



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

Sangha Samaggi Togetherness of the Buddhist Sangha

Published by the Queensland Sangha Association Inc

An incorporated association of Buddhist monks and nuns in Queensland, Australia. Est. 2007

108 Eric Street, Goodna, Queensland 4300 [ABN 56 506 052 172]

QSA WEBSITE www.sanghaqlld.org

EMAIL ADDRESS infoqsa@gmail.com

Facebook: Queensland sangha Association

15 AUGUSY 2022

NUMBER 024

EDITOR

Dr. Sanka Wasalthilake

	PAGE
Contents	01
Picture-The first sermon	02
Article number and description	
107 Patience	03
108 Compliance, obedience	05
109 Noble eight-fold Path-Lane 6- Right Effort	06
110 Roots and roosting	11
111 Inner commentator	12
112 Wholesomeness	13
CONCLUSION	14



THE FIRST SERMON AT ISIPATANA DEER PARK THE FIVE GREAT MONKS

It is gratefully acknowledged that the picture was taken from [Wikipedia](#)

Article 107

[Taken from the book titled The Buddhist Way to Happiness by Rahubadde and Tanuja Sarath-Chandra based on the Great Discourse on Blessings (Maha Mangala Sutta)]

Chapter 27 - PATIENCE

Patience is one of the ten perfections required of an aspirant to Buddhahood, mentioned in the Theravada scriptures. There is a famous birth story of the Bodhisatta, known as the Khantivadi Jataka where he was able to practise patience even at the point of death, showing no ill-will towards assailants. In day-to-day life, those who have no patience rarely win.

The concept of patience is somewhat like tolerance. One can tolerate something while hating it. In patience there is a higher level of understanding and lack of ill-will. A person practising tolerance may at some point of mental development develop the mental state of patience.

In life we often experience situations that are difficult to bear. Those who have patience find it easier to put up with such difficult circumstances. Patience is not a sign of weakness. It is more a sign of strength of mind. It is a strong mental state.

At times people say nasty things to you for whatever reasons. The tendency is to jump forward and defend yourself. In the rush you might make a lot of mistakes. If you have patience, you can be humble and listen patiently. You can say something mild and defuse the situation. That is much less costly.

If the bus is full, you can wait for the next bus with patience. If the queue does not seem to be moving, the best thing is to stay patiently. If the mother is shouting at a disobedient child, the husband can patiently stay quiet. If your boss blames you in strong terms, your patience may get the better of him. Rushing to defend shows lack of patience. It does not pay.

In our attempts at spiritual practice, we need to develop the ability to keep away from unwholesome behaviour. There are many ways of achieving that result. One way is to develop patience. We come across things that disturb us all the time. For example, hunger, thirst, heat and cold sometimes are hard to bear. Body pains are at times difficult to bear. How much of these can we put up with? It is good to experience these, and test how patient you can be.

In the Sabbasava sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha has stated that certain mental defilements can be eradicated by tolerating conditions such as these. The inclination to run away at the very appearance of these conditions is a sign of weakness.

Article 108

[Taken from the book titled *The Buddhist Way to Happiness* by Rahubadde and Tanuja Sarath-Chandra based on the Great Discourse on Blessings (Maha Mangala Sutta)]

Chapter 28 – COMPLIANCE, OBEDIENCE

Is one capable of following instructions given by another? Can he or she obey the rules prevailing in a place? One who has this quality is compliant and obedient.

This has very little to do with the authority giving the instructions or setting the rules and regulations. It is about one's own capability. The ego or the esteem with which one sees oneself, causes the inability to comply with and obey rules.

A story from the life of Venerable Rahula at his young age is illustrative. He always wished for instructions from the elders. The story says that every morning he would take a handful of sand and wish that he receives as many instructions as the grains of sand in his hand. So, he looked forward to compliance and obedience. That would no doubt have contributed to his spiritual progress.

Acceptance of critical comments from teachers is part of this wholesome behaviour.

In sports, how many people get into trouble simply because they do not follow instructions or obey rules? One can argue about unfair instructions or rules that always exist in society. There is always a platform on which these arguments can be pressed within limits. The sportsman needs to comply first and later seek action regarding instructions and rules.

Assumed superiority in one or more aspects of oneself, is the common reason for dis-obedience and non-compliance. For example, one may be affected by strength, height, loudness of voice, qualifications, experience, attainments and so on. One should not get carried away by these attributes.

Article 109

[Taken from the Dhamma Practice Training Academy -Dhamma Lessons Bank 3]

4062 RIGHT EFFORT (SAMMA VAYAMA)-DISCUSSION

(LANE 6 OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH)

Level 3 statements and discussions

Comments on meditation experiences of this presentation were mostly derived from a sermon given by Venerable Brisbane Dhamma Rakkhita, of the Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery, Ellen grove, Australia, at Buddhist forum 04, conducted by the Queensland Sangha Association on 24 July 2022 on Zoom)

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 37 factors of enlightenment, the term effort (vayama) appears in many places. The presumption is that the term means the same thing but offers a new meaning firstly depending on the context, and secondly indicates an advancement from one context to the other. The term effort in the path is probably the most advanced level.

Effort appears in every one of the seven groups in the 37 factors which means that spiritual advancement necessitates the contribution of effort. In the first of the seven groups, the establishment of mindfulness, the underlying word Atapi means ardent effort.

The adjective Right appears only in the Path, and Right Effort (samma vayama) has a special meaning pointing towards emancipation. At that level, it is essentially a mental effort. It is closely connected to mental development.

Sometimes the term energy is substituted for effort. Are these two different things? They imply the same idea, but they are in two different stages. Energy is a reserve from which effort is generated. Energy must be stored and preserved for effort to be generated. A steam engine has its energy preserved in coal and water. When the fire starts, steam supplies the effort to move the wheels.

2 WHAT IS EFFORT?

A definition of effort is found in the second group of the 37 factors. Effort consists of four classifications as follows:

1. to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome mental states
2. to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen
3. to arouse wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen

4. to maintain and perfect wholesome mental states already arisen

3 EFFORT TYPES 1 TO 4

Effort can be generated in this manner with respect to each type of effort:

- 1 Generating interest (or electing) to practice (canda)
- 2 Converting interest to action (vayamati)
- 3 Generating starting effort (araddhati)
- 4 Making the commitment strong (pagganhati)
- 5 Unswerving practice (padahati)

4 EFFORT TYPE 1

This type of effort is aimed at preventing the arising of unarisen unwholesome mental states. These mental states can be hidden in the mind not visible to oneself or to others. These are caused by the five hindrances which are as follows:

- 1 Sensual desire (kamaccanda)
- 2 Aversion (Vyapada)
- 3 Sloth and torpor (thina middha)
- 4 Worry (uddhacca kukkuccha)
- 5 Doubt (vicikiccha)

Note that items 1 and 2 are most important. Items 3,4 and 5 arise due to deep attention to 1 or 2. When this happens, normally available wisdom is covered up with the desire or aversion. Hence the skills of mindfulness and wisdom do not work properly. Then one gets further immersed in the desire or the anger.

The first part of the effort is to observe the arrival of the hindrance. For example, when I am about to get angry, I observe it. What do I do then?

Keep observing without reacting.

You can also label it like 'getting angry'. That is the second part of the effort. In this case it is necessary to guard against aversion towards the occurrence.

If at this time, if you are practising either sitting meditation of breathing, or walking meditation, there is usually enough mindfulness for the abandoning of the intrusion of anger without much effort.

If additional effort is required, then the above two techniques need to be tried.

The same techniques can be applied in the case of any of the other hindrances that might come up.

5 EFFORT TYPE 2

This is the effort required to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen in the mind.

Effort is now required to bring mindfulness to the forefront. The sustenance of the mindfulness with wisdom itself would cause the intrusion of the hindrance to weaken and ultimately get abandoned, particularly when the intrusion is light. The use of a label may also help. Returning to the original meditation object at such a time is not recommended as it might arouse aversion.

There is also a teaching to observe the negative aspects of the hindrance; if this technique is applied one must guard against the arising of hatred. This can also be done using mindfulness and wisdom. Another technique is to accept the intrusion and allow it to pass.

Venerable Brisbane Dhamma Rakkhita says that a difficult case can arise in which a meditator develops a hindrance arising with respect to the meditation itself. It can be in relation to the **meditation object**, the teacher, the teaching method, the surrounding, or any other matter relating to the meditation. In such a case, the meditator may not observe it. Even if it is observed the meditator may try to hide it in reporting. Then the teacher would find it difficult to suggest a remedy. In the case of the Buddha, he would not see this as a problem as he was able to read the minds of others. However, expertly, and experienced meditation teachers would be able to observe this impediment and help resolve the problem.

Attachment to the object of meditation is nothing less than attachment in general. There are people who believe that such an attachment is a good thing.

That is a mistaken idea. Such people report that the meditative experience was so sweet and enchanting. This is attachment.

6 EFFORT TYPE 3

This is the effort to arouse wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen. Regarding mindfulness meditation, this means going ahead with improved mindfulness from one level to another.

In general, it implies the further progress along the noble eightfold path. At that level the advancement is in the mental regime, rather than in the physical regime.

Right view, right mindfulness, and right concentration need to be further developed with the application of ardent effort. Over-exertion is not encouraged, but unswerving effort is worthwhile. Even more, waste of effort and energy must be minimised and avoided, by reviewing current methods of practice. Having picked up a poor method, one can easily waste all energy, and end in total disgust. Both self-review and consultation with noble friends such as meditation teachers and successful practitioners is possible. In this process, the abandonment of strong views is very helpful. The factor of investigation (vimansa) in the four psychic factors comes in to play. (see 37 factors of enlightenment, group 3, factor 4).

7 EFFORT TYPE 4

This is the effort to maintain and perfect wholesome mental states already arisen in the mind. The presumption is that all other factors in the noble eightfold path are well developed. Particular mention must be made of Right view, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The Discourse on the Great Forty (Maha Cattarisaka Sutta) specifically mentions that the three lanes of Effort, Mindfulness and Stillness (concentration), Vayama, Sati and Samadhi, inter-twine, and work together like a machine in a very fast and efficacious manner, that the entire being is cleansed of mental impurities.

Having reached this point, the mental states left are stillness, equanimity, and mindfulness. Equanimity is there because there is no choosing between likes and dislikes. Stillness has resulted from that equanimity. The awareness of this happening is mindfulness.

At this high level of mental states, one begins to see things as they are. In terms of body mindfulness meditation, the concern is now with the Sacca Pabba (mindfulness of the truths) of the fourth aspect, Dhammanussati.

The three features of existence, constant change, suffering and agglomeration and dissipation of component elements becomes vivid. Arising and ceasing becomes clear. Causation becomes clear. Here there is no meaning in a self.

It is absolute peace. The peace in the mind pervades the whole body.

When this new situation is approached, there are some indicative signs. One begins to feel a sense of loneliness, abandonment of desires, absence of any interest, abandonment of individuality, abandonment of becoming and non-becoming, a feeling of total stillness.

8 EFFORT DEPENDS ON THE MATURITY OF THE MENTAL STATE

As mentioned before effort occurs in each of the seven groups of the 37 factors of enlightenment. The groups appear to be graded to some extent. For example, effort in group 3 is different from effort in the noble eightfold path. In the path effort has a lot more to do with the mind. In other words, at the higher level, it is mental effort that is vital.

The four types of effort mentioned above have two in the unwholesome category and two in the wholesome category. The Buddha guides us, but we need to apply the effort. It is obvious that the change over from the unwholesome to the wholesome, needs effort, often strenuous effort. That, is our task. This is the key value of effort.

It is unflagging perseverance. The determination 'I shall not give up' is necessary. Remember the Bodhisatta said to himself, I shall not get up from this seat unless I realise the truth.

It is true that mindfulness is the key mental factor in the effort to secure emancipation from suffering. That does not mean that the beginner or mid-way practitioner can rely only on mindfulness. With regard to the first two types of effort, at the level of elementary practice, one must learn other appropriate techniques to go through the five hindrances.

For example, a hindrance like greed can be got rid of by the process of substitution. The greed can be replaced with a wholesome mental state like loving kindness or compassion. Switching to an entirely different thought is also a possible technique. At the higher level more advanced techniques may be necessary. A detailed study of hindrances would suggest such techniques. There is no space for that here.

The first two hindrances are very strong. The three remaining hindrances are built upon delusion which can be reduced through directed learning of the Dhamma.

8 RIGHT EFFORT-RELATION TO THE OTHER PATH LANES

Right effort cannot function alone as it needs the support of the other seven lanes. In the same way right effort supports the other seven. There is mutual advancement.

Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration seem to move together. This combination primarily depends on right view implying wisdom. A washing machine cleanses dirt on clothes. Even so, the trio mentioned above cleanses the mind the more it works.

9 EFFORT AND KAMMA

People sometime experience lack of progress in the application of effort. This might be due to inadequacy of wisdom, lack of attention to investigative skills and similar reasons related to practice. In such cases the help of noble friends needs to be sought. Just carrying on in the same way with effort may result in disgust and aversion.

The hidden reason may be due to the impact of a past kamma, meaning one's own past actions. One remedy is to lay emphasis on good actions, that are capable of overcoming the past kamma.

Article 110

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
14 July 2022]

Quote

Roots and roosting

"The person who is tied down lives in a prison. Many people make prisons of their lives; they make the bars of their prisons with the possessions they own. The prison guards are the relationships that confine and very often torture us. What the Buddha is saying is that we can let go of all of these prisons, all of these roots, we can abandon them. We can free ourselves from confinement. People who meditate and who live monastic lives experience a great freedom, even though they sometimes stay in one place and don't move.

People may say that's attachment. "Why are you fixed at being in this one place, in this one monastery?" And you say, "Because there is nothing to blow me away". That's real freedom, not external freedom but internal freedom, where there is nothing to blow you from one place to another. There are no defilements, there is no craving, and there are no roosting places. Birds go from one branch to another branch, always finding a different roosting place, but that's not what the Buddha meant by 'no roots'. He meant having nowhere at all and carrying on to destroy the round of rebirth.

So, this practice of sila, samādhi and pañña, the factors of the Eightfold Path, not only destroys the roots but also destroys rebirth."

Source: 'Simply this moment!' by Ajahn Brahm

Article 111

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
21 July 2022]

The Inner Commentator

People sometimes play really heavy, and oppressive music in their cars. If it's not that sort of music, it's some other music. In the shopping centers, in the airports or wherever else we go, we hear music. There is so much noise in the world! It's so nice in the evenings, when everyone has left, to go back to my room and be quiet again, "Oh what bliss!" That noise outside, people asking questions, asking you to do things, making arrangements, that's the same sort of noise as the noise we hear in our mind. It's the 'inner commentator' telling us what to do, telling us to go this way, or that way. That inner commentator telling us we are not good enough, we're this way, or we're that way. When that noise stops it's marvelous. We're left with just the emptiness, the bliss of no speech, of no thinking; of no one telling us what to do. ."

Source: 'Simply this moment!' by Ajahn Brahm

Article 112

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
28 July 2022]

Quote

Wholesomeness

"Put a lot of attention in the space between you and whatever you are aware of. And make sure there are wholesome qualities in that space: kindness, gentleness, peace and patience"

Source: 'All you need is kindness : a collection of Ajahn Brahm Quotes'

The end of the QSA Dhamma Magazine for the period August 2022

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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

www.sanghaqlld.org

If you do not want to receive this newsletter, please advise QSA via

infoqsa@gmail.com

If you want a friend to see this newsletter, please let is know the email address.