



# Bodhi Leaves

A newsletter created by children for children

\* Spring 2003 Issue 7

**The Buddhist Temple**  
We, the Sinhalese Buddhist community, are very grateful to the Vietnamese Buddhist community for allowing us to borrow their temple every Sunday and whenever needed. All parts of the temple are used for many things. The main floor is where the shrine room is located, which is where we do our Buddha Poojas and where the Advanced Class takes their lessons. The upstairs is used for the Intermediate, Junior and the Pre-school Classes. The community is very fortunate that the Vietnamese people trust us with building.  
**THANK YOU!**

This year the Intermediate Dhamma Class focused their studies on the topic of controlling ones mind. They looked at several Dhammapadha Gathas that reflected on ones own mind. They also learned various types of meditation to purify their minds, such as loving kindness meditation, breathing awareness meditation and meditation on the virtues of the Buddha. For the end of the year, the Intermediate Class prepared a program for the community called "May Dhamma Be Your Guide." This newsletter is the collection of their presentation.

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## Dhammapadha

There are many Dhammapada gathas but today I'm only going to talk about two of them. The first Dhammapada gatha reads:

*"All (evil mental) states have mind as their forerunners, mind is their chief, and they are mind made. If one speaks or acts with a polluted mind, then suffering follows one even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox."*

What this first Dhammapada gatha means to me is that if any living being that speaks or acts with an evil mind then suffering will always follow through their lives just as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox. A real life incident that follows this first Dhammapada gatha is the story of Maha Moggallana. Maha Moggallana was the second chief disciple of the Buddha. He was the foremost in supernatural powers which is how he got the name Maha Moggallana. Moggallana, unlike the other arahants did not have a peaceful death. This is due to the polluted mind that produced a grave crime that Moggallana had performed in a previous birth. The crime was when Moggallana's wife

ordered to kill his parents; Moggallana murdered both his parents who were blind, by pounding them to death. This example clearly explains the after cycle of karma.

The second Dhammapada gatha reads:

*"All (good mental) states have mind as their forerunners, mind is their chief and they are mind made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, then happiness follows one, as ones shadow that never departs."*

To me this Dhammapada gatha means is that any living being that speaks or acts with a pure mind then has happiness following them through their lives just as ones shadow that never departs. An example of this Dhammapada gatha is that there might be a poor person that usually speaks or acts with a pure mind and gives what little he has to those less fortunate than him. The good karma produced might make him a very wealthy man in his next birth or good fortune will make a him a very wealthy person in this same birth and he will be very happy. Now I will conclude

by telling you that both these gathas have the same concept of mind. All your actions start with your mind. So you must be aware of your mind and try controlling it.

### Ravindhi (13)



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### Dhammapadha

*"Oneself is ones own protector, who else could the protector be? With oneself well controlled one obtains a protection which is difficult to obtain."*

To me this means that you are your own guardian. You are the only one that can control your path in life. No one else can do this but you. Having a well-controlled mind helps you obtain a protection, which is difficult to obtain.

An example of this you encounter in your daily life is when you go through some hard time. You could just think that you can't do anything and just feel bad for yourself, or you can think about the situation you are in and go at it with a controlled mind. Doing this for yourself you will be able to get a protection, which is difficult to obtain.

*"Though one conquers in battle thousand times, thousand men, yet he's the greatest conqueror who conquers himself."*

What this means to me, is that a person can conquer any amount of people in any number of battles but its nothing compared to conquering yourself. Conquering yourself is something much more important and difficult.

How this can relate to us is when we're always trying to fix someone else's mistakes instead of seeing what we are doing wrong. We force strongly on other mistakes instead of making sure that what we're doing is right.

### Nimali (15)



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### Dhammapadha

I have selected a few Dhammapadha's that all fall into a certain theme. This theme is pertaining to our minds. Each one of the Dhammapadha's teach us how to control our minds, and by doing so we can achieve very difficult things in our lives.

*"By one self is evil done and by one self is defiled. By*

*one self is evil undone and by one self is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on one self. No one can purify another."*

What this Dhammaphada means to me is, if you are a kind-hearted person, then you have chosen to be that way, but also if you are evil-hearted person you have also chosen yourself to be that way. You also have the ability with the right determination to change yourself from being an evil-hearted to a good person. So what this is saying is the character that you are only depends on you and your actions, no one else's.

An example of this is, say a person does something bad and they want to change themselves. They go to a counsellor and depend on the counsellor to change you. Well, in order for you to change, you have to depend and be willing to try and change yourself rather than depending on someone else.

*"Better is to conquer one self than to conquer others. Neither a god, nor a gandhabba, nor a mara, nor a brahma can undo the victory of a person who is self mastered."*

What this dhammapadha means to me is before you try and pick out every mistake of another person, first look to see if you yourself is making the same mistake. Before you teach someone something, you must first know what you're teaching. Conquering yourself means that you know the difference between what's wrong and what's right. It means you know when to say "NO" and when to say "YES". Once this happens you do more and more loving kindness, and also once you have fully controlled your mind, no one can take that away from you. But being fully controlled is not a very easy thing to do, you must have lot's of practice. An example of this is, once you have gotten a good education and you are a very wise person, no one can take the wisdom that you have.

**Chaturika (15)**



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**Loving Kindness Meditation**

Loving Kindness is a kind of Samathe Meditation. The main purpose of loving kindness is to improve the ability to be calm and peaceful. There are other purposes too. If you practice this meditation properly,

Buddha said that you can achieve 11 good results. 10 of them are in this life and 1 of them is in the next life. There are 4 ways you can do this meditation; they are sitting down, lying down, walking, and standing.

The way you do this meditation is that you find a quiet place and by using one of those 4 positions comfortably, you close your eyes. Then you turn your attention to yourself and say in your mind: "May she or he be well and happy." After that, recall to your mind your friends and also wish them well and happy. Next, turn your attention to the whole world, to all the people around you and say in your mind: "May all people be well and happy." Finally, finish by saying: "Sadu, Sadu, Sadu."

**Dilendra (12)**



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**Benefits of Metta Meditation**

Before I start listing the Benefits of the Metta meditation, I will first tell you what it is. Metta meditation is the meditation of loving kindness. It is the practice of 'bare attention' to keep the

mind open and sweet. It was taught by the Buddha to develop the mental habit of unselfishness. In one of the Dhammapadhas it says, "Hatred cannot coexist with loving kindness and dissipates if supplanted with thoughts based on loving kindness." What this Dhammapadha means to me is that loving kindness is so strong that it can easily defeat hatred. There are eleven blessing of loving kindness that Buddha said in one of his suttas:

1. Sleep happily
2. Wake up happily
3. No bad dreams.
4. Dear to human beings
5. Dear to non-human
6. Immune from Poisson
7. Deities protect him
8. Quick mental concentration.
9. Beautify ones facial expression.
10. Peaceful death.
11. Born in blissful realm or Brahma realm.

The loving kindness meditation helps bring out a positive attitude, healing the troubled mind from its pain or confusion. Of all Buddhist meditation, loving kindness has the immediate benefit of sweetening and

changing old habituated negative patterns of the mind. By regularly practicing the Metta meditation one will attain four qualities. These are Metta (friendliness), Karuna (compassion), Muditha (appreciative joy) and Upeka (equanimity). After practicing the Metta Sutta thoroughly you will ultimately remain kind and caring towards every living being with an equal spread of loving kindness and acceptance.

Loving kindness can help us in many ways. It keeps you kind, compassionate, unselfish, and friendly. You will have many good friends and no broken friendships. Loving-kindness always keeps you thinking in a positive attitude. With loving kindness you can never be mad at any one. This means you will have no enemies. People notice your kindness and treat you just the same. There are real life incidences were people, through loving kindness calmed down wild animals who were about to attack them. This shows how strong and important loving kindness is. The last lines of the Metta Sutta say:

"The pure hearted one, having clarity of vision being freed from all sense desires is not born again into this world."

What this means to me is that through loving kindness one could become enlightened.

Udeesha (13)



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### The Reason Why I'm a Vegetarian

If you ask why I'm a vegetarian, most people would probably say the reason is because I was born as one. But I have more reasons than that to be a vegetarian. That's why when my parents gave me the choice if I wanted to eat meat or not, I decided not to. Right now I wouldn't even think of eating any kind of meat.

The main reason why I don't eat meat is because I love animals and I wouldn't want any of them to be killed for me to eat. I don't like to see any animal die, just as I wouldn't like to see any person die. We are all living beings and it doesn't matter what size we are. So why do we treat some better than others? Why do we kill other living beings and eat them with out caring?

Anyway, we could still live without eating meat. I don't eat meat but that doesn't make one who eats meat any healthier than I, or any other vegetarian. Actually I've read somewhere that a well-

balanced vegetarian is healthier than a non-vegetarian. All the nutrients any kind of meat has are in vegetables and dairy products too. So you don't have a disadvantage of being a vegetarian.

The Metta Sutta even says, "Whatever living beings there may be; whether they are weak or strong, omitting none, the great or the mighty, medium, short or small, the seen and the unseen, those living near and far away, those born and to be born, may all beings be at ease." When you say this you're spreading loving kindness to all beings including chicken, fish, pigs etc. So how could you eat a piece of meat on your plate knowing that it once was alive, and you had spread loving kindness to this being as well.

You could say that it was already killed, so you're not harming the animal by eating it. But, because you're eating it, more of them are being killed. There are thousands of animals being killed every day, for people to eat. If we could all put an effort to be a vegetarian, we would be saving the lives of billions of animals and still be getting the same nutrients.

These are some of the reasons to why I'm a vegetarian. Maybe you should consider being a vegetarian.

**Malsha (13)**



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**Buddha and his Determination**

The Prince Siddhartha became an ascetic with a highly developed mind and many good qualities. Among all of these was the quality of determination. It was this main characteristic that helped the Prince Siddhartha to endure many hardships that he encountered on his way to becoming the Buddha. An example of his willpower is when the Prince Siddhartha had to undergo six years of suffering and torture to his body before becoming the Buddha.

After attempting several different ways of attaining enlightenment, Prince Siddhartha decided to try the practice of Rigorous Ascetism. These extreme austerities were a method or practice in which one eats and drinks very little. In order to do this, one must have strong will power and a lot of self-discipline. As the prince was doing these practices, he met five ascetics: Kondanna, Vappa,

Bhaddiya, Mahanama and Assaji. These five ascetics practiced the same hardships and encouraged Prince Siddhartha to continue, telling him that this was the definite path to Buddhahood and Nibbana. Because of what the ascetics told him and since he wanted to attain Buddhahood, the prince did continue to endure these practices and he had much determination to keep on going.

This determination branches pit and teaches us many different lessons. First, and most important of all, it teaches us that when we are doing something important, we should not easily give up. Prince Siddhartha, having so many comforts before, kept enduring these hardships towards his body and did not give up. Even after the five ascetics left the prince, he continued these practices until he was positive that it was not the way to achieve Nibbana. The Buddha Gotama's determination also teaches us the amount of compassion he had, for he was struggling through the practices because he wanted to attain Nibbana to help others. The quality of determination is one of the things that make the Buddha a great teacher.

**Thisaru (14)**



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## The Buddha is a Great Teacher

The Buddha is a great teacher for many reasons. First of all, we should all greatly acknowledge the Buddha for his sacrifices to leave his family and treasures behind to live the life of an ascetic, and also how greatly he was influenced to seek enlightenment after seeing the four signs which were old age, sickness, death, and a monk.

The Buddha is the fully enlightened one who had complete understanding of life and its problems. He realized that suffering was a characteristic of all living beings and he decided to give his teachings of compassion and loving kindness to the entire world.

The Buddha called his teachings the Dhamma, which means the Truth. This truth is not something that he made up, but something he discovered through right determination, and hard work. One of the many unique characteristics of the Buddha is, he encouraged people to work out and experiment his teachings without just accepting them because you think it sounds right.

The Buddha has not only taught us what's right and wrong but also what the

consequences are of every action we do. He has taught us how to end suffering in our lives or in other words how to reach enlightenment or Nibbana.

Even after 2500 years of the Buddha's passing away, people are still strongly following the Buddha and his teachings. Today, Buddhism is followed by over 1/5 of the world's population. These are some of the reasons why the Buddha is a great teacher.

## Chaturika (15)



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## Meditation on the Virtues of the Buddha

After consuming the milk rice offered by Sujata, Prince Siddhatha wandered his way to the tree of Enlightenment, sat there facing east, having strong determination that he would not stand up without attaining full realization of the world. Thus he became Lord Buddha over night.

Our object of meditation today is Lord Buddha. Close your eyes, create a picture of Lord Buddha, meditating under the Bodhi tree, and think of his unprecedented quality of

determination that led him to attain Buddha hood.

## Uma (10)



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"By oneself alone is evil done; it is self-born, it is self-caused. Evil grinds the unwise as a diamond grinds a hard gem."

Dhammapadha 161

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