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For Non-Muslims only

Sabbadānam Dhammadānam Jināti ~ The Gift of Dhamma excels all other Gifts



The Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Kek Lok Si, Pulau Pinang

Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas is one of the most recognizable icons of Kek Lok Si Temple, Penang. Work to erect the pagoda began in 1915, under the leadership of the Second Abbot of Kek Lok Si, Ben Zhong. The foundation stone was laid by the Siamese king Vajiravudh, or Rama VI. As such, the pagoda was officially named Pagoda of Rama VI. The Pagoda was built in three different architectural styles. The lower tier was designed in the Chinese temple style. It stands on an octagonal base. This is followed by the middle tier, said to be in the Thai style. When the top tier and crown of the Pagoda were added, these were designed in the Burmese style. The Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas remains one of the most popular highlights for visitors to Kek Lok Si Temple.

Photo Credit: Spielvogel, Wikimedia Commons

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IF THE BUDDHA IS NOT A GOD, HOW CAN HE BLESS THE PEOPLE?

(Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thera)

Another question that people very often raise is this: 'If the Buddha is not a god, if He is not living in this world today, how can he bless people?' According to the Buddha, if people follow His advice by leading a religious life, they would certainly receive blessings. Blessing in a Buddhist sense means the joy we experience when we develop confidence and satisfaction. The Buddha once said, 'if anyone wishes to see me, he should look at my Teachings and practise them.' (Samyutta Nikaya) Those who understand His Teachings easily see the real nature of the Buddha reflected in themselves. The image of the Buddha they maintain in their minds is more real than the image they see on the altar, which is merely a symbolic representation. 'Those who live in accordance with the Dhamma (righteous way of life) will be protected by that very Dhamma.' (Thera Gatha) One who knows the real nature of existence and the fact of life through Dhamma will not have any fear and secure a harmonious way of life.

In other religions, the people worship their god by asking for favours to be granted to them. Buddhists do not worship the Buddha by asking for worldly favours, but they respect Him for His supreme achievement. When Buddhists respect the Buddha, they are indirectly elevating their own minds so that one day they also can get the same enlightenment to serve mankind if they aspire to become a Buddha.

Source : A passage from the article "Why we take Refuge in the Buddha" by Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thera

WHAT DID BUDDHA SAY ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

The Buddha once said to Ananda: "Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companion, and comrades, he can be expected to develop and pursue the Noble Eightfold Path."

The following are 7 qualities of a noble friend:

1. They give what is hard to give.
2. They do what is hard to do.
3. They endure what is hard to endure.
4. They reveal their secrets to you.
5. They keep your secrets.
6. They do not abandon you in misfortunes.
7. When you are down and out, they do not look down on you.

Ven Bhante Sujatha

Blue Lotus Buddhist Temple, USA

Why the Buddhist Sangha is the World's Oldest Democracy

By Ajahn Brahmavamso

As a Buddhist, no matter what tradition, we take refuge. Refuge was always in "Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha." It was never, "the Buddha, the Dhamma, and Ajahn Brahm." Never in, "Buddha, Dhamma, and your Guru, your Teacher or your Roshi."

Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

The problem comes when we take refuge in a person, not the institution of a sangha. When we have a person who's given power – power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. So, we try and get Buddhist institutions with no one as a leader.

When the Buddha passed away – before the Buddha passed away, in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, they asked him, "Who will take over the sangha, Buddhism, once you've passed away?" And the Buddha replied, "No one will take over. The teachings, the training – that will be your teacher from now on."

Sometimes we forget that, and we install people in positions of power rather than installing the teachings, the training, in positions of power.

I often tell university students that the longest-sustaining democracy in the world is the Buddhist sangha. Our constitution is fully democratic. One monk, one nun, one vote. We don't have leaders as such. And that's the motto which I have in the monastery where I am. I often get out-voted by my sangha, and I'm proud of that. If they always followed what I wanted, I'd get very concerned. If they gave me that power, even with the best one in the world, you'll abuse it. So let the community, the democracy have that power. Not a person.

Teachings & Practise



The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

by Ven Piyadassi Thera

The Tipitaka, the Buddhist canon, is replete with references to the factors of enlightenment expounded by the Enlightened One on different occasions under different circumstances. In the Book of the Kindred Sayings V (Samyutta Nikaya, Maha Vagga) we find a special section under the title Bojjhanga Samyutta wherein the Buddha discourses on the bojjhanga in diverse ways. In this section we read a series of three discourses or sermons recited by Buddhists since the time of the Buddha as a protection (paritta or pirith) against pain, disease, and adversity.

The term bojjhanga is composed of bodhi + anga. Bodhi denotes enlightenment – to be exact, insight concerned with the realization of the four Noble Truths. “Bojjhanga! Bojjhanga! Is the saying, Lord. Pray, Lord, how far is this name applicable?” queried a monk of the Buddha. “Bodhaya samvattantiti kho bhikkhu tasma bojjhanga ti vuccanti” – “They conduce to enlightenment, monk, that is why they are so called,” was the succinct reply of the Master.

The seven factors are:

1. Mindfulness (sati)
2. Keen investigation of the dhamma (dhammavicaya)
3. Energy (viriya)
4. Rapture or happiness (piti)
5. Calm (passaddhi)
6. Concentration (samadhi)
7. Equanimity (upekkha)

Man’s mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome and harmful thoughts, mind can cause disaster, nay even kill a being; but mind also can cure a sick body. When concentrated on right thoughts with right understanding, the effects mind can produce are immense.

“Mind not only makes sick, it also cures. An optimistic patient has more chance of getting well than a patient who is worried and unhappy. The recorded instances of faith healing include cases in which even organic diseases were cured almost instantaneously.”

– Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means (London, 1946)

I

Let us now deal with the enlightenment factors one by one. The first is sati, mindfulness. It is the instrument most efficacious in self-mastery, and whosoever practices it has found the path to deliverance. It is fourfold: mindfulness consisting in contemplation of the body (kayanupassana), feeling (vedananupassana), mind (cittanupassana), and mental objects (dhammanupassana).

The man lacking in this all-important quality of mindfulness cannot achieve anything worthwhile. The Buddha’s final admonition to his disciples on his death bed is this: *“Transient are all component things. Work out your deliverance with heedfulness!”* (vaya-dhamma sankhara, appamadena sampadetha). And the last words of the Venerable Sariputta, the foremost disciple of the Buddha, who predeceased the Master, were this: *“Strive on with Heedfulness! This is my advice to you!”* (sampadetha appamadena, esa me anusasana). In both these injunctions the most significant and pregnant word is appamada, which literally means incessant heedfulness. Man cannot be heedful unless he is aware of his actions – whether they are mental, verbal, or physical – at every moment of his waking life. Only when a man is fully awake to and mindful of his activities can he distinguish good from bad and right from wrong. It is in the light of mindfulness that he will see the beauty or the ugliness of his deeds.

The Buddha’s life is one integral picture of mindfulness. He is the sada sato, the ever-mindful, the ever-vigilant. He is the very embodiment of mindfulness. There was never an occasion when the Buddha manifested signs of sluggish inactivity or thoughtlessness.

Right mindfulness or complete awareness, in a way, is superior to knowledge, because in the absence of mindfulness it is just impossible for a man to make the best of his learning. Intelligence devoid of mindfulness tends to lead man astray and entice him from the path of rectitude and duty. Even people who are well informed and intelligent fail to see a thing in its proper perspective when they lack this all-important quality of mindfulness. Men of good standing, owing to deeds done and words spoken thoughtlessly and without due consideration to their consequences, are often subjected to severe and justified criticism. Mindfulness is the chief characteristic of all wholesome actions tending to one’s own and others’ profit.

Appamado mahato athaya sanvattati: *“Mindfulness is conducive to great profit”* – that is, highest mental development – and it is through such attainment that deliverance from the sufferings of samsara is possible.

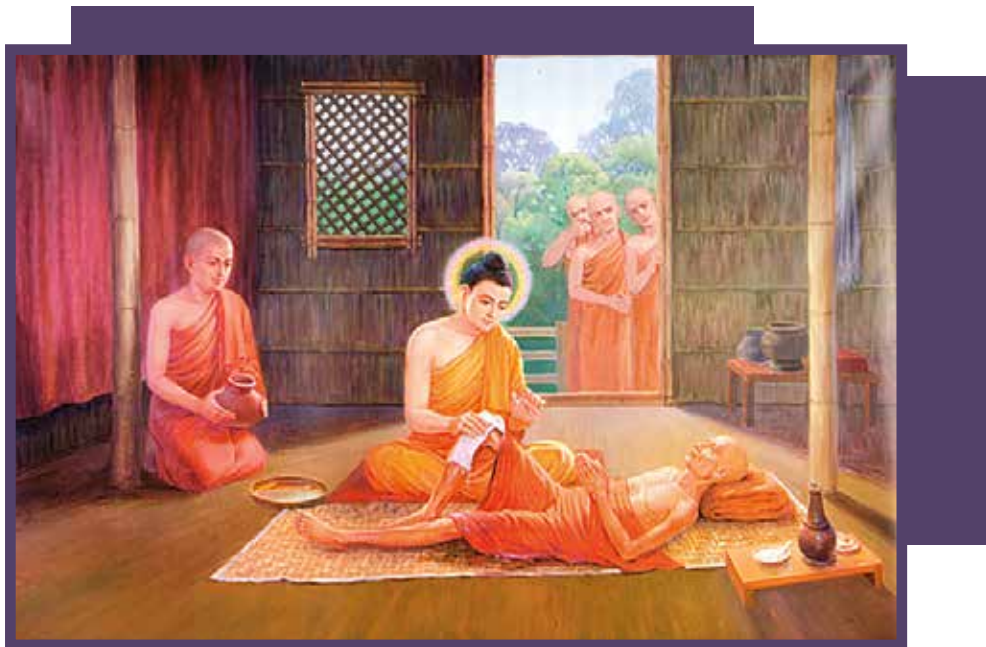
The man who delights in mindfulness and regards heedlessness with dread, is not liable to fall away. He is in the vicinity of Nibbana.- Dhp 32

II

The second enlightenment factor is dhammavicaya, keen investigation of the Dhamma. It is the sharp analytical knowledge of understanding the true nature of all constituent things animate or inanimate, human or divine. It is seeing things as they really are; seeing things in their proper perspective. It is the analysis of all component things into their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimates. Through keen investigation one understands that all compounded things pass through the inconceivably rapid moments of uppada, thiti, and bhanga, or of arising, reaching a peak, and ceasing.

The whole universe is constantly changing, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments. All things in fact are subjected to causes, conditions, and effects (hetu, paccaya, and phala). Systematic reflection (yoniso manasikara) comes naturally through right mindfulness, and it urges one to discriminate, to reason and investigate. Shallow thinking, unsystematic investigation (ayoniso manasikara) makes men muddle-headed; and then they fail to investigate the nature of things. Such people cannot see cause and effect, seed and fruit, the rise and fall of compounded things.

Buddhism is free from compulsion and coercion and does not demand of the follower blind faith. At the very outset the skeptic will be pleased to hear of its call for investigation. Buddhism from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see and minds to understand. The Buddha never endeavored to wring out of his followers blind and submissive faith in him and his teaching. He tutors his disciples in the ways of discrimination and intelligent inquiry. To the inquiring Kalamas the Buddha answered: *“Right is it to doubt, right is it to question what is doubtful and what is not clear. In a doubtful matter wavering does arise.”*



The Bojjangha Samyutta was recited as a protection against pain, disease and adversity.

Thus blind belief is condemned in the analytic teaching (vibhajjavada) of the Buddha. The truth of the dhamma can be grasped only through calm concentrative thought and insight (samatha and vipassana) and never through blind faith. One who goes in quest of truth is never satisfied with surface knowledge. He wants to delve deep and see what is beneath. That is the sort of search encouraged in Buddhism. That type of search yields right understanding.

He that cultivates dhammavicaya, investigation of the dhamma, focuses his mind on the five aggregates of grasping, the pañcupadanakkhandha, and endeavors to realize the rise and fall or the arising and passing away (udaya-vaya) of this conglomeration of bare forces (suddha sankhara puñja), this conflux of mind and matter (nama-rupa santati). It is only when he fully realizes the evanescent nature of his own mind and body that he experiences happiness, joyous anticipation.

III

The third enlightenment factor is viriya, energy. It is a mental property (cetasika) and the sixth limb of the Noble Eightfold Path, there called samma-vayama, right effort.

The life of the Buddha clearly reveals that he was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. From the hour of his enlightenment to the end of his life, he strove tirelessly to elevate mankind, regardless of the bodily fatigue involved, and oblivious to the many obstacles and handicaps that hampered his way. He never relaxed in his exertion for the common weal. Though physically he was not always fit, mentally he was ever vigilant and energetic.

The Buddha has not proclaimed himself a savior willing and able to take upon himself the evil of mankind. On the contrary, he declares that each person has to bear the burden of his ill deeds. In the words of the Buddha, each individual has himself to put forth the necessary effort and work out his own deliverance with diligence. The Buddha is only a path-revealer and not a savior who endeavors to save 'souls' by means of a revealed religion. The idea that another raises a man from lower to higher levels of life, and ultimately rescues him, tends to make a man indolent and weak, supine and foolish. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

The function of energy is four-fold: (1) the effort to eradicate evils that have arisen in the mind; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of un-arisen evil; (3) the effort to develop un-arisen good; (4) the effort to promote the further growth of good already arisen.

Thus the path of purification is impossible for an indolent person. The aspirant for enlightenment (bodhi) should possess unflinching energy coupled with fixed determination. Enlightenment and deliverance lie absolutely and entirely in his own hands.

IV

The fourth enlightenment factor is piti, rapture or happiness. This, too, is a mental property (cetasika) and is a quality which suffuses both the body and mind. The man lacking in this quality cannot proceed along the path to enlightenment. There will arise in him a sullen indifference to the dhamma, an aversion to the practice of meditation, and morbid manifestations. It is, therefore, very necessary that a man striving to attain enlightenment and final deliverance from the fetters of samsara, that repeated wandering, should endeavor to cultivate the all-important factor of happiness. No one can bestow on another the gift of happiness; each one has to build it up by effort, reflection, and concentrated activity. As happiness is a thing of the mind it should be sought not in external and material things though they may in a small way be instrumental.

Contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary person seems to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment; but by dint of courage, determination, systematic attention, and thought about the things one meets with in everyday life, by controlling one's evil inclinations, and by curbing the impulses, one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, perceiving an odor, tasting a flavor, feeling some tangible thing, cognizing an idea, people are moved; and from those sense objects and mental objects they experience a certain degree of pleasure. But it is all a passing show of phenomena. Unlike the animal whose sole purpose is to derive a feeling of pleasure from any source, at any cost, man should endeavor to gain real piti or happiness. Real happiness or rapture comes not through grasping or clinging to things animate or inanimate but by giving up (nekkhamma). It is the detached attitude toward the world that brings about true happiness. The Satipatthana Sutta, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, speaks of pleasant worldly feeling (samisasukha) and pleasant unworldly feeling (niramisasukha). Niramisa sukha is far superior to samisasukha.

Unalloyed joy comes to a man who ponders thus: "Others may harm, but I will become harmless; others may slay living beings, but I will become a non-slayer; others may live unchaste, but I will live pure. Others may utter falsehood; I, however, will speak the truth. Others may slander, talk harshly, indulge in gossip, but I will talk only words that promote concord, harmless words agreeable to the ear, full of love, heart-pleasing, courteous, worthy of being borne in mind, timely, fit and to the point. Others may be covetous; I will not covet. Energetic, steeped in modesty of heart, unswerving as regards truth and rectitude, peaceful, honest, contented, generous, and truthful in all things will I be." Thus conducive to full realization, perfect wisdom, to Nibbana is this fourth enlightenment factor piti, happiness.

V

Passaddhi – calm or tranquility – is the fifth factor of enlightenment. Passaddhi is two-fold. Kaya passaddhi is calm of body. Kaya here means all the mental properties rather than the physical body; in other words, calm of the aggregates of feeling (vedanakkhandha), perception (saññakkhandha), and the volitional activities or conformations (samkharakkhandha). Citta passaddhi is the calm of the mind – that is, the aggregate of consciousness (viññanakkhandha).

Passaddhi is compared to the happy experience of a weary walker who sits down under a tree in a shade, or the cooling of a hot place by rain. Hard it is to tranquillize the mind; it trembles and it is unsteady, difficult to guard and hold back; it quivers like a fish taken from its watery home and thrown on the dry ground. It wanders at will. Such is the nature of this ultra-subtle mind. It is systematic reflection (yoniso manasikara) that helps the aspirant for enlightenment to quieten the fickle mind. Unless a man cultivates tranquility of mind, concentration cannot be successfully developed. A tranquillized mind keeps away all superficialities and futilities.

It is only when the mind is tranquillized and is kept to the right road of orderly progress that it becomes useful for the individual possessor of it and for society. A disorderly mind is a liability both to the owner of it and for others. All the havoc wrought in the world is wrought by men who have not learned the way of mental calm, balance, and poise. Calmness is not weakness. The calm attitude at all times shows a man of culture. It

is not too hard a task for a man to be calm when all things around him are favorable. But to be composed in mind in the midst of unfavorable circumstances is hard indeed, and it is this difficult quality that is worth achieving; for by such control one builds up strength of character.

The man who cultivates calm of the mind does not get upset, confused or excited when confronted with the eight vicissitudes of the world (atthaloka dhamma). He endeavors to see the rise and fall of all things conditioned, how things come into being and pass away. Free from anxiety and restlessness he will see the fragility of the fragile.

A story in our books tells us how when a mother was asked why she did not lament and feel pain over the death of her beloved son, said: "Uninvited he came, uninvited he passed away, as he came so he went, what use is there in lamenting, weeping, and wailing?" Such is the advantage of a tranquillized mind. It is unshaken by loss or gain, blame and praise, and undisturbed by adversity. This frame of mind is brought about by viewing the sentient world in its proper perspective. Thus calm or passaddhi leads man to enlightenment and deliverance from suffering.

VI

The sixth enlightenment factor is samadhi, concentration. It is only the tranquillized mind that can easily concentrate on a subject of meditation. The calm concentrated mind sees things as they really are (samahito yatha bhutam pajanati). The unified mind brings the five hindrances (pañca nivarana) under subjugation.

Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to a non-flickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind aright and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. Correct practice of samadhi maintains the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance like a steady hand holding a pair of scales. Right concentration dispels passions that disturb the mind, and brings purity and placidity of mind. The concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects; concentration of the highest type cannot be disturbed under the most adverse circumstances.

One who is intent on samadhi should develop a love of virtue, sila, for it is virtue that nourishes mental life, and makes it coherent and calm, equable and full of rich content. The unrestrained mind dissipates itself in frivolous activity.

Many are the impediments that confront a yogi, an aspirant for enlightenment, but there are five particular hindrances that hinder concentrative thought, samadhi, and obstruct the way to deliverance. In the teaching of the Buddha they are known as pañca nivarana, the five hindrances.

The five hindrances are:

1. kamacchanda – sensual desires
2. vyapada – ill-will
3. thinamiddha – obduracy of mind and mental factors
4. uddhaccakukkucca – restlessness and worry
5. vicikiccha – doubt

Seated in a suitable place, the yogi meditator, fixes his mind on a subject of meditation (kammattana) and by struggle and unceasing effort inhibits the five hindrances, and washing out the impurities of his mind-flux, gradually reaches the first, the second, the third and the fourth jhana. Then by the power of samadhi, concentrative thought, thus won, he turns his mind to the understanding of reality in the highest sense. It is at this stage that the yogi cultivates vipassana, intuitional insight. It is through vipassana that one understands the real nature of all component and conditioned things. Vipassana aids one to see things as they truly are. One sees truth face to face and comprehends that all tones are just variations struck on the one chord that runs through all life – the chord which is made up of anicca, dukkha and anatta: impermanence, sorrow, and soullessness.

The yogi gains insight into the true nature of the world he has clung to for so long. With that final catharsis he reaches the state where dawns for him the Light of Nibbana, the Calm beyond words, the unshakable deliverance of the mind (akuppa cetovimutti), and the world holds nothing more for him.

Says the Dhammapada (373), *"To the bhikkhu who has retired to a secluded spot, whose mind is calmed, and who clearly discerns the dhamma, there comes unalloyed joy and happiness transcending that of humans."*

VII

The seventh and the last factor of enlightenment is upekkha, equanimity. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the vicissitudes of life, but the man who cultivates this difficult quality of equanimity is not upset. Refraining from intoxicants and becoming heedful, establishing themselves in patience and purity, the wise train their minds; it is through such training that a quiet mind is achieved.

Mention is made in our books of four wrong paths (cattaro agati). The path of greed (chanda), of hate (dosa), of cowardice (bhaya), of delusion (moha). People commit evil being enticed along one or more of these wrong paths, but the man who has reached perfect neutrality through the cultivation of equanimity always avoids such wrong paths. His serene neutrality enables him to see all beings impartially.

A certain understanding of the working of kamma (actions), and how kamma comes into fruition (kamma-vipaka) is very necessary for one who is genuinely bent on cultivating equanimity. In the light of kamma one will be able to have a detached attitude toward all beings, nay even inanimate things. The proximate cause of equanimity is the understanding that all beings are the result of their actions (kamma).

I have here made an attempt to give a glimpse of the seven enlightenment factors, expounded over 2500 years ago by the Supreme Buddha, for the attaining of full realization and perfect wisdom, of Nibbana, the Deathless. The cultivation or the neglect of these factors of enlightenment is left to each one of us. With the aid of the teaching of the Buddha each one of us has the power to detect and destroy the cause of suffering. Each one individually can put forth the necessary effort to work out his deliverance.

The Buddha has taught us the way to know life as it is, and has furnished the directions for such research by each of us individually. Therefore, we owe it to ourselves to find out for ourselves the truth about life and to make the best of it. We cannot say justifiably that we do not know how to proceed. There is nothing vague in the teaching of the Buddha. All the necessary indications are clear as clear could be. Buddhism from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see, and minds to understand. "So clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood." [24] The only thing necessary on our part for the full realization of the truth is firm determination, endeavor and earnestness to study and apply the teaching, each working it out for himself, to the best of his ability. The dhamma yet beckons the weary pilgrim to the happy haven of Nibbana's security and peace. Let us, therefore, cultivate the seven enlightenment factors with zest and unflagging devotion, and advance.

Editor's Note:- The original article was lengthy and therefore was edited and cut down to size but with all the important points intact. Please refer to the source below for the full and complete article.

Source : <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/piyadassi/wheel001.html>



About Ven Piyadassi : The late Ven Piyadassi Maha Thera was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka and attended Nalanda College and the University of Sri Lanka. In 1934 he ordained under the tutelage of Ven. Vajirañana, Sangha Nayaka, a respected authority on Buddhism. The author of some sixty books, Ven. Piyadassi was a popular television and radio lecturer of Dhamma, both in Sinhala and in English. He represented Sri Lanka at several international religious and cultural conferences.

Feature (Food for Thought)

When the Monks Met the Muslims

BY JOHAN ELVERSKOG OF TRICYCLE BUDDHIST MAGAZINE

In the popular imagination, Buddhism is synonymous with introspective peace, Islam with violent blind faith. But both conceptions are nothing more than Western fantasy. Revisiting the centuries of Buddhist-Muslim cooperative interaction forces us to rethink our stereotypes.

The Buddhist monastery of Nalanda was founded in northeast India in the early 5th century. Over time it became the premier institution of higher learning in Asia and, much like leading universities today, had a world-renowned faculty working on the cutting edge of the theoretical sciences and a student body drawn from across the Buddhist world. This prestige also brought with it ample gifts from the rich and powerful. At its height Nalanda had an extensive faculty teaching a diverse student body of about 3,000 on a beautiful campus composed of numerous cloisters with lofty spires that “resembled the snowy peaks of Mount Sumeru.” Then, suddenly, the serenity of this Buddhist institution was shattered. In the fall of 1202, Muslim soldiers on horses rode in and hacked down teachers and students where they stood. The once majestic buildings were left in ruins: the savagery was so great it signaled the end of Buddhism in India.

This powerful story has been told countless times. Today it is ubiquitous, appearing in everything from scholarly monographs to travel brochures. Indeed, by its sheer pervasiveness, this one episode has in many ways come to encapsulate and symbolize the entire 1,300-year history of Buddhist-Muslim interaction. As a result, anytime the topic of Buddhism and Islam is mentioned it almost invariably revolves around the Muslim destruction of the dharma.

This is problematic for many reasons, not the least being that the story of Nalanda is not true. For example, not only did local Buddhist rulers make deals with the new Muslim overlords and thus stay in power, but Nalanda itself carried on as a functioning institution of Buddhist education for another century. We also know that Chinese monks continued to travel to India and obtain Buddhist texts in the late 14th century. In fact, contrary to the standard idea promoted by the story that Nalanda’s destruction signaled the death of Buddhism, the historical evidence makes clear that the dharma survived in India until at least the 17th century. In other words, Buddhists and Muslims lived together on the Asian subcontinent for almost a thousand years.

Why are these facts not better known? There are numerous possible explanations, ranging from Buddhist prophecies of the decline of the dharma to the problems of contemporary scholarship. However, I find it most fruitful to begin with the power of story. As noted above, the destruction of Nalanda offers us a clear-cut narrative, with good guys and bad. It avoids entirely the complex shades of gray that most often color the messy fabric of history. And this is certainly what the Buddhist historians who cobbled together this story wanted to do as they tried to make sense of the dharma’s demise in India. Rather than explore the complex economic, environmental, political, and religious history of India, or even Buddhism’s institutional problems, it was clearly much easier to simply blame the Muslims.



Thangka of the Footprints of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339). Courtesy Doris Wiener

In this regard the Buddhists established a precedent that was subsequently to drive South Asian history. The British, for example, used the same claims established by Buddhists concerning Muslim barbarity and misrule to justify the introduction of their supposedly more humane and rational form of colonial rule. Indeed, the story of Nalanda was a powerful component of imperial propaganda. In turn, even as Indian nationalists questioned the moral righteousness and glory of the British Raj, they nevertheless maintained the historical model of blaming the Muslims. The humiliating imposition of colonial rule was thus not the result of Indian weakness per se, but rather the fault of the morally inferior, effeminate, and voluptuous Mughals. It is a view that is readily perpetuated in the rhetoric of today’s Hindu nationalists who want to recreate some imagined Hindu utopia by eradicating all traces of Islam in India, by violence if necessary.

This pervasive anti-Muslim view is, of course, not unique to medieval Buddhist and contemporary Hindu historiography. It has also been a part of the Jewish and Christian traditions ever since Muhammad received what Muslims regard as God’s final revelation through the angel Gabriel in the early 7th century. Many scholars have argued in addition that the modern Western construction of itself as the paragon of righteousness was often done at the expense of Islam. Yet even though such “orientalism” has been roundly critiqued by decades of scholarship, these earlier views persist. In fact, the attempts by contemporary scholars and museum curators to overturn such stereotypes by means of books and lavish museum exhibits highlighting Muslim tolerance and periods of Islamic exchange with Christian Europe have been unable to diminish the West’s orientalist fear. Today’s highly charged environment has further obstructed such a reevaluation, no matter how necessary it may be. If we take into consideration all these disparate strands, it is perhaps not at all surprising that the story of Nalanda and the attendant narrative of Islam destroying Buddhism are so readily accepted by Buddhists in much of Asia and the West. To many they just make sense. Moreover, they fit popular preconceptions about two religious traditions: whereas Buddhism is a good, rational philosophy with post-Enlightenment values, Islam is an inherently violent and irrational religion.

In the popular imagination, there are probably no two traditions more different than Buddhism and Islam. One is synonymous with peace, tranquility, and introspection; the other, with violence, chaos, and blind faith. One conjures up images of Himalayan hermitages and Japanese rock gardens; the other, primitive and dirty villages with men brandishing AK 47s as casually as briefcases. While Buddhism is seen as compatible with a modern mind-set, its teachings even in tune with the most pioneering science, Islam is largely looked upon as backward, its teachings and punishments redolent of the Middle Ages. And yet, just like the whole enterprise of orientalism and the construction of Islam as innately evil, this image of Buddhism as the perfect spirituality for the modern age is equally a Western fantasy, a construction of the 19th century. In fact, it was during those heady days of empire and modernity that Buddhism came to be conceived as a philosophy that could solve all the world's problems.

Modern Buddhism had many authors, from British colonial officers to Asian nationalists and from German philosophers to Russian Theosophists. All, however, agreed that this tradition shorn of rituals, doctrines, and communal structures was clearly the spiritual philosophy for the age of secular humanism. Such a philosophy was not what Buddhists in Asia actually practiced, of course, but to the modernizers Buddhism's traditions had lost touch with the true teachings of the Buddha and had instead descended into a morass of ritualism and superstition. It was hardly coincidental that their view dovetailed neatly with Protestant apologetics—namely, that the teachings of Jesus had been deformed by paganism and papism and then redeemed by Martin Luther—as well as with 19th-century debates about Aryans and Semites. It provided a powerful narrative arc and presented Buddhism, seen as the meditative path for individual liberation, as the very antithesis of Islam.

Given the influence of these background elements, it makes sense that so few question the story of Nalanda's destruction. It is a perfect story, with the requisite and familiar actors playing their appropriate roles. Moreover, in recent years this story has emerged as not simply some event long lost in the fog of history, or an abstract frame with which to map and order the chaotic progression of history, but rather as a concrete reality. In March 2001, it played out on television screens around the world when the Taliban used tanks and antiaircraft weapons to demolish the colossal Buddha statues of Bamiyan.

This wanton act of destruction not only reenacted the story of Nalanda but also reaffirmed Western, and often Buddhist, stereotypes. What better image could one have to represent

Buddhist-Muslim history than that group of fanatical Muslim militants senselessly mauling the peaceful and passive representations of the Buddha in the name of Islam? That is invariably how it was presented in the international media. Little thought, however, was given to the possible historical contingencies shaping the event. Perhaps most important, there was little recognition that the statues had until then somehow survived 1,300 years of Muslim rule—another of those inconvenient facts that somehow muddled the story. It was perhaps better not to think about it, since if one did, it opened the door for the whole messy reality of history to come rushing in, which in turn could very well challenge, possibly even shatter, the conventional narrative that has been told over the past millennium.

Over the years, shining a light on the history of Buddhist-Muslim interaction has been a scholarly focus of mine. I have been especially interested in how this history played out along what is often called the Silk Road, or more precisely Inner Asia, the wide swath of territory stretching from Afghanistan to Mongolia.

In the course of studying this often overlooked chapter of human history, I have been intrigued by how both Buddhism and Islam were reshaped by their encounter. A most telling example of this can be found in some of the developments in Mongol Iran, when Muslims started to represent Muhammad in imitation of Buddhist visual culture, and Muslim clerics and Buddhist monks engaged each other in theological discussion that brought to both religious communities new ways of thinking, such as the adoption by Sufis of the Buddhist idea of rebirth. Indeed, it is precisely by exploring the meeting of the two traditions in unconventional spaces—such as Mongol Iran—that many assumptions are challenged. Furthermore, in this way some of the conventional divisions that shape our understanding of the world—such as notions about East and West and the Middle East and East Asia—are revealed as conceptualizations that have often distorted historical realities and our sense of the world, especially our limited views about actual possibilities of cross-cultural understanding.

Far from being diametrically opposite, Buddhism and Islam have much in common, and Buddhist and Muslim thinkers alike have long tried to solve the tensions that arose between their communities. Yet it is clear that the problems of prejudice and suspicion and intolerance still often characterize relations between Islam and Buddhism. Recent theoretical frameworks—such as ecumenicalism, multiculturalism, pluralism, and cosmopolitanism—offer hope, but the fundamental issue of how one should deal with “the other” remains as pressing as ever. How such difference is to be articulated and dealt with is not only an ongoing process but also a fundamental aspect of the human experience. By understanding and challenging the common narrative, which pits the peaceful Buddhists against the militant Muslims—precisely the view used today in Myanmar to justify the genocide by Buddhists of the Rohingya—we can see our way clear to leaving them behind.

In the encounter of Buddhism and Islam there has been and continues to be conflict. But there has also been much else. An appreciation of not only the history of conflict but also that of cross-cultural exchange and understanding overturns the common narrative. And this tells us something about history itself, about its power to reveal truths that have been covered over by prejudice and forgotten because of suspicion of difference.

Adapted from *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, with permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Source : <https://tricycle.org/magazine/monks-met-muslims/>



About Johan Elverskog :
Johan Elverskog is Altshuler University Distinguished Professor and Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University.



Sanctuary for Ali's Footprints, attributed to Aqa Mirak, from A Book of Divination, 1550-1560. © Musées d'art et d'histoire de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques

BMV News & Events Past Events from April to June 2022.

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



Dr Sumana Ratnayaka
(Sri Lanka)

Sun, 24th April

**How to Live a Married
Life According to
Buddhism**



Bhante K Pesala Thera
(Sri Lanka)

Fri, 29th April

Dhammapada
Chapter 1 Verse 7 & 8



Dr Gamini Abhaya(UK)

Fri, 3rd June

How to See the Buddha
- Part 4

Fri, 10th June

How to See the Buddha
- Part 5



**Bhante U.
Swarnajoothi Thera**
(Sri Lanka)

Sun, 12th June

Dhammapada
Chapter 2 Verse 29

B. Live In-Person Dhamma Sharing at BMV



Bhante Dr Candana Thera (USA)

Wed, 11th May - **Samma Ditthi (Right View)** Part 1

Fri, 13th May - **Samma Ditthi (Right View)** Part 2

Fri, 27th May - **How is the Tripitaka Organised**

Sun, 29th May -
**Similarities and Differences Between Buddhism
and Jainism**



Bhante Dr M Uparathana Thera (Sri Lanka)



Tues, 17th May - **The Ideal Lay Practitioner**

Fri, 20th May - **Heedfulness**



Bhante Dr P Yassasi Thera (Sri Lanka)

Wed, 18th May - **Buddhism for Inner Peace**

Sun, 22nd May
10 Buddhist Principles of Leadership



Bhante Dheerananda Thera
(Sri Lanka)

Thurs, 19th May -
7 Factors of Enlightenment

C. Sutta and Meditation Class by Bhante Dr Candana Thera (USA) – Month of June

1. Sat, 4th June - 2-5pm - **Pathama & Dutiya
Niddasa Suttas** : "Measure for True Seniority :
Parts 1&2"

2. Sat, 11th June - 2-5pm - **Ratana Sutta** : "The Jewel Discourse"

3. Sat, 18th June - 2-5pm - **Culagosinga Sutta** : "Shorter Discourse in Gosinga"

4. Sat, 25th June - 2-5pm - **Kummopama Sutta** : "The Turtle Simile"



D. Wesak in Pictures

1. Wesak Eve – 14th May



*Lighting of the First Oil
Lamp by Chief Monk Ven
Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana
Maha Nayaka Thera
accompanied by other
members of the Maha Sangha
and the President of BMV
Mr Sirisena Perera*



*Members of the Maha
Sangha lighting oil lamps
to signify the start of the
Wesak Celebrations*



*Buddha puja and
Blessings*



*Devotees at
the Puja and
Blessing service*



Getting ready for Wesak



Wesak Paparazzi



*Observance of 8 Precepts.
Preceptors with the
monks who conducted the
Programme for the Day.*



Observance of 8 Precepts.



*Aerial view from the
Wisma Dhamma Cakra*

2. Wesak Day – 15th May



*Launch of the Wesak
Celebrations and Hoisting
of the Buddhist Flag*



*The Sri Lankan
High Commissioner
and President of
Buddhist Maha
Vihara jointly
hoisting the
Buddhist flag*



*The Vihara at 7am. Quite a number
of people came very early and by 9am
the temple grounds were filled with
devotees seeking blessings, holy thread
and holy water. A lovely sight after 2
years*



Breakfast Dana



*Flower Stall was
continuously busy with
devotees looking to buy
flowers to offer to the
Buddha.*



*Candles and Joss
stick stall operated
by volunteers with
recycled bags donated
by a well-wisher to be
sold to the public.*



*The Shrine Hall
continuously full but
thankfully for the
volunteers, everything
was under control.
Grateful thanks to
the Maha Sangha
who arrived from Sri
Lanka to assist.*



*Observance of
8 Precepts. The
Programme
consisting of
Dhamma talks,
meditation and
chanting of suttas
was conducted by
the monks in this
picture.*



*BMS Buddhist Books
Counter*



*Bangladeshi
devotees celebrating
Wesak at BMV*



*Senior monks from
Sri Lanka arrived to
conduct Dhamma talks
and Meditation for 2
weeks before and after
Wesak.*



*The numerous Flower
Bouquets sponsored for Wesak
and placed before the century
old brass image from the
Pagoda brought to the foyer of
the Wisma Dhamma Cakra*

3. A Big Thank you to all our Wesak Volunteers



Our apologies as we could not fit in all pictures of volunteers

BMV News & Events

E. Games of Business Finance & Strategy – 18th June

Twenty members of the Sasana Society, Siri Jayanthi Association, Malaysian Sinhalese Association, BMV Sunday School (BISDS) and BMV Admin staff attended the above programme in the form of board games conducted by corporate trainer Mr Philip Moey at BMV premises. This programme is the first of future non-spiritual training programmes to be organized by Sasana Society to enhance and elevate the life skills of members of our Buddhist and Sinhala Community.



Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School (BISDS)

On Sunday, 24th April 2022, BISDS celebrated its "Devotion Day" online. "Devotion Day" is to impart to our Sunday School students the significance of the Wesak celebration and to let the students know how to celebrate this very auspicious Buddhist Tri-Sacred day in a more appreciative way. About 20 students were celebrating this significant day together.

Sister Lai Yi was the emcee of the day. She led the students by taking refuge in The Triple Gem and observing the 5 precepts. Their curiosity was piqued by the meaning of this significant day. Sister Lai Yi continued explaining the significance of the celebration.

The children listened attentively to Sister Jess's explanation of the Noble Eightfold Path demonstrated by showing them a diagram. She shared some simple examples about the eight elements and divided them for easy understanding into The Threefold Way: ethics, meditation, and wisdom.

There were interactive sessions where students were given examples of how to apply the Noble Eightfold Path in their daily lives. The students were asked to color the Dhamma Wheel and name the Eightfold Wheel. Each student was given 30 minutes to complete the task. They were thrilled to show their coloring. Before proceeding with the Storytelling session, some group photos were taken.



The animation showed The Life of the Buddha during Sister Wendy's storytelling session. Born into a luxurious family and raised by a king, Siddhartha Gautama was sheltered from the outside world by his father. When he grew up, he got married and had a child. One day, he decided to leave the palace after seeing an old man, a sick man, a dead person, and a monk.

Gautama left home in search of the truth. While sitting and meditating under a Bodhi tree, he became enlightened, free from desires and sufferings. He then became a Buddha, which means "The Fully Enlightened One". Upon attaining his final liberation (Mahaparinibbana), the Buddha's message was that his teachings, the Dhamma, will continue to be a guiding light and spread all over the world with many disciples.

To ensure that the students understood and were able to summarize the story, Sister Wendy asked a few questions in response to the stories that were shared earlier in the session.

The session ended with a Reflection and Sharing of Merits by Sister Jean. Indeed, we had a memorable sharing experience benefitting all, especially the students on how to celebrate Wesak Day in a more meaningful way.

Thanks to the teachers and students for actively participating in this event.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

By Sis Wendy Chiam

PEN PORTRAITS



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

No 50. Seludaiyi – A learned Brahmin who followed the Buddha

Seludaiyi was a citizen of Hansawathie in the Dispensation of Buddha Padumuttara at a time beyond human reckoning. He was attracted by the crowds paying homage to the Buddha. He followed suit and saw his counterpart in the company of the Blessed One. He forthwith resolved to be such an Arahant. Accordingly, he gave alms. He was assured by the Blessed One that his wish would be fulfilled in this Dispensation. His life was on an even tenor.

In this last life, he was born in a wealthy and an influential family. He also became a learned man. He probed to the utmost depth of Vedic lore. Thus he became highly proficient.

Seludaiyi proceeded to meet Gautama Buddha when the Buddha Himself set forth to convert Kassapa at Uruwela, who was intoxicated by the might of a huge following while His disciples went to other neighbouring countries. The Buddha told them "Go ye forth, Oh Bhikkhus. Preach the Dhamma glorious in the beginning, its progress and in the end, for the welfare and happiness of men. Let not two go together".

Upon meeting the Blessed One, it was insight at first sight for Seludaiyi when he heard the Law. He was ready for the call. He soon became an Arahant.

No 51. Bhaddali – A weakling that the Buddha converted

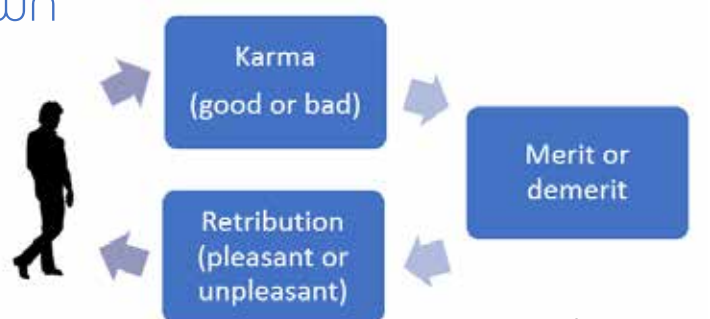
Bhaddali learnt that the Buddha was supreme and that His sermons lacked nothing in substance and form. The pupil got ordination from the Master. Since the assurance he received from the Buddha Padumuttara, he enjoyed every conceivable comfort in every plane of mortal existence. In his last life, the good Kamma that he had sown in the past gathered momentum and he was able to get rid of every defilement in a short time.

One day at Jetavanarama, the Buddha preached the precept of not taking any solid food after the sun is past the meridian, a practice which became the sixth precept of the Uposatha Sila. The Blessed One extolled the many benefits that one could derive by observing this precept. He said the body became light and buoyant and could be singularly free from disease. Even a layman observing it would reap its benefit especially if Uposatha Sila was observed on poya days. To Bhaddali, however, this proved a hurdle. The Blessed One suggested a compromise by partaking a portion of the meal he received by going on rounds (Pindapata) but even this was difficult for Bhaddali. The precept was too much for him and so he crept into obscurity.

The Buddha was preparing to go on a tour after the 'Vas' season. Vas means staying in during the rainy season of three months. The Bhikkhus were getting ready to offer a robe to the Blessed One. They had to get the cloth, wash and cut it before stitching and dyeing it. It involved much labour. All the while, Bhaddali, who was a spectator came out of his seclusion and joined the Bhikkhus as his conscience was pricking him. He received a hint or two. He picked up sufficient courage to go before the Blessed One. He implored the Buddha to forgive him as he had committed an error. It was a confession. He saw the error of his ways. The Buddha readily forgave him. He became a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

Feature

All Living Beings Have Kamma as their Own



By R.A. Nalinie Janis

Kamma is the law of moral causation. Rebirth is its corollary. Both Kamma and Rebirth are interrelated, fundamental doctrines in Buddhism.

What is the cause of the inequality that exists amongst mankind? How do we account for the unevenness in this ill-balanced world? Either there is a definite cause for this inequality or there is not. If there is not, the inequality is purely accidental. No sensible person would think of attributing this inequality to blind chance or pure accident. The majority of mankind attributes this inequality to a single cause such as the will of a Creator. The Buddha explicitly denies the existence of a Creator as an Almighty Being or as a causeless cosmic force.

The Culakammavibhanga Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya 135 states that once the Buddha was residing in Jetavana monastery, when the Brahmin student, Subha, Todeyya's son approached the Buddha. He asked the Buddha, "What is the cause, Master Gotama, what is the reason that we find amongst mankind the short-lived and long-lived, the healthy and the diseased, the ugly and beautiful, those lacking influence and the powerful, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born, and the ignorant and the wise?"

The Buddha replied: "All living beings have actions (Kamma) as their own, their inheritance, their congenital cause, their kinsman, their refuge. It is Kamma that differentiates beings into low and high states."

The Buddha then explained the cause of such differences by the law of cause and effect. Certainly, we are born with hereditary characteristics. At the same time, we possess certain innate abilities that science cannot adequately account for. The accumulated karmic tendencies, inherited in the course of previous lives, at times play a far greater role than the hereditary parental cells and genes in the formation of both physical and mental characteristics.

Take some woman or man who kills living creatures. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in hell. If they're not reborn in hell, but return to the human realm, then wherever they're reborn they're short-lived. Killing living creatures is the path leading to a short lifespan.

But they who give up killing living creatures. They abstain from killing. They're kind and compassionate towards all living beings. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in a heavenly realm. If they're not reborn in a heavenly realm, but return to the human realm, then wherever they're reborn they're long-lived. Not killing living creatures is the path leading to a long lifespan.

Some women or men habitually hurt living creatures. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss or if they return to the human realm, they're sickly.

But those who do not habitually hurt living creatures, after their death, they're reborn in a heavenly realm or if they return to the human realm, they're healthy.

Take some woman or man who is irritable and bad-tempered. Even when lightly criticized they lose their temper and display annoyance and hate. Due to this deed, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss or if they return to the human realm, they're ugly.

But take some woman or man who isn't irritable and bad-tempered. Even when heavily criticized, they don't lose their temper or display annoyance and hate. Due to this deed, after death, they're reborn in a heavenly realm or if they return to the human realm, they're lovely.

Take some woman or man who doesn't give to charity. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss or if they return to the human realm, they're poor.

But for those who do give to charity, after their death, they're reborn in a heavenly realm or if they return to the human realm, they're rich.

Take some woman or man are obstinate and vain. They don't rise for those who are worthy of offering, honour, respect or venerate them. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss or if they return to the human realm, they're reborn in a low-class family.

But some are not obstinate and vain. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death, they're reborn in a heavenly realm or if they return to the human realm, they're reborn in an eminent family.

Dhammapada Verse 126
Manikarakulupaka Tissatthera Vatthu

*Gabbhameke uppajjanti
nirayam papakammino
saggam sugatino yanti
parinibbanti anasava*

Some are reborn as human beings, the wicked are reborn in a place of continuous torment (niraya). The righteous go to the deva world, and those who are free from moral intoxicants (viz., the arahats) realize Nibbana.

While residing at the Jetavana monastery, the Buddha uttered the above Dhammpada Verse (126) with reference to Thera Tissa. Here is the story of Thera Tissa depicting how each being had to go through certain situations in life and how Kamma takes its course.

Once there was a Gem Polisher whose family offered alms-food to a certain monk every day. One morning, as the monk was entering their house to accept his almsfood, a messenger from the king's palace arrived with a giant ruby for the gem polisher to work on. As the gem polisher had been in the kitchen handling some raw meat when the messenger arrived, the stone was covered in blood when he put it on a table before going into the kitchen to get some food for the monk. Their pet bird, in the meantime, thinking that the blood-stained ruby was food, picked it with its beak and swallowed it before the monk could prevent it from doing so.

When the gem polisher came back into the room, he immediately noticed that the ruby was gone. He asked his wife, and then the monk if they had taken it, but they said no. The gem polisher assumed it must have been the monk since he was the last one seen in the room with the ruby. The monk knew that if he had told the gem polisher that the bird had swallowed the ruby, the gem polisher would have killed the bird. Since the monk did not want to take part in the evil act of killing, he was

silent. The gem polisher decided to beat the truth out of the monk, but his wife, would not let him do it. She warned him that the consequences of causing harm to a noble one would be worse than the punishment he could receive from the king.

The gem polisher, however, was too furious to listen to his wife. He tied up the monk and beat him severely until blood started flowing from his head. Attracted by the sight of the blood, the curious bird flew toward the monk, where it received a stray blow and fell dead. Only then, did the monk tell the gem polisher that it was the bird that had swallowed the ruby.

The gem polisher quickly cut open the bird and found that the monk was indeed telling him the truth. Realizing his mistake, he trembled with fear and pleaded for the monk's forgiveness. The monk replied that he felt no ill-will towards him for it was a debt that had to be repaid due to mistakes in his past lives. The bird was reborn as a child to the gem polisher and his wife as the bird had strong attachments to the couple. The monk then succumbed to his wounds and died, passing away into Parinibbana since he was already an Arahant. As for his wife, she was reborn in one of the deva worlds. When the gem polisher himself died, he was reborn in hell.

From here we can conclude from the story how some were reborn as a human being, some reborn in hell, the righteous are reborn in heaven, and those free from defilements attain Nibbana. Therefore, as long as we are in this Samsaric cycle, and have not attained any of the 4 stages of Awakening, we may be reborn in any one of the 31 planes of existence comprising 20 planes of supreme deities (Brahmas); 6 planes of deities (Devas); the human plane (Manussa); and lastly 4 planes of deprivation or unhappiness (Apaya) depending on our wholesome and unwholesome deeds.

Therefore, we should always radiate loving-kindness (Metta) to all beings, whatever living beings there may be; whether they are weak or strong, omitting none, the great or the mighty, medium, short or small, the seen and the unseen, those living near and far away, those born and to-be-born. May all beings be well and happy. The 11 benefits of practicing Metta are 1) Sleeps easily. 2) Wake easily. 3) Have pleasant dreams. 4) Dear to everyone. 5) Dear to Devas (gods or angels) and animals 6) Devas will protect you. 7) External dangers, such as poisons, weapons, and fire, will not harm you. 8) Good complexion. 9) Mind immediately becomes calm. 10) Dies with a clear mind. 11) Dies in peace.

Source:

1. "The Buddha and His Teachings" by Ven Narada Maha Thera Ch18 – Kamma
http://www.buddhism.org/Sutras/BuddhaTeachings/page_18.html

2. Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta: The Shorter Exposition of Kamma
<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.135.nymo.html>



About Nalinie Janis : Nalinie was a Sunday School teacher at BISDS, Buddhist Maha Vihara for 10 years. She was also Youth Coordinator for the Youth Section in Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Buddhism from Buddhist & Pali University, Sri Lanka and a certificate in Buddhist Psychology, Psychotherapy & Counselling from Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka. Nalinie also conducts Dhamma discussion on a regular basis among Buddhist groups.

The Last 10km Stretch of a 1000km Dhamma Walk in Penang

(A personal account and experience by Paolo Coluzzi)

Dhutanga is an old Buddhist tradition of self-development through the practice of walking. Walking is in fact what the Buddha did almost non-stop (apart from the rainy seasons) ever since his Enlightenment in Bodhgaya until his Parinirvana in Kushinagar. Walking is the best exercise to keep healthy, and if done with mindfulness it can also help our Buddhist practice greatly. Through walking we can also discover the world around us, we can meet people, we can relax our restless minds.

Social Interest

Two Theravada monks, Phra Ajahn Khemmacaro and Phra Cheng Sanjato, led a score of devotees on this long walk of actually about 1200 km from Ulu Tiram, Johor, all the way to Perlis and then back to Penang, where three of my friends and I joined another hundred or so Buddhist devotees to walk the last stretch of the walk. The latter, organized by the United Buddhist Order of Malaysia, had started on the 2nd of November 2021 and was finally winding up on the 20th of February 2022.

Our short Buddhist 'adventure' began on Saturday the 21st of February at six o'clock in the morning, when my three Malaysian Buddhist friends came and pick me up where I live in PJ. I must admit, for a night owl like me it wasn't easy to get up so early, but this time it was definitely worth it. In the darkness of that early time, we took the Federal Highway and headed towards the Expressway northbound to Penang. About one hour after the departure the first light of the day appeared on the eastern horizon behind the silhouette of the Titiwangsa chain, and after a short toilet stop we reached Ipoh, our first destination,



*Bhante Thitavijo of Chinaraj Cave
having his Dana*

shortly after eight o'clock. In fact, we had planned to offer dana to Bhante Thitavijo, the abbot of Chinaraj Cave, one of the many cave temples that can be found under the huge Karst boulders that surround Ipoh. In the past, I had visited Perang Tong and Sam Poh Tong, both beautiful Mahayana cave temples, but this was the first Theravada cave I was going to see thanks to my friends. When we arrived, Bhante Thitavijo had already started his morning chanting, followed by five or six devotees. We sat down

on the floor behind them and tried to follow the beautifully chanted suttas. About forty minutes later it was over – time to offer the dana, one by one, bowing in front of the monk. After that we did some guided meditation and listened to a Dhamma talk on mindfulness, after which time came for the abbot to enjoy his breakfast. At that point we were invited to cross the cave to reach the other end, where we found a beautiful pond surrounded by vegetation and high rocks. The pond, shimmering with the light of the sun, was full of cat fish that voraciously ate the food that we had been given to feed them. Then we headed back to the temple to partake of the dana food left, after which we took leave from the abbot.

A few minutes later we were back on the Expressway heading once again towards Penang, our final destination, which we reached a couple of hours later, at about one o'clock. Time for lunch in a market and then off to the camping site we had booked for two nights, located on the slope of the hills facing the Strait of Malacca in the southwestern part of the Island of Penang. An amazingly beautiful location, thick vegetation all around and the constant view of the sea and a small island on the western horizon. There was also a small waterfall with several pools of fresh water at a ten-minute walk from the common area (a few tables and chairs under a large roof). Simple and cheap accommodation amid nature, which, we believed, went nicely with something like a Dhutanga walk. Only one drawback, though, a big one for me – the heat! After putting up our tents, I realized it was so hot at that time of the day that it was impossible to take a nap inside the tent, something I really needed after sleeping so little the night before. Luckily some hammocks were available, hanging between some trees and under the roof of the common area. I could not really sleep, but at least I tried to rest, and went to bed as early as I could in the evening, in order to be in full shape for the 10-kilometre walk that awaited us the following morning.

Sunday morning, the alarm clock went off at 4.30 am! I was a bit sleepy, but very excited for the walk that was expected to begin two hours later. After a quick coffee, we drove to the new Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Bridge (the new bridge) linking the mainland to the island of Penang, where the two monks and a few other devotees were going to begin the walk. The rest of the walkers and I were actually going to start three kilometres further north along the east coast, but one of my three friends had been given permission to start her walk from there. So we dropped her and drove on to the parking area near the starting point, and then walked the kilometre or so along the coastal path separating us from the small canopies that had been put up by the organizers, just in front of Jerejak Island that stood out in the dark sea a couple of kilometres away. Our names were checked and we got our stickers, and then it was just a matter of waiting for the monks. I was surprised to see so many bikers and joggers running at that early time, but I thought it was so good they could enjoy that safe path winding along the shore all the way to Georgetown, with the constant view of the sea and the mainland opposite.

Shortly before seven o'clock, but fifteen minutes behind schedule, there they came! The two monks in the lead and the devotees behind, striding fast. My friends, I and all the other walkers joined them behind, some, like my friends, trying to catch up with the monks, others, like me, walking at their own pace, neither too fast nor too slow. "It's ten kilometres", I thought, "I don't want to get too tired and, most of all,

I want to enjoy this beautiful walk, observing and being mindful of everything that surrounds me".

And so I strode on, as the eastern horizon got brighter and brighter until the sun peeked behind the cityscape on the opposite shore. At that time the temperature was perfect, the light not too strong, and the colours that surrounded me, the blue of the sea and the sky and the green of the vegetation, made me feel so good and full of life. It was a walk of Buddhist mindfulness, but for me it was also a walk of discovery, a new beautiful place that I was enjoying even more after two years of pandemic and very few opportunities for travelling in Malaysia, and none abroad (I haven't seen my family and friends in Europe for nearly three years now!)... Along the way we also saw one of the old ferries run aground near the shore, a sad view for me who have always enjoyed so much the ferry ride between Butterworth and Georgetown that has now been sadly disrupted, probably deemed too slow for this frenzy modern world...

After one hour or so we reached the older first Penang Bridge, lighted by the early morning sun. We crossed underneath it and walked on. At times the path moved away from the shore, and we found ourselves surrounded by buildings or vegetation; at other times we had to walk along the busy main road, but then there it was again, the beautiful sea to our right, as calm as a millpond, a big azure blanket with thousands of glittering sequins woven into it. About two hours after departure I finally reached the 'finish line', our final destination, a big canopy erected next to a McDonalds in front of the sea, near Karpal Singh Drive, in the southern outskirts of Georgetown. My friends were already there, and after a while the remaining walkers arrived. We were welcome with a lion dance and were given water to drink, a sweet bun and a certificate of attendance, and then were invited to sit under the canopy for the closing ceremony. I felt so good to have had this opportunity, to have made it without any problems.

At the end of the ceremony we were offered fresh coconuts and then we called a grab to get back to the parking place where we had left our car. Lunch time was getting close, so we decided to drive all the way to Kampong Jalan Baru, a rural fishing village near the west coast, to the north of our camping site. The purpose was to try Ah Huat Pek stall, a simple Chinese restaurant famous for its hor kar sai, a very tasty deep fried hor fun. After lunch, after a brief detour to Malindo beach, (actually more of a mangrove coastal area than a beach), we returned to the camping site, which, being Sunday, was by now almost empty. The afternoon was spent very much like the previous day, trying to rest a bit and enjoying the nature around, including the small waterfall. As the sun began to sink towards the sea, the sky started to turn red, finally blossoming into a stunning sunset... Dinner was nasi goreng and grilled salmon.

The following day we had planned to go and offer dana again in a nearby temple, but again I was so tired that I decided to skip it and sleep on a little more. I felt a bit sorry, but the journey ahead was going to be long and I wanted to be in good shape. After getting up and folding my tent, I waited for my friends to come back. Once everybody was ready, we had a quick lunch and then off we went, back to Kuala Lumpur! With only one stop to rest and have something to drink, we reached Kuala Lumpur under heavy rain at about five o'clock in the afternoon. That was the end of a tiring but truly beautiful and inspiring Buddhist weekend.



*On the last stretch of 10km
Dhamma Walk*



About Paolo Coluzzi : Paolo is an Associate Professor at the University of Malaya KL where he teaches Italian and sociolinguistics. He first became interested in Buddhism at the age of 17. It is a fascination which has deepened over the years, thanks to contact with the many monks, Dharma experts and fellow-travellers he has encountered on his journeys. His first book on Buddhism, 'Buddhism and Pilgrimage', a personal account of his expedition to Buddhism's four most important pilgrimage sites, came out in September 2021. He also contributes to the online magazine *The Elephant Journal*.

Projects

LEND A HAND

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



Buddha Frieze for the sponsorship @ Meditation Pavilion, BMV

Seated Buddha Frieze

RM 18,000 each

30 statues left to be sponsored

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

General Items for Temple and Devotees' Use

Items displayed are for illustration purpose only



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

Estimated Cost : RM25,730



Meditation cushion with cushion

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

Small 10 x 14 x 46mm

@ RM55 x 106 nos = RM5,830

Total Estimated Cost : RM 10,120



Wireless Head Set
Microphone

Balance Required :
RM2,300



Mobile Stage with
Skirting and Staircase

Estimated Cost :
RM7,700



Microphone System

Estimated Cost : RM4,800



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

Estimated Cost : RM9,500



10-seater Round
Tables (50 tables)

Estimated Cost :
RM9,000

Vehicle for Transport



Balance Required: RM77,500

WISMA DHAMMA CAKRA

8 Lotus Pillars available for sponsorship at

RM25,000 each.

Each pillar is named after the Buddha's
core teachings

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

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

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



Dhammacakra Wheel
Balance Required:
RM100,000

CONTACT BMV ADMIN OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE

Account Name:

Buddhist Maha Vihara

Account Number: 292-00-01161-8

Bank: Hong Leong Bank

TEL: 03 - 2274 1141 / 011- 2689 6123

eMAIL: info@buddhistmahavihara.org

Tax Exempt Receipts can be issued for sponsorship

Partial Sponsorship

Names of Sponsors for Amounts RM500 and above

For sponsorship of 10-seater round tables

Yong Tian Shin - RM1,000

Tan Huey Kuan - RM1,000

Er Cheong Bank - RM500

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

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

Buddhist Maha Vihara (Established in 1894)

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

Religious Activities

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



Socio-Welfare Activities

Weekly Feeding the Homeless and Needy

Festive Season Midnight Aid Distribution to the Homeless

Grocery Aid Distribution to Welfare Homes and Orang Asli Settlements

Weekly Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic

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

Education Programme

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

Systematic tertiary Buddhist education.

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

Dharma for the Deaf class since 1999

VISION

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

MISSION

To provide a conducive environment to:

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

Six Strategic Objectives

To be the Buddhist center of choice for:

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

Four Ennoblers

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

Motto

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

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Mon - Sun

- 6.30am - 7.30am
- 11.30am - 12.00noon
- 7.30pm - 8.30pm

Daily Morning Buddha Puja
Daily Noon Buddha Puja
Daily Evening Buddha Puja

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon, Wed, Thurs

- 8.00pm - 10.00pm

Tues

- 10.30am - 12.00noon
- 8.30pm - 10.00pm

Thurs

- 7.30pm - 9.00pm

Fri

- 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Sat

- 8.00pm - 9.30pm
- 8.30am - 10.30am
- 10.30am - 11.30am
- 2.00pm - 7.00pm
- 7.30pm - 8.30pm
- 8.30am - 9.30am
- 9.30am - 11.00am
- 9.30am - 12.00noon
- 10.00am - 11.30am
- 10.00am - 2.00pm

Sun

- 11.00am - 12.30pm
- 1.30pm - 5.00pm

- 2.00pm - 7.00pm
- 3.00pm - 4.30pm
- 5.00pm

Meditation Class

Senior Club Yoga for Beginners

Qigong Practise

Senior Club Yoga for Intermediate

Afternoon Puja & Talk

Dhamma Talk

Qigong Practise

Tai Chi Practise

Degree & Master's in Buddhism Classes

Bojjhanga Puja

Morning Puja

Abhidamma Class

Sunday Dhamma School for Children & for Adults

Dhamma Talk

Traditional Chinese Medicine (Every Sunday except Public Holiday)

Pali / Sutta Class

Sinhala Language Classes

Sinhala Cultural Dance Classes

Diploma & Degree in Buddhism Classes

Dhamma for the Deaf (fortnightly)

Feeding the Needy and Homeless

You can donate towards our many projects :

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

Payments can be made via :

BMV Office Counter : Cash, cheques & credit cards

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

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

BMV Statement of Accounts :

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

We accept VISA and MASTERCARD for donations. Thank You.

Donations to Buddhist Maha Vihara operations are tax exempt.

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

PLEASE BEWARE OF UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS SOLICITING DONATIONS.

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

BMV OFFICE HOURS

MON – SAT : 9.00 am - 9.00 pm

SUN & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS : 9.00 am - 5.00 pm



BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA

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www.bisds.org