



European Executive Course 2008

Vipassana Meditation: Inner Peace through Inner Wisdom

Vipassana Meditation Centre Dhamma Pajjota

European Executive Course

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Press release

Vipassana meditation for executives

The last taboo broken - the introduction of spirituality at work

From the 12th to the 23rd of November 2008, top executives from companies and governments from all over Europe will participate in a Vipassana meditation course in Dilsen-Stokkem, Belgium. Throughout this year, similar exclusive courses are being organised in the United States, India and Australia. It is the first time that hundreds of important decision makers worldwide are attending these 10-day courses. The last taboo in the business world appears to be broken in Europe as well: the introduction of spirituality at work.

Managers are steadily growing to the understanding that classical reactions like: "That's not my cup of tea." or "I'm too busy" don't count anymore. The investment of time and effort are amply rewarded. Part of the purpose is for top executives and government officials to learn to handle stress and anxiety, but the effect goes much deeper. The course guides the "masters of business" into being "masters of mind", masters of their own mind. Through meditation, they become more easy-going in their dealings with their colleagues and their families. Those who practise Vipassana meditation are also more successful in integrating ethical principles and spiritual values on the work floor.

Vipassana meditation centres

Vipassana means: "to see things as they really are". It is one of the oldest meditation techniques of India. In the last 10 years, Vipassana has become very successful there in the business world at an executive level. Throughout the world these courses are available to people from all walks of life, but in certain cases specific target groups are identified requiring exclusive courses. For instance, in North American, European and Indian prisons Vipassana is being taught as a remedy for aggression. In politics and government institutions, the meditation technique improves efficiency amongst other things. Such is the worldwide interest in this technique that there are now more than 90 Vipassana meditation centres in this tradition, and courses are held in at least 90 countries extending from China to Hawaii

Participation in the course is free. The meditation centres support themselves on the basis of donations and the voluntary collaboration of old-students.



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S.N. Goenka

The organisation is being led by the 81 year old Satya Narayan Goenka. Before he came into contact with Vipassana, he was an extremely successful businessman and in the 1950's established a textile empire in Myanmar (Burma). Up to this day, the Goenka family owns several companies in Asiatic countries, including India. For many years now Mr. Goenka has devoted himself exclusively to teaching Vipassana worldwide and to giving public talks. He is a leading teacher without followers, since he emphasizes the importance of being your own master, with full confidence in oneself.

In the past years, Goenka was a speaker at the "World Economic Forum" in Davos (Switzerland), the "World Peace Summit" at the UN, the Harvard Business Club and at a conference "Spirit in Business" in New York.

S.N. Goenka pleads for honest business. He states that there's nothing wrong with economic growth, but that ambition should not harm man and his environment: "As a businessman, you have to realise you should never jeopardise the customer," he says, "because it's through and for society that you make profit."

Course

At the end of September, top executives will be welcomed in "Dhamma Pajjota", the meditation centre in Dilsen-Stokkem, Belgium. Vipassana attracts people from different backgrounds, both cultural and religious.

The course lasts for ten days. Meditation is its keynote. The students commit to abstaining from speech, sex, drugs and alcohol. With the help of daily instructions, one learns to develop mastery of the mind step by step.

During the first three days, the participants concentrate only on their respiration in order to concentrate the mind. From the fourth day onward through a process of self-observation one becomes aware of the inter-relationship between mind and body. Through the development of concentration the mind grows calm, and through the observation of the reality inside one can develop increased awareness, self-control and real peace of mind.

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On this page you will find all relevant links
- www.executive.dhamma.org
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Ten-Day Executive Vipassana Meditation Course as taught by S.N. Goenka

Last year, immediately following the Spirit in Business Conference in New York, Mr. S.N. Goenka conducted a ten-day Vipassana course for business executives and government officials. Following the tremendous success of that course, this year the Executive Course Committee is conducting courses worldwide in U.S. (Texas), Europe (Belgium), Asia, (India), and Australia (to be announced). These courses are uniquely designed for business executives and government officials.

Mr. Goenka has traveled and taught widely in the world in the past thirty years. His background in business, before devoting himself to teaching Vipassana, has attracted many businessmen and -women to participate in his courses. As he told the attendees at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in February, 2000:

I come from a business family and was an entrepreneur and businessman from a very early age. I built sugar mills, weaving mills and, blanket factories and established import-export firms with offices all over the world. In the process, I made a lot of money. However, I also vividly remember how I reacted to events in my business and my personal life during those years. Every night, if I had failed to be successful in a business transaction during the day, I would lie awake for hours and try to figure out what had gone wrong and what I should do next time. Even if I had accomplished a great success that day I would lie awake and relish my accomplishment. While I experienced great success, this was neither happiness nor peace of mind. I found that peace was very closely related to happiness and I frequently had neither, regardless of my money and status as a leader in the community.

I have a favorite poem related to this subject:

It is easy to smile,
when life rolls along like a sweet song;
But the man worthwhile,
is the man with a smile,
when everything goes dead wrong.

How each of us copes with these periods when things go "dead wrong" is a major component of the meaning of happiness, regardless of our money, power and prestige.

So long as one as one keeps generating negativity such as anger, hatred, ill-will, animosity, etc., the stock of unhappiness keeps on multiplying. The law of nature is such that as soon as one generates negativity, unhappiness arises simultaneously. It is impossible to feel happy and peaceful when one is generating negativity in the mind. Peace and negativity cannot coexist just as light and darkness cannot coexist. There is a systematic scientific exercise that was developed by a great super-scientist of my ancient country by which one can explore the truth pertaining to the mindbody phenomenon at the experiential level. This technique is called Vipassana meditation, which means observing the reality objectively as it is. The technique helps one to develop the faculty of feeling and understanding the interaction of mind and matter within one's own physical structure.

The Technique

Vipassana is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation. It was rediscovered by Gotama the Buddha more than 2500 years ago and was taught by him as a universal remedy for universal ills, i.e., an "art of living."

Vipassana is a way of self-transformation through self-observation. It focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body, which can be experienced directly by disciplined attention to the physical sensations that form the life of the body, and that continuously interconnect and condition the life of the



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mind. It is this observation-based, self-exploratory journey to the common root of mind and body that eradicates mental conditioning accumulated from past experiences, resulting in a balanced mind full of love and compassion.

The laws of nature by which one's thoughts, feelings, judgements and sensations operate become clear. Through direct experience, the nature of how one grows or regresses, how one produces suffering or frees oneself from suffering is understood. Life becomes characterized by increased awareness, nondelusion, self-control and peace.

The Course

The technique is taught at ten-day residential courses during which participants follow a prescribed code of discipline, learn the basics of the method, and practice sufficiently to experience its beneficial results. During a ten-day course of Vipassana one observes silence by not talking to any of the other participants or anyone outside the course. The practice of silence allows the mind to become sensitive and alert. Students are free to talk with the teacher about any questions that arise or with the management about any personal requirements or problems they may encounter with the facilities. Otherwise, noble silence is observed.

The course requires hard, serious, continuous effort. There are three steps to the training. The first step is the fundamental ethical practice of abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual activity, speaking falsely, and intoxicants, for the full duration of the retreat. This simple code of moral conduct serves to calm the mind, which otherwise would remain too agitated to perform the task of self-observation.

The next step is concentration of the mind—to develop some mastery over the mind—by learning to fix one's attention on the natural reality of the ever-changing flow of breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils.

By the fourth day the mind is calmer and more focused, better able to undertake the practice of Vipassana itself: observing sensations throughout the body, understanding their nature, and developing equanimity by learning not to react to them.

Finally, on the last full day participants learn the meditation of loving-kindness or goodwill towards all, in which the purity developed during the course is shared with all beings.

The entire practice is actually a mental training. Just as we use physical exercises to improve our bodily health, Vipassana can be used to develop a healthy mind.

Of course, the results come gradually through continued practice. It is unrealistic to expect all problems to be solved in ten days. Within that time, however, the essentials of Vipassana can be learned so that it can be applied in daily life. The more the technique is practiced, the greater the freedom from one's ills, and the closer the approach to the ultimate goal of full liberation. Even ten days can provide results which are vivid and clearly beneficial in everyday life.

Vipassana as taught by S.N. Goenka is a practice that has been preserved in its original, authentic form, passed down faithfully from one generation of meditation teachers to the next. In this tradition there are no charges for the courses—not even to cover the cost of food and accommodation. Courses worldwide are offered freely. All expenses are met by donations from people who, having completed a course and experienced the benefits of Vipassana, wish to give others the opportunity to benefit from it also. In this way Vipassana is kept free from commercialization. No person involved in its teaching receives any material remuneration.

To Apply for the Vipassana Course

Full information about, and application forms for the ten-day Vipassana course as taught by S.N. Goenka may be obtained at the website:

www.executive.dhamma.org

or by contacting
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