

Vesak 2018

Windsor Buddhist

Vihara

Windsor, Ontario

Canada



VESAK MAGAZINE - 2018

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WINDSOR BUDDHIST VIHARA

(Center for Meditation and Inner Peace Development)

**COME, LISTEN AND LEARN TO RELAX IN
A SERENE ENVIRONMENT**

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Summer Meditation Classes (One month)

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Conducting of traditional ceremonies

Individual counseling

Coordination with community organizations

ALL ARE WELCOME

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Message from Chief Monk

The Vesak is an important day for millions of many Buddhist followers everywhere in the world. We all remember the main three events happened in the life of the Buddha and commemorate due respect for his great and noble qualities. The enlightened one has given the world very pure and clear path to find happiness in every life. The Windsor Buddhist Vihara celebrates that very important day practicing the Dhamma with many different activities.

The Buddha preached the Dhamma to the world with enormous compassion on becoming a Buddha at the foot of the Bodhi tree, so that all living beings may live in happiness.

When the Buddha thought about the questions of to whom should the Dhamma be preached and who will understand it the following concerns arose in his mind.

“Enough with teaching the Dhamma, that even I found had to reach; For it will never be perceived by those who live in lust and hate.” “Those dyed in lust, wrapped in darkness, will never discern this abstruse Dhamma, Which goes against the worldly stream, subtle, deep and difficult to see. “

(The Middle Length Ariyapariyesana Sutta)

Then the Buddha having surveyed the world and found that there are indeed a group of people who will make good use of the Dhamma, preached the Dhamma, having great compassion for all its inhabitants.

Those who do not understand the basis of the Dhamma, view it in the wrong light and as such do not live in the Dhamma or follow in its path thus do not benefit from its radiance and its message of happiness.

Bhikkhus, one who misunderstands the Dhamma does not gain by it and so one should know it and comprehend it correctly. He illustrated this by the following idiom.

“Suppose a man needing a snake, seeking a snake, wandering in search of a snake, saw a large snake and grasped its coils or its tail. It would turn back on him and bite his hand or his arm or one of his limbs, and because of that he would come to death or deadly suffering.”

“Why is that? Because of his wrong grasp of the snake”

(The Middle Length Alagaddupama Sutta)

Similarly, if one does not use the teachings of the Buddha in the correct manner or does not examine the Dhamma with intelligence or learns the dhamma with the intention of debating others or learns purely for the sake of escaping other religious traditions, he will not gain by the learning of the dhamma. In such situations of wrongly grasping the teachings, they will be misguided and subject to suffering for a long time. The reason for this being the wrongful grasp of the Dhamma.

So it is apparent that the Buddha has this valuable advice for us worldly beings – the Dhamma is not for the purpose of argument and debate but for the purpose of making our lives happier and fulfilling. On this all-important Vesak day think of what we have to discover and develop as disciples of the Buddha. Real happiness can be enjoyed if you are on the right path.

May you be well and happy !!!

Bhante Rahula

Abbot of Windsor Buddhist Vihara

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REALITY

Everyone's **perception** is different

Everyone's **sensation** is different

Everyone's **mental formation** is different

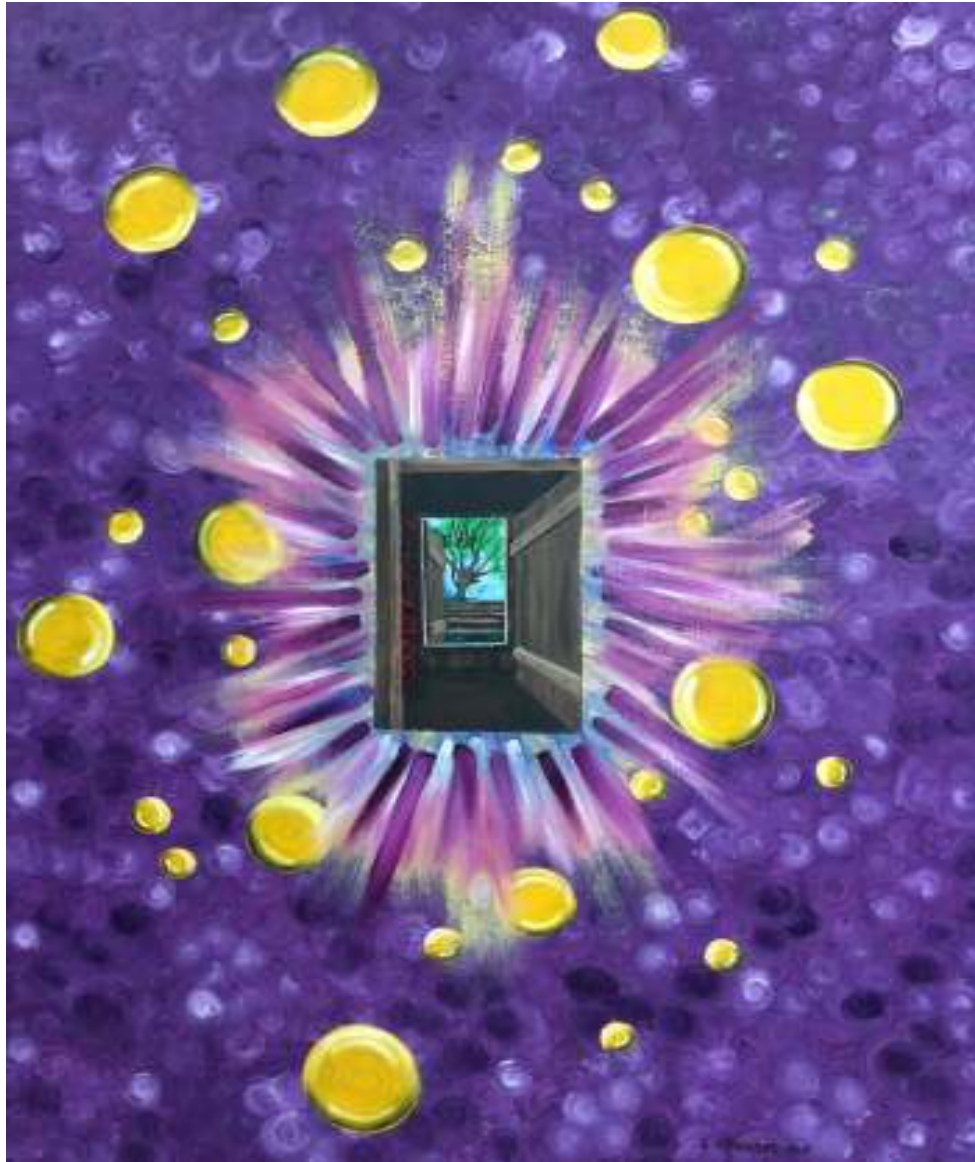
Everyone's **attitude** is different

PURPOSE OF MAGAZINE

Explore and share the above reality in the context of the Buddha Teaching.

Editor

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Open yourself
Shine forth

Poetry and Artwork by Shawn O'Rourke

A BUDDHIST

Kalana Dissanayake

WHO IS A BUDDHIST?

A Buddhist experiences reality in every moment.

A Buddhist lives with reality in every moment.

WHAT IS REALITY?

Everything is changing in every moment.

Nothing is in self.

Expectations are not fulfilling all the time.

WHO ARE YOU?

You have tangible parts (body) and non-tangible part (mind)

Your body does not exist without the mind.

The Mind exists association with blood inside the heart and it active momentarily with six senses
{eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch, mind itself}.

Mind is a culprit which always controls you You can control it with mindfulness.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is awareness of what you think and does in every moment of your life.

The Mind can discipline with great effort and determination.

HOW CAN MIND DISCIPLINE?

Practice the Eight Fold Path.

Experience the Eight Fold Path.

Realize the Eight Fold Path.

WHAT IS EIGHT FOLD PATHS?

Right View

Understanding of suffering

Understanding its truth

Understanding the way to its cease

Right Intention

Intention of renunciation

Intention of goodwill

Intention of harmlessness

Right Speech

Abstaining from false speech

Abstaining from slanderous speech

Abstaining from harsh speech

Abstaining from idle talk

Right Action

- Abstaining from taking life
- Abstaining from stealing
- Abstaining from sexual misconduct

Right Livelihood

- Giving up wrong livelihood
- One earns, one's living by right form of livelihood

Right Effort

- Prevent the existing unwholesome state
- Abandon unwholesome state that already arisen
- Arise wholesome state not yet arisen
- Maintain and perfect wholesome state arisen

Right Mindfulness

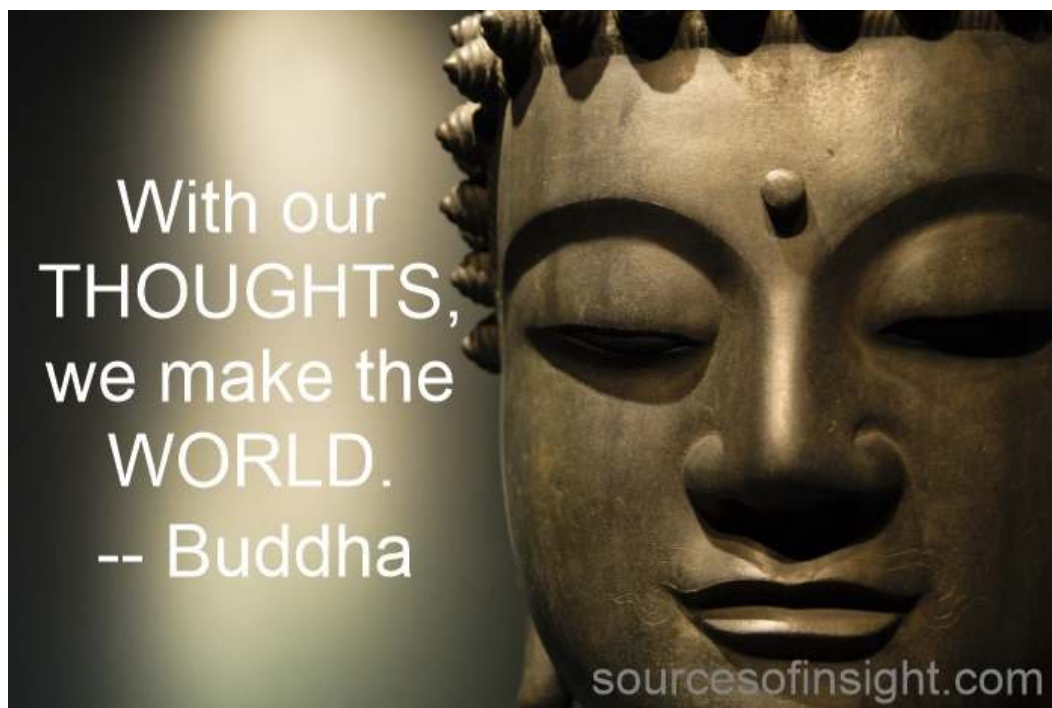
- Mindful contemplation of body
- Mindful contemplation of feeling
- Mindful contemplation of mind
- Mindful contemplation of phenomena

Right Concentration

- Four absorptions (jhana) and elimination of five hindrances (sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restless and remorse, sceptical doubt)

WHAT IS OUTCOME?

Happiness, HappinessEndless Happiness.....End of Craving, End of Rebirth.



Mind boggling mind?

Cyril Weeratunge

When we say it is mind boggling we mean it is extremely surprising and difficult to understand or imagine. It may be intellectually overwhelming. So, we may say never mind.

When you no longer want people to pay attention to whatever you previously said or asked you may say never mind.

Thoughts occur so naturally and automatically that we are oriented to see them not only as a part of ourselves, but as ourselves. We become so closely identified with our thoughts that we often believe there is no separation: Our thoughts are us and we are our thoughts. And yet, the reality is that we produce our thoughts. They are mental creations generated in our minds. When someone suggests us to be mindful, we try to incorporate it into our thought process. We also tend to believe in the inherent accuracy of our thoughts: "I think it, therefore it is true." Assuming our thoughts are facts—that they are true and valid without examination—is one of the reasons we can find ourselves out of balance mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

When I was living in a small city in British Columbia, I recall a woman with ear buds on and listening to music while waiting to cross a road. As soon as the car crossed in front of her she walked right between the car & trailer unaware that the car was pulling a trailer. She died instantly. The RCMP officer who came to investigate the accident was her husband! How many die trying to take selfies & driving while texting? I am sure they didn't think anything bad will happen to them or others because of their actions. That is their mind set!

What did Buddha say about the mind?

Buddha asked his followers to come and explore what he found (Ehipassiko). He emphasized to the devotees to develop their minds to seek the TRUTH. He is the only religious leader who said that there is much more to just plain heaven & hell. There are thirty-one distinct "planes" or "realms" of existence into which beings can be reborn during their long wandering through Samsara. These range from the extraordinarily grim and painful hell realms all the way up to the most exquisitely refined and blissful heaven realms. Existence in every realm is temporary. in Buddhist cosmology there is no eternal heaven or hell. Beings are born into a particular realm according to their past **Kamma** (actions). When they pass away, they take rebirth once again elsewhere according to the quality of their Kamma: wholesome actions bring about a favorable rebirth, while unwholesome actions lead to an unfavorable one. And so the wearisome cycle continues. 2600 years ago, Buddha said that there are billions and billions of planetary systems/galaxies. Scientists are just beginning to learn about their existence now. It is indeed mind boggling to think about it & is of no value to us, especially when our own lives are uncertain. Instead Buddha suggested to develop the mind to get out of this cycle of birth & death, which is a result of our attachments. Be mindful!

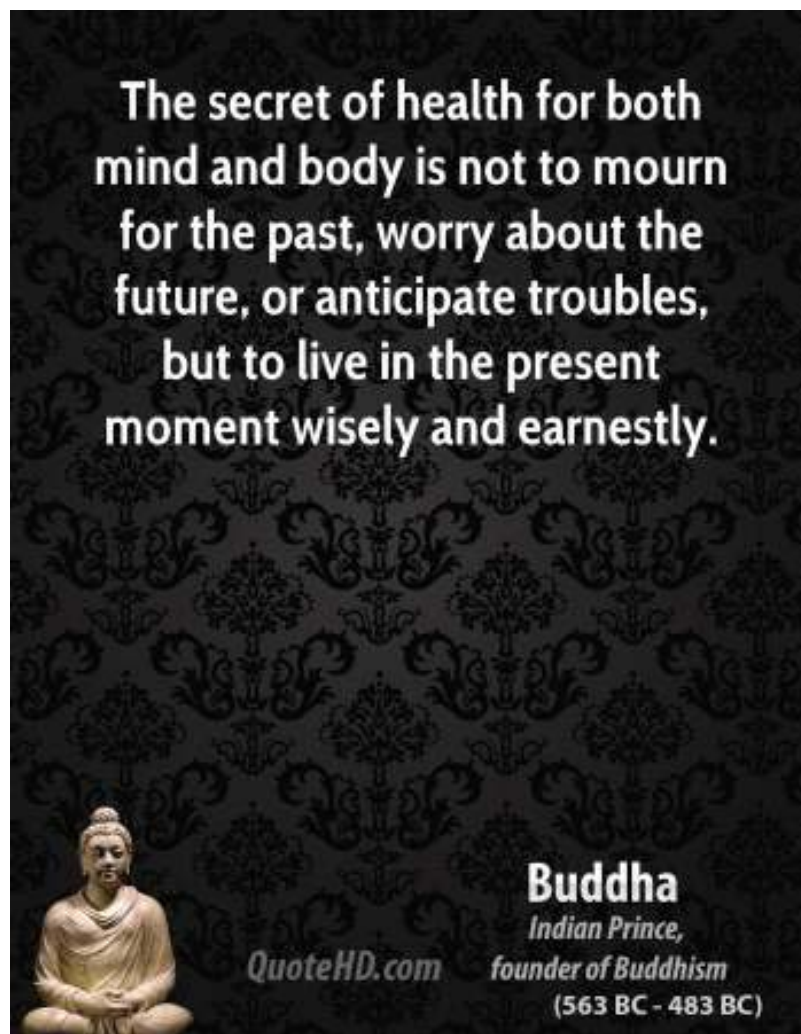
Why should we develop the mind?

Our minds are bombarded with information from the time since we are born, in fact even in the womb. Our five senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue & body) receive the information from outside sources. Some bring happiness (acceptance), others bring unhappiness (discontentment) and while some are neutral. Some of this information we remember very well and could recall instantly while others may be recalled with little bit of thinking and while others none at all. If we compare the mind to a computer, having all or most programs open will slow down or even crash the computer. Similarly, the mind could take its toll if we are not careful or mindful of the process and reduce the clutter.

There are basic Buddhist concept of mind and some of the techniques employed in Buddhism for training the mind. The primary aim of these techniques is the attainment of enlightenment, but it is possible to experience even mundane benefits, such as good health, by practicing them.

May you be blessed with wisdom & courage to seek the TRUTH!

Mind is a terrible thing to waste.



DID YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

Kalana Dissanayake

Every moment of our lives filled with full of occurrences. Sometimes, we blame for the outer world for unfavorable occurrences that we have to face day to day life. But we do not blame and are very happy about the occurrences that are favorable for us. But do you know that every occurrence is a result of agglomeration of many factors or causes? No one can be blamed for such results that affect you. You are the sole author or owner of each and every occurrence that affect you.

We can take an example of a rain for this purpose. We can see the cause and effect relationship of a rain. During high temperature, water starts to evaporate from all the sources of water available in the ground and it will form clouds at higher altitude with low atmospheric pressure and temperature. At certain low temperature, condensation takes place and water vapor cannot exist anymore as cloud and it will pour down as a rain. In this natural phenomena, agglomeration of the number of reasons or causes forms a rain. The natural law of cause and effect is common for the existence of all the elements in all the worlds. Our lives are part of this world. Therefore our lives operate according to this law. According to the Buddha Teaching, different lives exist in 31 different worlds at different levels of sufferings. If human world takes as bench level, lives below human world suffering (Dugathi Loka) is higher and above is lower (Sugathi Loka).

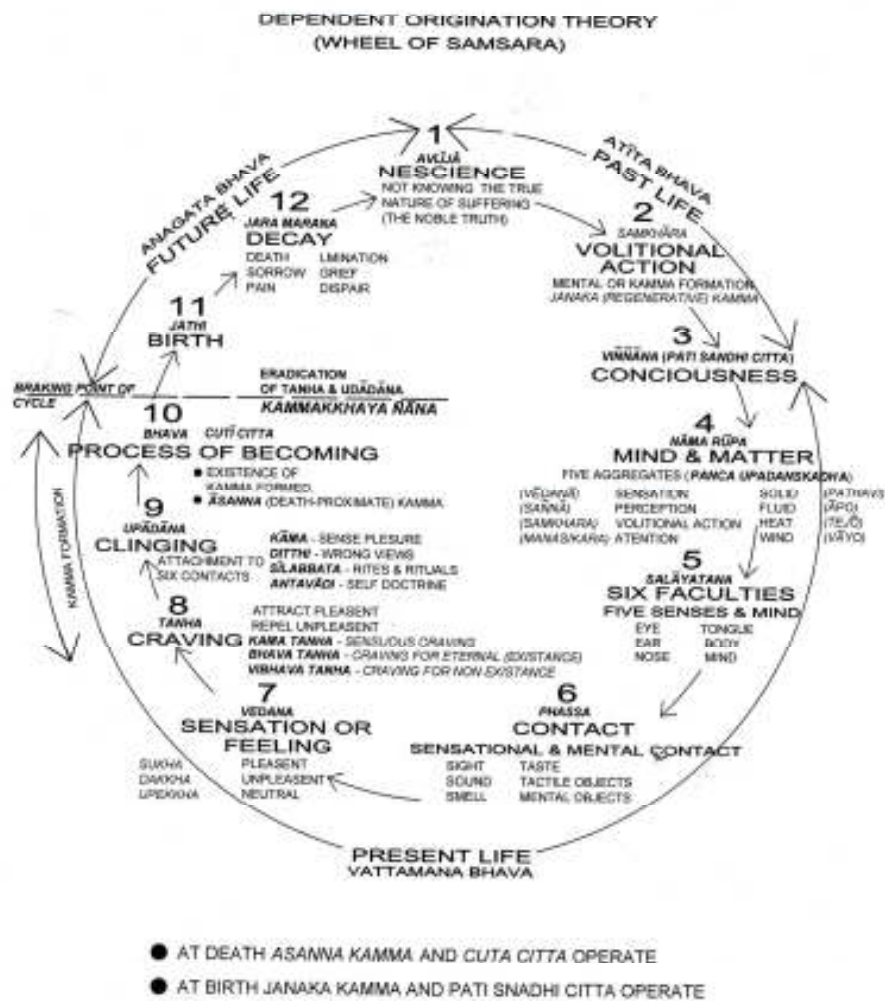
The Buddha discovered five Cosmic Laws (Five Imperatives) which directly affect the nature and existence of the worlds.

Five Cosmic Laws

1. Seeds Law (Beeja Niyaama) – Eg: mango seed cultivates only a mango tree, Human sperm and egg give only a human birth.
2. Seasonal Law (Utu Niyaama) – Existence of different seasons due to the existence of the different level of temperatures and different level of air pressure in different parts of the world.
3. Cause and Effect Law (Kamma Niyaama) - This is the law that mainly elaborates in this article.
4. Law of Mind (Citta Niyaama) – Human body consists of Mind and Body. The Buddha Teaching gives main focus to elaborate the nature of mind and how to clear mind from defilements (Keles). This is the most difficult task in this world. A lot of effort, determination, and desire is required for this purpose. This process makes final result of nonexistence of mind known as Nibbana.
5. Law of Phenomena (Dhamma Niyaama) - Each and every element of these multi-verse operates in three laws such as:
 - Everything is changing in every moment.
 - Nothing is in self.
 - Expectations are not fulfilling all the time and happiness is temporary.

Out of five laws, I want to elaborate third law which is directly linked to the formation of Kamma or Volitional Actions. Formation of Kamma is the main cause for elongation of rebirth-death cycle (wheel of life or Samsaara)

The wheel of life is a vicious circle consisting of the unlimited number of rebirth and death occurrences in 31 different worlds. If you do good, it will result in birth in human world or world above the human world. If you do bad, it will result, rebirth in a world below human world which gives a lot of sufferings. In Buddhist Teaching, this phenomenon is known as “Kamma” and “Kamma Vipaka” or Cause and Effect. To explain these complex phenomena in the simpler way, the Buddha took three lives “Past Life”, “Present Life” and “Future Life” in one circle. In the occurrence of three lives in this circle, the Buddha highlighted twelve factors inter-connected each other. In this phenomena, one factor (Kamma) becomes the cause for the other resulting factor or effect (Kamma Vipaka). These occurrences are taking place according to a natural law known as the Law of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppaada). The Buddha discovered that the momentum of the wheel of life results depending on the degree of craving that you have. High degree of craving results in more elongation of journey of the wheel of life. The main focus of the Buddhist Teaching is to guide you to reduce and eradicate the craving and escape from the wheel of life known as BLISS OF NIBBAANA.



SERIVANIJA JATHAKAYA

Sisira Premarathna

The Jathaka stories describe past life of Bodhisatta (The Buddha's previous lives identify as Bodhisatta). Five eons ago, he was a hawker of selling pot and pans and he met another rude and greedy hawker in the same city selling the same items. The Bodhisatta and the second hawker had a conflict in selling a trinket to a girl of the decayed family of a rich merchant. The second hawker was the person who attempted to kill the Buddha by falling huge rock onto him. He is known as Devadatta. of Devadatta started his lingering holding of anger (Upanaaha or බද්ධ වෛරය) at this incidence. Later he was born as the brother in law of the Buddha. Still, he continued to hold lingering anger with the Buddha and tried to take a revenge on the Buddha.

This pictorial display is a Vesak Drama performed in the Windsor Buddhist Vihara Vesak Ceremony in the year 2012. Sri Lankan kids showed their inherited artistic talents in an excellent way in this drama.



“We are poor what can we give him for trinket.



“What value is there in this bowl? Even half a farthing



“Mother this bowl is invaluable and I don’t have goods for such value”



“You ferry-man. Will you stop the boat”



“Death with craving and anger”

Lessons to learn in this Jathaka Story

1. Craving is the worst enemy of our lives
2. Purposefully, don’t talk and act to receive anger from the others. Don’t get anger from external forces that you face day to day life. The anger that you have, may convert into lingering holding type anger without your knowledge.
3. A lingering holding of anger (Upanaaha or බඳ්ඨ වෛරය) is very dangerous, as you will have to face its effects in many future births in the journey of the wheel of life or Samsara.



Artwork by Jithara Gallage



Artwork by
Sisira Premarathna

Shadow formation is a natural phenomenon. Everyone has his or her own shadow. Kamma formation in your good and bad actions creates your own shadow which will accompany with you in this life and beyond.

LEARNING MINDFULNESS

Enuri Gamage

Our mind is a very amazing thing. It has no bodily limitations and can travel anywhere it wants. It is very powerful and can also be quite dangerous at times. Lord Buddha has described this:

“Durangaman Eka caran - Asariran Guhasayan
Ye Chiththan Sanggnamessanthi - Mokkanthi Mara Bandana”

Those who restrain their bodiless mind which roams afar all alone and which resorts to a cave, are released from the bond of Mara.

The mind can travel across millions of kilometers and back in a matter of seconds, it travels faster than anything else we know. It can see the past, and create visions of the future all in the blink of an eye. The Lord Buddha tells us a story to explain this:

There was once an arahath who had a disciple monk. The disciple brought the arahath new robes as a gift. The arahath took pleasure in simple things so he told the disciple to keep the robes for himself. The disciple thought that his teacher wasn't accepting his gift so he thought that he should not be a monk and return to a normal life. As he fanned his teacher with his ceremonial fan, his mind began to wander. He started thinking about what he would do once he left the temple. He decided that he would sell the robe and buy two goats with the money. When the goats had a baby, he would sell it and use the money to find a wife. He and his wife would have a child, then the three of them would go back to the temple to visit the arahath. He started wondering what would happen if his wife was irresponsible and let their child fall out of the cart on the way. He decided that he would punish her by beating her with a stick. As he thought that, he accidentally hit the arahath with his fan.

The arahath realized what had happened and asked his disciple if he had hit him as if he was hitting his wife. The disciple was then very embarrassed.

This story shows that in the matter of seconds, the mind can go very far along its own train of thought. Lord Buddha has taught us that if you can learn to tame your mind, it can be very helpful to you in many ways. This can be done with meditation. Lord Buddha has taught us to meditate and keep our mind completely in the present without allowing it to wander. This is called mindfulness.

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There is nothing more valuable than a controlled and skillfully directed mind. We practice this in meditation by trying to prevent unwholesome thoughts from entering our mind. We can then apply this to unwholesome thoughts that occur in our daily lives. It is very helpful to many aspects of our day-to-day lives. It is important for our studies since we need to be able to focus on what we are learning in order to absorb the information. It also helps our health in general. It can help us recover from illness and relieve stress. The more we learn how to shut out negativity from our minds, the easier our life becomes.

A human life is a very rare thing so we must use it to practice good things such as mindfulness.

These good practices not only help us in our daily lives, but also help us in the ultimate goal to end this Sansaric journey and attain Nibbana.

Happy Vesak and may the Noble Triple Gem bless you.

The relevance, value & current global trends on Mindfulness connected to key sector: Science, medicine, alternate therapies

Harsha P. Jayatilake, M.D., FAAFP, ABOIM

Mindfulness in clinical practice has been frequently defined as present moment awareness combined with a nonjudgmental acceptance of emotions and thoughts. The primary purpose of mindfulness is to increase awareness of cognitive variables that can either compromise or enhance one's decision-making abilities. Greater awareness and fewer distractions in clinical settings may improve assessment skills and performance of technical procedures that may reduce the risk of clinical errors. Just as significantly, mindfulness training reduces risk of burnout. Clinical research has increasingly analyzed the mental and social benefits of mindfulness, and many studies have indicated that this practice improves compassion, self-care, resilience, and prevents burnout. Some of the techniques utilized in these studies include mindfulness-based stress reduction, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, transcendental meditation, mind-body techniques (meditation and relaxation), body-mind techniques (yoga and tai chi), and more. Mindful practices promote social wholeness with benefits such as resilience, situational awareness, self-awareness, teamwork, and self-monitoring in stressful and demanding clinical situations. Stress related chronic health conditions are responsible for up to 80% of primary care visits and account for the third highest health care expenditures, behind only heart disease and cancer. Current data are suggestive of a possible value of meditation and mindfulness techniques for treating symptomatic stress induced medical conditions alongside with other conventional medical therapies to improve overall well being of individuals.



Artwork by Asel Gamage

Guidance in the Quotes of the Buddha

Sahana Jayatilaka

Although this advice was spoken hundreds of years ago, these quotations still have meaning in the modern life of an everyday person. During ones daily life we seek guidance often no matter how little we notice it, as simple as asking “Does this look right”, and while these quotes may not guide us on such small and trivial matters they do guide us on the questions that one contemplates for much longer and contemplates much more intently.

“Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing at someone else; it is you who gets burned.”

Mistakes are human nature and they occur daily and many times the people who may hurt or insult you do not mean so or they are speaking in the heat of the moment and do not truly mean what they have said. These accidents happen often and it is near impossible to say that oneself has not made this sort of mistake be it a slip of the tongue or something they have been worked into saying. Much like the motto “forgive and forget” this quotation teaches us that we must learn to forgive people for their mistakes so that we can hope people will forgive us for ours.

“No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path.”

Initiative is a very hard thing to muster up sometimes and getting up and going seems impossible at times, but to achieve one’s goals one must start with himself, no one will start your goals for you. No one knows your goals unless you let them be known, and that is the first step down every path. Only once we have told our goals can we ask for others help. But we cannot hope for them to walk our path for us because they too have paths with their own difficulties to walk. Instead we must walk our paths ourselves and ask for help when we need it but not we want it. No matter how daunting the task may seem we must take it step by step looking ahead not back because that is how progress happens or to use another one of the Buddha’s quotes “ a jug fills drop by drop”.

“Even death is not to be feared by one who has lived wisely.”

While at a glance this quote would seem to tell us to take all the risks in life if we pay attention to the word “wisely” we realize it doesn’t not tell us to live recklessly but to live intelligently. In an age where it is easy to live recklessly we must learn to live well. This does not mean however to not experience what this life has to offer, it means to live in the middle and be a good person who enjoys

OUR GRATITUDES (PUNYANUMODANA)

VESAK CELEBRATION 2018

Members of the Board of Windsor Buddhist Vihara would like to thank Bhante Rahula and Bhante Saddhathissa for their valuable guidance, advice and their leaderships to organize the event

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We thank:

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- Rasika Gallage for organizing and trained kids for dialogues in Dhamma.
- Januda Walgama for designing Vesak Magazine cover page.
- Those who offered pirikara for the ceremony
- Those who provide articles for the magazine
- Those who participate in Bhakthi Gee.
- Those who participate in cleaning and preparation of the vihara for the ceremony
- Those who provide food items for the Dansala

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Your continuous support and encouragement are invaluable. Without your continuous support and participation this event would not have been a success!

Thank you.

With Metta

Windsor Buddhist Vihara.