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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

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May You Be Well And Happy

Summary

The following article will help us understand how to listen, contemplate, and cultivate the Dharma, concurrently with the four different times; past, present, future, and timeless times (akaliko).

Buddha Dhamma is “Akaliko” (timeless)

The Buddha Dhamma is timeless, unconditioned by time or season (1). It is relevant today as it was when the Buddha taught the Dhamma about 2600 years ago. Still relevant and applicable to all issues that we can come across today.

The way to see the Dhamma however does need certain conditions in the mind that will allow you to see things as they really are. A clear, wholesome mind not coloured by attachment to things can be developed and is essential to seeing things as they really are.

All Buddhists strive to achieve these conditions in the mind. Once these conditions are reached in the mind – you see phenomena as it was 2600 years ago and find that it is exactly how the Buddha describes.

Are you striving to develop these conditions in your mind? Or are you striving to develop the conditions in your life – there is a big difference.

The qualities of the Dhamma as given by the Buddha are:

Svakhato Bhagavata Dhammo

Sandithiko akaliko ehipassiko

Upanyiko paccatam veditabo vinnuhiti

In English :

Well-expounded is the dhamma by the

Blessed one, to be self-realised;

With immediate fruit, timeless,

to be but approached to be seen;

Capable of being entered upon;

To be attained by the wise, each for himself

In the context of the Buddha's teachings, *akaliko* means that the Buddha Dhamma is not dependant on time. You see things as they really are. You see phenomena in its raw state.

For example: seeing a feeling arise, fruiting and passing away. Seeing this process of a feeling is always the same when viewed with a clear, moral, and calm mind. This is the Buddha Dhamma. In this way what you see is always the same whether you see it today or 50 years from now.

All of the Buddha Dhamma must be known by one's own mind. To see it directly each for himself or herself, this is essential, otherwise it is but hearsay. Something you heard another say.

It is a path each person must decide to travel for themselves with delight and joy, determination, and rigor, quietly with confidence.

Teachings on the production of the right conditions to see things as they really are as taught by the Buddha.

In the beginning one decides to investigate and see how it works for you.

To begin the path one takes the five precepts, work with loving kindness, be generous and so on.

In this way you develop the wholesome factors in the mind that will help you to see things as they really are.

These mental factors are confidence, generosity, mindfulness, fear of unwholesomeness, moral shame, amity and letting go:

1. Let go
2. Develop mindfulness
3. Be happy and joyful
4. Generosity
5. Morality

So how to do this? Well it is difficult, however it is easier than you think.

The following is an excerpt written for the *Long-Life Day of the Chan Academy* in 1990:

“As the Late Venerable Narada Maha Thera pointed out; we are neither absolutely the servants nor the masters of our kamma, however, it is evident that the fruition of kamma is influenced to some extent by external circumstances, surroundings, personality, individual striving, and so forth.

Individual striving must be directed against ignorance by applying the Buddha Teaching, the Buddha Dhamma.

To assist persons who wish to conquer their ignorance, the Ch'an Academy creates causes for Ch'an Teachings (The Way of The Brush). As part of this

Practice, our Members take care of the Buddhist artifacts, library and surroundings of this place.

Our surroundings include this garden, the repository of the four seasons, the natural factors of change. This Ch'an Garden is used as a rather grand Teaching aide and because of this function, the Calligraphy on the Four Gates refer to it as a Heavenly Buddha Dhamma Garden.

Within the boundaries of this Buddha Dhamma Garden, human beings learn the first fundamental of life, that all things change. Change means unsatisfactory-ness (in Pali - dukkha). Most beings wish to slow down this natural deterioration caused by change. The modern world of physics shows disorder increases with time because we measure time in the direction in which disorder increases.

Buddhists distinguish four times; past, present, future and timeless times (akaliko).

This garden attracts many possums, birds and insects. The water ponds built here have saved the lives of several birds during drought and bushfires and the fruit trees and berry bushes provide food for many. We wish beings to have long life.

The Buddhist Precept of no killing is a fundamental morality. No being likes to be killed. Accordingly, even mosquitoes or other small creatures are not destroyed volitionally by students in this place. In fact, we attempt to preserve their lives and cultivate causes for their present and future wellbeing.

When watering the garden, this water is offered to save the lives of many, many small beings.

By repeated mindful cultivation of such kindly motivated actions, humans are taught to become friendly to others. Animals appear in this sanctuary without fear of death from humans. Their death appears from other animals' actions. Animals kill, so do not praise this aspect of animal nature. At some future time, these animals shall take rebirth as humans who trust humans. If an animal is killed by a human, it should not surprise you that, upon human birth that being is antisocial.

Compassion, without wisdom, is blind to the real needs of sentient beings. Humans can be trained to practice charity but, first, they must be trained to work for themselves and others. Harmless non-killing human work must be undertaken patiently to maintain our human material wealth and health, that is right livelihood.

Some goods and services must be given by those who have wealth to help other beings develop their own suitable habitats for themselves. It is not wise action to rob the rich to feed the poor. The poor must wish to get rich by their own efforts. Such truths may have been overlooked in recent times. The only valid war to fight is a war on the culture of poverty. Poverty culture arises because humans cannot trust each other.

The unprompted scripts of the culture of poverty and ill health by some Australians can be remedied.

The Practice of Compassion removes the kamma of ill health without necessarily replacing it with the culture of excessive greed or hypochondria.

If you find these subtle script concepts do not sit well with your present minds, please reflect on these concepts and arouse notions of Wisdom-Compassion.

The Way of the Garden is used as an active training ground to develop the needed human qualities of loving kindness, compassion, patience, generosity and trust minds.

The Ch'an Meditation Teachers here use many Buddhist ways to drive people sane, but only for those who request to be taught. We hope we earn your trust.

We desire to make some more causes for the long time preservation of this suitable Dhamma environment and for Ch'an Practice to build trust between people and to remove the scripts resulting in the culture of poverty and the culture of ill health from the mind frames of all Australians and others.

We overtly concentrate on the Ch'an Way of the Brush, but covertly practice the Ch'an Way of the Garden. A few of our students of the Middle Way have developed the patience to undertake training in the Ch'an Way of the Garden over the four seasons.

The Way of the Garden also helps us understand such matters as the two other fundamental properties of human existence, namely, unsatisfactoriness (in Pali - dukkha) and the lack of a permanent self (in Pali - anatta). The Way of the Brush and the Way of the Garden extends to encompass wisdom concerning all three fundamental properties of existence. Direct knowing of these three properties leads to Enlightenment (Pali - nibbana)."

Buddha Dhamma is the topic of choice that I always go to when I am in our Chan Heavenly garden. The garden always makes me think of the three marks of existence it is a constant reminder.

This earth, ground, that I walk upon is the labour of countless beings, nagas, insects, bacteria, past owners, visitors, garden workers, and builders.

It is a mere 6 foot that we actually own, but many disasters could take it away – death, a sink hole, an earthquake, a hurricane a flood etc. Our ownership of 33 Brooking street is impermanent – anything could happen.

In order to acknowledge this with wisdom, we first state the truth – that we are temporary owners of this place, however we wish to keep it within the Buddha dhamma mandala for at least the next 500 years at least.

How to do this? How to keep running a centre for the propagation of Buddha Dhamma here at 33 Brooking street, Upwey, Victoria 3158 for the next 500 years?

We have made a vow and stated it three times:

That the Buddha Dhamma be taught, practiced, preserved and realized here now and for the next 500 years at least.

That the Buddha Dhamma be taught, practiced, preserved and realized here now and for the next 500 years at least.

That the Buddha Dhamma be taught, practiced, preserved and realized here now and for the next 500 years at least.

We say it three times as this makes it stronger in our minds. We make the intention.

Second, we generate the energy. Our wish to do this generates energy in our mind, as the mind is chief. With this energy we carry out our planning.

Third, we make the effort by designing, discussing and creating our plan and implementing our plan.

Fourth we apply the mind by going back to our goal and making sure that we plan to do this. Our goal is the result of where we want to go.

Fifth we put ardour on top and do the whole thing with joy, happiness, and the love of doing this.

Our wish is to increase the Dhamma in the hearts and minds of all beings.

References:

1. From Access to Insight website: Definition of akaliko: timeless; unconditioned by time or season
2. Talk given in 1990 to the opening of the Chan Academy Long-Life Day