



Taste of the Dhamma

Monthly Newsletter of Bhavana Society

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Do not believe it but Investigate

The Buddha said, "Do not believe anything simply because it is your tradition, because it is there in your scriptures ... but investigate by yourself and if it is wholesome then accept it and if it is unwholesome then reject it." How to investigate things is taught in the Discourse of the simile of the elephant's footprint. (M.27)



ings high up. But still he should not come to conclusion this is the big bull elephant. Why? Because there are tall she-elephants with prominent teeth, who leave big footprints and break branches high up in the woods. In this manner, he should follow the footprints.

According to the discourse, when the elephant trainer wants to train a new elephant, first he has to capture one from the woods. While looking for one of the beasts, he notices footprints and follows them wherever they may lead. But suppose he needs to capture a really big bull elephant?

Finally, he will see the big bull elephant at the root of a tree or in the open, walking about, sitting or lying down. Only then should he come to his conclusion. This is the instruction of the Buddha to all of us to understand how we may come to a conclusion, not by mere faith, belief, or tradition, but by investigation. Let us heed these words of the Buddha.

While searching, he may see a large elephant's footprint. If he is wise he would not yet come to the conclusion, "Indeed, this is a big bull elephant." Why? Because in the woods, there are small she-elephants that leave big footprints. He might then see big footprints and some scrap-

✿
Do not believe it
but investigate



The Very Word of
the Buddha



Clear
Comprehension
(part II)



Many kinds of
Feelings



News
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Bhavanâ

These quotations are from the discourses of the Buddha

This Man

 This
 two-footed,
 filthy, evil-
 smelling,
 filled
 with
 various
 carcasses,
 oozing-out-
 here-&-
 there body:
 Whoever
 would think,
 on the basis
 of a body
 like this,
 to exalt
 himself or
 disparage
 another:
 What is that
 if not
 blindness.”
 (Snp.1.11)

Enmity with None

“One whose mind all day
 and night
 takes delight in
 harmlessness,
 who has loving friendli-
 ness for all beings—
 for him there is enmity
 with none.” (S.N.10.4)

Your protector

“One truly is the protec-
 tor of oneself; who else
 could the protector be?
 With oneself fully
 controlled, one gains
 a mastery that is
 hard to gain.”
 (Dhammapada verse 160)

This Earth is not permanent

“Now there comes a time
 when the water element is
 disturbed and then the ex-
 ternal earth element van-
 ishes. When even this ex-
 ternal earth element, great
 as it is, is seen to be im-
 permanent, subject to de-
 struction, disappearance,
 and change, what of this
 body (your body), which
 is clung to by craving and
 lasts but a while? There
 can be no considering
 that as ‘I’ or ‘mine’
 or ‘I am.’ ”
 -M.N. Sutta N0. 28-

Mother and Father

“Mother and father are called
 "Brahma," "early teachers"
 And "worthy of veneration,"
 Being compassionate towards
 Their family of children.

Thus the wise should venerate
 them, Pay them due honor,
 Provide them with food and
 drink, Give them clothing and
 a bed, Anoint and bathe them
 And also wash their feet.

When he performs such serv-
 ice, for his mother and his fa-
 ther, they praise that wise per-
 son even here and hereafter he
 rejoices in heaven”

(Itivuttaka N0.106 With Brahma)

Clear Comprehension (Part II)

When we can clearly and mindfully understand that certain thoughts, words and actions in the past have made our mindfulness practice difficult, we learn to guard our senses against them in the present and thereby prevent them from arising again. We can recall how, when we were not mindful, that craving, anger, or delusion arose in our minds in the past when we experienced certain sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and thoughts. The memory of those experiences is our mindfulness. We can clearly understand just how harmful they were in the past.

Why do we call them harmful? Because they prevent us from gaining and deepening our concentration. They made our minds restless. We became agitated as these thoughts arose. They damaged our spiritual practice and retarded our progress. They built up conceptual proliferations in our minds. They generated and supported our “monkey-mind” and got in the way of

gaining concentration. These harmful effects caused us to worry and become restless.

And, when they arise again, they will certainly generate similar harmful effects. With mindfulness and clear comprehension we apply our efforts and prevent them from arising again.

While we are mindfully observing impermanence in every experience in the present moment, craving, anger or delusion that we have held at bay can inadvertently arise in the mind from similar sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and thoughts.

And so, once again, we remember their harmful effects on our mind. And again, mindfully with clear comprehension, we put forth the effort to overcome the already arisen craving, anger or delusion.

Again, we return to our deep awareness of impermanence of all the events we are experiencing. By now, the mind is relatively calm and peaceful.

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*All of this
can be achieved
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practice of
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This time, because of our deeper mindfulness, we become aware of many more subtle changes taking place in our bodies, feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness.

Then, we make mindful effort to let this mental state stay for a longer time. The deeper our understanding, the stronger, deeper and longer our mindfulness becomes. And the duration of these wholesome mental states also becomes longer.

All of this can be achieved by the practice of mindfulness with clear comprehension. This is the first step in the development of your mindfulness practice. This is a much superior kind of clear comprehension that is particularly necessary for the development of mindfulness.

Often we think that we can purify our minds simply by paying attention only to our breath. But in fact, we cannot purify our mind just by paying attention to the breath. While

trying to pay attention to the breath, we notice many other things happening in our mind. Many impure mental states constantly arise in our minds. Noticing them only once or twice or even three times cannot purify our minds. These kinds of things don't just appear in our minds when we are sitting on our cushion. Much of the time, many thoughts - particularly negative thoughts - arise while we are talking, walking, or doing something. They arise unexpectedly. They give us a real surprise. Often they may arise in a very embarrassing situation—while we are in a hurry to get something done urgently or quickly.

Under these stressful situations, agitation can quickly arise in our minds, giving us a shocking surprise. We have been sitting for hours, trying to deal with our negative thoughts and to cultivate positive thoughts. When we are engaged in numerous activities these negative thoughts can arise even more often than when we

"Cunda, it is impossible that one who is himself sunk in the mire should pull out another who is sunk in the mire. But it is possible, Cunda, that one not sunk in the mire himself should pull out another who is sunk in the mire."

Buddha

are just sitting quietly.

The Buddha has given us very practical advice to check on whether a particular teacher is full of anger, greed or delusion when he is talking or engaged in any physical activity. You go to that very reputable teacher and associate with him for a while. Then you can notice whether he ever speaks with greed, anger, or delusion, and whether he ever behaves in a greedy, angry or delusional manner. Our verbal and physical expressions indicate whether we are mindful or not.

As we are more prone to our own negative mental states when we are active and off our cushions, we should therefore be more mindful to clearly understand as many of our activities as possible. The Buddha has given a list of everyday activities such as going forward, returning, looking straight ahead, looking away, bending, stretching, eating, drinking, biting, chewing, tasting, defe-

cating, urinating, wearing upper robes, and under robes, carrying an alms bowl and even while observing silence. We can include many more activities from lay life such as washing, bathing, swimming, cooking, making beds, sweeping, mopping, etc. We perform many activities every day. We can add them all to this list of activities to undertake with clear understanding and mindfulness.

Yoniso manasikāra

In this exercise of mindfulness and clear comprehension we should train our mind to look at the mind all of the time rather than at anything external to see that the roots of all wholesome-ness and unwholesomeness are in our mind. When we say something we should look closely at our mind and see whether we speak with greed, hatred or delusion. This is what is called *Yoniso manasikāra*.

To be continued in our next Newsletter in July

Many Kinds of Feelings

By Bhikkhu T. Seelananda

“Everything that arises in the mind is accompanied by sensation” (Sabbe dhamma Vedana samosarana).

The Buddha

Feeling is one of the four establishments of mindfulness, which is the way to Nibbana, the highest bliss. (The other three being establishment of mindfulness of body, mind, and mental objects).

When practicing mindfulness of feelings, one is expected to observe one’s feelings or sensations. There are many different kinds of sensations in this fathom-high body. Once the Buddha compared feelings to clouds: “Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky.” Another occasion, he said, “Feelings are like bubbles.” This shows the impermanent nature of feelings. Basically, there are three kinds of feelings:

1. Pleasant feelings
2. Painful feelings
3. Neither painful nor pleasant feelings.

One day, a devout follower of the Buddha, a carpenter, went to Ven. Udayin and asked, “Bhante, how many kinds of feelings have been stated by the Buddha?” “Three

kinds of feeling, householder,” he replied. This person was not ready to accept this and said, “No sir, only two kinds; pleasant feelings and painful feelings.” For the second time and third time, Ven. Udayin stated his position, and the carpenter stated his. However, both of them could not convince each other.

By this time, Ven. Ananda heard their conversation; he then went to the Buddha and reported the entire conversation. Then the Buddha said, “Ananda, I have stated two kinds of feeling in one presentation; I have stated three kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated five kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated six kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated eighteen kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated thirty-six kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated one hundred and eight kinds of feeling in another presentation. That is how the Dhamma has been shown by me in different

presentations. When the Dhamma has thus been shown by me in different presentations, it may be expected of those who will not concede, allow, and accept what is well stated and well spoken by others that they will take to quarreling, brawling, and disputing, stabbing each other with verbal daggers. But it may be expected of those who concede, allow, and accept what is well stated and well spoken by others that they will live in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”

Now, it is clear how the Buddha taught the Dhamma using different methods, like analysis and synthesis. He knew the limitation of language very well.

When practicing contemplation on feelings as feelings, one has to first sit comfortably and relax. For this, one can sit cross-legged on a cushion as that is the well-established posture (a triangular posture). If you cannot sit cross-legged, it is all right to sit on

a chair, but try to do so without leaning back.

This body is nothing but flesh, blood, sinews, bones etc. Therefore, feelings are there all the time, whatever feelings are to be understood. For this purpose, you can practice mindfulness of breathing for awhile, then give your full attention to any feeling (sensation) you may observe.

When observing feelings, keep a balanced mind and observe them objectively. This is the technique taught by the Buddha in the Maha Stipatthana Sutta from beginning to the end. As it is said in this Sutta, when we practice mindfulness of feelings as feelings internally, externally and both internally and externally, we can understand the nature of arising and vanishing. At the same time, there arises the knowledge that there is feeling but there is nothing to be grasped as feeling. ‘This feeling itself is not mine’, ‘this I am not’, ‘this is not myself.’ ‘This feeling is impermanent, this feeling is unsatisfactory, and this feeling is without a self.’ This is the real understanding of the world.☞

Through feelings (vedana), one can realize that all the other aggregates have the same nature of anicca, dukkha and anatta (Impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and soullessness)



Bhavana Society

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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.



Mindfulness Retreat from June 10-12



Retreatants in the main hall



Our Next Retreat
will be the

"Introduction to Medi-
tation"
(From
June 24-29, 2011)

This retreat will be
led
by
Ven. Olande Ananda
Thero.



Every Saturday

3:00-4:00p.m = Pali Class

4:00-5:00pm = Sutta Class

Every Sunday

Dhamma talk 10:00-10:45am

You are welcome!

Ven. U.Dhammajiva
led this Mindfulness
Retreat. He is from
Mitirigala Forest
Monastery
Sri Lanka.

There were 26
retreatants for this
retreat. It was
another successful
summer retreat.
Bhavana thanks
everybody who par-
ticipated and sup-
ported in many
ways.
THANKS

Youth Retreat

From July 29-31,2011

**This year's Bhavana Youth
Retreat has a theme.**

Theme: " Noble Eightfold Path Retreat "

Age: Children between 12 and 19 only.

What is this path? How to apply it to our life?

Hiking, Young Minds and Yoga are some of the items on the schedule.

Register soon for this retreat!

For more details and registration <http://www.bhavasociety.org/main/retreat/you1111>