

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 1, No. 2, 15 May, 2025; (Revised) (continued since January 1990)

Regd. No. MHENG/25/RAA43

Price per copy ₹0.00

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## Words of Dhamma

*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti,  
sabbarasaṃ dhammaraso jināti;  
Sabbaratiṃ dhammarati jināti,  
taṇhakkhayo sabbadukkhaṃ jināti*

—Dhammapada - 354

The gift of the Dhamma surpasses every gift, the taste of the Dhamma surpasses every taste; delight in the Dhamma surpasses every delight; the eradication of craving overcomes all suffering.

## Myanmar Earthquake

On 28th March 2025, an earthquake of 7.7 magnitude on the Richter scale hit the old city of Mandalay in Myanmar. Its effects were felt even in Thailand. More than 2500 people died, many thousands more were injured, and many buildings were destroyed.

Relief is pouring in from all over the world. But how can the immense pain of loss be relieved? There is but one way: the path of Dhamma! There are many Dhamma centres in Myanmar and Thailand. Directing those who are suffering to these centres, even holding special courses for them, will be of immense help. We hope that the doors of Dhamma open for these suffering people and they find relief. May they be at peace! May they be happy!

## Earthquake Victims and Vipassana

*(During these trying times, we offer this inspiring article by Goenkaji, published in the aftermath of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, that helps us express our compassion towards those less fortunate who may be in need of a healing touch. Ed. Note.)*

How catastrophic was the wrath of nature! The earth trembled and shook violently. Such a massive earthquake! Such a terrible earthquake! Such a destructive and devastating earthquake! It seemed as if the whole region had been affected by the frenzied dance of death.

The earth tore apart, and wide cracks appeared on roads. The houses, too, had developed cracks. From small cottages to big buildings, they all shook uncontrollably. Many of them collapsed like a house of cards.

Those who were outside by chance or had left their homes earlier survived. But the remaining thousands of people fell victim to this cruel misfortune. Many were killed, many were crippled, and many were injured. A great disaster had befallen the people, leaving them

sorely distressed. The sound of crying, the sound of weeping, the sound of lamentation, and the sound of wailing could be heard all around. Wherever one looked, there was ruin and desolation. Such great devastation was wrought within just a few minutes. It was a heart-rending sight, a terrifying spectacle of death and destruction.

A beloved husband was buried in the ground. A mother had died, leaving her weeping child behind. A father had departed leaving his loved ones without protection. The only child of a family had died, extinguishing the family line. The support of elderly parents was snatched away. Life was shrouded by darkness. The cries of those wounded and trapped beneath the rubble of the fallen buildings were heart-rending. What was the condition of those trapped beneath the rubble? Were they alive or dead or near death?

This great disaster took place so swiftly that it was not possible for anyone to help others. At some places, whole villages were buried; whole localities were destroyed. Who was left to save others, to help others, to console others, and to comfort others?

A large family of a wealthy person with their stores and warehouses was completely wiped out. He was the only one to survive—helpless. Elsewhere, a poor person who eked out a living from a small tea stall in front of his tiny hut also lost everything. His family also did not survive, leaving him feeling weak and helpless. Rich and poor, nature did not spare anyone. Hindu or Muslim, Buddhist or Jain, all of them fell victim to this earthquake. This catastrophe affected all of them equally. Thousands were suddenly rendered homeless and destitute. There was no food nor water,

no shelter; there was no succour. The groans from their battered hearts and the painful sighs of their distressed minds were unbearable. There was no limit to their suffering; it was intense beyond imagination.

Many people from India and other countries, as well as organisations and governments, came forward to help them as much as possible. Food, water, tents, blankets, medicines, and other material began to arrive there. Though this was very little in comparison to the amount needed, at least the relief work had started.

The Buddha said that *kālika dāna* (timely aid) is most beneficial, most meritorious. If whatever is essential to save someone's life is given immediately, that is called *kālika dāna*. Those affected by this natural calamity are in dire need of this kind of assistance. And such aid should definitely be given. But this material aid alone is not enough.

The wounds of the body can be healed, but what about the deep wounds inflicted on the mind? The one whose house lies buried in the ground can get a new house, but what about the one whose mind is mired in a bottomless pit of despair?

An incident from his life:

Once an extremely distressed person came to him. People beseeched the Buddha to teach Dhamma to this person so that he could gain freedom from his misery. The Buddha looked at him and asked,

"Have you had food?"

"No" was the reply.

"Did you have food yesterday?"

"No."

"Oh, he has been hungry for two days! First, give him food. Only then will I teach him Dhamma."

Therefore, even though the *dāna* of Dhamma is supreme, it is extremely important to give *kālika dāna* first. After the people get some relief by this *kālika dāna*, they can then be given the *dāna* of spiritual peace and happiness.

The greatest destruction by this cataclysmic earthquake was caused in the Kutch, Kathiawad, and Ahmedabad districts of Gujarat, India. There are Vipassana meditation centres already at these three places: Dhamma Sindhu at Bada near Bhuj, Dhamma Koṭa at Rajkot, and *Dhamma Pīṭha* near Ahmedabad. People join ten-day courses at these centres to strengthen and purify their minds and gain much benefit.

It is good that many Vipassana meditators have already undertaken the meritorious work of giving *kālika dāna*, individually and in groups. Now continuous courses will be organised at these three meditation centres as soon as possible so that those who have been affected by the earthquake can join

these courses in large numbers and gain mental strength to rebuild their lives. So far, about 100 to 150 people have been taking part in these courses at these centres because there were facilities only for this number. But now, with the use of tents, larger courses for 500 to 1000 people will be organised so that the quake-affected can gain relief from their mental trauma. Vipassana works as a healing balm on the wounds of the mind. It heals broken hearts and helps those become whole once again.

Vipassana enables one to practice living an equanimous life, which, during such great adversity, helps the disturbed, unbalanced mind regain balance and calm and helps it to come out of its misery. This has been confirmed by the experience of thousands of Vipassana meditators.

We just received a message that a meditator, Meena Asher, from Kutch passed away peacefully and equanimously in this calamity. She had done her first Vipassana course in 1978 and had been meditating regularly for the past twenty-three years. She had benefited greatly from it and inspired her brothers, sisters, and other family members to participate in Vipassana courses. Today, five of them are serving as assistant teachers of Vipassana and conducting courses at various places.

As it happens in everyone's life, this Dhamma daughter also had to face many ups and downs in her life. But on the strength of Vipassana, she always maintained the balance of her mind and never complained. She lived an exemplary life, accepting all that she came across with peace and composure. On 26th January 2001, when the earthquake struck at 8:50 a.m., she was working in the kitchen and was trapped under the rubble of the collapsed building. The bones of her neck and back were broken. Her only daughter and her sister-in-law with her son and daughter lay crushed near her; they had died. The mental state of a woman trapped under the debris of stones and bricks, who is alive but cannot make the slightest movement, is beyond imagination. How must she have passed every moment! It's hard to imagine how painful each moment must have been—waiting and hoping for some ray of light, some sound outside, someone to remove the pile of rubble off her.

She was trapped under the rubble in this unbearable condition not merely for one or two hours but for ten hours. She was finally rescued from the rubble at about 7:00 p.m. People saw that there was not the slightest sign of agitation on her face. The pain in her back and neck must certainly have been unbearable. But, let alone crying or lamenting, she did not even groan in pain or shed tears. She lay calmly with her head on the lap of her nephew, who had survived. It was

not that she was unconscious; she was fully conscious. She asked for water to drink. But there was no sign of misery on her face or in her voice. Lying in this condition and practising Vipassana, she passed away peacefully after an hour and a quarter.

Truly, she had learned the art of dying. She would often say that Vipassana had taught her the art of living. The technique that taught her the art of living peacefully and equanimously in every situation had also taught her the art of dying peacefully while facing excruciating pain. In the present history of Vipassana, there have been many meditators who have peacefully embraced a painful death in this way. Among them, there have been some who refused to take narcotic painkillers even while suffering from the extreme agony of the terminal stage of cancer, choosing instead to observe the pain dispassionately, and passed away peacefully. This meditator also has left an ideal example of an inspiring Dhamma death.

The technique of Vipassana teaches one to live a life of peace and harmony even in the face of great adversity. May it benefit all those affected by calamities like earthquakes.

May they get the strength to heal their broken hearts and start their lives anew.

May they be happy! May they be peaceful!

*(The following has been translated and adapted from an article by Goenkaji published in the March 2001 issue of the Hindi Vipassana Patrikā.)*

## Questions & Answers

Annual meeting: Dhamma Thali, India

3 January, 1993

**Q:** *It is found that students drop out after one or two courses. How can this trend be prevented?*

**Goenkaji:** This is because of the fact that every individual has both good qualities as well as bad qualities. People come to Vipassana courses to strengthen their good qualities and to eradicate the bad ones. They get helped by Vipassana, in one or two courses.

But after all, they have such a big stock of bad qualities. These start overpowering them. When these impurities start overpowering a student, one understands fully well at the intellectual level that one should practise Vipassana to come out of misery. Yet because one is overpowered by one's own impurities, it becomes difficult. This is quite natural, we see this everywhere.

This will continue to some extent. People will progress slowly—they may take two steps and then fall down, and get up again; then again take two steps, and

again fall down. Later they will reach the stage where they are so strong they can't fall down. It takes time.

As for the practical solution to the present problem there is one thing: Even if a student stops meditating every morning and evening, if they still come to a weekly group sitting, their battery will get charged and they will start working again. So this weekly sitting is very beneficial in helping to solve this problem. In every town, every village, every neighbourhood, there should be at least one person who can give time to remind people, “Tomorrow there is a weekly joint sitting.” This will help people. Many of them do not come merely out of laziness. It is not that they are very busy or that something stops them from coming. If you simply encourage them, they will come.

Another thing we have found helpful is these one-day courses with Anapana, Vipassana, *mettā*, and a short discourse. The students get refreshed by such courses, their batteries gets charged. This should be encouraged. It will be helpful.

## Auspicious deaths

1. At the age of 85, Shri Krishna Lal Sharma, a Vipassana teacher from Chandigarh, passed away peacefully on April 16, 2025. He has been actively serving the Dhamma ever since he was appointed as an AT in 1998 and then as a Teacher in 2013. He also served for a few years as Dhamma Dhaja Center Teacher. We all wish that he keeps moving forward on his Dhamma path till he reaches the ultimate goal.

2. Shri Prakash Gedam, a 74-year-old assistant teacher from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, passed away peacefully on April 17, 2025, from heart disease. After beginning Vipassana meditation in 2005, he continued sitting and giving Dhamma service. As soon as he retired from the State Bank in 2011, he became fully involved in Dhammaseva. His life was very disciplined and decent, and his behavior was well controlled. He was appointed Assistant Teacher in 2018. His active participation in all activities, from Dhammapala Centre registration to other activities, has inspired and improved many people's lives. The Dhamma family wishes him continuous progress towards Nibbāna. May he be peaceful and liberated.

## A New Vipassana Centre In Mumbai

The Goregaon Vipassana Center is now known as “Dhamma Kanheri,” a full-fledged center. The name alludes to the historic Kanheri Caves, which are located a short distance from the Center.

The facility offers 28 rooms with attached bathrooms, single rooms for returning students, and twin-sharing rooms for new students.

To run the Center, an independent trust has been established.

Please visit [kanheri.vridhamma.org](http://kanheri.vridhamma.org), call +91 91522233764 or 9155223765, or send an email to [info.gvc@vridhamma.org](mailto:info.gvc@vridhamma.org) for additional information.

**Additional Responsibility**

1. Shri Vikram Aditya, To Serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Sota, Sohna, Haryana
2. Mr. Ajay Bhagdikar, to assist the center teacher of Dhamma Anchal, Ambikapur, Chhatisgarh

**New Responsibility SATs**

- 1-2. Mr. Prashant & Mrs. Vanita Patil, Kolhapur

**New Appointments Assistant Teachers**

1. Mr. Kishor Matre, Pune
2. Mr. Parag Ramteke, Nagpur
3. Miss Madhupoornima Khobragade, Nagpur
4. Mrs. Sunita Sonawane, Jalgaon
5. Mr. Bhajan Singh, Rajkot
6. Ms. Shivani Kansal, Jaipur
7. Mr. Bhupesh Kumar Barua, Bangladesh
8. Mrs. Veena Kapoor, Dubai
9. Mrs. Lih Ching Gou, Taiwan

**Children Course Teachers**

1. Mrs. Charu Goda, Rajkot
2. Mrs. Bhartiben Vekariya, Rajkot
3. Mrs. Pravinaben Jani, Rajkot
4. Mr. Vimal Amlani, Rajkot
5. Mrs. Amra Lowanshi, Bhopal
6. Mrs. Anju Chandak, Bhopal
7. Mrs. Jyoti Meshram Bhopal
8. Mrs. Meena Sharma Bhopal
9. Mr. Sumantra Sardar, Kolkata
10. Mr. Vivekanand Srivastava, Bodhgaya
11. Mr. Vidayanand Prasad, Muzaffarpur
12. Mr. Dilip Kumar, Nalanda
13. Mr. Arturs Grobins, Latvia
14. Mr. Borisov Evgeniy Alexandrovich, Russia
15. Mr. Ludilkina Evgeniya Vyacheslavovna, Russia
16. Ms. Günel Fatullayeva, Finland
17. Mr. Jalmari Olavinpoika Laihin, Finland

**RCCC**

1. Mr. Mahendra Gaikwad, Regional coordinator children courses Nashik Area.
2. Mrs. Santosh Sharma, Regional coordinator children courses Marathwada Aurangabad Division (Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Osmanabad, Latur)

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

- 1) 1. **Sunday**, 13th July, 2025 Ashadha-Pūrṇimā, (Dhammacakkappavattana day).
2. **Sunday**, 5th October, 2025 Pujya Goenkaji's Death Anniversary (29-9-2013).
3. **Sunday**, 11-1-2026 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](mailto: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](mailto:info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org) or [info@globalpagoda.org](mailto:info@globalpagoda.org)

**DHAMMA DOHAS**

*Anna vastra griha dāna den, Auṣadhi vidya dāna;  
Para in sabase śreṣṭha hai, śuddha dharma kā dāna.*

Donate food, clothing, a house, medicines, and education; But the best donation of all is the dāna of pure Dhamma.

*Vastra deya jo nagna ko, bhūkhe ko de anna;  
Auṣadhi de jo rugṇa ko, dekara hoyā prasanna.*

One who gives clothing to a naked one and food to a hungry person; One who gives medicines to an ill person gains happiness.

*Apāne pāvāna dāna men, kālikha nā laga jāya;  
Maṅgalakārī dāna se, citta moda adhikāya.*

May there be no blot in one's pure giving; The heart turns joyous with the sanctity of pure dāna.

*Tyāga dharma kā mūla hai, dāna sukhon kā koṣa;  
Puṇya kshetra men dāna den, mile amita santoṣa.*

Sacrifice is the root of Dharma, and giving is the storehouse of happiness; The heart feels immensely contented by donating in a meritorious field.

Edited and published by R.P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri-422 403 and printed at Apollo Printing Press, 259, SICOFT Ltd., 69 MIDC, Satpur, Nashik-422 007.  
Subscriptions BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF (Vipassana Research Institute) Vol. 1, No. 2, 15 May, 2025.

SUBSCRIPTION TO ANNUAL NEWSLETTER: ₹ 100.00 (FOR OUTSIDE INDIA- US \$ 50); Vip. NL; (Revised) Regd. No. MHENG/25/RAA43. Price Per Copy ₹ 0.00

Posting Day: **15th of every month**, Posted at **Igatpuri**, Dist. Nashik (M.S.)

**DATE OF PRINTING: 10 MAY, 2025, DATE OF PUBLICATION: 15 MAY, 2025**

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