



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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How to be a great human being part-3

The appearance of the Buddha and the discovery of the noble truth in six century B.C is an outcome of the right energy practiced by the Bodhisattva throughout many life times. The stories about ten perfections (Paramitas) witness the power of immeasurable energy of the Bodhisattva, which was used to defeat the retinue of Mara in his last birth. So, gaining a clear knowledge about the great energy of the Buddha is beneficial to everyone in terms of learning the Dhamma to end the vicious circle of samsara. The development of right energy is not just one single practice but it is the key element of the entire teaching. The right energy can be compared to the wheels of a vehicle. The wheels are an integral part of the vehicle, without the wheels, the vehicle is not moving. Similarly, the right energy is functioned as the wheels of the teaching (Buddhayana, Pacceka Buddhayana, and Sravakayana (disciple hood)) to gain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.

To understand the necessity of right energy as a vital spiritual quality, there are many things to be investigated; for instance, the life of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva and the eightfold Ariya Purisas are the most suitable examples. Also every word in the Dhamma and Vinaya has direct correlation to right energy. However, only some aspects of right energy are discussed in the article.

It is important to understand at the very outset, the etymology of the words 'right energy', the way the Buddha explained it.



Some Pali words for right energy are 'Viriya', 'Utthana', 'Padana' and 'Samma Vayama'. The Most common translations in English are right effort, perseverance, exertion, diligence, vigor, determination, and will power. Hereafter, the Pali word 'Viriya' is used for right energy in the discussion as it has been used in primary sources.

Since it is a significant factor for gaining Nibbana, Viriya is explained as the third of the seven factors of enlightenment (sattabojjhangas). In addition, Viriya is the third of the four bases of powers (satara iddhipada), and the second faculty of the five spiritual faculties (pancaindriya) and five spiritual powers (pancabala). In the first sermon of the Buddha, Viriya is explained as 'right effort' the sixth factor of the noble path. Besides, it is the fifth of the ten perfections (Paramitas) a Bidhisattva fullfills in aspiring to become a Buddha. Therefore Viriya plays an important role in the life of one who treads on the Noble eightfold path.

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Just as a mighty boulder stirs not with the wind, so the wise are never moved either by praise or blame.



It is obvious that nothing is achieved in the Dhamma without the essential factor of Viriya. The Dhamma describes Viriya as an element of Dhamma that keeps away one from unwholesome actions and encourages one to engage in wholesome or skillful actions which are always supported by other spiritual qualities. Viriya functions relative to Kamma and dependant co-origination; if the purpose of Viriya is for gaining something positive, the result is positive, if it is geared towards the negative, and then inevitable are the negative outcomes. Viriya in the Buddhist teaching has been classified as mundane and super mundane right effort (Mahacattaridaka sutta). For instance, if you wish to be a doctor, a lawyer, a businessman, or any other professional, the Viriya expended should be for that purpose and it is mundane; on the other hand, some people give up these types of aims in life and strive to transcend the ordinary mind, which is entirely different from Viriya in a mundane sense.

The great Viriya expended by Siddhartha Bodhisattva was beyond measure in the sense of the mundane world. He, as the seeker of the truth went from teacher to teacher such as Alarakalama and Uddakaramaputta. Before he began meditation under the guidance of those teachers, he thought that these teachers achieved the ultimate mental states in their teachings due to the faculty of Viriya along with the other faculties. Then ascetic Siddhartha thought that he too has Viriya to practice all the faculties which could bring about the same attainments. As a result, he attained those mental states in their teachings in a short period of time (Ariyapariyesana sutta – MN26).

The immense power of Viriya of the Bodhisattva is measured at the moment he was giving up princely life leaving his new born son Rahula, wife Yasodara and the comfort of a princely life. The six years of self-mortification is another example for the great Viriya that the Bodhisattva exerted to achieve what he had set out to accomplish. Putting his life in great danger, ascetic Gotama practiced various methods to find out the right path. To begin the search, he had the great perseverance to limit



partaking of food, sleeping on nails and so on (Mahasaccaka sutta - MN).

Although he reached the maximum limit of self-mortification, his Viriya and confidence remained unchanged, so undeterred he changed the method of searching for the truth, and abandoned the extremes he practised and chose the Middle path (Sangarava Sutta). This teaches a very important lesson to everyone; if Viriya is wholesome, the wholesome result is inevitable.

The second chapter of Dhammapada (Appamadavagga) has many verses that deal with the qualities of this factor of Enlightenment. It shows the importance of heedfulness or mindfulness, as a requirement for enlightenment and heedfulness depends entirely on Viriya. It means that mindfulness cannot stand if not accompanied by Viriya. Appamadavagga stresses some people are heading towards deathlessness as they are heedful while others are heedless. Heedless are as if already dead. Both deathlessness and death in spiritual sense is dependent therefore on the level of Viriya.

Viriya is discussed in the same chapter as a criterion to distinguish the wise from the unwise. The wise acts according to Dhamma and becomes free from suffering while the unwise fails to do so and experience suffering. The wise person always restrains his senses through right effort while the unwise becomes a slave of unrestrained senses. The control of sense faculties should be developed diligently in order to restrain our mind (Indriyabhavana sutta – MN 152). When a person develops right exertion in such a way, wisdom is rapidly gained, so he is

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Celebration of Sinhala and Tamil New Year!



The New Year celebration included a blessing ceremony conducted by the resident monks. Many friends along with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Canada H.E. Chithrangani Wageesvara were present at HJBM on Sunday 14th April to participate in New Year customs. Participants paid their respect and gratitude to monks, parents and elders by offering a handful of betel leaves. Anointing oil and tasting New Year food were special moments in the Ceremony. We wish you all a happy and peaceful year 2013.

Even as a fathomless lake, a lake so calm and clear, so Dhammas having heard serene the wise become.



Mindfulness in action...

(Two day meditation retreat)

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අපස්සං ධම්මමුත්තමං
එකාහං ජීවිතං සෙය්‍යො
පස්සතො ධම්මමුත්තමං

*A single day of a person who sees
the true Dhamma is nobler than a
hundred years of a life of a person
who doesn't see the true Dhamma
(Dhp 115)*



*A few moments captured of
participants practicing meditation
in the two day retreat which was a
success. We thank the retreat
coordinators and friends who
brought food. The date for next
meditation session will be
informed in the near future
May you all be well and happy!*

compared to the one who is on the top of a mountain which gives a clear view of the surroundings and everything. In another stanza, it is said that a disciple with right effort is keen to be mindful and selects the right things to do. Therefore, his fame is spread because he is living righteously. In essence, anyone can be a noble person with the presence of Viriya; for example, even the main King of Gods reached that state due to his Viriya (Dhp 20).

The Buddha's advice to his disciples was to practice the path diligently. He recommended suitable places, to go and meditate for their own salvation; the Buddha is only your teacher who can show the path, your duty is to tread on the path for your salvation. Similarly, great disciples like Ven. Sariputta, Moggallana, Kassapa, Ananda and Kaccayana encouraged fellow monks to be zealous. Also Bhikkhunis Mahaprajapati, and Yasodara and so on guided the Bhikkhunis in following the Buddha's advice.

There are many stories that show how the disciples of the Buddha practiced the noble path diligently. One of them is the story of Ven. Cakkhupala's striving to become enlightened. In terms of attaining Arahatship, he practiced meditation without sleeping. Finally, he lost his eye sight. The physician advised the venerable to lie down and rest his eyes so that medicine would be effective. But Ven. Cakkhupala strived hard and wanted to become enlightened soon. His effort was heightened and he gained the vision of truth at the end even though he lost eye sight (Commentary Dhp - 1).

According to the teaching, right Viriya should be established in the practice along with right understanding and right mindfulness to complete the noble eightfold path (Mahacattarisaka sutta – MN 117). These are called three pillars that hold the Noble eightfold path and make the path 'right (samma)' so that Viriya (Samma Vayama) is equally important as right understanding (Samma Ditthi) and right mindfulness (Samma Sathi).

The most important teaching on Viriya is the

explanation of right effort as being fourfold.

1. A disciple generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind and strives to overcome the unwholesome states that are not yet arisen
2. A disciple generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind and strives to overcome the unwholesome states that have been already arisen
3. A disciple generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind and strives to develop the wholesome states that are not yet arisen
4. A disciple generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind and strives to maintain the wholesome states that have been already arisen (Vibhanga Sutta –SN 45:8)

It is amply clear that the fourfold effort is indispensable as is the advice of all Buddhas; "to refrain from unskillful action, word and thoughts and develop skillfulness in order to cultivate the mind" (Dhp - 183). The wise individual becomes mindful of those conditions and acts diligently being heedful, because his Viriya is developed as a faculty which is predominant in overcoming negativities.

Dealing with unwholesome states is the main purpose of meditation and Viriya is the quality that is required to overcome that unwholesomeness. In Vitakkasantthana sutta (MN 20), the Buddha shows five methods to overcome negative states of the mind, namely; paying attention to different objects when unwholesomeness arises, reflecting the negative results of unwholesomeness, trying to forget them, stilling of thought formations of the unwholesome state of mind and defeating the unwholesomeness by clenching teeth and pressing the tongue to the roof of the mouth, in other words plasticising determination. Another important source is Dvedavitakka sutta (MN 19). Next page...

If one some evil does then do it not again and again. Do not wish for it anew for evil grows to dukkha.



In this sutta, the Buddha instructs one to replace thought of renunciation, Metta and compassion when greed, hatred and delusion arise. Viriya that has been developed as a spiritual faculty helps overcome those negative states.

The vital role of Viriya in the purification of the mind is repeatedly mentioned in different sections of the Dhamma under the thirty seven limbs of awakening (Sattisbodhipakshikadhamma). For example; Viriya is included in five spiritual faculties (Panca indriya) and five powers (Pancabala) are developed together. The five qualities are Confidence (Saddha), energy (Viriya), Mindfulness (Sati), concentration (Samadhi) and wisdom (Panna) (Indriya Sanyutta - SN). Confidence should be developed simultaneously with wisdom. Viriya should be developed with concentration. Mindfulness, being in the middle, plays an important role to control and make the other four meaningful. Hence, mindfulness is the decisive factor here even if wisdom is the ultimate aim. If these qualities are developed alone, it is not beneficial to the practitioner. That practice may lead the practitioner towards an extreme situation because these qualities are immature and wild when they function alone. The story of Ven. Sona stresses the importance of understanding the spiritual qualities individually and as a group.

On one occasion, Ven. Sona was in walking meditating in a place called Sitavanaya near Rajagaha. He practised so hard until his feet cracked and bled. He thought he was one of the most energetic disciples of the Buddha but had not achieved anything other than bleeding feet. Having gained no positive results from his efforts, he decided to give up priesthood and lead a peaceful life at home doing meritorious deeds with his wealth inherited from his family. Knowing this thought of Ven. Sona, The Buddha appeared in front of him and asked a few questions;

“Tell me, Sona, in the past, when you lived at home, weren’t you skillful at

playing the lute?”
 “Yes Bhante”
 “What do you think, Sona? When its strings were too tight, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”
 “No Bhante”
 “But, Sona, when its strings were neither too tight nor too loose but adjusted to a balanced pitch, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”
 “Yes Bhante”
 “So too, Sona, if energy is aroused too forcefully this leads to restlessness, and if energy is too lax this leads to laziness. Therefore, Sona, resolve on a balance of energy, achieve evenness of the spiritual faculties, and take up the object there”
 “Yes Bhante” Ven. Sona replied. (Sona Sutta – AN 6:55 by Bhikkhu Bodhi - 2012)

Viriya becomes the enlightenment factor when it is cultivated and fully developed. That is conducive to perfect understanding and attaining Nibbana. The Buddha pointed out causes for its continuous development when a person practices in such a way. The element of arousal (ආරම්භධාතු), the element of endeavors (නික්කමධාතු) and the element of exertion (පරක්කමධාතු) are the nutriment for the arising of non arisen enlightenment factor of energy. Also giving frequent attention to the three elements is a nutriment for Viriya that has already arisen (Āhāra Sutta – SN 42:51).

According to Ven. Anuruddha’s reflection, ‘the teaching of the Buddha is only for people who develop Viriya but not for lazy people’, he meant that laziness always inclines towards downfall, unhappiness and suffering, and the Dhamma is not established in such a lazy people. Laziness is the maker of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of wisdom, detrimental to wisdom, tending vexation, leading away from Nibbana (Nivarana Sutta – SN 46:40). So laziness or drowsiness is an enemy of the meditator that associates other unskillful habits. There is an interesting advice given by the Buddha to chief disciple Moggallana concerning drowsiness and the methods to overcome it. Next page...

Teaching for the wise behaviour...

කණ්භං ධම්මංචිජ්ජනාය
 සුක්කං භාවෙට් පණ්ඩිතො
 ඕකා අනොකමාගම්ම
 විවෙකෙ යත්ථ දුරමං. (Dhp 87)



The wise overcome the negative emotions that are harmful for peaceful living. Also he abandons sensual pleasure and seeks the higher happiness that comes from renunciation as he aspires to liberate from suffering.



Vesak programs at HJBM



‘Happy is the birth of the Buddha’

The HJBM will conduct a series of meritorious events next month to commemorate the birth of prince Siddhartha, the great enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha, which took place in the month of May of 563 B.C.E

All are welcome!

If one should some merit make do it again and again. One should wish for it anew for merit grows to joy.



On one occasion, Ven. Moggallana felt sleepy while he was meditating in a cave. Then the Buddha appeared in front of him and advised him to arouse his Viriya in seven different ways.

“Moggallana, if you feel drowsiness;

1. Do not attend what you are attending, and then drowsiness vanishes

2. Ponder, examine and reflect on the Dhamma if the previous action is not working, then you would be fine

3. Recite the Dhamma you have learnt if the previous action is not working, then drowsiness vanishes

4. Pull your ears and rub limbs with both hands if the previous action is not working, then drowsiness vanishes

5. Get up from your seat and rub your eyes with water, survey all the directions and look at constellations and stars if the previous action is not working, then drowsiness vanishes

6. Attend to perception of light and develop the mind imbued with luminosity if the previous action is not working, then drowsiness vanishes

7. Practice walking meditation back and forth if the previous action is not working, then drowsiness vanishes

“Moggalana, if this is not working, you should lie down mindfully and rest for sometimes. Yet, do not indulge in resting or pleasure on sleeping, wake up and practice diligently. (Pacalayana Sutta – AN 7:58)

The danger of arising laziness is that it can prevent the arising of Viriya and destroy the arisen enlightenment factor of Viriya; therefore, we must be careful not to lose Viriya.

The Dhammapada, the bible of the Buddhists conveys another beautiful teaching in the 112 verse; a single day of a person with right effort is nobler and supreme than a person who lives hundred years without right effort (Dhp 112). Therefore, Buddha advised disciples as follows; arouse your energy, strive on and exert diligently in the

Buddha’s teaching until you sweep away the army of evil Mara just like an elephant breaks a hut of reeds. Therefore, one who lives ardently in the Dhamma and discipline will end the suffering and cease wandering in Samsara.

(ආරම්භය නික්මමට ,යුක්තව බුද්ධසාසනෙ; ධුතාම මව්වුනො සෙනං, නළාගාරංව කුඤ්ජරො. යො ඉමස්මිං ධම්මච්චනයෙ, අප්පමත්තො විහස්සති; පහාය ජාතිසංසාරං, දුක්ඛස්සන්තං කරිස්සති)

(Arunawati Sutta – SN 06:14)

Viriya is a vital spiritual quality talked about in each aspect of the Buddhist teaching. Without Viriya, other spiritual qualities cannot develop. Therefore, Viriya should be developed often in physical, verbal and mental activities, to make it an enlightenment factor which is indispensable in our practice towards Nibbana.

By Bhante Jinananda



කත්තබ්බං කුසලං, වර්තබ්බං
බුන්ධවරියං ,නත්ථි ජාතසස අමරණං
Engage in skillful activities, live according to the noble teaching because there is no escape from the death

Let’s meditate for peace of mind

**Meditation in English
With Bhante Vijitha
(Mondays 7:00pm – 8:30pm)**

**Lunch time meditation in English
With Bhante J (each Tuesdays and
Thursdays from 12:00 Noon to 1:00pm)**

**Sutta studies with Bhante J
(Tuesdays 6:30pm to 8:00pm)**

**Meditation and Dhamma discussion in
Sinhalese with Bhantes
(Wednesdays 7:00pm – 9:00pm)**



The wise reflections

These five things have to be reflected often by monks, nuns, men and women.

- ♣ I’m subject to old age; I’m not free from old age
- ♣ I’m subject to illness; I’m not free from illness
- ♣ I’m subject to death; I’m not free from death
- ♣ I’m subject to depart and separate from everyone and everything which is dear and agreeable to me
- ♣ I’m the owner of my kamma, the heir to my kamma; I have kamma as my origin, kamma as my relative, kamma as my resort; I will be the heir to whatever kamma, good or bad that I do

When a monk, a nun, a male or a female reflects upon these themes, the intoxication with youth, the intoxication with good health and the intoxication with life either diminishes or is completely abandoned. Also it decreases and completely eliminates desire and lust with regard to everyone and everything that is dear and agreeable. With this wise reflection of kamma, misconduct by actions, words and thoughts diminishes and ceases to exist.

(Abhinhapaccavekkhitabbatthana Sutta – AN 57:07)

Be a divine Husband and wife

On one occasion, the Buddha was travelling between Madhura and Veranja cities. Then a group of husbands and wives came to see the Buddha while he was resting. In the friendly conversation that took place, the Buddha mentioned that there are four ways of living in the world.

1. A male rascal lives with a female rascal (ඡවො ඡවාය සද්ධිං සංවසති)
 2. A male rascal lives with a female deity (ඡවො දෙවියා සද්ධිං සංවසති)
 3. A male deity lives with a female rascal (දෙවො ඡවාය සද්ධිං සංවසති)
 4. A male deity lives with a female deity (දෙවො දෙවියා සද්ධිං සංවසති)
- {Pathamasanvasa Sutta – AN 53:03}

The Buddha teaches his lay disciples how to lead a peaceful life at home and in the society while he guides his ordained disciples to end craving and gain total freedom from suffering. There are many instances where the Buddha advises lay people on how to build a happy married life. The Buddha's teaching on this subject is a landmark of counseling and domestic administration. According to this sutta, the husband-wife relationship is taught with similes and the satisfaction we wish can be gained through developing good qualities in interrelationships.

If a husband violates moral principles by killing living beings, stealing, engage in sensual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicating drugs, he lives with an obsessed heart. Therefore, he is incapable of wholesomeness and recognized as 'a rascal'. If his wife also has the same habits and supports him in his of living, she is also a female rascal. Although these two live in the society as humans, they are

compared to a male rascal who lives along with a female rascal.

In some families, the wife does not condone unethical behaviour of husband and never supports him to violate moral principles. She also lives righteously practicing good qualities with children. Due to unwholesome behaviour, the husband is like a rascal but the wife is compared to a female deity because of her divine qualities.

The third simile tells that the wife misbehaves while the husband acts ethically according to moral principles. So the wife's way of living is the same as a female rascal, who has ill-will in mind. But the husband is peaceful and serene so that he is like a deity.

Finally, the Buddha says that there are families where both the husband and wife have wonderful qualities. They both practice moral principles and maintain a mutual relationship exactly the way the Dhamma recommends. Neither the husband nor the wife has unskillful intentions in engaging in unskillful action, speech or thinking. In brief, this family is living in a divine abode because of the compassion and love they shower each other with. The children also follow the footsteps of the parents and live in peace.

The Bodhisattvas chose this kind of divine couples as their parents to be born in their last birth. Also Ariya Purisas can be produced by a good husband and wife relationship as they live in accordance with the Dhamma. Even the chief God worships this type of husband and wife considering their wholesome living. Make the determination to be good husbands and wives.

Bak Full Moon Poya day observances



The second visit of the Buddha to Sri Lanka took place during the sixth year of the great enlightenment. The Buddha got to know about a dispute between two brothers in Nagadeepa in Thambapanni (Sri Lanka). It was due to a gem stubbed throne which brought almost to war with each other. The Compassionate One intervened and resolved it explaining the significance of peace and harmony.

▲
Commemorating this historical incident and understanding the value of the Noble training, devotees participated in observing eight precepts, meditation sessions, and Dhamma discussions on Sunday April 21th at HJBM.

▲
Dana was offered by Mrs. Ranjini Alwis and family to transfer merit to departed parents and relatives.

▲
Mr. and Mrs. So and so sponsored the expenses of the day.

▲
May you all be happy and well!

Though one should live a hundred years foolish, uncontrolled, yet better is life for a single day moral and meditative.