



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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Sensual Pleasures Never Satiated



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තින්ති කාමෙසු විජ්ජති
අප්පස්සාදා දුබා කාමා,
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*Insatiable are sensual
desires. Sensual
desires will not be
satisfied even with a
shower of gold. The
wise knows that
sensual pleasure
bring but little
satisfaction and
much pain.*

(Dhammapada-verse 186)



*Dhammika Stupa in Sarnath, India,
where Lord Buddha, after attaining
enlightenment, gave his first
sermon to his five disciples.*

The benefits of understanding the great qualities of the Buddha

The way the Buddha emerges in the primary sources is very different from that of the commentarial explanations. This dissimilarity becomes wider when looking at Jataka stories. Even if the unenlightened Bodhisattva appears in many Jataka stories, their purpose is to illustrate how the Bodhisattva qualities finally evolved in the culmination of the power of a Buddha. Apart from these, people have different ideas but many people don't have a clear idea about the Buddha's qualities. This fact was the inspiration in writing this article, to explore the nature of the Buddha through learning about the Buddha's great qualities. Firstly, let's see how some individuals understood or saw the Buddha by their utterances when inspired by the Buddha.

"He is the Wise One, who has cast off delusion, abandoned the heart's wilderness, victor in battle; He knows no anguish, is perfectly even-minded, mature in virtue, of excellent wisdom; beyond all temptations, he is without stain: The Blessed One is he, and I am his disciple."

(Majjhima Nikaya translation of Bhikkhu Bodhi)

The above joyful utterance is made by householder Upali in *Upali sutta* of Majjhima Nikaya. The Householder

Upali was a follower of Nigantanataputta, an ascetic contemporary of the Buddha. He was sent to the Buddha with the intention of defeating the Buddha through debate. However, at the end of a long debate, he became a noble disciple of the Buddha by attaining to stream entry and afterwards praised the Buddha in the presence of Nigantanataputta, his former teacher who was a reputed master to many ascetics.

According to the *pali* canonical evidence, many beings were aware of the extraordinary qualities of the Buddha and were overjoyed to realize that he was indeed one who attained full enlightenment. Among them, Maha Brahma (head of Brahma realm), Sakka (head of divine realms), many deities, kings, distinguished scholars, wealthy merchants, people from all walks of life, and other ascetics who saw and heard about the Buddha, expressed their amazement over the power of Thathagatha. Some individuals even became attracted by the physical appearance of Gautama Buddha and learnt from the Buddha himself that they were trying to cling on to something that was impermanent. *Lakkhana Sutta* in Digha Nikaya gives an account of

The greatest wisdom is seeing through appearances.



thirty two main bodily characteristics and eighty secondary characteristics which constitute the body of the Buddha. Many people in ancient India knew about these special characteristics seen only on the body of a Buddha and recognized them when they saw the Buddha.

The teaching of the Buddha built unwavering confidence in people. Confidence gained through listening to the teaching from the Buddha or from his disciples led many people to leave their homes, wealth, families to follow the path proclaimed by the Buddha.

It is important to learn about the special qualities of the Buddha rather than reflecting on bodily signs as the former brings one closer to the happiness. In the Buddha's teaching, one necessary condition which is conducive to attaining the stream entry, the first stage of enlightenment, is the unwavering or established confidence one gains about the Buddha. Those who attained this stage have built their confidence through learning, grasping and contemplating about the great teacher's incomparable nine qualities, which helps the disciple to cross over to join the noble ones and takes him further on the path to full liberation.

At this point, I think, it is very interesting to explore the meaning of King Kosala's appreciation of the Buddha. On a certain occasion, King Pasenadi Kosala, one of the pious devotees of the Buddha, sang his praises embracing the Buddha's feet. When the Buddha asked him the reason for behaving in such a way. The King gives his reasons;

- 1) The Blessed ensures the welfare and happiness of many beings and establishes many in the noble method in accordance with the wholesome Dhamma. Due to this reason, I pay this supreme honor to you, The Blessed One.
- 2) The Blessed One has perfect virtues and so the behavior is wholesome
- 3) The Blessed One has long time been a forest dweller who resorts to cave and lodgings in the forest.
- 4) The Blessed One is content with four requisites offered.
- 5) The Blessed One is worthy of gifts, hospitality, offerings, reverential salutations and is an unsurpassed field of merits for the world.
- 6) The blessed One has been teaching about elimination of defilements, things conducive to opening up the heart, curtailing of desires, contentment, energy, concentration, Wisdom, liberation, knowledge and vision of liberation.
- 7) The Blessed One attains to four Jhanas at will, without trouble or difficulty. You experience the higher mind and pleasant abiding in this very life.
- 8) The Blessed One can recollect manifold past lives with names, clans, parents, relatives, years of living and experiences.
- 9) The Blessed One sees the appearance and disappearance of living beings according to karmic forces with the divine eye which is purified and surpassing the human's ability.
- 10) The blessed One himself gained the direct knowledge, taintless liberation of mind and

liberation of wisdom by destructing the taints

In *Alagaddupama sutta* the Buddha explains that if one has confidence in the teacher built through the realization that the Dhamma is clear, open, evident and free of patchwork , then such people are all headed for heaven (යෙසං මයි සද්ධාමන්තං පෙමමන්තං සබ්බෙ තෙ සග්ගෙ රායනා'ති)

Mahanama Sutta (Anguttara Nikaya) gives a beautiful explanation as to how one can gain a peaceful life by contemplating on the qualities of the Buddha. When a person becomes mindful and understands clearly, the nine great qualities, at that moment, his mind is not overcome with passion (න රාගපරියුච්ඡිතං චිත්තං භොති), not overcome with aversion (න දෝෂපරියුච්ඡිතං චිත්තං භොති), and not overcome with delusion (න මොහපරියුච්ඡිතං චිත්තං භොති). Having released the mind from Greed, hatred and delusion in such a way, the mind becomes strong and stable, specially based on these Noble qualities of the Tathagata. At such a time an individual gains great stability of his mind, unhindered by defilements and gains a clear sense of the final goal and the true Dhamma is established in his mind leading him to joy which is certainly connected to the Dhamma. It is said that depending on joy there arises rapture. In one who experiences rapture, the physical body becomes calm and tranquil, and then the tranquil body gives birth to relaxation where one finds concentration or Samadhi which is the root for seeing the truth as it is. Therefore, it is important to learn and understand these nine sublime qualities;



1. අරහං (**Arahan**) - Fully Accomplished One (The commentary Visuddhimagga has defined this quality in five ways)

2. සම්මාසම්බුද්ධො (**Sammāsambuddho**) - Perfectly enlightened Buddha (who learnt and realized about the four Noble truths himself, without any help. It is said that he knew things to be known, comprehended that, that has to be comprehended, removed things to be removed, developed things to be developed all by himself without the help of any teacher)

3. විජ්ජාචරණසම්පන්නො (**Vijjācaranasampanno**) - He was endowed with Knowledge and conduct.

There are three types of knowledge he gained

1. The knowledge of recollecting his own past lives
2. The knowledge of seeing appearance and disappearance of other beings
3. The knowledge of eliminating defilements

Then there are the eight kinds of knowledges

- 1) Knowledge of attaining insight, for example, he clearly knows the impermanence of the body
- 2) Knowledge of making mind-made bodies
- 3) Knowledge of super normal powers; walking on water and in space, sinking into earth and so forth
- 4) Divine ear – can hear sounds of human and deities
- 5) Knowledge of knowing other’s minds
- 6) Knowledge of previous existence
- 7) Divine eye – can see the death and rebirth of all beings

8) Knowledge of destruction of craving

The fifteen types of conducts

1. Restraint by virtue
2. Protecting doors of sense faculties
3. Moderation in eating
4. Watchfulness
5. Confidence
6. Shame of wrong doing
7. Fear of wrong doing
8. Excellent learning
9. Energy
10. Mindfulness
11. Wisdom
12. First Jhana
13. Second Jhana
14. Third Jhana
15. Fourth Jhana

4. සුගතො (**Sugata**) - the well- gone one or well- spoken one

Six classes of speech

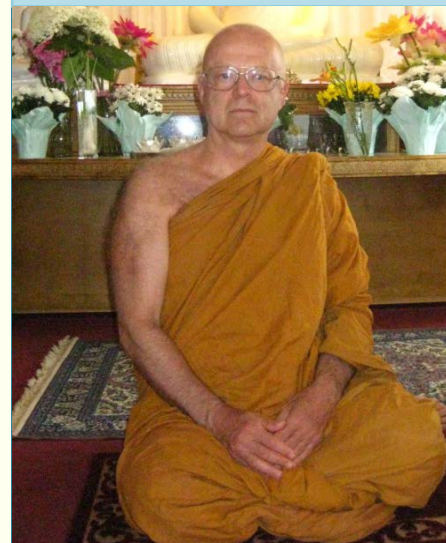
- i. The Buddha never spoke if something is untrue, incorrect, not beneficial, unwelcome and disagreeable to others
- ii. The Buddha never spoke if something is true and correct, but unbeneficial, unwelcome and disagreeable to others
- iii. The Buddha spoke if something is true, correct, and beneficial even if unwelcome and disagreeable to others
- iv. The Buddha never spoke if something is untrue, incorrect and unbeneficial but welcome and agreeable to others
- v. The Buddha never spoke if something is true and correct , welcome and agreeable to others but unbeneficial to others

“The entire holy life Ananda, is good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship” – The Buddha

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet greets monks of Hilda Jayewardenaramaya Buddhist Monastery before his speech to more than seven thousand people gathered at the Masonic center, Ottawa.



Thānissaro Bhikkhu, also known as Ajaan Geoff, is an American Theravada Buddhist monk of Thai forest Kammattthana tradition. He stayed in our temple for two days while leading a two day meditation retreat. He is a skilled and prolific translator of the Pali Suttas and author for many Dhamma books.



The greatest quality is seeking to serve others.



Our Dhamma School

Presenting certificate of Appreciation (2011-2012) to children and the Sinhala New year Program held in June



Dhamma Message for Children.....

*“Mother & father,
Compassionate to their family,
are called Brahma,
first teachers,
those worthy of gifts
from their children.
So the wise should pay
them homage, honor
with food & drink, clothing &
bedding anointing,
bathing & washing their feet.
Performing these services to
their parents,
The wise are praised right here
and after death rejoice in
heaven”*

- The Buddha

VI. The Buddha speaks if something is true, correct, beneficial, welcome and agreeable to others.

5. ලොකවිදු (Lokavidu) - the knower of the three worlds

- 1) The world of formation(Sankaraloka)
- 2) The world of beings (Sattaloka)
- 3) The world of emptiness (Okasaloka)

6. අනුත්තරො පුරිසදම්මසාරථී (Anuttaro purisadammasarathi) - the incomparable teacher of beings who could be tamed

The Buddha has surpassed beings in the universe by the aggregates of virtue, concentration and wisdom. Therefore, he is the supreme leader of beings to be tamed

7. සත්ථා දෙවමනුස්සානං (Satta devamanussanan) - teacher to terrestrial and celestial beings

The discourses of the Buddha depict many situations where even deities came for advice from the Buddha in finding the solutions to problem of suffering. However, the history of other religions says the leaders of other faiths sought help from the God.

8. බුද්ධො (Buddho) - The fully enlightened One

The Buddha has this name as he completely understood the four noble truths

9. භගවා (Bhagava) - The Blessed One

In the commentaries, this quality of the Buddha has been defined in many ways.

When you read the topic of the article, perhaps it may have seemed to you that this may be something simple and easy to understand and that the content may not need much attention. Many people think that they know the Buddha well. There is apparently a logical reason for that assumption; many who are born to Buddhist families, who inherit the religion, customarily recite the Buddha qualities on many occasions sometimes even on a daily basis. They are merely words to them and they are recited not knowing the power of these words, the words that explain the qualities of the Thathagatha. However, the majority now feel the need of understanding the Buddha and his qualities as the teaching itself has been recognized as one that is the main source of happiness to many; further, the Buddha has been considered as the greatest scientist ever, one who found the cause of birth and death, while modern science is still clueless in this regard.

In conclusion, even after 2500 years since the passing away of the Buddha his teaching shines and has been a comfort and solace to many both in the East as well as in the West. Thus we can now understand why the Buddha is revered as the supreme teacher of all. His great compassion and wisdom pave the way for many beings to find solace from Sansaric suffering. This investigation of the irrefutable truth, which is his teaching, brings peace and happiness to all.

BY BHANTE JINANANDA

The greatest precept is continual awareness.



My First Meditation

Ah, that very first meditation. It was an all day meditation. Needless to say I was concerned about sitting still for a whole eight hours for my first attempt at meditating.

First, the group of us were instructed to sit on the floor crossed-legged, with a straight and erect back, have our heads looking forward, have our eyes gently closed and our hands were to be on our laps with the one hand wrapped around the other with the thumb of the outer hand laying on top of the other thumb. I did not sit on a cushion that first time.

Then there was the schedule for the day. Not too bad I thought. Meditation followed by a break for tea, then more meditation followed by lunch, followed by more meditation and another tea break, and followed once again by meditation. But then there was this bit about "Golden Silence". Golden silence meant I could not talk to anyone during the breaks. Now, I am really beginning to wonder what I got myself into.

Next we are instructed on breathing meditation. We were to concentrate on the breath as it enters and exits the nose either at a point above the middle of the top lip or at the nostrils. The instructions also included observing the breath as it entered our nostrils went down into the

lungs and went back up and exited the nostrils. This observation was to be done for every breath. The last instruction pertaining to the

breathing meditation was not to control the breathing. After these instructions I remember thinking this should be easy to do.

Then there was one more thing to know before we actually got to meditate. What we had to know was interesting to me but did not make much sense. We were told about these five hindrances that will distract us from our meditation. They are sensual desire, ill will, restlessness, drowsiness and doubt. The best was when restlessness was immediately renamed as having "monkey mind". I recall thinking "Monkey mind" these monks have some weird sense of humour.

Now, as to how I did for my first meditation. All I remember about that all day meditation was that sitting with the proper posture was painful and required a lot of effort to do so, I could not figure out which point to concentrate on with my breath entering and exiting my nostrils, I could not follow my breath, and that that monkey sure got a hold of my mind. I spent the whole time trying to figure out if I was following the sitting and breathing instructions correctly.

Well, that describes my first time meditating. I hope this invokes memories of your first meditation.

Frank Degen

The Blessed One on friendliness (Mettā):

"Bhikkhus, whatever kinds of worldly merit there are, all are not worth one sixteenth part of the release of mind by universal friendliness; in shining, glowing and beaming radiance. This release of mind by universal friendliness far excels & surpasses them all..."

First Outdoor Meditation held in the Temple yard in June



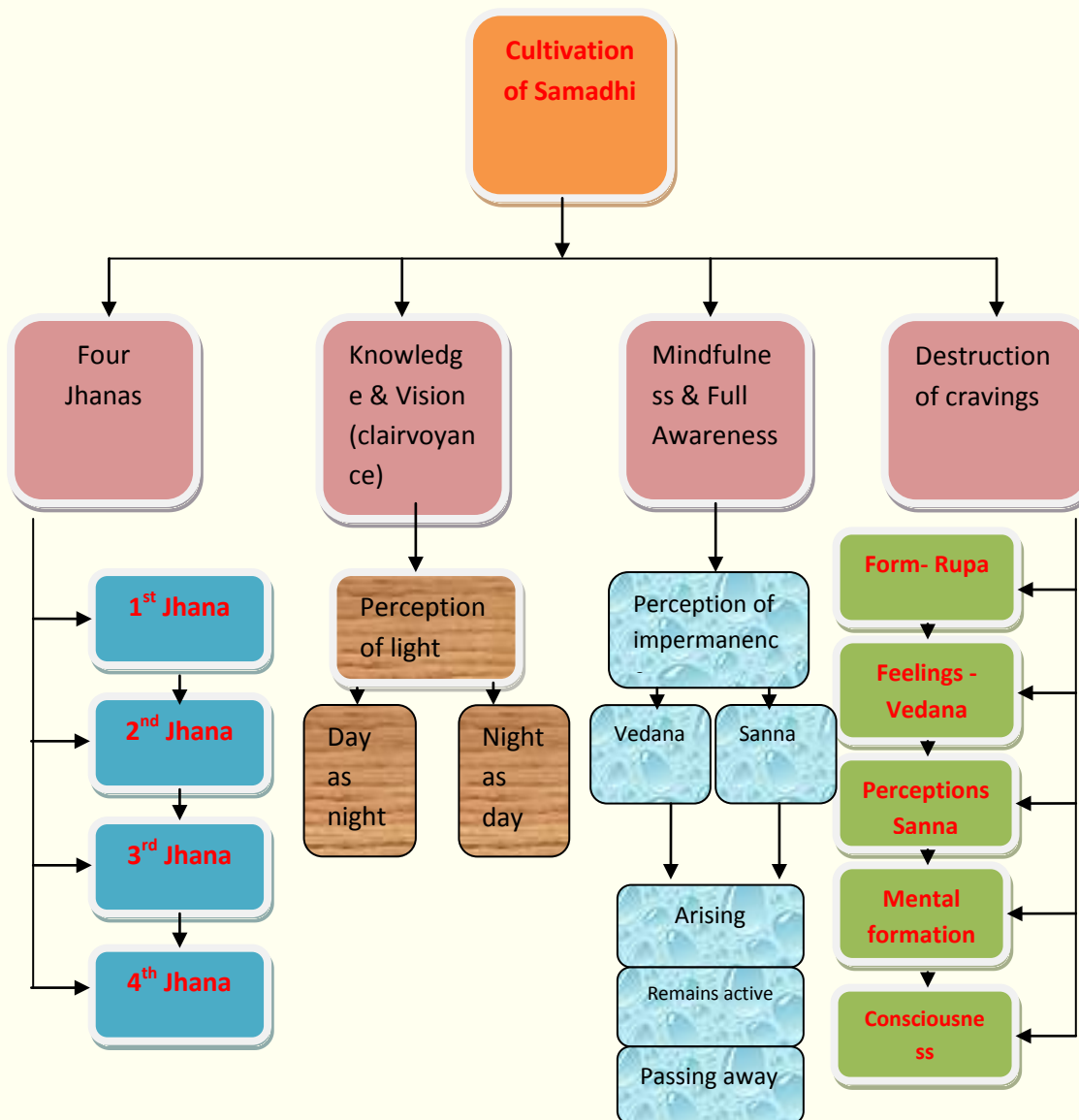
All know the Way, but few actually walk it.



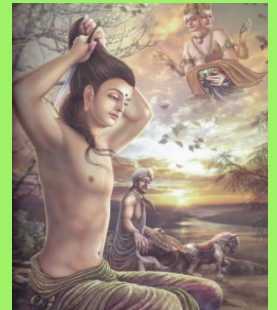
The Summary of Samadhi Bhavana Sutta (A.4.41)

This Sutta explains concentration (Samadhi) with its usage that is four. වනස්සො ඉමා, භික්ඛවෙ, සමාධිභාවනා.

- සමාධිභාවනා භාවිතා බහුලීකතා දිවිදිවමමසුඛවිභාරය සංවත්තති;
The cultivation, the growth of Concentration (Samadhi) for dwelling happily here and now. Experience of four Samadhi.
- සමාධිභාවනා භාවිතා බහුලීකතා ඤාණදස්සනාපච්චාභාය සංවත්තති;
The cultivation, the growth of concentration (Samadhi) for bringing about to the attainment of Knowledge and vision. Perception of light is maintained.
- සමාධිභාවනා භාවිතා බහුලීකතා සතිසම්පජ්ඤාය සංවත්තති;
The cultivation, the growth of concentration (Samadhi) for bringing about mindfulness and full awareness. Here feeling and perception are understood as they are when they arise, exist and pass away
- සමාධිභාවනා භාවිතා බහුලීකතා ආසවානං වයාය සංවත්තති.
The cultivation, the growth of concentration (Samadhi) for bringing about the destruction of the mental influxes. The five aggregates, the arising of five aggregates of clinging and the passing away are truly understood.



Significance of Esala Full Moon Poya day



The Buddha preached his first discourse, The Dhammacakkappavattana sutta to five ascetics at the deer park near Benares. The conception of Bodhisattva in the womb of Queen Mahamaya also happened on this day. The great Renunciation of prince Siddhartha, the performance of the twin Miracle (Yamaka Patihariya), preaching Abhidhamma in Tavatinsa heaven. All these event took place on a Esala Full Moon Day. It is also significant as it marks the beginning of the Vassana season (the Rains Retreat).