



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

SIB COURSE 101

Thanks everyone for the quick response. Batch 10 was filled up and the announcement in the QSA Newsletter was withdrawn.

NEW ZOOM CHANNEL FOR DHAMMA QUERIES

QSA has set up a new ZOOM channel to answer questions on the Dhamma and queries regarding QSA and its activities. At present the channel will be active from 1.30 pm to 2.20 pm every Saturday. Anyone can reach us through the following link:

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

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

QSA CALENDAR OF PROXIMATE EVENTS

RECENT PAST

Saturday 8 October 2022, one hour from 2.30 pm

Meditation program SIB 401

Subject1 A Jhana development procedure plus breathing meditation

Subject 2 Supportive breathing meditation techniques

15 October 2022

Saturday 15 October 2022, one hour from 2.30 pm

Meditation program SIB 401

Subject1 A Jhana development procedure plus goodwill meditation

Subject 2 Supportive goodwill meditation techniques

Two other supportive meditation techniques will be discussed in coming weeks.

Language **English**

OCTOBER

Saturday 22 October 2022, one hour from 2.30 pm

Meditation program SIB 401

Subject1 A Jhana development procedure plus Buddha reminiscence meditation

Subject 2 Supportive Buddha reminiscence meditation techniques

Language: **Sinhalese**

23 October 2022 (Sunday), one hour from 7.00 pm Brisbane time

Self-development program for practitioners and teachers, Buddhist counsellors

Lecture and discussion led by Venerable Brisbane Dhamma Rakkhita

Topic (1) Cycle of births and deaths

Topic (2) What does Nibbana mean to you?

Language: **Sinhalese**

29 October 2022

Saturday 29 October 2022, one hour from 2.30 pm

Meditation program SIB 401

Subject1 A Jhana development procedure plus Buddha Reminiscence meditation

Language: **English**

NOVEMBER

5 November 2022- Another session of SIB 401 in Sinhalese

12 November- Another session of SIB 401 in English

FUTURE EVENTS

Please come on the Zoom Dhamma queries channel on any Saturday between 1.30pm to 2.30 pm and check or see the QSA Newsletter.

Saturday 17 December 2022, 2.30 pm Committee meeting 52

Saturday 25 March 2022, 2.30 pm, Annual General meeting and committee meeting 53

ARTICLES PRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

Article 120

[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 31 – SELF-RESTRAINT

The world is full of things that we might either like or dislike. These are constantly around us offering contact with us through our senses. The first five senses the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are ever ready to make contact with objects out there in the surrounding. The sixth sense, the mind has plenty to contact right inside the mind itself.

Life itself looks like an unending series of such contacts. Due to these contacts, responses arise in the mind, usually called sensations (vedana). The five aggregates of form (mental creations of external objects), sensations, perceptions, mental fabrications, and consciousness (vinnana) arise immediately in the mind. This is natural and impossible to prevent. What is the real implication of this experience.?

The mind tries to fabricate a story of attraction or one of repulsion, because it is incapable of doing anything better. This experience leads to unwholesome

thinking, words, and actions. That is best avoided as the bad actions cause bad results in the future.

That is the restraint that is attempted by the seeker of spiritual progress.

As a first line of defence, the senses are held in restraint. When that fails the Dhamma teaches us many methods of dealing with consequences, minimising damage as early as possible.

For example, if food is an object that gives rise to attraction, then the first defence is at the level of the tongue-sense. The mind tells the tongue to behave properly. Imagine an elderly person who is fond of eating sweets, the easiest point of control is his tongue-sense. If he or she succeeds, then the consequences are well controlled.

If no restraint is exercised, bad results will follow. Regarding the other senses too, restraint is the easiest defence. When the senses are restrained, the mind will have less problems to deal with. Wholesome progress is now possible.

In this endeavour, mindfulness needs to come to the forefront. If mindfulness is well developed, the moment contact is made, mindfulness will tell you to step back from an imminent action. Hence self-restraint is facilitated by the mental state of mindfulness (sati) which we all have from birth. It needs to be developed and sharpened.

If an army of the invader is moving into our country, the first line of defence will push them back. If you allow them in, things will become harder. How foolish is it to let the invader right into our country?

Restraint needs to begin in the mind. If the mind is trained to keep calm and careful, the senses will follow the same behaviour. Wisdom and understanding grow in the mind. That sets the pattern for verbal or bodily actions. A controlled mind is the key to control of the senses.

Article 121

[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 32 – EXERCISING THE HOLY PRACTICE

Holy practice means the monastic life, which includes celibacy (*brahmachari*). Monastic life also implies, living separately away from families and family responsibilities.

It enables the monastic to concentrate on the spiritual life, and to do everything conducive to the attainment of enlightenment. The monastic therefore becomes a full-time practitioner free of worldly burdens.

The practice is woven around the noble eight-fold path prescribed by the Buddha. It consists of the eight aspects shown below:

ENGLISH	PALI
1 Right view	<i>Samma-ditthi</i>
2 Right intention	<i>Samma-sankappa</i>
3 Right speech	<i>Samma-vaca</i>
4 Right action	<i>Samma-kammanta</i>
5 Right livelihood	<i>Samma-ajiva</i>
6 Right effort	<i>Samma-vayama</i>
7 Right mindfulness	<i>Samma-sati</i>
8 Right concentration	<i>Samma-samadhi</i>

The question is often asked as to what is meant by the terms right or samma. The brief answer is that the development factor is directed towards the attainment of enlightenment.

Right for what purpose is the question. Things may look right for mundane gains. For example, concentration can be developed to such an extent that one might be able to perform miracles. That does not contribute much to progress towards enlightenment. Mindfulness is worth developing for leading a happy worldly life but that might not be enough to progress towards enlightenment. Effort we always apply to achieve useful results, but what is meant here is the effort to reach enlightenment. That effort is made in the mind through meditation and not by physical exercise.

Right view is apparently the most important. It clears the mind to see the four noble truths.

Article 122

[Taken from the Dhamma Practice Training Academy -Dhamma Lessons Bank 3, lesson number 4023]

4002 NUTRITION OF MENTAL VOLITIONS (Mano sañcetanā āhāra)

{This article is based on a sermon given by Venerable Panadure Chandaratana Thero, Deputy Chief Monk of the Meethirigala Forest Monastery of Sri Lanka, at the International Buddhist Forum held in Colombo on the September Full Moon Day, 2022.}

THE ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS OF VOLITIONAL THOUGHT

At the beginning of the discourse on Right View (Sammā Diṭṭhi), the first lane of the Noble Eight-Fold Path, Venerable Sāriputta says that understanding of the four nutrients contributes to the development of Right View. These four nutriment are:

Edible Food

Contact

Volitional thought

Consciousness

This discussion is on the third nutriment, thought. These nutriment keep working all the time, although we may not be fully aware of it. Regarding thought, it is easy to notice that we keep trying to do this or that all the time,

and every time it involves a thought, or a series of thoughts supported by intention.

These thoughts can be associated with the body, speech or the mind and they can be wholesome or unwholesome. It is worth considering whether our thoughts are entirely ours or generated by conditioning of different types.

Conditioning can come from the external environment, for example associates, businesses, advertising, or any type of influencing. Conditioning also occurs from the internal environment meaning your own mind. Memory sometimes conditions your thoughts, and at times the mind can put new constructions on existing thoughts. The Buddha calls these fabrications. The original thought may be one thing, but the fabricated thought can be very different.

The fabrications could be built by the mind with knowledge and awareness, or they may build up without our full awareness.

So, our volitional thoughts that produce kamma can be very complex and not always within our control.

As the kamma generated can cause happiness or distress in the future, this complexity is very important. It needs to be understood and dealt with.

The Buddha draws attention to a man being pushed by two strong men towards a pit of hidden embers. The victim is aware of the fate if he gets pushed into the pit. Hence, he struggles to escape from the adversaries.

In the same way we need to struggle against this push by volitional thoughts to lead us towards the danger of more and more suffering. Otherwise, we will continue in the cycle of births and deaths and the suffering entailed in it.

We need to know that merely thinking of events in the past, events possible in the future and events that occur right now, can all produce kamma as all these are based on volitional thoughts.

We know that unwholesome thoughts arise due to greed, hatred and delusion projected by craving. Any attempt to eradicate harmful thoughts is woven around the elimination of craving.

What sort of action is required on our part to achieve this result?

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM

Three types of practice are recommended in the Dhamma for dealing with the complications caused by volitional thoughts that lead to suffering. These are:

Practice of morality

Calming the mind

Development of the mind

Volitional activities associated with the body and speech are mostly controlled by the practice of morality. Morality is promoted by the observance of precepts. An example is the five precepts. Refraining from killing, stealing and wrongful conduct help to diffuse unwholesome bodily actions. Extended precepts to discipline verbal volitional activity is found in the eight precepts of livelihood. Refraining from falsehoods, slanders, harsh speech, and frivolous speech are examples.

Together the practice of morality helps to deal with harmful volitional activities associated with the body and speech.

Calming of the mind is equally important. This is where certain types of meditation come into play. It leads to the ability to deal with the mental states of the five hindrances, passions, aversions, sloth, and torpor, worry and restlessness, and sceptical doubt.

With calming meditation, the mind temporarily becomes clean. However, the cleanliness tends to dissipate when the meditation concludes.

This is where the third type of practice becomes relevant. This is also called insight meditation or vipassana. It is the development of the mind, particularly the mental state of wisdom, to be able to see things as they really are as ever-changing, innately suffering, and beyond our control. The ideas of incessant arising and ceasing, and the perpetuation of the flow of universal cause and effect are also implied.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PRACTICE

A series of possible meditation practices are given in the Great Discourse on the Establishment of Mindfulness. One common practice of meditation is breathing, and another is walking. A few details regarding breathing meditation are given here to guide the practitioner.

In breathing meditation body-based volitional thought is calmed down. Speech too is calmed down. Mental volitional thoughts continue to remain though perhaps reduced. This is dealt with later in this article.

For success, breathing needs to be natural and not forced in any way. The meditator here is only an observer of a natural process. Breathing meditation includes several stages of development. For our purposes here, we observe the difference between the in-breath and the out-breath. This is simple.

There is the possibility of thoughts arising due to external or internal stimuli. It is good to note that the initial thought may not cause many problems but that constructed thoughts that might follow do cause problems. These fabrications may proceed far and wide and go on for some time. This proliferation is called Conceptual Proliferation (papañca).

They form layers on layers. If one analyses these sustained thoughts, one may fail to find a value in any of them. When a banana tree is unsheathed, ultimately there is no hard wood inside. It is like that. These layers may have grown because of influences from within the mind or from external sources. That reality is worth noting.

THE LINK TO EMANCIPATION FROM SAMSARA

The calmness of the mind allows us to examine the causes behind the proliferating thoughts. The Buddha has taught that there are three possible causes:

Craving for sensual experience

Craving for becoming

Craving to get rid of

It is easy to observe the first one as we live in a sensual world.

Additionally, every moment we think of becoming someone else. For example, a teacher would dream of becoming the principal. The deputy director would think of becoming the director. A student would think of becoming the best student in the class. So, this tendency to become someone else causes a line of thought. This never seems to end. That craving is not easy to see and hard to eliminate.

In the rush when you want to become X, automatically, and ipso facto you also do not want to be what you are now. Hence there is craving to get- rid- of.

All these three generate volitional thoughts that keep us driving and linger on in the cycle of births and death. How do we stop this?

The sustained practice of meditation as hinted above is the answer.

No amount of book-learning will give us the expected result. Practising meditation is necessary. The strength of the meditation, if done under proper guidance, will improve gradually. You will have joy when achieve results.

At culmination the mental states that arise, such as equanimity, sustained effort, abandonment of both pleasure and pain, mindfulness, and stillness of mind, give the meditator the wisdom to see the realities of existence such as the following:

Constant change

Suffering entailed in existence

Inability to own any thing

Constant arising and ceasing

The operation of the non-ending phenomenon of cause and effect

May you attain enlightenment!

CONCLUDING NOTE

This article briefly deals with one issue, namely the mental state of volitional thought. The ardent practitioner must note that there are a few more lanes of effective practice needed to realise emancipation. The first is unswerving effort. Another is developing stillness of mind. Yet another is developing mindfulness. These three working together all the time, results in the development of right view or wisdom. Right thought, speech, action, and livelihood follow, all contributing to eventual peace.

QUOTES FROM AJHAN BRAHM'S WRITINGS

Article 123

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
11 August 2022]

JUST BEING AWARE

The energy of the mind can be directed in two ways. It can either go into reacting, doing, thinking, struggling and striving or it can go into letting go, not being involved, not getting entangled, and just being aware without reacting."

Source: All You Need Is Kindfulness : A Collection of Ajahn Brahm Quotes

Article 124

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
18 August 2022]

GIVE THIS MOMENT A JOY

Give This Moment Joy

The moment is here. It's come. You can't change it. Maybe the next moment might be different, but this moment is just like this. This is why the whole path of Buddhism is to 'let go' of trying to change this moment and instead develop a sense of contentment. In other words, let this moment be.

The only way you can let the moment be and not try and change it and control it is to find joy. Find joy in your duties. The only way I can carry on talking like this is to actually put happiness into it, to give it meaning, to

give it value. The only way I can work so hard, is to give my work value and meaning, to give it joy. That's the only way I can meditate, by giving this moment joy and energy. This is a practice that I have been doing for many years. Realising that I cannot do just what I want to do, I do what I have to do. I make that happy, I give that joy. I invest joy in whatever I am doing. That's been a training – not something that I was born with, but something that I have trained myself to do.

Source: Simply This Moment! a collection of talks about Buddhist practice by Ajahn Brahm

Article 125

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 8 September2022]

"Wisdom is all around us and insight is there for the taking. But when there is too much noise, we just can't hear life teaching us."

Source: All you need is kindness : A Collection of Ajahn Brahm Quotes

Article 125

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 22 September2022]

"The Satipahana Sutta says this path leads in one direction only; if we continue walking this path we will have to arrive at the goal. It's just a matter of time! That's a powerful saying, a wonderful teaching. The trouble is though, we sometimes get off the path. We don't keep going because we haven't got enough faith, we haven't got enough confidence. However, we should remember that if we keep walking just a little bit further then we find a little bit more happiness. That's the beauty of the path: it's a happy path. At every stage of the path, we get a prize, we get more happiness, more peace, and more

understanding. That's what makes it a gradual path that leads us on and on and on, opanayiko. It doesn't lead us on because we think we understand more; it leads us on because we get more happiness, more peace, more freedom, more joy, and more bliss. This is the great thing about the Dhamma: you don't need to look so far into the distance to gain some benefit or to get a taste of Nibbāna."

Source: "Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice" by Ajahn Brahm

FREE DHAMMA BOOKS AND DHAMMA LESSONS

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

- 1 **Buddhist Chaplaincy**
- 2 **Basic Buddhist Psychology- second edition**
- 3 **Q and A for High School Students**
- 4 **Discourse on Blessings (English and Sinhala versions)**
- 5 **Practical Techniques of Teaching Buddhism**
- 6 **Practice of Buddhism**

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

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

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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