



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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VOL.02

June 2012

The true disciples of the Buddha



අපි දිව්‍යෙහි කාමෙහි,
රතීං සො නාධිගච්ඡති;
තණ්හකංඛයරතො හොති,
සම්මාසම්බුද්ධසාවකො.

The disciple of the Buddha does not even go after heavenly pleasures.

Because that son of the Buddha has his mind fixed on the process of ending craving.



The Samadhi Buddha Statue is situated at Mahamevna Park in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It belongs to the 3rd or 4th century AD.

A young prince in search of Noble Truth (Kin Kusala Gavesi)?

The Buddha, prior to self-awakening, was named as ‘Siddhartha’, the king-to-be in the kingdom of Kapilavatthu, a country in the foot hills of Himalaya mountain range. Astrologers predicted that he was destined to be king of all and that was father King Suddhodana's wish as well. However, the behavior of the prince from a very young age, showed that he was a genius as well as inquisitive so that he questioned things around him, not like a person who wishes to be king, but something beyond that. A number of primary sources and later commentaries clearly indicate this inquisitive nature of prince Siddhartha, and his interest to find the hidden truth of life, which was covered for many eons.

On one occasion the Buddha, addressing a group of monks near Savatthi in a hermitage that belonged to Brahmin Rammaka, explained his quest for the noble search, which he culminated in the last birth. To arouse ‘Sradha’ or ‘confidence’ especially about the Buddha, he said, one must be familiar with his immeasurable perseverance in searching for the truth especially during the six year period of his life where he tried out many things and researched on ways of finding the end to suffering. Because no one in the history of humanity strived in this form to achieve anything. Many are

aware of Ascetic Gothama’s self-mortification for many years. In this context, with reference to Maha Saccaka and Ariyapariyesana suttas in MN where the noble search is precisely related, the Buddha pictorially explained how he at first, conducted his ignoble search, prior to exploring the truth of life. He was, එකච්චො අත්තනා ජාතිධම්මො සමානො ජාතිධම්මංයෙව පරියෙසති - someone being himself subject to birth seeks what is subject to birth’

The rational of the above statement is very important in understanding the depth of the teaching and also in understanding the genuine interest of the Bodhisattva. Whatever we acquire in life, like family members, wealth, knowledge, money and everything else are subject to birth. Whoever is infatuated with them is also becoming a victim of the unending cycle of birth and death. Going behind all these material and immaterial things, we accelerate the journey to suffering. So the question is why we seek something that is subject to birth. In addition, all animate and inanimate things are endowed with the nature of deterioration, death, sorrow and lamentation. However, the desire to grasp them as ‘I’ ‘me’ and ‘Myself’ brings us suffering sooner than later. That’s why the Bodhisattva understood that the direction of sentient beings so far, was for searching something that led to

By doing evil, one defiles oneself - The Buddha



suffering. This is called ignoble search by the Buddha.

Those who realize the danger in seeking what is subject to birth and death, seek the deathless. He never becomes a slave of craving that leads to suffering. He understands the nature of deterioration and the death of mentality and materiality. So he certainly finds a moment of deathless, sorrow less security in the life. This is as in the case of prince Siddhartha, who called this the noble search.

This brings us a message about the clear vision one has to have if one seeks salvation. The Bodhisattva cleared his vision of what has to be done. While his father and all relatives were crying, he left the palace. Some people ignorantly believe that prince Siddhartha left the palace secretly leaving his new born child and young wife, Yasodhara. But the following extract from the sutta of Noble search clears this misunderstanding.

‘සො ඛො අහං, භික්ඛවෙ, අපරෙන සමයෙන දහරොව සමානො සුසුකාළකෙසො , හද්දරෙන යොබ්බතෙන සමන්තාගතො පඨමෙන වයසා අකාමකානං මාතාපිතූනං අස්සුමුඛානං රුදන්තානං කෙසමස්සුං ඔභාරත්ථා කාසායානි වත්ථානි අව්ච්ඡාදෙන්ථා අගාරස් මා අනගාරියං පබ්බජීං.

“So, at a later time, while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life and while my parents, unwilling, were crying with tears streaming down their faces, I shaved off my hair & beard, put on the yellow robe and went forth from the home life into homelessness’”

To gain the freedom of life, he was able to leave everything behind. The

renunciation of prince Siddhartha is unthinkable for an ordinary mind, leaving all the comforts he enjoyed as a young prince, he started sleeping under trees in dusty environments, eating food that he had never before eaten and definitely not palatable for a prince. However, even at this crucial juncture, his skilfulness (Kusala Citta) to protect the mind from unskilful thoughts was unchanged (එවරුපාපී ඛො මෙ, අඟ් ටිවෙස්සන, උප්පන්නා දුක්ඛා වෙදනා චිත්තං න පරියාදාය තිට්ඨති)

His determination to learn the teaching of both Alarakalama and Uddakaramaputta is also a valuable example for all who would follow the path he showed. He said to himself, not only Alarakalama and Uddakaramaputta, I too have confidence (Saddha), perseverance (Viriya), mindfulness (Sati), concentration (Samadhi) and wisdom (Panna). Therefore, without much struggle, he could attain to highest achievements namely ‘nothingness’ and ‘neither perception nor no non perception that the two teachers had attained. There was nothing more for him to learn from them. The effort of Ascetic Gothama at this juncture, is worthy to discuss further as it brings a kind of powerful inspiration for those who wish to succeed in the path to awakening. Because the first pillar of success is right effort. Also the presence of right understanding and intention, which are fundamental to realization, are the two primary conditions.

With the Sansaric experience of fulfilling the perfections (Paramithas) to fulfill the final goal, Ascetic Gothama was not satisfied with the teaching of both Gurus, because he realized that they were not teaching the

High school students and friends from RCMP visit to learn meditation



Mr. Aruna & Dr. Mrs. Wasantha Ratnayake of Pembroke donate a car for the use of the monks for the second time.





ending of suffering and that this was how far their teaching went. The Buddha says about what he learnt from them, "this Dhamma leads not to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to awakening, nor to Nibbana, but only to reappear in the dimension of Brahma realms". So the Bodhisatta decided to leave them not accepting the invitation extended to sit in the same position as a teacher with them. This shows the greatness of the Bodhisattva, the wisdom he had to see that they could not go further to teach him the truth he was seeking. Any ordinary individual may have accepted this invitation to be treated equally as the two greatest teachers in India in the same institution, Siddhartha Gothama's intention was otherwise, to attain peace and happiness within and bring this message to others in the world.

At this point it is important to discuss the three similes that appeared suddenly in the Bodhicitta of the Buddha-to-be, which never arose before.

1. Taking a wet sappy piece of wood lying in water, a man is trying to light a fire with an upper fire-stick (the wet stick placed on the bottom and an easily flammable slick on top) by rubbing them together. This he compared to people who are still infatuated with sensual desire of the body and mind but thinking to be free from suffering. People who still enjoy sensual desire are like the wet sappy piece of wood. Even if they strive for seeing an end to suffering, it doesn't work for them like trying to light a fire with a wet piece of wood of such would never happen. Because they feed desire, they are incapable of supreme enlightenment.

2. Taking a wet sappy piece of wood lying on dry land, a man is trying to

light a fire with an upper fire-stick by rubbing each other. If the piece of wood is on dry land, it is still wet and sappy. Similarly, even if some people become recluses for complete destruction of sensual desires, they are incapable of supreme enlightenment because their minds still seek satisfaction from sensory experiences even if they live bodily withdrawn, from sensual desire.

3. Taking a dry sapless piece of wood lying on dry land far from water, a man is trying to light a fire with an upper fire-stick by rubbing each other. This person can produce a fire as the piece of wood is sapless and dry, also lying on dry land and far from the water. Similarly, those who are quite withdrawn from sensual desire bodily and mentally, externally and internally, are capable of attaining peace and happiness.

Then the Bodhisattva met a group of five recluses who had also renounced the householder life. As the suttas elaborate, the Bodhisattva did not spend six years practicing self-mortification in rigorous form as is the popular belief. He must have spent at least few months looking for those teachers in different places across India. According to archeological evidence, he had travelled a long distance from the palace to meet teachers.

The scriptures describe how the Bodhisattva, then, by encouraging himself, practiced meditation without breathing. Can you try to think what it is like to be without breathing for even meditation, thirty seconds? It is truly very difficult for anybody to survive without any air, but the aspirant to be the Buddha, astoundingly practiced 'Appanaka Jhana – breathingless

Dhamma School

Children Participate in the Vesak Sil programme held on May 13th.



A new Blue Lotus Buddhist Temple has blossomed in Woodstock, Illinois, under the patronage of Ven. P. Sujatha.

<http://www.bluelotustemple.org/>





meditation, යංනුනාහං අප් පාණකංයෙව ඝානං ඝායෙය්න්ති. After that many dramatic incidents happened to him that is scary and also arouse curiosity in many people about how a human could torture his body purposely in order to attain something. Maha Saccaka sutta describes and gives a comprehensive account of extraordinary happenings that were related by the Buddha himself. There was a loud roaring wind that came from his ears when he stopped breathing by nose and mouth. When he ceased breathing from ears, an unbearable burning aroused in his whole body that nobody in the world cannot even think of. The Buddha, in Maha Saccaka sutta likens the pain in the body he experienced to the pain a weaker man who was held over a pit of hot coal by two strong men. However, the wonder of this great being is that he was able to endure all this and protect his skillful thoughts, and pay undivided attention and mindfulness to pain.

At the first glance of the story of austere practices, many people believe that the Bodhisattva immediately stopped taking material food. It is an incorrect assumption when compared with canonical evidence. He at one point had thought of completely cutting off of partaking in material foods (තස්ස මය්හං, අග් ගිවෙස්සන, එතදහොසි යංනුනාහං සබ්බසො ආහාරුපච්ඡෙදාය පටිපථ් ජෙය්න්ති.), but some deities came to Bodhisattva and said that they would infuse heavenly foods in to the pores of his skin and he would be forced to live if he refused to take foods. Then Bodhisattva decided to have a handful of food such as beans, lentils, pea soups... etc. with this little food, it's said that his body became quite similar to a skeleton. When he touched the belly he could feel the backbone and when touched the

backbone, he felt his belly. Both humans and deities have expressed different views about the condition of Bodhisattva during this period of austere practice. Some guessed the Bodhisattva had died while some refused to believe it and said that he had attained enlightenment. However, those who had confidence about Bodhisattva were of the view that he would never die without attaining the supreme enlightenment.

At this juncture of his quest for the truth, the wise bodhisattva came to a realization that none of the beings of the universe are practicing the self-mortification in this form to this extent, nor in the past has anyone done it nor will any one do it in the future either. Then he saw that there is nothing except pain and tiredness in this effort of self mortification. Therefore, he questioned himself again that this couldn't be the path, and could there be another? (න බො පනාහං ඉමාය කට්ඨකාය දුක්කරකාරිකාය අධිගච්ඡාමි උත්තරි මනුස්සධම්මො අලමරියඤ්ඤාණදස්සනවිසෙසං. සියා නු බො අඤ්ඤො මග්ගො බොධායා'ති?).

Then, the Bodhisattva recalled where and how he practiced mindfulness of in and out breathing meditation at a very young age and how he attained to the first Jhana under the rose apple tree where his father, for the second time, worshiped him at the harvesting festival. Then he thought if that pleasure of Jhana is devoid from all sensual pleasures, why I should be afraid of experiencing it again. He realized it is not easy to achieve it again without eating solid food and then he partook in some rice and porridge. Meanwhile, the five recluses left the Bodhisattva concluding wrongly that the recluse Gothama has given up the quest and has started to enjoy life with luxurious foods and so forth.

The Bodhisattva strived hard and attained to Jhanas with regained strength and in the full moon day of Vesak, he was able to calm down the mind perfectly to see something deep and difficult by an ordinary mind. It's recorded that the Buddha sharpened the mind with concentration which is unblemished, rid of imperfections and steady. His mind experienced the imperturbability or the unwavering. Then Bodhisattva directed his attention and gained the three types of knowledges namely, knowledge of the recollection of the past life, knowledge of passing and reappearance of beings and knowledge of the destruction of the taints. With this great understanding, his noble search was successfully ended.

As the followers of the Buddha, it is necessary to know how the Bodhisattva attained full enlightenment with full and accurate details as mentioned in Maha Saccaka and Ariyapariyesana suttas. Our purpose here is to give a detail account of how he practiced self-mortification. The detailed explanations of renunciation and related incidents have come from the Buddha's own lips. So we can learn these valuable facts and we too could speed up our efforts to find freedom from suffering. Some people doubt or argue about the above mentioned happenings either from an academic stand point or based on confidence or Saddha alone, without having any knowledge about the facts that the Buddha himself conveyed in the Suttas.

Bhante Jinananda



The splendour of Vesak Celebrations



Getting the temple ready for Vesak Celebration – go to the web site for more photos.

<http://buddhisttempleottawa.org/Gallery.aspx>



You cannot travel the path until you have become the path itself



Generosity as the Buddha taught

On one occasion the Buddha said, “If you know as much as I know about the benefit of giving, you would not eat even the last morsel of food without sharing it with somebody else”. This is one of the most interesting and marvellous statements that was made by the Buddha regarding the importance of Dana, generosity. If everyone practices Dana with proper understanding, it is said that he or she can enjoy great pleasure and happiness throughout life which is impossible to gain from anything else with what we do in our day-to-day life. We cannot force anyone to practice giving but we can make them understand the benefit of giving. The practice of giving should start with one’s own heart. This is not as easy as we think. The Buddha said

“දානඤ්ච සුද්ධඤ්ච සමානමාහු, අප්පාපි සන්තා බහුකෙ ජිනන්ති; අප්පමපි වෙ සද්දහානො දදාති, තෙනෙව සො හොති සුඛි පරත්ථා”ති. (Sanyutta Nikaya-Dewatha Sanyutta- Sadhu Sutta) giving is like fighting in the battle field. In the battle field, the soldiers defeat enemies by using many kinds of weapons. In the war of giving the enemies are our own very strong thoughts of greed, hatred and delusion. One has to fight with these enemies as for some, it is impossible to give or donate what belongs to one to another. It is not wrong if I say that our own thoughts, which are deeply rooted in greed, are stronger than enemies in war because these ones that hide inside are very hard to defeat. That is why we can see only a few people in the world who practice generosity when comparing to the world population.

There are many benefits of giving. It is obvious that the giver accumulates more pleasure

than the recipient, by giving. One can experience this great happiness only by practicing Dana with good understanding. In Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha said the giver of alms accrues five blessings: the affection of many, noble association, good reputation, self-confidence, and heavenly rebirth. The greedy will never be able to accumulate these benefits.

According to the teaching of the Buddha, the main purpose of practicing Dana is to wipe out defilements which bind us to Sansara, the cycle of becoming, by making us the heirs of a mass of suffering. At the same time this practice also helps us to develop four sublime states loving friendliness, compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity.

In the first verse of the Dhammapada, the Buddha said if a person speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him. In the same way, the merits gained in the name of Dana will give us comfort, happiness and wellbeing. Therefore, it is good to practice Dana as much as we can. Finally, even in our death bed we may be able to enjoy this happiness by thinking of these acts of generosity that we have done throughout our life. Remember, this can be one of the best investments you ever made in your life.

Bhante Vijitha

Events in the month of July

- *Esala Full moon Sil program on Sunday 08th July*
- *Second Outdoor meditation on Sunday 15th July*
- *First Youth program on Saturday 21st July*
- *First Summer food fair On Sunday 22nd July*
- *Fund raising Garage Sale On Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th*

“Dhammosadha Samam Natthi”

“There is no medicine like the Dhamma”

Ven.Pitigala Gunarathana Thero delivered nine Dhamma sermons and conducted a discussion at the center for inner peace from May 25th to June 14th. It was the first ever series of Dhamma sermons in the form of lectures done by a monk at the center. To listen to the recorded sermons, Please Visit;
<http://www.buddhisttempleottawa.net/dhammaTalks.asp>



MEDITATION POEMS

යත්ථ ආපො ච පඨවී,
 නෙජො වායො න ගාධති;
 න තත්ථ සුක්කා ජොතන්ති,
 ආදිච්චො නජ්ජකාසති;
 න තත්ථ චන්දිමා භාති,
 තමො තත්ථ න චිජ්ජති.
 යදා ච අත්තනාවෙදි,
 මුනී මොනෙන බ්‍රාහ්මණො;
 අථ රූපා අරූපා ච,
 සුඛදුක්ඛා පමුච්චති”ති

*Where water, earth, fire,
 & wind have no footing:
 There the stars do not
 shine, the sun is not
 visible, the moon does
 not appear, and darkness
 is not found. And when a
 sage, a Brahmin through
 sagacity, has realized
 this for himself, then
 from form & formless,
 from bliss & pain, he is
 freed.*



Nammo thassa
 The Autumn wind
 shakes the only leaf on the tree
 and drops it to the ground.
 The stamp of impermanence.

Bhagavatho
 Eyes closed
 I see the Monarch
 go south for the winter
 but only to die on its way.
 The acceptance of
 impermanence.

Arahatho
 The gardenia
 my favourite flower
 I give it to you.
 My soul detached
 I enjoy the supreme solitude.

Samma Sambudhassa
 Suspended
 by a red flower
 the Hummingbird
 is silent and piercing
 with its beak.
 I join its ruby throated
 clarity in its
 uncomplicated solitude.

Asoka Weerasinghe

Significance of Posen Full Moon Day

Arahant Mahinda, son of emperor Ashoka, officially introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka on this full moon day in the 3rd century B.C. King Devanampiyathissa embraced Buddhism as a result of Emperor Ashoka's mission of spreading Buddhism to neighbouring countries. With the spread of Buddhism, the Island became a stronghold for Theravada tradition which thrives in its purest form to this day.

