

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Words of Dhamma

*Puttā matthi dhanammatthi, iti bālo vihaññati;
Attā hi ttano natthi, kuto puttā kuto dhanam.*

—Dhammapadapāḷi— 62, Bālavaggo

“I have sons, I have wealth”; with this (feeling of attachment) the fool is troubled. Indeed, he himself is not his own, how can sons and wealth be his?”

The Brightness of Dhamma

*Annual Meeting: Dhamma Giri, India March 1, 1988,
Opening Address by Principal Teacher S. N. Goenka*

Companions on the path of Dhamma, once again we have gathered together to understand how more suffering people can come in contact with Dhamma. As the work grows, more assistant teachers are appointed, more centres are established and more servers give their service for the spread of Dhamma. This growth is bound to continue and so it is essential that the work be properly organized, to avoid vociferous tendencies which make Dhamma weaker. But it is a very dangerous situation. We are now at the crossroads: one wrong step and the whole movement will proceed towards its own downfall and also towards harming mankind, one right step and the whole movement will be used for the good and benefit of many.

As one starts organising Dhamma which becomes essential as it grows there is every danger that it turns into an organized religion. When it turns into a sect the essence of Dhamma is gone. On the one hand, some discipline has to be maintained for the proper spread of Dhamma. Something has to be properly organized. On the other hand if it turns into a sort of hierarchy: the great teacher and under the great teacher one upacharia (deputy teacher), then so many senior assistant teachers, so many assistant teachers and so many junior assistant teachers. All working within hard and fast rules, regimented—nobody should do this nobody should do that. This is how sects are established, how else. Ego starts playing a very predominant part, “I am placed in this position now and all who are junior to me must obey me, must give respect to me as my word is the final word. I am such an important person.”

Certainly Dhamma must spread there is no doubt. Certainly more and more suffering people should come in contact with Dhamma no doubt. But if one thinks, “In the whole organization, Where do I stand, what is my position, what is my status, is there proper appreciation

of my service? Look I have left all the comforts of my householders life, I have left my business, I have left my family and I am giving my whole life. I don’t want any money, I don’t want people to bow down before me but then there should be some appreciation, some appreciation for my service.” Madness, from here the personality cult starts. From here sectarianism starts.

Dhamma is important; nothing else. “In the spread of Dhamma, whatever part I play, I play this part because I am asked to play this part. However, tomorrow, if I am asked not to play this part but some other part then I will be too happy.” What is ‘I’? Dhamma is important. Service is important. The benefit of more and more people that is important. The happiness of more and more people that is important—nothing else, nothing else.

Someone comes and says that believe me I am really working selflessly I have no ego at all. I do not expect anything in return. I do not even expect the appreciation of the people of my services. Honestly, I have given my life for the cause of Dhamma. That may be true, it may not be true; who can judge? One has to judge oneself. No one else can judge you. You have to judge yourself whether really you are working without ego. Have you dissolved your ego? You really don’t expect anything in return?

Two of the Brahma Vihāras are for this purpose: to examine oneself whether “I am working with ego or whether I am working in Dhamma.” *Muditā* and *Karuṇā*, sympathetic joy and compassion are the two yardsticks by which one has to keep on measuring oneself on how one is working. A fellow comrade in the organization gets a particular position, a particular status. A fellow worker in the organization is giving his or her service in a way, which people like very much, they appreciate it. Word is spreading about their way of working. Then what is happening in my mind? Am I generating sympathetic joy, do I feel very joyful? “Wonderful, one of my comrades is doing wonderful work and people are appreciating it.” Or, on the other hand, have I started developing jealousy, envy, “Then what about me, if he or she surpasses me then what will happen?” Such a mad person has not understood

Dhamma. If there is somebody progressing in Dhamma, then yes, there must be sympathetic joy. There must be joy to see somebody serving Dhamma properly, helping others. If there is a trace of jealousy then understand, “In spite of all my self delusion [of being free from ego] I am far, far from the path of Dhamma. Look there is no sympathetic joy, I don’t feel joyful at all.” *Muditā* is missing totally missing.

Or you find somebody making a mistake, which may be a mistake or may not be a mistake. It may be a mistake because you are looking at it with your own colored lenses, with your own prejudices. Or it may really be a mistake. Now what happens? Seeing one of your comrades having committed a big mistake what happens in the mind? Do you generate hatred towards this person, do you generate aversion towards this person? If so then you are far away from Dhamma. If you generate compassion towards this person, “Look my companion has slipped, my companion has become weak. What should I do to support him to give strength to him so that he comes out of this weakness?” A feeling of compassion, compassion.

A big delusion can also come at this stage. One will examine oneself, “No I do not have any hatred towards this person who has made such a blunder. I do not have any hatred.” However, there is a pleasant feeling. One feels pleased to see a comrade falling down, “Look such an ego centered person, now people will know what a mad person this fellow is, now all his reputation will go away. Now the great, great teacher will know that this fellow is a useless fellow, and he will be toppled down.” Is this kind of pleasant feeling coming in the mind? Examine yourself as nobody else is going to examine you. You must examine yourself, and if any such thing is happening, you are far, far away from Dhamma. First establish yourself in Dhamma, only then you can serve others in Dhamma. A blind person cannot show the path to other blind persons. A lame person cannot support other lame persons. And to establish yourself in Dhamma see how much your ego is really dissolved. If at every opportunity you put yourself forward so that people know that here is an important person, then you are far away from Dhamma. If any opportunity arises and Dhamma is placed before others, Dhamma is given importance, not the person, then yes, you are working properly. Are you projecting your ego in the name of serving Dhamma? As a teacher, as an organizer, or as a Dhamma worker what is your aim, what are you doing? If you are inflating your ego then the Dhamma cannot remain Dhamma. Then you are not serving anybody, because you are not serving yourself. One who cannot serve oneself cannot serve anybody. Serve yourself in Dhamma. Keep on examining how much your ego is getting dissolved; only then are you fit, fit to support the organization. You have to examine yourself.

Five centuries back, there was a saint in this country whose words are so appropriate on this occasion. The saint Kabir said,

“I am standing here in the marketplace with a very

sharp ax in my hand. Who wants to accompany me? Only such a person can accompany me, who can use this ax and behead himself and throw the head in the dustbin. Only then is this person fit to accompany me.”

A clarion call from another Kabir:

“Cut your head off with this ax of Dhamma. Throw it in the dustbin. Then yes, you are fit to accompany.”

I know many of you will accompany. Many of you had been accompanying me in so many previous lives. You accompanied me for so many years. Certainly, many of you will accompany me for this whole life and a few lives more. But accompany me, cutting your head off, dissolving your ego. Then Dhamma will remain Dhamma; it will not become a sect. As Buddha started it in its pure form, generation after generation, it kept on spreading in its pure form. Time has come once again; see that it starts flowing in its pure form. For at least a few centuries more, it should flow in its pure form. Those who really want to serve must serve themselves first. Come out of ego, come out of ego. The “I” has no place on the path of Dhamma.

You are going to have very important discussions the next few days. You are going to codify the code of discipline for the teachers, for the organizers, for the dhamma workers, and for different centers. A very important historical gathering, taking very important historical steps. One wrong step and humanity, in the future, will miss the purity of Dhamma. Everything that you do, everything that you decide, and everything that you codify—the Dhamma should remain most important in it. A “person” has got no importance. Persons may come and persons may go, but Dhamma has to remain to serve people properly. If now you start giving importance to the “person,” then you start building an ego; you have started running in the opposite direction. All importance should be given to Dhamma, the applied Dhamma. That one is placed in this position in the organization, or that place in the organization is irrelevant. How much actual benefit—without putting one’s own image forward—are people receiving from your service? If you have to project something, project Dhamma. Not your image, then Dhamma will go in the background. And when Dhamma goes in the background, then everything good has gone in the background. So whatever decisions you make, whatever code of discipline you make, see that those who make the code of discipline follow it.

The one and only aim is *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*. May more and more people benefit from Dhamma, come out of their misery and enjoy real peace and harmony. I see a very bright future. May all of you shine in this brightness with Dhamma so that people get attracted towards you that means towards Dhamma. Not you as a person but as a representative of Dhamma. Work in Dhamma, work for Dhamma. May you all be successful working in Dhamma for suffering people everywhere.

*Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ,
Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ,
Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ.*



Questions & Answers

**Annual meeting: Dhamma Giri,
India March 4, 1990**

Q.: Please explain why we have painful sensations during meditation.

Goenkaji: Sensations can be of different types and have different causes. If you are not accustomed to sit cross-legged for a long time you may experience painful sensations when you start to sit purely because of the sitting posture; or there may be painful sensations because of the food you have taken; or a painful sensation may be due to the atmosphere around you; if it is very hot, for example, a lot of heat may be felt in the body. There can be many reasons for painful sensations.

Another reason for these sensations is your accumulated *sankhāras* from the past. When you meditate properly, the power of the *anicca-saññā* [awareness of impermanence] vibrations is so strong that all the impurities inside are shaken and come up on the surface in a great upheaval. Initially the gross *sankhāras* surface, and only when they are completely eradicated can one reach the stage of *sotāpanna*.

It's like sweeping a floor: The first time, large pieces of debris are removed, the next sweeping will pick up the smaller particles, and the third sweeping will clear away finer dust. When you sweep with a small brush still finer dust will be removed and, finally, when you wash the floor the dust removed is still finer. Similarly, in Vipassana you work moving from the gross to the subtle, to the subtlest. This is the law of nature.

Q.: Sectarianism seems to be another form of casteism. How should we safeguard against these evils?

Goenkaji: To me, sectarianism is worse than casteism. Discrimination on the basis of caste is a poison, but is limited only to India; sectarianism has now become universal. Everywhere people are obsessed with their own sect and feel, “My sect is the best!” For them their sect has become Dhamma.

The Dhamma is the law of nature. It is universal, it can't belong to a particular sect. If one generates negativity in the mind one is bound to become miserable; one may call oneself Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim, but this fact does not alter because it is the law of nature. Likewise, if one eradicates the impurities of lobha, dosa, moha [craving, aversion, ignorance] from the mind, one is bound to feel liberated and peaceful.

One may consider oneself religious yet not have even a trace of Dhamma, in which case the label has no meaning. But if anyone from any religion is full of Dhamma and is a good person, then this person will help to create a healthy society. So long as sectarianism keeps raising its head there cannot be peace in the world. Equally, so long as casteism keeps raising its head in this country, there cannot be peace in this country.

The Buddha condemned casteism and said one is not a brāhmaṇa [of the highest caste] just because one is born to brāhmaṇa parents: One becomes a brāhmaṇa only by purifying the mind. One who is called a shudra [low-caste]

because of being born in a shudra family can become a brāhmaṇa by purifying the mind.

Therefore we have to keep giving importance to Dhamma, and keep explaining that both sectarianism and casteism are the enemies of Dhamma. No matter what caste or religion one belongs to, if one does not care to live the life of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, one has wasted one's life, harmed oneself, and harmed others.

If you get established in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, no matter what religion you belong to, you are a good, liberated, and pious person, and good people make a good society.

This must be emphasized not merely in discussions or discourses, but in actual practice. Anyone who begins to practise Vipassana will see how useless it is to pride oneself on one's religion if one does not practise *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*; and if one is practising these one may belong to any religion.



Additional Responsibility

- 1-2. Mr. Prashant and Mrs. Vanita Patil, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Sugandha, Sangli
3. Dr. Melvin Chagas, To serve as Centre Teacher at Dhamma Sindhudurg
4. Mr. Karma Jigmee Dawa to serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Taṭa, Siliguri
5. Mr. Norbu Tshering Bhutia, To serve as Centre Teacher at Dhamma Sineru, Sikkim
6. Mr. Dhendup Lama, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Sineru, Sikkim

New Responsibility Teacher

1. Mr. Brian Wagner (T), To serve as CAT for Rest of Africa
2. Mrs. Ruth Senturia (T), To serve Spread of Dhamma in Rest of Africa and To Assist the CAT for Rest of Africa
- 3-4. Mr. Ramkrishna & Mrs Saroj Bante, Nagpur

SATs

- 1-2. Mr. Bhaudas & Mrs. Nalini Meshram, Gondia
3. Shri Chandrakant Ganeriwala, Yavatmal
4. Smt. Ravikanta Kotangale, Bhandara
5. Ms. Hetal Ahir, Kutch, Gujarat
6. Miss. Lyna Som, Cambodia
7. Mrs. Sapanha Phang, Cambodia
8. Mrs. Vannath Chea, Cambodia
9. Ms. Natnapa Prapatpotipong, Thailand

10. Ms. Rewadee Kongtiam, Thailand

New Appointments Assistant Teachers

1. Mrs. Prerana Choudhary, Thane
2. Mrs.. Shahnaz Sheikh, Pune
3. Mrs. Megha Kothadiya, Pune
4. Mr. Ulhas Botkar, Pune
5. Mrs. Laxmi Kamble, Jaysingpur,
- 6-7. Mr Rajesh and Mrs. Seema Malik, Modasa, Gujarat
8. Mr. Kishore Gaadhe, Hyderabad
9. Mr.Madhusudhan Rao Karnati, Hyderabad
10. Mr. A. N. Venkateshappa Venkat, Bangalore
11. Mrs. Renuka Godara, Jaipur
12. Mrs. Madhu Jain, Bathinda
13. Mr. Manoj Kumar Verma, Mainpuri, UP

Children Course Teachers

1. Mr. Bharat Bhaskar Dalavi, Pune
2. Mr. Gaurav Shukla, Pune
3. Miss Komal S.Mane, Sangli
4. Mrs.Rupali D. Patil, Sangli
5. Mr. Sardar A. Patil, Kolhapur
6. Mr. Ratan Prakash Shelake, Kolhapur
7. Mr. Jagannath B. Metkari, Kolhapur
8. Mrs. Jyotsnaben Mayurkumar Amin, Godhara, Gujarat
- 9-10. Mr. Milind & Mrs. Vandana Bhagat, Raigad
11. Mrs. Pushpanjali K S, Bengaluru
12. Mr. Vishwanath Giramallappa, Bharama, Bengaluru
13. Mrs. Priyanka B Nari, Bengaluru
14. Mr. Nir Peled, Israel

Online Pāli-Hindi Certificate Course - 2025

Admission Open from 1st March to 31st March 2025.

Application form will be available on the link (given below) & different WhatsApp groups from 1st March 2025.

Details of the Course: <https://palilearning.vridhamma.org>

Auspicious death

On February 6, 2025, Shri Mahesh Kumar Gupta, a senior assistant teacher from Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, departed peacefully at the age of 84. After being appointed as an assistant teacher in 2011, he was asked to serve as senior assistant teacher in 2017. He has been actively serving the Dhamma ever since he was appointed. We all wish that he continues to progress in his Dhamma journey until he reaches the ultimate goal.

One-Day Mega Courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai

- 1) 1. **Sunday**, 11th May, 2025 Buddha Purnima,
2. **Sunday**, 13th July, 2025 Ashadha-Pūrṇimā
(Dhammacakkappavattana day)
3. **Sunday**, 5th October, 2025 Pujya Goenkaji's
demise day (29-9-2013)
4. **Sunday**, 18th Jan, 2026 Mataji's Demise-day (5-1-2016)
and Sayagi U Ba Khin's demise day (19-1-1971)
- 2) In addition there are Daily One-Day Courses being held in the Pagoda for Vipassana Students. Please follow the link to join and take advantage of the immense benefit of meditating in a large group
Contact for all one-day: 022 50427500 (Board Lines)
Mob. +91 8291894644 (from 11 am to 5 pm). **Online registration:** <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register>;
Email: oneday@globalpagoda.org
- 3) **Dhammalaya Accommodation during Mega Courses:**
Meditators can stay at Dhammalaya during mega courses and avail maximum benefit. Please **contact:** 022 50427599 or **Email-** info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Jaba-jaba yaśa carcā sune, taba-taba hoyā vinīta;
Parakha svayaṃ ko ahaṃ taja, rakha mana śanta punīta.*

Whenever one hears words of fame and praise (about oneself), one becomes humble; Know oneself, forsake pride, keeping the mind calm and pure.

*Dharamasevakon men yadī, ahaṃbhāva jaga jāya;
To sevā kaluṣita bane, phala dūṣita ho jāya.*

If arrogance rises in dhamma servers, then their service becomes impure; And the results of that service get tarnished.

*Ahaṅkāra kā dharama se, rañca na hove mela;
Ahaṅkāra jāge jahaṅ, vahaṅ pāpa kā khela.*

Ego has not even a slight connection with Dhamma; Wherever pride awakens, it becomes the playground of impurity.

*Mukhya bāta abhimāna taja, bane vinamra vinīta;
Ahaṅkāra jaba taka rahe, hoyā na citta punīta.*

Eliminating the ego and becoming humble are essential; As long as pride persists, the mind cannot become pure.

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