



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

Sangha Samaggi Togetherness of the Buddhist Sangha

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QSA 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 are in the meeting room, 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 APRIL-MAY 2023

In April 2023 there will be no BCR (Buddhist Counsellors) programs.

2023

MAY

6 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 15

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Who is worthy of wearing the yellow robe? (Dhammapada 9, 10)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Recollecting past good actions might be beneficial (Dhammapada 18)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of parts of the body

MAY

13 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 16

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- The weak succumb to temptations, but not the strong (Dhammapada 7, 8)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- False pride is a dangerous barrier (Dhammapada 7,8)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of compassion

MAY

20 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 17

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Make your own island, watch the floods pass by (Dhammapada 25)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Heedfulness is the key to learning (Dhammapada 31)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of mental impurities (Dhammapada 25)

MAY

27 *Saturday 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm*

BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS PACKAGE 18

- 1 Dhamma applications in daily life- Learning without practising is not worth (Dhammapada 19)
- 2 Buddhist educational principles- Using subsequent regret as an indication that a mistake was made (Dhammapada 67)
- 3 Dhamma practice techniques including meditation-Reminiscence of appreciative joy -meditation

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. If you are unable to attend you can ask for the scripts of presentations to be sent to you by email.

Article 163

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DISCOURSES-
LESSON 0103

Edited by John A. Cartwright

CULTIVATING LIBERALITY (CAGA SAMPADA)

We know the word charity. The words giving, donating, or renouncing for the benefit of others have similar meanings.

You own or you have a right to own something, and you feel like giving it to another. If you can do this easily, then you have this quality of liberality. A common act is giving an eatable to another. Giving your seat in the bus is similar.

Naturally we like to cling on to what we have, Liberality enables us to renounce or give up what we have.

It is a good way to live in society.

Renunciation is an essential feature of spiritual practice. Members of the Sangha have renounced household life.

Practising giving in simple ways is the beginning.

Once again reflecting on reminiscing the value of liberality is a good meditation amounting to right effort.

Article 164

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON MEDITATION-
LESSON 2004

Edited by Dayani de Silva

MOVING THE MIND FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER

Meditators often worry about the difficulty of bringing the mind to dwell on a single object. Concentration meditation is concerned with this type of meditation.

It is little realised that it is even harder to lift the mind off an object on which it is dwelling to the exclusion of all others.

For example, if you see a beautiful object, you tend to keep looking at it, and it is pretty hard to take your mind away. Test the mind with respect to the other senses, and you will notice the truth of this dictum.

One method of moving the mind away from an object is the development of mindfulness. When mindfulness is strong, it will remind you that you are stuck on an object. Dhamma knowledge will remind you that you need to move on for your own good.

Article 165

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DHAMMA-LESSON 3004

Edited by Lyna Chen

WHAT IS THE DHAMMA?

The first discourse called Turning the Wheel of the Dhamma mentioned above, contains a gist of Buddha's teachings. The ideas are apparently simple but took a good amount of time and explanation for the five ascetics to understand them. Initially, only Kondanna understood the Buddha. He then attained the first stage of enlightenment. The others took a little more time. It must be noted that these five ascetics were not ordinary people. They had already developed great mental skills under other teachers of the day.

When we read the discourse, things seem to be direct and simple. Continued reflections help us to see that there is more depth to explore.

There are three fundamental ideas in the discourse. The first is the need to abandon the extremes. At that time, some thought that the truth is realised by ardent practice of austerities, effectively torturing the body. Others believed that the more effective way was to enjoy life to the extreme. The Buddha advised abandoning these extremes.

The second part of the discourse was a statement of the fundamental truths of life, called the four noble truths. These were, the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of there being an end to suffering and finally, the truth of there being a way to reach that end.

The third part of the discourse is the noble eight-fold path or the middle path to be followed to reach the end of suffering.

The massive volume of literature forming the Pali scriptures is detailed explanations of these matters.

Lessons appearing later in the Dhamma Lessons bank, go into deep studies of the four noble truths and the noble eight-fold path. However, they are explained here in much simpler terms.

Article 166

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY-LESSON 5003

Edited by Dr. Kumari Sellahewa

THE NOBLE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

The path to be followed to reach the end of suffering is called the noble eight-fold path. These are eight mental states that need to be developed, both separately, and together. The eight are:

Right View

Right Thought

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood

Right Effort

Right Mindfulness

Right Concentration

The term right needs to be understood gradually although it suggests a meaning to any reasonable person. Ultimately right here indicates that the mental state leads to enlightenment or the end of suffering. The meaning is mostly empirical.

The meanings of the eight terms need to be explored. Livelihood is really a combination of thought, speech and action **that is** used to earn a living. It applies to everybody including children, monks, nuns, and the elderly.

Effort here implies mental effort. Mindfulness is the ability to move the mind with the action and to continue following the action. Concentration here does not imply some strenuous action but rather allowing the mind to become still.

These are discussed in depth in the relevant lessons under the main topic Dhamma.

The noble eight-fold path is sometimes called the middle way.

The fundamental idea that there is suffering is the first of the four noble truths. Briefly stated these are as follows:

That there is inherent suffering in existence

That there is a cause for that suffering

That there is a possible end for such suffering

That there is a way that leads to the cessation of suffering

The cause for suffering is craving.

The elimination of craving results in an end to suffering.

Anyone following the noble eight-fold path may reach that end.

Article 167

EXTRACT FROM THE DHAMMA PRACTICE TRAINING ACADEMY (DPTA) LESSON BANK ON DHAMMA
PRACTICE-LESSON 6003

SUGGESTED COMMENCING PRACTICE

Learning to be quiet is useful. Talk when necessary but there is no need to talk for the sake of talking. Many mistakes are made in engaging in unnecessary speaking. Learn to be silent most of the time. This is valuable unwritten precept. It will also help in developing the mind through meditation.

Another simple practice is observing the five precepts described as part of Dhamma.

It is better to practice the eight precepts of livelihood. This set is as follows:

- Not to kill living beings
- Not to steal
- Not to engage in misconduct
- Not to tell lies
- Not to spread slanders
- Not to utter harsh words
- Not to engage in meaningless chatter
- Not to engage in wrong livelihood

The seventh precept can bring about remarkable change in a person. The first four coupled with not taking intoxicants is usually called the five precepts.

No formalities are required as these are rules one decides to follow voluntarily.

What we build up with the help of noble friends can be adversely affected because of the influence of one ignoble associate. Such a person will look very friendly but may have poor intentions. They usually interfere with our practice and try to dissuade us from following the path of spirituality.

The practice must be protected from such individuals.

Article 168

QUOTES FROM AJAHN BRAHMAVANSO

Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria

16 March 23

Why is it that people keep worrying about what happened in the past? Or, why do they keep worrying and being anxious about the future? I've often told different amazing ways of how to let go of the past and the future, but unless you have Kindfulness to the present moment and appreciate being here, of course you will always want to go somewhere else."

Source: ["Opening up to Kindfulness" by Ajahn Brahm](#)

22 March 2023

"It says in the Buddha's second sermon, the teaching on non-self, the Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN XXII. 59), that if these objects of the mind were yours to control, you could say to them, "May you be like this, may you be like that". These objects are anatta: not me, not mine, not a self; "you can't do anything about them", said the Buddha. So leave them alone, let them go. Whether it's rupa, bodily things, material things, or whether it's feelings, perceptions, mental formations, or consciousness, leave them alone. They just arise and fall according to their conditions."

Source: ["Simply This Moment! a collection of talks on Buddhist practice" by Ajahn Brahm](#)

30 March 2023

Inspiration is a beautiful source of pure energy that uplifts your heart."

Source: [All you need is kindness - a collection of Ajahn Brahm Quotes](#)

Article 169

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

THE NEED FOR MEASURED EFFORT (BCRP 3.1)

INTRODUCTION

Effort is one (number 6) of the lanes of the Noble Eight-fold Path. There can be no progress on the path unless effort is applied.

The four great endeavours in the 37 factors of enlightenment described in the above lessons, is the way in which effort must be applied.

The four endeavours are arranged in a particular order.

1 Prevent the arising of unwholesome mental states

- 2 Abandon already arisen unwholesome mental states
- 3 Arouse wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen
- 4 Maintain and perfect already arisen wholesome mental states

One can apply effort the whole time everywhere but to get the best results one needs to apply wisdom and mindfulness all the time.

Otherwise, effort will go waste, not giving expected results.

STREAMLINING EFFORT

1 In the above *pattern*, note that the initial attention needs to be paid to unwholesome mental states. Most people pay great attention to the wholesome mental states while amassing unwholesome mental states.

For example, a man who is given to drinking and trying to get into gambling, might take strong interest in alms-giving or Dhamma study. His initial endeavour needs to be to eliminate the tendency to take up gambling, and then reduce or eliminate the habit of drinking, according to 1 and 2 above.

To give another example, suppose a person lacks training in meditation but excels in Dhamma knowledge, the better endeavour is to learn meditation rather than reading more and more in Dhamma. This is a choice between item 3 and item 4.

2 Another matter of interest here is the *intensity of effort* applied. People who start late get into a rush and want to learn and practise everything good. Here one needs to guard against using excessive effort. Why? This can lead to fatigue, failure, and frustration. It is not useful to rush with Dhamma practice.

On the other hand, mild, half-hearted effort is also not helpful. The excessive time taken invites other influences and distractions to set in.

Mindfulness and wisdom must be summoned to help the practitioner to apply reasonable effort.

The Buddha refers to the experience of a violin player. If the wires are not adequately tightened there will be a sag and the expected musical sound will not come out. If the wires are too tight, again the sound can be awful. Reasonable tightness must be established with mindfulness and wisdom.

3 *Wisdom needs to work with effort* to achieve success. Effort and energy are often wasted because the current methods are not the best. Then wisdom

needs to come in to seek and adopt a better method. This obviously applies to every student as many fail, because of adhering to wrong methods of study. They cling on to wrong methods with tenacity, unable to let go.

For example, a method of meditation if continued for ever, may cause loss of confidence and abandonment. It makes sense to change the method every now and then, on good advice.

4 Whatever we do by way of practice must be *accompanied by mindfulness*. Always be aware of what is being done, what method is used, how intense the method is and so forth, and take corrective action. It can save one from falling asleep in meditation.

5 When applying effort in Dhamma practice, one must bear in mind the ultimate goal of *abandoning attachments*, though in practical terms this will progress gradually in stages or fields, or strands.

Article 170

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

RE-FOCUSSING IN PRESENTATIONS (BCRP 3.2)

INTRODUCTION

Re-Focussing at intervals is a teaching technique similar to re-enforcement theory. The basic idea of a presentation is alluded to, several times in a presentation, to confirm and re-enforce the idea.

The success of a person as a teacher, counsellor, mentor, or guide depends on the ability to communicate effectively. In making a presentation it is suggested that the Buddha's method of re-focussing on the theme of the presentation **WHENEVER POSSIBLE** is recommended.

MANY LEVELS OF RE-FOCUSSING ON THE THEME

- 1 Re-focussing on the theme after the initial concise summary
- 2 Re-focussing on the theme after the brief description of the topic

3 Re-focussing on the theme after every sub-topic is discussed

The first is adequate for some listeners and gives others a useful key.

The second makes the information intelligible for many.

Repeated re-focussing helps to confirm the theme in every detail as in the sub-topics.

Most discourses of the Buddha are styled in this way.

If these three fail a repetition may be necessary. For example, the four noble truths, and the noble eight-fold path are repeated almost everywhere in the Dhamma in most presentations. That is re-fussing.

ILLUSTRATIONS

One example is the fourth line of every stanza in the Great Discourse on Blessings. The discourse on the Jewels is another example.

Another example is the presentation of the Buddha in the Great discourse on Turning of the Dhamma Wheel.

Article 171

EXTRACT FROM THE QSA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUDDHIST COUNSELLORS

GOODWILL (METTA) MEDITATION (BCRP 3.3)

INTRODUCTION

(Written by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra for the Dhamma Practice Training Academy, of the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational division of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc Note that there is a separate package for high school children, another for young adults and yet another for young married couples including a social contract)

The idea of teaching goodwill (*metta*) meditation for adults arises from the social need of successful relationships and happy marriages, peace in the 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) worlds.

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 *metta* meditation, adjusted for the needs of 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 Buddhist Counsellor 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 adult must be encouraged to complete a package like this at intervals in life 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. Through a package, experience and learning gained over a period can be consolidated. This can be life changing.

It is believed that Siddhartha and Yasodhara were spouses in 500 previous births. That helped each other to progress spiritually. So can be a family 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 reminiscences, recollections and contemplations or focussed, light and soft thinking:

PRACTICE METHOD 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, breathing meditation, on the internet and during chanting of scriptures.
- 3 Think of your mother who looked 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 looked 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 looked 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, a family. or a group.

Think of yourself as a happy, peaceful person, in good health, and free from pain, fear and agitation. Feel happy about yourself, always.

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.

Participants must be encouraged to keep records of their own progress and get further advice from a Buddhist Counsellor.

ALTERNATIVE METHOD 1

Think of all the people you usually associate with beginning from yourself. Imagine you are at the centre. Arrange them in two circles around you.

The family members can be in the first circle. Associates whether friendly or unfriendly will be in the outer circle.

Think of one person in the first circle and wish that person as stated above in the main method. Even though your eyes are closed, the person can be seen in front of you. Heap the person with goodwill as if pouring water to bathe. See the person happy and at the same time you will see yourself happy. This is important. If you are not happy, it does seem that you can wish another happiness. Take your own time.

Now think of another person and repeat the process. Stop the process when you want whether finished or unfinished.

Then move to the second circle and repeat the process.

If the other person is unfriendly, you may find some difficulty. In that case use the label 'unfriendly' but try to extend good wishes. After a few trials that person will begin to be seen as friendly.

If that does not succeed, there are other remedies we can discuss later.

ALTERNATIVE METHOD 2

In discourses the Buddha has suggested that we radiate goodwill in the ten directions, North, South etc, North-East etc, above and below.

Do not think of individuals or groups, countries, or areas, but just the directions.

Radiate goodwill in every direction. Stop when you want.

FURTHER EXPLANATIONS

- 1 The process is mutually beneficial
- 2 There is no need to Imagine something going from you to another.

- 3 There are benefits accruing to the goodwill meditator but there is no need to be greedy for those things.
- 4 This is the easiest meditation for many people
- 5 Practise it with faith in the Buddha. Remember Nalagiri or Angulimala?
- 6 Have confidence in success. Have joy when success is evidenced.
- 7 The Buddha was the pinnacle of goodwill thoughts
- 8 It is stated that a person steadfastly practising goodwill meditation can reach right up to the third stage of enlightenment (Anagami or non-returner) in Theravada.
- 9 If the formula of four or five types of wishes does not work, think of one aspect only. The writer practises that way. It is more effective.

BASIC MINIMUM PRACTICE

At least, whenever some person comes to your mind, extend goodwill. Nothing can be a simpler meditation.

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 A Guide to the Practice of Buddhism**

Printed copies of book 1 are also available; for printed books a donation for postage, will be appreciated. A few copies of the first edition of 2 are available.

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 April 2023

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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