



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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The contents

Advent of Buddhism in Sri Lanka

කණ්ණාඩි...

*Mindfulness' is
The path to
'Deathlessness'*

**Upcoming
events**

සුඵපබුද්ධං
පබුඵකන්ති....

Right mindfulness;
the divine dwelling

*1st Outdoor
meditation*

**Suffering exists,
but no sufferer**

Dhamma School

**Aditta Sutta:
(The House) on Fire**

**Vesak at HJBM
2013**

Advent of Buddhism in Sri Lanka

By Bhante Jinananda

It was after two hundred and thirty six years from the Blessed One's Parinibbana that Ven. Mahinda along with a group of missionaries arrived in Sri Lanka with the most wonderful gift in the world not only for the Sri Lankans but for the whole world. This arrival of Arahant Mahinda is a very significant event for all Sri Lankans as it marks the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In speaking generally, the arrival of Ven. Mahinda is considered a kind of arising of the Buddha a second time and also, rediscovering the Dhamma. According to Sri Lankan history, a wise King, Devanampiyatissa by name, was ruling the country at that time. He had been maintaining a close diplomatic relationship with Emperor Asoka in India. Due to this strong friendship and also foreseeing the future development of the Buddha Sasana in Sri Lanka, the leaders of the third Sangha council may have taken an important decision to send special envoys; Ven. Mahinda, a son of King Asoka and later, a daughter Ven. Sanghamitta to the Island nation to spread the teaching.

The Buddha's teaching was not established in the Island although the chronicles mention that the Buddha visited Sri Lanka three times before Ven. Mahinda's arrival. Since the Buddha's visits had been to resolve conflicts



among two groups as the historic chronicles explain, the inhabitants of the island may not have been ready to grasp the Buddha's teaching at the time. The arrival of Ven. Mahinda therefore, is the beginning of the Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In this short article, the author's intention is to explain how Ven. Mahinda conveyed the message of the Buddha to the people of Sri Lanka, who were unaware about the Buddha and his teaching.

Ven. Mahinda understood that if the king was wise enough to answer the questions, his people could also realize this deep and profound teaching. Ven. Mahinda at the moment met the King, used the Buddha's unique teaching method; testing a person's wisdom by asking a few questions. A number of preliminary questions were asked to check the king's intelligence before unveiling the deep Dhamma. *Next page...*

"It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles."



The selection of a specific sutta for his first formal introduction of the Dhamma is also very significant; instead of selecting a deep and heavy discourse that includes an explanation of the four noble truths, dependent origination (Paticcasamuppada)...etc. he selected Cula Hatthipadopama sutta which simply explained the real picture of the Buddha and the step-by-step practice of disciple until he reaches the final goal. Ven. Mahinda explained who his teacher was and the teaching he taught.

In first meeting, ven. Mahinda introduced him and the group as disciples of the King of the Dhamma. He basically added that the place they came and why they came. This sutta was really worthwhile for ven. Mahinda to say everything he want. Therefore, the discourse is quite appropriate for a new audience who had not heard about the Buddha or about his teaching.

Let's try to understand this important sutta that changed a whole nation and helped establish this wonderful teaching in Sri Lanka.

Cula hatthipadopama sutta (MN 27) was delivered by the Buddha to a Brahmin called Janussoni when the Buddha was living in Jatavana monastery. One day, Brahmin Janussoni was travelling by a decorated chariot and on the way he met the wanderer Pilotika. Then Brahmin Janussoni asked the wanderer where he was coming from. Then the wanderer Pilotika said he is coming from having met the Buddha. Janussoni wanted to know the wanderer Pilotika's impression about the Buddha. 'What do you think about Gautama's wisdom?' asked Janussoni, and Pilotika said that the Gautama is admired by the many and admired as the best among Gods and humans. So he is not capable enough to sing the praises of the Buddha.

Then Janussoni questions what characteristic of Gautama made Pilotika have so much confidence in the Buddha See the answer the wanderer provided;

'Just like an elephant woodman sees footprints of a big bull elephant in the forest and realizes that these are footprints of a big bull elephant, I also came to the conclusion that the Gautama the Buddha is really remarkable and has four footprints. Also he is fully enlightened and the Dhamma is well-explained and the Sangha is well disciplined.

The four footprints of the Buddha

1. *Many people well versed in various fields prepare themselves with questions and answers and go to the Buddha to check his knowledge. If the Buddha could not answer their questions, they go with the intention of ridiculing the Buddha. Their intention is to defeat the ascetic Gautama through debate. However, after they listen to ascetic Gautama, they neither ask questions nor do they debate with him but accept the teaching and become disciples under the ascetic Gautama. The wanderer Pilotika says that when he sees this first footprint of Ascetic Gautama, he came to the conclusion that, the Buddha is rightly enlightened, his Dhamma is well-proclaimed and the Sangha, his disciples are on the right path.*

2. *The learned Brahmins who are clever and intelligent prepare themselves with questions and answers. Go to the Buddha with the intention of ridiculing him and putting him down in debate but at the end they also become his disciples. This is the second footprint of ascetic Gautama that made me decide that the ascetic Gautama is..... and the Sangha is on right path.*

3. *The learned householders who are clever and intelligent prepare themselves with questions and answers..... They also become disciples. This is the third footprint of ascetic Gautama that made me decide*

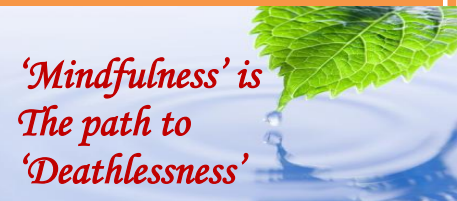
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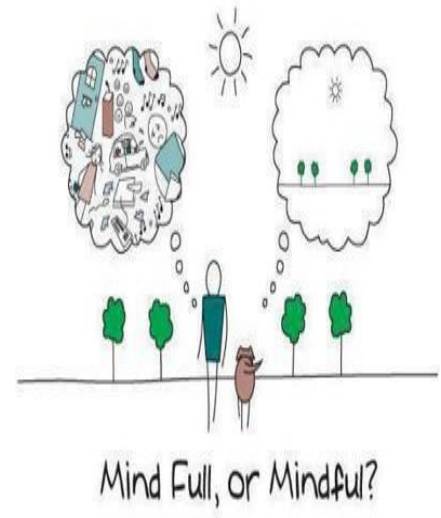
මුල් ඉතිරිවන සේ ගස් කපා දැමුවද, නොමරුණ මුල් නිසා ගස් නැවත හටගන්නේ යම්සේද, එසේම තණහාව තාවකාලිකව සමනය කලත් එය හට ගන්නා හේතුවේ පවතින්නේනම්, දුක ද නැවත නැවත හටගනී.

Even when a tree has been cut down, it will grow again if its roots are strong and unharmed. Similarly, when even if a trace of craving remains, suffering is likely to arise again and again.

- The Buddha -



'Mindfulness' is The path to 'Deathlessness'



Next page...

"The way is not in the sky. The way is in the heart."



4. *The learned recluses who are clever and intelligent prepare themselves with questions and answers..... They also become disciples. This is the fourth footprint of ascetic Gautama that made me decide that the ascetic Gautama is..... and the Sangha is on right path.*

When this amazing description of the Buddha is heard, Brahmin Janussoni got down from the decorated chariot and turned to the direction of where the Buddha was residing at the time, and made reverential salutations by reciting the following;

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa .../// (Honour to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One)

Overjoyed from Pilotika's information, Brahmin Janussoni then goes to see the Buddha and mentions his conversation with Pilotika. Then The Buddha says that the explanation of the footprint of the elephant is not completed yet. So the Buddha elaborates further the simile of footprints of elephant in order to show the significance of the Buddha, his teaching and the Sangha.

The wise elephant woodman, seeing a big footprint of an elephant, does not come to the conclusion that this is of a big elephant because there are she-elephants that have similar feet but they are not tall. He again finds another footprint which is big and he also sees that some rubbing branches high up on surrounding trees have been rubbed on. Therefore he has still not come to the conclusion that it is the footprint of the biggest elephant as there are she-elephants in the forest that have teeth that can destroy trees and branches so that this footprint might be of such an elephant. He further goes in to the forest and sees some big footprints; a scraping high up on the branches and also marks made by tusks. Does he decide in this case that this may be the biggest elephant? No because there are such she-elephants in the forest that have tusks. When he continues further, he can

see some big footprints, scrapings high up, marks by tusks and broken branches. Not only that, he also sees such an elephant in the open area walking Then the wise person decides that this is the biggest in the forest because he has seen the elephant and it is not from concluding from other factors but seeing the elephant itself.

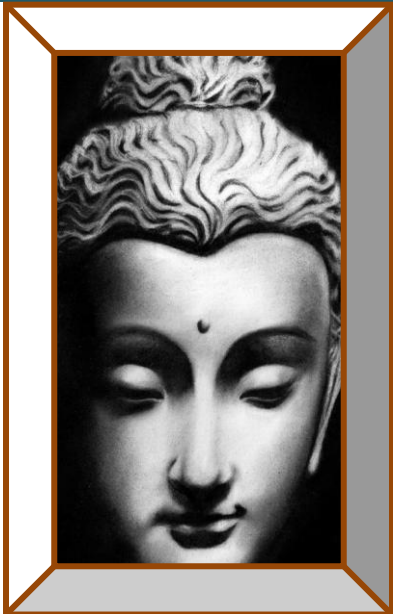
Similarly, the wise individual finds the Buddha who has appeared in the world; sees that he is the foremost and the supreme among humans and gods, he is fully enlightened, perfect in wisdom and so on. The Dhamma he proclaims is excellent at the beginning, excellent in the middle and excellent in the end.

Then, he hears the Dhamma from the Buddha; by listening, he gains confidence of the Buddha and decides that this life is dusty, full of troubles and many responsibilities. He thinks further that it is difficult to lead a holy life leading such a busy life. He contemplates on cutting off the hair and becomes a disciple in search of the truth. After becoming a disciple, he abandons wrong practices and develops the moral principles;

- Abandons killing living beings and develops Metta*
- Abandons from stealing and practices generosity*
- Abandons from sexual misconduct and practices celibacy*
- Abandons from lying and speaks the truth*
- Abandons from malicious words and speaks friendly words*
- Abandons from harsh speech and speaks gentle words*
- Abandons from useless talk and speaks words that are useful and beneficial*

After establishing discipline on body and speech, according to the sutta, he does every possible thing to be perfect in discipline because he has tasted the Dhamma. He does not accept anything material out of four requests (robes, meals, lodgings and medicines) nor does he involve in any activity that is harmful.

Next page..



Upcoming events

Poson Full Moon Day observance

Saturday 22nd Dana sponsored by Chaminda & Niranjala Weerakoon

Summer Garage Sale

Saturday July 6th & Sunday July 7th

2nd outdoor meditation

Sunday July 14th from 9-11 AM At the HJBM meditation garden

Esala Full Moon Day sil observance

Sunday July 21st

Vas Aradhana

Sunday July 21st
Sponsored by Akil Edirisinghe, Mallika and Thansen Edirisinghe

First Vassana Puja and meditation

Sunday 28th followed by a Dhamma sermon



to his peace of mind. In this way, he becomes a well-restrained disciple in the order.

In addition, he disciplines by contemplating on the fleeting nature of senses and sensory experiences. Sense restraint helps a disciple to cross over from the mundane world that is full of miseries to a more peaceful state. It is certainly a higher development of his Sila. Some people think that Sila is completed only in the initial stage of practice and after that they do not need to think about Sila. However, there are some aspects of Sila to be developed along with development of concentration and wisdom. By understanding the impermanence of things around him, he is lifted towards the higher training like practicing full-awareness of the body in the body, movement of the body and so on. He practices clear comprehension (Satisampajanna). At this stage, he prefers seclusion and prefers to live in places where there is silence. This implies that he has only one goal; to purify his mind from unwholesome states and attain peace.

Elimination of hindrances

For the purpose of freeing the mind from and cutting off sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, remorse and worry and doubts, he continues his meditation. In this battle, a disciple has to use the most useful weapon, the weapon of wisdom. Also Sraddha (Confidence), Viriya (perseverance) play an important role in going beyond the trap of hindrances. They are representatives of Mara and are likened to iron walls that block our freedom. We require a strong blow to crack and bring down these iron doors. At least, we should try to make a few holes in them so that the walls become weaker. This helps the disciple to totally eliminate the hindrances eventually. higher training, he can see the mental

development as the Buddha explained them. These are reckoned as the footprints of the Tathagata. According to Cula Hatthipadopama sutta, the footprints of the Tathagata are given as follows;

1. 1st Jhana
2. 2nd Jhana
3. 3rd Jhana
4. 4th Jhana
5. The knowledge of the recollection of past lives
6. The knowledge of passing away and reappearance of beings
7. The knowledge of the destruction of the taints
8. The knowledge of the liberation from taints

If someone needs to see the Buddha, they should experience these states because they are the characteristics of the Blessed One’s mind. As mentioned in the Sutta, the disciple understands that his journey has not finished yet until he attains the knowledge of the liberation from all taints. Some people attain the first Jhana, second, third and claim they are enlightened. It is like a person who sees big footprints and concludes that they are foot prints of a giant elephant. The wise individual knows that freeing his mind from hindrances is not the end. He has confidence of the Buddha at this point but not imperturbable. This implies that at each stage of spiritual development, the Buddha is seen in a different light and in reaching the final knowledge, he clearly sees the real Buddha with his mental power. That is why the Buddha gives the simile of the elephant’s footprint.

Ven. Mahinda in his first sermon explained to the King and his retinue about greatness of the Buddha. Selecting the Cula-hattipadopama sutta, he taught the king how a person could transform through the Dhamma from an ordinary living being to one who becomes a spiritually higher being. The royal

Family members and many people listened to the discourse out of devotion and understood the importance of the Dhamma because the Dhamma wheel was turned in such a clear way by ven. Mahinda.

During this Poson Season, we too should follow the method described in the Sutta and see the Buddha this way. If we go through the Dhamma in this very important sutta (MN 27), it clearly shows the way one has to start and continue the wholesome practice for peace and happiness. It shows training principles, the gradual practice and how gradual attainments are obtained. As we all aspire to uplift our lives from mundane to supramundane levels, move from suffering to happiness, and move from the clutches of sansara to Nibbana, let everyone learn this Sutta well and live with the Dhamma as explained in the shorter discourse of the elephant’s footprint.



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භාවනාය රතො මනො.
**People who meditate
day and night wake
up with pleasant
thoughts and
control in their
senses
(Dph 3011)**



Continued from May Newsletter
**Right mindfulness;
 The divine dwelling**

How to become a great human being - 4

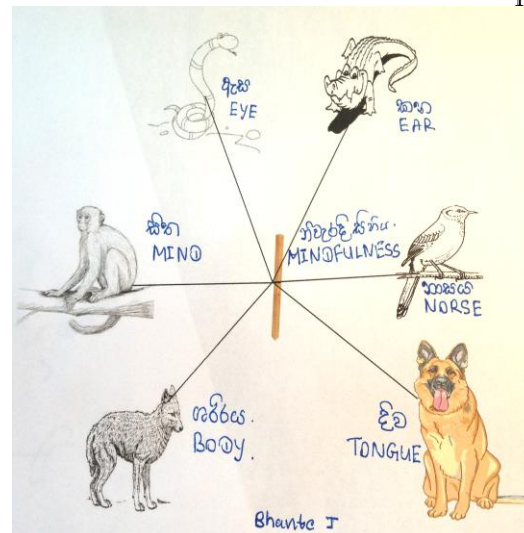
One occasion, a hawk swooped down and caught a quail. While the hawk was taking the quail to his nest for eating, the quail was lamenting 'I'm so unlucky today, I have little merit, I experience this pain because I went out of my own domain into that of others. If I were in my ancestral domain, this hawk could not have caught me in this way'. Then the hawk who listened to his wailing was curious to find out about its domain and asked about the quail's domains. The quail said it is the newly ploughed field covered with clods of soil. Releasing the quail, the hawk said, 'ok, you can go now, but I will take you even in your own domain'. Then the quail went near his house and shouted at the hawk 'come and get me if you can'. With great confidence of its strength, the hawk swooped down to get the quail. The quail jumped into the clods of soil when the hawk was closer and the hawk could not control the speed and he swooped down so fast and hit himself on the hard ground and shattered his breast and died immediately. (Sakunaggi Sutta - SN 46:06)

The Buddha recites this story to the monks to teach the importance of mindfulness. The quail is compared to a disciple and the hawk is the evil Mara or unskillful thoughts. The quail got caught to the hawk as it went out from his domain and was unmindful about the dangers. If he stayed in his domain, there was no danger. The newly ploughed field with clods of soil is likened to the four domains where the disciple

abides. The disciple becomes a victim of the evil Mara or unskillful thoughts, if the disciple's attention strays beyond his domains, which are the four foundations of mindfulness. If the disciple is mindful about the body, the feelings, the mind and mental states, there is no way for Mara to enter into our mind.

In another example Right mindfulness is also compared to a rope that binds all the senses together. The Buddha explains here, how right mindfulness controls the senses by using the simile of six animals in Cappananaka sutta (SN 35:206).

A man catches six animals; a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal and a monkey. All of them are from different domains or habitats and feeding grounds. Each is tied by a rope and all ropes are tied together to a post. Then, each animal pulls towards their habitats but none of them can go to their feeding grounds. They try hard to pull the rope towards their own habitats and finally, they become exhausted and lie down without help.



The Buddha compares these six animals to six senses which have different functions. The rope is right mindfulness. In essence, the six senses without mindfulness incline to negative emotions. The wise person ties the senses together with the rope of mindfulness in order to control them.

Next page..

**The 1st Outdoor
 meditation**
 Sunday June 9th
 Friends practiced
 sitting, standing and
 walking meditation in
 the back yard of the
 HJBM



"The tongue like a sharp knife ... Kills without drawing blood."



In establishing right mindfulness, one has to be aware of how wrong mindfulness arises. The main reason for wrong mindfulness is the inappropriate attention given to sensory experiences. The feeding of wrong mindfulness is wrong views, intentions, speech, actions, livelihood, effort and wrong concentration. When there is not right effort imbued with right view, wrong mindfulness arises. The untaught ordinary individual doesn't know how purity and impurity of mind occurs. He attends to anything he encounters; he grasps things through senses, and considers them as real and correct. Also he perceives forms, sounds, smells...etc with attachment. So the disciple must be wise to let the negative elements of wrong mindfulness go off and develop right mindfulness.

Evidence mentioned in Satisampajanna sutta (AN 8:81) shows the danger of the presence of wrong mindfulness and the benefits of the presence of right mindfulness. The sutta says that unwholesome states such as shamelessness and fearlessness for wrong doing arise when there is not right mindfulness and clear comprehension. As a result, the person loses sense restraint; losing sense restraining causes a lot of unwholesome emotions to act. That takes the mind away from the experience of right concentration. When there is no right concentration, there is no wisdom (Dph 372)

The Buddha mentions in another discourse that each phenomenon related to beings is dominated by mindfulness (සනාධිපනෙය්‍යා සබ්බෙ ධම්මා - Mulaka sutta - AN 8:83). This is clearly shown the right mindfulness is as the decisive factor for all the other spiritual qualities.

According to the path of purification written by the commentator Ven. Buddhaghosa in fourth century CE, the Buddha has prescribed forty



meditations to gain right mindfulness. This classification has been made due to its vital importance to gain liberation. Right mindfulness should be developed on ten devices (Kasina), ten meditations on corpse (Dasa Asubha), ten recollections (Dasa anussati), four divine abodes (Brahmavihara), four formless Jhanas (Arupa Jhana), Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (Aharepatikkulasanna), Contemplation of the four elements (catudhatuvavatthana). {Translation of Visuddhimagga by Bhikkhu Nanamoli}

Anapanasati or right mindfulness on in and out breathing should be discussed in developing right mindfulness as it was practiced by the Siddhartha Bodhisattva to become enlightened. (Saccaka Sutta - MN). On one occasion, the Buddha mentioned that the Tathagata's usual dwelling is on mindfulness and concentration cultivated through in and out breathing meditation. Hence, the Buddha named Anapanasati as the noble dwelling (අරියවිහාරො' ඉතිපි), a divine dwelling (බිරන්මවිහාරො' ඉතිපි) and the Tathagata dwelling (තථාගතවිහාරො' ඉතිපි).

It is important to understand the mindfulness of the Buddha in terms of knowing the teacher's skills and encouraging ourselves to develop right mindfulness. On one occasion, the Buddha said that although his body is

Next page..

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විජ්ජති' ' ති.

"Mere suffering exists,
no sufferer is found;
The deed is, but no doer
of the deed is there;
Nibbana is, but not the
man that enters it;
The path is, but no
traveler on it is seen."

(Vis.M. XVI)

*Life is a journey
Not a race, peacefully
and mindfully walk*



ඇස් තීරයේ වැටෙන ජවනිකා
නරක්න .

**Pictures in eyes
are only seeing**



කන් බෙරයෙන් නැගෙන
බෙර හඬට කන්දෙන්න
**Sounds heard are
only heard**



Dhamma School



Vesak Festival by
-Naween Jasinghe -

The HJBM Dhamma School completed one year of Dhamma studies successfully on June 3rd and closed for the summer vacation. The School starts again on Sunday September 8th 2013.

Aditta Sutta: (The House) On Fire

When a house is on fire
the vessel salvaged
is the one that will be of use,
not the one left there to burn.

So when the world is on fire
with aging and death,
one should salvage [one's wealth]
by giving:
what's given is well salvaged.

What's given bears fruit as pleasure.
What isn't given does not:
thieves take it away, or kings;
it gets burnt by fire or lost.

Then in the end
one leaves the body
together with one's possessions.
Knowing this, the intelligent man
enjoys possessions & gives.

Having enjoyed & given
in line with his means,
uncensured he goes
to the heavenly state.

(Translated from the Pali by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu)

decaying, the mindfulness of the Tathagatha is the same as at the time of the enlightenment. Even if four erudite monks, who are well-versed in the Buddhist teaching, ask questions simultaneously, the Buddha could have remembered all the questions and answered them without any mistake. In Mahaparinibbana sutta, the Buddha mentioned that all the Buddhas as aspirant Bodhisattvas abandon five hindrances and establish right mindfulness on four foundations and then master the seven factors of enlightenment which result in the liberation as the full-enlightened Buddhas.

It is interesting to research on how great disciples developed mindfulness as a factor of enlightenment. They all built mindfulness of the body or reflection in each movement of the body because the body is the frame that feelings, minds and mental states depend on. The disciple with wise reflection tastes the Dhamma in the present moment itself. According to Bhaddekaratta suttas (MN 130-134), he maintains attention in the present moment putting aside the past and the future experiences and investigates things as they appear. So there are many things to obtain from the great disciples with respect to right mindfulness.

Mindfulness in different activities is generally discussed as it is really effective to maintain the balance of life. It seems everyone is interested in having some experience about mindfulness. Let's see how we can develop right mindfulness being at home, in school or in the office. So the first thing is to get some knowledge about mindfulness through reading or discussing with a good teacher. Secondly, know the rudiments of practice. According to Satipatthana, right mindfulness can be developed in four postures but first, it is recommended to practice in the sitting posture, in a quiet place which can allow the meditator to stabilize the mind.

This practice in sitting posture makes a great difference to all activities of the Yogi. Thirdly, try to practice it in the form of meditation with guidance. In addition, it is fine to discuss the meditation with friends who have experience.

Reflect the nature of an unrestrained mind; it is like the fish out of water. The fish tries to jump to water for survival. Our mind, when it experiences sense pleasures, shows exactly the same behavior.



However, when right mindfulness exists in mind, it is full of love and compassion. The Buddha who sees the mentality of each being says that right mindfulness is the field for right Sila, right Samadhi and Panna to progress. Right mindfulness has the power to progress one into more strong and established levels. For example, if a meditator begins meditation just on a simple way and trains to be with it, that mindfulness pushes itself to go forward.

To sum up, we all must understand the importance of right mindfulness and practice it in each action, word and thought. When there is absence of right mindfulness, there is definitely a problem. Wisdom always develops with the support of right mindfulness. Practicing four foundations of mindfulness as recommended by the Buddha is the key for attaining enlightenment.

“Every human being is the author of his own health or disease.”



Vesak at HJBM 2013



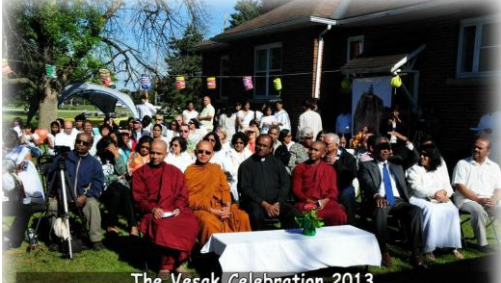
The Vesak Celebration 2013
Hilda Jayewardenaramaya Buddhist Monastery and meditation centre
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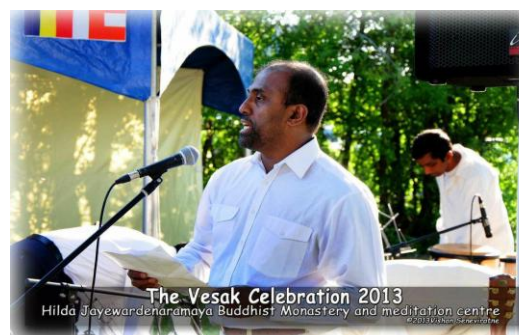
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“Even death is not to be feared by one who has lived wisely.”