



Bodhi Leaves

A newsletter created by children for children

* Summer 2003 Issue 8

Practicing the Perfections

The Advanced Dhamma Class learned about the Bodhi Chitta or Awakening Mind this year. After making an aspiration to Nibbana they were taught to practice virtue and concentration (meditation) towards their goal. As part of this exercise they were encouraged to actively incorporate the 10 perfections in their day to day lives. After the students were able to identify the 10 perfections through awareness they were taught to use their aspiration and goal to strengthen their minds and practice each time the opportunity arose.

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Practicing The Perfections

The Gift of life

Every year, members of our Sri Lankan Buddhist community go to The Canadian Blood Services to donate blood. My mom decided to join them for the first time last year so that she too could donate.

For a long time she had been reluctant to go because the thought of having your blood removed is obviously an intimidating one. However, after thinking about how helpful her donation might be for someone in ill health, she was finally able to gather up enough courage to go.

Unfortunately, once she got there she was unable to donate because her blood pressure was too high. My mom was disappointed but

she remained determined and did not give up. She brought home a list of steps that would help lower her high blood pressure. She learned that if she were ever going to be able to donate, she would have to start incorporating many of the things on the list into her day-to-day lifestyle. For her, this meant eating more fruits and vegetables and less foods with cholesterol, as well as walking more often. It also meant that my mom would have to reduce her sodium intake by eating less salty foods. This was especially difficult for her since some of her favorite foods are salty. Yet with effort, my mom was able to make and maintain these changes in her lifestyle over the following six months.

Finally, in November of last year, she again went to The Canadian Blood Services with our community and that time, she was able to donate blood. As a result of her effort (Viriya),

determination (Adhitthana), and equanimity of mind (Upekka), my mom was able to perform an act of great compassion (Karuna) and give (Dana) the gift of life by donating blood.

Hasantha



My ESL Buddy

In addition to my school being a day school, it is also a boarding school. We have many students from all over the world, such as Brazil, Korea, Germany, and Russia. Most of these students come to Canada at a very young age and do not speak a word of English. Coming to a new country alone is hard enough on most of the students, so one can only imagine how hard it is to begin high school in a completely different country and in a foreign language.

A very kind and devoted teacher at our school has chosen to help out all of these students. She is practically a second mother to them, but as the number of

these students increase, she needs help with tutoring them and helping them with their English. Students can volunteer to have an English as a Second Language (ESL) buddy.

I realized that this was an excellent opportunity to practice many of the ten perfections. The buddy is

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| <p>The Ten Perfections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">GenerosityMoralityRenunciationWisdomEffortPatienceTruthDeterminationLoving kindnessEquanimity |
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usually in the same grade as the volunteer.

When I heard this, I knew that I would love to be an ESL buddy. I was chosen to be the buddy of a boy in my grade named Doojin.

Doojin is from Korea, and came to Canada in the summer of 2002. As an ESL buddy, I can do many things to help my student. One thing I do is speak to him everyday continually for at least fifteen minutes in English. At the beginning, Doojin's answers were all one word answers such as yes and no. With patience, I worked with him everyday, and now we have excellent conversations. An ESL buddy can also help their student

out with any homework or assignments. I usually help Doojin with reading some of our textbooks because the English in them can be very challenging. I do this with a lot of effort and determination because I take pride in doing my best to teach him well.

I also must have a lot of compassion when dealing with my ESL buddy. Many people do not realize that they are just like us even though they do not interact with as many people. It is just because they are shy to speak with wrong grammar. I explain this to Doojin, and help him make new friends all the time. By doing these very simple tasks, I practice many of the ten perfections in my day to day life.

Chayanika



The Perfection of Effort

It was the third day in a brand new coed school for my friend. Most of the boys in our grade, had also gone to

the same kindergarten class. My friend decided to bring her kindergarten yearbook and show it to our other friends. So she innocently brought it on our third day in school.

Everyone came to look, even the brand new teacher. Along with everyone, came this guy. Now this guy, had a very embarrassing kindergarten picture, and he got mad at having the yearbook brought to school. Before my friend knew it, he was strangling her in front of the whole class.

My friend's first priority, considering she had just switched from an all girl's school was to keep that kilt around her knees, and to not let it, under any circumstances, fly up. Her second priority was to loosen the hold that this guy had on her neck so she could breathe. Finally he stopped!

My friend did not lunge back and hurt him, even though anyone else in her circumstance would have. This was the first instance of many where he has been extremely mean to her.

Since then, for the last three years, this guy takes every opportunity to be mean to her. Some of the comments he has said to her have hurt, but she still tries to endure it all. She tries hard to be silent, tries to be nice to him and tries to forgive him for

everything negative he says to her.

My friend has shown many qualities, such as wisdom, and compassion. She has realized that no matter how much she strikes back, she will just make the situation worse. Extreme patience and determination is another. No matter how mean he is, she still gives him second chances and tries to be nice to him. It takes great effort, considering how hard it must be for her to not strike back, and to keep on trying to forgive and forget.

Nilupama



The Benefits of Volunteering

I volunteer every weekend at the St. Norbert's Nursing Home. I started as a helper to help the residents with their games and activities such as playing bingo. One day one of the workers there told me to play checkers with another guy because he really likes playing checkers. I found out that his name is William Wilderman. He's a really nice guy to be with. It was really

hard to beat him at checkers because he was extremely good. I tried my hardest but still it wasn't enough. Then I finally beat him. I got to know him a lot. He was a farmer. He told me that he really loved the farm and all the animals that he had.

Every weekend he has everything set up on the board and he waits for me in his room. When he sees me coming through the door, he looks really happy to see me and greets me with a huge smile on his face. Making the residents there happy is a great way to work at completing the perfection of Generosity and Compassion.

Charith



Book Review

The book that I would like to review for this Newsletter is named " *The Last Breath*" and is written by the Venerable Ajahn Passanno. This book depicts a story of how a man named Jay Siripongs used Buddhists spirituality to deal with the traumatic situation of being

sentenced to death by lethal injection.

As a youth Jay had some knowledge of the Buddha Dhamma, as he had been ordained as a monk for one year according to traditional

Thai law. This made Jay lead a "different" life when compared with his cellmates in prison and as a result everybody in prison loved him. The "love" and respect grew to such an

extent that nobody could believe that Jay would be involved in a crime let alone committing one as grave as murder. Though Jay knew the Dhamma he realised that if he wanted to have a clear mind at the time of death that he would need deep spiritual counselling. This encouraged him to consult the Abyagirri co-abbot Ajahn Passano. Undergoing major obstacles the Ajahn arrived at the prison cell six days before Jay was sentenced. As a result of this Jay underwent tremendous spiritual trans-formation, which prepared him for death.

Though Jay admitted to the robbery he denied committing the murders. Jay also refused to name his

accomplices involved in the crime. Jay felt that his sentencing of death was due to an unwholesome deed that he had committed in a previous birth and that "dragging" more people into it

An Arahant is not troubled with anything just as the earth is not troubled with clean and unclean things. He is virtuous and pure, as water free from mud. He attains Nibbana.

would not help him to alleviate this unwholesome deed. The Buddha has taught us that people have to suffer for the unwholesome deeds that they have committed

and engaging in activities that will prolong suffering should be avoided.

Another point, which I liked about the book, was that moments before Jay was sentenced to death he shared merit with those who caused him immense suffering. These included some of the prison guards and his lawyers who were unable to win Jay's trial. This situation illustrates another example of the teachings of the Buddha where the Buddha taught us to radiate loving kindness to all living beings including our enemies. This shows that Jay had been in a compassionate frame of mind just before he was sentenced to death.

According to the teachings of the Buddha the last thought (during the javana thought moment) determines the place of birth.

When reading this book I felt that there are many things that a Buddhist could learn towards his/her goal of Nibbana. Therefore I strongly recommend that you read similar books to gain insight of the Dhamma so that it will help you in your spiritual development and inspire you to diligently practise the Dhamma.

Sukitha



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