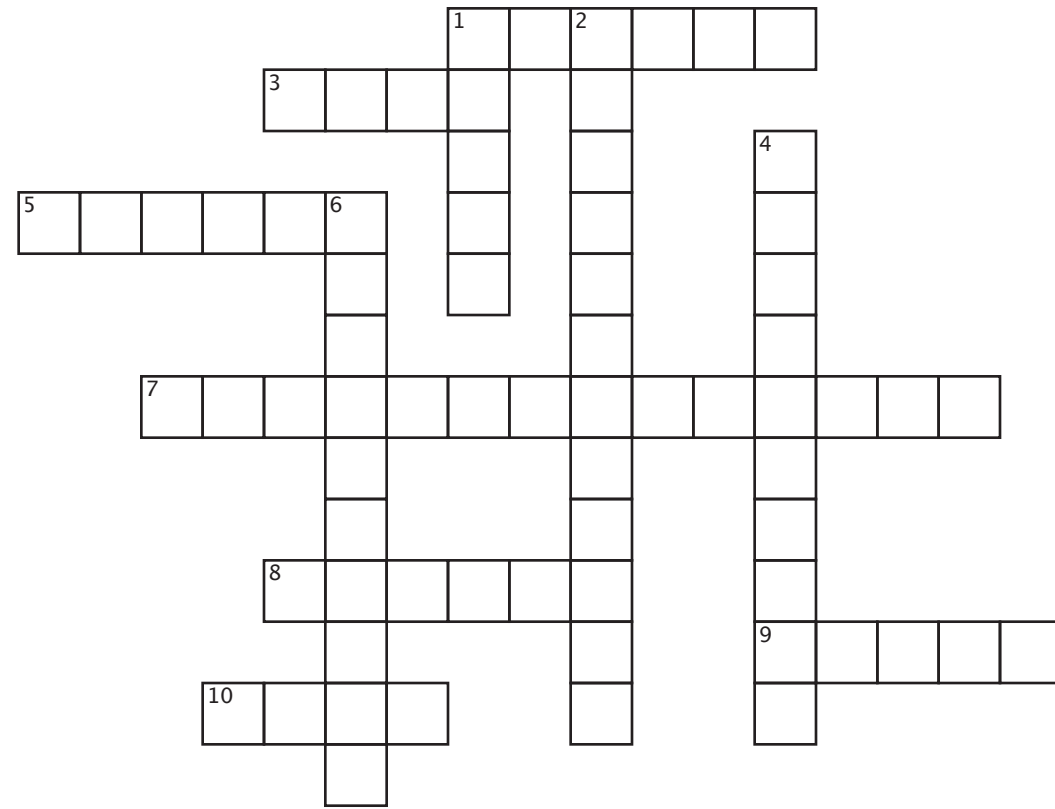


Pali Word Puzzle: The Ten Perfections

*There are ten good mental qualities - pāramī - that one must perfect to reach the final goal. The goal is the stage of total egolessness. These ten pāramī are qualities that gradually dissolve the ego, thereby bringing one closer to liberation. - S.N. Goenka*



**renunciation dāna sīla viriya khanti truth adhiṭṭhāna paññā lovingkindness equanimity pāramī**

**Across**

- 1. the 10 perfections
- 3. morality: observing the 5 precepts
- 5. making right efforts
- 7. mettā
- 8. tolerance
- 9. sacca
- 10. generosity

**Down**

- 1. wisdom of anicca
- 2. nekkhamma
- 4. upekkhā
- 6. strong determination



# Vipassana Prison Newsletter

Volume IV – September 2013

**WORDS OF DHAMMA**

*Dunnigghassa lahuno,  
yatthakamanipatino.*

*Cittassa damatho  
sadhū,cittam dantam  
sukhavaham.*

*Wonderful it is to train  
the mind, so swiftly  
moving, seizing whatever  
it wants.*

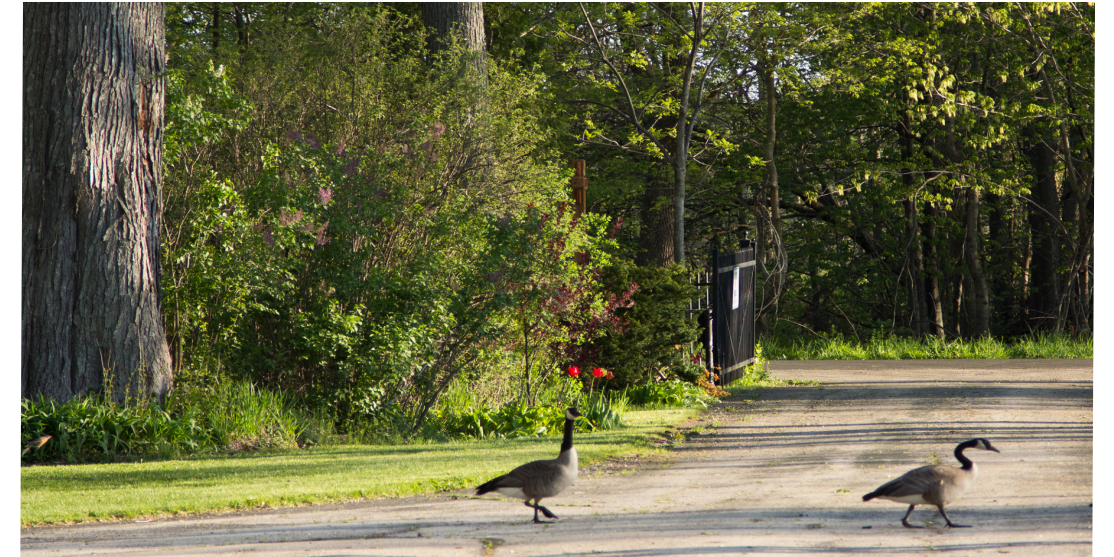
*Good is it to have a  
well-trained mind, for  
a well-trained mind  
brings happiness.*

*~ Dhammapada 3.35*

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*The Vipassana Prison Newsletter is published by the Vipassana Prison Trust – a non-profit organization with charitable status. The purpose of the Trust is to promote the practice of Vipassana meditation in correctional facilities. The Trust is run by volunteers and funded by donations.*



**Patience, Persistence, and New Milestones at Donaldson’s Most Recent Course**

Nineteen new students and two old students completed the 10-day Vipassana meditation course at Donaldson Correctional Facility this past May – the eighteenth 10-day course at the prison. Their successful completion of the course brings the total number of Donaldson inmates who have completed a 10-day Vipassana course to more than 250. “I was inspired by the hard work the students did,” said assistant teacher Dean Taylor.

Every course, in prison or not, has logistics to consider. At Donaldson, having just two available toilets and one shower meant there was sometimes a bottleneck at the bathroom. Taylor was initially concerned this would cause a lack of concentration, and some communication between students. But their determination was strong: students wanted to finish the course, and stayed focused. “It was made clear that noble silence had to be maintained, or students would immediately be asked to leave.”

Dr. Tytell, prison psychologist, provided much-appreciated support before and during the course, and on most days joined inmates and servers for the 2:30 p.m. group meditation.

As the number of students grows, researchers continue to study how meditation helps people become calmer and happier. With help from the administration, staff, and inmates at Donaldson, Stanford University researchers gave the students a series of five tests before and after the recent course. The researchers will analyze prison data on students’ incidents with guards, and other discipline matters, and will try to discover just how much difference Vipassana makes in inmates’ lives.

In the meantime, old students have the opportunity to support each other in their practice by meditating together twice a week in scheduled group sittings. Assistant teacher Taylor said he felt hopeful he was “leaving behind a group of guys who would continue to practice Vipassana, and get benefit from it.”



## Cooling Down the Fire Within

*This is an excerpt from the Day 1 discourse of a 10-day course. The text has been edited.*

In the East, when a housewife prepares food, she uses a brazier filled with burning charcoal. Once the food is cooked, the fire is not needed but the housewife wants to keep the charcoal for the next meal. To extinguish the fire, she takes a handful of water and throws it on the burning coals. The charcoal is burning hot; the water is cold. When the two come in contact, there is a great impact, a great reaction: *choong!* The housewife throws another handful of water and again there is a sound of *choong*. Each time she throws a handful of water, the sound comes. It stops only when the temperature of the charcoal comes down close to the temperature of the water. It is no longer hot. Then even if she throws a bucketful of water, there will be no *choong*.

Understand that the difficulties you have faced today are the *choong*, the reaction of your body. In one hour of meditation, you may have only a moment when your mind is just with your breath coming in, going out, observing the reality of this moment. There is

no ignorance because the breath is a truth, with no imagination involved. And there is no craving or aversion. You don't start craving more breath or decide you don't want breath. You just remain equanimous, you just observe.

That moment when your mind equanimously observes the truth is a wonderful moment. A part of the mind is pure but there is still garbage deep inside. The pure mind of this moment comes in contact with all that impurity and negativity in the depths of your mind, and there is a volcanic explosion, a big *choong*. And that manifests as a pain in the leg, or the back or head. You feel so much discomfort and think, "I'd better run away, this is not good for me."

Make a strong determination: This is the operation of my mind. When you have a physical operation, it is performed by a surgeon and you are kept under anesthesia. You don't know what is happening. But here, you have to perform your own operation, without anesthesia. You have to face everything that comes up now. Be brave and face it. It is for your good. This is how you start changing the behavior pattern of the mind.

## The Snake Should Not Be Killed

*This is an excerpt from a 1973 recording of a discourse given by Goenkaji during a 10-day course. It has been edited for publication.*

In India, many saints have taken birth and developed from time to time. There was one a few years back; we know him by the name of Mahatma ("Great Soul") Gandhi, a saintly, wonderful person. . . . The people of India revere Gandhi as a spiritual figure as well as the leader of their country's struggle for independence from foreign rule.

One day in his ashram he was sitting outside. It was winter so he had a folded blanket on his shoulders. Some friends, residents of the ashram, were sitting in front of him. Suddenly one of them saw a big cobra that came up on his back. That man became frightened, but he had nerve so he said to Gandhi, "Please do not move. Remain very still. There is a cobra on your back. If you move a little, the cobra will bite you. We shall see what to do, but don't move."

He remained still, as if in *adhithana*, not moving. And it so happened that the cobra moved here and there, and went into one of the folds of the blanket. People rushed, took the blanket and threw it off. Gandhi was saved.

Then somebody asked him, "That was a time when death was so near to you. What was your mental condition? How did you react? We want to know."

He said, "As soon as somebody told me that, there was a chill: death." That was natural. He was an honest man, he spoke the truth. But next moment wisdom arose, love, compassion. "Oh, I am as yet not a perfect man. I still have traces of fear in me, and because of this fear there is quite a possibility that I might move a little. And if I move a little this creature, this snake, won't understand why. If I move a little, just to save itself it will bite me. No snake bites anybody just for the sake of biting; it bites to save itself — "Somebody might kill me." It will bite. And as soon as the snake bites me, these people here will kill the snake. The snake will be killed, the snake will be killed. I should not move to save the snake. The snake should not be killed, the snake should not be killed."

What a tremendous amount of love and compassion at the time of death, when death was so near! If someone who calls himself a devotee of Gandhi tries to develop a little bit of that love and compassion, even toward enemies threatening death, there is a meaning in saying, "Yes, I am a devotee of Gandhi." Otherwise it is all meaningless, purposeless, harmful. We have not understood *bhakti*, we have not understood devotion.

## Questions and Answers from Goenkaji

*Source: drawn from various public talks and discourses*

*1. What is the relevance of Dhamma to a person on the street, whose stomach is empty?*

A large number of people living in poverty come to Vipassana courses and find it very helpful. Their stomachs are empty, but their minds also are so agitated. With Vipassana, they learn how to be calm and equanimous. Then they can face their problems. It is noticed their lives improve. They come out of addictions to alcohol, gambling, et cetera. Dhamma is helpful to everyone, rich or poor.

*2. You spoke about non-attachment to things. What about to persons?*

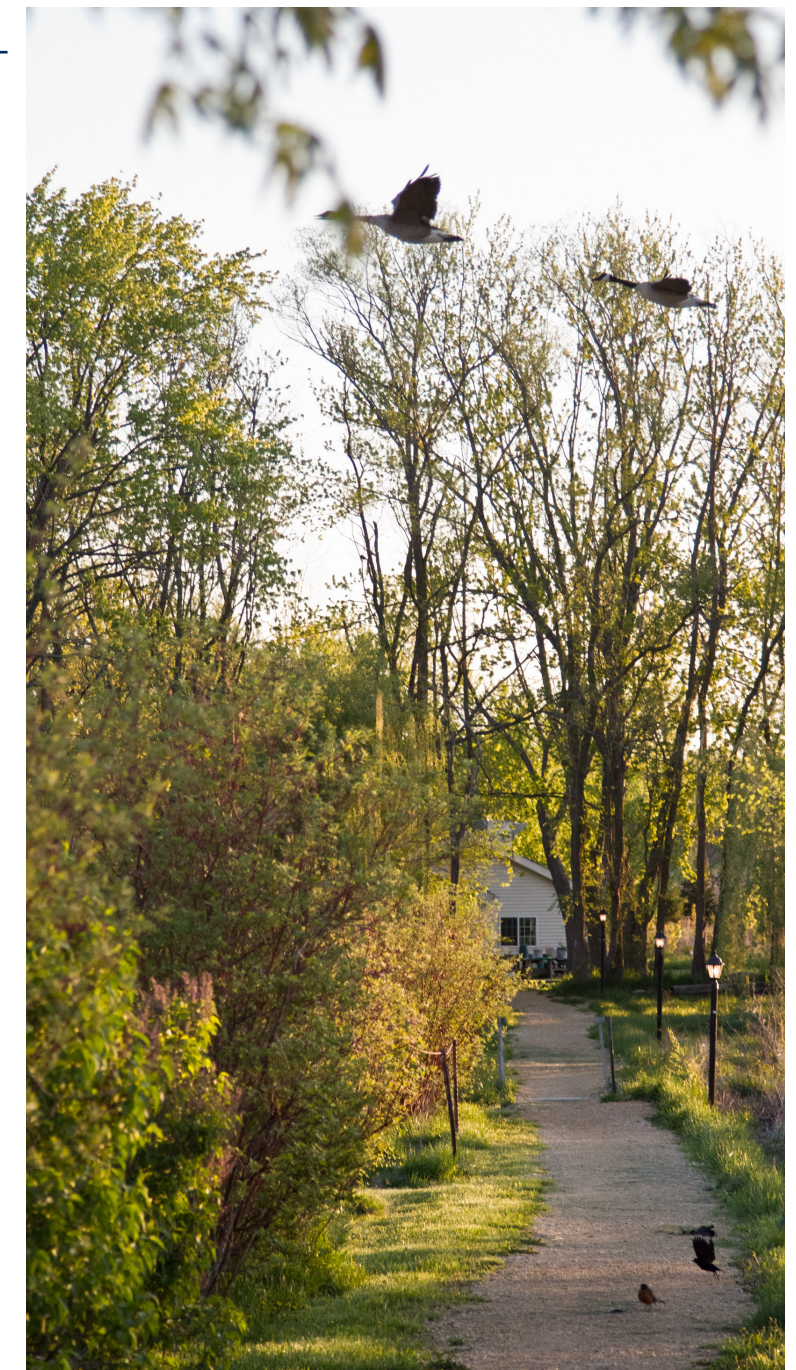
Yes, persons also. You have true love for the person, compassionate love for this person, this is totally different. But when you have attachment, then you don't have love, you only love yourself, because you expect something, material, emotional or other, from this person. With whomever you have attachment, you are expecting something in return. When you start truly loving this person, then you only give; it is one-way traffic. You don't expect anything in return. Then the attachment goes. The tension goes. You are so happy.

*3. If you purify the body, you purify the mind?*

No. Even though you purify the body, the mind may remain dirty and it will again make the body impure. So the root is the mind, not the body. The body is just the base. With the help of the body the mind is working, but the mind has to be purified. You keep on washing your body as much as you can, but the mind is not washed. The mind remains impure. It has to be pure. But if you purify the mind, the body gets purified. It has an effect. The aim of Vipassana is to purify the mind.

*4. What do we do when someone else is doing wrong to us?*

You must not allow people to do wrong to you. Whenever someone does something wrong, he harms others and at the same time he harms himself. If you allow him to do wrong, you are encouraging him to do wrong. You must use all your strength to stop him, but with only good will, compassion, and sympathy for that person. If you act with hatred or anger, you only aggravate the situation. But you cannot have good will for such a person unless your mind is calm and peaceful. So practice to develop peace within yourself, and then you can solve the problem.



## Group Sitzings and Upcoming Courses

Donaldson  
Course Schedule 2013

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

October 11 – 22  
(10-day Course)

Donaldson  
Weekly Group Sitzings

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