



SEEING THROUGH

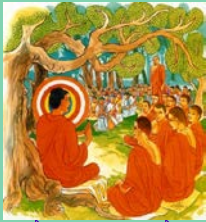
The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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VOL.05

September 2012

BLAZING MOON



සීලදස්සනසම්පන්නං,
ධම්මවිධං සච්චවෙදිනං;
අත්තනො කම්ම කුබ්බිතා,
තං ජනො කුරුතෙ පියං

The one who has perfected
morality and insight,
confident in the Dhamma,
fulfilling all duties, knowing the truth,
such a person is liked by many.

Somawathiya



Somawathiya stupa was built in 2nd century BC.

This stupa is said to enshrine the right tooth relic of the Buddha. It is located in Polonnaruwa District, in the north-central province of Sri Lanka.

This stupa was named after the princess Somawathi, the sister of King Kawanthissa.

The Dhamma; the incomparable teacher

By Bhante Jinananda

In the previous article, we discussed how and in what ways the teaching of the Buddha becomes our incomparable teacher even though the founder of the teaching, Gautama Buddha is no more. This is the second part of the article which is an extended investigation on the same subject and a further analysis to explore the significance of Dhamma as explained by the Buddha.

The sublime Dhamma which is excellent in every aspect is unattainable by mere reasoning or logic. It needs right practice which should flow in action, speech and thought of followers. Logical conclusions may help only to identify certain facts in terms of finding the truth related to material aspects. Many are unable to discover the root causes of existence and also those of non-existence, both created by incessant thoughts. Therefore, this special quality of the teaching is indicative that the Dhamma can only be realized by one who gathers certain skills like identifying and living by moral values, developing skills in recognizing and calming the emotions, and thinking in a manner appropriate to the training that is required. The Buddha too traversed through Samsara in a long journey to explore and fulfill these same noble qualities in uncountable number of previous lives as mentioned in the Ariyapariyesana Sutta in Majjhima Nikaya. After much effort, going through much hardship and suffering, He found the truth that is pleasant but very difficult

For one to discern without being committed to this final realization. Seeing this difficulty of understanding the Dhamma, the Buddha wondered if other humans could grasp this deep and profound truth he realized and hence was reluctant at first to preach to others.

“Enough with teaching the Dhamma
That even I found hard to reach;
For it will never be perceived
By those who live in lust and hate.”

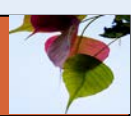
Those dyed in lust, wrapped in darkness
Will never discern this abstruse
Dhamma which goes against the
worldly stream, Subtle, deep, and
difficult to see.’

(Translation of Ariyapariyesana sutta by Bhikkhu Bodhi)

One who learns and lives by the Dhamma has to swim against the current (Patisothagami) when compared with the navigational direction of others in the society. Nevertheless, when he is going with the current (Anusothagami) doing things the usual way as the others, he is dragged or swept away with the current does not benefit from it. Hence, the Dhamma paves the way for the ordinary person to still the mind of all mental formations and fabrications. While the average person looks for sustenance through creating and living on them expecting happiness,

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To live a pure unselfish life, one must count nothing as one's own in the midst of abundance.



The Dhamma further helps and guides an individual to let go of all acquisitions that are dear to him, that he believes are permanent and bring him pleasure. The letting go of such clinging builds a firm foundation to destroy the craving for sensual pleasures. As a result, the individual develops the quality of dispassion, and reaches towards cessation of suffering to finally experience the perfect release, Nibbana.

The criteria to distinguish the Dhamma from other things:

Even though the Buddha and other enlightened beings were capable in seeing through real situations of life, ordinary beings, who are infatuated with craving and hindered by ignorance, may have difficulties to see the Dhamma. It is also difficult for them to identify the importance of Dhamma and the true Dhamma. To many, Dhamma may mean a lot of different things. Many have different views based on ignorance and delusion.

Therefore, the Buddha mentioned four types of criteria (සතරමනාපදෙස) in the Mahaparinibbana sutta to clearly distinguish the Dhamma from non-Dhamma, It is as follows: If someone says;

1. Friends, I listened to this Dhamma from the Buddha's own lips; this is the doctrine and discipline.
2. Friends, I listened to this Dhamma from a community of distinguished elderly monks in such and such places. So this is the doctrine and discipline.
3. Friends, I listened to this Dhamma from many learned monks from such and such place. They are good learner and bearers of the lineage, so this is the doctrine and discipline.
4. Friends, I listened to this Dhamma from an older monk, who has learned in such and such places. So this is the doctrine and discipline.

Whenever we hear this type of expression from a person or a group, it should neither be approved nor disapproved. The above statements or similar ones should be carefully investigated word by word. Also compare the statement with the Sutta and review it in the light of the discipline or vinaya. After such comparison and review, if the statement does not match with the doctrine and discipline, which should be rejected, concluding that the person or group have wrongly grasped the teaching. If the statement is in accordance with the doctrine and discipline, then it should be accepted confirming that it is the word of the Buddha.

The Buddha taught the Dhamma for forty five years only to show us the path which he found and followed. However, unlike the other cotemporary ascetics, he did not want to force his teaching on anyone. That is because the importance of freedom of thinking which so is revered in Buddhist teaching and also because of Buddha's great compassion towards other beings. Therefore, the Buddha wanted his teaching to be accepted by anybody only after clear investigation and not by mere belief. This excellent message given to the world which strengthens freedom of expression is described in the Kalama sutta (Anguttara Nikaya).

"Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many Do not believe in anything (simply) because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders".
(Translation – anonymous)

Udana exclamations

The Buddha, while experiencing the serenity of Nibbana at the end of the 1st week after attaining enlightenment, reinvestigates the Paticcasamuppada in forward order and reverse order. Seeing through the depth of Paticcasamuppada and realizing the significance of the moment, the following Udana were uttered by the Blessed One.

“යදා හවෙ පාතුභවන්ති ධම්මා; ආනාපිනො ක්කායනො ඩ්‍රාණ්ම ණස්ස; අප්ප්ප කච්චා වපයන්ති සඛ්ඛා; යනො පජානාති සහෙතුධම්ම”න්ති

All causes and conditions become clear to one, who is ardent attaining in Jhana and liberated from craving, when he discerns phenomena with its causes. Then his doubt about phenomena vanishes away.

“යදා හවෙ පාතුභවන්ති ධම්මා; ආනාපිනො ක්කායනො ඩ්‍රාණ්ම ණස්ස; අප්ප්ප කච්චා වපයන්ති සඛ්ඛා; යනො ඛයං පච්චයානං අවෙදී”ති.

All causes and conditions become clear to one, who is ardent in attaining Jhana and liberated from craving, when he penetrates ending of phenomena with its causes. Then his doubt about phenomena vanishes away.

“යදා හවෙ පාතුභවන්ති ධම්මා; ආනාපිනො ක්කායනො ඩ්‍රාණ්ම ණස්ස; විධුපයං නිට්ඨන්ති මාරසෙනා; සුරියොව ඔභාසයමන්තලික්ඛ”න්ති.

All causes and conditions become clear to one, who is ardent in attaining Jhana and liberated from craving. Then he firmly stands driving away Mara with his army just as the Sun shines in the sky
(Bodhivagga - 1, 2, 3 - Udana Pali, Khuddaka Nikaya)

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Our Dhamma School

Dear Parents,

It is a traditional saying that starting of a new school is closing hundred prisons. Starting a Dhamma school, which teaches good ethics and essential techniques to lead a peaceful life, may eliminate even the word of 'prison from our mind.

The Hilda Jayewardenaramaya Dhamma School, with the above wholesome vision, began its new term last week, with the attendance of many children in the community. If you wish to take your child to the HJDS, don't consider the distance and other difficulties to bring them. Because teaching Dhamma today will be the biggest investment for the future.

Please visit our website and print the application or email us. <http://www.buddhisttempleottawa.org/Kids.aspx>

New teaching methods will be applied to help your children understand the Buddhist teaching in a simple and practical way.

There will be many activities that would teach them the value of the Noble triple gem, how to respect and find refuge, and also to learn to respect adults and all other beings.

The Staff:

*The Dhamma teacher (level 4- youth)–
Rev. Jinananda N*

*The principal & the Dhamma teacher
(level 3)– Ven. Vijitha Kirinde*

*The Dhamma teacher (level 2)–
Upeksha Ranpatbedige*

*The Dhamma teacher (level 1)–
Lakmini Seneviratne*

There are two criteria mentioned in the sutta and elsewhere in Tripitaka that follows this method of analysis.

The criterion for rejection

After careful observation and investigation, one is able to know that facts are bad, blameable and censured by the wise people. Also these lead to harm and downfall of oneself and others, so abandon them. If a teaching leads one to be greedy and hateful, that should be eliminated because it leads to pain and suffering.

The criterion for acceptance

After observation and analysis when you find anything that agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it. Goodness and benefits in the analysis mean a state of freedom from greed, hatred and delusion.

Before attaining full enlightenment, as the Bodhisattva, he has used a similar method to distinguish between the good and bad. In Dvedhavitakka sutta (two sets of thoughts) in Majjhima Nikaya, the Bodhisattva divided his thoughts in to two categories, unwholesome thoughts (thought of sensual desire, thought of ill will and thought of cruelty) and wholesome thoughts (thought of renunciation, thought of non-ill will and thought of non-cruelty). This division of thoughts is based on the respective results they bring.

"I remained heedful, mindful, ardent and resolute when a thought of sensual desire arose in me. Also discerned that thought of sensual desire has arisen, which leads to my own suffering or to suffering of others or to suffering of both. It obstructs discernment and Nibbana"

In the same way, the Bodhisattva did observe the thought of ill will and cruelty.

However, when a wholesome set of thoughts arose in the mind of the Bodhisattva, he observed and analysed that those thoughts lead neither to his own suffering nor of others and that they promote discernment and lead him to Nibbana. At this point, we can understand that whatever thoughts support or lead towards peace and happiness would be right Dhamma as in the case of the Bodhisattva's thoughts.

Moreover, these methods of dealing with thoughts are, in a way, is a kind of shield to protect the teaching from personal opinions and misinterpretations. In another instance shown in the Tripitaka, the Buddha reasons out how and why some previous Buddha Sasana or dispensations disappeared soon after the Buddha's Parinibbana. By considering all the information, the Buddha wanted to protect the Sasana and declared the Dhamma as the teacher for all, for his current disciples and also to those who would enter the order in the future.

It is very interesting to explore how the teaching and its magnanimity becomes apparent when practiced by the disciple. As we discussed in previous articles, the Dhamma appears in a mind nourished with right view and a mind that can distinguish between the wholesome and unwholesome nature of the mind. Therefore, the aggregate of Dhamma is compared to ambrosia of medicine, which has the sweetest taste. Generally speaking, people say the truth is bitter when it is revealed. For example; when a person is sentenced or prosecuted for wrong doing, he is receiving punishment for what he did, for his actions. For example; when a person is sentenced or prosecuted for wrong doing, he is receiving punishment for what he did, for his actions. But, he is unhappy to face that and suffers as a result.

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Watchfulness is the path of deathliness, those are watchful never die – the Buddha



This is why; people believe the truth is bitter. Nevertheless, the absolute truth or the Dhamma the Buddha expounded is the sweetest among the tastiest things in the world.

It is important to explore the qualities of the Dhamma which grants it the status of a teacher equivalent to the Buddha himself. The most significant aspect of the teaching is the benefits the Dhamma brings to one who wishes to reap them. The acquisition of benefits begins with the thought of confidence in the Dhamma (Sradhdha). In Upanisa Sutta of Sanyutta nikaya, The Buddha explains that confidence arises as a result of suffering (Dukkhuapanisa saddha) that one experiences. One who suffers feels the need of escaping from suffering and the knowledge that there is a way to end it brings deep confidence to a person who has no other means of getting rid of it. For example, Kisagotami who lost her only child lost her mind due to grief. With proper guidance, her mind rapidly inclined towards reaching the oasis of the Dhamma. This ending of suffering came due to the unwavering confidence she had on the teacher who guided her to realize the truth. In the story of Sopaka and Sunita, you find the same scenario; they became free from miseries by understanding the Dhamma.

To understand this quality of the Dhamma further, it is good to refer to Theragatha and Therigatha, where a number of stories of liberated monks and nuns are illustrated. Here, it is important to see the sequence of change from a mundane level transcending to other levels in the order of causality as explained in Upanisa Sutta. It teaches us that suffering should be understood for what it truly is. In order to do this, we have to develop ‘Sradhdha or confidence’ through which we gain other qualities.

The Dhamma is really deep and profound in nature. However, it can be seen in simple form through

investigation and practice, to reach the depth which exists in its purest form that does not change. Once, Venerable Ananda said that the Paticcasamuppada appears as simple as he sees it. The Buddha explained that one should not conclude like that and explained that the Paticcasamuppada really is deep and also profound in nature. To understand that, one has to be very wise.

However, the law of dependant co-origination can be realized by simple examples in daily life. Let’s take a simple example; when buses get late, people become angry and resentful. They think their anger is reasonable and it is aimed at the Driver or the Bus Company for their negligence and is the justified cause for it. In this example, the bus being late is the immediate cause for anger to arise. That thought of anger arises because of the inability to see things clearly without one’s vision being blurred by anger, and masks the fact that the bus may be having a Mechanical failure on the way or have some other reasonable cause for not being on time. Anger arose as a reason of not knowing the causes and conditions of the bus being delayed. If people are able to see the situation clearly, identifying the causes and conditions, they would never irrupt angrily, because they know through experience that getting angry is painful and burns them due to their own folly.

It is also important to realize that anger does not change the cause or the result. For, those who are wise enough to apply the theory of Paticcasamuppada to the situation, have allowed the Dhamma to function within them, so negative perception vanishes then and there. This of course, is one of the ways the Dhamma acts as a teacher in our life.

The wholesome Dhamma doesn’t spring up in the mind automatically. It has to be seen by a clear mind that is gained through wisdom attained after following many right steps. *Next page...*

Ten wholesome topics of conversation

1. **Conversation on modesty** (අප්පිට්ඨකථා)
2. **Conversation on contentment** (සන්තුට්ඨිකථා)
3. **Conversation on seclusion** (පව්වෙකකථා)
4. **Conversation on non-entanglement** (අසංසග්ගකථා)
5. **Conversation on arousing persistence** (වීරියාරම්භකථා)
6. **Conversation on virtue** (සීලකථා)
7. **Conversation on concentration** (සමාධිකථා)
8. **Conversation on discernment** (පඤ්ඤාකථා)
9. **Conversation on release** (විමුක්තිකථා)
10. **Conversation on the knowledge and vision of release** (විමුක්තිඤාණදස්සනකථා)

If one would frequently have conversation in these ten subjects, he or she would outshine even the powerful Sun and the Moon.

The Buddha
Kathavatthu sutta (69) - AN

"Monks, come and dwell in a secluded resting place; in a forest, in a foot of a tree or in an empty building, and develop Jhanas..."
The Buddha



The last outdoor meditation session was successfully held in August at the meditation garden of HJBM completing the series of outdoor meditation sessions in summer 2012.



Youngsters under the guidance of monks looked for peace within by practicing mindfulness in sitting, walking and standing at the 2nd youth outdoor meditation session held at HJBM meditation garden in August

The Dhamma stands out when compared with teaching of other teachers during the time of the Buddha as well as in today's world. The Buddha explained and advised his last disciple, Subhadda just before he passed away as to how one could distinguish Dhamma from many other teachings or beliefs.

"In whatsoever Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, there is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is there found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, or fourth degree of saintliness. But in whatsoever Dhamma and Discipline there is found the Noble Eightfold Path, there is found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness. Now in this Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path; and in it alone are also found true ascetics of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers. But if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of arahant."

(Sister Vajira & Francis Story's translation of Mahaparinibbana sutta)

This is a wonderful message for all, who are currently diligent in practice. It reveals that there is no specific period in which Arahants or any other saints appear. As long as the eightfold path is seen and followed, the world will not be empty of the fourfold disciple or the eight kinds of special individuals in the world. The Buddha's teaching is not limited to a particular land or country. The land, the nation, the group of people, their color of skin and even the language, hold no limitations or boundaries for the realization of truth. In the Buddha's teaching one has the freedom and the ability to understand the Dhamma even though the scriptures were written in Pali and Sanskrit. It is historically accepted that the Buddha spoke Pali, the language spoken in the country of Magadha,

To disseminate the Dhamma. However, the Dhamma is universal and can be seen by anyone who strives to see it irrespective of their language. Linguistics is something created periodically for the purpose of communication. Therefore, the language develops according to needs of people. But the absolute truth is not based on something that is created.

The Dhamma can be viewed in many angles. It can be viewed in another angle when we examine the Right Path shown by the Buddha, which is categorized in two ways as mundane path and supramundane path. It also demarcates the eightfold path according to individual's achievement. According to Mahacattarisaka sutta in Majjhima Nikaya where this categorization is discussed, in detail, the beginners or ones that have entered the path, practice the Dhamma at a mundane level while others who have gone forth, from the stream enterer to one who aspires to be an Arahant, practice the eightfold path at the supra-mundane level. This means, the Dhamma still has to be practised continuously, until one reaches the final liberation even by a Stream enterer and other noble ones until they reach Nibbana.

It is recorded in the Pali canon that the Dhamma was taught and expounded not only for human beings but also for celestial beings such as, Asura, Yakkha, Naga and Brahmas. Even if they didn't belong to the category of the fourfold disciple, they benefited very much from the teaching. Sometimes, the king of gods and Maha Brahma came to the Buddha and asked question about the Dhamma and discipline as there are Suttas which contain discussions they had with the Buddha. Devatha and Devaputta Sanyutta in Sanyutta nikaya contain such suttas where divine beings came to visit the Buddha with their questions and these comprise of a vast area of the teaching as well.

To be continued

Spiritual friendship is the whole of the spiritual life.



Beloved mother protects her only child even at the risk of her own life...

“පුත්තපෙමං , හත්තෙ, ජවිං ඡීන්දති, ජවිං ඡේත්වා වම්මං ඡීන්දති, වම්මං ඡේත්වා මංසං ඡීන්දති, මංසං ඡේත්වා නහාරුං ඡීන්දති, නහාරුං ඡේත්වා අට්ඨිං ඡීන්දති, අට්ඨිං ඡේත්වා අට්ඨිමිඤ්ජං ආභව්ව කිට්ඨති”

“Venerable Sir, parental love for a child submerges into the skin, its inner lining and then it sinks down into flesh. Having sunk into flesh, it goes through sinews and to the bones. Without stopping there, Venerable sir, parental love further immerses deeper into bone marrow.”

(King Suddhodana after the ordination of prince Rahula – Rahulavatthu, Mahavaggapali, Vinayapitaka)

These pictures were emailed by Athula Warakagoda from Sri Lanka



Distinguishing the wise from the foolish person



Whatever fears, troubles, and calamities arise due to actions of a foolish person, just as a fire, which starts from bushes or grass and then it burns down even houses in high mountains. Thus, the foolish bring fear, troubles and calamities while the wise bring no fear, no troubles, and no calamities. The wise person is further skilful in understanding the elements, the six bases, dependant co-origination and also is skilful in knowing what is possible and impossible. Therefore, monks, train thus 'we shall be wise men, we shall be inquirers.

The Buddha – the Many type of elements (Bahudhatuka sutta)

MN 115

Those who are free of resentful thoughts surely find peace.

Let's study a sutta

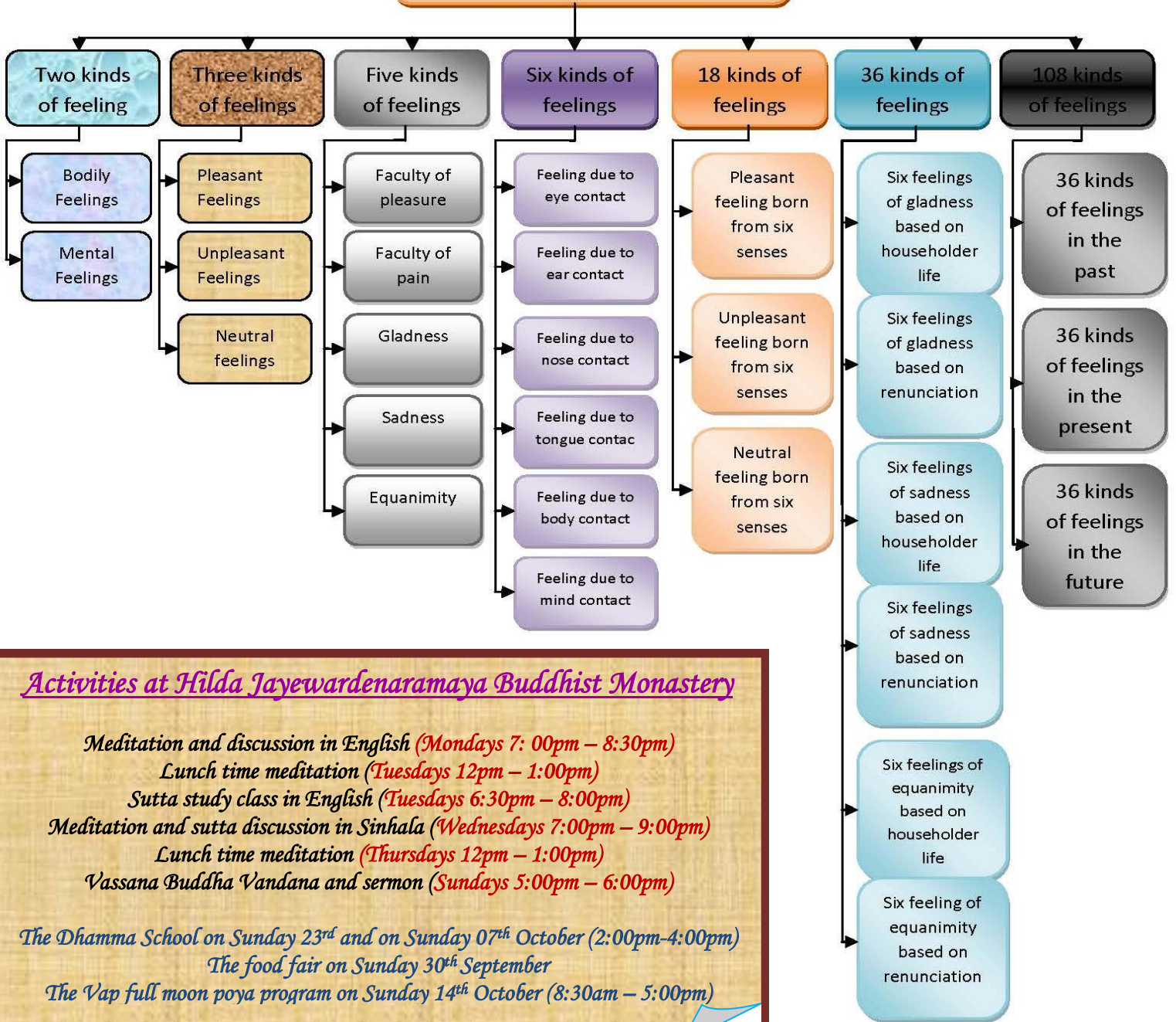
The aggregate of feeling (*Vedanakkhandā*) has been categorically explained by the Buddha according to means of expression or the context in *Bahuvēdaniya sutta* (*MN 59*) and *Atthasathapariyaya sutta* (*SN 36.22*). Also many explanations are there in *Vedanāsanyutta* of *Sanyutta Nikāya*.

(ද්වේපි මයා, භික්ඛවෙ, වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; තිස්සොපි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; පඤ්චපි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; ඡපි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; අවධාරසාපි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; ඡන්තිසාපි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන; අවධසනම්පි මයා වෙදනා චුත්තා පරියායෙන (*SN 36.22*))

'In one way, O monks, I have spoken of two kinds of feelings, and in other ways of three, five, six, Eighteen, thirty six and one hundred and eight feelings.

(English Translation of Pali phrase by Bhikkhu Thanissaro)

Aggregate of feeling/ වෙදනා ස්කන්ධය (*Vedanakkhandā*)



Activities at Hilda Jayewardenaramaya Buddhist Monastery

Meditation and discussion in English (Mondays 7: 00pm – 8:30pm)

Lunch time meditation (Tuesdays 12pm – 1:00pm)

Sutta study class in English (Tuesdays 6:30pm – 8:00pm)

Meditation and sutta discussion in Sinhala (Wednesdays 7:00pm – 9:00pm)

Lunch time meditation (Thursdays 12pm – 1:00pm)

Vassana Buddha Vandana and sermon (Sundays 5:00pm – 6:00pm)

The Dhamma School on Sunday 23rd and on Sunday 07th October (2:00pm-4:00pm)

The food fair on Sunday 30th September

The Vap full moon poya program on Sunday 14th October (8:30am – 5:00pm)

Long is the night to him who is awake; long is a mile to him who is tired; long is life to the foolish who do not know the true law.