

VIPASSANA NUMBER

**THE
MAHA BODHI**



2521

AUGUST—OCTOBER

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THE MAHA BODHI

FOUNDED BY THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA
IN JULY 1892

‘Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.’

—*Mahāvagga, Vinaya Piṭaka*

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S. N. Goenka gave his first 10-day Vipassana course in India in 1969. Since then thousands of courses by Mr. Goenka and those appointed by him have benefitted hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

The August - October 1977 issue of The Maha Bodhi, The journal of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, contained articles and letters by his students and his students’ students. Especially inspiring are several articles stemming from the 1975 course in the Central Jail, Jaipur

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Although modifications have been made to formatting and layout, the main text has been reproduced as faithfully as possible.

Certain material not pertaining directly to Goenkaji’s mission has been omitted. We apologise to those who might have wished to see those pages. See last page for details.

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We are happy to bring out this special Issue of the Maha Bodhi Journal (now in book form) on the experiences of *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* with special reference to the method of meditation as taught by Sayagyi U Ba Khin of Burma.

Vipassanā meditation is the last and the most important part of the eight-fold path. This path is represented by the 3 stages of *sīla* or virtue, *Samādhi* or tranquillity and *paññā* or wisdom. *Vipassanā* is the last stage which leads to the attainment of insight-knowledge of impermanent (*anicca*) unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and impersonal (*anattā*) nature of all composite things and the realisation of the ultimate peace of Nibbāna. So one who practises *Vipassanā* is expected to have already covered the first two stages.

From the time of Lord Buddha there was a living tradition of practising *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* by his followers. Later on in certain quarters all importance came to be attached to the practice of *Samādhi* for its psychic powers. As a result practice of *Vipassanā* was neglected by people in general and it came to be confined only to certain groups and individuals who kept it alive in one form or the other.

It was towards the 2500th Buddhajayanti that a new awakening took place in the Buddhist countries regarding *Vipassanā-bhāvanā*. In this connection Burma played a special role. Several

meditation centres were set up there with competent teachers who taught meditation with emphasis on one aspect or the other of the technique in the light of their own experience.

Late Sayagyi U Ba Khin was one of these teachers. He taught *Vipassanā* to all sincere seekers of *Dhamma* without any discrimination. He had a great attraction for people in general as he taught them how *Vipassanā* could help them in getting rid of stresses and strains caused by various problems they had to face in their day-to-day life, and lead a happy and peaceful life in the world. This attraction was quite natural as U Ba Khin himself was a practical man of the world holding several important posts in the government including that of the Accountant General of the country. For details of his life and work U Ba Khin number of the Maha Bodhi Journal Vol. 80, No. 4, 1972 may be consulted.

Acharya S. N. Goenka, who is now well known as a *Vipassanā* teacher, in India and abroad, happens to be the most brilliant student of late U Ba Khin. He practised *Vipassanā* for long 14 years under the guidance of his revered teacher. Since his arrival in India in 1969 Sri Goenka has been conducting meditation camps in various parts of the country all the year round. In fact he has dedicated his whole life to the great mission of serving the suffering humanity with this practical form of *Dhamma-dāna*.

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For six years Goenkaji has been conducting meditation camps in different places by the invitation of the local people interested in *Vipassanā*. Many of these places could not provide the conditions necessary for a congenial atmosphere for the purpose. So it was felt that a centre with such conditions should be set up in a suitable place. As a result the big meditation centre known as Vipassanā International Academy was built up at Iगतपुरी with donations of his students. Now most of the meditation courses, specially the intensive ones are conducted at Iगतपुरी. All the same he continues to entertain invitations for the benefit of local students who cannot afford to go to Iगतपुरी for one reason or the other.

Up to October 1977 Goenkaji has conducted 141 meditation camps, 13,000 *Sadhakas* and *Sadhikas* from all the five continents and from all walks of life—farmers, teachers, doctors, engineers, businessmen, administrators and others—followers of major religions of the world—Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Christians, Muslims, Jews etc.—have participated in these camps. At the end of a ten-day meditation camp it becomes a matter of joy to listen to the elevating experiences undergone and the ennobling benefits received by the participators.

It is for the benefit of people in general and our readers in particular that we bring out this special issue including articles and personal notes on the experiences of a cross section of the meditators.

It is edifying to read what immense good has been done to them as a result of practising *Vipassanā*. For instance a businessman narrates

how he used to spend a restless life full of worries and anxieties causing him physical and mental ailments, and by practising *Vipassanā* he was able to lead a healthy and peaceful life.

A second meditator tells how he indulged in all kinds of distractions to get away from his unpleasant 'self'. Instead of giving relief, this way of life created more and more complications for him. At last the path of *Vipassanā* taught him how to live a simple life with healthy thoughts and habits leading to peace and happiness.

A third meditator narrates how he used to blame others for the miseries he suffered. At last *Vipassanā* disclosed to him where the rub was. As a result he discovered that it was his own wayward life led without self-discipline that was responsible for the unhappy situation. And after practising *Vipassanā* he was able to settle down in life as a peaceful and useful member of the family and the society.

A fourth meditator tells how she had been going after preachers and teachers of *yoga* to have peace and happiness, and everywhere she met with disappointment leading to despair. However at last she was fortunate enough to meet Acharya Goenkaji who taught her *Vipassanā* which gave her what she had been seeking for all her life.

Thus every meditator relates how he or she had to undergo suffering in one form or the other and practice of *Vipassanā* gave relief from the same. *Dukkha* was the common element that urged them to take to the path of *Vipassanā* and cessation of the same was the common experience they all underwent. On one occasion addressing his disciples Lord Buddha said—Brethren! Two

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things do I teach—existence of suffering and the cessation of the same. This is what *Vipassanā* does—it teaches how to comprehend *dukkha* and bring about its cessation. These meditation camps had a wonderful effect on many of them.

Vipassanā has not been confined to law-abiding citizens leading the normal way of life. It has now gone to the jails. Some of the officers of the Rajasthan government who were greatly impressed by the changes that *Vipassanā* could bring about in the mentality of a man, decided to introduce it in jails for the benefit of prisoners. Accordingly Acharya Goenkaji was invited and he conducted several camps for prisoners—not ordinary convicts but hard-boiled criminals including dacoits and murderers, some serving life sentences. These meditation camps had a wonderful effect on many of them. Letters written by some of them regarding their experiences to the meditation teacher remind one of the *udaānas* of old. English renderings of some of these letters have been included here and the survey reports published confirm the results.

Along with the survey reports of the prison camps and the Police Academy, Rajasthan, we have also published the report of a survey made of the meditation camps held at Varanasi, by several scientists of the Banaras Hindu University. The close relation between mind and body is now an established fact. Mental changes that take place during *Vipassanā* meditation also produce their corresponding changes in the body. They can be studied with reference to breathing, blood pressure, chemical changes and other phenomena. Though the technique is not a perfect one which could ascertain subtle changes taking place at

deeper levels, it can give satisfactory results as far as it goes. The studies made in the light of this technique also bear testimony to the healthy results of *Vipassanā* meditation.

For some meditation means a method of achieving miraculous powers. It is true that at the higher levels of *Samādhi* what are known as *abhiññās* or super-normal powers can be achieved.

They develop as a kind of by-product in course of these meditational practices. While *Samādhi* is an essential condition of *Vipassanā*, these super-normal powers are not. Their value is psychic only and not spiritual. Being mundane in nature they are likely to create allurements for the *yogavacara* who has not developed full awareness and hinder his path of progress. Therefore the serious student of *Vipassanā* is warned not to take undue interest in them. Even when one is already in possession of them one is instructed to be mindful of their composite nature in the light of the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*.

We learn from the scriptures that Lord Buddha and many of his disciples were in possession of all the five *abhiññās* related to supernormal powers. At times they also made use of them to direct the mind of the devotees towards the higher life. But later on some unscrupulous elements began to abuse these powers, specially *iddhi-power*. Devadatta's is a glaring case in point. So by an act of *vinaya* performance of miracles was made an offence. This rule of discipline was respected for a fairly long time. But in course of time in certain circles undue importance came to be attached to the performance of miracles.

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Because of its popular appeal certain obscure cults also came to be built up around miracle-mongering. According to some historians this was one of the factors responsible for the down-fall of Buddhism in India.

The meditation teacher takes care to tell his students not to take to meditation with this misconception. Vipassanā, he tells them, is the art of living a life free from tensions and conflicts. It is the technique for living a happy, fruitful and peaceful life while facing problems and situations with equanimity.

He also tells them not to have the wrong notion that the ten-day meditation camp would do the job for the whole life. It is just the initiation into the technique which one has to keep on practising life-long with diligence and penetrate all levels of physical and mental phenomena.

It is true that the ultimate goal of *vipassanā* is Nibbāna. Dhamma is a gradual path (*anupubbi paṭipada*) which is progressive in nature (*opanayiko*). As one walks along the path one enjoys the fruits of liberation. This experience one undergoes from the first to the last step on the path. It is not something to be taken for granted but experienced. It is this dynamic aspect of the Dhamma that invites one to come and see

(*ehipassiko*) its immediate results (*akāliko*).

Lord Buddha says— ‘Just as ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, so also this Dhamma has but one taste, the taste of liberation’. This is true of the path from beginning to end. This is what is meant when the Dhamma is said to be excellent in the beginning (*adikalyāno*), excellent in the middle (*majjhe-kalyāṇo*) and excellent in the end (*pariyosāna-kalyāṇo*).

One who participates in *Vipassanā* camps begins to enjoy this taste of the Dhamma (*dhamma-rasa*) as he begins to experience relief from the *dukkha* that is already there. In the light of this experience he or she can move forward on the path until full liberation from all *dukkha* is attained. The articles and personal notes included here provide glimpses of such experiences. If they could inspire even a few to take the path of Dhamma, we would feel happy that the purpose of bringing out this special issue has been fulfilled.

We take the opportunity of recording our heart-felt thanks to Acharya Goenkaji and his students for kindly making available to us the materials for this special issue. We also thank those who made the English translations of some of the Hindi articles and personal notes.

MAY DHAMMA PREVAIL IN THE WORLD!

U. Dhammaratana

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FROM CONFUSION TO CONCENTRATION

By

Ronald Pocsik

(U.S.A.)

Indeed my life has changed. The Buddha did say that there are two types of worldly life that a human being is liable to. The first, the physical ills and the second the mental ills. He went on to say that there are some beings who will escape the physical ills but there will be very few who will escape those most painful ills of the mind. It is remembered that prior to my study of this most wonderful technique of *Vipassanā* Meditation my life was in a total state of confusion. One might say that my life could be compared to a chicken without a head. Running, running to and fro with never the mindfulness of the What For. Now, let me say that this technique of *Vipassanā* Meditation does not offer any short-cut remedies to mental health but with hard work and faith in what one is doing many beneficial results should and will become noticed. There was a time in my life when any and all forms of escapism were sought after as a means to an end: how foolish were these illusions. But because of a lack of knowledge as to the actual content of this human life and that there actually are methods of stabilising these foolish mental activities into most beneficial ones an escape was always sought.

From drugs to alcohol, sex to travelling, any form of how to get away from the unpleasantries of mind were all sought. However, after a while it was noticed that no matter what was indulged

in no real permanent satisfaction was gained and the more that one received the more one would want with never any real end in sight. Now all this misguided energy has finally found a way to become channelled into right perspective, a Path of Purification of these wrong views to a more healthy natural way of living life. The wonderful part of it is that it was never any further away than the tip of my nose. From confusion to concentration—what need we more!

Let me also say that I am living in society; as a matter for the record my home is located in the most industrial, polluted and populated state in America. It can be said with an open heart that this most wonderful technique along with right effort has transformed a body of confusion into a person who is leading a much more healthier and happier life as a result. Where once running away from myself was the method, a holding still and working out these unpleasantries is now being followed. My vocation in the world is that of a Social Worker and all the many intense situations that get presented to me are understood and worked out with a much more balanced state of mental facilities. To conclude, if one feels lonely and empty inside and confusion is the only course of mind, why not sit down and give yourself some space to observe the true nature of these mental disturbances which are the wrong views which we all so easily acquire.

MAY ALL BEINGS TRULY BE LIBERATED!

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FACE THE PROBLEMS, DONT RUN

By

Tom Savage

(U.S.A.)

I began practising *Vipassanā* in December 1970. At that time I suffered from grand mal epilepsy, smoked charras twelve hours a day, hated myself and the world, was uncleanly and was kept from pursuing my career by my negativities.

I am happy to say that after five years of *Vipassanā* I've learned to recognise the onset of attacks. I'm no longer dependent upon intoxicants, no longer hate the world, keep myself clean and have begun to climb the rungs to success in my chosen profession, writer. This past summer I was a teaching assistant to Allen Ginsberg at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. I've had poems published in ten or twelve magazines, a short story of mine (on *Ānanda*) will be published next January. I'm the co-editor of a new literary magazine called *Roof* and have read my work in many places in New York and Boulder. My association with the *Dhamma* was instrumental in allowing me to

advance. My practice of *Vipassanā* (U Ba Khin tradition) has been instrumental in helping me deal with my illness, beginning to act creatively in the world and giving me the balance of mind and concentration necessary to produce better writing and to begin to find an audience for it among my literary masters and my peers.

When I left America I hated my mother. Now she and I get along fairly well and I'm beginning at last to assume my social responsibilities as a citizen, a man and a son. That *Vipassanā* has helped me look beyond my own ego for the answers to my problems has been instrumental in bringing this about. I've begun to face my problems rather than run from them. While *Vipassanā* is no panacea, no cure all, it has allowed me the psychic space inside to confront my own weaknesses, assess the damage done by my past actions and to begin moving in the right direction.

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VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION— MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

By

Dr. Vithal Das Modi
(INDIA)

At about five o'clock one afternoon, I arrived at the Burmese Buddhist Vihara, situated about half a mile east of Varanasi Cantt. Station. Nearby is a bus terminal, and the surrounding neighbourhood is densely populated. The place did not impress me as being either very clean or spacious; the cabin I was assigned to stay in was eight feet by six. I thought to myself, "Let me begin and try things for a couple of days. Then, if I am dissatisfied, I shall run away" — easy for me to do, since my son Chaturbhuj lives in Varanasi.

For an hour after arrival, I was busy getting acquainted with the other people at the Vihāra. There were 100 in all, fifty of them foreigners— mostly young men and women— and fifty Indians, ranging in age from twelve to seventy-five years.

They had all gathered here to attend a ten-day *Vipassanā* Meditation camp, directed by Shri Satya Narayan Goenka, and beginning from seven o'clock that evening. I also had come to join the camp, in obedience to the direction of my friend, Shri Yashpal Jain. He had urged me to join such a camp, but still I had refused; so finally he told me, "You will attend the camp—that is an order." Thus I had to participate in this experiment.

My aversion towards learning or practising meditation dated from my childhood. When I was ten years old, I was a student in the local school,

where academic subjects took second place to meditation and devotional singing. My experience there was the root cause of my disliking meditation. I was forced to memorize 700 verses of the *Gīta*, and to repeat them every day in an hour and a half. There was no proper instruction in meditation; instead, I was told to sit for half an hour with closed eyes, and to visualize at the end of my nose the God Chaturbhuj, exactly as he appeared in the picture printed in my copy of the *Gīta*. I used to wonder how it was possible to make such a detailed picture of God. To me, the Chaturbhuj depicted in my *Gīta*, looked like an old man wearing too much jewellery; I couldn't bear to look at him.

Luckily, my pranks were successful, and I was expelled from that school. My father then got me admitted to an English school; I was saved from having to meditate.

Since then, many learned persons and sages have visited the medical centre at Arogya Mandir, and many teachers among them. All wanted to show me the right way of spiritual practice—their way; but I staunchly resisted every effort. On one occasion, I accidentally met a woman who was a Theosophist, come (so she said) to show me the path. No sooner did we meet than she asked to see me alone, and began telling me stories of my previous lives. All her tales showed that I was a very noble soul. She also explained to me a technique to practise before going to sleep at night,

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which would help me progress on the path of human welfare. As abruptly as she had come, so she stood up and left, leaving me entranced. The meeting with her seemed like a dream to me, but I could not act according to her suggestions. The direction of my life remained unaltered: I continued to be engrossed in my work.

Now I was going to see what impact *Vipassanā* Meditation might have on me.

In a short while, Mr Goenka arrived, dressed in a Burmese *lungee* and a shirt. He had medium complexion, a heavily-built body, and looked like a gentlemanly householder. Accompanying him was his wife.

Mr Goenka is a Burmese national. In his youth, he suffered from severe migraine headaches. Unable to find a cure for them in Burma he travelled to countries such as Switzerland, Germany, England, America, and Japan, spending four months in search of treatment, but to no avail. Finally, at the suggestion of a friend, and despite great hesitations, he attended a ten-day *Vipassanā* meditation camp, conducted by Sayagyi U Ba Khin. The meditation relieved him not only of the migraine, but also of the tension which was its root cause, and which had made his life a burden to him.

This experience made Mr. Goenka greatly devoted to U Ba Khin. For ten years he worked under him as his interpreter for Hindi-speaking students, all the while growing in the knowledge and practice of *Vipassanā*.

With the permission of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, Mr. Goenka conducted his first meditation camp in Bombay from 3 to 15 July 1969. Camp after camp followed; up till now, 100 have been held in different parts of the country, with about 4800

participants.

Half an hour after Mr. Goenka came, we were called upstairs to a clean hall which could easily seat 200 people. At one end of the hall, on a high pedestal, was a white marble statue of Lord Buddha, smiling gravely; in front of it were seated Mr. Goenka and his wife, on a dais. The light was dim, the atmosphere hypnotic.

After we had all sat down, Mr. Goenka chanted something, and then welcomed us and explained in brief the technique. Next he taught us the first step, which is *Ānāpāna* Meditation. *Ānāpāna* is a method for achieving concentration of mind, by observing the incoming and outgoing breath at the entrance of nostrils. By practising this technique, we became aware of a difference in temperature between incoming and outgoing breath. Next we gradually started to perceive the touch feeling of the breath passing over the upper lip. Further, I could feel the movement of the hair on the upper lip, as the breath shifted it. Then the area in which we were aware of touch feeling became quite small. Thus, by the afternoon of the third day, we had learned to concentrate the mind on a subtle activity, in a small area.

Every day of the course, we had to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and go to bed by 10:15 at night. We practised the technique for twelve hours daily, with one hour at the end of the last sitting for a discourse by the "Welfare Friend," as the teacher is properly called. Through these discourses, the teacher helped us understand the nature (*Dhamma*) of the sense bases (*Āyatana*s), and the feelings or perceptions which arise from them. He also discussed the basic fact of the unsatisfactory nature of existence—*dukkha*, encompassing both suffering and pleasure—as

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well as the nature of the mind, memory, and heart (*Mana, Buddhi, Citta*) and the relationship of attachment, desire, craving and dissatisfaction, with suffering.

During these talks, he explained the technique on which we were working. In the daytime, he would talk to each person, in order to understand his or her progress, and to suggest ways to overcome difficulties.

The food served during the course was clean, nutritious, and healthful in all respects. At 6:30 a.m. we took our breakfast— wheat pudding and milk. The main meal of the day was served at 11:00 a.m. Vegetables were plentiful, and the food contained little ghee or oil. No spices were used except salt. At 5 p.m., tea or milk was served, and a guava and banana at night, with more tea or milk.

On the evening of the third day, we were taught *Vipassanā* Meditation. *Vipassanā* means observing oneself in a special way. From the entrance to the nostrils and the upper lip, we moved the point of our concentration first to the top of the head, and then slowly over the entire scalp area. From there we brought it to the face, then the neck, then the breast and back, and then on to the arms and legs, returning finally to the top of the head.

In this passage through the body, many sensations were perceived—in some places pain, in others tingling or vibration. The teacher instructed us not to like or dislike these sensations, but instead merely to observe them; not to cling to pleasant ones, nor to try to get rid of the unpleasant ones. He compared the sensations to the flow of a river, always impermanent, never remaining the same. Whatever the flow, we have only to observe it.

Remembering this fact of impermanence, we

kept moving further and further. With trained, concentrated mind, we could become aware not only of the surface of the body, but also of the interior. As a result, impurities accumulated in different parts of the body began disintegrating, getting displaced and destroyed. These stirred-up impurities filled the bodies of the meditators, causing aches in different parts, fever in one meditator, nausea in another, lethargy in another. However the understanding of the impermanent nature of these sensations helped us to remain patient.

For me, it was easy to understand all this process, because of its similarity to the effect of nature cure, during which foreign matter (impurities) in the body is aroused and—causes pain as it passes out but leaves the body cleaner and healthier.

If any meditator experienced great suffering while practising *Vipassanā*, the teacher would sit before him and give his loving kindness, in order to help him regain a peaceful state of mind.

As the last step of practice, we learned the technique of “well-wishing.” We forgave those beings who had caused us any harm by their actions of body, speech or mind; and similarly we begged forgiveness of those whom we had harmed by our actions of body, speech, or mind. We were told to bring into the mind not only our friends, well-wishers, and relations, but also our so-called enemies, and then to wish them well—that they may keep good health, that only good happen to them, that they find real happiness. All this we did, and as a result the cravings and hatred which I had been nursing, started being washed away, and to that extent I felt relieved, lighter.

So engrossed were we in the process of meditation that we did not even notice the passing of the ten days. Only on the last day of the camp

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did we realize that it was indeed the last day. Quickly I started improving my acquaintance with the other meditators, particularly foreigners, whom I was eager to know better.

“Where have you come from?” I asked.

“From Switzerland.”

“How long are you planning to stay here?”

“I am leaving tomorrow.”

“How did you come to know of this *Vipassanā* camp?”

“A friend of mine mentioned it to me in Switzerland.”

“Don’t you want to tour and visit different parts of India?”

“My work here is completed. I have got what I wanted.”

I spoke with many foreigners. All had heard of the course from other persons. All had come looking for satisfaction and faith. They had found what they were seeking.

I saw some of the forms completed by foreigners applying to join the camp. One of the questions was whether the applicant had used any drugs or intoxicants, and if so what. Six out of ten times the answer was LSD and hashish. They had used these drugs in order to have a glimpse of spiritual bliss. Now, through *Vipassanā*, they had found a practical way to real bliss. Despite their reliance on drugs in the past, during the course these and all the other meditators had fully observed the five precepts which are the basis of the technique: to abstain from killing sentient beings; to abstain from stealing; to abstain from sexual misconduct; to abstain from speaking lies; and to abstain from all intoxicants.

In his closing talk, our Well-wishing Friend, Mr. Goenka told us that by overcoming craving, one can liberate oneself, without needing any external assistance. This he had made clear to the students. His last advice to us was, “Stand on your own feet.” In our leave-taking, there was no suggestion of teacher and disciple, rather, it was the parting of friends. His last instruction to us was to meditate one hour morning and evening, and when sending loving kindness to all beings, not to forget to include him. This was the only *dakshina* (remuneration) he sought from his fellow meditators.

To clean the body, I have undertaken many fasts, both long and short. Once I fasted for thirty-eight days. The purity which I perceived in my body at the end of that time was exactly what I experienced at the end of this meditation camp. I cannot fully evaluate the effect which this camp had on my mind. However, writing to my daughter-in-law about the effect of *Vipassanā* on me, my wife said, “His anger has calmed down greatly.” Only then did I realize that I had been filled with anger to such an extent as to cause suffering to my wife.

Vipassanā is the meditation technique expounded by Lord Buddha, by means of which he attained Enlightenment. He taught this technique to his disciples. At the time of Emperor Ashoka, it was introduced into Burma, and since then preserved in unaltered form by a chain of teachers and disciples, until the present day. Now it has returned to India from Burma. In gratitude for the gift of Buddha-Dhamma, Burma has re-introduced *Vipassanā* meditation in India, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

Note—Dr. V. Modi is a well-known naturopath. His friend, Shri Yashpal Jain is a famous writer.

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VIPASSANĀ AND PSYCHIATRY

By

Dr. K. N. Dwivedi

(ENGLAND)

As a teacher in Preventive and Social Medicine I learnt to appreciate that subtle cultural forces of superstitions and mystifications maintained a high level of disease load in India. Meditation to me had a similar connotation, but Professor O. N. Sriwastaw of Psychiatry inspired me to attend a course of *Vipassanā*. Probably my motive was to find out effective weapons to fight the bad mystical influences on our health culture, but to my surprise I could find no clash between scientific way of thinking and *Vipassanā*. Fascinated by its psychiatric implications I joined Psychiatry. Here I do not wish to establish any theories but to point out a few links between ideas and practices of *Vipassanā* and that of psychiatry. Psychiatry today is a diverse discipline and varies across psychiatrists, institutions, nations and cultures. The two so called major schools are organic and psychodynamic.

The dynamic psychiatry visualises psychosocial forces leading to mental illness and employs various pedagogical psychotherapy techniques for therapeutic purposes. Behaviour therapy, analytical psychotherapy, group therapy, therapeutic community approach, social therapy, marital and family therapy, vector therapy, transactional analysis, gestalt therapy, drama therapy (psychodrama, remedial drama, sociodrama), art therapy, occupational therapy, Primal therapy etc. are just a few examples.

In psychoanalysis the subject reports his free-associations as they occur and is helped to understand his mental mechanisms. A student of *Vipassanā* also finds himself free associating during meditation. However, psychoanalysis and *Vipassanā* differ in their attitudes towards and interpretation of the materials of free association. In *Vipassanā* the emphasis is to maintain a continuum of awareness of somatic sensations and to inculcate a neutral attitude of indifference and non-indulgence (*upeksha*) in the ideational material. In psychoanalysis the ideational material is welcome; in *Vipassanā* the interpretation is mainly phenomenological in terms of transitory nature (*Anicca*), illusory nature (creating the illusion of 'I' etc), binding nature (*Dukkha*) of emotive processes of clinging (*Raga*), aversion (*Dosa*) and ignorance (*Moha*). In psychoanalysis, the interpretation is semantic and helps to decode the messages from the system unconscious revealing the universal struggle between various forces. Objects Relation Theory recognises some of the illusory nature of ego (*Anattā*) as most of it is made by internalisation of objects (eg. mother's breast etc). Laingian knots take the full leap:

“..... although one is full inside of the inside of the outside one is on the outside of one's own inside and by getting inside the outside one remains empty because while one is on the inside

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even the inside of the outside is outside and inside oneself there is still nothing. There has never been anything else and there never will be”.

Krishnamurti gave an useful slogan of freedom from all conditioning. Behaviour therapy cares to control conditioning and has various therapeutic applications as treatment of phobias; modifications of behaviours such as sociability of chronic schizophrenics; speech training in autistic children; training of mentally subnormals, physically handicapped, socially inadequate, control of eating, drinking, sexual and other behaviours; contract marital therapy; biofeedback etc. Conditioning is almost an alternative explanation of the system unconscious and is a process of binding in a person of juxtaposed events through the cement of emotive ingredients. In *Vipassanā* one works to sharpen his perceptual mechanisms and learns to be aware of subtle emotional processes. Conditioning requires the cement of emotion at subtle levels. Continuous awareness of the subtle emotive processes with a neutral attitude would free oneself from conditioning.

Systematic desensitisation involves reciprocal inhibition, since relaxation and anxiety are incompatible. The subject is taught to relax and is presented either in reality or in imagination with specific anxiety provoking stimuli in a systematic manner. As he faces them in a relaxed state he learns not to react with anxiety. It thus resembles *Vipassanā*. Some of the physiological and biochemical measurements on meditation support the obvious hypothesis of built-in relaxation. Biofeedback studies confirm the controllability of autonomic, electroencephalographic and emotive processes through awareness.

Awareness of feelings or sharpening of sensitivity is one of the major tools in group therapy, where the subject is helped by others who keep reminding him of his current emotional state, so that he can evolve his own monitoring equipment. However, there is a qualitative difference in the sensitivity of the ‘radars’ built through *Vipassanā* and through group and other therapies. A group therapy ‘radar’ picks up imageries and such gross lumpsome feelings as hatred, anger, sadness etc. *Vipassanā* ‘radar’ on the other hand, continuously concentrates on subtle somatic sensations beyond the cloud of imageries, ideations and lumpsome feelings. One learns to recognise the illusory and transitory nature of ‘cloud’ formation.

There is an association between subjective mental state and peripheral activity. Gannon emphasised the influence of central nervous system on peripheral mechanisms, while James and Lange emphasised the influence of peripheral activity on the central subjective state. Because of these associations anxiety can become self-perpetuating. Some one may insult me once but the idea (or the memory) that someone insulted me can keep me troubled repeatedly for a very long period. The idea breeds peripheral changes and peripheral changes feed the idea; the vicious cycle thus goes on, *Vipassanā* aims to break the cycle by awareness of the peripheral activity and appreciation of its transitory nature.

Primal therapy postulates encapsulation of traumatic memories in somatic sensations and guides through the path of somatic sensation, recollection of the primal traumatic experience, reliving the suffering and freedom. It has its parallel in abreaction. This attitude of confrontation is the basic tool of *Vipassanā* where

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the student confronts his somatic sensation such as pain in the knee. However, he is not advised to indulge in the story behind the pain. Instead he stays face to face with pain to appreciate its illusory and transitory nature. Reality therapy, existential therapy and many other approaches in psychiatry recognise the value of facing the painful reality as it is.

The reason why *Vipassanā* ignores dwelling on the 'worm in the apple' (as in Primal therapy) is because of its frame of reference of reality i.e. sensations and not ideations of imaginations. Reality is here and now, rest is illusion. But most of our lives are lived in illusion. *Vipassanā* provides training opportunity to live in reality. Gestalt therapy takes up this issue of 'here and now' as well as many other principles as in *Vipassanā*; eg. Continuum of awareness, confrontation etc. It differs from *Vipassanā* by being a cafeteria like approach using techniques to deal with ideational material, fantasies, dreams and psychomotor behaviours etc.

Client-centred Rogerian therapy is nondirective and finds empathetic and compassionate orientation of the therapist as most therapeutic. Freudians view the basic human nature (id) as instinctively selfish while *Vipassanā* reveals compassion when one gets rid of accumulated impurities. George Kelly (originator of Personal Construct Theory) construed man basically as an investigator. A doctor-patient relationship accordingly is analogous to the relationship between a guide and a research scholar. *Vipassanā* provides each of its research scholars, a superb laboratory for scientific explorations of physical and mental phenomena, life and death.

Organic psychiatry with its phenomenological orientation explores and manipulates physical causation, hereditary influences and biochemical changes associated with mental illnesses. For example in schizophrenic and affective (depressive and manic) disorders, the levels and/or ratios of neurotransmitters are found to be disturbed. Neurotransmitters are biochemical agents which regulate and are involved in the transmission of messages or impulses through the nervous system; eg. Dopamine, Noradrenaline; Acetylcholine, Serotinine etc. Their levels and ratios may be influenced by hereditary, dietary, immunological and many other mechanisms. Along with Professor Udupa, the Director of the Institute of Medical Sciences, Varanasi, and other, we conducted some studies on students of *Vipassanā* in the courses of Mr. Hover and Mr. Goenka and found definite changes in the levels of many of those neurotransmitters after a ten-day course of *Vipassanā*. However, the study did not have any control group to assess the effect of dietary changes. The electrophysical changes in *Vipassanā* demand further exploration of possible relationships between the consequences of electroplexy and *Vipassanā*, influences of *Vipassanā* on epilepsy, sleep, dream etc.

Psychiatry, however, cannot be replaced by *Vipassanā* nor *Vipassanā* can be replaced by psychiatry. They differ in their terms of reference and value systems. *Vipassanā* is not used for treatment, treatment may be a by-product. The desire to get treated may be a by-product. The desire to get treated may become a hindrance on the path of *Vipassanā*. A treated person may have improved capacity to undertake *Vipassanā*. *Vipassanā* can reduce the development of mental illness in a society and therefore reduce the need for psychiatry.

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AN APPRECIATION

By

Shri Shanker Ganesh Patwardhan,

A.A., B.Sc., LL.M.

(Ex-Professor of Law, Govt. Law College, Ex-High Court Judge, Bombay.)

I underwent an intensive Course in meditation held at the Lahoti Hostel in Poona, for ten days. The participants lived a corporate, exclusive life and tried to follow a very strict, strenuous, prescribed routine. The day began at 4 A.M. and faded into sleep at 10 P.M. The participants ate simple but nourishing meals together, and they were asked to utilise every possible moment to practise arduously what was preached by the Master—Shri Goenka—The art of Living. To follow the instructions was far from easy, but the attempt brought its own reward. The master's constant encouragement coaxed the willing pupil towards understanding. The frail unwilling body was put under a severe strain and sitting in a formed posture and keeping away dozing became barely possible by the soothing balm of the Master's very controlled and modulated voice which was of a magical quality.

He asked us not to converse unless one MUST. He exhorted us to look WITHIN and play the role of an observer and watch sensations, pleasant or otherwise, come and go, come and go, come and go....ever-changing, impermanent. The burden of the teaching was to remain ever awake, to develop an intense awareness and thus to intermix the mind with body, from head to feet and back from the feet to the top of the head. This was to be the key that would steady the mind

that alone contains the seeds of pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy, health and disease. The aspirants were told neither to be elated nor to be depressed by the apparent success or otherwise of the exercise.

The crux of the teaching was: Don't approve, don't condemn; let nature show itself, you are merely and simply to watch and watch and watch.....

The aspirants soon realised that this was easier said than done but they also knew that doubting the fruition of the system led to a morass and unwavering faith led to fulfilment.

This is the Burmese version of the teaching of Buddha—the traditional system of meditation handed down from Guru to pupil and maintained to date in its unsullied glory.

Emphasis was very properly laid on the fact that a ten-days course did not bring out a realised soul as a platform ticket comes out of a slot.

The course was only a beginning, to lead the aspirant into a life-long regular practice of meditation. *Prima facie*, to spare an hour in the morning and another hour in the evening is a tall order, and not to be undertaken without mature thought. But if one considers the large slice of life spent in oversleep and avoidable futilities,

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two hours a day reserved for meditation would easily be the most fruitful investment, which will transform a base metal into gold. If the aspirant helped himself, nothing will stand in the way of achievement and Gods and Goddesses will literally vie with each other in leading him to the final goal of this human life—Nirvana. This eternal peace of mind is not reserved to be attained in an after-life, but it is here and now in the closed fist of your own right palm. Therefore, awaken, arise and be blessed. Don't waste your breath, develop

inner, intense awareness, watch, don't resist and the magic will come.

The master introduced the participants to the eight-fold golden path. The road is a royal road and there is hope and encouragement, all along. Do it, tread the path and rise again even if you may occasionally flounder.

The participants were immeasurably grateful to Shri Goenka. They were equally grateful to Shri Bhausahab Rathi, the perfect master of the ceremonies.

APPLIED DHAMMA

By

Gary Buck

(JAPAN)

I was born, brought up and educated in England. Being of an inquiring nature with an insatiable thirst for knowledge I had read many books on Philosophy, Religion, Psychology and anything else that claimed to have the answer to the great questions about the World. None of these learned books offered me anything which seemed realistic. I felt very drawn towards the Teachings of the Buddha, but they seemed very removed from the life of a young Londoner, educated in Science and Accounting. Eventually, in 1974 I decided to go to Sri Lanka to find out what the Buddha taught.

I found many helpful people and many interesting books. In a few weeks I read lots of books and questioned many people. It all seemed

to make good sense, my faith and confidence in the Dhamma grew rapidly and on the full moon of Wesak that year I went to the temple to take the Refugees and observe Eight Precepts, thus formally becoming a Buddhist.

Having become a Buddhist I felt I ought to practise the Dhamma and meditate. With no idea of either the seriousness or the magnitude of the task I was undertaking I began to try and practise a mixture of all the seemingly bewildering subjects of meditation listed in the scriptures. First I tried *Ānāpānasati*; but neither my nose, nor my abdomen could hold my attention at all. I spent hours reciting the Thirty-Two parts of the Body, mixed in at times with various formulas for *Mettā Bhāvanā*. I walked up and down my

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room telling myself that the foot swinging from one step to the next was not really my foot because it was changing all the time but I couldn't really see any changes and it still seemed like my same old foot.

It became obvious that I needed the guidance of an experienced meditation teacher and so I took the advice of Mr. Richard Abeysekera (for which I shall be ever grateful) and made my way to Benaras to see U S. N. Goenka who was conducting a ten-day course of *Vipassanā Bhāvanā* that December.

I arrived in Benaras a few weeks early and was pleased to find some of Goenkaji's students staying at the Burmese Vihāra. I had met many Westerners on my travels through India and had grown to dislike most of them as idle hippies, but these were of a very different kind. Their genuine concern for other people made a very favourable impression on me, likewise the simple grace with which they went about their daily tasks. They were serious about their *Sīla* and their daily meditation yet smiled endlessly. How refreshing it was to be among such people.

At last the course began. Strict rules and hard work were the order of the day, but the results were staggering. I knew immediately that I had found what I had been searching for all my life. Here was the Dhamma, not only in theory but in practice too. Right there on my cushion I found the *Anicca*, *Anattā* and *Dukkha* about which I had been reading. The tender loving care with which Goenkaji guides his students is already a legend. About his wisdom and understanding I cannot judge, but his every word, his every action reminded me of the words of the Buddha. My reading gave me great faith and strong aspirations,

but Goenkaji gave me the Dhamma, the pure Dhamma.

After fifteen months of serious work I made a trip to the I.M.C. in Rangoon. Here I was able to experience the advantages of working in an environment that has been kept pure and protected from all influences except *Vipassanā Bhāvanā*. It seemed that the very walls of the place were aware of the arising and passing away of the *Rūpa-Kalapas* of which they were made.

Everything I've said about Goenkaji can be said in greater measure about Mother Sayama. Her love and care amazed me. The wonderful way she guided me over many hurdles is impossible to explain. How very lucky we are to be here when such Teachers are alive in the world!

It is not yet two years since I came into contact with the pupils of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, but the difference in my life is great indeed. Before then I lived a life of selfishness and pleasure, my only concern was my own welfare. I was very unhappy and discontented. Now I can watch the Dhamma growing stronger within myself, my life has become more peaceful, more harmonious and more contented. I am very happy, life has direction, purpose and a very rosy future. The end of birth and death is in sight because I know that as long as I keep working hard I will one day penetrate the veil of ignorance and realise in myself the Four Noble Truths.

My debt to my Teacher is very great and I can never adequately express my gratitude. Thank you Goenkaji, Mother Sayama, U Chit Tin and all the other great Teachers who preserved this wonderful technique unchanged for so long. Thank you Sayagyi U Ba Khin for your great selfless sacrifice.

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PRACTISING VIPASSANĀ

By

Robert Pryor

(U. S. A.)

Practising the *Vipassanā* meditation has made a tremendous impact on my life. Attitudes about how one should live and why we are living underwent basic changes after contact with *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anattā*. The power of the technique is that it makes these three essential concepts a concrete experience for the individual. Once contact is made with *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anattā* then the maintenance of *Sīla* becomes just common sense. Morality is seen as a skilful means for living instead of a burden imposed from outside.

Once I began to experience the Dhamma in everyday living, the desire for drugs and other forms of escape grew less and less. When I am learning so much from moment to moment

awareness it seems ridiculous to surrender clarity for some state of artificially induced delusion. The meditation also changed my orientation towards working. Previously I saw a job as primarily a way of making a living. Now it has become a means of service and a valuable way to deepen my understanding. In a working environment one has the opportunity to practise equanimity towards the people one works with. This equanimity is the real test of our practice and it is here in the ordinary life that the rewards came from sitting.

For these changed attitudes towards Truth, *Sīla* and Service I will always be grateful to this meditation and the Teachers who have preserved it for me.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY!

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AN EXPERIENCE CANNOT BE DESCRIBED: IT HAS TO BE LIVED

By

Bill Pruitt

(France)

My main motivation when I first did a meditation course in the tradition of U Ba Khin was to learn to concentrate. At least that's the way I saw it at the time. I was looking for much more and expecting much more—things that I didn't even admit to myself consciously.

I had looked into other ways of meditating, had been attracted by *Hatha Yoga*, *Tai Chi* and had even discovered in drawing and in writing a sort of meditation. I had looked into the expensive business of psychoanalysis as well as doing a psychotherapy that was (may be still is) all the rage in California. Everything seemed to work—for a time. But nothing seemed to become integrated into my life for long.

So here I was, well informed on all sorts of psycho-spiritual paths, reserving judgement on such issues as rebirth, higher spiritual beings etc. I didn't wish to put faith in all these things until I could see with my own eyes. Nor did I wish to dismiss other dimensions of reality. But the more I looked into all this the less difference it seemed to make in my everyday life. And I didn't see anything that developed concentration,

When a friend told me of meditation courses where concentration was taught I knew it was just what I was looking for. But these courses were in India. "Why not go there for your Christmas vacation?" asked my friend. It seemed crazy but I could just manage to afford it. And off I went.

Yes, here was something to develop concentration. But surely few people had so much trouble keeping their mind on their breath. I must be an exceptionally unconcentrated person. No, in the evening talks the Teacher spoke of a mind that couldn't stay put even for a moment. That was MY mind. And the way other people were laughing when he said that meant it must be true for them too.

There was much more to this than concentration of course. I began to learn what Buddhism was all about. It was so different from any religion I had known. So much so I could understand that many people prefer not to call the fundamental teachings of Buddha a religion at all. The main, thing required was an inquiring mind. No blind belief. Don't believe anything until you've experienced it. I felt right at home.

As the ten days went by, I began to discover that secretly I was expecting all sorts of miracles. After going to so much trouble and expense, surely I would come out of the meditation course fully enlightened. My friend had told me of a wonderful experience during which her mind had stopped talking. Just what I wanted: a silent mind. So I kept expecting this to happen to me. But it didn't of course.

When I realised how I was getting my hopes up for some specific event and how tense I became, straining every muscle in expectation I had a good

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laugh at myself. The first of a lot of good laughs at this clever tenacious mind I call "me".

Then there were the other students. Many of them seemed so flippant. Here I was keeping silent, respecting the hours, not smoking, even lining up for no-sugar tea (mistakenly thinking this was a special bonus in asceticism). I know all about projections; this tendency of ours to see in others the things we want to avoid seeing in ourselves; this being irritated with and angry at others for doing the things we would like to do or things we perhaps even do but don't admit that we do. For example there was a boy who seized every opportunity to run to the Teacher with a question. How inconsiderate I thought. How egoistical. Then suddenly one day I saw myself clearly: I wanted to run to the teacher with all my questions. In fact I was jealous of the other boy. Fortunately I could laugh at myself because otherwise seeing myself so clearly would be too painful to bear.

After my first course I returned to the West. I had much, free time and could continue to meditate frequently. No matter how well I understood intellectually that I should stay with the reality of the moment expecting nothing, still I caught myself, time after time disappointed because I had not experienced something exceptional. Or I would be excited for a time thinking I had just had a significant break-through. Time after time I had to bring my feet back to earth.

As a teacher I could take advantage of my school vacations for doing some courses. Fortunately I didn't have to go to India every time. There are several Teachers in the U Ba Khin tradition. More surprises. Each person, each Teacher is different. And soon I saw that the Teaching can remain the same even if each Teacher doesn't have the exact same personality or present the work in exactly the same way. In fact there are

advantages in working with more than one personality. It's harder to develop hero worship.

Certain patterns began to be clear to me. The more closely I observe what lies back of irritation, being angry with others, the more I find that the cause is in me. I'm jealous. Or I'm so ashamed of some aspect of my character I try to hide it from myself. During each course my mind runs along familiar roads: there's the "as soon as I get out of here" road with many projects and plans. It has lots of footpaths off it: "write this story," "paint that picture," "persuade so and so to do a meditation course," "help set up a meditation centre. And so on and so on. There the "oh dear what if this or that catastrophe happens how will I cope?" More foot paths. Then there's the "Just dream about this and feel happy" fantasy world. But the more I observe the fantasy world the more it's a matter of "dream about this and feel frustrated." And one I hadn't suspected but find has always been a game in my mind: "To fix up this or that you'll need to put three screws on the left, no, that won't work, why not nails." A sort of fix-it-up, invent a new way mind game.

Each course is unique, though much is familiar my restless mind, the physical pain as old negativities come to the surface; yet each time I get into new areas. On my second course I pushed too hard and realised that I shouldn't overdo. On another course I began to relax and not expect the other students to be as literal about the camp rules as I like to be.

I discover something that seems so obvious once you know it, and am amazed that modern psychologists and psychiatrists seem to be unaware of it. There's an alternative to repressing negative emotions. They can be examined. I discover that fear is a physical thing. It takes place in a specific place; the back or the neck or the stomach. It reels

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a certain way. It lasts a certain time. If I observe it, it slowly goes away, dissipates. Observing the manifestation of fear in my physical body keeps my attention away from the outside event that triggers the fear. And this can be applied to anger, hatred etc.

So the most important thing about these meditation courses is that they change my everyday life. At first I was discouraged. It's hard if not often impossible to catch negative emotions while they're small enough to be observed. After they grow past a certain point they take over. But quite unexpectedly I would find that there would be times when my old reactions would not come up, or they would last for shorter periods of time. Even if I got upset, now I was aware of the mechanics. I could remind myself that I would be upset for a while but not for ever.

Whenever I'm discouraged I remind myself of something a friend told me: no effort in meditation is wasted.

At times it's very tempting to begin to believe in some sort of magic. Things fall into place, problems work themselves out. Oh yes, the Dhamma will take care of everything. Then comes along a difficult period. Problems remain problems. And I worry about what I've been doing wrong. Once again I must remember that as long as I'm in this circle of birth-death-suffering I must expect for there to be problems.

I heard the same talks given during my first course recently. As the ten days of my most recent course went by and the tapes of the talks were played I realised that all these things I've talked about were mentioned in the talks. I had remembered only those things I was capable of understanding. The talks could have been new to me, for so many things that were unknown to me the first time I heard them were familiar now. I was ready to understand them, ready to say "sadhu,

yes that's the way it is." Each moment is new. No matter how many times I hear the same talks it will never be a simple repetition. Maybe my mind won't wander at a given moment and I'll hear something I hadn't even heard before. And whenever I'm discouraged I can remind myself: earlier I thought I understood this time but now I understand more fully thanks to my effort—and perhaps in the future, with work I'll understand even more. And this can help me be more tolerant of others, like me, they will understand what they are ready to understand. With time and effort they will be able to understand things that it's impossible for them to understand now.

During my last course I was reminded very forcefully how important practice is. How many times I've heard or read or said to myself: "Equanimity, keep equanimity. Just observe without being attached or repulsed." Then in my last course the momentary elements came together to give me the needed push and I had a very brief moment during which I saw first hand at what subtle levels my mind was being attracted or repulsed. Every little sensation in my body was being labelled desirable or undesirable. My sitting position was good or bad, This was progress but that was not progress, I'd had a good or bad meditation. For a brief moment I saw through all that and the mind just observed.

An experience like that cannot be described fully. It has to be lived, lived and relived until it becomes the rule rather than the exception.

How lucky we are to live at a time when we can learn to work on ourselves. How lucky we are that there are people like U Ba Khin and the Teacher he designates to carry on these Teachings of the Buddha.

May all beings come out of their suffering. May all beings be truly happy. May all beings be enlightened.

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THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION

By

Dr. U Revata Dhamma, M.A., Ph.D.

(ENGLAND)

I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak to you today. I would like to apologise for any difficulty you may have in understanding my pronunciation.

Today I would like to discuss the subject of Buddhist meditation. My talk is entitled: “The Practical Results of *Vipassanā* Meditation.” Before dealing specifically with the technique of *Vipassanā* meditation however I would like to introduce the subject of Buddhist meditation to you as a whole.

There are currently many different types of Buddhist meditations being taught and practised in different parts of the world. The Mahāyāna schools are teaching various techniques according to the Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese traditions, such as the Vajrayāna, Tantra and Zen. Then there are the Theravāda techniques from schools in Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Cambodia. The Theravāda techniques also vary but all are based on the four-fold objects of awareness called ‘*Satipatṭhāna*’ in Pāli. This means awareness of the body, awareness of sensations, awareness of consciousness and awareness of thoughts. The Buddha declared that this path was the only way to liberation (*Ekāyano maggo*).

The Hindu scriptures say that God created all movable and immovable objects. The Bible says: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth”. But the Dhammapada opens with the words

“Mind precedes things, dominates them and creates them”. This is the unshakable reply of the Buddha to the Biblical and Vedic belief. So the mind is the most important object of meditation. It is so close to us and yet so unknown. Only by practicing observation of the mind can we fully understand the nature of mind and body as they really are—not only as they seem to be.

Our mental actions, bodily actions and vocal actions start from the mind. Whenever there is contact between our sense organs and external objects, such as visible forms, smells, sounds, tastes and touch, a sensation arises within our body, then reactions start which become a source of new actions. If we can control our minds, we can control all our actions.

The Buddha says that our bodies are made up of trillions upon trillions of tiny particles, each smaller than an atom, continually renewing themselves. They are arising and vanishing every moment millions of times, in the same way our minds are also arising and vanishing trillions of times a second. Scientists also agree that the human body continually renews itself under the right conditions. As those tiny particles, or *kalapas* as the Buddhist calls them, are in contact, sensations arise—this we call real or subtle sensations. When we practise *Vipassanā* meditation if our concentration is deep enough, we can observe those tiny particles arising and

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vanishing and in this way we can control the mind before any action arises. For this reason, the Dhammapada says:

“Though he conquers a thousand times a thousand men in the battlefield, he is not a real conqueror but the one who should conquer his own mind is the noblest conqueror.” Therefore mindfulness is the main object of meditation in the Theravāda school.

There are two main parts of Buddhist meditation. These are *Samatha*, or concentration of mind and *Vipassanā* or the purification of the mind. The aim of *Vipassanā* is to understand the true nature of mind and matter. *Samatha* was practised widely by Saints before the Buddha in India. The Buddha himself practised *Samatha* meditation before he became enlightened and attained all the absorptions himself, but found that the state of tranquillity he achieved was not lasting. The Buddha was looking for a way to end all suffering for ever. Finally he discovered the way by starting to observe the nature of mind and matter within himself. Through this technique he was able to realise ultimate truth—called the state of *Nirvana* the unconditioned state.

The *Samatha* meditation is only sufficient to uproot one’s grosser impurities. Through *Vipassanā* we can uproot the very subtlest of impurities, or *Samkhāras*, which are created by our past or present actions. The word ‘*Samkhāra*’ has many meanings, but in this context we can say ‘conditionings of the mind.’

The Buddha has taught us to understand the true nature of things through the observation of the five aggregates that comprise the mind and body. Through so doing we are able to perceive

the three qualities of all beings: that is, *Anicca*, or impermanence, *Dukkha*, or unsatisfactoriness and *Anattā* or the quality of having no soul.

The five aggregates are: form or matter, sensation or feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. These five aggregates together constitute what we call a being. The quality of this being is impermanent and because of this impermanence there is suffering. There is no other being, or quality of being outside these five aggregates that we call ‘I’ who experiences this suffering. According to the Buddhist philosophy, therefore there is suffering but no sufferer. Just as there are deeds but no doer. In short we can say the five aggregates consist of mind and matter and the purpose of Buddhist meditation is to understand the true nature of this mind and matter. For this reason the four objects of mindfulness are given, namely: body, sensations, consciousness and thoughts.

When we first begin to practise, it is not necessary to observe all four objects at once. We can choose one out of the four. By practising regularly the observation of one of the objects we will also come to understand the other three. Since the body and sensations are easier to observe, most teachers give importance to these two objects of awareness. Usually they start with the awareness of breathing and bodily movements together—although traditionally, mindfulness of breathing is regarded primarily as the object of *Samatha-bhāvanā*, tranquillity meditation. It can however be used for the development of insight. For *Vipassanā* meditation it is not necessary to attain the *jhānic* states or absorptions, but to understand the true nature of mind and matter it

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is necessary first to attain a state of what we call access concentration (*Upacāra samādhi*). Only a concentrated mind can experience reality.

By observing the breathing regularly, the meditator comes to understand the nature of the physical and mental processes. If he then gives attention to the bodily movements he comes to understand not only the nature of mind and matter but also the nature of the four elements that make up the body: Earth element—the entire range of weight from lightness to heaviness; Water element—the element of cohesion, of binding; Fire element—the entire range of temperature from heat to cold and Air element—the entire range of motion. The nature of these elements is also impermanent. To understand the nature of things means to understand that they are all *Anicca*—impermanent, *Dukkha*—unsatisfactory and *Anattā*—without soul. Through this understanding we come to realise the ultimate truth or *Nirvana*, the unconditioned state. This is the main aim of Buddhist meditation. In the same way, if we take as our object of meditation our sensations and mental formations the same understanding can be achieved.

At this point I would like to introduce you to a particular technique of meditation which was taught by U Ba Khin, a householder and civil servant of the Government of Burma which is now widely taught both in the East and West by some of his disciples whom he authorised to teach this technique. Some years ago the people in Buddhist countries and in other countries also, believed that meditation was only for old monks and not for the lay people. But at the present time it is now widely accepted that the Buddha's teaching is not only for monks but also for those

who are living a householder's life, who can both learn and teach meditation. If meditation was confined only to monks it would have little use—U Ba Khin was a good example of a householder and Government servant who could live and practise meditation very successfully. This technique is popularly called *Vipassanā* meditation. It is the method through which we can learn to follow the Noble Eightfold Path as taught by the Buddha. The path has three aspects: morality, concentration of mind and purification of mind.

Many people, past and present, have benefitted from the Noble Eightfold Path which is equally beneficial for monks and householders, young and old, men and women—to all human beings belonging to any caste, class and community, country, profession, religion or language group. There is no narrow sectarian limitation on the path. It is for all human beings at all times, in all places. It is universal, just as all kinds of suffering in life are universal, such as birth, old age, sickness, death, association with unpleasant persons and conditions, separation from loved ones or pleasant conditions, not getting what one desires, grief, lamentation, distress. All such forms of physical and mental discomfort are universally accepted as suffering or pain. When one applies the techniques of *Vipassanā* to lust, anger, fear, greed, infatuations jealousy, enmity, hatred, egoism and other emotions and passions, he will acquire the ability to face all these things with equanimity.

The foundation of this technique is the observance of the five basic precepts of morality—*pañcasīla*—which in practice means abstinence from killing, stealing, untruthfulness,

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sexual misconduct and the taking of intoxicants. It makes no difference whether or not one has been observing these precepts before beginning to practise the meditation.

The important thing is that from the time one begins to practise the technique one also begins to observe these precepts. They are necessary not because they were taught by the Buddha or by religious teachers, but because these five evils are the fruits of our mental aberrations and the root cause of the physical and mental ailments from which we are seeking relief.

We are nowadays suffering increasingly from certain new types of ailments such as nervous tension, strain, migraine, blood-pressure and so on, as well as unhappiness, constant cravings, mental instability. We therefore need to gather our spiritual forces. We need a technique that will help us to face all things with equanimity and one which gives results here and now. Through practising *Vipassanā* meditation we shall not only rid ourselves of these nervous diseases but also experience a corresponding degree of true happiness in this life.

So how do we practise this technique? We start by observing the five precepts and practising concentration of the mind. As our object of concentration we take the breathing—by focussing our attention on the nostrils with awareness of every ingoing and outgoing breath. It is very necessary at this stage to understand the difference between this exercise and the Hindu Yoga practice of *Pranayama*. In *Pranayama* the breathing is controlled or regulated, whereas in this Buddhist *Ānāpāna* practice we observe only the natural breathing as it is. The word *Ānāpāna* means ‘awareness of breathing’. The Hindu

practice of Yoga also attaches great importance to the sitting posture, whereas for the practice of Buddhist *Ānāpāna* any posture that is comfortable will do.

When we concentrate our minds continuously on the breathing at the entrance of the nostrils, our awareness will gradually become sharper and more consistent. If, while experiencing the touch feeling of the breath in the nostrils and in the nose, there appears any other real sensation in the nose or in the vicinity we give attention to that also. There are many kinds of sensations that appear, such as: smarting, tingling, pins and needles, heat and cold, pulsations or throbbing, flushing, blushing, chilliness and so on. Whatever sensations we experience we have to observe. There may be some that are merely a result of autosuggestion or imagination, but the Teacher can help us to understand what is reality and what is imagination.

After this stage we begin to observe sensations throughout the body from head to feet, from feet to head. This is what is called *Vipassanā* which in fact means to observe things properly, in correct perspective, to see things as they really are, not only as they seem to be.

Vipassanā teaches one to be a detached observer of one’s own physical sensations and mental emotions. The meditator learns to accept all sensations, pleasant or unpleasant, without any reaction, that is with equanimity, or balance of mind. In this way *Vipassanā* is a very effective and yet simple technique to rid ourselves of the mental stresses and strains that are so common nowadays.

As a result of continuous practice the meditator begins to be aware of sensations in a

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fully detached way, without any craving or aversion continuing his detached observations he notices how the sensations come and go. He will begin to realise that all sensations, whether pleasant or unpleasant, are impermanent and vanishing. Attachment is lessened and the meditator sees that unpleasant sensations are unpleasant while the sensations which are felt to be pleasant also become a cause of suffering when they disappear, because of our attachment to them.

Attachment is further lessened as the meditator penetrates deeper into the realities of the body and discovers that everything within it is in a state of flux; that there is nothing within the body or mind that can be called 'I' or 'Mine' and that the world of the body and mind is false, illusory and without essence.

Understanding this, the meditator automatically develops an attitude of detachment. In this way, based on the experience of sensations the meditator will come to know that attachment is the root cause of all suffering. To uproot this attachment the meditator should practise *Vipassanā* regularly. The main aim of *Vipassanā* is to understand the ultimate truth of Nirvana, but if *Vipassanā* becomes our way of life we shall be able to attain a greater degree of happiness and peace of mind here and now in this life.

As we uproot our impurities, so we allow the purities of *Mettā*, *Karuṇā*, *Muditā* and *Upekkhā* to arise in our minds. *Mettā* means love, pure love, loving kindness, universal love, infinite love or boundless love. There are many kinds of love between human beings.

There is a parent's love for his or her child; a husband's love for his wife; a wife's love for her

husband; sisterly and brotherly love; love between man and woman, between relatives and friends. But none of these forms of love is *Mettā*, pure love. They are all rooted in *Lobha*, craving, in *Upādāna*, attachment and in *Moha*, ignorance.

Karuṇā means compassion, pure compassion, infinite compassion or boundless compassion. There are many kinds of compassion. If our nearest and dearest are suffering, compassion also starts in us; we start to share their misery and sorrow because of our attachment for them. But if someone else is suffering, for whom we have no attachment, then we do not feel compassion, we do not feel their misery ourselves. This is not *Karuṇā*, infinite compassion. Similarly, if those who are dear to us are happy and successful and we feel happy for them because of our attachment, this is also not *Muditā*, sympathetic joy, for it is rooted in ignorance. *Muditā* means pure sympathetic joy, infinite sympathetic joy for all human beings, known or unknown, without any discrimination.

Upekkhā means equanimity. This is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, firmly based on insight. To the extent that we can come out of our attachment to self—to 'me' and 'mine'—this much we will be filled with equanimity, Equanimity is the greatest of the four states (of *Mettā*, *Karuṇā*, *Muditā* and *Upekkhā*). This is not to say that equanimity supersedes Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy. They all include one another.

As long as we have impurities or defilements within us we cannot give this pure love to other beings. This love is obscured or blocked by our impurities. Once we have started to purify ourselves through *Vipassanā* meditation — that

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much impurity we have removed — to this extent we are able to give *mettā* to others.

Mettā embraces all beings without exception. It means loving-kindness to all beings without exception. It is loving-kindness to all sentient beings known or unknown, near or far, big or small, seen or unseen; without distinction as to race, creed or colour. This love has no limitation—it is boundless. When our love is limited to certain people such as our parents, children or friends or if it is based on an expectation of something in return this is not *Mettā Bhāvanā*. *Mettā Bhāvanā* is one-way traffic—it expects nothing in return.

If I love someone with expectation of love in return and the love is not returned, my love then turns to *dosa*, aversion. This is not *mettā*, it is rooted in selfish desires. If there is someone with whom we are on bad terms, every time we see him we become angry, thoughts start coming ‘he said this, he did that’— anger, anger, and this perpetuates our impurities. But if when someone tries to do harm to us or abuses us we can give him *mettā* we will not then carry his abuses with us for days and days in our memories. Such memories are the cause of many impurities and much unhappiness. Why should we cause ourselves unhappiness because of others? This is a way of life— giving love to others. If you know of anyone who has done harm to you, you can send *mettā* to him in particular during your *Mettā Bhāvanā* meditation and you will see that his

attitude will change within a few days.

The Buddha said:

Nahi verena verāni

Sammantīdha kudācanam

Averena ca sammamti

Esa Dhammo sanantano

Hatred cannot cease through hatred. It only can cease through love (or *mettā*). This is the ancient law of nature. If I return hatred with hatred there will never come peace—only through love will peace come. This is the unchanging law of nature.

Pure love is to give, only to give. The best way to express infinite love is to give the best that we have—and for anyone practising *Vipassanā* the best that he has is the peace and harmony he has attained through the practice of *Vipassanā*. This is the most valuable thing that we have—and that is what we would like to share with others. The pure love and the compassion can only be given by those who have purified their minds through the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation. *Vipassanā* meditation helps us to live peacefully and harmoniously with others, and to have a peaceful and happy life.

Ladies and Gentlemen! thank you very much for listening so patiently to my talk. I hope you may now find the opportunity to practise *Vipassanā* meditation for your own benefit. And may true happiness come to you all.

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THE ROLE OF VIPASSANĀ IN MY LIFE

By

Miss Pushpa Sukla

(India)

For ages human beings are confronted with numerous problems of families, societies, customs and creeds. One time, we try to find solace in worldly pleasures. Another time we submit ourselves to religions. Still another time, we keep ourselves absorbed in continuous activities. But at the end of all this, when we come to ourselves, we realize that we haven't achieved what we longed for.

We want to be sincere and honest, truthful and simple, courageous and brave, don't we? There isn't any aspect of life on which from a book to a volume is not written and yet we fail to find a solution to our questions.

Then a question arises whether there is any remedy that can be applied to this. To my mind, the answer to this question is, 'Yes there is.'

I was a person who wanted to realize God but did not know how to do it. I read books. I listened to sermons but neither reading nor sermons helped me the least. I asked *Sadhakas* how they did meditation but their answers did not satisfy me. Whatever I heard and read I tried to put into practice, but in vain. I was so disappointed and frustrated that I often soliloquized that it would be better if I died. Life seemed to me worthless and meaningless. The very purpose for which I kept myself unmarried seemed to me lost.

When I was on the verge of breaking down, I came to know about *Vipassanā* and Guruji Goenkaji. I decided to participate in the meditation course of ten days held at Baroda in 1973. When I reached the camp and saw the participants gathered at the meditation camp at a glance, they looked to me ordinary worldly people who gathered to hear the sermon of a priest. I was on the point of deciding whether I should attend the camp or not. Just then my glance fell upon a lady who looked like a *sadhika* and who had attended meditation courses before. The talk with her revealed to me that I would be able to see myself with an inward eye if I attended the camp. I took her statement literally and so I hoped to see my body from within after *Vipassanā Sadhana*.

During the meditation course, I had to take five vows, namely, (1) I would not tell lies, (2) I would not steal, (3) I would not be violent, (4) I would not take any intoxicating drinks, and (5) I would observe *brahmachariya*.

Then I was asked to concentrate on the breath as it entered and left my nostrils. I had not to think about anything else while doing so. This was called '*Ānāpāna*'. Little by little I became aware of a point on my upper lip. On the fourth day, I was initiated in *Vipassanā*. I was asked to note the point on my upper lip and then I had to

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pay attention to the upper part of my head. Thus I took my mind from head to feet and from feet to head. According to the lady whom I met on the first day at the meditation camp I was to see my inner body on this day. Instead of seeing my inner-self I saw Lord Shiva and light which made me joyful. But Guruji told me not to pay attention to those things as they were only obstacles in the way of *Sadhana*. It is strange that after *Vipassanā* as soon as I closed my eyes, I saw a lot of snakes curved into one-another. On inquiry I came to know from Guruji that it was a sign of fear.

I continued my meditation at home and as days passed I began to feel that the current was passing throughout my body day and night. I wrote to Guruji about it and learnt from him that it would purify both my mind and body.

Though the first meditation course made me experience vibration in my upper lip and the current passing throughout my body, I was not satisfied because I had built castles in the air. I meant that I thought I would be able to see myself with the inward eye. I mention here this to let the new *Sadhakas* know that in *sadhana* whatever we experience is only the truth. Hence it is useless

to inquire of others what they experience during their meditation.

Disappointed as I was owing to the great expectations, I continued meditating and participating in *Vipassanā* courses. In October 1976, I attended the third meditation camp at Igatpuri. Now I am somewhat satisfied with the progress I have made. Now it appears to me that *Vipassanā* will turn over a new leaf in my life. I was like a flower without fragrance, a ship without a sail. Now I feel that at last I have found out what I had been searching for since long.

The important question relating to *Sadhana* is where do the experiences the *Sadhaka* has during the *Sadhana* lead him to? The answer to this question is that they lead him to realize the truth which he can never learn otherwise.

Vipassanā has made me more patient and peaceful than I was. I can concentrate more keenly than I used to do. *Sadhana* may be a blessing after this life but I know for certain that it is very beneficial in this very life. I experience how it helps me in my day-to-day work. Whatever work I undertake, is done in a better way than before. This makes me feel that I discharge my duties more successfully and efficiently.

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TEN DAYS JOURNEY OF NEW BIRTH FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

By

Dr. B. G. Salva

(INDIA)

It was indeed a new birth, like bursting of Eggshell darkness.

With sense of deep gratitude to the authoress of an article on *Vipassanā* in a magazine, introducing this subject, and gratitude to a Jain Muni for giving address of whom to contact for joining a course, and equally deep gratitude to organisers of the meditation camps—who after persistently replying no vacancy, gave last minute telegraphic consent to join the course starting next day, 600 miles away at Bombay, the journey started.

Camp—everything new, unexpected, unthought of and (24 hours of) study first day revealed that this is the method to realise truth for which one wandered from time to time, from place to place, from this Mahatma to that saint, without satisfaction.

Every day a new step, a higher one, nearer to the goal, caught one spellbound.

But the body will not cooperate with many aches and pains, the mind will not cooperate with unusual long periods of sloth and sleepiness, a part of mind refusing to continue the practice, but another stronger part of mind prevailing to work hard and fight out all obstacles, resulted in unbelievable sense of inner joy-experienced for

the first time in life during first 3 days on path...working on concentration of mind by *Ānāpānasati*.

On fourth day, everything changed, as if you entered another world, a world within, revealing Truth as it really is, breaking down apparent truth or illusion of solidity or permanency.

Sixth day started with 'Ehipassiko'—come and see, all you relatives and friends, come and see this wonderful method, so simple and yet so scientific, to lead one from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light.

Most probably on seventh day, I experienced a state of Ecstasy, feeling that ultimate truth is revealed to me during meditation—with real happiness and peace within.

Alas, 8th day, and, MARA succeeded in impairing the progress by coming with nobler appearance this time. Mind changed its gears from drowsiness to over activeness, activities coming in the garb of saintliness, with the sole hidden aim of dislocating from right direction.

One such big jerk by restless mind came on 8th day. Completely taking me off the feet, unfortunately for few hours, making me walk out of the meditation campus, thus seriously affecting the progress and continuity of practice.

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And 10 days were over, like a flash of light— amidst the noisiest central part of the city where there was no difference between turmoil of day and night and yet one was unaware of it.

Without personal experience, it is unbelievable to think that, in such a short span of ten days, with such simple technique, that most people can follow a path without any discrimination of colour, creed, place etc., and yet so rational, that no blind faith is necessary in scriptures or Gurus or teachers.

Thus unforgettable light was lit, the light

which will take the follower to ultimate Truth, to lasting happiness and peace of Nibbāna.

How to pay the debt to the finder of this wonderful remedy, which dissolves the pains and suffering of humanity once and forever. Buddha, the Enlightened One, who not only found it out, but with infinite compassion distributed it to the ailing beings. And glory to all the Masters, who, generation after generation from that time till today, practised the technique of *Vipassanā* and preserved it in its pristine purity, so that today anyone can learn from them and practise for their own salvation.

VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION: MY EXPERIENCES

By

Shyam Sundar Taparia

(India)

In March 1971 I underwent a camp with Shri Goenka. My experiences and attainments since should easily interest anybody who is seeking peace of mind and revival of health that is sagging for want of it.

Let me briefly provide a picture of what I was before March 1971. I was 33 years of age, but devoid of any enthusiasm.

Life was a burden for me. I had an annihilated will-power. Lack of confidence in myself kept me in indecision, affecting the business. Family relationship and life was in a bad shape—one of fully choked up communication channel. Health was poor and weak. This was leading to chronic illness adding to my debility.

Such an I arrived a day late in the camp but was fortunate to get good insight and practice of *Vipassanā*. I can still recall the vibrating ‘*Mettā*’ en masse in my body on the 9th day of the camp. Cleansing was so deep and thorough that I could easily keep up my daily sittings in the morning and evening even after the camp. I could even perceive the changes in sensations that took place within my body when I got disturbed or agitated. The ‘perception’ helped me to overcome the same. I have kept up the practice largely regular. I have attended four full camps so far besides some very brief self-courses.

My present picture, as perceived by me, is that I am fully confident of myself. Much of my

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fears and anxieties are gone. Whatever remain are weak currents and are perceived at a very subtle level of sensations. I am full of positive energy and am able to convert most business and family situations, including very difficult ones, into purposeful and constructive ones. Family relationship is improving. Few illnesses have visited me during this time, and the ones that have, caused, much less suffering, and weakness in the body. Now I enjoy a rather good health.

In the true tradition of Lord Buddha, the teacher U S. N. Goenka keeps on emphasising that the student shall have to work out his own salvation; the teacher can only show the path. This is quite understandable because he wants to discourage the tendency of building up a personality cult or Gurudom which is quite common in our country. With this blind faith the student starts depending more on the teacher without working on his own. But the fact remains that the *Mettā* and *Dhamma* vibrations of the teacher do help a student. I write with my own experience, how time and again I have felt his *Mettā* vibrations, presumably strengthened by those of the higher beings from the cosmic universe. I can also say based on my own personal experience that with practice of *vedanānupassanā*, in course of time a student becomes quite sensitive himself and starts feeling

the positive or negative vibrations generated by an individual whom he meets; he also develops the ability to generate *Mettā* vibrations for others which of course are effective only with the base of purity gained by the understanding of *Anicca* in *Vipassanā* meditation.

There is a growing realisation within me of the impermanence (ANICCA) of all mind and matter. Feeling of “Egolessness” (ANATTĀ) is gaining ground by revealing itself in ever greater number of situations by itself. The following statement has deeply penetrated my mind and heart: “There is no DOER of things. There is ‘NOBODY’ who experiences. All that ‘happens’ and ‘is perceived’ is phenomena of mind and matter according to their own ‘DHAMMA’ or nature.”

And this knowledge or ‘VIDYA’ has transformed my life. The mind is most of the time working on doing good unto others—one and all—without ‘discretions’. A lesson of ‘LIFE’ has been learnt. Life is now being lived and experienced. Mind is more often in the present rather than wandering in the ‘brooding over of the past’ or ‘anxieties of the future’.

There is less of seeking now within me. Things are happening and I have a growing awareness that ‘DHAMMO HAVE RAKKHATI DHAMMACARIM.

LET GOOD HAPPEN TO ALL BEINGS

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EHI-PASSIKO

By

Susan Elbaum

(India)

Before coming to India in 1976, I was involved in the intellectual pursuits of an academic career and at the same time in the so-called radical movement in American politics during the height of the Vietnam War. I was a perfect example of upper middle class urban children who went away to college in the early 60's. Many of us idealistically tried to find a way to help suffering people without really knowing what we were doing. We never saw how such mental violence and ill-will was being generated in the name of pacifism, how much power was being justified in the name of 'Women's Liberation', or how little we really knew of our own minds, let alone things outside.

The intellectual games in college and high school had been fun. Here there was always some novelty the mind could grasp at and devour for a while. But this too was wearing thin as the necessity of settling down in one limited field became apparent; and I grew bored with the perpetual pattern of read, analyse, memorise, repeat. It was all too easy, too trivial and completely separate from the *Dukkha* that was life. Neither the politics nor the academics really seemed worth putting up with life for, and there wasn't much other basis for existing either.

By the time I got to India the mind had become quite disturbed and unsettled. I found myself

constantly and uncontrollably lashing out at those I was closest to and always blaming them. Mental rigidity was fast coming in as well and I was unable to accept the slightest thing going against my will of the moment. In short, I knew I was rapidly losing control of my mind as tension, clinging and aversion were mounting.

It was in this frame of mind that I was willing and actually anxious to try *Vipassanā* meditation—I who previously would never have considered entrusting my precious self to anyone else. With the first course in October, 1970, I knew I had found the way to answer the basic questions of life I had been tormented by. I also felt that I had some very old connection with Buddha Dhamma, though of course I had never even considered the possibility of rebirth, coming from an agnostic Jewish background.

Six years of very hard work battling with a stubbornly recalcitrant mind later, now, I see many changes for the better. Through the insights gained in *Vedanānupassanā* many of the grossest layers of the mental impurities have definitely worn off. Although it is clear that all the underlying tendencies are still there waiting to rear their ugly heads and react quite strongly if the awareness and understanding of *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anattā* are particularly weak in a certain situation.

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The mind is still not as flexible as would be ideal—but at least the initial negative reactions are not so totally overwhelming; now they do pass off quite soon to allow reason to prevail. Where I was constantly running away from myself, seeking diversion and entertainment in the complexities of modern society, now I can be content with a perfectly simple life—cut down to necessities. I always had had a fairly strong innate moral sense, but it was without any understanding of *kamma* or any firm roots and my ideas of helping other people were really irrelevant to their needs at all. Now, keeping *Sīla* is the very foundation of my life because I see how much suffering always follows an immoral life. And I have developed the humility to see that only through serving the *Dhamma* can I truly serve others, as self-understanding alone can

really liberate beings from misery. I know that much more purifying of the mind is required before such service can be done really effectively. But still a beginning must be made in *dāna* and service at a basic level in order to develop *Paramis* and to express the tremendous gratitude that has developed towards the *Dhamma* itself and to the Buddha and the unbroken chain of teachers from his time who have kept the teachings alive in this their perfectly pure form.

In conclusion, all there is to say is because of my own personal experience, ‘ehipassiko’—come and see and try *Vedanānupassanā*, this eminently practical method of living the Buddha’s teachings. Only in this way can we liberate ourselves and really overcome the inherent *Dukkha* of existence.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE FREE FROM ALL SUFFERING

VIPASSANĀ—EXPERIENCES AND BENEFITS

By

Rajendra Singh

(India)

Though it is very difficult, to relate all the experiences (not mystical) but those which have become living facts can very well be described here.

I had attended my first *Vipassanā* Camp on 7.10.75 at Jaipur and at such a juncture of my life when my bad health had posed a very unhappy situation for me. At the same time my spiritual aspirations were no less and I was much concerned about the purpose of my life and my

contribution to the Society.

Though I studied *Gīta* and delved with devouring interest in the Philosophy of Vedānta, Yoga and Sāṅkhya for years together and accepted them as my way of life, I found it very difficult to practise them and so I aspired to learn something which could help me in realising these great philosophies. It is with this background that my experiences have to be viewed.

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HEALTH:

Immediately after my first camp the amoebiasis which had troubled me for over a decade became much less frequent and its side effects disappeared altogether. My digestion improved and fatigue was gone and I felt an overall feeling of rest, put together sort of feeling and happiness. During my subsequent daily meditations I experienced pain releasing out of my liver because due to amoebiasis my liver often used to get enlarged and was always tender. I felt as if the body turned at 45 degrees to the left with liver portion stretching to make me turn. But outwardly the body remained in its position with head of course turning towards left. This continued for some days and later both pain and the mental twist vanished.

As my understanding of the technique grew my meditation became more effective and now there is an all round improvement in my health. There is a tremendous improvement in my digestion. I noticed that a glass of milk taken half an hour before meditation gets digested during meditation very quickly. It applies to other meals also but I do not think that it is advisable to do except when one wants to have easy burps after a hearty meal.

Yet another improvement which I have noticed is that the wrinkles and exhaustion which marked my face and the stiffness in my body has totally disappeared. I am not sure but I feel that even yogic exercises will not give that elasticity which one gets through meditation. Now I feel fresh and have regained to a great extent the body elasticity, health and happiness.

This way I have come to believe that for all outward investigations of a recurring disease

germs may appear to be the cause but in fact it is the mental impurity (the store of our anger, jealousy, strong likes and dislikes and pride etc.) which create conditions in body where germs of a particular type can thrive. In my case when the tension and mental twist at liver and abdomen were reduced I got rid of a decade-old amoebiasis without taking any drug. Similarly when the tension in my head was reduced the wrinkles and exhaustion disappeared.

Recession Of Anger, Hatred Etc:

The hold of angry thoughts, hatred, strong likes and dislikes no longer torment me and though they still appear but not with force. During my first camp I dreamt one night that I was kicking very hard at a spiked Porcupine which became powerless and then vanished. In the same camp I experienced a mental twist which rose from my back and reached upto the back of my neck and subsided giving me a feeling of great relaxation which seemed as if I have been united.

During my second camp at Igatpuri and later also I used to get such powerful burps which seemed to come from the depths of my stomach and some of them caused burning sensations in my throat. Tensions still appear in my head and liver and then subside. Once tension appeared with a burning sensation right in my left eye and left forehead for a few minutes which reminded me of an accident in 1973 or 74 when while playing squash my left eye was directly hit by the ball. I do not know whether the two incidents can be linked.

Once during meditation I experienced a painful cramp in my neck which took more than 5 minutes to disappear. During one sitting I experienced pain in my abdomen and

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simultaneously visualised without effort that a snake was wriggling out at a distant place. After some-time the pain and the picturised thought disappeared. I believe Gandhiji had said that it is the poison in our mind, which creates poisonous reptiles.

All these experiences have confirmed that meditation is throwing out the muck of anger, hatred, jealousy etc. which I had stored in my subconscious mind. How unfortunate it is that though overwhelming majority of human race professes faith in one religion or the other but because of the impurities in the subconscious mind they are not in a position to live upto their faith. *Vipassanā* would certainly help them do it.

A Basis For Morality:

Morality is the basis of meditation. When meditation destroyed my afflictions, pain and disease which according to its principles are the result of anger, hatred, violence, dishonesty, strong attachment etc. (immorality), it naturally became clear to me that love and goodness, that is, *morality rules the elements* and thus I have acquired a positive value structure for my social and economic ideas to stand on. Quite contrary to a popular notion that values change in every age, I now firmly believe that morality which has the eternal values of life can never change and no state can derecognise the human goodness. Not only this but *Vipassanā* has made it very easy for me to practise morality and I have become

more considerate in dealing with people and situations.

I remember once when I was elected general secretary of my college with an overwhelming majority, I started actualising my belief in success by whatever means, fair or foul. Today I brand this kind of thing as pseudo leadership for self-aggrandizement with narrow outlook. It is noteworthy that meditation cleans the subconscious minds of the people but we foolishly neglect it for the sake of rituals or because of wrong ideas about religion.

The Moorings:

When I close my eyes to meditate there are only two things to witness. They are picturesque thoughts and total feeling of the body and mind. They both keep on changing or unfolding of their own and though I don't claim this conscious observation and awareness to be constant and perfect, I think it is quite fair to say that man can stop identifying himself with his thoughts and be mindful not to be involved in and dragged by them. The thinking process goes on—on the basis of its past experiences and we foolishly identify ourselves with it.

Vipassanā has thus given me a place to sit down and watch the flux of time for which I shall bear an eternal gratitude to Lord Buddha, my teacher Shri Goenkaji, his Guru Sayagyi U Ba Khin and to the entire creation.

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MEDITATION FOR TEN DAYS STRAIGHT (A Crash Course in India)

By

Dennis Bailey

(U.S.A)

Bodh Gaya, India

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato-Sammā-Sambuddhassa. “In the name of the Lord, the Holy One, The perfectly Enlightened One.”

Gently, letting each word slowly emerge and spread in the silent air, with this ancient chant the teacher begins his instruction seated on a slightly raised platform in the darkened meditation hall of the Burmese Buddhist Monastery in Bodh Gaya.

Here, in Bodh Gaya, Siddhartha, the disaffected, son of a mighty king, sat down beneath a tree in meditation, and rose up again the Buddha, the perfectly Enlightened One, and went out into the world to show to others the path. Down 25 centuries his teachings have been passed, in many different forms and now, in the dim hush of the meditation hall, the process continues.

The teacher—he insists he is simply a teacher, small “t”, not a Guru, not a Saint—speaks slowly and softly; in English, and with a concentrated force behind his words which makes each of us in the hall feel directly and intimately addressed.

He explains that the course, which will last ten days, is intended as an introduction to be of Buddhism’s more simple methods of meditation. But he warns that although the method may be simple, the practice is rigorous.

At least for the duration of the course, a minimum of ten hours daily practice is expected of each student. Ten hours sitting motionless, eyes closed, concentrating on the method, confronting the inner chaos, the wavering and erratic fluctuation of the mind, the ceaseless seeking after sensation of the life-force, the sullen intractability of the physical body itself, which will not sit still, which must scratch this itch, flex that aching knee.

Our day will begin at 4 am, with a two hour pre-breakfast meditation, and continue till nine at night, alternating between periods of meditation, meals, and rest, with each evening a short discourse by the teacher on some aspect of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

A total immersion in a state of concentrated meditation is aimed at. We are asked, even during the rest periods, not to write, draw, play music, practice any other form of yoga or meditation, or do anything at all not related to the method being taught. Inside the monastery precincts—and we are not to leave, not even to step into the street to buy a handful of peanuts, while the course is in progress—the first five vows of the novice Buddhist monk are enjoined on us.

Harmlessness is one, injury to no living being, including, the teacher is careful to point out, the clouds of mosquitoes who find the motionless meditators such wonderfully easy prey.

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The other four are to accept only what is given, to speak only the truth, to refrain from any form of sexual contact, and to take no intoxicant of any kind. (Tobacco, to the dismay of many, is definitely considered to be an intoxicant.)

He doesn't look much like anyone's idea of an Eastern Master, this slightly pudgy man with his loose Western clothes and neatly barbered head. But then we may not look much like his idea of disciples. There are more than a hundred of us, packed knee to folded knee in the meditation hall, mostly Westerners, mostly young, and mostly with our heads in many different places. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, atheists, agnostics, acid heads, puritans, unidentifiable flying objects, the only thing we seem to have in common is that we're all here now, and the teacher, very quietly, very slowly, is beginning to initiate us into the practice.

It doesn't take long to tell us how to begin. Begin, he says, and we begin.

The eyes strive to keep focussed on the very simple object of concentration which we have all been given. But the entire universe, down to the last confusing detail, seems to have been devised precisely to make such focussing impossible. The mosquito whine and noise in the street, and the rush of air in the nostril, and slow throb of blood in the veins. Quickly the body stiffens and the legs become numb, heavy, finally painful. "Try," the teacher said, "and see if you can sit still, really sit, not moving a muscle."

(You find if you sit still long enough, really, absolutely still, that your circulatory system somehow sorts itself out and the pain and the numbness pass. But once you give in and start shifting your body, no matter how slightly, the

relief thus obtained is only temporary, and you find yourself moving more and more often, always a bit embarrassed at the slight scuffling disturbance you make, aware that you're not supposed to move at all.)

But the body is easy to nail down compared to the constantly vibrating life-force within the body, and the constantly shifting cloud of mind hovering over and around it.

Smells rising up from the kitchen draw you out, and you follow them down and find yourself wondering really one-pointedly what's for lunch, turning the question—is it peas or potatoes, that steamed earth smell?—over and over in your mind with a wonderfully intense concentration.

Subtle vibrations from the people around you reach out and mingle with your own. Scent of sandalwood, sandalwood shampoo, the long blonde woman in the Kashmiri shawl, the two of you walking down a long beach into a red sun, ankle-deep in gentle waves, seagulls softly calling, the raucous caws of crows in the monastery garden snap the mind, snap back to breathing in the darkness, and oh yes, the monastery darkness....now where was I?

Each time, a hundred times an hour at first, like a man with a wild monkey on a long chain, you haul the awareness back to its tethering point. You will yourself not to think, but thought chucks on doggedly regardless. Odd the thoughts that come, things you haven't thought about for years. How Linda came to your 14th birthday party and you. No, not that thought. Please not that thought. Anything but that.

(You remember maybe the story of the seeker who asked the wise man how to attain

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enlightenment and was told it's simple, nothing to it, do anything you like. Just don't think about monkeys. Strange how repression seems to lead straight to obsession, isn't it?)

And through it all from time to time, often seeming to come incredibly at just the right moment, the sound of the teacher's calm voice, advising, encouraging, reminding.

And so the ten days pass, superficially spinning on a cycle of sameness, mind and body sullen and bored by kicks no, greater than walking

in the garden, lining up for lunch. But inside, visible in everyone's eyes, something else is waking up, striking out in new directions, continually moving on, making new discoveries, finding out for itself that the world within is easily as vast and complex and interesting as the world without.

The method, that is to say, works.

So let's just say that the journey ended as it began, with 100 people in a dim-lit room, and an ancient mantra patterning the air with deep-droning sound.

ART OF LIVING AND PURPOSEFUL LIFE

By

Bankey Lal Gupta

(India)

I was advised by a friend in April 1973 to attend a course on '*Vipassanā Sadhana*' (Meditation) which was then being conducted. After initial hesitation, as any common person with responsibilities of life will naturally have, I attended the course for the first time at Madras, the duration of which was for a period of ten days. Till that time, I had been suffering from chronic headache, constipation and many other ailments. While going in for the 10 day course, the only object in my mind was to get away, for a short time of course, from the routine of life and devote myself solely to spiritualism. After the completion of the course, I could, not only divert my energies towards better thinking but was also

benefitted a great deal physically. I got rid of my chronic and some other ailments, like a miracle happening at the command of a supernatural being. As the time passes out, the power of concentration in me is increasing significantly.

This course which is normally of 10 days' duration, is conducted during periodic intervals by a gentleman, affectionately known as Kalyanmitra (well wisher), free of cost, as a part of service to humanity. He comes from a family of big business house and was once himself a victim of serious and incurable ailment depending for his existence entirely on morphine injections. He underwent best available medical treatment in various foreign countries but with no positive

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result. It was by chance that he was persuaded by some of his friends to participate in a 10 day *Vipassanā* course camp and he got complete cure after going through this technique. After getting rid of this incurable disease and after having enjoyed the fruits of *Sadhana*, he has now made it his mission of life for the past so many years to share this precious gem with others. Leaving the business responsibilities to his brothers and children, he is now devoting almost all his time entirely to the cause of teaching *Vipassanā Sadhana*.

You will be inquisitive to know as to what really this '*Vipassanā Sadhana*' means to a lay man and what is its object? *Vipassanā* (Vipashyana) means special vision, i. e. vision of the ultimate truth. Nevertheless, different people call it the manifestation of vibratory force, Pranic energy, Mental power, Chit Shakti, Vital force, Life force, etc. etc. Like physical exercise, it teaches us the technique of training the mind. In other words, it is a technique which invokes the power to control mind with the object of promoting one's physical, spiritual and over-all growth and well-being. While man has mastery over matter, he still lacks mastery over his mind. When a person focuses his attention into his own self by way of *Vipassanā Sadhana* (introspective meditation) and makes an analytical study then, he understands the true nature of the mind and then by constant practice he is able to eradicate slowly all the evil tendencies of the mind. With the constant practice of *Sadhana*, one becomes 'conscious' by controlling the 'sub-conscious' and the 'unconscious' self within. The mind has an inherent tendency to keep on moving all the time, thinking either of the past or the future. It never wants to stay in the present. It also keeps looking

'outside', refusing to see one's own self or 'inside'. This *Sadhana* aims at keeping your mind 'within' yourself and in the 'present'.

Having examined the objects of this technique, let me explain the impact or the effect of the technique on the *Sadhaks* or those who practise the same. Needless to say that the technique (*Vipassanā*) aims at restoring complete mental peace and happiness on the *Sadhaks* by a process of reducing and ultimately eradicating the causes that lead to uneasiness and tensions. It is an established fact that most of the physical ailments which make life miserable are of mental origin, mostly unconnected with bacterial infection, deficiencies or other causes. There have been a number of cases where people through *Vipassanā* were cured from diseases like Blood-pressure, Heart-attack, Ulcers, Asthma, Sleeplessness, Migrainic headache, Tuberculosis, Cancer etc.

People not only from, this country but those drawn from different lands such as Burma, Malaysia, USA, UK, Germany and many other nations also take part in *Vipassanā Sadhana*. Also people from different walks of life, such as chief Justices, Scientists, Psychologists, Businessmen, Professors, Industrialists, Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Politicians, Sarvodaya workers, Students and people frustrated in life from here and abroad have learnt this technique and have obtained satisfaction and benefitted by it. Young and old, men and women irrespective of any caste, creed, faith, class, community, country or language group can join this course. It is universal for all human beings for all times and all places because all human beings are victims of the same illness manifesting itself in different ways and forms, the remedy of which is therefore equally

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applicable to all. This path does not teach us to run away from the problems. The house-holders and the other common people who have to face the hard realities of life, get the necessary strength by this *Sadhana* and they face it with peace and equanimity of mind. In short it teaches us the ART OF LIVING & MAKING LIFE PURPOSEFUL.

Not only myself, but a number of persons have got the firm opinion that this *Sadhana* is the easiest and the best to change the mental attitude

of the mankind. The real happiness cannot be experienced merely by reading highly philosophical or religious books or by listening to thought-provoking discourses. The key process consists in transforming our thoughts which ultimately affect our words and actions. In fact the Bliss could be experienced but cannot be explained.

May you enjoy happiness and peace throughout.

MY THANKS TO VIPASSANĀ

By

Shri Balraj Chandhok

(India)

It was my good fortune that I joined the *Vipassanā* camp at Madras in October end, 1973. Thanks to this simple technique, it is now possible to keep the process of thoughts concentrated and to bring back the mind on the right track whenever it wanders. A particular type of “thought wave force” is developed within the body. I am gaining more and more spiritual confidence and having new experiences.

Coming to the physical benefits, I have to say that at my age of 47 years, I have a long history of ailments, starting with Diabetes for the last 17 years, “Slip Disc” Back/Waist pain for the last over 15 years, kidney stones for the last nine years, tendency of High Blood Pressure for the last six years with Gastric Indigestion and Hernia.

Now my back pain, though not permanently cured is almost gone. On 26th November, 73 I felt heaviness in head and on medical check up my Blood Pressure was found to be 110-160. My doctor knew about my meditation and he was kind to permit me to experiment with *Sadhana* without putting me on any medicines. The next day’s check showed Blood Pressure at 105-150, thereafter each day there was a further progress and on the 5th day it came to 92-138. Since then I have not suffered from Blood Pressure.

My much more eventful and spectacular experience was about my kidney stones. Before joining the meditation camp I was supposed to undergo Hernia operation. I requested my doctor to postpone it till I can finish my meditation

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course which he granted. About 25 days after completing my *Vipassanā Sadhana* course, I went to the doctor to fix up the date for my Hernia operation. Before fixing the operation date the doctor wanted to take some fresh X-rays of my kidney with some other special tests. All my previous X-rays showed many small stones with three bigger stones rooted deep and high in the kidney for the last many years which did not bother me till May, 1973. However, when the fresh X-rays were taken my doctor was pleasantly surprised to find that some smaller stones had already passed out, and out of the three big stones, two had moved down to the Bladder. The Surgeon Doctor was now keen that those two big stones in the Bladder should come out before he undertook the operation. So on my request and on the advice of our family, the Surgeon agreed to my making the experiment and to see if any positive result at all could be achieved by mere force of *Sadhana*.

It was my good luck that within a week's time two big stones passed out smoothly without

causing any pain or trouble to me. Encouraged by this success it was decided to try to bring out the third bigger stone as well, from its original deep location, which was thought to be rather difficult. With the continuous application of the "thought wave" with deeper concentration, positive results can be achieved. By this process within next 15 days the third bigger stone with all the remaining smaller stones as well passed out. Now the fresh X-rays taken recently show no trace of any stone left out anywhere.

There are other good side-effects also with continuous *Vipassanā Sadhana* both mentally and physically. I feel very light in mind; peaceful and contented person in day to day life. It helps to overcome worries. There is a positive change in attitude and understanding towards others, which is more of love and co-operation instead of grumbling or undue criticism. I am indeed lucky that I joined the camp and got such astonishing results so quickly. I hope to make further progress step by step.

APPRECIATIONS FROM SADHAKAS AND SADHIKAS

When a person suffers from any sort of physical ailment, he becomes very much disgusted and depressed. But sometimes these sufferings are blessings in disguise for him. This was true in my own case. Since childhood, I had been suffering from severe headache and finally it was diagnosed as migraine. To get rid of this headache, I tried allopathic, homeopathic and ayurvedic medicines but I could not get rid of

the agony. It was at this stage that in November 1969, a friend of mine suggested me to attend a 10 day *Vipassanā* camp and I attended my first camp in December 1969, in Bombay.

And it was no less than a miracle for me. I do not remember a single incidence when my headache had disappeared without taking any sort of analgesic tablet, but during the course of the camp it did. This gave me further encouragement.

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And after completing the 10 day course, I felt as if I had gained a new life. Although the headache was not cured completely, the agony of it had gone. The frequency and intensity of headaches reduced drastically. Now I could bear the headache for a full day, without taking any medicine, which would otherwise had made me mad. Before the course, I had to take 4-5 analgesic tablets during a single day to 'control' the pain but after the course, the headache would 'disappear' with a single tablet within an hour.

The relief was not in headache alone. The feeling of laziness and drowsiness had also gone. Now I get a feeling of lightness in the body and feel as if the whole body is energised. I feel as if all the mental and bodily tensions are released.

Shri Shivkumar Poddar,

Madras-26

* * * *

I doubt whether an ordinary being can point to so many periods in his lifetime, that further his inner development as much as these ten brief days under your guidance. You yourself are the finest example of what you set out to obtain in pupils. Your wisdom, your tolerance and patience and your deep, loving devotion leave a profound impact on the personality of those who come and sit at your feet. To yourself and to your dedicated helpers goes my true gratefulness.

His Excellency Mr. Eliashiv Ben-Horin

Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary for Israel, Burma

* * * *

It is impossible to put my feeling for the *Dharma* and the technique of *Vipassanā* into words. I only know that this is the only way of life that can bring true peace.

S. Balbir Singh Jootla,

Ex-Mayor, Dalhousie

* * * *

I feel myself as most fortunate one who received the precious jewel of *Vipassanā*. It is the technique which can help all human beings in eradicating all the evils of their mind irrespective of any caste, creed, colour or religion. '*Vipassanā*' is like a lamp of knowledge which vanishes the deep darkness of ignorance. It frees man from any clinging and makes him realise the things as they really are. It puts aside all the blind beliefs and dogmas and insists on the truth only.

Kashyap Dharmadarshi

* * * *

Your indefatigable work here, and your own supremely dedicated and inspiring example, is a challenge not only to orthodox religionists and medical scientists (by reason of the variety of different diseases which vanish as if miraculously during the course of meditation) but to all who recognise that our major ills in personal and international life stem from ignorance, wrong morality and the misdirection of power.

Finally, I leave with a firm resolve to keep *Vipassanā* meditation as the dominant force in my life; to apply it to all thoughts, sensations and situations—and to return for more training as soon as possible.

Miss Carol Wilson

* * * *

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I was fortunate enough to attend a ten-day course of *Vipassanā* meditation at Madras and I was a person given to irritability, impatience with others, strong dislikes and so on. Meditation has been slowly but steadily changing me. There is now a calmness in my dealings with others. I no longer react to situations as strongly as I used to. There is a constant awareness of oneself which prevents such strong reactions.

Is this not a better and happier life in the real sense? The modest progress one has made makes one realise, how far one still has to go, but at the same time does not despair.

Dr. R. Narsimhan

* * * *

This is a letter of love and praise to you for bringing such light into the lives of my wife and me. We both agree that our *Vipassanā* courses with you were the most enlightening experiences. I wish my entire office could take one of your courses. So many unhappy people could benefit.

Mr. Theodore M. Vestal, an ex-College Dean and presently Director, Educational Resources Centre, University of the State of New York.

* * * *

Dearest Guruji,

Five years ago we came to India and five years ago to the day we sat here in Goa, in the most beautiful tropical paradise, trying so hard to be happy yet so full of misery and despair—with no love in our family, no love in ourselves, how could we possibly be happy?

Now we sit here again, reflecting with deepest gratitude to the Dhamma, our hearts full of love—

love for ourselves, for each other, and for all! We have truly discovered the “miracle” of Christmas, the true spirit of Jesus, for we have seen the miracle of the total transformation of our little family from deep unhappiness, alienation and loneliness, to a Dhamma family and we have begun to love again.

And for this most precious gem of Dhamma we do not know whom to thank. Cathy thanks me and I thank you and then I see you smile and say so gently and sincerely: “Don’t thank me—thank the Dhamma!” And we do! But still we want to send our deepest respects and love to you, our Dhamma Baba, who seeded our scattered family in Sevagram in March 1972 and who has been guiding us so patiently, so lovingly and so wisely along the Path of Dhamma.

Our thanks to the Dhamma we can only express by treading this Path as steadfastly and as diligently and humanly possible, for we fully realise that only by purifying ourselves can we be of an real service to our fellow men and to the Dhamma.

May we continue to realise the wonderful *Mettā* blessings of our Benefactor Sayagi U Ba Khin and may we grow stronger moment by moment in an understanding of *Anicca*, the key to the end of all sufferings.

May you and Mataji and all your Dhamma Sons and Daughters whom you are so selflessly serving this very Christmas Day enjoy all the peace and harmony. May all beings be truly happy and peaceful.

With all the *Mettā*

Cathy & Geo & Debbie

* * * *

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COMPARATIVE BIOCHEMICAL STUDIES ON MEDITATION¹

By

K.N. Udupa, R.H. Singh, K.N. Dwivedi, H.P. Pandey & V. Rai,

(Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-5, India)

Neurohumoral, endocrine and metabolic studies were conducted on two groups of volunteers (10 from India and 10 from Western countries) who underwent a 10-day course of meditation in a meditation camp. They showed some significant biochemical changes. The blood neurohumors and the related enzymes, namely RBC acetylcholine, RBC cholinesterase, plasma catecholamines and plasma histaminase were found increased; while plasma cortisol, urinary corticoids and urinary nitrogen were found decreased. This indicates that after the course of meditation these subjects were physically stable and were under less stressful state while they were mentally more active and were in a state of increased awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Different forms of meditation are claimed to improve mental concentration and to relieve emotional conflicts. *Vipassanā* is a Buddhist system of meditation which is commonly practised as a means to improve mental health, to quieten the mind and to improve the power of concentration. Thus, this type of meditation appears to be a useful way of keeping oneself mentally fit. The utility of such procedures appears to have considerably increased in present times when human life has become full of stress and strain. Therefore, there is a need for controlled

scientific studies on this subject in order to elucidate various biological phenomena involved in this process.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ten subjects were selected from each of the two consecutive meditation camps arranged for people of India and for Western countries at the International Buddhist Vihāra, Varanasi. These subjects remained in a controlled camp on a restricted diet and movement. They were not allowed to go out of the camp during the course of meditation. All kinds of drugs and intoxicants were prohibited. They practised *Vipassanā* type of meditation 8-10 h. a day continuously for 10 days. In order to measure the biochemical changes in these people, each one was subjected to the following investigations in basal conditions on the 1st and the 11th days of the course:

- (1) RBC acetylcholine by bioassay on frog rectus abdominis muscle as per method of Macintosh and Perry (1950),
- (2) RBC Cholinesterase by Caraway's spectrophotometric method (1956),
- (3) Plasma histaminase by the rapid spectrophotometric micromethod described by Arsen and Kemp (1964),
- (4) Plasma catecholamines by the method of Ghosh Et Al (1951),
- (5) Plasma cortisol by the method of Peterson (1957),
- (6) Urinary 17-hydroxycorticosteroids by the method of King and Wooton

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(1964), (8) Urinary VMA as per method of Pissano Et Al (1962) and (9) Urinary nitrogen. All urinary estimations were made in instantaneous samples collected at the camp and results were expressed in terms of urinary excretion per gramme of creatinina.

Results and Observations

As would be evident from the Table² a significant increase was noted in RBC acetylcholine, RBC cholinesterase, plasma histaminase and plasma catecholamine levels in the subjects practising meditation in both the camps.

On the other hand, the plasma cortisol, urinary corticoids and urinary nitrogen were generally found decreased. On further analysis of the results of two camps, it was observed that above mentioned changes were more pronounced in volunteers of Camp I (Westerners) as compared to Camp II (Indians). Besides, the urinary nitrogen was not found significantly changed in Indian subjects, while it was found notably lowered in Westerners.

Discussion

As pointed out earlier, *Vipassanā* is a Buddhist system of meditation seeking increased awareness of the mind. During the meditation a particular person tries to concentrate his mind and he is supposed to be mentally more active. Though bodily he is very much quiet neuro-psychologically he becomes more active and attentive. This is supported by the observations made in the present study. The lowered urinary nitrogen and lowered plasma cortisol and urinary corticoids indicate that the meditators were physically stable and were under less stressful

state. The bodily metabolic activities were decreased. On the other hand, increased neurohumoral activity in the blood suggests that they were neurophysiologically more attentive and were in a state of increased creative activity.

The significant differences observed in the subjects of the two camps appear to be due to varied state of their health and habits before entering in the camps. The Western subjects were probably more depressed possibly due to habitual use of different drugs and when they underwent this course, showed more pronounced changes. Similarly, most of them had been on a good protein diet prior to entering the camp. The restricted vegetarian diet during the course of meditation with decreased physical activity might be responsible for a significantly lowered rate of urinary nitrogen excretion in these volunteers as compared to the Indian subjects. Thus the above type of meditation appears to reduce the quantum of stress resulting into lowered metabolic changes in the body.

Acknowledgement

Authors are thankful to Mr. S.N. Goenka, Teacher-in-charge of the Meditation Camp and the authorities of International Buddhist Vihāra, Varanasi for permitting us to conduct these studies and to the volunteers for excellent cooperation. Authors are also thankful to Mr. S. Behari and Mr. G. N. Sharma for technical assistance.

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Notes:

1. An investigation conducted under a Research project supported by Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy, New Delhi.

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2. Table not included here, Ed.

JAILS, CRIMINALS AND VIPASSANĀ

By

Harishchandra Vidyalankar

(INDIA)

Sociologists, psychologists and criminologists have long been looking for and experimenting with ways to transform prisons from mere houses of punishment into temples of reformation, rehabilitation, and re-education to positive living. Various psychological experiments have been carried out with this end, but they failed to produce the desired results. However, the practice

of *Yogasana* and *Pranayama* in the prisons of the Western world during the last 10 - 15 years has brought results worthy of notice. But what has opened a new chapter in the history of reforming convicts is the experimental use of *Vipassanā*, a special technique of *Dhyanayoga*. This technique was used successfully with 114 prisoners the year before last (Sep. - Oct. 1975). The experiment

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took place in the Central jail of Jaipur, under the auspices of the Rajasthan Government.

This was the first experiment in the world in which *Dhyanayoga* (meditation) was taught to convicts in order to improve their character and conduct. More noteworthy is the fact that the whole project was undertaken by the Government rather than by a private institution. This thesis presents the story of this historic experiment, together with a scientific report of the impact of *Vipassanā* on the minds and bodies of the prisoners.

Place: Central Jail, Jaipur.

Time: September 1975.

Participants: (1) Shri Ramsingh Chauhan, Home Commissioner-cum-Home Secretary, Government of Rajasthan;

(2) the Jail Superintendent.

Subject of Discussion: Concessions to be granted to prisoners taking part in the 10-day meditation camp:

(1) freshly laundered linen for the prisoner-sadhakas;

(2) pure, simple food;

(3) open barracks—no locks, no guards;

(4) exemption from the routine of hard labour;

(5) ten women prisoners participating among the male majority.

The jail Superintendent had apprehensions about concessions nos. 1- 4. His fear was that the remaining 1,000 or so non-participating prisoners would feel jealous, and might create a row. As for concession no. 5, the very rules and

regulations of the jail demanded that women prisoners always be kept separate from the males, in order to avoid untoward consequences arising from prolonged involuntary celibacy. For this reason, the jail Superintendent was particularly hesitant about this proposal.

After a long discussion, it was agreed that at least one camp of this meditation be set up precisely according to the principles of the technique. Thus the path for the experiment was cleared.

But before it actually came into being, Shri Ramsingh proposed a further dimension to the experiment. He suggested that the 900 - 1000 non-participating prisoners of the Jail should also be present at the discourses given each evening of the course by the Master, Shri Satya Narayan Goenka.

Once again, the jail Superintendent was taken aback by this proposal.

How could he abrogate the clearly stated rules of the jail by allowing a thousand prisoners to congregate in the open, without armed sentries around?

Particularly, how to permit this when several high Government authorities and their families would also be attending these discourses? Was it not against the traditions and rules of the jail, which required that any visiting high official be cordoned off by armed guards?

Still a further apprehension of the Superintendent was that the presence of about a hundred women prisoners in the audience could trigger off disturbances.

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INTEREST

Why, in spite of the jail Superintendent's serious apprehensions, was Shri Ramsingh, Home Commissioner and Secretary, eager to hold at least one meditation camp in the jail? The reason was that the Home Commissioner himself had participated in a *Vipassanā* meditation camp some months before, and was much impressed by the results. He felt sure that despite the unprecedented concessions, no untoward incident would occur in the jail during the period of the camp. His confidence proved justified.

After its termination, the jail Superintendent reported that there had not been a single disturbance during all the ten days of the camp, neither during the discourse hour, when a thousand prisoners assembled, nor during the rest of the daily routine. This record contrasted sharply with past experiences in the jail, when some 15 - 20 disturbances were reported daily. One can easily appreciate why the 114 prisoners participating in the *Vipassanā* course became peaceful. But what is surprising is that even those 1,000 prisoners who did not actively perform the *Sadhana*, merely attending the discourses, also underwent a change—a development in the direction of peace of mind. This change may perhaps be attributed to the inspiration they received from observing the transformation in the *sadhaka*-prisoners.

WHAT WAS THE MYSTERY ULTIMATELY?

The question arises, why did not a single case of unrest occur in the jail during the ten days of the *Vipassanā* course? The non-participating prisoners themselves were impressed by the changes they observed in those participating.

How was this peaceful atmosphere achieved?
What is the nature of *Vipassanā*?

VIPASSANĀ SADHANA—ITS NATURE

Vipassanā Sadhana is a secular practice—as secular as is the Constitution of the country. It is an entirely scientific technique, and like any other scientific technique, it has nothing to do with the dogma of any one religion. If anything, it helps each man to follow better his own religion.

In the first stage of this meditation, the *Sadhaka* concentrates his mind on his natural respiration. He keeps himself aware of the touch of the breath at the nostrils.

Respiration is related not only to the body, but also to the mind, with its varying states:

—Respiration is a physical function. Evidently, then, it is closely related to the body.

—The respiration pattern changes whenever the mind is affected by anger, fear, passion, or any other such emotion. Hence it is clear that respiration is also closely related to the mind.

The *sadhaka* while practising awareness of his breathing, starts experiencing the subtler processes going on inside the body, such as the metabolic, electromagnetic, and biochemical processes.

These processes, like respiration, are not confined to the body only, but are also deeply related to the mind. Whenever a change occurs in the mind (“vikar”), at the same time subtler processes of life are also modified, and as a result the *sadhakas* start experiencing different kinds of sensations, such as heat, cold, trembling, tingling, creeping sensation, feeling of lightness etc.

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In ordinary life we remain unaware

—not only of these mental alterations (which modify the subtler processes mentioned above),

—but also of the sensations caused by them,

—as well as of the reactions of the mind toward these sensations—reactions of approval or disapproval, liking or disliking (Raga and Dwesha).

The practice of *Vipassanā* enables us to remain alert toward all these happenings.

Because we are not alert to these internal processes and responses, whenever some pleasant or unpleasant incident occurs, we are caught in the grip of emotions arising from the consequent mental modifications. When anger appears in the conscious mind, we do not know when or how it began and destroyed our equilibrium. The result is that we utter words which we should not say, and behave as we should not behave.

We react blindly and improperly at the moment when the incident actually occurs, when the emotional state (*vikara*) actually exists. But we also continue to be affected by the *vikara* long after the moment has passed. So long as we keep brooding over an incident, pleasant or unpleasant, our mind remains restless.

ANNIHILATION OF VIKARAS

The practice of observing equanimously and objectively the *vikaras*, whether of body or of mind prevents one's being overwhelmed by them.

By this technique of detached observation, complexes of *vikaras* which have been accumulating in the subconscious mind are brought up to the level of the conscious mind, and then pass away.

Thus

—the piled up *vikaras* are discharged instead of suppressed;

—new *vikaras* cease piling up, while old ones are gradually enfeebled and eradicated; (This process by which the *vikaras* gradually lose potency and disappear is called “*nirjarā*.”

—purification of mind follows accordingly.

As the mind becomes purified, the following qualities naturally develop:

—benevolence (*maitree*);

—compassion (*karuṇā*);

—sympathetic joy (*muditā*);

—equanimity (*samatā*).

Consequently,

—the behaviour of the meditator improves;

—his relations with others improve;

—his mind gains equilibrium.

Hence the startling change in temperament of the meditators. Every crime has its root in an emotion. The technique of *Vipassanā* gives the meditator mastery over his emotions, thus preventing them from giving rise to crimes.

SCIENTIFIC STUDY

Scientific studies of the *Vipassanā* Camp at Jaipur Central Jail (27 Sept. to 7 Oct. 1975) were made by the following three parties:

(1) The Managing Committee organized by the Rajasthan Government, the Secretary of which was Shri Ganesh Narayan Vyas, Deputy Secretary in the Home Ministry;

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(2) Dr. T. K. Unnithan, Head of the Department of Sociology of Rajasthan University, and his colleagues;

(3) Miss Kusum Shah, Lecturer, College of Social Work (affiliated with Bombay University) in "Nirmala Niketan," Bombay.

These three parties made their studies of the effects of *Vipassanā* on the prisoners, each independently of the other, and from their own points of views.

What follows is a summary of their findings:

(1) Prisoners suffering from high blood-pressure experienced noticeable relief in their ailment.

(2) All the prisoners felt considerably relieved of their mental tensions, and felt more contentment and peace than ever before.

(3) Several prisoners gave up smoking.

(4) Sufferers from chronic headache, stomach-ache, constipation and other such common troubles reported partial or even complete relief.

(5) Feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy, vengefulness etc. diminished in the prisoners, and were replaced by a general feeling of friendship and goodwill for one another.

(6) After the end of the camp, when the prisoner-sadhakas resumed their routine of hard labour, productivity in the industries of the jail went up.

(7) A number of prisoners resolved to lead peaceful and pure lives in the future.

(8) Those prisoners who attended only the evening discourses stated that they were

genuinely impressed by them, and voiced their keen desire to participate in a future camp of this kind.

(9) Many of the participating prisoners desired that such camps within jails be repeated; some wanted *Vipassanā* camps as often as three times a year.

(10) The general opinion was that each and every prisoner should be given an opportunity to participate in such camps.

The following striking example illustrates the impact which the camp had on the prisoners.

AWAITING THE GALLOWS

Within Jaipur Central Jail were three prisoners in solitary confinement, awaiting the last day of their lives. One of them was Gurujanta Singh, who from his solitary cell listened attentively to the discourses each evening of the camp, as they were broadcast through the loudspeaker. On the final day of the camp, he expressed his keen desire to have a "Darshan of the Mahatma" (sight of the Master) who had conducted the camp, and to be initiated by him personally into the path of Dharma. His wish was granted, and he received instruction from the Master in the first steps of *Vipassanā*.

During the following ten days, the Master was conducting another course at the University of Jaipur, and was therefore absent from the Central Jail. However, one of his leading disciples came daily to the prison, in order to give guidance in the practice to Gurujanta Singh, within the four walls of his cell.

At the end of this second ten-day period, the Master returned to the jail for a final discourse

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and meditation session with the *sadhaka* prisoners. On this occasion, Gurujanta Singh was permitted to leave his cell and attend the closing session.

This was the first time in Indian penal history that a prisoner sentenced to death was initiated into the practice of Dharma, was led out of his cell, without guards, not to go to the gallows, but to meditate in an open hall, in the presence of the “Mahatma” and of his fellow prisoners. Thus for a second time Gurujanta Singh had the “Darshan of the Mahatma” which he coveted so greatly.

Ten days of *Vipassanā* had transformed Gurujanta Singh from a restless, unhappy man into a person filled with peace and serenity. Now, seeing the change in him, the other prisoners were filled with deep emotion. They themselves, guilty of serious crimes such as homicide and dacoity, no doubt all benefitted from the camp. But the transformation of Gurujanta Singh was unique, as he bore the responsibility for 17 murders.

The Government of Rajasthan carefully examined

—the behavioural change in the prisoners; the views expressed by the Superintendent of the jail, as well as those of other authorities, and particularly those of the Home Secretary;

—the scientific studies conducted by the Managing Committee and by Dr. Unnithan and colleagues.

After careful evaluation of the data, the Government of Rajasthan has officially approved of *Vipassanā* as an effective medium for the reformation of criminals. As a direct result of this first experimental course, *Vipassanā* has now become a regular feature in the jails of Rajasthan for the re-education of criminals.

Note: Encouraged by the results of this first camp, the Government of Rajasthan organised a second *Vipassanā* camp for the prisoners of the Central Jail in Jaipur, in January 1977 .

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APPRECIATIONS FROM JAIL INMATES

From my own experience, I can say that this practice gave me immense peace of mind. The mind has become quiet, tranquil, relieved of its negativities. Truly I have attained a new life. I am determined to apply the education of *Vipassanā* to my behaviour throughout my life. May all be benefitted similarly. May everyone's life become so... It should like my mother, wife, and children to learn *Vipassanā*.

—Fateh Singh, convicted murderer

Gurudev gave me five precepts, which I observed carefully. I practised the technique of *Ānāpāna* for three days; it seemed very wonderful. Later, the technique of *Vipassanā* was taught. I had been an extrovert my whole life, always looking outside. Now that I started introversion, I had different kinds of experiences. I continued to observe them, and doing so made me a changed person. I felt that all the ill-will of the mind went away, and I experienced great peace. Now I have found the correct way to live my life.

The path is easy and straightforward. If one concentrates the mind a little bit and starts introspection, he realizes that he himself is responsible for all his miseries—none else. By the practice of *Vipassanā*, all the cravings and aversions are eradicated. This is the path of true Dharma.

I have attained a new life altogether, a life beneficial for me and beneficial for others. I have

taken a dip in the Ganges of Dharma, which has washed away many impurities of previous lives. I am confident of washing away all the rest within this life itself. I shall persuade my family members, friends, neighbours, and all others to adopt this path. This is the only path which gives a new life. Having come to prison, I found this new life.

—Gulab Singh, convicted murderer

By practising this *Vipassanā* meditation, I started experiencing throughout the body different types of sensations, such as itching, tingling, heaviness, lightness, cold, vibrations, etc. With these, the internal impurities started to be eradicated—all such enemies as craving, aversion, passion, anger, which had their abode in the mind. I could observe them by this introspection, which also gave me a technique to get rid of them.

The conscious mind increased in power and scope. This is the superconsciousness which the *Gīta* describes as “awakened *samādhi*.” It is not an ordinary waking state, nor is it sleep; neither is it dream, because the dream state is imaginary, whereas this was all real. Hence this is the state of awakened *samādhi*. When I developed wisdom in this state, these words of the *Gīta* came into my mind “A meditator remains awakened in the state which is like night for all other beings, and what others consider an awakened state seems like night to an enlightened person.”

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I experienced this saying of the *Gīta* personally. I became aware of so many other realities inside, which were not mere imaginations of the past or future. They were all actual realities.

I was immensely benefitted by this *Vipassanā* meditation. Through it one finds peace of mind and equanimity. Mental awareness of one's physical reality develops. The virtue of equanimity actually gives real happiness.

Every word of explanation coming from the mouth of the teacher was very important, working powerfully to purify our minds. I uncovered great currents of love within me. We have certainly found the path of deep happiness. I believe that in future I shall not be able to commit any wrong action.

—Jhunjhun Ram, convicted murderer

There has been a tremendous change in my mental outlook due to this meditation practice of ten days. Now, from my own experience, I know that if someone observe himself with the power of introspection, and purifies his mind of all the defilements, then he won't have to face miseries. Now I am free of all the agitations which used to keep me unhappy before I joined this camp. I have started getting rid of all cravings and aversions toward others. I have learned this wonderful technique to keep my mind concentrated. This is certainly the result of some wholesome, meritorious deed of the past....

I find that there is a continuous improvement in my mind from day to day. With concentrated mind, one can observe the realities inside the body. The sensations in the body every moment make one realize the reality of impermanence. Nothing remains permanent; everything gets

destroyed at one time or another. Then why all these aversions and attachments?

I have found a way of living. I can never forget this meditation.

—Munna Singh, convicted murderer

The mind started to become concentrated from the first morning of the camp, and I began experiencing very sweet fragrances in my nostrils. I thought that someone was using perfume. This sweet scent continued for quite a time. I continued to practice, and by evening I experienced some light before my closed eyes, and some sound in my ears.

The next morning, I described these experiences to Guruji. He said to me, "These occur naturally when the mind starts becoming concentrated. These experiences are like milestones or resthouses on the way of meditation. See that you don't get attached to them." Listening to this explanation, I felt very pleased and confident of being on the right path. I maintained the continuity of my practice, and the mind started getting more and more concentrated.

I began feeling sensations on the entire body, from head to feet. At times I could hear the sound of bells ringing. The mind became peaceful, blissful. I kept on observing the sensations every day....The mind became more concentrated, more blissful. My anger started bit by bit to diminish. I began experiencing a change in my way of life.

I was observing every instruction of my teacher very scrupulously. I did not break any rules, regulations, or discipline. I started experiencing changes in my habit-patterns. This encouraged me to resolve that whenever I am

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released from this prison, I will see that my parents, other members of my family, and friends all receive the benefit of this meditation.

I express heartfelt thanks to the Home Secretary, for bringing here the Dharma teacher, who was a God for us in this land of hell. I have no words to express my gratitude.

My mind felt greatly elated every time I saw the divine smile of Guruji. Guruji, treasure of wisdom, showed us this path of liberation. I shall remain grateful to him for all my life.

—Pratap Singh, convicted murderer

The biggest attraction, that I found in *Vipassanā* is that it can be followed by every human being, and is a really healthy way of life. Now I have learned this right way of living. The ten-day programme was specially beneficial for me because I was suffering from the illness of craving and aversion; this illness is now cured. In cases where I would have been overwhelmed by emotion in the past, I have learned the technique of observing and understanding properly. All this I actually experience—I have not just read about the technique, or listened to discourses. This is my own personal experience. Before, I had heard many good sermons, but that was just listening. Now I can experience inside, for myself..

I found nothing in *Vipassanā* which can be described, as communitarian, or sectarian. This is the best technique to reform the human mind. Here is true Dharma, which is applicable to every community and society.

My mental defilements are gone; my physical health has also improved. No anxiety troubles me now.... I wish that this true Dharma could be

learned and experienced by all human beings.

—Prem Shankar, convicted murderer

By participating in this meditation camp, I got great mental peace, and also freedom from anxieties. As a method also for developing physical health, I found it unparalleled. It is very helpful for building up character while purifying the thoughts.

—Mukund Bihari, convicted murderer

As we see waves in the ocean arising, moving, increasing, and diminishing, in the same way I felt sensations from the top of the head to the tips of the toes. I am convinced that by this practice, a man can open up the knots of sins from many past lives.... Our government has been very kind to us in arranging this *Vipassanā* meditation camp for prison inmates. Many thanks to them. I hope that such camps will be repeated again and again, so that we can participate and get rid of our past sins....

The government can make an animal out of a human being; in the same way, it can transform a complete idiot into a wise, intelligent human being by arranging such courses.

—Sampat, convicted murderer

On hearing that there would be a meditation camp, I started feeling great happiness, as if I was about to receive a precious jewel....

One day before the closing session, we were taught *Mettā Bhāvanā*, which made me very happy. In fact, the whole programme of the camp gave me immense happiness. Till now I never had the wisdom to know how to deal in the world with one's family, friends, or foes. I never knew how to live my life. All this I have learned at the

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camp. I feel that this *Dharma* should be given to all the members of my family, and I'd like to advise all my neighbours to join a camp at least once, in order to learn the art of living.

—Roop Singh, convicted murderer

By practising *Vipassanā*, I was able to experience the sensations in my body; and by doing so I realized how we keep on generating new *samkhāras*, and keep on solidifying them. When these *samkhāras* become rooted in ourselves, they make us very agitated. In such situations, we blame other people for our suffering; but by this practice of *Vipassanā* I have experienced that we alone are responsible for our miseries and burnings. By *Vipassanā* I have come to know that we should see our own truth within ourselves, and not blame others. *Vipassanā* is very helpful.

I liked this camp very much. While in the camp, I felt as if I was living in heaven. Since the end of the camp, I find that wavelets of *mangal maitri* [*mettā bhāvanā*] have started oozing out of my whole body; they are filled with nothing but love. I wish I could remain in such a camp all the time, and become a real *dharmic* person, to serve others.

—Taj Singh, convicted murderer

I had evil thoughts of annihilating my enemies, but they are now all gone through listening to the discourses of Guruji. Now, in my mind I have only good-will toward those who were my enemies. May they be happy, be peaceful.... Certainly it must be the result of some good, wholesome deed of one of my past lives that I have had this opportunity to practise the awareness of Dharma... I wish that convicts suffering in other jails could also, be benefitted by *Vipassanā* meditation.

—Vishnu Datta Sharma, convicted murderer

This meditation gives a wonderful experience by shaking out all the darkness in the mind. It eradicates the impurities within, and develops feelings of love, compassion, and devotion, which are latent in everyone. This is Nirvana. This meditation helps a man to find release from his mental defilements, which keep him constantly in the bondage of the ego. . . . The purpose of *Vipassanā* is to know oneself properly, to remain equanimous in every situation. The real meaning of *Vipassanā* is to apply this equanimity in the heat of day-to-day life. *Vipassanā* meditation is unique in itself. The deeper the dive one takes in it, the clearer the result will be.

—Vijay Bahadur Singh, convicted murderer

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VIPASSANĀ IN CENTRAL JAIL, JAIPUR

a brief review

By

G. N. Vyas

(INDIA)

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All crimes originate from a diseased mind and mental tension. The criminals seldom get an opportunity in the prison to get relief from these tensions and throughout their incarceration they continue to suffer the agony of constant strain. The main objective of prisons is to rehabilitate the prisoner as a responsible member of society. Keeping this objective in view a '*Vipassanā*' meditation camp was organised at the Central Jail, Jaipur so that the prisoners may get an opportunity to free themselves from their tension and strain. '*Vipassanā*' is based on experience of Lord Buddha 25 hundred years ago. He placed this system of meditation before all human beings so that they may live under the bliss of real 'dharma'. This method of meditation is free from the worship of an individual or a particular deity and from all forms of superstitions; it is based on a truly scientific system of self-observation. The literal meaning of '*Vipassanā*' is to 'observe self intently'. It is the experience of facts as they are. This meditation helps one maintain his equanimity.

The camp was organised at Central Jail, Jaipur from September 27 to Oct 7, 1975 under the guidance of Acharya Shri Satya Narayan Goenka. Shri Goenka hails from Rajasthan but his family migrated to Burma a century ago.

Keeping the importance of this camp in view a thorough selection was made of the participants. The prisoners so selected represented various offences and age groups, but the jail authorities were satisfied about their ability to learn. Special care was taken to see that the participation in the camp is purely voluntary. A thorough study was conducted about the state of mind of each prisoner before this camp. For this study, cooperation from Dr. Unnithan, Head of the Dept. of Sociology, University of Rajasthan and Dr. Swarna Hooja, eminent social worker, was readily available. Km. Kusum Shah, Research Scholar from College of Social Work, Bombay University was also associated with this study. All facilities were provided for the conduct of this study before and after this camp. The report of Dr. Unnithan has been received.

The camp was attended by 114 prisoners and 19 jail officials. The break-up of the prisoners on the basis of education, age group and crime is as follows:—

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<u>Education</u>		Tea, Soaked-gram & Moth.
(i) Below 5th Class	51	<u>Evening meal:</u>
(ii) Between 6th to 10th Class	53	Fruits and Milk.
(iii) Post Matriculation	<u>10</u>	<u>Programme</u>
	114	4.00 A.M. Waking-up.
<u>Age Group</u>		4.30 A.M. to 6.00 A.M. Meditation in the room.
(i) Below 21 years	14	6.30 A.M. to 8.00 A.M. Daily routine
(ii) Between 22 to 40 years	73	and breakfast.
(iii) Above 40 years	<u>27</u>	8.00 A.M. to 9.00 A.M. Mass Meditation.
	114	9.00 A.M. to 11.00 A.M. Meditation in the room.
		11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. Lunch & rest.
<u>Crime Group</u>		1.00 P.M. to 2.30 P.M. Meditation in the room.
(i) Murder	73	2.30 P.M. to 3.30 P.M. Mass Meditation.
(ii) Dacoity	8	3.30 P.M. to 5.00 P.M. Meditation in the room.
(iii) Other	<u>33</u>	5.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M. Tea and rest.
	114	6.00 P.M. to 9.00 P.M. Meditation and
		discourse.
		9.00 P.M. to 10.00 P.M. Milk and Fruits.
		10.00 P.M. Rest.

This number included 10 female convicts. The prisoners were provided a free environment during the camp days. They were transferred from their usual barracks to new improved dormitories and were given all necessary facilities. They were provided simple and wholesome food more conducive to meditation. The details of the food provided is as under:—

Breakfast:

Dalia & Milk.

Mid-day meal:

Chapati (Wheat), Dal, Vegetable, Rice & Salad.

Afternoon:

The weight, blood-pressure etc. of each prisoner were examined before and after the camp so that the impact of meditation on his health and mental state may be ascertained.

The atmosphere of the camp remained serene. The prisoners participated with great zeal and devotion and the evening discourses were heard patiently. Visitors from outside were allowed to attend this discourse. They also experienced the solemnity of the atmosphere prevailing in the jail during this camp.

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The camp concluded in the morning of Oct. 7, 1975. After that, the prisoners were contacted to narrate their experience and the impact of the camp. The important points mentioned by prisoners are as under:—

(1) There was a remarkable improvement in the health of the prisoners. Those who suffered from various ailments like high blood-pressure, stomach disorder, headache etc. were normal.

(2) All the prisoners experienced that their mind is free from tensions and they have a feeling of peace and satisfaction.

(3) There was a marked change in the behaviour of the prisoners; prison offences were minimised and the number of quarrels among the prisoners were negligible.

(4) Prisoners, addicted to smoking, gave it up.

(5) The mutual relationship among prisoners became more cordial.

(6) The working efficiency of the participants improved and there was more production in the Jail Industries.

(7) Some of the prisoners while writing their experiences about the camp have narrated the following important points:

(i) Their feeling of jealousy has lessened. Mental tensions, ill-will and dreadful dreams are also reduced. They are more confident of themselves and they feel that they will not revert to crime.

(ii) Some prisoners said that before this camp they were constantly harbouring a feeling of revenge but now their mind is at rest and they are determined to lead good and peaceful life. They no longer feel dull and take more interest in work.

(iii) Prisoners demanded that they should be given such opportunities at frequent intervals. Prisoners, who were only allowed to hear the discourses, requested that they should also be provided an opportunity to participate in the camp in near future.

These expressions have been corroborated by the report of the study conducted by University of Rajasthan under Dr. Unnithan. The important findings of the study are as under:—

(i) There is definite indication of change of attitude after the meditation camp; 80.3% prisoners described the crime committed by them as 'unjustified'.

(ii) The nature of relations with family members before coming to jail and the frequency of contacts with the kith and kin after being imprisoned affect the success and failure of meditation programme.

(iii) 86.9% of the respondents expressed their desire to compensate the loss of the victim.

(iv) While commenting about the change in their attitude or values the report reveals that 42.9% had controlled anger, 46.4% had achieved mental peace and learnt concentration of mind; 28% had developed brotherhood feeling for others and learnt to be generous and kind to them; 16.6% had curbed their feeling of vengeance; 9.6% had stopped smoking; 9.6% were feeling physically fit, 10.7% had developed faith in God; 5.2% had learnt speaking truth; 4.8% had repented for crime; 4.8% had stopped bothering about the past and were concerned only with the present and the future; 3.6% had learnt adjusting themselves in all situations; and 2.4% thought they were relieved of mental frustrations. This shows the physiological, mental, moral and social benefits of meditation.

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(v) 92.8% inmates thought that attitude and behaviour of the people can be changed through meditation. 95.3% inmates described it as very useful in changing the values and attitudes.

(vi) 98.8% inmates recommended these camps to others and all of them expressed their desire to continue this meditation throughout their lives.

(vii) The study has revealed that sympathetic attitude of prison officials and self-realisation and self-discipline of the inmates achieved through mechanism and motivations of meditation will evoke respect for social rules among the criminals.

(viii) Such camps have the potentiality to score

a 'break through' and to enable us to eliminate the feelings of vengeance and develop the feeling of repentance among deviants.

(ix) With the success of the camp at Jaipur Jail the study team has recommended its extension to other jails in the State.

(x) The study team has also recommended that some offenders who have attended the camp be released on parole so that their behaviour can be observed by the community.

The study team feels that meditation, if properly planned and organised, will go a long way in according distinct treatment to and special handling of socially ill individuals.

PRISONERS, MEDITATION CAMPS: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

By

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Criminologists and penologists have always been concerned with workable practices and policies in dealing with criminals and delinquents. What some administrators consider 'soft' policies, implying concessions to, or appeasement of the deviants, are viewed by criminologists and sociologists as sociologically and psychologically functional measures and mechanisms for the correction of the wrong-doers. False beliefs and excessive fears only create situations that actually increase the magnitude of crime in society and

breed apathy and non-receptiveness in criminals in responding to various reformatory measures.

We therefore readily agreed to study scientifically the effectiveness of the scheme prepared by the Home Commissioner, Government of Rajasthan, for changing the values and attitudes of inmates in the prison. Under this scheme, a meditation camp called '*Vipassanā Sadhana Shivir*' was organised under the direction and leadership of Shri Goenka in order to provide

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opportunities for reflection in solitude leading to repentance and redemption, and to help the prisoners in controlling their raw impulses of anger, hatred and vengeance. The camp was held at the Central Jail, Jaipur for a period of ten days, from September 26th to October 6th, 1975.

Research Method for Collection of Data:

Interviews were conducted through structured interview schedules in two stages: (a) 10 days before, the starting of the camp and (b) 15-30 days after the expiry of the camp. For the first interview, the schedule of questions consisted of two parts. The first part had 18 questions pertaining to the nature and cause of crime, term of imprisonment, social background of inmates, relations with family, treatment by jail officials and social contacts with the outside world. The second part consisted of 10 questions relating to the desire for attending the camp, earlier experiences of meditation and objects of the camp. In the second interview, 12 questions were asked pertaining to change in values and attitudes as perceived by the inmates, utility of the camp, future plans of inmates continuing the meditation and suggestions for the organisation of more camps, if they found the camp useful. Besides, 17 inmates were randomly selected (both in the first stage and in the second stage) for intensive informal dialogue to solicit frank and detailed information regarding the functional aspects of the camp for the prisoners. At both the stages, group interviews were also conducted to assess the collective views of the inmates. In the final analysis, we attempted to eschew unwarranted conclusions and value judgments and concentrated on highly concise statements, and correlations between different variables and success and the failure of the Meditation Camp.

The Inmates:

A list of 112 prisoners was initially prepared by the Jail Department, who were to attend the camp. However, 12 prisoners from this list did not participate because of which 19 more prisoners were selected from the reserve list. Thus, 119 prisoners in all participated in the camp. Out of 112 prisoners in the first list who were to attend the camp, 93 were from the Jaipur jail (83 males and 10 females), 10 from the Model Jail, Ajmer, and 9 from the Juvenile Reformatory, Udaipur. Of these, we interviewed 110 prisoners in the first stage, (i.e. before the starting of the camp). In the second stage (i. e. after the camp was over), we were able to interview only 88 inmates out of 119 who actually attended the camp. Since there were 22 inmates who were interviewed in the first stage but who could not be interviewed in the second stage and 7 inmates who were interviewed in the second stage but who could not be interviewed in the first stage, we tabulated the responses of only those 84 prisoners who were interviewed, in both the stages.

Of the 84 inmates, 85.7% attended the camp voluntarily but 14.3% attended it because of the jail order. Of the 12 inmates who attended the camp out of compulsion, all were (adult) males and 33.4% were murderers and 66.4% non-murderers. Before giving their names for the camp, 47.6% had consulted other inmates but 52.4% didn't consider such consultation necessary. Those 40 inmates who consulted others, found 87% in favour of attending the camp, 2.5% against it and 5.0% neutral. The remaining 5% did not give any satisfactory responses. Of all the (84) inmates, 17.84% were persuaded by other inmates to attend the camp,

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while 82.14% attended it because they personally believed in its utility. Surprisingly, 43 inmates (or 51.19%) opined (in first interview) that given option, they would have opted out of the Meditation Camp. Of these, 41 were males, 1 female and 1 juvenile; 67.4% murderers and 32.6% non-murderers. 92.56% inmates never had meditation in their lives earlier, i.e. it was for the first time that they were practising meditation; however, 7.14% had some earlier experience of meditation.

Socio-Cultural Background:

Before analysing the responses of the inmates, it is necessary to focus on the socio-cultural factors of the inmates—age, education, occupation, area of residence and the nature of crime etc., so that these variables may ultimately be used to link them with the success and the failure of the Meditation Camp.

Of the 84 inmates interviewed, 63.3% were convicted for homicides, 12.5% for causing injuries, 10.0% for theft, 8.0% for dacoity and 6.2% for cheating, kidnapping and other offences. Out of 84 cases, in 17.86% the crime was premeditated and in 48.81%, it was emotional, 20 respondents (i.e. 23.31% of the total) denied committing the crime at all. About 73% of the adult respondents were young, in the age range between 21 and 40. Precisely, 6% belonged to the age group of 21-25 years, 34.7% to 25-30 years group, 22.7% to 31-40 years group, 16.0% to 41-50 years group and 10.6% were above 50 years. The mean age of these respondents, 5 were below 40 years, 4 between 41 to 50 years and 1 above 50 years. Their mean age was 33. Juveniles comprised nearly 8.5% of all inmates. Of the 9 juvenile delinquents, 1 was below 17 years of

age, 5 of 18 years age and 3 of 19 years age. 74.8% (adults) were married, 22.6% unmarried and 2.6% were widowers.

A large number of inmates (66.6%) came from rural areas; only 33.4% belonged to cities and towns. Of the 56 inmates with rural background, 64.3% were cultivators and 35.7% non-cultivators. Of the 28 inmates with urban background, 96.4% were engaged in service. In terms of economic status, 13.1% had monthly income of less than Rs. 200/-, 42.9% had income of Rs. 200 to 500, 27.4% had income of Rs. 500 to 1000 and 16.6% earned more than Rs. 1000 per month.

14.3% inmates had no school education, 2.4% could read and write (though they never had any formal education) and 83.3% were educated. Of the 70 educated respondents, 35.8% had studied upto fifth standard, 27.1% upto eighth standard, 30.0% upto matric and 7.1% were graduates.

65.5% inmates were imprisoned for life, 19.0% for a period of 1-5 years and 15.5% for 5-10 years; 7.1% inmates had spent less than one year in the jail, 41.7% 1 to 2 years, 35.7% 3 to 5 years, 13.1% 6 to 10 years and 2.4% above 10 years. On the other hand, 12.6% were still to spend upto 2 years in the prison, 14.3% 2 to 5 years, 12.6% 5 to 10 years, 15.5% 10 to 15 years and 45.0% above 15 years.

On the basis of the above analysis we could say that a large number of inmates who attended the camp were young, married, educated, not so poor and with rural background. About four-fifth were long-termers and felons and one-fifth were short-termers and misdemeanants. Individual inmates differed strikingly. Some were irrevocably committed to criminal careers; others

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subscribed to quite conventional values, but were aimless and uncommitted to goals of any kind. Many were disturbed and frustrated people and thought, they were falsely implicated in crimes. Still others were victims of senility, showing feeble-mindedness of old age. This diversity did not pose any problem for the organisers of the camp, for all inmates were handled together and accorded same treatment.

Impact of Meditation

To what extent did the camp succeed in changing the values and attitudes of the prisoners. In the first interview (i.e. before the camp started) 62 inmates (or 73.8%) had confessed committing crimes while 22 inmates (or 20.24%) thought, they were falsely implicated. In the second interview (i.e. after the camp), 84.5% confessed crime and 14.3% denied it. Of those 62 inmates who had confessed crime in the first interview, 25.8% had described it as 'justified' and 74.2% as 'unjustified'. Of the 71 inmates who confessed crime in the second interview, 19.7% described it 'justified' and 80.3% 'unjustified'. This definitely indicates some change in attitude.

Of the 14 inmates who described their crimes as 'justified' even after attending the camp, 63.3% were convicted for homicides and 6.7% for robbery. In 14.3% cases, their crimes were premeditated and in 85.7% emotional. Further, of the 14 inmates who justified their crimes even in the second interview, 71.4% had hostile relations with their families and 63.4% were unable to maintain any contacts with their relatives after being prisonised. It could therefore be *hypothesised that the nature of relations with family members before coming to jail and the frequency of contacts with the kith and kin after*

being imprisoned affect the success and failure of meditation programme.

Further evidence of change in attitude due to participation in the Meditation Camp is contained in the answers to the question, "If given an opportunity, would you like to compensate the loss of the victim?" The majority of the respondents (86.9%) replied in affirmative; only 4.76% said 'No'.

How do the prisoners themselves view the meditation idea? When asked in the first interview to give the object of meditation as seen by them, 29 prisoners (34.6%) said they had no idea at all. Of the 55 prisoners who gave some object, 47.3% described it as self-improvement, 34.6% as achieving peace of mind, 25.4% as changing one's values, 12.7% as controlling raw impulses, 7.3% as self-realisation, 5.4% as receiving religious training, 3.6% as controlling frustrations and 3.6% as mental exercise.

In the second interview, when they were asked "What change do you perceive in your attitudes or values after attending the camp?" the following answers were received 42.9% had controlled anger, 46.4% had achieved mental peace and learnt concentrating mind on one thing, 28.6% had developed brotherhood feeling for others and learnt to be generous and kind to everybody, 16.6% had curbed their feeling of vengeance, 9.6% had stopped smoking, 9.6% were feeling physically fit, 10.7% had developed faith in God, 8.2% had learnt speaking truth, 4.8% had repented for crime, 4.8% had stopped bothering about the future, 3.6% had learnt adjusting themselves in all situations, and 2.4% thought, they were relieved of mental frustration. *This shows the physiological, mental, moral and social benefits of meditation.*

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In the first interview, 92.8% inmates thought that attitudes and behaviour of the people can be changed through meditation; only, 2.38% considered it useless. But in the second interview, 98.8% inmates described it as very useful in changing the values and attitudes. The one inmate who described the camp not very useful was a murderer, an atheist and a frustrated person.

At the initial stage, 53.5% inmates felt like leaving the camp, it was only after 3 - 4 days that they thought it useful and decided continuing attending it. At present, all the inmates were devoting two hours daily (one hour in the morning and one in the evening) to meditation. When asked, whether they proposed to continue meditation in their lives, all inmates replied in affirmative, 98.8% even recommended these camps to others. All the inmates, except one, said that if the camp is organised again, they would willingly attend it.

In the first interview, 52.3% inmates considered prison as an unsuitable place for holding the camp, only 30.95% described it as a proper place. After the camp 24.05% thought that jail is not an unsuitable place for meditation.

Is there any relationship between treatment by the jail staff and the success and the failure of the meditation? 71.43% respondents in the first interview described the treatment of jail officials as 'satisfactory'; the percentage was 72.52 in the second interview responses. This indicates the neutral effect of meditation. In fact, at the time of group interview as well as individual interviews, a large number of respondents complained of the ill-treatment and indifferent treatment they received from the jail officials. In theory, prisons may be described as 'correctional

institutions' but in practice, prison officials continue to view them as 'custodial institutions'. They remain primarily concerned with 'keeping the criminals in' rather than giving the inmates supervised freedom necessary for changing their values. The authoritarian regime and callous administration lead to increased alienation, dependency and learning of 'inmate code' by the prisoners. If prisons are really to be used for 'decriminalisation' of the criminals, the internalisation of the inmate code or what is popularly called in Criminology as 'prisonisation' or 'Fraternalisation' processes, have to be prevented. And meditation camps can definitely play a significant role in this process because meditation, as revealed by this survey, will affect one's desire to achieve one's rights that are considered legitimate and rational.

Conclusions:

New policies to control disruptive and disturbing deviant behaviour are always welcome. It is futile to think about eliminating all crime or completely controlling recidivism. It is a mistake to expect our law-framers, law-enforcement officers, sociologists and criminologists to be able to 'solve' all the crime problems in the society. But it is surely possible to point out the measures and policies that may constitute the most rational means of achieving our goals of reducing recidivism and decreasing the magnitude of the phenomenon of crime. In regard to causation of crime, interplay between some alleged shortcoming of the offending individuals and the general conditions prevailing in the society has come to be accepted as significant by all criminologists in recent years. Consequently, 'get tough' attitude of the prison

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officials in dealing with prisoners has been rejected by scholars. Our present study also reveals that sympathetic attitude of the custodian officials and self-realisation and self-discipline of the inmates achieved through mechanisms and motivations of meditation will evoke respect for social rules among the criminals.

But at the same time we cannot afford to be rather naive optimists and take the position that meditation camps will be the panacea for all criminal problems and will help us completely resocialising the criminals. Yet we do believe that such camps have potentiality to scope a 'break-through' and to enable us to eliminate the feelings of vengeance and develop the feelings of repentance among the deviants. Undoubtedly, we are impressed by the meditation idea which directly deals with the classic issue of changing offender's morality, attitudes and which strikes at the very basic chords in deviants' personality. On a more conscious level, we must be prepared to examine critically those values and patterns that contribute to the success of the Meditation Camps. And we must also make sure that precipitous and unwise reactions to such efforts do not subvert the very measures (meditation camps etc.) which may prove most rational to criminals' well-being and offenders' rehabilitation in society.

There are some specific measures that will significantly make the meditation camps more meaningful and functional. The important ones seem to be the following. :—

1. Selection of prisoners for meditation camps should be made purely on voluntary basis.
2. All prisoners engaged in meditation be kept in one place for at least some time after the camp

to permit free and frequent interaction amongst themselves.

3. Undisturbed atmosphere be provided for meditation. As far as possible, such camps be organised outside the prisons to avoid the failures of prisoners' relationship with the jail officials. The pattern of cumulative failure (i.e. failure in relationships with families, with other inmates and with jail officials) will prevent the prisoners from developing a sense of detachment, thus creating a great obstacle to successful meditation.

4. More time be given to inmates for meditation. This is necessary because it was reported by many inmates that no sooner they concentrate their minds on meditation during the one hour they got for it in the morning and in the evening, the chowkidars (guards) knock at their doors and order them to get ready for the daily jail routine. Since concentrating one's mind on one thing takes some time, the fixing of time takes away the very purpose of meditation. The respondents, while responding to the question, "Do you have any suggestion for organising such camps in future" themselves suggested (73.4%) long hours and lonely and open places for meditation.

5. A few more camps be organised for those who have already undergone this process of meditation and have realised its pragmatic and rational benefits. The frequency of meditation may reduce the major discrepancies between the values that are professed by the criminals and the values by which they actually live.

6. With the success of the camp in the Jaipur Jail, it is time to extend this scheme to other jails in the State. It will not be irrational and illogical to transfer some of the inmates (having experience

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of the uses of meditation) from Central Jail, Jaipur to Central Jails, Udaipur and Jodhpur where they may not only get more opportunities of attending these camps but may also explain the advantages of meditation to the 'new' inmates who are yet to go through this process and learn bridging the gap between the ideal and the real in their lives.

7. Some offenders who have attended the meditation camps should be released on parole so that their behaviour patterns may be observed in the community to assess and evaluate the practical utility of the meditation idea in the amelioration of social ills of our society.

8. Separate meditation camps be organised for juvenile and female criminals. They may prove eager to learn and invoke new sanctions in reforming themselves and changing their personal behavior.

9. Prison and University Departments should co-ordinate their efforts for an objective appraisal of the functional utility of meditation inside and outside the prisons. Hopefully, a scientific study and a systematic review of key findings about crimes and criminals will prove valuable to both custodial officials in controlling the deviants and academicians in building theories. Actually, when we examine a new correctional programme a bit more closely, we often find that overacting to a

programme may be even worse than not reacting at all. All these could be investigated into. It may be worthwhile to consider in this connection the establishment of a small research unit with competent personnel, to undertake systematic study of meditation as an effective method of correction. Such a unit may include, among other aspects, study of not only those who attend the camp and are on parole but also those who are released after attending the meditation camp.

Meditation if properly planned and organised, will go a long way in according a distinct treatment to and special handling of socially ill individuals. Meditation is not to be viewed as a product of humanitarian impulse for punishing, deterring and rehabilitating offenders but as a rational and scientific process to cope with wrongdoers. The idea of restraint as a necessary ingredient in corrections remains as a philosophic legacy of this era. And, to the extent meditation itself is based on the idea of self-restraint and self-discipline, it will attempt to promote normal personality development of the deviants and to prevent their suffering from social, intellectual and emotional deficiencies.¹

1. This is a summary of the survey report prepared for the Rajasthan government on the results of the camp conducted in the jail.

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EVALUATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION

By

S. N. Sinha, S. C. Prasad & K. N. Sharma

Introduction:

Vipassanā is a technique of meditation which literally means intent self-observation. A person who undergoes *Vipassanā* develops concentration of mind by watching the incoming and outgoing breath. It has no religious bias, dogma or ritual attached to it; rather it is concerned with the individual himself, and development of his cognition or awareness in dealing with the problems of his day-to-day life situations. It has certain alleviating effects on stress on human behavior.

The present study, thus, intends to find out short-term as well as long-term changes taking place in individual's mental predisposition as he becomes involved in new states of existence as a result of *Vipassanā* meditation training. For this purpose three states of *attention*, *readiness* and *emotional stability* were investigated so as to ascertain immediate and delayed effects of *Vipassanā*. Attention refers to individual's consciously locating the number of visual objects at a particular moment. By readiness we mean the quickness to react to some signal. Emotional stability means bodily changes (glandular) due to sweat, secretions effected by mental states of excitement.

Method

The study was conducted on three groups: Group I experienced police officers (No. 11), Group II newly recruited police officers (No. 13), and Group III promoted police officers (No. 11) which underwent a ten-day *Vipassanā* Meditation training (28.1.1976 to 6.2.1976). The second and third groups also underwent service training for four months at Rajasthan Police Academy, Jaipur after the meditation training was over. Using three apparatuses, namely Tachistoscope, Electronic Chronoscope and Galvanoscope, tests were given to measure the four factors respectively referred to above, three times; first of all before start of the meditation training on 27.1.1976, then on 6.2.1976 after 10 days of meditation training, and finally after a period of 3-4 months on 5.5.1976, except the first group which was tested on 5.6.1976.

Results

The table of mean scores of all the three tests on the three testings are given as Appendix 'A'

(i) Span of Attention

The average scores for attention by the three groups on all the three testings have been shown in Appendix 'B'.

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The results have shown that although there had been slight increase in the degree of attention by the experienced and promoted police officers after meditation but not so much as to cause an appreciable change in attention, whereas for the newly recruited officers the increase was fairly high to be effective enough after *Vipassanā* meditation was given to them. This shows very clearly that the effect of *Vipassanā* meditation was positive to improve the degree of attentivity of newly recruited persons, i.e. they are prone to increase their range of attentivity whereas the experienced groups appear to be slightly more resistant to make a change. However, the positive trend shows that if training is given to them either for a longer period of interspersed at different intervals, it may make the desired effect.

The newly recruited police officers (Group II) have shown the beneficial effects even after three months of *Vipassanā* training. A higher degree of attentivity is manifested as compared to the pretest situation. However, in the follow up period a relative stability during the post-*Vipassanā* period is evidenced. The scores of the old promoted Police Officers (Group III) were reduced a little when tested after three months of the *Vipassanā* meditation, but not so critically as to make effective change in the attention of the officers what was observed at the time when *Vipassanā* was given.

(ii) Alertness

The average scores for readiness to react for the three testing situations of all three groups have been shown in Appendix 'C'.

Interestingly enough, it had been found that *Vipassanā* meditation has uniformly developed alertness in all the three groups as evinced by

decrease in the reaction time during follow up (post-test I on 6.2.1976). The same effect has further been retained even after 3-4 months of *Vipassanā* meditation. One very important finding has been received in case of experienced Police Officers (Gr. I) in the final follow up that their alertness has further been increased when tested after four months. In the case of other two groups II and III, such an enduring effect of meditation has not been found. It seems worthwhile to mention here that the Group I was of experienced Police Officers, of the Dy. S. P. level, and were posted immediately on duty after they were given *Vipassanā* meditation, whereas the members of the other two groups, i.e. II and III, who were newly recruited and promoted inspectors respectively, were retained still in police training at the Academy after *Vipassanā* meditation was given. On the one hand, the experienced police officers were perhaps able to practise *Vipassanā* meditation in on-the-job functions, and on the other, they being officers of the gazetted ranks, were able to exercise their powers using the knowledge of what they learnt during *Vipassanā* meditation. As the other two groups still continued in the departmental training after meditation training was given, they did not get any chance to exercise their knowledge or gains obtained from *Vipassanā* meditation in their on-the-job assignments.

(iii) Emotional Reactivity

The average scores on emotional stability measures for all the three groups on three testings have been shown in Appendix 'D'.

The results show that *Vipassanā* meditation could make a great change only in the newly recruited officers (Group II). The newly recruited

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persons were comparatively young, sensitive and easily affected. A rise in their skin conductance has shown that meditation created an effect on their emotional stability. They became more calm and tranquil. In the follow up situation on results have shown quite different trends in all the three groups, i.e. the skin conductivity has decreased. The decrease in the case of newly recruited and old promoted officers (groups II and III) was not critically high, but in case of experienced police officers there was a remarkable fall in skin conductance, indicating a much higher level of tranquillity achieved by them, that this group was sent to perform their duties in the field (postings) perhaps in a calm and dispassionate manner. Since the newly recruited and old promoted officers (groups II and III) were retained still in departmental training in the Police Academy, an opportunity to exercise the tranquillizing effects

of meditation in real work setting possibly did not exist.

Suggestions

1. Large sample should be taken.
2. Experienced Police Officers should be given long and interspersed training periods.
3. Improvement in attention will help in quick decision making.
4. In selections of police officers, persons of high attentivity must be preferred.
5. Readiness to respond due to *Vipassanā* may lead to promptness of action,
6. Decrease in skin conductance shows that it is possible that officers be more composed, dispassionate and tranquil in their dealing with public and perhaps with subordinates.

Mean Values of Various Measures on Different Testing

Groups	Pre-test (27.1.76)			Post-test I (6.2.76)			Post-test II (5.5.76/5.6.76)		
	Sp. of Att.	GSR	RT in ms.	Sp. of Att.	GSR	RT in ms	Sp. of Att.	GSR	RT in ms.
I. Experienced Police Officers	4.59	3.13	5.20	5.04	4.82	442	5.59	-7.27	358.0
II. Newly Recruited Police Officers	4.25	2.08	4.94	5.50	6.00	428	5.77	-2.38	419.38
III. Old Promoted Police Officers	5.35	1.82	5.47	6.23	1.34	458	5.59	-0.82	462.0 ¹

Note: Appendix B, C and D not included here, Ed.

1. This report is on the camp conducted for the benefit of the officers of the Rajasthan Police Academy at the instance of the government.

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OBITUARY

It is with a deep sense of sorrow that we have to announce the death of Dr. Madho Ram Soft, senior Vice-President of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, on the 18th July, 1977, at the age of 92, at his residence in Calcutta.

He was a nationalist in the true sense and a great social worker. During the independence movement Dr. Soft worked with Mahatma Gandhi for sometime and devoted much of his time to social work.

In the early forties he became a member of the Maha Bodhi Society and later on he was elected a member of the Governing Body and then one of the Vice-Presidents.

He took keen interest in the activities of the Maha Bodhi Society and played an active part in promoting its activities—religious, social and humanitarian.

He accompanied the sacred relics of Arahants Sariputta and Moggallana to several parts of India and some of the neighbouring countries. On this occasion he took the opportunity of explaining to the people, the relevance of the sublime message of Lord Buddha in the modern world and its significance for world peace. He also led the Maha Bodhi Society delegation to the 10th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, held in Sri Lanka from 22nd to 29th May, 1972.

Dr. Soft took especial interest in the Maha Bodhi Orphanage and Welfare Home. He was a patron and Chairman of its Managing Committee. He was ever ready to lend his assistance in meeting its needs. He was like a second father to the inmates of the Home. They will long remember him with gratitude and affection.

Dr. Soft was a source of inspiration and encouragement to others by reason of his winning personality and great enthusiasm for every task he undertook. He was a man of *Mettā* and as such was popular with members of all communities. On hearing the news of his death they flocked to his residence to pay their last respects to him.

He used to come to the Headquarters of the Maha Bodhi Society regularly to attend meetings and participate in religious functions until his failing health forced him to remain indoors.

A condolence meeting of the Maha Bodhi Society of India was held at its Headquarters and a religious service was held in his memory at Dharmarajika Vihāra, on the 18th August, 1977.

Late Dr. M. R. Soft is survived by one son and four daughters. His wife predeceased him.

May he fulfill *Pāramīs* and attain *Nibbāna*.

Excluded from this issue was the News and Notes (5 pages plus Photos) and the final article 'Vipassanā' by Dr. Narain Varandani.

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Late Dr. Madhoram Soft, Vice-President, Maha Bodhi Society of India passed away on 18th July, 1977.

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