

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. 33 - 34

JANUARY - MAY 2009

B.E. 2552

ISSN 1368-1516

MESSAGE FOR VESAK THE LOTUS

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

Symbolism in Buddhism is helpful for understanding the Dhamma. The Buddha used some symbols in order to convey the message of the Dhamma. Vesak is the most important poya day in the Buddhist calendar. One of the best-known symbols in Buddhism is the lotus flower and it occupies an important place in the celebration of Vesak, because Vesak marks the enlightenment of the Buddha, just as a lotus flower grows and blossoms for the benefit of all.

In Asian countries there are a lot of lakes and also an abundance of sunshine. These are important factors for growth of lotus flowers. For the purpose of paying homage to the Buddha, people take lotus flowers. The white Lotus is a symbol of purity of body, speech and mind and spiritual perfection. The heart is like an unopened lotus. The lotus grows out of mud (materialism), it grows up through the waters of experience, rises above the water and eventually basks in the sunshine of enlightenment. The stem can be taken as the practice of the Dhamma. There are other plants which bloom on the surface of the water, but the lotus is special in that it rises several inches clear of the water.

On this Vesak day, let us reflect on the appearance of the Buddha. Once the Buddha met a Brahmin called Dona, who asked the Buddha whether the Buddha will be a deva (a deity), or a manussa (a human being), or a yakkha (a demon), or a gandhabba (a heavenly musician). The Buddha explained to Dona that he was none of these, and he used the symbol of the lotus to explain himself. "Just as, Brahmin, a lotus though born in water, grown up in the water, when it reaches the surface stands there unsoiled by the water, just so, Brahmin, though born in the world, grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Therefore, Brahmin, I am a Buddha." (Gradual Sayings, II. pp.44)

According to this, the Buddha explained the transcendental mind of the Buddha, which is free from defilements (kilesas). Worldly human nature is very selfish. Unenlightened minds are full of negativities, especially greed, hatred and delusion. The opposite of greed (lobha) is alobha, which means non-attachment, unselfishness, generosity, having thoughts of sharing. It is characterised by lack of desire for an object. It is likened to a drop of water that

runs off a lotus leaf without adhering to it; non-adhesion to an object is its chief characteristic. So the lotus symbolises detachment as water runs off its petals without adhering them. In the Indriya-Bhavana Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya no.152), the Buddha speaks of the value of equanimity as a means of dealing skillfully with sense impressions, whether agreeable or disagreeable, "just as drops of water roll off a gently-sloping lotus leaf and do not remain there."

Like the lotus flower which was born in the mud, the Buddha was also born in the human world, but he transcended the lokiya world, and developed wonderful qualities. The Buddha said there are four qualities which we can strive to develop in ourselves, and which have the fragrance of the lotus flower. They are loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. If we have these qualities, we can live as if we are in a heavenly realm. They are called brahma-viharas.

In the Ariyapariyesana Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya, no.26), the Buddha describes how, immediately after his Enlightenment he hesitated as to whether he should teach the

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Chief Executive: Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera

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Dhamma. He surveyed to world to see if there was anyone who would understand his teachings. He used the growth of the lotus flower as a simile for people at different levels of spiritual growth. "Just as some lotuses – born and growing in the water – might flourish while immersed in the water, without rising up from the water; some might stand at an even level with the water; while some might rise up from the water and stand without being smeared by the water – so, too, I saw beings with little dust in their eyes and those with much, those with keen faculties and those with dull, those with good attributes and those with bad, those easy to teach and those hard, some of them seeing disgrace and danger in the other world."

The Buddha is often shown sitting on a lotus bloom, and the flower also features prominently in carvings. Although the lotus flower has one hundred petals (satapatta), sometimes in carvings only eight petals are shown in order to symbolise the Noble Eightfold Path. The lotus flower is used in order to convey the purity of thought in the philosophy and literature of Buddhism.

I know of a poem. It asks a question: whether the lotus belongs to the lake or to the sun. The lake by itself is not enough. The sun by itself is not enough. Both are necessary factors for the development of the lotus. The lotus flower is clearly an image of the inter-connectedness of nature. It depends upon water and sunshine. The lack of one of these factors means the lotus cannot grow and bloom. Similarly, all the sankharas are inter-connected and inter-related. This is what we call paticcasamuppanna. This teaches us that there is nothing which can exist as an independent entity.

There are four stages in the growth of the lotus flower. As a bud under the water, as the flower which has just come to the surface of the water, as a flower standing over the water, and as a fully-opened flower. Taking this process, the Buddha used this to illustrate the process of spiritual development towards the attainment of enlightenment. Some flowers, which are under the water, take many weeks to open. The second stage takes a few weeks. The third stage takes a few days, and some lotuses open in the early morning with the touch of

the first rays of the sun. The reason for this difference is the degree of spiritual maturity of each aspirant to overcome the samsaric dukkha. When one is enlightened, it is indeed a great blessing for mankind.

This point is well made in two stanzas in the Dhammapada. "As upon a heap of rubbish thrown on the highway, a sweet-smelling, lovely lotus may grow, even so amongst ignorant beings, a disciple of the Fully-Enlightened One outshines the blind worldlings in vision." (Dhp.v.68-59) The lotus flower decorates the pond when it is open. Similarly, when a person is enlightened, it becomes his duty to work for the welfare of mankind.

Let us rejoice in the wonderful gift of dhamma which the Enlightened Buddha has given us. Let us renew our commitment to follow his path and apply his teachings in our daily lives.

I wish everyone a happy and peaceful Vesak.

BECOMING

Once the Venerable Ananda came to see the Blessed One and spoke to him thus: "One speaks, Lord, of 'becoming, becoming'. How does becoming taking place?"

"If, Ananda, there were no kamma ripening in the sense-sphere realm, would there appear any sense-sphere becoming?"

"Surely not, Lord."

"Therefore, Ananda, kamma is the field, consciousness the seed and craving the moisture for the consciousness of beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving to become established in the lower

realm. Thus there is re-becoming in the future.

"If, Ananda, there were no kamma ripening in the form realm, would there appear any form-sphere becoming?"

"Surely not, Lord."

"Therefore, Ananda, kamma is the field, consciousness the seed and craving the moisture for the consciousness of beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving to become established in an intermediate realm. Thus there is re-becoming in the future.

"If, Ananda, there were no kamma ripening in the formless realm, would there appear any formless-sphere becoming?"

"Surely not, Lord."

"Therefore, Ananda, kamma is the field, consciousness the seed and craving the moisture for the consciousness of beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving to become established in a lofty realm. Thus there is re-becoming in the future.

"It is in this way, Ananda, that there is becoming. (Anguttara Nikaya)

TAKING THE EIGHT LIFETIME PRECEPTS

by *Bhante Gunaratana*

[Please note: the lifetime precepts are different from the monastery precepts. The lifetime precepts do not include the training precepts of celibacy, not eating after noon and not using cosmetics or entertainment. They include the right speech precepts found in the eightfold path and right livelihood.]

I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking life

I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given

I undertake the training rule to abstain from sexual misconduct

I undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech

I undertake the training rule to abstain from malicious speech

I undertake the training rule to abstain from harsh speech

I undertake the training rule to abstain from useless speech

I undertake the training rule to abstain from wrong livelihood and drinks and drugs that cause heedlessness

We take precepts to make our lives happy, not miserable. People have unhappy lives because they are not observing any discipline, they aren't following the normal guidelines or principles for a happy life. Sooner or later they need to realise the importance of precepts.

Observing the precepts also improves meditation. When the mind is clear, the conscience is not pricking the mind, and there is no reason for remorse, concentration will be better. Taking the precepts is a reminder, a way of helping us to be mindful. When you begin an action that violates one of the precepts, your mind will say, "Stop! Remember?" and you will say, "Ah! I've vowed not to . . ."

The precept operates like the light touch of a whip that reminds the horse to stay on course, like the beep of a horn to remind a driver to stay in his

lane. Some people say, "What good would this be to me? I don't like following these external rules. My life is all right the way it is." But their lives are not all right. If they were, they wouldn't need to engage in lying, stealing, gossiping, or speaking harshly. Instead of spending their energy breaking the precepts, they would be better off using it in wholesome activities.

If we habitually break the precepts, we will have great difficulty when we try to stop. We are addicted. We constantly get ourselves in trouble. Not just through stealing or sexual misconduct, but also by lying, participating in gossip, speaking harshly. Here are some words from the Buddha that remind us of the importance of precepts.

*Every fool who is born
Has an axe within his mouth
With which he cuts himself
When he uses wrong speech* Sn 657

*One should utter only words
Which do no harm to oneself
And cause no harm for others
That is truly beautiful speech.* Sn. 451

*Speak kind words, words
Rejoiced at and welcomed
Words that bear ill-will to none;
Always speak kindly to others.* Sn. 452

*The worse of the two is he
Who, when abused retaliates.
One who does not retaliate
Wins a battle hard to win.* S. I. 162

*The fool thinks he has won a battle
When he bullies with harsh speech
But knowing how to be forbearing
Alone makes one victorious.* S. I. 163

You shouldn't be afraid to make the commitment to keep the precepts. You should be happy that you have determined to take steps to make your life happy.

People addicted to alcohol or drugs or gambling or some other unwholesome activity have a very hard time deciding to stop. They drag their feet and come up with many excuses. But once they have made the commitment to stop and have maintained that commitment for a period of time, suddenly they find they are thinking clearly, eating well, saving money, and developing good relations with their families and other people. Then they are grateful and congratulate themselves for taking this step.

Giving up an addiction is very difficult; a person may make many attempts that fall short of the goal. But if his aspiration remains strong, eventually he will succeed. In the same way, we may have difficulty making the commitment to abandon unwholesome behaviour, but once we make the commitment and work at it consistently, we, too, will be very happy, very glad to have made a decision that brings such an improvement to our lives.

THE HIGHEST GAIN

Insignificant is the loss of relatives, wealth and fame; the loss of wisdom is the greatest loss.

Insignificant is the increase of relatives, wealth and fame; the increase of wisdom is the highest gain.

Therefore, you should train yourselves thus: "We will grow in the increase of wisdom." Thus, should you train yourselves.

(Anguttara Nikaya)

THE PATH OF VIPASSANA

by Dr. Matheesa Gunathilake

Vipassana or Insight meditation is an integral part of the Buddha's teaching. It utilises mindfulness (*sati*) to achieve its objectives. The Buddha taught that mindfulness directed at the 'Four foundations' was the path leading to liberation. In this article we look at some of the important stages of this development as the suttas describe it.

'Bhikkhus, these four establishments of mindfulness, when developed and cultivated, lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana'. -SN 32(2), mahavagga, satipatthanasamyutta.

The critical words in the above sutta are disenchantment/revulsion (*nibbida*), dispassion (*viraga*), cessation (*nirodha*). These are states of mind which arise during the progress of vipassana.

In the present day people see the development of mindfulness in the following manner: When a person is mindful of all sensory stimuli in an open, non-judgmental manner he is less moved by what goes on around him. This results in a peaceful and calm existence. While this mechanism has its benefits the suttas seem to suggest a deeper mechanism at play, as seen above.

Disenchantment (*nibbida*) refers to seeing the drawbacks of the phenomena which arise during vipassana. Some meditators experience fear and a sense that everything is dissolving away. This is a stage which arises after the meditator realises that all phenomena are impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*), as mentioned in the 'The Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic' (*anatta-lakkhana sutta*)

Dispassion (*viraga*) arises after this, with further development of the faculties. After having seen the draw-

backs fully there is a great degree of detachment from phenomena which arise and pass away, from moment to moment. This detachment is not enforced or willed in anyway. It has naturally arisen from seeing the true nature of phenomena. It is also a sign of maturing mental faculties such as samadhi (one-pointedness) which leads to suppression of attachment, which works conjointly with insight in the process of satipatthana.

Cessation (*nirodha*) is the final phase of development. The meditator sees everything passing away. His mind naturally focuses on the aspect of passing away, rather than the arising. He might feel a sense that all phenomena are empty. He himself might feel empty.

This is followed by breaking through to release, to 'magga-phala states' and nibbana. This results in peaceful states of mind, having fully let go.

This progress of vipassana has been described in great detail in another method of detailing the development of insight: the Seven Purifications (*sapta-visuddhi*) in the Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*) by Ven. Buddhagosa.

It is difficult to experience strong emotions such as revulsion and experience feelings of being detached from everything as in dispassion. However these mind-states are the result of realising the true nature of phenomena, and would naturally lead to such mind states, as unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) is realised at its depths. If it did not happen then the depth in insight is suspect. True letting go comes from cutting deeply at the root, not from a superficial pruning. Developing equanimity intentionally towards everything using mindfulness remains at best useful, but superficial. For vipassana proper to begin the truths must be faced, especially with a foundation

of tranquillity (*samatha*) meditation which helps the process to progress smoothly. While these aspects may not be highlighted by popular Buddhism, we can recognise it as 'heartwood' of the teaching where it is being taught. These mind-states, graphically detailed in the training manuals of vipassana masters such as Mahasi Sayadaw and Pa Uk Sayadaw, are being practised even today. So the path to nibbana according to the suttas remains open.

As Buddhists a primary goal should be the stage of 'stream entry' the sotapanna state - the 'Practice according to the dhamma' (*dhammanudhamma patipada*) is said to be one of the factors leading to stream entry. Its definition once again involves revulsion, pointing to the role of vipassana in reaching this state. 'Full understanding' in the dispensation of the Buddhas' is synonymous with full letting go, which arises when reaching full enlightenment. So as seen below these stages of vipassana are inherent in the entire path to nibbana.

At Savatti. " *Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu us practising in accordance with the dhamma, this is what accords with the dhamma: he should dwell engrossed with revulsion towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. One who dwells engrossed with revulsion towards form,..... consciousness, fully understands form,.... consciousness. One who fully understands form,..... consciousness is freed from form...consciousness. He is freed from birth, ageing and death; freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from suffering, I say.*"
-SN39(7) 'In Accordance with the dhamma', *Khandasamyutta*.

BACK TO BASICS

LEARNING (SUTA)

The Blessed One said, "A noble disciple is learned, and one who bears in mind what he has learned. By him is learned, borne in mind, recited, pondered on, and penetrated with right understanding, the meaningful, well expressed doctrines good in the beginning, middle and end, which speak on the absolutely complete, perfectly pure holy life. This is the treasure of learning". With that is stated the highest kind of learning known to humanity – the learning that ends all learning.

Other kinds of learning bring a man not to the cessation of suffering; they lead to further suffering, wants, deficiencies, that is to further birth, disease, decay, unions with the unloved, separations from the loved and disappointments. Such learning is worldly, partial, defective and unsatisfactory from the standpoint of one who has seen that all is impermanent, all is ill, and all is beyond the control of the self, except the renunciation of the whole mass of ill through the renunciation of craving.

The Buddha's teaching of liberation from ill is what the noble disciple learns especially. To hear the doctrine and to master it is the object of the follower of the Buddha who has understood this. What arises ceases; what has an origin has also a cessation. But what does not arise does not

cease; what has no origin has also no cessation.

Now the learning in which the noble disciple is a master has to be gained through study of the actual instructions of the Buddha now found in the Pali Canon which gives the most complete account of the Buddha's teachings without the ambiguities of the Mahayana, and which is historically the oldest recorded account of the Buddha's words.

The learning of the scriptures by the noble disciple is different from the learning of the words of the Master by the worlding. The noble disciple learns the doctrine through the intensity of diligent practice as well as through the study of it and so reads the Law with the body and the mind; but the worlding knows it in a shallow way, through grasping the teaching intellectually and not applying it diligently to his life. The full profit of learning the Law comes only with the understanding of life that makes a man get rid of the attachment to life, that makes a man renounce the world. "It is impossible" says the Buddha "that he who is full of sensual aims, enjoying sensual pleasures, devoured by sensual thoughts, consumed with sensual heat, and eager in the sensual quest, should know, see, attain, and realise, what has to be known, seen, attained and realised, by renunciation".

Monthly Dhamma Talks & Other Important Speeches

February

Dr. Nimal Pathiraja, "*Animal Welfare.*"

March

Dr. Matheesha Gunatilake,
"*The Dependent Origination.*"

May (Vesak Celebrations)

Professor Richard Gombrich, "*Nibbana.*"

Bhikkhuni Kusuma, "*Paticca Samuppada.*"

Dr. Hema Gunatilake, "*The Contribution of Sri Lankan Bhikkhus to the Development of South-East Asian Civilisation.*"

Mr. Anil Gunawardene,
"*The Three Signs of Being.*"

June

Ven. Dhammajeeva, "*Sammaditti - the Guide of the Noble Eightfold Path.*"

June (Poson Celebrations)

Bhikkhuni Kusuma, "*The Base for Supernormal Power - Cattaro Iddhipada.*"

July

Mr. Laksiri Paranatala, "*Art of Understanding the Science of Buddhism.*"

July (Esala Celebrations)

Ven. Lodro Thaye,
"*Buddhism for Every Day.*"

Julian Wall, "*Bringing the Paramitas into Personal Practice.*"

AN

A - Z

OF BUDDHISM

JANAKA KAMMA – Reproductive Kamma

According to Buddhism, every subsequent birth is conditioned by the good or bad Kamma which predominated at the moment of death. This kind of Kamma is technically known as Reproductive Kamma.

The death of a person is merely "the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon." Though the present form perishes another form which is neither absolutely the same nor totally different takes its place according to the thought that was powerful at the death moment, since the Kammic force which hitherto actuated it is not annihilated with the dissolution of the body. It is this last thought-process which is termed 'Reproductive Kamma' that determines the state of a person in his subsequent birth.

As a rule the last thought-process depends on the general conduct of a person. In some exceptional cases, perhaps due to favourable or unfavourable circumstances, at the moment of death a good person may experience a bad thought and a bad person a good one. The future birth will be determined by this last thought-process, irrespective of the general conduct. This does not mean that the effects of the past actions are obliterated. They will produce their inevitable results at the appropriate moment.

Ven. B. Seelawimala,

"*Buddha's Vision and Mission.*"

October

Lord Eric Avebury,
"*Buddhism and International Relations.*"

December

Dr. Matheesha Gunatilake,
"*Path of Vipassana.*"

December (Sangamitta Day)

Ven. Kovida, "*Anatta.*"

Sister Amarasiri, "*What is Dhamma?*"

Ms. Deborah Smith, "*Death.*"

**FELICITATION CEREMONY TO VEN. B. SEELAWIMALA NAYAKA
THERA, CHIEF SANGHA NAYAKA OF GREAT BRITAIN
HELD ON 16TH AUGUST 2008**



A felicitation ceremony was held at the London Buddhist Vihara on 16th August 2008 to mark the appointment of Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala Nayaka Thera as the Chief Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain. Ven. Welamitiyawe Kusaladhamma Nayaka Thera, Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya and Principal of Vidyalankara Pirivena in Sri Lanka presided over the ceremony. Luang Por Sumedho, Amaravati Monastery and Venerable monks from all the Sri Lankan Viharas in England participated in this event. The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Mr. Rohita Bogollagama, H. E. High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in UK, Mr. Nihal Jayasinghe and Madam Jayasinghe were guests of honour. Many dayakas and well-wishers attended the event.



H. E. President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa visited the London Buddhist Vihara on his way to USA on 20th September 08. and got blessings from Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera and resident monks. Amongst the other guests were Mr Lalith Weeratunga, Secretary to the President, Mr Nimal Welgama MP of Sri Lanka and Mr. Nihal Jayasinghe, H. E. High Commissioner.



A New Pirith madapaya was donated to the Vihara by Mrs. Mallika Rajakaruna.

Bhakti Gee (Devotional song) programme was held at the Vihara on Posen day by Ananda College OBA U.K.



Mr. Sumith Nakandala, Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka garlanding the statue of Anagarika Dharmapala on Founder's Day.

Rahula Dhamma Day in 2008



Inter-Faith gathering at a reception to welcome His holiness Dalai Lama at the Lambeth Palace

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

WALKING EVEN AMIDST THE UNEVEN

by *Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi*

The Buddha often speaks of life in the world as an uneven path that constantly challenges us to walk evenly. Each day countless obstacles threaten to obstruct us, to divert us, to knock us off balance, and steady mindfulness and firm determination are needed to avoid losing our way in the dark sidetracks of greed and anger. To stumble may be inevitable until we reach the great highway of the noble ones, but with a clear vision of the goal and diligent effort we can avoid tumbling into the ditches that line the road.

If the task of practising the Dhamma while living in the world has always been difficult, our modern commercial culture has increased that difficulty acutely. No longer is it the case that the desires to be tamed by Dhamma practices are the simple, relatively innocent urges implanted in us by nature or stimulated by a basic subsistence economy. Like unsuspecting fish caught in a net, we move within the coils of a global social and economic order predicated on the premise that the essential human activity is the production and consumption of commodities. From the standpoint of this system, the final good of human life is to enjoy goods, and the combined ingenuity of laboratory researchers and business magnates ensures that the goods to be enjoyed pour forth in inexhaustible variety.

The law that governs the global economic order is a simple one: never allow desire to abate. The media of communication, or modern miracle workers, employ every strategy at their disposal to ensure that this calamity will not befall us. Through an uninterrupted series of messages they contrive to inflame our fantasies and titillate our appetites with an intensity that would banish the word “enough” from our vocabulary. But despite its mammoth dimensions

and global reach, the entire corporate culture rests upon a pervasive illusion that has become so widespread that it seems almost a self-evident truth. This is the idea that happiness is proportional to the quantity and monetary value of our possessions. We are led to believe that by extending our financial asserts, by acquiring ownership over more and more goods, we thereby come closer to the good, to becoming happier, more contented, more deeply fulfilled human beings. Yet this belief, this assumption so rarely questioned, is precisely the magical trick, the sleight-of-hand deception, that creates the prison cage of our misery. For so long as we seek happiness by trying to quench desire, the more we strengthen our bondage to the implacable demands of desire. The Suttas compare this process to the attempt to slake thirst by drinking sea water: far from eliminating thirst, the sea water will only increase it.

At the heart of the consumerist culture we find this puzzling paradox, that when we pursue happiness as an end in itself, instead of arriving at true happiness we only seem further removed from it. This conclusion is easily confirmed if we examine the lives of those who come closest to fulfilling the consumerist dream. Those who enjoy the most abundant wealth and exercise the greatest power are rarely models of contentment. To the contrary, they often live on the edge of despair and can avoid slipping over the edge only by kindling again and again the quest for more wealth, more power, and more pleasure in a viciously degrading cycle.

When we reflect on this situation in the light of the Buddha’s Teaching, the reason for the perpetual failure of consumerism stands forth in clear relief. The reason, as the Buddha tells us so succinctly, is that craving is the cause of suffering. By its own nature

craving is insatiable, and thus the more our personal lives are governed by the assumption that the gratification of craving is the way to happiness, the more we are bound to reap disappointment. When an entire society is founded upon the principles of consumerism, upon the drive to produce and sell without concern for genuine human needs, the outcome may well be catastrophic.

According to the Buddha’s Teaching the way to genuine happiness does not lie in the indulgence of desire but in uncovering and eliminating the cause of suffering, which in practical terms means the control and removal of craving. To adopt such an approach is not a matter of forcing oneself into the mould of a cold puritanical asceticism. The Dhamma is gradual teaching which instructs us how to order our lives in ways that are immediately rewarding and gratifying. It does not promote personal development by demands for repression and self-affliction, but by gently offering us practical guidelines applicable to our present circumstances, guidelines that help us grow towards genuine happiness and peace.

For those involved in civilian life, seeking to raise a family and to forge their fortune within the world, the Buddha does not enjoin ascetic withdrawal from social and civil obligations. He recommends, rather, a life regulated by moral values aimed at the cultivation of wholesome qualities of mind. To his lay disciples he does not even decry the accumulation of wealth or extol poverty as a preferred alternative. He recommends only that wealth be acquired by right livelihood and be utilised in meaningful ways to promote the happiness of oneself and others.

In his advice to village headman Rasiya (SN 42:2) the Buddha de-

scribes three praiseworthy qualities in a householder who enjoys sense pleasures: he acquires wealth righteously; and he shares his wealth; and does meritorious deeds. The practice of meritorious deeds introduces a spiritual dimension to the proper employment of wealth, a dimension based on the recognition that greater happiness comes from giving than from gaining. To give is not only a way to reduce our greed and attachment, not only a way to acquire merit productive of future benefits, but a directly visible source of joy which provides immediate confirmation of the central pillar on which the entire Dhamma rests: that the path to happiness is one of relinquishment rather than one of accumulation.

But while the Buddha praises the virtuous householder who possesses the above three qualities, he does not stop there. He introduces a fourth quality which distinguishes the virtuous lay follower into two groups: on one side, those who enjoy sense pleasures while remaining tied to them, blind to the danger and unaware of an escape; on the other, those who enjoy sense pleasures without being tied to them, seeing the danger and aware of escape. It is the second of these that the Buddha declares superior. This pronouncement offers us an insight into the Buddha's final solution to the challenge posed by consumerism. The final solution is not a limp compromise between indulgence and virtue but a bold, decisive step in the direction of detachment, an inner renunciation that enables one to rise above the whole round of production and consumption even while living within its boundaries. The incentive for this movement comes from seeing the danger: that there is no stable happiness to be gained by the pursuit of sense pleasures, that sense pleasures "give little satisfaction and are productive of much suffering." Its completion comes from recognising and escape: that the removal of desire and lust brings an unshakeable peace and freedom that is not contingent upon external circumstances.

While it may be difficult to master desire for material things within the confines of household life, the Bud-

dha, in his wisdom, created a model for the greater Buddhist community to emulate, indeed a model for the world as a whole. This is the Sangha, the order of monks and nuns, pledged to a mode of living in which needs are reduced to the most basic and their satisfaction provided in the simplest ways. While only a few may have the opportunity and urge to leave behind the household life in order to devote their energies unhindered to the task of self-purification, the ideal Buddhist social order forms a pyramid in which those at apex, dedicated to the ultimate goal of deliverance, serve as the models and teachers for those still enmeshed in the demands of economic subsistence.

By their purity, peacefulness, and wisdom the mature monastics demonstrate to the lay community and to all those who have eyes to see, where true happiness is to be found. They show that happiness is to be found, not in acquisition and self-indulgence, but in freedom from desire, in renunciation and detachment. Whether as lay disciple or as monk, to enter the course of training that culminates in such freedom is to walk evenly within the uneven terrain of the world. It is to recover, even with one's initial steps, a balance of living so sorely needed amidst the loud demands and hollow promises of our rapacious consumerist culture.

HAPPY DAYS

Whatever beings behave righteously by body, speech and mind during the morning, a happy morning will be theirs.

Whatever beings behave righteously by body, speech and mind at noon, happy noon will be theirs.

Whatever beings behave righteously by body, speech and mind during the evening, a happy evening will be theirs. (Anguttara Nikaya)

COURSES FOR THE YEAR 2009

BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS

**8 meetings starting:
Monday 08 June 2009,
7.00pm**

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

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Fees : Free (*donations are welcome*)

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

THE BUDDHA'S LIFE & TEACHINGS

**10 meetings starting:
Thursday 10 September 2009,
7.00pm**

This is a general introduction to the life of the Buddha and the fundamental principles of his teachings. Informal discussion is welcomed and by the end of the course students should have developed an appreciation of all the essential doctrines and their relevance to the world today.

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Fees: Free (*donations are welcome*)

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

VIHARA ACTIVITIES - 2008

January

5 Ven. Seelawimala conducted the funeral service for Mr. Nihal Fernando at Lambeth Crematorium, Wimbledon.

9 Ven. Seelawimala conducted the funeral service for Mr. Ari Kodagoda at Enfield Crematorium.

24 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Southfield Primary School, Chiswick.

28 Ven. Bandula attended the Interfaith Network Executive meeting.

31 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at the German YMCA, Lancaster Hall Hotel, London W2 3BX.

February

2 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Wimalajothi attended a chanting ceremony in Frankfurt organised by the Council General of Government of Sri Lanka to mark the island's 60th anniversary of independence.

3 Special Puja and a Meeting were held to celebrate the 60th independence day of Sri Lanka.

4 Ven. Seelawimala attended the 60th Independence Day Ceremony at the Sri Lanka High Commission.

11, 12 & 13 Strand on the Green Junior School, Chiswick (3 visits).

14 Ven. Seelawimala attended a meeting of Archbishops and Bishops at Mansion House.

22 Welcome ceremony for Ven. Seelawimala, organised by a group of people at Reading.

27 Theravada Sangha Meeting was held at the Vihara.

28 & 29 Feb. Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at Garth Hill College, Bracknell.

March

3 Ven. Bandula talk to a group of children from Orchard House School, Chiswick.

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

17 & 18 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at Brackenberry Primary School, London W6 (2 visits).

17 Ven. Seelawimala attended Buddha Bathing Ceremony at Fo-Kuan Temple, London.

17 Ven. Seelawimala conducted Buddha Day Ceremony at the Buddhist Society, London.

17 Ven. Bandula conducted a Vesak Celebration for the Children and Parents of Pubudu Dhamma School at Southgate.

19 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at the Buddhist Society in the University of Oxford.

20 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Vesak Celebration at the Detention Centre, Heathrow.

23 Ven. Bandula attended the welcome ceremony for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.

31 Ven. Bandula attended the chanting ceremony at the Jetavana Buddhist Vihara, Birmingham.

29 A group of 20 people from the defence forces of the UK, including Army, Royal Navy and Air Force, joined the religious observance of the monthly retreat.

April

5 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Wimalajothi attended a Sri Lankan New Year Celebration at Feltham Assembly Hall organised by four Sri Lankan associations.

12 Food Fair for fund-raising was held by a group of friends of the Vihara from Harrow.

13 Ven. Wimalajothi attended a Sri Lankan New Year Celebration organised by the Past Pupils' association of Ananda College UK.

20 Ven. Seelawimala attended the ceremony for the installation of the Rt. Revd. Michael Colcough as Canon Residentiary at St. Paul's Cathedral.

May

2 Ven. Seelawimala attended the ceremony of his appointment as the Chief Sangha Nayake in UK, organised by the Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha of Malwatta Maha Viharaya in Kandy.

5 Ven. Seelawimala attended the welcome ceremony and meeting with Hon. Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, the President of Sri Lanka, at the Temple Trees, Colombo.

9 Ven. Bandula attended the focus group meeting on plans for the new Buddhist sculpture gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

19 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to group of children from Strand on the Green School.

20 Mr. Anil Goonawardene gave a talk at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter.

31 Special meditation retreat was conducted by Ven. U. Dhammajeewa from Meetirigala Forest Meditation Centre, Sri Lanka.

June

2 All the Monks attended a blessing ceremony for the newly-appointed Sri Lanka High Commissioner, Mr. Nihal Jayasinghe, at the Sri Lankan High Commission.

4 Ven. Bandula attended Interfaith Network executive meeting.

15 Special Puja was performed to commemorate the victims of the cyclone disaster in Myanmar.

16 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mrs Kanthi Weeraratna in Dublin.

21 Ven. Seelawimala & Ven. Wimalajothi attended the funeral service for Mr. Daya Sugunasinghe at Streatham Crematorium.

25 Theravada Sangha meeting at Buddhapadeepa Vihara in Wimbledon.

30 Ven. Seelawimala and Ven. Bandula attended the AGM meeting of the Interfaith Network UK.

July

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

5 Sri Lankan cookery demonstration programme for fundraising.

8 Ven. Bandula attended a meeting between faith leaders and mental health professionals in Southall.

10 Mrs. Ruki Shillam visited Brentside High School and Greenford High School, Southall.

24 Ven. Bandula attended the Walk of Witness for millennium development goals & attended at lunch in honour of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion, organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.

24 Ven. Bandula attended the Queen's garden party at Buckingham Palace for those attending the Lambeth Conference.

24 Ven. Seelawimala conducted the funeral of Mrs Kamala Perera at Croydon Crematorium.

26/27 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Wimalajothi attended a chanting and dana ceremony in Shannon, Ireland.

August

13 Meeting of the Theravada Sangha in UK in Birmingham Thai temple.

16 Felicitation Ceremony for Ven. B. Seelawimala.

September

13/14. Pirith Chanting and Dana were held to mark the 143rd birthday of the Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the LBV.

19 Ven. Seelawimala attended a meeting of the Endorsing Authority of the Buddhist Chaplaincy for HM Hospitals at the Buddhist Society.

20 "Safer Neighbourhood, London Peace Week" programme for harmony and peace, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police.

28 Ven. Seelawimala attended the centenary celebration of the arrival of Ven. Ananda Metteyya, at Brent Town Hall.

October

16 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Trustees' meeting of the Interfaith Network in UK.

18 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at the Birmingham Maha Vihara, 3rd anniversary celebration.

18 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Buddhāsiri attended a chanting ceremony at the Birmingham Maha Vihara, 3rd anniversary celebration.

19 Ven. Bandula attended the Kathina Ceremony at Letchworth Buddhist Vihara.

19 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina Ceremony at the Thames Buddhist Vihara.

BOOK REVIEW

“Our mentality through the ages and then to Nibbana” (The Path of Evolution)

By Dr. Basil J de Silva

This book explores the concept of ‘Mind Culture’, and discusses the development of the human mind and intellect from primitive times and its subsequent impact on human society. The author then approaches the subject of mind cultivation with respect to Buddhist philosophy, with the aim of achieving spiritual advancement.

More information on the author and text is available at:
<http://sites.google.com/site/mindsculture> or
Please contact UK telephone 0044(0)208 979 4625

22 Ven. Seelawimala & Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mrs Sujata Ranjani Komasaruru at Putney Vale Crematorium.

23 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Chiswick and Bedford Preparatory School.

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

26 Ven. Bandula attended the Kathina ceremony at the Dhammaniketana, Lechworth.

26 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Buddhāsiri attended the Kathina ceremony at Lumbini Vihara, East Ham.

November

8 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina ceremony at Redbridge Buddhist Vihara.

9 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Remembrance Day Observance at the Cenotaph

13 Ven. Seelawimala visited Auschwitz, a Nazi camp in Poland, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks and other religious leaders.

14 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mr. Roger Stazenger Prince Pathinayake at the City of London Crematorium

14 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mr. Asoka Abeyratana at Reading Crematorium.

20 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at the House of Commons in connection with 300 years of Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikh religion

December

1 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Ipswich High School for Girls, Suffolk

3 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Norwich High School for Girls, Norfolk.

4 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mrs. Sujata Malkanti Deheragoda at Slough Crematorium.

5 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral of Mrs Alice Batstone at Hanworth Crematorium

5 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral of Mr. Tissa Hapangamaarachchi at Hendon Crematorium

10 Ven. Bandula attended the memorial service for Mrs Ann Noonam, Interfaith personality.

14 Sangamitta Day celebration and Dana offering in memory of Ven. Dr. M. Vajiragnana

15 Meeting of the Theravada Sangha at Buddhapadeepa Temple in Wimbledon.

19 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral service of Mrs. Edith Kottegoda at South-West Middlesex Crematorium.

20 Special retreat at the Vihara conducted by Ven. Kovida.

22 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Amitha attended the funeral of Mr Tolamy Bernard Kariywasam at Hither Green Crematorium.

OBITUARY

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

Mr Daya Sugunasinghe. Passed away on 16th June and cremation was held on 21st June in Surrey. He is survived by his loving wife Padmini, and two children Naomi and Nilupa.

Mrs Kamala Perera. Passed away on 19th July and funeral was held on 24th July at Croydon Crematorium. She is survived by three children Lakshmi, Lalith and Chandani.

Mrs Sujatha Ranjani Coomasaru. Passed away on 11th October 2008 and funeral was held on 22nd October at Putney Vale Cemetery. She is survived by her three children Kulochani, Chudamani and Chamindra.

Mrs Alice Batstone. Passed away on 28th November and funeral was held at Hanworth Crematorium on 5th December. She is survived by 5 children Ranga, Charles, Brian, Suzette & Lavinia.

Mr Tissa Hapangamaarachchi. Passed away on 1st December and funeral took place at the Henden Crematorium on 5th December. He is survived by his loving wife Chitra Olivia.

Mrs. Edith Kottegoda. Passed away on 12th December and funeral was held at South-West Middlesex Crematorium on 19th December. She is survived by her loving husband Mahilal, and two daughters, Thamari and Maheesha.

Mr. I. L. Ariyasena. Passed away on 17th December 2008 in Sri Lanka and funeral was held in Colombo on 20th December 2008. He is survived by his loving wife Kusum, and three children Ranmalee, Nilantha and Janaka.

Dr. Amarajeewa passed away on 31st December 2008 and funeral was held at New Southgate Crematorium on 8th January 2009. He is survived by his two children Anoma and Rohana.

**May they all attain the bliss of
Nibbana!**

MIND OVER BODY

*The mind controls the body
The body does not control the mind.
The mind can fool the body and
it can kill the body.*

(Digha Nikaya)

Anicca vata Sankhara

VEN. AMBALIYADDE SRI SOMANANDA NAYAKA THERA

It is with sense of deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of Ven. Ambaliyadde Sri Somanada Nayaka Thera, Chief Incumbent of Madanwela Raja Maha Vihara and Principal of the Sri Dharmodaya Pirivena in Hanguranketa, Sri Lanka on 13th October 2008 following a brief illness. He was a very good friend of the London Buddhist Vihara and one of the teachers of Ven. Pandith Wimalajothi. His cremation took place on 18th October in the presence of a large gathering of monks and lay followers in Hanguranketa. Ven. Pandith W. Wimalajothi attended the cremation.

May he attain the bliss of Nibbana!

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Gaya, Bihar

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SANCHI

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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)

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 05 Rahula Dhamma Day

May 10 VESAK - Buddha Day

June 06 Blood donation Session

June 07 POSON

July 05 ESALA - Dhamma Day

Sept. 20 FOUNDER'S DAY

Nov. 01 KATHINA

Dec. 06 SANGHAMITTA DAY

○ 2009 (FULL MOON) POYA DAYS

January ○ 10

February ○ 09

March ○ 10

April ○ 09

May ○ 08

June ○ 07

July ○ 06

August ○ 05

September ○ 04

October ○ 03

November ○ 02

December ○ 01

December ○ 31

SAMĀDHI SPONSORS

This issue of Samadhi is sponsored
by Mr Upali & Mrs Kusum de Silva
in memory of their parents

Mr & Mrs A. C. de Silva
and

Mr. & Mrs. G. K. F. Wickramasekera,

Mrs. Padmini Almeda

&

Mrs. Gnana Selverajah

also made contributions to remem-
ber their departed relatives.

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

PUNYANUMODANA

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

May you be well, happy and
attain Nibbana.

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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