



QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

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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

NOVEMBER

- 19 Saturday 1.30 to 2.30 pm Brisbane time
- 1.1 Self-Assessment
 - 1.2 Repetition technique in teaching Buddhism
 - 1.3 Breathing meditation (to absorption 3)
- 20 Sunday 7.00 pm Discussion on the Safe-bet (Apannaka) Discourse
Conducted by Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra
- 26 Saturday 1.30 to 2.30 pm Brisbane time
- 2.1 The decision mental state
 - 2.2 Three-pronged presentation style
 - 2.3 Walking meditation-theory and practice

DECEMBER

- 03 Saturday 1.30 to 2.30 pm Brisbane time
- 3.1 Application of Measured Effort
 - 3.2 Re-Focusing technique in Dhamma teaching
 - 3.3 Goodwill (Metta) meditation-theory and practice
- 10 Saturday 1.30 to 2.30 pm Brisbane time
- 4.1 The Psychic Power of Interest
 - 4.2 Learning by teaching
 - 4.3 Mindfulness of the six senses (a Jhana meditation)-theory and practice
- 17 Saturday 8.30 to 9.30 pm Brisbane time

(No Dhamma Program)
Committee meeting 53

END OF YEAR RECESS

2023

January

7 Saturday 1.30 m

Zoom programs resume

25 March Saturday 1.30 pm

AGM and MCM 54

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

Venerable Brisbane Dhamma Rakkhitha conducts two programs every month on topics related to mindfulness in English and Sinhalese. Details are as follows.

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 134

[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 34 – REALISING NIBBANA (ENLIGHTENMENT)

A person who realises enlightenment could still be leading a mundane life. That might be you or me or our neighbour, or an unknown person. That is possible because according to Theravada scriptures, enlightenment can be achieved in four stages. These are the four stages:

- 1 Stream winner (sotapanna)
- 2 Once returner (sakadagamin)
- 3 Non-returner (anagamin)
- 4 Saint (Arahant)

Each stage is attained by the successful abandonment of certain mental factors called fetters (samyojana) that keep us in the cycle of births (samsara) by bonding to it.

At the first stage the following fetters (samyojana) are abandoned:

- 1 Conception of an ego-entity (sakkhaya ditthi)
- 2 Sceptical doubt (vicikicca)
- 3 Attachment to ritual (Silabbata paramasa)

At the second stage the strength of the following fetters is minimised:

- 4 Sensual pleasures (kama raga)
- 5 Ill-will or aversion (vyapada)

At the third stage the following fetters are eliminated:

- 4 Sensual pleasures (kamaraga)
- 5 Ill-will (vyapada)

At stage four the following fetters are eliminated:

- 6 Craving for existence with form (ruparaga)
- 7 Craving for existence without form (aruparaga)
- 8 Conceit (mana)
- 9 Agitation (uddhacca-kukkucca)
- 10 Ignorance (avijja)

With the elimination of the fetters, the roots of unwholesomeness, greed, hatred, and ignorance are fully destroyed. In our day-to-day practice, every attempt is made to reduce these using virtue and concentration. They get eliminated finally, through the ardent practice of *mindfulness meditation (sati) associated with wisdom*.

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 135

[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 35 –A MIND NOT SHAKEN BY WORLDLY VICISSITUDES

The results of attaining enlightenment discussed here apply at the attainment of stage 4 of enlightenment discussed before.

The mind of the Arahant cannot be shaken by things that happen in the world whether these are welcome or unwelcome. These are called the eight vicissitudes of life and are enumerated below:

- 1 Gain and loss
- 2 Fame and disgrace or ill-fame

3 Praise and blame

4 Pleasure and pain

The Arahant faces all these experiences with equanimity. Whatever happens, it is alright.

Those who have attained the first three stages of enlightenment, probably could face the vicissitudes to a great degree. Individuals who ardently and wisely practice on the path too have the partial ability to stay relatively equanimous. This is proved by experience.

One who attains the first stage, is endowed with the following:

- 1 Confidence in the Buddha is firm and cannot be shaken
- 2 Will not be re-born in woeful states
- 3 Observes the five precepts scrupulously
- 4 If he is re-born it will be as a human or deity (celestial being)
- 5 Attains the fourth stage in one of the next seven lives
- 6 Is a noble and exemplary friend
- 7 Is an ideal person in ethical terms

One who attains the second stage of enlightenment, has succeeded in minimising sense-desires and ill-will. If reborn it will be only for one more life. All the qualities that apply for a person who attained the first stage will also apply here.

One who attains the third stage of enlightenment is completely free from sense desires and ill-will. If he is married, he would help the spouse to re-marry if the spouse so desires. A celibate life is what he would pursue. Such a person will not return to a human life after death. Until the fourth stage is attained, this person will live in a brahma world. That is a world in which sense desires are absent.

A person who has attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, has succeeded in abandoning all defilements of the mind, and while he or she is alive, will lead a

saintly life, not disturbed by anything. Life becomes absolutely happy and there will be no rebirth anywhere. When the sustaining conditions disappear, the flame would also disappear. It is like that.

Article 136

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES AT THE TIME OF THE BUDDHA (BASED ON APANNAKA SUTTA (SAFE BET DISCOURSE))

This article is extracted from the DPTA lessons bank on discourses

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The following is an extract from the introduction to the translation of the Pali discourse written by Venerable Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

“I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was on a wandering tour among the Kosalans with a large community of monks, he arrived at the brahman village called Sala. The brahman householders heard, "Master Gotama the contemplative — the son of the Sakyans, having gone forth from the Sakyan clan — on a wandering tour among the Kosalans with a large community of monks — has arrived at Sala. And of that master Gotama this fine reputation has spread: 'He is indeed a Blessed One, an arahant, rightly self-awakened: consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, a knower of the cosmos, an unexcelled trainer of those persons ready to be tamed, teacher of human & divine beings, awakened, blessed. He has made known — having realized it through direct knowledge — this world with its devas, maras, & brahmas, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their rulers & common people. He has explained the Dhamma admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end; has expounded the holy life both in its particulars & in its essence, entirely perfect, surpassingly pure. It is good to see such a worthy one.

So, the brahman householders of Sala went to the Blessed One. On arrival, some of them bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side. Some of them exchanged courteous greetings with him and, after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, sat to one side. Some of them sat to one side having saluted him with their hands palm-to-palm over their hearts. Some of them sat to one side having announced their name & clan. Some of them sat to one side in silence.”

As they were sitting there, the Blessed One asked them, "Householders, is there any teacher agreeable to you, in whom you have found grounded conviction?"

"No, lord, there is no teacher agreeable to us, in whom we have found grounded conviction."

"As you have not found an agreeable teacher, you should adopt and practice this safe-bet teaching, for this safe-bet teaching — when accepted and adopted — will be to your long-term welfare & happiness.

"And what is the safe-bet teaching?"

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At that time there were many religious teachers, some of whom were considered by the people as Buddhas, but taught entirely different things as against the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha. A few of these teachers were:

Purana Kassapa

Makkhali Gosala

Ajita Kesambali

Paduka Kaccayana

Nigantha Nathaputta

Sanjaya Bellattiputta

Purana Kassapa was a believer in non-action (akiriyavadi). In effect he was denying cause and effect or kamma.

Makkhali Gosala also did not believe in cause and effect. For him things happened in nature as pre-determined. This was a form of fatalism.

Ajita Kesambali was a materialist and denied the relevance of kamma.

Paduka Kaccayana considered killing as a non-event, but an inter-action among the great elements of matter plus happiness, pain, and soul.

Nigantha Nathaputta also was known as Mahavira. He was the patriarch of the Jaina sect. He accepted kamma but mere mechanistic kamma. Volitional thought had no place. Note that Jina was a name given to Gautama Buddha and Jaina

appears to be a variation. Mahavira was a naked ascetic, with a large following. There were scriptures and a code of discipline. The sect continues in India, particularly in Maharashtra near Mumbai.

Some of these views were powerful and were accepted by many people. This led to an era of controversy. Ordinary people found it difficult to choose the correct views, if any. That is why the people in Sala sought the advice of the Buddha.

SAFE BET PRINCIPLE OF BUDDHIST EDUCATION

For overcoming this type of wasteful controversy, the Buddha advocated the application of the safe bet principle. Briefly stated, this means that one needs to examine which side of the controversy is safer to accept and then apply it, observe its benefits.

This was a pragmatic approach.

This principle can be used in more widely as a other matters too. It is recommended that this be used more widely as a Buddhist Principle of education.

Venerable Bhikkhu Thanissaro who has translated this discourse, makes a detailed presentation of this principle in the introduction. The translation can be read on the website “[accesstoinsight](http://www.accesstoinsight.org)”.

The principle is applied to twelve specific cases that still keep causing controversies among people. These are considered in the following paragraphs.

Parents of university students, young adults, educated people, monks and nuns often get caught in this type of controversies, which end in bitterness and sadness. They can use this technique a little more often.

THE MATTERS THAT CAUSED CONTROVERSY

- 1 Is there an existence after death?
- 2 Is action necessary or will inaction help?
- 3 Is there, causality or is there no causality?
- 4 Is there a formless existence?

- 5 Is cessation of becoming possible?
- 6 The four types of individuals
- 7 What does virtue mean to you?
- 8 The usefulness of sense restraint
- 9 The usefulness of mindfulness, alertness
- 10 Abandoning the hindrances
- 11 The four absorptions (Jhanas)
- 12 The three special knowledges

APPLICATIONS OF THE SAFE BET PRINCIPLE TO SOLVE CONTROVERSIES

1 IS THERE AN EXISTENCE AFTER DEATH?

One person might say no, there is no existence after death. What are the possible consequences?

Does the claimant actually know what is being claimed? Probably not so, is the answer. It is a supposition only.

Suppose for a moment that the claim is wrong. What are the consequences? Imagine the claimant is born in an unbearable state, or a place of visible excessive suffering like the animal world.

Is that welcome? No.

It is therefore safer to assume the opposite, that there is an existence after death and get ready for it.

This is an answer to Ajita Kesambali's position.

Have you got into this controversy before? If so, recollect the results and consider whether this technique is superior.

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 December 2022

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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