



Minnesota Buddhist

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Taming the mind

By Bhikkhu T. Seelananda, Bhavana Society West Virginia, USA

Mind is the most vital energy in this psychophysical existence of humans. This psychophysical existence is the existence within time and space. The Buddha, as a superhuman, taught the *Dhamma* to show the way to go beyond time and space. That is, in other words, the way to human perfection or the way to the state of superhuman. This is beyond the mundane world. Therefore, the teaching of the Buddha is beyond time and space.

What is time and what is space? The Buddha explained this in the Mahā Pun-
nama Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (See Sutta N0.109)

In this Sutta, the Buddha said, " Monks, any kind of material form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, or consciousness, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near- it is the material form...feeling...perception... volitional formations...and consciousness." With this expression, the Buddha pointed out 11 factors which belong to both time and space. Anything that belongs to the time, either to the past, future or present belongs to time. And anything that which is belonging to internal, external, gross, subtle, inferior, superior, far or near belong to space. In

the whole world everything consists of these 11 factors. So if anything belongs to these is impermanent, unsatisfactory and soulless. All conditioned things are impermanent. What is permanent is what is unconditioned which is the supreme bliss of *Nibbāna*. This is the highest result of taming the mind.

Three Aspects of Mind

According to the teaching of the Buddha, there are three aspects of mind. For these three aspects of mind, there are three different terms given by the Buddha himself to be used separately. Each of these has separate meanings too. Unfortunately, in English we do not find separate three terms and meanings to these three terms. This is one of the problems arises to most people who strive to understand the nature of mind. The three terms used in the Canonical discourses are:

- *Citta* (Emotional aspect of mind)
- *Mano* (intellectual aspect of mind)
- *Viññāna* (perceptual aspect of mind)

As we see it, *Citta* is translated as consciousness, *Mano* is translated as mind and *viññāna* is translated as

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consciousness. So everybody can understand easily here that there is a problem of translating the three terms into English. For the three words we have only two words in English. This is a problem that many face when try to understand the nature of mind.

Only one unit of Mind but Six Consciousness

One has to understand clearly that though there are many units of matter in this psycho-physicality, there is only one unit of mind. But when the mind is connected to different sense-bases they take different names. That is why there are different consciousness (*viññāna*) such as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness. The intrinsic nature of this mind is taking the object and cognizing the object. The Buddha has defined the mind very clearly. This Mind can be tamed, developed and cultivated.

Tamed Mind is conducive to happiness

In the Anguttara Nikāya the Buddha clearly said that mind can be tamed and when it is tamed it is conducive to happiness. "No other thing do I know, O monks, that brings so much happiness as a developed mind. A developed mind truly brings happiness" In line with the very word of the Buddha we can say that while the undeveloped mind is intractable the developed mind is tractable. This mind changes so quickly. Therefore, even it is quite difficult to find a simile for how quickly it changes. The Buddha once said, "No other thing do I know, O monks, that changes so quickly as the mind. It is not easy to give a simile for how quickly the mind changes." When the mind is developed and cultivated it is of great benefit too. "No other thing do I know, O monks, that brings so much benefit as a mind that is tamed, guarded, protected and

controlled. Such a mind truly brings great benefit."

One day a certain novice named Pandith who got the ordination at the very young age of seven under the tutelage of Ven. Sāriputta, followed him to the city of Sāvatti for the collection of alms from houses. That is the custom of the Buddha and the monks. They go from house to house begging mindfully. This is how they collected their meals. This is a very good meditation too. On their way, this novice monk saw some farming irrigators channeling water from different places to their fields. Having seen this Ven. Pandith said to Ven. Sāriputta, " Ven. Sir, this water has no mind but can be diverted to many ways." Ven. Sāriputta approved it. The other day he saw some smiths who strengthen arrows (shafts). Having seen this also he got the idea that even though there is no mind in the metal rods they can be strengthened as we want. Then the next day while he was on his way to collect alms this novice saw how the carpenters cut, saw and plane logs and planks and make different furniture. By seeing this he got the idea of bending and taming. He thought to himself, "If inanimate things like these could be so tamed, controlled why could I not control my own mind?" With this inspirational thought he retired to his cell and started to practice meditation. While practicing he became the stream enterer, once re-turner, and the non-returner respectively.

By this time, the Ven. Sāriputta, his mentor, wanted to meet this novice Ven. Pandith. So he left his cell to go to Ven. Pandith's cell. But Ven. Pandith has not yet come to the completion of his journey. He has to continue his meditation to gain the last step. Ven. Sāriputta did not contemplate on him. Just he came out from his cell with the intention of meeting him.

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However, the Buddha saw this and the Buddha came out of his cell and stood on Ven. Sāriputta's way to meet Ven. Pandith. Then the Buddha and Ven. Sāriputta fall into a fruitful conversation while Ven. Pandith achieved his goal, the Arahantship. This was the eighth day from his ordination.

Thereafter, both the Buddha and Ven. Sāriputta met him and appreciated his untiring effort for the achievement of the goal and in this connection the Buddha uttered. "Irrigators divert the waters; fletchers bend the shafts; carpenters bend the wood; the wise control themselves" (The Dhammapada Verse.80).

The Buddha has very clearly pointed out the nature of this mind in the Chapter of the Mind in the Dhammapada. Defining its nature the Buddha said,

"The flickering, fickle mind, difficult to guard, difficult to control- the wise person straightens it as a Fletcher straightens an arrow."

"The mind is very hard to perceive, extremely subtle, flits wherever it likes. Let the wise person guard it; a guarded mind is conducive to happiness"

"Faring far, wandering alone, bodiless, lying in a cave, is the mind. Those who subdue it are freed from the bond of Mara."

How to tame this mind

First thing in the process of taming the mind is restraint (*samvara*). One has to restrain from eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. The Buddha once said, " Good is restraint in deed; good is restrain in speech; good is restrain in mind; good is restrain in everything. The practitioner who restrained at all points, is freed from sorrow". So in short, one has to restrain from three modes of conduct namely;

- Bodily conducts (Refraining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct)
- Verbal conducts (Refraining from false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, and useless speech)
- Mental conducts (Refraining from covetousness, ill will and wrong views).

This is how one becomes moral (*seela*). Morality is the foundation of the path. As the Buddha said, "The wise having established on morality, develops mind and wisdom and such a one will disentangle this tangle". So morality or virtue is the beginning of the holy life.

Secondly removing or abandoning (*pahāna*). What is to be removed or abandoned? Some people think to give up their material things. It is all right. But removal is basically mental. We have many things in our mind. Therefore, we have to remove unwholesome thoughts such as shamelessness and fearlessness of committing wrong, hate, passion, ill will, jealousy and avarice, based on greed, hatred, and delusion. When practice meditation, basically there are five hindrances to be understood and removed. They are:

- Sense desire
- Ill-will
- Sloth and torpor
- Restlessness
- Doubt

Samatha (serenity)

This is the way to practice and develop serenity or calmness. (*Samatha*). For this purpose, one's hindrances should be subdued and let the mind to come to the application of thought and sustain of thought and further to rapture, happiness and singleness of mind. In this manner one can develop concentration meditation and then switch to insight (*vipassanā*). In order to practice both concentration and insight one has to follow the Noble Eightfold path.

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There are some practitioners, who start from *Jhāna* or absorptions. But one has to understand that *jhāna* come to experience only at the eighth factor of the path. The Buddha clearly said that the eighth factor of the Path (Right concentration) comes to the completion only when the first seven factors are completed. Therefore, for the taming of the mind one has to develop the path gradually. The gradual training, gradual performance and gradual progression (*anupubba sikkhā, anupubba kiriyā, anupubba patipadā*).

When practice in this manner one develops wholesome thoughts. What are the wholesome thoughts. They are the seven factors of enlightenment (Mindfulness, investigation of the *Dhamma*, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration and equanimity). These are the wholesome thoughts to be maintained by the practitioners. Then these factors, lead oneself to the attainment of *Nibbāna* realizing the three characteristics of existence, the four noble truths and the dependant origination.

Vipassanā (insight)

Vipassanā is the uniqueness in the teaching of the Buddha. Both concentration and insight (*Samatha* and *Vipassanā*) should be practiced together as tandem. The Buddha has taught this tandem in the Great discourse of the establishment of mindfulness (*Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta*).

In this discourse he said, "This is the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the path, for the realization of *Nibbāna*."

This itself is the way to tame the mind and attain *Nibbāna*.

When one realizes that one's mind is well tamed and released, one can understand things in the world as they really are. That realization is the realization of life and the nature of existence. With this realization one can *proclaim* that one has stopped birth, has lived the holy life, has done what had to be done, and there is no more to be done. (*Khīṇājāti, vusitam brahmacariyam, katam karaniyam, nāparam itthattāyati pajānāti*) When one's mind is released one can understand that one's mind is released. (*vimuttasmim vimutta mitiñānam hoti*). This is the way to tame this mind and attain Supreme bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Let us all understand this way to tame the mind and let us strive to tame this mind so that we all can attain supreme happiness of *Nibbāna*.

May we all attain Supreme Bliss of *Nibbāna*!

Vesak Ceremony 2010



Singing Devotional Songs (Bhakti Geetha) on the significance of Vesak

Many parents as well as dhamma kids observed sila to commemorate the thrice blessed day of the Buddha

Vas Aradhana - 2010



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Autumn Get Together - 2010



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The Akkosa Sutta ~ The Insult

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rajagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. Then the brahman Akkosaka Bharadvaja heard that a brahman of the Bharadvaja clan had gone forth from the home life into homelessness in the presence of the Blessed One. Angered & displeased, he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, insulted & cursed him with rude, harsh words.

When this was said, the Blessed One said to him: "What do you think, brahman: Do friends & colleagues, relatives & kinsmen come to you as guests?"

"Yes, Master Gotama, sometimes friends & colleagues, relatives & kinsmen come to me as guests."

"And what do you think: Do you serve them with staple & non-staple foods & delicacies?"

"Yes, sometimes I serve them with staple & non-staple foods & delicacies."

"And if they don't accept them, to whom do those foods belong?"

"If they don't accept them, Master Gotama, those foods are all mine."

"In the same way, brahman, that with which you have insulted me, who is not insulting; that with which you have taunted me, who is not taunting; that with which you have berated me, who is not berating: that I don't accept from you. It's all yours, brahman. It's all yours.

"Whoever returns insult to one who is insulting, returns taunts to one who is taunting, returns a berating to one who is berating, is said to be eating together, sharing company, with that person. But I am neither eating together nor sharing your company, brahman. It's all yours. It's all yours."

"The king together with his court know this of Master Gotama — 'Gotama the contemplative is an arahant' — and yet still Master Gotama gets angry."

[The Buddha:]

Whence is there anger - for one free from anger,	-	tamed, living in tune
one released through right knowing,	-	calmed & Such.
 You make things worse	-	when you flare up
at someone who's angry.	-	Whoever doesn't flare up
at someone who's angry	-	wins a battle, hard to win.
 You live for the good of both	-	your own, the other's
when, knowing the other's provoked,	-	you mindfully grow calm.
 When you work the cure of both	-	your own, the other's
those who think you a fool	-	know nothing of Dhamma.

When this was said, the brahman Akkosaka Bharadvaja said to the Blessed One, "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. Let me obtain the going forth in Master Gotama's presence, let me obtain admission."

Then the brahman Akkosaka Bharadvaja received the going forth & the admission in the Blessed One's presence. And not long after his admission — dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute — he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And so Ven. Bharadvaja became another one of the arahants.

"Akkosa Sutta: Insult" (SN 7.2), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight*, September 21, 2010, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn07/sn07.002.than.html>

Dhamma School Kids' Page



Art by Anaka Perera



Art by Seth Perera

Activities of MNBV



Spiritual Day for Kids – 2010

It was a very practical day for all kids to experience Dhamma. They observed eight precepts, did walking meditation as well as sitting meditation and listened Dhamma sermon. Everybody enjoyed the day and learned and experienced the taste of the Dhamma.

Dhamma discussion and meditation session at Warba, MN

Students and teachers of Northern Light Community School welcomed us warmly and were so delighted to meet us and learn about Buddhism.



MBV Major Events-- June to October 2010

June 20	Spiritual Day for kids	Oct 10	Special Meditation session conducted by Ven. Bhikkhu T. Seelananda at MBV
July 11	Students from Metro State University for interview regarding Buddhism	Oct. 11	Special Sinhala Dhamma Sermon at MBV – By Ven. Kotugoda Dhammawasa Anunayaka Thera
July 14	Students from St. Scholastica University for interview regarding Buddhism	Oct. 15	Students from MCTC College for interview regarding Buddhism
July 24	Vas Aradhana (Rain Retreat Invitation)	Oct. 16	One day Vipassana meditation retreat at MRC
Aug. 5	Students from Capella University for interview regarding Buddhism	Oct. 17	One day Vipassana meditation retreat for Local community at BRC, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Aug. 21	Autumn Get Together at MRC	Oct. 18	Two sessions on meditation and Buddhist talk at South Dakota State Penitentiary
Sept. 12	Dhamma talk and meditation session to Local Community of Sioux Falls, SD	Oct 20	Lecture and meditation at Iowa State University, Ames
Sept. 13	Dhamma talk and meditation Session at South Dakota State Penitentiary	Oct 22	Lecture and meditation at St. Cloud State University
Sept. 21	Lecture to the students at Bethel University	Oct 23	Pirith Ceremony at MBV on the occasion of Annual Kathina Ceremony
Sept. 23	Students from Univ. of Phoenix for interview regarding Buddhism	Oct 24	Bhavana session on the day of Annual Kathina Ceremony
Oct. 3	Special Meditation session conducted by Ven. Bhikkhu T. Seelananda at MBV	Oct 24	Bhoomi Puja starts on the day of Kathina Ceremony
Oct. 3	Special Dhamma sermon for kids of Dhamma school		
Oct 6	Lecture and Meditation session at University of Minnesota		
Oct 9	Meditation session for monastic at MRC		

Contributions

The objective of MN Buddhist Vihara provides Spiritual, Cultural, Scientific, and Educational activities of the Community.

The Minnesota Buddhist Vihara is a 501 C (3) charity registered with the State of Minnesota since March 30, 2004.

Development of the Vihara and its activities depend solely on your support. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

All your donations are Federal and State tax deductible. The MN Buddhist Vihara will issue receipts for all your donations at the end of year.

You can join to our:

Dhamma School

Daily morning meditation

Sutta Discussion Class

Weekly meditation group

Monthly Sil Observance

Volunteer activities