

Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 1, No. 6, 12 September, 2025; (Revised) (continued since January 1990)

Regd. No. MHENG/25/RAA43

Price per copy ₹ 0.00

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SUBSCRIPTION TO ANNUAL NEWSLETTER: ₹ 100.00 (FOR OUTSIDE INDIA- US \$ 50)

Words of Dhamma

Appam vata jīvitam idaṃ, oraṃ vassasatāpi miyyati

Yo cepi aticca jīvati, atha kho so jarasāpi miyyati.

— *Khuddakanikāye Suttanipātapāli 810, Jarāsuttam*

Truly this life is short; you die before a hundred years. Even if anyone lives beyond this, then you still die of old age.

Death in Dhamma

For a Vipassana meditator, death is not to be feared. It is to be welcomed with awareness and equanimity and not something to shy away from. When the time is ripe, and the karmas of this life are over, then the body's release is inevitable. No one can ever avoid this unbreakable law of nature. A ripened meditator welcomes this death moment smilingly. There is not a speck of sadness in his mental flow of consciousness. Even if there is some pain in the throes of death, the mind does not tremble. Just as during adhiṭṭhana sitting, a meditator observes choicelessly and does not let one's mind react if pain is felt, so also while dying, one is aware, observing consciously; indeed, one's awareness of anicca permeates consciousness. In the last moment, 'cuti' is when one leaves the body, and then the consciousness of the very next moment, 'paṭisandhi,' is the very first moment of the next life. This is undoubtedly in a better realm. There is not a shred of doubt about moving to a lower realm.

A meditator who, till the end, remains a traveler on the path of Vipassana is a traveler on a wholesome path. One rises, step by every step—'opanayiko.' Death does not obstruct one's progress. One moves onwards on the dhamma journey; the future is safe and bright.

A true Vipassana student, hence, does not fear death. One neither rejects life praying for death, nor does one turn away from death while clinging to life. One is comfortable knowing death is a promotion. It is a matter of tranquility and joy, not sadness. Thus one learns the art of living. In the art of living lies the art of dying.

Meditators who may be present near someone dying should assist them—keeping the surroundings calm and filled with dhamma. If the dying one has not yet ripened in dhamma, then he may, upon seeing a loved one weeping, get disturbed and sad, which may disturb such a vital death moment. All the meditators present should meditate, generating anicca, or giving metta. At such time, the entire

atmosphere must be filled with Dhamma vibrations.

Even afterwards, no one need cry but remain calm and in equipoise, happy about the departed one's evolutionary step, continuing to generate metta, and sharing merits. With this, wherever the person may be born, their consciousness is touched by dhamma, giving him or her a happy feeling of ease.

This is the best way to say farewell to a dear one.

This is the way to an auspicious death in Dhamma.

-- from *Hindi Patrika*, 29th May, 1980. Vol. 9/12.

The Death of Our Father

— By Satyanarayan Goenka

Editors Note: We present here a heartfelt letter of Goenkaji's written to his brother Babu Bhैया (Babulalji) in Burma upon their father, Gopiram Goenkaji's, passing away. Upon getting the news of his father's accident, Goenkaji, who was then conducting a course in Raxaul, India, decided to conclude it a day earlier in the evening instead of the next morning in order to leave early for Bombay. I was to follow later with the remaining luggage, etc., by train. However, he had to face a most challenging journey back—a portent of some unwelcome event. Undoubtedly, it materialized—as the passing of his father, Babuji.

Decades later, on the day Respected Goenkaji left his body, he had his evening meal like every other day and then asked his assistant to take him to his room. As soon as he lay on his bed, his breath turned rapid, and he was propped up on pillows. Soon he took a last breath, just like that.

The very first camp in India, which began on 13th July 1969, was held for Goenkaji's parents, who benefitted greatly from the camp.

Goenkaji's death anniversary falls on September 29th, whereas his father's is on September 13th.

Is anyone not aware of Goenkaji's endeavors to light the

lamp late at night before raising to chant in the morning? He was very mindful of the passage of time and exhorted everyone not to waste it but to make the most of it by developing in sadhana, because who knows when death will strike?

During his last years, he wrote:

**Jeevan to thoda bacha, karane kam anek;
Aesa jage dharma bal, purna hoye pratyek.**

Life is passing, and the tasks are many.

May dhamma power arise, so that all these tasks are completed.

May we, his dhamma sons and daughters resolve to fulfill his tasks—especially to live by dhammic values and to retain Dhamma in its total purity. This will be true homage to him.

Excerpts from the letter:

23 Sept 1972 – Bombay

Dear Babu Bhaiya, Respectful Salutations!

The camp at Raxaul was barely halfway through when the unhappy news came from Bombay that father's thigh bone had been fractured in a mishap and an operation was imminent. But then the news came that while weakness in the body persists, the doctors will not operate, further adding that there is no need for concern and that I should return after completing the camp. When the news first came, I resolved to share all my pāramīs with him. The camp progressed smoothly. In the subsequent five days, the camp's atmosphere changed noticeably. Not only did the students benefit immensely, but I benefited as well.

There was certainty in my mind that father will not leave us so soon. Certainly he would remain alive until your return from Myanmar. My mind kept wandering to the pain in his thigh. I remember—a few months ago, there was some problem in his spine, which was very painful. Mother and I, with the rest of the family, would sit around and meditate while he lay in bed. The metta vibrations would permeate the air. After an hour, he would either fall asleep or declare happily that the pain was gone.

For metta vibrations to reach someone, the boundary of place and time can never be an obstruction. And I generated metta vibrations from where I was. It was but his pāramīs. I felt that, for the remaining five days, the dhamma environment of the camp was full of metta vibrations.

Facing the Storm

I left Raxaul for Muzaffarpur in the evening, after the camp had ended. I was intent on reaching Bombay as soon as possible. I planned to fly the next morning at 10 am to Patna, taking a connecting flight at 12 pm to Delhi and onwards to Bombay. But the flight to Patna left Muzaffarpur at 12:30 pm, and I would have missed my flight to Delhi. I decided to fly instead from Patna via Allahabad and

Lucknow to Delhi, where I was to arrive by 4 pm, and then take another flight to Bombay at 5:30 pm.

The journey from Patna to Allahabad was uneventful, but when we took off from Allahabad for Lucknow at 1:45 pm, within 15 minutes we were caught in a fierce cyclonic storm. The pilot prepared to return to Allahabad, but the cyclone had reached Allahabad by then, and the plane was not given permission to land. After that, we moved on to Lucknow, but again, we were refused permission to land. We returned to Patna after attempting to land in Varanasi but were unsuccessful. The unprecedented cyclone had affected the entire area, and the pilots then decided to go to Kathmandu in Nepal. But then the news came that a plane crash had paralyzed the airport, and we could not land there either.

Then the plane's intercom came alive with the news that the weather at Varanasi airport had slightly improved and we might land there from the north side. It had reached 5:30 pm, and both the pilots and the passengers had become worn out and anxious. Around 6 pm, following a smooth landing the pilots eventually eased the aircraft at the airport terminal. Everyone exhaled in relief.

When we arrived at the hotel, I wanted to call the family, but unfortunately, the phone lines were down. Early the next day, I reached the airport, but all the airports besides Varanasi—Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, and Delhi—were still closed, and I remained stranded at the airport. Around 11 am, news came that the airports were opening up, and we secured a flight, and we made it to Delhi, but the permission to land was denied due to the continuing storm. We flew towards Agra but had the same news and were unable to land. We swung between Agra and Delhi for half an hour before the pilot tried to land in Agra. But about 150 feet from the ground, the pilot had to take off again. An hour passed, and finally the plane landed on a third attempt at Agra. The pilots were overcome with nervous tension.

Immediately, I made a flight reservation to Bombay from Delhi, and eager to get some news from there, I contacted our Delhi office representative, Mr. Goswami. As I traversed through that ferocious storm, I was stunned to learn that my father had died the day before (September 13, 1972). Mr. Goswami added that he was cremated at 11 am today, the 14th. I was shaken by this and stayed that way for perhaps twenty minutes. But soon, Dhamma consciousness flowed through the entire body.

Smooth Journey from Agra to Bombay

By 4 pm, the skies cleared in Agra, and an aircraft from Calcutta to Bombay via Agra and Delhi landed at Agra airport. I was accommodated on compassionate grounds. A rainbow on the horizon and the light floating clouds in the heavens appeared serene after my turbulent experience. The flight from Agra to Delhi and then to Bombay was a remarkably blissful experience. In fact, the entire ambiance seemed to vibrate with an unmatched grace. The mind was

joyful, and the grief of father's passing had vanished.

After landing in Bombay, from the airport to home, I heard all about the last days of respected father from dear Shyam Bihari (brother), and then at home, my mother, Shankar, Shyam Sundar, and Ilayachibai (Mataji) all narrated the events leading up to his death. Instead of being disturbed, my mind was calm, and dhamma joy flowed through me.

The next day I went to the cremation ground with my brothers and gathered father's ashes (a tradition in India). These half-burnt ashen remains had to be enough to fulfill my need to pay homage to my father. Like you, Baba Bahiya, I too was deprived of being with him to serve him in his last days.

Endless Visitors

The house is filled with visitors. Everyone talks of his association with Babuji (father). Morning and evening we all sit with mother and elder brother for sadhana. Chants of dhamma fill the air. In this situation, the dhamma wisdom of mother and elder brother is exemplary. From amongst those who come to visit, there are some who were father's companions in his daily morning and evening walk to the beach. A group of people, young and old, had formed for this daily ritual. Now they are missing their dear 'Babuji.' Many spoke of his happy demeanor and how he kept others uplifted. How indeed could one remain morose with Babuji around? His way of becoming one with others was unusual: a child with children, a young man with youngsters, and an old man with the elderly.

Such was Babuji—spontaneous, cordial, and loving towards all. Some mentioned that a couple of days prior to the accident, he had said that now I will not live for long. Time is near. At that time, he was neither unwell, nor had anything happened that could remind him of his passing away, but it seems that he had sensed his imminent death.

Mother's Sadness

My mother would sometimes lamentably remark, "We both are nearing the end, and you go on such long voyages," whenever I would return to Bombay or prepare to depart for a camp. It's possible that you will be deprived of witnessing our final moments. However, my father would vehemently respond, "As long as I am able to move and stand, nothing bad will happen to me." However, I won't get out of bed again the day I become bedridden.

Both these foretellings came true. I could not serve him in his last days, as I was travelling, nor did he ever get up once he became bedridden.

Even though neither of us was able to provide for him in his final days, he was satisfied with the way the rest of the family and the elder brother served him. He was, in fact, concerned with what he considered to be an excessive number of doctors being contacted.

(To be continued)

Questions & Answers

Annual meeting: Dhamma Giri, India Jan. 1992

Q: *What actually happens when we are practising Vipassana and we take our attention to the extremities? Does anything actually leave the body, or is this an illusion? Why use these four extremities in particular?*

Goenkaji: Well, impurities do leave, but not because you have come to the extremities. They leave because you are equanimous: You are with the sensation and you are equanimous. The reason we ask people to take their attention to the extremities is that, generally on the extremities one does not experience a sensation which is unpleasant or which will make this person lose the balance of the mind. At other places there might be different kinds of sensations which may cause someone to lose the balance of the mind. But these extremities are such that one feels either neutral sensations or pleasant sensations there. You see, when the mind is more and more equanimous—because it is aware of sensations—then purity is possible. This is the whole logic and science of it.

Update about Academic courses in affiliation and collaboration with Mumbai University

1. Introduction to Vipassanā Meditation (ITVM) (Online 3 Month, Every Sun). Starting on 7th Sept
2. Diploma Course in Buddhist Studies— Vipassanā Theory & Practice (Online 1-year, Every Sat). Started on 23rd Aug
3. Advanced Diploma Course in Buddhist Studies— Vipassanā Theory & Practice (Online 1-year, Every Sat). Started on 23rd Aug

Residential Course :

4. Residential Pāli-Hindi Course (3 weeks + 3 weeks). Starting on 21st Sept

For more details about this courses visit link or <https://www.vridhamma.org/> Pali-Study-Programs

AUSPICIOUS DEATH

1. Shri Ramdin Ahirwar, Assistant Teacher of Bhopal (MP), passed away on 12 August 2025 at the age of 77. He started Vipassana meditation in 1999, after which he continued to contribute in Dhamma service. He was appointed assistant teacher in 2010. He had a sincere, sympathetic, and hardworking nature. He used to perform all forms of Dhamma service at the Dhammapala Center with ease and joy, which inspired and benefited a great number of people. May he be peaceful and liberated.

2. Shri M. R. Muthuswamy, T-2024 from Tamilnadu passed away peacefully on 18th August at his residence at the age of 82. He has been diligently serving courses since 2010 across Tamilnadu till his last stages of life. He was also deeply involved in translating Dhamma literature into Tamil. May he be happy, peaceful and attain Nibbana.

Additional Responsibility

- 1-2. Mr. Sajjan Kumar & Mrs. Niru Goenka, To Serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Licchavi, Muzaffarpur, Bihar
3. Shri Laxmi Prasad Mandlekar To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Bala, Jabalpur, M.P.
4. Smt. Ambpali Chaudhary, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Upvan, Barachakia, Bihar
5. Shri. Arjun Bhargava, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Suvatti, Sravasti, U.P.
6. Smt. Poonam Singh, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Kaya, Kushinagar, U.P.

New Responsibility

SAT

1. Shri Manohar Bapat, Delhi
2. Smt. Abha Mittal, Delhi
3. Shri Rohitashwa Rahul Nagpal, Shahjahnpur, Uttar Pradesh
4. Shri Vineet Sharma, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
5. Smt. Vimlesh Pandey, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
6. Smt. Poonam Singh, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

7. Miss Vibha Kamal, Haridwar, Uttarakhand
8. Smt. Sarla Kaushal, Ludhiana, Punjab
9. 10. Shri Ravinder Singh Negi, Mohali, Punjab
10. Smt. Parveen Khansa, Rohtak, Haryana
11. Shri Naresh Kumar Sharma, Rohtak, Haryana

New Appointments Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Durges Nandan, Vaishali, Bihar
2. Mrs. Sabita Dash, Odisha
- 3-4. Mr. Kim & Mrs. Natalie Johnston, Australia
5. Mr. Fei Ding, China

CCTs

1. Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Andheri (E), Mumbai
2. Mrs. Pooja Pawar, Andheri (E), Mumbai
3. Mr. Rajesh Sable, Goregaon (W), Mumbai
4. Mr. Prashant Jadhav, Ratnagiri, MS
5. Mrs. Surekha Ayare, Ratnagiri, MS
6. Mrs. Sujata Desai, Sangli, MS
7. Mrs. Jyoti Sagar, Pune, MS
8. Mr. Nitin Vasnik, Bhopal, MP
9. Mr. Prakash Goenka, Dubai, UAE
10. Mr. Sushil Chhetri, Dubai, UAE
11. Ms. Laetitia Lauvray, France

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

- 1) 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
- 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 or info@globalpagoda.org

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Koī sāre vishva kā, bhale vijetā hoyā;
Mrityukāla ke vāra se, vivasa parājita hoyā.*

Someone may conquer the whole world; However, the assault of death renders him helpless and defeated.

*Koī mare isa byadhi se, koī mare usa roga;
Koī mare bina roga hī, hoyā mrityu sanyoga.*

Some die of this disease, some die of that disease; Some die without any disease; it is but time for him to die.

*Jarā vyadhi bhava mrityu kā, chale chakra bhava bhūla;
Bin antar pragyā jage, kate na bhavabhaya śūla.*

The wheel of old age, illness, becoming and death goes on rotating; Without awakening inner wisdom, the fearful dart of becoming cannot be removed.

*Jo janamā so hī marā, chhūṭa sakā nā koya;
Mukta huā jo janama se, mrityu-mukta hai soya.*

He who is born inevitably dies, no one could escape; He who is liberated from birth, also becomes free from death..

Edited and published by R.P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri-422 403 and printed at Apollo Printing Press, 259, SICOF Ltd., 69 MIDC, Satpur, Nashik-422 007.
Subscriptions BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF (Vipassana Research Institute) Vol. 1, No. 6, 12 September 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: 12th of every month, Posted at Igatpuri-422403, Dist. Nashik (M.S.)

DATE OF PRINTING: 8 September, 2025, DATE OF PUBLICATION: 12 September, 2025

If undelivered, please return to:

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