

Midwest Vipassana Newsletter

Dhamma Pakāsa: Illinois Vipassana Association
Vipassana Meditation As Taught By S. N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

Aug. 2010 Volume 9

The Meaning of Happiness by S. N. Goenka

(The following is a translation of an article by Goenkaji in the December 2005 issue of the Vipassana Patrikā. It has been adapted for the Newsletter.)

The Buddha said: “I see four types of people in this world. The first type is running from darkness towards darkness. The second is running from brightness towards darkness. The third is running from darkness towards brightness. And the fourth is running from brightness towards brightness.”

The Buddha did not speak in riddles. His teaching is clear and well-explained. Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo. Whenever he said something that people might not understand properly, he explained it immediately. What is darkness? What is brightness? How does one keep on running from one to the other?

1. From darkness to darkness:

All around there is darkness, a life of darkness, a life of misery. One is suffering in different ways—physically, mentally, materially and because of problems in the family or society. There is no happiness at all. And yet, there is no trace of wisdom within. So every moment, this person is generating nothing but anger, hatred and ill will: “I am suffering because of this person, because of this incident, because of this cause.” One generates aversion towards that person or cause. This misery is the result of past karmas of aversion, and now, one is planting more seeds of aversion. There is already so much darkness in one’s life and one is planting more seeds of darkness. These seeds of anger, hatred, ill will bring nothing but misery in the future. So the future will also be full of misery. The present is misery, the future is misery. The present is darkness, the future is darkness. So such a person is running from darkness to darkness.

2. From brightness towards darkness:

There is brightness all around in one’s life. There is happiness today because of material wealth, good health and prestige in society. But there is no wisdom within. So one becomes arrogant because of all this wealth, power and status and feels contempt for others. “These poor people are all useless. I am so smart; I have got so much money, position, power, status.” Because of some good karmas of the past, there is brightness all around. Sooner or later, this will come to an end. But every moment, one is planting seeds of egotism, seeds of aversion, seeds of misery, seeds of darkness. These seeds of negativity will result in darkness in the future, misery in the future. Thus this person is running from brightness towards darkness.

3. From darkness towards brightness:

The third type of person is in exactly the same position as the one in the first group. There is hardship all around, darkness all around in the present but there is wisdom inside. One keeps on smiling. “Oh, this hardship has come because of some past bad karmas of mine. Somebody seems to be the apparent cause of my misery. Certainly, this person is not the real cause of my misery. This person has just become a vehicle. May he or she not have to suffer because of these misdeeds! This hardship was bound to come through this person or through some other person because of my own past karmas. Now I will not plant new seeds of misery.” So one generates only love and compassion towards such people. One is planting seeds of love, of compassion. Now there is darkness, but the future is full of brightness. Sooner or later this darkness will go and then there will be only brightness. One is planting seeds of brightness, which will bring brightness in the future, happiness in the future.

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4. From brightness towards brightness:

At present, one's life is filled with brightness, filled with happiness. One enjoys the happiness of material wealth, all worldly comforts, and prestige in society. But there is wisdom and one keeps on understanding: "All this success is because of some good kammās of the past. And whatever good kamma I might have done, they are not eternal, their fruit is not eternal, sooner or later it will come to an end. So, I must make best use of all this money, position, power, status that I have now for the good of others. As a householder, it is my duty to use my wealth for the maintenance of my family and those who depend on me. Whatever remains, I must use for the good of others, for the benefit of others. May more and more people get pure Dhamma! May more and more people develop wisdom! May more and more people be liberated from their suffering!" So one generates love, compassion, and goodwill all the time. All actions—vocal, physical, and mental—are for the good of others. One plants seeds of brightness. From happiness one is running towards happiness; from brightness, one is running towards brightness.

We should not be like the people in the first or the second group. We must be like the people in the third or the fourth group. Whether third or fourth, this is not in our control. Sometimes, life may be full of darkness, full of suffering because of the past kammās. At other times, life may be full of brightness because of the past kammās. There is happiness or unhappiness in life because of the results of past good and bad kammās. Irrespective of whether there is happiness or sorrow, brightness or darkness, we will develop brightness within. We will not make any new saṅkhāras that will produce suffering in the future, darkness in the future. This is what we learn from Vipassana.

The Buddha said:

Attā hi attano nātho, attā hi attano gati.

One is one's own master;

One is the master of one's own future.

The present is nothing but the child of the past. Whatever you have done in the past is done. But you are the master of the present. Try not to generate a single saṅkhāra that will bring misery for you. The future is the child of the present. Be master of the present. Let your present be full of Dhamma. Then, the future will automatically be full of happiness. There will be no darkness in the future.

Develop this mastery of the present moment. This is Vipassana. Understand the technique properly and get established in the technique. You have to be aware of the sensations and be equanimous to the sensation. Leave the rest to Dhamma. The results are bound to be good. Keep growing in Dhamma, keep growing in Dhamma. Dhamma is so great, so wonderful.

May you all get the best fruits of Dhamma! May you all enjoy real happiness, real peace, real harmony!

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ—May all beings be happy!



Dana: For the Benefit of Many

Each student who attends a Vipassana course is given this gift by a previous student. There is no charge for either the teaching, or for room and board. All Vipassana courses worldwide are run on a strictly voluntary donation basis. At the end of any course, if you have benefited from the experience, you are welcome to donate for the coming course, according to your volition and your means.

As an old student, you are welcome to make a tax deductible donation at any time. These donations go directly to finance the running of courses. To learn more about this and how you might participate go to

<http://www.pakasa.dhamma.org/os/dana.shtml>

We are also in great need of Dhamma servers to make courses possible. Please look to the course schedule to apply to serve a course.

They Came to See. *Our 2010 Open House*

The sun was out and the early summer heat was upon us; but it was a wonderful day to be at the center for our annual Open House. Servers gathered together on Saturday to prepare and ready the grounds for the arrival of visitors. Rooms were cleaned, food was prepared, and flowers were planted in anticipation. Beginning at noon there was a steady stream of people coming to see what Dhamma Pakāsa was all about. They were greeted at the gate and welcomed with food and refreshments in the dining hall. After settling in, groups were taken on a brief tour of the center, ending in the Dhamma Hall for a short video and Q&A with the ATs.

Approximately 80 people from all over the Midwest took part in this wonderful event. Some were already signed up for courses and others were just curious, but all looked happy to have come.

Thanks to all who served and made this Open House a success!

I knew nothing of the meditation technique; I only knew that my visit had shown me some peace I had not experienced before.

After my experience with the 2009 open house, I felt that it was imperative for me to serve at the 2010 open house.

Seeing Myself

In January of 2009, I had been sitting regularly twice a day for nearly a year, but I was making no progress with meditation. I felt that I needed serious instruction and was looking into different programs. In the Chicago Tribune Magazine, I read an article that referenced Vipassana meditation. Interested, I went to the website. I was impressed by what I read and delighted that there were ten day courses. This indeed seemed to be the serious meditation program I was looking for. Then, I followed the link to the Code of Discipline and schedule. I am no stranger to self-discipline; but this was intimidating. Perhaps this was a little too serious. My biggest fear was sitting for the long hours during the ten days, making no progress, and being in physical pain because of problems with my back. I noticed that there was an open house some months away and decided to attend. I visited the website often and reread the Code of Discipline before the Open House arrived. By May, I had sadly come to the conclusion that the course was too much for me. I wanted very much to be someone who could do this; but I really didn't think that I was that person. None the less, when the day of the open house arrived, I could not come up with an excuse not to go, and I drove the two hours to visit Dhamma Pakāsa.

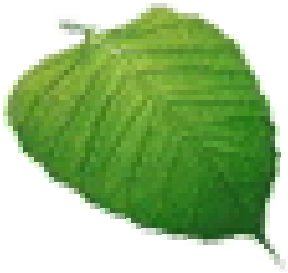
There were a few other visitors at the time of my arrival, so we snacked before heading out on a tour. The food was wonderful and I felt I would have no problem eating like that for ten days. We walked up the path and into the dormitory. It was clean and orderly. I found that I would have my own room, only having to share a bathroom. College wasn't that cushy! In the meditation hall we watched a DVD on the prison program and had a Q&A with an assistant teacher. I learned that some people did sit in chairs to meditate and felt that I could manage sitting long hours with that possibility. I found Dhamma Pakāsa to be a very pleasant place. I could easily stay there for ten days without being physically miserable. I drove home pleased. I signed up for (and completed) the September 2, 2009, course.

After my experience with the 2009 Open House, I felt that it was imperative for me to serve at the 2010 open house. But again, I had my fears. Although I do possess valuable and marketable skills, cooking and gardening are nowhere on the list. Was I actually going to be helpful, or would I be more of a clumsy annoyance to a group of busy, experienced people? Happily, I found that anyone can pull weeds and no special skills are needed to run the dishwasher. So, I came. I sat. I pulled some weeds. I washed the dishes. Oh yes, and I walked a dog for some visitors while they enjoyed the Open House activities. Working with the 2010 Open House was an important step and now I have an annual date with the Dhamma Pakāsa Open House.

Udakañhi nayanti nettikā,
 usukārā namayanti tejanam.
 Dāruṃ namayanti tacchakā,
 attānaṃ damayanti subbatā.

Irrigators conduct water wherever they wish, fletchers shape the shafts;
 carpenters work the wood, and wise men discipline themselves.

Dhammapada, X, (145)



Course Schedule for the rest of 2010

August 25	—	September 5	10-day course
September 8	—	September 12	3-day course <i>for old students</i>
September 13	—	September 21	Work Period
September 22	—	October 3	10-day Spanish/English course
October 6	—	October 17	10-day course
October 20	—	October 31	10-day course
November 1	—	November 9	Work Period Coordinator needed
November 24	—	December 5	10-day course
December 8	—	December 19	10-day course
December 22	—	January 2, 2011	10-day course



Work Period Committee — Come and Help the Center

A Work Period Committee has now been formed to organize these important work weeks for Dhamma Pakāsa. This group will collect and organize the list of tasks to be done and help prepare the volunteer coordinator and other servers. If you have organizational skills and could help this group, a few more people are still needed to assist on this committee. Your help can be given either locally or remotely. Upcoming work periods in 2010 are in September and November.

Work Period Coordinators: For a work period to be considered 'official' and posted as such on the website, the Trust has concluded that a coordinator is needed who can be on site to oversee the volunteers and tasks. This position is crucial to insure that things run smoothly for all the other volunteers who come to offer their services. Ideally a coordinator is someone familiar with Dhamma Pakāsa and would be present throughout the entire work period. However, if you would be interested in coordinating, but cannot be available to give service for a whole work period, even a few days or part of the week would be helpful. Please consider being a coordinator if you are able. Training for this position is available.

Contact us with your interest:

If you are interested in joining the Work Period Committee, or serving as a coordinator, or being a volunteer for any coming work period, please contact:
 workperiod-committee-owner@
 pakasa.dhamma.org.

*Work period servers meditate
 3 hours daily, eat 3 meals,
 meet and work with other
 students and ATs, and gain
 merits at the same time.*

Thumbs-up for Dhamma service.



A thumbs-up while clearing the rain gutters of the dining hall.

It was a beautiful experience working with meditators who gave the time they could along with amazing effort and big smiles. We deep cleaned things that I didn't even know existed, cleared dead trees, improved paths, weeded, raked, weeded, weeded, and raked again. And, we met some very fine people.

Doing Dhamma service gives one a tangible connection to the center and a deeply fulfilling way to express gratitude to the Dhamma one has learned there, while offering essential support to future students who will come and gain so much from their experience at Dhamma Pakāsa.

Service at Dhamma Pakāsa

The giving of Dhamma Service, whether for a 10 day course, or helping at the Center before and after a course, or other service projects for Dhamma Pakāsa, is one of the most valuable experiences a student of Vipassana can have. Not only is it rewarding to know that you have helped others to taste the Nectar of Dhamma, but it also is a wonderful source of growth and strength for one's own meditation practice.

Course Service

Most courses at Dhamma Pakāsa are now waitlisted with students eager to learn Dhamma. In order to give these students the best experience possible, it is necessary to have a full group of servers on each course. Optimally, we would like to have 6 full-time servers per course and rarely do we see this happen. Any amount of service you may be able to give in this way would be helpful, so if you could be available and are interested in serving on a 10-day course, either full-time or part-time, please visit www.pakasa.dhamma.org to register.

Between course service

Typically, Sunday through Wednesday is a period of time between courses when servers are needed at Dhamma Pakāsa. Important preparations are done which keep the courses running smoothly. Much of the work done during this time is to ready the center inside and out for the next group of students who will be coming. If you can come to the Center during these days and are interested in giving service, please check www.pakasa.dhamma.org for registration, or contact the management at 815-489-0420 for more details on how you can help.



On-site Service Group:

Dhamma Pakāsa is always changing...anicca of course! As the center grows and courses are wait-listed, the need for a regular server group has become apparent. Old Students who can come to the Center at the end of a course or between courses to help with kitchen, housekeeping, and maintenance tasks are very welcome. If you can commit to serving perhaps one weekend a month, or even a day or two between courses, that would be a great help. If you can dedicate a certain amount of time to a regular task - that would make all the difference in helping to prepare the Center for the next course. Joining this new 'on-site group' of regular servers is a great way for you to get involved with Dhamma Pakāsa, to develop your own practice, and to meet other meditators. If you have the interest and the time to serve in this way, please contact Kate at manager@pakasa.dhamma.org or call 815-489-0420 for details..

Specific Service Opportunities at Dhamma Pakāsa:



Dhamma Service Committee

Looking for an additional member who can help cover ongoing course needs on regular rotations through out the year. The role involves finding servers for courses by e-mailing and calling old students who have indicated an interest in serving. Time commitments vary from one to ten hours a course depending on server availability.

Metta Day Table Coverage (Days 10 and 11) The DS Committee is also responsible for finding old students who are willing and able to talk with students about giving service at the Center and its benefits. Informing them about the different committees, and all the various ways they can be of help to Dhamma Pakāsa, both on site and remotely.

For more information on filling either of these positions, please contact the DS Committee at dhamma-service-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Finance Committee

Dana Table Coverage
(Day 10 and 11)

The Dana Table duty is interacting with the students by collecting and processing donations to the Center. This service requires specialized training by the finance committee and certain old-student requirements apply. If you would be willing to be trained for service in this capacity, please contact management at manager@pakasa.dhamma.org 815-489-0420 or the finance committee at finance-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Center Photographer

As we work to improve our newsletter and document the growth of our great center, it would be nice to find an old student with skills in photography. Open houses, work periods, and seasonal scenery are great photo ops and a fun way to give service to the Dhamma Pakāsa.

If you have skills in photography and are available to come to the center periodically for this purpose, please contact the outreach committee at outreach-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org for more details.

About the Vipassana Trust

The trustees form the executive apparatus of a Vipassana organization. They fulfill the legal requirements of the state and work according to the guidelines set down by Principal Teacher, S.N. Goenka. The Trust is a way of involving, training and giving responsibility to more and more Dhamma workers in various activities of a center or area.

Serving on a trust and temporarily taking responsibility for some aspect of the operation of a particular Dhamma center or an area where courses are held, is one way students of Goenkaji can develop the quality of serving others.

Each trustee should understand that the whole purpose of their service is to progress on the path of Dhamma, to earn merits by selfless service.

Next Trust Meetings at Dhamma Pakāsa
September 19th
November 7th

Trust Meetings: All Old Students are Welcome!

As of January 2010, Dhamma Pakāsa Trust will be reducing their total yearly meetings from 12 to 8, scheduling some of them over a weekend instead of just on a Sunday. If you have an interest in learning more about the business and maintenance of the center, as old students you are always welcome to sit in on any trust meeting. Trust meeting days and weekends are a wonderful opportunity for you to strengthen your practice by meditating with others at the Center, socializing, and giving Dhamma service in a more relaxed atmosphere outside of a course schedule. Attending these meetings is a great way to become more involved with your center, get to know other meditators, and learn about the workings of the committees.

Be a Friend of the Trust

To keep informed and in touch with the ongoing workings of the Center and the Trust, all Old Students are welcome and encouraged to join the 'IVA Friends ' listserv. You can do so by sending a blank email to friends-subscribe@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Regional News and Outreach

Other Regional Vipassana Trusts

Michigan Vipassana Association - The Michigan Vipassana Association has regained access to the Emrich Center in Brighton, Michigan for non-center courses May - November. Enrollment was waitlisted for the recently completed August course. Please see the Michigan Vipassana Association website (<http://www.mi.us.dhamma.org/index.shtml>) for dates for coming courses, updates and registration.

Minnesota Vipassana Association - The next course hosted by the Minnesota Vipassana Association is scheduled for November 25 - December 6. For further information and registration contact registration@mn.us.dhamma.org.

Regional News and Events

Great Property for Sale near Dhamma Pakasa!!

At the moment there is a nice piece of property for sale about a mile away from the center. It would be a great investment for any old student who may want to contribute to the center by becoming a long term server or providing housing for long term servers, or to just be near the center. Along with the 4-bedroom home, the property also has a huge barn above which is the beginnings of an apartment and other out-buildings that can be used for storage or outdoor activities.



Beautiful setting near Four Lakes Forest Preserve. Completely updated home with wooden beam ceilings. Vaulted ceiling and Avalon wood-burning stove in kitchen. First floor laundry room. Nice location for horses or small farm animals. Fenced hayfield/pasture. Small chicken coop. 34' x 58' Heated shop with 2 bedroom apartment roughed in above.

As Dhamma Pakasa grows, one of our bigger issues is the lack of ample accommodation for long-term servers. The Center itself is not able to buy this property for reasons of gender separation and oversight, but other centers have a similar set-up where old student properties nearby the center grounds are used for long-term server quarters.

If you have interest in relocating near the center, please check <http://rockfordfsbo.com/index2.htm> (ad # 2845) for more information.

Please Read and Respond

We are thinking about changes to the way we deliver our newsletter and would like to know what the current readership is like. Please take a moment to send us a message at outreach-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org and let us know. Please put "I read it" in the subject line to help us organize the response. Thank you.

In-kind Dana: Needed Items

Our center is in need of some particular items and would welcome dana in the form of these:

Industrial-size pots and pans
Steam carpet cleaner and carpet shampooer
Pressure-washer to wash building exteriors

Outreach Revisited

Dhamma Pakasa is growing and serving more students with ten-day courses that are regularly wait-listed. All of the courses are in real need of more Dhamma servers. We need old students to help support the center. Those of us who serve on committees have collectively turned our focus to this need. The outreach committee is doing its part by adding a new focus to our work. We will help old students build community as they establish official group sittings and organize local groups who would like to come out and serve at Dhamma Pakasa. We will help old students be sure that group sittings meet formal requirements and to stay connected with the center. People are coming to learn Vipassana; we old students need to be here to volunteer and make these courses possible.

The Outreach committee is, of course, still here to help any old student who has a volition to share awareness of Vipassana with others. We do not canvas for members; we do not solicit. We are simply here to support those who wish to learn Vipassana and, on the outreach committee, we are here to support old students who find interest in their own communities. We can give you materials and offer a little guidance. When those communities would like to here more, we can help you set up movie screenings and possibly arrange a public speaker to assist you. Keep in mind, any presentation or writing that refers people to our center has to use approved materials and wording. We are happy to help you with that.

Other Outreach tasks include organizing and planning the annual open house, writing and formatting this newsletter, helping to keep the website up to date, and printing the yearly schedule.

Contact us at: outreach-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Organizing Dhamma Events or Outreach In Your Area

Please contact the outreach committee at outreach-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org or any of the following local volunteers:

Ann Arbor, MI – Vijaya Nagesh vijaya11@hotmail.com

Chicago, IL - Austin Pick transverbal@gmail.com

Evanston, IL (Northwestern University) - Zarina Parpia zina.parpia@hotmail.com

GreenBay, WI – Jessica Steffens gypsywonder@gmail.com

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN – Michelle Vidovic michellevido-vic@hotmail.com

Rockford, IL – Jennie Williford spiritofb@sbcglobal.net

Milwaukee, WI-Jamey Povlich jameycst@gmail.com

Local Group Sittings

Group sittings of Vipassana Meditation are found in cities all across the country. These group sittings are a great way to strengthen your practice and create community with other Vipassana meditators in your area. For updated group sitting information, please visit http://www.pakasa.dhamma.org/os_portal.htm

We encourage multiple group sitting sites where a variety of times and options might suit local meditators. If you would like to organize a group sitting in your area, there are guidelines to maintain continuity of practice and an application for becoming an official group sitting site. Please contact the outreach committee at outreach-committee-owner@pakasa.dhamma.org for more information or call 815-489-0420 for details.

Monthly One Day Courses in Chicago

One Day Vipassana Courses are happening on a regular basis in Downtown Chicago -- at 141 W. Jackson Blvd, in the Chicago Board of Trade Building. All old students who have completed at least one ten-day course with S.N. Goenka or his assistant teachers are welcome to attend. 1-Day Courses are conducted by an assistant teacher, who is available for you during the noon interview time if you have any questions about your practice. Participating in a one day course is a great way to strengthen your daily practice, and a wonderful opportunity to sit with others. Please note that registration is required for the 1-Day Courses. Please visit the Old Student pages at the Dhamma Pakasa website (http://www.pakasa.dhamma.org/os_portal.htm) or email onedaysitschicago@gmail.com for more information and registration. 1-Day Course dates for 2010 are: August 22 and October 17.

Children’s and Teen’s Courses

There have been five Children/Teen’s Anapana courses in our region: two Teen and one Children’s Course at Dhamma Pakasa, one Children’s Course in Michigan, and one Children’s Course in Minnesota. These courses are available for children ages 8-17. Students and servers alike have worked diligently and enjoyed their courses. How wonderful it is to see all of these children getting a start on the path of Dhamma at such a young age!

Two Teen courses were held at Dhamma Pakasa over the Memorial Day weekend, with a total of 9 students, 7 girls and 2 boys. Teens were housed overnight, and this contributed to their Dhamma Pakasa experience. Courses combined Anapana instruction, meditation periods, stories, and activities. They were enthusiastic about the chance to make some meditation cushions. In addition, parents who were not involved with serving on the course worked in the kitchen and did a lot of building and grounds work, under the able direction of our parent server coordinator. One parent even gave the outside of the dining hall a much needed washing. On July 18th, 23 children attended the Children’s Course at Dhamma Pakasa, a total of 13 girls and 10 boys, ages 8-12. Based on feedback from the children and on reports of parents after the course, it was a whopping success, and we can expect to see many of these children back for other courses.

The Michigan course included six boys and seven girls from ages 8 - 15. The course was hosted in the home of old students just outside Detroit.

The first children's course held in Minnesota was conducted at St. Olaf College in Northfield. There were 4 children and 10 adult old students attending, including two AT's and two CCT's. In addition to meditation, the kids loved playing ball and running around in the beautiful landscaped gardens and had no problem finding a tree to climb.

What do the youngsters themselves have to say?



I will use it as a tool to start and end my days peacefully . . . a tool to have more patience and understanding for the people in my life.

The people are nice and it isn't scary at all. It helped me learn to better concentrate.

The most inspiring part was when we went into the meditation hall. I actually experienced what it's like to meditate.

Not having to be engaged actively in fixing any problem, other than the quandary of silencing and befriending my own mind, was rewarding.

It was good to wish others happiness.

I think it will help me to grow as a person.



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in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

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Words of the Buddha

May all creatures, all living things,
all beings one and all,
experience good fortune only.
May they not fall into harm.

Anguttara Nikaya II, 72

Hindi Doha: S.N. Goenka

Mairī jāge balavatī,
roma roma laharāya.
Phūte jharanā pyāra kā,
tana mana maṅgala chāya.

May goodwill arise, mighty in power,
and ripple through every particle
of your being.
May a fountain of love gush forth
spreading happiness through body and mind.

International Vipassana Newsletter

Here is the link for the International Vipassana Newsletter

<http://www.vnl.dhamma.org/>

Username: oldstudent

Password: behappy