**Dhamma talk to Old Students – Dhammavimutti, Kushinagar (U.P.)**

My Dear Vipassana meditators!

Today we have gathered at a place where a very long journey, a very long journey indeed, came to an end for one who was a giant among men. Uncountable kappas (eons) ago, this man, a Brahmin by the name of Sumedha lived as a tapaś (renunciate) during the time of a Fully Enlightened One – Sambuddha Dīpānkara.

Upon coming in contact with this Great One, an immensely powerful Dhamma vocation arose in him. He then examined what manner of worthiness he possessed. Firstly he would examine how deep the resolve of the one making the request was – whether he had a stable, unshakable volition to serve others, or whether it was merely a momentary outburst emanating from this present situation.

There are many who, upon seeing a Fully Enlightened One, develop the inspiration to become like him and help the multitudes. With this potent thought arising, Sumedha approached Dīpānkara Buddha and expressed his wish.

Sambuddha Dīpānkara then looked with his inner eye of Dhamma to see whether or not this man was truly ripe for this extraordinary undertaking. If he found that a person was not ready, he would merely smile. But if the person was worthy of such an immense venture, he would then examine what manner of worthiness he possessed. Firstly he would examine how deep the resolve of the one making the request was – whether he had a stable, unshakable volition to serve others, or whether it was merely a momentary outburst emanating from this present environ, which would quickly disappear once this situation changed. Secondly, he would examine the person’s worthiness – whether he had fulfilled pāramīs over innumerable lifetimes. And if he had, whether he had fulfilled sufficient pāramīs to achieve final liberation and become an Arahant, if the Buddha were to teach him Vipassana right there and then.

Having examined these aspects, Dīpānkara Buddha then saw Sumedha’s future; that this man was capable of getting liberated there and then, and yet was asking to become a Sambuddha, knowing fully well that in order to achieve that goal, he would have to work over uncountable lifetimes fulfilling the same pāramīs in infinitely larger volumes. Knowing that fulfilling pāramīs in such magnitude takes a very long time, Dīpānkara Buddha had to judge whether this man possessed this level of a sense of sacrifice.

He who has reached this far knows fully well that he can achieve total liberation today by the Buddha’s teachings, yet he rejects that potential Nibbāna contemplating, “What is the point of merely my own liberation? Just as this Enlightened One served so many over innumerable lifetimes as a Bodhisatta, thereby increasing his pāramīs, I too can work over many lifetimes multiplying my pāramīs, even if that means bearing immense difficulties, and finally reach that state where I too can become a Sambuddha.”

**Incomparable Service to Humanity**

This deep sense of sacrifice is manifest when one relinquishes Nibbāna which is easily within reach, while expressing total readiness to bear immense hardships in order to help many suffering beings. Buddha Dīpānkara could see that this brahmin was totally worthy. He then looked to his future to see how much time it would take for him to ripen to become a Sambuddha.

Then blessing Sumedha, he proclaimed that after so many kappas, Sumedha would be born from the womb of Queen Mahāmaya in the household of King Suddhodana in Kapilavatthu, bearing such and such name, and he would become a Sambuddha.

From that time on, this man kept taking birth, life after life, from this womb to that womb. How many lifetimes it took to turn the attention of those he came in contact with in that particular life towards Dhamma, or to kindle the flame and to raise his own levels of pāramīs is impossible to count. In due course he was born by the name of Siddhartha Gotama. Those who saw the auspicious signs on his body, proclaimed that when this child attained adulthood, if he were to remain a householder then he would become a victorious emperor, but if he were to renounce the world, then he would become a Sambuddha.

The Bodhisatta achieved the final goal of full liberation sitting under the bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya. In the intervening lifetimes he had immersed himself in the unceasing service of others; and now, having left home at the age of 29, he became Buddha after 6 years. The subsequent 45 years were again dedicated to serving others, day and night. For one period of the night he would lie down fully aware with wisdom, while the rest of the time was given to serving others. He continued serving in this way with utmost compassion until his Mahāparinibbāna in this very place.

**Four Stages of Nibbāna**

Nibbāna is that state where the senses cease to function. This state is achieved with the practice of Vipassana. The very first nibbanic state is experienced when all those defilements that lead us towards the lower levels of existence are dissolved. After experiencing this state, called Sotāpanna, the doors leading to the lower realms are forever closed. One will take birth again seven times at the most, no more, though the number may be less. Then as one progresses, one becomes a Sakadāgāmi. After experiencing this state, one will take only one more birth in the sensual world, either in the human realm or in a deva loka. Progressing further one will become an Anāgāmi – now one will not return to the sensual world, but be born in a brahmā loka –
and then moving forward, will become an Arahat, free from all 
elkas forever.

As Sāmmā Sambuddha, these four stages are achieved one 
after the other. Total liberation, or the final Nibbāna for the 
Sāmmā Sambuddha still remains and until then this state is called 
Saupādisesa-nibbāna – meaning upādihi: saṅkhāra persists 
which will carry forward the burden of this body in order for the 
Sāmmā Sambuddha to live out this life, though these saṅkhāra 
are not enough to give him another birth. When this life ends, he 
will not take birth again. It is then Anupādisesa-nibbāna – there 
is no upādihi, no birth ever. It is the state of Parinibbāna, total 
liberation. Here is that place where this Enlightened One’s 
Mahāparinibbāna took place.

How suffused with compassion he was. He was suffused 
with compassion in all preceeding lives as a Bodhisatta, and even 
now in this final life also. How else could it have been possible 
for him to serve others so continuously. The time for his 
Mahāparinibbāna was drawing close. He had made an 
announcement three months earlier while in Vesālī, that in the 
coming full moon night of the month of Vesālī, he would leave 
his body.

He walked all the way to this place, Kushinagar. On route, 
on the previous day, a householder by the name of Cunda gave 
dāna of a meal which contained mushrooms of a kind that were 
poisonous. Though the Buddha ate them himself, he prevented 
the bhikkhus from consuming them. He was now moving 
towards Parinibbāna, but compassion flowed in the heart for 
Cunda, “Others must not censure him after I am gone. They must 
not malign Cunda asking him how he could give such a meal to 
the Compassionate One.” He told Ānanda that after he was gone 
he must go to Cunda and explain to him that he had truly gained 
much merit.

The food that is offered to the Bodhisatta on the night prior 
to his becoming the Buddha is immensely meritorious. This 
erit belonged to Sujātā. The last meal too is equally 
meritorious. After moving from birth to birth through 
uncountable lifetimes, this wheel was now coming to an end. 
Cunda must not be struck by remorse. Further, he told Ānanda to 
see that others too did not speak ill of Cunda. How much 
compassion the Bodhisatta had! How much indeed!

Moving towards a twin sal tree he told Ānanda he would lie 
down there. He explained that as dawn came, the Tathāgata’s 
Parinibbāna would take place. This place happened to be near 
the kingdom of the Mallās and he realised that the Mallās would 
be distraught when they found out that the Buddha had come so 
close to their kingdom before his Mahāparinibbāna, wishing that 
they had at least had an opportunity to pay their last respects. 
Hence he advised Ānanda to go and inform them. Ānanda went 
and made an announcement that Lord Buddha’s 
Mahāparinibbāna would take place at the rise of dawn.

People began to flock to that place to pay their final 
respects. Upon seeing this, Ānanda requested them to come, pay 
their respects and then move on as there wasn’t much time. Then 
came a recluse by the name of Subhadda. He said, “I have not 
come to merely pay my respects, I want to learn the teachings 
from him. Who knows whether you will be able to teach it to me 
properly afterwards.” Ānanda replied, “This is his time of passing 
away, please do not trouble him, let him go in peace.”

But Subhadda was adamant saying he must learn Dhamma 
from the Lord. Ānanda again responded telling him that if he 
wanted to pay his respects he could do so, but otherwise let others 
come forward. The Lord listened to this exchange 
thinking, “A thirsty one has come to the river Ganges, and 
another one is stopping him saying he cannot drink water, just 
fold his hands and leave.” Then the Ganges of compassion arose 
in him and started flowing – “O Ānanda, do not stop him. He is a 
worthy one. Let me teach him Dhamma.” And he taught him. 
Boundless compassion flowed from him to serve one more even 
as it was time to pass away. This is indeed the hallmark of such a 
Rare One.

There were other events of importance that took place in 
Kushinagar. Someone once asked the Buddha, “Respected Sir, 
who will be your successor once you are gone?” The Tathāgata 
replied, “The Dhamma will. The Dhamma that I have taught you 
will be your teacher, your guru.”

He further explained that if one person is made the 
successor, then a commercial priesthood will take over. Until the 
time that a person attains the higher states of meditation, he is 
likely to get drunk on power once it comes in his hands thinking, 
“Now I am presiding over the congregation of the Buddha, sitting 
on his seat, and I deserve to be venerated in the same manner.”

This power-filled intoxication becomes the cause of the downfall 
of Dhamma. Hence there is no single person who will be the 
successor, but Dhamma alone will be the successor. Those who 
follow Dhamma will benefit themselves. If you have understood 
Dhamma well what else do you need?

Another episode that occurred in those times was at the 
time of the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. His chief disciple, Mahā 
Kassapa, was on his way to Kushinagar with his 500 disciples. It 
was going to take another seven days for them to reach there, and 
until that time the Buddha’s physical remains were to be 
preserved. Among Mahā Kassapa’s disciples there was one by 
the name of Subhaddha who was very old in age, but very 
immature in Dhamma. When he heard of the Tathāgata’s passing 
away he jumped with joy exclaiming, “O wonderful the old man 
is gone! He was so troublesome, so bothersome with his rules 
stating do this, don’t do that. Now that he is gone we are free to 
do what we want. No one can interfere.” Hearing this, Mahā 
Kassapa became concerned thinking, “Yes, certainly there are 
ripe, mature people in the saṅgha, but there are also foolish ones 
like Subhaddha. Now that the Lord has passed away, such people 
will twist his words to suit their own purposes. They will claim 
the Buddha said something that he may not have said, or not talk 
about some things that he did say, thus contriving to put in his 
mouth what they desire. They will make efforts to remove what 
is undesirable to them by saying the Buddha did not say so. Such 
people will then be the cause of the Dhamma’s downfall. What 
shall be done?” The wise old Mahā Kassapa mused and then 
concluded that all the spoken words of the Buddha must be 
gathered and compiled together.

After seven days, once Mahā Kassapa arrived, the 
cremation took place and other rituals were performed.

Three months later, at the Sattapanni cave in Raigir, the 
very first Saṅghāyana took place. Five hundred Arahat bhikkhus 
who were very close to the Buddha gathered together, narrated 
and compiled the words of the Buddha with utmost care. The 
teachings regarding Vinaya, the rules and regulations for the 
bihhkhus, was well absorbed and digested by Upāli, a senior 
teacher of the bhikkhus, and he narrated the words that had come 
as guidance from the Buddha. This was accepted by all. The rest 
of the words and teachings were well known to Ānanda, which 
he recounted and this too was accepted by everyone.

This event was a huge undertaking. In those days neither 
paper nor printing presses existed. This being such a large body 
of literature, it was not a small matter for people to memorise it 
in order to preserve it. And what’s more, preserve it while carefully 
retaining its authenticity, the pristine purity of what was said, so 
there could be no argument regarding what was genuinely said.

So they came together on one common point of agreement 
saying that these were the authentic, proven words of the Buddha 
which no one should add anything to or remove anything from.

This was the first Saṅghāyana. It kept Dhamma alive, giving 
birth to the tradition whereby the second and then the third, 
fourth and fifth Saṅghāyana’s were held. Then, 2500 years after 
the Buddha’s time, the sixth Saṅghāyana was held in Burma. At 
this time, wherever in the world the words of the Buddha, the
Tipitaka existed – and they existed only in the five countries of Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos – from these countries 2500 scholarly bhikkhus were invited to review and recite together the Buddha’s words. The opinions of all had to be one, this was important, in fact a necessary condition.

May all beings be happy!  
*Discourse for old meditators, during Dhamma-Yatra, trip to Kushinagar…*)

---------

Sādhana and Buddha Jayanti  
(*Correspondence between Goenkaji and Meditators – April 9, 1977*)

My Dear Ishwarchandra,

My good wishes to you.

I received your letter dated 30th March. I was pleased to hear that you are making full efforts to keep up the practice of Vipassana meditation, and participating in Sunday group sittings which give you peace and joy.

It is certainly true that in a householder’s life, many ups and downs pose obstructions in the process of developing in Vipassana. Though this is how it seems to appear, yet, one has to struggle against them and not get overwhelmed, as these obstructions, in reality exist, but to strengthen our sādhānā. It is not advisable to be apprehensive of a householder’s life.

There is no doubt that when a person renounces home and sheds the responsibilities of a householder he gets more time to go deep within and practice meditation; thus many difficulties which may otherwise persist as a householder are avoided.

However, in a society where Dhamma has not permeated amongst the householders, it is not easy to become a renunciate and work towards one’s true welfare. The difficulties in such situations are also numerous, so nothing wrong to work towards growing in Dhamma even as one remains a householder.

There is no magic-wand that instantly stops the generation of new saṅkhārās; the entire path is such that it takes us gradually to the dissolution of large accumulations of old saṅkhārās.

A person should remain practical in worldly affairs. If owing to some difficulty or a person’s wrong behaviour, our sense of safety and security is shaken up, it is necessary to maintain forbearance at least to some degree. Subsequently, a time may come when one may need to confront injustice and wrongful behaviour without falling prey to emotional reactivity; without generating anger even towards the perpetrator and maintaining good will towards him I trust that despite difficulties, the meditators will continue to grow in Dhamma. Your success is inevitable.

May every struggle strengthen your progress in Dhamma, may every defeat inspire you to progress step by each step with doubled enthusiasm and determination. Whenever we resolve to walk on the path of Dhamma, then the infinite energies of Dhamma are drawn to us powerfully, assisting us, helping us. This is certainly true.

It is good that the meditators want to celebrate Buddha Anniversary with much fanfare there, and if anyone wants to sit a self course, then there is no better way to celebrate it. Buddha Anniversary is to acknowledge his greatness, to pay respect and to venerate him, and this is how he is best worshipped – *Imādaya dhammānudhampatipattiya buddhaṃ pūjīmi.*

By walking on the path of Dhamma, we pay our respect to him, we pay obeisance to him, thus truly celebrating the day. All those who are participating on this occasion, to them I would like to say that, like other festivals, this occasion should not turn into a carnival, it should not remain limited to speeches and intellectual enthusiasm and determination. Whenever we resolve to walk on the path of Dhamma, then the infinite energies of Dhamma are drawn to us powerfully, assisting us, helping us. This is certainly true.

With all my Metta and Blessings,

Satyanarayana Goenka

---

Dhammic Deaths

Centre teacher of the Lucknow Vipassana Centre, Shri R. D. Tiwari died peacefully on 19th March 2017. At the ripe age of 90 years, he was fully active and carried out his own tasks while staying at the centre. He had been a freedom fighter and as a senior Superintendent of police, he was honored with the President Award. He came in contact with Vipassana after retirement never to turn back. His wife joined him and both were appointed teachers. Respected Goenkaji gave him the responsibility of the Lucknow Centre where he worked with total sincerity.

A course was to start on the day of his passing and at about 10 am, he was going through the forms of the meditators, even though he felt a little indisposed. By the time any trustee could reach him he breathed his last peacefully, sitting in his chair. The Vipassana family shines brighter with such a dedicated meditator, it pays respect to him.

Senior Assistant Teacher, Shri Govardhan Das Kela from Nagpur passed away peacefully on 16th March, 2017 at the age of 95 years. He came in contact with Vipassana in 1969 making major contributions in the initial years of its establishment; he organized the first Vipassana camp in Nagpur. In 1999, he was appointed senior assistant teacher, serving sincerely till the end. The Vipassana family wishes all the best to the departed.

---

Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Mumbai

VCRC-Mumbai is serving as the in-house Vipassana Resource Centre of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, and is managed by MCGM in collaboration with Vipassana Research Institute, at the site of Department of Psychological Medicine, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Shastri Nagar, Goregaon (W), Mumbai–400104. [Tel: 28766885 Ext. 219; Time: 12pm–1pm]

The services being offered currently are:

**[A] For Vipassana Meditators:**

1. **“Practice by Oneself”** on Working Days: 9am–1pm; 2. **“1-Hr Group Sitting”** on Second & Fourth Sundays: 8.30am–9.30am; 3. **“1-Day Course”** on First Sundays: 10.30am–5.30pm.

**[B]** “**Mini-Anapana Course for All**” on Second Sundays: 9.30am–10.30am. **[C]** “**1-Day Anapana Course for Children**” on Third Sundays: 8.30am–2.30pm; **[D]** “**Meeting of Dhamma Volunteers**” on Fourth Sundays: 9.30am–10.30am.

**Newly Appointed Senior Assistant Teacher**


**Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers**


**Newly Appointed Bhikkhu / Bhikkhuni Teachers**


**Children course teachers**


**Basic Diploma & Advanced Diploma Courses on the teachings of the Buddha, Vipassana theory and practice.**

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) and Mumbai University jointly conduct this Diploma course on theoretical and practical aspects of the Buddha’s teachings, and practical application of Vipassana in various fields. **Application form** available from 3rd July to 8th July, 2017 between 11am to 2pm at Philosophy Department, Jnaneshwar Bhavan, Mumbai University, Kalina, Santacruz (E). Mumbai - 400098. Tel 022-26527337. Duration of course is from 15th July, 2017, till March end 2018. Classes- every Saturday 2:30 to 6:30 pm. **Eligibility:** Min. 12th pass. It will be compulsory to sit a Vipassana course by the end of first term.

**For more information contact:** 1) VRI office 022-62427560 (9:30am- 5:30pm), 2) Mrs. Alka Vengurlekar - 09820583440, 3) Mrs. Archana Deshpande – 9869007040

*****

(9)
One Day Mega Courses are held in Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai every year. People at times come from far off places to participate but are constrained as there are no residential quarters for overnight stay. Hence every year, People at times come from far off places to participate but are constrained as there are no residential quarters for overnight stay. Hence every year, people are coming from far-off places to participate in the 1-day course meditation the next morning on a fresh note. Anyone wanting to participate in this noble project may contact: 1. Mr. Derek Pegado: 9921227057; or 2: Shri Vipin Mehta: 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

Residential Accommodation in Global Pagoda for Dhamma Servers and Meditators

One Day Mega Courses are held in Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai every year. People at times come from far off places to participate but are constrained as there are no residential quarters for overnight stay. Hence a 3-4 storey free residential accommodation building is being planned where servers who are staying on premises and the meditators arriving in from far may stay in rooms/dormitories which will either be on sharing or single occupancy basis. This will help meditators rest well and begin their 1-day course meditation the next morning on a fresh note. Anyone wanting to participate in this noble project may contact: 1. Mr. Derek Pegado: 9921227057; or 2: Shri Vipin Mehta: 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date: 16-4, 21-5, 18-6, 24-3, 29-4, 4-5, 11-5, 18-5, 25-5, 1-6, 8-6, 15-6, 22-6, 29-6, 6-7, 13-7, 20-7, 27-7, 3-8, 10-8, 17-8, 24-8, 31-8, 7-9, 14-9, 21-9, 28-9, 5-10, 12-10, 19-10, 2-11, 9-11, 16-11, 23-11, 30-11, 7-12, 14-12, 21-12, 28-12, 4-1-2017, 11-1, 18-1, 25-1, 1-2, 8-2, 15-2, 22-2, 29-2, 6-3, 13-3, 20-3, 27-3, 3-4, 10-4, 17-4, 24-4, 1-5, 8-5, 15-5, 22-5, 29-5, 5-6, 12-6, 19-6, 26-6, 3-7, 10-7, 17-7, 24-7, 31-7, 7-8, 14-8, 21-8, 28-8, 4-9, 11-9, 18-9, 25-9, 2-10, 9-10, 16-10, 23-10, 30-10, 6-11, 13-11, 20-11, 27-11, 4-12

**Date:**
- First Sunday: Ulhasnagar 10-16 2 days before Course
- First Sunday: Wadala 10-16 2 days before Course
- First Sunday: Khar 10-16 2 days before Course
- Second Sunday: Dombivili 10-16 2 days before Course
- Second Sunday: Andheri 10-16 2 days before Course
- Third Sunday: Ghatkopar 10-16 2 days before Course
- Fourth Sunday: Airoli 10-16 2 days before Course
- Fourth Sunday: Kalyan 10-16 2 days before Course

**Course Timing:** 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration Timing:** 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location. **Course Venues:** Gorai: Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Gorai (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. Ulhasnagar: A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, Wadala: B’MC School – Sewri Wadala Estate Road No: 7A Behind Lijaj Papad Building Contact: Mobile: 90822-18186, 98750-50336, Khar: Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Boudha Smashan Bhumii, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, Dombivili: Tilak School, Tilak Nagar, Dombivili, Mob. 9029423540. Andheri: Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Caesar Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. Ghatkopar: SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. Airoli: Dnyandeeschool, sector 2, Airoli, Mobile: 9969267720, 9969950901. Kalyan: Krishnraoo Dhipu KDM school No. 4, Ram baug lane no 5, Near old Vani Vidyalyay. Mob. 9987425633. Please call two days in advance for registration. NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please *Inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.

**Dhamma Dohas**

Yadi sambuddha na khojate, siddha dharma kā pañcha,
To mithyā jañjāla meṁ, hotā ājana anija.

Had the Fully Enlightened One not sought the path of Pure Dhamma, Then the life would have ended in futile, useless worldly tasks.

Yāda karūµa jaba Buddha kī, karuµa anita amita apiña,
Tana-mana pulakita ha uţhe, cita chāye ībhāra.

Whenever I remember the infinite compassion of the Buddha, Then every pore of my being brims over & the heart is filled with gratitude.

Yahi Buddha ki vandanā, vinaya namana ībhāra,
Ittē bhūda anityā kā, hovēm dūra vikāra.

This is the way to pay obeisance to the Buddha, the hands folded in gratitude & humility; With the rising awareness of Anicca the defilements are eradicated, Citta nipāta nirmala rahe, rahāṁ pāpa se dūra,
Yahi Buddha ki vandanā, rahe dharma bhārāpāra.

May the mind remain ever pure, may I stay away from defilements, May I be filled with Dhamma, this is the way to pay respect to the Buddha.

**SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 50/- (US $10 OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500/- (US $100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF Vipassana Research Institute**

Editor and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri-422 403 and printed at Apollo Printing Press, G-259, SICOF Ltd., 69 MIDD, Satpur, Nashik-422 007 on 11 April, 2017

**Printed Matter**

If undelivered, please return to:
Vipassana Research Institute
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India
Tel: (02553) 244076, 244086, 243712, 243238 Fax: (91) (02553) 244176
Email: vri_admin@dhamma.net.in
Website: www.vridhamma.org