



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

Sangha Samaggi Togetherness of the Buddhist Sangha

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QSA ZOOM CHANNEL FOR DHAMMA QUERIES

QSA has set up a new ZOOM channel to answer questions on the Dhamma and queries regarding QSA and its activities. At present the channel will be active from 2.30 pm every Saturday. Anyone can reach us through the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6043658907>

When you are in the meeting room, please speak to the Buddhist Counsellor on duty for the information that you seek. In case of a difficulty, please email QSA via infoqsa@gmail.com

Channel time needs to be booked; bookings can be made by emailing QSA, as above.

QSA CALENDAR FOR A FEW WEEKS IN APRIL-MAY 2023

In April 2023 there will be no BCR programs.

2023

MAY

6 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 15

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Who is worthy of wearing the yellow robe? (Dhammapada 9, 10)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Recollecting past good actions might be beneficial (Dhammapada 18)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of parts of the body

MAY

13 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 16

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- The weak succumb to temptations, but not the strong (Dhammapada 7, 8)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- False pride is a dangerous barrier (Dhammapada 7,8)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of compassion

MAY

20 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 17

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Make your own island, watch the floods pass by (Dhammapada 25)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Heedfulness is the key to learning (Dhammapada 31)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of mental impurities (Dhammapada 25)

MAY

27 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 18

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Learning without practising is not worth (Dhammapada 19)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Using subsequent regret as an indication that a mistake was made (Dhammapada 67)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of appreciative joy -meditation

If you are interested in any of these programs, please send QSA an email via infoqsa@gmail.com We will then send you the entry link.

Article 154

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DISCOURSES-LESSON 0102

Edited by John A. Cartwright

THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE (*Sila Sampada*)

We say that a person is virtuous when he seems to follow useful ethical rules and principles. In Buddhism we are encouraged to follow the five precepts in daily life. This is worth discussing. Why and how do these precepts help us?

These precepts help me live peacefully without causing any harm to others. The five precepts are:

Avoid killing of any living being

Avoid stealing what belongs to others

Avoid bad conduct

Avoid telling lies

Avoid taking intoxicants

They are discussed in detail in the Lesson Bank on Dhamma.

There are higher precepts that we can observe if we want to do so.

The main attribute is that using these precepts we do not harm others and we do not incur harm.

It is worth reminiscing the value of precepts not only while observing them but also when one is resting.

Reminiscence is a concentration meditation and would help to develop your own concentration, which is absolutely necessary in studies and in working life.

It also means that by thinking of the value of virtue we practice right effort, a part of the practice of a Buddhist, we learn later.

If I am interested in becoming wealthy and happy, being virtuous is necessary.

Article 155

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON MEDITATION-LESSON 2003

Edited by Dayani de Silva

NOTICE THE SPEED OF THE MIND, NOTHING IS FASTER

Here the group can settle in a way like the manner described before. Sit on the floor or in chairs in a circle and rest quietly for a few minutes.

The chaplain or counsellor can ask the participants to think of objects, places, and people all over the world. The following series can be tried. A short time gap must be allowed between any two of these:

Brisbane
Sydney
Melbourne
A new car
A tram car
A bus
A train
Prime minister of Australia
President of the United States
President of Russia
A bodhi Tree
A temple
A Buddha Statue
My home
My school

At the end a discussion is held using the following or a similar grid:

- 1 Was there a difficulty in moving from one to the next?
- 2 Did you think of a previous object by mistake?
- 3 Did any other unintended objects or thoughts interfere with what you were trying to do?
- 4 Did you notice how fast the mind can be?
- 5 Is it faster than light?
- 6 Can you now repeat the objects in the same sequence?
- 7 Did you like the experiment?
- 8 You can send the mind anywhere as you wish; did you note that?

The speed of the mind is greater than anything else. That often causes us a few problems. Meditation is one of the techniques of reducing the speed of the mind. It also helps to reduce the radius of movement of the mind.

Article 156

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DHAMMA-LESSON 3003

Edited by Lyna Chen

WHO WAS THE BUDDHA?

The story is that of a prince called Siddhartha Gautama, born to a Queen called Mahamaya in Lumbini, a city in Nepal close to the border between Nepal and India. King Suddhodana was the name of his father.

The life story of the Buddha is available on the internet, and it is not proposed to include it in detail here.

The prince led a successful and happy life as a prince. However, the riddle of life kept him interested in searching for a solution. What is the truth about life? Is ultimate happiness possible? How does one attain that stage?

When he was close to 29 years, he reflected on four signs he saw while moving around the city. One was that of an old man, the second that of a sick person, the third a dead person and fourthly, an ascetic.

He noticed that the experience in the first three cases was suffering. He thought the ascetic was looking for a solution to the problem of suffering.

He himself gave up the royal life and became an ascetic. He lived with five other ascetics who were also searching for the truth. They all practised austerities and so did Siddhartha.

He and the other friends all learnt concentration meditation from the best teachers of the day and did attain very high levels of development of the mind. They were able to enter mental absorptions and stay in these for a substantial time.

Siddhartha felt that austerities would not take him to the truth but to unnecessary suffering. At this stage the five friends abandoned him and went to a distant forest occupied by a herd of deer.

Siddhartha practised by himself, started taking food, and changed his meditation methods. He shifted from concentration to mindfulness. Within a short time, in the early hours of the full moon day in May he saw the truth and attained enlightenment. From that time, he was called the Buddha, as the person who realised the truth.

For seven weeks he reflected on the knowledge that had dawned on him looking for anyone who might understand what he discovered. He thought of the famous teachers who taught him concentration meditation, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, but they had passed away.

He then thought of the five old friends Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji who were living in the deer park in Isipatana, far away from Bodh Gaya where he attained enlightenment.

The Buddha went all the way to teach the five friends. Initially they thought Siddhartha had come back to learn from them. Soon they realised that Siddhartha was totally different. Eventually, they understood the Dhamma, and after a short time all of them attained enlightenment.

The first discourse the Buddha delivered to them is called the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta summarising the philosophy, psychology, and practice of Buddhism with the aim of attaining enlightenment.

The Buddha kept on teaching until he passed away at the age of 80. All his teachings are embodied in the scriptures, written in the Pali language. What we call Dhamma is based on the scriptures.

Article 157

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY-LESSON 5002

Edited by Dr. Kumari Sellahewa

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The fundamental idea that there is suffering is the first of the four noble truths. Briefly stated these are as follows:

That there is inherent suffering in existence

That there is a cause for that suffering

That there is a possible end for such suffering

That there is a way that leads to the cessation of suffering

The cause for suffering is craving.

The elimination of craving results in an end to suffering.

Anyone following the noble eight-fold path may reach that end.

Article 158

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DHAMMA PRACTICE-LESSON 6002

KEEPING AWAY FROM IGNOBLE ASSOCIATES

What we build up with the help of noble friends can be adversely affected because of the influence of one ignoble associate. Such a person will look very

friendly but may have poor intentions. They usually interfere with our practice and try to dissuade us from following the path of spirituality.

The practice must be protected from such individuals.

Article 159

QUOTES FROM AJAHN BRAHMAVANSO

Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria

10 February

"So our path of practice is to be able to sit down and learn what it means to be able to let go, to go in the opposite direction of the *āsava*, (the out-flowings of the mind), and to just sit and be patient. The problem is that people don't know how to be truly patient. Whenever you are sitting down doing nothing, you want something. Craving and desire come up, and they take you away from this moment, and prevent you from going inwards. Remember, wanting is that force which takes you away from whatever you are experiencing now, into something in the future, into fantasies or dreams."

Source: ["Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice"](#) by Ajahn Brahm

February 2023

"What I've seen in the world is that people want the freedom of desire. They want to be free to express their desire. Free to follow their desires at whatever cost. What Buddhism wants, what Buddhism celebrates, is not the freedom of desire, but freedom from desire. That's going in a completely different direction."

Source: ["Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice"](#) by Ajahn Brahm

16 FEB 23

"When we look at the concept we call time, we see time only moves because of craving, because of doing things. When we stop doing things, when we stop planning, when we stop hurrying and hastening through the rounds of rebirth, time stops in this beautiful timelessness. Whenever we want something, we are already making the future. What is it going to be like? What is going to happen next? Where are we going to go next? And then we start going into ill will or guilt, we start looking into the past. It's all just craving or ill will. That's why I say the present moment is the place where you will be free from those things. Once craving and ill will stop, time stops, and then the idea of where we are going and what we are going to do next just disappears. The mind becomes still in time and we experience the beautiful timeless present."

Source: ["Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice"](#) by Ajahn Brahm

22 February 2023

"The more things we have, the more complicated our life is, and the less we experience the beautiful spaces we call freedom."

Source: ["Happy Everyday : 365 Enlightening Quotes"](#) by Ajahn Brahm

2 March 23

"People sometimes come to me and say they tried that and it didn't work. What do you mean it didn't work? It didn't work because you want it to work. Why do you want anything? Give up all wanting. Give up all these expectations and this measuring, and then it happens. When you don't want something, then it comes. So, give it up, abandon, renounce. That's what the Buddha said we should do."

Source: ["Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice"](#) by Ajahn Brahm

Article 160

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

DECISION MENTAL STATE

BASED ON QSA DPTA LESSON 5522 and BCRP 2.1

THE THIRD OF THE SIX OPTIONAL COMMON CETASIKAS

DECISION

This mental state causes many problems in life as it is not adequately developed in a lot of people. If you are unable to make decisions or if you always delay making decisions, it is very difficult to look after a family, look after your health, look after your assistants, or manage anything worthwhile.

A sign of absence of this mental state is dilly-dallying and wasting time thereby making things worse. A good example is looking for garments. Some people can buy things they want in minutes while others wait for the next day. While you wait for tomorrow, the article could be snatched by another person. Lack of decision ability brings suffering and complaining.

The mental states of doubt and fear inhibit decision making. Every moment we are faced with choices. Some may go wrong, but that does not matter. It will always happen that way. People who are weak in decision making need to learn from others.

The scriptures say that like a bee, one needs to say, 'this is the one I need' and finish a transaction. This must be done in a reasonable time. When you delay decisions, you cannot stay steady because you get pushed everywhere.

Excessive greed might be one reason why some people are unable to make decisions reasonably quickly.

THE NEED TO BE SUMMONED OR CALLED UP

The mental state of decision is not always present in the mind. It is available to be called up or summoned. When a decision is due but is being delayed, if one has developed mindfulness, at once the person recollects that something is being unduly delayed and that decision is necessary.

That prompts one to make a decision as necessary.

FACTORS INHIBITING DECISION

It is worth noticing that a person's inability to make decisions is often connected with one of the following:

- 1 Excessive desire
- 2 Too much hatred
- 3 Doubt and lack of confidence
- 4 Fear of consequences

Recollect the experience and try to understand the influence of these factors in your inability to make decisions when they are due.

SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LACK OF THE SKILL OF DECISION

Window shopping but no shopping

Addiction to radio or TV

Eating for a long time

Prolonged conversations

Article 161

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

BCRP 1.2 THE THREE-PRONGED PRESENTATION STYLE

INTRODUCTION

The success of a person as a teacher, counsellor, mentor, or guide depends on the ability to communicate effectively. In making a presentation it is suggested that the Buddha's method of using three levels be followed **WHENEVER POSSIBLE**.

THE THREE LEVELS OF PRESENTATION

- 1 A very concise summary (perhaps in one sentence)
- 2 A brief description (perhaps in one paragraph)
- 3 A full explanation at a detailed level

The first is adequate for some listeners and gives others a useful key.

The second makes the information intelligible for many and furnishes the detail to build on further.

The third part of the presentation should help everyone to understand the subject.

Most discourses of the Buddha are styled in this way.

If these three fail a repetition may be necessary. For example, the four noble truths are repeated almost everywhere in the Dhamma.

Article 162

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

BCRP 2.3 ELEMENTARY WALKING MEDITATION

INTRODUCTION

Based on QSA DPTA lesson 2504

BODY BASED MEDITATION-WALKING POSTURE

Walking meditation is one of the most effective forms of activity meditation. If you get tired say after 20 minutes, then try a sitting meditation again for a similar time and come back.

How is walking meditation distinguished from walking per se? In walking meditation, you try to focus on the activity of walking. The focus suggested by teachers is the point on the heel that seems to contact the ground.

The question is often asked as to what, is the exact point. There is no answer. Whatever point is prominent in your feelings, that is the correct point.

The activity is the walking. The chosen focus is the point on the heel.

The mind will trace the movement of each foot from the focal point on one foot, to the forward movement and placement of the other foot on the ground. The movement and placement can be left out at the start.

Some try to do this (following the movement and placement) in a strenuous manner. That might be over-doing. Walking at a normal speed would do. Try to keep the mind moving with the leg that is moving. At the end of a pace, you transfer the attention to the other foot.

It is best to treat this lightly and make it natural.

Trying to walk fast might make attention impossible. Trying to walk extremely slowly might make the exercise distasteful and over-bearing. Finding the mean is recommended.

After some experience, once you get the rhythm, the mind will move with the feet quite easily. Meditation teachers say that when a certain level of mindfulness is reached, the mental state will rise to the level of what are called faculties. At this stage, initially the feet will feel the four great elements of matter, namely earth, water, fire, and air.

The writer can vouch to a feeling of warmth or fluidity associated with the feet. This may not happen to everyone, and not all the time.

The rising to prominence of any of the elements in any part of the body is treated as an indication of partial success of the meditation.

This could be a thrill at the start, it is suggested that the meditator should not crave for this experience or get attached to it when

experienced. Nor should a meditator feel disappointed that this experience did not happen. It may not happen in some instances.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Decide on a path for walking, a straight one if available. About 22 paces is suggested. The turn back point must be clear.

To start with, pace up and down a few times and get used to the path.

Stand at one end, keep standing for a few moments. Pay attention to breathing and aim at settling the mind.

Think of your feet and start walking.

After a few steps try to feel the bottom of the heel touching the ground.

Experience this as many times as possible though the mind might run away for short periods. With experience, the mind will pay more attention to the heel touching the ground.

If you are wearing footwear, that is alright.

When tired, do sit down and do a little breathing meditation.

Then come back.

DIFFICULTIES LIKELY TO BE EXPERIENCED

Eyes being kept open there may be many distractions. The distractions can disturb the concentration.

The same thing may happen due to sounds.

As usual the mind may get disturbed with memories and plans for the future.

GETTING OVER DIFFICULTIES

The disturbances can be noted and labelled. Let them pass.

Come back to the meditation as best as you could.

Repeated application of mindfulness on the meditation will help in maintaining it.

There is no need for 100 % concentration. Mindfulness is what we are aiming to cultivate.

INDICATION OF SUCCESS

It is possible that at the bottom of the heels the meditator will feel the touch of warmth, or fluidity, or hardness. This is an indication of success.

It may not happen in some cases. Please do not yearn for it.

If such a feeling occurs just feel joy for a second and let it pass. Please do not get attached to it. That might defeat the meditation.

This phenomenon is connected to spiritual development. This is discussed in the Dhamma.

If you get sleepy in walking meditation at any time, please remember to sit down and go back to breathing meditation, after a sip of water and a short break.

WARNING

You should not try walking meditation while going on a public road. It can be dangerous. Then you need to keep your mind on the path and the surrounding.

FREE DHAMMA BOOKS AND DHAMMA LESSONS

The following books published by the Queensland Sangha Association Inc are available for free distribution. Please request by email via infoqsa@gmail.com

- 1 Buddhist Chaplaincy**
- 2 Basic Buddhist Psychology- second edition**
- 3 Q and A for High School Students**
- 4 Discourse on Blessings (English and Sinhala versions)**

- 5 **Practical Techniques of Teaching Buddhism**
- 6 **A Guide to the Practice of Buddhism**

Printed copies of books 1 and 2 are also available; for printed books a donation for postage, will be appreciated. A few copies of the first edition of 2 are available.

About 300 Dhamma lessons and the guidance of a Senior Buddhist Counsellor, are available for everyone joining the Assembly of Buddhist Counsellors of QSA. Just send an email to QSA through infoqsa@gmail.com

The end of the QSA Dhamma Magazine for the period March 2023

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

You are welcome to forward this to a friend who is likely to benefit from this magazine. It is not for public circulation but for the information of members of QSA or for their friends. Past copies of the magazine are held on the current page the QSA website

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