



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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“Ehipassiko” – Come and See the truth

By Bhante Jinananda...

‘Ehipassiko’ is a combination of two words, which literally means ‘come and see the truth as it is. It is one of the outstanding qualities of the Dhamma that expresses the universality of the teaching as a philosophy. The Implied meanings of the words are deeper than the denotation.

One meaning of ‘come’ (Ehi) is a direct invitation to come and see the Dhamma, learn the teaching which led many towards renunciation or going forth from home life to homelessness. Sometimes, the Buddha addressed certain wise people such as Prince Yasa with the special term ‘Ehi Bhikkhawe’. It means to come and become full-fledged mendicants an experience the simplicity and bliss the Dhamma offers. There are many examples of such instances scattered in Buddhist teaching. It shows that the Buddha encouraged some individuals to transform their lives to a more simple form as monks and nuns.

The other meaning of ‘Ehi-come’ is not an invitation to change their life as a monk or nun. It is an invitation to open our mind to wise reflection. In that sense, the Pali phrase ‘Ehipassiko’ is very important and relevant to lay people. They are invited by the Buddha who saw and experienced the Dhamma and the peace it brings. The Buddha expected people to come and explore the truth as the only way for

salvation. Even though monks and nuns dedicate their life to practice and see the Dhamma for themselves making maximum effort, the Buddha never expected such striving from his lay followers. It may be difficult to the majority of lay people to practice complete renunciation and the Buddha did not encourage in ordaining every lay devotee. The teaching encourages transforming one's perceptions to wholesome perceptions and leading a fruitful life. That's why this invitation ‘come’ is justified in broader sense.

The Buddha expounded that all compounded things of life are impermanent. Theoretically, then nothing can be taken as self even if one believes that there is a person who thinks and acts. However, sentient beings entrapped by sensual pleasures can't see this truth. Further, the Buddha discovered that beings wander in Samsara due to craving and ignorance. Therefore, a compassionate request is made to all to understand craving and ignorance as main causes of all Problems in this life and beyond.

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Wise people are encouraged to explore the hidden truth of life to end the suffering. To those individuals, the Buddha extended an invitation to 'come' into his order and experience the truth. Some didn't have penetrative wisdom to realize the truth immediately but were looking for the reason for the suffering that surrounded them as they realized there was a reason that had to be corrected. Therefore, everyone who was seeking for an end to suffering was invited to investigate the problems in their own time and find happiness.

Although people have come to know the importance of happiness through the Dhamma, many still lack of right awareness. They are lost in finding how spiritual quest should start. Thus, it is obvious that right understanding is the foremost condition needed, but how do we develop right understanding? According to Maha vedalla sutta in Majjhima nikaya, the Buddha explains two main conditions for the arising of right understanding. They are 'voice of another' (paratoghosapacca) and 'right reflection' (yonisomanasikara). 'Voice of another' means listening to the right Dhamma from one, who knows the Dhamma. As a result of listening to the Dhamma, right reflection or wise attention arises. This clears the path to the practitioner for a long journey until the victory gains.

Such a person may have questions about unclear facts and situations in life. Questioning or analysing is the nature of humans that makes them distinct from other beings. If questioning is for a positive purpose, that surely upgrades the mind to a unique stage. Indeed, human beings are naturally inquisitive. Without clear evidence, they are reluctant

to accept anything as right or wrong.

Questioning about religion is prohibited in some cultures. For instance, if someone questions, about God, even physical punishments up to death could be expected. During the Buddha's time in Indian society, there is evidence that people were barred from questioning. They had to accept whatever the elite believed. Almost all the theistic and non-theistic societies, in which one God or a few Gods are venerated, prohibited questioning and people are forced to believe the superiority of the God. There is no opportunity at all to appreciate the spiritual values in those religions. Even though man lives in a scientific world today, belief on superstitions is very common. Many shape their lives according to these beliefs. However, in the Buddhist teaching questioning is encouraged and totally acceptable if it directs the mind to mental peace and clarity.

Questioning is not only one of the basic requirements to find peace but it also a cornerstone of freedom of expression. For example, when people in Kesaputtiya (Kalama) were in a dilemma wondering who preached the right Dhamma, the Buddha accepted their perplexity and taught the discourse Kalama. The Buddha taught them a new moral criterion to have a clear and a doubt free mind.

1. Do not accept anything upon hearing
2. Do not accept anything just because it comes from tradition
3. Do not accept anything just because it comes from hearsay
4. Do not accept anything just because it is in scriptures
5. Do not accept anything upon argument
6. Do not accept anything upon rules

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Ogha Sutta: Floods

"Monks, there are these four floods. Which four?"

**The flood of sensuality,
the flood of becoming,
the flood of views,
the flood of ignorance.**

These are the four floods.

"Now, this noble eightfold path is to be developed for direct knowledge of, comprehension of, the total ending of, and the abandoning of these four floods. Which noble eightfold path? There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops right resolve... right speech... right action... right livelihood... right effort... right mindfulness... right concentration dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. This noble eightfold path is to be developed for direct knowledge of, for comprehension of, for the total ending of, & for the abandoning of these four floods."

SN 45.171

Translated from the Pali by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Our Dhamma School

**A well disciplined person
is a great blessing for the
whole world.**

Providing positive guidance for the
young flourishing minds-the
Sanghamitta Day Celebration 2012
was a success.



The first Dhamma School Sil
Program held in January, 2013
at the temple premises. It was
a great opportunity for the
children to learn and practice
The Dhamma.



7. Do not accept anything upon reasoning

8. Do not accept anything due to a view arisen after pondering on

9. Do not accept anything upon other's ability

10. Do not accept anything just because of your teachers

The Buddha further explains; when you know these things clearly as unwholesome, blamable and censured by the wise, abandon them because they bring you suffering. Also if things are unwholesome, blamable or censured by the wise, that should be abandoned. The message from the Buddha in the sutta is that anything that is devoid of greed, hatred and delusion is acceptable as true and correct.

Sometimes, people argue that Buddhism accepts and appreciates any kind of questioning. This is incorrect. The Buddha always emphasized the moral basis of questioning. It was acceptable if the questioning was based on moral values. For instance, the Kalamas were confused about what is right and wrong. So their questions about different views are legitimate because they really needed guidance from the right person and learnt the right teaching. The Buddha understood the ethical background of the Kalamas and simply instructed them to hold positive thoughts in their mind such as non-greed, non-hatred and non-dilution. When these thoughts are dominant in the mind, no matter what is heard or read, the person has moral values to protect him from extremes.

At the end of the Sutta, the Buddha encourages people in Kesaputtiya to cultivate four divine abodes; loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. The logic is that once they free their mind from dogmas or erroneous views, they should cultivate these right thoughts in order to see the truth. After the invitation to see the truth,

the Buddha generally established such people in the Dhamma. In the market town of Kesaputtiya, the people understood the Buddha's advice but the Sutta doesn't provide evidence that they were wise enough to understand a sermon about four noble truths. This may be the reason why the Buddha explained some Dhamma aspects to establish them only in morality and then instructed them to develop four divine abodes. There is a very important and encouraging teaching on four Brahma Viharas. It says when someone practices four abodes, he or she obtains four assurances right here in this life.

1. If there is an afterlife and karmic result -then he or she undergoes a good rebirth
2. If there is no life after death`-then he or she lives happily right here in this life
3. If evil results happen to an evil doer- then no evil will happen to him or her
4. If evil results do not happen to an evil doer -he or she is purified anyway.

According to historical and textual references, it was Mahabrahma, the head of Brahmans who invited the Buddha to expound the Dhamma. From then on, he invited all beings to "come and see" and explore the truth. In fact, the Buddha unveiled the path of wisdom to everyone, irrespective of caste, clan, social status etc. The Dhamma was available to everyone and everyone could benefit by it. Due to this action of compassion and wisdom, not only the knowledge about his uniqueness is widespread as a spiritual leader and his teaching is also highly venerated. Therefore, the Buddhist teaching has become a treasure for many people Next page...

around the world. It is universally recognized as a way of living that teaches how to detach from causes of suffering and transcend the mind beyond suffering reaching final release.

What has to be seen if one enters in to the Dhamma? First of all, it is important to realize the significance of human life that is a rare occurrence. Then there is a happy thought too because you value your life. At this point, you feel that living according to moral principles is very beneficial. Those who are morally pure think about well-being of others. So you see suffering of others as yours. As a result, no harm is done to any living being because you are kind to everyone. Then Compassion, caring, patience and many qualities develop in such minds making them noble friends to all beings.

When one meditates one is able to watch the thoughts that arise and pass away. The increasing and decreasing of unskillful and skillful thoughts can be identified. For example, when the thought of greed arises, it can be noticed physically and mentally. If the thought of renunciation develops, the meditator recognizes that as a thought of renunciation. One who continues to practice this way is bound to experience something new or different every time. Experiencing the changing thoughts, moods and phenomena is seeing the Dhamma itself. According to many Suttas, the best seeing is seeing through Paticcasamuppada (causal relationship). Those who see the relationship of cause and effect about all things, the Buddha says, they are the ones who transcend their minds from attachments.

Of course, in terms of seeing through, the three characteristics of phenomena have to be seen in the journey to perfection. Wise persons understand the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self in

anything they see, hear and sense. While sentient beings perceive senses and sensory stimulus with the eye of desire, Noble persons perceive them as objects of disenchantment because they see the reality with the eye of wisdom. As explained in Maggavagga in Dhammapada

Sabbe sankhara aniccata-yada pannaya passati...

Sabbe sankhara anattati-Yada pannaya passati...

Sabbe sankhara dukkhati-yada pannaya passati...

atha nibbindati dukkhe-esa maggo visuddhiya.

All compounded things are impermanent, subject to suffering. Also all these phenomena should not be grasped as self because they all are subject to impermanent and suffering. When a person understands this truth with wisdom, he gets disenchanted with suffering. This disenchantment is the path to purification.

Humans vary from person to person according to how they see the Dhamma. In previous articles, this distinction is discussed relative to individual capabilities. When a person is welcomed to the noble community, he or she sees the Dhamma as a Noble person. The Buddha's Noble disciples understand and interpret the Dhamma in a different way when compared with ordinary individuals. Let's understand this fact using a simile; Udakupama sutta (the discourse on the water parable - AN 7.15/4:11-13) explains seven kinds of individuals who have different levels of mentality. They are being compared each other to a situation where someone falls in deep water.

1. The person who once submerges and remains submerged (drowns)
2. The person who is having emerged and then submerges
3. The person who is having emerged and remains so

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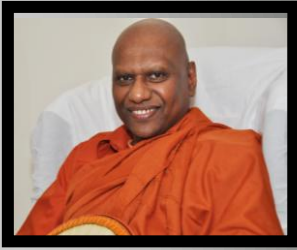
Immeasurable are the qualities of the Blessed ones...

Reflecting on the greatness of the twenty eight Buddhas, the HJBM started her service to all at the dawn of the New Year 2013. Many friends and families participated in the annual "Atavisi Buddha Pujawa" on January 1st 2013. The special blessing ceremony was conducted by Ven. Vijitha thero followed by a sermon delivered by the abbot Most Ven. Brahmanagama Muditha thero.



The bhikkhu liking heedfulness, seeing fear in heedlessness, never will he fall, near is he to Nibbana.

The abbot leaves for Sri Lanka shortly



Most Venerable Brahmanagama Muditha Thero, the abbot of Hilda Jayewardenaramaya, will leave for Sri Lanka on 12th February, 2013 to resume the responsibilities he undertook as chief incumbent of many temples. He will also continue to provide guidance and spiritual support to many monks and lay people in Sri Lanka. The Venerable thero expected to return to Canada in October, 2013.

The HJBM invites all friends to a short meditation session and a Buddha Puja on Wednesday, February 06, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. to bless Ven. Muditha Thero. We wish you a safe journey and a peaceful time in Sri Lanka.

Superior or equal or inferior...

If one regards himself superior or equal or inferior by reason of the body that is impermanent, painful and subject to change, what else is it than not seeing reality? Or if one regards himself superior or equal or inferior by reason of feelings, perceptions, volitions or consciousness, what else is it than not seeing reality? If one does not regard himself superior or equal or inferior by reason of the body, the feelings, perceptions, volitions or consciousness what else is it than seeing reality?
— SN 22.49

4. The person who is having emerged and observes and look around
5. The person who is having emerged and swims across
6. The person who is emerged and gains firm ground
7. The person who is emerged and crosses over to the far shore and stand on the land as a Brahmin.

In this sutta, water and persons are parables or analogies. The water usually denotes the purity of mind; however, water is not considered as pure when one has to cross over it to go to the other shore, it is an obstacle. Therefore, in this water parable sutta, water is compared to darkness of ignorance or samsara with severe suffering.

According to the sutta, the first person sinks in the water; perhaps, he doesn't know how to swim or he cannot stand because he is in deep water. The final result is death for the first person. Similarly, one who attaches to sensual pleasures is also sinking down to samsaric suffering because he doesn't have an interest to overcome it or doesn't know how to do it.

On the other hand, the second person stays a little bit on the surface treading water but cannot stay long and he too drowns. It seems he has some ability to keep his head above the water. In Dhamma point of view, he can understand the importance of faith, shame for wrong doing, fear for wrong doing, right effort and wisdom to some extent. But none of those qualities are strong enough to develop further. They decrease rapidly. As a result, he can't stay on the surface he drowns in samsaric suffering. Those who periodically engage in wholesome activities are included to this category.

The third individual is different from the previous one. He can remain on the surface either by floating or by treading water using his strength and stamina.

He is able to remain without sinking. He is in the same position; he is neither sinking nor crossing across the water to the shore. Similarly, nothing changes in this person spiritually. The five wholesome qualities neither grow nor decrease. In other words, even though these kinds of persons possess five important qualities, they don't develop them but maintain them in the same level.

The next person is powerful because he emerges, observes and looks around. To do that, he should have strong abilities. Imagine a person who is in the middle of the river but stays without drowning and also has the ability to investigate his surroundings, look for the shortest path to the shore. At the same time, he is talking to someone who is on the far shore to get help. He is not worried about the situation because there are people who can support him. In the Sutta, this person's faith, shames regarding morality and other qualities have been firmly established. Therefore, this person has been recognized as 'the mindful observer' or 'the stream winner'. He has defeated the furious water current of samsaric suffering by cutting down three gross fetters, which is why he is called by the stream winner.

The fifth one not only emerges from water but also swims across the water. This noble person is called 'the once returner', which means one who is reborn only once in the sense sphere. According to the Dhamma, he is able to attain full enlightenment in that very life. The distinction between this person and the previous one is that the latter has weakened two more fetters compared to the former.

The one who finds firm ground is very different from the once returner. In the parable, person in this situation can

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stand on the ground. There is no danger for this person about his life. He never sinks down. When he is compared with the Dhamma, he is designated as ‘the Non-returner’ or ‘Anagami’. He has completely cut off five fetters and the afterlife is definitely in Brahma realms. It is said that he attains full sainthood from there.

The last one is the most skillful person because he is able to emerge, cross over the water and stand safely on land. He doesn't seem exhausted by anything because he has done what has to be done in terms of saving his life. He doesn't perceive that ‘I’ am saved because he is quite aware of the notion of self or release from worry and no perception ‘I’ exists. He has totally eradicated almost all the ten fetters. Faith, shame for doing wrong things, fear for doing wrong, right effort

and wisdom have been practiced to highest extent and direct knowledge is gained. Due to this reason, the Buddha explains him as the one who reaches the farthest shore; the Brahmin, the Arahant.

In conclusion, ‘Ehipassiko – come and see’ is a unique quality of the Dhamma. The Buddha's discovery twenty six centuries ago is still alive in the same strength when it is applied by one who has the wisdom to see it. The Buddha's compassionate invitation is to all humans to realize the importance of this rare opportunity and make it meaningful by developing wholesome qualities. Although we are all invited to ‘come and see the truth, some ignore it, some have no interest to investigate it. For some, it is too complicated to understand. Finally only a few fortunate beings see the essence and realize it.



BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF OTTAWA

HILDA JAYEWARDENARAMAYA

New Board Members of the HJBM - 2013

The Annual General Meeting of the HJBM was held on Sunday 20th January, 2013 at the temple premises. The meeting presided by Venerable Muditha Thero was well attended. New directors were appointed unanimously to the positions made vacant by the outgoing Board Members.

New Board Members:

President: Mr. Duleep Mahanama

Secretary: Mr. Dhammika Herath

Treasurer: Mr. Turadeva Ratnayake

Director: Ven. Jinananda Thero

Director: Ven. Vijitha Thero

We take this opportunity to appreciate all the work done by the past board members, Mrs. Ranjini Alwis the President, Mr. Saman Jayathilake the secretary, and Mr. Mahinda Piyasiri the treasurer. Their dedicated service and valuable contribution to the temple in numerous are greatly appreciated!

☞ Foam ☜

Form is like a glob of foam;
Feeling, a bubble; perception,
a mirage;

Fabrications, a trunk of
banana tree;

Consciousness, a magic trick

—

This has been taught
By the Kinsman of the Sun
(Buddha).

However you observe them,
Appropriately examine them,
They're empty, void
To whoever sees them
appropriately.

Beginning with the body
as taught by the One
with profound discernment:
when abandoned by three
things—life, warmth, &
consciousness —form is
rejected, cast aside.

When bereft of these it lies
thrown away, senseless,
a meal for others.

That's the way it goes:
it's a magic trick,
an idiot's babbling.

It's said to be a murderer.
No substance here
is found.

Thus a monk, persistence
aroused, should view the
aggregates by day & by night,
mindful, alert;
should discard all fetters;
should make himself
his own refuge;
should live as if
his head were on fire —
in hopes of the state
with no falling away.

Phena Sutta: Foam
Translated from the Pali by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu

The perfect monk

පඤ්ච ජීන්දෙ පඤ්ච ජනෙ, පඤ්ච චුක්කරි භාවයෙ
පඤ්ච සඨගාතිගො භික්ඛු, “ඔසති ඡෛණො”ති වුච්චති
(Kathicinda sutta, SN/Dhp, Bhikkhu Vagga-370)

This stanza is taken from the *Katichinda sutta* in Sanyutta nikaya and was uttered by the Buddha as an answer to a question. One day, a deity came to the Buddha when the Buddha was staying at Jeta's Monastery in Savatthi. The question of the deity was about what has to be done by a monk in terms of attaining Nibbana.

“How many ties must one cut, how many one abandon,
And how many further must one develop?
When a Bhikkhu has surmounted how many ties
Is he called a crosser of the flood?”

Four questions are asked in this stanza about how one could become a noble person, who crosses the flood of suffering,

1. How many defilements or skillful thoughts one has to cut off?
2. How many defilements does one have to abandon?
3. How many qualities does one have to develop?
4. How many things does one have to overcome?

The Buddha answered; to be a noble monk, who crosses over the flood of suffering,

1. Five defilements must be cut off;
2. Five defilements should be abandoned;
3. Five wholesome qualities should be developed;
4. Five things should be overcome

What are the five defilements that have to be cut off?

Self view (sakkayaditti), skeptical doubt, wrong practices and rituals, sensual pleasure and ill will are the five defilements that have to be cut off. They are called 'gross fetters', which binds a person strongly to samsara.

Also there are five things to abandon; desire to form, desire to the formless, conceit, restlessness and ignorance. They are explained as 'subtle fetters'. These are not easily noticed because they lie deep down in one's mind.

To pull out all these gross and subtle fetters or defilements, five wholesome qualities should be developed such as confidence (Sradha), perseverance (Viriyā), mindfulness (Sati), concentration (Samadhi) and wisdom (Panna).

Then with the gradual training of these five wholesome faculties, that noble monk overcomes the five ties that bind beings, literally explained as floods of suffering. They are lust, hatred, delusion, conceit and views. With the destruction of these five including the ten fetters, the monk frees his mind from attachments. Therefore, he is called 'the crosser of the flood'.

*Duruthu Full
Moon Day Sil
observance and
Meditation*

*Many devotees took
part to the 1st day long
sil program and
meditation session in
2013 held at HJBM
on Last Sunday.
Duruthu Poya is
historically important
to Sri Lanka
Buddhists due to the
first visit of the
Buddha to Sri Lanka
a few months after his
enlightenment.*

*Reflecting this
significance, people
involve in meritorious
activities to spend the
day in peace.*

*It was a fruitful day
for every participant.
Living in seclusion at
least on the full moon
is noble custom
continued from the
Buddha's time. Invite
all to join to Poya
program in each month
and practice the
teaching as the
Buddha taught.*

*The Dana was offered
by Mr. and Mrs.
Marakawaththa and
family.*

May you be well!

Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion.