



Taste of the Dhamma

Monthly Newsletter of the Bhavana Society

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Abandon what is not yours



The Very Word of the Buddha



Clear Comprehension (Part VII)



How Mindfulness forms a Dhamma Triangle



News @ Bhāvanā



Abandon what is not yours

“Whatever is not yours, abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness,” the Buddha told his disciples. He further explained what is not yours. According to his explanation; form is not yours, feeling is not yours, perception is not yours, volitional formations are not yours, consciousness is not yours. All these are to be abandoned for your own welfare and happiness.

The Buddha further said: “Suppose, Monks, people were to carry off the grass, sticks, branches, and foliage in this Jeta’s Grove, or to burn them, or to do with them as they wish. Would you think: ‘People are carrying us off, or burning us, or doing with us as they wish?’”

Monks: No, venerable sir.

Buddha: For what reason?

Monks: Because, venerable sir, that is neither our self nor what belongs to our self.

Buddha: So too, Monks, form is not



yours, feeling is not yours ... consciousness is not yours: abandon it. When you have abandoned it that will lead to your welfare and happiness.

Abandonment of the five aggregates is one of the Buddha’s greatest teachings. It is because of attachment to these five aggregates that we suffer. If we do not attach to these five we will remove the source of our suffering. The cause of suffering is craving, which must be seen and eradicated. That is the way to the cessation and experiencing liberation. Let us all understand this wonderful teaching of the greatest human ever born on this earth, the Buddha. ☸

These quotations are from the discourses of the Buddha

Do not Neglect Your Own Welfare

Buddha's kind admonition to all of us

“So, Cunda, the way of effacement has been taught by me, the way of inclining the mind has been taught by me, the way of avoidance has been taught by me, the way leading upwards has been taught by me, and the way of extinguishing has been taught by me. What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, that I have done for you, Cunda. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts. Meditate, Cunda, do not delay or else you will regret it later. This is our instruction to you.”

“Let one not neglect one’s own welfare for the sake of another, however great. Clearly understanding one’s own welfare, let one be intent upon the good” (Dhammapada 166)

“As if smitten by a sword,
As if his head were on fire,
A meditator should wander mindfully
To abandon identity view.”

MIND

“I don’t envision a single thing as quick to reverse itself as the mind — so much so that there is no feasible simile for how quick to reverse itself it is.”

(Anguttara Nikaya 1.48)

Ill-directed Mind

Whatever an enemy might do to an enemy,
or a foe to a foe,
the ill-directed mind can do to you
even worse.

(Udana 4.3)

Clear Comprehension (Part VII)

Some Dhamma Activities at Bhavana

Daily: Morning
5:00-6:30 a.m.:
Meditation and Pooja

Daily: Evening
5:00-6:00 p.m.:
Meditation
6:30-8:00 p.m.:
Pooja and Meditation

Saturday is cleaning day.

Morning:
8:30-10:30 am:
All residents and visiting practitioners are asked to help in cleaning up around the monastery.
Evening:
3-4 p.m.: Pali Class
4-5 p.m.: Sutta Discussion class

Sunday

Morning
9:00-9:45: Meditation
10:00-10:45:
Dhamma talk

Pre-Full Moon and New Moon days

(A special program will be followed)
5:00 am- 11:00 pm
Meditation / Dhamma Talks, Dhamma discussions / Uposatha recitals for monks.

If you need our Schedule to join with us to practice, e-mail us:
<Seela22bhavana@gmail.com>

You should know the suitable subject of meditation to get rid of specific harmful mental states. “What thought should I cultivate to get rid of jealousy? Perhaps appreciative joy might counteract my jealousy, or should I cultivate the thought of generosity?” In this case, cultivating the thought of appreciative joy would be the suitable meditation subject to get rid of jealousy.

Suppose you have excessive energy? Then you should practice something peaceful to get rid of your excessive energy. You should use a subject that can calm your mind. Suppose you feel lethargic, sleepy, drowsy? Should you practice concentration to get rid of drowsiness? No, definitely not! At that time you must rouse your energy, to get rid of your sleepiness. And if you are physically energetic “Do not strive everywhere.” Calm your mind only by paying total attention to your breath.

Also, we should find a suitable person to associate with when we practice mindfulness or concentration meditation. Avoid, by all means, people who cause harm to themselves and to others, for they are not suitable people to associate with when you practice any kind of meditation—tranquility or insight. Employ various strategies and find out which of them is suitable. “Is this subject suitable for

gaining concentration or insight? Should I sacrifice my practice to do this particular work, which has nothing to do with meditation? Is this conversation suitable for my mindfulness practice? Does this conversation help me gain concentration? Am I eating moderately or am I eating too much? Do I sleep too much?”

(iii) Clear Comprehension of Domain:

“Those who take the unessential for the essential and the essential for the unessential, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the essential. Those who know the essential as essential and the unessential as unessential, dwelling in right thoughts, arrive at the essential.”

Arahant Devasabha has put it succinctly. “Endowed with energy, keeping mindfulness as domain, decorated with the flowers of freedom, the arahant cooled off all influxes.”¹ The word “gocara” means the place where cows graze. That is their field. Similarly, a meditator’s field is his body and mind. We should clearly comprehend our field of meditation. Our field is made up of form, feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness. That is where we establish the four foundations of mindfulness. All our suffering begins in our own body and mind. If you want to be rid of suffering, where should you go? Where suffering arises is the place we go to eliminate it. Where the problem is, there also is the solution.

Mind

“Just as rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, so passion penetrates an undeveloped mind”

“Just as rain does not break through a well-thatched house, so passion never penetrates a well-developed mind.”



We should comprehend this field fully with mindfulness. We view it not as a biologist, chemist, physicist, anatomist, or pathologist, but more profoundly, as a mindful meditator, whose aim is moral and spiritual development through experiential knowledge and deep insight to get rid of suffering. Let us see two similes the Buddha gave to illustrate the clear comprehension of domain:

“And what is not a bhikkhu’s own resort but the domain of others? It is the five cords of sensual pleasures. What five? Forms, cognizable by the eye that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tantalizing...sounds, odors, tastes, and touches.

“Monks, be islands unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves with no other refuge. Let the Dhamma be your island. And how does a monk dwell as an island unto himself? Here, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world, he abides contemplating feelings as feelings,... he abides contemplating mind as mind,... he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

“Keep to your own preserves¹, monks, to your ancestral haunts, the range of your fathers¹. If you do so, then Māra will find no lodgment, no foothold. It is just by the building-up of wholesome states that this merit increases.”

Stay in your domain while walking, talking, sitting, standing, writing, reading, meditating, eating, drinking, observing silence and every waking moment. Wrap yourself up in your body, feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness.

Sometimes the Buddha said the domain is either right thought or wrong thought. If we choose wrong thoughts as our field, then we head in a wrong direction and end up in trouble. If we chose right thought as our field then we head in right direction and end up in peace and happiness. If we remain mindful then we can make the right choice easily.

Also, the Buddha has given us the four foundations of mindfulness as our domain. In some other places he asked us to use the five aggregates of clinging as our domain of mindfulness practice. Whether we use the five aggregates as our domain or the four foundations of mindfulness as our domains we do the same practice, because the four foundations of mindfulness deals with the five aggregates.

Since we are unmindful most of the time, we don’t use our own domain—body and mind—to cultivate mindfulness. We use others’ domains. We don’t use our laboratory. We borrow others’ laboratories. We don’t use our own encyclopedia. We borrow others’ encyclopedia. What is the domain of others? That is, the five cords of sensual pleasure: forms, sounds, smell, taste, and touch cognizable by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body that are desirable, lovely, agreeable and pleasing.

Clearance the path

“Drowsiness,
lethargy, lazy
stretching,
discontent, torpor
after meals:
When one dispels
this with energy,
the noble path is
cleared.”

(SN 1166)

Free! Free! Free!

“So freed! So freed! So
thoroughly freed am I
from three crooked
things:
my sickles,
my shovels,
my plows.
Even if they were here,
right here,
I'd be done with them,
done.
Do jhana, Sumangala.
Do jhana, Sumangala.
Sumangala,
stay heedful.”

—
An Enlightened One
Sumangala
From the Theragāthā

We feed the body, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations and consciousness. We nourish the body with solid and liquid food. We feed feeling with contact. We feed volitional formations with endless thinking or conceptual proliferations. We feed our consciousness with six kinds of consciousness. We take care of them.

We should not let these five aggregates simply rot without making use of them. We must use them for developing insight and wisdom. If we use our domain with mindfulness then we definitely end up in peace and happiness. The practice of mindfulness is the direct and unconfused way to liberation from stress and grief. We have our bodies and minds, our domain, where we live and die, which we can use or abuse. If we learn how to use it mindfully with clear comprehension we can liberate from suffering. If we let it decay and waste away, if we abuse the body and mind without putting them to any meaningful purpose we will perpetuate our suffering.

“Bhikkhus, be absorbed in meditation;
Don't be negligent;
Don't let your mind whirl about
In sensual desire.
Don't be negligent and swallow a
[molten] iron ball,
And then, being burnt, cry out,
“This is suffering!”

This body exists only to gain insight and knowledge -- nothing else.¹ This is the chorus; this is the

mantra, which the Buddha has asked us to repeat in each section of mindfulness practice.

Only through them can we experience impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness. The Buddha advised us to use our own domain so we will be able to move on safely in the right direction without getting into trouble.

Only in these aggregates can we establish mindfulness. These aggregates exist for us not to cling to, but to use for developing insight. We simply don't view the aggregates we view logs, rocks, trees, rivers or clouds. Wisdom and insight does not arise in us automatically. We must use the body and mind to develop mindfulness.

We should not abuse the body and mind, but use them without clinging to them. We use them like a raft to cross the four kinds of floods: the flood of greed (*kāmogha*), the flood of endlessly becoming one thing or another (*bhvogha*), the flood of wrong view (*ditthogha*) and the flood of ignorance (*avijjogha*).

All of them are found in these five aggregates. All good, bad, evil, wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, right path, wrong path, suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, the path leading to the end of suffering—all of them without any exception are locked up in these five aggregates. The key to unlock all of them is also within them.

To be continued.

Mindfulness is the Way

By Bhikkhu T. Seelananda

“Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of the body has been repeatedly practiced, developed, cultivated, used as a vehicle, used as a basis, established, consolidated, and well undertaken, benefits may be expected.”

M.N. 119

“Mindfulness is the way to deathlessness and un-mindfulness is the way to death”, said the Buddha. Mindfulness is a built-in quality of all humans. Being mindful, all humans can discover our potential of developing and cultivating mindfulness present in our subconscious mind. The Buddha discovered this potential secret in his mind and then cultivated and perfected it. This is known as Buddhahood or Full Enlightenment.

Mindfulness is the key to unlock the door to deathlessness. It is because of mindfulness that we are aware of what is going on within us and around us. It is because of mindfulness that we can understand whatever impinges upon our mind through the six senses. However, we should remember that it should be developed through ardent effort and clear comprehension. Basically, without undivided attention, no one can meditate let alone develop mindfulness. This advice is given as the first step in meditation instruction. The instructor or Master guides you to give your full and undivided attention to the base of your nostrils and to observe your natural breath.

Through mindful attention one is able to understand many things as they occur one by one in the body and mind. That is the way to develop and cultivate mindfulness.

In order to develop and cultivate mindfulness, one of the essential factors is association with a true friend.

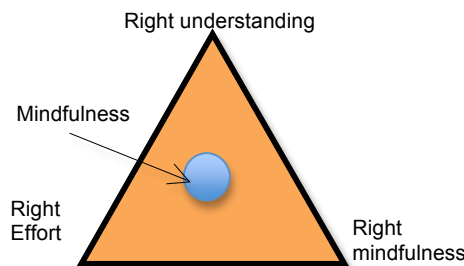
In the Avijja sutta of the Anguttara Nikāya, the Buddha taught us the way for the completion of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness and attaining the ultimate bliss of emancipation. Here the Buddha says that when there is an opportunity to associate with a good friend, one gets the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma. When one gets the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma one gets the opportunity to develop one’s confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. When one gets the opportunity to develop confidence, one gets the opportunity to develop wise attention, which leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension, restraint of senses, three modes of good conduct, the four establishments of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment, and finally right knowledge and liberation respectively.

So this is the way for the culmination of Bliss. When mindfulness is developed and cultivated, it fulfills the four establishments of mindfulness. Where there is mindfulness there is wise-attention, wisdom, and clear comprehension. Mindfulness and wisdom always go hand in hand. One should give wise-attention to the meditation object in order to develop mindfulness. When there is wise-attention and mindfulness then clear comprehension arises. But all this is possible with right effort. Then our triangle of right mindfulness, effort and understanding is complete.

The Buddha said, "When there is the opportunity to develop wise-attention, then there arises the opportunity to develop mindfulness and clear comprehension." Whenever we practice meditation, if we sit cross-legged we sit in a triangle posture, which is the recommended posture by the Buddha. Triangle posture is a well-established and well-grounded, stable posture. If we practice meditation based on the four establishments of mindfulness with a well-protected mind, "keeping the mind as a fortified city" as the Buddha said, undoubtedly we can gain benefits step by step. When practicing in such a way we can understand clearly how we are developing mindfulness, wise-

attention, wisdom and clear comprehension. As we mentioned earlier, mindfulness is the key. Without mindfulness there is no wise attention, wisdom and clear comprehension. When we are observing silence and mindfulness, then there arises wisdom. Wisdom arises only in a mindful and quiet mind. Unlike knowledge, wisdom cannot be transferred or exchanged with others. But the experience gained through wisdom can be shared with others. That was what the Buddha did. His entire teaching is his experiential wisdom.

When mindfulness is developed and cultivated one can pay wise-attention. When there is wise-attention, one can understand things as they really are. This is what is called clearly comprehending or clear comprehension. When one sees things as they really are, one sees the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and soullessness. Thus, mindfulness becomes the nucleus of the following triangle of right understanding, right effort and right mindfulness.



"Monks, these two slander the Tathagata (Buddha). Which two? He who explains what was not said or spoken by the Tathagata as said or spoken by the Tathagata. And he who explains what was said or spoken by the Tathagata as not said or spoken by the Tathagata. These are two who slander the Tathagata."

A.N. 2.23

**Buddham
saranam
gacchami!**

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We're on the
Web at

www.Bhavasociety.org

See our
schedule
and
consider
one
of the
meditation
retreats
offered
throughout
the year.



Kathina Ceremony -2011

Kathina is a 'Special Robe' offered to the Sangha at the end of the three months Rains Retreat. This is a ceremony organized by laypersons in Buddhist temples all over the world. For the performance of this ceremony, both monks and devotees have to dedicate for three months and fulfill their duties properly. Kathina basically means something difficult to perform or firmness, solidity and durability. This year's Kathina ceremony at Bhavana was held on November 6 under the guidance of the Abbot, Bhante G. There were 14 monks for this ceremony.



Snow @
Bhavana
last week



Next Meditation Retreat

November 23-27

THANKSGIVING

A 4-Day Retreat with
Bhante Gunaratana
&
Bhante Seelananda

A 14-day Retreat led by Bhante Seelananda -TX

Bhante Seelananda will lead a 14-day Meditation Retreat (from December 3-18) at the American Bodhi Center in Texas. There will be daily discussions of the original discourses of the Buddha, Dhamma Talks based on the discourses and Q & A.

