Enlightened TIMES

Newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia

Spring 2017
Monks and Money

This is the second article in the series about the Vinaya, the body of monastic rules and traditions binding on every Buddhist monk and nun. In this article I will be concerned with the controversial issue of a monk’s or nun’s dealings with money.

The issue has been controversial for over 2,000 years. Around 200 years after the Buddha’s final passing away, there arose a great quarrel in which “both endless disputations arose and of not one speech was the meaning clear”[1]. This dispute arose because a large community of monks were accepting money in defiance of the Vinaya. The proceedings of the dispute became known as the Second Council and it sowed the seed of the first great schism in the Buddhist world, which happened soon after.

Then, as now, there is no excuse for uncertainty on this point, for the Buddha’s own words make it plain: Buddhist monks (bhikkhus) and nuns (bhikkhunis) are not allowed to accept money for themselves. Nor are they allowed to tell a trustworthy layperson to receive it on their behalf and keep it for them (e.g. keeping a personal bank account). Such practices are explicitly prohibited in the 18TH rule of the section of Vinaya called Nissaggiya Pacittiya.

Nor may monks or nuns buy and sell things for themselves using money. This is prohibited by the 19TH rule in the Nissaggiya Pacittiya.

Some people argue that these two rules refer only to gold and silver but such a view is indefensible. The Vinaya specifically states that these rules cover “whatever is used in business”[2], i.e. any medium of exchange.

Other people try to get around this rule by saying that it is only a minor rule, inapplicable to monastic life today. Indeed, the Buddha once did say that the Sangha may abolish the “lesser and minor” rules.

But is this rule a minor one?

Monks, there are these four stains because of which the sun and moon glow not, shine not, blaze not. What are these four? Rain clouds… snow clouds… smoke and dust… and an eclipse. Even so, monks, there are these four stains because of which monks and priests glow not, shine not, blaze not. What are these four? Drinking alcohol… indulging in sexual intercourse… accepting gold or money… obtaining one’s requisites through a wrong mode of livelihood. These are the four stains, monks, because of which monks and priests glow not, shine not, blaze not.

Obviously, the Buddha thought that the rule prohibiting the acceptance of gold or money was, indeed, a very important rule.

The non-acceptance of money has always been one of the fundamental observances of those who have left the world. Money is the measure of wealth and to most people material wealth is the goal of life. In the renunciation of money by monks and nuns, they emphatically demonstrate their complete rejection of worldly pursuits. At one stroke they set themselves significantly apart from the vast majority of people and thus become a constant reminder to all that a life based on the struggle to accumulate money is not the only way to live. Through giving up money they give up much of their power to manipulate the world and to satisfy their desires.

Thus, as the Buddha once said when asked whether money was permissible to the monks and nuns:

Whoever agrees to gold or money, headman, also agrees to the five strands of sensual pleasure, and whoever agrees to the five strands of sensual pleasure, headman, you may take it for certain that this is not the way of a recluse, that this is not the way of a Buddhist monk.

References


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Dear Members and Friends

I recently gave a talk at Dhammaloka on Buddhism in Australia, which received many good comments on our YouTube Channel, so I thought I might touch on it again. I started by discussing some of the valuable insights the Buddha gave that weren’t available in other religions, which may have particular appeal to Westerners. In particular, I focused on the Anguttara Nikaya Suttas 4-61, 4-62 and 10-91 that discuss family life and wealth management. I also mentioned the appeal of Buddhist meditation in our modern stressful world, which when established, then dovetails into applying Buddhist ethics that provide a tried and tested 2,500 year old mode of good living.

I also proposed parallels between Karma and scientific method as well as how the idea of rebirth was not new to the West, having its roots in in Greek culture and early Christianity. To balance the talk, I ended by commenting on what Westerners might find foreign in regards to Buddhist culture and how the BSWA could improve on making Dhammalokka more inviting to locals who may want to explore spirituality.

Controversially for some, I said the BSWA needs to allow Buddhism to develop a local flavour which would and encourage attract local born Australians to be more involved. The inference is that the BSWA should not become an enclave for a particular culture but it needs to be a bona-fida successful Australian centre of Buddhism that appeals to the residents of Australia. The wording and spirit of the Society’s Constitution make this clear and I believe the BSWA is in a unique position to be a force of good in demonstrating social cohesion across a broad spectrum of cultural demographics. To achieve this we should all be allowing it to develop a uniquely Australian and wide ranging appeal that does not lead to the exclusion of any particular social group that may want to be involved.

With metta, Drew
I was recently asked by a friend if I thought he could learn to do self-hypnosis. He had experienced a past life under hypnosis when attending my hypnotherapy practice and thought he may be able to use self-hypnosis to constructively balance some things in his life. Self-hypnosis can be used well in this way and I thought while I was writing up instructions for self-hypnosis, I would take the opportunity to explain what Hypnosis is and how the “Dissociation” at its core is very different from the “Unification” that is being worked toward in Buddhist Meditation.

“Past lives” and past traumas are often being held in a client’s stream of consciousness. The tensions that can arise from this unseen energy can bring trouble and trauma to our lives. Past negative patterns that repeat in our mind can often be released once there is an awareness of it. In my Hypnotherapy practice I have also developed a modality of Hypnosis where a client can be helped to understand the stillness or spaciousness that is always present in the mind. This still consciousness is a very powerful tool and can facilitate healing as well as provide a deep insight into our human condition.

Learning to understand and practice self-hypnosis is not so difficult, but like learning anything, it does take practice to be proficient and to gain knowledge in what we are doing beyond doubts. Ignorance of our conditioning is ubiquitous, and the way we are all conditioned has its foundations in dissociation. Subjects who have been given a direct suggestion under Hypnosis will often “confabulate” their own story on how they arrived at “their” idea of the suggestion later. They take ownership of it. It is the same for every person on the planet. We confabulate the stories and meaning in our lives because we are mostly ignorant of how the conditioning that filters our world view came to us. It is the same for our personal stories and how we think of ourselves. We condition each other to believe in this or that while at the same time deepening our attachment to ourselves and the world, without seeing the reality behind it all. We are all in effect hypnotised.

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is the “Art and Science” of dissociation. Hypnosis is all about dissociation; the opposite of the unification aimed for in Buddhist meditation. The hypnotist uses various techniques to distract or trick the conscious mind into leaving the sub-conscious mind unguarded. This so called subconscious mind is beyond the view of our conscious mind which guards it. The subconscious mind is very naïve and childlike. It will accept suggestions without question when the conscious mind is not there to filter what is going in. There are three main techniques the hypnotist can use to this end. First is to bore the client until the conscious mind drifts off. Second they can shock the conscious mind into releasing, and third, they can confuse the conscious mind so it is not online. Because the hypnotist is making suggestions and leading the client without the conscious mind being present, the subconscious is open and vulnerable to have its tapes changed --- so to speak. This is not a state of awareness, and if the brain rhythm is measured, it will read as a so called “Theta rhythm”, which is normally associated with a dream state. Indeed the hypnotist can know his client is in this state by observing Rapid Eye Movement (REM) which is usually associated with dreaming.

Meditation Practice

Buddhist Meditation on the other hand is a practice to make our mind still and encourages us to eschew distractions until the “Right” Concentration, Energy and Mindfulness are present to allow Still Consciousness to arise. Of course the other factors of the Buddha’s eight fold path also play into this outcome. (See the side bar for the Buddha’s Noble “Eight Fold Path”). Still Consciousness can be seen as Emptiness, Spaciousness or most eloquently for this description as Pure Consciousness. You know that it is pure consciousness because it can be experienced feeding back on itself. This visceral experience can understand the transience, as pure consciousness feeds itself back, looping around and around, beginning and ending very fast. So fast in fact, that it is only when the mind is concentrated to one point, balanced and mindful over a period of time that the resonance can be discerned. We see that this still consciousness is knowable because this feedback gives it an identity. Practice with a deepening focus of concentration along with sustained mindfulness eventually allows us to know that all the compounded conditions that make up the world are being fed back to make our being. All the conditions, including our being are nested within the stillness. We know that it is feeding back countless times each moment. This is a state that confirms for us, that we are totally present.
Truth and transcendence can be seen right there when wisdom clears things up! Even though we are present, the Buddha separated and labelled this state of mind as “Mundane”. The brain wave resulting from this “Aware State” is measured as an “Alpha Rhythm”, compared to the “Theta Rhythm” of Hypnosis. I believe this is so for all concentrated states including say --- watching a movie that you are interested in, so what you are aware of is important.

Deep Meditation Practice
Perseverance and deepening of our knowledge of this state will allow us to know and see beyond any doubt that this pure consciousness is also a condition. It is arising dependently from the volition of the karmic influence proceeding. We see that it is our ignorance that allows this cycle of feedback to arise. When stillness becomes such that it can penetrate past this volition, the consciousness feeding back becomes unstable and will eventually finish quite abruptly. This experience needs to be known beyond any doubt so that we can know what it is that finishes. This means that the still consciousness that feeds back the world to us has also finished and we will know that at death, we will not be reborn if this state is in place. From this observer's perspective the world has collapsed and unified back into this observer's mind, such is its purity. The paradox of me as separate to the world has finished, because the pure consciousness that forms everything dependently and conditionally, has penetrated into the present moment to the point where it has collapsed all the nested conditions, including it-self. The mind is unified into what the Buddha called a “Supra Mundane” state and all conditions will finish if this state of mindfulness is present at death. There is no longer an external conscious storage. The paradox of a separate external world is resolved. The unified mind will shed its conditions at death when the karma of this person’s existence is finished. This is the difference between Dissociation and Unification.

Heedfulness is the Deathless path,
Heedlessness, the path to death.
Those who are heedful do not die,
Heedless are like the dead.

_Dhammapada Verse 21_  
Dennis Sheppard

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### Noble Eight Fold Path

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The italicised words above are the Pali version of the factors listed.

The prefix “Right” in front of each factor refers to the precision the Buddha was trying to emphasise.

For example, there is a graduated precision in Physics where “Newton’s Laws” will be sufficient for everyday interactions with the world, but as we start to increase our perspective to the universe it is essential to move on to Einstein’s “Relativity Theory”.

Then as we look deeper again we need to measure what we are looking at with “Quantum Mechanics”.

The prefix “Right” is pointing to a deep understanding of our reality. Each factor plays its part such that combined, they will allow us to experience the unification of the Mind and the Universe in the reality and absolute truth that is there for us all to see in the heart of the present moment.
Buddhism Against Violence

On Saturday 16 September, the WA Muslim community organised a peace protest at the Parliament House. It was against the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, with various community leaders invited to participate. The Buddhist Council of WA president (Boon Tan), the Federation of Australian Buddhist Council president (Cecilia Mitra) and secretary (Kevin Dickson) also participated in the peace protest.

Some of the Buddhist monks in Myanmar have been quite vocal against the insurgence of Islamic fundamentalists and their influence around Myanmar which partly contributed to the Rohingya crisis in Rakine. Rakine has a long history of violence that has been happening for several centuries. With the Myanmar military taking action, evidence of violence and brutality appeared on the internet and in the media. Pictures of burnt villages, dead bodies, refugees and many undesirable graphics appears in the internet. Through the social media some people even posted “Buddhism preaches violence”. This is not what the Buddha taught. Unfortunately, people with very limited knowledge about Buddhism relate these violent acts with Buddhism.

As Buddhists, we tend to be contemplative and say to ourselves “That is against what the Buddha thought”. We may express our disagreement silently or discuss among our Buddhist friends. But, it only stops there. Unfortunately, the majority, who are non-Buddhist may not see it that way especially if they are fixated on a particular ideology. So, the Buddhist Council of WA president together with the Federation of Australian Buddhist Council took the opportunity to display in public a strong and clear message that “BUDDHISM IS AGAINST VIOLENCE”

Ten Buddhist Principles of Governance

President of the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils, Ms Cecilia Mitra, was invited to read on behalf of the Buddhist Community. Her reading on the Buddhist Ten Principles of Governance was well received.

The Buddha was sometimes asked for advice from kings. He advised on good governance and conditions of non-decline of a nation.

These Buddhist teachings were formulated into the Ten Laws of Governance which are timeless and applicable:

**Dānaṁ sīlaṁ pariccagāṁ**

**Ajjavaṁ maddavaṁ tapaṁ Akkodhaṁ avihīṁsaṁ ca Khantiṁ ca avirodhanāṁ**

1. **DANA** – (generosity) having good social welfare programs and tax exemptions for charitable organisations;
2. **SILA** – (moral virtue) the importance of our politicians being upright and honorable;
3. **PARICCĀGA** – (self-sacrifice) a willingness to place the need of the nation before self;
4. **AJJVA** – (integrity) this applies to transparency and accountability in government;
5. **MADDAVA** – (kindness and gentleness) punishment for crimes should not be harsh or oppressive;
6. **TAPA** – (self-restraint) exercising self-control and in today’s context could mean not Tweeting in the early hours of the morning;
7. **AKKODHA** – (non-anget) decisions should not be made out of anger or ill-will but in the interest of the nation;
8. **AVIHIMSĀ** (non-violence) to avoid violence where possible. This does not mean that law, order or national security should be sacrificed;
9. **KHANTI** – (patience) hasty decisions are often wrong decisions. Example are laws passed without adequate consultation and discussion.
10. **AVIRODHANA** – (will of the people or democracy) – being able to receive feedback, act justly and in accordance with the rule of law.

In closing, I would like to share with you a little known fact - the order of Buddhist monks and nuns is the longest running and oldest democratic institution in the world today.

*Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda Sutta (A 3.14). Mahaparinibbana Sutta Sections 1.6.2-1.6.11 Mahā Harisa Jātaka (M 534)*
WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?

Happiness is what we feel when our mind is free of negative mental states that cause us pain and suffering. Three things that make me happy: meditation, helping others and living in the forest.

WHAT IS A WELL-LIVED LIFE?

A life that is lived in full awareness is a life well lived. If we clearly see the suffering in the world, our conditioned nature and the benefits of developing our potential, then we will always lead a good life.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

The friendships you make when you are young are very important. So be careful, and recognize the qualities that make a good friend. Care for them and keep them close; they will be there for you all the way through your life.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?

I love looking after children, listening, responding, seeing their choices through all moments of life, providing guidance, and seeing how they grow in love and confidence. In seeing them embrace and play with life, I am inspired to embrace and play more within my own life.

WHAT IS A WELL-LIVED LIFE?

When I first came to Australia, I worked hard. My father asked me to help look after the monks. By doing so and by keeping the five precepts, my life got better. There is no point being greedy as you will lose it all when you die. Being happy, content and sharing your time with friends and family is a better way to live.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?

I love helping and spending time with friends, family & the sangha. It’s great to be part of & see everyone together in these communities. I really enjoy the national diversity in our Buddhist community.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Listening is a kindness. To be a friend is to dance with another person in listening and telling the truth for benefit. When anyone is unable to listen and kindly connect, listen deeply before acting or judging yourself and others harshly. Silence is a strong form of communication. Let truth emerge, put in ‘right effort’, be humble in knowing the limitations of what we can control and create. The future is wonderfully and petrifyingly uncertain.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

My father died very suddenly, so I would’ve liked a chance to say goodbye and spend some time with him before he left. Aside from that, I wouldn’t change a thing. I am glad I live in Australia; there are a lot of struggles in Thailand and I could have easily fallen in with the wrong crowd. Here I have a simple and easy life. I do not need to be rich. I love helping our community.
The offering of lights, flowers, food, fruit juice, incense, etc. in the name of the Buddha is yet another practice, the meaning of which some people fail to understand. Offering of such things to holy persons is in fact an eastern custom. Even during the Buddha’s time, it was customary among Indian people to carry some flowers whenever they visited a holy person. This is only done as a mark of respect. Devout Buddhists likewise always offer something in the name of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. This symbolic act gives them a sense of happiness, peace, and relief.

At the same time, understanding Buddhists often use the same offerings as objects of their meditation. They are fully aware that these physical objects are simple representations of things spiritual. The flame of the candle or oil lamp and the flowers could each be compared to the physical body of life. The offering of light symbolise the dispelling of darkness or ignorance through light. The existence of the flame and its brightness, the beauty of the flowers, the aroma of incense and the final fading away of such brightness and beauty only to manifest their impermanence; hence all these natural phenomena could be taken up as suitable objects for meditation. The flowers on the altar represent one of the most beautiful and yet one of the most transient forms of nature.

These offerings symbolise meritorious deeds because of the wholesome and devout mental states they induce. Therefore time spent in a shrine room in offering some of these articles and reciting some verses is not at all wasted. The devotee’s pious acts have the effect of pleasing themselves and calming the mind. It is good to start our daily work after offering some of these objects to the Buddha as a mark of respect to the holy religious teacher who has shown us the correct path for our peace, happiness and salvation.

However, Buddhists should not be satisfied by simply offering something in the name of the Buddha, reciting in a parrot-fashion some verses or Suttas thinking that their duty has been done. To become good Buddhists, they have to do something more; they have to correct themselves by following the Buddha’s advice. Try to gain more knowledge and understanding through His Teaching. One should not think that by just offering something to the Buddha, one’s wrong doings can be eradicated.

**Offerings**
(Puja)

Source: The Great Southern Weekender 29/06/2017

**Funky monk brings happiness to town**

ANTHONY PROBERT

GOING to the dentist can have some strange side-effects.

Buddhist monk Venerable Mudu, who is visiting Albany this weekend, can attest to this, as he explains his path towards becoming a monk.

In his life before being ordained, Venerable Mudu was going through a stressful period following the disintegration of his marriage, and a custody battle over his young daughter.

“I was at the dentist, and he said ‘do you know that you grind your teeth?’ He suggested I look at meditation as a way of relaxing,” he said.

After taking the dentist’s advice and discovering meditation, and eventually the Bodhignaya Monastery in Serpentine, a series of twists and turns led Venerable Mudu to trade-in his possessions and join the long waiting list to begin training under Ajahn Brahm.

Brahm instils a sense of approachability in his monks and it is this accessibility that brings Venerable Mudu to Albany.

He has been encouraged to share his principles beyond the monastery with fellow Buddhists and those that are interested in learning more about Buddhism.

As well as a public talk entitled “Being Happy” at PCYC on Saturday night between 6.30pm and 8.30pm, he has been invited to bless Joop Thai restaurant, which he says will be plenty of fun.

“We’re going to bless the food and I get to splash some holy water around, which will be fun,” he said.

“Then we will enjoy a meal together. We only eat one meal a day and from what I hear I might need to take a doggy bag.”

Buddhist Monk Venerable Mudu, who will be in Albany this weekend, gave up his possessions, including two Harley Davidsons to join the monastery.
Looking for a peaceful place to spend a quiet weekend? Heard about meditation retreats but never tried one? Want to attend but not sure if you can survive a 9-Day retreat? Don’t fret! Due to popular demand, we have added more weekend retreats into our existing offering at Jhana Grove. Find a date that suits you and plan for your next meditation vacation. You deserve a good break!

12 - 14 Jan 2018 Weekend Retreat Ajahn Santutti
19 - 28 Jan 2018 9-Day Retreat Ajahn Brahm
2 - 4 Mar 2018 Weekend Retreat Ajahn Appicchato bookings open 19 Jan 2018
29 Mar - 7 Apr 2018 9-Day Retreat Ajahn Brahm bookings open 5 Jan 2018

Please write to the Assistant Secretary as soon as possible with the following information:
- Payment method
- Date of payment
- Amount
- Name
- Address
- Contact details
- Membership Number

Please include the following information as well, depending on your payment method:

Paid by PayPal
Please advise the credit card owner’s name if it is different from the member’s name.

Paid by Bank transfer or Deposit
Whether paid into the BSWA Westpac or BSWA Bankwest bank account.

Paid by Cash at the library
Aforementioned personal and payment details.

Paid by Cheque
1. Whether handed in to Dhammaloka office or sent by post,
2. Date handed in or posted,
3. Cheque number.

All first time attendants must complete the Introduction to Meditation course at Dhammaloka (or equivalent) before starting their first retreat.

9-Day retreats are first open to Full Members, then to Associate Members and finally to Non-Members. Weekend retreats are open to ALL – both Members and Non-Members.

This information helps us to process your payment and membership application quicker. This is especially useful if you are intending to make a reservation for a retreat.

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Please fill out the website survey so that we can continue to improve the ET.
One who is accomplished in knowledge,
Peaceful and restrained,
Doesn’t expect to dwell in this world or the next.
Without clinging to anything,
They know the arising and passing of the world.
All things arise, and all things pass away
As I’m watching, my emotions arise and pass away
As I’m watching, conclusions arise and pass away
As I watch, my understanding and knowledge ebbs and flows
And I watch as beliefs flutter past like autumn leaves
The chains and bars of my prison start to fade
But I just sit and watch
Neither using my body to sit, nor my eyes to watch
Nor brain to think, nor lungs to breathe
Or legs to run or hands to grasp
Soon my skin disappears
And all the parts that I once thought were me
Un-coalesce
Scatter
Dissipate

The planted tree asked the sun in heavens
"Why do You rise and set? The darkness it comes then goes."
The Sun replied
"From where you be, this is what you perceive, yet from where "I am" do I not always shine?"

Your real home is not the house you live in but the stillness and peace in your heart

Falling Leaves
Art and poetry inspired by the late Ajahn Chah

The wind is blowing
The branches are swaying
Young green leaves are sprouting
Old brown leaves are falling
No matter how hard they are clinging
All are subject to death and dying

Artwork by Ethen Ng
Poem by Ratana Mah