

# THE WISDOM



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## Anusasana

### Buddhism and Prayer

The path to spiritual perfection in Buddhism values the awakening of knowledge, insight or wisdom. Nibbana or the highest attainment has to be realized by one's own effort in this life itself through super cognitive vision. There is repeated emphasis on "knowing and seeing" things as they have come to be or as they are. To attain this goal Buddhism prescribes a systematic and detailed procedure which is called the middle path. Pañña or wisdom has to be developed on the basis of Sīla (good conduct), and Samādhi (mental composure).

The approach to spiritual perfection in Buddhism is a path one needs to follow and practise diligently rather than to depend on some unknown entity or super natural power. So it does not demand blind faith from its adherents. It also is not a system of faith and worship. Hence there are no petitionary or intercessory prayers in Buddhism. The Buddha always asked his followers not to depend on others, but to depend on one-self and to be self reliant. However much one may pray to the Buddha one cannot be saved. The Buddha does not and cannot grant worldly favours to those who pray to him.

Therefore Buddhism gives full responsibility and dignity to man. It makes man his own master. According to Buddhism, no higher being sits in judgement over his affairs and destiny. That is to say, our life, our society, our world, is what you and I want to make out of it, and not what some other unknown being wants it to be.

On the other hand nature is impartial; it cannot be flattered by prayers. Nature does not grant any special favours on request.

The Buddha once mentions about five pleasant things that have to be gained through following a systematic way.

"Householder, these five agreeable and pleasant things are rare in the world. What five?"

Householder, life span, beauty, pleasantness, fame and heavenliness are agreeable and pleasant things that are rare in the world.

Householder, I do not declare the gain of these five agreeable and pleasant things rare in the world by prayer, aspiration and request. If they are gained by prayer, aspiration and request, why do they decrease in this world?

Householder, it is not suitable that the noble disciple should aspire to long life, or take pleasure in long life; rather he should fall to the method conducive to lengthen life span, either heavenly or human.

Householder, it is not suitable that the noble disciple should long for beauty or take pleasure in beauty; rather he should fall to the method conducive to beauty, either heavenly or human." (Anguttara Nikaya).

*Ven. T Amitha (resident monk)*

Regular Feature Article by Kalyanamithra

### ITIPISO BHAGAVA

The stanza Itipiso Bhagava .....(such indeed is the Blessed One .....) is recited at all Buddhist devotional events. It mentions nine virtues of the Buddha which are the subjects of this essay.

(1) **Arahato:** Buddhagosa, in his famous work Visuddhimagga, dissects and analyses the word in various ways to explain the multiple facets of this virtue:

(a) Being worthy (*araha*) is the principle meaning. Buddha is worthy of highest veneration by all beings. He is also the most worthy of receiving the requisites of a bhikkhu. Requisites (gifts) and veneration may be done out of respect or expecting good results in the future. The Buddha is most worthy in both aspects. The next four in addition illustrating the facets of the virtue, also indicates why the Buddha is worthy of highest veneration by all beings.

(b) *Ari* means enemy. *Hanta* means destroyer. The enemies are the defilements. The Buddha destroyed all defilements when he attained enlightenment; hence *arahato*.

(c) *Ara* means spokes of a wheel. *Hanta* means destroyer. At enlightenment the Buddha destroyed all the defilements, 'the spokes of the wheel' of samsara and escaped the non-ending round of death and rebirth, hence *arahato*.

(d) *Āraka* means remoteness. All beings including enlightened disciples of the Buddha has in them traces of unwelcome mannerisms acquired in samsara. The Buddha is devoid (remote) of such things, hence *arahato*.

(e) *Rahābhāva* means absence of secret wrong doing. This indicates perfect purity of mind. On account of *rahābhāva* too the Buddha is *arahato*.

Buddhagosa summarises thus:

The Sage of remoteness unalloyed,  
Vanquished defiling foes deployed,  
The spokes of rebirth's wheel destroyed,  
Worthy of requisites employed,  
Secret evil he does avoid,  
For these five reasons he may claim, this word *arahato* for his name.  
(Nanamoli translation.)

**(2) *Sammāsambuddha*:** He is called *Sammāsambuddha* because he understood (*buddha*) all things (dhammas) in all their aspects rightly (*sammā*) by his own effort (*sāma*).

Although many direct knowledges are included, the principle thing that he understood in all its aspects rightly by his own effort are the Four Noble Truths – *Dukkha*, *samudaya* (the cause of *dukkha*), *nirodha* (the cessation of *dukkha*), and *marga* (the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*).

Each Noble Truth he comprehended in three aspects:

That *samsara* is *dukkha*; it should be known directly and that he knew it directly.

That the cause of *dukkha* is *thanha*; it should be abandoned and that he had abandoned it.

That cessation of *dukkha* is *nibbana*; it should be realized and that he had realized it.

That the way to cessation of *dukkha* is the noble eightfold path; it should be fully developed and that he had fully developed it.

The Buddha clearly state in his very first sermon that he did not claim supreme enlightenment till he understood the Four Noble Truths in these twelve ways. His understanding of the Four Noble Truths was so comprehensive that he was able to teach it to others willing and intelligent enough to listen to him. This is in contrast to *Pacceka Buddha* (Pasebudu in Sinhalese) who though attains enlightenment by his own effort lacks the ability to teach. ( to be continued.)

## Wisdom (EMBA newsletter) is back once again

### (Editor's column)

We are delighted to re-start the circulation of the EMBA Newsletter- 'Wisdom' after 5 years break. This is your copy. Many of the present day users of the Leicester Vihara may not even have heard or seen the existence of such a newsletter.

The main objective of the newsletter- 'Wisdom' initially was to keep the members and the well wishers of the EMBA updated with news about the EMBA and Vihara activities and any relevant news of the resident monks, the trustees, the committee members and the general membership. In addition the news letter also included Dhamma topics by way of regular feature articles on various aspects of Buddhism. We would maintain a similar format but would keep it under review. *We would be delighted to receive any such articles for publication from the 'readers' and also to receive your comments and helpful suggestions.*

In the past, we posted most of the copies of Wisdom to our members and other Buddhist Viharas in UK. We used the electronic media (internet) for those who had given us the e mail contact addresses and we also added copies on to a web site (maintained by Dr.Nanda De Silva under the heading of EMBA many years ago). The production costs (photocopying) and the postage was expensive and was born by the editors with no added costs to the EMBA.

With the continuing improvement and wider usage of the electronic media facility at present, we hope to use internet facility to circulate the future copies electronically. In order to do that we do need your correct e mail contact addresses (we can only update if you notify us of any changes.) We would send copies in the post to those who have not given us your e mail addresses. Few copies could also be kept in the Vihara for collection if required.

In addition, we now have a web site ([Http://Leicesterbuddhistvihara.co.uk](http://Leicesterbuddhistvihara.co.uk)) thanks to the voluntary efforts by a well wisher. We hope to make few changes to the present format to cover some of the important EMBA activities planned for the future. Any volunteers to assist the future production of the EMBA Newsletter will be most welcome. We do appreciate any constructive and pragmatic suggestions to improve the quality and the public appeal of the newsletter.

The new committee (following the election of new office bearers at the AGM held on 28.3.2010) along with the resident monks and the trustees have already identified some of the important priorities in the maintenance of the Vihara activities. These include

- Monthly vihara expenses exceed the regular income received from the standing orders and ad hoc donations received by the EMBA
- Membership drive to attract more members
- Plans to improve vihara facilities
- Get a feed back from those who are not members but use the vihara facilities as to how they could help the EMBA to

overcome some of the existing deficiencies and shortcomings.

Some of you may not be aware that the EMBA is fully responsible and accountable for the maintenance of the Vihara and the maintenance of the basic needs of the resident monks .It is registered as a charitable institution (accountable to the UK Charity Commissioner) The committee will act on your behalf and along with the trustees will oversee that the EMBA funds are well managed as required by the EMBA constitution and the Charity commission.

We are fully aware of your importance as members and well wishers in all the religious and spiritual activities. Without your presence and collective participation (physically &, financially) EMBA and vihara activities will not progress. We can respond to your needs and expectations but it is our shared duty and responsibility to work together. The present vihara premises have very limited space for any group activity and these needs to be addressed early.

The 3 resident monks are coping with some difficulty to provide all the needs of the members and well wishers. We have very limited finances from the regular contributions you make by way of regular standing orders we receive at present.

The limited resources at our disposal may not be adequate to provide all your individual needs. There are several deficiencies and shortcomings that need to be addressed as well.

Please let us know how you could help us. With your active participation and support we would be able to move forward and overcome some of the difficulties highlighted. - United we stand... We are very hopeful that we would have a bright future.

**Dr. C.S.Nanayakkara.**

**EMBA News: Ven. B. Seelawimala is our new patron.**

We are delighted to inform our members that Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala- Head of London Buddhist Vihara and Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain has very kindly accepted our invitation to become the Patron of the EMBA. Ven B.Seelawimala fills the vacancy created by the late Ven .M.Vajiragnana. Ven Seelawimala is a highly respected and a very experienced and a learned Buddhist monk. His guidance would be greatly appreciated by the EMBA.



**EMBA Office bearers & Trustees 2010/2011**

Patron: Ven B. Seelawimala Head of LBV & Sangha Nayaka G.B.

Trustees: Dr Nanda De Silva, Mrs Barbara Russell, Dr. Senarath Perera, Dr Mrs Nelun Perera

President: Dr. C.S.Nanayakkara, Vice president: Mr G.H.Perera, Secretary: Mrs Samanthi Hills, Treasurer: Mr Sarath Fernando,

The com. members: Mr Silvatha Ekanayaka, Mrs Anusha Ekanayaka, Mrs Padmini Fernando, Mr Sunil Silva, Mr Harold Yatigammana

Auditor: Mr Samitha Guruge

**Routine Vihare (Religious) Activities**

Vihara is open from 9 am – 9 pm

\*Daily Chanting & Meditation:

~Evenings from 6.p.m – 7 pm.

\*Weekly: /Alternate weeks:

- 5.30 pm- 7.30pm Saturdays, 2 hour meditation practice

-7.30 pm – 9.30 pm Alternate Wednesdays: The Serene Reflection Group (led by Kevin Commons)

\*Monthly:

-9 am – 11 am: 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday, 2 hour meditation practice

-4 pm – 6 pm: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday- Dhamma School for children

-5 pm- 6.30 pm: Last Saturday, Special Dhamma Sermon

\*Special/Family services: as agreed with resident monks.

( Ven D Rathanaiothi, Ven. H. Pannasara, Ven T Amitha)

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**Special functions and Events for your diary ( from April 2010 )**

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April: anointing of oil-New Year 2010

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May: Vesak Day Special full Day programme

**For your diary:**

\*\*Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June: from 5 pm-6 pm: Posen Day Dhamma Sermon (guest monk)- Ven Pilikahane Gnanawasa Maha Thero.

\*\*Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 6 pm: Invitation to Rainy Season Retreat(Vas Aradana) & Dhamma Sermon. Annual Kathina is sponsored by Mr Sarath & Mrs Padmini Fernando & family.

\*\*Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October: Annual Kathina Ceremony

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**Vihara News**

**1.Ven. Pannasara is away in Sri Lanka on compassionate leave.**

Ven Pannasara had to return to Sri Lanka on 16<sup>th</sup> May as a matter of urgency to attend to the funeral of his teacher monk- Ven Hegoda Vjitha. He is expected back in UK on or near 15.6.2010. The EMBA extends its deepest sympathies and wish him a safe journey. EMBA is greatly appreciative of financial support given to Ven Pannasara for his return air fare and travel expenses at his hour of greatest need and grief We are very grateful to all those who responded positively to our urgent appeal we made for voluntary contributions. All contributions received will be acknowledged with thanks.

2. Vesak Day Special religious program – successful event

The annual Vesak Day special program at Leicester Vihara was once again successfully conducted thanks mainly to a combined effort from the 2 resident monks, members & the guest speakers. The breakfast was offered to the resident monks and all those who observed the 8 precepts by Dr Nelun Perera & her family. The alms to the resident monks (and the Upasika & Upasakas who observed the 8 precepts) were collectively prepared by the members but were well co-ordinated by Mrs Padmini Fernando. A local restaurant owner also brought rice and curries for use. As a result, there were plenty of food for the mid day meal for the lay members and the visitors.

Ven Amitha needs special mention for his efforts in conducting the meditation practice session ( almost single handed) in the morning and the dhamma discussion conducted in the afternoon (specially in the absence of Ven. Pannasara.) Dr Senarath Perera made a very illuminating illustrated talk in great detail on contemplation on 'Maitre Buddha'. Dr Nanayakkara also gave a talk on basic qualities of a 'good' Buddhist and the importance of sustained efforts in the 'practice' of the teachings of the Buddha.

The vihara premises were beautifully decorated with Buddhist flags and in addition a large beautifully made Vesak Lantern (vesak Kuudu) was also on display. (Our thanks to all the members who took the initiative to construct the vesak lantern) These decorations gave reminiscences of vesak decorations seen traditionally in Sri Lanka as a form of 'amisa puja.'

The event was well attended especially during the afternoon session and during the preparation of the mid day meal/dhana. Those who participated at the special event felt the inadequacy of the space available in the vihara premises for these popular events.

**Gift Aid DEclaration Form**

**DONATIONS TO EMBA: Do you pay UK Income taxes**  
please use a Gift Aid Declaration Form.

All donations to EMBA made by UK taxpayers qualify for tax relief. In other words, the EMBA can obtain a tax refund from the UK Government, and thereby increase your donation.. Please ask for a Gift Aid Declaration Form for any future regular donations/standing orders.

Any 'ad hoc' donation you make to the EMBA would also entitle us to reclaim tax concession if you would fill the amount donated in a Gift Aid Declaration Form.

You can do this over the phone, or, when you visit the Vihare, you can ask for a Gift Aid Declaration Form. If you pay higher rate UK Tax, you will also be able to claim a tax refund for yourself from your tax office.

All such donations will be acknowledged with a receipt. Please let us know if you have not received a receipt for the donations you make.

You can cancel your declaration at any time. For more information, please contact the resident monks or our Treasurer Sarath Fernando on 0116 2109697

**EMBA membership - Application forms: your personal details will remain confidential.**

As part of the extra effort to increase the EMBA membership numbers, the committee has taken the 'membership drive' initiative to enroll more members. This special appeal goes out to every one who is using the vihara facilities but have not yet become a member of the EMBA. Membership is not compulsory as the vihara is open to any one who genuinely wishes to obtain religious and spiritual advice from the resident monks on the Teachings of the Buddha.

Membership numbers do matter a great deal on several counts. Increase in membership will bring in much needed financial income. In addition it will help to facilitate UK Border Agency requirements (all visas of the resident monks are authorized by this Agency) and the needs of the charity Commission. If we are to get visas for the resident monks, the 'work load' and various spiritual and religious duties performed by the resident monks become important supportive evidence. In addition, the provision of basic needs of the 3 resident monks including the visa applications & renewals and the maintenance of the vihara premises, insurance cover, heating and gas bills, council taxes etc. do incur a significant monthly outgoing. The regular contributions made by way of existing standing orders and ad hoc donations received intermittently at present cannot cover the total monthly outgoings. Any future plans to acquire a suitable building with reasonable accommodation and more space for the vihara activities will need a very substantial financial commitment on a monthly basis.

Any contribution you make (however small) to the EMBA will help to cover all these issues highlighted. All contributions made in the future would be gratefully acknowledged.

The details asked in the application forms will only be kept with the official documents of the EMBA and will not be shared with any other member or any outside agency. The EMBA circulation list will include the e mail addresses only. If you need further details, please contact us or the resident monks.



*This newsletter is distributed to all the members and religious institutions in UK free of charge. We welcome your comments & articles for publication. **Any contributions to recover the costs (approx. £50.00/issue for photocopying & postage to those who are not on the internet) are gratefully appreciated and acknowledged.** Opinions expressed in the individual articles are a personal reflection only and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the EMBA.*

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