



Vipassana Prison Newsletter

Volume V – March 2014

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Manopubbangama dhamma,
manosetha manomaya.*

*Manasa ce padutthena,
bhasati va karoti va.*

*Tato nam dukkhamaveti,
cakkamva vahato padam.*

*All the phenomena of
existence have mind as their
precursor, mind as their
supreme leader, and of mind
are they made.*

*If with an impure mind one
speaks or acts, suffering
follows him in the same way
as the wheel follows the foot
of the drawer (of the chariot).*

~ Dhammapada I, (1)

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A Message From Goenkaji



*Dear Travelers on the Path of Dhamma,
Be happy!*

*Keep the torch of Dhamma alight! Let
it shine brightly in your daily life.
Always remember, Dhamma is not an
escape. It is an art of living: living in
peace and harmony with oneself and
also with all others. Hence, try to live
a Dhamma life.*

*Don't miss your daily sittings each
morning and evening.*

*Whenever possible, attend weekly joint sittings with other Vipassana
meditators.*

*Do a 10-day course as an annual retreat. This is essential to keep you
going strong.*

With all confidence, face the spikes around you bravely and smilingly.

Renounce hatred and aversion, ill will and animosity.

*Generate love and compassion, especially for those who do not
understand Dhamma and are living an unhappy life.*

*May your Dhamma behavior show them the path of peace and
harmony. May the glow of Dhamma on your faces attract more and
more suffering people to this path of real happiness.*

May all beings be happy, peaceful, liberated.

With all my metta,

S.N. Goenka

The Bunch of Keys

The following is a story told by Goenkaji in the closing discourse of a 10-day course. It has been lightly edited for publication.

There is a story back in our country. In the last 10 days you have been hearing many stories. Perhaps your teacher is addicted to telling stories, and you are also getting addicted to listening to them. So before we part, one more story.

An old man in our country, a very rich man, became a widower. The old lady passed away. And in our country and perhaps here also, the housewife is the owner of everything—money, jewelry, property, everything. She keeps the bunch of keys. Now the old lady had gone. And it was a joint family. He had four sons and four daughters-in-law. He couldn't give the bunch of keys to everyone; he had to choose one. So he called them and said, "I will examine you. This bunch of keys will be given to the one who gets the highest mark."

What would he do to examine them? He gave five grains of corn to each daughter-in-law and said, "I will come after four years. You have to preserve these five grains. If you cannot take care of five grains, how can you take care of all the money, the jewelry, the granary, etc.? This is your examination." And the old man went away.

The eldest daughter-in-law thought, "The old man has gone crazy! For four years, why should I worry about those valueless five grains? I'd better throw them away. When he comes back, I'll take another five grains from the granary and give them to him saying, 'Take your five grains.'" She threw the grains away.

The second one thought, "Yes, it is not good to worry about these five grains for four years. But who knows, these very five grains may have some wonderful, magical,

miraculous powers. And after four years he will say, 'All right, eat it!' And when I eat it, I will get this or that supernatural power. I should not throw the grains away. I'd better eat them now. When he comes back, I'll give him another five grains." And she ate the grains up.

The third one was very eager to get the bunch of keys. She kept those five grains in her room where she had the statues of her deities. And every day when she went to inspect the statues, she inspected the five grains also. She took care of the five grains all the four years.

The fourth daughter-in-law took the five grains, cleared the land behind the house and planted them. When the time ripened, five plants grew with a hundred grains each. Next season, all those five hundred grains were planted. And the next season, all the grains were planted. In four years, there were tons of grains.

When the old man came back, each daughter-in-law had her own story. When he questioned the fourth one, she said, "They have increased, sir. The storerooms are full. Bring some laborers to take the grains." The old man was very happy. This daughter had not only preserved the five grains; she had multiplied them.

This old man has also given you five grains of Dhamma. Not only preserve but multiply them. And I won't take the bunch of keys away with me; it remains with you. As you keep on multiplying Dhamma, you are able to open the gateway of the kingdom of heaven within, and enjoy. You can open the gateway of the brāhmanic plane within, and enjoy. The gateway of nibbānic peace within, and enjoy.

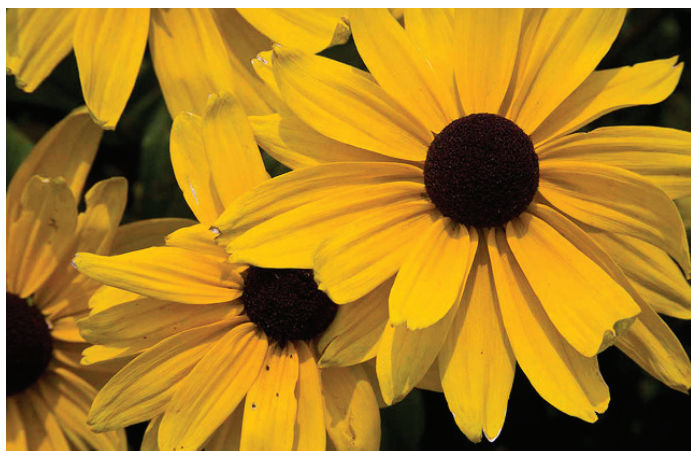
Keep growing in Dhamma, keep growing in Dhamma. Not to oblige anybody else—for your own good, for your own benefit. And also for the good and benefit of so many others, so many others.

The Wheel of Dhamma Keeps Turning

All over the world hundreds of assistant teachers conduct approximately 2,500 Vipassana courses every year. These courses are attended by some 150,000 students at more than 150 permanent centers, temporary facilities, and prisons.

S.N. Goenka, who passed away in September 2013, freely gave the gift of Dhamma—and laid the foundation for the teaching to continue without him. Consequently new and old students continue to learn and practice Vipassana meditation, exactly as he taught. In the early days of his teaching in India, and for the next two decades, Goenkaji taught alone. Vipassana spread, mostly by word of mouth. Courses became bigger, from just a handful of friends and family on the first course, to hundreds of students on almost every course. Centers sprang up in India, North America, Europe, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and beyond.

As more and more centers opened, courses grew and so did the numbers of students attending them. Goenkaji did everything live in those days—all the chanting, the daily instructions, and the evening talks. Eventually there were so many students and requests for courses that Goenkaji could not personally teach them all.



To solve this problem, starting in 1981 Goenkaji began appointing and training assistant teachers to conduct courses, using recordings of his teachings. Within months courses led by assistant teachers were being offered around the world.

As time went on Goenkaji appointed some of the most experienced assistant teachers to be full Teachers. Each was given specific responsibilities; all were charged with carrying on the teaching of Vipassana. These Teachers will continue working together with other appointed teachers throughout the world to maintain and distribute the Dhamma in its pure form.

Going forward, Vipassana courses will continue to be offered exactly as they have been, and the Wheel of Dhamma will keep turning for the good and happiness of many. Goenkaji set an inspiring example with his compassion, humility and equanimity. He often talked about the sweetness of the Dhamma. His own sweetness will long remain, as will the sound of his voice as he left the hall chanting, “May all be happy... be happy... be happy.”

Questions and Answers from Goenkaji

Question: How can Vipassana be used at the time of death?

Goenkaji: At the time of death—death of other people—then you just sit and give metta. And when your own death comes, observe it, at the level of sensations. Everyone has to observe one’s death: coming, coming, coming, going, going, going, gone! Be happy!

Question: I find that I am very egoistic and quick to belittle other people. What is the best way to come out of this problem?

Goenkaji: Come out of it by meditating. If the ego is strong, one will try to belittle others, to lower their importance and increase one’s own. But meditation naturally dissolves the ego. When it dissolves, you can no longer do anything to hurt another. Meditate and the problem will automatically be solved.

Question: Can we feel and enjoy things fully and still be equanimous?

Goenkaji: Certainly. Life is to enjoy wholesome things. But not with an attachment to anything. You remain equanimous and enjoy, so that when you miss it you smile: “I knew it was going away. It has gone away. So what?” Then only are you really enjoying life. Otherwise, you get attached, and if you miss it, you roll in misery. So no misery. In every situation be happy.

Question: Surely it is unnatural never to react?

Goenkaji: It seems so if you have experienced only the wrong habit-pattern of an impure mind. But it is natural for a pure mind to remain fully equanimous. An equanimous, pure mind is full of love, compassion, healthy detachment, goodwill, joy. Equanimity is purity.

Question: What do you mean by ‘being equanimous’?

Goenkaji: When you do not react, you are equanimous.

Question: How can we be involved in life unless we react?

Goenkaji: Instead of reacting you learn to act, to act with a balanced mind. Vipassana meditators do not become inactive, like vegetables. They learn how to act positively. If you can change your life pattern from reaction to action, then you have attained something very valuable. And you can change it by practicing Vipassana.



Group Sitzings and Upcoming Courses

Donaldson Course Schedule 2013

April 25 – May 5
(10-day Course)

September 4 – 8
(3-day Old Student Course)

October 23 – November 3
(10-day Course)

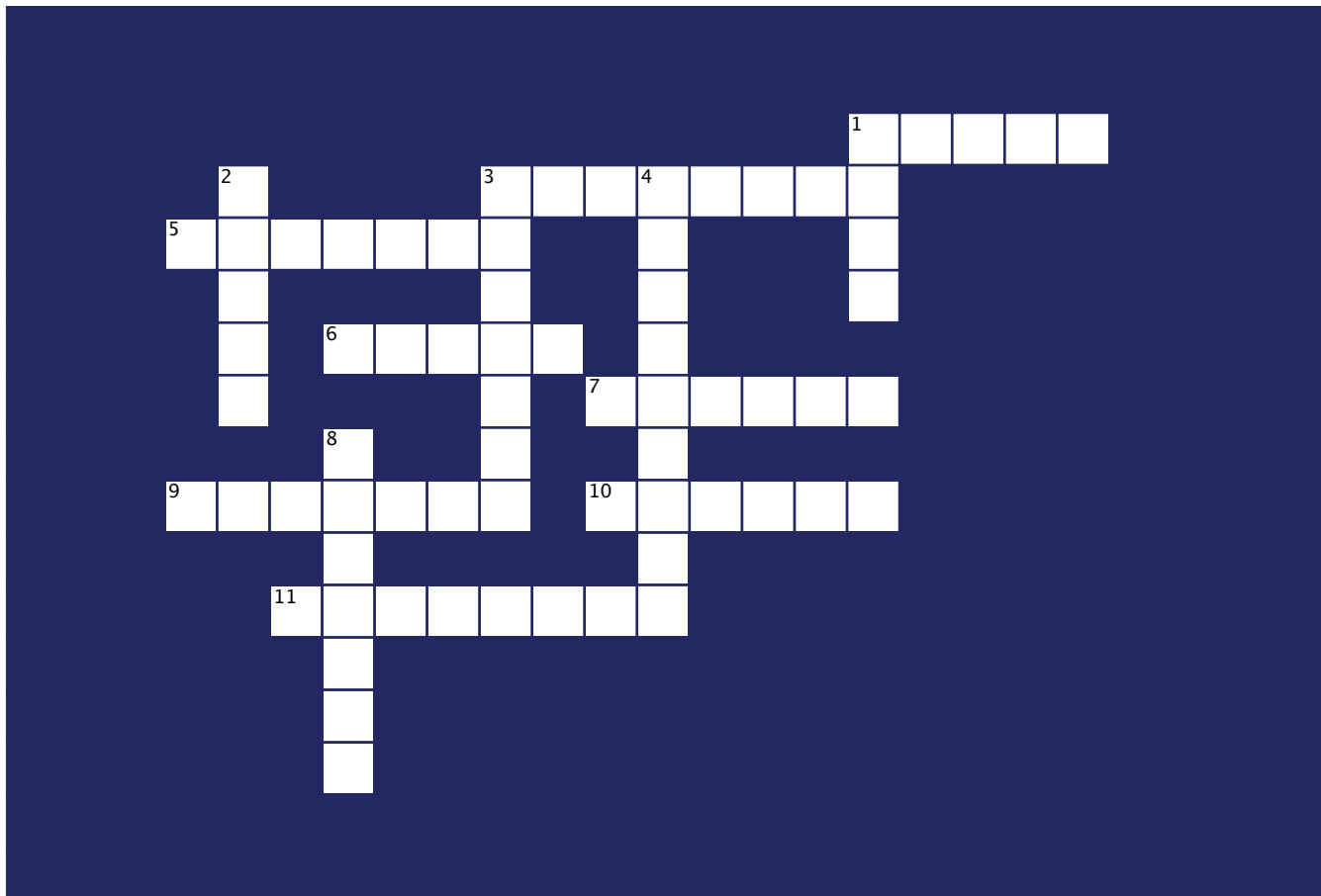
Donaldson Weekly Group Sitzings

Mondays & Wednesdays
12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

The Five Hindrances and The Five Friends

"The old habits of generating new reactions must be eliminated, and it can only be done gradually, by repeated practice, by repeated work. Of course, there are hindrances, obstacles on the way: five strong enemies which try to overpower you and stop your progress.

Just as there are five enemies, five hindrances which block your progress on the path, there are also five friends, five wholesome faculties of mind, which help and support you. If you keep these friends strong and pure, no enemy can overpower you." - S.N. Goenka



craving aversion sloth agitation doubt nīvaraṇa indriya saddhā viriya sati samadhi paññā nibbana

Across

1. Hindrance: sleepiness; drowsiness
3. Pali word for "The Five Enemies" or hindrances to concentration
5. Friend: concentration; the sustained awareness of reality from moment to moment
6. Hindrance: the opposite of "faith"
7. Friend: faith, devotion, confidence
9. Pali word for "The Five Friends" or mental factors
10. Friend: effort
11. Hindrance: blind reaction to what's unpleasant

Down

1. Friend: awareness; which is always of the reality in the present moment
2. Friend: wisdom, developed at the experiential level
3. The final goal
4. Hindrance: makes you "run here and there; doing anything except meditation"
8. Hindrance: wanting or desiring something with an unbalanced mind