

Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK)

Buddha was born more than 2600 years ago at Lumbini in Nepal. His teachings of existence of suffering and the way out of the suffering are applicable today as it was applicable then. The middle way he preached is more appropriate now than ever before.

For centuries Buddhism remained the religion of the East. Recently, more and more Westerners are learning about it and practising Dharma for the spiritual and physical well-being and happiness. As a result of this interest many monasteries and Buddhist organisations have been established in the West, including UK. Most have Asian connections but others are unique to the West e.g. Friends of Western Buddhist Order.

Nepalese, residing in the UK, wishing to practice dharma for their spiritual development, turned to them as there were no such Nepalese organisations. Therefore, a group of Nepalese met in February 1997 and founded Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) to fill this gap. The society is non-political, non-racial, non-profit making voluntary organisation and open to all, both Nepalese and non-Nepalese, whatever their faith.

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Objectives

1. To make Buddhism known to the wider public and to help them understand the benefits of his profound teachings.
2. To have a forum for the meeting of Nepalese residents in the UK and others with an interest in Buddha Dharma as a spiritual practice for discussion, exchange of ideas, constructive dialogue and to build Nepalese Buddhist community in the UK etc.
3. To establish links with similar organisations in the UK, Nepal and other countries.
4. To organise voluntary work to help reduce human suffering in Nepal and other countries, and
5. To promote and publish religious and cultural heritage of Nepal



L u m b i n i

Journal of The Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK)

Lumbini is the journal of LNBDS (UK) and published annually depending upon funds and written material; and distributed free of charge as Dharma Dana. It is our hope that the journal will serve as a medium for:

1. Communication between the society, the members and other interested groups.
2. Publication of news and activities about Buddhism in the United Kingdom, Nepal and other countries.
3. Explaining various aspects of Dharma in simple and easily understood language for all age groups.
4. Discussion on Dharma through a readers column.

Lumbini is run purely on donation. Therefore, any donations are welcome and greatly appreciated. Cheques/Postal orders should be made payable to Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) or LNBDS (UK) and forwarded to the society.

Lumbini for you...

For the forthcoming issues of Lumbini, we welcome your articles, anecdotes, short stories or news features, which are linked to Nepal and/or Buddhism. Send your contributions and comments to:-

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Please include your full name, address and telephone number. We regret we cannot acknowledge or return items we do not publish.

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NAMO BUDDHA

- Amrit R Sthapit

The picture on front page is tablet of Namu Buddha, Namura, one of the holiest Buddhist sites in Nepal. Namura is about three hours drive from Kathmandu via Banepa, / Panauti. Many years ago, when The Buddha was practising the Behaviour of Bodhisattvas, he saw a hungry tigress on the verge of eating her cubs. He gave his body away to her compassionately. It is said that his hair, bones and so forth were made into a Stupa, now known as NAMO BUDDHA. (Mahasatva Jataka/ Vyagri Jataka)

In this world, many aeons ago, there was a King called Maharath. The King had three sons. *Mahasatva* (Great Sentient Being), the youngest was full of love and compassion from a young age. He regarded everyone equally. Once, the King, his ministers, the Queen and the Princes set out for a walk. While enjoying the walk, the three Princes made their way into the nearby jungle. The youngest Prince saw a hungry and thirsty tigress, on the verge of eating her own cubs not long after she delivered them. "I saw a downcast animal about to die and realized its suffering, emaciation and the fact that it was ready to prey on its own children." He mentioned this to his elder brothers. "You are right," they acknowledged.

He asked his elder brothers, "What types of foods does this tigress feed on?" They answered "She lives on raw meat and the blood of other creatures." He asked further; "Is anyone able to save the life of this beast?" They replied, "No one, it is very difficult". The youngest brother then thought: "I have been cycling in this existence for a long time, wasting innumerable bodies and lives; some sacrifice their lives out of anger, some from ignorance. Why not to sacrifice for the meritorious act?"

After walking further, the youngest Prince stated, "Brothers, keep on going, I have an important commitment to execute and will return afterwards." He walked rapidly back along the same path to the den where the tigress rested. He provided some food for the destitute animal but she wouldn't eat it. The Prince then pricked his own body with a sharp thorn from a tree, drew blood and let her lick it. Then the young Prince allowed the tigress to eat his whole body, in a divine act of compassion and sacrifice.

The elder brothers had been waiting for a long time and the youngest brother had not returned. They thought about what he had said before and were convinced that he had gone back to try and save the hungry tigress. When they arrived at the location of the tigress, they could not believe their eyes. In front of them was the tigress, sitting upright, her body smeared completely with the blood of their brother. They knew their brother had sacrificed his own body for the sake of the tigress.

They threw themselves to the ground and became unconscious. A long time afterwards, they began breathing again, and they lamented and suffered deeply. At the time this was happening, the boys' mother, queen, slept and dreamt of three pigeons flying in a playful manner. A Hawk caught the smallest of the pigeons and the queen was awakened instantly. She described the dream to the King. "As I have heard," she said, "the pigeon represents the soul of my family, and therefore the smallest pigeon being caught by a Hawk means inevitably that something bad has happened to my lovely child." She immediately sent people in search of him. Not long afterwards, the two Princesses returned, short of breath. Their voices choked as they answered their mother that her youngest son had been eaten.

Having heard this, she fell unconscious. Later, the Queen and King, and two princesses proceeded to the spot where her youngest

child passed away. They saw the bones and blood of the young Prince's body. The Queen and King held each other, wept and lamented. The queen fell into a trance and her body writhed painfully; again she fell into unconsciousness. The Prince, Great Sentient Being, had passed away from here and took birth in the higher realms: the heaven of the divines. "What have I done to take birth here," he thought. Equipped with the divine vision of god, he examined the five continuums? and thereby saw a vision of his parents lamenting and suffering from the pain of sorrow around his bones in the jungle. "My parents' mental unhappiness has caused obstacles to my body and life force. I should make them happy," he thought, and descended from heaven. From the sky above, he uttered various pleasing words. Looking towards the sky, the parents asked, "Tell us who you are?"

The deity answered: "I am Prince *Mahasatva*. Because I gave away my body to the hungry tigress, I'm born in the heaven of gods. You should know this. All the *Samsaric Dharma* will eventually end in disintegration. Anything produced will extinct inevitably. A sentient being engaging in negative actions will plunge into hell while those practicing virtue will take birth in a higher state. As long as birth and death exist for all, people will always fall into the ocean of sorrow, instead of cultivate virtue."

The parents asked, "If you nourished the tigress with great compassion and hold every being dear, is it appropriate for you to engage in the deed of so great a compassion?" The deity then spoke numerous sweet words that left the parents happy and satisfied.

*Heartfelt Greetings
On the Occasion of
2550th Buddha Jayanti
Celebrations*



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Editorial

This year it is 2550 Buddha Era since the Buddha passed away. It is full moon of May, *Vaisakha purnima*, a significant day in Buddhist calendar when we pay homage to the Buddha and contemplate on his teaching. Happy Buddha Jayanti and warm wishes from LNBDS!

Life is precious to all of us. From tiny insect to us humans, we do all our best to stay alive. We do all our best to live comfortably and long. If life is so valuable, how many of us actually live usefully or use it properly on good causes? This is something we all have to think. Based on our thoughts, our purpose of life defers. If one has negative thoughts with selfish attitude, it causes harm to one self and others. If one can develop positive thoughts and channel them to good causes, it can benefit many.

By birth none of us are saint, but by developing ones mind, we can achieve higher goals. As it is well said: *'one will give up money to protect one's limbs, one will give up limbs when it is the matter of survival; one will give up life for the good cause for the well being of all.'* When we look at the life of the Buddha, he developed noble qualities for the sake of well being of all. On the process of fulfilling ten perfections (*Dasa Paramita*) to be the Buddha, he even gave up his own life. One of such example is when he was born as Prince Mahasatva (*Mahasatva Jataka*) and sacrificed his life to feed starving Tigress and her cubs. We may not be able to do such a divine act but constant effort could be made to develop good qualities e.g.: loving kindness, Compassion etc.. Cultivating good thoughts and acting on that for the wellbeing of all sentient beings is highly appreciable deed. Gradually when one achieve the state of mind without any attachment, *letting it go*, ultimate goal of Nirvana will be achieved.

We are in ninth year of publishing Lumbini which is in your hand. We are thankful to all who provided us with articles, necessary materials and financial help for the publication of this magazine.

Recently we have heard news about Buddha boy in Nepal who has been meditating continuously for months supposedly without taking any food. From scientific point of view it is hard to believe that he could survive without food for such a long period. With our request Venerable Dhammadipa did some research on this subject and produced an article *'A Reflection on the news about the "Buddha boy" with regard to meditation'* which is enlightening to read. We on behalf of our readers would like to pay our gratitude to the Venerable.

Ms Deborah Smith is a practising Buddhist since her school age. To share her knowledge she has been teaching meditation in Bath. Her article on *'The five hindrances'* is one of the talks she has given, which is worth reading. To progress on meditation one has to overcome these five hindrances (*Pancanivarana*).

Our Action is the reason, which makes us happy or unhappy. Intention (*Cetana*) is main cause in all our acts which decides whether act is good one or bad one. Dr. Dinesh Bajracharya's reflection on *'The significance of Karma in Modern day life'* explains clearly the functions of Karma.

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Ajahn Candasari writes on the main teaching of the Buddha *'Four noble truths'*. It is important to understand the four noble truths to know the Buddha and his teachings. Once one grasps the noble truths, it changes our perception of life. Ms Maureen Eastwood contemplates her life as a that Buddhist in *'Buddhism in my life'*.

One of the Buddha's teachings is we should keep our mind open at all the time. Not to believe and to follow blindly is well explained in one of his teachings to Kalamas (*Kalama Sutra*). Thus, one of the qualities of the teaching (*Dharma*) is *come and see* not believe blindly (*Ehipassika*). In this sense dialogue and discussions are food to our mind. Sister Lucy's article *'Journey into interreligious dialogue Christian perspective'* is a food for thought for our readers. This year on who is who in Nepalese Buddhism Venerable Sujana has written on Most Venerable Kumara Kasyapa who is one of the prominent living Buddhist scholarly monk in Nepal.

Similarly, for Nepalese who would like to read in own language we have included an article on Lumbini by late Venerable Sudarshan and a poem by Hari Thapa on *"भगवान बुद्धमा प्रार्थना"*.

We hope all our readers will enjoy reading this journal, as much as we have enjoyed presenting it to you.

'Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam'

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS – NOT JUST A NICE IDEA

- Ajahn Candasari,
Amaravati

In this article I will revisit the essential teaching of the Buddha with a view to lifting it out of the realm of theory and placing it in the market place. As the Buddha pointed out, the way of honouring him is to carefully consider his teachings and to apply them in our daily lives.

What he discovered is related in the first sermon – the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta - which we recite very frequently in the monastery. At first it may not seem particularly remarkable, but the succinctness of his formulation and presentation was quite brilliant. I still, after many years of contemplating this teaching, feel a sense of awe. He described his teaching as the Middle Way - it is the way between the extremes of self-mortification and sensory indulgence.

The Buddha's early life, when he was Siddhartha Gotama, represented a life of total indulgence. Whenever he wanted to see a pretty girl or to hear some sweet music he would just snap his fingers and they would be there; whenever he wanted to eat some delicious food, it would be there. He had three palaces, one for each of the seasons, where the conditions would be most favourable for that season. So for the first part of his life he had very pleasurable lifestyle. Then, after realising the transience of human existence, he began a life of religious austerity, going to the other extreme where he tried through denial to subdue the natural bodily energies and its needs – almost to the point of death. Finally, seeing that neither of these practices brought him any closer to a state of peace, he adjusted his approach and discerned a way between these two extremes. This formulation of this understanding, his essential teaching is given in terms of this Middle Way and what he referred to as the Four Noble Truths.

The first of these noble truths is that there is suffering - as human beings we are subject to dis-ease. This can be quite an extreme form of suffering: terrible sickness, famine, ghastly injuries, bereavement or loss - of loved ones, of our fortunes, or of our reputation or worldly status. It can also refer to something more subtle. The Pāli word for suffering is *dukkha*, meaning 'hard to bear', so I like to understand this term as anything other than a point of complete ease with how things are.

For example, if the weather is very hot, we can suffer about that; maybe there is the feeling of: 'This isn't all right; why don't they have better air conditioning? Why do I have to wear all these robes?' It can be over something that may seem very minor. Maybe there is simply a feeling of inadequacy; or we make a foolish remark, and think: 'Oh dear, I wish I hadn't said that...' a kind of agitation can arise. Or perhaps we are having a really lovely time with somebody, but then realise that they have a plane to catch in half an hour. Even the most pleasant experiences, the most wonderful things that can happen to us in our lives, can be a source of *dukkha* - dis-ease, lack of perfect easefulness.

This is the First Noble Truth. As part of this truth the Buddha also pointed out that suffering has to be understood. Now we don't understand suffering by getting rid of it, or by turning our backs on it - we understand suffering by actually being willing to bear with, patiently enduring, whatever conditions we might be experiencing. In this way we come to know – to really know, from experience – that all conditions (the unpleasant as well as the

pleasant) change; that they can never fully satisfy or quench our longing; we also begin to appreciate that there is no inherent selfhood in any state of mind or body. The foundations of mindfulness [of the body itself, feelings, the mind and mental activity] provide anchors, or points of reference, which we can use for holding the awareness steady as conditions within and around us keep changing. We become skilled in the use of these through the practice of meditation. So... *dukkha* is to be understood.

The Second Noble Truth is that there is a cause of *dukkha*. Suffering has an origin - there is a reason why we suffer. The reason we suffer is because, habitually, we attach to our desires; we want things to be other than the way they are. We want something pleasant; we want to get something pleasant; we want to keep something pleasant; we want to make something pleasant last forever! Or maybe that we want to get rid of the things that are difficult and un-pleasant. I've met some people who just spend their whole time asleep or totally drunk, trying to avoid or escape from things – such as boredom, regret or fear - that they find unpleasant. We call this *vibhava-tanha*, the desire to not exist. The third kind of desire is *bhava-tanha*, the desire for existence. We want to exist as a separate special personality.

It can be rather humbling to reflect on our lives, and to realise that almost everything we do has elements of this *bhava tanha*. How we dress, what we surround ourselves with, what we eat, how we do things and so on are all expressions of 'what I am' – which of course is very precious to 'me'; so if anyone comes along and criticises or challenges these things, we can feel extremely upset. In the same way, our religion, gender, class or race can also be ways that we create a sense of identity or selfhood, if we view them from a place of ignorance, rather than with the understanding that they are simply conventions that can be useful if their limitations understood correctly.

So the origin of suffering can be described as these three kinds of desire and the resulting attachment. This word 'attachment' is really important, because the way that we free the heart from desire is by abandoning it. It's an internal relinquishing – letting it go, rather than trying to get rid of it - trying to make it go away, because we don't like it or think we shouldn't have it. It's rather a subtle distinction.

The Third Noble Truth is that suffering ceases. It ceases when we let go of desire. As I said above, this doesn't mean not having any desire but rather not investing any kind of energy in that desire; we no longer allow it to pull us into any kind of mental activity. We neither follow it, nor struggle to get rid of or to change it. We learn how simply to be aware that there is desire, so we can watch it - we can see how it feels, and we can notice its cessation. When we can do this, we come to a place of ease, a place of presence, where there is no longer any suffering.

This is something we can experience in daily life. In the middle of a real struggle about something, there can suddenly be a kind of letting go, as we realise: 'This doesn't matter, I don't need to worry about this! It's all right!' There is an extraordinary sense of relief that we can experience when we let go of something that has really been concerning us or bothering us. It doesn't necessarily understanding of the nature of our existence! It's a cycle – and

Continued on page 18...

BUDDHISM IN MY LIFE

By Maureen Eastwood

When I was asked to write this, I was actually reading an interview with Sogyal Rinpoche, the author of “The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying”. One of the things he talked about was that Buddhism has something for everyone. It can be regarded both as a religion and a way of life. To me personally it is more of a way of life, so I do not call myself a Buddhist, probably because I see it as a guide to spirituality rather than a religion.

I was brought up in quite a strict religious family (in one of the major Christian religions). Until my early to mid teens, I accepted it without question as did everyone else I knew. However, gradually I began to assess that religion for myself and what I found did little to impress me. I found a dogma which had to be accepted as “faith” which not only required absolute obedience to its rules, but also needed the intercession of a priest between myself and God.

As a child born in 1955, I was therefore a teenager in the sixties. As you may imagine, a patriarchal, restrictive religion did not sit well with the ideas I was exposed to then. However, I do not regret being brought up in such a way. On the contrary, it was in fact the beginning (at least in this lifetime) of a spiritual quest which lasts to this day. Having been so very immersed in that religion as a child, when I rejected it quite radically as a teenager, I found myself without any kind of spiritual “anchor” for many years. As a result I left no stone unturned, investigating every type of religion to discover if they were any better than the one I had left.

However, rather than discovering another religion, I discovered instead, spirituality. Not only that, but I learned that in order to find what I was looking for, I had to look within myself, not outside at all. However, of all the religions, Buddhism is the only one that I have found which allows everyone the ability to have a direct connection with the Divine, indeed Gautama Buddha never wanted anyone to worship him. On the contrary, he tried to teach everyone to find the same “nirvana” that he had found himself and the tool he suggested that would enable us to do that, was meditation. Though ultimately even meditation falls away and non-meditation or perhaps “no-mind” can be experienced.

Why is this useful? There is one thing that every single living thing on our planet has in common and that is that we will all one day die. Religions generally work along the lines of “do’s and don’ts” in order to get into some kind of paradise when you die. Moreover, most religions tell their followers that unless they conform to the particular rules and regulations of that religion, then forget paradise! To me this has always seemed like being held to ransom in some way, without the chance of having any direct experience which might help prepare me for death. As none of the various religions can even agree on what is necessary to do or not do, they are, in my opinion, pretty useless. Not only that, but it has always seemed to me that these regulations were entirely man-made or if not, then we were asked to believe in some miracle or other, which was “faith”. In contrast, Buddha said simply, look within yourself, which is in essence, the difference between spirituality and religion.

Spirituality is immediate, that is, it is only ever as far away as inside yourself. There is no need to attend a church or temple or mosque (though many such places do offer peace and quiet which is very conducive to meditation). Meditation can be practised anywhere, though I admit I find it pretty difficult in London, which is why I try to go to places where it’s just me and nature, when I can. But as well as enabling us to get in touch with our own divinity, meditation does something else as well.

Anyone who has meditated would agree, that out of meditation there is no possibility whatsoever of trying to force that experience on another using any kind of violence. The very idea of it is unthinkable! Instead a compassion for your fellow creatures arises, an understanding that we are all in the same boat as it were. There is no need for rules or regulations, for do’s and don’ts. A meditator, in experiencing that immediate connection with the Divine, understands our true nature and acts accordingly, that is, in a peaceful, compassionate way. There have been thousands of wars fought in the name of religion and many are still happening today, but I doubt very much indeed if any at all have ever been fought in the name of spirituality.

I had an interesting discussion with my 82 year old mother recently. She believes that people can be lured into evil acts by what she sees as “the devil”. From my point of view, however, that is an excuse and leads me to another reason that I like the teachings of Buddha (which, by the way, I had the great good fortune to learn from a “Guru” who had a profound and insightful take on them). He taught that we are all responsible for our own decisions and that we accumulate karma as a direct result of our past actions. This makes much more sense to me. Religions seem to make a habit of blaming someone or something else for whatever problems we face - it is never our own responsibility. I think we all need to accept responsibility for ourselves, within ourselves. Only then will there be an end to violence in the name of religion.

Buddha also said that he had lived a thousand lives before he found nirvana. That seems like rather a long time, but in reality it is a drop in the ocean of eternity. It gives me hope, not only that I will one day find nirvana myself, but that death is not the end at all. In fact I see it as a transition, which, though I would obviously prefer to live to a ripe old age, makes it seem like quite an exciting prospect in some way! At least I feel that I have some say in the matter - not when I die, of course, but how conscious I am in myself when I do. And since it could happen at any time really, I try to be prepared for it always, without fearing it. That is the legacy the Buddha has left us, for which I can only say an eternal “Thank you” - from the bottom of my heart.

* Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. ISBN number: 0712615695

* The Guru in question here was the late Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, later known as Osho, to whom I will also be eternally grateful.

**The fool who knows that he is a fool is for that very reason a wise man;
the fool who thinks that he is wise is called a fool indeed.**

~ Dhammapada 63

A PERSONAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE HINDRANCES

Deborah Smith, Bath

Nivarana (Ni + var, to hinder, to obstruct) is that which hinders one's progress or that which obstructs the path to emancipation and heavenly steps. There are five kinds of hindrances (*Pancanivarana*). ~ editor

1. Sensuous Lust/Desire
2. Ill-will/hatred/anger
3. Sloth and Torpor
4. Restlessness and worry
5. Sceptical Doubt - story of being hit with an arrow

These are considered to be hindrances, hindrances to any clear sort of understanding or progress.

Luckily I don't suffer from any of the five hindrances! Of course we all suffer from the five hindrances, hopefully not all at the same time but at least one of the hindrances will be experienced most weeks if not most days.

It can start the moment we wake up, we can have sensuous desire for the bed and feel it is the most comfortable place and feel ill will at the thought of getting up. Or we can wake on a beautiful sunny day and have desire for the sunshine! So be aware the hindrances can start before we've even got out of bed!

We can have sensuous desire for many things, desire for something pleasurable to start or not to stop. Sensuous desire can turn into ill will, anger even hatred. If we are doing something that we don't want to stop yet we have to ill will and anger can arise which can easily flow into sloth and torpor. We can't be bothered to do whatever it is, we don't feel like it, we'll do it later and so on. This too can lead to restlessness and worry. We feel bad for not getting on with the job so we busy ourselves with something else, we become restless, then we start to worry about what we should be doing. Finally comes the thought, "why should I be doing that", sceptical doubt arises. "I'm not sure I really believe in all this, why should I do this or that, why can't I just follow my desires and cravings?!"

So we can see how easily we can go from one hindrance to another. Or they can stay on their own in our minds. Sensuous desire arises, so we stay doing what we're doing and hold onto it, attach to it. But of course this brings dissatisfaction as it will cease sooner or later as everything is subject to change, that is a fact.

Ill will, hatred, anger can arise and stay in our minds on its own, causing huge amounts of harm to oneself and others. Holding onto ill will is like holding onto a hot coal, it burns us, it causes us harm and if it were a hot coal we would drop it instantly but unfortunately we tend to hold onto things that are doing us harm, even when we know it.

Sloth and torpor, which is my main hindrance, I find can easily arise, we can put off doing some meditation, work, reading, writing a talk and so on!

Being aware of these fires enables transformation to take place. Sensuous desire becomes giving, ill will becomes harmlessness, sloth and torpor become patient endurance and doubt becomes absorption, wisdom and faith.

THE FIVE HINDRANCES

The five hindrances come from the Satipatthana Sutta. They are five manifestations of the three unwholesome roots, hatred, greed & delusion. Contemplation of the hindrances covers not only the presence or absence of a hindrance but also the conditions underlying the presence or absence of each hindrance.

The instructions for contemplating the hindrances as set out in the Satipattana sutta are:

"If sensual desire is present in him, he knows "there is sensual desire in me"; if sensual desire is not present in him, he knows "there is no sensual desire in me"; and he knows how unarisen sensual desire can arise, how arisen sensual desire can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed sensual desire can be prevented. If aversion is present in him, he knows If sloth and torpor is present in him, he knows If restlessness and worry is present in him, he knows If doubt is present in him, he knows "there is doubt in me"; if doubt is not present in him, he knows "there is no doubt in me"; and he knows how unarisen doubt can arise, how arisen doubt can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed doubt can be prevented."

The term hindrance is used because these mental qualities "hinder" the proper functioning of the mind. Under the influence of the hindrances one is unable to understand one's own good or that of others, or to gain concentration or insight. Learning to withstand the impact of a hindrance with awareness is therefore an important skill for one's progress on the path. According to the discourses, difficulties in counterbalancing a hindrance are a good reason for approaching an experienced meditator to ask for practical guidance.

Each hindrance correlates to one of the five mental factors needed to attain absorption. Hindrances not only obstruct absorption attainment, they also impede the establishment of the awakening factors. This antagonistic relationship between the hindrances and the awakening factors is of considerable importance since the removal of the former and the development of the latter are necessary conditions for realisation.

The effects of each hindrance is like the image of a bowl filled with water and used as a mirror in order to look at the reflection of one's face. The effect of sensual desire is similar to water mixed with dye, as sensual desire colours one's perception. Aversion resembles water heated to the boil, because of aversion one gets heated. Sloth and torpor is compared to water overgrown with algae, stagnation. Restlessness and worry affect the mind like water stirred by wind, one is tossed about and doubt is like dark muddy water, as one is obscured. In all five cases one is unable to see one's reflection properly in the water.

Another set of illustrations illustrates the absence of the hindrances. To be free from sensual desire is like being relieved from a debt, having sensual desire is like being in debt. To be free from aversion is like recovering from a physical illness, aversion causes dis-ease. Not having sloth and torpor is like being released from prison, as they dull and imprison the mind. Not having restlessness and

worry is like being liberated from slavery, as they can control the mind to such an extent that one is completely at its mercy, and to overcome doubt resembles crossing a dangerous desert safely, as doubt leaves one in a state of insecurity, not knowing which way to turn.

Awareness of their presence or of their absence.

If a hindrance is present and one does not recognise it one is mis-meditating, a form of practise the Buddha did not approve of. But if one does recognise the presence of a hindrance and contemplates it as a satipatthana meditation, one's practice will lead to purification of the mind.

There was a monk in the Buddha's time called Anuruddha who complained to his friend Sariputta that despite concentrative attainments, unshaken energy, and well established mindfulness he was unable to break through to full realisation. Sariputta pointed out that Anuruddha's boasting of concentration attainments was nothing but a manifestation of conceit, his unshaken energy was simply restlessness and his concern about not yet having awakened was just worry. Helped by his friend to recognise these as hindrances, Anuruddha was soon able to overcome them and achieve realisation.

In this way we can turn obstacles to meditation into meditation objects. This is often talked about in terms of Mara, who often acts as a personification of the five hindrances and how he loses his power as soon as he is recognised.

If we consider anger - when anger arises there is an increase in the release of adrenaline and this in turn will stimulate the anger. But if one is aware of the state of anger, neither the physical reaction nor the mental proliferation is given scope. If one abandons the balanced state of awareness and resents or condemns the arisen anger, the act of condemnation becomes just another manifestation of aversion. The vicious cycle of anger continues, albeit with a different object.

Once the hindrances are at least temporarily removed, the alternative aspect of contemplating the hindrances becomes relevant: awareness of their absence. Such absence of the hindrances forms a causal sequence that leads via delight, joy, tranquility and happiness to concentration and the attainment of absorption. The instruction is "to contemplate the disappearance of the five hindrances within oneself". This is a positive act of recognising and even rejoicing in the absence of the hindrances, which then paves the way for deep concentration. As illustrated above.

Several discourses refer to such a tranquil state of mind, temporarily unaffected by any hindrance or mental defilement as "luminous", which is an important requirement for the development of the mind.

After the first stage of recognising the presence or absence of a hindrance, the second stage of the same contemplation follows: awareness of the conditions that have led to the arising of a hindrance, that assist in removing an arisen hindrance, and that prevent future arising of a hindrance.

If awareness does not dispel the hindrance more specific antidotes are required. Clearly recognising the conditions for the arising of a particular hindrance not only forms the basis for its removal but

also leads to an appreciation of the general pattern of its arising. Such appreciation lays bare the levels of conditioning and misperceptions that cause the arising of a hindrance and thereby contributes to preventing its recurrence.

Sustained observation will reveal the fact that frequently thinking or dwelling on a particular issue produces a corresponding mental inclination and thus a tendency to get caught up in ever more thoughts and associations along the same lines. Sensual desire, for example, its arising is due not only to outer objects but also to an inclination towards sensuality embedded within one's own mind. This sensual tendency influences the way one perceives outer objects and thence leads to the full-blown arising of desire and various attempts to satisfy this desire.

The particular dynamic of sensual desire is such that every time a sensual desire is gratified the act of gratification fuels ever stronger subsequent manifestations of the same desire. With detached observation it will become apparent that gratification of sensual desire is based on a misconception on searching for pleasure in the wrong place. The way to inner peace and composure necessarily depends of gaining independence from this vortex of desire and gratification.

The search for satisfaction through a partner of the opposite sex is related to one's identification with the characteristics and behaviour of one's own gender. To search for union externally implies that one is still caught up in the limitations of one's own gender identity. This shows that the affective investment inherent in identifying with one's gender role and behaviour forms an important link in the arising of sensual desire. Arahants, however, who have eradicated even the subtlest traces of identification are unable to engage in sexual intercourse.

Once one has at least temporarily escaped from the vicious circle of continuous demands for satisfaction, it becomes possible to develop some form of counterbalance in one's perceptual appraisal. If excessive dwelling on aspects of external beauty has led to frequent states of lust, contemplation directed towards the less appealing aspects of the body can lead to a progressive decrease in such states of mind. Decaying corpse, contemplate the anatomical constitution of the body, restraint of the senses, moderation with food, wakefulness, awareness of the impermanent nature of all mental events.

Aversion, is a one sided perception, therefore if one ignores the negative qualities of whoever is causing the irritation and pays attention to positive qualities. By paying attention to the matter or by reflecting on the inevitability of karmic retribution it becomes possible to develop equanimity.

An important remedy is to develop loving kindness. This also develops harmonious relationships towards other human and non human beings, counteracts pathological feelings of alienation and low self esteem and contributes to realisation.

Antidote to sloth and torpor is to develop "clarity of cognition". In the discourses this refers to the development of mental clarity others understand it more literally as an external or internal light, mental image.

Such "clarity of cognition" takes place with the aid of mindfulness and clearly knowing which brings into play two essential qualities of satipatthana as a remedy against sloth and torpor. This points

back to the fact that satipatthana itself can suffice for countering a hindrance. The emphasis in the satipatthana is not on actively opposing a hindrance but on clearly recognising a hindrance together with the conditions related to its presence or absence. More active measures are the domain of right effort, the noble eightfold path.

The arising of sloth and torpor can be caused by discontent, boredom, laziness, drowsiness caused by overeating and a depressed state of mind. An effective antidote is sustained application of energy. One can change ones meditation object, pull on ones ears, massage the body, get up, sprinkle ones eyes with water and keep the eyes open while meditating and finally there is walking meditation.

The opposite case is restlessness and worry, factors leading to an increase of mental calmness and stability should be developed. Breathing meditation is particularly recommended for calming the thinking activity of the mind. It can arise because of excessive energetic striving, less pushy attitude towards ones practise can help. Restlessness in particular it's advisable to avoid provocative talk as it can lead to prolonged discussions and thereby causing restlessness. Worry is often related to guilt, such as when one has done something unwholesome and feels regret. Thus maintaining an impeccable level of ethical conduct helps. It also relates to a monk's experience of worry due to lack of clarity concerning the Dhamma.

A clear distinction between what is wholesome and unwholesome serves to counter the obstruction caused by doubt. This is extremely important as without knowing what is wholesome and unwholesome one will be unable to overcome lust, anger and delusion.

Doubt plays a role not only in relation to the development of insight but also in the context of calmness meditation. Doubt heads a list of mental obstructions to the attainment of absorption in one of the discourses.

This ability to distinguish can be developed by investigating Dhamma which leads to clarity and understanding.

Overcoming these five hindrances is a matter of crucial importance for all types of meditation. With increasing meditative proficiency it will become possible to dispel any hindrance as soon as it is recognised, as quickly as a drop of water evaporates when it falls on a hot frying pan. The important factor for removing a hindrance is sati, awareness, since without awareness of the presence or arising of a hindrance little can be done in terms of prevention or removal.

To summarise, there are obstacles:

There are obstacles to our progress in meditation which are known as the Five Hindrances (Nivarana). These are:

1. Kamachanda, sensual desire, like a debt always wanting to be paid, or like coloured water which is mixed up and not clear.
2. Vyapada, anger, like an illness causing pain and fear, or like boiling water constantly able to burn.
3. Thina-middha, laziness, sloth/torpor, idleness of the mind, like a prisoner who cannot escape from suffering, like water in a pot unclear and decaying.

4. Uddhacca-kukkucca, restlessness, always busy, like being a slave having to do never-ending work, like water constantly disturbed into waves.

5. Vicikicca, doubt, like an unending desert with no clear path.

To begin with, we should simply be aware that "anger has arisen", or that "there is restlessness". Initially we may not be very successful at overcoming these Hindrances, but the mindfulness of these states is a very important first step. It takes a certain amount of courage to admit to ourselves that negative states do exist in our minds, but we must be honest with ourselves. When we can observe how such a state of mind arises and how it passes away, then intervention becomes possible, enabling us to maintain an objective viewpoint and to refrain from identifying ourselves with these states. As our meditative skills develop, our mindfulness deepens so that we can identify the arising of negative states earlier and earlier, and ultimately we may be able to prevent them from arising at all.

NOTES:

The hindrances lead the contemplation's of dhammas because their removal serves as a basis for developing the comparatively sophisticated contemplation's in this last satipattana.

Five hindrances - five aggregates - six sense-spheres - seven awakening factors - four noble truths

“भगवान बुद्धमा प्रार्थना”

- हरि सिंह थापा, अध्यक्ष,
नेपाली शाहित्य विकास परिषद, यू.के.

जन्मिन्दैमा ॐ शान्ति मुख्य मंत्र मूल
देख्दैमा हिँड्यौ सात पाईला कमलको फूल
अहिम्साको मार्ग दियौ शान्ति फुल्ने फूल
लोभ मोह ईर्ष्या त्याग्ने दियौ मंत्र मूल

यश आरम जीवन त्याग्यौ बनको बाटो लाग्यौ
माया मोह मात्र होईन राज्य सम्म त्याग्यौ
संसारमा शान्ति दत्त बुद्ध भगवान
तिनै लोक्का ब्रम्हज्ञानी बुद्ध भगवान

प्रार्थना यही गरौ बुद्ध भगवान
शान्ति संग बाँचन पाउँ बुद्ध भगवान
चारैतिर हाहाकार छ बुद्ध भगवान
मातृ भूमी बचाई देउन बुद्ध भगवान

आफ्नै देशका दाजुभाई बुद्ध भगवान
सन्तान सबै मासिन भो बुद्ध भगवान
अहंकारले बास लियो बुद्ध भगवान
देशभारि नै शान्ति छैन बुद्ध भगवान

दाजुभाईकै मारामार छ बुद्ध भगवान
आँखा खोली रक्षा गर बुद्ध भगवान
नेपालका छोरा तिमी लुम्बिनीको जन्म
तिमी छोडि शान्ति मार्ग कहाँ जाउँ अन्त

JOURNEY INTO INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Lucy M Brydon, OSB
Turvey Abbey, Bedford

I was brought up in the 1940s and 50s in a conservative, working-class Roman Catholic family. I do not remember any overt prejudice or bigotry, except for an acceptance of the “fact” that only the Roman Catholic Church was the true Church founded by Christ and that however good other non-RC people were, they were “outside the Church” but we should be very kind, helpful and friendly to them. And in fact many of our best neighbours were Christians of other denominations and we got on well together. We Catholics were a minority group and aware of being “different” from other English people. In some circles we were referred to as “left-footers”. There was certainly no question of being able to learn from people of other denominations. We never spoke deeply about our Christian faith to each other, and the attitude was “live and let live”. This could by no means be called ‘dialogue’! As for dialogue with people of other religions, this was simply impossible. I never spoke to a person of another religion until well into my adult life, though I may have seen some—in the distance. These were thought of as totally foreign: ‘the pagans’. I wonder if perhaps this is the experience of people of other religions, growing up in a close-knit minority ethnic and religious group in Britain today.

It was not until I went to work in Kenya that I became truly aware of the reality of people actually LIVING other denominational variations of Christianity, and indeed, other religions in the same way that I was living mine. It was a shock to the system! I discovered, for instance, that my narrow attitude to other Christians was exactly the same as some other Christians’ attitude to the Roman Catholic church: that however good we might be, we were not really Christians at all. This made me realise that there really was SOMETHING seriously mistaken in the attitude I had been brought up with and accepted without question. This insight was further strengthened by meeting and communicating with people of other Faiths, mainly Muslims and Hindus. I learned more by getting to know the families of Muslim and Hindu students in the school where I was teaching. I realised that, just like my own family and my religious community, they too were seeking to “**know, love and serve God in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next**”, as a Catholic Catechism (primer for learning the Faith) put it. This was my first great step forward in the journey towards interreligious dialogue that I am still following.

On my return to UK in 1988 I soon came in contact with Theravada Buddhism, the religious practice that has perhaps taught me most about interreligious dialogue, and whose teachings have been truly a gift in my own spiritual journey as a Christian. In 1993 I had the opportunity to attend the conference “Faith in Awakening” at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery. It was a conference of people of many different religions and Christian denominations, all together some 35 groups were represented. This was a major cross-roads for me. I had not realised so many different ways of seeking God even existed and it was a “mind-blowing” experience to meet people and talk to them about their faith, and have them listen to me talking about my own faith in Christ. It opened my mind wide to the understanding of something I had glimpsed in Kenya, that people of other religious faiths were (in St Benedict’s words) “truly seeking God”. They might use different names, but I could recognise patterns of behaviour and practice that echoed my own Christian and monastic experience and especially what I called prayer. The most fruitful parts of this conference seemed to me

and many others to be the times we joined in silent meditation (again, I would call it prayer) together.

Since then, and through a wider experience of contacts with Theravada and Zen Buddhism, my view is the same. When we try to TALK in dialogue, it is easy to go astray, using words that we think mean the same to all the partners in the discussion. Often they do not. We use the same words to describe very different concepts and experiences. This is not to deny that speaking to one another can be a very enriching experience and help us to learn a great deal about our own faith and the faith of the other person. But such talk must begin from a position of being open to learn from each other.

One of the most moving and fruitful experiences for my own spiritual journey has been to lead, jointly with a Buddhist, retreats for Christians and Buddhists over the past 10 years or so. During these retreats I shared with others the experience of listening to and learning from each other, of making connections with the ideas, beliefs and practices that have echoes in my own Faith tradition; but at the same time acknowledging and rejoicing in the fact that there are also profound differences. To quote Timothy Radcliffe, OP: “*Inter-religious dialogue is not a matter of being pleasant to one’s neighbours for the sake of peace: it should be part of my religious quest precisely as a Christian. ...So (it) is not about evolving some vague universal wishy-washy spirituality with a little bit of every world religion stirred into the pot. When I am attentive to (people of other religions) talking about their faith, then I want to be touched by the intensity of their convictions, the specificity of their faith, its difference, for it is that which will stretch me open. An inter-religious dialogue in which one had to put into cold storage one’s deepest convictions for the sake of an easy exchange about spiritual generalities would be a waste of time.*” (“What is the Point of Being a Christian? Burns Oates, 2005, p. 162)

Helpful and inspiring examples of this kind of dialogue are happening all over the country. The monastic communities like my own have contacts with the monastic practice of other religions especially Buddhism and find ourselves inspired and encouraged in our own monastic journey by the similarities we find in them. Our Buddhist friends tell us they feel the same. The demands of a busy life-style mean that we cannot meet and spend time in each other’s communities as often as we would wish to. But I recently had the wonderful experience of spending a month in Japanese Zen Buddhist monasteries as part of a “spiritual exchange” that has been going on since 1979 and I have spent shorter periods in Theravada monasteries. It has been a huge privilege. It has helped me again to see the connection between the “apophatic” tradition (i.e. negative way of speaking) of Christian mysticism and the Buddhist way of referring to “the Unborn, the Undying, the Unconditioned”.

In reflecting on my ongoing experience in the journey of dialogue, the following “apophatic” ways of defining it come to mind:

- It is not proselytising, trying to convert people to my own faith tradition.
- It is not evangelisation, preaching a message with a view to convincing people of MY faith as I understand it and have been called to live it.
- It is not proclamation: an announcing of something as

Continued on page 18.....

WHO IS WHO IN BUDDHISM IN NEPAL

TRIPITAKACHARYA VEN. BHIKSHU KUMARKASYAPA MAHATHERA¹

- Phra S. M. Sujano

Buddhism has just got the morning light in the horizon in 1940s Nepal. Most Theravada monks returned to Nepal to revive the tradition after completing their training abroad. Unfortunately, Rana government of the time did not allow them to propagate Buddhism in Nepal and ordered all the monks, nuns and novices to leave Nepal. Despite this harsh punishment and hardship they had to endure all of them continue their effort in the revival of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal and went to different countries like India, Burma and Sri Lanka for further studies.

Two of the exiled monks, Venerable Subodhananda Mahasthavira, the present Sanghanayak of Nepal and venerable Kumar Kasyapa, who was the youngest novice at that time are still alive and devoting their time and energy in the propagation of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal.

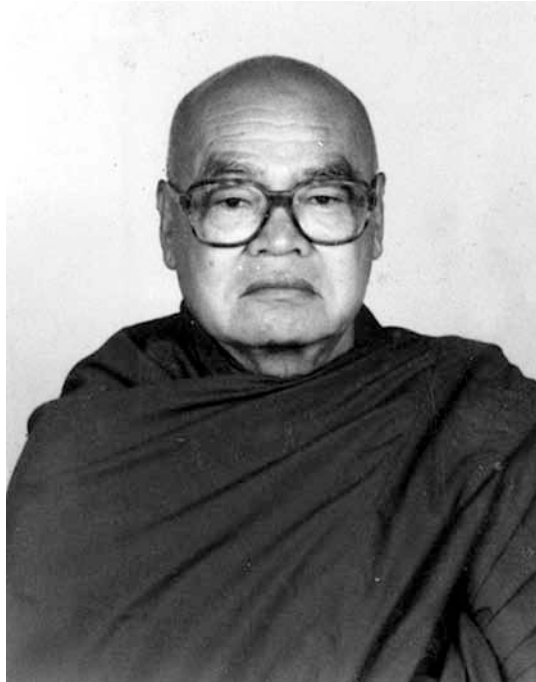
Venerable Kumarkasyapa Mahasthavira is the abbot of Anandakuti Vihara, one of the oldest Vihara in Nepal where he has been living since 1961 AD and he is also the president of Akhil Nepal Bhikkhu Maha Sangha, the association of Nepalese Theravada Buddhist monks and nuns.

Venerable Kumar Kasyapa was born in 1926 AD in a Shakya family from Tansen, Palpa in Southern Nepal. His formal name was Astaman. He has learnt Buddhist teachings according to family tradition. He was taught as a young boy that there were born Buddhist but no Buddhist monks in Nepal. Hence, he was very pleased to see Buddhist monks in 1940's. The whole family came in contact with Venerable Pragyananda- the first Sangha Mahanayaka of Nepal while he was living in Palpa for a few months. The young Astaman was so impressed by Venerable Pragyananda Mahasthavira that he decided to become a Bhikkhu. Venerable Pragyananda Mahasthavira took him to Kusinagara, India where he was ordained as a Samanera Kumar in 1942 under venerable U. Chandramani Mahathera of Burma. He returned to Nepal after his novice ordination but once again, he along with other Buddhist monks were blamed for propagating Buddhism in Nepal and ordered to leave Nepal within three days. On his exile he went to Kalimpong, India with Venerable Pragyananda Mahasthavira. From there he went to Sri Lanka in 1945 as arranged by Venerable Amritananda one of the most renowned Theravada monks in Nepal, where he studied Pali and Buddhist scripture at Vidyalkara Pirivena School for ten years. He came back to Nepal in 1951 for higher ordination under the most venerable Pragyananda Mahasthavira at Anandakuti Vihara and became Bhikkhu Kumar Kasyapa. He was liked by every one at the Vidyalkara Pirivena School and distinguished himself by receiving the title of "Tripitakacharya", a first Nepalese to receive this title from Sri Lanka.

On his way back from Sri Lanka, he went to live with Venerable Jagdish Kashyap in India and helped him in publication of Buddhist

books mainly Tripitika. After working in publication for three years he came back to Nepal and resided at Anandakuti Vihara, Swayambhu in Kathmandu, Nepal with Bhikkhu Amritananda, Venerable Kumarkasyapa is a well known writer/ translator and has written many books. His wrote mainly in Nepal Bhasa (Newari). So far he has written six books and Dasa Parami (Ten Perfections) is his best book. He has also written many articles. His most popular articles are **Durlabhagu Janma** (Rare

opportunity to be born as human being) and **Poginyagu Upadesh** (Message of a beggar). He is also editor of many magazines like Ananda Bhumi, Buddha Jayanti Smarika etc. Because of his work and dedication he is well known among the Buddhists of Nepal and overseas.



He has traveled widely and has visited Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, India, China etc. In recognition of his contribution to Buddhism he has received many awards from many countries. He received "Maha Saddhamma Pariyatti Pradeep" from India in 1955. In 2001, he received "Vidyalkara Padmabhushan" from Sri Lanka and more recently he received "Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja" from Burmese government in 2003. He is much loved and respected by Buddhist devotees in Nepal and they call him 'Our Kumar Bhante' or simply Kumar Bhante. They have also established scholarship in his name "Acharya Bhikshu Kumar

Kashyapa Dharmik Kosha". Sukhi Hotu Nepal (Local Nepalese Buddhist group) organized temporary mass ordination "Satkulaputra Alpakaleena Durlabh Pravjya" in 2003 at Sri Kirti Vihara, Kirtipur to celebrate his 77th birthday. It is a great honour to have such a remarkable Bhikkhu among us in Nepal. May he have a long life, good health and success in his Dhamma work for the benefit and welfare of many.

(¹ I would like to express my thanks to Ven. Pannamurti and Ven. Bodhigayana for providing the information for this article.)

**UNSHAKEN AS A ROCK ARE THE
WISE AMIDST PRAISE AND BLAME**

As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind,
even so the wise are not ruffled by praise
or blame

Dhamapada 81.

A REFLECTION ON THE NEWS ABOUT THE “BUDDHA BOY” WITH REGARD TO MEDITATION

- Venerable Dhammadipa, PhD,
Boston, USA

There is no doubt that one of the eye-catching topics for Buddhism in Nepal is about the “Buddha Boy”. Gathering the available news from Daily Telegraph, the Sun or BBC, the “Buddha Boy” called Ram Bomjan sat under a sacred peepal tree from six to ten months before disappearing. What has attracted the media’s attention and motivated flock of worshipers to visit him does not seem to be his speech or performance of miracle¹, but the duration of sitting meditation he did under the tree without food or water. In response to the news, quite a few conjectures have been made in suspicious light. The whole point of argument lies in whether it is possible to sit without food under a tree for approximately ten months, an act of which can only be regarded as a miracle.²

In this paper, I am not going to judge if the whole issue is genuine. What interests me instead is the implication of the long sitting he did. If the news information is trustful, he sat there longer than anyone recorded in Buddhist history.³ What does it tell in terms of meditation? With very limited sources, I will discuss the states of meditation power the “Buddha boy” might have, given that the description of his meditation is extremely meager. My primary intention is to give readers a basic concept of meditation and also hope this will lead to more interesting discussions on meditation in the near future.

Did the “Buddha Boy” enter form or formless *dhyânas*? The staying in long mediation power depends on mastery in resolving or not at all?

It is never an easy task to talk about the subject of meditation. As far as the Buddhist texts show us, there are many types of meditative techniques the Buddha taught his followers. They are generally divided into two categories: the category of concentration (*samatha*) and the category of insight meditation (*vipassyanâ*). The issues on concentration and insight meditation could easily lead to an endless discussion, not to mention that there are more than hundred types of concentration listed in the whole Buddhist treatises and *sûtras/suttas*. Concerning the range and the purpose, I will focus my discussion on the stages of concentration meditation.

It is mentioned in many *sûtras/suttas* that there are four *dhyânas*. The four *dhyânas* are named as first *dhyâna*, second *dhyâna*, third *dhyâna* and fourth *dhyâna*. The names are assigned according to their characteristics. The first *dhyâna* consists of the mental qualities, namely, *vitarka* (applied thought), *vicâra* (examined thought), *prîti* (joy), *sukha* (happiness) and *cittaikâgrât* (one pointness). Only the *vitarka* and *vicâra* are the two stronger mental qualities among the five in the first *dhyâna*. When one reaches the second *dhyâna*, these two qualities will be eliminated, and joy (*prîti*) will become the strongest mental quality. It is the same with the third *dhyâna* where joy will be eliminated while happiness and one-pointness remain, with the happiness being the strongest quality. The last *dhyâna*, the fourth, only retains the last mental quality, one-pointness. It is said that the breaths will almost cease at this stage of meditation. In the Buddhist teachings, these four *dhyânas* belong to the realm of form for one is liable to be reborn in certain types of heavens⁴ in the realm of form.

There are other four higher *dhyâna* besides the four *dhyâna* of the realm of form. They are called the concentration of the realms

of formless (*arûpa dhyâna*). As the name suggests, they are the other four *dhyâna* closely connected with the realm of no-form or no body. Likewise, when one reaches this state, it is said that his/her mental states is equivalent to the beings there. They do not have material body but only consciousness.

If we apply the above mentioned principles to the duration of staying in long meditation like what the “Buddha boy” did, none of it can decide how long one is to ‘enjoy’ the mental states; rather, the whole point should be whether one is mastery in resolving to the *dhyâna* that enables one to stay in meditation for certain period of time. For example, if one enters the second *dhyâna*, he/she is supposed to enjoy different types of joy without any interruption. It is up to his/her decision to withdraw or emerge from that particular kind of *dhyâna*. It is believed that if one does not learn the skill of withdrawing (mastery in emerging), he/she would find it difficult to use the *dhyâna* power to do insight meditation, or even to emerge from concentration. Thus the *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification) mentions five kinds of mastery of *jhâna*: “These are the five kinds of mastery: mastery in adverting, mastery in attaining, mastery in resolving, mastery in emerging, and mastery in reviewing.”⁵ Moreover, it is the mastery in resolving (*adhitthânâvasî*) that contributes to the factor of how long one can stay in the *dhyâna*. This very same concept is evident in the other traditions of Buddhism as well. For example, the *Mahâprajñâpâramitâ-upadeûa-ûâstra* mentions that a bodhisattva can attain different types of *samâdhi* (states of concentration) and understand the doors of *samâdhi*: “mastery well in attaining, mastery well in resolving and mastery well in emerging.”⁶ On the other hand, mastery in resolving means “a person is well grasping any type of form (generated by concentration) and with his own wish staying in therein without losing it.”⁷

In this regard, when it comes to the Buddha-boy’s long-time sitting under the peepal tree, we should rather ask whether he is well mastery in resolving: did he ever know how long he was going to stay in meditation?

It seems that the “Buddha boy” at least entered certain types of *dhyâna*. Judging from the time he sat there, it could be possible that he had reached the highest stage of *dhyâna* called “the state of neither perception nor no perception” in the realm of form. For it is the stage in which not only breaths come to almost complete distinction, but also the perception of the bodily existence is almost gone to zero. Certainly, there is similar possibility for certain people who sit there for days. They are the ones who are not mastery in resolving. In other word, they cannot determine how long they should stay in the *dhyâna*. For them, to emerge from any *dhyâna* is purely dependent on ‘arbitrary’ factors. I was told that one of the monks I acquainted went to do meditation in Lion-head Mountain, Taiwan. It turned out that almost a month had past before he emerged from certain states of meditation. He did not even realize that he was in meditation for all this while until being asked why he was up to the hill for days without any correspondence.

Did the “Buddha boy” exercise Non-conceptual concentration? The staying in long meditation for enduring pains in the body?

It is reported that the ‘Buddha-boy’ was bitten by a snake after three months of his meditation. He then took the incident as the first test (BBC 30/11/2005). It was only at that time that he spoke. But then he was bitten by a snake again after perhaps a month or months of his meditation. It is said that he then continued his mediation for another few months until his disappearance (to further his mediation in deepest forest?). This incident reminds me of what the Buddha said in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* of Chinese Āgama: “I am now old, worn out, Ānanda, one who has traversed life’s path, I have reached the term of life, which is eighty. My body is just as an old cart has to keep on maintaining to function. My body is the same, I have to work hard to abide the pain. I do not contemplate all ‘conceptual’, but entering into none-conceptual concentration (無想定).”⁸ According to the *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣā*, the none-conceptual concentration is taken part in the fourth *dhyāna*.⁹ It is the stage of concentration wherein all mental functions of the first six consciousnesses stop, a state of spiritual concentration to the extent of which there is no consciousness arisen. Seemingly, it is one of the meditative stages enabling one to ignore the pain in the body. If it is true, could that be the “Buddha boy” also attained certainly concentration like the non-conceptual concentration to keep him from bodily suffering from the snake bites? It is quite unfortunate that we do not have any chance to ask him about this, neither do I have any available source to prove what kind of meditation he was doing. If he had done *samātha* (concentration) meditation as mentioned in Buddhist texts, then he would have been likely to exercise ‘non-conceptual concentration’ to endure his pain.

Did the “Buddha boy” exercise Absorption on Cessation or Untainted absorption? The staying in mediation power depends on outside factors or a better mediation power to stay in meditation longer?

Can one really sustain his/her body without taking any food for months? According to BBC News, most people may live without food for several weeks since the body can draw on its fat and protein store, but they can survive only three to four days without water (BBC 30/11/2005). According to the *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣā*, one is advised not to enter a certain concentration called *nirodhasamāpatti* (Absorption on Cessation) for more than seven days. A recorded incident tells that a certain monk passed away immediately right after emerging from the Absorption on Cessation. Since it is one of the very advanced stages of meditation for non-mundane people,¹⁰ and it is the state that one is said to completely shut off their senses and consciousness, a pre-determinate condition should be made before entering this stage of concentration. The incident happened when this particular monk pre-determined to be ‘awaken’ or ‘alarmed’ from meditation by hearing bell running in the temple. It was coincidental that the lodging monks went away for three months. When the monks came back and ran the bell for the sake of chanting, he was awakened and passed away immediately.¹¹ A similar incident also is recorded in the same treatise. In this case, the monk passed away after staying in Absorption on Cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) for half to one month. As the treatise suggests, it is in the consideration of the exhaustion of material food (Sanskrit: *Kavāṅkārāhāra*; Pāli: *kabalinkāra āhāra*) that one is suggested to enter *nirodhasamāpatti* for not more than seven days.

That said, what really sustains their life while they do such type of meditation? Wouldn’t he feel hungry and thirsty at all? It is explained that in the Absorption of Cessation, he does not rely on food to survive. Therefore, he could stay longer in meditation since no

material food is needed, no different types of feelings disturbed him, no thoughts provoke him to leave the meditation and even consciousness does not arise, which in Buddhist terminology is called ‘no four foods’ (material food, touching/sensation food, thought food and consciousness food).

It is also mentioned that there are two types of *samādhi*: Tainted absorption (*sāsrava-samāpatti*) and Untainted absorption (*anāsrava-samāpatti*).¹² The previous one is said to still rely on the three kinds of food (except for the material food) to sustain his body and the latter, the Untainted absorption, is sustained by three somewhat similar kinds of food to sustain their body. However, the latter one is only for someone who at least attains certain sainthood.

Conclusion

Having briefly discussed few types of concentration with regard to resolving in meditation, I cannot help asking how long did the “Buddha boy” really sit for his meditation? Even if it is true that he sat there for three months without even speaking a single word until he was bitten by a snake, can he be said to stay in meditation without being interrupted for all this while? It is certainly for sure that he had emerged from certain meditation states since he did speak to his uncle; therefore we can be positive that he did not sit there for ten months without emerging from any form of meditation. However, although it is very likely that he has attained certain advanced *dhyānas*, most probably *ārūpa dhyānas* (in the realm of formless), did he ever enter the non-conceptual concentration (*asamijñi samāpatti*) to endure his pain? The last question concerns whether he has attained certain sainthood enabling him to stay in such a long time in deep meditation. He did humbly say he was not a Buddha yet but just Rimpoché. Surely he also knew he had attained certain stages of sainthood? It is believed in the *Theravāda Abhidhamma* that mind food can sustain a meditator for seven days. If the “Buddha boy” sat there longer than seven days, one can only say that he has either reached certain sainthood to enter certain concentration like non-conceptual concentration, or arrived Absorption of Cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) to enable him to sit for a longer period of time.

Without any direct talk with him, one can never prove what kind or what stages of meditation did the “Buddha boy” achieve. But it is without doubt that his long sitting under the tree has raised some important issues on Buddhist history: how long can one really sit for meditation? What are those meditations? Do they conduce to our spirituality?

It is said in all Buddhist traditions: the Buddha descent from Tusita heaven to Nepal after long period of practices from his innumerable past lives. He attained his supreme enlightenment with his skill of meditation and he also attained final liberation (*parinirvāṇa*) with his skill of meditation. On this important day in commemoration of the three important events of our great teacher, the Gotama Buddha, I rejoice at his incomparable knowledge of spirituality that enables us humble human beings to attain what he acquired two thousand five hundred years ago.

¹ Miraculous things like light emanating from his forehead (Telegraph filed 21/11/2005) and his uncle, Bahadur Rama incessantly claims he is a God (Telegraph filed 13/3/2006).

² BBC News 30/11/2005: The most puzzling question is that Does he remain seated like that and meditate even at night? Does he not eat and drink at all?

³ A renowned contemporary Zen master Xuyun (虛雲) was said to have entered certain concentration for nine days while he was supposed to continue his talk in Thailand. This incident also had called to the attention of Thai King. He was invited to give blessing in the Thai palace. Before this incident, he had experienced half month meditation on a run. See 釋惠敏, 2003, 中華佛學學報, 第十六期, 虛雲和尚長時住定經驗之探索, 中華佛學研究所, 臺北。

⁴ Buddhism believes in different levels of heaven. The levels of heaven are chiefly categorized with the life span, living condition and more importantly, their spiritual levels and powers. Since concentration (*samādhi*) is believed to be one of the guaranteed doors to heavens, the theory of concentration divides heaven into three realms: realm of desire, realm of form and realm of formless.

⁵ *Visuddhimagga* IV 131 [154]: *Tatr' imā pañcaviṣayo: āvajjanavasī, samāpajjanavasī, adhiṭṭhānavasī, vutthānavasī, paccavekkhanavasī ti. Pathamam jhānam yatthicchakam yadicchakam yāvadacchakam āvajjati avajjanāya dandhāyittam natthi ti āvajjanavasī. Pathamam jhānam yatthicchakam ...pe... samāpajjati samāpajjanāya dan- dhāyittam natthi ti samāpajjanavasī. Evam sesā pi vitthāretabbā.*

⁶ *Mahaprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra* (大智度論) Taisho 1509, 25.204b25-28: 定根者菩薩善取定相。能生種種禪定。了了知定門。善知入定善知住定善知出定。於定不著不味不作依止。

⁷ *Yogacārabhūmi Śāstra* (瑜伽師地論), Taisho 1579, 30.334c22-25: 云何住定相。謂即於彼諸相。善巧而取。由善取故。隨其所欲。於定安住。又於此定得不退法。

⁸ Taisho 1, 1.15: 吾已老矣。年粗八十。譬如故車。方便修治得有所至。吾身亦然。以方便力得少留壽。自力精進。忍此苦痛。不念一切想。入無想定。時我身安隱。無有惱患。 The Pāli version of the same sutta (*Dīgha nikāya* II 100) offers a slightly different picture: The

Buddha attained he cessation of certain feelings, enters into the signless concentration of mind, that his body knows comfort. (*Yasmim Ānanda samaye Tathāgato sabbanimittānam {amanasikārā} ekaccānam vedanānam nirodhā animittam ceto-samādhim upasampajja viharati, phāsukato Ānanda tasmim samaye Tathāgatassa kāyo hoti*).

⁹ *Mahāvibhāsa*, Taisho 1545, 27.773a: 諸欲入彼定者先起欲界善心。次入初靜慮。次入第二靜慮。次入第三靜慮。後入第四靜慮。於第四靜慮上中下心。從上入中。從中入下。下品心斷入無想定。 Please also see the *Abhidharmahrdaya sūtra I* (阿毘曇心論經), Taisho 1551, 28.866a: 無想定滅盡定。無想定名厭於生死解脫想。第四禪力心相續次第中間滅。滅盡定名厭散亂心寂滅想。初住想心思念。非想非非想過惡心心數次第滅。(the none conceptual concentration is, when one with the thought of liberation and is abhorred of birth and dead, with the power of fourth *dhyāna* he ceases consciousness steps by steps...) *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* Chapter II p.68: *atha kimidamāsamjñikam nāma? āsamjñikamasamjñisu nirodhaścittacaittānām* (non-consciousness is that which, among the Non-consciousness ones, arrests the mind and its mental states.)

¹⁰ In Buddhism, there are eight levels of saints. When one becomes the first level of saints, a person is no more a mundane person.

¹¹ *Mahāvibhāsa*, Taisho 1545, 27.779c: 問住滅盡定得經幾時。答欲界有情諸根大種由段食住。若久在定則在定時身雖無損後出定時身便散壞。故住此定但應少時。極久不得過七晝夜。段食盡故。云何知然。曾聞於一僧伽藍中。有一苾芻得滅盡定。食時將至。著衣持?詣食堂中。是日打? [3]? 少晚。彼苾芻以精勤故。便作是念。我何爲空過。此時不修於善遂不觀後際。則立誓願入於滅定。乃至打?當出時。彼僧伽藍有難事起。諸苾芻等散往他處。經於三月難事方解。苾芻還集僧伽藍中。纔打?。彼苾芻從定而出則便命終。

¹² *Mahāvibhāsa*, Taisho 1545, 27.782c12-14: 食謂住有漏有心定者。雖斷段食而食有漏觸思識食。住無漏定者雖斷真實四食。而有相似觸思識食。住滅定者一切皆無。

POLITICS AND BUDDHA'S POINT OF VIEW

In the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta*, the Buddha said that immorality and crime, such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, could arise from poverty. Kings and governments may try to suppress crime through punishment, but it is futile to eradicate crimes through force.

In the *Kutadanta Sutta*, the Buddha suggested economic development instead of force to reduce crime. The government should use the country's resources to improve the economic conditions of the country. It could embark on agricultural and rural development, provide financial support to entrepreneurs and business, and provide adequate wages for workers to maintain a decent life with human dignity.

In the Jataka, the Buddha had given 10 rules for Good Government, known as 'Dasa Raja Dharma' These ten rules can be applied even today by any government which wishes to rule the country peacefully. The rules are as follows:

1. be liberal and avoid selfishness,
2. maintain a high moral character,
3. be prepared to sacrifice one's own pleasure for the well being of the subjects,
4. be honest and maintain absolute integrity,
5. be kind and gentle,

6. lead a simple life for the subjects to emulate,
7. be free from hatred of any kind,
8. exercise non violence,
9. practise patience, and
10. respect public opinion to promote peace and harmony.

Regarding the behaviour of rulers, He further advised:

(a) A good ruler should act impartially and should not be biased and discriminate between one particular group, of subjects against another.

(b) A good ruler should not harbour any form of hatred against any of his subjects.

(c) A good ruler should show no fear whatsoever in the enforcement of the law, if it is justifiable.

(d) A good ruler must possess a clear understanding of the law to be enforced. It should not be enforced just because the ruler has the 'authority to enforce the law. It must be done in a reasonable manner and with common sense.

(*Cakkavatti Sihananda Sutta*)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KARMA IN MODERN DAY LIFE

- Dr Dinesh Bajracharya, PhD

BACKGROUND

Peace and happiness are the ultimate goal of each and every human being. Knowing or unknowingly people always seek happiness one way or other. In the modern day life people are getting better off in the materialistic world as they have got virtually everything to enjoy the life physically. Nevertheless, people are not happy mentally due to lack of spiritual knowledge and practice. People have become more individualistic. They only think about their benefit. During the course of being happy they develop every impurities in their mind. The family value, social values and even law and orders are taken as burden. It is because of that many youngsters in western countries are becoming more problematic in communities. They develop a belief that they should enjoy as much as possible when they are young. Only in old age they should think or practise about spirituality. As a result many young people waste their life in materialistic world trying to be happy. And, whenever they become unhappy they break down badly. Ultimately many land up in intoxication and drug addiction to gain peace and happiness. Many die in young age and those who live till old age finds it too late to practise the mental peace. Enjoyment in materialistic world thus is direct result of ignorance, attachment, and aversion which are very common in human life that keeps us in the prison of samsara, that is, rebirth and suffering. There is no harm to be happy in any stage and time of life as long as the happiness is not at the cost of other's happiness and one's unhappiness later. In order words, happiness should not come out of negative actions.

Many influential personalities and religious leaders have encouraged people to be happy in life physically by following the precepts or code of morality. It is indeed true to say that simply following the precepts or code of morality is sufficient for performing a positive karma. But even for performing a positive karma, spiritual knowledge and mental development is helpful if not necessary as it is relatively easy to perform positive actions by following the rules of morality when things are going well. If we have a good job, live in stable society, and earn enough to support us, it is relatively easy to perform positive karma. But when we find ourselves in situation of stress, instability, and uncertainty, for instance, if we lose our job and find ourselves in circumstances where lawlessness prevails, and so forth then we become vulnerable which increase the likelihood of performing negative actions. In such circumstances the knowledge of karma and control over mind can safeguard our practice of positive karma. Therefore, the synchronization of material and spiritual happiness is the true happiness of human beings for their normal way of life.

KARMA IS NOT FATE

Karma is often misunderstood as fate or luck. Whenever people get something out of nothing they think it is the fate or luck. For example, if a person wins a lottery he believes that it is his luck or fate that he got a benefit. In the same way when a person gets into a trouble or something bad happens he links it to bad luck or ill-fate. For instance, if a natural disaster happens or a plane crashes he may call it ill-fated incidence. He directly or indirectly gives responsibility to some unseen force or even a god. It is due to this reason people in many developing countries as well as in some developed countries worship god/goddess by sacrificing animals and birds, offering money and other valuable things to make him pleased so as to get his blessing to have so-called luck or fate and avoid bad luck or ill-fate. Since all these beliefs have sentimental

values and linked with traditional values of some cultures it must be respected. Nevertheless, there are many questions which need to be answered in respect of fate, luck or even god. As evidenced in recent days there had been several tragedies in the different parts of the world due to terrorist attacks, natural calamities, accidents and so on. If we believe in fate or luck, who is responsible for this and why the unseen force or god didn't do something to prevent it, why some people got escaped (even nearly missed) the incident while other got trapped and killed. These are few questions which need to be analysed very carefully before believing on fate or luck or god. Further, there are many differences among living beings such as some are wealthy while others are poor; some are strong and healthy while others are weak and diseased and so forth. Are these all due to fate or luck? If it is yes then who is responsible? Who made these differences? If it is made by god or unseen force then why? The god is supposed to be fair, just, compassionate and equal to every body. Then why are these differences? The centre of gravity of all these questions rest on Karma. These all differences are in fact the result of karma. All living beings are alike insofar they are subject to the afflictions such as ignorance, attachment, and aversion but the particular circumstances in which each living being finds himself are the effects of his particular karma which conditions his specific situation.

WHAT IS KARMA

Karma is action. It is the act of doing this or that. However, karma is not a mechanical action, nor it is unconscious or involuntary action. On the contrary, karma is intentional, conscious, deliberate action motivated by volition or will. If we step on an insect or worm unknowingly or unintentionally it doesn't form karma. So it is a neutral karma but if we kill a living being with an intention then it creates negative karma. Here a question may be raised as what if we kill millions of germs by taking drugs to save the lives of some living beings. The answer is very simple, as long as the intention is not to kill, it doesn't form karma. Here, medication is motivated by saving the lives. So far as killing germs are concerned, it is not related to intentional killing. It is in fact defensive or preventive or curative action which is also related with positive karma. Under Buddhist philosophy, it is always permitted to take every possible measure to protect oneself and others from anything or anybody if one is endangered by the other. For instance, if someone tries to attack you, it is your duty to protect yourself. If you kill the attacker during the course of action of your defence it won't be your negative karma as you didn't have intention to kill him. On the contrary, the attacker will have to face the effect of negative karma for his intention to harm or kill the other. The law of land of every civilized society is also guided by the same principle. That is why the law always wants to save the innocent and punish the culprit. This proves that Buddhism is not fanaticism rather it is a way of living the life.

Any action, therefore, motivated by ignorance, attachment and aversion which is harmful to oneself and others is negative karma where as actions motivated by wisdom, renunciation or detachment and love and compassion are positive karma. It is therefore all volitional activities both good and bad karma. Volition refers to the impressions, or habits, that we have formed in our stream of conscious moments, or conscious continuum. These impressions are formed by repeated actions, that is, our actions become habitual. These habits become part of our personality, and we take these habits with us from life to life in the form of what we call volition

or mental formation. Our actions in this life are conditioned by the habits we have formed over countless previous lifetimes. According to Buddhist philosophy it is volition that we call karma. Having willed, one acts through body, speech and mind. Volition is 'mental construction, mental activity. Its function is to direct the mind in the sphere of good, bad or neutral activities. It is only volitional actions – such as attention, will, determination, confidence, concentration, wisdom, energy, desire, repugnance or hate, ignorance, conceit, idea of self etc that can produce karmic effects.

Specifically, the negative actions that are to be avoided are related to the so-called three doors of action – namely, body, voice, and mind. There are three negative actions of body, four of speech, and three of mind. The three negative actions of body are (1) killing, (2) stealing, and (3) sexual misconduct; the four negative actions of voice are (4) lying, (5) harsh speech, (6) slander, and (7) malicious gossip; and the three negative actions of mind are (8) greed, (9) anger, and (10) delusion. By avoiding these ten negative actions, we can avoid their consequences.

WEIGHT OF KARMA

Karma whether negative or positive, is modified by the conditions under which it is accumulated. In other words, a positive or negative action may be more or less weighty depending on the condition under which it is performed. The condition that determine the weight or strength of karma may be divided into those that refer to the subject, or the doer of the action, and those that refer to the object, or the being toward whom the action is directed. Hence the conditions that determine the weight of karma apply to the subject as well as the object of actions.

If we take the example of killing, five conditions must be present for the action to have complete, absolute strength: a) a living being, b) consciousness of the existence of a living being, c) the intention to kill the living being, d) the effort or action of killing the living being, and e) the consequent death of the living being. Here we can see conditions that apply to the subject as well as object of the action of killing: the subjective conditions are consciousness of the existence of a living being, the intention to kill, and the action of killing a living being, while the objective conditions are the presence of a living being and the consequent death of that living being.

Similarly, there are five alternative conditions that modify the weight of karma: 1) persistence or repetition, 2) wilful intention, 3) absence of regret, 4) quality, and 5) indebtedness. Again, the five can be divided into subjective and objective categories. The subjective conditions are actions done with persistence, actions done with wilful intention and determination, and actions done without regret or misgivings. If you perform a negative action again and again, with wilful intention and without regret or misgivings, the weight of the action will be increased.

The objective conditions are the quality of the object – that is, the living being toward whom the action is directed – and the indebtedness, or the nature of the relationship that exists between the object of an action and the subject. In other words, if we perform a positive or negative action toward a living being with extraordinary qualities, like an Arhat or the Buddha, the positive or negative karma will have greater weight. In the same way, any action performed by Arhat or monk will have greater weight in term of karma. If a monk commits crime or perform any negative action he will have to bear greater negative consequences compare to the same action done by a lay man or an ordinary person. Finally, the strength of positive and negative karma is greater when they

are done toward those to whom we are indebted, like our parents, teachers, and friends who have benefited us in the past. It is therefore actions towards animals bear relatively smaller karmic effect. Therefore, when a butcher kills animals for the sake of business it forms mixed (negative and positive) karma because it could be an intentional killing on the one hand and intentional well being of other living beings on the other. However, the negative karma, in this respect, is greater than positive as it is directly related with repeated intentional killing of a living being without regret but motivated by profit.

EFFECTS OF KARMA (LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT)

No one in this world can escape from consequences of his or her karma. It is said that even the Buddha suffered from mild headaches in his life due to some of his negative karma, that is, he enjoyed seeing a fish being suffered in the surface without water when he was young in his previous life. Similarly, during the Buddha's time, Moggallana, a very learned monk was attacked by dacoits in a forest where he was taking a shelter. When he came to the Buddha soaking with blood the Buddha looked at his past life with the power of his meditation and found that it was because of his negative karma as the monk took his old parents into a jungle and, having beaten them to death, reported that they had been killed by dacoits. Everyone therefore will have to face the consequences of their particular karma sooner or later. The Buddha explained in this matter that, as long as a negative action does not produce its fruit of suffering, a foolish person will consider that the negative action is good, but when it does produce its fruit of suffering, then he will realize that the act was bad or negative. In the same way, as long as a positive action does not produce happiness, a foolish person may think that it was useless, only when it does produce happiness will be realize the act was good. We thus need to judge positive and negative actions from the point of view of their long-term effects. Very simply, sooner or later positive actions results in happiness for oneself and for others, whereas negative actions result in suffering for oneself and others.

Therefore, in the Buddhist philosophy, every intentional action must have its effect. Similarly, it has been scientifically proved that every action must have an equal opposite reaction. So, it is the law of nature or law of karma that a particular cause brings about a particular effect that is similar in nature to that cause. The general effect of negative actions is suffering, which can, however, take various forms. The fully ripened effect of negative actions is rebirth in the lower realms, or realms of woe, that is, the hell realms, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the realm of animals. If the weight of negative actions is not sufficient to result in birth in the lower realms, then it results in unhappiness even though we are born as humans. In the same way, the general effect of positive actions is happiness. A positive action can be done in two ways. The first one is by avoiding the negative actions such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and the rest and the second one is actions in terms of generosity, restraint, meditation, respect, service to others, transference of merit, rejoicing in the merit of others, listening to the Dharma, teaching the Dharma, and correction of our own erroneous views. Here again, the effects of positive actions are similar to their causes. For instance, generosity results in wealth, listening to Dharma results in wisdom, and so on.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion we can say that the principle of Karma is a great gift to the human being from the Buddhist point of view. It is the knowledge for human being to live life peacefully and happily not only in this life but also a quality in the next life. We therefore should perform always positive action in every step of our life

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लुम्बिनी वन : लुम्बिनी ग्राम

- भिक्षु सुदर्शन महास्थविर

वैशाख पुर्णिमा, बुद्ध पुर्णिमा, पुष्प पुर्णिमा (स्वायापुन्ही) का दिन सिद्धार्थ गौतमको जन्म, वहाँको सम्बोधी प्राप्ति र तथागतको महापरिनिर्वाण भएको थियो । त्रिविध संयोगको पुन्य दिवशमा सिद्धार्थ गौतमको, धार्मिक भाषामा भन्ने भए बोधिसत्व राजकुमारको र अभिलेखको भाषामा भन्ने भए शाक्यमुनी बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनी वारेमा केही चिन्तन मनन गर्नु र केही लेख्नु बाँच्छनीय छ ।

तिपिटकको सुत्तपिटक अर्न्तगत खुद्दकनिकायको एक संकलन (ग्रन्थ) को नाउँ हो, सुत्तनिपात । सुत्तनिपात भाषा र छन्दको दृष्टिबाट पनि बुद्धकालिन छेउसम्म पुग्याउने संकलन मानिन्छ । यसमा संकलित सुत्तहरू मध्येमा ३ सुत्तहरूको नाउँ बैराटको अशोकको अभिलेखमा उल्लेख भएको छ । यसै ग्रन्थमा लुम्बिनी वारेमा उल्लेख गरिएको छ, “उनि रत्नवर अतुल्य बोधिसत्व प्राणीहरूको हित र सुखको निम्ति मनुष्यलोकमा शाक्यहरूको जनपद (अर्न्तगत) लुम्बिनी ग्राममा जन्मनु भयो । यस कारण हामी अत्यन्त सन्तुष्ट र प्रसन्न छौं ।” लुम्बिनीस्थित अशोकस्तम्भमा मौर्यकालिन ब्राह्मीलिपिमा कुँदिएको छ, “हिदबुधेजाते साक्यमुनि” अर्थात् “यहाँ शाक्यमुनि जन्मनुभएको” हो । “हिदभगवंजातेति लुमिनिगामे” “यहाँ भगवान् जन्मनुभएकोले लुम्बिनी ग्राममा” । यसरी प्राचीन वाङ्मय र अभिलेखमा लुम्बिनीमा सिद्धार्थ कुमारको जन्म भएको वर्णन समस्वर मा अभिव्यक्त भएको छ । त्यस्तै लुम्बिनीको उत्खननमा ग्रामीण अवस्थितिको प्रमाण पनि पाइएको छ ।

बुद्धको जीवनी सम्बन्धी पाली र संस्कृत भाषाको वाङ्मयमा लुम्बिनीवनको वर्णन राम्ररी गरेको छ । जातक अष्टकथाको “अविदुरे निदान” मा कपिलवस्तु र देवदह दुई जगरको बीचको उभय नगरवासीहरूको लुम्बिनी-वन नाउँको मंगल शालवंन भएको उल्लेख गरेको छ र लुम्बिनी-वनलाई - स्वर्गको चित्तलता वन जस्तै आनुभावयुक्त सुसज्जित छ भनी उल्लेख गरेको छ र मज्झिमनिकायको “देवदहसुत्त वण्णना” मा बुद्ध देवदह निगमको आधारमा (भिक्षाटन गर्दै) लुम्बिनीवनमा विहार गर्नुभएको प्रसंग यहाँ स्मरणिय छ ।

“ललितविस्तर” अनुसार महामायाले वृक्षहरूमा श्रेष्ठ शालवृक्षको उद्यानमा जाने ईच्छा गरेपछि राजा शुद्धोदनले श्रेष्ठ गुणहरूबाट समृद्ध लुम्बिनीलाई सजाउनुभयो (प्रवरगुण समृद्धा लुम्बिनी मण्डयध्वं) । लुम्बिनीलाई सबै प्रकारका वृक्षहरू र विविध फुलबाट सजिएको नन्दन (वन) जस्तो विविध वस्त्र (पताका) र रत्नबाट भकिभकाउ हुने गरी सजायो । अनि देवताहरूले आज लुम्बिनीमा जगत्का श्रेष्ठ (पुरुष) जन्मने छ भनी फुल वर्षाए र पताका फहराए । अशोकको धर्मयात्राको विवरण प्रस्तुत गर्दै दिव्यवदानमा पनि मायादेवी लुम्बिनी जानुभएको वर्णन गर्दछ । यसरी अनेक प्रसंगबाट ललितविस्तरमा लुम्बिनीलाई वनको रूपमा वर्णन गरिएको छ । बुद्धको जीवन गाथा “बुद्ध चरितमा” लुम्बिनीलाई वनकै रूपमा स्पष्ट गरेको छ, “प्रातकालिन प्राची जस्तो शोभित भएर अनि मोहको थकानबाट रहित भएर (महामाया) देवीले घना वन जाने ईच्छा गरिन् । त्यस पछि रानीले मनोहर, ध्यानप्रद, देववन (नन्दनवन) भन्दा कम नभएको लुम्बिनी नामक वनमा निवास गर्ने ईच्छा गरी आफ्नो पतिसँग

बिन्ति गरिन् ।” चिनियाँ भाषाबाट संस्कृत भाषामा पुनः अनुदित “महापरिनिर्वाण सुत्र” अनुसार बुद्धमाताको मुखबाट उच्चारित श्लोकांश अनुसार बुद्ध लुम्बिनी वनमा जन्मनु भएको हो । (जातो बुद्धो लुम्बिनीवने) । उत्तरतिर टाढा हुँदै गएतापनि पातलिध्वै गएतापनि लुम्बिनीको उत्तरतिर आज पनि शालवृक्ष वनको अवशेष हामी देख्दछौं । यस उसले सिद्धार्थ गौतमको जन्म भएको बेला लुम्बिनी वन हो, त्यहाँ नजिकै छेउछाउमा सानातिना गाउँहरू पनि थिए ।

फाहियानको वर्णन अनुसार लुम्बिनी एक राजकीय उद्यान हो र यसलाई मानिसहरू लुगमिंग भन्दछन् । राजमहिषीले पोखरीमा स्नान गरी त्यसको उत्तर (द्वार वा दिशा) बाट निस्केर २० पाईला गईकन शालवृक्षनिर उभिनुभयो र राजकुमारलाई जन्माउनुभयो । केनसांगको यात्रा वृत्तान्त अनुसार पनि लुम्बिनी एउटा उद्यान हो । चिनियाँ उल्लेख अनुसार यसको नाउँ ल-फ-नि हो यो संस्कृत शब्द लवणको रूपान्तर शब्द हो “लवणी” एक स्त्रीलिङ्ग नामवाचक शब्द भन्न सकिन्छ ।

लुम्बिनी सिद्धार्थ गौतमकी बज्रै, महामायाकी आमा, सुप्रबुद्धकी रानीको नाउँ हो । अर्को विश्वास अनुसार देवदहकी महारानीको नाउँबाट लुम्बिनी उद्यान बनिएको होइन, अपितु सुप्रबुद्धकी मुख्य नायक (अमात्य) की जहानीको नाउँबाट बनेको यो एउटा उद्यान हो । तर तिब्बती मूल श्रोत अनुसार सुप्रबुद्धकी रानीको नाउँ लुम्बिनी हो र यसको अर्थ नगरकी राम्री शोभिनी नारी हो । एक बार घुम्न जाँदा रानी लुम्बिनीले देवदह नजिक एक सम्भ्रान्त श्रेष्ठीको एउटा राम्रो बगीचा देखिन् । रानीले त्यो बगीचा पाउन चाह्यो । राजाले श्रेष्ठीको बगीचा मा तिमीलाई दिन सकिदैन भनी श्रेष्ठीको बगीचा भन्दा पनि आकर्षक, राम्री, सुगन्धित र चराचुरूङ्गी भएको उद्यान बनाई दियो र त्यस बगीचाको नाउँ पनि लुम्बिनी राखी दियो ।

“लुम्बिनी-वन” र “लुम्बिनी-ग्राम” को प्राचिन गौरव अनुकूल हाल लुम्बिनी-वन र ग्राम दुवै हुँदैछ । लुम्बिनीमा केही दशकपछि नै घना जंगल बन्ने तरखरमा शाल आदि विभिन्न वृक्षहरू फैलिँदै घना हुँदै गईरहेकोछ । साथै गत २१३ वर्ष देखि लुम्बिनी नव ग्रामका लागि वातावरण बन्दै गुरुयोजनाको कार्यान्वयन हुँदै गएको छ । लुम्बिनीमा भव्य लुम्बिनी यात्रु विश्राम गृह, अनौठो लाग्दो भव्य संग्रहालय, पुस्तकालय र पुल बनिसकेको छ । अखण्ड शान्ति प्रदिप लुम्बिनीमा बलिरहेको छ । गुरुयोजनाको यो कार्यान्वयन यो सम्पन्नता लुम्बिनीका सबै यात्रीहरूले देख्न सक्ने गरी शिघ्रातिशिघ्र जान आउन साधन केही समयका लागि नै किन नहोस् व्यवस्था हुनु जरुरी छ । अशोक स्तम्भबाट अखण्ड शान्ति-प्रदीप, शान्त-क्षेत्र र मंदिर-क्षेत्र जोडिने सेतु, संग्रहालय, पुस्तकालय र यात्रु-विश्राम-गृह जान आउन अम्यस्त-स्वाभाव यात्रीहरूमा आईसकेपछि हिँड्न वा ढुंगाबाट जाने प्रायोजित विधि बनेको खण्डमा बुद्धप्रति र लुम्बिनीप्रति श्रद्धा राख्ने सबै यात्रीहरू सबै पर्यटकहरूले देखेछन्, अनुभव गर्नेछन्, सिद्धार्थको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनीग्राम लुम्बिनीवन, बुद्धको संदेश बौद्ध संस्कृतिका परम शान्तिज्ञ बन्नेछ ।

साभार: लुम्बिनीको काखमा)

.... Continued from page 10 : Christian perspective

“the Truth” which would then lead the other person to have to “proclaim” what they believe to be true and which would somehow make the other person feel in the wrong. (This insight comes from Rev Jonathan Gorsky, a Jewish Orthodox teacher working in the Council for Christians and Jews).

- It is not laying down boundaries of exclusion: *what does not fit into this cannot be “true”; those who do not believe this cannot be “saved”*.

- It is not a case of one partner speaking from a superior position, being certain they have the whole truth and are absolutely right, regarding the other partner in dialogue as somehow inferior.

I hope it is clear from my own journey that I am gradually learning what dialogue IS.

- It means listening to another and learning through our shared experience and conversation. There is no suggestion of heated or acrimonious argument or discussion to prove a point; no suggestion of an inferior and superior partner. It is an equal process.

- It means both partners listening deeply, aware of where the other is coming from. This is particularly true in cases when westerners have embraced Buddhism, having been born into agnostic or merely nominal Christian families, where they have never found the reality of the Christian faith i.e. encountering the risen Christ. They are **not** ‘heretics’, ‘apostates’ or ‘lapsed’, and dialogue does not mean trying to win them back.

- It is part of the process of my own personal conversion and *metanoia* (to use St Paul’s word) to be open in dialogue to learning from the religious experience of others.

- It means to **witness** with sincerity and love to my own religion, being able to give personal testimony and explain my own faith. It implies as a condition being deeply rooted in my own faith, otherwise an insecurity and defensiveness will creep in. This is one of the most inimical things in dialogue, on either side. It leads to a feeling of being accused, attacked or discounted.

I end with a story told by the Sufi poet Rumi (d. 1273) which gives a clear insight into the subject

A man in Damascus gave some money to four colleagues—a Persian, an Arab, a Turk and a Greek. The Persian said, ‘Let us spend this on *angu*’. No’, said the Arab, ‘I want to spend all the cash on *inab*’. The Turk made his own demand: ‘The money must be spent on *uzum*’. The Greek shouted above the hubbub, ‘We must buy *istafil*’ Now they began to fight each other—because they did not know that each one of them was talking about grapes. (Quoted in John Watson, “Listening to Islam”, 2005, Sussex Academic Press.)

Continued from page 5... Four noble truths

often depicted as a wheel with eight spokes, rather than as a ladder we have to climb.

Rather than picking them up simply as an awesome collection of do’s and don’ts, we can reflect that the Buddha’s teaching and way of practice were offered out of compassion for humanity. They are not intended to make us feel inadequate, guilty or miserable but rather to make this life worthy and noble. We can find great joy in using these teachings in our lives. Verse 183 in the Dhammapada summarises them as follows: Do good; Refrain from evil; and (most importantly) purify the heart. We cultivate a sense of interest, learning all we can from our successes as well as any mistakes or difficulties, so that our natural wisdom and compassion can arise for the benefit of all beings.

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without wasting the time to accumulate more positive karma. It is the deposit of karma which takes us steps ahead towards more happiness and peace in this life and we will have rebirth with more and more purified mind. It leads us ultimately to the path of meditation, enlightenment and Nirvana. As we know Siddhartha Gautam accumulated enormous amount of karma in his previous lives with his positive actions like meditation, teachings, services, compassion, and wisdom and so on, as a result of which, he was born as a prince and attained the Buddha hood.

We therefore should not ignore any positive action thinking that that is too small. Similarly, we should not do any negative action thinking that it is negligible. Even a tiny bit of seed ultimately bears a huge tree.

(This article is partly reproduced from the Book ‘The Tree of Enlightenment by Peter Della Santina, 1997. However, the views expressed solely belong to the writer).

BUDDHA VIHARA FUND APPEAL

LNBDS (UK) decided at its annual general meeting held on July 22, 2001 at Buddha Vihara, Southall to have our own Vihara for the benefits of all the Nepalese and others interested in Buddha Dharma as their spiritual practice.

Vihara in Pali, the language used by Buddha himself, means a dwelling place. Mostly this term is used for monastery where Buddhist monks and nuns dwell. In the Buddhist text it is written that to build or participate in any form in building a Vihara is considered highly meritorious act. This is the spiritual place where the nobleness is practised by many for the harmonious life and salvation of all

With this aim in the mind and with generous donations from our members and well-wishers we have set up an account in the name of **Lumbini Buddha Vihara Fund** in Barclay’s Bank. We would like to appeal to all our well-wishers to help the society to fulfil its aim by donating whatever they can.

Donation can be deposited in fund’s account:

Barclay’s Bank
Sort Code: 20-35-90
A/C NO: 40976660

Or Sent to:
LNBDS (UK)
11 Mulberry Drive
Slough, Berkshire, SL3 7JU

If you would like to contribute regularly by direct debit/ standing order please e-mail us or write to the society. With Best wishes. LNBDS (UK)

MEDITATION

(QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

Q: What is Meditation?

Meditation is a conscious effort to change how the mind works. The Pali word for meditation is 'Bhavana' which means 'to make grow' or 'to develop'.

Q: Is meditation important?

Yes, it is no matter how much we may wish to be good, if we can not change the desires that make us act the way we do, change will be difficult. For example, a person may realise that he is impatient with his wife and he may promise himself. 'From now on I am not going to be so impatient.' But an hour later he may be shouting at his wife simply because, not being aware of himself, impatience has arisen without him knowing. Meditation helps to develop the awareness and the energy needed to transform ingrained mental habit patterns.

Q: I have heard that meditation can be dangerous. Is this true?

To live, we need salt. But if you were to eat a kilogram of salt it would kill you. To live in the modern world you need a car but if you don't follow the traffic rules or if you drive while you are drunk, a car becomes a dangerous machine. Meditation is like this, it is essential for our mental health and well-being but if you practise in a stupid way, it could cause problems. Some people have problems like depression, irrational fears or schizophrenia, they think meditation is an instant cure for their problems; they start meditating and sometimes their problems get worse. If you have such a problem, you should seek professional help and after you are better, then take up meditation. Some people instead of going gradually, step by step they meditate with too much energy for too long and soon they are exhausted. But perhaps most problems in meditation are caused by 'kangaroo meditation'. Some people go to one teacher and do his meditation technique for a while, then they read something in a book and decide to try that technique, then a week later a famous meditation teacher visits town and so they decide to incorporate some of his ideas into their practice and before long they are hopelessly confused. Jumping like a kangaroo from one teacher to another or from one meditation technique to another is a mistake. But if you don't have any severe mental problem and you take up meditation and practise sensibly it is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Q: How many types of meditation are there?

The Buddha taught many different types of meditation, each designed to overcome a particular problem or to develop a particular psychological state but the two most common and useful types of meditation are Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapana Sati) and Loving Kindness Meditation (Metta Bhavana).

Q: If I wanted to practise Mindfulness of Breathing, how would I do it?

You would follow these easy steps: the four Ps – Place, posture, practice and problems. First, find a suitable place, perhaps a room that is not too noisy and where you are not likely to be disturbed. Second, sit in a comfortable posture. A good posture is to sit with your legs folded, a pillow under your buttocks, your back straight, hands nestled in the lap and eyes closed. Alternatively, you can sit in a chair as long as you keep your back straight. Next comes the actual practice itself. As you sit quietly with your eyes closed you focus your attention on the IN and OUT movement of the breath. This can be done by counting the breaths or watching the rise and

fall of the abdomen. When this is done, certain problems and difficulties will arise you might experience irritating itches on the body or discomfort in the knees. If this happens, try to keep the body relaxed without moving and keep focusing on the breath. You will probably have many intruding thought coming into your mind and distracting your attention from the breath. The only way you can deal with this problem is to patiently keep returning your attention to the breath. If you keep doing this, eventually thought will weaken, your concentration will become stronger and you will have moment of deep mental calm and inner peace.

Q: How long should I meditate for?

It is good to do meditation for 15 minutes every day for a week and then extend the time by 5 minutes each week until you are meditating for 45 minutes. After a few weeks of regular daily meditation you will start to notice that your concentration gets better, there are fewer thoughts, and you have moments of real peace and stillness.

Q: What about Loving Kindness Meditation? How is that practised?

Once you are familiar with Mindfulness of Breathing, practise Loving Kindness Meditation. It should be done two or three times each week after you have done Mindfulness of Breathing. First, you turn your attention to yourself and say to yourself words like 'May I be well and happy. May I be peaceful and calm. May I be protected from danger. May my mind be free from hatred. May my heart be filled with love. May I be well and happy.' Then one by one you think of a loved person, a neutral person, that is someone you neither like nor dislike, and finally a dislike person, wishing each of them as you do so.

Q: What is the benefit of doing this type of meditation?

If you do Loving Kindness Meditation regularly and with right attitude, you will find that you are able to be more accepting and forgiving towards yourself. You will find that the feelings you have towards your loved ones will increase. You will find yourself making friends with people you used to be indifferent and uncaring towards, and you will find the ill – will or resentment you have towards some people will lessen and eventually be dissolved. Sometimes if you know of someone who is sick, unhappy or encountering difficulties you can include them in your meditation and very often you will find their situation improving.

Q: Do I need a teacher to teach me meditation?

A teacher is not absolutely necessary but personal guidance from someone who is familiar with meditation is certainly helpful. Unfortunately, some monks and laymen set themselves up as meditation teachers when they simply don't know what they are doing. Try to pick a teacher who adheres closely to the Buddha's teachings.

Q: I have heard that meditation is widely used today by psychiatrists and psychologists. Is this true?

Yes, it is. Meditation is now accepted as having a highly therapeutic effect upon the mind and is used by many professional mental health workers to help induce relaxation, overcome phobias and bring about self – awareness. The Buddha's insights into the human mind are helping people as much today as they did in ancient times.

(Reproduced as a Dharma Dana for the benefit of all from a booklet "What is Buddhism" by Ven. S. Dhammika.)

2549th Buddha Jayanti celebration in Nepal:

Nepalese both Hindus and Buddhists celebrated this day on Full moon day on Monday 22/5/2005. Devotees gather in great number at two most important stupas in Kathmandu valley - Swayambhu and Bouddha. Baisakha Purnima (Full moon day in May) is celebrated as the day of three important events in the life of Lord Buddha –birth in 623 B.C, attainment of Buddha hood in 588 B.C and death in 543 B.C. The festival is observed as a national holiday in Nepal. *Nepalnews.com May 23-5-05*

Inauguration of 2nd Lalit Buddhist Art Exhibition:

His Majesty King Gyanendra of Nepal inaugurated 2nd Lalit Buddhist Art exhibition at Achheswor Maha Vihara, Patan, Nepal on 8/6/05. The exhibition was organised by Buddha Vihara Sangha, Lalitpur, Nepal to mark 29th Anniversary of the Vihara.

His Holiness Dalai Lama turns 70:

The 70th birthday of Tibetan spiritual guru The Dalai Lama was celebrated all over the world on 5-7-2005 by Tibetans and his followers.

Lumbini to be developed as a World Peace City:

The 16 member International committee for the development of Lumbini has decided to reactivate the almost defunct body in order to develop Lumbini as a world peace city according to the statement issued by permanent mission of the kingdom of Nepal to United Nation, New York. The committee comprised among others Nepal, Japan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore and Thailand. It was also stated that Lumbini will be developed as a foundation of peace and regional hub of Buddhist pilgrimage sites and tourist destination of international attraction. The high level mission decided to meet at least once a year in New York to take stock of the ongoing development in Lumbini. *nepalnews.com sep 18.05*

Dipankar Jatra

Tens of thousands of Buddhist and Hindu devotees are taking part in 'Dipankha Yatra'—a religious ceremony— that kicked off from Nagabahal in Lalitpur, Nepal on Monday 17 Oct. 2005. The ceremony is taking place after 38 years in the Nepalese capital. According to the legend, Dipanker Buddha breathed life to the idol of a bull named 'Neel Thu' (or Blue-horned bull). The bull visited 131 various religious sites before returning to Nagbahal, which the devotees are trying to retrace. *Nepalnews.com Oct.17 2005*

Nepal Buddha Boy:

RamBahadur Bomjan, 16, who has been meditating under a peepal tree around his home village of Ratnapuri in Bara District, Nepal since May 2005 as disappeared from his usual meditating site since 11 March 2006. His followers have said he may have moved deep inside the forest (Charkose Jhadee) looking for a quite place to meditate. Local people and police have searched the area for him. According to BBC news dated 20/3/2006, the chairman of the Om Namoh Buddha Tapaswi Sewa

Samiti, Ram Bahadur Lama told the reporters that he and his colleagues have seen Bomjan about 3 km south of the meditating site and have spoken with him for half an hour. Bomjan told them



he would reappear after six years. He left the place because there was no peace at his meditating site. He told them to tell his parents not to worry.

Bomjan was born in February 1990 in a Tamang family in Ratnapuri village of Bara district in Nepal. He was deeply interested in Buddhism and has spent some time in Lumbini (2003) and Bodhgaya in India (2004). According to his

mother he has never touched any meat or fish nor drank alcohol. He was so different from others. He never fought with anyone and was peaceful. Incidentally Bomjan's mother's name is also Mayadevi just like the name of Siddhartha Gautam's mother

"Did he remain seated and continued meditation even at night? Did he not eat and drink at all?" were the most frequently asked questions.

Buddha Statue three times bigger than the statue of Liberty to be built in India:

Huge statue of Maitreya Buddha which will be three times the size of the statue of liberty will be built at Bodhgaya in northern India by the Maitreya Project, an international consortium at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. The statue which was supposed to be completed by 2005 will sit on a throne 17 storey house, housing a temple. Its feet will rest on a lotus.

This was the dream of the late Tibetan Buddhist monk, Lama Thubten Yeshe who died in 1984. After his death Lama Zopa Rinpoche took over the responsibility. Quoting Buddhist scriptures he said "the merits received in making a holy object are directly related to the number of atoms the holy object is composed of." It also says "By building it in Bodhgaya the place of enlightenment many people will come to see it and will accumulate merits leading them to happiness and ultimately enlightenment" BBC

China hosts first Buddhism forum:

Hundreds of monks and Buddhist scholars from more than 30 countries attended the World Buddhist Forum in the Eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou. This was the communist China's first international religious gathering. China has about 100 million Buddhist. Dalai Lama was not invited. The figure head of the conference was Gyaltzen Norbu, who was nominated by Chinese government in 1995 as Panchen Lama. But according to Reuter news agency he appeared to be stunned by delegates. The Dalai Lama has nominated his own Panchen Lama – Tibet's second most important figure, who has disappeared and is believed to be under house arrest. The conference was held from 13 – 17 April 2006.

May 2005

2549th Buddha Jayanti Celebration in London, UK

Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) celebrated 2549th **Buddha Jayanti (Buddha Day)** on Sunday, 22nd May 2005 at the Priory Community Centre, Acton, London. The celebration started with Buddha Puja followed by music from Ghyaling, a traditional Tibetan musical instrument played by Sano Lama. Venerable Bhikkhu Bandula from London Buddhist Vihara administered five precepts (Panca Sila). His Excellency Prabal S. J. B. Rana, the ambassador of Nepal and Mr. Nima Lama, president of Yet Nepalese Association in the UK spoke about the importance of remembering Buddha's teaching. His Excellency emphasized the importance of remembering various suffering human beings have to endure from the time of birth until we die. He told the gathering that Buddha's teaching is more important today than ever before. Mr. Nima Lama also emphasized the importance of Buddha's teaching and expressed his happiness that Yeti is able to cooperate with Lumbini Nepalese Buddha dharma society (UK) in this celebration.

This day is celebrated all over the world to mark the birth, enlightenment and death (parinirvana) of Buddha. It was 2549 years ago that Siddhartha Gautama Buddha passed away in Kusinagar in India. In Nepal people enjoy national holiday to celebrate this day. In United Nation's headquarter; it is celebrated as Vesak Day (Buddha Day).

During the occasion Venerable Bhikkhu Bandula spoke on **"Only we can help ourselves."** Buddha's last word to his disciples was

'Be your own island'. Be self-reliant. Do not depend on external forces. Venerable Sumana spoke on **"Buddha as a teacher"**. Buddha always pitched his teaching to suit the audience. He could equally teach kings as well as ordinary people, wealthy as well as paupers. Every one found his teachings easy to understand. That is why Buddha is regarded as one of the greatest teacher in the world. Mr. Hari Singh Thapa, Chairman of Nepali Literary Development Council (UK), recited a poem suitable for the occasion. Venerable Bhikkhu Sujana, who is in UK for a short visit from Thailand, spoke in Nepali and explained two types of meditation -Samatha (Tranquility) and Vipassana (Insight). After this he led the audience to a brief practice in meditation. The whole audience was absolutely quiet during this brief meditation practice.

The hall was decorated with Buddhist flags appropriate for the occasion. The arrangement of the dais itself gave religious atmosphere with Buddha Murti and venerable monks between the trees. About 150 devotees including presidents, general secretaries, members of various Nepalese organisations attended the ceremony. The editor of Nepali Sandesh and coordinator of Nepali Samaj UK took notes and photos for their respective publications. Mr. Amrit Ratna Sthapit, founder president of the society and master of the ceremony for the day provided appropriate commentary in Nepali and Mrs. Reema Pradhan, executive committee member thanked every one for attending and making the celebration a success. Sujana Shakyas and Prayas band provided an excellent sound system. After the formal

On the auspicious occasion of 2550th Buddha Jayanti



*'May all misfortunes be warded off,
May all ailments cease:
May no calamities befall to all
May all live long in peace'*



Mani Rimdu Handicraft

Metal sculptures ॐ Ritual objects ॐ Decoratives

Shop:

**c/o Tula Ratna Shakyas
Patko, Lalitpur - 18, Nepal**

Residence:

**c/o Tula Ratna Shakyas
Nagbahal, Lalitpur -16, Nepal**

**E-mail: shakyatch@yahoo.com
www.shakyatch.com**

**Contact: Anuj Shakyas
Mobile: +977 9841282733
Tel: +977 1 5533976**

programme every one enjoyed the traditional Nepali refreshment generously provided by members and well-wishers of the society.

June 2005

Sunday, June 19: Amrit, Anu, Dharma and Pramila attended 25th anniversary celebration of Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda at the invitation of monks and nuns of the Nipponzan Myohoji, a Japanese Buddhist Group.

July 2005

Thursday, July 21: Dharma attended Dharma talk by Lama Lekshe at E P Colliers School, Swansea Road, Reading at the invitation of Sakye Ling Buddhist Centre Reading.

August 2005

Sunday, August 7: Amrit and Dharma attended Non-resident Nepalese general meeting at Ealing town hall.

Sunday, August 28: LNBDS (UK) annual general meeting was held at London Buddhist Vihara, Chiswick, London and executive committee for 2005/2007 elected.

November 2005

Wednesday, November 2: LNBDS (UK) members attended Mha Puja (Newari New Year) at the Ealing town Hall at the invitation of Pasa Puchah Guthi (UK).

Sunday, November 6: LNBDS (UK) members attended Kathina ceremony and Dharma talk by Ajahn Brahmavamso from The Buddhist Society of Western Australia at London Buddhist Vihara, Chiswick, London.

Saturday, November 19: LNBDS (UK) executive committee

meeting was held at Amrit and Anu's residence in Hayes, Middlesex

January 2006

Monday, January 23: Dharma attended reception at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, London hosted in honour of president of World Hindu Federation, Major General Bharat Keshar Sinha.

February 2006

Saturday, February 18: LNBDS (UK) executive committee meeting was held at Dinesh and Menika's residence in Ilford, Essex.

Sunday, February 19: Dharma and Sukman Lama attended Democracy Day celebration at Tandoori Palace restaurant, Acton, London at the invitation of Yet, Nepalese association in the UK. Amrit, Anu and Nani Shova attended the same celebration held in the evening at the Royal Nepalese Embassy London.

March 2006

Sunday, March 19 2006: A Dharma Talk was organised at Greenwich London College, Stockwell Street, Greenwich, London. Venerable Bhikkhu Sujankirti gave talk on 'The Buddhist way to a successful Life'

Saturday, March 25: Amrit and Dharma attended annual general meeting of Network of Buddhist organisation (UK) at Taplow Court Buddhist Centre in Taplow, Berkshire.

April 2006

Sunday, April 30: LNBDS (UK) executive committee meeting was held at Dharma and Pramila's residence in Slough, Berkshire.

All tremble at the rod. Life is dear to all.

Comparing others with oneself, one should neither strike nor cause to strike.

~ Dhammapada 130

Membership of the Society

Members whose valued memberships are due for renewal and new members who would like to support the society by becoming a member are requested to complete the section below and return it to the society's address **11 Mulberry Drive, Slough, Berkshire, SL3 7JU** with your cheque made out to Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) or LNBDS (UK). We very much hope you will support the society by renewing your membership or by becoming a member.

Membership for 1 year: Individual -£ 10.00, Family - £ 25.00, Life Membership - £ 150.00

I/We would like to support the Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society's work and would like to renew my membership/join the society.

Name.....Address.....
.....Tel.....

I/We enclose the membership fee for the year of £.....to renew my membership/join the society.

In addition, I/We wish to donate £.....Total amount enclosed £.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

'It is good to train the wondering mind. A mind under control brings great happiness'
- The Buddha

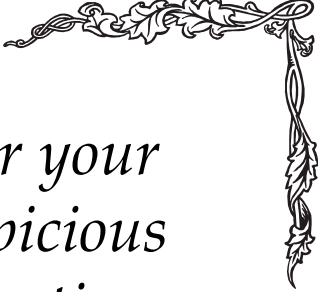

*We wish all readers
Happy 2550th Buddha Jayanti!*

Lotus Restaurant

(Nepalese Cuisine)

2 New Broadway
Uxbridge Road, Hillingdon, UB10 0LH
Tel: 01895 234 679, 01895 251 991

Contact: Shubha Ratna Shakya and Shyam Darshan Kunwar



*We extend our heartiest wishes for your
prosperity & longevity on the auspicious
occasion of 2550th Buddha Jayanti.
May the Lord Buddha bless you all.*

Greenwich London College

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