



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

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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

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EDITOR **Dr. Sanka Wasalthilake**

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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 2.30 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

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

QSA CALENDAR FOR A FEW WEEKS IN 2022

FROM 5 TO 12 NOVEMBER 2022

5 Saturday 1.30 to 2.30 pm Brisbane time
Dhamma discussion on these topics led by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra

- 1 Acceptance of occurrences in Dhamma practice
- 2 Decision and non-decision in Dhamma practice

Language: **English**

12 Saturday 1.30 to 2.15 pm Brisbane time
Dhamma discussion on the following topics:

- 1 Establishing faith in the Buddha
- 2 Establishing faith in the Dhamma

Language: **English**

FROM 19 TO 11 DECEMBER 2022-1.30 TO 2.30 PM BRISBANE TIME

BUDDHIST COUNSELLOR PACKAGE 1-SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life-Self Assessment in Dhamma Practice

- 2 Buddhist educational principles-Repetition of Statements
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Breathing Meditation

SUTTA DISCUSSION 31-SUNDAY 20 NOVEMBER

Title of discourse: Apantaka Sutta translated as The Discourse on the Safe Bet

Leader: to be announced

Panel: to be announced

BUDDHIST COUNSELLOR PACKAGE 2- SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life-Invoking the Decision mental state
- 2 Buddhist educational principles-The 3-Prong presentation style
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Walking Meditation

BUDDHIST COUNSELLOR PACKAGE 3- SATURDAY 03 DECEMBER

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life-Application of measured effort
- 2 Buddhist educational principles-Focussing in presentations
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Goodwill meditation

BUDDHIST COUNSELLOR PACKAGE 4- SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life-Psychic power of interest
- 2 Buddhist educational principles-Learning by teaching another
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Mindfulness of the six senses (**leading to Jhana 1 and 2**)

1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

Saturday 25 March 2023, 1.30 pm, Annual General meeting and committee meeting 53

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

MINDFULNESS PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY VENERABLE BRISBANE DHAMMA RAKKHITHA

English Program

Wednesdays 6.30pm-9.30pm

At Forest Lake Temple Hall or virtually

Topic: 4 Foundations of Mindfulness

Zoom Link: <https://tinyurl.com/32n3xdbw>

Sinhala Program

Sunday 6.00am-10.30am

Virtually Only

Topic: Satipatthana

Zoom Link: <https://tinyurl.com/32n3xdbw>

Program Manager: Chathu Senarat

Email via infoqsa@gmail.com

Article 127

[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 – HOLY PRACTICDE

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 128

[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 33 –UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The practice of the noble eight-fold path described in the previous chapter, ultimately leads to the full understanding of the four noble truths. The breakthrough is achieved by the culmination of the right view. When right view is perfected, the four noble truths are fully understood.

The discourse on right view enumerates seventeen methods of approaching this understanding. Initially, confidence in the triple gem, namely the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha is fully established. Then, the mind realises the demarcation between wholesomeness (kusala) and unwholesomeness (Akusala) in full. Thereafter the principles underlying the four noble truths are applied to a series of conditioning factors (as listed in the theory of dependent origination.) This application gives rise to the conviction that the four noble truths are universally applicable. It becomes vivid.

The four noble truths briefly are:

- 1 That there is universal suffering
- 2 That there is a cause for that suffering
- 3 That an end of that suffering is possible
- 4 That there is path leading to that suffering (the middle way)

The practitioner keeps developing the middle way which is expressed as the noble eight-fold path, ardently, mindfully, and unswervingly until full realisation is achieved. At the highest level of right view, the concept of the self disappears leaving no room for further becoming. No further birth is possible.

The key factor to develop on the path is wise-attention, or a combination of mindfulness and wisdom (yoniso manasikara).

Looking at it in another way, the chain of causation is broken at the link of clinging (upadana). This perfectly within the reach of every person. This needs to be tried in simple ways initially to get convinced.

For example, it is natural to have desire for food. It is natural because we cannot live without food. The question is how far you want to be attached to any particular item of food. Except the very weak individuals, we all have the ability to abandon certain items of food at will. Every time we abandon in this manner, we actually reduce our mental state of attachment (clinging).

When you keep repeating this practice, it becomes normal behaviour. It leads to gradual reduction of clinging. That is an effective method to move on the path. There is no need to lament that it is too hard to practice the teachings of the Buddha. Try it and get convinced. Repeated practice is the key.

It is beneficial if we want to lead a happy life here and now. It is crucially beneficial in progressing on the path to Nibbana.

The Buddha realised the truths all by himself, taking a long time of training and sacrifice. He has placed before us a method of achieving enlightenment with much less effort. Only, we need to apply it.

DISCOURSE ON RIGHT CONCENTRATION

(BASED ON SAMMA SAMADHI SUTTA PARAGRAPH 1 ITEM 1)

This note is largely based on a sermon given recently by Venerable Panadure Chandaratana, Deputy Chief Monk of the Nissarana Vanaya, forest monastery of Sri Lanka. It is written by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra of the Sidhartha Institute of Buddhism, Brisbane, Australia for the Dhamma Lessons Bank.

REFERENCE TO SCRIPTURES

Discourse on Right Concentration (stillness).

There are other discourses dwelling on this idea.

ESSETIAL PRACTICE

Right concentration (stillness) is achieved by developing the four absorptions. Absorptions can be attained in many different ways, such as meditation on breathing, physical objects, goodwill (metta), postures, and the six senses. However, the results might vary but are always beneficial.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS ARTICLE

In this discourse, four types of objectives for developing absorptions are mentioned:

- 1 Happiness right now
- 2 Development of abnormal knowledges
- 3 Development of mindfulness and clear comprehension
- 4 Destruction of all cankers

In this dissertation we confine ourselves to the first objective, namely the achievement of happiness right here and now.

MENTAL STATES THAT ARE OVERCOME TEMPORARILY

The development of the absorptions effectively suppresses the five hindrances:

- 1 Sensuality
- 2 Hatred
- 3 Sloth and torpor
- 4 Restlessness and worry
- 5 Doubt

This attainment is temporary and may dissipate after the meditation. However, the cultivation of the mind is beneficial and may have lasting benefits. The fourth absorption, however, has the potentiality to get over hindrances for ever.

MENTAL STATES THAT ARE FACTORS IN THE ABSORPTIONS AND HOW THEY CHANGE STAGE BY STAGE

- 1 The newly incident thoughts (vitakka)
- 2 Evaluation of new thoughts (vicara)
- 3 Joy in the mind and pleasant feelings in the body (piti and sukha)
- 4 One-pointedness of mind (ekaggata)
- 5 Equipoise (Upekkha)

All five prevail in the first absorption. Stage by stage these get eliminated. In the fourth absorption only the last two remain.

DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF REAL LIFE

How do these changes happen in our experience?

It is worth checking whether you experience these things:

- 1 You remember past events that were not pleasant
- 2 You dream of realising dreams that might never come true
- 3 Memories of an encounter with an enemy keep coming up
- 4 There is a feeling of lethargy about work to be done
- 5 Something went wrong but it cannot be set right now
- 6 Thoughts about various things crowd the mind, and I cannot control this
- 7 I have doubts about anything and everything

If these things happen just observe the feeling of harassment you experience. It is unending suffering, even misery. These can be linked with one or more of the five hindrances listed above. If we have a method, we should try to get rid of them peacefully.

Development of Jhanas is a sure way of doing this.

HOW THE ABSORPTIONS SUCCEED IN GETTING RID OF HINDRANCES

As a result of attaining a Jhana when the mind is still or concentrated or one-pointed, there is no room for thoughts relating to sensual desires or aversions. Hence, they dissipate.

When the mind tries to focus on a nominated object like the breath, the act of walking, or the person to you extend goodwill or metta, there is no room for lethargy, sleepiness, sloth, or torpor. One becomes active in the meditation.

The peace of mind resulting from the meditation does not support worry and restlessness or harking back to past trouble or to jumping forward to future possibilities.

The joy of attaining peace of mind reduces the chances of uncertainty and doubt gripping the mind.

When you get settled in the first absorption, the door is opened to the second absorption.

FIRST ABSORPTION

The first absorption was associated with new thoughts from the memory or from the surroundings (vitakka), evaluation or mulling over new thoughts (vicara), joy or rapture and body pleasure, stillness of mind and equanimity or balance of mental states.

SECOND ABSORPTION

New thoughts are no longer pursued or evaluated creating a more sublime level of peace of mind. This is called the second absorption.

The Buddha compares this mental state to a water pond with no inflows from any direction or from above, thus making it serene. It gets its water quietly from within itself, through the natural spouts. There is a dispassionate joy. Hence the mind tends to get absorbed in it. It is an absorption, and it does create a liking for continuation.

With gradual elimination of these mental states absorptions 3 and 4 are attained.

THIRD ABSORPTION

With concerted practice, it seems to the meditator that this liking is gross and attempts to abandon the rapture and pleasure dwelling on the initial meditation

object, placing the mind on stillness and equanimity. As a result, the third absorption results.

FOURTH ABSORPTION

Refinement of the third absorption results in the cleansing of mind still further. It is compared with a perfectly white cloth. There are no impurities for the time being. It can serve as a steppingstone to ultimate wisdom and realities of all experience.

MINDFULNESS TO THE FORE FRONT

In all these stages, mindfulness needs to be taken to the forefront. With the help of mindfulness, one can prevent the attachment to the joys and pleasures that arise from the attainment of absorptions.

MANY WAYS OF DEVELOPING STILLNESS OF MIND

We must not forget that there are many ways of attaining high levels of concentration. It is worth trying different techniques and observing which of these work for you. It is best to keep an open mind.

A well-known method is observation of breathing. Another is walking. Goodwill (metta) meditation is yet another. Object-based (kasina) meditation and sense-based meditation are also effective.

The newcomer naturally gets into calming (samatha) meditation. At an early stage it is good to learn the difference between meditation of the calming type and the meditations of the mindfulness type also called insight (vipassana).

It is economical to switch over to vipassana meditation or sati meditation at an early stage. This helps to reach emancipation from samsara. Calming meditation leads only up to the Brahma worlds. That is not encouraged.

In sense-based development of Jhana, the writer feels that the meditator has a better chance of discerning progress. This discernment does help building confidence and practising to improve on the attainments. This is very clear with respect to the first two Jhanas. Many teachers of meditation do not seem to support this claim.

It is however true that in breathing meditation, the appearance of a moving cloud is an indication of progress. In walking meditation, the arising of feeling of the four great forms of matter function as indicators of progress.

QUOTES FROM AJHAN BRAHM'S WRITINGS

Article 130

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
6 October 2022]

FREEDOM FROM DESIRE, NOT FREEDOM OF DESIRE

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

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

Article 131

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
13 October 2022]

MEDITATION

In practicing meditation there will be some hard work, especially at the beginning, but if you are persistent, meditation will lead you to some very beautiful and meaningful states. It is the law of nature that without effort one does not make progress. Whether you are a lay person or a monk or nun, without effort you get nowhere.

Effort alone is not sufficient. Effort needs to be skilful. This means directing your energy to just the right places and sustaining it until the task is complete. Skilful effort neither hinders nor disturbs; instead, it produces the beautiful peace, of deep meditation."

Source: "Happiness through meditation" by Ajahn Brahm

Article 132

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
20 October 2022]

FOCUS ON THE GOOD THINGS WE HAVE DONE, NOT THE MISTAKES

"The trouble is that we tend to amplify the mistakes and forget the successes, which creates so much of a burden of guilt and heaviness. So instead, we can turn to our successes, the good things we have done in our life; we could call it our Buddha nature within us. If you turn to that, it grows; whereas if you turn to the mistakes, they grow. If you dwell on any thought in the mind, any train of thought, it grows and grows, doesn't it? So, we turn our hearts around and dwell upon the positive in ourselves, the purity, the goodness, the source of that unconditional love - that which wants to help, to sacrifice even our own comfort for the sake of another being. This is a way we can regard our inner being, our heart. Forgiving its faults, we dwell upon its nobility, its purity, its kindness. We can do the same with other people, we can dwell upon their goodness and watch it grow."

Source: *On Making a Mistake*, Ajahn Brahm

Article 133

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria
27 October 2022]

LET THE CONTENTMENT DEEPEN

It's the nature of contentment to deepen – to become more brilliant, more happy, more blissful, more profound, and empty – if you just stay with it long enough"

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

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.

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

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

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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