

PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING BUDDHISM TO YOUTH

Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra

Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra

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FOREWORD 1

The modern world is full of attractions and distractions which can easily lead youth astray. The prevalence of the internet, coupled with ubiquitous devices, mean the hearts and minds of youth and young adults can easily be influenced to follow patterns of thinking and action which can be harmful to themselves and society as a whole. The book Practical Techniques of Teaching Buddhism to Youth is a commendable venture which maintains the central theme of the welfare of young people and the need for appropriate religious care.

For this reason, the Queensland Sangha Association Inc (QSA) offers full encouragement to the authors to promote the training of Buddhist Youth Counsellors to use this book as a guideline to help people of a young age to realise their potential to be excellent citizens, and to lead successful and happy lives.

The Dhamma content of the book is essentially based on the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, but it is free from doctrinal aspects. The ideas promoted are of universal value, so that Buddhists belonging to all traditions of Buddhism will find it easy to apply the techniques suggested, using practical material from their own traditions.

I would recommend the use of this book to all parents and caregivers of children. I would also encourage as many Dhamma teachers as possible, of all traditions, to participate in the Buddhist Youth Counselling Courses that are expected to follow from this book.

Reverend James Wilson

President

Queensland Sangha Association Inc

19 October 2021

FOREWORD 2

The Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma, represents the tried and tested path to the liberation of the mind from suffering and unhappiness. Lay persons can derive worldly benefits while treading this path. The book Practical Techniques of Teaching Buddhism to Youth attempts to bring this path closer to the youth and young adults of the modern world by dealing with the practical issues faced by these generations.

Commendable efforts have been made by the Sangha in Australia to serve and promote Buddhism. However, Buddhist Youth in the country deserve greater attention. Young people in Australia, and indeed around the globe, are continuously influenced by the internet, particularly the social media. While there are advantages in using the internet, particularly in education, we need to take guard regarding unwholesome influences.

Equipping youth with the skills necessary to stay alert, look after themselves and to make wholesome decisions which are less harmful to themselves and others, despite all the challenges, cannot be over-emphasised. Relevant information necessary for this purpose is presented in this book in simple language. A key aspect of this book is that it contains information for young adults, including tertiary students, newly married couples, and newly employed young people.

I would like to recommend the use of this book to all members of the Sangha, so that they may give effective guidance to Buddhist Counsellors and to parents in the difficult task of looking after their children.

Venerable S. Sugathasara

Secretary

Queensland Sangha Association Inc

20 October 2021

PREFACE

Dhamma schools have been conducted in a good number of countries quite successfully and have shown good results. Within the limited teaching time allocated, it is not possible to teach the Dhamma and at the same time pay attention to the application of the Dhamma in daily life.

It is unfair to expect volunteer teachers to include both theory and practice in the classroom. Wider facilities are required for teaching practical skills.

The purpose of this book is to impart organised knowledge as to the communication of practical skills based on the Dhamma to enable young people to be well prepared for a happy life.

For this purpose, already there is a movement to promote youth chaplaincy and to help existing Dhamma teachers to acquire new skills as required. For a time, the same Dhamma teachers will form the bulk of those training youth in practical skills based on the Dhamma. Newly qualified Buddhist chaplains, though fewer in number, will participate in promoting the new techniques.

Based on this book, the expectation is to develop a specialised course to train Buddhist Chaplains on techniques of imparting practical knowledge and techniques based on the Dhamma. It is a difficult task and will take time to succeed globally. We thank the Queensland Sangha Association Inc (of Australia) for taking the initiative to promote this movement, firstly in Queensland and then in Australia and other countries.

Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra and Tanuja Sarath-Chandra

21 October 2021

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITION OF AGE GROUPS

A strict definition of relevant age ranges is not possible. As a rough assumption, three ranges are identified for this presentation.

Age 12 to 16	Group 1	Adolescents
Age 17 to 22	Group 2	Youth
Age 23 to 30	Group 3	Young Adults

Some individuals may not fit into these categories, but these are probably the exceptions. The problems experienced by individuals in each group are bound to be different. However, it is possible that types of problems experienced in one age group are the same as those experienced in another group. The intensity and impact could vary.

In each situation the chaplain may decide on the suitability of this classification regarding individuals. Teaching can be adjusted to suit the group served.

There can be regional or country variations, and possibly variations relating to particular times.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEMS OF YOUTHFUL AGE BY AGE GROUPS

Common problems experienced in the first age group - ADOLESCENTS

1 PERSONAL:

- 1.1 Hormonal changes
- 1.2 Puberty
- 1.3 Abuse by elder residents and associates
- 1.4 Loss of self-esteem due to abuse
- 1.5 Body image complex
- 1.6 Stress
- 1.7 Depression
- 1.8 Holding on to strong views

2 SOCIAL:

- 2.1 Cyber addiction
- 2.2 Other addictions
- 2.3 Smoking, drinking and drugs
- 2.4 Bullying in school
- 2.5 Lack of respect from senior relatives
- 2.6 Defiant behaviour

3 INFLUENCES:

- 3.1 Being forced into a disliked sport
- 3.2 Parents using children to settle their problems

- 3.3 Mixing with wrong age group
- 3.4 Inability to deal with strangers
- 3.5 Adoration of false heroes

4 ENVIRONMENTAL:

- 4.1 Study environment at home and in school
- 4.2 Facilities for studies
- 4.3 Environment affecting health
- 4.4 General neglect by elders

5 PRESSURES:

- 5.1 Pressure of study requirements
- 5.2 Peer competition
- 5.3 Economic pressures
- 5.4 Having too many commitments

6 RELATIONSHIPS:

- 6.1 Relations between parents
- 6.2 Influence of elder adults and problems caused by them
- 6.3 Relationship with teachers
- 6.4 Relating to other children
- 6.5 Targets set by parents
- 6.6 Domestic obligations
- 6.7 Domestic violence

6.8 Separation of parents

Common problems experienced in the second age group - YOUTH

Many of the problems mentioned under Group 1 would flow into this group. In addition, there are other problems faced by youth in this group. Children in this group are mature and sometimes they feel they are adults. Some might be doing part-time jobs. They are hopeful of entering university or other tertiary institutions. Vocational choices are also in the offing.

1 PERSONAL:

- 1.1 Inferiority complex
- 1.2 Superiority complex
- 1.3 Lateness in the evening
- 1.4 Tendency to go out in the night
- 1.5 Sexual attraction
- 1.6 Excessive entertainment
- 1.7 Being criticised the whole time
- 1.8 Sexual urges
- 1.9 Fear of parents

2 HABBIT FORMATION:

- 2.1 Drinking
- 2.2 Drugs
- 2.3 Increasing defiance
- 2.4 Aggressive behaviour
- 2.5 Looking for assertion
- 2.6 Confusion and inability to cope with challenges
- 2.7 Continuous distraction (television, social media)

3 PRESSURES:

- 3.1 Economic responsibilities
- 3.2 Increasing peer pressure
- 3.3 Temporary employment opportunities
- 3.4 Early assumption of family or business responsibilities

Common problems experienced in the third age group - YOUNG ADULTS

1 PERSONAL:

- 1.1 Extra-marital interests and relationships
- 1.2 Early problems of married life
- 1.3 Divorce
- 1.4 Caring for children after a separation
- 1.5 Problems with in-laws
- 1.6 Learning to become parents
- 1.7 Responsibility for older members of the family
- 1.8 Interest in religion

2 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL:

- 2.1 Desire to own a dwelling
- 2.2 Purchase of a car and other possessions
- 2.3 Career choices
- 2.4 Clubs and community groups
- 2.5 Planning for advancement in the career

2.6 Working for social position

2.7 Investment planning

2.8 Social responsibilities

2.9 Legal problems

CHAPTER 3

GENERAL SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF YOUNG AGE

1 Observing changes in behaviour of individuals

Parents and carers need to observe changes in behaviour of children and discuss these with the partner in confidence. It is not sensible to get upset with a child the moment one notices a change. That might be confronting. The change could be transitory.

Changes may relate to attitudes, eating habits, sleeping patterns, tendency to isolate and general changes in daily activities. The child might seem more withdrawn than usual or display aggression towards the parents or to siblings.

Communication patterns may change over a period.

2 Identification of types of problems

The statements of common problems set out above would help parents to identify the onset of new problems and form an idea of what is occurring. Parents need to avoid rushing into strong conclusions. Rather it should help to make a discussion between the parents more meaningful. Parents should continue to show the same level of kindness and tolerance to the child as usual.

It is possible that a given situation is a combination of problems, rather than a simple, singular issue. The combination could be baffling to many parents. Avoid rushing in to take immediate action, simply because you read something in a magazine or had seen advice on television, as many ideas are floated by educated people before they are proven and confirmed. Even then, a parent may not have the understanding or skill to arrive at serious conclusions.

Future action can be mapped out only if the identification is done properly. These statements are only an indicative guideline as many other possibilities can exist.

3 Early prevention

Early intervention is a necessary general solution. This is particularly true regarding both smaller children and mature children. The reason is that it is relatively easy to manage a problem early. The intensity of the problem is likely to be low at the start. The participation of the child in the solution is of great use.

In this context, the vigilance of parents is important. The vigilance must not be over-whelming to the point of being a bother and a nuisance. It is necessary to build up a relationship with children on a continuing basis. This is one of the fundamental duties of parents. One parent may be more skilled in the art of relationships with children than the other, but dominance is not advised.

In this context, parents need to improve their skills through all means available.

Puberty is a time when parents' help is necessary. If such help is not forthcoming, children may seek help elsewhere. It is best to keep these matters within the family as confidentiality is important at such times. Although it is a generalisation, the mother might be effective in the case of girls and the father useful in the case of boys.

The time of acquisition of social skills and building a group of friends is another occasion for parents to help children. In these matters, parents need to show respect to the children and listen to their point of view. Stories from their experience might be helpful, but care must be taken not to be overly frank.

4 Setting an example

Parents need to set an example for children to follow. If parents are given to excessive smoking, drinking, drugs, or poor social habits, naturally the children will copy them. If one or both parents remain aloof, again the child may follow such behavioural patterns. It is up to the parents to rectify their imperfections before expecting perfection from children. Many parents claim that they come to a temple for the sake of children, but that they do not really benefit. Nothing is further from the truth. Parents must be honest in their self-assessments.

One of the advantages of the family unit is the creation of an environment for setting an example for children to follow.

Domestic violence or constant arguments and disputes can be destructive influences. Many parents have poor behaviour, yet they expect children to behave well. That does not happen. We can learn together. In Buddhism, the usefulness of the family unit is always highlighted.

The discipline of parents is vital in bringing up children. The assumption that parents have completed their education and training is utterly false. According to the Buddha, education and training should never stop. There is always room to improve.

In known cases, parents take to excessive drinking and the children follow the bad example. They even justify their behaviour, quoting parents as the cause. Worse things have happened.

Even simple hygiene practices such as taking a bath, brushing teeth, washing the hands before a meal, or cleaning one's dishes following the meal are vitally important. Example is far better than admonition. That was the way of the Buddha.

One parent should not openly discredit the other in the presence of children.

5 Friendship within the family

The family unit, including parents and children, need to function as a group of intimate friends. In particular, the father must be open to children and be a genuine helper and friend to the children. To have favourites or to ignore or reject some children is not wise behaviour. There are differences among children and that is natural. Parents need to accept the differences and work around them.

The father should not be like the Captain in the Sound of Music, summoning the children by blowing a whistle. We can remember how Julie Andrews captured the hearts of the captain's children. Some men are not very communicative. Even a smile or a wink can be effective. The father should not appear to favour the girls in preference to boys.

The dinner table is a place where friendships can be promoted, even with little talking. A child must feel comfortable in talking to parents. Rapport is the key word. There is no need to sacrifice discipline in favour of rapport.

Questioning a child in the presence of others is not recommended. Parents need to trust their children and show them that they are being trusted. That does not imply that parents must believe all the yarns invented by children.

It is useful to talk about common problems in society such as bullying, drinking and drugs. Stories are useful in this type of communication.

6 Providing a safe space for health and security

Children, as do all of us, desire to live in a safe place or environment. Physical, social, and mental environments are all important, though some types of environments are more important than others.

All children need a healthy environment. In an actual case there was a father who was investing in new houses in his home country. The house in which he lived lacked ventilation, the carpets were not clean and the whole place was relatively dark during daytime. One child was constantly ill, often getting flu and sinus trouble. At times, there was bleeding from the nose. After some advice from a friend, the gentleman decided to buy a land and build a house. This made all the difference. The health of the child improved, studies improved, and a top-level career resulted. The second child also followed the sibling.

When people purchase homes, they think mostly about their needs, but rarely the future needs of the children. A well-known teaching of the Buddha was that we should be careful as to where we live. In some places, there is hardly any security. In others, the social environment can be poor or unsuitable.

It is not trying to be snobby, but it is simply about choosing a suitable place to live.

7 Seeking help

Parents may be clever in many respects. However, there are situations in which their cleverness fails to produce adequate results. The moment this is realised, they need to examine the possibility of getting help from more competent people, even professionals.

Consultations with close relatives or friends could be helpful in trying to clear the path. This is particularly useful when the parents are not comfortable in approaching professional consultants.

CHAPTER 4

SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN AGE GROUPS

1 Obtaining wider education

This is more relevant to young adults rather than children. In the competitive modern world, a traditional education in a limited area is not adequate for economic or social success. An engineer would benefit from learning management, accountancy, or information technology. A medical professional might benefit from learning management or information technology.

One of the reasons why this is necessary is that as one gets higher responsibilities, wider learning helps.

In general, it is good to have a wider knowledge basis so that one does not get narrow-minded and unable to relate to others or lack the agility to adapt to new situations and environments.

2 Obtaining wider training in skills

Similar considerations apply as in the case of education. Training in common skills useful in the household or in the community are generally useful. Some instruction in plumbing, electricity or home maintenance will not go to waste. The need for some understanding of computers and communications technology is very necessary. Car repairs is another area in which some training is useful.

In the Buddha's discourse on blessings, the second stanza mentions the need to be equipped with some knowledge of technical matters and trade skills. Carpentry and masonry are also useful areas for wider training.

Training in trades also helps to break the barrier between different classes of society. One can then appreciate the value of different services and different types of training.

Wider training provides the opportunity for people to diversify their engagements. It might also be an opportunity for physical exercise. In the early period of building the Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery (Brisbane), in Ellen Grove,

professional engineers and scientists, made a major contribution using the skills they had in the trades like electrical work, plumbing, steel fabrication, carpentry and masonry. The whole effort helped to save money, and more importantly, in the building of a cohesive and committed social group.

3 Learning different types of meditation

Meditation here means the development of the mind using concentration and focussing techniques. As it is a major topic, details are presented in another chapter. See sections 11 to 16 of Chapter 7.

There are several aspects of meditation that need to be noted.

The busy world and the difficulties of handling it effectively requires some amount of calming of the mind. Calming can be achieved through the skill of concentration as well as by practising mindfulness. Calming can also result from the enjoyment of natural surroundings. A walk along the beach, a walk along a foot path in an area full of trees, watching a waterfall, watching rain, listening to the sounds from the ocean, paying attention to the singing of birds, and watching the stars in the sky are a few examples.

There are man-made water features in parks and within urbanised environments providing a similar experience.

Concentration is a higher level of mental development. Many are familiar with breathing meditation in which one tries to keep the mind on the in-breath and out-breath. Concentration can also be developed by focusing on defined objects such as a beam of light through a hole in the roof, a candle flame, a coloured disc, water drops, or a spectrum.

Mindfulness meditation can be practised in many ways. There are fourteen ways suggested in the famous discourse of the Buddha on the establishment of mindfulness. Again, observation of breathing is well recommended. At times it is hard to distinguish between concentration meditation and mindfulness meditation.

In Buddhism, there is also insight meditation in which the meditator begins to see things as they truly are in the light of the Dhamma. Causation as a phenomenon and the self-idea in a true perspective are two examples of insight knowledge.

Meditation provides a therapy for many of the problems faced by youth mentioned earlier. The style and type of meditation as a therapy will vary with age and the problems experienced.

4 Developing a researching attitude

The proper attitude to the idea of researching needs to be inculcated into the minds of children. Without an inclination to research, young people tend to rush to conclusions with no evidence or flimsy evidence. Many problems in behaviour and thinking are caused by this careless attitude.

From a young age, when curiosity is dominant, it is useful to acquire the skills of researching. Initially, the need to get an overview of what has been discovered before is important. This helps individuals to admire those who researched before, and to respect what has already been discovered. This helps people to acknowledge those who contributed in the past. Indirectly, it helps to avoid plagiarising.

Secondly, a person needs to get a good understanding of what has already been discovered so that one can investigate a new area.

Thirdly it paves the way for future discoveries.

Young people can be encouraged to research on whatever topics they have an interest in. Examples are scientific material, history, geography, languages, engineering achievements, progress in the medical field, pharmaceuticals, philosophy, religions, politics, economics and so on. The particular field is not material, but the methods used, and the value of results obtained are of significance.

5 Setting up social contracts

These are not legally binding agreements, but rather honest agreements on ideas considered to be desirable by, say, two individuals. A young person may agree with another to study together. An older sibling may consent to reducing the volume on the television to prevent disturbing a child who is studying. Parents may agree with an adolescent to review their social media accounts for appropriate content.

One can question the need and validity of these social contracts. In any contract, legal or social, what matters is the method of performance and the results. If arrangements like this help to produce good results, then these are useful in the sustenance and development of every individual, whether parents or children.

6 Learning from the life story of the Buddha

Whether we like it or not, all young people tend to have their own heroes. As Buddhists we all have a well-known and unsurpassed hero in the Lord Buddha. Once we learn about the Buddha, his personality, his teachings, and the great following he had, the Buddha can become a true hero in our lives. Nothing can be better than that.

When choices are to be made, we can check how the Buddha solved the problem, or a similar problem. We can see the choices he had in different situations, and how he made those choices. Where feasible, these can be treated as examples to adopt and follow. It helps to reduce worries relating to choices.

Children like stories. There are plenty of stories from the life of the Buddha that children can learn from and relate to. A recent film on the life of the Buddha appeared to attract so much attention from children and showed the interest children had in these stories. Children were able to notice fine points that were significant.

Young people might have some difficulty in understanding the Dhamma in its deepest depths, but they have no problem in understanding the universal principles embodied in the Dhamma. Much of the teaching directly helps in sustaining happiness in this known world, and that fact must be drawn out by chaplains working to help young people.

Young people are curious about the appearance and conduct of monks and nuns and that curiosity is a useful stepping-stone to get them to understand what the Sangha is and what they are practising and why. The Buddha was the leader of the Sangha.

In non-traditionally Buddhist countries, one of the curious features of the Sangha is the way they dress, and the connection among the robes of monks and nuns from different country traditions. In this context, the appearance of the Buddha also would cause curiosity and lead to further thinking, as to the way

the Sangha lives and the fundamental reasons for their appearance and the way they dress.

7 Learning from the life stories of great monks and nuns

When a young person develops interest in the personality of the Buddha, it is also useful to look at the stories of great monks and nuns. Each of these stories has a story from the Dhamma worth telling. Moreover, when these stories are told, the individual monks and nuns become real characters. This enables children to emulate their behaviour and the wholesome choices they made.

What each young person aspires to achieve may involve certain aspects of character. These are illustrated in life stories of great monks and nuns.

A case in point is the story of Venerable Rahula, the son of Prince Siddhartha. Rahula was keen to listen and take instructions, hoping to learn and better himself from each such instruction. He did learn very effectively. It is a great example for young people.

For young people who are fascinated by super-human performances of various individuals such as performers, athletes, great explorers, scientists and discoverers of knowledge, the story of Venerable Maha Moggallana is satisfying and convincing. It shows the vast powers of the human mind, only a fraction of which most of us may have achieved.

There were also members of the laity who demonstrated great qualities and virtues. One such personality was Anathapindika, believed to be one of the wealthiest merchants in the region at the time. Yet, his humility and generosity in building the famous Jetavana Monastery in Savatthi, and the respect and support given to the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha was unsurpassed.

The lofty nature of the great members of the Sangha helps us to tone down our self-conceit and at the same time indicates future potential each one of us has.

8 Learning from biographies of great individuals

The world has known many great individuals belonging to many religions and nationalities and there is a lot to learn from them. As there are so many such people, it is necessary for a chaplain to help a young person to select suitable

biographies. The selection needs to be made on a rational basis and connected to the personality of the young person.

In this connection, it is necessary to mention religious leaders such as Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohamed, the founders of Christianity and Islam respectively.

Stories about the life and teachings of leaders of other religions might be useful to a person who is inclined on spirituality. There are many books written, and much reference material to be found on the internet regarding great spiritual leaders.

Individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi, Socrates, philosophers, discoverers well known in science, world explorers, artists, musicians, athletes, engineers who created famous bridges, buildings and other infrastructure and pioneers in different fields of study are some other great individuals to learn from.

9 Participating in major development projects in any field

This may suit those in Group 3, young adults. Learning in a university is certainly useful. If one can participate in a major project as a member of a team, it helps the person to acquire valuable skills. It also gives the confidence necessary for one to take on major projects in the future. This helps in character building.

Some individuals might have fears of taking on major responsibilities or fear of failure in general. People should be encouraged to get involved in smaller projects at the start. These opportunities are in plenty, particularly through volunteering organisations.

Again, it is good to learn about key individuals who made incredible contributions to the success of national or global projects.

Those living in Australia can work as consultants in overseas projects in developing countries.

Participating in major projects or initiatives helps us develop our mind, and at the same time, we get to understand how insignificant we are in the universal scheme of things. This helps to manage our ego and self-concept, a crucial practice in Buddhism.

10 Participating in physical work programs

Participation in physical work programs helps a young person to observe how far they can translate classroom learning or academic learning into real situations. The young person by himself or herself needs to develop this understanding, perhaps with some help from the chaplain.

Book learning is enabled mostly by the mind-sense and is therefore conditioned by imagination or by intellect. Learning at work also involves the body-sense and the resulting sensations of pain or pleasure. Applying the body-sense is the basic technique of meditation discussed in the discourse on the establishment of mindfulness. Initially it is good to learn how the body works in real situations.

The ability to move the limbs, the head and organs in the head seem to contribute a great deal to the development of the personality. The less we articulate these, the less we can express our personality. This is sometimes suggested by Buddhist meditation teachers in connection with mindfulness meditation. Physical work gives young people an avenue to express themselves, as against hiding themselves.

Cleaning of the garden, preparation for cultivation, setting up a plant nursery, caring for plants, reaping a harvest, sharing the benefits of the harvest, engaging in a sporting or movement driven activity such as dance, are simple opportunities for personality development, more particularly for young persons. This implies the development of the mind.

Other examples are found in building fences, building walls, setting up work sheds, creating play areas and so on.

Work situations also enable the inter-mingling of individuals in difficult situations and through that the identification of noble friends. The latter is an essential part of our practice of Buddhism.

11 Experiencing group dynamics

It is easy enough to associate with people, but it is not easy to understand how people interact with one another in a group situation. Here we are dealing with relatively small groups rather than large ones.

A practical application of this principle is found in group interviews for the recruitment of employees. It can work in addition to individual interviews held separately. In a group interview, sometimes the selectors stay out of the visibility of interviewees. Their presence is made known to the group.

One can assess one's own participation and at the same time observe the character of others participating. A person might be arrogant, dominating, or assertive in presentations and discussion. One person might take all the time available. Some would be almost silent all the time. Some are silent generally but come forward with wise suggestions or points of view that astound everybody.

All these things can help a young person to discover the strengths and weaknesses of one's own personality and thus enable improvements with suitable guidance.

From a Buddhist point of view, group situations disclose patterns of thinking, hidden defilements, and obvious frailties. These are not things to be regretted but need to be seen as opportunities for development.

It is also an opportunity to select noble friends.

12 Learning and teaching life skills

This is an endless topic. Learning life skills is particularly important for young adults. Life skills can be a very wide topic. In this discussion skills of dealing with other people is vital. See Chapter 6, in which 32 life skills are discussed in detail.

Sometimes communications are treated as the main life skill. It is indeed one of the main life skills. In Buddhism there are so many life skills to learn.

Children benefit from participating in debates in schools that are assessed by the teachers. Many children are hesitant to participate initially but after observing the effectiveness of others they might come forward. Admittedly, some children, probably most of them, would never participate and should not be forced into participation. According to Buddhism we have all sojourned through many life cycles and have acquired peculiarities of character and some of these are hard to change in one lifetime.

In a school debate there should not be winners and losers. Every point of discussion put forward by individuals must be seen as an opportunity to enhance our collective thinking and knowledge. This precludes one group as being labelled the losers. Topics that are too sensitive need to be avoided.

Learning life-skills is more beneficial than theoretical learning or book-learning. It equips the individual to deal with the ability to cope with all kinds of situations that are confronted in life.

13 Building a circle of noble friends

According to the Buddha, this is the main factor that helps us in the advancement in spirituality, the ability to select noble friends.

This is the first factor that contributes to happiness in life, as mentioned in the Discourse on Blessings (*Maha Mangala Sutta*). Some may take this in the wrong context and say that it is not correct to be judgemental about people. The idea is not to judge a person on a permanent basis because of one or a few experiences. In Buddhist culture this is clearly taught. One is expected to keep an open mind regarding an individual, as there is always a possibility that things might be better in the future.

In selecting a noble friend, it is up to everyone to use their wisdom to see if a friend is helping one to advance on the spiritual or worldly path by encouraging one to develop wholesome and skilful thoughts, words, and actions, or whether the opposite is occurring.

The Buddha has mentioned that even if you associate with a person for a whole lifetime, you might not be able to understand him or her completely. According to the teaching of constant change (*anicca*) no individual stays as a constant. Influenced by the environment and the development of the person's power of understanding, the person keeps changing with time.

Another important teaching is that although you might notice that a person's behaviour (thinking, words used and actions) might seem objectionable or unacceptable regarding one aspect, yet according to other aspects that person

might seem to be good. In many cases this is true. After all, until all defilements are uprooted from our minds, none of us are capable of being perfectly noble all the time.

We should not judge others permanently or fully. In a so-called bad person, we should try to see at least some good features. Our first obligation is to observe our own thinking and behaviour, and thereby increase our own level of wisdom. Because of something bad (unwholesome mental activity) in ourselves we might be passing wrong assessments on other people.

14 The need for noble friends

A very important teaching is that one can progress (both in a worldly and spiritual sense) only by having a group of noble friends. In case you you're your way, the noble friends will influence you to get back on the right path. There are very many stories to support this theory. The words "*Asevanaca Balanam, Panditananca Sevana*" in the Great discourse on Blessings, need to be fully understood. The Dhamma mentions many features of noble friends.

However, one needs to understand friends, and closely understand who they are; just by living with them might not be effectual.

Noble friends cannot be bought from the open market. The information in social media might not be helpful. The starting point is being a noble friend yourself. Once you are a noble friend to some extent, you begin to attract other noble friends.

Another easy start is to treat the Buddha as your noble friend, maintaining your respect for him. As the Buddha is not living, one can turn to the Dhamma or Sangha. This is the reason why learning about the Buddha is so important. He was an impeccable person, whose supreme qualities should be kept at the forefront of our minds. This will help us to emulate his behaviour and help us to remain on our chosen path.

We can always look for persons from whom we can learn the Dhamma; there are many in society like that.

There is a belief that past kamma brings noble friends together. This could be happening in Buddhist Temples and Meditation Centres.

15 Case studies on various selected topics

Actual or constructed stories illustrating the application of the Dhamma in daily life are very effective in communicating the Dhamma to young people. There are legal problems involved in relating actual stories, however much they are convincing. Hence careful construction of cases becomes important in communications. These can be called case studies in keeping with current terminology.

Cases can be built upon an experience or an observation or even recorded stories taken properly. These need to be brief but informative. Cases that illustrate one or a few particular Dhamma teachings are recommended. It is also possible to take a long story and work out self-contained extracts that relate to the main considerations.

Appendix (2) contains illustrative cases which a chaplain may use directly or build upon to suit specific groups. Relating aspects of the Dhamma applicable in real situations is the main aim of the case studies. This helps to bring the Dhamma close to our lives and apply it in a beneficial manner. Dhamma merely for knowledge can be academically valued. It may not have spiritual value. It will not help while we sojourn in *samsara* (cycle of births and deaths) or in our attempt to get out of *samsara*.

Note that the technique of using case studies is used in teaching subjects such as management and law very effectively.

16 Laughter and amusement as therapies

The 550 *Jataka* stories (available in ten volumes) contain some amusing stories. Each story has a Dhamma value. When these stories are related, people laugh a

lot and at the end, attention is drawn to the Dhamma aspect. The pleasant mood of laughter helps in absorbing and in retaining the Dhamma.

In modern society past birth stories are rarely used to help learn the Dhamma. However, in ancient Sri Lanka and in other countries, this technique has been widely used in temples. It did not require the ability to read or write. It was also used as entertainment. Some birth stories evoke utter laughter but in effect communicate a deep teaching of the Buddha.

There is no harm in using this technique even today in Australia, maybe with suitable adaptations or with descriptions of the culture of the day.

There are stories in television and radio even today from which we can learn aspects of the Dhamma, while enjoying hilarious situations.

Some assert that laughter is the best medicine for maintaining good mental and physical health.

17 Storytelling and participation

In general, children and even adults like listening to stories, actual or concocted. Again, the results can be very impressive. Dhamma sermons in Sri Lanka often include stories either from the life stories of the Buddha or the great monks and nuns, or stories about the faithful. The Dhamma message of stories is powerful, provided that guided attention is paid to the Dhamma.

The stories of Nalagiri, the elephant, Angulimala, the highway thief, Alawaka, the feared demon, Devadatta and many others are well known. There are very instructive stories in Zen Buddhism. Stories from other religions can be used by chaplains. Arabian stories are one example.

The danger with storytelling is that the attention to details of a story might cloud the main themes of interest to the chaplain.

Many stories are so strange that these cannot be believed. The chaplain can remind the audience that a story is only a story, and they need not become part of our beliefs.

Dramas can be created giving the opportunity for children to play various roles including acting and singing.

18 Keeping a diary and checklists

Most children are in the habit of keeping diaries as a part of their duties in school. What is suggested here is a record of events that relate to our advancement along the chosen path of spirituality.

How much to record depends on each individual and the usefulness of the information. Significant experiences that remain in memory could be worthwhile recording. Time should not be wasted in making long and useless entries.

An important consideration is the likely use of the information in future activities. Some dates, persons, places, actions, good or bad results, shocking experiences, or newly understood sections of the Dhamma might be among the diary records.

As a person becomes mature, the style of keeping a diary will invariably change and in fact the uses of a diary may also undergo change. As records grow old there will be less and less opportunity or need to refer to them.

Appendix (4) lists some things that can be recorded for future reference.

Ideally one needs to have a classified diary bound together or held in one file, such as a folder or lever arch file with dividers. In this way, it is easier to refer to records in the future.

19 Illustrative clues to tracking the mind

It is an important part of spiritual practice to watch one's mind. The mind runs all over all the time. This obviously results in wasted energy and efficacy of the mind. Moreover, silly, harmful, and fruitless pursuits not recognised by the individual can go on in the mind for considerable lengths of time.

As far as possible we should try to have control of our minds. This training can be understood by children of a young age. It is always relevant, regardless of age. Hard control may not be effectual but control through understanding is useful.

Appendix (1) lays out a set of cases in which the mind moves away from the control of the individual and suggests ways of getting the mind back.

20 Question and answer sessions for young people

Buddha's life story is full of questions asked by people and the answers given to them by the Buddha. The Buddha encouraged questioning and advised people not to believe in things in a casual or un-informed way. In fact, he said not to believe something just because the Buddha himself said it. We are advised to test things through experience and to accept only if we are really convinced.

Believing in things without questioning is causing much confusion and damage in the current world. The social media, radio and television are contributing to this mess.

Appendix 3 contains some typical questions asked by young people and the answers suggested.

It is also mentioned that people who ask questions to better understand the Dhamma are reborn as wise people in the future. Apart from the next birth, we can observe this happening in the classroom for people of all ages.

When asking questions, one needs to understand the value of the question and its significance in sorting out a problem in the Dhamma. Questions should not be vexatious or complicated. That is poor questioning.

There are at least a few things that are beyond our comprehension and then it is pointless asking questions about them. In Buddhism the origin of the world or the end of the world are worthless questions. These do not help us to advance spiritually. However, the beginning of a phase of the world might be asked but even here our ability to understand the answer is clearly limited.

It is best to raise questions relating to one's current practice rather than philosophies which do not help you advance your current practice.

A question-and-answer bank is provided in the website of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc (www.sanghaqlld.org) under the resources menu.

21 Lessons from the Dhammapada

The Dhammapada contains about four hundred stanzas attributed to the Buddha. Many of these contain teachings that can be helpful in dealing with problems experienced by young people. Many good English translations of the Dhammapada are available.

The *Dhamma Padattha Katha* also includes the stories relating to the background that prompted the teaching in each stanza. The stories themselves provide excellent information that can be applied in the solution of problems.

The book consists of 26 chapters, and 423 stanzas. Chaplains can select stanzas which have greater significance to the lives of young people. Alternatively, they can refer to the relevant appendix for a brief selection of stanzas.

A few stanzas are discussed in section 20 in chapter 6 to illustrate the value of the Dhammapada.

22 Learning and practice of equanimity

Enlightenment (Nibbana) is our ultimate aim. Short of that, we all like to lead a happy worldly life. A good part of the Buddha's teachings is about that. Do we look at such teachings often enough? Probably not. We assume that we know.

One meaning of equanimity is about maintaining balance in day to day living.

For example, when we get a promotion in the job, when we get a lot of money from our business or by selling a property, when we make a large profit from a stock we sell, when we win a game, when our son or daughter wins an academic prize in an examination, when our politician wins a seat, when our team wins a match, we get elated and feel ecstatic. In these and similar situations it is reasonable to become happy, but is it reasonable to become highly elated and lose control?

High elation throws you off balance. It is better to be quietly happy. The event may be due to good actions done in the past. The high elation might bring you

immediate suffering, as in the case of drinking or sports related injuries. Moreover, our success often can mean someone else's failure. It is good to have compassion towards them. The high elation can pass just as quickly as it came, sometimes leaving one with a sense of deflation. Such elation may never come again. Reasonable happiness might last for a longer period.

When the opposite happens, that is when things go wrong, when you experience serious problems at work, incur heavy losses in business or the share market, when the children fail to do well in examinations, or when you are on the losing side in a game, one may experience disappointment and sadness. Here again one can stay in quiet acceptance as it is part of living. There is no need for lamentation. It might be the result of bad actions in the past. If one accepts failure as a common occurrence, and as the natural flip side of success, the sadness will pass away quickly. If one holds on to it too much, it might leave a continuing scar in the mind.

It shows us that staying in balance is the best option. It is our experience, and it is what the Buddha taught. Once you understand this principle you will find it much easier to tide over both success and failure, both gain and loss, good fame, and ill-fame and so on. The question remains as to how we can develop this mental strength.

Firstly, we need to understand the working of *kamma*, our actions in the past bearing results now or in the future. Learn to say to yourself, this is what I may have done in the past!

Secondly, both success and failure are generated ultimately by craving (*tanha*). We can keep reducing craving simply by reducing the strength of unwholesome roots in the mind, namely greed, hatred, and delusion. One needs to observe one's conduct and spoken words and note whether these are wholesome or unwholesome. Whatever religion one might belong to, this can be done. If it is gradual, it is easy.

Thirdly, learn to be compassionate towards others. This helps to reduce the gulf between myself and others. We are, after all, in the same boat. The idea of compassion (*karuna*) itself is good. Translating this into action brings tangible results. Buddhist chaplaincy is one way you can practise compassion towards others.

Fourthly, the attitude of measuring others (*mana*) is not always helpful. It is useful to reflect on the equality of everyone in society, as opposed to thinking that we are better than others. To reduce *mana*, it is useful to reflect on the common aspects of our existence, such as the air we must all breathe, the environment we rely on, the nutrients we all rely on for our sustenance, the support we must get from others to achieve anything in life and the mental suffering and anguish every living being experiences at one time or another. Once we begin to accept such commonalities, we are less likely to focus on the differences which create divisions, animosity, and hatreds between groups of people and individuals.

Fifthly, it is good to try staying in mental balance in the face of what happens in the world. “Come what may” is a useful attitude if applied in a reasonable manner. This leads to a most fundamental idea, namely equanimity (*upekkha*). This is the seventh factor of awakening in the path to enlightenment. Australians have an idiom like “she’ll be right, mate”. This is a good attitude a Buddhist can adopt, as it is akin to saying no matter how bad things get, it will pass and right itself with time, and therefore, not to take things too seriously.

What is embedded deep in the mind can be seen only in meditation. Mindfulness is particularly important. That is a deeper matter.

23 Acceptance theory and practice

One of the ways of alleviating or overcoming mental suffering is acceptance of experiences that are not pleasant or hard to cope with. That requires knowledge of the Dhamma, training and practice.

In connection with the eight vicissitudes of life, we have seen how things keep changing, for example from grief to happiness, fame to ill-fame, praise to blame, and gain to loss. When things go wrong, we need to accept them at least for the time being.

What is the basic reason for these ups and downs? One possibility is our own past deeds (*kamma*). If that is so, we have no reason to complain.

Lamentation in cases of loss is fruitless, as it is unreal to expect restitution through lamentation. Furthermore, lamentation itself involves hatred of the situation, and that itself can attract worse *kamma*.

Again, when something goes against your expectations, the tendency is to look for someone to blame. That again does not bring resolution of any problems. Also, ill-rooted, respondent actions can bring more harm, both to me and to others.

There is a belief that things occur in the world due to the operation of certain universal norms or laws. For example, people grow old and become ill and feeble. The best thing is to accept that as a universal norm. Wise acceptance is the solution.

My own mind can go wrong and so might the minds of other people. That is a norm. Knowing that, we need to accept what I am experiencing.

Acceptance helps us to reduce hatred and pain of mind. It creates for us an opportunity to move forward and avoid getting stuck. When the mind experiences sloth and torpor, one of the five hindrances to spiritual (and worldly) progress, it is very damaging as the mind is rendered incapable of moving forward. It is virtually trapped.

The exercises on acceptance (see section 22 of chapter 7) can help a young person to learn the techniques of acceptance and the resulting alleviation of suffering.

CHAPTER 5

CLASSIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING BUDDHA DHAMMA

1 Methods and techniques of practical Dhamma communication

The current popular method of teaching is in the classroom, a teacher speaking to a small group of children. Children who are capable and keen to study may find this method effective. Other children may not pay attention, and engage in conversations among themselves, causing annoyance to the teacher. The teacher in this situation must waste a lot of energy in maintaining discipline. Many students may fail to participate.

When the main aim of the teacher is to help the students to prepare for an examination or other assessment, things become worse, as the children who do not like to sit for examinations feel that they are left out completely.

As many of the children do not enjoy what is going on in the classroom, the Dhamma becomes distasteful. This is a most unwelcome result and can result in far reaching consequences.

The process of communication in the Dhamma group needs to meet as much of the following requirements as possible:

- 1 Making it easy and enjoyable to the teacher
- 2 Making it easy and enjoyable to the children
- 3 Helping both teachers and students to relate the Dhamma to real experiences in life.
- 4 Helping the children to derive tangible benefits from the learning experience.

- 5 Developing the ability to think clearly and wisely
- 6 Developing the ability to speak clearly and wisely
- 7 Developing the ability to act clearly and wisely
- 8 Experiencing the development of concentration
- 9 Experiencing the development of mindfulness
- 10 Writing with concentration and mindfulness
- 11 Experiencing the advantages of a soft mind
- 12 Building the capacity of the mind to reach out to others
- 13 Breaking the barriers of narrow knowledge through guided research
- 14 Improving the functioning of the mind through concentration
- 15 Improving the functioning of the mind through mindfulness
- 16 Enhancing and understanding cultural proficiencies
- 17 Applications of these techniques using modern technology
- 18 Application of these techniques on selected discourses of the Buddha

Teaching techniques can be further developed using a system of classification. For example, in Field (A) below, it is mentioned that a few techniques can be used to develop the thinking ability of a child. Examination of the types of techniques listed will immediately suggest to the teacher a few more techniques using the teacher's own knowledge and experience. Hence these lists are not comprehensive or final. They can be further developed.

The classifications themselves can be expanded.

A simple classification of new techniques is set out below in terms of several fields that most of us are familiar with.

Field (A) Development of the skill of thinking

- 1 Building case studies in the applicability of Dhamma in situations
- 2 Building case studies in the lost mind
- 3 Building case studies in the rushing mind
- 4 Building case studies in the bonded mind
- 5 Appreciating the Triple Gem
- 6 Sorting out skilful and unskilful mental states
- 7 Sorting out merit and demerit
- 8 Developing the skill of managing limits and measures

Field (B) Development of the skill of speaking and the use of words

- 1 Preparation and delivery of speeches
- 2 Leading Dhamma Discussions
- 3 Individual interviewing
- 4 Being interviewed
- 5 Learning through observing and participation in group dynamics
- 6 Participating in Dhamma discussions
- 7 Effective storytelling

Field (C) Development of the skill of actions based on mindfulness

- 1 Garden projects in the temple
- 2 Maintenance projects in the temple
- 3 Alms-giving projects in the temple or in homes
- 4 Chanting projects

- 5 Relating to the Sangha, Parents and Elders

Field (D) Development of mindful writing and presenting

- 1 Reporting Dhamma experiences
- 2 Reporting meditation experiences
- 3 Reporting major pilgrimages
- 4 Reporting new knowledge acquired

Field (E) Development of knowledge and wisdom

- 1 Guided Research in fields selected by participants
- 2 Guided Research in fields selected by the chaplain

Field (F) Development of mindfulness and concentration

- 1 Experiments in loving kindness meditation
- 2 Experiments in moving the mind
- 3 Experiments in tracking the moving mind
- 4 Developing methods of preventing errors relating to lack of Mindfulness (*Sati*)
- 5 Experiments in testing mindfulness
- 6 Experiments in compassion meditation
- 7 Experiments in contemplating on the Buddha
- 8 Experiments in contemplating on celestial worlds
- 9 Contemplating on the putrid nature of the body
- 10 Contemplating on the certainty of death
- 11 Experiments in breathing meditation

- 12 Experiments in posture meditation
- 13 Experiments in walking meditation
- 14 Experiments in posture freezing

Field (G) Social and cultural joy and development

- 1 Singing projects
- 2 Performance projects
- 3 Enactment of stories from the Dhammapada
- 4 Enactment of stories from the past births of the *Bodhisatta*
- 5 Local pilgrimages

Field (H) Technological applications

- 1 Making video recordings in Dhamma studies
- 2 Making movies promoting Dhamma studies
- 3 Making spreadsheets to collate and co-relate Dhamma concepts
Example: depicting the many aspects of *Sabbasava Sutta*
- 4 Making electrical applications to facilitate Dhamma studies
Example: Inter-relations of *Cittas*
Example: Progression in the 37 factors of enlightenment
- 5 Building websites for the propagation of the Dhamma
- 6 Maintaining Dhamma websites
- 7 Application of Zoom (or other) technology for Dhamma communication
- 8 Using Facebook (or other) to publicise Dhamma events

2 Illustrative exercises (from the book)

CHAPTER	SECTION	POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES BY FIELD
6	1, 2, 3	B2, B5
	4, 5	B3, B4
	6, 7	B5
	9	A1, B6
	11	B6
	15	F4, H3
	18	F1
	19, 20	F4
	27	A1, F2
	30	A1, E1, E2
	31	A1, E1, E2
7	1, 2, 3	F5
	4	C3, F5
	5	B6, F5
	7	B2, F5
	11 to 16	F
	19	B4, E
	28	A2, E
8	3,4	C4, F5

3 More topics for application of teaching techniques

- 1 34 Topics from the discourse on Blessings
- 2 14 topics from the discourse titled *Karaniya Metta Sutta*
- 3 Selected topics from the *Parabhava Sutta*
- 4 *Vyagga Pajja Sutta*
- 5 *Sammaditthi Sutta*
- 6 *Sabbasava Sutta*
- 7 *Chula Kamma Vibhanga Sutta*
- 8 Thirty-seven factors of enlightenment
- 9 *Satipatthana Sutta*
- 10 Dependent origination
- 11 *Ratana Sutta*
- 12 *Kalama Sutta*
- 13 *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*
- 14 Other discourses

It must be noticed that all these techniques can be connected to the eight strands in the Noble Eight-fold Path. In particular, the items in Field A are related to Right View and Right Thought. Field F depicts a combination of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. Other fields relate to Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.

The use of these techniques would lead the participants on a way to happiness in this world and would guide them on the Path to Enlightenment. Thus, there is a great deal to achieve in a mundane sense as well as in a spiritual sense. The teaching techniques look simple, but they aim very high.

Note also that these techniques are partly illustrated in Chapters 6 to 8 and in appendices 1 to 9.

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN LIFE SKILLS

1 Dealing with a stranger

Section (A)

The chaplain can discuss a few points as given below to start a discussion on the experience one gets in dealing with a stranger.

- 1 How much does first appearance contribute to understanding a person you meet for the first time? Discuss.
- 2 Is the first appearance a tentative idea that occurs naturally or is it a strong assessment of the person? Discuss.
- 3 There is a saying that appearance can be deceptive. Did you ever get caught in a situation of incorrect judgment? Discuss.
- 4 Is your posture and poise material? What are the different possibilities?
Discuss
- 5 Does the manner of speaking influence others?
Demonstrate and discuss a few alternatives.
- 6 Can words be used to manipulate the opinion generated in the minds of people who are listening?
Demonstrate and discuss.
- 7 Is there a manipulation or a failure in articulation?
Demonstrate and discuss.

Section (B)

Some other matters to discuss about meeting strangers:

- 1 True understanding of another person comes from knowing how they think.
- 2 Even after a whole lifetime, one may still fail to understand another.
- 3 It is hard to guess what or how people think.
- 4 The presence of much greed, hatred and delusion are indicative of thought trends.
- 5 Some people are not articulate. Have sympathy for them.
- 6 Facial expressions are more indicative than words uttered.
- 7 Face colour, blood flow, eye movements indicate what is in the mind.
- 8 One can hide the words but not the shape of the face.
- 9 Movements of the mouth are sometimes indicative of intention.
- 10 Strong thoughts can cause the mouth to make certain shapes.
- 11 The mild smile on the face of the Buddha is worth noticing.
- 12 How does the person act and talk in a given situation?
- 13 The person may genuinely be happy about the happiness of another.
- 14 Is the person capable of listening to another?
- 15 Some people just would not listen to others; they keep talking.
- 16 Does the person have patience at all?
- 17 Is the person able to abandon an argument or do they keep arguing?
- 18 Is the person more concerned with what he/she is about to say than about what is being heard.
- 19 This type of person could be narcissistic.

2 Principles relating to the use of words

Buddhist ethics highlights a group of words that are unwholesome and are bound to cause suffering, now or later. Some of these could be sweet at the time of utterance but become foul with time. Some have meanings much deeper than the obvious. A close look at these would be useful before talking about skills.

The unwholesome types of words (in English and Pali) are:

Telling lies	<i>Musavada</i>
Spreading slanders	<i>Pisuna vaca</i>
Using strong or harsh words	<i>Parusha vaca</i>
The use of meaningless or fruitless words	<i>Sampapphalapa</i>

How do these cause harm to oneself and others? This question can be answered through discussions and demonstrations based on the following or similar questions.

Discussion on uttering falsehoods:

How is the liar harmed by his own utterances?

How are others harmed by the liar telling lies?

Possible answers:

One lie necessitates another lie for justification, and the process goes on.

Many lies result in the person getting branded as a pathological liar.

Even when a liar tries to tell a truth, no one would believe the person.

Telling lies leads to many other unwholesome actions, and often facilitates their commission.

A liar is likely to get a birth in unpleasant circumstances.

Even in the new life other people are unlikely to believe the person.

Discussion on uttering slanders:

What is a slander?

It is a false statement intended to harm another.

How does a slanderer suffer from slandering?

How are others harmed because of slanders?

Suggested answers:

Slanderers get caught eventually and go into disrepute.

A slanderer suffers in a future birth.

One who is a victim suffers pain of mind.

The victim experiences embarrassment.

The victim may waste energy in trying to correct or erase the slander.

What is harsh speech?

How does harsh speech harm the speaker?

How are others harmed by harsh speech?

What are the consequences of harsh speech?

The following answers are possible:

Harsh speech invokes more harsh speech.

It results in suffering at the hands of others in this and future lives.

The appearance of the speaker looks unpleasant to others.

People will shun the speaker.

Harsh speech regenerates more hatred in the mind of the speaker.

A question worth discussing is whether one is always obliged to tell the truth. Generally, there is an obligation to tell the truth. But there are matters to be considered before telling the truth. Think whether it is really the truth, is it beneficial to tell, and is it welcome and agreeable to others. Particularly in controversial matters, never rush to tell the truth, loudly and carelessly, without thinking clearly.

In the *Abhayakumara Sutta*, there is a discussion on when and how to speak the truth.

3 Using principles relating to the styles of communication

The chaplain can arrange for a conversation between two individuals or among a small group. Another group can function as observers. The observers can then report on their findings at the end of the session.

The group doing the conversation needs to keep in mind the following or similar principles:

No one needs to stay silent the whole time.

Show respect before you start speaking.

Make your contribution short and to the point.

Avoid arguments.

Avoid personal attacks.

There is no need to raise your voice or to point fingers.

The observer group can use the following or a similar set of matters to observe:

Avoid being carried away by loud utterances.

Watch whether the speaker is talking sense or just talking.

Are there totally silent people, or quiet thoughtful people?

4 What you should know when being interviewed

The chaplain can assign the responsibility for interviewing to an individual or a panel. The chaplain will explain to them the process and principles to bear in

mind. In the next round, roles can be exchanged. The interviewee needs to understand the following:

The interviewer or panel is looking for information from you.

Any reluctance to speak is not helpful.

Complete what you need to say but do not wrangle on unnecessarily.

Be truthful.

Answer questions directly.

Trying to hide information does not help.

5 Conducting an interview

The chaplain will set up the interview panel from among participants and change the panel at proper times. The panel needs to be advised of the general principles of conducting an interview. Adequate time needs to be given for preparing for the interview. Some of the principles governing interviews are set out here.

The chaplain can be vigilant to notice errors and defects such as the following:

The interviewer has not prepared for the interview.

The interviewer is not listening properly.

Questions are concentrated on minute matters.

Questioning technique does not conform to directions for the interview.

Sometimes the questions dry up and hence the interview seems to stop.

Just accepting statements does not help in a successful interview.

Superficial explanations could hide the truth.

Questions do not follow a logical pattern.

Seeking yes or no answers will not bring out facts.

The interview is not smooth.

All members of the panel need to take turns in a meaningful manner.

Talking to the interviewer after the interview and repeating the process a little later would be helpful in identifying and securing improvements.

6 Discovery of a noble friend

If you do not have at least some features of a noble friend, you might find it difficult to discover other noble friends. The main qualities of a noble friend are woven around the Dhamma. A noble friend will, in general, be one who tries to live according to the Dhamma.

- 1 The noble friend is warm-hearted.
- 2 The noble friend will come to your assistance in times of need.
- 3 In both happiness and woe, the noble friend will be there.
- 4 Nothing will be expected in return for services given.
- 5 The noble friend will not cause you harm intentionally.
- 6 They do not abandon you in difficult times.
- 7 They do not introduce harmful associates.
- 8 Invariably a noble friend helps you to advance along the noble eight-fold path.
- 9 They are wise and help as good counsel.
- 10 They always show motherly love.

The chaplain can discuss these matters and ask whether these are true in the experience of everyone.

It is useful to know a little about ignoble friends. These people are characterised by the following:

- 1 They look for opportunities for appropriating something.
- 2 They aim at gaining some advantage in the future.
- 3 Lip service is their main activity.
- 4 Ignoble associates resort to praise and flattery to win favour.
- 5 Eventually they bring unexpected ruin and suffering.

7 Understanding your teacher

There is no perfect teacher other than the Buddha. There are no teachers of the calibre of Venerable *Sariputta*, the first chief disciple of the Buddha. A student must know that in trying to understand a teacher. It is this understanding that creates confidence and promotes learning.

Students tend to mess up their own progress by always trying to be critical of teachers. Whether they are good or bad, we owe our status largely to our teachers.

A student can complement the teacher, provided that the student follows the rules of learning. The student needs to pay attention to what is going on in the class, by hearing, listening, and promoting quietness. In addition, the student needs to keep the mind on the matters being taught and not engage in daydreams and paying attention to external objects and occurrences.

The chaplain can check with the group how this class is going. Are the students satisfied that they are learning?

The teachers help lead and guide us, and it is up to us to learn, despite the faults of teachers.

8 Avoidance of social floods and possible refuges in a flood

Floods are often fearful as people who are not careful get washed away, never to return. In human society, too, there are dangerous social floods, and one can get washed away, never to return to safety. The Buddha has mentioned this possibility in his teachings. Take care in times of social floods.

The Buddha has advised that if we seem to be caught in a flood, we should try to save ourselves by getting on to an island with whatever strength we may have. We can build an island and hold on to it, seeing the floods roar by.

The concept of an island can be illustrated by the following constructed example. A schoolboy caught into a group of drug users, cut school, and was not returning home in the night. His mother kept going round the suburb, looking for him, and one day, she sighted him in a large group. The mother picked up courage, alighted from the car and held him by the hand. The other boys were afraid to interfere. At home the boy agreed to change. The mother was the island, and the boy was lucky to understand it. Much later, he became a well-respected professional.

The chaplain can invite a group to name possible social floods and suggest how one can stay safe while the floods roar past.

Possible ideas are:

- 1 Smoking
- 2 Drinking
- 3 Using drugs
- 4 Excessive night life

What precautions can one take to avoid getting caught?

Possible answers are:

- 1 Continued association with parents
- 2 Having a circle of noble friends
- 3 Learning about the damage caused by getting caught

9 The technique of acceptance in unwelcome circumstances

The chaplain may invite suggestions from the group to evolve techniques for developing the skill of acceptance.

A few possible suggestions are:

- 1 Acceptance can be used as a platform to begin a new move.
- 2 Acceptance is a logical necessity following one's own *kamma*.
- 3 Noticing how things occur as per universal norms. Some examples are sickness, old age, death, droughts, fire, volcanos, floods and tsunamis, and pandemics such as influenza and Covid-19.
- 4 Understanding the complications caused by laying the blame on other people for our problems.

A few counter-arguments can be expected:

- 1 Acceptance as a habit might make us weak people.
- 2 If someone is to blame, why should we take the responsibility?
- 3 Is fighting on not a better approach?

10 Orderliness in life

Techniques of building up orderliness in daily life can be discussed here. The chaplain can invite ideas to establish such orderliness.

A few possible ideas are set out below:

- 1 Developing an overview of current obligations.
- 2 What is it that we are trying to achieve?
- 3 What are the different ways of achieving it?
- 4 Do we have a plan of action?
- 5 How do we measure the success of our plan?
- 6 If things go wrong, what actions do we take?
- 7 Are our activities more orderly now?

The chaplain can discuss the following:

- 1 Coming home from school or work, where do I keep my clothes?
- 2 Do I just throw them to some place in the house?
- 3 Why do we need to keep a diary?
- 4 Why do we need to write check lists for different matters?
- 5 Do we have a place to keep important things like house keys, money, security cards, and other things we take every day?
- 6 When am I taking a break or a holiday?
- 7 Who are the people I need to visit and for what?
- 8 Did the Buddha have a daily routine? What was it?

11 General problem-solving techniques

When faced with choices, most of us find it difficult to know whether we are making the correct choice. For Buddhist youth, here is a general methodology for arriving at a solution to any problem. It is derived from the Dhamma.

There are four steps as follows:

- 1 Recognising and defining the problem

- 2 Tracing the cause of the problem
- 3 Decision or discovery of the solution
- 4 Working out a way to move towards a solution

These steps are derived from the structure of the four noble truths.

The chaplain can describe a situation and help the group to work through these four stages. The group can then suggest working on various other situations.

A few suggestions to discuss are:

Failure to remember what you study

The kettle does not work

The car does not start in the morning

Inability to locate things I need in the morning

My school clothes are not very clean

Most days I stay without having lunch (already prepared by my mother)

12 Happiness is a key to success

We spend a lot of time and resources to achieve success in things we do. However, we tend to forget about the value of happiness as a factor contributing to success.

The chaplain can help the group to re-discover the value of happiness as a contributor to success. Some considerations in this connection are set out here:

Examination of factors that lead to success, such as interest, effort, commitment, and the habit of verifying the path taken are keys to success.

- 1 Having a target to achieve, or an objective to realise
- 2 A plan to achieve the target
- 3 Working out the resources required
- 4 Checking on the communication facilities
- 5 Organising resources such as people, materials, machines, money
- 6 Application of resources wisely
- 7 Hard work is important.
- 8 Regular verification of progress is necessary.
- 9 Admitting when mistakes are made and making corrections to the path

The first few factors emanate from the mind. The mind needs to remain healthy and efficient. That is promoted by happiness. If one is not happy, suffering becomes strong, and the attention of the mind is channelled into that problem. Happiness makes experience satisfying and smooth.

If you are working in an enterprise, with many workers, it is of paramount importance to ensure the happiness of all workers with cordial treatment, reasonable wages and good safety and health practices.

The group can contribute with deeper thought and connection to the purpose.

These questions can be raised:

- 1 Does this mean that it is necessary to throw parties to maintain happiness?
- 2 Do you need to spend a lot of money to buy happiness?
- 3 What are the implications?
- 4 Taking personal interest in workers and helpers

- 5 Listening to what the workers have to say
- 6 Avoiding taking sides in a disagreement
- 7 Avoiding the application of threats and force

13 Reviewing self-behaviour constantly

In the *Rahulovada Sutta* taught to Venerable Rahula by the Buddha, the Buddha mentions the need and significance of reviewing one's actions often using wisdom. It is not mere recollection. The chaplain can discuss with the group why reviewing and self-reflection are so important.

Points discussed can include some of the following:

- 1 Thinking is an action
- 2 Speaking is an action
- 3 Working with the body forms actions
- 4 Earning a livelihood involves actions of these types.
- 5 All actions are ultimately based on thoughts.
- 6 Thoughtless actions create turmoil and cause suffering.

For example, first one needs to think about the speaking, its purpose, its appropriateness in a situation, choice of style, choice of words and so on.

Similarly, thoughts must precede bodily actions. Speaking or body actions must not be rushed before adequate thought.

Every day there are many occasions when we do things without thinking carefully.

At the end of the day, we can review at least the main actions undertaken and see whether we could have done better. Constant reviewing helps us to do better tomorrow.

These issues also can be considered:

Should one regret wrong actions or understand and determine how to do better in the future?

Is remorse necessary and what are its consequences?

Is there a contradiction between the practices in a court of law, and Buddhist religious practice regarding this matter?

If the same mistake is repeated, are there other solutions?

Can reviewing prompt unwholesome reprisals?

14 The practice of loving-kindness and its benefits

People who get angry or upset in situations lose a great deal at the end of the day. In this task, one can learn how to reduce the risk of damage caused.

The group can explore the reasons for getting upset for so many things. The following could be among the reasons:

- 1 Inability to cope with normal workload
- 2 Taking upon oneself too many responsibilities
- 3 Starting things late
- 4 Excessive ambition
- 5 The taint of hatred deep in the mind
- 6 Selfish attitude
- 7 Inadequacy or lack of knowledge regarding duties

The chaplain can request ideas to improve the behaviour. These would be some of the answers:

- 1 Re-assessing duties and responsibilities
- 2 Improvement in check-listing and diary techniques
- 3 Developing loving-kindness (*metta*)
- 4 Practicing loving-kindness meditation
- 5 Practicing mindfulness meditation
- 6 Understanding the harm caused to one-self

15 General checklist and short notes

Everyone needs to have a picture of what needs to be done at home, at work and in the community. A list of things to be done needs to be developed. A checklist may not have the expected dates marked. When a date becomes clear, then the item is entered in the diary or calendar.

The group is likely to ask these questions:

- 1 What should be done when the expected work is not done on the date?
- 2 What do we do if we are not sure of expected dates?
- 3 Diary keeping and check lists also need time to write
- 4 What if I remember something while driving?
- 5 Under the five hindrances (a set of mental states) which one is closest to these failures?

The chaplain can help the group to come up with answers to the questions; some possible answers are:

- 1 Keeping a small note paper in the shirt pocket at all times, or an electronic equivalent such as a note-taking app
- 2 When a thing is not done as written in the diary, the item can be posted to another date
- 3 When an expected date is not sure, we can post it tentatively.
- 4 When too many errors are made, it might be due to the hindrance called restlessness. People tend to jump into the future as a habit every now and then. Such people need to practice mindfulness meditation.
- 5 Lack of diaries and checklists tends to create more recklessness

16 Balancing ideals with practical needs

Most people have ideals, and in a way, they are good and necessary. The fact is that the implementation of ideals and the need for practicality may not match. When good ideas cannot be put into practice, one needs to compromise.

The chaplain can consider a few cases when this happens and examine how compromises are worked out. The following cases are suggested for discussion:

- 1 A man had the ideal of being absolutely well-dressed. In the morning this causes much delay for him in getting to work. The person would try different combinations of shirts and suits. What was wrong with him and how should he get out of this troublesome habit?
- 2 Perhaps he should realise that nothing is perfect. The world is full of imperfections. He might be having too much of the self-concept (I, my and mine).

The problem is in his mind, and not so much in the clothing.

- 3 Some think that poverty must be fully eliminated. Is this a practical idea?
It is good as an ideal, but it is very difficult to implement.
- 4 There are people who want to be assured that there is no possibility of
there being germs and microbes anywhere in the house.
It is good to keep the house clean, but one must be realistic as to what
extent this can be achieved.
- 5 Some want to survey the entire share market before buying shares.
This might be ideal but think of the time and energy wasted in looking for
the best in both price and quality. Winning and losing is the truth about
the real world.

17 Need for self-care in the real world

At times we take the real world for granted. Not everyone is careful. Hence innocent people run into trouble and loss due to the poor behaviour of others. One needs to take minimum care in general and specific care in certain circumstances.

The Buddha has taught about how and where one needs to take self-care. The group can be asked to discuss a few such instances. Some possibilities are:

- 1 In the great discourse on blessings, the second stanza says that you need to select the proper area to establish your home. The yardstick was to what extent people in the area practised the Dhamma.
- 2 In another place the Buddha speaks of people having a great deal of hatred or a great deal of greed. In the case of an associate who has too much hatred, one needs to observe the person and take care not to get entangled with such a person.

- 3 In the case of a person filled with greed, the Buddha suggests that it may be necessary to keep out such a person from your life before you get dragged into unwholesome activities.
- 4 There are people whose level of ignorance is very high. They might think that they are wise and try to get you to follow them. Here again, the criterion is the understanding and application of the Dhamma.
- 5 There are people who must be in the action all the time and there are others who are more reasonable. While action is attractive, one needs to take care to avoid bad situations, or pointless or excessive action. Bodily action can be harmful without adequate prior thought.

18 Divine conduct

This is an excellent example of applying Buddhist concepts in daily life. Loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity are together called divine conduct. However, we need to be clear that the first three concepts are distinct and separate. Loving-kindness means goodwill towards all with no discrimination. In compassion, the other party is in distress. In appreciative joy, the other party is in joy, and one feels a similar joy due to the success experienced by others. Equanimity implies mental balance.

The group can work out the correct terms for the behaviour of people in this story.

A family of several people met with an accident. The father, son, daughter, grandson, and grandmother were involved. The son got badly injured, the daughter a few bruises but shouting a lot, the grandmother was unscathed. Who might have felt loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy in this situation?

One possible answer is:

The father showed loving-kindness to the old lady who was alright anyway. He felt compassion towards the son who was badly injured. He also showed loving-kindness to the daughter. Because the grandmother was happy to have escaped any injury, everyone showed her appreciative joy.

A customer at a coffee shop was irritated by the conduct of the waiter, who spilt coffee on the customer. However, the customer told the waiter not to worry and that these things sometimes happen. Perhaps the customer was demonstrating equanimity. He was neither happy nor unhappy under the circumstances.

The chaplain can ask the group for their stories and try to see whether any mental state of the four divine abodes was noticeable.

These four are also called *Brahma Viharas*.

19 Conversations, arguments, and debates

Does every debate involve an argument? What mental states occur during arguments and debates? What are the similarities and differences between debates and arguments? Can their intensities vary? When is merit/demerit of interest? When are wholesome actions (*kusala*), and unwholesome actions (*akusala*) relevant?

The Buddha, when he met people, always engaged them in conversation. During the conversations he taught the Dhamma. Some conversations were brief, and others were long. People who came for arguments or debates ended up in useful conversations.

A group can examine statements like these:

- 1 Dhamma conversations are useful.
- 2 They become debates when parties hold on to different views dogmatically.
- 3 Depending on knowledge and practice people arrive at different views.
- 4 Having views is natural.
- 5 Having strong views is not natural and might lead to arguments.
- 6 Strong views arise in the minds of foolish people, and they need to be treated kindly, to allow time for them to understand (and become wiser).
- 7 Strong views are enhanced in people thinking too much of themselves (self-idea).
- 8 Is the purpose to gain more understanding or is it to assert yourself or put down the other party through strongly worded arguments?
- 9 Do we listen to the other party?
- 10 Do we hear what the other says?
- 11 Are both people talking at the same time?
- 12 What is the result we expect from a debate?

Merits result from using kind words. Demerits result from unkind words. It is also unwholesome as it causes deviation from the path to Nibbana. Trying to put down and hurt others results in demerit. As a result of holding on to strong views, it causes a deviation from the path to Nibbana. Merits and demerits cause happiness and sorrow in *Samasara* (repeated births). Wholesome actions take us forward (upwards) on the path to Nibbana.

In a simple thing like conversations, debates, and arguments all these ramifications can occur.

20 When to end a pursuit

We pursue a line of conversation or a line of action to obtain a useful result. Once we get the result we can move on to some other pursuit. Many are unable to do that. Even after the result becomes clear, they keep pursuing the original action. Is it due to stupidity and ignorance, or is it due to lack of understanding or training in moving the mind at will?

The chaplain can help the group to examine the following cases:

- 1 Two people started a debate while travelling in a semi-express train. The train halted at a stop at which one of them was to get down. He was so engrossed in the debate that he forgot to disembark. The final stop was about 100 kilometres away. By this time, it had become a violent argument. The matter finished only after the arrival of a police officer.
- 2 A few people who were leaving a temple after a function discussed how the temple might be improved. Soon they got to discuss the suitability of the resident monk. All kinds of statements were made while others passed by. They accumulated a good deal of bad karma after having done some good deeds a short while before this. They were unable to end the pursuit.
- 3 People talk about the present government. Some say it is good, others feel differently. Can such a conversation ever finish? In an election, they argue who has the best policies and is speaking the truth. Can it end?

People talk like this on many topics like euthanasia, abortion, drugs, politicians, public policies, city development, natural beauty, movies, beauty contests, the afterlife, and a host of other things. It is useful to talk, but within well-considered limits.

21 No one is to be fully condemned

There are all kinds of people in the world, some are good in behaviour, and others are not. When we notice that a person is of poor behaviour, we ought to be careful not to condemn the person for life.

What are the reasons for this?

The group can discuss with the guidance of a chaplain. Some points to discuss are given here:

- 1 A human being is a body and mind system, both of which are subject to change, one influencing the other constantly.
- 2 Nothing stays the same for ever.
- 3 The mind of a person keeps changing with every object the person is contacting.
- 4 The change occurs because of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-touch, and the contents of the mind. Contacting some objects, usually from the memory itself, the mind can turn unwholesome. The opposite also can happen a short while later.
- 5 We need to give a chance for the changes to occur.
- 6 So, in a way, there are no bad people as such.
- 7 Their words and actions might be bad for a time in some ways.
- 8 They can turn over a new leaf at any time.
- 9 No one ought to be condemned forever.
- 10 Each one of us has been good at times and not so good at other times.
- 11 We are like that, and other people are also like that.

22 The value of the five precepts

The five precepts are not commands but are an indicative guideline of personal behaviour that provides the opportunity for all people to live in one society. To test that, imagine a world devoid of the principles embodied in the five precepts. For example, if people try to settle disputes simply by killing one another, can we live? When stealing becomes prevalent, can we live in any suburb? If telling lies is the norm, can we function in society? If most people take to drinking and behaving in an unruly manner, can we live sanely? If people try to interfere in the intimate lives of married couples, can we live in peace and create safe environments for children?

Whatever the religion, we need some social norms to enable living in a society. Whenever we are confronted with difficulties, it is probably because someone has broken the five precepts badly.

The chaplain may conduct a discussion on the five precepts, perhaps covering topics like these:

- 1 Excessive drinking or drug abuse destroys the most important asset we have, the mind.
- 2 There is a belief that heavy drinkers are re-born as insane beings. Rebirth is at least partly determined by what you like or prefer. Your habits are what you like. The last thought in this life might come from your habits. Then it can get carried over to another life, having comparable features.
- 3 A person who is in the habit of telling lies has no respectable existence in society as no one believes such a person. That is a sad experience.
- 4 A person who has bad character and interferes in family bonds is not trusted as a good friend by others.
- 5 Fortunately, in civilised society, we do not steal the possessions of others. However, many have assumed that taking bribes and advantages for giving a service is alright. It is not alright because it is stealing.

- 6 If you kill an animal by mistake, there is no *kamma* involved. Keep watching a dying animal and imagine the pain it is going through. What if someone tried to kill you?

23 Healthy competition

This world is full of competition. Even little children must compete in examinations that determine their future. To get a good job, one must compete. Countries compete with one another. It might even lead to wars among them. There is competition for land and houses, and for other possessions and resources. These competitions will go on. However, in competition, we need to observe limits, and not everyone has such skills.

The chaplain can guide a discussion on competition using the following or other considerations:

- 1 Competition is driven by need, desire and yearning and the self-idea.
- 2 Sharing is an alternative idea.
- 3 Goodwill needs to prevail in competition.
- 4 The aim of competition is not to destroy or eliminate others.
- 5 Sharing in one field and competition in another is a compromise.
- 6 Continuously improving and achieving your personal best might be more satisfying than always trying to defeat someone else.
- 7 Sometimes children and youth study in guarded groups, keeping others out. At least some sharing of knowledge is possible.
- 8 In the workplace, employees carry tales to bosses, hoping to put others down in the competition for promotions.
- 9 In sports, some may try to take enhancement drugs to win in games.
- 10 In sports, training facilities ought to be shared so that all can have equal opportunities to perform.

- 11 For all the bad habits, there is a payback in kamma.
- 12 In business, they resort to under-cutting to manipulate competition.

Even if we fail in competition, life does not end there, as the world has an incredible number of opportunities on offer.

24 Over-ambition can be ruinous to one-self

It is good to have an interest in your line of action and that interest often grows into ambition. Once you develop an ambition, you would not tolerate anything on the path to its achievement. Determination to achieve a good result in any venture can grow without getting overly ambitious.

Once a determination is made, one needs to apply energy, get committed and be watchful without harming others. The aim ought to be for the good of all, and not merely for one's own benefit.

Excessive ambition can bring ruin to one-self. Moderation is necessary. Excessive ambition can result in restlessness, one of the five hindrances to spiritual progress.

The chaplain can help the group to discuss matters such as the following:

- 1 Henry Ford, the inventor of the car had a strong determination to make a car and despite all the hardship he eventually succeeded.
- 2 When Henry Ford tried to be supreme, he went bankrupt.
- 3 When his own design engineer came up with bright ideas, he felt jealous and even physically destroyed new designs.
- 4 Hitler was not satisfied when he captured most of Europe. So, he decided to conquer the whole world. When he lost the war, he committed suicide

inside his protection chamber underground. A similar fate befell Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

- 5 If you want to build a temple you do not need to build the world's biggest temple but just what is needed.
- 6 Students who do not sleep much to score the highest marks in examinations need to re-examine their strategies. Is this necessary? Is there a better way?

25 Generosity in relationships

In society we need to work with other people. Married people have their spouses. Committees have other members. The workplace has many workers and leaders. We are in some sort of relationship with many others.

Some people think they can be cunning and try to use others for their selfish pursuits. Others are more generous and work together so that all parties achieve a reasonable result.

The chaplain can guide a group to understand the need for generosity in relationships for shared advantages. These statements can be used:

- 1 In the relationship between husband and wife, each needs to be generous to the other. Try to always share the workload and household duties to make the other person happy, and that will certainly make you happy.
- 2 Children can be generous to parents for what they give by behaving well, doing their duties, and always looking for ways to help the parents.
- 3 In an association, each member needs to help the others at every turn by performing their duties and lending a hand to others. Where there are monks and nuns, they need to be respected and assisted.

- 4 At the workplace, the employee maintains the relationship with the management firstly by doing the duties and secondly by being obedient and respectful to superiors.
- 5 People in management ought to treat subordinates with respect and help in work and should not be bossing over them. That is not the Buddhist way.
- 6 Individuals can develop kindness and compassion by looking for ways to contribute to their community. This will not only benefit others, but it will help reduce one's ego to become a less selfish person.

26 The destructive nature of sorrow

We all feel a sense of sorrow in various situations such as making a big mistake, losing a possession, being blamed for something, loss of loved ones, failing to do well in an examination, not getting a desired thing, disputes within the family, being evicted from a house, losing a job, getting belittled in public, getting accused for little reason, and so on. Sorrow can be accompanied with grief and lamentation. All these are connected to suffering (dukkha) and are listed in the first discourse of the Buddha (*Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*).

It is important to realise that sorrow can generate hatred, as you begin to dislike, and eventually hate, what has happened. Sorrow is attributed to past actions or kamma. Sorrow accentuates suffering.

It might be difficult to avoid sorrow or mitigate sorrow, but it is possible to overcome sorrow. Understanding that this is the nature with the world, that it could be the result of your own actions in the past, and that the continued sorrow can cause further harm to you, will help you overcome sorrow.

Remembering the same event and continuously replaying it in the mind can cause further sorrow, and that is one's own creation. There is no need to fall into that trap. The courts often require a wrong doer to feel remorse and show remorse. It is worth noting that remorse has no place in Buddhist practice. Instead, let go of the event quickly and determine not to get into such situations in the future.

Developing deep understanding is the Buddhist method.

27 Clinging on to long past history

Some people spend a lot of money in trying to track their family history and often they are over-joyed to discover they had some connection to the royal family or some other recognised family. They get sad to discover that an ancestor was a criminal, prisoner, or a person of bad behaviour.

In India, a caste system still prevails, treating some people as low-caste descendants and others (usually landowners) as high caste. Despite all attempts on the part of governments to rectify the situation, this situation still continues, and it holds back the development of society. It is worth noting that the Buddha taught against the caste system, and he said that a person is not of high caste by birth, but by actions.

Clinging on to history is not worth the trouble and can be extremely damaging.

Many first nations' people, including aboriginals of Australia, are attached to history, and that can impede their progress. In Sri Lanka, some parts of the Tamil community cling on to their claimed history as original inhabitants of Sri Lanka. They consider the land in the North and East to belong to them. Most Tamils live with Sinhalese in other areas of the country in absolute peace and harmony, but the problem continues for some.

If you believe in rebirth, people belonging to one race might have belonged to another race in the previous birth. You could be fighting with your own kith and kin in the last birth.

To live in the present is one of the fundamental teachings of the Buddha.

There are many other examples of the suffering caused by people clinging on to history, instead of focussing on the present and the future.

Clinging brings suffering, according to Buddhism. Clinging to history is no exception.

28 Racial, religious, and ethnic difference

Nearly all cases of religious, ethnic, and racial differences are misguided experiences. This planet is big enough for all to exist peacefully, if people are prepared to keep aside their natural differences.

From a Buddhist perspective, individuals in the universe may have been born in past births in every kind of society. In the next birth, they might be born into a different group, a group they currently dislike. The Buddha invoked us to reflect on the fact that anyone in the world might have been my own mother, father, brother or sister, or other kin in a previous life. We have passed innumerable lives in the past.

It is sensible to think of the oneness of the world rather than harp on differences.

The more we focus on differences, the more we generate greed, hatred, and delusion in our minds. We sojourn more and more in *Samsara* (repeated cycles of birth and death) and the chances of deliverance from suffering recede.

Most religions try to teach something good and useful, but there are individuals who try to use the name of a religion for their own ignorant ambitions.

29 Treating all on the principle of equality

People are born different and are brought up differently. They have very little say about these things, and they are not responsible for the eventualities. The sensible policy is to treat all as equals, at least as a policy.

Physical or mental limitations may prevent some individuals from performing certain tasks. Thankfully, many others try to make them as independent as practically possible. By intelligence, people are not equal, but within the whole economy of a country, we do our best to accommodate all as equals.

Some are born rich and others poor, some are physically attractive, and others are not so, some are more capable in music and the arts, some in medicine and engineering, some are good in science and others in law, some in teaching and others in managing and leading, and some may have physically strong and capable bodies, but we need them all, so ideally, we try to treat all as equals.

30 Focusing on the path rather than the final target

This is a valuable skill for those who are treading the path to enlightenment. We often have targets, goals, or milestones to achieve, and always a path to follow to get to the desired result. The path to enlightenment (Nibbana) is always in the minds of Buddhists. In all situations, whether worldly or other worldly,

although the goal is of paramount importance, we need to be keeping our mind on the path. That includes training.

An interesting involvement among Buddhists is trying to check whether one has attained a certain level of mind development. They check against the attainments of stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, and *Arahant*. When the Buddha was living, it was possible to find out one's level of development and ask for advice to progress further.

In the present day, the wiser behaviour would be to work on the path and not to get concerned about what you have attained. Otherwise, it creates yearning, false assumptions and a tendency to mislead others. A result will come eventually with ardent and applied practice, but getting anxious about it is not recommended.

Even for young people, this principle is vital. For example, while studying for an examination, there is no point being restless about the result you may get. One must simply continue studying according to the plan.

A cricketer who approaches 100 runs might start thinking of the imminent achievement of scoring a century. That loss of concentration itself could cause the batsman to get out prior to achieving the desired outcome.

In general, the incessant yearning and restlessness to achieve a goal or result in itself could be the major cause of one failing to achieve the desired result.

31 The four qualities of a stream-winner

It is beneficial to know the attributes of a stream-winner (*Sotapanna*), the first stage of enlightenment, as it helps to check the validity of one's current practice. A *Sotapanna* (stream winner) has these features:

- 1 Is a noble friend and belongs to a circle of noble friends
- 2 Is associated with the Dhamma and listens to Dhamma
- 3 Has wise attention (*Yoniso Manasikara*)
- 4 Keeps practising the Dhamma (*Dhammanudhamma patipada*)

Qualities 1, 2 and 4 are generally within the grasp of our day-to-day practice, though the intensity and correctness of the practice might be low.

The third quality is regarding the control of our mind. Firstly, we need to have some wisdom and some degree of mindfulness. This combination, when worked on continually, helps us to keep our mind at a wholesome level. This is a key skill, and it can be developed by repeated wholesome practice combined with wisdom.

This means that all four qualities can be developed by us. We need to keep paying attention to that journey without trying to check whether we have attained *Sotapatti*.

32 Learning to observe neutral sensations (feelings) or Vedana

This is a very useful skill to learn for the advancement of wisdom. We are familiar with pleasant feelings and unpleasant feelings. We little realise that quite a lot of the time we experience neutral feelings (*Adukkhama Sukha Vedana*).

This skill can be developed simply through self-observation. Now and then we should examine how we feel, and the surprising discovery is that we are experiencing neutral feelings.

This skill helps us to develop wisdom. It also makes life smooth and hopeful.

33 Moderation in taking food is an aspect of Right Understanding (*Samma Ditthi*)

Being over-weight and feeling some discomfort in moving are experienced by some people. In some cases, other diseases such as diabetes are also associated. Over-eating is one of the reasons for this. Not merely over-eating but also poor diet selection and times of taking food are connected to this.

In the *Samma Ditthi Sutta*, the discourse on right understanding (or right view) in the noble eight-fold path mentions this problem. If one can see the proper way of taking food, that is an indication that the person has a certain level of right view. There are about sixteen other cases in which right view is manifested, according to this discourse.

Poor diet is also a cause of suffering. The cause of that suffering is greed for food, or the attachment to a self-image which can prevent one from taking the correct types of food. Eradication of that suffering is achieved by eliminating or reducing such attachment or greed. Reduction in greed is always feasible. There is a way to achieve that result. The noble eight-fold path needs to be practised.

CHAPTER 7

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

1 Spiritual benefits of gardening

People take up gardening for physical benefits but there can be spiritual benefits in the same action, provided it is recognised. In gardening, attention needs to be paid to detail. Attention is always present in the mind at a low level of intensity. In gardening, the mental state of attention can be sharpened. Attention is a prelude to the development of both mindfulness and concentration.

Gardening is, in many ways, a harmless activity. It is wholesome. We do not expect or yearn for large economic gain and therefore greed is virtually absent. It is a slow process and so there is hardly any anxiety in gardening. With these factors put together, gardening can be treated as a wholesome pursuit.

Like removing wild plants and weeds, we can also remove wild thoughts from the mind through thinking and meditation. Garden plots need sunshine for energy. Our minds need energy to do something good. We generate that energy through learning the Dhamma and through its practice.

The chaplain can set up gardening groups and assign simple projects to implement. Some ideas are set out below:

- 1 Cleaning the garden and collecting material according to a plan
- 2 Removing wild plants from the garden
- 3 Lawn mowing according to a pattern
- 4 Making a garden plot to cultivate
- 5 Water management for a garden project
- 6 Watering a garden plot
- 7 Removing wild plants and grass from a garden plot
- 8 Dismantling a garden plot
- 9 Collecting the harvest
- 10 Sharing the harvest
- 11 Adding fertilizer

- 12 Storing fertilizer
- 13 Storing implements
- 14 Cleaning implements

Whilst gardening is chosen here to illustrate these points, many similar activities can be pursued, so long as they have the qualities of wholesomeness and applied attention.

2 Spiritual benefits of cleaning temple buildings and garden

Spiritual development entails cleaning the mind of unwanted rubbish. This rubbish consists of all unwholesome thoughts and mental formations, more importantly, their roots of greed, aversion, and ignorance.

The temple is a place for the development of spirituality. When we clean the temple premises, our wish is to have a clean mind, as clean as possible right now. We do not think of cleaning tomorrow, but right now.

With that wish in mind, we not only clean the temple premises, but also our minds.

Temple cleaning is a pointer towards self-cleaning, and the avoidance of unwholesome mental actions. Maintaining relative silence enables success.

The chaplain can set up groups for cleaning different parts of the temple; some possibilities are set out here:

- 1 Dusting of Buddha statues, maintaining respect for the Buddha
- 2 Dusting of skirtings, bending and kneeling
- 3 Cleaning the kitchen
- 4 Washing the toilets (like washing the unwholesome thoughts in the mind)
- 5 Spraying disinfectants in the toilet (like preventing the arising of bad thoughts in the future)
- 6 Sweeping the compound
- 7 Sweeping the bodhi-tree compound
- 8 Washing the dust from the Stupa
- 9 Cleaning the walls of the buildings, both inside and outside (avoiding the killing of spiders and insects)

3 Constructions and repair work in temples - what we ought to know

Spirituality entails re-doubled endeavour to continue whatever good things we have been performing thus far, and the application of new efforts to perform wholesome, new actions.

Repair work ensures the continuation of the temple buildings. Construction work entails the creation of new structures as considered necessary.

When we do re-painting, filling gaps, and replacing damaged or broken parts by way of repairs, we can keep these principles in mind. That takes us a step forward in relation to our practice of mindfulness (*Sati*) development as described in the *Sati Patthana Sutta*. Please refer to items 7 and 8 in the 37 Factors of enlightenment.

A group can be set up for repair work and another for construction work, and they can engage in small projects such as the following. The principles listed can be followed.

- 1 Filling gaps and cracks in building walls
- 2 Filling gaps in a stupa
- 3 Repainting a building
- 4 Repainting the stupa
- 5 Repair of the roof
- 6 Repairing leaks in pipes
- 7 Repairing transmission systems
- 8 Identifying and rectifying health hazards which can cause accidents
- 9 Safety projects in general
- 10 Reduction of flooding due to rain
- 11 Keeping fences and walls in repair
- 12 Landscaping activities

4 What we ought to keep in mind in alms-givings

Alms-giving is a major part of the practice in Buddhist countries, where monks and nuns do not go to work to earn a living but depend on the generosity of lay people for their essential needs, food, medicine, robes, shelter, and other paraphernalia. This is to enable them to use all their time and energy for the practice. Even in western countries such as Australia, this practice has been recognised and honoured.

It promotes a healthy dependence and a high level of discipline. Meditation for attaining enlightenment becomes their key interest.

The chaplain can engage in a group discussion to promote understanding in this regard. Some matters that can be discussed are listed here.

- 1 This is an opportunity to practice generosity.
- 2 In return the Sangha give us advise and blessings.
- 3 The higher the discipline of the Sangha, the more is the merit.
- 4 There is no need to doubt their discipline when giving them their needs.
In fact, there is no way we can be sure about Sangha discipline.
- 5 Senior Sangha are entrusted with Sangha discipline.
- 6 We give things that the Sangha need, but we do not need to go and check how the Sangha use what we give; if you do, then you have not given it fully and correctly.
- 7 We should not offer things for our glory or to set records.
- 8 The Sangha need food to avoid starvation and death.
- 9 These days we may not be able to give the Sangha medicine, but we can help the Sangha to procure health care, access to doctors and hospitals.
- 10 We can donate health insurance to the Sangha, although in some traditions, this is not encouraged.
- 11 We should learn the Dhamma from the Sangha.
- 12 The expertise of the Sangha will guide us to meditate.
- 13 In an offering, we need to concentrate on generosity as a good practice.
- 14 We can reduce our greed and reflect on it.

5 Getting the most from Dhamma discussions

The advice of the Buddha is to listen carefully, remember well, and discuss the Dhamma to increase our understanding and our ability to apply the Dhamma in daily life. In the seven factors of awakening, the second factor is discernment of the Dhamma. In the noble eight-fold path, the first factor is right view, and that needs a good understanding of the Dhamma.

There is no doubt about the value of Dhamma discussions. Hence, we need to have a clear idea of such discussions. It is worth considering matters like the points raised below.

Initially, one needs to learn the basics of the Dhamma, think of the Dhamma and obtain clarifications from those who know. As we progress, we can check how much we have progressed, make a list of the gaps to fill later. We can take the list to a Dhamma teacher or discussion leader.

Regarding discussions, it is useful to note matters such as the following:

- 1 There is no purpose in asking questions to get noticed.
- 2 Ask a question genuinely.
- 3 When a matter is confusing, it is good to ask for a clarification.
- 4 Never be openly critical of the discussion leader.
- 5 Any feedback to the discussion leader can be given privately.
- 6 Never convert discussions to debates or arguments.
- 7 There can be differing points of view. Accept that position genuinely.
- 8 Strong views, even relating to the Dhamma, are not recommended.
- 9 Avoid criticising the Buddha simply because you formed some opinion.
- 10 Opinions on the Dhamma are not important, but facts and experience matter.
- 11 Avoid finding fault with teachings, as they were delivered to people to suit their needs at that time.
- 12 Avoid looking for faults in other Dhamma teachers but try to understand them.
- 13 Are you skilful enough to understand the Dhamma?
- 14 Avoid criticising the scriptures or commentaries as you might not be an expert in the subject.

6 Giving a talk in Dhamma

Teaching the Dhamma is a very meritorious action. It is suggested that the only way of repaying the debt owed to one's parents is to teach the Dhamma to them. In teaching the Dhamma, we need to think of the benefits to the listeners, more particularly, that they may end the suffering in the cycle of births and deaths.

The person who teaches needs to be reasonably sure of his or her level of understanding and its usefulness to the listeners. There are two sides to a coin. Some might think that their level of understanding of the Dhamma is not good enough. They might think like this until they attain enlightenment. That is not practical. They need to be moderate in this self-assessment. It is a question of relativity. Most people having a good knowledge of the Dhamma are bound to

be effective teachers. At the start, it is sensible to choose the appropriate audience.

When the Buddha was living, everyone wanted to hear the Buddha. Even such a capable monk like Venerable *Sariputta*, who was considered only second to the Buddha in wisdom, sometimes waited to hear the Buddha on certain topics, but he did teach in many situations.

For ordinary people, there might be a tendency to feel superior when they teach the Dhamma; that is because of the knowledge and experience they have. That is quite natural, and listeners ought not to hold it against them.

Even school children can study the Dhamma and try to give a talk on the Dhamma. It will give them the opportunity to test their knowledge and ability to teach. Such children need to be respected and trained further.

The chaplain can guide others regarding giving Dhamma talks covering aspects such as the following:

- 1 Do not teach without appropriate preparation.
- 2 Check the composition of the audience.
- 3 Study the topic thoroughly.
- 4 If there are difficult points, one needs to acknowledge the fact.
- 5 Never try to present your personal views and if you do, you need to state that it is your personal view.
- 6 As far as possible, teach from the scriptures and commentaries.
- 7 Avoid long and winding stories.
- 8 Make your lessons short.
- 9 Allow the participants to ask questions.
- 10 Never pretend that you know everything
- 11 Never pretend that you have made great attainments.
- 12 When a listener seems to be correct, show appreciation.
- 13 Do not keep talking endlessly after you have made your point.
- 14 When you have made your point, there is little need to keep saying the same thing repeatedly.
- 15 Pay respect to the Buddha, both at the start and at the end.

7 Conducting a Dhamma discussion

Much of the contents of the section on giving Dhamma talks apply here too. Specific attention must be given to the needs of the group. It is much easier to conduct a discussion than to give a talk, as many participants are likely to understand and articulate the points under discussion.

Participants need to gain experience as discussion leaders and develop that skill. It can be applied in work situations for many people.

The chaplain can guide the group and discuss the following points:

- 1 Do not lead without appropriate preparation.
- 2 Check the composition of the audience.
- 3 Study the topic thoroughly.
- 4 If there are difficult points, one needs to acknowledge the fact.
- 5 Never try to present your personal views and if you do, you need to state that it is your personal view.
- 6 As far as possible, explain from the scriptures and commentaries.
- 7 Avoid long and winding stories that take time.
- 8 Entertainment is not the purpose of a discussion.
- 9 Make your contributions short.
- 10 Allow the participants to speak and to ask questions.
- 11 Never pretend that you know everything.
- 12 Never pretend that you have made great attainments.
- 13 When others seem to be correct, show appreciation.
- 14 Do not keep talking endlessly; people get tired.
- 15 When you have made your point, there is little need to keep saying the same thing repeatedly
- 16 Pay respect to the Buddha both at the start and at the end.

8 Working in temple committees

In the establishment of Buddhism in traditionally non-Buddhist countries such as Australia, it has been necessary to set up associations and incorporate them. Other types of legal entities (such as companies) have been considered unsuitable. In every state or territory there is a law relating to incorporation of associations. Incorporation gives protection from most liabilities applicable to individuals. Also, it facilitates many matters such as collecting money, buying property, paying (or not paying) income tax, benefits of gift funds, GST (or value

added tax), gains from registering for GST, local government approval for conducting activities in the temple and so on. There is also a federal body called the ACNC for registering the activities of charities. Prospective donors can find charitable organisations such as temples through the ACNC (Australia only) as they make public information regarding the organisations.

We derive so much of benefit from temples and the Sangha that every young person ought to participate in the functioning of temple committees or the general upkeep of the temple. Moreover, these are not primary duties of the Sangha as they must pay attention to practice. Lay people need to carry this responsibility. What a technician, accountant or lawyer needs to do should not be placed on the shoulders of the monks and nuns. The Sangha also needs to understand this.

The law may require the setting up of a management committee for the temple association, but the reality is that many committees and sub-committees are required to help a temple function in all its many facets.

It is important to realise that the committee system is inefficient in management. The executive system is far more successful than the committee system. Committees can supervise but the executive can be held responsible and given the necessary authority to carry out tasks. At least a balance must be maintained. It is unnecessary for monks and nuns to try to do what skilled lay persons can do better.

For example, many pipelines and power lines laid underground can easily be managed by a qualified technical person, rather than a committee. If this is not done, when something happens, even the drawings will not be found, and heavy costs are incurred. There are legal aspects of these services and only suitable individuals can manage them.

The primary purpose of a committee should be the allocation of funds and accounting for collections according to law. The services of qualified accountants are necessary to ensure legal compliance. This is even more important if the temple has secured a gift fund authority from the tax department.

Executives in temples need to be given proper designations. The term co-ordinator is not suitable. In many cases the term manager is more suitable. They

must be given authority to do their voluntary job, not merely responsibility. However, limits on authority can be placed, using good judgment.

Given this background, the chaplain can help in guiding committee members and voluntary executives. Matters worth discussing could include the following:

- 1 When you are called upon to take a position, do not backdown.
- 2 Obtain the training and education required for the position.
- 3 Understand the limits of your authority
- 4 Understand the definition of the responsibility assigned to you.
- 5 Never misuse authority.
- 6 Be honest in all dealings.
- 7 Account for money used.
- 8 Respect the seniors but there is no need to feel enslaved.

Management of enterprises and the skills necessary to lead and work with others is a valuable subject one should learn while young. It determines one's success in life. No profession escapes the principles of management and creating positive interactions with others. Management is usually presented in enterprises as a secular theory and practice. It is far better to learn it in association with Buddhist principles.

Temple committees and other Dhamma based initiatives are an excellent way of imparting knowledge of management in terms of Buddhist principles. All thoughts, words and deeds must be governed by the Dhamma. No one must be harmed by your actions, including yourself. The counsellor can use these and similar matters with a group to arouse interest in management theory and practice, along with human interaction and collaboration.

- 1 Reluctance to participate is a sign of sloth and torpor, or a negative self-image preventing active participation with others.
- 2 Venerable Moggallana was a well-known organiser in the Buddha's time.
- 3 Right view is a key principle to use in decision-making, which is vital for a leader or manager.
- 4 Poor management usually results from breaking fundamental precepts.

- 5 Success in communications depends a great deal on following the relevant principles taught in Buddhism. Without communications based on right thoughts and right speech, proper management is impossible.
- 6 One will need to change jobs often if the Buddhist principle of showing genuine respect for seniors and peers is not followed.
- 7 Managers fail to get on with others mainly because of holding on to strong views. This is one of the key mental states that needs to be cleared for both worldly and spiritual progress.
- 8 Craving for power and neglecting the needs of others often brings failure in management.
- 9 One cannot keep good relations with members of a team if one is prone to frequent anger or selfishness.
- 10 Compassion and true empathy towards subordinates always brings success to group operations.
- 11 Success is always sweeter when achieved as a group.
- 12 Failures or perceived failures are an opportunity to increase knowledge and wisdom, not an excuse to lay blame.
- 13 Buddhas and Arahants never commanded respect. Respect always followed them due to their exemplary behaviour. Throughout the course of many centuries, many followed their footsteps and continue to do so now.

The Queensland Sangha Association Inc (QSA) would be able to help in training new committee members. QSA also provides a free general consultancy service to help management committees in performing difficult tasks.

9 Showing respect to monks and nuns

This depends on the customs and traditions prevailing in a particular society. Respect is what you have in the mind and the customs are how you show it. It is hard to copy customs; it needs to come naturally. When we visit other temples, we are not familiar with, it is good to ask for advice.

Depending on the customs of the temple one is in, the chaplain can help younger people to observe essential practices to show respect to monks and nuns.

Some aspects shown here are worth discussing:

- 1 In the Sri Lankan tradition, a lay person pays respect to a monk or nun by placing the forehead on the floor with hands clasped.
- 2 When the tradition is not known, it might be good to clasp your hands and bow.
- 3 In the Thai tradition, one goes on to the knees when approaching a monk.
- 4 In South-Asian traditions, monks do not reciprocate. Mahayana monks and nuns in Australia do reciprocate.
- 5 There is no shaking of hands with members of the Sangha.
- 6 When you sit on the floor try not to project your feet towards a monk or nun or a Buddha statue.
- 7 When you enter a temple, shoes are removed and kept in a proper place.
- 8 Leave the temple premises as clean as practically possible.
- 9 In the Sri Lankan tradition lay people do not consume food in the presence of monks and nuns.

10 The Sangha as leaders of the Buddha *Sasana*

Whatever traditions might prevail in a culture, we need to acknowledge that the Sangha are the ultimate leaders of the Buddhist dispensation. In the teachings the Sangha are treated as the custodians of the *Sasana* (Buddhist Dispensation).

As leaders they function as those who have a right to interpret the teachings of the Buddha. This is true, because very few lay people have a good knowledge of the Dhamma. The Sangha also look after the temples and monasteries.

Lay people need to be careful not to disturb this arrangement as it has proved successful over many centuries. Young people need to understand this structure.

In this context children must not use the temple merely as a playground or a place for entertainment, except when they are authorised by the Sangha.

When we sit on committees, we need to remember that the Sangha are the ultimate custodians of the temple, unless otherwise arranged.

11 Meditation - mapping your mind

The mind is the most important part of a human being. This fact may be lost on many of us, as the tendency is to focus on our bodies instead. We are superior to animals because our mind is more developed. For those who are not sure about the existence and functioning of the mind, the technique of mapping what is in the mind would be useful.

The chaplain can guide a group to try this technique.

The members of the group will first sit down on the floor or on chairs in a circle. A point of silence should be reached. Before commencing, each person will be given a pen and notepad.

To reduce disturbances, the group can keep their eyes closed. Eyes need not be forcibly closed, but rather casually closed.

The chaplain will ask the group what they are thinking of right now. Each participant will be asked to open the eyes and write a few words about what they were thinking at that time.

After a short break, the chaplain would ask the same question for a second time. Participants will be asked to write what they were thinking of at that time and write a few words describing the thought.

The process can be repeated several times.

The chaplain can collect the papers and eliminate topics which are inappropriate to be discussed as a group. Then the chaplain will read from the notes with no reference to the names of individuals.

If participants have comments, the chaplain will discuss with the group.

The question will be put whether they can now notice the existence of a mind. At this point, the group can understand that all their thoughts came from the mind.

The mind is a process associated with the body that deals with our thoughts. This is, of course, not a definition of the mind.

12 Experiment in moving the mind

Here the group can settle in a way like the manner described in section 11. The process will be almost the opposite.

The chaplain 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 can be 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?

13 Experiment in calming the mind

First, we must develop our ability to notice the difference between calm and disturbance in a physical setting and then gradually apply the same idea to the mind. Examples of disturbed situations can be the following: a choppy sea with fast rising and falling of waves, heavy rain with gusty winds, a river flowing down through a rocky stretch, traffic in the city, an artificial fountain, boiling water, a football match, and a drink being poured into a glass.

These can be described to a group, and they can think of each of these one after the other, slowly.

Then calm situations can be listed slowly, giving time to think of each separately. Examples are a very gently flowing river, a flat sea, the perfectly still water of a lake reflecting the surrounding landscape, a gentle breeze, or a moving ship far in the distance.

Now we can start thinking of what goes on in the mind. Sometimes it is calm, as it happens just before one falls asleep. At other times, it is agitated, when one is unable to fall asleep, or during the morning rush in preparing for school or work.

We can ask ourselves the question whether you prefer the mind to be calm or agitated. How does each one feel?

While being seated, the group can try a few minutes of breathing meditation. These instructions would help:

- 1 Think of breathing, as this action enables you to live
- 2 You can close your eyes or keep them open as you prefer
- 3 Do you notice the air coming in through the nostrils?
- 4 After a few minutes watching the air coming in, now pay attention to the air that goes out.
- 5 Observe the in and out breaths for a few minutes

- 6 Now, begin to observe the in-out breathing cycle
- 7 Between the two, there may be a small gap; do not bother about it for now
- 8 After, say, 20 minutes, ask the group whether the mind feels calm
- 9 While doing this meditation, the mind might have been thinking about various things; that can be ignored for now
- 10 You do not do anything other than noticing the air coming in and going out
- 11 Was the mind calm at the end?

Discuss these aspects with the group.

The chaplain can explain other methods of calming and get the group to try them. A few are mentioned below.

- 1 Count backwards, say, from 20 to 1, and then forward
- 2 Say aloud the letters in the alphabet, first forward, and then backward
- 3 Call out the colours in the rainbow (violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red) forward five times, and then in the reverse order
- 4 Check the pulse for a minute or two
- 5 Check how many pulses occur in one breath, inward, then outward
- 6 Watch a line of ants moving in a line
- 7 In light rain, watch the raindrops falling on a pool of water, and the little circles formed and how they vanish in a second
- 8 Watch a train moving far away
- 9 Watch the cars moving on the highway far away
- 10 Watch how you are falling asleep

14 Meditation - concentration

Some say that they lack concentration, but the truth is that from birth, we do have concentration. It is an inherent feature of the mind; the level of concentration may be low, and it can be gradually improved with meditation.

A question can arise as to the difference between concentration and mindfulness. If we look at driving as an example, we concentrate on the position and movement of the vehicle, and at the same time, we are mindful of the surrounding. For example, we are mindful of the other vehicles, people nearby, the traffic lights, speed bumps and even police cameras. Concentration and

mindfulness are both aspects of the mind called universal mental states, as they are present all the time with five other mental states (*cetasika*).

Both work on objects we confront through our senses, being the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When one is studying, the mind sense is very active, and the mind can concentrate on information taken in. However, one is also mindful of the surroundings. Younger siblings coming into your room is one example. When learning music, the information one concentrates on is coming via the ears. When drawing or painting, the eyes receive the information, and one concentrates on that information.

The Pali term *Samatha* means calming, and *Samadhi* means high concentration. Good students have a high level of concentration. It can get disturbed and weak when disturbances occur.

If one is skilful, a low intensity disturbance in the background might help in developing concentration, as it tends to keep away a potential multitude of other disturbances. For example, older children sometimes listen to music while studying.

Staying in a frozen posture, such as standing on one leg, bending the body halfway or leaning to one side can be experimented on to notice a rise in the level of concentration. These need to be done under supervision only. Safety aspects must be considered before engaging in these types of exercises.

The chaplain can guide a group in recognising and developing concentration using the following information:

USING THE EYE SENSE

Watching the rain falling

Watching a sunset

Reading a book

Watching the slow flickering of a candlelight

USING THE EAR SENSE

Hearing a song

Listening to the sound of rain falling

Listening to the sound of the ocean

Listening to a religious chanting

Listening to a religious chanting with sober background music

Listening to meditation music for calming

USING THE BODY SENSE

Natural breathing

Changing posture (sitting, standing, walking, reclining)

Walking

USING THE MIND SENSE

Contemplating the foulness of the body

Reflecting on a dead body

Contemplating the negative aspects of certain types of greed

Contemplating the inevitability of death

15 Meditation - walking

A simple way of practising meditation is walking according to instructions from a meditation teacher. It helps in developing the body, maintaining health, developing concentration and in developing mindfulness. It is easy for even very young children, and for people of all ages who can walk.

One method is to keep the mind at or around the point at which the heel touches the ground (or at least the shoe). Assuming one starts walking with the right foot, the concentration resides momentarily with the right foot. In a moment, the concentration switches to the left foot as it contacts the ground, and so on. The continued activity of walking generates mindfulness. Concentration is generated for a moment, and then gets released. It is alright if the mind strays somewhere, so long as one is aware of that.

The mind can move and watch the progress of an action, namely, walking. Strong mindfulness is developed through ardent and continuous practice.

Mindfulness needs wisdom in the sense that a person who practises mindfulness using the technique of walking genuinely knows what he or she is currently doing. Correct mindfulness is a combination of effort (being ardent), wisdom to understand what the activity is, and active awareness of what is being done.

In the great discourse on the establishment of mindfulness (*Sati Patthana Sutta* in Pali), this meditation is referred to as the one and only way of progressing towards enlightenment. Concentration takes one to a high level of mental activity, but it falls short of enlightenment.

There is ongoing discussion about the differences between mindfulness meditation and concentration meditation in considering the path to Nibbana (enlightenment). The recommendation is that body-based meditation leads to the development of mindfulness. Concentration comes from mind-based meditation. The latter can generate Absorptions (*Jhana*) but these are temporary attainments.

This is a subtle point that requires thought and unswerving practice.

The chaplain needs to guide the group to develop understanding these ideas well before the practice of walking meditation. Some common instructions follow.

- 1 Try to keep the mind on the heel, at the point of touch
- 2 Thoughts will come and pass, and it is difficult and not necessary to stop them
- 3 Invariably some steps will occur without mindfulness
- 4 Do not worry about thoughts or external disturbances
- 5 Do not start theorising, analysing, worrying, questioning and so on, but just walk
- 6 After some time, one might feel something like dizziness, but that will soon pass
- 7 That feeling is an indication of concentration
- 8 Twenty to thirty minutes at a stretch might be enough, but keep repeating
- 9 Try not to look around but if you do, do not worry
- 10 Try to be mindful of the path but avoid concentrating on the path
- 11 Mistakes are alright, so long as you feel you are walking mindfully

16 Contemplation on the Buddha (*Buddhanussati*)

Buddha, though not living, is our guide. The Buddha is there in our minds. His physical appearance in pictures, paintings and sculptures and his teaching are there. The physical appearance can be drawn from statues or pictures that we see. There is no need to check whether this is the correct appearance, as what matters is the idea one develops.

Appearance is important as it will stay in the mind. The moment one thinks of the Buddha, the mental picture will arise. Try to select a statue or picture that you like. Then remembering it is easy.

As you go to sleep, just remember the Buddha. If you happen to get woken up in the night, again think of the Buddha. The Buddha is believed to have been an exceptionally handsome person beyond description. An artist or sculptor would find it difficult to draw a correct picture of the Buddha. Buddha statues were apparently not made while he was living. A carving thought to have been made on an ornament approximately 100 years after the demise of the Buddha and found in Afghanistan is in the possession of a British museum.

What really matters is the qualities of the Buddha found in the Dhamma. It is said that these qualities are common to all Buddhas. The nine great qualities of a Buddha are worth remembering. It is in the scriptures. They are as follows:

- 1 He was the fortunate one, having a history of wholesomeness
- 2 He would not commit anything considered to be wrong
- 3 He was the accomplished one, having understood the truth by himself
- 4 He was possessed of ultimate knowledge and conduct
- 5 He had gone along the correct way
- 6 He had full knowledge of the world
- 7 He was a perfect tamer of the untameable
- 8 He was a teacher unsurpassed
- 9 He had understood the truth about the world

The chaplain can explain to the group each of these qualities to the extent these could be understood. Perfect understanding might not be possible. As one reflects on the Buddha and his qualities the level of understanding will increase. That in turn will help develop faith and wisdom.

The chaplain can also get the group to chant the qualities of the Buddha, reflecting on them while chanting. If possible, one can memorise this chanting and recollect it in times of difficulty. It can also be recited before going to sleep.

The Pali stanza is as follows:

Itipi so

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Bhagava</i> | Having heaps of merit |
| 2 | <i>Araham</i> | Would never do something wrong |
| 3 | <i>Samma Aambuddho</i> | Accomplished in every way |
| 4 | <i>Vijja Carana Sampanno</i> | With knowledges and conduct |
| 5 | <i>Sugato</i> | Well gone in the right way |
| 6 | <i>Loka Vidu</i> | Knower of the worlds |

7	<i>Anuttaro Purisadhamma Sarathi</i>	Unsurpassed tamer of men
8	<i>Sattha Deva Manussanam</i>	Teacher to deities and humans
9	<i>Buddho</i>	Having realised the truth
10	<i>Bhagava ti</i>	Such is the fortunate one

The group needs to be advised on the method of building up the meditation on the Buddha. First, one needs to identify a picture or statue of the Buddha to remember. Think of the qualities of the Buddha to the best of one's understanding. Keep contemplating for some time.

17 Biographies of great members of the Sangha

Character building is not based on theories only. The more important aspect is learning from others. The great monks and nuns offer us many guidelines from their life experiences.

First, we can identify a few monks and research what factors made them so important. A brief study follows.

Sariputta	His wisdom was next only to that of Buddha Excellent in teaching the Dhamma Followed rules carefully Extremely humble First great disciple of the Buddha
Moggallana	Second great disciple of the Buddha Possessed high miraculous powers Attempted to traverse the universe Great organiser in the temple
Maha Kassapa	Followed difficult rules Looked a little like the Buddha Preferred to live in a forest
Ananda	Buddha's attendant for the last 20 years Delay in attaining Nibbana. Effort too strong Held all Dhamma in memory
Pajapati Gotami	Chief Nun, and founder of Nuns Order

Yasodhara	Spouse of Siddhartha in many lives An arahant
Khema	Chief female disciple Famed for wisdom
Uppalavanna	Second chief female disciple Famous for miraculous powers

18 Learning from the biographies of great people

There are many people who made great achievements in life from whom we can learn valuable lessons. They may not all be Buddhists, but they have made great achievements because of certain qualities.

A brief list is given here to stimulate a discussion.

Anatha Pindika	Leading male supporter of the Buddha Built the first monastery for the Sangha Attained <i>Sotapatti</i> upon seeing the Buddha Unwavering faith in the Buddha A leading financier
Visakha	Leading female supporter of the Buddha A great organiser Attained <i>Sotapatti</i> when 7 years old A powerful business manager
Mahatma Gandhi	Strong determination Commitment to truthfulness Belief in respect towards all communities Fearless against colonial rulers, the British
Mother Teresa	Self-sacrifice and helping the needy Fearless even in danger to self A saint in the Catholic church
Henry Steele Olcott	Fearless during colonial rule by the British Commitment to Buddhist education A great Buddhist activist

Venerable M. Gunananda	Succeeded in debates with Christian priests
Anagarika Dharmapala	Fearless Buddhist leader Rose against the oppression of Buddhists Powerful speaker Associate of Olcott

19 Answering common questions in Buddhism

All types of questions are asked regarding the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, or Buddhism as a religion. There are some questions that cannot be answered, and some that are not worth pursuing as it is futile. A questioner must ask worthwhile questions and a chaplain needs to answer only worthwhile questions.

A chaplain could work out with the group whether these statements or questions are worthwhile:

- 1 What is the origin of the world?
- 2 Is science more important than Buddhism?
- 3 What is primary, the brain or the mind?
- 4 Is kamma a fiction of the mind?
- 5 Who determines what is right and wrong?
- 6 There is no meaning in merit and demerit
- 7 There is no value in making offerings to the Buddha
- 8 There is no rebirth. This is the only life
- 9 There is no order in the universe
- 10 Relativity theory is the ultimate truth
- 11 Kamma has no basis in modern science
- 12 The world must have been created by an almighty god
- 13 Who created me is the main question in life
- 14 Life is a very pleasant experience
- 15 There is no such thing as suffering or *dukkha*
- 16 The body belongs to me, and the mind belongs to God

There is a book published on the website of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc (www.sanghaqld.org) titled as Questions and Answers. It contains about 150 questions asked by students and the suggested answers given mostly by the authors of this book. A sample set of questions is given in Appendix (3).

20 Re-stating some teachings in the *Dhammapada*

For people who have no time to read a lot from the scriptures or from commentaries, the *Dhammapada* affords a collection of brief statements attributed to the Buddha that indicate the ethics and philosophy of Buddhism. Here is a brief extract from the *Dhammapada*. These statements are not complete or exact translations but are only indicative.

Stanza 1

Mano pubbangama Dhamma, mano settha manomaya.....

Manasa ce padutthena, Bhasati va karotiva,

Mind is the forerunner of all evil states. If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind, suffering follows one, as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox drawing the cart.

Stanza 2

Mano pubbangama Dhamma.....

Manasa ce pasannnena.....

Mind is the forerunner of all good mental states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that happiness follows, even as one's shadow does not leave.

Stanzas 3,4 and 5 are not included here but are valuable.

Stanza 21

Appamado amata padam.....

Heedfulness is the path to the deathless, heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are like the dead. Directly understanding this, the wise rejoice in heedfulness, delighting in the realm of the *Ariyas*. The constantly meditative, the ever-steadfast ones, realise the bond-free supreme Nibbana.

Stanza 35

Dunningahassa lahuno.....

The mind wonders wherever it wants and is swift. It is good to tame it. A tamed mind brings happiness.

Stanza 42

Diso disam yantam kaira.....

Whatever harm a foe may do to a foe, yet an ill-directed mind can do more harm to one-self.

Stanza 62

Putta matthi dhanam matthi.....

I have sons, I have wealth, thus thinks the fool. When the self is not his own, where are the sons, where is the wealth?

Stanza 63

Yo Balam Mannati balayam.....

The fool who knows he is a fool is wise to that extent. A fool who thinks he is wise is really a fool.

Stanza 80

Udakamhi nayanthi nettika.....

Irrigators control water flow, arrow makers bend the metal, and the wise control themselves.

Stanza 81

Selo yatha ekagano.....

As a solid rock is unshakable by the wind, even so the wise are unshaken by praise and blame.

Stanza 100

Sahassam apice vaca.....

One meaningful word is better than a thousand meaningless words.

Stanza 129

Sabbe sasanti dandassa.....

Everyone fears violent treatment. Imagine myself in that position and I shall not hurt or kill another being.

Stanza 216

Tanhaya Jayati soko.....

From craving arises grief and fear. For one who has surpassed craving where is the grief, and where is the fear?

Stanza 276

Tumhehi kiccam attappam.....

You must apply yourself; Buddhas only show the way.

Stanza 277

Sabbe sankara anicca ti, yada pannaya passa ti.....

All component things are subject to impermanence, and this must be understood with wisdom developed.

Two other stanzas are similar, and they relate to suffering (*dukkha*) and no-self (*anatta*). These are numbers 278 and 279.

If you wish to read further but the Dhammapada is not available, more details are found in the books published by the Colombo YMBA under the general title "Guide to the study of Theravada Buddhism."

These books are available in many temples in Australia and have a good coverage of important topics in Buddhism.

21 Where does equanimity apply?

We learn about the idea of equanimity (*Upekkha*) but how and where do we see it in the real world? Equanimity has a few different, though allied, meanings. The chaplain can help the group to sort out the different meanings with examples and how they apply in the real world.

One meaning is staying in the middle, without taking sides. It can be active or passive. A second meaning is not to give in to attractions, and not to generate repulsions. This is mostly active. A third meaning is work hard on softening of views (including strong views). Thereby you can actively stay in the middle.

The chaplain can discuss with the group the following statements and questions:

- 1 Some think that capitalism is the solution to all human problems and others think that socialism can solve the problems of the world. Hence, we have no peace in the world. How can equanimity help? What kind of equanimity is required?
- 2 Israelis say they owned that land for more than 3000 years and so it belongs to them. Arabs think that they have lived there for many centuries and that Israelis must vanish from the earth. What type of equanimity might help resolve this grave problem affecting the world?
- 3 Aboriginal people in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and other countries hold the view that they were the owners of the land and subsequent inhabitants consider the countries as theirs because they developed them. What type of equanimity will help them to reconcile?
- 4 Two children in one family engage in a quarrel and the parents would like to stop it. What style of equanimity can help the parents to resolve the dispute?
- 5 When an unwanted character enters a group having a chat, resentments occur. How can the people avoid any major flare up?
- 6 We always experience attachments and repulsions. How can we get to a position of peace and tranquillity?

22 Where does acceptance come into use?

There are many experiences which can cause us difficulties. We need to be mindful of our response to such difficulties. There are events that occur for natural reasons, and we might not be able to alter them to suit us. A pandemic caused by the spread of a virus such as Covid-19 is an example. However much we lament and protest, it will not go away. Instead of whinging about it, the

better approach is to tentatively accept it. After acceptance we can act towards alleviation.

The chaplain can help a group to consider examples such as the following and learn how acceptance based on mindfulness and wisdom can help. Certain key aspects of the Dhamma can be brought into the discussion as appropriate; in particular, the three key signs of existence can be discussed, namely impermanence of all composed things (physical and mental), suffering or lack of permanent satisfaction and the feature of non-self, or the lack of permanent substance of all living beings.

- 1 The eruption of a volcano, a tsunami, a flood, bush fire, a house on fire, a war, landslides, shipwreck, the collapse of a high-rise building, and other natural events can cause unbearable grief.
- 2 One can lose a loved one in a vehicle accident.
- 3 A student might fail or do badly in an examination.
- 4 A prospective bridegroom might lose the bride unexpectedly.
- 5 A long-employed person can lose the job
- 6 A parent who was healthy suddenly becomes ill
- 7 The economy of a country collapses, causing political and social upheaval

Acceptance does not mean complacency or falling into a state of defeated depression. One needs to remain mentally active within reasonable limits. Where acceptance is due, one needs to strive for it rather than waste energy trying to achieve the impossible.

23 What is the necessity and meaning of the Five Precepts?

Fundamentally, it is the first step in establishing discipline. It is very significant when living as a group, society, or civilisation. If not for the five precepts being adhered to consciously or unconsciously by most members of society, living peacefully as a social group would be impossible.

Firstly, we keep out of the legal system and prisons essentially because we observe the five precepts. Secondly, it inculcates the idea that everyone must submit to rules. When we drive, we observe rules, when we do business transactions, we follow accepted rules and etiquette. Rules are fundamental in a civilised society. Unruly behaviour becomes costly, and the cost will be borne by all of us.

The grand daughter and daughter of the two authors respectively, presently a seven-year-old student attending Dhamma School, asked after one of her Dhamma classes why “I should not hate another” is not included as a 6th precept. Similarly, someone could have suggested a 7th precept not to be greedy. With deep study, we find that greed and hatred are already covered by the five precepts. For example, one kills with hatred. One steals due to greed. One drinks due to foolishness. In general greed, hatred, and delusion (ignorance or foolishness) are all covered by the five precepts.

The chaplain can help a group to find answers for the situations described below, or similar situations.

- 1 On precept days when I walk in the temple, I think many small insects like ants get killed under my feet. Am I breaking the first precept?
- 2 I used a colour pen belonging to a friend without permission. Did I break the second precept?
- 3 When a student caused damage to an item and I saw it, the teacher asked me if anyone had seen the action. I kept silent. Did I break the fourth precept?

24 The usefulness of parades, processions, and perambulations

Most temples conduct these activities at various times of the year. Some feel that these activities do not serve any useful purpose. Some would claim that they are more interested in the Dhamma or in meditation and these activities like processions are not for them. What is the correct view?

Temple activities that have been performed for many centuries ought not to be looked down with disdain. They have been there for many reasons.

They have the persuasive power of promoting faith (*saddha*) in the minds of participants. Many do not get into practice because they do not have sufficient faith. Even blind faith is useful at the start as it is bound to improve with Dhamma knowledge and wisdom. Even in the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment, faith is continuing at level one to five. Wisdom overcomes faith only in level six (*bojjhanga*) at the level of awakening factors.

This problem arises with people who think they are wise, though they may not be as wise as they imagine. With a sense of pride, they assume they are wise. It is something akin to being wise-conscious.

Intelligent and qualified people need to take care to avoid falling into this trap. Once one gets caught in it, there is no way forward (or upward). Young people who are in the science streams at all levels are prone to get trapped in this way. Mathematics, information technology, astronomy, engineering, and nanoscience can take one along this incorrect path.

Acknowledging that one is relatively ignorant currently is a pointer to wise behaviour in the future.

Temple activities help in these and other ways:

- 1 Developing concentration
- 2 Developing mindfulness
- 3 Paying attention to respect
- 4 Developing humility
- 5 Developing the skill of orderliness
- 6 Developing the ability to perform work in a group

People who are well educated and intelligent need to understand that just because the most useful part of a tree is the fruit, it does not mean the fruit can appear from nothing. Fruits come from the energy put into roots, stems, branches, leaves, chlorophyll, flowers and the internal parts of flowers like the stigma and tendrils. The wise conscious may want to begin, say at the leaves, but that would not work either.

Similarly, the fruit of the Dhamma practice is supported, protected, and propagated by many other facets and factors, some of which are cultural traditions and events which enable the mass participation of communities and people. These in turn provide a pathway to the deeper practice of the Dhamma.

25 Offerings to the Buddha, what does it mean?

It is known that offerings to the Buddha performed in the Tooth Relic temple in Kandy, Sri Lanka are conducted with a high level of devotion, respect, and care. In many temples around the world, there are similar offerings made to the Buddha almost daily.

The Buddha is no ordinary human being. He was a Buddha possessing unequalled qualities. We must remember him with a deep sense of gratitude and respect. All offerings are made with this in mind. The Buddha's guidance is vital in our pursuit of happiness.

Making offerings is a way of remembering with a sense of high respect and gratitude. There is another aspect of this. Making offerings and contemplating the nature of Buddhahood is a method of developing faith. Faith is essential if we are to progress along the path to enlightenment.

Faith in Buddhism is not blind faith, or merely devotional faith. It is a mental state that grows hand in hand with wisdom and practice. To begin with, we might not have enough wisdom, but we try to raise its level when we make offerings. Faith in Buddhism can be described as an experiential faith, where faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha grows as one practices the teachings and begins to realise the benefits. Making devotional offerings can be a basis and a continuation for such growth.

In summary, offerings to the Buddha help us to stay close to the Buddha.

The chaplain can discuss how these actions contribute to the growth of both faith and wisdom.

- 1 When flowers are offered, we reflect on the fact that we will all come to decay and death someday, like the beautiful flowers which will wither and decay to an unrecognisable state within a few days. It is a meditation on impermanence.
- 2 When incense is offered, we reflect on the purity of the Buddha. With each such offering, we can resolve to improve our own purity of mind.

- 3 When lights (candles and lamps) are offered, we reflect on the wisdom of the Buddha. We reflect on the fact that it is such wisdom which will eventually replace the darkness, fears, and defilements within our minds.

Offerings also give the opportunity to think about and reflect on the Buddha. Care is taken to avoid contamination, the offerings are carried with great respect, they are placed on a shrine with care, and at the due time, many items are respectfully removed from the shrine, all requiring mindfulness.

Therefore, offerings are a method of developing mindfulness.

26 How do we find noble friends?

This is not an easy question to answer. The method suggested is for you to be a fitting noble friend to others. Not only should one be well established in practice appropriate to your age, but also it needs to be visible to others through communications and conduct.

Initially, one can adopt the attitude that each one of us has at least one noble friend, being the Buddha seen through the Dhamma.

Thereafter, it is a case of getting established in morality (*sila*) at a level you can practise without pretending or deceiving yourself and others. Children may not be able to practise generosity (*dana*) in certain ways, but they can assist parents in their practice and develop an attitude of sharing with siblings and friends.

Even at a low level, one must try to practise meditation in a suitable way. For students, meditation helps to develop concentration and mindfulness, which are keys to success in studies.

Kamma also has the power to bring before you people who are fit to be noble friends. It can happen in strange circumstances. There is a saying that deities who look after you bring noble friends to you. When you meet someone like that, it is sensible not to reject the person, but you can take the person in to your life tentatively, until good proof becomes apparent.

The chaplain can discuss with the group about the success or failure in finding noble friends and suggest solutions as much as possible.

27 Analysing the Dhamma using case-studies

Friends can talk about real stories about known people with the idea of working out what sections of the Dhamma are applicable in each story. Gossip is not suggested, but practical and useful storytelling is one thing that everyone can participate in. There is nothing like actual stories to illustrate the working of the Dhamma.

Chaplains can design case-studies to enable others to relate to them and check what aspects of the Dhamma each case-study highlights. The extended Dhammapada called *Dhammapadattha Katha* has many cases that can be adapted for these case-studies.

Some case studies are described here.

Sample case-study 1:

A very bright student got dragged in to cricket trials by a cricket coach in a big school. Much against the advice of his father, he joined the school team and became a success. Although he was academically one of the best in the class earlier, his grades began to drop, and he failed to enter university. What went wrong, according to the Dhamma?

Discuss whether the factors of ego (self-idea), obedience, taking advice, debt owed to parents, pride, fame, comparison (*mana*), checking on the validity of effort applied (*vimamsa*) are relevant in this case.

Sample case-study 2:

A student who passed the school examinations well entered a university. As his home was in the countryside, he lived in shared accommodation during the university semesters. Not all his housemates were good associates. Some were taking drinks and drugs using the money they received from parents. He got into their company and got pally with the group, much against his parents' advice. The parents stopped sending money and the boy took a part-time job in a liquor shop. He never did well in studies and eventually dropped out of university.

Discuss whether the factors of choice of a place of living, choice of friends, parent-child relationships, listening to advice, duties of parents, duties of

children, good employment (*samma ajiva*) and investigative skill mattered in this case.

The chaplain can invite the group to come up with cases like this and see how the Dhamma applies in daily life. More case-studies are given in Appendix (2).

28 Techniques of recalling a lost mind and their meanings

Quite often we lose control of the mind, me remaining here but the mind is busy elsewhere. This can happen for a very short time and pass away, but it can go on for long periods of time. Incessant day dreaming is an extreme case. Here one can lose much needed time achieving nothing.

After doing something or saying something, we wonder why we did or say that thing. This happens when you had no control over your mind or limited control. In such situations, there is no need to get angry or resentful, so long as one develops the ability to recall that this is the nature of the mind.

Try to separate yourself and your mind as two different entities in this discussion. If you think that the mind is part of you, it will get confusing.

One might wonder whether it is sensible to talk about controlling the mind. Commanded control is not implied here. Control needs to be based on understanding and compassion.

In the *Dhammapada*, in the chapter on the mind, several stanzas emphasise the need to control the mind. In stanza 35, it is said that it is good to tame the mind.

We can consider a few constructed cases to illustrate this. You may have seen these in actual experience many a time. Many more cases are available but with time and space constraints, only a few have been selected.

Nearly all the ideas presented in this presentation are from *Abhidhamma* (philosophy and psychology) and *Sutta Dhamma* (discourses). Twenty sample

constructed cases appear in Appendix (1). These can be used by the chaplain directly or with modifications. Similar cases can be constructed by the participants with the help of the chaplain.

29 Is it possible that we create bad *kamma* even while participating in religious activities?

We perform religious activities at the temple or sometimes at home with relatively clean minds. As time passes, during an activity, unless we are mindful, we tend to stray on to unwholesome actions.

A simple and common example is that when a little thing goes wrong, we might blurt out at a child who made a mistake. Although we might try to justify our action, it is a deviation from the wholesome to the unwholesome. This can happen in a temple and at home or elsewhere. It results from undeveloped mindfulness.

In Pali, it is called an *apunnabhi sankhara* a mental activity that is unwholesome but enveloped in a wholesome activity. There is a story that a keen meditator abused a person who caused a disturbance and prompted the meditator to break the meditation.

When this happens, there is no need to explain or justify the action, but one must try to improve one's mindfulness.

Try to keep in mind the main activity one is pursuing at a particular time and ignore stray happenings, within the limits of practicality.

30 Excessive effort in the practice might have negative effects

In the noble eight-fold path the application of effort is of paramount importance. In the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment, effort appears at many levels, though in gradually increasing intensities. In daily life too, we know that nothing can be achieved except through ardent effort.

How much of effort is good to apply? The Buddha once said that a musician who plays a string instrument will not tighten the strings too much, nor will the strings be allowed to sag. The musician somehow gets the correct tightness in the strings. Similarly, when one is practising the Dhamma, effort needs to be

applied at the correct or appropriate intensity. Otherwise, the result will be negative. Here the balancing of behaviours and actions become crucial.

This is true of Dhamma studies, as delving into every word to understand the correct meaning must be balanced with sensible practice of the Dhamma. This is where wisdom can help us.

A young person who studies hard needs to recognise this principle and must not ruin his or her health, breaking rest day after day. It is wiser to seek advice and to investigate the methods of study.

The first authors' book on Methods of Study would be of help in working out the methods suitable to a young person. This is a skill, and like all other skills, it needs to be learnt and developed. The chaplain can help a group to develop good methods of study.

CHAPTER 8

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1 The value of arts and crafts

Not everyone is truly skilled in arts and crafts. Most people have the skill to a certain extent, and they can learn the skills by assisting the more skilled people. Drawing, painting, weaving and other skills need concentration (*samatha*) and it is a method of developing concentration. Note that this is not *Samma Samadhi* (Right concentration) as part of the noble eight-fold path, but similar at a lower level and more worldly.

These activities not only help to develop concentration but also help to develop faith (*saddha*). Mindfulness also may be developed in a worldly sense.

The chaplain can encourage groups to be creative, say, in a temple. The following activities are suggested:

- 1 Making Vesak lanterns and lighting them in a temple
- 2 Making Chinese lanterns and drawing Chinese letters
- 3 Drawing pictures of the Buddha
- 4 Drawing pictures of the temple premises
- 5 Making paintings of the temple premises
- 6 Making paintings of the Buddha
- 7 Cutting decorations for a chanting chamber
- 8 Printing T-shirts to use at religious functions
- 9 Colouring containers to use in a temple (to bathe a Bodhi Tree)
- 10 Making bead garlands for meditation
- 11 Participating in traditional activities in Tibetan/Mahayana temples
- 12 Taking photographs of temple premises
- 13 Cooking food for monks and nuns

2 Spiritual benefits from musical engagements

In some other religions (Hinduism, Christianity) singing and other musical engagements are commonly used in religious activities. In Buddhist culture singing devotional songs (*Bhakti Geeta*) is recognised and practised on certain

occasions. There are beautiful musical chantings in India and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, available on the internet.

Music helps people, particularly children, to build faith. Its application depends on the culture in different countries. Music is useful in temple functions, within limits. It also helps to develop concentration.

The chaplain can locate many such clips posted on sites such as YouTube and get the participants to practise them.

Music is also used by meditation teachers, both at the introduction and as background support for concentration.

Some examples are:

- 1 Sri Lankan singing of Victory Verses (*Jayamangala Gatha-Bahum sahassa....*)
- 2 Sri Lankan drumming, and Thai drumming groups are available in Australian cities
- 3 Scripture chanting from various countries
- 4 Hindi musical chantings on various topics such as *Dhammacakka Sutta*, *Metta Bhavana*, *Karaniya Metta sutta*, *Dhammapada* and so on
- 5 Pali chantings on various topics such as *Mangala Sutta*, and selected groups of discourses.
- 6 Bangladeshi devotional songs
- 7 Devotional songs from various cultures
- 8 Thai chantings
- 9 Chinese chantings
- 10 Tibetan chantings

3 Deriving benefits from chanting

Chanting is usually from the scriptures. Listening to a chanting, therefore, is a wholesome action and is believed to create good *kamma*.

Paying attention to the chanting again is good *kamma*, and it is less likely that one would think of doing anything unwholesome while listening.

If you effectively pay attention, concentration is likely to develop. Additionally, if you can understand at least some words, the concentration will be sharpened.

Chantings too can be obtained from the internet.

The chaplain can play some chantings from the internet and ask members of the group to comment on their experience with each chanting. What effect did the chanting have?

Here is a listing of known chantings on the internet:

- 1 Sri Lankan singing of Victory Verses (*Bahum sahasa....*)
- 2 Sri Lankan drumming groups available in Australian cities
- 3 Scripture chanting from various countries
- 4 Hindi musical chantings on various topics such as *Dhammacakka Sutta*, *Metta Bhavana*, *Karaniya Metta sutta*, *Dhammapada* and so on
- 5 Pali chantings on various topics such as *Mangala Sutta* and selected groups of discourses.
- 6 Bangladeshi devotional songs
- 7 Devotional songs from various cultures
- 8 Thai chantings
- 9 Tibetan chantings
- 10 Chinese chantings

4 Story telling

Telling stories has been a significant means of social engagement, partly for entertainment and partly for exchange of ideas. In Buddhist culture we can still see this in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and other countries. One well known example in Thailand is the story of King Vessantara. In Sri Lanka stories are related through paintings in Vesak pandals with beautiful lighting.

In ancient Sri Lanka, villagers were not familiar with reading the scriptures, and therefore, they flocked to the temple to listen to stories. Many a time, the *Bodhisatta* (aspirant to Buddhahood) was the hero. Typically, he first gets into great difficulties and finishes as a hero. Every story carries a Dhamma message. People learnt the Dhamma by hearing such stories.

Most stories have insightful revelations about good behaviour.

In fact, even today, hearing the Dhamma is listed as the first requisite of a person following the path to Nibbana.

Although we have the internet and computers, books and tapes carrying Dhamma information, the actual story telling has not lost its place. Younger people understand the Dhamma mostly through stories.

The chaplain can organise a story telling group. Some of the stories suggested are listed here:

- 1 Story of King Vessantara who gave away his two children
- 2 *Seri Vanija Jataka* - birth story regarding the old golden bowl of Seri
- 3 The King who saw a grey hair on his head and took to spiritual practice
- 4 The royal child who refused to speak to avoid the throne
- 5 *Kusa Jataka* - showing the wisdom of the Bodhisatta
- 6 *Ummagga Jataka* - many stories showing the wisdom of the Bodhisatta
- 7 *Sasa Jataka* - showing self-sacrifice
- 8 The story of Venerable Sangharakkhita

This is a hilarious story taken from the stanza 37 of the Dhamma Padattha Katha showing how far the mind will go and what funny situations can arise if one does not have mindfulness.

- 9 *Themiya Jataka* - the prince who pretended to be unable to speak to avoid becoming king
- 10 *Vidhura Pandita Jataka* - illustrating the wisdom of the Bodhisatta
- 11 The character of *Mahosadha* illustrated the wisdom of the *Bodhisatta* in the *Ummagga Jataka*.

The group can be helped to search for Jataka stories on the internet. Jataka stories are previous lives of Bodhisatta Siddhartha. Storytelling and working out the Dhamma involved can also be tried.

CHAPTER 9

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS OF SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS

It would be useful to keep some record of applied tasks for the chaplain to be able to assess whether they generated beneficial results. A simple journal would do at the start. Later with experience, it can be formalised.

Periodic surveys of the opinions held by members of the Sangha are necessary. Surveys of opinions of participating youth are essential. Similarly, the opinions of parents are also vital.

Suitable forms (paper based or electronic) can be developed by the chaplain to record the results of these surveys. There are online providers who can facilitate the generation and dissemination of online surveys and feedback forms. Summaries must be made to render the information understandable and useful.

Written examinations may not be necessary, but interviews will be helpful. Group discussions can also be used for assessment purposes.

Using the results of surveys, the chaplain can determine what specific solutions were helpful, or otherwise, to the youths. The information should be passed on to the temples and to the Queensland Sangha Association Inc.; the Buddhist Chaplaincy Services Division of QSA will be particularly interested. An appropriate level of anonymity should be used to keep private any sensitive information pertaining to individuals.

The Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational arm of the QSA, will find this information useful in designing youth chaplaincy educational courses in the future.

The chaplain needs to discuss the performance of students in activities with parents.

CHAPTER 10

IMPROVEMENT OF SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS

The chaplains who implement the solutions suggested can make recommendations to the Queensland Sangha Association Inc., regarding all aspects of Buddhist Youth Chaplaincy and Counselling programs.

The Queensland Sangha Association can also work with the multi-cultural services of the state and federal governments of Australia to organise events to promote the understanding of services such as the Buddhist chaplaincy and Counselling for youth, as the government is concerned with the attitudes of youth of all religions, and the social and economic damage caused by such attitudes.

It is also possible to work with universities and other tertiary institutions in the search for continuing improvement of these programs.

Dhamma information can be presented using computer programs such as Excel. In Excel, relationships among Dhamma concepts can be depicted. Many such concepts appear difficult to understand when presented in narrative form, but easily understood when presented through a more graphical technique, such as a spreadsheet. The periodic table in Chemistry is a well-known example. Another avenue of development is the production of videos that can be used in group activities. This technique has been effectively applied in subjects like management and accounting.

In general, education films are being used now in many countries. This technique can be used in teaching the Dhamma too.

The Mindful School Foundation in Meethirigala, Sri Lanka, is currently developing videos to promote teaching mindfulness, particularly to young people. Initial indications are that this is very effective. The plan is to make these videos in English, Sinhalese, and other languages.

Ideas can be taken from modern technology in general.

CHAPTER 11

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF CHAPLAINCY AND COUNSELLING FOR YOUTH

Online consultancy and training services deserve consideration for the immediate future.

Co-operating with other religious groups may also be necessary, depending on the social climate.

In temples where Dhamma Schools are conducted on a regular basis the possibility of working together in delivering services would be essential.

Ethnic and historical connections could be a barrier, but these can be overcome through communications and understanding.

There will be no need to have the Dhamma School and the chaplaincy services run separately as time goes on.

APPENDIX 1 - TAKING CONTROL OF THE MIND - CONSTRUCTED CASE STUDIES

Introduction - Control the mind; do not allow the mind to control you

After doing something or saying something we wonder why we behaved the way we did. This happens when one has limited or no control over the mind, and the mind moved somewhere unexpectedly.

In this situation there is no need to get angry and upset, if you keep in mind that this is the nature of the mind.

Try to keep yourself and your mind as two different entities in this discussion. If you think that the mind is a part of you all the time, it will get confusing.

One might wonder whether it is sensible to talk about controlling the mind. Commanded control is not implied here. Control needs to be based on understanding and it must be smooth and soft.

In the Dhammapada, in the chapter on the mind, several stanzas emphasise the need to control the mind. In stanza 35 it is said that it is good to tame the mind.

We can consider a few constructed cases to illustrate this. You may have seen these in actual experience many a time. A lot more cases are available, but with time and space constraints, only a few have been selected.

Nearly all the ideas presented in this presentation are from *Abhidhamma* and *Sutta Dhamma* in the Theravada tradition.

Case (1) - The mind can run very fast and very far, in a short time

If I request you to think of your home right now, how quickly did your mind move? Less than a second? Think of the moon now. The moon is so far away. Yet it took less than a second.

Here we made the decision, and the mind did what we wanted it to do. If the mind is allowed to run around on its own, it would do many rounds like this on its own and without our expectation.

This way we waste our time and mental energy.

When the mind is having meaningless trips like this, we should label it WASTING TIME, and note it. There is no need to curse what happened. All you do is to note what happened and give it a label or name.

Case (2) - The mind creeps into a cave and hides there for too long

Imagine there was a fun party you attended, or you went on an exciting holiday. You will remember it and perhaps keep on daydreaming about it. That experience may keep repeating in your mind. The mind is taking control of you. You can take control of the mind using the same technique of labelling and noting. That way you save time and energy.

Case (3) - The mind runs in a wayward fashion

Allowed to run around freely, the mind tends to run in every direction and not in a purposeful way. This implies waste of time and energy.

For example, a student is trying to solve a maths problem and starts thinking. In a few seconds, the mind could stray on to another topic, and yet another, and

so on and so forth, and the mind will not come to the original problem. This is the mind running wayward.

Again, labelling and noting helps to bring the mind back to the problem. Keep reaction away. There is only noting and naming.

If a similar thing happens again, just remembering the label is enough to bring the mind back, as if you caught a thief just by calling his name.

Case (4) - The mind tries to conduct research on everything

When a Dhamma teacher explains something, the mind has the habit of analysing and researching on the subject using whatever knowledge one has. This often happens to people who think of themselves as intelligent and learned.

This behaviour of the mind prevents or obstructs the hearing of the Dhamma being taught. While researching can help you to develop knowledge and understanding, it can also inhibit your ability to understand and absorb new information. The first task is to hear the Dhamma. The research can come later.

When this happens, know that it is happening and arrest it. The mind can do only one thing at a time. However bright you might be, the mind just cannot do another thing at the very same time. This is evident when we learn *Abhidhamma*.

The same thing can happen when listening to a teacher or lecturer in the school or college.

In a list of ten factors (found in the Dhamma) which can hinder insight meditation, “Craving for research” is in the first five. Educated and intelligent

people are prone to this mental disturbance. So, you need to know it and guard against it.

If consciously directed, this mental feature can also be of great assistance. It has the in-built ability to promote both progress and retardation.

In the present context, the concern is with the probability of retardation.

Case (5) - Getting involved in memories

Here the mind tends to get involved in some experience, or memory. It gets stuck on something and stays on it for a long time. For example, you may have had a strong exchange of words with a friend or parent, and you regret it now. The thought does not go away.

What was done cannot be taken back. Worrying over it endlessly is also foolish. With this understanding, you can decide to let it go.

Getting carried back without a valid purpose is an utterly wasteful mentality. If you wish to reflect on an experience, it must be done after a clear decision is made to enter such a reflection, and even more importantly, a decision is made to end the reflection. One must decide to reflect on a past experience with good reasons, such as for future planning or a clear goal of improving one's discipline and behaviour.

Reviewing and reflection are recommended in Buddhism but getting carried back to a past experience mindlessly is certainly wasteful and could even end up being harmful. It is one of the five hindrances to spiritual progress. It obstructs concentration (*samadhi*).

Case (6) - The mind takes a hard position

At times, the mind becomes too rigid in taking a position or sticking to a view regarding a matter. Such a mental state gets even harder with time. Even though you feel that you need to change your position, the mind refuses to move on, as if to protect its pride.

For example, a person can take the position that it is not worth listening to monks who have not attained enlightenment. Suppose it is you. As time goes on you harden your position and collect evidence for the correctness of your attitude. Even after you realise that it might be foolish, the mind will stick to the old position and refuse to move.

This is probably due to ego. It might also be due to bad *kamma*. Notice that the more ego one has, the possibility of others taking you to be a fool will increase, and you might not be seeing it.

Understanding this, we can decide to change our position and be humble enough to listen to others and acknowledge their views, even if you disagree with them.

Observing the stress caused by sticking to hard positions is also helpful. Another method is to take a middle position. For example, you might say that some monks are quite effective at teaching the Dhamma. Later you could take a normal position.

Case (7) - Incessant frivolous talking

The mind prompts non-stop, frivolous talking. Remember that this can become very annoying to other people. It is the mind that does this; the mouth is merely the main instrument of delivery.

This will become a poor habit as time goes on. Learn to be sensitive to what others say and feel.

Refraining from frivolous speech is a precept in the eight precepts of livelihood. It can prompt you into other forms of poor speech. It can lead to the destruction of one's character.

Understanding this, one can bring the mind under control. Learning to ask questions rather than talking is also a helpful technique.

Case (8) - Worrying over what has already happened

This is somewhat like case (5) discussed earlier.

Time is wasted when the mind starts brooding on something that happened in the past. The brooding can go on for long periods. The technical term for this in the *Abhidhamma* is worrying. Note that worrying in common English is a much broader term, and that meaning is not relevant here.

The mind finds it hard to stay in the present. Then it goes back to a memory, good or bad. Suppose it is a bad experience. Then the mind tries to analyse things and wonder why it happened that way. The exercise has no real purpose to achieve.

Remember that what has happened has already happened. It is impossible to change it. It is better to forget it for now and work it out at a more suitable time, to take corrective action, if possible. Otherwise, it is best to let it go. Do not allow your mind to cling on to it. It is simply foolish. Letting things go is a well-known teaching of the Thai monk Ajahn Chah.

Bring the mind to the present by engaging in some physical work. For example, if you had a bad experience with your partner, you could look for a place to clean, or sweep the floor. A short walk or a job in the garden might also help.

This is one of the hindrances in meditation (*kukkucca*). You cannot practice *samatha* (or calming) well until the hindrances are suspended (though temporarily).

The stress caused by worrying can be very harmful to the mind. When the mind manages to return to normal, learn to appreciate that success, whether full success or even partial success. Be grateful to those who helped in the process.

Case (9) - Nurturing hatred

The mind can pick up dislikes or hatred for slight experiences. This is a bad habit. Firstly, hatred can make the mind very weak. The energy is consumed by the constant dislikes entering the mind.

Once the mind gets entangled in hatred, partly because of the ego, it finds it hard to pull out of it. Sometimes, it needs the intervention of a third party to help the mind to pull out.

A mind caught in hatred can run into other unwholesome mentalities such as jealousy, vengeance, retaliation, and despair.

As hatred is one of the three roots of all unwholesome actions, it is necessary to get the mind out of a hateful state as quickly as possible.

Hatred can be deceptive and hard to spot, as a person full of hatred can pretend that there is no hatred at all. It is commonly mentioned that very few people attend educational sessions on anger-management. They think hatred is normal.

One useful pull-out technique is to focus on the body, or a part of the body. That provides a middle ground for the mind to land on. The practice of body scanning on a regular basis becomes helpful. When the mind comes back to the body, notice the reduction of stress; that reduction must be appreciated.

This type of technique needs to be practiced whenever a similar situation arises.

Case (10) - Unexplained attractions

The mind gets attracted to the opposite sex all too often. Some say that this is quite natural. When someone looks attractive, the mind becomes cloudy. It can see far too many features in the other party that are excellent.

While the mind is clouded, nothing is seen as it really is. Another way of saying this is that the mind chooses the colour of the glass through which to see. If someone points this out, the mind will choose another colour for the glass.

Thinking about the views of others helps the mind to correct itself. Young people need to observe that genuine compassion at one time might lead to attraction later. Attraction could be hiding behind the initial compassion.

There is a different view for married people. Attraction can keep a person disciplined and help keep a marriage continuing, despite occasional brief interferences. There are two sides to the coin. A strong marriage helps to maintain self-discipline.

Case (11) - The mind might lose its natural malleability

Part of a person's ability to progress depends on the ability of the mind to pick up new ideas. New ideas do not come when the mind is stuck in a particular view.

Right view (*samma ditthi*) is an important element in the noble eight-fold path. According to the Dhamma, a strong view is usually a wrong view. We need to be malleable and ductile in the mind. That way we can accommodate a correction and seek progress.

Because of the rarity of noble friends, we tend to become subservient to strong views and hold on to them as if these are our belongings. That is part of the ego. It is wiser to be flexible and to have an open mind.

This is not a simple matter. It seems to be the base upon which our path to enlightenment is established.

If you cannot find many noble friends, never forget that the Buddha is always present as a noble friend through the Dhamma.

Case (12) - The mind dwells on embarrassing situations for too long

This is a special case of going to a past occurrence and getting stuck in it for no real purpose.

Firstly, one must recall that the incident has happened already, and no amount of thinking will erase it away. The best thing is to forget about it and move on to a mental activity which is more productive.

Secondly, the embarrassment was your own ego, and ideas about how you need to present yourself. Embarrassment is a creation of your own mind and not necessarily contributed to by others witnessing the event. "They must be thinking like this" is what was going on in your mind. So, you are concerned about an imagination. It is a subjective assessment. It is worth getting rid of.

Even if others ridicule you, it is still worth noting that even that is a subjective assessment in the mind of others.

If you focus on the present moment, there is no room for this type of thought to arise or continue.

The world is so large and complex that the event you are concerned about is relatively trivial.

Case (13) - The mind tries to always focus on the self, no matter what is around

We have an endless series of ideas and concepts. We have the tendency to feel that these ideas belong to me. The idea of the self is one of them, and indeed a very strong one. Everybody without exception holds on to the idea of the self. Let us examine its consequences.

In life, awareness of the surrounding is important, at least for safety purposes. Suppose you move the mind to think of yourself, how nice you are looking. If you get engulfed in it, you will lose touch with what is happening around you. Then your safety will be lost or compromised.

When you are in an important conversation, you might stop hearing what the other person is saying, partly because you are then thinking of your relative status.

When the other person gives you a business card, you might not see the contents, because your mind gets concerned that the other person is superior to you.

It is hard to open yourself up to others because of your continuing efforts to protect and promote yourself.

Case (14) - The mind continuously and incessantly jumps from one thing to another (like a monkey)

This may happen to some people. It can grow into a problem if allowed to continue. It can also happen to many people in certain situations.

Decision-making is a recognised ability of the mind, but some people do not use that ability often enough, and particularly when problems arise. To use this ability, one needs to be well-informed and trained.

When a proper decision is required, if a person fails to make one, the mind will take you everywhere possible. A monkey cannot stay in one place and will jump somewhere. The mind that is not trained will always need to jump somewhere. Hence training of the mind can alleviate the problem.

Training may also lead to planning. Planning itself will support the making of decisions. It can reduce the need for meaningless jumps.

The purpose of life needs to be determined. That too requires many decisions.

Case (15) - The mind derives comfort by dwelling on unwholesome things

The mind is usually rooted in unwholesome factors. In addition, these experiences tend to linger on for a long time. A reason may be that these are pleasant and provide a level of temporary pleasure.

Unwholesome experiences derive strength from greed, hatred, and delusion, and are temporarily pleasant to experience. Later they can lead to grief because of *kamma*.

One may have enjoyed a party serving intoxicants. When you remember that experience, it could be pleasant. You can continue to recall that memory and notice how pleasant it is.

Like other things in the past, this is only a memory. At least after some time, this needs to be forgotten. Continued enjoyment implies that you must look for repetitions. That might not be beneficial.

Case (16) - The mind is embroiled in confusion most of the time

When a problem arises, when a decision must be made, people can experience the inability to move towards a decision. It may be partly because of prevailing confusion in the mind. In confusion, you need help and advice.

This is a time to think again from fundamentals. While concentrating on the definition of the problem, the confusion could subside.

The confusion may have arisen because you have muddled up facts and re-thinking might help to sort out facts. While sorting out facts, it is best to keep your opinions away.

If you still have difficulty in getting rid of the confusion, it will help to identify just the significant issues and leave aside the trivial ones. As you reduce the number of issues, the confusion could get resolved.

Case (17) - The mind is tired and wants to sleep, after running around too much

This might happen after a series of heavy mental activities are carried out within a short period. It can also happen when some of those activities are not to a person's taste or range of abilities.

When the mind gets tired, the body seeks a break for replenishment of energy.

This is unlikely to happen when one is engaged in some unwholesome activity. It is in the nature of things that unwholesome engagements are temporarily enjoyable. Good examples are parties in which drinking or wasteful chatter is taking place. In such situations, tiredness or sleepiness may not arise. Therefore, youth and young adults find it easy to engage in late night partying without feeling mentally or physically tired. However, the same people, if asked to meditate into the night, may find it difficult to stay awake after a short while.

Whilst engaged in a wholesome activity, such as listening to a religious chanting or a sermon, or in meditation, sloth and torpor is more likely to occur.

What are the possible solutions? In an extreme case, the best thing is to forget everything and have a good rest or sleep.

Short of that, a person can have a glass of cool water, look at the open sky, do a short walk among the trees, or engage in mild exercise. For meditators, more actions are recommended in commentaries and suggested by meditation teachers.

If laziness is a perennial problem, it is good to reflect on the shortness of life.

Case (18) - The eyes try to see what is here but the mind dwells on what is there

This a common experience. Here the person is not living in the present moment.

The general solution is to develop mindfulness (or *sati*). Alternatively, one can observe the surroundings more carefully and with interest. Are you aware of where you are currently, what you are about, what you are doing, what time of the day it is, who is around you, and does your behaviour suit the social surrounding?

In short, are your five physical senses active? If they are active, the mind sense has little time left for wandering around. That implies that your mind is not out of control.

In *Abhidhamma* we are taught that the mind can do only one thing at one time. If you are supposed to see something, you cannot think of another thing at the same time. You will fail to do either of the two tasks. It makes sense to put the mind on one object at one time.

Finally, a person who wishes to get rid of this tendency must seek an opportunity to learn and practise mindfulness (*sati*) meditation.

Case (19) - The mind tries to do too many things at the same time

Life is frightening for some people because they always see a mountain of things to be done at any given moment. Something must be wrong. There are others who carry huge responsibilities but seem to be unruffled and light-hearted. What is the secret?

The common-sense approach would be to prioritise and select only a few activities to be carried out. Otherwise, a person cannot continue or progress. In the discourse on *Metta* (loving-kindness) it says one needs to have only minimal duties. That is necessary for one who is trying to follow the spiritual path.

What about the path to worldly happiness? Again, some think that to succeed in the job or in business, one must carry a huge load of work. That is not true. If you keep good relations, if you have no ulterior motives, and if you are genuinely committed to duty, progress will be smooth, and obligations will not pile up in the workplace. One needs to review workload now and then.

If there is something unwholesome in your mind, that must be identified and cleared.

Similar considerations apply in the domestic scene.

Having too many things to do is not natural. One might be collecting too many jobs to do for hidden reasons. It might be that you need more training in management, particularly the ability to delegate work to manage the apparent workload.

Were you trying to impress the boss or somebody else? Do you tend to waste time in the office on lower priority activities or engaging in frivolous talk with colleagues? These might be some of the reasons why work has piled up.

Case (20) - The mind enjoys having a pipedream

This is not uncommon. The question is whether one is aware that a pipe dream is going on. If one is not aware, then the problem is serious. If one is aware, it would be possible to take control of it.

This problem arises due to a natural reason, namely that the mind is unable to stay in the present moment. Hence it tries to live in the future. Imagine something, even an absurd thing, and then let your mind enjoy the imagined thing. It will keep going. It is easy to do.

The tendency to dream grows because we have unfulfilled desires. When you come to understand that we can procure only a limited number of things, the dreaming will automatically reduce.

This does not mean that planning is not good. Planning is a deliberate activity, whereas in daydreaming, the mind is pushing you this way or that way, resulting in wasted time and mental energy.

APPENDIX 2 - ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES TO PROMOTE ANALYSIS OF THE DHAMMA APPLICABLE IN REAL SITUATIONS

Case study (1)

Close to an examination, three students in a class of twenty would huddle in a corner and discuss possible questions. When a fourth student wanted to join them, it was said that they were having a private chat.

Did they break the fourth precept?

Did they have Metta (loving kindness)?

Case study (2)

A new university student got caught in a rag for newcomers. He was asked to recite a stanza from the *Dhammapada*. He said he knew a good many but refused to recite. Much worse was experienced later.

How did the seniors behave?

What was the principle the fresher forgot to apply?

Case study (3)

A student of mathematics was fond of geometry theorems, and he kept cramming them one after the other, but when he sat an examination, he found it hard to solve any of the problems. He was disappointed.

What is the Dhamma teaching that he was not using?

What was the Dhamma teaching he was trying to apply?

Case study (4)

A medical student who had qualified as a doctor did not go into practice. She started to study politics right from the beginning.

What is the Dhamma factor that was missing?

What factor was working for so many years?

Case study (5)

A biology student in school was asked by the father to change over to the engineering stream and she was a dismal failure.

What Dhamma factors had the father lost sight of?

Case study (6)

A mother who was successful in netball nearly forced the daughter to follow her and play netball. The girl was keen to learn football. Finally, she did not achieve any useful result.

What Dhamma factor did the mother fail to recognise?

How would you describe the feelings of the girl at the initial stage and later stages?

Case study (7)

A student of chemistry tried to memorise every detail of an element. It was difficult and time consuming. She was disgusted with herself for her perceived lack of ability.

What Dhamma factors came into play?

How would you describe what was going through her mind at the end?

Case study (8)

A person who was keen to practice breathing meditation tried his best to locate the exact point at which the air touched the nostril area. He never succeeded.

What is your advice to him?

What are the mental factors (*cetasika*) that get developed through breathing meditation?

Case study (9)

I remember a friend who was talking all the time and rushing all the time as he was so busy. I wondered why he was so busy and why he was talking so much.

What Dhamma factors has he overlooked?

Case study (10)

My uncle was a man with a big body, he had a big stomach, and he was fond of eating. He was also taking medicine for diabetes.

What is going wrong, and what Dhamma factor should he have learnt?

Case study (11)

A friend who was shy to participate in devotional activities in the temple told me that he was more interested in the Dhamma, and that these practices are not worth the effort.

What benefits is he losing?

How does a devotional practice help a Buddhist?

Case study (12)

A lady once told me that she was collecting all the Dhamma lessons so that she could practise effectively to attain enlightenment.

Is this a wise approach in practising Buddhism?

Will she ever begin to practice?

How should she correct her method?

Case study (13)

A person who had no time to help in any work in the temple believed that he needs all his time to practise meditation.

Is there something wanting in his attitude?

Can meditation stand alone?

What is missing in such practice?

Case study (14)

A student in the next house did extremely well in an examination. In the house we were living in there was a student who performed poorly.

What sort of feelings are people in either house experiencing?

According to the Dhamma what should they be experiencing?

Case study (15)

In the house near the junction, we heard laughter and music for a long time. Later we heard that a person in that house had won a sweep ticket and that is what they were celebrating.

What would you think about the celebration?

What aspects of the Dhamma are relevant in a case like this?

APPENDIX 3 - QUESTIONS ON BUDDHISM AND SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1 Do Buddhists believe in Almighty God?

No. Buddhists do not believe in an almighty god.

2 If you do not believe in God, then how do you have such an ordered world?

Buddhism agrees that the universe has some order. That order is attributed to the operation of a system of natural laws. The main laws are listed below:

- a. Physical norm (e.g. physics, chemistry, mathematics etc.)
- b. Biological norm (e.g. botany, zoology, genetics etc.)
- c. Astronomy (e.g. planets, seasons, eclipses etc.)
- d. Super normal norm (e.g. miracles performed by the Buddha, unusual acts and occurrences not explained by the sciences that we know of, etc.)
- e. Mind norm (e.g. Western psychology, Buddhist psychology etc.)
- f. Causation norm (e.g. *Karma*, action and result, dependent origination etc.)

3 How do you explain creation when you do not believe in God?

For a Buddhist what is called original creation is not relevant. What is important is current and continuous creation. You create your world of tomorrow, pretty much based on what you do today. Look at the six norms. The last two afford you an opportunity to create your world all the time. Perhaps you could do less in relation to the first four norms. Instead, take control of what you can control, which are the last two norms above.

4 How do you explain pain and suffering?

All of it is due to the operation of the six norms. At least in part, you must take responsibility, as norms 5 and 6 are under your control. Suffering could be due to what you are doing now or could be the result of your past actions. Pain and pleasure arise when your senses contact the environment. Pain is caused mostly by your own unwholesome mental states. Pain can be overcome developing your mind.

5 In this world of science what is the relevance of an old religion like Buddhism?

Science deals with matter and energy. Only in the last 100 years it has even tried to deal with the mind. What is more important, the mind or matter? Think. Even regarding matter and energy, science is still developing. Quantum science is now challenging the very basis of modern science. Science stands on shaky ground, but it is bound to develop.

Without any instruments at all the Buddha was able to see that matter and energy are two forms of the same thing. It was as recently as 1930 that modern science realized the truth of that assertion of the Buddha. Regarding the mind, western psychology is still looking for a strong theoretical foundation, although its clinical aspects are developed. All in all, if the Buddha was an epitome of super-knowledge, the scientist is more akin to a crawling baby. But it is growing up. There is simply no comparison now.

Despite all the discoveries and scientific advancement happening now and likely to happen in the future, these are unable to solve the problem which the Buddha did, that being how to eliminate suffering and dissatisfaction experienced by the mind due to the arising of unwholesome mental states. Therefore, the path shown by the Buddha to achieve this outcome is relevant now and well into the future.

6 Are you born as a Buddhist, or can one be converted to Buddhism?

A Buddhist by birth means a person born to Buddhist parents. That does not necessarily mean that such a person is a practising Buddhist. In the same way you can belong to another religion, yet you could be practising teachings of the Buddha. To that extent, you will be acknowledged as a Buddhist. The label 'Buddhist' is meaningless. What truly matters is how you think, speak and act.

According to Buddhism, most labels (such as religion, race, country etc.) are irrelevant for most purposes and they cause more harm than good. Not so strangely, converting and proselytizing are strange to Buddhism. The ability of a human being to make his own decisions is respected.

What right do I have to say that only I am right and that you are wrong? In fact, people who make this type of statement are acting extremely foolishly most of the time. Truly wise people do not brag about their wisdom. In very practical terms, just look at the turmoil in the world today. What is the main cause? Some people think that only they are right and want to impose their views and beliefs on others. When they fail, hurting and killing is the result. Can that be part of any religion?

7 Are all religions right or is it that only Buddhism is right?

There are useful teachings in all religions. It is disrespectful to pass judgment on other religions. Millions of people follow some of these religions. We need to respect their faith. However, we should be able to discuss matters in a civilized manner. Where Buddhism is concerned, you are invited to consider, question, analyse and most importantly, practise its teachings. If your experience is that these teachings are useful and bring benefit to you and others, then you learn more and practice more. It is as simple as that.

8 How has the Sangha adapted to the contemporary Australian life?

In some cases, the Sangha haven't had to adapt, particularly when they are well supported by ethnic groups such as the Thai, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Sri Lankan communities. However, their impact tends to remain limited to their ethnic community. In some instances, the support is given to monasteries belonging to well-known lineages. The major support is given by ethnic communities rather than by the wider Australian communities. There are a few other monasteries supported by overseas wealth and these are usually Chinese or are supported from Taiwan and Singapore. In any instance, when monastics are well supported, they can lead a more traditional monastic life.

9 The first precept is not to kill living beings. So does this mean Buddhists are vegetarians?

Vegetarianism is encouraged, and some temples follow it. The reasoning is that if one stops consuming the meat of animals killed specifically for consumption by humans, then by becoming a vegetarian, one can indirectly contribute to the reduction in the killing of animals and the pain and suffering caused.

10 How important is the rule of not killing? Why is it important?

It is very important. Firstly, you do not like to get killed. Other beings would feel the same way. Secondly, killing is an unwholesome action and it brings unbearable results to the doer. Thirdly, the intention to kill is borne out of a combination of the three unwholesome roots of anger, delusion, and greed. Such intentions move one away from the Right Understanding and Right Thought described in the noble eight-fold path, thus moving one away from the path of spiritual development.

11 Why is meditation such an important aspect of Buddhism?

Buddhist practice has three key elements, generosity, morality, and mind development. Meditation is the key to mind development. In fact, generosity and morality take you up the spiritual ladder. Meditation is the ultimate practice in Buddhism to liberate the mind.

12 Is there a specific time and place that is best for the process of meditation to reach a state of enlightenment?

To reach enlightenment the level of meditation must be very high. For that a quiet place such as a thicket, foot of a tree, an environment devoid of activities which can distract the mind is certainly helpful at the beginning. A time of relative relaxation is needed to help train the mind. The body must be settled at that time, just nourished and in reasonable health. After ardent practice, any time and any place are conducive to achieving enlightenment. But for beginners, the above conditions are worthy of attention.

13 How does meditation help devotees gain a state of enlightenment?

Enlightenment is the awakening of true wisdom. Usually, our wisdom is clouded with our thoughts of ignorance, craving and hatred. Such thoughts can be cleared only by meditation. The act of calming the mind helps it to become focused and energised, rather than being constantly embroiled in a blur of worldly mental activity. A concentrated mind is then able to gain insight into the true nature of mind and matter, which ultimately liberates the mind from all unwholesome actions. Mindfulness is the key factor.

14 What values and beliefs are involved with meditation?

Meditation aims at cleansing the mind in stages. That is its greatest value. Cleansing the body is possible but is subsidiary. Buddhist meditation does not aim at gaining worldly advantages or super-human powers, such as performing

miracles. These may be consequent results, but no value is attached to them. The only belief attached to meditation is to accept tentatively that it is the ultimate way to enlightenment. For this, one needs to learn and practise the essentials of the Buddha's teaching (Dhamma). That knowledge brings meditation into true focus. Through practice itself the person gains conviction about the path. As one progresses along this path, there is no belief necessary. It becomes experiential conviction rather than merely devotional or blind belief.

15 How are these values and beliefs carried out in Australia?

The Australian scene is no different from that of other countries. Dhamma is imparted through temples by the monks and nuns. They also teach the techniques of meditation. The temples and more especially, the forest monasteries, provide the proper places for learning and practice. They also provide group help to practitioners of meditation via discussions of experiences.

16 What are the key beliefs in Buddhism?

The following is a sample of key ideas taught in Buddhism. It is not quite correct to call them beliefs. These basic tenets are embodied as the Four Noble Truths (1) Living beings experience a state of dissatisfaction in life. (2) There is a cause for this dissatisfaction – craving (*tanha*). (3) An end to this dissatisfaction is possible (Enlightenment). (4) There is a way (the middle path) to reach that end by following the Noble Eight-Fold Path. The Buddha achieved the result on his own and discovered the Way.

17 Is Buddhism a religion or a philosophy?

It depends on what you mean by these words. In a way it is neither of these. Buddhism is a way of living and practice to gain happiness in this world and thereafter. It is also a way of reaching absolute wisdom (enlightenment), by dispelling ignorance and all unwholesome activity from the mind.

18 Are Buddhists who do not follow the commands ex-communicated?

There is no such concept in Buddhism. There are no commands but recommendations to follow to free the mind from dissatisfaction and suffering. If you follow the recommended path and practise, you derive good results. The Buddha points us in the direction of the beneficial path. It is up to everyone to make a choice to follow that path and understand the consequence of that choice. One is entirely responsible for one's actions and its results.

19 Is Buddha a god or a human being?

Neither. He was born as a human being. Once he became a Buddha, he belongs to the class called Buddhas.

APPENDIX 4 - KEEPING RECORDS OF DHAMMA LEARNT

The Dhamma is precious. It is worth keeping usable records of Dhamma teachings. From whatever sources you learn, it is worth maintaining your own records. Keeping personal notes, references to sections in useful books and keeping references to electronic recordings can be beneficial. Referring to such records after a period of practice can help shed new light (wisdom) on those old notes and recordings.

The Dhamma is vast, and some say that a whole lifetime is not long enough to read and understand the whole of the teaching. Monks and nuns being full-time practitioners of the teaching might have studied a great part of the Dhamma. Therefore, lay persons need to listen when they teach.

A Dhamma record maintained by an individual needs to be well organised. If a summary is made on paper it needs to be filed in a retrievable manner. The Queensland Sangha Association Inc has created a simple scheme to help in this task. Readers may ask for a copy of the scheme. It covers hundreds of topics and is organised to exhibit the path to enlightenment. The user can expand the scheme on computer and keep it as your own.

Whenever you come across a new topic, you can fit it into the scheme. This way you can help others or help yourself to refer to what you have collected whenever the need arises.

In addition, a section of the Dhamma records can include great sayings you come across, references to useful websites, references to commentaries and modern books.

It is also recommended that you develop a subject index which will help you to retrieve any part of the record you need now.

You might need to read the original scriptures from a good website. Your records need to have names of discourses, and the sections of the scriptures these are in so that you can retrieve them easily.

A few references to websites are given here:

tripitaka.lk

metta.lk

accesstoinsight.org

Buddhanet.net

www.suttacentral.net

On the internet, information in the Wikipedia is useful as a first reference. There are many researchers around the world who publish their findings and there are discussions among researchers going on all the time.

When you are following the training course in Buddhist Chaplaincy or counselling for Youth, it is recommended that you keep a record of what you learn, mentioning the chapter or appendix number and the section number. Then you can ask a chaplain or counsellor to cover a section or topic that interests you.

APPENDIX 5 - VIPASSANA PACKAGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN

The idea of teaching and practising *Vipassana* (insight) meditation is to ensure that children at this age must be given the opportunity to lead a healthy and useful life, live in harmony with the family and associates, and grow up as valuable citizens. They need to learn how to keep out of trouble and lead their lives safely in a manner that benefits the individual, the communities, societies, and nations they live in, and as global citizens.

Vipassana is based on observation, experiments, and interpreting results. It is akin to modern science in some ways. Science helps in the growth of wisdom in certain ways by avoiding individual beliefs and opinions, superstition, or mere conjecture. Science employs techniques such as experimentation and observation to understand phenomena and the myriad of cause-and-effect relationships which give rise to the physical phenomena we observe. It helps unearth the natural norms and laws that govern the various aspects of our physical existence.

Vipassana helps in the growth of total wisdom by encompassing both the mental and physical aspects of beings. It has been tested and tried before by no less a person than the Buddha himself, other Arahants, and the *Maha Sangha*. Observation of the body is the key to developing the mind. When developed, *Vipassana* enables a child to see things as they are, not as they appear to be (clouded by our perceptions and ignorance of reality). It enables the formation of excellent habits, which they can carry through to adulthood.

The purpose of this package is to put together a composite program which can be used to help students in middle to high school (say age 12 to 18) to gain mastery over *Vipassana* (insight) meditation sufficient to deal with the early experience of adolescence.

While a chaplain can conduct various programs to help in this way on a continual basis, a package such as this is helpful in putting together the practical learning of the Dhamma into a personal attainment complete within itself. Every child must be encouraged to complete a package like this at intervals to suit the temples or other facilities being used. It is good if they can afford the time to go through a package several times. Through a package, experience and learning gained over a period can be consolidated.

A package such as this can also be conducted within residential facilities if available. Otherwise, a day can be set apart (like precepts days in temples) during which the package can be delivered.

This package will consist of the following parts:

STAGE 1

- 1 Observing a set of precepts
- 2 Sitting as a group in total silence
- 3 Feeling the in and out breaths, the mind coming to the body
- 4 Noticing that one breath is shorter than another
- 5 Noticing the temperature difference between in-breaths and out-breaths
- 6 Noticing times of smooth breathing and rough breathing
- 7 Noticing that there are disturbances and distractions
- 8 Noticing pain in the back, knees, and the buttocks
- 9 Noticing other sensations such as feeling warm or cold, hunger or boredom

STAGE 2

- 10 Observing any hatred for the exercise

- 11 Observing the feeling of sleepiness
- 12 Recording each thought that comes to your mind
- 13 Marking the thoughts of greed, hatred, and foolishness with symbols
- 14 Identifying thoughts regarding past experiences
- 15 Identifying thoughts of the future
- 16 Identifying doubts that come to the mind
- 17 Level of confidence in the process followed

At intervals, a discussion with the group is conducted about the experience. The actions suggested are drawn from the great discourse on the establishment of mindfulness.

The discussions must not unduly break the progress of the meditation. Break times for discussion must be wisely chosen.

It is not necessary to devote equal lengths of time for every action. The chaplain can use discretion in this matter.

The chaplain needs to periodically check with parents whether the package has been beneficial and collect information on actual progress of every child.

Participants must be encouraged to keep records of their own progress and get further advice from the chaplain.

A report card as used in schools would be very useful. It will help in formalising results to the extent that it can help students visualise and focus on areas of improvement. Conversely, it can help students enhance the mental state of joy and improve their confidence in what they are already able to achieve.

APPENDIX 6 - VIPASSANA PACKAGE FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

The idea of teaching and practising *Vipassana* (insight) meditation is to ensure that people at this age must be given the opportunity to lead a healthy and useful life, live in harmony with the family and associates, and grow up as valuable citizens. They need to learn how to keep out of trouble and lead their lives safely in a manner that benefits the individual, the communities, societies, and nations they live in, and as global citizens.

Vipassana is based on observation, experiments, and interpreting results. It is akin to modern science in some ways. Science helps in the growth of wisdom in certain ways by avoiding individual beliefs and opinions, superstition, or mere conjecture. Science employs techniques such as experimentation and observation to understand phenomena and the myriad of cause-and-effect relationships which give rise to the physical phenomena we observe. It helps unearth the natural norms and laws that govern the various aspects of our physical existence.

A young adult will be equipped to go for a job or take an active role in a family or other business, if the package has been effectively completed. Making friends with the opposite sex will become harmless or natural. It will also lead into a marriage or other harmonious living arrangements smoothly. After marriage, an inter-dependent partnership will be established, for mutual benefit, understanding and lasting happiness. The bond of marriage will be sustained as a welcome precept.

The purpose of this package is to put together a composite program which can be used to help senior students in high school (say age 15 to 18) to gain mastery over *Vipassana* (insight) meditation sufficient to deal with the early experience of youth and young adults.

While a chaplain can conduct various programs to help in this way on a continual basis, a package such as this is helpful in putting together the practical learning of the Dhamma into a personal attainment complete within itself. Every child must be encouraged to complete a package like this at intervals to suit the temple or other facility being used. It is good if they can afford the time to go through a package several times. Through a package, experience and learning gained over a period can be consolidated.

A package such as this can also be conducted within residential facilities if available. Otherwise, a day can be set apart (such as precepts days in temples) during which the package can be delivered.

This package will consist of the following parts:

STAGE 1

- 1 Observing a set of precepts
- 2 Conducting or participating in religious rituals such as making offerings to the Buddha, alms-givings and chanting of scriptures
- 3 Sitting as a group in total silence, feeling peaceful
- 4 Feeling the in and out breaths, the mind coming to the body
- 5 Noticing that one breath is shorter than another
- 6 Noticing the temperature difference between in-breaths and out-breaths
- 7 Noticing times of smooth breathing and rough breathing, and the connection between states of mind
- 8 Noticing that there are disturbances and distractions, both in the mind and in the environment, allowing them to pass as a technique
- 9 Noticing pain in the back, knees, and the buttocks; noticing the urge to suspend the meditation, and letting such urges go

- 10 Noticing other sensations like feeling warm or cold, hunger and boredom, and letting them go

STAGE 2

- 11 Observing any hatred for the exercise
- 12 Observing the feeling of tiredness, boredom, or sleepiness
- 13 Recording each thought that came to your mind
- 14 Marking the thoughts of greed, hatred, and delusion with symbols
- 15 Identifying thoughts regarding past experiences
- 16 Identifying thoughts of the future
- 17 Identifying doubts that came to the mind
- 18 Level of confidence in the process followed
- 19 Level of confidence in the teacher
- 20 Level of confidence in yourself

At intervals, a discussion with the group is conducted about the experience. The actions suggested are drawn from the great discourse on the establishment of mindfulness.

The discussions must not unduly break the progress of the meditation, and break times for discussion must be wisely chosen.

It is not necessary to devote equal lengths of time for every action. The chaplain can use discretion in this matter. Attention must be paid to the average age of the current group. Choice of examples needs to suit the group.

The chaplain needs to periodically check with parents whether the package has been beneficial and collect information on actual progress of every young person.

Participants must be encouraged to keep records of their own progress and get further advice from the chaplain.

A report card as used in schools would be very useful. It will help in formalising results to the extent that it can help students visualise and focus on areas of improvement. Conversely, it can help students enhance the mental state of joy and improve their confidence in what they are already able to achieve.

APPENDIX 7 - *METTA* (LOVING-KINDNESS) MEDITATION PACKAGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN

The idea of teaching *metta* meditation for high school children arises from the social need of peace in the community and peace of mind of the individual. Lack of peace arises in the mind of individuals, and it grows into a social malaise.

One of the great teachings of the Buddha is the practice of *metta* as a spiritual experience, leading up to the third stage of enlightenment (*Anagami* in the Theravada tradition) and leading up to a birth in the *Brahma* (higher celestial) world.

The aim of this package is simpler than that. It is to promote peace in one's mind, peace in society, and peace among nations. It is a reduced version of *metta* meditation, adjusted to the needs of young people in this age group. Some people have minds that are hard, like rock and concrete, and unable to relate to others. For such minds to grow, it is necessary to render them soft and malleable. *Metta* meditation facilitates such wholesome growth of the mind.

While a chaplain can conduct various programs to help in this way on a continual basis, a package such as this is helpful in putting together the practical learning of the Dhamma into a personal attainment complete within itself. Every child must be encouraged to complete a package like this at intervals to suit the temple or other facility being used. It is good if they can afford the time to go through a package several times. Through a package, experience and learning gained over a period can be consolidated.

A package such as this can also be conducted within residential facilities if available. Otherwise, a day can be set apart (such as precepts days in temples) during which the package can be delivered.

This package will consist of the following parts, all experienced through contemplations or focussed but soft thinking:

STAGE 1

- 1 Observing a set of precepts
- 2 Participating in religious rituals such as making offerings to the Buddha, almsgiving and chanting of scriptures
- 3 Think of your mother who looks after you. Wish her as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy
 - May you be peaceful
 - May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation
- 4 Think of your father who looks after you. Wish him as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy
 - May you be peaceful
 - May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation
- 5 Think of your brother who may be with you for your lifetime. Wish him as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy
 - May you be peaceful
 - May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation
- 6 Think of your sister who may be with you for your lifetime. Wish her as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy

May you be peaceful

May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation

- 7 Think of your teacher who helps with discipline, knowledge, and wisdom. Wish him or her as follows:

May you be well

May you be happy

May you be peaceful

May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation

- 8 Think of every person, one by one, whom you know. Wish him or her as follows:

May you be well

May you be happy

May you be peaceful

May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation

Think of yourself as a happy, peaceful person, in good health, and free from pain, fear and agitation. Feel happy about yourself.

Extend that feeling to all others in the world without exceptions.

At intervals, a discussion with the group is conducted about the experience. The actions suggested are drawn from the discourse on loving-kindness (*Karaniya Metta Sutta*).

The discussions must not unduly break the progress of the meditation and break times for discussion must be wisely chosen.

The chaplain needs to periodically check with parents whether the package has been beneficial and collect information on actual progress of every child.

Participants must be encouraged to keep records of their own progress and get further advice from the chaplain.

A report card as used in schools would be very useful. It will help in formalising results to the extent that it can help students visualise and focus on areas of improvement. Conversely, it can help students enhance the mental state of joy, and improve their confidence in what they are already able to achieve

APPENDIX 8 - *METTA* (LOVING-KINDNESS) MEDITATION PACKAGE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The idea of teaching *metta* meditation for young adults arises from the social need of successful relationships and happy marriages, peace in the young family, opportunity for progress despite minor differences. Thus, it will also promote harmony in the community. Further it will ensure the prevention of domestic violence and crime. Children can then grow up in a happy environment, which will lead to further benefits for future generations.

One of the great teachings of the Buddha is the practice of *metta* as a spiritual experience, leading up to the third stage of enlightenment (*Anagami* in the Theravada tradition) and leading up to a birth in the *Brahma* (higher celestial) world.

The aim of this package is simpler than that. It is to promote peace in one's family and peace in society. It is a reduced version of *meta* meditation, adjusted for the needs of young adults. Some people have minds that are hard like rock and concrete, and unable to relate to others. Soft relationships need to be nurtured within the family. *Metta* meditation facilitates such wholesome growth of the mind.

While a chaplain can conduct various programs to help in this way on a continual basis, a package such as this is helpful in putting together the practical learning of the Dhamma, most useful in one's current experience. Every young adult must be encouraged to complete a package like this at intervals to suit the temple or other facilities being used. It is good if they can afford the time to go through a package several times. Ideally for married couples, both people need to follow the programs together. Through a package, experience and learning gained over a period can be consolidated.

It is believed that Siddhartha and Yasodhara were spouses in 500 previous births. That helped each other to progress spiritually. So can be a married couple living today.

A package such as this can also be conducted within residential facilities if available. Otherwise, a day can be set apart (such as precepts days in temples) during which the package can be delivered.

This package will consist of the following parts, all experienced through contemplations or focussed, light and soft thinking:

STAGE 1

- 1 Observing a set of precepts
- 2 Conducting or organising religious rituals such as making offerings to the Buddha, almsgiving, teaching the Dhamma, listening to Dhamma teachings, Dhamma discussions in person or on the internet and chanting of scriptures
- 3 Think of your mother who looks after you. Wish her as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy
 - May you be peaceful
 - May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation
- 4 Think of your father who looks after you. Wish him as follows:
 - May you be well
 - May you be happy
 - May you be peaceful
 - May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation

5 Think of your spouse who looks after you and who may be with you for your lifetime. Wish your spouse as follows:

May you be well

May you be happy

May you be peaceful

May you be free from pain, worry, fear and agitation

I know that you and I both have weaknesses and imperfections

Yet I wish you well

We need each other when we are sick

We need each other when the children are sick

We need each other when we lose our jobs

We need each other when we get into debt

Others need us to stay together

Your good qualities I admire

I understand your weaknesses, as I understand mine

I will be compassionate to you in your weaknesses

Feel free to add to these contemplations to suit the needs of an individual or group.

Think of yourself as a happy, peaceful person, in good health, and free from pain, fear and agitation. Feel happy about yourself.

Extend that feeling to all others in the world without exceptions.

At intervals, a discussion with the group is conducted about the experience. The actions suggested are drawn from the discourse on loving-kindness (*Karaniya Metta Sutta*).

Between steps, stay silent for a minute in contemplation. The discussions must not unduly break the progress of the meditation, and break times for discussion must be wisely chosen.

The chaplain needs to periodically check with married couples and parents as to whether the package has been beneficial and collect information on actual progress of everyone.

Participants must be encouraged to keep records of their own progress and get further advice from the chaplain.

APPENDIX 9 - IMPLIED SOCIAL CONTRACTS IN MARRIAGE - PACKAGE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Marriage is a legal commitment where one spouse accepts the other as the partner for life. Although certain promises are made at a wedding ceremony, there are many social contracts between a married couple that need to be understood, and observed throughout the marriage, hopefully for a lifetime.

The chaplain needs to remind young couples about these obligations, and the beneficial aspects of the observance of these obligations. Some such obligations are set out below, although the list is endless. It can be customised.

The aim of this package is to promote the smooth progress of a marriage relationship. It also promotes continuing an established marriage, despite obstacles and occasional unbearable experiences.

It is believed that Siddhartha and Yasodhara were spouses in 500 previous births. That helped each other to progress spiritually. So can be a married couple living today. It is not about just existing, but about a vibrant, interesting, and productive togetherness.

A package such as this can also be conducted within residential facilities if available. Otherwise, a day can be set apart (such as precepts days in temples) during which the package can be delivered.

This standard package of social contracts within a marriage is suggested as a working basis. The chaplain and the spouses together can expand and modify these considerations.

- 1 No one is perfect; this applies to each of the spouses.

- 2 The relationship is not for me to have a good time but to practise and give attention to making the other party happy and satisfied. A feeling of kindness and compassion for the other party is paramount.
- 3 In Buddhist culture, the roles of husband and wife are demarcated in the *Sigalovada Sutta*. The husband needs to look after the needs of the wife and give gifts to her in admiration.
- 4 When harsh words happen to be used in a bad situation, a spouse must feel sorry and say sorry to the other. Accept that the mistake was made due to a weakness of the offending spouse.
- 5 If you have lied to your spouse, learn to admit that, and discuss with your spouse how a similar situation will not arise again.
- 6 In social mixing, one spouse might feel an attraction to another person but there is no need to start an argument about it. Talk softly and settle any misunderstanding.
- 7 Wasting money is a common accusation made against a spouse. One solution is to agree on the way incomes are held in banks, and expenses are paid out of the accounts, ensuring that household expenses are met reasonably by both spouses, while each can keep an agreed amount for personal use.

One spouse might be a squanderer, and the other stingy. Such facts need to be acknowledged and worked around.

It is not sensible for one spouse to dictate to the other in matters relating to finances. Open discussion, negotiation and coming to an amicable agreement regarding finances are very important.
- 8 Never have arguments in the presence of children, even when they are quite small. Children may feel fearful and sad in such circumstances.
- 9 Never use a child for your advantage.
- 10 Always show admiration of your spouse for his or her capabilities. Everyone likes to be admired.
- 11 Never look down on the spouse for any reason or make derogatory comments in public or private.

- 12 Never dislike or hate the spouse for a fault but try softly to communicate and educate.
- 13 The level of intelligence might not match between spouses. That should be understood as a part of nature but must not be emphasised by the stronger spouse.
- 14 Some spouses though good inside, might not be able to articulate well.
- 15 In a marriage think of the future well-being of the children
- 16 In many marriages the mother-in-law or the father-in-law might be creating problems. They belong to an earlier generation and have different ideas. King Suppabuddha, Yasodhara's father always obstructed Siddhartha. Even a *Bodhisatta* could not escape this calamity. If this happens to you, learn how to get around it. Never try to teach a lesson to them.
- 17 If a mother-in-law has problems with the daughter-in-law, use your wisdom to deal with it. This will never be eliminated in this world.
- 18 Women carrying big dowries tend to look down on their husbands as poor people. Husbands need to appreciate the wealth of the family, and show appreciation of that, for the sake of children. This can be a problem in Asian and sub-continental families.
- 19 In Asian countries political power can be very imposing. Never forget that these things are temporary.
- 20 In the sub-continental countries (e.g. India and Sri Lanka), tribal superiorities are often valued. Remember the Buddha's teaching:
One is not a *brahmin* (high caste) by birth
One is not lowly by birth
One is superior owing to actions only
One is inferior due to actions only

Tribal feelings are an anachronism. Never pay heed to these things. Admire a person for his or her thoughts, words, and actions only.

APPENDIX 10 - QUALIFYING COURSE FOR BUDDHIST YOUTH COUNSELLORS

Who needs to attend this course?

Dhamma Teachers including monks, nuns and lay persons and others who intend to be Dhamma teachers soon. Parents of children who intend to guide children will also be eligible.

Course purpose and process

The purpose of this course is to train intending Buddhist Youth Counsellors, including monks, nuns, and lay persons. They get trained in techniques to impart practical knowledge of the application of the Buddha Dhamma in day to life to young persons in two age groups, namely high school children and young adults. Parents need to be part of the process.

It is expected that trainees will equip themselves to guide youth to achieve mundane happiness, and at the same time, set themselves on a spiritual path advocated by the Buddha.

Youth so trained will be assessed but will not be required to pass formal examinations.

The initial batches of trainees will become the master-trainers to train others for the future.

Course duration

The total duration is envisaged to be six hours and can be on one day or over several days as convenient to the group and as suitable to the temple hosting the course.

Course content

SESSION -A

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | The needs of the developing child | 15 min. |
| 2 | The role played by the parents | 30 min. |
| 3 | The contribution made by the Buddhist counsellors | 15 min. |
| 4 | Problems experienced by young people by age group | 60 min. |

SESSION-B

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| 5 | General solutions | 30 min. |
| 6 | Specific solutions adaptable to age ranges | 60 min. |
| 7 | Helping and counselling in practical exercises-1 | 30 min. |

SESSION-C

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 8 | Helping and counselling in practical exercises-2 | 30 min. |
| 9 | Helping and counselling in practical exercises-3 | 30 min. |
| 10 | Helping and counselling in practical exercises-4 | 30 min. |
| 11 | Helping and counselling in practical exercises-5 | 30 min. |

Exercises can be chosen from the following and similar activities when required:

- A Inter-group guided communication - question and answer technique
- B Inter-group guided communication - debating technique
- C Giving a talk - preparation and delivery
- D Leading a discussion-role of the leader

- E Participation in a discussion-role of the participants
- F Story telling techniques and relevance of stories
- G Physical activities - organising a group (leaders, communications, performance, assessments)
- H Engaging and utilising specialists in singing, music, and drama
- I Creativity in computers using spreadsheets and other programs
- J Sensitivity regarding cultures, customs, and habits
- K Making videos and films for the benefit of groups
- L Conducting group discussions on the internet e.g. by ZOOM technology

Sample of topics for exercises

Questions and answers on Dhamma topics

Interviews – individual and group

Debates on success, happiness, contentment, mental floods, path, and fruit

Experiments in equanimity, loving-kindness (*metta*) and moving the mind.

Broad views and ramifications of generosity

Admission requirements

An applicant should possess one of the following qualifications:

- 1 A Buddhist monk or nun with authority to teach Buddhism in a recognised tradition
- 2 A recognised Buddhism teacher in a school or university
- 3 A recognised Dhamma teacher in a Dhamma School at a temple
- 4 A person recommended by a senior monk or nun

NOTE

When the course is held in a country other than Australia, suitable modifications can be made to suit the custom and practice in each country. Initially courses will be conducted using Zoom with participants from several countries. Country-specific courses will be commenced later. In Australia, chaplains and counsellors for youth need to obtain a blue card from the state government prior to dealing with children.

Course assessment

There will be no formal examinations. Assessments will be based on group discussions conducted by a Buddhist Counsellor.

Certificates

Participation certificates will be issued by the Queensland Sangha Association Inc initially, and later delegated to other institutions as necessary.

Course fees

No course fees will be charged but donations will be welcome to maintain the organisation.

How to apply for admission

An email needs to be sent to QSA on infoqsa@gmail.com

Course teachers

Teachers suitable for the venue will be selected by the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational division of QSA, or by a delegate.

Supervision

Within Australia, courses will be supervised by the Chairperson of the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational division of QSA or a delegate. Arrangements for other countries can be made in conjunction with the QSA.

The procedures necessary will be developed in conjunction with the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism (SIB), the educational division of the QSA.

Enquiries

Queensland Sangha Association Inc

Email: infoqsa@gmail.com

Website: www.sanghaqlld.org

Reference material

Buddhist Chaplaincy by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra published by QSA. E-book available on the QSA website.

Reading material

This book titled **Practical Techniques for Teaching Buddhism to Youth**, written by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra and Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra published by the QSA. Initially available as an e-book from December 2021.

Parents of children must read at least chapters 1 to 4, so that they can help their children.

ABOUT THIS BOOK - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH CHAPLAINS

According to the census conducted in 2020, Australia is home to a diverse collection of people. The following statistics regarding religions are interesting:

Islam	600,000
Buddhist	560,000
Hindu	440,000
Sikhism	130,000
Judaism	90,000

It is worth noting that Buddhists and Hindus have many shared values. A few Hindu children are known to attend Buddhist Dhamma schools. The total of adherents of both religions total to one million. Because there are 560,000 Buddhists, they have responsibilities as a prominent section of the population. One of these is the proper education of Buddhist children and young adults.

General education at primary level is the responsibility of government. Regarding secondary education, there are no Buddhist secondary schools. For tertiary education Buddhists have the Nantien Institute, at the university level.

There is a special need at ages from about 12 years to about 30 years. Young adults up to about thirty years will benefit by learning the practical applications of Buddhist principles. A Buddhist youth chaplaincy or counselling service, working with the help of temples and Dhamma teachers is the answer. This book attempts to promote such a service.

The service will be conducted through practical learning rather than academic learning. Academic learning imparted in temples is assumed as a working basis.

Although both authors belong to Theravada, the tasks suggested in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 are adaptable to Chinese Mahayana and Tibetan Mahayana traditions. Principles used in the book are common to all traditions. The commonality will be brought out in the Buddhist Youth Counsellors or youth chaplaincy training programs.

This new direction, it is hoped will create a powerful young generation of Buddhist youth. It would greatly benefit Australia. Input from parents, Sangha and Dhamma teachers is most welcome.

The programs are adaptable to all countries where Buddhism is practised. An extension to all countries is envisaged.

The support of monks and nuns, temples and monasteries, Buddhist associations, Buddhist Councils, other Buddhist organisations, Buddhist Chaplains, Buddhist Counsellors is earnestly solicited. It will be in the interests of young people and Buddhism as a whole.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This note is inserted in the book to encourage readers to render voluntary services through the Queensland Sangha Association Inc and through temples, and other groups.

Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra

The first author Rahu Sarath-Chandra (full name Rahubadde K.D.S. Sarath-Chandra) was born in Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka in 1935. He had his school education at Rahula, Mahinda and Ananda colleges in Sri Lanka. Having migrated to Australia he now lives in Brisbane, Queensland after retirement from the electricity industry.

Since schooldays when he won many accolades for his unusual understanding of Buddhism, his lifetime interest has been Buddhism. As an adult he has been examining methods of teaching Buddhism and Buddhist meditation. He has in fact been teaching Buddhism and Buddhist meditation, testing various methods. He has always felt that these methods must be continually adapted to suit the needs and conditions of the times.

He has been collating his teaching material to publish a series of books and this book is one of these. All these activities proceeded as a lifelong interest, and his education and employment took him through many fields of study and work.

He first graduated in 1959 from the University of Ceylon with a degree in Science (B.Sc.) specializing in Mathematics. Then he obtained an arts degree (B.A.) including Education from the Vidyalkara University of Sri Lanka, which included education and educational psychology. Then he completed a law degree (LL.B.) from the Colombo University. His first glimpse of Western philosophy and psychology was in connection with the B.A. degree.

In 1969 he qualified through the Ceylon Law College as an advocate (equivalent of barrister) of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. In 1975 he qualified as an accountant with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in the United Kingdom. He is a fellow of that institute and a CPA of the Certified Practicing Accountants association of Australia.

Strangely, the only formal qualification he has in Buddhism is a Diploma from the Colombo YMBA. He has read much more in Buddhism.

In Sri Lanka he was an active social worker, working for several organizations. While being a university student he was president of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Students Federation, one of the largest youth organizations in Sri Lanka and in South-East Asia.

In Australia he has rendered valuable service to many Buddhist organizations throughout Australia. In the state of Queensland, he played the lead role in the establishment of Theravada Buddhism. In 1982, he was closely connected to the establishment of the first Theravada Buddhist Temple in Highgate Hill, Brisbane. In 1983, he played the lead role in setting up Wat Thai Buddharam in Forestdale, Logan, Queensland. After that in 1995, he led a small group to set up the Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery (Brisbane) in Ellen Grove, Brisbane, Queensland.

In 1998, he played the lead role in setting up the Buddhist Council of Queensland Inc. A few years later, at a meeting in Brisbane organized by him at the Amitabha Temple, the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils was set up. He was in the first committee of FABC but declined to become the first president, owing to many other responsibilities.

In 2006, he with the help of his son Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra (the second author of this book) and a few friends played the guiding role in establishing the Buddhist Education Services for Schools Inc. (BESS).

A little later he attended an annual meeting of the Australian Sangha Association (ASA) chaired by Venerable Ajhan Brahmavanso, and advised the group in drafting the first constitution, in association with Venerable Sujato. For some time he was associated with the ASA, and thought up the need for state-based Sangha organisations.

As a result, in 2007, he conceived the idea of a Sangha Association for Queensland. With the help of Venerable Dr. U. Kitsayana, the chief monk of the Myanmar temple, he was instrumental in setting up and incorporating the Queensland Sangha Association Inc. Venerable Wattegama Dhammawasa became the first president and Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra has been working for the QSA since that time.

He with his son's help conceived the idea of Buddhist Chaplaincy, wrote a book on it, and trained a few batches of people as Buddhist Chaplains. The movement has taken off as part of the QSA. In addition, QSA conducts a free general

consultancy service, a temple development consultancy service, a Buddhist publications service, and an educational service called the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism.

In 2021, he came up with the idea of Youth Chaplaincy and this book is a result of that.

The author's work experience was mainly in management positions, though he also had a few stints in teaching at both secondary and university level. His interest in industrial and educational psychology was useful at work. His constant contact with people in connection with community work created a deep interest in psychology, more particularly Buddhist psychology.

In 1969 he published a book on 'Methods of Study and Memory Development' which was enriched by his familiarity with Buddhist psychology, and with the principles of management. The third edition was published in Australia in 2002.

In 2006 he published a book on Buddhist Psychology largely based on the scriptures as understood from commentaries and English language books. The Abhidhammatha Sanghaha by Venerable Narada, and a similar book by Professor Rhys Davies were the essential bases.

Many educational courses have been conducted in the last fifteen years by QSA. He participates as a leader in some Dhamma discussions in QSA.

Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra

The second author migrated to Australia in 1978 with his parents and studied at Brisbane State High School until 1988. He then entered the University of Queensland, Australia and initially qualified as an Electrical Engineer specialising in communications and electronics.

Subsequently he developed his interest in computer technology and obtained the post-graduate qualification of Master of Engineering Science at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, Australia.

Soon afterwards, he completed further post-graduate studies, and qualified as a Master of Information Technology – Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

Tanuja and his parents were very closely involved in the establishment of the first Theravada temple in Brisbane in Highgate Hill, Brisbane, in 1982, the first Thai Temple in Queensland in 1987 (Wat Buddharam) in Forestdale, and the Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery (Brisbane), Ellen grove, Brisbane in 1993.

Tanuja studied the syllabus used world-wide by the Colombo YMBA to teach Buddhism to children and youth and a course developed by the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational division of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc (QSA) to qualify as a Dhamma teacher. He has been teaching Dhamma and Abhidhamma to senior students of the Yasodhara Sinhala and Dhamma School – Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery, Ellen Grove, Queensland.

He served as the president of the Buddhist Education Services for Schools Inc (popularly known as BESS) almost from inception and was responsible for setting up a viable and useful organisation for teaching Buddhism in state schools. This is the only such organisation in Australia. BESS also has a deductible gift fund status approved by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Tanuja also helped his father in promoting the Queensland Sangha Association Inc, (QSA) which brought together monks and nuns of all traditions in Mahayana and Theravada. He qualified as a Buddhist Chaplain registered with the Queensland Sangha Association Inc. He has played many executive roles in QSA and helped to make a success of the organisation.

Tanuja, along with others, conducts many programs on Zoom, to discuss important aspects of the Buddha Dhamma, on a regular basis.