

BMVdigest

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For Non-Muslims only

Vayadhammā saṅkhārā appamādena sampādeṭhā
~ All component things are impermanent. Work diligently for your liberation.



Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Tree at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi is a historical sacred bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) in the Mahamewuna Garden in the historical city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. This is believed to be a tree grown from a cutting of the southern branch from the historical sacred bo tree, Sri Maha Bodhi, which was destroyed during the time of Emperor Ashoka the Great, at Buddha Gaya in India, under which Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) attained Enlightenment. The Buddhist nun Sangamitta Maha Theri, a daughter of Indian Emperor Ashoka, in 288 BC, brought the tree cutting to Sri Lanka during the reign of Sinhalese King Devanampiya Tissa. At more than 2,300 years old, it is the oldest living human-planted tree in the world with a known planting date. The Mahavamsa, or the great chronicle of the Sinhalese, provides an elaborate account of the establishment of the Jaya Siri Maha Bodhi on the Island and the subsequent development of the site as a major Buddhist pilgrimage site.

Photo Credit: Arbol

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The Miracle of Instruction

There is the case where a Tathagatha appears in the world, a worthy one, rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing and conduct, one who has gone the good way, knower of the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of those who can be taught, teacher of humans and divine beings, awakened, blessed.

He says: “Here! This is the Path, this is the Practice that having practices, I make known the unexcelled coming ashore in the holy life, having directly known and realized it for myself.

Come! You, too, practice in such a way that you will remain in the unexcelled coming ashore in the holy life, having directly known and realized it for yourselves.”

Thus the Teacher teaches the Dhamma, and others practice, for suchness. And there are countless hundreds of them, countless thousands of them, countless hundreds of thousands of them.

“This being the case, is this the practice of merit – this business of going-forth – one that benefits countless beings, or only one being?”

“This being the case, Master Gotama, this practice of merit – this business of going-forth – is one that benefits countless beings.”

~ Saṅgārava Sutta AN3.60 ~



Dhammapada Verse 3.78



The monk who is calm in body, calm in speech, calm in mind, who is well-composed, who has renounced worldly things, is truly called a “peaceful one.”

www.suttas.com (Dhammapada Verse 378)

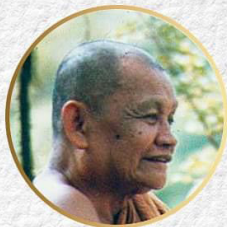
Thera Santakaya

While residing at the Jetavana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verse 378 with reference to Thera Santakaya.

There was once a Thera named Santakaya, who had been a lion in his past existence. It is said that lions usually go out in search of food one day and then rest in a cave for the next seven days without moving. Thera Santakaya, having been a lion in his last existence, behaved very much like a lion. He moved about very little; his moments were slow and steady; and he was usually calm and composed.

Other bhikkhus took his behaviour to be very queer and they reported about him to the Buddha. After hearing the account given by the bhikkhus, the Buddha said to all of them “Bhikkhus! A bhikkhu should be calm and composed; he should behave like Santakaya.”

At the end of the discourse Thera Santakaya attained arahatship.



If the mind is agitated, set up mindfulness
and inhale deeply till
there is no space left to store any air,
then release it all completely until none remains.
Follow this with another deep inhalation
until you are full,
then release the air again.
Do this two or three times,
then re-establish concentration.
The mind should be calmer.
If any more sense impressions cause agitation in the mind,
repeat the process on every occasion.
Similarly with walking meditation.
If while walking, the mind becomes agitated,
stop still, calm the mind,
re-establish the awareness with the meditation object
and then continue walking.
Sitting and walking meditation are in essence the same,
differing only in terms of the physical posture used.

Ajahn Chah



By Prof. G. P. Malalasekara PhD.(Lond)

There is one doctrine in Buddhism which separates it from all other religions, creeds and systems of philosophy and which makes it unique in the world's history. All its other teachings such as the doctrine of impermanence, the denial of a supreme God, the law of Kamma, its system of ethics and its practice of meditation are found, more or less in similar forms, in one or other of the schools of thought or religions which have attempted to guide men through life and explain to them the unsatisfactoriness of the world. But in its denial of any real permanent soul or self, Buddhism stands alone.

This teaching presents the utmost difficulty to many people and often provokes even violent antagonism towards the whole religion. Yet, this doctrine of No-Soul or Anatta, as it is called is the bedrock of Buddhism and all the other teachings of the Buddha are intimately connected with it. The Buddha is quite definite in its exposition and would have no compromise. In a famous passage he declares, "Whether Buddhas arise in this world or not, it always remains a fact that the constituent parts of a being are lacking in a soul." The Pali word used for "Soul" being is Atta.

Divine Soul Denied

Now, what is this soul the existence of which the Buddha denied? Without it there can be no reward in heaven or punishment in hell, no recompense for one's deeds.

Such, generally speaking, is the teaching of other religions, with a few minor differences in detail. Buddhism, on the contrary, denies all this and asserts that this belief in a permanent and a divine soul is the most dangerous and pernicious of all errors, the most deceitful of illusions, that it will inevitably mislead its victims into the deepest pit of sorrow and suffering. It is in fact, says the Buddha, the root cause of all suffering, because the belief in a separate Self breeds egotism and selfishness. Selfishness produces craving for life and life's pleasures-tanha-which plunges beings into the ocean of samsara-continues existence.

Analytical Knowledge

This doctrine of the denial of the soul the Buddha arrives at, by analysis. Buddhism is, for this reason chiefly, called the Vibhajja vada, the Religion of Analytical Knowledge. Man, says the Buddha - for it is with man that we are mainly concerned - is composed of two chief parts, the physical body-rupa and the mind-nama.

Let us analyze these two components and see if we can find anything permanent or divine in them. Let us begin with the body. At first sight, the body would seem to be our own and continuous from our first memory of childhood. But it is really not our own because we cannot control it. It grows old and is subject to disease and finally it dies. Every part of it is perishing; the hair, nails and skin for instance quite noticeably, but the millions of cells within us not so palpable. The body is always decaying, some parts of us are dead already; our survival is merely as sort of balance between living and dead cells. Though we feel we are the same person, that our body continues to be the same, it really is not so. The child becomes the youth, the youth changes into the old man. Anyone who has lived to be 70 years old has possessed several bodies completely different, no single atom of which was common to any two of them.

What of the mind? The mind is even less permanent, for while the body last for a bit, at least in appearance, the mind of what is called the mind, for it is a compound of all sorts of things example thoughts, feelings, consciousness - the mind keeps perishing day and night, always changing. A man's mind, his character, aspirations must change and they do or there would be no possibility of his higher development, progress and improvement. We know that character, mind and emotions require the most constant care, diligence and energy to direct and develop them, to hold them to the path of righteousness and purity. It is only by such constant care and vigilance that any progress at all is realized. The same can be said of all mental faculties.

Impermanence

We cling to ourselves, hoping to find something immortal in them, like how children would wish to clasp a rainbow. To the child, a rainbow is something vivid and real but the grown up knows that it is merely an illusion caused by certain rays of light and drops of water. The light is only a series of waves of undulations having no more reality than the rainbow itself, while "water" is merely a name for a certain combination of particles of hydrogen and oxygen, a combination which has no permanency whatsoever. Like the rainbow, there is a process, a conditioning but nowhere the least trace of anything permanent.

Life is thus merely a phenomenon or rather a series, a succession of phenomena produced by the law of cause and effect. An individual existence is to be looked upon not as something permanent but as a succession of changes, as something that is always passing away. Each of us is merely a combination of material and mental qualities. In each individual without exception, the relation of the component, constituent parts are ever changing so that the compound is never the same for two consecutive moments. And this compound, this individual, remains separate as long as it persists in Samsara or existence as we know it. It is this separateness which is the cause of life and therefore of sorrow.

Our present life is only a link in the infinite chain of existence; what subsists is only the unbroken continuity of the processes that constitute life. Assemble together the parts of a battery and there is electricity.

Cause and Continuity of Life

As long as the cause of life persists, the craving for existence (for life) will continue; remove the cause and life does not come about. Remove the clinging to life and life will not continue. The continuity of life is like the flame of a lamp. The light appears to come from the lamp throughout the night as long as the oil, wick and lamp holder and the air that feeds the flame are constantly changing. It is the same, yet not the same. The infant that comes to birth is different from the old man who dies, yet both are called the same person. The fire will burn as long as there is fuel to feed it; so will life continue as long as there is craving.

The beginning and end of the river is called source and mouth though they are still composed of the same water as the rest of the river, even so is the source and mouth of the river of life called birth and death though still composed of the water of life. At death, the flow of the stream from life to life seems to be interrupted but there is no real interruption, only a more obvious, a more violent breach in the continuity than in normal life. To the Buddhist, death is not anything very important but merely an incident between one life and its successor. Birth and death have great significance only to those who believe in a single life. The true Buddhist regards death with something like indifference because he knows that he has experienced it countless times already. Nor does he desire death, by suicide for instance, for death cannot end his troubles. Suicide would be useless to himself and rather painful to his family and friends.

A lamp may go out with the exhaustion of oil or wick or both, or by a sudden gust of wind.



If at death, the craving for life has not been completely destroyed, then this craving gathers fresh life, body and mind. The result is a new individual. There is nothing that passed from one life to another. It is the kamma produced by us in our previous lives and in this life that brings about the new life. Just as this life is the result of the kamma of past lives. Our next life is the product of that kamma plus the kamma of the present life.

Source : Vesak Lipi Buddhist Digest 2006

About the Writer: Professor G P Malalasekera PhD; OBE was an authority on Theravada Buddhism and a distinguished Pali scholar. He served as Principal of Nalanda College, Colombo and appointed Professor of Pali at the University of Ceylon. He was also a founding member of World Fellowship of Buddhists and elected as President of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (1939-1957) He passed away in 1973.



Feature

Driving Meditation



By Thich Nhat Hanh

In Vietnam, forty years ago, I was the first monk to ride a bicycle. At that time, it was not considered a very 'monkish' thing to do. But today, monks ride motorcycles and drive cars. We have to keep our meditation practices up to date and respond to the real situation in the world, so I have written a simple verse you can recite before starting your car. I hope you find it helpful:

Before starting the car,

I know where I am going.

The car and I are one.

If the car goes fast, I go fast.

Sometimes we don't really need to use the car, but because we want to get away from ourselves, we go for a drive. We feel that there is a vacuum in us and we don't want to confront it. We don't like being so busy, but every time we have a spare moment, we are afraid of being alone with ourselves. We want to escape. Either we turn on the television, pick up the telephone, read a novel, go out with a friend, or take the car and go somewhere. Our civilization teaches us to act this way and provides us with many things we can use to lose touch with ourselves. If we recite this poem as we are about to turn the ignition key of our car, it can be like a torch, and we see that we don't need to go anywhere. Wherever we go, our "self" will be with us; we cannot escape. So it may be better, and more pleasant, to leave the engine off and go out for a walking meditation.

It is said that in the last several years, two million square miles of forest land have been destroyed by acid rain, partly because of our cars. "Before starting the car, I know where I am going," is a very deep question. Where shall we go? To our own destruction? If the trees die, we humans are going to die also. If the journey you are making is necessary, please do not hesitate to go. But if you see that it is not really important, you can remove the key from the ignition and go instead for a walk along the riverbank or through a park. You will return to yourself and make friends with the trees again.

"The car and I are one." We have the impression that we are the boss, and the car is only an instrument, but that is not true. When we use any instrument or machine, we change. A violinist with his violin becomes very beautiful. A man with a gun becomes very dangerous. When we use a car, we are ourselves and the car.

Driving is a daily task in this society. I am not suggesting you stop driving, just that you do so consciously. While we are driving, we think only about arriving. Therefore, every time we see a red light, we are not very happy. The red light is a kind of enemy that prevents us from attaining our goal. But we can also see the red light as a bell of mindfulness, reminding us to return to the present moment. The next time you see a red light, please smile at it and go back to your breathing. "Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I smile." It is easy to transform a feeling of irritation into a pleasant feeling. Although it is the same red light, it becomes different. It becomes a friend, helping us remember that it is only in the present moment that we can live our lives.

When I was in Montreal several years ago to lead a retreat, a friend drove me across the city to go to the mountains. I noticed that every time a car stopped in front of me, the sentence "Je me souviens" was on the license plate. It means "I remember". I was not sure what they wanted to remember, perhaps their French origins, but I told my friend that I had a gift for him. "Every time you see a car with that sentence, 'Je me souviens,' remember to breathe and smile. It is a bell of mindfulness. You will have many opportunities to breathe and smile as you drive through Montreal."

He was delighted, and he shared the practice with his friends. Later, when he visited me in France, he told me that it was more difficult to practice in Paris than in Montreal, because in Paris, there is no "Je me souviens." I told him, "There are red lights and stop signs everywhere in Paris. Why don't you practice with them?" After he went back to Montreal, through Paris, he wrote me a very nice letter: "Thay, it was very easy to practice in Paris. Every time a car stopped in front of me, I saw the eyes of the Buddha blinking at me. I had to answer him by breathing and smiling, there was no better answer than that. I had a wonderful time driving in Paris."

The next time you are caught in a traffic jam, don't fight. It's useless to fight. Sit back and smile to yourself, a smile of compassion and loving kindness. Enjoy the present moment, breathing and smiling, and make the other people in your car happy. Happiness is there if you know how to breathe and smile, because happiness can always be found in the present moment. Practicing meditation is to go back to the present moment in order to encounter the flower, the blue sky, the child. Happiness is available.

Source : Excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh's Book 'Peace is Every Step'



About the Writer : Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh is a global spiritual leader, poet and peace activist, revered around the world for his pioneering teachings on mindfulness, global ethics and peace. Thich Nhat Hanh envisioned a kind of engaged Buddhism that could respond directly to the needs of society. His teachings have impacted politicians, business leaders, activists, teachers and countless others.

Ministering to the Sick and the Terminally ill

by Lily de Silva



“He who attends on the sick attends on me,” declared the Buddha, exhorting his disciples on the importance of ministering to the sick. This famous statement was made by the Blessed One when he discovered a monk lying in his soiled robes, desperately ill with an acute attack of dysentery. With the help of Ananda, the Buddha washed and cleaned the sick monk in warm water. On this occasion he reminded the monks that they have neither parents nor relatives to look after them, so they must look after one another. If the teacher is ill, it is the bounden duty of the pupil to look after him, and if the pupil is ill it is the teacher’s duty to look after the sick pupil. If a teacher or a pupil is not available it is the responsibility of the community to look after the sick (Vin.i,301ff.)

On another occasion the Buddha discovered a monk whose body was covered with sores, his robe sticking to the body with pus oozing from the sores. Unable to look after him, his fellow monks had abandoned him. On discovering this monk, the Buddha boiled water and washed the monk with his own hands, then cleaned and dried his robes. When the monk felt comforted the Buddha preached to him and he became an Arahant, soon after which he passed away (DhpA.i,319). Thus, the Buddha not only advocated the importance of looking after the sick, he also set a noble example by himself ministering to those who were so ill that they were even considered repulsive by others.

The Buddha has enumerated the qualities that should be present in a good nurse. He should be competent to administer the medicine, he should know what is agreeable to the patient and what is not. He should keep away what is disagreeable and give only what is agreeable to the patient. He should be benevolent and kind-hearted, he should perform his duties out of a sense of service and not just for the sake of remuneration (*mettacitto gilanam upatthati no amisantaro*). He should not feel repulsion towards saliva, phlegm, urine, stools, sores, etc. He should be capable of exhorting and stimulating the patient with noble ideas, with Dhamma talk (A.iii,144).

Here it is noteworthy that the nurse is expected to be efficient not only in taking care of the body by giving proper food and medicine, but is also expected to nurture the patient’s mental condition. It is well known that the kindness of nurses and doctors is almost as effective as medicine for a patient’s morale and recovery. When one is desperately ill and feels helpless, a kind word or a gentle act becomes a source of comfort and hope. That is why benevolence (*metta*) and compassion (*karuna*), which are also sublime emotions (*brahmavihara*), are regarded as praiseworthy qualities in a nurse. The sutta adds another dimension to the nursing profession by including the spiritual element in a nurse’s talk. Sickness is a time when one is face to face with the realities of life and it is a good

opportunity to instill a sense of spiritual urgency even in the most materialistic mind. Further, the fear of death is naturally greater when a person is ill than when well. The best means of calming this fear is by diverting attention to the Dhamma. A nurse is expected to give this spiritual guidance to the patient in his or her charge as a part and parcel of a nurse’s duty.

In the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha describes three types of patients (A.i,120). There are patients who do not recover whether or not they get proper medical attention and nursing care; there are others who recover irrespective of whether or not they get medical attention and nursing care; there are others who recover only with appropriate medical treatment and care. Because there is this third type of patient, all those who are ill should be given the best medical treatment available, agreeable food and proper nursing care. So long as a patient is alive, everything possible should be done for his recovery.

According to another sutta (A.iii,56,62), illness is one of the inevitable situations in life. When faced with it, all resources available to one, even magical incantations, should be utilized with the hope of restoring health. Here the question of whether such performances are effective or not is not discussed. The point seems to be that at the time of a crisis there is no harm in trying out even methods traditionally believed to be efficacious, but in which one does not necessarily have faith or belief. Of course, such methods should not clash with one’s conscience. If, in spite of these efforts, death does occur, then one has to accept it as a verdict of kamma with equanimity and philosophical maturity.

Here we are reminded of an episode (MA.i,203) where a mother who was critically ill needed rabbit meat as a cure. The son, finding that rabbit meat was not available in the open market, went in search of a rabbit. He caught one but was loathe to kill even for the sake of his mother. He let the rabbit go and wished his mother well. Simultaneously with this wish, the power of the son’s moral virtue brought about the mother’s recovery. The Buddhist tradition seems to hold that under certain circumstances moral power has healing properties that may work even in cases when orthodox medicine fails.

The Buddha teaches that the patient too should cooperate with the doctor and the nurse in order to get well. Such a good patient should take and do only what is agreeable to him. Even in taking agreeable food he should know the proper quantity. He should take the prescribed medicine without fuss. He should honestly disclose his ailments to his duty-conscious nurse. He should patiently bear physical pain even when it is acute and excruciating (A.iii,144).



the patient with the four assurances, he should ask him whether he has any longing for his parents. If he says yes, it should be pointed out that death will certainly come whether he has longing for his parents or not. Therefore, it is better to give up the longing. Then, if he says he gives up his longing for his parents, he should be asked whether he has longing for his wife and children. With the same reasoning he should be persuaded to give up that longing too. Then he should be asked if he has any longing for the pleasures of the senses. If he says yes, he should be convinced that divine pleasures are superior to human pleasures, and should be encouraged to aspire for divine pleasures. Then he should be gradually led up the scale of divine pleasures and when he comes to the highest heaven of the sense sphere, his attention should be diverted to the Brahma-world. If he says he has resolved

on the attainment of the Brahma-world, he should be admonished that even the Brahma-world is characterized by impermanence and the rebirth personality. Therefore, it is better to aspire for the cessation of the rebirth personality. If he can establish his mind on the cessation of the rebirth personality, then, the Buddha says, there is no difference between him and the monk who is liberated.

The suttas show that the Buddha exercised great will power and composure on occasions when he fell ill. He experienced excruciating pain when a stone splinter pierced his foot after Devadatta hurled a boulder at him. He endured such pain with mindfulness and self-composure and was not overpowered by the pain (S.i,27, 210). During his last illness, too, the Buddha mindfully bore up great physical pain and with admirable courage he walked from Pava to Kusinara with his devoted attendant Ananda, resting in a number of places to soothe his tired body (D.ii,128,134). The Maha-Parinibbana Sutta also reports that the Buddha once willfully suppressed a grave illness in Beluvagama and regained health (D.ii,99).

A number of suttas advocate the recitation of the enlightenment factors (bojjhanga) for the purpose of healing physical ailments. On two occasions, when the Elders Mahakassapa and Mahamoggallana were ill, the Buddha recited the enlightenment factors and it is reported that the monks regained normal health (S.v,79-80). It is perhaps significant to note that all the monks concerned were Arahants, and had therefore fully developed the enlightenment factors. The Bojjhanga Samyutta also reports that once when the Buddha was ill, he requested Cunda to recite the enlightenment factors (S.v,81). The Buddha was pleased at the recitation and it is said that he regained health.

On another occasion, when the monk Girimananda was very ill (A.v,109), the Buddha informed Ananda that if a discourse on ten perceptions (dasa sañña) is delivered to him, he might get well. The ten perceptions are the perception of impermanence, egolessness, impurity of the body, evil consequences (of bodily existence), elimination (of sense pleasures), detachment, cessation, disenchantment with the entire world, impermanence of all component things, and mindfulness of breathing. Ananda learnt the discourse from the Buddha and repeated it for Girimananda and it is reported that he recovered.

There is much material in the Pali Canon on counseling the terminally ill. Speaking about death to a terminally ill patient is not avoided as an unpleasant topic. On the contrary, the reality of death and perhaps its imminence are accepted without any pretense and the patient is made to face the prospect of death with confidence and tranquility.

The Sotapattisamyutta contains a valuable discourse on the question of counselling the terminally ill (S.v,408). Once Mahanama the Sakyan inquired from the Buddha how a wise layman should advise another wise layman who is terminally ill. Here it should be noted that both the counselor and the patient are wise lay Buddhists. The Buddha delivered a whole discourse on how this should be done. First, a wise layman should comfort a wise layman who is terminally ill with the four assurances: "Be comforted friend, you have unshakable confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, that the Buddha is fully enlightened, the Dhamma is well proclaimed, and the Sangha is well disciplined. You also have cultivated unblemished virtuous conduct which is conducive to concentration." Having thus comforted

A sutta in the Sotapattisamyutta (S.v,386) maintains that when an uninstructed ordinary person at the threshold of death sees that he has no faith in the noble qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and that he has led an immoral life, great fear of death and trepidation arise in him. But a person who has deep unwavering faith in the noble qualities of the Triple Gem, and who is spotlessly pure in his conduct, experiences no such fear of death and trepidation. It seems to be the guilty conscience that causes much anguish at the moment of death. When there is fear and anxiety at this crucial moment rebirth must take place in a sphere that is proportionate and commensurate to that experience of anguish.

It is appropriate to record here a relevant discussion Mahanama the Sakyan had with the Buddha regarding the fate of one who meets with a violent death (S.v,369). Mahanama tells the Buddha that when he comes to the serene atmosphere of the monastery and associates with pious monks of noble qualities, he feels quite calm and self-possessed. But when he goes out into the streets of Kapilavatthu, busy with constant traffic, he feels frightened over the future birth that would await him should he meet with a violent death in a traffic accident. The Buddha assures him that a person who has cultivated moral virtues and led a righteous life need not entertain such fears. He explains the situation with the help of a simile. If a pot of ghee is broken after being submerged in water, the potsherds will sink to the riverbed, but the ghee will rise to the surface. Similarly, the body will disintegrate, but the cultured mind will rise up like the ghee.



The question may arise of how effective spiritual guidance will be if the terminally ill patient is unconscious. Here what is actually important is that we are really unaware of the patient's mental condition at the hour of death. The doctors and onlookers might conclude that the patient is unconscious because he does not respond to his surroundings and to the questions put to him. His five faculties may have become partly or completely defunct, but nobody can be certain whether or not his mental faculty is active. We certainly do not know what special potentialities the mind harbors on the occasion of death. It is quite likely that the mental faculty is most active at this crucial hour. Perhaps this is the time that one has the most violent mental struggle, yearning for life with the firm habitual resistance and protest against death.

It is our conjecture that yearning for life is greatest when the fear of death is greatest. The fear of death is greatest when one's sense of guilt is greatest, the fear that one has squandered the great opportunity of human life, an opportunity which could have been well utilized for spiritual growth. If, on the other hand, one has well utilized the opportunity of human life for spiritual growth, one can face the inevitability of death with relative calm, contentment and happy satisfaction. One's rebirth seems to be commensurate with one's spiritual potential, which in Buddhist terminology is called kamma.

It is appropriate to conclude this essay by giving thought to what we should do when we visit a terminally ill patient. Our normal attitude is one of sadness and pity, but Buddhism holds that it is wrong to

entertain negative thoughts at such a moment. It is my opinion that it would be helpful to the terminally ill patient, and to any patient for that matter, if we radiate thoughts of metta, loving kindness to him. As the dying person's mind may be working at this crucial hour, unencumbered by the limitations imposed by the physical sense faculties, it is possible that the person's mind will be sensitive and receptive to the spiritual thought waves of those around him. If negative thought waves are generated by grief and lamentation the dying person may be adversely affected. But if gentle thoughts of love and kindness are extended, such thoughts may function as a subtle mental balm that allays the distress and anxiety brought on by the approach of death and envelops the dying person's mind in a warm protective cloak of consoling peace.

Source : http://www.buddhanet.net/help_sick.htm

About the Writer : Lily de Silva is Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. A regular contributor to Buddhist scholarly and popular journals, she is also the editor of the Digha Nikaya Tika, published by the Pali Text Society. Her previous BPS publications include One Foot in the World (Wheel No. 337/338), The Self-Made Private Prison (Bodhi Leaves No. 120), and Radical Therapy (Bodhi Leaves No. 123).



Feature

A BUDDHIST VIEW ON WAR AND CONFLICT

By Paolo Coluzzi

Notwithstanding the suffering of millions of people in the world and the repeated anti-war statements of experts and sages of all times, there has not been a moment in human history when some war, small or big, was not claiming lives somewhere on this planet. It seems as if aggression and the belief that disputes can be solved through fighting still dominate the mind of most people in the world. It seems to me that human beings on the whole are still quite primitive – rage and violence may have made some sense 50,000 years ago, when human beings had to protect themselves from the threat of wild animals. They make little sense now, but nothing seems to have changed. Rage, one of the three 'poisons' in Buddhism, aided by greed and ignorance, the other two, still dominate the way most

people think and act. One of the big problems is that technology and science have made weapons so much more lethal than in the past. As a matter of fact, the production of weapons, the arms industry, together with the ideas of nationalism, are perhaps the two main 'external' factors that sustain war and make it so terrible.

A Buddhist, in my view, can never justify a war. Even when it is a war of defense. There might be extreme cases when a degree of violence may be inevitable, I can accept that, but as a Buddhist I am convinced that there are always or nearly always ways to solve disputes without recurring to violence and war, as recent history has also shown.

But let us begin with the 'external' factors I have just mentioned: the arms business and nationalism. As for the first, it is quite clear that any business that produces goods, does so in order to sell them. Nobody would produce millions of articles just to keep them in store – they are produced to be sold and make a profit. This applies to weapons as well – they are manufactured to be sold, and not just to hunters or the police, which are but a tiny percentage of the total number of the recipients of weapons. Wars are indispensable for the arms industry, and perhaps we could also say that the arms industry is indispensable for war, in the sense that without weapons there would probably be no wars. And then there is nationalism, this ideology invented in Europe in the 18th century that has become so widespread and ingrained all over the world. Nationalism teaches that our nation and its borders are 'sacred', that if necessary we should even be prepared to give our life to defend them. It does not matter that those borders were different in the past, or did not exist at all – this human construct has become something real in the people's mind, and the interests of the elites in power somehow become their citizens' interests, too (even though these interests often go against the people's wellbeing). This is my land and that is yours... Does this make sense? Doesn't this earth belong to everybody, to the people, the animals, the trees living and growing on it? Why should one kill for a theoretical construct, for an invisible borderline, believing that if other people from other countries took over, we would be somehow worse off because, obviously, our nation and our people are better than all others? Both nationalism and arms production are reflections of greed and ignorance, the first and third poisons in Buddhism. We are attached to money, which we have to get at any cost, and we are attached to our ideologies, which include the false belief that nations are real and worth losing people's lives for.

Nationalism did not exist at the time of the Buddha, but production of weapons did, and the fifth step of the Eightfold path is about right livelihood, and livelihood or money obtained through the production and selling of weapons is clearly rejected, as weapons are made to kill. As we all know, the first precept enjoins us to refrain from hurting/destroying other living beings. Most importantly, the Dhammapada clearly states:

**In this world
Hate never yet dispelled hate.
Only love dispels hate.
This is the law,
Ancient and inexhaustible.**

Let us take the ongoing conflict in Ukraine as an example. Putin may have had some 'justifiable' claims, justifiable from a geopolitical and nationalist point of view, that is. He did not want to be surrounded by NATO countries and American military bases, and he wanted to reintegrate Russian speakers living in the Eastern border regions of Ukraine (which are by the way rich in mineral resources) that had been harassed by the Ukraine army for a long time. The problem is that he chose military means to do that, starting a war that has already killed thousands on both sides. Zelensky, on the other hand, is fighting for the 'freedom' and territorial integrity of Ukraine. He also chose to respond with violence, backed by the American and European military industry and thirst for world hegemony. In this scenario, everybody with no exception is steeped in short-sighted nationalism and led by the economic interests and thirst for power of the economic and political elites. Putin could have kept pursuing the diplomatic way, and if necessary he could have imposed economic sanctions on NATO countries, for example. Zelensky should have done the same, should have stopped demanding Western support, declared neutrality and tried to be more flexible with Russia... And now the government of United States and those of all European countries are sending billions of dollars in armaments to Ukraine (apparently as much as 15 billion US dollars, i.e. a fifteen followed by nine zeroes!), 'to help her defend herself and achieve peace' they claim... Achieve peace with weapons? Do they not realize or refuse to realize that more weapons can only lead to more deaths?

There is a great Buddhist parable told by Ajahn Brahm, that of the anger-eating demon. This demon one day entered the king's palace by force while the latter was away, and placed himself on the throne. He was terribly ugly and stinky, so the guards started threatening and swearing angrily at him in their effort to get rid of him. However, at every threat and swearword the demon was growing, becoming uglier and more stinky. The more abuse he received the bigger he became until his body grew to occupy the whole throne room. At that point the king returned, and as he was a wise king, he understood the situation at once. He stopped his guards and welcomed the demon, proffering kind words, inviting him to tasty food and refreshing drinks. At that point the demon stopped growing and began shrinking, and the more kindness he received, the smaller he became. After a while he had reached his original size, but the king and at that point everybody else in the court went on speaking nice words and treating him kindly. The demon kept shrinking until he disappeared altogether! Perhaps this is what Zelensky should have done... As a matter of fact, Denmark did something similar at the beginning of World War II. When the Nazi army attacked Denmark's borders, the Danish soldiers tried to fight back. Sixteen of them died, and then the government, in agreement with King Christian X, realizing the futility of trying to stop the Germans, just surrendered. Because they surrendered and expressed their will to collaborate, the death toll was minimum and the government managed to find an agreement with the Nazis that allowed Denmark to proceed with normal life of a sort. However, the German troops stationed in Denmark were treated with coldness, when possible boycotted, and an underground resistance movement developed. In this way also hundreds of Danish Jews managed to escape the German concentration camps. At the end of the war only about 3000 Danes lost their lives in Denmark, the lowest figure among the countries involved in the war. Their decision not to use violent means had pretty good results. Resistance to an 'enemy' can be non-violent, as the great Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela have shown us. None of them were Buddhists, but they all behaved like Buddhists! I also greatly admire those hippies in America in the 1960's who placed flowers in the guns of the National Guard. An extraordinary way to show that love is more powerful than weapons!

Beside the 'external factors', there are 'internal' ones, perhaps even more important. War and fighting are the external consequences of the war taking place inside us, rage and violence, the second poison. As many wise people have long understood, starting from the Buddha (but including characters so different as Martin Luther King, John Lennon and recently Sadhguru), as long as there is war inside us there will be war outside. We can avoid wars by starting making peace within ourselves. Meditation, particularly loving kindness meditation, can go a long way towards creating inner peace and love.

Our world is now troubled with so many problems, from poverty to climate change. What are governments doing to ease these? Billions of dollars have been sent in weapons to Ukraine now... How many people have they killed? How many lives could have been saved if that money had been employed in other parts of the world to



relieve hunger and lack of clean water and medical assistance? Nine million people die of hunger every year... 15 billion divided by 9 million is 1666 US dollars... that is what each of these unfortunate people could have received from Western countries and survived, if that amount of money had been sent to them instead of being used for weapons for this war. And this is just on the Ukrainian side! Why are people incapable to let go of their petty grievances and use their energy and wealth to solve these real problems? The war in Ukraine has even intensified pollution! Let's just think of the millions of cubic metres of methane released into the atmosphere from the Nord Stream pipes, or the highly polluting coal that is going to be used again in Europe to replace the lacking fuels due to the Russian counter sanctions...

If everybody had followed Buddhist precepts and teachings, no war would have erupted and we would live in a better and cleaner world now.

To conclude, whenever we hear of a war, especially when this war is called 'just' or 'inevitable', having a strong ethics as Buddhism

(but not only Buddhism) provides will help take the right position from the start, even before we understand exactly what is going on. And this position is a simple 'no' to violence even when we are told that violence is necessary. Once we have taken a pacifist position, we should of course investigate, which will invariably lead to the discovery that that war was all but just. It seems to me that those who waver, or those who decide to support a war or the sending of weapons to a country at war, are normally those who do not have strong spiritual and ethic beliefs and are easier to brainwash. May peace and love prevail in the world!



About the Writer : Paolo Coluzzi is an Associate Professor at University of Malaya, KL where he teaches Italian and sociolinguistics. He first became interested in Buddhism at the age of 17. It is a fascination which has deepened over the years, thanks to contact with the many monks, Dharma experts and fellow-travellers he has encountered on his journeys.

BMV News & Events

Past Events from Dec 2022 to Feb 2023

1. Virtual Dhamma Sharing (Streamed online via BMV Public Facebook Page)



Bhante K. Pesala (Sri Lanka)
Fri, 16th Dec 2022

Dhammapada Chapter 1 - Verse 9 & 10
Peace and Liberation



Bhante Dr M. Dhammika
(Sri Lanka)
Sun, 18th Dec 2022

Appamada - Heedfulness/Thoughtfulness

2. In Person Dhamma Sharing



Bhante K. Chandaratana
(Sri Lanka)

Sun, 8th January 2023
How to Maintain Good Relations Between
Parents and Children

Fri, 3rd February - Stress Management in Buddhism
Sun, 5th February - How to be Wealthy Always



Bhante Prof. W. Ariyadewa
(Sri Lanka)



Bhante K. Chandaratana
(Sri Lanka)

Sun, 12th February
Dialogue - 10 Unanswered Questions by the Buddha - Why?



Bhikkhuni K. Subhagya
(Sri Lanka)

Fri, 13th January
Anger Management Based on Vitakkhasamtana Sutta

Sun, 15th January
Can Marriage Go Beyond Death

Fri, 20th January
The Happiness Within You



3. Chinese New Year Celebrations at BMV – 22nd & 23rd Jan



Tying the holy thread after the Blessing service



Devotees in their finest came to receive blessings at the Shrine Hall



Blessing service throughout the 2 days.



Offering of Dana by Devotees on Chinese New Year Day.



CNY Eve Blessing Service.



CNY Eve Blessing Service.



Lighting of the Oil Lamps and big Lotus Candles by the Maha Sangha.



Sponsored Flower Bouquets at the Bodhi Tree area.



Sponsored oil lamps and big lotus candles.

4. Chap Goh Mei Celebrations at BMV – 5th Feb



Maha Sangha during Dana on Chap Goh Mei Day.



Devotees who attended the Dana.



Ven Chandaratana taken up with this little devotee.



Blessing service.



Offering the holy thread after the service.



A pair of Lions came for blessings on Chap Goh Mei Day.



The lions visited the Pagoda too.



Blessings by the Sangha.

Upcoming Events

1. Maha Sanghika Dana and Merit Offering Ceremony - 2nd Apr



a) April 2nd @ 11.30am - Maha Sanghika Dana In Memory of Departed Loved Ones. Sponsorship of oil lamps will be available.

b) April 2nd @ 5.00pm - Merit Offering Ceremony at Sinhala Buddhist Cemetary, Jalan Loke Yew.

2. Puja Honouring Departed Relatives & Loved Ones – 5th Apr



A Full Moon evening puja will commence at 7.30pm with offerings to the Noble Triple Gem followed by Sutta Chanting and a Dhamma talk. This is a special puja to dedicate merits in memory of all departed relatives and loved ones. Sponsorship of Puja trays, flower bouquets and oil lamps will be available.

3. Sinhala New Year – 14th April



Sinhala New Year Buddha puja and blessing ceremony will be held at 7.30am followed by the Hil dana for the Maha Sangha.

All Are Welcome.



The Chief Sangha Nayaka of Buddhist Maha Vihara, Venerable Datuk K. Sri Dhammaratana Nayaka Maha Thera, President Prematilaka K D Serisena, The Committee of Management of the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society, all BMV resident organisations and BMV Admin Staff would like to wish our Sinhala devotees “Subha Aluth Awrudak Wewa” and Tamil devotees “Puthandu Vazthukal”. May the New Year bring you and your family peace, happiness, good health and prosperity.



Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School (BISDS)

Sariputta Class students alms offering to Sangha members

On 15th January 2023, adult Sariputta class students, led by Head Teacher Bro Tan Bok Huat performed Buddha Puja in the Shrine Room and offered alms to Sangha members in the Buddhist Maha Vihara during schooling hours.

Collectively, students donated \$100 to Buddhist Maha Vihara to prepare the food and drinks and brought along beautiful flowers, Yakult drinks, Chinese New Year (CNY) oranges and Optrex refreshing eye drops for Buddha Puja and alms offering.

First portions of food and drinks were placed in Puja tray for Buddha Puja. Students experienced the beautiful, simple and meaningful Buddha-Puja with Sri Lankan touch, as these items were carried from Dana Hall to the Shrine Room. Reverend conducted the Buddha Puja in the language spoken by the Buddha. At the end of the session, Reverend chanted blessings verses whilst sprinkling holy water onto students and devotees. As a teacher, I rejoice in guiding and seeing students performing devotional practise of puja with saddha (conviction) and sati (mindfulness).

After Buddha Puja, we proceeded to the Dana Hall for alms offering. Students had the opportunity to practice what they learn in class in the morning. That is, to give with attention, respectfully, with one's own hand, not as if throwing it away, and with a view that something will come out of it. In giving alms, students give four things to Sangha members. What four? Students give long life, beauty, happiness and strength to Sangha members. In return, they will be endowed with these four things. Good to see them rejoicing before, during and after the alms offering.

CNY oranges, commonly called "kam" was a special offering as the following Sunday is Chinese Lunar New Year. CNY oranges were offered in whole rather than peeled, wishing Reverends abundance of good health in the lunar year of the Rabbit, many more years of dhamma-duta works and the attainment of Nibbana bliss.

In our joyful moments of performing wholesome deeds, we remember our departed ones and perform dedication of merits. Students were connected to each other through touching each other shoulders, all the way to the Lead student who holds the pot of water. The water represents the abundance of merits flows from all students. Led by Reverend, we recited the Pali verses for the dedication of merits, as lead student pours water from the pot into a receptacle. If our departed ones have taken rebirths in favourable planes, may they keep an eye on us and loved ones. If they have taken rebirth in unfavourable planes, may they rejoice in today's wholesale deeds and obtain favourable rebirth.

As Sangha members leave the Dana Hall, with folded palms in anjali posture, we bow with respect to Reverends, rejoice for this dana opportunity and say saddhu to kitchen staff for their valuable assistance and guidance provided. Saddhu also to the school for incorporating this alms offering into schooling hours and as part of dhamma teaching which encompasses Study, Practise and Self-realised the Dhamma.

Submission by: Bro Tan Bok Huat

Head Teacher, Sariputta Class 2023

Dated: 19th January 2023



**June 2023 Intake
Now Open**

Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School

For enquiries please contact:
email to registration@bisds.org OR register via www.bisds.org
Registration starts from 1st March to 30th April 2023



The theme is to pay tribute to the 80 Maha Arahants and the 13 Maha Theri Arahants who had by their efforts won emancipation of a rare distinction. They belonged to the innermost circles in the life of the Gautama Buddha. The Buddha and the Maha Arahants were together most of the time.

No 55. Mettagu Maha Thera

Mettagu was a follower of Bavari and a colleague of Mogharaja and Ajita. He himself was a leader of 1,000 followers. According to the Apadāna (ii.342f), he gave away alms worth sixty crores of gold before joining Bāvarī. His life pattern was similar to that of his colleagues.

In the time of Sumedha Buddha he was an ascetic living near Mount Asoka in Himavā, in a hermitage built for him by Vissakamma. There the Buddha visited him, and the ascetic gave him a bowl filled with ghee and oil. As a result, he was eighteen times king of the gods and fifty-one times king of men.

Again and again, some people were re-born into the same circle. Death was no barrier. Mettagu was no exception. For instance, the Buddha, Ananda, Sariputta, Moggallana to mention only a few had been born again and again in the same circle.

He was one of the sixteen disciples of Bāvarī who visited the Buddha at Pahan Vihare where the Buddha was preaching, to put forward a series of intelligent questions to the Buddha. His question (pucchā) to the Buddha was as to how various ills originated in the world, and the Buddha's answer, that it was through upadhi.

Mettagu-manava-pucchā: Mettagu's Questions (Sn 5.4)

(translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland)

[The Venerable Mettagu:]

"I ask the Lord this question, may he tell me the answer to it. I know him to be a master of knowledge and a perfected being. From whence have arisen these many sufferings evident in the world?"

[The Lord:]

"You have asked me the source of suffering. Mettagu, I will tell it to you as it has been discerned by me. These many sufferings evident in the world have arisen from worldly attachments. Whoever ignorantly creates an attachment, that stupid person comes upon suffering again and again. Therefore, a man of understanding should not create attachment, seeing it is the source of suffering."

[Mettagu:]

"What I did ask you have explained, now I ask another question. Come tell me this: how do the wise cross the flood, birth and old age, sorrow and grief? Explain it thoroughly to me, O sage, for this Dhamma has been understood by you."

The Lord: «I will set forth the Dhamma, Mettagu, a teaching to be directly perceived, not something based on hearsay, by experiencing which and living mindfully one may pass beyond the entanglements of the world."

Mettagu: «I rejoice in the thought of that highest Dhamma, great sage, by experiencing which and living mindfully one may pass beyond the entanglements of the world."

[The Lord:]

"Whatever you clearly comprehend, Mettagu, above, below, across and in between, get rid of delight in it. Rid yourself of habitual attitudes and (life affirming) consciousness. Do not continue in existence. Living thus, mindful and vigilant, a bhikkhu who has forsaken selfish attachments may, by understanding, abandon suffering, birth and old age, sorrow and grief, even here in this life."

[Mettagu:]

"I rejoice in the words of the great sage. Well explained, O Gotama, is the state of non-attachment. The Lord has surely abandoned suffering as this Dhamma has been realized by him. They will certainly abandon suffering who are constantly admonished by you, O Sage. Having understood, I venerate it, Noble One. May the Lord constantly admonish me also."



[The Lord:]

"Whom you know as a true brahmana, a master of knowledge, owning nothing, not attached to sensual (-realm) existence, he has certainly crossed this flood. Having crossed beyond he is untainted and freed from doubt. One who has discarded this clinging (leading) to renewal of existence is a man who has realized the highest knowledge. Free from craving, undistressed, desireless, he has crossed beyond birth and old age, I say."

At the same time, he grasped the Doctrine as he listened to the words of the Buddha with rapt attention. He was converted and became one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Buddhist Art, Symbols & Literature

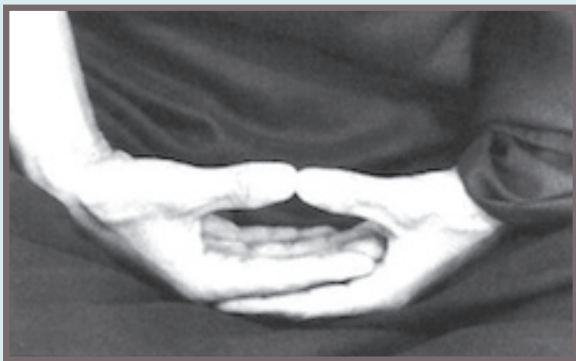
Mudras : What Do These Hand Gestures Mean?

What is a Mudra?

Mudra or Mudras are hand positions often depicted in Buddhist art and used in practice to evoke a particular state of mind. The most notable mudras (Sanskrit, "seal" or "sign") are those commonly found in representations of the Buddha: hands folded in the lap signify meditation; a palm held up facing outward signifies the act of teaching or reassurance; an open palm pointed downward signifies generosity.

In the Vajrayana school, mudras assume an esoteric significance and are usually combined with mantra(recitation) and tantric visualization. In the Zen school of Mahayana Buddhism, which is relatively bare of esoteric rituals, two important positions, the dhyani, or meditation mudra (formed with the hands held in an oval), and the anjali, or greeting mudra (palms held together at chest level), nevertheless remain important elements of daily practice.

Every mudra has both an outer/symbolic and an inner/experiential function, for it communicates at once, both to the person who performs them and to the observer, aspects of the enlightened mind. The names are given in the original Sanskrit.



Dhyana Mudra

With the mudra of meditation, the back of the right hand rests on the upturned palm of the other with the tips of the thumbs lightly touching. The top hand symbolizes enlightenment; the bottom hand, the world of appearances. Thus the mudra as a whole suggests the supremacy of the enlightened mind.



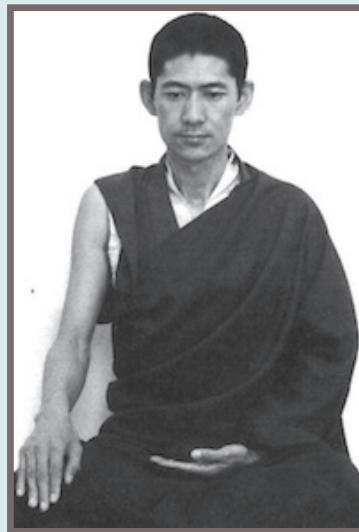
Vitarka Mudra

Teaching mudra. Held at chest level, the right hand faces outward. The thumb and forefinger form a circle, symbolizing the "Wheel of the Teaching." Pointing downward, the left hand faces outward or lies palm up in the lap.



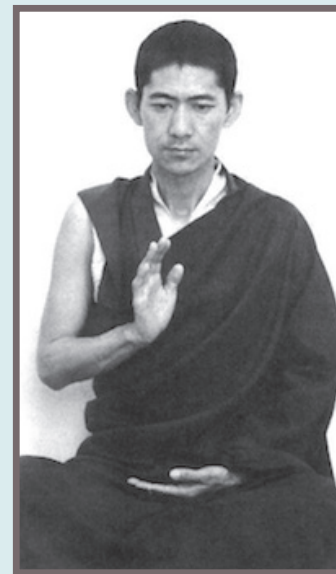
Dharmachakra Mudra

Mudra of turning the Wheel of the Teaching. The thumbs and forefingers of each hand form circles that touch one another. The left hand faces inward, the right hand, out. The hands are held on a level with the heart.



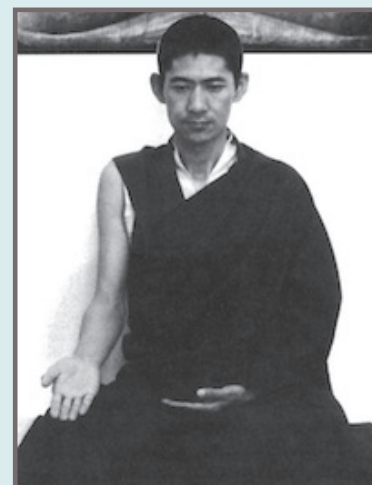
Bhumisparsha Mudra

With the earth-touching mudra, the left hand rests in the lap with the palm facing upward. The right hand rests palm down on the right knee with the fingers pointing toward the earth. When the Buddha attained enlightenment, he reportedly used this gesture to summon the earth to bear witness to his victory over the seductive forces of illusion.



Abhaya Mudra

Mudra of blessing or protection. The right hand, held at shoulder level, is pointed upward with the palm facing out. Attributed to the Buddha immediately following his enlightenment, the Abhaya is usually intended as a gesture of reassurance.



Varada

Mudra of giving or generosity. Pointed downward, the palm of the right hand faces up.

Source : <https://tricycle.org/magazine/mudra>



Obstacles Are Part of the Path

By Jack Kornfield

When we examine our own minds we will inevitably encounter the root forces of greed, fear, prejudice, hatred, and desire, which create so much sorrow in the world. They become an opportunity for us. They raise a central question for anyone who undertakes a spiritual life. Is there some way that we can live with these forces constructively and wisely? Is there a skillful way to work with these energies? To understand the nature of happiness and sorrow, to find freedom in our life, we have to be willing to face all the demons in our mind. Depending on our relationship to these demons, or hindrances, they can be the cause of tremendous struggle or valuable fuel for the growth of insight. The first step necessary in working with these energies is to identify them clearly. Classically, there are said to be five primary hindrances, although you may have discovered some of your own.

The first hindrance is desire for sense pleasure: pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations, and mind states. What's the problem with desire—what's wrong with it? Nothing, really. There's nothing wrong with enjoying pleasant experiences. Given the difficulties we face in life, they are nice to have. But they fool us. They trick us into adopting the "if only" mentality: "If only I could have this," or "If only I had the right job," or "If only I could find the right relationship," or "If only I had the right clothes," or "If only I had the right personality, then I would be happy." We are taught that if we can get enough pleasurable experiences, pasting them together quickly one after another, our life will be happy. A good game of tennis followed by a delicious dinner, a fine movie, then wonderful sex and sleep, a good morning jog, a fine hour of meditation, an excellent breakfast, and off to an exciting morning at work, and so on. Our society is masterful at perpetuating the ruse: "Buy this, look like that, eat that, act like this, own that . . . and you too can be happy." There is no problem with enjoying pleasant experiences, and to practice does not mean to dismiss them. But they don't really satisfy the heart, do they? For a moment we experience a pleasant thought or taste or sensation, and then it's gone, and with it the sense of happiness it brought. Then it's on to the next thing. The whole process can become very tiring and empty.

Of course, we don't always ask for a lot; sometimes we settle for very little. At the beginning of a meditation retreat people often spend a lot of time dwelling on desires they carry in with them: "If only I had that house," or "If only I had more money." But as they settle into the limits placed on them by the retreat, the desires get smaller: "If only they would put out something sweet after lunch," or "If only the sitting were five minutes shorter." In a situation like a retreat—or a prison, for that matter—where the possibilities for fulfilling desires are limited, it becomes clear that the strength of a desire is determined not by the particular object, but by the degree of attachment in the mind, and the desire for a piece of candy can be as powerful as the desire for a Mercedes Benz. Again, the problem is not the object of desire, but the energy in the mind. The energy of desire keeps us moving, looking for that thing that is really going to do it for us. The wanting mind is itself painful. It's a self-perpetuating habit that does not allow us to be where we are because we are grasping for something somewhere else. Even when we get what we want, we then want something more or different because the habit of wanting is so strong. It is a sense that being here and now is not enough, that we are somehow incomplete, and it keeps us cut off from the joy of our own natural completeness. We are never content. It is the same force in the world at large that creates the havoc of people wanting and consuming, hoarding, and fighting wars to have more and more, for pleasure and for security that are never fulfilled.

The second difficult energy we encounter is aversion, hatred, anger, and ill will. While desire and the wanting mind are seductive and can easily fool us, the opposite energy of anger and aversion is clearer because its unpleasantness is obvious. Anger and hatred are usually

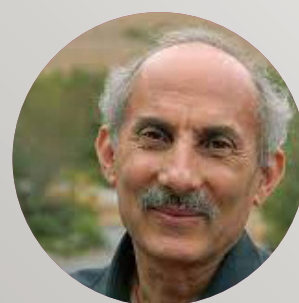
painful. We might find some enjoyment in them for a while, but they close our heart. They have a burning, tight quality that we can't get away from. Like desire, anger is an extremely powerful force. It can be experienced toward an object that is present with us or one that is far away. We sometimes experience great anger over past events that are long gone and about which we can do nothing. Strangely enough, we can even get furious over something that has not happened, but that we only imagine might. When it is strong in the mind, anger colors our entire experience of life. When our mood is bad, then no matter who walks in the room or where we go that day, something is wrong. Anger can be a source of tremendous suffering in our own minds, in our interactions with others, and in the world at large. Although we generally don't think of them as such, fear and judgment and boredom are all forms of aversion. When we examine them, we see that they are based on our dislike of some aspect of experience. With the mind full of dislike, full of wanting to separate or withdraw from our experience, how can we become concentrated or explore the present moment in a spirit of discovery? To practice we need to come very close to and investigate this moment, not push it away or pull away from it. So we need to learn to work with all these forms of our aversion.

The third common hindrance that arises is sloth and torpor. This includes laziness, dullness, lack of vitality, foggy, and sleepiness. Clarity and wakefulness fade when the mind is overcome with sloth and torpor. The mind becomes unworkable and cloudy. When sloth and torpor overcome us, it is a big obstacle in practice.

Restlessness, the opposite of torpor, manifests as the fourth hindrance. With restlessness there is agitation, nervousness, anxiety, and worry. The mind spins in circles or flops around like a fish out of water. The body can be filled with restless energy, vibrating, jumpy, on edge. Or sometimes we sit down to meditate and the mind runs through the same routines over and over. Of course, no matter how much we worry and fret over something, it never helps the situation. Still the mind gets caught in reminiscences and regrets, and we spin out hours of stories. When the mind is restless, we jump from object to object. It is difficult to sit still, and our concentration becomes scattered and dispersed.

The last of the five hindrances is doubt. Doubt can be the most difficult of all to work with, because when we believe it and get caught by it, our practice just stops cold. We become paralyzed. All kinds of doubt might assail us: Doubts about ourselves and our capacities, doubts about our teachers, doubts about the dharma itself—"Does it really work? I sit here and all that happens is my knees hurt and I feel restless. Maybe the Buddha really didn't know what he was talking about." We might doubt the practice or doubt that it is the right practice for us. "It's too hard. Maybe I should try Sufi dancing." Or we think it's the right practice but the wrong time. Or it's the right practice and the right time, but our body's not yet in good enough shape. It doesn't matter what the object is; when the skeptical, doubting mind catches us, we're stuck.

Choose one of the most frequent and difficult mind states that arise in your practice, such as irritation, fear, boredom, lust, doubt or restlessness. For one week in your daily sitting be particularly aware each time this state arises. Watch carefully for it. Notice how it begins and what precedes it. Notice if there is a particular thought or image that triggers this state. Notice how long it lasts and when it ends. Notice what state usually follows it. Observe whether it ever arises very slightly or softly. Can you see it as just a whisper in the mind? See how loud and strong it gets. Notice what patterns of energy or tension reflect this state in the body. Become aware of any physical or mental resistance to experiencing this state. Soften and receive even the resistance. Finally sit and be aware of the breath, watching and waiting for this state, allowing it to come, and observing it like an old friend.



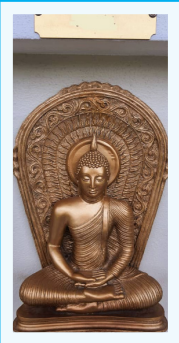
This excerpt is taken from the book, "Seeking the Heart of Wisdom"

About the Writer : Jack Kornfield is an American writer and teacher in the Vipassana movement in American Theravada Buddhism. He trained as a Buddhist monk in Thailand, Burma and India, first as a student of the Thai forest master Ajahn Chah and Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma. He has taught mindfulness meditation worldwide since 1974.

Projects

LEND A HAND

The Buddhist Maha Vihara “Lend A Hand” programme is to support the undertaking of a number of crucial projects that are needed for continuous maintenance and upgrading for the benefit of all devotees. We appeal to your kind generosity to help us realise the following:



Buddha Frieze for the sponsorship @ Meditation Pavilion, BMV

Seated Buddha Frieze
RM 18,000 each
26 statues left to be sponsored

We have the above Seated Buddha Frieze available for sponsorship. Please contact the office for further details. A big Sadhu to all who have sponsored the Standing Buddha Frieze.

General Items for Temple and Devotees' Use

Items displayed are for illustration purpose only



Supply and Install Visual System at 1st Floor, Puja Hall (for dhamma talks and retreats)

Estimated Cost : RM25,730



Meditation cushion with cushion

Big 2 feet x 2 feet @ RM65 x 62 nos = RM4,030

Small 10 x 14 x 46mm

@ RM55 x 106 nos = RM5,830

Total Estimated Cost : RM 10,120



Wireless Head Set
Microphone

Balance Required : RM2,300



Mobile Stage with Skirting and Staircase

Estimated Cost : RM7,700



Microphone System

Estimated Cost : RM4,800



Skirting for Banquet Table (for 100 tables - 6 ft x 2 ft)

Estimated Cost : RM9,500



10-seater Round
Tables (50 tables)

Estimated Cost : RM7,000

Vehicle for Transport



Balance Required: RM74,500

WISMA DHAMMA CAKRA

8 Lotus Pillars available for sponsorship at RM25,000 each.

Each pillar is named after the Buddha's core teachings

PILLARS ON MEZZANINE FLOOR TEN MERITORIOUS ACTIONS & EIGHTFOLD NOBLE PATH	5 pillars available for sponsorship
SAMMA VACA (Right Speech)	Available
SAMMA SAMKAPPA (Right Resolve)	Available
SAMMA KAMMANTA (Right Action)	Available
SAMMA VAYAMA (Right Effort)	Available
SAMMA SAMADHI (Right Concentration)	Available

PILLARS ON LEVEL 1 FIVE PRECEPTS	3 pillars available for sponsorship
ADINNA-DANA VERAMANI SIKKHAPADAM SAMADIYAMI (I observe the precept to abstain from taking things not given)	Available
KAMESU MICCHA-CARA VERAMANI SIKKHAPADAM SAMADIYAMI (I observe the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct)	Available
SURA MERAYA-MAJJA-PAMADATTHANA VERAMANI SIKKHAPADAM SAMADIYAMI (I observe the precept to abstain from taking anything causing intoxication or heedlessness)	Available

2 nos Elevators on the Ground Floor available for sponsorship - RM150,000 each



Dhammacakra Wheel
Balance Required:
RM100,000

CONTACT BMV ADMIN OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE

Account Name:

Buddhist Maha Vihara

Account Number: 292-00-01161-8

Bank: Hong Leong Bank

TEL: 03 - 2274 1141 / 011- 2689 6123

eMAIL: info@buddhistmahavihara.org

Tax Exempt Receipts can be issued for sponsorship

Partial Sponsorship

Names of Sponsors for Amounts RM500 and above

For sponsorship of Vehicle for Transport

Chee Mun Cheah - RM3,000

With the merits accrued by your generous donations, May you and your family be blessed and protected by the Noble Triple Gem

Sadhu.....Sadhu.....Sadhu

Buddhist Maha Vihara (Established in 1894)

The Vihara was founded by the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society, which is the oldest registered Buddhist Society in the country. The Vihara was elevated to that of a Maha Vihara since 1994 with the full complement of the three main sacred objects of veneration namely the Buddha image (1894); the Bodhi Tree (1911) and the International Buddhist Pagoda (1971). Being the oldest Buddhist temple in the Klang Valley, we have served the community selflessly as follows:

Religious Activities

- Daily Buddha Puja at designated hours
- Full Moon and New Moon Buddha Puja
- Bojjangha Puja for good health
- Dhamma Talks
- Meditation Classes and Retreats
- 8 Precept Programme
- Chanting Classes
- Wesak Programme and Candle Light Procession
- All Night Chanting to invoke Blessings
- Kathina Ceremony
- Novitiate Programme



Education Programme

FREE Buddhist education for children and adults via the Sunday School since 1929.

Systematic tertiary Buddhist education.

Distributed more than 2 MILLION free publications and CDs/MP3/DVD/VCD in 30 languages since the 1950s.

Dharma for the Deaf class since 1999

Weekly Feeding the Homeless and Needy

Festive Season Midnight Aid Distribution to the Homeless

Grocery Aid Distribution to Welfare Homes and Orang Asli Settlements

Weekly Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic

Pursuing inter-religious harmony through the Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST)

VISION

To be a leading international center for the Learning, Practise and Dissemination of the Buddha Dhamma

To provide a conducive environment to:

- promote scholarship and study of the Buddha Dhamma
- propagate the Buddha Dhamma
- be the focus of Buddhist activities for the larger community
- foster Theravada Buddhist cultural and traditional practices

Six Strategic Objectives

To be the Buddhist center of choice for:

1. Pariyatti – Structured Buddhist education for children and adults.
2. Patipatti, Pativedha – Regular programmes for the practice and the realization of the Buddha Dhamma.
3. Dhammadutta – Dhamma materials for the masses locally and abroad
4. Karuna – Compassion in Action
5. Kalyana Mitrata – Networking and Fellowship with Buddhist and non-Buddhist organisations to sustain the Buddha Sasana.
6. Samajivikata – Financial viability while committing to Religious and Cultural Obligations.

Four Ennoblers

1. Loving Kindness
2. Compassion
3. Altruistic Joy
4. Equanimity

Motto

Go forth, for the good, happiness and welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world.

BMV DAILY OPERATING HOURS & PROGRAMMES

BMV ADMIN OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Saturday
9.00am - 9.00pm

Sunday & Public Holidays
9.00am - 7.00pm

EVENING PUJAS

Daily Puja - 7.30pm at Pagoda

Saturdays Bhojjangha Puja 7.30pm at Pagoda

Full/New Moon Puja - 7.30pm at Shrine Hall

DANA FOR MONKS

Daily Buddha Puja - 7.30am
Breakfast Dana - 8.00am

Daily Buddha Puja - 11.30am
Lunch Dana - 12.00 noon

MEDITATION CLASSES

Monday & Thursday - 7.00pm to 9.00pm
@ Puja Hall - Meditation master - Uncle Chee

ONLINE DHAMMA TALK

Friday & Sunday @ 8.30pm
www.fb.com/groups/Bhuddhistmahavihara

DHAMMA TALK @ BMV

Saturday @ 2.00pm

FRIENDS OF THE VIHARA (BMV VOLUNTEER GROUP)

Sunday @ 5.00pm

Feeding the Needy & Homeless

Delivery of Food parcels to Old Folks
Home and Orphanage

YOGA CLASS

Tuesday @ 10.30am - 12 noon
Thursday @ 7.00pm - 8.30pm

ONGOING CLASS

Saturday @ 8.00am - 10.30am

CLASSES

SUNDAY DHAMMA CLASSES FOR
CHILDREN & ADULTS

Sunday @ 9.30am to 12.00 noon
www.bisds.org

SUTTA CLASS BY BRO VONG CHOY

Sunday @ 11.00am - 12.00pm

ONLINE DIPLOMA & DEGREE IN BUDDHISM

Saturday & Sunday

ONLINE DHAMMA FOR THE DEAF

Sunday @ 1.00pm to 2.00pm (fortnightly)

You can donate towards our many projects :

- Dhammadutta
- Free Buddhist Publications
- Welfare Activities
- Monks Dana
- Sunday Dhamma School
- Maintenance of Shrine Hall
- K Sri Dhammananda Library
- Temple Lighting
- BISDS Building Fund

Payments can be made via :

BMV Office Counter : Cash, cheques & credit cards

Postage : Make cheques payable to “**Buddhist Maha Vihara**” & write your name & contact telephone at back of the cheque.

Direct Debit : Hong Leong Bank Brickfields
Acct : 292-00-01161-8

BMV Statement of Accounts :

Buddhist Maha Vihara's Monthly Statement of Accounts is displayed on the Notice Board at the Reception area for public viewing. Please address all queries to the Hon. Secretary in writing.

We accept VISA and MASTERCARD for donations. Thank You.

Donations to Buddhist Maha Vihara operations are tax exempt.

Any donor who wants a tax exemption for computation of personal or corporate tax can request for a tax exempt receipt.

PLEASE BEWARE OF UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS SOLICITING DONATIONS.

KINDLY ENSURE THAT ALL DONATIONS ARE ISSUED WITH A NUMBERED BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA OFFICIAL RECEIPT.

BMV OFFICE HOURS

MON – SAT : 9.00 am - 9.00 pm

SUN & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS : 9.00 am - 7.00 pm



BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA

123 Jalan Berhala, Brickfields 50470 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03-2274 1141 H/P: 6011-2689 6123

Email: info@buddhistmahavihara.org

Website: www.buddhistmahavihara.org

www.bisds.org