



SEEING THROUGH

The Monthly Newsletter of Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center

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VOL.11

March 2013

The Contents

How to be a Great Human (Part-2)

Non-residential meditation retreat

The meditation puzzle

First fund raising event for 2013

Sinhala New Year

The Glory of Buddhahumi

Observance of Medin Full Moon Poya day

Live in concord....

The eight qualities of the Buddha's word

Upaneyya Sutta

Special General meeting at HJBM

The killer attains Nibbana

Special General Meeting at HJBM

How to be a Great human (Part-2)

Contentment is the greatest wealth

The ability to be contented is an integral part of a practitioner who treads on the noble path. Contentment is also a kind of achievement that encourages the followers to go forward on the right path. Therefore, contentment plays an important role in the spiritual development of both monks and lay people as it provides the necessary foundation in reaching the final goal.

Ven. Anuruddha once reflected on the purpose of the Dhamma. The second reflection is that the noble teaching is only for one who is contented, not for one who is discontented. First, it reveals an important quality that is developed by one who follows the Buddha's teaching; that is the contentment visible through the application of Dhamma in daily life. It is a quality of life which manifests not in the future or after death but in this life at the present moment. This is also an understanding relative to the practice and the speed of the practice. In addition, the teaching of contentment is another fact to consider the Buddhist teaching as living Dhamma or a way of life, whereas the other contemporary teachings did not teach or stress the importance of such a rich concept in this life.

The concept of contentment (සන්තුට්ඨි) in the teaching has been discussed and researched at length by many scholars. Yet, contentment, as a factor of noble practice and as an achievement, has to be further discussed because it can only be realized and defined by each individual's experience. For example, the contentment of a mother may not be the same

as that of the father with respect to children, irrespective of the strong relationship they maintain. Even if people live together as one family, the degree of contentment can vary from person to person. This shows how distinct and personalized contentment is.

First, let's discuss the meaning of the word 'contentment' (සන්තුට්ඨි). The term 'contentment' is often used in the place of the word 'happiness' in the general way of speaking. However, the words 'contentment' and 'happiness' have different meanings. The word 'happiness' is used to explain 'momentary excitement' or 'joy'. It is a mental state which comes and goes. For instance, if you see someone helping a poor person, you become happy and appreciate the good action. That pleasant attitude of yours is only for the moment when you involve yourself with that action but later you may forget it and that happiness may not be coming to you again. In contrast, 'contentment' is a state of mind that exists for a considerable amount of time. According to Buddhist teaching, contentment arises through right practice which stays with one for a long time. If you are a contented person, you are satisfied always just as you experienced before. It means that a number of happy moments create a contented life. According to the Dhammapada, contentment is the most important and the highest wealth that can be gained (සන්තුට්ඨිපරමං ධනං).

Next page..

If a wayfarer fails to find one better or equal, steadfast he should fare alone for a fool's no fellowship.



What does it mean when it is said that ‘this Dhamma is for one who is contented, not for one who is discontented’? Of course, it means that the Dhamma can only be useful to be contented for one who can experience contentment. In many suttas, the Buddha pointed out that wise people see the contentment of noble followers and enter in to the stream to gain the same contentment. Such people should be contented with minimum requirements such as food, clothing, shelter and medicine. When they are satisfied and contented with the minimum requirements needed to lead a spiritual life, then it is easier for them to tread on the path towards the achievement of the goal. In other words, contentment is also a factor related to dependant co-origination. When a person practices the Dhamma, the quality of contentment establishes in him. For example, if a person observes eight precepts each full moon day and maintains righteous living, he must have a better chance to be contented compared to others who don’t have such life style. So the speed of the practice dependently causes one’s contentment.

Let’s investigate the reflections in consuming the four requisites in the framework of Buddhist discipline. It is advised for both monks and nuns to eat in moderate. Consumption of food is supposed to be an action that decreases desire to food. It is not appropriate to complain about food even if they are not to one’s liking. Also there should not be expectations to have different types of food items on different days because monks consume food to maintain the physical body which is used to strive for enlightenment. Those enlightened ones partake food only to maintain their lives for the benefit of others. In the Karaniyametta sutta in Suttanipata, it is said that it is a necessary requirement for gaining contentment if one is easy to support with four requisites. As a lay person, you may be able to adjust or change your life by doing simple things. Some people cannot eat the same food if offered on two consecutive meals. They complain about it and quarrel with family members. If the food is a little cold or too warm, they complain and break relationships. Some people yield for many varieties or many items on the table, and

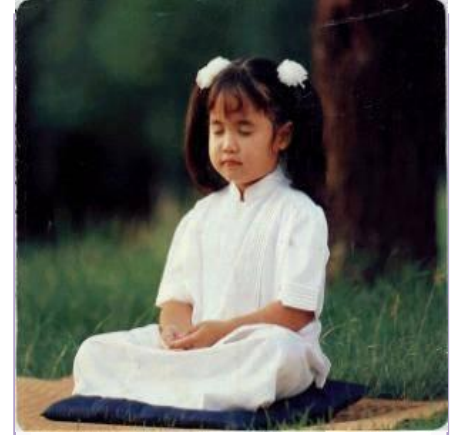
if they are not provided they become unhappy. The problem of seeking pleasure in the consumption of food, clothes, and so on, will take one backward on the spiritual path. As one who is not happy, who yearns for more is always in a state of stress and will not be able sustain a clam mind and a contented one to progress on the path to purity.

Contentment is the culmination of right practice (සම්මා පටිපදා). The root of right practice is the wholesome mind which is accompanied with positive habits. In short, it is clear that the whole noble eightfold path is the mechanism that teaches one to be contented. In the first place, it teaches us to avoid wrong means of living and cultivate the good in life. This is called the aggregate of Morality or Sila. When the person is satisfied with morality, his mind becomes concentrated to wholesomeness. Contentment in the aggregate of concentration is more refined and subtle. Furthermore, developing our minds to such level is another objective of the right path as mentioned in the advice of All the Buddhas (Dhammapada 183). This means that the person is ready to achieve the highest contentment, wisdom or Nibbana. Yet, this level of contentment is far beyond of many humans due to misunderstanding about contentment and lack of right practice.

The right effort to be contented has been described as a necessary practice for individuals who strive for freedom from suffering. For Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis, accepting and consuming of four requisites according to vinaya rules is a kind of right effort. In addition, the way disciples perceived things is also effective to their contentment. If disciples understand the purpose of giving up householder life, their contentment increases and brings about the fruits of monkhood. So this sort of investigation clearly points out that the contentment in monastic life is really subjective to the purpose and the way of practice.

In the achieving of contentment, a number of practices are recommended for lay people. Let’s discuss a few of them and how they are

Next page...



‘අප්පමාදො අමනපදං
**Mindfulness is the
way to the Deathless
(Nibbana)’**

Let’s meditate for peaceful living and clearing the path to deathlessness.

*The first non- residential
meditation retreat in
2013 will be held at
HJBM on March 30th
Saturday and 31st
Sunday from 8:30 am to
4:30 pm.*

Practicing mindfulness (සම්මාසනී) is the method of following the noble eightfold path. Cultivation of mindfulness brings contentment both in this life and beyond. The Satipattana sutta assures that mindfulness leads one to be free from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and finally to the realization of Nibbana.

The meditation puzzle

The puzzle in the February newsletter was created based on the Dhamma articles published during the last couple of months. Nimal & Udula Ratnayake were able to solve it. The next puzzle will be published in the April newsletter.



Our Dhamma School

We are happy to inform you that the first fund raising event organized by Dhamma School was a success. We were able to raise a considerable amount of money for the maintenance of the temple.



Warm wishes for a bright and prosperous New Year



The annual Sinhala New Year celebration will be held at HJBM on Sunday 14th April from 09:30 am to 12:00 pm.

The program consists of the following activities;

The Buddha Puja

Pirith chanting

Anointing oil

Respecting parents and elders

Partaking in traditional

New Year food's items

All are welcome!

important to gain contentment. First, cultivating contentment through precepts is needed. Our mind is not pure by nature because it associates greatly with greed, hatred and delusion from birth. Subsequently, the environmental factors can aggravate those roots of unwholesomeness. So, lay people require strong commitment to establish on morality. The interest of living in accordance with moral principles then leads lay people to fulfill their duties to families and the society alike because families and the society live in depends significantly on the compassion and kindness of their members. Offering food, respecting parents and elders, performing duties and responsibilities to families and society are recommended practices for lay people that lead to their contentment as described in discourses such as Singalovada, Vyagghapajja, Parabhava and Mangala. In these discourses the Buddha explains how to be contented as an individual, a family member and a member of a society. Contentment cannot be achieved merely by performing one task or one single effort, it is the result of a number of things; cultivation of patience, ability to accept failures and building good relationships, fulfilling one's duties etc., are some of them. Overall, this is the contentment that we look for. Another result of practicing morality is 'non-confusion' (අවිච්ඡිද්ධිසාරි මනාකි). It means that they are contented with simple life and wish the same for the others.

It is said that the Dhamma is not for people who are discontented. At the first glance of this statement, one may decide that the Buddhist teaching is impractical because it is only for one who has already achieved contentment not for one is in trouble. It is obvious that a large number of people in the world are discontented due to many reasons, but the statement doesn't imply that the Dhamma is not for them. It means that when people become contented in the practice of Dhamma, they feel its importance. Otherwise, the Dhamma is a useless thing for them. People become discontented with problems arisen dependent on many causes and conditions. When causes and conditions are identified, the problems are solved. In this context, it is clear that 'discontentment' arises when people are not in the right practice that results contentment. Unless

the right way of practice is put into action, there won't be good results achieved. For example, some people expect contentment from sitting for one session of meditation. It is impossible to have such a pleasant quality due to their expectations, it needs a lot of practice to overcome the enemies of contentment; greed, hatred and delusion. If not careful, one becomes a victim of those evil mental states and, he or she feels discontented with the practice. Also discontentment can function as a strong obstacle when the four requisites are not looked upon as expected. However, devoted disciples need to be aware of the danger of continued suffering in Samsara and strive to minimize the needs until the desire for things is completely cut off.

Dhamma in a solitary life

The third reflection on of a Noble one is about living in solitude. Ven. Anuruddha thought that The Dhamma can only be understood by one who is interested for a solitary life. He might come to that understanding based on personal experience; Ven. Anuruddha, from the inception of his mendicant life, lived in the forest along with two forest dwellers; Ven. Kimbila and Ven. Nandiya. Although they lived together in the same monastery, the Suttas like Cula Gosingha (MN) and Uppakkilesa (MN) describe their way of life that were inclined towards seclusion. Moreover, the habit in seclusion helped them to become enlightened disciples.

The Buddha himself preferred to be alone when he strived for self-awakening (Ariyapariyesana sutta – MN 12). The exonerated value of leading secluded lives was conducive to the Sanga to achieve the objective of their going forth from lay life. He encourages monks to live alone and meditate even if they live in the same monastery. The reason is that it brings momentum to investigate one's own mind. In addition, it is conducive and creates an excellent environment to refrain from four types of unwholesome speech identified by the Buddha. On one occasion, the monks were talking and

Next page...

Conceiving so his foolishness the fool is thereby wise, while 'fool' is called that fool conceited that he's wise.

making a lot of noise in the assembly when the Buddha arrived. Realizing the danger of frequent gathering and idle talking, the Buddha advised monks only to do two things when they get together. That is either to engage in conversation on the Dhamma or maintain complete silence.

The solitary life is praised by the Buddha in instances where the Buddha emphasized the importance of practicing emptiness (සුඤ්ඤත). The section on voidness (Sunnatavagga) in MN explains the absence of attachment as ‘emptiness’. For the understanding this concept, it is very important to read two sunnata suttas in the section. According suttas, emptiness develops when a person reflects on things around him. At the outset of practicing emptiness, The Buddha recommends letting go of both material belongings and also the company of people. *‘A Bhikkhu-not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of people-attends to the singleness dependant on the perception of forest. His mind enters into that perception of forest and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution’ (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995).* He encourages disciples to let go of even the perception of people, fellow monks and nuns because that perception is an impediment to the unification of mind.

Another point to be considered is how seclusion is important in the cultivation of the three pillars of enlightenment namely, mindfulness (සති), concentration (සමාධි), and wisdom (පඤ්ඤා). They cannot be developed when one is in constant association with friends and families. According to rudiments of meditation, a meditator who wishes to develop the right path requires to find a place that is carefully selected for the purpose. In a large number of discourses one who goes forth, is instructed to find a suitable forest, a foot of a tree or an empty or abandoned house or hut. Such places are secluded from the hustle and bustle of mundane living. The reason is explained in Atanatiya sutta (DN 32) *‘there are disciples of the Blessed One who dwell in remote forest glades, where there is little noise or shouting, far from the madding crowd, hidden from people, Suitable for retreat - භගවතො ආවනා*

අරඤ්ඤවනපන්ථානී පන්තානී ඔසනාසනානී පටිසෙවනී අප්පසද්දානී අප්පනිග්ගොසානී විජනවානානී මනුස්සරාහස්සෙය්‍යකානී පටිසල්ලානසාරුඡ්භානී’. So it is clear that the meditator, if he wishes to train his mind, should be contented to live in solitude not in the company of others.

However, it seems many people like to have company and associate with friends and families. Some see the ability to have a lot of people around them as an achievement in life. However it may not be a supporting condition for the development of the mind as suitable to a noble disciple. People need good friends and companions. They are the ones who help others to develop spiritually. But frequent meeting with them is not appreciated as it may cause to degradation. It is fine if we have such meeting and talking once a while to develop our practice. In the noble discipline, monks and nuns should gather for vinaya kammass. They are the perfect gathering that can appreciate as they bring mental peace which leads to many spiritual accomplishments.

The reflection of the Dhamma in meditation is the highest of all actions. It is the time to explore the reality of our mind, to investigate roots of suffering. So a trouble free environment is really needed for this investigation. Yet, the priority is not given to such investigative contemplation in silence because many people due to the desire of meeting and being together with friends. Wholesome actions done as a group help develop the good qualities in many. It is true to some extent when it says that we need merit to be born in the human realm or the Deva realms. Nevertheless, the direct path to Nibbana should be practised as recommended by the Buddha in a secluded place. The spiritual journey may start in a group environment for many, but the completion of the training, fulfilling of factors of enlightenment emerges from practicing, ideally in solitude.

This third great thought of Ven. Anuruddha therefore is of great importance to aspirants in the path.

By Bhante Jinananda...

To be continued...



THE GLORY OF BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA
The Buddha statue was built around 11th and 12th century Ad in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka. It is one of the statues situated in Vatadage (A house of many stupas with a circular wall built around it). The posture of the statue depicts the Buddha in deep concentration.

Observance of Medin Full Moon Poya day

Commemorating the Buddha’s first visit to his home town Kapilavatthu in seven years after the great renunciation, many devotees of the HJBM observed eight precepts, practiced meditation, participated in Dhamma discussions and listened to Dhamma sermons in terms of treading on the right path.

Dana for monks and sil observants was offered by Chandrakantha and Lasanthi Samarawickrama and family along with friends, to convey merits to their departed parents and friends.



Live in concord.... (සමභියෙන් ජීවත් වීම)

We can paraphrase ‘Live in concord...’ in other words as living in unity and peace among with each other. This is one of the noble qualities in a human being that is appreciated by all humans and all religious leaders. This basic quality builds a strong foundation to live in concord with others. Here, my effort is to explain the importance of this noble quality for a happy life as appreciated by the Buddha. The Buddha and the Arahants were the ideal characters, who practiced this great quality in their life. When we look at the Buddha’s life and those of the Arahants, we come across so many wonderful examples.

and it is hard to distinguish between water and milk. Similarly, wise people live in concord. Again the Buddha questioned venerable Anuruddha ‘how do you live thus blending like milk and water?’ “Venerable Sir, as to that, I think thus: ‘it is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me, that I am living with such companions in the holy life.’ I maintain bodily action of loving-kindness towards those venerable ones both openly and privately; I maintain verbal action of loving-kindness towards those venerable ones both openly and privately; I maintain mental action of loving-kindness towards those venerable ones both openly and privately; I consider: ‘Why should I not set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do?’ Then I set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do. We are different in body, venerable sir, but one in mind.”

Once, the Buddha went to see Venerable Anuruddha, Kimbila and Nandiya, who were abiding in the Gosingha-Sala forest. After having a friendly chat, the Buddha asked them about their abiding in the Gosingha-Sala forest. “I hope, Anuruddha, that you are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.” In answering to the question venerable Anuruddha said “Surely, venerable sir, we are living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.” This is a common example the Buddha used to show what living in concord truly meant. When milk and water is mixed together, there is no visible difference

This is the way the Buddha recommended his disciples to live in concord. They are different in body but one in mind. How do we become ‘one in mind’? If you say ‘I am a Buddhist’ that means you have accepted the Buddha as your teacher and intent to follow his teaching. You respect the Sangha as their lives are the best examples for you to guide you in practicing the Dhamma. By reciting “*Buddham, Dhammam, Sangham saranam Gachchami*”, you seek refuge in the noble triple Gem to lead you on the right path to

The eight qualities of the Buddha’s word

1. it is direct
2. it is intelligible
3. it is melodious
4. it is audible
5. it is ringing
6. it is pleasing
7. it is deep
8. it is complete

(Brahmayu Sutta – 91, MN)

Upaneyya Sutta

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying near Saavatthi, at Jeta Grove, in Anāthapīḍika’s park. Now a certain deva, as the night was passing away, lighting up the whole Jeta Grove with his effulgent beauty, approached the Blessed One and, having approached, stood on one side.

Standing thus on one side, the deva spoke this verse before the Blessed One:

*Life but leads to doom. Our time is short.
From Decay there’s naught can keep us safe.
Contemplating thus the fear of death,
Let’s make merit that will bring us bliss.*

[The Blessed One replied:]

*Life but leads to doom. Our time is short.
From Decay there’s naught can keep us safe.
Contemplating thus this fear of death,
Scorn such worldly bait, seek final peace.*

Sanyutta Nikaya
Translated from the Pali by
Maurice O’Connell Walshe

Next page...

Though briefly one intelligent might wait upon the wise, quickly Dhamma he can sense as tongue the taste of soup.



Nibbana, the destruction of all defilements. It is true that there are many things to achieve in one's mundane life in order to become successful. However, you should not forget your spiritual goal as a Buddhist. When you forget this, enemies like anger, annoyance, jealousy, conceit, greed...etc. invade your mind. These enemies not only make your mind miserable but also keep you away from your friends. Therefore, the Buddha's advice is to cleanse our mind from these impurities and look at each other with kindly eyes, with the eyes of compassion. This is how we become one in mind.

*" Sukho buddhanam uppado,
Sukha saddhammadesana,
Sukha sanghassa samaggi,
Samagganam tapo sukho",*

*"Happy is the birth of Buddhas.
Happy is the teaching of the sublime
Dhamma.
Happy is the unity of the Sangha.
Happy is the discipline of the united ones."*

By Bhante Vijitha

To be continued...

Special General Meeting at HJBM

The HJBM Dayaka Sabhawa invites all friends and devotees to participate in special general meeting on Saturday April 06th from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The meeting will be held to discuss the progress of the new building project that was initiated last year and explore new avenues to continue the project. Let's join and contribute with your creative ideas and support to build the centre for inner peace in the Capital Region.

The killer attains Nibbana

මාතරං පිතරං හත්තවං
රාජානො දේවෙ ච ඛන්තියෙ
රච්ඨං සානුවරං හත්තවං
අනිසො යාති බිරාහම්මණො.

මාතරං පිතරං හත්තවං
රාජානො දේවෙ ච සොත්ථියෙ
වෙයග්ඝපඤ්චම්මං හත්තවං
අනිසො යාති බ්‍රාහ්මණො.
(294-295, Miscellaneous, Dhammapada)

The simple meaning of the twin verses is that 'having assassinated the mother and the father, two warrior kings and the whole country along with its treasurer, the Brahmin goes without fear. In the third line of the second stanza, it says he killed five tigers too.

The Buddha explained these two verses while residing in Jetavana Monastery with reference to Lakunthaka Bhaddiya (Short Bhaddiya). While a group of monks were in discussion with the Buddha, Ven. Bhaddiya passed by. Seeing the exceptionally short stature of this short monk, the Buddha commented, 'look at that monk, he has killed both his mother and father. But he is living without any fear having killed his own parents'. The monks confused with the Buddha's statement as the Buddha preaches non-violence. Then, monks questioned the Buddha about the way he killed his parents. According to the Buddha's explanation, the mother (මාතරං) and the father (පිතරං) he killed were craving and egoism, not his own mother and father. Also he killed two warrior kings (රාජානො දේවෙ ච ඛන්තියෙ) on his way with their retinues; they were externalism and nihilism which disturbed his freedom, not two kings who ruled countries and their armies. Finally, he destroyed the whole kingdom (රච්ඨං) along with the treasurer (සානුවරං).

The country is likened to six senses and their objects and the treasurer who became a victim was attachment or Upadana in Pali.

In the second stanza, the Buddha explained that he destroyed two Brahmin kings (රාජානො දේවෙ ච සොත්ථියෙ) instead of just kings. But two Brahmins again represented both externalism and nihilism. However, it was not the end; he had another danger before the end of his journey; five tigers (වෙයග්ඝපඤ්චම්මං) that were in hunger for days. He had to fight with them and killed all five. The Buddha said they are the five hindrances namely; sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and sceptical doubt. Therefore, the Buddha concluded that Lakunthaka Bhaddiya was a serious destroyer, who lives without fear of punishment.

The Buddha explained the two stanzas with regard to an arahant who destroyed all defilements. The Buddha used metaphors to illustrate the intensity of the defilements and the importance of killing them. The craving and egoism are the parents of the baby called 'I'. First, parents get together and create the opportunity for the baby to be born and later when the baby 'I' is strong, he feeds both parents. So by killing the parents, he kills the roots of 'I' without residue. Destroying externalism and nihilism are likened to two warrior kings because they are powerful views which are supported by much defilement. Mother, father, two warrior kings and the treasurer lived in the country called 'six senses and their objects'. The Buddha said, 'therefore, wise Lakunthaka Bhaddiya destroyed the whole country with all its wealth and hence he is called a Brahmana.

With themselves as their own enemies, fools lacking in intelligence, move about doing evil deeds, which bear bitter fruits.