

SAMĀDHI

JOURNAL OF THE LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA
THE FIRST AND THE FOREMOST BUDDHIST VIHARA OF THE WESTERN WORLD
ESTABLISHED IN 1926 BY THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

ISSUE No. 35

JANUARY 2010

B.E. 2553

ISSN 1368-1516

"ANXIOUS TIMES: A BUDDHIST BALM"

Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera
Head of the London Buddhist Vihara

2009 has been a turbulent and challenging year for us all. Everything seems suddenly to have changed and old certainties have completely disappeared. True, very positive things have happened particularly in Sri Lanka but, on a personal level, the present economic instability has led to great uncertainty. Perhaps it is no wonder then that anxiety is very much on the increase and large sums of NHS money have had to be spent on providing those suffering from this debilitating complaint with drug therapy. As the Dhamma was given to us with the precise aim of alleviating human suffering, I think that now is an appropriate moment to look at how the Buddha diagnoses the condition and provides a prescription for the treatment of this painful and increasingly prevalent form of human suffering.

At first sight, the solution seems all too simple. Anxiety is merely just another expression of "Wrong View"! If the sufferer were to pull him or herself together and look at his or her present existence with "Right View", all suffering would completely fall away. Everyone in our society would be happy, peaceful and well, and the increasingly large amounts of NHS resources could be spent to better effect elsewhere. Is it really this simple? Is it really this

easy? Of course, the answer is quite firmly No. By taking this approach we are forgetting entirely that the nature of anxiety is totally different. It is caused by other factors and it is rooted elsewhere.



Buddha in Abhaya Mudra

Anxiety is rooted in and arises from uncertainty, attachment, impermanence, emotional turmoil, and concern for the future. It is a state in which the person fails to comprehend the interdependency and impermanence of all things, and out of this ignorance arises attachment and anxiety – anxiety that we cannot obtain what we want and anxiety that we shall lose what we have.

In our attempts to allay our anxieties we may put our trust in false or unre-

liable things: we seek refuge in many material things, such as banks and houses, all of which turn out to be impermanent. We also seek refuge in other mundane attainments, such as power, fame, popularity and many other things which also turn out to be transient. The most secure form of refuge is the Triple Gem. We go for refuge to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. This is not a simple thing, to be done thoughtlessly, just mechanically repeating the same old words every day. This is a serious commitment; it is the start of the long process of mental training which can lead ultimately to purification of the mind of all negative states, including fear and anxiety.

Simultaneously with Going for Refuge, we can take a very practical step: to follow the Buddha's rules of training (precepts, sila). These are five actions from which we should refrain. The consequence of leading a life in accordance with the precepts is that one lives a blameless life and the result of leading a blameless life is freedom from fear. "..... the noble disciple gives immeasurable beings freedom from fear, freedom from hostility and freedom from oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility and oppression, he himself will

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Mindfulness of Feeling
- The Theory of Kamma in Buddhism
- Programmes and activities
- Obituaries
- Back to Basics
- A-Z of Buddhism
- Courses for the Year 2010

Chief Executive: Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera

Editors: Ven. Tawalama Bandula, Mr. Richard Jones

Continued from page 1

enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility and oppression.” (AN VIII, 39) Observance of the precepts means one need have no anxiety about speaking or acting unskillfully; one’s verbal and bodily actions are brought under control. We can relax in the knowledge that we shall not say anything or do anything which is harmful to others. Like Going for Refuge, Taking the Precepts is not something which should be done lightly or carelessly, but with full awareness of what one is saying. The fifth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Livelihood (*samma ajiva*), should also be kept in mind as practical guidance about how to live one’s life. If we live according to this factor, this too gives us freedom from worry or remorse that we are harming others.

We should try to develop a better understanding of ourselves and how our mind works. The Buddha taught us that *citta* (usually translated as consciousness) is like a flowing river, always moving and always changing. At the moment of birth it is said to be stainless and pure, but it becomes polluted by defilements which come from outside. Many of us are not aware of this or, if we are, we make little or no effort to control it. However, the Buddha’s teaching is ultimately a system of mind-training, so our goal is to eradicate the unwholesome states and develop the wholesome states. In the Noble Eightfold Path this is known as Right Effort (*samma vayama*). Anxiety can be considered as an unwholesome state of mind.

To help us tread this path, there are five qualities which we can develop. They are called Five Controlling Faculties (*indriya*), (i) faith, (ii) energy, (iii) mindfulness, (iv) concentration, and (v) wisdom. The five faculties are called ‘controlling’ because they are said to control or master their opposites: faith (or confidence) con-

trols lack of faith (or doubt); energy controls laziness; mindfulness controls heedlessness; concentration controls agitation and distraction; and wisdom controls ignorance. *Saddha* gives us the confidence that by following the Buddhist path we can overcome our negative states of mind. *Viriya* supplies the power to apply ourselves diligently to the task. *Sati* harnesses the other faculties, keeps them in balance and directs them in skilful ways. It works like a mental watchdog. *Samadhi* keeps the mind from wandering away and getting lost in other pursuits. *Panna* allows us to develop insight into the way things really are, it enables us to realise that anxiety – like all states of mind – is impermanent and not self. *Panna* shows us that all these states are rooted in the sense of “I”, “me”, or “mine” and that all of these three are delusions. It is because we identify with them as real that states like anxiety can exercise power over us, filling us with fears and worries.

The Buddha gives us a great gift – freedom from fear. (Fig 1) This photo shows the Buddha in the *abhaya mudra*, reassuring us that his teaching can liberate us from fear and anxiety. There is a story concerning Ven. Bhaddiya who was overheard saying repeatedly “Oh! The happiness. Oh! The Happiness”. When the

Buddha asked him what he meant by this, Ven. Bhaddiya said, “Formerly, Sire, when I was in the enjoyment of a royal home, I was guarded and closely protected both within and without the palace, within and without the city I was guarded and closely protected, within my country and beyond my country I was guarded and closely protected.”

“Thus guarded and closely watched, Sire, I lived in a state of anxiety, distrust and alarm; now, Sire, that I wander through the forests, under trees and in desolate places, I pass my days, fearless, at rest, confident, unalarmed, in comfort, unterrified, supported by gifts of food and garments from others, and with a heart free as that of a gazelle.” (*Udana, ch.2*)

It is my fervent hope for the coming year that, if and when this form of suffering arises in your mind, you will remember that you have a highly potent remedy which, if you take regularly as part of your daily routine, will totally eradicate pain and suffering, and will enable you to live in a more positive and fruitful manner.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

An Island of Refuge

Once two trail and old brahmins, aged, advanced in years, at life's end, one hundred and twenty years of age, approached the Blessed One and spoke to him thus:

“We are Brahmins, Master Gotama, frail and old... one hundred and twenty years of age. But we have not done anything that is good and wholesome, we have not made a shelter for ourselves. Let Master Gotama admonish us and exhort us, so that it may lead to our welfare and happiness for a long time.

“Truly, bhahmins, you are frail and old... and you have not done anything good and wholesome, you have not made a shelter for yourselves. Indeed, Brahmins, this world is swept away by old age, illness and death. Though the world is thus swept away by old age, illness and death, for one who departs from this world self-control in deeds, words and thoughts will provide shelter and safety, an island of refuge and succour.”

*Life is swept away, brief is our span of years,
There are no shelters for one who has reached old age.
Perceiving the peril that lurks in death,
Perform good deeds that entail happiness.
When one is restrained in body,
Restrained by speech and by mind,
The deeds of merit one did while alive
Bring happiness when one departs. (AN III, 51)*

MINDFULNESS OF FEELING

by Bhante Gunaratana

One quarter of the Buddha's teaching is based on feeling, which is the first truth that he taught for forty-five years. It is in not understanding this truth that we are leashed to repetition of birth and death in one form or another. To a lesser degree it also is one of the four foundations of mindfulness as outlined by the Buddha in several Suttas. An ordinary person and a more enlightened one differ from each other in their response to feelings. While an ordinary person, for instance, would cling to the pleasant feeling and reject the unpleasant, the more enlightened one neither clings to the pleasant nor rejects the unpleasant. Rather he pays total mindful attention to both and always maintains a balanced mind with regard to both.

All living beings, without any exception, feel. Not very many of them, however, use feeling as a means of gaining deeper insight into the reality of their experience, while avoiding emotional reaction. Human beings who use their mind to think and create are in a very advantageous position. Unfortunately, however, not many human beings use their feelings as a way to develop their humanness or humane qualities. There are many human beings who have not learned to use their unlimited mental capacity and feelings for further development of their mind.

When somebody asks you, "How are you?" You would say "I am fine." or "I have never felt better." or "I am O.K. and how about yourself?" or "I don't feel well today." or "I have a bit of an upset stomach." or "I feel miserable today." Here you express your feelings but not any particular reason for how you feel. If you were to perform a psychological analysis you would make a distinction between feelings and sensations. In your daily expression, however, you use these two terms indiscriminately. In order to maintain consistency in this article, I, too, therefore, will use the term "feelings" indiscriminately

to mean both "feelings" and "sensations." It may be better to put the difference between these two terms on the back burner until you have completely read this article. I am not trying to make any neurological analysis here of how feeling occurs. My attempt is to point out how feelings should be used as an object of mindfulness training so that you would be able to live with all kinds of feelings without having a nervous breakdown.

Feeling should be used as a mechanism for gaining deeper insight into the reality of feelings. We know from the moment we were born until we breathe our last breath we operate on feelings. Feeling arises from the periphery due to designation contact or from the deep down our own state of mind due to impingement contact. As soon as our senses come in contact with their objects we become conscious of our feelings caused by peripheral contact. Initiated simultaneously with the development of our nervous system, feeling was present even as we were in our mother's womb. When our mother ate hot food we felt the heat. When she ate cold food we felt the cold. When she was angry we felt her agitation and tension. When she moved we felt her movements. When she sang we heard her singing. When she cried we heard her cry. When she laughed we heard that too. While we may not be able to recall this, nevertheless, we felt all of them.

As soon as we were born we cried not only because we felt sad that we had to leave our mother's womb, or not only because we thought that if we did not cry that people wouldn't pay attention to us, but because we felt the change of atmosphere. From the warm, dark and comfortable environment in the mother's womb we were thrust into the cool, blinding bright light and uncomfortable surroundings with several people around us. We had never experienced this

before. From the moment we started our struggle of life as a unicellular being, we have been experiencing feelings. From the moment our nerve cells or neurons began to develop we have been experiencing our feelings. When the feeling pleases us we wish to have more of it and when feeling does not please us we wish to reject it. This is our natural reaction. Our entire search--struggle, achievements, improvement, development, inventions, working hard or not, desire to live or not to live-- depends on how we feel. Our search for food, clothing, medicine, shelter, sex, heat, cold, and much more, depends on our feelings. When we feel cold we look for heat. When we feel hungry we look for food. When we want to evacuate we go to a suitable place to fulfill that feeling. We have discovered, manufactured, developed or improved many things because of what we feel. We create and procreate according to our feelings. Even our reasoning began from our feelings. All that we do depends on our feelings. Our reaction to any situation depends on how we feel. After reacting to the situation we may rationalize our reaction. All our emotional reactions depend on how we feel about a situation. Repeated emotional reactions to feelings gradually nourish our ego. When emotional reaction becomes a habit we rationalize our emotional reaction and defend ourselves saying, "I have every right to defend my feelings when somebody hurts my feelings."

When we begin to learn the universal nature of feelings we begin to train our minds to use it for the benefit of all living beings, rather than becoming selfish. When we learn to train our minds to use feelings as objects of our mental development, we learn more about it and make the full use of it with deeper understanding. When you universalize your feelings you become more mindful about not saying anything to hurt anybody.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Nor can you do anything to destroy any living being. All living beings feel the fear of death. Of course, if you ignore others' feelings, you may justify doing anything. Most of the time your justification does not come with feeling. You rationalize anything if you can ignore others' feelings. Religious fanatics are well known for this. Some people, while putting their own religions on high pedestals, use abusive or disparaging language to attack people belonging to other religions, because they ignore their feelings.

All these are but a few examples of how much you suffer from your own feelings. If you look at your feelings with understanding, you would not be very upset to see somebody different from you. You won't get annoyed if someone speaks a language you don't understand. If you understand the nature of feelings you can listen to somebody's complaints of pain without yourself complaining. If you don't understand feelings you may be very obnoxious, arrogant and insulting, and later suffer for this behaviour.

When you train yourself to have mindfulness of feelings your whole attitude will change and you will feel more comfortable in noticing differences in the world. Notice your feeling--pleasant, unpleasant or neutral--focus your total attention on it without thinking or saying, "Ah! My head aches," or "My leg aches," etc. Unless you pay total attention to your feeling, you won't know what is behind it. Pay total attention to your own feeling and begin to notice the pleasant feeling behind your unpleasant feeling. Only by giving total attention to something can you notice what is behind that thing. If you have enough patience to observe your feeling, you will also notice that it is changing. You would not notice this change in feeling if you did not pay attention to it. It is your attention, not the word, that brings things to the surface of your mind.

Suppose you feel depressed. If you pay total attention to this feeling

without adding any other emotion to it, you will notice your depression gradually diminishing. Of course, you may make your depression more miserable and even may have manic depression lasting for several days if you become attached to it. Or you can get rid of it very quickly if you learn to accept the reality of change that takes place during every moment of your feeling. Fortunately for you even unpleasant feelings are impermanent.

Suppose you wake up one morning with a terrible headache. Immediately find a reasonably quiet place in your house or apartment and spend some time quietly sitting down, closing your eyes and watching your headache without any presumption or worry, but paying total attention to it. Soon will you notice your headache diminishing slowly. But if you worry about it, you may make your headache worse by adding more tension or pressure to it, because you add another feeling--worry--rather than dealing with just one feeling--headache.

Suppose one night or for several nights in a row you cannot sleep. Following morning you wake up and you feel a little uncomfortable. If you begin to worry about not sleeping you may have more uncomfortable feelings. Now it is this worry, not the sleeplessness that makes you feel greater discomfort. If, on the other hand, you take it easy and don't worry about not having a good night's sleep, you feel better. This means that you can use your feelings to make you feel either comfortable or uncomfortable, depending on how you deal with your feelings.

Suppose one day you feel very peaceful, joyful and happy. Look at that feeling as it is and try to pay total attention to it. As long as you feel peaceful, joyful and happy, try to pay total attention to it and let it fade away when it fades away. Don't try to make it permanent. If that feeling disappears, don't get upset; simply accept the disappearance. Welcome it as it is. By accepting it you allow yourself to recreate it in your mind at another time. If you worry about its

disappearance you won't permit it to come back. What you are really doing by accepting the disappearance of your pleasant feeling is learning to relax and be comfortable with the change in your own feelings. You cannot force any feeling to stay with you as you wish. It slips away from your grip. The harder you try to keep it with you the quicker it disappears. If you simply accept it as it comes and let it go as it goes away, you maintain your equilibrium and this permits you to relax.

By the same token, if an unpleasant feeling arises in you, don't try to reject it or push it away prematurely. It takes time for any feeling to go away. You have to cultivate patience with unpleasant feelings as well. If you lose your patience with it, you lose the pleasantness that can follow the unpleasantness, and even magnify it. When you "take it easy", you make things simple and more comfortable for yourself. Simply pay total attention to your unpleasant feeling. You may have certain unpleasant feelings due to a chemical imbalance in your brain. You must admit that whether you like it or not, things in your body and mind change all the time. If you experience certain unpleasant sensations due to a change in hormone balance, you may prolong the imbalance by worrying or by being impatient. If you relax and pay total attention to the hormone imbalance your mind generates better and more positive hormones to transcend the imbalanced state.

Inadvertently, you cultivate a certain mental attitude towards numerous things and persons. This attitude can cause you pleasant or unpleasant feelings. When you mindfully look at your own state of mind, you will see that it is your own attitude that has created that state of mind which results in one feeling or another. Feeling does not come from the object that you perceive but from your own state or mental attitude. This is why when several people look at the same object they can have several different feelings, several different opinions about the object.

Continued on page 3

BACK TO BASICS

LIBERALITY (CAGA)

Renunciation, which is the essence of the Buddhist Way of Life, begins with the practice of liberality. First the aspirant for enlightenment learns to give away his external possessions; then he learns to become indifferent to his own body and to follow in the path of the Master, who in his Bodhisatta days, gave limb, life and all that he held dear, for the sake of perfecting the virtues necessary for the attainment of the highest good. The whole way to enlightenment is adorned with liberality. There is no property the man bent on Nibbana cannot part with.

Through liberality a man becomes dear to others and finds peaceful and noble-hearted associates. The generous man's good reputation spreads far and wide; he enters an assembly without embarrassment, without diffidence and when he dies cannot but find happiness in the thought that he is taking with him the treasure of Liberality to the next life. Appreciation of the fact that to give is to be endowed with mental treasure is not confined to the East. Liberality has always been held in high esteem in the West.

We find recorded in Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'

Continued from page 4

If you mindfully watch your own mind and feelings, you can see very clearly and unequivocally that what you feel is your own creation and that you are totally responsible for it. Mindfully watching the continuous change of your own feelings can make you abstain from emotional reactions and make you see the

this epitaph of Edward Earl of Devon: "What I gave I have; what I spent I had; what I left I lost". The line of great givers of the West continues unimpaired. Although there is no one who could emulate the Emperor Asoka, whose munificence is without parallel in the records of princes of the earth, there are many great and good men who have impoverished themselves for the good of the world like the great Anathapindika. Unbroken as the tradition of the Dhamma knowledge has been the tradition of the liberality in the East; but it could be made stronger and nobler if we were to reduce our personal wants, and cut down our desires. The desire to hold on to money, property, power and position, regardless of the suffering of others, should be overcome. The Buddha encourages us to be aware of the sufferings of others. Out of this grows the supreme quality of compassion, and from compassion grows the unselfish practice of renouncing and letting go.

Unshakable deliverance of the mind can be attained by practising the arts of renunciation and liberality. These two qualities lead to transcending evil deeds, evil thoughts, and wrong understanding.

truth of your own feelings. Mindfulness of feelings will not cause you to think obsessive thoughts or abusive thoughts or harmful thoughts. By unmindful thinking you abuse your mind. The abused mind always generates abusive feelings, which always is painful.

Bhavana Newsletter Vol. 11. No. 3 July - Sept. 1995

Cause of Shame

"If, monks, wandering ascetics of other beliefs should ask you: 'Is it, friend, for the sake of rebirth in a heavenly world that you live the holy life under the ascetic Gotama?' – would you not feel repelled, ashamed and humiliated?"
"Certainly, Lord."

"So then, monks, you say you feel hurt, ashamed and repelled by the idea of divine longevity, divine beauty, divine bliss, divine glory and divine sovereignty. How much more then should you feel repelled, ashamed and humiliated by bad conduct of body, speech and mind!" (AN III, 18)

AN

A - Z

OF BUDDHISM

JAVANA – impulsion, to run swiftly. This is important technical term with should be clearly understood. Ordinarily the term is employed in the sense of swift. Javana means running. It is so called because in the course of a thought-process it runs consecutively for seven thought-moments or five, hanging on to an identical object. The mental states occurring in all these thought-moments are similar, but the potential force differs.

When the consciousness perceives a vivid object, usually seven moments of javana arise in the particular thought-process. This javana stage is most important from an ethical standpoint. It is at this psychological stage that good or evil is actually done. Irrespective of the desirability or the undesirability of the object presented to the mind, one can make the javana process good or bad.

Of the normal seven javana thought-moments, the first is the weakest potentially as it lacks any previous sustaining force. The Kammic effect of this thought-moment may operate in the present life itself. It is called the Dittadhammavedaniya Kamma. If it does not operate, it becomes ineffective (ahosi). The last is the second weakest, because the sustaining power is being spent. Its Kammic effect may operate in the immediately subsequent life (Upapajjedaniya). If it does not, it also becomes ineffective. The effects of the remaining five may operate at any time (Aparapariya-vedaniya) till one attains Parinibbana.

It should be understood that moral and immoral javanas refer to the active side of life. They condition the future existence.

VESAK CELEBRATION - 2009



10th May 2009 Vesak celebration was held at the Vihara. The Programme started with hoisting the Buddhist Flag by HE Justice Nihal Jayasingha, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and lighting the oil lamp by Mr Khin Minnn, secretary of the Embassy of Myanmar. Guest speakers were Prof. Chandra Wickremasinghe and Mr. Anil Goonawardane. A message from Dr. Rowan Williams, The Archbishop of Canterbury, was read by his Interfaith Co-ordinator, Ms Siriol Davis. At the end of the day children and parents of the Dhamma school presented a devotional song programme (Bhakti Gee). (Photo by Tissa Madawela)

Sunday Dhamma School children also observed eight precepts on 9th May.



RAHULA DHAMMA DAY - 2009



Annual Sunday Dhamma School prize giving and Variety Show (Rahula Dhamma Day Programme) was held at the Vihara on 5th April. Chief Guest was H.E. Justice Nihal Jayasingha the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and he distributed presents and certificates to the Dhamma school students. (Photo by Christopher Mathias)

Esala Celebration - 2009

Well attended Annual Dhammacakka Day celebration was held at the Vihara on 5th July. Invitation to spend the Rainy Retreat for the monks was done by Miss Surya Samaraweera and frindes. (Photo by Tissa Madawela)



Anicca vata Sankhara Mrs. Kumarihami

It is with sense of deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of Mr. Kumarihami loving mother of Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera on 29th August 2009 in Sri Lanka. Her cremation took place in the presence of a large gathering in Kurunegala. 3 month Dana ceremony was held at the Vihara on 29th November 2009.

INTER-FAITH EVENTS



Ven. Seelawimala participated the faith leaders reception meeting in the Interfaith week in UK which was held at the Lambeth Palace on 16th Nov. 09



Ven. Seelawimala participated "Faith and the Environment seminar", in Lambeth Palace on 29th Oct. 09. At the end of the seminar Dr. Rowan Williams the Archbishop of Canterbury handed over the joint statement to Rt. Hon. Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. Most Rev. Vincent Nicolas the Archbishop of Westminster, Sri Jonathan Sack the Chief Rabbi and other faith leaders also attended.

A special Pariththa Chanting ceremony was held to commemorate the 145th Birth anniversary of the Anagarika Dharmapala the founder of the Vihara and the 83rd anniversary of the London Buddhist Vihara on 19th September 2009.

The programme included a memorial lecture by Venerable Luang Por Sumedho, Head of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery and more than 25 Monks representing all the Sri Lankan Buddhist viharas in the UK attended in the Pariththa Chanting. Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala Nayaka Thera, Head of the Vihara delivered the opening Anusasana and Ven. Pahalagama Somarathana Nayaka Thera headed the Pariththa Chanting. Among the participating devotees was the Sri Lanka High Commissioner H.E. Justice Nihala Jayasinghe.

20th morning Dhana was offered to the Maha Sangha and transferred merits to Anagarika Dharmapala, all the monks, friends and devotees who helped the Vihara in its development.

(Photo by Tissa Madawela)



FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS - 2009

KATHINA CELEBRATIONS - 2009

Annual Kathina Ceremony held at the Vihara. This year Kathina Robe was offered by Mrs. Premalatha Samaraweera family and friends.

(Photo by Hema Liyanage)



THE THEORY OF KAMMA IN BUDDHISM

by Prof. Lily de Silva
(University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka)

Kamma is a much misunderstood doctrine in Buddhism. Some scholars believe that the Buddha took for granted the doctrine of Kamma and rebirth from the pre-Buddhist Indian philosophies. Still others believe that one has to experience the fruits of all the kamma committed in the past. Another popular belief is that whatever we experience in the life is all due to past kamma. Another general attitude is that we have to succumb to the kamma of the past with a sense of resignation and this is denoted by the Sinhala word *karume*. It is also believed that the theory of kamma as propounded in Buddhism is detrimental to development and progress. We shall take these observations for discussion one-by-one during the course of this essay.

In the famous, oft-quoted *Kalamasutta* the Buddha exhorts his disciples not to accept any proposition on the strength of traditional beliefs and logic, but to personally verify the validity of a proposition before accepting. As the Buddha is reputed to be one who acts according to what he professes (*yathavadi tathakari*), it cannot be maintained that the Buddha took for granted the theory of kamma and rebirth from his philosophical background without verification. Moreover, the pre-Buddhist theories of kamma are quite different from the theory of kamma propounded in Buddhism. In Vedic literature kamma meant sacrificial ritual and it was believed that a man's fate after death depended on the *sraddha* sacrifice performed by his son. Anyone who is even remotely acquainted with Buddhism would know that the Buddhist theory of kamma has nothing to do with a belief in sacrificial ritual. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* maintains that as a man desires so is his will, as is his will so is his deed, and whatever deed he does, that he will reap (*Brh, Up iv. 4.5*). But the *Upanishads*

postulate that karma works through the medium of an everlasting *atma* or soul, and such a concept is not acceptable to Buddhism. According to Jainism a type of subtle matter pours into the soul, the passions of a soul (*kasaya*) act as a viscous substance to which this subtle matter adheres and gets transformed into karma-matter. Moreover Jainism also believes that man experiences the effects of all past actions and through a process of self-mortification the karma of the past should be exhausted for liberation. By the dual process of exhausting previous karma and preventing the accumulation of new karma, the *Karmanasarira*, the crust of karma round the soul gets attenuated and finally the soul can burst through to liberation. But Buddhism does not hold such a materialistic view of karma, nor the idea of soul. Still other *Ajivikas* such as *Purana Kassapa* and *Ajita Kesakambali* denied the efficacy of karma altogether.

The Buddhist theory of kamma has a psychological basis in sharp contrast to the other pre-Buddhist theories. The Buddha says that volition or intention is kamma, as one performs actions through the instrumentality of the body, speech and mind, having first willed or made an intention – *cetanaham bhikkhave kaammam vadami, cetayitva kammam karoti kayen vacaya manasa*. Un-intentional action is not considered as having karmic validity and as such is not productive of results.

Once a person asked the Buddha whether a man has to experience the results according to whatever kamma he performs. The Buddha replied that if such is the case, leading the life a monk would be useless and that it will not be possible to make an end of suffering. Giving the correct interpretation the Buddha says “*yatha yatha vedaniyam ayam puriso kammam karoti thata tatha'ssa vipa-*

kam vediyatiti. Here it is pointed out that only the effect of *vedaniya kamma* has to be experienced. This can be understood as only deeds which have made a deep impression on the mind produce results. Therefore the *anantariya kammam* such a killing parents are very grievous deeds which mark a very deep, almost indelible, impression on the mind and they produce results of a very grave nature in the very next life. Other kammam of a serious nature may produce effects at any time. It is also possible to understand the statement made by the Buddha in still a different way. We experience the results of kamma for which we make an opportunity to give effect. By the performance of wholesome deeds man can prevent the fruition of past unwholesome deeds. This is how it is possible to make an end of suffering. We do not know what a backlog of unwholesome or wholesome kamma we have, if we have to experience the results of all this accumulation of past deeds, we would not be able to make an end of suffering within any single lifetime. If we continue to develop spiritually through a process of *bhavana* or mental culture, we will be in a position to render the backlog of kamma ineffective as it will not find an opportunity to give results. The most notable example of rendering demeritorious action ineffective is that of *Angulimala*. The Buddhist method of liberation tries to render ineffective the backlog of kamma.

All this evidence from the *Pali Canon* goes to show that the popular belief that we have to experience the fruit of all our past deeds is really a myth which has no foundation according to early Buddhism.

Another such myth is that whatever we experience in this life is all due to previous kamma. In the *Vedana-samyutta* of the *Samyuttanikaya*, the

Continued on page 9

Buddha says that human experiences have 8 causes, four of them are physiological causes, namely disorders of bodily humours such as bile, phlegm, wind and a combination of all these factors; the other 4 are physical climatic causes, the use of disagreeable things, deliberate manoeuvring and kamma. Thus kamma is but one of several causes and it is not the correct Buddhist position to maintain that everything that happens to man is due to kamma. Thus, if a person catches a cold by getting wet in the rain it is not correct to blame it on kamma. Again, the post-canonical commentaries have put forward a set of 5 cosmic laws. They are physical laws or utuniyama, biological laws, or bijaniyama, psychological laws or cittaniyama, moral laws or kammaniyama and causal laws or dhammaniyama. When all these laws are working in the universe, and they affect the experiences of human beings, it is wrong to maintain that everything that man experiences is due to kamma.

Accepting the lot that a man has to face with a sense of resignation is contrary to the Buddhist concept of kamma. As was mentioned in a sutta quoted earlier in this essay, man suffers the consequences only of kamma for which he gives an opportunity to come to fruition. Thus, by human endeavour it is possible to prevent unwholesome kamma from coming to fruition. It we engage in wholesome activity through word, deed and mind we can prevent unwholesome action from coming to fruition. Moreover, any misfortune that happens to us can be utilised, if one is so bent, for spiritual uplift. Say, if a woman has a troublesome unfaithful husband, if she is bent on her spiritual welfare and is a woman of strong character, she would play the role of *dasi bhariya* and continue to do her duty without expecting any material reward for herself. Thus she strengthens herself spiritually and does not just accept her lot with resignation and a sense of defeat. This is the way to triumph over even one's misfortune.

It is wrong to act as if man has no free will. Once a Brahmin came to the Buddha and said that he holds the view that man has no free will. The Buddha then asked him whether he can go forward or backward or whether he can initiate something if he so wishes. He says yes. If so, the Buddha asks, why deny free will? Buddhism uses a number of Pali words which express human initiative and endeavour. The following are some of them: *attakara* meaning individual action, *viriya* meaning energy, *sankhara* volitional activity, *atappa* effort, *arabbhadhatu* element of initiative, *adhithana* determination, *bala* mental power.

It is true that our volitional actions are conditioned by causal factors, but they are not wholly shaped or strictly determined by them. Therefore, we have an element of initiative, a certain degree of will power. In the *Ambalathika Rahulavada Sutta* the Buddha advises to reflect upon an act before committing it, to determine whether it conduces to the unhappiness of oneself and others. If so, such action should be avoided. Here it is accepted, and our experience also shows, that we do have the ability to choose between alternatives. Thus Buddhism accepts the position that man has a certain measure of free will and is therefore personally morally responsible for his deeds. Had it been otherwise, factors outside the human personality would be responsible for human action.

Buddhism maintains that beings own their kamma, they are heirs to their kamma, kamma is their matrix, kamma is their relation, kamma is their refuge, and kamma divides beings into high and low. Thus a human being is born into his station in life according to the dictates of his kamma. According to a sutta in the *Salayatana Samyutta* the human body and sense faculties are produced through former kamma. We have bodies of varied potentialities for physical action and disease resistance, and sense faculties of varying degrees of sensitivity. All this is because we are conditioned by our previous kamma. But it should be

remembered that though our birth is conditioned by previous kamma, the present moment is not wholly conditioned. In the present moment we have the freedom to choose between alternatives and therefore we do not labour under the weight of a kammic heritage. Therefore it is wrong to argue that Buddhist theory of kamma is detrimental to progress. Though one is born to a particular station or position in life it does not mean that one should stay bound to that position without any progress. Buddhism emphatically asserts that man has the capability, energy and the initiative to advance materially and spiritually. If this is not accepted the whole endeavour of Buddhism fails. The death-bound, imperfect, unhappy, worldly man has the capacity, if he so tries according to the path laid down by the Buddha, to transcend death and become morally perfect and wholly happy. If the theory of kamma were fatalistic or deterministic such progress would be unimaginable. The same reasoning holds good for material advancement.

Let us now consider how a man gets reborn propelled by kamma. I think it is a fair assumption to make that the fear of death is at the base of all fear. Throughout life whenever we experience fear we either run away from the source of fear or fight against it. That is, we protect ourselves from direct or indirect danger to life. Thus, as long as our bodies are strong enough we run away from death. But when we are ultimately on the death bed, face-to-face with death, and our body is not strong enough physically to run to safety, it is very likely that mentally we shall yearn and struggle to live. When this craving for life called *bhavatanha* is present we shall try to cling to a place where life can continue. This in Pali is called *tanhapaccaya upadanam*. Once we cling to a viable place, perhaps in a mother's womb, a process of becoming, or growth takes place, *upadana paccaya bhavo*. This growth in due course gives rise to birth which is called in Pali *bhavapaccaya jati*. So long as kamma is not rendered ineffective rebirth remains operative.

VIHARA ACTIVITIES - 2009

January

1. New Year Blessing Ceremony held at the Vihara.

February

7. Navam Full Moon Day Guest Speaker Ven. Kovida.

4 Ven. Seelawimala attended the 61st Independence Day ceremony of Sri Lanka at the Sri Lankan High Commission.

28 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Founder's Day Ceremony at Samadhi Meditation Centre at Edmonton.

March

7 Monthly Dhamma talk was given by Dr Senevi Aturupana Chaplain to HM Prisons.

9 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey.

12 Ven. Bandula gave a talk to a group of children from the Strand-on-the-Green Primary School.

15 Ven. Bandula attended funeral of Mr. Oswarid Ramanayake at Hendon Crematorium.

18 Ven. Bandula attended the reception of Faith and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games –exploring our involvement.

18 Ven. Wimalajothi gave a talk to a group of students from St. Mary's University College, Twickenham.

24 Ven. Bandula attended the Reception for Cardinal Murphy O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, at the office of Board of Deputies of British Jews.

April

5 Annual Rahula Dhamma Day (Children's Day) Programme was held at the Vihara.

6 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Interfaith Network AGM meeting at Hamilton House, Euston.

9 Ven. Seelawimala & Ven. Bandula attended funeral of Dr. Dudley J Bandara at Northampton Crematorium.

18 Ven. Seelawimala attended the New Year Celebrations organised by Janahanda Foundation, Hounslow.

22 Ven. Seelawimala & Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mr. Lincon Chandrasekera at Tonbridge Wells Crematorium.

May

1 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Heathrow Multi-faith chaplaincy board meeting at Heathrow airport.

9 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Buddha Bathing Ceremony at Fo-Kuang Temple, London.

9 Children's Vesak Programme.

9 Ven. Seelawimala conducted the Buddha Day Celebration at the Buddhist Society.

10 Vesak Celebrations at the Vihara.

17 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at Buddha Jayanthi Celebrations of the Lumbini-Nepalese Buddha Dhamma Society.

19 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral service for Mr. Solomon Gunawardane at Kensal Green Crematorium.

21 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Reception for the New Archbishop of Westminster, Most Rev. Vincent Nicholas at Westminster Cathedral.

27 Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of Great Britain meeting was held at the Vihara.

31 Ven. Bandula attended the Vesak Celebration in Nice, France.

June

4 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Executive Committee Meeting of the Inter-Faith Network UK.

5-12 Ven. Wimalajothi attended Poson celebrations organised by Moscow Buddhist Federation, Moscow.

6 Annual Blood Donation Day was held at the Vihara.

7 Poson Day celebrations at the Vihara.

13 Fund Raising Dinner was held at the Vihara.

20 Ven. Wimalajothi and Ven. Susara attended the Anniversary celebrations of the London Peace Pagoda.

21 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at a seminar at Om Day Celebration organised by Unity Forum of Indogenic Religions at Hammersmith Town Hall.

24 Ven. Seelawimala participated in the Heathrow Multi-faith Chaplaincy Board Meeting.

26 Ven. Seelawimala attended Multi-religious Day at Primary School, Harlesden.

27 Monthly meditation retreat conducted by Ven. Ahimsako from Amarawati monastery.

27 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at 6th annual national conference of the Islamic Foundation in UK, Leicester.

27 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Child Lanka Annual Ceremony.

July

2 Ven. Seelawimala attended a workshop on the theme of Marriage Culture in the Nine Major Faiths of Britain, organised by the Jain Academy.

2 Ven. Bandula gave a talk on "Buddhism and Mental Health" at a day training programme for Mental Health staff organised by West London Mental Health Trust.

4 Ven. Seelawimala & Ven. Bandula attended the anniversary celebrations of the Thames Buddhist Vihara

5 Esala (Dhammacakka Day) celebrations at the Vihara.

6 Ven. Seelawimala participated in a seminar on "Young people and Inter-faith" by Interfaith Network UK at Leicestershire County Cricket Club, Leicester.

August

17 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral service of Mrs. Prema Adhikari at North East Surrey Crematorium.

29 Ven. Seelawimala attended his Mother's funeral in Sri Lanka.

September

15 All the resident monks participated in the Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha meeting at Thames Buddhist Vihara, Selsdon.

19/20 Founder's Day Memorial Lecture was given by Luang Por Sumedho, the Amarawathi Buddhist Monastery. Chanting ceremony and morning Dana was held to mark the 144th birthday of the Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the LBV.

30 Ven. Seelawimala participated in Heathrow Multifaith Directors' meeting at Point West, Bath Road.

October

3 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Buddhasiri attended a chanting ceremony at the Birmingham Maha Vihara, 4th anniversary celebration and Kathina ceremony.

4 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina ceremony at the Letchworth Buddhist Vihara.

10 Fundraising Dinner at LBV organised by the Sunday Dhamma School teachers and parents.

17 Ajahn Brahmavamso, the Abbot of the Bodhiyana Monastery Western Australia, gave a talk at LBV.

17 Ven. Bandula attended the Kathina ceremony at the Samadhi Meditation Centre, Edmonton.

18 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina Ceremony at the Lumbini Vihara, East Ham.

18 Ven. Bandula attended the Kathina ceremony at the Letchworth Dhammaniketanaya.

19 Ven. Bandula gave talk to a group of mental health workers at West London Mental Health Trust, St Bernard's Hospital.

24 Ven. Susara conducted a Dhamma Class for young people, a monthly programme.

29 Ven. Seelawimala participated in a seminar "Faith and the Environment" at Lambeth Palace.

November

1 Kathina Ceremony at LBV.

5 Ven. Seelawimala conducted the funeral service for Professor Alexandor Piatigorsky at Gunnersbury Cemetery.

Continued on page 11

COURSES FOR THE YEAR 2010

BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS

8 meetings starting:
Monday 18 January 2010,
7.00pm

The Life of the Buddha
The Four Noble Truths
The Noble Eightfold Path
Kamma
Dependent Origination
Meditation

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Tutor: Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera

Fees : Free (*donations are welcome*)

How to join: Enrol at the class
on first day of attendance.

SERMONS OF THE BUDDHA

10 meetings starting:
Thursday 07th January 2010,
7.00pm

This course examines some of the Buddha's most important discourses, especially those given to lay people, addressing the same worldly issues which are just as important today as they were 2,500 years ago.

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Tutor: Julian Wall

Fees: Free (*donations are welcome*)

How to join: Enrol at the class
on first day of attendance.

Monthly Dhamma Talks & Other Important Speeches held at the Vihara in 2009

February (*Navam*)

"Sense of Urgency (*Sanvega*)"
Ven. B. Seelawimala

March

"Saddha" Dr Senevi Aturupana

May (*Vesak Celebrations*)

"The Buddha and His Message for Today"
Ven. Pandith W. Wimalajothi.

"The Wheel of Life"

Mr. Anil Goonawardena,

"The Impact of Buddhism on
Science and Culture"

Prof. N.C. Wickramasinghe.

"The Footprint of the Buddha"

Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera.

June (*Poson*)

"The Uniqueness of the Dhamma"
Bhikkhuni Kusuma,

"Meditation and Health"

Professor G. S. Widanapatirana,
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

"The Buddhist Mission"

Mr. Yann Lovelock.

"The Parable of the Elephant's
Footprint" Ven. T. Bandula

July (*Esala Celebrations*)

"The Wheel of the Dhamma is
Set in Motion" Ven. T. Bandula

"Kamma and Vipaka"

Ven. Susara

"Why did I become a Buddhist?"

Ven. Dotetzu Zenji, an Iranian
Zen Buddhist monk.

"Why didn't the Buddha answer
some questions?"

Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera.

September

"Founder's Day Memorial
Lecture" by Luang Por Sumedho,

October

"Happiness and Contentment"
Ajahn Brahmavamso

December (*Sangamitta Day*)

"Appamada - Heedfulness"
Dr. Matheesha Gunatilake,

"Citta: Forms of Thoughts"

Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera.

OBITUARY

With heavy hearts and deep sorrow we announce the passing away of the following devotees:-

Dr. Dudley J Bandara. Passed away on 1st April and funeral was held on 9th April at Northampton Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Mayura, and two children Arosha and Kalika.

Mr. Lincoln Chandrasekera. Passed away on 16th April and funeral was held on 22nd April at Tonbridge Wells Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Chitra, and Rovine.

Mr. Ranjith Gunasekera. Passed away on 26th July and funeral was held on 7th August at Hanworth Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Chandra, and three children Suvini, Achini and Pubudu.

Mrs Prema Adhikari. Passed away on 11th August and funeral was held on 17th August at North East Surrey Crematorium. She is survived by 6 children Parakrama, Lakshman, Priyanka, Damitha, Thamarara and Dilani.

Mr Samith Jayasena. Passed away on 27th November and cremation was held on 5th December at Hendon Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Pulmali, and three children Sachini, Sushara and Senoli.

May they all attain the bliss of Nibbana!

Continued from page 10

8 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Cenotaph.

16 Ven. Seelawimala participated in the Interfaith week reception, Lambeth Palace. The Statement in Co-operation for the Common Good was read according to the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

16 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at a Uni-faith Event at Imperial College. Date?

17 Ven. Seelawimala participated in a seminar by the British Humanist Association, St. Barnard Inn, Holborn.

21 "Unity in Diversity" Interfaith Dialogue and Cultural Event, organised by LBV at the same.

December

2 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at St. James Independent School for Senior Boys, Pope's Villa, Twickenham.

5 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral service of Mr. Samitha Jayasena at Hendon Crematorium.

6 Sanghamitta Day Celebration at LBV.

14 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Chaplains' meeting at Ealing Hospital.

20 3rd Death Anniversary Memorial Dana for Most Ven. Dr. Medagama Vajiranana Nayake Thera.

LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA

Dharmapala Building
The Avenue
London W4 1UD
Tel: 020 8995 9493
Fax: 020 8994 8130
e-mail:

london.vihara@virgin.net
website

www.londonbuddhistvihara.org

SRI LANKA - Head office

Anagarika Dharmapala Trust
130 Pujya Hikkaduwe Sri
Sumangala Nahimi Mawatha
Colombo - 10 Sri Lanka

AFFILIATED CENTRES:

INDIA - CALCUTTA

Maha Bodhi Society of India
4-A Bankim Chatterjee Street
Calcutta - 700073, India

BUDDHA GAYA

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Gaya
Gaya, Bihar

SARNATH

Maha Bodhi Society
Mulagandhakuti Vihara
Sarnath, Varanasi, UP

NEW DELHI

Maha Bodhi Society
Buddha Vihara,
Mandir Marg,
New Delhi - 110 001

MADRAS

Maha Bodhi Society
17 Kennet Lane
Egmore, Madras - 8

SANCHI

Chetiyagiri Vihara
Maha Bodhi Society
Sanchi, Bhopal - MP

BHUBANESHWAR

Buddha Vihara,
Plot 4 Unit 9
Bhubaneswar, Orissa

NOWGARH (Lumbini)

Maha Bodhi Society
Srinivasa Ashram,
Lumbini Road
Nowgarh

LUCKNOW

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Vihara
Risaldar Park,
Lucknow-1, U. P.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sundays	2.00-3.00pm 3.00-4.15pm 6.00-7.00pm	Children's Sinhala Classes Children's Dhamma Classes Sermon and Pirith chanting
Mondays	7.00-9.00pm	Introduction to Buddhism (Eight-week course, repeated through the year)
Tuesdays	7.00-9.00pm	Advanced Buddhist Doctrine Class
Wednesdays	7.00-8.30pm	Meditation: Instruction & Practice
Thursdays	7.00-9.00pm	Theravada Buddhism
Saturdays	1.30-8.00pm	Monthly meditation retreat (Last Saturday of every month except August & December)

○ 2010 (FULL MOON) POYA DAYS

January	○	30
February	○	28
March	○	30
April	○	28
May	○	27
June	○	26
July	○	26
August	○	24
September	○	23
October	○	23
November	○	21
December	○	21

PUNYANUMODANA

Ven. B. Seelawimala, Head of the Vihara, wishes to express his sincere gratitude to all Co-ordinators and supporters for their help in making the Vihara's wide programme of activities a success.

May you be well, happy and attain Nibbana.

2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 04	Rahula Dhamma Day
May 30	VESAK - Buddha Day
June 06	Blood donation Session
June 27	POSON
July 25	ESALA - Dhamma Day
Sept. 19	FOUNDER'S DAY
Nov. 07	KATHINA
Dec. 19	SANGHAMITTA DAY

SAMADHI SPONSORS

This issue of Samadhi is sponsored by Mr Dharmasiri & Dr. Mrs Mala Weerasinghe in memory of their parents Mr William & Mrs. Emalyn Weerasinghe and Mr. Siripala & Mrs. Leela Ilayperuma,

We invite our readers and supporters of the Vihara to sponsor SAMADHI. This will greatly help us in meeting the cost of its publication.

Data Protection Act: The mailing list used for SAMADHI is maintained on computer. If you object to your record being kept on our computer file, please write to London Buddhist Vihara, and we will remove it.

Typeset by Venerable T. Bandula

Published & Distributed by the LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA, The Avenue, London W4 1UD. Tel: 020-8995 9493 Fax: 020-8994-8130
Printed by Genesis Designs, 2 Station Parade, Northolt Road, South Harrow, Middx HA2 8HB. Tel: 0845 095 3484