



# QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

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## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

A QSA course planned for October - November 2022 on Zoom

The Queensland Sangha Association is again offering a short, on-line course for those who are interested in volunteer chaplaincy work. Buddhist Chaplains undertake a wide range of volunteer work both inside and outside Buddhist communities in Australia. This includes: supporting people who are facing life difficulties (relationship and family problems, unemployment, bereavement, etc.); providing pastoral care in hospitals, hospices, aged care facilities, prisons and universities; teaching Buddhism in schools and elsewhere; teaching meditation and mindfulness; running Buddhist centres and groups; caring for children, the sick, the elderly and dying; supporting community members in times of conflict or natural disaster.

The Introduction to Buddhist Chaplaincy course provides some basic tools, information, and skills training, in how to help and support others. The topics to be covered in the course include what it means from a Buddhist perspective to help or 'offer service' to others, assessing needs and making referrals, basic counselling skills (listening and communication), the diversity of Buddhist communities, common problems and issues encountered by chaplains, suicide prevention, and self-care for chaplains.

**This course will run - via Zoom - over five Saturdays (from 9am to 1pm, Brisbane time) on the following dates in 2022: 29 October, 5 November, 12 November, 19 November, 3 December. Attendance at a minimum of 4 out of 5 classes is a requirement to complete the course.**

This introductory course in Buddhist Chaplaincy does not assume or require any in-depth knowledge of Buddhism or any prior training in counselling. It is open to lay and ordained people from all Buddhist traditions and backgrounds (and to non-Buddhists as well). The course is free although a donation to the Queensland Sangha Association (of any size) is requested for participants who are able to afford this.

The full information package for the Qualifying Course in Buddhist Chaplaincy can be obtained by emailing the course convenor, Dr Barbara Sullivan – [barbara.sullivan4005@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.sullivan4005@gmail.com)

## Article 113

[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 29 – SEEKING THE COMPANY OF THE SANGHA

The term used in the discourse is Samana, which usually means the monks or nuns. They form a special class of persons committed to life-long practice of the Dhamma. They lead a special form of life mostly in temples and similar institutions. They are the best among the noble friends we can meet.

Seeing them as a habit is a blessing for several reasons. Firstly, they form a group that is always good to meet, that is noble friends. Noble friends are considered as wiser people who can give us guidance. They are well versed in the Dhamma having learnt from the scriptures and their teachers for a long time.

When you want to clarify a point or learn the Dhamma in general, the clergy can help us.

They set an example for others to follow. That is one of the best forms of learning, particularly when we are interested in spirituality.

While we can read books and learn the Dhamma, it is often necessary to discuss the Dhamma with others who know.

They also provide us with inspiration to practice the Dhamma.

Most often, if we are interested in learning and practice of meditation, it is very necessary to seek guidance from the Sangha, as they have a wealth of knowledge, and genuine experience, that may not be available elsewhere.

The presence of the Sangha enables us to perform many meritorious acts such as making offerings of food, medicine, robes, shelter, and other needs of the Sangha.

The temples where they live also provide us with the opportunity to meet other noble friends who also tend to follow the spiritual path. Temple activities are also helpful in following the spiritual path.

#### **Article 114**

[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 30 – TIMELY DISCUSSION OF THE DHAMMA**

In the pursuit of spiritual development, the first requirement is listening to the Dhamma, the second is remembering what was taught, and the third is discussing the Dhamma learnt for deeper understanding.

It should be timely because we tend to forget the Dhamma as time passes. Hence discussions cannot be postponed, and difficulties need to be discussed quickly. It is true that written material is readily available now, and that the internet and computer facilities are easily accessible. Even then, a discussion in due time is vitally important. In a discussion one gets the opportunity to exchange ideas.

People learn the Dhamma as a part of their knowledge base and therefore, each person is bound to form views and opinions about any aspect of the Dhamma. Some views may not be helpful. A discussion affords an opportunity to reduce incorrect understanding. Some will have more wisdom and prior knowledge, and it is possible to correct our ideas by discussing with them.

Discussion of the Dhamma is a continuous process, and our understanding of difficult points is bound to improve with more discussions.

Those who are not interested in discussions run the risk of holding on to wrong views for ever. Doubts can be cleared only through discussions. In this connection, debates and arguments are best avoided.

Learning from those with more experience, is very helpful. Repeated practice is the key. Solitary thinking is not recommended, however wise one might be.

Noble friends come to our help in discussing the Dhamma. In practice most of them are monks and nuns.

Apart from learning the Dhamma in discussions, another advantage is that participants get inspiration for further practice because of the example set by noble friends and their stories of success.

Dhamma discussions must suit members of the participating groups. Discussing very succinct aspects might be unsuitable in some groups. Hence the overall understanding of a discussion leader is important. Quite often, people tend to discuss matters complexly beyond their understanding.

Discussions need to help a participant to advance spiritually and so much academically.

### **Article 115**

[Taken from the Dhamma Practice Training Academy -Dhamma Lessons Bank 3, lesson number 4002]

## **4002 NOBLE EIGHT-FOLD PATH-A SUMMARY**

It is not proper to say that one teaching is the most important in the Buddha Dhamma. If such a choice would be made it is the noble eight-fold path. How well we progress along the path determines how soon we can come to enlightenment. The practice is along the eight lanes of the path that are discussed, at different levels shown below.

The question is in which lane to start. You can start in any lane. The little you achieve today will spread to the other lanes, and as time goes on. For many people a lane that is easily understood is right speech. Just decide to use right speech from this moment onwards. That is all you need. You will get confidence that you have got on to the path, simply by observing the results.

It will be good to get an idea of other lanes on the path. Read only the short lessons at the start. There is at least one lesson for one lane of the path.

The eight lanes are:

- 1 Right view
- 2 Right thought
- 3 Right speech
- 4 Right action
- 5 Right livelihood
- 6 Right effort
- 7 Right mindfulness
- 8 Right concentration

The starting point and the starting process are important. Although speech is one area most people can improve, it is suggested that the eighth lane, concentration is a worthwhile lane to try. Even as children we need to improve our ability to concentrate, so that we can improve in studies. Later in life this is valuable in doing well in a trade or profession. It is needless to say, that as a religious person, concentration would be indispensable.

Many methods are mentioned in the Dhamma that help us to develop concentration. One such method is described in lesson 6911. Concentration is also called stillness of mind.

When the mind is still, you know where it is now. Hence mindfulness or Sati is developed. This helps to correct your view, to develop wisdom to some extent. As the view improves, though improves. Thereby speech, action and livelihood also improve.

This means that the key starting factor is Effort. Effort helps to develop stillness and mindfulness. These three working together cause a flow effect on all the lanes of the path. This is specifically mentioned in the Great discourse on the forty (Maha Cattarisaka Sutta).

The writer feels that this is the best way to start practising on the noble eight-fold path.

Learning is one thing but practising what you learn is the crucial thing. Otherwise learning becomes academic.

## Article 116

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

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

## Quote

### THE EXPERIENCE OF BREATHING

"Make the breath a pleasant abiding so that the mind finds happiness and satisfaction by remaining with the breath. We do that by developing the perception of a happy breath, a peaceful beautiful breath. That is not too difficult to do with training. If you can remind yourself, when meditating, to develop the perception of joy and happiness with the breath, you will find that the mind remains on the breath with very little difficulty. One way of doing that is to develop loving kindness towards the breath.

Loving kindness towards an object sees only the joyful, beautiful, and positive aspects of that object. If you can develop that positive way of looking at the breath when it comes in and goes out, you will find that the mind will naturally just want to remain with it. It will not be so interested in those other sensory phenomena that try to steal your attention away."

Source: Simply this moment : a collection of talks on Buddhist practice by Ajahn Brahm

## Article 117

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

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

### BEING AWARE WITHOUT REACTING

"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 118

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

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

#### 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 119

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

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

#### IT IS THE BODY THAT GETS TIRED

"We can see all these things like physical tiredness; it's just the body, that's all. That's why the forest masters told us to just reflect upon the body. Tiredness is



part of having a body. The older we get the more tired we get. It is just a natural process. We have to get used to it. We can't fight it or control it. What we can do is realise that it's just the body being tired.

Sometimes when I go back to my hut at night my body is so tired. I've been running around all day doing things for people, and then I remember that teaching of the Buddha – I have great faith in the Buddha's teachings – 'Even though the body is sick, the mind doesn't need to be sick. Even though the body is tired, the mind doesn't need to be tired'. These are very powerful teachings! Teachings like these are great, because we are often tired physically but not mentally. That is how we can cheer ourselves up.

Separate the mind from the body and even though the body is hurting, we just let it go, and follow the Buddha's teachings on meditation. Let go of the past and the future, and we're just left with the present moment. Let go of the inner conversation. That inner conversation is the worst thing we're attached to. We think ourselves into so much suffering!"

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

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

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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