



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]

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15 MAY 2021 NUMBER 009

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ARTICLE

NUMBER DESCRIPTION

21 Right View

22 The significance of having noble friends

Comments and questions requested.

Article 21

**SELECTED TOPICS FROM THE PATHWAY TO NIBBANA
RIGHT VIEW (SAMMA DITTHI)**

1 In the ardent push to move up the pathway to Nibbana, one reaches the set of Dhammas called the 37 factors of enlightenment. One needs to make sure about oneself in relation to the first 29 stages, to see Right View in bright light. One must be sure what to expect at every stage. This presentation is not

intended to impart that knowledge. It is a separate aspect of the Dhamma. It might be useful to go through the 37 factors.

2 Wisdom grows not just by reflection but by practice using Buddha's instructions, once, then twice, then thrice and go on and on until the result is achieved. One will have stops on the way. Buddha uses the word Bahulikata to explain this technique. That is the overall aim. Now we come to the topic.

3 Sammaditthi Sutta (the discourse on right view was delivered by Venerable Sariputta and confirmed by the Buddha. A number of ideas as to what constitutes right view are discussed. Right view being the first item in the noble eight- fold path, this subject is very important. There are 71 sections in the discourse, set out in a uniform scheme.

4 In terms of practice aimed at attaining Nibbana, right view in oneself can be promoted by practising the teaching. Checking on the progress according to the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment (Bodhi Pakkhiya Dhamma) is useful in this regard. That set can be considered separately. The purpose here is to understand what right here means.

5 The discourse on right view mentions three different aspects of right view.

FIRST ASPECT

6 One idea of right view is the ability to have a pure view on things. Conduct needs to be correct. Faith in the triple gem should be unwavering. One has to understand the roots of wholesome actions and unwholesome actions. Unwholesome actions are conducive to harm to oneself and to others.

7 In this aspect faith in the triple gem is mentioned. The practically important point is the ability to understand and identify what is Unwholesome and what is Unwholesome. In Pali it is Kusala and Akusala. These need to be seen at the level of thoughts, speech and actions. The eradication of Akusala in the obvious forms and more importantly at the level of Akusala Roots needs to be emphasised.

8 In fact we worship the Buddha as the one who is accomplished in Kusala (Bhagavato), having totally discarded Akusala (Arahato), and having fully understood both these (Samma Sambuddhassa).

9 Some Buddhist scholars define enlightenment as the total eradication of Akusala and all the roots of Akusala.

SECOND ASPECT

10 Another idea is to adhere to the correct nutriments. The correctness can be in quantity, as well as in quality. Nutriments are of many types.

(A) Physical including food, medicines, These are derived from the four great aspects of matter:

Gases

Fluids

Solids

Heat or energy

10 In this set energy is the underlying factor. Resting, bathing etc are all included in the group as levels of energy.

11 In all these the correct dose is the right view. One needs to know the correct quantity to eat or drink. Why is this important? It is because the wrong quantity or quality leads to suffering (Dukkha).

12 It is clear that, craving disturbs the correct dose. Suffering results. If you eat too much of a type of food, stomach troubles start. If you take too many tablets of a medicine, the doctor will have a problem.

13 Here we can notice the relevance of the four noble truths. First you notice the origin of dukkha. Then you look for the cause of dukkha. It is the craving for food. How could you end this dukkha? You need to eliminate the cause, the craving. The way to end this dukkha is the Noble Eight-Fold Path, not extreme behaviours. Seeing things in this way is the right view.

(B) Mental nutriments

Contact (Phassa)

Component things (Sankhara)

Consciousness (Vinnana)

14 The nutriment for Contact is the natural environment. There is very little we can do about it. In a reasonable way we can avoid contact via the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-touch, and the mind. In Buddhism the important method is to properly deal with what happens in the mind after contact occurs. These are perceptions (sanna), investigation, determination and thinking.

In these mental activities, the appropriate measure or dosage becomes relevant. Ultimately, the question arises whether the mind is getting caught up with wholesome or unwholesome activity. Is it kusala or akusala? If this occurs at the stage of sensation and perception, thinking gets adjusted accordingly.

15 Seeing this way is the right view. Then you can see how dukkha can be eliminated.

16 Whatever form of nutriment is considered, one needs to examine the application of the Four Noble Truths in each case. How did the item originate, and how did it contribute to suffering? What was the cause of that suffering? Is an end to that suffering feasible? What is the way to end that suffering?

17 For example, the need for physical food arises due to natural reasons. It is from hunger. The question is why food turns into suffering. When the hunger is quenched, there is temporary satisfaction. Eventually it turns into dissatisfaction either because time has passed or because there was over-eating. So, the arising of suffering can be prevented or postponed by eating the correct dose (Matra). That also includes the correct type and description. We can see how suffering arises. Over-eating is due to craving for taste (rasa tanha).

18 Incidentally what does suffering mean? The Pali word Dukkha means something difficult to bear up. Due to natural reasons Dukkha may occur. On top of that there is Dukkha that we create. For example, when we reflect on what happened and regret it, more and more Dukkha arises. Also, when the situation changes, there can be dukkha.

19 Can the dukkha be eliminated? Yes, when the cause is eliminated, dukkha ends. Is there a way to reach that end? The answer is to follow the noble eight-fold path.

Regarding the mental factors, contact, thinking and consciousness, similar considerations apply.

20 Contact is a natural process, and it is hard to avoid. When contact occurs we have the choice of thinking or not thinking about it. For example, we always hear sounds. We can ignore them or we can pursue them. At this point we can think in a wholesome manner or an unwholesome manner. In the latter case dukkha will arise. The ending of that dukkha, its cessation and the way to the cessation become clear. That is right view.

21 Thinking is based on consciousness. Consciousness is dealt with in the same way.

THIRD ASPECT

22 The very same methodology can be applied in relation to a large number Dhammas. These are considered in the Sammaditthi Sutta. In this presentation the writer will follow the sequence found in the discourse, which happens to be the reverse order.

Ageing	Jara
Death	Marana
Birth	Jati
Being	Bhava
Clinging	Upadana
Craving	Tanha
Feeling	Vedana
Contact	Phassa
Six-fold bases	Salayatana
Mentality-materiality	Nama-rupa
Consciousness	Vinnana
Formations	Sankhara
Ignorance	Avijja
Taints	Asava

23 These items are actually related to the links in the chain of dependent origination (Paticcha Samuppada) except for taints. Taints are deep seated memories of past experiences which together keep the mind clouded.

24 For each of this we need to examine the occurrence of Dukkha, the cause for Dukkha, the ceasing of Dukkha and the way to reach that ceasing.

25 We have already considered Contact, Formations and Consciousness. As another example, we can consider Ageing. What is the origin of Ageing? The real origin is Birth, as from birth we start ageing, although most of us begin to feel it after say 60 years or so. Is there dukkha in this? Is it hard to bear the problems of old age? Many experience this at one or other time. Can we eliminate ageing? You can by eliminating birth. That also means attaining Nibbana. What is the way to elimination? Again it is the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

26 If we can see this through we have the right view.

RELATED COMENTS

Dukkha can be of different types. The first is Dukkha-Dukkha or common suffering that we constantly experience. Illness is one. We do not create them intentionally as these happen due to natural reasons. Secondly, Dukkha is caused by continuing change (Viparinama). Again we cannot do much about these. Thirdly Dukkha can result from our own actions (Sankhara). For these we are responsible. If we have the right view, to that extent we can reduce the third type of suffering. This helps us to measure our progress towards right view.

A simple example is in taking food. We control the type and quantity and therefore we can control the Dukkha connected to food. If our right view is sharp, then to that extent our Dukkha is reduced.

We can sharpen our Right View using Buddha's method of repeated application of the methods given.

Dukkha can also be looked at as controllable and uncontrollable. For example, ageing is beyond our control. Getting flu every week can be controlled at least to some extent. We need to avoid wasting time on dukkha that we cannot control. Our time and energy need to be used for controlling dukkha that can be controlled.

The uncontrollable Dukkha can be terminated ultimately by attaining enlightenment.

(This article was written by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra, based on the Discourse on RIGHT View. The grouping was developed by the writer. It was presented at the first session of the QSA Buddhist Forum number 04, conducted on ZOOM on 26 April 2021)

Article 22

The way to worldly happiness

HAVING NOBLE FFRIENDS

This is the first factor that contributes to happiness in life as mentioned in the Discourse on Blessings (Mangala Sutta). When this is mentioned in a Dhamma Class in Australia, young children say that it is not correct to be judgmental. This probably results from wrong or half-baked ideas expressed by primary school teachers in Australia and perhaps in other Western Countries.

What the teachers mean is that one should not judge a person on a permanent basis because of one or a few experiences. In Buddhist culture this is clearly taught. The Buddhist is expected to keep an open mind regarding an individual as there is always a possibility that things might be better in future.

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 the person keeps changing.

Another important teaching is that although you might notice that a person's behaviour (thinking, words used and actions) might seem objectionable or unacceptable in regard to one aspect, yet according to other aspects that person might seem to be good. In many cases this is true.

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. Because of something bad in ourselves we might be passing wrong assessments on other people.

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. Where you might go loose, 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 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.

Always we can 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.

[\(This article was written by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra\)](#)

COMMENTS ON ARTICLES AND DHAMMA QUESTIONS

Readers are invited to send any comments on articles or Dhamma questions to QSA via infoqsa@gmail.com

THE END OF THE 8 PAGE QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE FOR MAY 2021

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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