

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

(BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS CARE)

Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra

Buddhist Chaplain and Buddha Dhamma Teacher

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PREFACE

The relevance and prevalence of chaplaincy services in schools, hospitals, palliative care centres, correction centres and in communities in given situations is recognised in Australia and in many other countries. The term pastoral care is also used in certain situations. For Buddhists, the term Buddhist spiritual advisory services or Buddhist religious care services have been suggested. However, the author has been satisfied with the current term 'chaplaincy', which has acquired a specific meaning, although it may have originated in Christianity.

All the above mentioned types of chaplaincy services and any other specialisations not mentioned here seem to have a basic common content. The purpose of this book aligns with the need for a book on Buddhist chaplaincy covering this common content.

This book can be used as a text book in training Buddhist chaplains. This Association has conducted such a Training Course once in 2011 and later in 2013-2014 with the author playing a lead role and supported by many other academic and professional personnel.

I thank the author for the interest taken in promoting Buddhist Chaplaincy in the world. A great deal of hard work has been done in developing the concept and in writing the book. It is gratefully acknowledged that the graphic designs for the book were developed by Mr. Kamal Wanigasooriya. The book was edited by Mr. Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra and Mr. Milton Fernando. The service rendered by Mr. Milton Fernando, the Director of Publication Services of the Queensland Sangha Association, Inc., in managing the publication of this book is gratefully acknowledged.

Venerable W. Dhammawasa

President

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Many monks, nuns and lay persons contributed ideas in the initial formulation of the primary course in Buddhist chaplaincy conducted in 2011. Material from the inaugural course was helpful in designing the second run conducted from 2013 to 2014. As the second run was delivered over the internet, more research was required and every lecture had to be rewritten by the author. This book is a result of that effort. All who rendered help are gratefully acknowledged.

It is hoped that this book will serve as a text book when Buddhist chaplaincy courses are conducted in the future.

The author drafted the majority of the lessons for the second run of the course. The initial drafts for lessons 7A, 8A and 9A were written by Mr. Lakshman Ramanayake. Mr. Milton Fernando edited lessons 11A and 12A. All other lessons were edited by Mr. Tanuja Yasanga Sarath-Chandra. The twelve assignments issued as part of the second run do not form part of the book.

Participants in the second run of the course provided much constructive feedback which is gratefully acknowledged. Venerable Lozang Drolkar highlighted similarities, parallels and differences with teachings in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. These are gratefully acknowledged.

The support given by Mr. Ruwan Wathukarage and Venerable Bhikkhuni Nedimale Sudhamma in connection with the second run of the course is gratefully acknowledged.

The publication of this book was possible because of the offer made by The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation of Taiwan. This offer makes it possible to distribute this book free of charge for the spread of Buddhist knowledge throughout the world. This offer is gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

This book consists of forty eight units. Half of these are designated with the letter 'A' and the other half with the letter 'B'. For example, Unit 15A is immediately followed by Unit 15B. Units designated with 'A' typically cover the theoretical aspects of Buddhism used in chaplaincy. Those designated 'B' demonstrate how these theoretical ideas can be applied in providing chaplaincy services to people in difficulty.

The first 24 units from 1A to 12B are shown as belonging to Part (1) of this book. The idea is that these units cover the basic processes of Buddhist Chaplaincy. Part (2) of the book covers more advanced processes, theories and techniques.

If this book is used as a text book in conducting a training course in Buddhist Chaplaincy, the lecturers would do well to place greater emphasis on part (1) so that trainees get a thorough idea of the basic processes without which Buddhist Chaplaincy cannot be practised.

It is recommended that on completion of a course based on this book, six additional months be devoted for practical work under supervision and a further six months for seminars to discuss practical experience gained. In the second period of six months, Part (2) of this book can be revisited.

Rahubadde Sarath-Chandra

Author

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BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

PART (1)

BASIC PROCESSES

UNIT 1A

PHILOSOPHY AND CONTEXT OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS CARE

1 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

The universe, galaxies, stars, planets, and moons we see in the sky fascinate us, yet there is very little we can do except watching these objects. They look as if they were always there and continue to be there. According to astronomers that is not true. The Buddha too says that these things are there only while certain conditions prevail and that they will vanish when those conditions cease.

While they are there, their impact on us keeps changing. For example, day follows night, and the moon changes appearance and its rising time daily. The sun's heat keeps changing. Seasons change. Seas and rivers are sometimes calm and sometimes threatening. Beautiful trees and plants grow for some time and die someday. The wind changes all the time. Often it is pleasant and at times deadly.

When the natural environment seems pleasant and serves our interests, we tend to form an attachment with it, and when it turns against our interests, we tend to dislike it or even fear it. **Some are able to cope with the changes, at least to some extent. They learn to accept the aspects that are not welcome.**

2 OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

The built environment in cities is considered to be able to provide us with security and protection in every way. While to some extent this is true, news from around the world shows that we have no guarantees about the ability of the built environment to keep us secure. We have to be **prepared to hear about and experience common traumas associated with cities. We cannot expect things to be perfect.**

3 OUR FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

The family environment with spouses and children at the centre is expected to provide stability and happiness to the family and to society as a whole. It needs to be realised that individuals are different and each is entitled to work for his or her aspirations. **Clashes of interests do occur. That is a part of life and we need to bear with it.**

4 OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

At work we invariably meet people who are not quite like us and differ among themselves. Disputes, challenges and lack of fairness are common. We need to learn to cope with it. We cannot change others at will. **We should investigate whether we need to change to fit into the work environment.**

5 OUR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

This is similar in some ways to the work environment. Despite what happens in society the **Buddha says one can make an island for oneself and thereby ensure a reasonable level of happiness.**

6 OUR INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND HOW WE RELATE TO IT

It is human tendency to assume that in any situation of conflict or disagreement, it is the other party which is wrong. This is the furthest from the truth. The truth is that each of us has some good features of our minds and equally there are poor features. The most effective solution to our problems with others seems to reform our selves continuously. This is a thing that is within our power. **We do not have any real power to reform others.**

7 CONSTANT CHANGES IN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THE DIFFICULTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN COPING WITH CHANGES

All the different environments we discussed above have one common feature and that is that they change all the time. Many of these changes cannot be seen and we form an opinion that everything is permanent. The moment we notice the fact of change, it comes with a shock. Continually we struggle to hold on to things that are vanishing or fleeting. **We cannot hold on to anything that is favourable for any length of time.** This is a fundamental challenge.

8 ABSENCE OR INADEQUACY OF SATISFACTION IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

When we chance into a satisfying environment, our underlying desire is that the situation is permanent or at least long lasting. The reality, however, is that such an experience can slip out of our hands at any instant. It is as if one is running after a mirage that looms somewhere in the distance. Sometimes the level of satisfaction is not what we wished for. That is enough to make us feel dissatisfied and disillusioned. **In general, satisfaction is inadequate or is transitory; in reality it is both.**

9 ABSENCE OF A SUBSTANTIAL PERSON TO COPE WITH CHANGE AND NON-SATISFACTION

Worst of all, the person trying to seek satisfaction is also changing. The individual is not a permanent entity. There is no such thing as a separate, permanent soul within us. Hence, although I might think that there is some satisfaction at a given moment, in the next moment, I would have changed. The new 'ME' is expecting something else or something more. **Because there is no substantial and on-going soul, satisfaction seems to be elusive.** There is dissatisfaction.

10 POSSIBILITY OF SOLUTIONS FROM THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

Armed with these and similar observations, supported by communication skills taught by Lord Buddha, a Buddhist teacher will be able to help a person in difficulty, to cope with such difficulty, and indeed to get over it.

The difficulty experienced could be minor or major, such as a failure of a relationship or a massive trauma resulting from a major event, but the **Buddhist teacher ought to be able to devise an effective solution, based on the Buddha's teachings.**

The individual in difficulty may not be able to devise the method whilst in that situation, but the Buddhist teacher can. This is why there is a need for Buddhist religious care.

UNIT 1B

NEED FOR BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY IN TODAY'S WORLD

1 SITUATIONS THAT OVERWHELM INDIVIDUALS

If one looks around or listens to TV or radio, one will be amazed to notice the variety of cases in which people find it hard to cope with certain situations. Some examples are:

Natural disasters such as Tsunamis, bush fires, floods, cyclones

House fires, destruction of buildings, falling power lines

Epidemics, pandemics, famine and lack of basic sanitation

Shootings and bomb attacks

Road accidents and airline crashes

Loss of dear ones

Depression and anxiety

Physical disablement and deterioration of limbs and organs

Major illness and effects of old age

Court cases and trouble with the police and other authorities

Financial problems and insurmountable debts

Children out of control

Emergencies and hospitalisation

Family disputes, breakdown of marriage

Unemployment and unexpected re-locations

Problems with neighbours

This list goes on and on. Hopefully no one confronts every one of these troubles at the one time. However, everyone has to face one or other such troubles every now and then. In many countries, society is organised to help people to cope with these types of problems. There are government agencies, voluntary organisations and religious organisations ready to help. There are also many individuals who are glad to help those in difficulty.

The SES, Red Cross, ambulance services, health professionals, counsellors and others render a great deal of service to alleviate the suffering. **In many of these situations, the Buddhist**

chaplain may have a role to play. There are nearly half a million Buddhists in Australia. The small number of monks and nuns are not able to meet all demands, partly because of numbers and partly because of lack of training in chaplaincy.

2 SITUATIONS IN WHICH BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS ADVICE IS THE MISSING ELEMENT

Sometimes other specialists are consulted by or on behalf of the person suffering the difficulty. While they render help in their own way, often a missing link appears in whatever therapy is given.

That missing link could well be filled with appropriate religious practices. A Buddhist chaplain could help in these situations. The life of the Buddha, chantings, meditation, and Buddhist psychology may provide the missing element of help.

3 SITUATIONS THAT OVERWHELM WHOLE GROUPS

In unit 1A, we discussed the experience of individuals in distress or difficulty in coping. In many cases there are several persons (as in a family), or small groups (such as a class in a school) or large groups (such as an entire city afflicted by a flood), who need advice as a group.

The principles would be similar but the approach adopted or the method of communication would vary.

Follow up action is also likely to vary.

4 INTERNALLY-CAUSED MENTAL DILAPIDATION

Matters such as stress and depression are mostly attributed to internal mental conditions, although there might be external conditions that promote or aggravate the difficulty.

For example a person who has in mind so many things to achieve, yet does not seem to progress on any front may become restless, firstly imagining an expected outcome and then seeing one's inability to reach these outcomes. After a series of cycles of anxiety to achieve and subsequently feeling negative about the inability to achieve, one could easily fall into a depression.

A person might set targets that are too high because of one's ego, or because of prompting or pressure from family and society. Unable to achieve much, the person could come under stress.

In cases such as these the internal problems need to be understood and addressed by the chaplain.

5 **DISRUPTION OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS**

Close relationships such as between husband and wife or mother and child tend to give stability and a feeling of security to a person. When a relationship is destroyed or badly damaged, one feels displeasure and suffering. Separation from people who are liked is one of the causes of suffering listed in the first discourse of the Buddha. The person finds it hard to cope with the changed circumstances and so needs the help of a chaplain.

Relationships and attachments may exist not merely with people but also with pets and animals, material objects or the environment.

6 **MISSING LINK IN AN EFFORT TO GROW OR MOVE AWAY FROM A SITUATION**

A sick person may rise from that situation with the help of a physician. The help of a physiotherapist or psychologist can be enlisted. Yet with all the known professional help given it is possible that the person still finds it difficult to get back to normalcy.

It is possible that the missing link in the care provided is in the area of Buddhist chaplaincy. Religion provides simple solutions to complete the missing links in recovery.

7 **NEED FOR RELIGIOUS PROTECTION IN A SITUATION WHERE SOME TYPES OF PROGRESS IS EVIDENCED**

Sometimes with all the professional help given to a person, a full or partial recovery from a bad situation may result. Yet, there is no guarantee that the person might stay that way in the future. The causative factors of the bad situation may well return, given the appropriate conditions.

This is where religious protection becomes important. Continuing religious practices, the study of the Dhamma, associating with a Buddhist Chaplain, having the company of others who practise the religion in a similar way could all play an important role in providing continuing protection. **Here the chaplain provides a type of safety-net able to prevent a major fall.**

A repeat of a trauma can have more dangerous results than before.

UNIT 2A

BUDDHIST SERVICE IDEAL AND THE RELATED COMMUNICATION PROCESS

1 CONCEPT OF THE BUDDHA ASPIRANT (BODHISATTA OR BODHISATTVA)

The Buddha aspirant is a person aspiring to be a Buddha in the future and is therefore in training to qualify in a number of defined aspects, such as generosity, morality and mind development. The apparent basis of such a person's life in training is service to others without expecting anything in return.

The Bodhisattva (or Bodhisatta in Pali) guards his or her thoughts, words and physical actions, aspiring to do no wrong and without expecting anything in return.

The style of communication of a Buddha aspirant is a useful style for a Buddhist chaplain. It is full of wisdom and yet guided by compassion.

2 COMPASSION AS A HALLMARK OF A BODHISATTVA

The Bodhisattva says or does something out of compassion for others. With these words and actions the intention is to alleviate the suffering of another person in difficulty.

In the choice of the manner of speech, such a person avoids falsehoods, slander, abusive words, harsh words and worthless words that invariably cause harm to others.

In their actions, such a person avoids the killing and hurting of living beings, taking what belongs to others without permission, and disturbing the chastity of those under the protection of someone else.

In their thoughts, such a person would not covet what belongs to others, harbour ill-will towards others and would not be given to strong views.

All these are based on compassion.

3 WISDOM AS THE GUIDING LIGHT OF THE BODHISATTVA

In living as a compassionate being the Bodhisattva will not behave foolishly, or allow others to fool or deceive them, as such a person is gifted with wisdom. If not for the wisdom, people who are cunning can misuse a Bodhisattva's kindness as a weakness and attempt to use such a person for unwholesome purposes.

The Bodhisattva has great wisdom to be able to differentiate what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

The Bodhisattva has the ability to hold a balance between wisdom and compassion so that the best outcomes are achieved.

4 CONDUCT OF A BODHISATTVA

We have already seen what sorts of actions the Bodhisattva tries to avoid. These are negatively stated good actions.

The Bodhisattva also has a set of positively stated good actions. For example, such a person would go forth to save the lives of other beings when in danger from illness or disaster.

The Bodhisattva would go forth to protect what belongs to other people, when in danger of destruction. An example would be in a fire or a flood.

Corresponding to the negatively stated good actions or precepts, there are as many positive actions performed by the Bodhisattva.

5 THE WAY A BODHISATTVA SPEAKS

Again we have seen the negatively stated rules of guarding one's speech. The Bodhisattva practises positively useful ways of speaking. For example, the Bodhisattva would always speak the truth or keep silent when that is impossible.

The Bodhisattva would use **kind words, helpful words, and meaningful words** having in mind the welfare of all beings.

6 THE WAY A BODHISATTVA THINKS

The Bodhisattva thinks clearly, with the constant aim of keeping mental impurities away or inactive. For example, the Bodhisattva avoids basing thoughts on greed, hatred and delusion.

The Bodhisattva cultivates **wholesome mental states** such as generosity, loving kindness and balance of mind.

7 SERVICE IDEAL OF THE BODHISATTVA

The most prominent part of the conduct of a Bodhisattva is perhaps the devotion to the service of others, expecting nothing in return. It is this commitment that is manifest in the Buddha who devoted his entire life for the welfare of all beings.

In one way it looks as if the Bodhisattva 'takes over' the suffering of others. **Actually, the Bodhisattva alleviates such suffering despite the possibility of having to undergo difficulties for oneself.**

It is the wisdom and other wholesome mental states of the Bodhisattva that help such a person cope with these difficulties with very little experience of direct suffering.

The Mahayana tradition elaborates on the Bodhisattva ideal more than the Theravada tradition, but the fundamental thinking is still the same in all systems.

In the Theravada school, aspirants to become non-teaching (*Pacceka*) Buddhas and Arahant Buddhas, are all treated as Bodhisattvas of different types.

8 BODHISATTVA AS A TEACHER

The Bodhisattva is usually a leader in the community, with outstanding mental prowess. Such a person is naturally a **teacher and advisor**.

Most of all the Bodhisattva is a teacher by example by being a role model for others to follow.

9 BODHISATTVA SETS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW

A community listens to a teacher of repute. Having listened to the teacher the community observes the teacher to test whether the teacher does what he or she admonishes others to do. The teaching is thus validated.

Even without active teaching the teacher can influence the community by his or her own **behaviour**. The conduct of a *Pacceka* Buddha (a non-teaching Buddha) is an example.

There are many examples of that type. It was the conduct of a junior monk of a young age walking on the street that changed the mind of Emperor Ashoka of ancient India from being a ruthless warrior to become a devotee of Buddhism.

10 BODHISATTVA'S BELIEF IN SELF WORTH AND WILL POWER

A person in trouble may not have the attitude to think of self-worth as an idea. However, the overall conduct of a Bodhisattva that exhibits belief in self-worth can be observed. Such an idea cannot be taught easily.

It can go further by the display of **will power to overcome difficulties**. Again these ideas are not easy to communicate in words but the Bodhisattva's mental make-up is evident in what such a person's will power succeeds in achieving.

11 THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE FOR A BODHISATTVA

Even in the worst possible situation where most people will give up hope, the Bodhisattva is there to provide hope and encouragement. In a ship wreck, such a person would calmly guide others to save their lives by clinging to a floating object. There are similar examples in the ancient books. There are great people living today exhibiting such qualities.

To give up hope is the worst possible attitude. To inculcate hope has the opposite effect. It has the ability to give new life and energy to all to achieve good results. That type of hope may provide a person with the capability to achieve a difficult goal which might be impossible to achieve when working alone.

12 BODHISATTVA CONSTANTLY PERFORMS SELF-EXAMINATION TO TRACE ORIGINS OF TROUBLES

Many people, when in difficulty, looks to blame others or external factors for their situation.

The Bodhisattva always looks inward to see whether **one is in anyway responsible for the bad situation**. The teaching is that what came from within can be corrected with one's own effort, which is relatively easier than trying to correct the rest of the world. This behaviour, combined with teaching, can be very helpful to a person in trouble.

13 BODHISATTVA INCESSANTLY ATTEMPTS TO BREAK OUT OF BONDAGES

Bondages such as ego, greed and thoughts of past hatreds keep us in the cycle of births and deaths. Unless we manage to reduce such bondages, we fail to find true peace and freedom. The Bodhisattva's practice involves the breaking or disablement of harmful bonds. Thus, such a person sets an example to others experiencing difficulties.

14 BUDDHA HAS DESTROYED ALL BONDS AND WAS A GENUINELY FREE PERSON

A person who is not bonded in anyway has complete freedom. The Buddha was a person who succeeded in breaking the bonds of the repeated cycle of births (*Samsara*). So long as one is bonded, suffering exists. The Bodhisattva trains the self to abandon bonds in stages and to **become free in stages**. Hence such a person can help others in difficulty stage by stage.

UNIT 2B

GOALS AND THE PROCESS OF BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SERVICE

1 GOALS OF CHAPLAINCY SERVICES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE CHAPLAIN

[In this sub-section, it will be useful to consider a hypothetical case of a person in some kind of well-known trauma and try to interpret each of these goals in practical, real world terms. This will help avoid excessive theorising].

1 As in the case of a physical illness, the client receiving care may display signs and symptoms of mental debilitation. Simple examples might be the unwillingness to eat as normal, to wash as normal or speak as normal. The initial aim of the chaplain is to help the client regain some **relief in regard to symptoms** such as these, which can have a reverse effect of genuine mental recovery. **Observation skills** are important for this effort to succeed.

2 Prior to serious communication being initiated the chaplain needs to **understand the client** in as many ways as possible. A general conversation that has little to do with the current problems can help unravel the individual without causing added hurt or arousing suspicions. **Listening skills** are important for this part of the work. It is from the stories of the client that the chaplain is trying to understand the client and the situation.

3 At this stage the chaplain needs to ask **sensible questions** to find out as much as possible about what had overtaken the client. The information given would be tainted from the point of view of the client but nevertheless the story of the experience might become visible. Questions for which there are stock answers such as 'yes' or 'no' ought to be limited or avoided. Questions should prompt the client to tell a story or to describe a situation or to talk about feelings, thoughts and experiences.

4 Based on the story related by the client, the client needs to be asked what sort of solution might be able to resolve, at least partially, the situation causing the trouble. In trying to put forward a solution the client may **identify specific obstacles** to progress, including those posed by other parties. The obstacles need to be identified. The chaplain need not immediately deal with blame directed at other parties.

5 The chaplain is now able to bring in personal knowledge and experience, personality and character, in order to set the client on the path to recovery, **without giving the appearance that the client is being instructed**. If at all possible the client's own solution should become the appropriate solution. Usually some adjustment to that solution would be necessary. It must be made easy for the client to own the solution.

6 At that stage the personality gap between the client and the chaplain might become evident. The chaplain needs to **adjust the manner and content of communication** to be

more purposeful. The client needs to feel ownership of the development of solutions. In fact in the development process the original solution mooted can be changed substantially.

7 Still there can be difficulties in understanding. It might be due to the limitation of skills on the part of the client. For example, comprehension power, the logical approach or the objective approach could be inadequate. The chaplain needs to **assist the client to enhance inadequate skills**.

8 The client may well show relief or signs of emanating from the trouble. Often some of the original poor patterns of behaviour tend to return quickly. When this is observed, the chaplain needs to understand each such poor pattern and work out a way of improving it. Some of these might be simply habits formed during trauma. In difficult situations **other types of professionals can be brought in to the case**. Referrals are an important part of a chaplain's service. There is no need to shy away from it. Referrals should be an active part of the repertoire of services provided by the chaplain.

9 The chaplain might notice the possibility of changing behaviour completely, particularly in the longer term, by encouraging religious growth in the client. Other service providers might not utilise such a path. The chaplain can work out a suitable path for **religious growth of the client**, see the client through it, and be available to assist over the longer term if necessary. This is like the provision of a safety net below which the chaplain is attempting to prevent the client from falling.

The chaplain needs to keep in mind the importance given by the Buddha to the circle of noble friends in regard to religious growth. Religious growth is rarely possible without the help of noble friends.

10 Along with religious growth, some help can be provided to enhance self-development in other ways. Economic and other forms of success are equally important in the real world. Such an approach would make the chaplain's contribution **holistic**. Once again help from other service providers would be necessary.

11 The chaplain needs to maintain a good relationship with the client. However the chaplain needs to **avoid getting deeply involved in the client's problems** in the course of duty. Financial and family matters are examples. Emotional involvement needs to be avoided at all costs. Such involvement is likely to result in additional problems, both for the client and the chaplain.

2 GOALS OF CHAPLAINCY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE CLIENT

[The difference here is simply the point of view. We look at the goals through the eyes of the person receiving care, the client]

1 Chaplaincy is all about **effective communications**. The client is presumed to have a need to talk to the chaplain. In certain situations the client might not want to have a conversation with the chaplain. The first requirement is establishing an understanding between the chaplain and the person for whom care is provided. This is the cornerstone of communications. It can be in the form of silence, talking, questioning, listening or discussions allowing the client to talk a little more. In establishing lines of communication, an appropriate connection can be made with the client and rapport can be built. Initial discussions may centre on topics unconnected with the client's troubles at hand. However, such discussions help build the rapport necessary to gain the trust of the client to tackle the real issues later.

Once a reasonable level of understanding is reached, the more directed communications on understanding and resolving the client's issues may proceed. The initiative lies with the chaplain.

2 Identifying **issues concerned** and discovering likely solutions is the aim of good communications. The client wishes that his or her problems be resolved by someone. On a moving basis the chaplain needs to discover the needs of the client. That is to say that these needs of the client may change over time. What appears to be a need may not be the real need. Satisfaction of immediate needs helps in communications and in finding long term solutions. Issues of major concern need to be sorted out from the rest.

3 The main goal of a client receiving care is finding a **lasting solution** to the problems. The ground has to be appropriately prepared for that to occur.

Firstly, the client needs to learn that despair and disgust will not help. The chaplain must demonstrate the contrast between cocooning in despair and the flight to freedom from suffering. The client needs to learn that the reins of power are within reach and that the potential to reach normalcy is already within oneself. As the client protests about these assertions, the chaplain can help the person to discover latent strengths.

The idea of notional gradual healing can be pursued and demonstrated to the client. Helping the client to reconcile current unbearable conditions with known factors is helpful in notional healing. The client might be yearning to **know whether any progress is being made** in the situation.

Notional healing can be promoted by deliberate changes to the environment. For example the person can be taken on a temple tour or even an evening walk.

4 Often the client is confused as to the origin and the cause of the problems, and may look for reasons outside. The chaplain can help the client to see the **real origin of the problems**.

This will need changes in attitude, initially in small steps and later in bigger steps. The level of understanding also needs to be raised within practical limits.

5 When the problems have been cleared to an appropriate level, a **religious safety-net** can be created to develop confidence in the mind of the client. Some actions the chaplain can take in this regard are:

Teaching the Buddhist attitude to ups and downs in anything (the four pairs)

Assisting the client to build new religious attitudes such as loving kindness

Encouraging the client to study the Buddha Dhamma (selections)

Helping in mental growth to meet future challenges

Organising Dhamma discussions

Organising Buddhist rituals

Teaching suitable types of meditation including *Yoga* and *Qui Gong*

Helping to correlate behaviour with Dhamma and experiences in meditation

Helping in selected walking meditation practices

6 Finally, the client needs some plans for **long term recovery and development**. Such a plan needs to be developed in consultation with the client where practical. Not merely recovery but also **further growth** needs to be addressed. Reading or listening to recordings, written assignments, diarising and analysis of daily experiences, etc. may be helpful. In simple cases, going into a deep level might not be warranted.

Progress reviews need to be done on a timely basis.

The chaplain needs to tell the client when the chaplain's services have ended. The client would naturally like to know this to avoid further expectations.

7 The chaplain needs to **sever chaplaincy services clearly** to avoid being trapped into an endless cycle of dependency by the client, thus enabling the client to be truly independent. The client needs to know a level of recovery has been reached.

UNIT 3A

SENSITIVITIES CONFRONTED BY THE BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS TEACHER

1 THE BUDDHA RECOGNISED THE STATE AND THE LAW OF THE LAND

A religious teacher can easily run into trouble with governmental authorities if the teacher is not mindful about certain types of sensitivities. If the teacher builds a large following, authorities may get worried. On the other hand a religious teacher cannot afford to toe the line of government if the state policies contradict the teachings. Sometimes these sensitivities are difficult to manage. Examining a few matters from the life of the Buddha may help in this regard.

The Buddha travelled to many states governed by different kings. Each had its own legal and political system. From the manner in which the Buddha conducted his mission it is clear that he refrained from interfering with the law of any state. He expressed his views when invited to do so but did not seek to force his ideas to change the laws or the politics behind the laws.

2 THE BUDDHA RECOGNISED THE EXISTENCE OF SOCIAL VALUES

Even within the same legal system, there was a variety of social values coming down the ages. For example, at that time religious people avoided moving around in early spring, presumably to protect the newly blossoming flora and fauna. The Buddha recognised this in formulating rules for monks during the rainy season.

3 THE BUDDHA RECOGNISED CUSTOMS PREVAILING IN AN AREA

Similarly there were all kinds of customs in society. For example parents were held in great regard. The Buddha normally does not walk behind others. However when the Buddha's step mother *Maha Pajapati Gotami* visited the Buddha a little before she passed away, as she got up from her seat and walked out of the preaching hall, the Buddha too got up and followed her with all the monks out of respect for the 'mother'. This was a common custom of the area.

4 GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE LAW, VALUES AND CUSTOMS OF THE AREA

The Buddha in his all-encompassing knowledge had a thorough and complete understanding of the law of the land, social values and customs prevailing in an area. However we should remember that the appearance of a Buddha in the world is an extremely rare occurrence and the purpose of such a manifestation is not to address the wellbeing, law or social values in the world. The appearance of a Buddha is to teach to this world immersed in ignorance that Existence is *Dukkha* (suffering or incomplete or unsatisfactory or stress) and also show the Path leading to the ending of this very same *Dukkha*. The Buddha teaches this through

the Four Noble Truths i.e. *Dukkha*, its cause, its complete ending or cessation and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of *Dukkha*.

The *Suttas* (discourses) in the *Tipitaka* (Theravada Scriptures) show no specific evidence to indicate any direct involvement of the Buddha with the law of the land, the social values and the prevailing customs. However, there is adequate evidence to show that the Buddha did not interfere with the prevailing laws and customs of the land and never tried to impose his way of thinking on anyone. The Buddha did not attempt to gain political control, but he did have ideas about how rulers should govern. There are several episodes in the *Kosala Samyutta* of the *Samyutta Nikaya* (SN) to illustrate this fact of non-interference and two of these are described briefly below.

5 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

[SN 3.9] There was a large sacrifice set up for King Pasenadi of Kosala with 500 bulls, 500 goats etc. When some Bhikkhus reported this to the Buddha, the Buddha did not try to stop the sacrifice but simply stated that these great sacrifices bring no fruit. He also said that the great Seers of right conduct do not attend these sacrifices. They will attend only sacrifices that are free from violence.

[SN 3.14] There was a battle between King Ajasattu of Maghadha and King Pasenadi of Kosala. King Pasenadi was beaten and when the Buddha heard about this he said that “Victory breeds enmity, the defeated one sleeps badly. The peaceful one sleeps at ease having abandoned victory and defeat”.

Whenever anyone, be it kings, Brahmins, rich or poor householders sought advice from the Buddha, the advice was always directed towards righteous living and that resulted with absolutely no conflicts with the state laws, social values and customs. The following two episodes in the *Kosala Samyutta* illustrate sound advice given to King Pasenadi. Even today this advice is very valid and beneficial.

[SN 3.17] The king asked the Buddha if there is one thing which secures both kinds of good, i.e. the good pertaining to the present life and that pertaining to the future life.

The Buddha replied in the affirmative. Diligence (*Appamada*) or in other words Mindfulness (*Sati*) was that thing.

[SN 3.25] The Buddha asked the king if four mountains come crashing down from the four directions i.e. illustrating that aging and death are rolling down on one, then what should be done by that person.

The King replied ‘live by the Dhamma, live righteously and do wholesome meritorious deeds’. The Buddha approved of this. Even today, this is considered highly valuable and practically applicable advice.

There is also the *Sigalavada Sutta* [*Digha Nikaya* 31] where the Buddha advises the householder *Sigalaka* who was following his father's advice on their custom to worship the six directions. The Buddha advised *Sigalaka* of a more valuable way of worshipping the six directions that will benefit him in this world and the next, thereby ensuring a good destiny. This advice offers valuable practical help for all householders on how to skilfully maintain relationships with parents, spouses, children, pupils, teachers, employers, employees, friends, and spiritual mentors so as to bring happiness to all concerned.

6 RELEVANCE OF ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS TO CHAPLAINCY CARE SERVICES

First and foremost is the non-intrusive and non-interfering attitude. The care providers should never try to force the Dhamma on anyone as that can result in an act of non-reverence to the Dhamma if the response is negative.

It should also be noted that in the societies in which we live today, it is extremely important to recognise the law of the land, existing social values and the prevailing customs when attempting to provide care services.

UNIT 3B

CONSTRAINTS ON DELIVERING BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

1 LEGAL, ETHICAL, MORAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS OF CHAPLAINCY CARE

A Buddhist chaplain needs to be aware of the many types of constraints that are applicable in relation to chaplaincy work. These constraints can arise from laws and regulations promulgated by government or other authorised agencies, ethical and moral principles recognised in a particular society and social norms observed in society.

For example, certain types of actions cannot be performed by anyone except those duly authorised by law. Medicine can only be prescribed by a duly qualified doctor. Even suggesting that aspirin is good for a client is not the business of the chaplain.

In a hospital, there are many norms and regulations to protect patients and the environment. The application of disinfectants from dispensers on your palms is common practice today. Outsiders cannot use toilets in patient's rooms. Similar rules and regulations need to be learnt and respected. Rules may be different in private and public hospitals.

There are other such applicable rules and regulations in correction centres, youth shelters and schools.

There are key regulations applicable to all visitors to schools. In the state of Queensland the government has published a set of books that describe many kinds of rules and regulations and related policies. A school chaplain must be very familiar with the contents of these rules. These rules are mostly for the protection of children and can be universally applicable.

Even without published rules, chaplains need to respect general principles of ethics, morality and simple common sense. For example, a client of the opposite sex should not be interviewed in a closed space. A chaplain must respect the client's personal space and understand what may be deemed to be inappropriate touching of a client.

Even within general community chaplaincy, many of these principles need to be kept in mind, even though there may not be any rules directly applicable to a given situation.

2 PROFESSIONAL GROUPS BORDERING ON BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

There are many other service groups likely to be encountered whilst engaged in Buddhist chaplaincy. Some of these include:

Physicians and surgeons

Nurses and paramedical personnel

Psychotherapists, counsellors and social workers

Psychologists and psychiatrists

Ambulance personnel and physiotherapists

Pharmacists and first aid personnel

Teachers

In some cases a chaplain may have to work in a team including some of these service providers. Professional boundaries need to be respected. Chaplains must not stray into other professionals' areas of authority.

In community chaplaincy the position of monks and nuns need to be respected. They may not be classified as professionals, but there are other principles to be observed.

3 OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS ENGAGED IN CHAPLAINCY CARE

In the case of a natural disaster, suppose the Buddhist chaplain has to visit a shelter. It is likely that chaplains from other religions are also rendering services. The Buddhist chaplain needs to work with other such service providers.

4 PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

There are laws and authorities to protect children. Most of these laws and related regulations are applicable in places where children congregate. The principles behind them are applicable universally. It is not easy to learn these laws and regulations. As with other laws, common sense must always be a guiding factor.

A child is protected by the state, by parents, by institutions such as child care centres and schools. The general principle is that no one should disturb that protection.

5 PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND RESPECT FOR WOMEN

Similar considerations apply in regard to women. Again the protection afforded to women should not be disturbed. For example a girl lives under the protection of the parents. A married woman lives in the protection of the husband and the immediate family unit.

6 PAYING DUE REGARD TO ABORIGINAL CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS

In Australia, aboriginal people are respected for their original ownership of this land. The chaplain must recognise and respect Aboriginal culture, customs and sensitivities to the issue of ownership of land.

7 INSTITUTIONS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS HAVE DIFFERENT STANDARDS

In terms of regulatory issues, it needs to be noted that public institutions are stricter than private institutions in regard to regulatory standards. Because politicians and legislatures

are responsible for public institutions and are answerable to the public, the regulatory framework is more complex.

As some issues are sensitive to religious institutions, and government is reluctant to clash with religious institutions, it must be noted that whatever influence the church had on public institutions with regard to regulations, is left undisturbed.

For example Buddhist chaplaincy is not recognised in public hospitals. At the time of this writing, one has to be trained by a church-connected training institution to be recognised as a chaplain within the public hospital system.

In private hospitals, rules of entry are more relaxed and Buddhist chaplains can gain right of entry and practice.

8 CULTURAL BARRIERS IN CHAPLAINCY WORK

Even within the Buddhist community, there are many differences among clients from different countries. The customs and cultures are different. The chaplain must understand and respect such differences.

9 RELIGIOUS BARRIERS DUE TO COUNTRY, CULTURE OR SECTS

The aspects relevant to chaplaincy within the Mahayana and Theravada traditions can be different. Further, there are country-based differences. These need to be understood when dealing with clients from within these backgrounds.

10 GENDER BARRIERS OF A CULTURAL NATURE

In general, there are differences in the way a chaplain can communicate with clients of the opposite sex. The chaplain must be sensitive to the types of questions that can be asked from a client of the opposite sex.

11 PERSONALITY BARRIERS DUE TO PERSONALITY TYPES

Clients have different types of personality. Some are aggressive. Some tend to keep feelings hidden from others. Some are always suspicious. The success of a conversation is influenced by the personality type.

12 BARRIERS OF AGE, BACKGROUND AND MATURITY

It may not always be easy to convince an older person as to what should be done in a situation. It may be more difficult to communicate with certain educated people because they may presume that their knowledge outweighs that of the chaplain, and that the chaplain has nothing to offer. Some clients may not be receptive because of a lack of maturity. A chaplain must be astute enough to identify such barriers to communication and devise a method to keep the communication channels open with the client.

13 SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES RELATING TO ETHICS, ETC.

The following and similar principles help us to ensure that the Buddhist chaplain does not make unnecessary mistakes impinging on law, regulations, customs and value systems of groups of people:

- 1 Ensuring that no harm is done to clients,
- 2 A chaplain has a duty of care towards the client,
- 3 Information given confidentially needs to be kept confidential,
- 4 Clients must not be put under additional stress,
- 5 No advantages should be derived from the relationship with the client.

14 CONNECTIONS WITH THE LAW

Care needs to be taken in keeping records of work done. The client is usually entitled to confidentiality with regard to information divulged in the course of receiving the services of a chaplain. It is sensible to keep only the essential records. Details which are not necessary need not be kept.

However, governmental authorities such as the police may have overriding powers to access any information in certain situations. A criminal investigation is one such possible situation.

The chaplain needs to be reasonable in exercising discretion with regard to records. The legal concept of the “reasonable man” needs to be kept in mind. All reasonable care needs to be taken in whatever the chaplain does.

Reasonable care helps to eliminate or minimise civil liability. In this regard, a particular point of note is that the chaplain must avoid transgressing into areas managed by other qualified professionals.

UNIT 4A

THE NEED TO IDENTIFY THE GROUP SERVED BY THE CHAPLAIN

1 THE BUDDHIST PRINCIPLE OF KNOWING THE ADVISEE BEFORE ADVISING

When the Buddha was addressing a group, small or large, he looked at the audience to assess their nature and their needs. He had abnormal powers to survey people in this manner. This way he ensured that whatever he taught did not go to waste.

2 TARGETED ADVISEES

While there was a teaching for everyone, when the Buddha addressed groups of people, he would also identify a target person or a target number of persons to whom the address of the Buddha is particularly directed. Because of such targeting, individuals derived specific benefits relevant to their spiritual progress while everyone else derived general benefits suitable for their aspirations, interests and objectives.

3 ASSESSMENT OF THE MINDS OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONS

Even for a single person, the Buddha checks the person's mental states and prevailing conditions before teaching the Dhamma. This is because the knowledge imparted must be suitable to the person in the context of the current conditions and mental states.

There are many stories from the life of the Buddha relating to target identification and assessment of the mind and mental states. Two are mentioned here.

(1) the seven year old daughter of a hand loom operator

(2) Suppabuddha the leper

4 MENTAL ABILITIES AND DEFILEMENTS ARE BOTH ASSESSED

The Buddha had highly developed mental powers to encompass and assess the minds of others. He also possessed that knowledge which is unique to Buddhas which not only identified a person's mental state but also the defilements in that person's mind. The Buddha would then provide the necessary object of meditation to target these defilements and provide the specific teaching at the appropriate time directed at the now developed mind. The Buddha's aim was to free as many beings as possible from the vicious cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*), and guide them to the final release from bondage, namely the attainment of Nibbana (the Deathless state).

5 ADDRESSING MONKS AND NUNS

The Buddha taught the Dhamma to the four types of persons, namely, *Bhikkhus* or monks, *Bhikkhunis* or nuns and laypeople, both male and female. In the case of ordained Monks and Nuns, there are several *Suttas* in the *Tipitaka* (*Digha Nikaya*, *Majjima Nikaya*, *Samyutta*

Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya, etc.) that state that many in their hundreds attained final liberation at the end of the Teaching by the Buddha. This is because these *Bhikkhus* had previously attained the mental conditioning necessary, mainly through meditation, and hence the knowledge to understand ‘things’ or phenomena as they really are. The Buddha, having surveyed their mental state, then expounded the right Teaching. The *Bhikkhus* with their minds elevated to higher and superior states of consciousness would have sat listening attentively to the Dhamma and would have penetrated to the Truths leading to Nibbana. We should also not forget the fact that a Teaching from the Buddha himself would have had a tremendous impact on the listener.

6 TEACHING LAY PERSONS

For laypeople, Buddha’s Teachings were usually structured on the principles of Dana (generosity) and *Sila* (Virtue) that lead to good results in this world and also ensuring a good destiny after the breakup of the body (commonly referred to as death). However there are several instances where the Buddha having surveyed the audience with his mental awareness and having identified individuals who had the mental conditioning to understand the Dhamma, directed the Teachings to guide that individual to attain at least Stream Entry (*Sotapanna*), the first stage of enlightenment.

The two episodes described below show that the Buddha not only knew the mental strength of the person but also knew that their death was imminent. Without the Buddha’s guidance at the right time just before death, the fruit of their effort in their previous existences would have been wasted.

7 DAUGHTER OF A HANDLOOM OPERATOR (WEAVER)

This is a story which is the source for Buddha’s utterance of the Verse: “Blind is this world. Few are those who clearly see. As birds escape from a net, few go to a blissful state”. (Verse 173, *Loka Vagga -The World, Dhammapada*).

The daughter of a weaver listened to a Teaching by the Buddha delivered to a gathering in her village on how to practice Mindfulness of Death. While all the others present on that occasion forgot about these meditation instructions, the weaver’s daughter practised this for a few years.

When the Buddha surveyed the world after a few years, he saw that this little girl had a matured mind suitable to understand the Dhamma and also that his presence will benefit many others in the village. The Buddha then went by foot to the village of this weaver’s daughter and after the meal offered by the people he was ready to give a teaching to the gathering. However at that time this little girl had to go on an errand to bring some shuttle items for her father’s weaving equipment. The Buddha waited silently and everyone in the audience was wondering why the Buddha did not commence his teaching.

The girl having obtained the necessary items was on her way back but when she went past the gathering the Buddha lifted his head and looked at her. The little girl thought that the Buddha wanted her to come to his presence and sat in a corner with her shuttle basket.

The Buddha then asked this little girl "Maiden, from where do you come?" — "I do not know, reverend sir." — "Where are you going?" — "I do not know, reverend sir." — "Do you not know?" — "I know, reverend sir." — "Do you know?" — "I do not know, reverend sir."

The people in the audience were offended thinking this girl was talking nonsense with the Buddha. The Buddha then put the gathering to silence and asked her to explain why she replied in this manner.

In reply to the first question 'From where do you come?' she said, "Reverend Sir, you yourself know that I came from the house of my father, a weaver. So when you asked me, 'From where do you come?' I knew very well that your meaning was, 'From where did you come when you were reborn here?' But as for me, from where I came when I was reborn here, that I do not know."

In response to the second question "where are you going", the girl replied, "Reverend Sir, you yourself know that I was going to the weaver's workshop with my shuttle-basket in hand. So when you asked me, 'Where are you going?' I knew very well that your meaning was, 'When you pass away, where will you be reborn?' But as for me, where I shall be reborn when I have passed from this present existence, that I do not know."

In response to the third question "Do you not know", the girl said that she knows she will surely die and hence the response "I know Reverend Sir".

In response to the last question, the girl replied: "This only do I know, Reverend Sir, that I shall surely die; but at what time I shall die, whether in the night or in the daytime, whether in the morning or at some other time, that I do not know; and therefore I said so."

Then the Buddha said to her that she answered correctly all the questions and uttered the verse quoted above. This girl became a stream enterer after seeing the Buddha. Then having gone to her house, she handed over the shuttle basket to her father who was sleeping on a handloom. The father woke up suddenly causing the handloom to fall on her and as a result she died immediately. The little girl's father was very sad and weeping and wailing went to the Buddha. The Buddha consoled him saying that in the rounds of *samsara* he would have cried on the death of a daughter so many times and shed tears more than the four great oceans. The Buddha also said that his daughter was now reborn in the *Deva* world and bound for enlightenment.

8 SUPPABUDDHA THE LEPER [UDANA 5.3]

Suppabuddha was a very poor person and suffering from leprosy. One day when he was going around looking for food he saw a gathering and thought he can get some food there. However, when he went there he found that there was no food being distributed, but saw the Buddha. He abandoned his search for food and decided to listen to the Buddha's Teaching.

Then the Buddha, having surveyed the minds of the whole gathering asked himself, "Now who here is capable of understanding the Dhamma?" He saw *Suppabuddha* the leper sitting in the assembly, and on seeing him the Buddha decided that "This person here is capable of understanding the Dhamma." So, aiming at *Suppabuddha* the leper, the Buddha gave a progressive talk, i.e., a talk on generosity, on virtue, on heaven; he declared the drawbacks, degradation, and corruption of sensual pleasure, and the rewards of renunciation. Then when he saw that *Suppabuddha* the leper's mind was ready, malleable, free from hindrances, elated, and bright, he then gave the Dhamma-talk special to the Buddhas, i.e., *Dukkha*, origination of *Dukkha*, cessation of *Dukkha*, and the Path to that cessation.

Suppabuddha the leper while sitting in that very seat became a stream-enterer. After the Dhamma talk he went to the Buddha, prostrated himself before the Buddha and keeping his right side towards the Buddha departed.

The story has a sad ending as a cow with a young calf attacked *Suppabuddha* and killed him. When the *Bhikkhus* reported this to the Buddha, the Buddha said that he was a stream-enterer and now reborn in the *Deva* world bound for enlightenment.

9 RELEVANCE TO CHAPLAINCY CARE PROVIDERS

A chaplain needs to understand the background and mental stability of the person to whom care is being provided.

We definitely do not have the supernormal powers as the Buddha had to encompass other's minds. But we can make an informed judgement that may be dictated by the religious and cultural backgrounds and mental stability of the person.

We also should note that the mental conditioning of a non-Buddhist is completely different from that of a Buddhist. In addition, a Buddhist (or a non-Buddhist by birth) who practises the Dhamma will have an entirely different mental make-up compared to someone who does not practice the Dhamma. In this context, one who practices the Dhamma can be broadly categorised as one who practises *Dana* (generosity), *Sila* (virtue) and *Bhavana* (cultivation of the mind) and also has some knowledge of the teachings of the Buddha.

UNIT 4B

IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF THE CLIENT

1 INDIVIDUALS NEEDING CHAPLAINCY CARE

After a major natural disaster such as a flood, bush fire, tsunami or earth quake, it is very likely that hundreds of people would experience unbearable feelings and unbearable conditions. However, it might be that only one or two people need the help of a Buddhist Chaplain. The chaplain needs to identify those who need such service and locate them through other service agencies such as disaster management or the police.

In such cases the chaplain needs to first approach such an agency.

Individuals who have had a difficult experience such as the breakup of a relationship might approach various people such as a monk in a temple. The Buddhist chaplain needs to maintain good relations with the monks who will then negotiate for the engagement of the chaplain to bring relief to the person or persons concerned.

Maintaining a social network is important for this type of engagement.

In hospital chaplaincy, the hospital identifies patients who are Buddhists but the chaplain needs to verify whether they are interested in the chaplain's services. In a prison or in a school the engagement is similar. The Buddhist Chaplain needs to be accepted by the institution for the intended purposes.

2 RESISTANCE OF INDIVIDUALS

The individual identified by an institution as needing chaplaincy services may not be keen on accepting the service, and may flatly refuse such offers. It must be recognised that ultimately it is the client who engages the chaplain. It is not like the services of a doctor or nurse.

3 ADDRESSING CLIENTS IN A SMALL GROUP

In the case of a problem within a family, say, the spouses may form a small group needing chaplaincy services. It is up to the chaplain to engage them together or separately. That topic needs to be discussed with the people concerned. Often the service can be given with the spouses together, then as individuals, and again as a small group.

In a case that involves parents and children, siblings could form a small group. Here again the group may be extended to include both or one parent as appropriate. Siblings can be engaged together or separately.

In these and similar cases the success of the service will depend a great deal on the procedure adopted by the chaplain in taking the individuals separately or as a group or one following the other.

4 IN SMALL GROUPS INDIVIDUALS MAY NEED TO BE SEPARATED AT TIMES

While a group is being served by a chaplain a situation might arise when the chaplain has to suspend the procedure and engage some individuals separately. For example, if there are three children under consideration, the chaplain might discover that on a particular issue one child is far too sensitive. Then that child may have to be separated for part of the procedure.

5 LARGE COMMUNITIES CAN FORM A TARGET GROUP

Hundreds of people in a town can be affected by a natural disaster and the initial service given by a chaplain is likely to be for the whole community. The approach taken could be a sensitive issue. It is best that the chaplain remains in the background while emergency services complete their work. The latter may invite the chaplain to help individuals or groups.

In the case of a school community a chaplain will be called upon to help by the principal. The procedure adopted can be agreed with the principal. The participation of teachers and indeed other senior students in providing chaplaincy services might be necessary. The chaplain should give guidance to the teachers. If it is a sudden event such as the death of a student in a car accident, or an incident of suicide, the chaplain may need to address the assembly with the principal. At the next level teachers may need to address their classes. At the third level the chaplain may discuss matters with individual students who are deeply affected. Such an engagement can continue for a number of days.

Within a school, rules regarding entry and movements have to be respected. For example, the eligibility to hold a Blue Card will be an absolute necessity for schools in Queensland.

6 LARGE GROUPS MIGHT NOT BE HELPFUL IN A LONG TERM PROGRAM

As in the example from a school discussed above, the group size needs to be adjusted in keeping with the procedure being adopted. The people who are worst affected cannot be served in groups. In such cases the mental make-up of individuals is probably important and that is highly variable from one to the other.

UNIT 5A

PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SERVICES IN ANCIENT TIMES

1 BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS AIM AT PREVENTING PEOPLE GETTING INTO TROUBLE IN THE FIRST PLACE

Examples of some of the troublesome situations people get into by their own doings today include addiction to alcohol and drugs, marital/family disputes, domestic violence, verbal and physical altercations, fraud, living outside their means and getting into heavy debt, causing hurt to others, etc.

It is quite clear that living in accordance with at least the five precepts could have prevented one from falling into these difficult situations. The Pali stanza below shows that all Buddhas teach to help people lead a trouble free life.

<i>Sabba papassa akaranam</i>	Refrain from all unwholesome deeds,
<i>Kusalassaupasampada</i>	Be virtuous and skilful
<i>Sacittapariyodapanam</i>	Purify the mind
<i>Etam Buddhānu Sasanam</i>	This is the teaching of all Buddhas

The Buddha has taught that **every mind is inherently radiant and pure but it is the layers of defilements that make it contaminated and impure**. The gradual training of the Buddha is aimed at purifying the mind by removing these defilements.

The nature of impermanence was used by the Buddha to bring some comfort to grieving minds and it may be worthwhile to mention some aspects of it as it can help the chaplain. The Buddha taught us to examine and understand through wisdom the arising and ceasing of the five Aggregates or the six Elements. People, and the external world, are examples of the various combinations of these elements.

If we can penetrate into this through wisdom, then we will not be able to find an "I" or "me" or "mine" internally and anything permanent externally. This would then be the end of our ego, all our views, comparisons, arguments, fighting, taking up of weapons, etc., and hence the ending of all troubles and mental stress.

So it is clear from the above that living in accordance with the Buddha's teaching is a protection in itself. It therefore, prevents people from getting into most kinds of trouble in the first place.

2 REFRAINMENTS AND POSITIVE PRECEPTS AS PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The first line of the stanza above is about refraining from certain types of conduct and is commonly achieved by practising *Sila* (Virtue) according to certain rules. Laypeople start by living in accordance with the five precepts every day and taking the eight precepts on full

moon (*Poya*) days. Once established in the precepts, the next step is to be skilful or in other words refraining from the 10 unskilful activities, i.e., the 3 unskilful actions by body, 4 by word and 3 by mind. These ten are:

Not to kill

Not to Steal

Not to engage in misconduct

Not to tell lies

Not to spread slanders

Not to use harsh language

Not to engage in fruitless conversation

Not to have extreme greed

Not to have extreme hatred

Not to hold onto false beliefs or strong views

This is effectively the Noble Eightfold Path in action.

The purification of the mind is the gradual removal of the defilements of the mind. The practice of calming meditation (*Samatha Bhavana*) helps to make the mind calm so that the defilements of the mind can be clearly “seen” for *Vipassana* (insight) meditation practice. The latter helps to totally eliminate defilements. The Buddha also asks us to develop a mind with Unconditional Love, Compassion, Altruistic Joy and Equanimity.

For those aspiring to higher states of conduct the gradual training additionally requires restraining the senses, taking food in moderation, devotion to wakefulness, practice of mindfulness and meditation on the purification of the mind. Mindfulness is a key practice on the Path and it can be guaranteed that one established in it will not fall into any troublesome situation caused by any of their own doings.

Most rules relating to morality are negatively stated. For example the first precept is “I shall refrain from killing”. **One needs to look at the related positive behaviours.** For example related to killing is saving lives of other beings. Related to stealing is protecting other’s belongings. Development of positive behaviour helps one to prevent getting into trouble caused by one-self.

3 SOME TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA ENABLE PROTECTION IN THE FUTURE TO A PERSON WHO HAS MANAGED TO RECOVER FROM A BAD SITUATION

The Buddha always pardoned those who accepted their wrongdoings and were prepared to correct themselves. We see this in the case of *Angulimala* where the Buddha intervened to pull him out of the dire situation he was in. One can apply this principle, for example, to advise the parents to forgive a child coming out of an addiction like alcohol or drugs and help to start a new life. Similarly, forgiveness can play a positive role to overcome family/marriage disputes, disputes within social and community circles and disputes in the workplace.

The Law of Kamma was used by the Buddha to bring comfort to someone who had lost a loved one, for example. Reflecting on the operation of the Law of Kamma can help a person to deal with future similar situations, thus affording a protection.

The stanza starting with “*Putthassa loka Dhammehi*” in the discourse on Blessings (*Mangala Sutta*) states that a mind not touched by the vicissitudes (8 in total) of life is one of the highest blessings. These teachings may help to calm the mind of the client. Understanding these teachings can also provide protection for the future.

The **nature of impermanence can be a valuable tool when dealing with someone after a loss of property** due to fire or flood, for example. How Kamma plays its part is often evident when we see a row of houses completely gutted out by fire, leaving just one or two at random on the same street without any damage. However, we should be careful to understand the present mental conditioning of the person to whom care is provided before talking about Kamma, impermanence and the like.

4 IN SOME CASES THE BUDDHA HELPS A PERSON TO OVERCOME A TRAUMA

The story of how the Buddha helped *Patacara* who had lost her whole family is well known. She had lost her sanity and was running around in despair without any clothes. The Buddha simply said “Sister regain your mindfulness” when she came to his presence. That brought her back to her senses and after a brief teaching by the Buddha, *Patacara* became a Nun and having practised, soon became an *Arahant*. She was foremost among the *Bhikkhunis* who were experts in the *Vinaya* (disciplinary rules). This was a curative action because *Patacara* was experiencing trauma when she met the Buddha.

The story of *Kisa Gothami* is another example of curative action. She was a distraught mother who had lost her child. The Buddha brought *Kisa Gothami* to see reality by asking her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house that has not had a death in order to treat her dead child. She soon understood the fruitless nature of this pursuit, and gained the understanding that no one escapes death. She too became an *Arahant* later.

We must remember that both *Patacara* and *Kisa Gothami* had past Kamma that helped them to penetrate into the teachings. The important lessons we can learn is the calm

attitude of the Buddha, immense compassion and application of the correct technique to help someone in a traumatic situation.

5 MANAGEMENT OF MENTAL STATES IS A KEY TO RECOVERY IN MANY CASES

It is clear from the above that it is the power of the mind that helps the curing of the ailments in both the body and in the mind itself. Meditation is used today in western medicine to reduce mental stress, reduce blood pressure and the like. We also hear of some people even being cured of cancerous growths and tumours by practising meditation. In order to make full use of the mind it must be made reasonably clean by reducing defilements, which manifest as negative mental states.

Even in the time of the Buddha, bringing back to mind the 7 factors of enlightenment helped not only the *Maha Arahants* but also the Buddha himself. This is a case of positive mental states being energised with the help of someone else.

UNIT 5B

CURATIVE AND OTHER TYPES OF BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SERVICES IN MODERN TIMES

1 PREVENTIVE INDEPENDENT INTERVENTIONS ON THE PART OF THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

When the deterioration of the mental condition of a person is noticed by someone who is familiar with the behaviour of the person, it might be brought to the notice of a Buddhist chaplain in one way or another.

The same can occur in respect of a group or larger community known to be running into unbearable or difficult situations due to an impending or unfolding disaster or major event. Here the chaplain directly sees the dangers of the immediate future.

In either case the chaplain is free to assess the situation and work out a strategy for intervention before the situation worsens. The chaplain may then intervene with the idea and aim of preventing a person, a group or a community from getting caught up in a major event likely to cause serious mental damage.

This type of preventive religious care can be very valuable not only from the point of view of affected individuals but also from the point of view of society in general, including government.

Prevention of suicide, particularly among young people, is a good example of this. Early intervention has the best chance of saving a life. The writer has seen some evidence that as a percentage most suicides occur in the Buddhist community as compared with Christian and Islamic communities. Assuming that this evidence is reliable and unbiased, preventive independent religious care is a vital element which can be provided by Buddhist chaplains.

Buddhist chaplains in Australia do not have to deal with forced marriages or honour killings, as in some societies. Such matters are not discussed here.

2 PREVENTIVE TEAM INTERVENTIONS ARE ENCOURAGED AS INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES ARE LIMITED

While preventive independent interventions are encouraged in appropriate situations, it is the responsibility of the Buddhist chaplain to understand at what point (if at all), the chaplain needs to seek the intervention of others in similar fields, such as Buddhist monks, nuns and senior chaplains.

Buddhist psychotherapists or Buddhist counsellors may need to join in a preventive endeavour. When that occurs it becomes a preventive team intervention. Such an

intervention may require the services of other professionals such as physicians and psychologists.

On the other hand a team may have already formed, say, due to the influence of government or other relevant authorities, and then a Buddhist chaplain may be invited to join, or can volunteer to join in.

A possible case is a team considering the release of a prisoner on parole.

3 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN CAN WORK WITH OTHER SPECIALISTS FORMING A TEAM

The Buddhist chaplain must not assume that all of the client's needs will be taken care of simply because there are other professionals or specialists in a team, such as psychologists, counsellors or doctors. Each person's role will be different. There will be different levels of expertise and varying points of view. The knowledge base of each person will be different. The Buddhist chaplain may continue to have a role to play in parallel with the work of the other professionals.

For example, a doctor or psychiatrist might not understand the difference a Buddhist chaplain can make in a particular situation. That is not the doctor's field.

In these situations professional comparisons and discussions about the perceived benefits of each type of service need to be kept at a minimum. Otherwise a team will not be effective or work cohesively.

4 CURATIVE INDEPENDENT INTERVENTION

In most situations, prevention is usually ignored as it is not easy or feasible to see the signs in advance or because people are busy with curative duties. This is true for chaplaincy too.

When the stage at which prevention is possible has passed, the intervention is curative. The chaplain needs to help the client to overcome the bad situation in which the client is engulfed.

The process in curative intervention is very different. The person in difficulty is already in a poor mental state and may be resistant to curative endeavours. The client's ability to understand what the chaplain says may be limited. The client might be suffering from the effects of symptoms rather than from the effects of substantial causative factors.

As mentioned before, adequate attention must be paid to the symptoms to begin with.

5 BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS CAN JOIN WITH OTHER SPECIALISTS IN CURATIVE CARE

As in prevention, team contributions might be necessary with curative care. In natural disasters it is necessary to identify suitable curative care teams and join them. One such path is to join a Christian chaplaincy team as they are likely to move in advance. In such a

situation we need to keep religious differences aside. Any Buddhist victims in a situation might be referred to the Buddhist chaplain. In a predominantly Christian group a Buddhist chaplain could be invited to tender general advice. For this to take place, good rapport ought to be established and maintained.

In cases like drug and alcohol rehabilitation, team procedures may already be in place and the Buddhist chaplain can actively seek opportunities to contribute within.

The chaplain needs to be very mindful of the need to refer a case to other professionals, such as a doctor or a psychologist, when evidence of that need arises. However, the chaplain can still continue to provide services in parallel.

6 BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS NEED TO BE READY TO LEAD MULTI-DISCIPLINARY INTERVENTION TEAMS

After gathering some experience in team preventive and curative care the Buddhist chaplain can volunteer to lead a team of specialists intervening in a matter. If such a need arises it is useful to remember that the most important skill is **leadership**, not specialist knowledge.

This can happen in community interventions. The person who is gifted with an ability to lead must lead. That may well be the Buddhist chaplain.

The Buddhist chaplain needs to develop leadership skills.

7 WITHOUT PROTECTIVE CARE THE CLIENT MAY RELAPSE INTO A BAD SITUATION

This is one of the most important areas in which a Buddhist chaplain can help. Other specialists may cease their services relatively early, partly due to the inability of the client to pay professional fees and partly due to the specialists assuming that they have contributed what they could.

The Buddhist chaplain works on the basis of compassion and quite often on a voluntary basis, and so is able to maintain the services for a longer period. That time can be devoted to organising **protective care**. That may be the final phase of the services. The aim now is to prevent the recurrence of causes that were behind the original trauma.

For example, assume that the client has apparently fully recovered, but the Buddhist chaplain finds that the client is not at all religious. The protective care in that case could include establishing a connection between the client and a temple within the community.

In addition the client can be taught some basic practices, further study of the Dhamma and some meditation techniques appropriate to the client and the client's recent poor experience. In this situation the chaplain should seek the participation of a monk or nun.

Teaching the client some simple *chantings* and introducing a book like the *Dhammapada* is also useful. Keeping small replicas of a Buddha statue, a stupa or a reminder of a *Bodhi* tree can be helpful to many clients.

UNIT 6A

TEACHING, LEARNING AND PRACTISING WITH A CIRCLE OF NOBLE FRIENDS

1 BUDDHA'S CONCEPT OF LEARNING, PRACTISING AND TEACHING IN GROUPS

The usual approach for a novice monk in the time of the Buddha was to learn and practise under a senior monk within a group of novices. *Anapanasati Sutta (MN 118)* illustrates this. Here it is said that there were several *Maha Arahants* teaching groups consisting of ten, twenty, thirty and forty novice monks. It is interesting to note that the maximum was forty, probably because that was the number convenient for the teacher to give individual attention.

This *Sutta* also states that each group was practising different objects of meditation and shows that a particular teacher was an expert on a type of meditation and all who had the tendency and character for that object of meditation studied under that teacher.

The concept of learning and practising in groups is continued in traditional *Theravada* countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand today. There are regular interviews to ascertain progress and the assessments are supplemented by Dhamma talks and Dhamma discussions. Group discussions help each other as the questions may be common to many and hence the answer applicable to all in the group. It also assists those who are reluctant by nature to raise questions in an open forum.

Group sittings during meditation are said to provide immense benefits to one another due to the calm vibes present in the environment. There is always a sense of being pulled into concentration and for some, group sittings help to keep awake and continue till the end of the session which would not be the case at home when meditating in isolation.

2 CONCEPT OF NOBLE FRIENDS

Once Venerable Ananda said to the Buddha that noble friendship is half the holy life lived. The Buddha replied by saying that it is not half but the complete holy life (*SN 45.2*) and stressed the importance of noble friendship (*Kalyanamittata*). He also asked the *Bhikkhus* to expend maximum effort as they had a noble friend around them, and that was referring to the Buddha himself.

Identifying a noble friend can be a challenge. Anyone who is of higher virtue and practising for the final goal of liberation such as an ordained monk, nun or even a layperson would be our first option. *Canki Sutta (MN 95)* provides some further guidelines to help us identify a noble friend. However, in this instance we should be careful and have adequate wisdom to judge the qualities of another whom we are hoping to be our teacher.

The Buddha advises in the *Canki Sutta* to observe the person for a long time with regard to three mental qualities: greed, aversion and delusion: 'Are there in this person any such

qualities based on greed, aversion or delusion that he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm and pain?' If one can be found satisfying these requirements then the Buddha advises to learn the Dhamma from such a person. The qualities of non-greed, non-aversion and non-delusion are those of an Arahant. However, we may be able to find someone these days that might satisfy these qualities at least to some extent.

The advice to *Dighajanu* (AN 8.54) provides a guide to what good friendship is. The advice is to associate with those whether young or old but mature in virtue, accomplished in faith, of virtuous and exemplary behavior, possessing generosity and wisdom. The *Sutta* goes on to state that one should converse with them, engage them in discussions and emulate them with respect to their accomplishments in virtue, faith, behavior, generosity and wisdom.

3 USEFULNESS OF NOBLE FRIENDS IN LEARNING, PRACTISING, TEACHING AND ADVISING OTHERS

The *Meghiya Sutta* (*Udana* 4.1) states that when one has a Noble friend, it is to be expected that such a person will be virtuous, will very regularly get to hear the Dhamma, will engage in speech that is truly sobering and leading to liberation, will be persistent and arousing energy to purify bodily, verbal and mental conduct and will develop wisdom to see the arising and passing away of phenomena.

Although the advice above is for a practicing monk, it is also valid for the type of activity we are involved in. We need to be virtuous and develop loving kindness and compassion as that is directly applicable to our work. Our noble friend can help us in all these activities for our own development and can even provide advice when providing care, depending on the situation.

When providing care to a client, the care providers will more or less take over the role of the noble companion to the client seeking care and advice.

4 IDENTIFYING THE PERSON TO WHOM ONE IS TRYING TO TEACH

It will be in the best interests of all to encourage anyone who is keen to learn the Buddha's teachings. One can start with whatever available knowledge and then direct that person to various knowledgeable monks, nuns or lay people, meditation groups, Dhamma books and talks, internet references, etc. However, we should not try to force the Dhamma upon anyone.

As a teacher we should also not be discouraged if someone is not pursuing the teachings as much as we would have liked as there were monks, even in the Buddha's time, who did not want to learn. In the *Salayatanavibanghanga Sutta* (MN 137), the Buddha says that sometimes all the disciples or at other times some disciples do not want to hear the Dhamma or exert their minds and they turn away from the teacher. He says that "the

Tathagata is not satisfied but dwells unmoved, mindful and fully aware". Sometimes all the disciples hear the Dhamma and exert their minds and achieve the final goal. The Buddha says that in this case "the *Tathagata* is satisfied but yet dwells unmoved, mindful and fully aware".

We should always remember that the Dhamma is for the welfare and happiness of the listener. It is part of the skill of the teacher to identify the student as an interested student or a disinterested student. This way the teacher will not end up in disappointment.

5 ASSESSING AND KNOWING THE PERSON TO WHOM ONE IS TRYING TO TEACH

In the case of providing care, the person requiring our assistance would more likely be going through some troublesome or stressful situation. In the *Upanisa Sutta* (SN 12.23), the Buddha shows that suffering or stress leads to faith. The *Sutta* goes on to state that faith leads further through rapture, joy, concentration and wisdom, right up to understanding reality. This shows that if the care provider can give the right guidance even at a basic level, it will be of immense benefit to the person to calm the mind and reduce worry.

Anyone with faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, established in the minimum precepts and with mundane Right View (*Mahachattarisaka Sutta*, MN 117) should qualify as the ideal candidate to whom one can teach the Dhamma.

At a deeper level, AN 8.30 provides qualities of a person suitable to receive the Dhamma. It is stated that this Dhamma is for one with few desires, contented, resorts to solitude, i.e., not delighting in company, energetic, with mindfulness well established, with good concentration, wise and does not delight in mental proliferation.

The above eight qualities are for a practising monk with the goal of liberation and is not directly applicable to the lay community but nevertheless they are strong guidelines and a good reference for chaplaincy work.

6 STARTING WITH A TRIGGER FOR LEARNING

With the amount of research and money invested into inventing and developing items solely for the purpose of giving pleasure to the five sense doors, introducing a non-Buddhist by birth to study the Dhamma is a difficult task. It may also be difficult to even teach a Buddhist living in a society where the theme of gratifying the senses is well rooted.

The core of the Buddha's teaching is built up on causality and as our minds are influenced by the previous thought moments that can go back to very long periods of time, there can come a situation when the previous cause brings an effect that will propel one to the study and practice of the Dhamma.

A trigger such as this may come after a loss of a loved one, illness, natural disaster and so on, or simply listening to a talk on the Dhamma.

The best we can do is to encourage others regarding the benefits of the Path and always try to take up Dhamma topics for discussion whenever possible. This gives an opportunity to bring to the surface the previous good Kamma that might help them to gravitate towards the teachings of the Buddha.

7 IMPARTING JUST ENOUGH LEARNING AT A TIME

The Buddha has stated (Udana 51) that “this Dhamma and discipline is a gradual training, a gradual course, a gradual progression, and there is no sudden penetration to final knowledge. Just as the great ocean gradually shelves, slopes, and inclines, and there is no sudden precipice”.

One starts with generosity leading to *Sila* and then *Samadhi* with which one sees with wisdom things as they really are. This is the turning where one is led to dispassion, disenchantment, cessation, relinquishment and final liberation. The four fruits of the Path that need to be attained sequentially are in fact the gradual Path.

8 LAYING THE SEEDS FOR FURTHER ADVANCEMENT

The *Opanaika* (leading inward or upward) quality of the Dhamma is guaranteed to lead one onwards once the seeds are sown. It is indeed amazing to see this quality in action even today when we see some people progress on the Path.

They start with simple acts of *Dana* (generosity), progressing on to the observation of the eight precepts on Full Moon (*Poya*) days, participating in meditation retreats and even ending up as *Bhikkhus* or *Bhikkhunis*. The teaching of the Buddha is still very much alive!

UNIT 6B

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

1 IDENTIFYING TARGET PERSONS OR GROUPS TO AVOID DIFFUSED ATTENTION

In some cases the target person is obvious. When groups are involved it is not obvious as symptoms of agony might be widespread. For example if a shooting incident occurred in an otherwise peaceful area, everyone could be generally affected. A few could be utterly affected.

The chaplain needs to apply the powers of observation or information obtained from others to identify those individuals who are seriously affected.

2 ASSESSING THE TYPE AND EXTENT OF CARE NEEDED

Initial care is required to minimise the symptoms of the bad experience. For instance, the person may seem dumb-founded, unclean, tired, thirsty or hungry. Once these are overcome, the chaplain might be able to begin the process of assessment of the problem.

Once the problem is understood, it is necessary to examine the depth of the damage caused. When the mental damage is superficial, the care needed will be brief and relatively simple. In trying to provide religious care at an initial level, the chaplain needs to ascertain whether there is more to the story.

Long term damage or deep damage will need more concerted or long term care. In some cases the chaplain may have to seek help from other specialists.

3 PROVIDING ADVICE AND COUNSELLING DEPENDENT ON CURRENT ASSESSMENT

As shown above the chaplain might not be able to make a full and accurate assessment at once. The assessment of the problem could vary as time passes. There is nothing to regret about this for many reasons. All the chaplain can do is to work on the basis of the current assessment and knowledge. Conjecture of alternative assessments might result in confusion.

For example, in the case of the sudden death of a parent, the current assessment might be the loss of confidence due to the loss of the parent's love. Consequently, the first step is to assist the client to overcome that.

Underneath, there might be a fear regarding the future guardian. That needs to be looked at in a second assessment. The two should not be mixed up.

4 PLANNING RECOVERY AND SETTING DIRECTIONS FOR PROGRESS

In very serious situations the care provided by the chaplain has to be phased out over time, leaving gaps for gradual recovery. The chaplain needs to develop a long term plan for the work.

Such a plan could have alternative approaches. Hence the chaplain needs to reset the direction being taken and subsequently make plans according to the chosen direction. Planning cannot be absolute and final. There must be some flexibility, and the plans can be expected to be modified in an incremental and iterative manner.

Take the case of a child without a proper future guardian who witnessed the killing of both parents by a burglar. A recovery plan cannot be absolute. The situation is too complex. At some stage the mental condition of the child might be examined by a competent person. Depending on the results the chaplain needs to adjust the plans.

Another example is a natural disaster. The people affected initially suffer from displacement. Once that is surmounted, a series of other problems might surface. With every such development the chaplain's plans need to be amended.

5 CONDUCTING RELIGIOUS RITES, DHAMMA (DHARMA) AND MEDITATION PROGRAMMES

In certain cases the chaplain may decide to encourage the client to engage in religious practices. These are likely to include simple rites and rituals depending on the mental make-up of the client. In general, teaching certain relevant parts of the Dhamma and encouraging the person to continue to study selections from the Dhamma is useful. Both these will hold well only if some meditation is taught.

Trauma of any sort, or a mental break-down of any sort indicate some weakness of the mind. Selections from the Dhamma and connected meditations can then be helpful. It is important to realise that knowledge of the Dhamma by itself cannot help a person in difficulty. The person needs to apply the Dhamma within their life. That is hardly possible without training the mind, which implies meditation and some level of sustained effort.

The selection of words and the level and type of knowledge presented is very important. A massive amount of Dhamma may not be what the client can handle. It can become a burden.

Meditations selected also must relate to the type of mind and the strength of the mind of the client. However, breathing meditation could be generally helpful in all cases. This is a view held by the writer. If this is not possible, staying quiet for a short time is a good beginning. In such a case the client and chaplain both need to remain quiet in proximity.

A person boiling with hatred will benefit from Loving Kindness (*Metta*) meditation. However, this could be difficult for the client to commence in some situations. Breathing meditation could help to calm down initially. Reflection on death as a concept and also as a universal experience can help, though an initial assessment needs to be made whether such a reflection can cause further stress to the person.

The Buddhist Chaplain need not specialise in all this as the help of a nun or monk can be solicited. Noble friends can be of mutual help.

6 PROVIDING GUIDANCE IN ADJUSTING BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

Towards the end of the service given by a Buddhist chaplain to a client, suppose the client fully understands the need to change their behaviour so that the client will not have to face the difficult situation again. The client may not be able to change the behaviour. One possible difficulty is the lack of knowledge or techniques for doing so. Another is environmental factors.

In such a case the chaplain needs to help the client to identify poor behaviour patterns and present techniques for changing them.

As change of behaviour is a slow process, help can be rendered after certain periods of time intervals. It cannot always be quick and continuous.

7 TRAINING OTHERS IN BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

The facilities for training Buddhist chaplains in Australia are virtually non-existent. Therefore the few Buddhist chaplains available have a profound responsibility to train others in chaplaincy work.

All who receive training need to start working as Buddhist chaplains and become trainers themselves.

8 PROVIDING ACCESS TO OTHER SPECIALIST PERSONNEL WHEN REQUIRED

The client might not be able to access other specialists such as a Buddhist psychotherapist. In such a case assistance can be provided to facilitate such access.

Often the request can be to see a Buddhist monk or nun educated and trained in Buddhist chaplaincy.

9 LINKING COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUPS (TEMPLES) AND PERSONS NEEDING THEIR SUPPORT

Not all Buddhists are closely connected to temples. They may not know the residing monks and nun. Very few might know the different interests and capabilities the monks and nuns

may have. The chaplain can acquire this information and set up links between prospective clients and the members of the Sangha who could help them.

Buddhist chaplains may establish relations with temples they are not closely connected with, through the Queensland Sangha Association Inc. and related organisations. In particular, a Theravada chaplain might need some advice from a monk or nun in a Mahayana temple. It would be useful to engage the Queensland Sangha Association Inc. in such a case.

10 PROVIDING INFORMATION ON BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY CARE TO OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Professionals in related fields such as psychologists or psychotherapists might not be familiar with the services being provided by Buddhist chaplains. They might need to work with or engage Buddhist chaplains. The Buddhist chaplain needs to establish and maintain necessary connections with interested professionals.

In this matter the Buddhist chaplaincy services division of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc. could be particularly helpful. It is a good idea for every Buddhist chaplain to be part of that service and to help strengthen the service through active participation, research and sharing of information.

11 NETWORKING WITH OTHER SIMILAR CARE WORKERS

Some care workers such as those in ambulance services might occasionally need the help of a Buddhist chaplain. There is presently no way for them to locate a Buddhist chaplain. Hence the Buddhist chaplain needs to make their presence known to groups like that. Again the Buddhist Chaplaincy Service of the Queensland Sangha Association would be a useful mechanism.

12 PLAYING THE ROLE OF A TEAM MEMBER (ALSO IN MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS)

We have already seen that the Buddhist chaplain may need to work in teams of similar care providers or in teams including other types of professional personnel.

Hence it is important to learn team techniques in general.

Any team member may be called upon to lead the team depending on circumstances. Some understanding of leadership attributes would be useful.

13 SUPERVISION OF OTHER SIMILAR CARE PROVIDERS WHEN REQUIRED

As a team leader or as a designated supervisor the Buddhist chaplain needs to be ready to supervise other members of a team. This is of course an integral part of leadership. With experience the Buddhist chaplain may notice some areas in which supervision of team

members could be made more meaningful with improved understanding of the work done by other team members, particularly those who are trained in other fields.

UNIT 7A

THE BUDDHIST TEACHER'S KNOWLEDGE BASE

1 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY PROVIDES A BASIS FOR DETAILED KNOWLEDGE

A balanced knowledge of the Dhamma (Dharma) and knowing the person who hears the Dhamma (Dharma), that is the student, are both important as pre-requisites of the knowledge base.

Buddhist Scriptures such as the *Tripitaka* do indeed provide a detailed knowledge of the Buddha's teachings. It gives guiding principles for behaviour and a system of philosophical thought and training that will lead one to superior understanding of existence and reality. The Buddha's teachings are still very much alive even after more than 2600 years. It has also helped academics as well as the medical profession, and with the advance of technology the teachings that once were committed to memory and handed down orally are now just a 'click' away.

But for a true Dhamma practitioner this is not the knowledge that the Buddha would have expected. The Buddha's aim was to liberate all of us from suffering (*Dukkha*). To be free from *Dukkha*, knowledge of the teachings to some extent is required as one needs instructions on how to put the teachings into practice. The priority is to practice and experience the Dhamma so that we too, like the Buddha, can say "I know and I see". Once we begin to "see" the Dhamma, that indeed is the highest knowledge.

In the *Sutta Pitaka*, (e.g. *Samannaphala Sutta*, *Digha Nikaya* 2), there is reference to specific True Knowledge the Buddha has identified. These are arrived at by directing the mind to them after emerging from the 4th *Jhana* and these are identified as the knowledge of (1) recollection of past lives (2) passing away and reappearance of beings and (3) ending of taints (*Asava*). Would anyone who has experienced these True Knowledge have any further love for existence here and now and the future? This indeed is the end of craving.

2 BROAD PATHS OF PRACTICE NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD

The broad Path of Practice shown by the Buddha is the gradual development of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom (*Sila, Samadhi and Panna*). This approach is illustrated in all the *Suttas* where the Buddha instructs the disciples in training. *Samannaphala Sutta (DN 2)* is a classic example that describes this broad practice.

Foremost is Virtue, or discipline, which starts with the taking up of the precepts. This is followed by restraining the senses, then moderation in eating, devotion to wakefulness and developing mindfulness and full awareness. Once established in Virtue, the next step is to cultivate the mind through meditation and develop Concentration (*Samadhi*) and Insight (*Vipassana*). The first step in *Samadhi* is to free the mind from the Five Hindrances. This is followed by higher concentration, which is the development of the *Jhanas* (Absorptions).

Once the mind is thus concentrated, stilled and equanimous, it is directed towards wisdom that leads to understanding things as they really are (Impermanence, Suffering and Non-Self). This broad path is indeed the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddha has also advised his disciples on the importance of development and cultivation of the thirty seven (37) factors of enlightenment (*Mahaparinibbana Sutta DN16*). The 37 factors of enlightenment can be considered as a complete Tool Kit on the way to liberation.

As we all know the mind is non-self and it has to lead itself to liberation. All we can do is to continue on the path until such time the mind has seen enough of the inherent *Dukkha* in existence and develops its own momentum to free itself, at least to be a stream-winner (*Sotapanna*) in the first instance. The commentaries to the *Suttas* compare this to someone trying to get to the other side of a river using an overhanging creeper or vine. Such a person will develop the momentum by swinging backwards and forwards and then letting go of the creeper at some stage to be thrown over to the other side. The letting go of the vine is compared to allowing the mind to take over. The person can fall into the river (unable to achieve *Sotapanna*) and keep on trying or may get over to the other bank.

3 EXISTENCE OF NARROW SPECIALISED PATHS OF PRACTICE TO SUIT INDIVIDUALS

The Buddha, at times, gave special advice to individuals who had matured faculties (Faith, Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom). The Path to enlightenment of Sopaka, Patachara, Bahia, Angulimala, and others, based on specific advice shows that there can be paths that are outside the broad method of practice that are suited to particular individuals.

As for us ordinary worldly beings it may be more advisable to start with the broad method of practice discussed above. Once we begin to practice, start to acquire experiential wisdom and understand the strengths and weaknesses of our faculties, it is quite possible that we too may see narrow specialised methods that are more suited to our individual character.

The practice of *Maha Satipattana Sutta* or *Anapanasati Sutta* or *Kayagathasati Sutta* may be considered as examples of such narrow specialised paths. The Buddha has guaranteed that correct development of the meditation techniques given in these *Suttas* will lead one to liberation.

4 KNOWLEDGE OF TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR DIFFERENCES

In the *Mahamalunkayaputta Sutta (MN 64)*, Venerable Ananda asks the Blessed One, “Venerable Sir, if this is the path, the way to the abandoning of the five lower fetters, then how is it that some *Bhikkus* here gain deliverance of mind (*Ceto Vimutti*) and some gain deliverance by wisdom (*Panna Vimutti*)?” To which the Buddha replies “The difference here *Ananda* is in their faculties”.

The path described here is the Insight Meditation on emerging from the absorptions or the *Jhanas*, and the faculties stated here are the same as described in section 3 above.

The commentaries also talk about 4 categories of individuals:

- (a) Slow to learn and gain wisdom with practice also slow and painful
- (b) Quick to learn and gain wisdom but practice is slow and painful
- (c) Slow to learn and gain wisdom but practice is quick and pleasant
- (d) Quick to learn and gain wisdom and practice is also quick and pleasant

5 SEQUENTIAL APPROACH IS RECOMMENDED

There is a tendency on the part of some students of the Dhamma to jump to conclusions the moment an idea appears that never occurred to them before. The impression created is so great and powerful that they conclude that the path has been seen.

A well-known example is the attraction of Insight Meditation as the direct path or a quick path to enlightenment. No other practice is considered necessary. As was mentioned in paragraph 2 above, what the Buddha recommended was a gradual path and gradual progress.

A sequential approach is recommended. Jumping from one method to another is not the most effective way of practice.

6 PRACTICE NEEDS TO CORRESPOND TO ONE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

Once an individual understands that *Sila* (discipline) helps the mind to settle down in meditation and that a concentrated mind can discern the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, the practice can begin at any stage depending on the individual's character and circumstances. Although there is no pre-requisite level regarding the *Sila*, with the maturing of the practice, wisdom feeds back to *Sila* and *Samadhi*, which in turn boosts wisdom.

Sila can lead to *Sati Sampajjana* (Mindfulness and Full Awareness) or *Sati Sampajjana* can take the lead and refine the *Sila*. The Buddha places high importance on *Sila* and *Panna* as found in the *Sonadanda Sutta* (DN 4). In this *Sutta* the Buddha says to Brahmin *Sonadanda* that "Wisdom is purified by Virtue and Virtue purified by Wisdom; where one is, the other is also there and the combination of Wisdom and Virtue is called the highest thing in the world".

So the message is start practising with Virtue and Wisdom (*Sila* and *Sati Sampajjana*) and let the *Opanaika* (leading) quality of the Dhamma guide you.

7 TEACHINGS MUST BE AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL

Any teaching without practice is purely academic and indeed it is in vain. Once the practice matures, the individual will have the wisdom to identify what teachings will be conducive to

development. The lesser the knowledge one has acquired through books, the easier it is to experience the Dhamma. This is because a person with book knowledge has the tendency to rush to conclusions before direct experience. Direct experience requires a person to see things as they truly are.

8 NIRVANA (NIBBANA) AS THE ULTIMATE GOAL SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN IN GETTING INVOLVED IN THE DETAILS OF PRACTICE

This is very important as we should always remember that the practice of the Dhamma should not be for such simplistic goals as good health, recognition as a virtuous person or a Dhamma scholar and so on. It should be only for the single purpose of gaining freedom from suffering and attaining enlightenment. Other benefits such as good health will follow.

9 THE COLLECTION OF DISCOURSES (SUTTA PITAKA) PROVIDES INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND THE DHAMMA AND TO GET ESTABLISHED IN PRACTICE

The *Sutta Pitaka* (consisting of the five great collections) provides the teachings of the Buddha aimed at achieving the ending of suffering, namely, Nibbana and hence contains the practical aspects of the path as taught to the Buddha's disciples. The five great collections are the *Digha Nikaya*, or collection of long discourses, along with the *Majjhima*, *Samyutta*, *Anguttara* and *Kuddhaka Nikayas*.

10 COMPENDIA IN THE ABHIDHAMMA PITAKA HELPS TO CONFIRM OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MIND AND THE LAWS GOVERNING THE UNIVERSE

The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* in the *Tripitaka* is divided into seven books and is highly regarded in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. It is interesting to note that in Thailand, the study of *Abhidhamma* is not considered as important, especially by the forest dwelling monks.

According to tradition it is said that the *Abhidhamma* was preached by the Buddha to the *Deva* community that included the Buddha's mother. On coming back to the human world each day, the Buddha conveyed the *Abhidhamma* teachings to Venerable Sariputta and this is said to be the source for the seven books contained in the *Tripitaka*. The seventh book was written more than 200 years after the other six.

Abhidhamma indeed helps us in our understanding of the Dhamma but for someone intent on practising the teachings and experiencing the Dhamma to gain liberation, the *Sutta Pitaka* may be more useful and practical rather than the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. The latter helps to build a picture of the mind and its workings.

11 THE VINAYA PITAKA CONTAINS THE DISCIPLINARY RULES FOR THE SANGHA

The *Vinaya Pitaka* includes the disciplinary rules for the *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunis* (monks and nuns). It also includes advice that will enable harmonious relationships among the monastics themselves, and between the monastics and the *Dayakas* (lay supporters).

The *Patimokka* contains 227 major rules for the *Bhikkhus* and more than 330 major rules for *Bhikkhunis* (please refer to the *Vinaya Pitaka* for more information and exact number of rules, etc.). Thailand is the leading country in relation to the *Vinaya Pitaka*.

12 THE DHAMMAPADA - THE BOOK OF SHORT SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

This popular book is easy to read. There is one version in English that contains stories and detailed explanations of each stanza. It contains 423 stanzas providing an exposition of many parts of the Dhamma. It is one of the 15 books in *Khuddaka Nikaya* (one of 5 great books) of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

Some stories are humorous, yet very instructive. Each stanza is based on some incident and provides valuable understanding as to how the Buddha responded in that situation. If a person does not have the ability to read the main books it is recommended that it is fully worth reading the *Dhammapada*, practising what is taught and testing one's practice now and then.

UNIT 7B

STRUCTURE OF THE KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR A BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

1 GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED ASPECTS OF BUDDHISM PROVIDING A BROAD BASE

We are referring to Buddhist chaplaincy and not just chaplaincy or spiritual care. The basis of what we are studying is Buddhism as a religion. A general knowledge of Buddhism is absolutely necessary. In trying to obtain a general knowledge of Buddhism we would naturally come across stories and teachings that are directly applicable in religious care. Those aspects need to be given emphasis. These are not found in one place in the scriptures and need to be gathered from many parts of the religious books.

A good starting point is the first discourse of the Buddha. Here he describes suffering and the causes of suffering. The three features of existence are explained in many discourses. A system of ethics and morality is described in the discourses. The growth and development of the mind is described in many discourses. At an analytical level these considerations are dealt with in detail in *Abhidhamma*. The *Abhidhamma* also synthesises teachings found in the Dhamma in various discourses.

A person comes to a Buddhist chaplain seeking help to overcome a situation which is causing some level of distress. The person is in a poor state of mind. A rounded knowledge of the Dhamma would enable the chaplain to bring to focus certain teachings that are suitable to the particular problem and a possible solution. Some of these are detailed in the later units.

This does not mean that the chaplain needs a complete knowledge of Buddhism. We need to remember that monks and nuns are usually gifted with that knowledge. The chaplain can always consult a monk or nun regarding Dhamma knowledge.

2 KNOWLEDGE OF VARIOUS TRADITIONS OF BUDDHISM

There are two major traditions of Buddhism, Theravada and Mahayana. Theravada has no sub-divisions but there are country traditions exhibiting some differences in emphasis, but not in doctrine. In the case of Mahayana, the Tibetan tradition stands out as a separate sub-tradition. There are many other sub-traditions of Mahayana developed in China and Northern Asia. Pure Land is the name of one such sub-tradition. Chan and Zen sub-traditions also need to be mentioned.

There are fundamentally different philosophical approaches in the traditions. For a Buddhist chaplain, the important fact is that the same historical Buddha and the Dhamma he taught are recognised in all the sub-traditions. Religious practices are different partly due to countries of origin and the influence of the Sangha.

A chaplain may choose to practise within one familiar tradition and refer other cases to more suitable chaplains. Another possibility is to resort to common aspects such as veneration of the Buddha and the system of morality taught by the Buddha.

One sensitive difference is the idea of the Buddha Aspirant (*Bodhisattva*). Another sensitive point is the idea of higher heavens and the state of Nirvana (Nibbana). The idea of an Arahant is also very different. The chaplain needs to respect the ideas of the client in faith related matters.

3 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS CARE

Many adherents of Mahayana yearn for a birth in Pure Land. In that Pure Land there will be a living Buddha. It is a very happy state and they will live there for a long time with others like themselves. That contrasts with the wish of an adherent of Theravada to attain enlightenment in this life itself. Here the wish is not to stay in the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*) any longer than this life or in the next few lives during which the person ought to attain Nibbana. If religious care is given close to death this is a vital difference to remember.

There is also a belief among Mahayanists that after attaining enlightenment we need to come back to this world to help other beings to do likewise. Hence service is the ultimate goal. Theravadins see service as part of preparation to attain Nibbana and once that goal is achieved there is no expectation to come back.

For Mahayanists there are many *Bodhisattvas* in the universe performing various duties such as alleviating the suffering of other sentient beings. Theravadins see the *Bodhisattva* as a person training himself to become a Buddha (at one of three levels), and moving in *samsara* until the mission is accomplished. They do not have special duties. We cannot appeal to them for help.

At a higher level Mahayanists lay great emphasis on concentration through calming of the mind. Theravadins see calming and insight meditation as being developed in parallel. They see emphasis on calming as leading to absorptions (*Jhana*) and rebirth in *Brahma* worlds. Insight Meditation is seen as the only way to obtain release from bonds in *samsara*.

It is not the job of the chaplain to convert a client from one system to the other. The chaplain must respect the faith sensitivities of the client, yet devise various methods and techniques based on the Dhamma to assist the client to overcome their present difficulties.

Faith based practices are more prominent in Mahayana than in Theravada, though both groups resort to some form of worship. A Theravada chaplain needs to be sensitive in this regard if the client follows the Mahayana tradition.

4 CULTURAL ATTITUDES REGARDING MENTAL DEBILITATION, RELIGION AND HEALTH

Culture is older than religion. People from all cultures have their own ideas regarding life, regardless of whatever religions might have to say. For example, Mahayanists lay emphasis on remembering and showing respect to elders. Some of them also venerate their ancestors. In Vietnamese temples there is a shrine to make offerings to deceased ancestors.

In some cultures there is a tendency to commercialise Buddhism; the more one donates, the more is the merit gained.

Every little thing that happens is attributed to Kamma in some cultures. In other cultures the influence of other universal laws is recognised.

Some cultures treat Kamma as fatalism. Most of these ideas have some connection with Buddhism but they are affected by the cultures and other non-Buddhist teachings prevailing in different countries.

5 STAGES OF LIFE AND CHANGING ATTITUDES TO MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE

The chaplain needs to be aware of the change in attitudes with the age of a person. Sudden changes in attitudes during certain ranges of age are even more important. Adolescence is one important age range. It is earlier in females than in males. The child assumes that he or she knows everything that needs to be known. Similarly, the child becomes too confident as regards health and strength. They develop a genuine superiority in regard to gadgetry and technology in general.

Effective communication becomes difficult if such changes are not recognised.

6 CHARACTER TYPES AND PROBLEMS IN APPROACHING THEM

It is important to have some idea of types of character and personality. There are people with strong ego. Such people are equally foolish, but they do not seem to understand that they are fools. This makes it impossible or very difficult to introduce a new idea to such a person. Very often such people look for external reasons for their troubles other than their own ego and associated stupidity, or lack of wisdom.

There are others burning with hatred and jealousy. It may be difficult to enter into a conversation with them.

Some people are unable to listen and absorb information because they constantly keep thinking of the next thing to say, or their attention span may be very limited.

An informal chat might help to discover the character type before beginning any serious conversation with a client.

7 GENDER VARIABILITY OF MENTAL ATTITUDES AS RELATED TO CHAPLAINCY CARE

There is an obvious difference in the way we can talk to adults and children. Similarly, a conversation with a male may be different from a conversation with a female. A female, for example, may expect more respect and softness. Words uttered by a female in given circumstances are likely to be different from those used by a male in the same circumstances. A 'yes' or a 'no' might not mean exactly that.

8 INTER-PERSONAL PROCESSES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHAPLAINCY CARE

A chaplain trying to help a client in difficulty is in a special position. A conversation with a client is like a conversation between two friends or two people known to each other. The client is in a position of weakness and needs to be treated kindly and with understanding. It is always possible that the client may use that position to take advantage of the chaplain. Being overly kind might lead the chaplain astray or into some form of trouble.

Posture, gestures and looks are often connected with a conversation and can influence the outcome of the conversation. The chaplain needs to be conscious of body language. The chaplain needs to be disciplined and at the same time keenly observe behaviour on the part of the client.

9 PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES APPLICABLE IN CASES OF SHOCK AND TRAUMA

In this type of situation certain parts of the brain could be inactive or over-active for a period of time. Advanced counselling methods have been developed and these might be beyond the role of the Buddhist chaplain.

The Buddhist chaplain can be of some service in relating suitable stories. In one aspect, this amounts to diverting the mental state of attention. In case the client is not looking at the facts of an event, but looking at their feelings about the event, the chaplain may use a story in which someone was successful in sorting out the facts from the feelings. The facts may have been easy to deal with but some individuals develop strong feelings for their own creation without realising that they were complicating matters.

The Buddhist chaplain can also draw attention to the need for self-control and calm. For example, if the client is moving incessantly, it would be useful for everyone to sit down. If there are movable objects, these can be moved away quietly. An example is sharp implements that can aggravate matters.

The chaplain can stand as a guardian and a person able to give hope to those in difficulty.

10 PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE IN CASES OF UNBEARABLE SITUATIONS

The Buddhist chaplain can draw inspiration from the individual's ability to shift attention. This ability is always there. The chaplain needs to energise that ability. When a person says that a pain is unbearable, it may mean body pain or mental pain or both. The body has its

own mechanisms to reduce body pain. The mental pain is far stronger and that is the one the chaplain ought to help reduce.

In addition to shifting attention, the chaplain can move to help energise pleasant feelings. These may displace the poor feelings or overcome the poor feelings.

11 PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE IN BROKEN INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Broken relationships cause pain of mind because of a sense of loss. The loss may refer to a sense of security and stability or a material loss. Attention can now be shifted to the possibility of replacements or alternatives. Pleasant feelings can be aroused by drawing attention to advantages of replacements or alternatives. If replacements cannot be found, attention can be paid to mitigation of losses.

Investigation of totally unconnected phenomena is another way to reduce the pain experienced. Investigation is more than attention. Going deep into a different object brings about new mental states. A simple example is short tours or even walking in suitable places. Engaging in activities is an alternative. Observation of the night sky, the ocean or biological phenomena also help to restore balance of mind.

In an improved state, meditation can help. Meditation on the mind or on mental objects relating to the Dhamma is particularly useful.

12 PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE IN CASES OF FEAR AND ANXIETY

Advanced counselling techniques might be necessary in some cases. A referral to a different type of practitioner may be the solution. Fear and anxiety are caused by desires, greediness or attachments. It is also due to lack of conviction about impermanence. It is accentuated by a belief in the self-idea.

For example if the client fears job loss, it is because there is desire to continue with the job. There is attachment to the job, and a level of greed for the pay packet and its perceived security. The client has not observed that hardly any job is secure and permanent. Observing the real world and seeing job losses happening everywhere may help to alleviate such fear.

Fearing an impending surgical operation is based on the attachment to the body. Education about the surgical operation helps to reduce fear of the procedure. Seeing the advantages strengthens the mind.

In dealing with anxiety about the future, alternatives can be presented regarding the possible outcomes in the future. The person may become restless as the mind dwells alternately on the present moment and then on a future eventuality. In common parlance this is also called worry. However, it needs to be clarified that in Buddhist psychology as found in *Abhidhamma*, worry always refers to an event in the past that caused

disappointment, whereas restlessness is associated with the mind constantly dwelling on future eventualities.

The root cause of worry and restlessness may well be due to greed, hatred and delusion, but the client might find it hard to see the connection. The chaplain will do well to point out these connections.

13 PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE IN RESTLESSNESS AND STRESS

People who constantly dream of things in the future, not being fully conscious of what they are thinking of, would easily run into restlessness. In this mental state, the mind is tossed between the present moment and a future eventuality. The future eventuality begins to look more and more real. It could be more than one future eventuality the mind keeps incessantly dealing with. The mind gets tired from these movements. The person is now restless.

The risk of non-achievement of these eventualities is ever present. The person cannot cope with this pushing and pulling of the mind. The person is feeling stress.

A client needs the chaplain's help to come back to reality and learn to accept any eventuality. This subject is dealt with in detail in a later section.

In other words one needs to learn how to come back to the present moment. One way is to activate a physical sense such as the eye or the ear.

UNIT 8A

THE SKILLS OF THE BUDDHIST TEACHER TO ASSESS THE STUDENT

1 BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS ON COMMUNICATIONS

Abayarajakumara Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 58) provides the criteria the Blessed One used when deciding what is worth saying. *Tathagata* here is another word for the Buddha.

[1] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be untrue, incorrect and unbeneficial and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, such speech the Tathagata does not utter".*

[2] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, such speech the Tathagata does not utter".*

[3] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true and correct and beneficial but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others, such speech the Tathagata knows the time to use such speech".*

[4] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be untrue, incorrect and unbeneficial but which is welcome and agreeable to others, such speech the Tathagata does not utter".*

[5] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial and which is welcome and agreeable to others, such speech the Thathagata does not utter".*

[6] *"Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true, correct and beneficial and which is welcome and agreeable to others, such speech the Tathagata knows the time to use such speech".*

"Why is that? Because the Tathagata has compassion for all beings"

2 TRUTH NEED NOT BE UTTERED JUST BECAUSE IT IS THE TRUTH

The criteria above explain this matter. Some hold the confused view that if it is the truth then it must be uttered. This is a false tenet of modern morality. In a court of law or in an investigation regarding a crime this view might be difficult to resist. There is always a right to be silent. Wisdom needs to be summoned in managing this right. The Buddha's teaching is far more comprehensive and pragmatic.

3 ABILITY OF THE CLIENT TO ABSORB THE ADVICE VARIES WITH MENTAL STATES

The Teachings of the Buddha is not purely academic knowledge but more inclined towards experiential knowledge. Hence higher the development of one's mind, the higher the ability of that person to absorb the Dhamma. The simile used by the Buddha to illustrate this condition is the ability of a clean cloth to easily absorb the dye in comparison to a dirty cloth.

4 THE MEANING OF ADVICE CAN VARY WITH THE MENTAL STATES OF THE CLIENT

Mental states (*cetasikas*) are invariably present in the mind at all times but these can vary partly because of past Kamma and partly because of current and recent mental and physical action. Before advice is absorbed it needs to be received by the mind. For example, if a mental state tainted by hatred is prevailing in the mind of the client, a thought of kindness contained in the advice given by the chaplain will not be received by the client. What is not received is obviously not absorbed. Instead of absorbing the advice, the client now tries to attribute incorrect kinds of meanings and interpretations to the advice.

The chaplain will do well to create an environment of neutral mental states based on faith, as much as is practicable, prior to providing advice.

5 MEDITATION HELPS TO STRENGTHEN THE MIND

Meditation or *Bhavana* is cultivation of the mind, and is an essential tool to reach final liberation. The nature of the mind of an ordinary worldly being is to jump from one object to another and in this process, whilst a significant amount of energy is lost, the actual information gathered about the object is partial as the time the mind dwells on it is very small. The mind does not penetrate to the true nature of the objects it deals with in such rapid fashion.

Buddhist meditation provides two methods, namely, *Samatha* and *Vipassana*. *Samatha Bhavana* is concentration of the mind on a single object for long periods of time to reach absorption (*Jhana*). *Vipassana Bhavana* is mental cultivation adequate to understand impermanence, suffering and non-self. The commentaries describe forty objects of meditation for the *Samatha* practice, which includes the *Brahma Vihara* described in Section 7 below.

How *Samatha* and *Vipassana* techniques are used as found in the *Suttas* is described below in Sections 9 and 10. However, some meditation teachers today quoting the commentaries state that *Samatha* practice is sufficient to steady the mind and to suppress the five hindrances. This result, they say, is adequate for *Vipassana* practice to see things as they truly are.

Both *Samatha* and *Vipassana* techniques help to strengthen one's mind. As an example, if one regularly practices loving kindness (*Samatha Bhavana*), such a person will know how to direct loving kindness to someone who might be behaving in an abusive way towards them, thus causing anger. In a similar situation, where someone is making a *Vipassana* practitioner angry, the *Vipassana* practice would help to identify when anger arises, its peak and when it starts to fade away. With further development in *Vipassana*, such a practitioner will realise that we are just mind and body, anger is a temporary state of mind and there is no permanent soul here to experience anger, and that there is no one out there to 'make' one angry.

6 PRACTICE OF TEACHINGS HELPS TO STRENGTHEN THE MIND

This can be easily experienced by one who practices the teachings of the Buddha. It is said that one who lives in the Dhamma is protected by the Dhamma. As a simple example, anyone who can adhere to the five precepts, at a minimum, will not have remorse or fear of accusations by others, or fear of the law of the state or fear of lower births. Going further, it is then not difficult to understand the immense benefits one arrives at if Mindfulness and Full Awareness can be maintained as much as possible during the time one is awake. The protection by the teachings increases in leaps and bounds with further development of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom (*Sila, Samadhi and Panna*).

7 COMPASSION CAN BE DEVELOPED THROUGH MEDITATION

Compassion is the second of the *Brahma Vihara* meditations recommended by the Buddha. Developed mental states arising out of *Brahma Vihara* meditations (loving kindness, compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity) will no doubt be very useful and perhaps compulsory for those providing chaplaincy services. This is because one can easily observe that hatred in all its forms are not helpful, and in fact, could be damaging to all parties. When one understands the futility of anger and hatred, the mind tends to swing towards compassion.

8 PURIFICATION OF VIRTUES PROVIDES A BASIS FOR FURTHER SELF DEVELOPMENT

In *Digha Nikaya* 16, the Buddha advises householders regarding the five advantages derived by one with good virtue. Such a person (1) gains wealth righteously (2) has a good reputation for virtue and good conduct (3) has confidence in oneself when approaching whatever gathering of people, be it people with high positions, etc. (4) dies unconfused and (5) after death is assured of a good human or heavenly re-birth.

At *Anguttara Nikaya* 10.1, when Venerable Ananda asks the Buddha what purpose and benefit is there for one who develops **virtuous behaviour**, the Buddha replies that it is for **non-remorse**. When Venerable Ananda inquires on the purpose of non-remorse, the Buddha replies '**joy**' and this conversation leads on to other attainments. The purpose of joy is to attain **rapture**, the purpose of rapture is to attain **tranquillity**, the purpose of tranquillity is to attain all-pervading **happiness**. That happiness leads to **concentration**, concentration leads to **knowledge and vision of things as they really are**. That leads to **disenchantment and dispassion** and finally ends up in **liberation**.

9 ABSORPTIONS (JHANAS) PURIFY THE MIND AND BRING IT TO A PROFOUND STILLNESS WHICH IS CONDUCIVE FOR THE ARISING OF WISDOM

Right Concentration, which is the eighth factor in the Noble Eightfold Path, is the Four Fine Material Sphere (*Rupa*) *Jhanas*. The *Jhanas* are elevated states of consciousness and refines the mind with the gradual progression in the four *Jhanas*. The first three *Jhanas* have

increasing levels of bliss and happiness and have the added benefit of happiness here and now. In the fourth *Jhana*, the mind is very pure, calm, stilled and equanimous. Almost all the *Suttas* dealing with the Path in the *Sutta Pitaka* state that the fourth *Jhana* is the launching pad for gaining insight and final liberation.

Further, **all *Jhanas* are temporary states of the higher mind** and emerging from a *Jhana* further demonstrates the nature of impermanence and inherent suffering. In addition, the non-self nature is also clearly evident as the concepts of “I” and “me” recede when one enters the *Jhanas* as the mind takes over. There is no longer a doer and the mind goes to “auto-pilot”.

10 INSIGHT MEDITATION LEADS TOWARDS ENLIGHTENMENT

The *Suttas* state that when the mind has attained the fourth *Jhana* “It is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability. The mind directs itself and inclines it to True Knowledge and Vision”.

Note: The broad practice towards disenchantment, dispassion and relinquishment culminating in Nibbana as found in the *Suttas*, is the attainment of the Fine material Sphere *Jhanas* (the eighth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path) and then directing the mind to True Knowledge and Vision of things as they really are. However, Buddhist monks and meditation teachers today have their unique approaches and do not strictly conform to the standard practice as above. The best approach for all of us may be to make a start and through gradual training, gradual practice and gradual progress, arrive at the optimum method that fits into our individual abilities.

UNIT 8B

GENERAL SKILLS BASE FOR A BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN INTERVIEWING, CONVERSATION, LISTENING AND SILENCE ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

An important part of the success of a chaplain depends on the ability to communicate. All principles applicable to effective communication can apply in chaplaincy too. However, it must be remembered that the chaplain invariably has to communicate with a person experiencing some form of mental agony, trauma, inability to cope with a situation, insurmountable concern connected to a situation or some other form of debilitating mental state. That mental state is very likely to be a temporary one.

The reader would do well to study elements of the subject of interviewing, taking care to adapt the information to suit the limitations mentioned above.

For example, relative silence when the chaplain is interviewing a client is more important than in the case of a job interview. Again the need for empathy is more important in chaplaincy than in some other types of interview.

Communication is not restricted to words. This is particularly important in giving chaplaincy services. The client may be reluctant to talk, but may take cues from the chaplain's body language.

2 ABILITY TO HANDLE DIVERSITY WITHIN AFFECTED GROUPS

When a chaplain is called upon to help a group, it needs to be realised that members of a group can be very different from one another. This might be linked to one or more relatively independent parameters.

One obvious parameter is the scale or nature of the impact of whatever event has happened on different individuals. Consider this in relation to a bushfire, tsunami, a train crash, a race riot, floods, an epidemic and the like. People are impacted in widely different ways. This factor by itself renders a group diverse from the point of view of the chaplain.

Even within a sub-group experiencing a common level of impact, there can be many differences. A relevant difference is religion. Some of the people could be Buddhists and the rest might be Christians. While there is no need to avoid people belonging to other religions, the chaplain's approach ought not to be confronting to those of other religions. This is not to say that there are many things common to people despite religious labels. There are a lot of people who have the capacity to see beyond religious barriers, particularly in difficult situations. The chaplain must have the skills to select aspects of the Dhamma that are not confronting to some.

The approach adopted by the chaplain could be dictated by other aspects of diversity. For example, the country of origin or race differences and major political attitudes might be worth examining. The chaplain must have the skill to move around and observe sharp differences in the characteristics of the group prior to attending to the situation.

Diversity on account of age and sex is yet another factor to consider.

In dealing with diversity, the help of local people, government and other agencies and other chaplains can be actively sought.

3 ABILITY TO CONDUCT RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS INCLUDING WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

A few of the simpler aspects of what is usually conducted by monks and nuns need to be developed as special skills. Some of these are:

Worship

Making offerings to the Buddha or to the Sangha

Chanting of 'Sutras', providing chanting thread or holy water

Teaching the Dhamma

Teaching temple manners

Teaching meditation

At opportune times some of these can be delivered to individuals or groups as necessary as part of the overall service provided by the chaplain. Monks or nuns may not always be available to provide these services when and where required.

4 ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH WHOLE COMMUNITIES IN LARGE NUMBERS

In connection with major events, the services of the chaplain are likely to entail talking to large numbers of people in a group. If the event revolves around a school, it is relatively easy to organise meetings with the help of the school authorities. In other cases the assistance of government or other agencies is necessary as regards getting the affected people together.

Delivering speeches to a large group may become the responsibility of the chaplain. One needs to learn how best to handle the microphone or loud hailer to achieve the best effect. Seeking some advice beforehand is advisable.

When addressing a large group, a speech needs to be short and to the point. The points made ought to be separate and clear. The voice must be clear and loud, without appearing to be yelling. If the communication is too loud, what people hear is the noise. Sometimes it

helps to announce right at the beginning how much of time you intend to take. It is completely counter-productive to go on rambling for an extended period of time. Overuses of phrases such as 'as I said before' and 'as you might already know' tend to make a speech clumsy.

In a large group the speaker needs to deal with generalities, leaving some specifics for later communications.

Not all of us are natural speakers. However, everyone can do a little preparation to make a speech useful, interesting and meaningful. After all, even Winston Churchill is said to have prepared and practised his speeches.

5 ABILITY TO LIAISE WITH CO-WORKERS (NOT MERELY SUBORDINATES)

Some people are good in dealing with subordinates. Part of this ability is can be due to training. However, one should remember that the rules within the group and the authority given to the leader by the organisation play a vital role in shaping the behaviour of a subordinate. It is a combination of these factors that help in enabling a leader to manage a group of subordinates.

Being fair and firm are good attributes for a leader.

It is more difficult to deal with co-workers who are not one's subordinates. Different aspects such as respect for the roles played by others, negotiation, persuasion, consultation and collaboration are called for in these situations. Rules and regulations are less relevant.

Gaining training in supervision and team work can help.

6 ABILITY TO NETWORK WITH RELATED AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONALS

Most of the time, the work done by a chaplain could involve other service providers. Other professionals may have an interest. Other organisations and institutions such as the Salvation Army, Red Cross, schools, local authorities, hospitals and correctional centres may be involved.

Referrals to other professionals or playing a different role while working with other professionals requires a range of skills. In making referrals, the chaplain needs to have an understanding of the services provided by relevant professionals, and be able to select the most appropriate one for immediate referral. For example, if a medical professional is required, the immediate referrals can be to a General Practitioner and not to a specialist.

Again it must be realised that people from different professions and trades have their own ways of doing things because of training or long time practice.

7 ABILITY TO WRITE REPORTS WHICH WILL PROMPT USEFUL ACTION

The main purpose of writing a report for the attention of someone in authority is to instigate further action. Sometimes it can be for the record and for future reference.

Therefore, the contents and structure of a report are dictated by the purposes of the report. Obtaining training in report writing skills is useful.

Salient aspects to keep in mind are report structure, the roles and the nature of the intended recipients of the report, authorship, subject heading, appropriate breakdown of the report into meaningful sections and dating of the report. Sometimes a brief preamble may be useful. The body of the report needs to be clear. Specific recommendations need to be prominent.

If copies of the report are sent to others, that fact must be noted at the end of the report. The name of the writer and the signature must be clear. Contact details of the author, such as an email address and telephone number should be included.

Reports need to be brief and tidy. Verbose reports with unnecessary details will most likely remain unread by the recipients, thus rendering it useless. A report should focus on the addressee rather than the chaplain writing it. Avoid defamatory comments. A report should be written with a wholesome mind. Where the facts may be in doubt, qualify any statements accordingly.

If an opinion is being provided (as opposed to a fact), then the report must make this distinction clear.

8 ABILITY TO PROMOTE AND MANAGE CHANGE RECOMMENDED IN A REPORT

Someone else in authority might send a report to the chaplain for necessary action. It is important to understand the recommendations and consequent implications. If these are not clear, a referral back to the author is necessary. Having understood, the chaplain needs to map out a course of action.

Attention must be paid to the ultimate aim of the report, the actions to be undertaken, a measure of progress, the resources required, and the methods to be used. These need to be considered when assembling a plan of action. If the desired results do not occur, some correction to the plan will need to be considered.

Rushing to take action on reports can be counter-productive. Implementation of a recommendation needs to be planned carefully, and the consequences considered thoughtfully.

9 MANAGING EXPECTATIONS ARISING FROM A REPORT OR ACTION

It is better to indicate or offer little and achieve much rather than promising too much and achieving very little. In particular the client should not be given false expectations. That can have negative effects adding to the problems the chaplain is trying to solve.

10 THE ABILITY TO EXIT THE PROCESS AND KEEPING THE CLIENT INFORMED OF THE EXIT PROCESS

Providing the service is the key aspect for a chaplain. Ending the service at a suitable time is equally important. If that is not done, a situation may arise where the client has an endless dependency on the chaplain, which might create a different type of problem. Because of the faith in the chaplain's ability the client may tend to pursue the chaplain for a vague purpose or for no purpose at all. All kinds of complications can occur. In situations such as these, faith in the chaplain can turn into an interest, affection, love or an unnecessary dependency.

Hence the chaplain must have an exit strategy in mind and implement it at the correct time. The client should be advised about the impending exit and the exit itself very clearly.

UNIT 9A

BUILDING A REFUGE

1 TORRENT OF WORLDLY PRESSURES

It is common experience that we find it difficult to devote time for what we want to do, as problems and demands from our surroundings, both physical and social, impinge on life and consume much of the time available. Not only time, but most other resources such as finances are also consumed in this manner. The world around us creates unending demands and we are constantly kept busy doing things that ultimately do not bring us any lasting benefits. After some time we find it comforting to be kept busy in this manner and get carried away by the torrent of worldly pressures. The tendency then is to mistakenly imagine that everything is as it should be and that we are getting on well with everyone. Usually, the end result is a growing amount of unsatisfactoriness, frustration and suffering. Then we say that this is the way with the world and that there is nothing that we can do about it. So we decide to endure such worldly pressures.

This amounts to living in a fool's paradise.

2 THE CHOICE BETWEEN GETTING DRAGGED AND HOLDING ON TO A PLACE OF CHOICE IS AVAILABLE TO US

While we are being pushed around in the torrent of worldly pressures, we can still have a look around to see whether there is something beneficial to us and try to hold on to it. It could be akin to holding on to a little twig. As we hold on to a little twig, the opportunity arises for us to catch a branch of a tree. The tree we hold on to might be on a little island. We can then get on to the island and feel more secure. **This way, step by step, we can fight the torrent and stay in a place of genuine choice.** When we are stilled to such a level, we might notice the torrent passing by, carrying others to misery.

This will be an opportunity to help others.

Stanza 25 in the *Dhammapada* has the heading '**By their Efforts the Wise create their own Heavens**'. The stanza itself runs like this:

Utthanenappamadena

Sannamena damena ca

Deepam kayratha medhavi

Yam ogho nabhikirati

By sustained effort, earnestness, discipline and self-control, let the wise man make for himself an island which no flood overwhelms. The connected story is that of Venerable Cula

Panthaka. *Deepam* here means an island, *Ogho* means a flood. Effort, morality and self-control (presumably through meditation) form the chain of action to prevent one from being dragged down by the water currents.

3 PRINCIPLE OF RELYING ON ONESELF FOR ONE'S SALVATION

Saving oneself from the downward gush of worldly torrents is commonly called salvation. For our salvation, we need to take responsibility and work hard to achieve it. Even when we receive help from one who has reached safety, our hard work has to continue. The short saying of the Buddha, '*Attahi Attano Natho*' means that one is one's own saviour.

The Buddha is only a guide and an example to follow. We cannot pray to a Buddha and ask for salvation, as taught in other religions.

Stanza 160 in the *Dhammapada* states as follows:

SELF IS ONE'S REFUGE

Atta hi attano natho, ko hi natho paro siya

Attana hi sudantena, natham labhati dullabham

Oneself is one's own refuge, what other refuge can there be?

With oneself fully controlled, one obtains a protection (refuge) which is hard to gain

The story connected to this stanza is that of *Kumara Kassapa*. His mother was a *Bhikkhuni* who gave birth to *Kassapa* while she was a *Bhikkhuni*. When the son himself became a *Bhikkhu*, he lived and meditated in a forest and attained *Arahanthood*. The mother still kept on searching for the son. The son triggered a thought in his mother's mind which resulted in her becoming an *Arahant* eventually.

The Buddha said that one's salvation depends on oneself and one must not depend on others. In this case the mother tried to depend on the son but later realised that such an attachment was an impediment.

SELF EXERTION HAS NO SUBSTITUTE

Stanza 276 of the *Dhammapada* affords a similar teaching.

Tumhehi kiccam atappam, akkhataro tathagata

Patipanna pamokkhanti, jhayino mara-bandhana

You yourself must exert on your task, the Buddhas only point the way

The meditative ones who enter the path, are delivered from the bonds of *marā*

These teachings are fundamentally different from the corresponding teachings in god-believing religions in which prayer and a belief in a higher being is relied upon for salvation. Buddha calls upon beings to take responsibility upon themselves for their salvation, though help may be sought from suitable guides and teachers.

4 TRAINING ONESELF FOR SELF SUFFICIENCY AND SELF SUSTENANCE

We need to train ourselves to earn a proper livelihood, avoiding actions that are unwholesome. Then we can sustain ourselves without making ourselves a burden to others. Even a child needs to do this through good behaviour. Recluses 'earn a living' by serving others by teaching the Dhamma and by setting an example through their own practise. They do not have to ask others to give and would never demand anything. A recluse, like a monk or nun, needs to reside in a proper place where support is available.

Self-sufficiency is even more important. A monk or nun has so few needs and thus does not become a burden to supporters. This is a great example. If one can be happy with just a few things and just a little of these, life would be pleasant and rich with true happiness. The more we demand, the more we ask for misery. Hence, reducing one's needs helps a person to be self-sufficient. That in turn makes sustenance easier.

5 HELPING OTHERS AFTER HAVING HELD ON TO A SECURE PLACE ONESELF

A person who has achieved self-sufficiency has reached a little island, whereas those who keep looking for more things and more sensual satisfaction are seen being carried with the torrent. In this position, the self-sufficient person can serve others, both by teaching and by being an example.

Just imagine trying to help others while being carried away by the torrent of desires. It is far more difficult and can amount to lip service.

One can strengthen the island using nets of morality. The morality could be of any type. These can be formal precepts and rules, control of the senses, control in the consumption of food and control in the demand for things and conditions. Regulation of sleep patterns is also bound to help.

The *Bodhisattva* has made his island and therefore is able and equipped to help others without falling down. In the Mahayana tradition, great reliance is placed on the *Bodhisattva's* ability to help others.

6 BUDDHA DOES NOT GIVE US DELIVERANCE BUT ONLY SHOWS THE WAY

A significant difference between Buddhism and other religions is that the Buddha does not give us deliverance from suffering. In other religions, god, working through the prophets or messengers, is expected to give deliverance to us.

The Buddha is a teacher and guide showing us the way, but each person has to work for his or her deliverance.

7 AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH GOES AGAINST THE DHAMMA

One can become too earnest and over-zealous in the practice of Buddhism. Technically speaking, such a person is either having excessive faith or is putting in too much fruitless effort.

Break-neck effort is not recommended in general as it might cause accidents, disappointments or other losses along the way. Such effort could cause disgust and regret and may result in wastage.

Effort is mentioned in the set of five leading attributes and also in the set of five powers recommended for a committed practitioner. The five factors are Faith, Effort, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom. Excessive effort damages concentration. It is mindfulness that sends the message that one factor is moving too much and that a correction is needed. Hence one who tends to be aggressive in practice must resort to concentration meditation to balance the practice.

8 A DECEITFUL APPROACH CONTRADICTS THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE DHAMMA

A practitioner might try to practice in a particular way so as to make others believe the practice is excellent, whereas in reality, this may not be the case. This amounts to deceit. Deceiving another is against the teaching. In the discourse on loving kindness (*Metta Sutta*) this is specifically mentioned. The words used are 'No one should deceive another' (*Naparo param nikubbetha*).

Under stanza 70 of the *Dhammapada* the story of an ascetic who pretended to have high moral behaviour is mentioned. His name was *Jambuka*. He had strange behaviour which led him nowhere. The heading says that realisation is superior to mere fasting.

A practical reason for not trying to deceive is that in fact people do not easily get deceived. People are able to see through someone's behaviour in trying to deceive.

There is no need to claim for yourself what you do not have. What you already have is probably good enough for others to see and to be happy about.

9 AN AFFECTIONATE INCLINATION COULD LEAD TO MISUSE OF THE PRACTITIONER'S POSITION

The constant practice of loving kindness, devoid of equal wisdom, can take various turns. One possibility is to develop sympathy towards the client. The sympathy can develop into a type of affection. The affection can lead to love and then lust. This may not happen in a conscious manner in most cases, as teachers have a sense of responsibility and follow their own rules and precepts.

What may happen is a weakening of the teacher's mindfulness while the teacher is concentrating on one or two aspects of another person in an unwholesome manner. The unwholesome mental states can develop further as residual impurities in the mind arise. The teacher needs sharp mindfulness to catch the incidence of affection before it takes hold of the mind. It has to be nipped in the bud.

Stanza 118 in the *Dhammapada* states the case of *Arahant Maha Kassapa* who asked a female young *Deva* not to come to the monastery to clean it as it would give the wrong notion to the people. An *Arahant* cannot be tempted or seduced by another, yet *Maha Kassapa* was concerned about the harm it might do to other people.

Signs of developing friendship can be easily misunderstood by the public. It can also give the wrong signal to the client. The teacher needs to take guard, particularly if the teacher is not fully enlightened.

10 MAKING TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS MAY RENDER ADVICE USELESS

Advice needs to be based on reasonable assumptions relating to the facts of a matter. Assumptions must be kept to a minimum. Making too many assumptions imports the risk of providing poor or totally incorrect advice. In such a case the advice may turn out to be useless, or indeed add to the client's existing trouble. Different lines of conversation can expose the validity of assumptions. Tracing the origin of an assumption can also help, as some assumptions may arise from bad experiences of the teacher and related prejudices.

11 AN OVER-ZEALOUS APPROACH COULD CAUSE CONFUSION AND LACK OF CONCENTRATION

In Section 7 of this chapter, this has been discussed. When the chaplain is over-enthusiastic in relation to a particular line of thinking, in the chaplain's mind, the enthusiasm seems justified and beneficial to the client. One can easily lose concentration due to excessive enthusiasm. In such a situation the advice might be confusing and not palatable to the client.

UNIT 9B

STYLES OF BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY CARE

1 EACH CHAPLAIN HAS A PARTICULAR STYLE BUT EXTREMES NEED TO BE AVOIDED

The style adopted ultimately depends on the chaplain's personality. However with education, training and experience, extremes in styles can be reduced. In this unit a set of possible extremes is considered. Once extremes are avoided an attempt can be made to reduce over-emphasis of some aspects of style.

For example, a chaplain might be inclined towards looking for documentary evidence of a story. Instead, there might be oral evidence of immense value. Due to the nature of the style adopted, the chaplain is tempted to gloss over that and keep pressing for documents. Thus the chaplain might end up without any useful findings. While it may be a good thing to look for documents to understand a matter, in this case the chaplain is placing too much emphasis on it. That is an ineffective style and it needs to be understood and corrected.

2 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN NEEDS TO STAND FIRMLY ON A MENTAL ISLAND TO RENDER EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO A CLIENT IN DIFFICULTY

Greed, hatred and delusion constantly cloud our minds to a greater or lesser extent. The chaplain is no exception. Depending on the appearance of a client the chaplain might get attracted or repelled by the client initially. The chaplain needs to summon whatever strengths have been developed as a practitioner of Buddhism, and **determine to stay steady without allowing the attraction or repulsion** to overtake decision making. In other words the chaplain remembers one's island and decides to hold firmly to it without being swayed.

If the chaplain constantly fails to stay undisturbed, then it is poor style due to weakness of character. Further training is necessary.

3 THE CHOICE BETWEEN BEING ACCESSIBLE AND BEING ALOOF

Being aloof is another distinctive type of personality. It is as if the chaplain cannot see or hear the client. No meaningful relationship or connection is established with the client. The client may conclude that the chaplain is not accessible or is simply not interested or capable. However, too much of accessibility may also be counter-productive. Hence a good style is to be accessible, yet keep a reasonable distance from the client.

For example, imagine a chaplain who out of unlimited compassion tells the client that the latter could come for a consultation at any time of the day or night. This may be deemed highly inappropriate behaviour by observers. The chaplain may not be able to rest or get sleep if the client decides to call on the chaplain at a whim in the middle of the night. Hence a balanced style is recommended and boundaries need to be set at the outset.

4 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN NEEDS TO REMAIN IN THIS WORLD DESPITE ONE'S ATTAINMENTS

Consider a Buddhist chaplain who is very advanced in concentration meditation. Engaging in a meditation practice for a considerable length of time with the client seated in front may not be appropriate. The client would rather discuss their issues than indulge the chaplain's practices. Besides the client might not have a clue about meditation.

Even if a chaplain does have a beginning ritual such as worship or meditation prior to a consultation, the client needs to be advised in advance.

5 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN MUST MAINTAIN FOCUS ON THE CLIENT

In some situations the chaplain may well feel superior to the client. A narcissist, or a chaplain who exhibits similar though lesser tendencies, may devote a good deal of time in his or her own world examining one's own opportunities to speak and act, paying little regard to the world outside or the needs of the client before them. If a chaplain has this style of behaviour, it will be hard to make a purposeful connection with the client and solve the client's problems.

The chaplain must constantly strive to 'forget' himself or herself during the process of engagement with the client. More particularly, the chaplain must leave aside preconceived perceptions regarding one's own importance, and make room in the mind for the client's presence. Continuing focus on the client's problem helps to address the client's problems more effectively.

6 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN BELIEVES IN A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOLVE THE CLIENT'S PROBLEMS

Whatever our erudition, we all have limits to our capabilities. Our approach has limitations and limited applicability. Where we have limitations, perhaps there are others who may be able to progress with their types of knowledge or approach.

From the client's point of view the service cannot be limited to one approach or one direction. **The client would derive most benefit if the service given is holistic.** Teaching the Dhamma and getting the client to practise the Dhamma and meditation are likely to have benefits. At the same time taking the client for a fast walk by the river is also likely to have benefits. Participating in some activity like a game is another possibility, depending on the client's issues. It is likely that a combination of different actions could produce beneficial results more than any single action.

The Buddhist chaplain in particular has the freedom to promote a holistic approach in solving the problems of the client. Buddhism has a very liberal and free thinking approach, and we should use that principle when helping a client.

7 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN'S WORK NEEDS TO INTEGRATE WITH THAT OF OTHER CARE WORKERS

The Buddhist chaplain cannot afford to be selfish or be bound to follow one track. The chaplain needs to acknowledge the services rendered by other care workers and professionals. That includes chaplains of other religions and other types of care workers like those in ambulance services. When we focus on the plight of the client, an integrated effort becomes necessary so as to assure success.

8 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN STAYS IN THE PRESENT AND PROMPTS THE CLIENT ACCORDINGLY

Being in the present is one of the attributes of the 'island' we make for ourselves. This is important for any practitioner and particularly important for the Buddhist chaplain. When the client describes difficult experiences and keeps sobbing while talking, suppose the chaplain also breaks down and starts shedding tears, then there can be unwelcome consequences, and indeed the chaplain may be unable to help the client. The chaplain then should remember the lesson regarding the value of presence of mind. The chaplain should quickly regain mindfulness.

If the chaplain remains mindful this way, there is a chance of prompting the client to have presence of mind, rather than remaining 'stuck' in the problems ailing the client's mind.

Mindfulness is like a security guard who remains constantly vigilant about who enters the premises. When the chaplain maintains mindfulness and is able to help the client maintain mindfulness, then the client's chance of maintaining safety by detecting the intrusion of hurtful and unwholesome thoughts into the mind increases (just like the security guard detecting the intrusion of unwelcome intruders into a place being protected).

An absent minded chaplain is simply unable to render good service.

9 THE CHOICE BETWEEN FOCUS ON THE FUTURE AND DIGGING UP THE PAST

Often stories from the past can be very pithy and interesting. Sometimes it is useful to listen to the client's stories. If a chaplain is in the habit of digging up too much from the past with no real purpose in mind, at a minimum it will cause wastage of time. If the chaplain is not mindful, the story might become the main issue. Then the chaplain might miss the path towards a solution.

Paying more attention to the future needs of the client might help in reducing this weakness of style.

10 THE CLIENT MUST NOT BE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUOUSLY RELY ON THE CHAPLAIN.

An exit strategy and an exit plan are very necessary for a chaplain. Firstly, completing the chaplaincy process on a certain date gives confidence to the client that he or she can now manage affairs without external help. Secondly, it also helps the chaplain to move on in life. Thirdly, a clear exit removes the tendency to maintain unhealthy relationships with the client.

The exit cannot be sudden and hence it needs to be planned. The usual reason for the exit will be the success of the process. There can also be other reasons for exit. For example, a referral to a medical practitioner could be a reason.

There can be arranged suspensions not amounting to exits. This might be due to the need to involve other care workers. It can also be due to the way a team process has to be conducted over a period of time. It is important that the client knows exactly with which care worker he or she is associated at a given time. Confusion in this regard will not be beneficial to the client.

11 THE CHAPLAIN HELPS THE CLIENT TO SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN DICTATING SOLUTIONS

It is generally poor style if the chaplain dictates solutions to a client, although some amount of firmness might be helpful in given situations. The ideal style for the chaplain is to enable the client to work out solutions to problems.

Depending on the personality of the client the ideal approach might not work that easily. Some amount of persuasion is probably necessary in many situations. Again, as the client moves forward, the level of persuasion can be relaxed.

On the other extreme the chaplain cannot afford to adopt a 'no care' attitude as regards progress. Monitoring of progress is essential. Monitoring can also help the chaplain to amend programs in consonance with progress and the ability of the client to cope with solutions. Monitoring can also help determine any changes required to the exit strategy.

12 THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN'S LIFE IS ONE DEVOTED TO THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS

As mentioned before, the Buddhist chaplain has the characteristics of a Buddha Aspirant (*Bodhisattva*), perhaps to a lesser and more limited degree. That really defines the ideal style for a Buddhist chaplain. The Buddha aspirant constantly works for the well-being of others, even if that means some amount of suffering to oneself. It is part of the chaplain's practice aiming at much higher goals. Essentially, the importance of the 'self' is diminished. The service is selfless. It is replete with merit and is bound to show excellent results both here and in the hereafter.

UNIT 10A

INTERVIEWING ADULTS

1 THE INTERVIEWER NEEDS TO TALK LESS AND LISTEN MORE TO THE ADVISEE

Stories contained in discourses of the Buddha indicate that early in the afternoon, he would attend a gathering of the Sangha and stay for a while in silence. He would then exchange greetings and inquire about the subjects they were discussing about. After listening to the gathering, at an appropriate time, the Buddha starts speaking, or rather, exchanging views.

It is the monks and nuns who experience problems, not the Buddha. Hence, this technique of listening has been widely used. Listening affords the best opportunity for the teacher to formulate advice. The benefits are immense as the advice is specific and relevant to the advisee's experience.

2 LOOK FOR THE ADVISEE'S STORIES RATHER THAN SHORT ANSWERS

When direct questions are asked, short answers such as 'yes' or 'no' are possible. Such answers do not always help in formulating advice. It is far more effective to inquire about the story behind an experience.

When the advisee tells the story, the interviewer can observe the way the person speaks, whether there are gaps in the story, what emotions arise as parts of the story are related, the level of confidence of the advisee about the validity of facts, the prevalence or otherwise of opinions compared with facts and so on.

The interviewer can ask some questions to complete or clarify the story. This way the interviewer can deliver the most useful advice.

3 IT IS THE INTERVIEWER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INSTIGATE THE CONVERSATION

A glib-tongued advisee might resort to talking endlessly and out of turn. On the other hand, the advisee may remain silent, thus bringing the conversation to a standstill.

The initiative rests with the interviewer to keep the conversation going, without, of course, talking too much. The art of triggering conversations through relative silence needs to be put to use.

The advisee could be stuck because of trauma, a lack of proper words, emotions, fear of exposure or due to a mistaken or ill-considered utterance of the interviewer. A short period of silence may be useful for both parties. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to keep the interview moving towards a result.

4 THE INTERVIEWER NEEDS TO THINK WHILE INTERVIEWING

The interviewer needs to concentrate on the interviewee and what is being said, and at the same time be mindful of what issues to explore further. Keeping a simple record of the interview, just sufficient to jog the memory of the interviewer, may help. Making too many notes during the conversation may be a wasteful distraction.

5 IF THE ADVISEE STRUGGLES TO TALK, HELP NEEDS TO BE GIVEN

It is quite common for an advisee to struggle to talk for one of many reasons. Saying something in appreciation of what the advisee said earlier may prompt a positive attitude and confidence. This may help break down or at least lower the barriers preventing the advisee from communicating.

A little hint, a brief question or a suggestion can help. However, these things need to be non-committal.

In difficult cases the interviewer could resort to reviewing what has already transpired in the conversation with pointers towards possible continuations of the discussion.

6 INTERVIEWEE'S POSITIONS CAN BE CHALLENGED

The interviewer need not be a passive listener. Indeed the interviewer has the ultimate responsibility to bring the conversation to a useful end. A common possibility is for the advisee to take a false stand. When that happens any advice becomes redundant or meaningless. The position taken by the advisee needs to be challenged.

The challenge will depend on exact circumstances. A few questions to make the advisee think twice about the false position taken would be useful.

For example, a person who pretends to be on very high grounds in morality can be asked when this status commenced. The person can be asked to relate a negative experience before that time. Having got that information the person can be prompted to think whether the negativity can arise again in appropriate conditions. Dependence of morality on conditions can be demonstrated without hurting the person's feelings.

Similarly, a person who deludes himself or herself to be an accomplished meditator can be asked exactly what was experienced in meditation.

A good interviewer, while challenging an advisee, does not seek to belittle the person.

7 THE INTERVIEWER OUGHT TO PROVIDE A CLUE OR TWO FOR POSITIVE CHANGES BEFORE THE NEXT INTERVIEW

All religious interviews aim at helping an advisee to attain a higher spiritual level than what was experienced in the past. With this in mind a teacher needs to develop a line of thinking

and action that the advisee would be prompted to follow after the conclusion of the conversation.

The next time they meet the changes for the better need to be visible. If there are no observable changes, some form of remedial action should be worked out by the teacher. This survey is the initial part of the next conversation. In general, people do not change instantly, although there are always some exceptions to the rule.

Sudden improvements can happen due to shocking experiences. There is the story of a military leader who was given seven days royal treatment because he won a war. A dancer with whom he had a good time suddenly fell dead. The man was shocked into sanity. The conversation with the Buddha was enough for him to see the path towards enlightenment.

Venerable Meghiya, an attendant to the Buddha prior to Venerable Ananda, was being over-enthusiastic in attempting to attain enlightenment through meditation. He thought a certain mango grove was a really peaceful place for meditation. The Buddha was not supportive but allowed him to go. The monk went to the mango grove to meditate but he was disturbed with passions. So he returned the same evening. In the subsequent conversation with the Buddha he understood that it is not the place that is important, rather the control of one's mind. In this case the clue was to go back to moral internal development. The monk then attained the first stage of enlightenment.

Stanzas 34 and 35 in the Dhammapada are connected to this story. Mental development is usually not a single, massive jump, but a series of orderly steps, one leading to the next.

The stanzas run as follows:

The flickering, fickle mind, difficult to guard and difficult to control

The wise persons straightens it as a fletcher straightens an arrow

Like a fish that is drawn from its watery abode and thrown upon land

Even so does this mind flutter. Hence should the realm of the passions be shunned.

UNIT 10B

GUIDANCE FOR MODEL INTERVIEWS (ADULTS)

1 A MODEL INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE TEACHER IS OBSERVED BY THE TRAINEES

If a course participant has had prior training in interviewing techniques as part of management practice or as a trainee in another type of activity, such training can be applied here too. However, both parties need to be conscious of the roles they are playing. In this drama, the client is in a weak situation and the chaplain is in a position of power and is able to help the client.

Many job interviews are one-sided and the manager tends to 'attack' the applicant hoping to unravel his or her real capabilities or weaknesses. This style is not effective in chaplaincy interviews. Questions can be probing but need to be compassionate and directed.

Trainees are free to criticise the teacher.

Trainees who are unable to participate in the face to face session should organise similar interviews at convenient venues. Another possibility is to participate in actual interviews in an institution with due permission. The senior can be a chaplain, a doctor or nurse, for example.

2 GROUPS OF FOUR CONDUCT INTERVIEWS, TWO AT A TIME BEING OBSERVERS

The trainees need to change roles appropriately. At the conclusion of each interview the observers need to present their criticisms of the interview, looking at it from both sides. For this and the following purposes, the criticism grid given below (or an adapted version) can be used.

CRITICISMS GRID

THE VENUE

THE INTERVIEWER

Poor lighting

Interviewer is not guiding the interview forward

Poor ventilation

Lack of active listening (e.g., interviewer talks too much)

Cramped room

Lack of questioning from different angles to hone in on the real issue the client is describing (i.e. do not take the client's first words as the real problem, as there may be further underlying issues to be discovered)

Unhelpful seating

Assuming the truth of the story is not good

UNIT 11A

INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

1 CONSIDERATION IN UNIT 10A STILL APPLY SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS

In unit 10A we discussed a number of matters pertaining to conversations and interviews in general. Similar considerations still apply in the case of children subject to other matters mentioned in this unit.

The main point made here is the vulnerability of children compared with adults, and the special attributes of children from a psychological point of view.

Laws have been enacted for the protection of children and institutions have been established for the protection of children. Public policy has always been directed at protecting children in every possible way. That policy must be respected.

2 THE INTERVIEWER MIGHT SEEM TO BE OVER-POWERING

Apart from legal and regulatory demands, there are many other matters to consider in dealing with children. For example, a child sees an adult as a 'larger' person with regard to size and abilities. Hence, the child feels weak, fearful and intimidated. A good deal of convincing is necessary to get over these difficulties. Hence, teachers are given training to handle conversations with children.

3 THE FACT THAT CHILDREN NEED A FEELING OF SECURITY NEEDS TO BE KEPT IN MIND

From the outset as a baby, the dominant feature of a child is the need for a feeling of security. In most cases, just being with the mother gives a feeling of security. The father also can provide the assurance of security in many cases.

As separation from parents is a lingering fear in small children, the presence of a parent can give a feeling of security. When they are alone, children tend to be fearful. The presence of a familiar relative could also help.

Even up to twelve years of age children might fear darkness and heavy sounds like thunder. It is good to avoid these situations by selecting the most appropriate place for a conversation.

Allaying any fears would generally render a conversation more productive.

The personality of the teacher is likely to have an impact. It is not in the nature of some adults to make children feel comfortable in their presence. The child must be at ease before being able to talk freely.

It is also recognised that children are fearful of some animals and very concerned about serpents. One has to think twice before deciding on an outdoor meeting.

Constant eye contact can sometimes scare away a child. While eye contact is necessary for interviews, breaks in eye contact help to reduce the discomfort.

4 RE-ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY IS NECESSARY

The parents are keen to keep discussions with children confidential. In some cases a child might not want the parents to know what he or she tells an interviewer. Sometimes this might cause tricky situations and each case needs to be decided on its own merits.

5 CHILDREN EXPECT RESPECT FROM OTHERS

In just the same way adults expect respect from others, children also have a sense of respect from a very early age. They are aware of who they are and what they are capable of doing. Hence, they have a considerable degree of pride. If an interviewer appears to take things for granted showing no respect to the child, the child will get offended and therefore will not actively co-operate in the conversation.

Pronouncing the name of the child correctly, using the first name in addressing and offering a chair are simple ways to show respect.

6 EACH CHILD IS DIFFERENT

Individual differences need to be borne in mind in conducting an interview. Hence, the initial part of the interview may be devoted to understanding the character type of the child. There are those who get easily offended, others get easily frightened, some others easily break down. Some are aggressive and others are very friendly. This understanding makes the interview easy and useful.

UNIT 11B

GUIDANCE FOR MODEL INTERVIEWS (CHILDREN)

1 A MODEL INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE TEACHER IS WATCHED BY THE TRAINEES

In the case of a child the interviewer needs to be more careful about the way the interview is conducted and what kinds of words are used. One reason is that in general, children have particular kinds of fears that adults do not have. One example is that children tend to trust their parents more so than strangers. If a parent is not present assurances of security must be given to the child that there is no intention to put them into any kind of harm.

They might also fear that what they say might get reported to someone in greater authority, such as a school principal or the police. Similarly, a child might be less likely to open up to a chaplain if they suspect that the information they provide might find its way to their peer group of friends.

2 GROUPS OF FOUR CONDUCT INTERVIEWS, TWO AT A TIME BEING OBSERVERS

Similar considerations as for adults may apply. The difficulty in regard to interviews with children is that an adult playing the role of the interviewee can rarely get into the mind set and attitudes of a child. For this reason the success of these model interviews can be limited.

3 WELL-KNOWN SCENARIOS AND CASES OUGHT TO BE USED IN MOCK INTERVIEWS

Some possibilities are mentioned below:

- 1 Ann was unable to enter university and her parents were very angry. They were so unkind to her that she left the home and is living with other street kids.
- 2 Bertie is only ten years old and he never liked the constant arguments and bickering going on between the parents. Now he fails to come home after school and roams around.
- 3 Carmen is very lean and does not eat much. She thinks she is ugly and keeps hiding in the house. She is 19 years old.
- 4 Damien lost both parents in the great floods and he is constantly shedding tears and is unable to get on with life. He is 12 years old and lives with an uncle.

4 THE TEACHER DISCUSSES THE GOOD AND WEAK POINTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The criticism grid introduced in Unit 10B can be used here, subject to the limitations discussed already in dealing with children.

UNIT 12A

GUIDANCE IN SELF-CARE FOR THE TEACHER OF BUDDHISM

1 ACCEPTING THAT THE BUDDHIST TEACHER IS NOT A PERFECT INDIVIDUAL

The terms teacher and pupil are relative terms. One is a teacher for the time being with respect to the other called a pupil. It is important to remember that the teacher is not perfect and not expected to be perfect. In many respects the teacher is more accomplished than the pupil. A teacher in one situation might be a pupil in another situation.

In regard to morality the level of accomplishment ought to be visibly higher. A few mistakes can be acceptable so long as continuous improvement is pursued. In regard to other factors such as generosity, wisdom and loving kindness, a similarly high level is not expected.

That is why we do not expect perfection from the teacher or adviser.

Perfection was attained by the Buddha and *Arahants*; even the latter had poor habits in living that had been derived from past lives. Hence, the need is to be mindful and to correct oneself when frailties are noted or exhibited.

2 SELF EXAMINATION BY REFLECTION AND REVIEW OF ONE'S THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOUR

In the discourse to *Rahula (Rahulovada Sutta)*, the Buddha admonishes *Rahula*, the young monk, to look back on one's own actions continually. Most such reflections lead to substantial reviews and the reviews lead to corrective action.

Three types of reflection are possible. Firstly, what thoughts passed through the mind is most important. Secondly, the words that were spoken and thirdly, the actions taken are reviewed.

This self-examination is a counter-balance to the lack of perfection.

3 DISCOVERING THE MENTAL STATES THAT LAST FOR LONG PERIODS

When one reflects on one's own thoughts and behaviour, it is not difficult to discover certain mental states that last in the mind for long periods of time. A common example is anger as a mental state. When one feels angry with a person, the anger may continue for hours, sometimes even many days. The practice of reflection helps one to observe this weakness. Simply discovering this behaviour of the mind results in partial dissolution of the anger. To the extent it does not fully dissolve, other techniques can be applied to overcome the situation.

A substantial list of such techniques is given in Chapter 9 of 'Buddhist Psychology' by Rahu Sarath-Chandra.

The teacher then begins to notice that the length of the period for which poor mental states last in the mind keeps reducing.

4 IDENTIFYING THE MENTAL STATES THAT INTENSIFY RAPIDLY

In place of the length of time a given mental state might last, there is the possibility that it might intensify rapidly. Once it becomes intense, the mental state can last for a significant period of time.

Once again, the teacher practising reflection and review has a good chance to discover what is happening inside the mind. Similar considerations follow and similar techniques of dissolution apply as discussed in the previous section.

5 POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABOVE TWO TYPES OF MENTAL STATES

It is useful to examine how some continuing and intensifying mental states might adversely affect the chaplain's own life. In general, continuing poor mental states like anger and lust tend to become intense with time. Every time one remembers the scene of the first experience, one actually remembers the perception in one's mind. What is remembered is not the original scene exactly as it happened, rather, the altered or coloured perceptions of what took place. The tendency is to see the 'colouring' brighter and stronger. Hence, with each day passing, the perception may become stronger and it may become more and more difficult to eradicate it from the mind.

Something else can also happen. Even after the poor mental state fades away from the mind the residue remains dormant. Given the appropriate surrounding conditions the residue may fire up again at a later date, even in a future life. Thus, a virtually permanent fault is created in the mind.

6 WORKING OUT A PLAN TO AVOID THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES

The problems considered above can be dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis by reflection and review relating to one's own thoughts, words and deeds. However, it is far better to design a regular way of ensuring one's own safety as a teacher.

In Buddhism the recommended way is to build up a circle of noble friends. They could be other chaplains, Buddhist or otherwise. They can be monks or nuns. For a lay Buddhist chaplain, suitable lay people can be noble friends. Above all, well-known *Arahants* and the Buddha need to be treated as noble friends, despite the fact that they are not living today.

A plan for the safety of the teacher may include a regular daily routine including a period of time set apart for further learning and meditation.

Submitting oneself to a leadership hierarchy both among chaplains and being in association with monks and nuns is very useful in regard to safety.

Observing a set of recognised rules and principles is equally important. Operating alone as a chaplain is discouraged, particularly knowing the fact that we are all imperfect as discussed before.

Another simple guide is not to try absurd practices beyond one's capability and training. Buddhist practice is one of gradual development of the mind. One cannot jump from one level of practice to another arbitrarily. Advice from a superior helps in cases like this. The story of Venerable Meghiya is an illustration. This was discussed before.

7 MINDFULNESS IS THE MOST POWERFUL SELF PROTECTION

If a one word summary can be given to cover all protective mechanisms for a teacher or adviser, it is 'mindfulness'. Mindfulness brings to focus whatever mental state it is that makes one vulnerable at a given time. It is like a security guard who never sleeps. As support mechanisms, it is necessary to learn the Dhamma in general, learn specific points in the Dhamma thoroughly, learn and practise meditation continually and associate with noble friends constantly.

Without the aid of all these supportive factors, mindfulness might be like a security alarm in a house with no back up service from the security company.

8 MINDFULNESS SERVES AS A BALANCING MENTAL FACTOR

It is a common weakness to take an extreme position in lines of thinking and behaviour we are fond of or habitually used to. Once you have already taken up an extreme position it is not easy to come back to a normal position. For example, if you have faith in the Triple Gem and you tend to take an extreme view of it, almost anything purported to be part of the Dhamma, original or not original, will be believable. This is not good. The Buddha's advice is to look at things critically and to test them for validity. That does not mean that you entertain doubts about the Buddha or the teaching. In this case the faith element is too strong. So we need to balance it with more of the factor called wisdom.

The point is who or what will remind us to balance the two mental factors of faith and wisdom. The final answer is 'Mindfulness' or '*Sati*'. As mentioned before, one of the great services provided by mindfulness is the balancing of mental factors. Hence, this is a key to self-protection for a teacher of Buddhism.

UNIT 12B

ORGANISING FOR THE SELF-CARE OF THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN

1 ACCEPTING THAT EVERY PERSON IS A POTENTIAL COUNSELEE AT A GIVEN LEVEL

It must be realised that the gap between the chaplain and the client is essentially a matter of degree. In other words, both are in the same boat to different extents. We are all subject to greed, aversion and delusion. Through self-development the chaplain attains a good amount of stability. Placed in a very unpleasant situation the chaplain too can descend into a state of distress. The chaplain needs to accept that truth and take guard against that possibility. If a poor situation is approaching, it might be useful to have a word with a more experienced chaplain.

2 PRACTISING MEDITATION TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S OWN ONGOING PROBLEMS, VIEWS, AND IN GENERAL MENTAL STATES THAT TEND TO PREDOMINATE

For the Buddhist chaplain a powerful tool is found in meditation. While in a reasonable state of calm, the chaplain can see the main or predominant types of mental states in one's mind. For example, one of these mental states could be conceit. A further examination might show that the conceit is nurtured by specific strong views held by the chaplain. At this stage the chaplain has identified a predominant problem in one's mind. This awareness tends to protect the chaplain while rendering services to others.

Again in meditation the chaplain can become aware of other problems being experienced, and as before, that awareness affords protection.

There is no suggestion here that the chaplain should completely eliminate his or her own problems before rendering services to others. That could take many life times to achieve. As a modern day analogy, many people coach elite athletes or teams to be the best in the world, yet most of these coaches are not elite athletes and may not have achieved at the highest levels themselves. Yet, with the application of the correct techniques, diligent practice, dedication and effort, such coaches enable others to achieve world-beating results or to simply be the best they can be.

3 CONSTANTLY REVIEWING ONE'S OWN PRACTICE

Meditation is not the only available tool to develop protections for one-self. Constant re-examination of one's own actions, speech and thoughts is another similar tool. Whilst in the midst of an act, one cannot see its true nature so easily. But in a subsequent review, it is much easier to see one's own frailties. Again, there is no need to wait until all frailties are eliminated. It is just not practicable. Constant review can also promote presence of mind or mindfulness (*Sati*) at a higher level. This may lead to the capability to commence auto-reviews, making things still easier.

A rounded and reasonable approach is necessary in self-checking. One should not get disappointed or depressed seeing one's faults. Developing a sense of joy that you understood the reality of the situation can help in avoiding depression.

4 IN EXTREME CASES CARING FOR OTHERS MIGHT EXPOSE THE CHAPLAIN TO TRAUMA

Listening to a client's travails intensely and for a long time can cause a negative effect or trauma for the chaplain by induction. It is like magnets or circulating electricity inducing magnetic properties in a close by metal object. If the object is made of plastics there will be no induced magnetism. Similarly, the trained chaplain should be immune to inductions as if the chaplain is made of plastic.

Chaplains being human might be unable to be fully shielded from the client's trauma. With improved practice the chaplain should try to develop this type of protection. If the chaplain understood the lesson about making an island for one-self that would certainly help.

As discussed previously, a chaplain who sobs, for example, when a client sheds a tear may make the client's situation even worse.

5 USEFULNESS OF A DAILY ROUTINE TO ENSURE SELF CARE

The practise of meditation and self-review discussed above do take time and energy and a Buddhist chaplain who is busy with services and a personal life might not have the time for such ardent practice. One solution to this problem is to devote a specific time period for special practice. This means that a daily routine including reviews and meditation is a necessity. The end of the day is ideal for these reviews. The routine can also include meditation in the morning. Loving kindness meditation is recommended as part of this routine.

6 DEVELOPING A SUPPORT GROUP FOR THE CHAPLAIN IS HELPFUL TO PROTECT ONESELF

Many Buddhist monks and nuns living in towns consider chaplaincy services as part of their regular activities. Some who are more dedicated to practice may not think along these lines. The lay chaplains need to work with one or more temples and associate with the monks or nuns. This will help both parties. The temples have libraries and the Sangha are well trained and are familiar with the scriptures and commentaries. The lay chaplains have other resources and are mobile. If they work together, that will be mutually beneficial.

The role played by the two groups should best be complementary. The Sangha need to take the lead in this matter and help to train and nurture lay Buddhist chaplains, even in predominantly Buddhist countries.

7 FURTHER TRAINING APPLICABLE TO SELF CARE

If a chaplain needs further training, particularly for the chaplain's protection, it is advisable to take a period of rest and seek such training. This is where noble friends become helpful. Additional reading and reflection are part of the self-improvement process.

Seek appropriate training courses if available.

8 IN SUMMARY BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY ITSELF CAN BE TREATED AS PART OF ONE'S PRACTICE AS A BUDDHIST

It must be clear from these considerations that a successful Buddhist chaplain needs to be equally good in the practice of the Dhamma. When services are given, actions of the chaplain become part of the practice. This way, there will be no room for a gap between services given and one's own practice as a Buddhist. As one's own practice of the Dhamma steadily improves, the ability to provide advice to a client becomes more natural, and finding solutions to diverse issues a client might be facing becomes easier, or becomes more of a second nature. As the chaplain practises and gains a deeper understanding of the Dhamma, the ability to analyse and find the root cause(s) of a client's issues, and the ability to present viable solutions to a client, becomes that much easier.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

PART (2)

ADVANCED PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES

UNIT 13A

SUMMARY OF MENTAL STATES

1 UNWHOLESOME MENTAL STATES

Consciousness (*Citta*) by itself can be pure. It may not have any impurities. In common parlance *Citta* is called the mind. In Buddhist psychology *Citta* is not the totality of the mind but in some ways the core or base of the mind. For example when you look at a flower a *Citta* arises. Theoretically speaking the *Citta* that arises is simply knowing the flower.

For ordinary beings like us such knowledge immediately acquires some properties. Sometimes these are wholesome and at other times unwholesome.

These properties are called mental states or mental factors or mental fabrications. For most of us, any unwholesome *Citta* is tainted by ignorance (of the true nature of the object, in this case the flower). Ignorance together with greed and hatred form the shortest array of unwholesome mental states.

Based on these three roots one or more of a set of fourteen mental factors can be developed. These fourteen have been expanded into some 1,500 mental factors to form an extended set. For our purposes the medium sized set would suffice.

These unwholesome mental states (UMS) make the mind ugly and often harmful both to oneself and to others around. We can observe people in mental states that seem to be combinations of several mental states of similar types.

From one perspective, the whole effort put in by a Buddhist is to reduce and eliminate the ugly or unwholesome mental states and cultivate the beautiful or wholesome mental states (WMS).

2 WHOLESOME MENTAL STATES

As in the medium set of unwholesome mental states described above, beautiful or wholesome mental states (WMS) also could be organised in sets. The shortest set is wisdom as a mental state. The next shortest is wisdom, non-greed and non-hatred. These together are called the roots of wholesome mental states.

In terms of day to day experience, a medium sized set of WMS consists of twenty five mental states. Similar to the UMS, we can construct a much larger set of actual wholesome mental states.

A Buddhist practitioner who manages to diminish unwholesome mental states by concerted practice and learning would also attempt to develop wholesome mental states, more or less at the same time.

Right effort in the noble eight fold path is relevant in this context. It consists of four strands:

- 1 Eliminating UMS already arisen
- 2 Preventing the arising of UMS that have not arisen
- 3 Improvement of WMS already arisen
- 4 Cultivation of WMS not yet arisen

3 ACTUAL MENTAL STATES MIGHT NOT BE IN THE RECOGNISED SETS

When one observes an actual mental state experienced by a person, it might seem as if that mental state does not correspond exactly to the medium sized sets described above and listed in section 13B. This is because the actual mental state experienced is different as it is a combination of several mental states in the medium sets. Some mental states are not compatible. Only compatible ones can combine.

One can define mental states as they occur and see what elemental states combine to make them. The exercise can be difficult.

4 MANY OF THE UMS AND WMS OCCUR DUE TO PAST KAMMA

There can be only two ways in which wholesome or unwholesome mental states (the two types we are considering here) can occur. One is by our own free will. The other is as a result of past *Kamma*.

Suppose a group of students are following a Dhamma class. Something that happened outside the classroom causes a distraction for the students. Say, half the students divert their attention to the distraction and the other half ignore the distraction and continue to pay attention to the class. Why was the behaviour different? Perhaps those who disliked the Dhamma in the past may have experienced the distraction strongly due to their bad past *Kamma*. Suppose after some time they come back to pay attention to the class. Their will power helps them. First the UMS was due to bad *Kamma* and subsequently the WMS was due to wilful action.

Those who experienced only a brief distraction may not have had so much of bad *Kamma*.

5 MANY UMS/WMS ARE GENERATED BY ACTIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE PAST

When we reflect on the above story of seeing something and retracting quickly the current mental state results entirely from *Kamma*. In one case it is long past *Kamma*. In the other case it is immediate past *Kamma*. The latter is controllable.

If we get distracted while we are doing something wholesome, we should not get despondent. It can be the intervention of a past bad *Kamma*. That will also pass, according to the tenet that all things and situations change.

6 PAIR OF UMS THAT ARISE TOGETHER

The mental states of sloth and torpor arise together. They look similar in the sense that when they occur, the mind finds it difficult to move forward or to become active. However the two are not the same. Sloth arises due to a fall in energy, or a sickness of the mind. Torpor occurs when the mind is so stiff that it cannot become active as it cannot move around due to the stiffness. For example, if one gets stuck on a particular view, idea, opinion or dogma, nothing new can enter the mind and so there is no possibility of progress.

7 THE TRIAD OF GREED

There are three UMS that are rooted in greed. These are greed itself, wrong view and conceit. In wrong view one is greedy regarding a point of view. In conceit one is greedy about the relative (assumed) superiority of oneself as against others. Generally we think of a person's greed for external things. Here it is greed for things within oneself.

Ultimately, they arise from delusion.

8 THE QUAD OF HATRED

Similarly there are unwholesome mental states based on hatred. These are hatred itself, envy, avarice and worry. Envy encompasses hatred towards the person being envied because the latter possesses something that I do not have.

In the case of avarice the main attitude is that I do not want another person to possess what I possess. Primarily it is hatred.

Worry means mentally drifting back to a bad experience over and over again, hating the fact that it happened that way. It is important to note that worry is not an innocent mental state. It is based on hatred. That is why it is dangerous.

9 DOMINANCE OF DELUSION IN SOME UMS

Delusion in the ultimate analysis is the root of all unwholesome mental states. It is useful to notice the immediate connection of delusion with the following:

Moral shamelessness

Moral fearlessness

Restlessness

In the first two, stupidity, or lack of wisdom, is obvious. In the third one, it is not so clear. A person might dream of becoming this or that all the time. If such an achievement is not within one's grasp, then the thoughts are clearly foolish.

10 POSSIBILITY OF DISPLACING A UMS WITH A WMS

When one looks at the two sets of UMS and WMS, it should be clear that one can push out a UMS with the power of a WMS. For example a person prone to constant anger can learn and practise loving kindness or *Metta* to such an extent that the constant feeling of anger is completely ousted.

Similarly, lust can be atoned with constant reflection on the true nature of parts of the human body.

It would be useful to examine other such connections.

11 MENTAL HEALTH

In general, a person carrying a bagful of UMS making no attempt to reduce the load or to put it aside even temporarily, will suffer from various mental health problems. If such a person has no knowledge of the Dhamma, the person will never recognise that the illness can be cured. This is where a Buddhist chaplain or a noble friend might step in and show the afflicted person the right way.

12 BODY HEALTH

Constant mental health problems are known to affect the health of the physical body. The impact might not be noticed immediately. In fact, even the connection might not be recognised. The body will be treated with medicines by physicians. Whether that treatment is sufficient is an open question.

A Chaplain or Dhamma teacher has the ability to suggest holistic treatment in appropriate cases of people suffering from long term illnesses that continue to exist despite medical treatment.

UNIT 13B

RECOGNISING WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME MENTAL STATES

1 IDENTIFICATION OF A WHOLESOME MENTAL STATE WITHIN THE CLIENT

The Chaplain dealing with a client in distress actually tries to observe the client's behaviour and mental states to begin with. At least partly, the behaviour itself is a function of the mental states. Understanding the client's mental states is therefore vitally important. One broad type of mental state according to the Buddha Dhamma is wholesome mental states.

Within this class there are three sub-classes:

Non-Greed (*Alobha*)

Non-Aversion (*Adosa*)

Non-delusion (*Amoha*) or wisdom (*panna or pragna*)

These three are really the roots of wholesomeness. This set is too brief to fully understand. A more detailed analysis makes it easier to understand. In this analysis, there are twenty five wholesome mental states as follows and these can be related to the experience of most people:

GROUP (A): MENTAL STATES COMMON TO WHOLESOMENESS

1	Confidence	<i>Saddhā</i>
2	Mindfulness	<i>Sati</i>
3	Moral Shame	<i>Hiri</i>
4	Moral Fear (dread)	<i>Ottappa</i>
5	Non-attachment (F1)	<i>Alobho</i>
6	Non-hatred (goodwill) (F2)	<i>Adoso</i>
7	Equanimity	<i>Tatra-majjhataṭā</i>
8	Tranquility of mental states	<i>Kāyapassaddhi</i>
9	Tranquility of mind	<i>Cittapassaddhi</i>
10	Lightness of mental states	<i>Kāyalahutā</i>
11	Lightness of mind	<i>Cittalahutā</i>
12	Pliancy of mental states	<i>Kāyamudutā</i>

13	Pliancy of mind	<i>Cittamudutā</i>
14	Adaptability of mental states	<i>Kāyakammannatā</i>
15	Adaptability of mind	<i>Cittakammannatā</i>
16	Proficiency of mental states	<i>Kāyapāgunnatā</i>
17	Proficiency of mind	<i>Cittapāgunnatā</i>
18	Rectitude of mental states	<i>Kāyaujjukatā</i>
19	Rectitude of mind	<i>Cittujjukatā</i>

GROUP (B): MENTAL STATES CONNECTED TO TANGIBLE PRACTICE

20	(Mental state of) right speech	<i>Sammāvācā</i>
21	(Mental state of) right action	<i>Sammākammanto</i>
22	(Mental state of) right livelihood	<i>Sammāājivo</i>

GROUP (C): MENTAL STATES OF ILLIMITABLES (two out of four)

23	Compassion	<i>Karunā</i>
24	Appreciative joy	<i>Muditā</i>

GROUP (D): MENTAL STATE OF WISDOM

25	Wisdom	<i>Pannā</i>
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This table has been taken from 'Basic Buddhist Psychology' by Rahu Sarath-Chandra. A discussion of these mental states appears in that book (pages 55 to 75).

The chaplain needs to note any of these existing in the client's mind. If one of these exists, all the others also exist to some degree. The dominant one should be identified and the chaplain begins to work on it.

2 HELPING THE CLIENT TO NOTE ITS POSITIVE VALUE

The client may need help to see that a particular wholesome mental state is already in the mind. A common sense approach is better than theoretical explanations which the client may not understand. Some considerations might be obvious but the client might not notice them because the mind is not clear. For example, if the mental state of goodwill or loving kindness is observed, then a discussion can incorporate actual experience of goodwill. For example, one's appearance will be pleasant and even attractive. A genuine smile will adorn the face. One will find it easier to connect with other people at a social or professional level. Other people will not seem to be threatening, and so on.

3 ENABLING THE CLIENT TO DEVELOP THAT MENTAL STATE

The chaplain then explains the ways in which the mental state can be further developed. The advantages likely to result from this exercise need to be explained in simple terms. Taking the same example of loving kindness, one can learn to chant the discourse on loving kindness. Then one can learn its meaning with emphasis on lines that relate to goodwill. Meditation on one selected aspect may help to develop goodwill still further. The client will attain a degree of joy from that.

4 IDENTIFICATION OF AN UNWHOLESOME MENTAL STATE WITHIN THE CLIENT

In some cases it will help to identify a negative or unwholesome mental state. Hatred is easy to identify. It is present at least in a mild form in many common situations. For example, we tend to make adverse value judgements on many day-to-day matters such as the look of a dress, the colour of a car, or the taste of a certain type of food. We might even decide that we do not like a certain person due to perceived character traits of their ethnic background. These are all forms of mild aversion, the forerunner to hatred. The shortest summary of the unwholesome mental states is as follows:

Greed	<i>Lobha</i>
Hatred	<i>Dosa</i>
Delusion	<i>Moha</i>

At a deeper level of analysis there is the fourteen-point set of unwholesome mental states:

1	Delusion or ignorance (F3)	<i>Moha</i>
2	Shamelessness	<i>Ahirika</i>
3	Fearlessness (to commit wrong, and the consequences)	<i>Anottappa</i>
4	Restlessness	<i>Uddhaccha</i>
5	Attachment or greed (F1)	<i>Lobha</i>
6	Misbelief (holding on to wrong views)	<i>(Micchā) Ditthi</i>
7	Conceit	<i>Māna</i>
8	Hatred (F2)	<i>Dosa</i>
9	Jealousy	<i>Issā</i>
10	Avarice	<i>Macchariya</i>
11	Worry	<i>Kukkucca</i>

12	Sloth	<i>Thina</i>
13	Torpor	<i>Middha</i>
14	Doubt	<i>Vicikicchā</i>

The codes in brackets F1, F2, and F3 indicate that these correspond to the three major roots of unwholesome mental states as stated in traditional order. These three also form the lower level summary.

This table has been taken from ‘Basic Buddhist Psychology’ by Rahu Sarath-Chandra. A discussion of these mental states appears in that book from pages 34 to 54.

The books on Buddhist Psychology by Venerable Narada of Sri Lanka, and by Professor Rhys Davids of the London Pali Text Society are among the earliest books on the subject in English.

These fourteen mental states can be expanded to about 1,500 mental states but that analysis could be too deep for practical chaplaincy purposes.

5 ENABLING THE CLIENT TO NOTE ITS NEGATIVE VALUE

Compared with wholesome mental states it is harder for a client in distress to note that one of these unwholesome mental states is dominating in the mind. The chaplain can use conversation skills to let the client see the truth at the appropriate time. Note that the truth may hurt the client. It must be communicated in a careful manner. For example, consider a mind sick with jealousy. The client may be very reluctant to acknowledge it. The chaplain can remind the client that no one is immune from jealousy, and then explore with the client the behaviour traits of a jealous person in a similar situation to the client. Gradually, the client can be led to see that such jealousy-based behaviour traits are within the client, and what effects that behaviour is having on the client.

6 ENABLING THE CLIENT TO UNWIND THAT UNWHOLESOME MENTAL STATE

Unwinding is not easy. Relating old stories from the books might help to soften the ground. Demonstrating that the mental state is an unnecessary burden can be helpful. Developing the opposite wholesome mental states where possible will certainly help. This cannot occur right at the start. The timing of such conversations is critical.

7 UNWINDING CAN BE PROMOTED BY NOTING THE DAMAGE THAT A MENTAL STATE CAN CAUSE

The starting method of unwinding could be some education about the damage caused to the client as a result of nurturing the particular mental state. A simple example is the effect of hatred. Hatred makes a person literally look ugly and even dreadful. Hatred can give a feeling of debility or pain in the spine. Hatred is capable of shrouding wisdom. The person

overtaken by hatred behaves foolishly and can cause harm to themselves and others. A person driven by hatred is feared or despised by others.

UNIT 14A

USEFULNESS OF NEUTRAL MENTAL STATES

1 THE MUTUALLY COMMON SEVEN (7) IN-BUILT MENTAL STATES WITH VARYING ENERGY LEVELS OR INTENSITY

The mind (or strictly speaking that part of the mind called consciousness, or *Citta* in Pali) cannot exist without some mental states, sometimes called mental factors or attributes of the mind. There can be any number of mental states depending on how one wishes to analyse them. As mentioned previously, a standard set of mental states consists of 52 factors. In this set there are always seven mental states that are eternally present and are ethically variable. That is to say that these seven mental states are capable of becoming wholesome or unwholesome. These are as follows:

Contact	<i>Phassa</i>
Feeling or Sensation	<i>Vedana</i>
Perception	<i>Sanna</i>
Volition	<i>Cetana</i>
One-Pointedness	<i>Ekaggata</i>
Psychic (mental) life force	<i>Jivitindriya</i>
Attention	<i>Manasikara</i>

Contact does not imply physical contact. It is mental contact. Feeling is a result of mental contact. Perception is similar to sensation but is distorted on the basis of the individual's past experience. Volition or willing is the mental action taken. Attention is the mental state that keeps consciousness on the object contacted. Keeping one's attention on the object is a valuable ability.

Given the same sensation no two people are likely to have the same perception. Thus, two individuals facing the exact same situation may behave quite differently. This has significant implications to our relations with other people and with our physical environment.

A question that arises is whether all these mental factors are always intense or at a high energy level. The answer is no. That is why people make such an effort to concentrate despite the fact that one-pointedness is already a feature of the mind. Nominally these seven mental states are all present at different energy levels or intensities. In training we try to energise them the way we want.

2 MUTUALLY COMMON SIX (6) MENTAL STATES THAT CAN BE SUMMONED AND ENERGISED

In addition to these seven factors, there are six other mental factors that can be summoned when we want them. These six are as follows:

Initial application	<i>Vitakka</i>
Sustained application	<i>Vicara</i>
Decision	<i>Adhimokkha</i>
Effort	<i>Viriya</i>
Joy	<i>Piti</i>
Intent to act	<i>Chanda</i>

In a way the last factor in the universal set of seven mental factors is related to the first factor in this set. The first three factors are explained by the behaviour of a bee looking for a flower. See Buddhist Psychology by Rahu Sarath-Chandra page 27. After turning attention to a new flower the bee lands on it (initial application) and immediately circles around it. The latter is like sustained application. Then it decides that this is the right flower to take honey from. Of course then it puts in some effort and draws honey. It is now joyous. This creates interest to repeat the action. This simple illustration goes to show that these factors are not just part of a theory but these factors are things that we all experience all the time.

A person developing concentration to a high level (absorptions or *Jhana*) comes across some of these mental states. We all summon these in our day to day work. A student or a worker makes use of these every day.

One factor that is often missing is decision making. Sometimes we keep working hard but fail to make decisions when necessary. Shopping is a simple example. In a large shopping centre, we may keep walking around looking at things but fail to decide to either buy something worthwhile, or move away from something useless. Decision making needs guidance and training. Once it is acquired the skill of decision making is amazingly useful and indispensable.

3 LINK BETWEEN THE TWO SETS

These thirteen factors do not operate in isolation. They work with the help of one another. For example, if one needs to receive training and practice in meditation, one will summon and energise the six mental factors mentioned above by trying for a short period. Trying a little more, one-pointedness gets sharper. As the meditation practice improves, one's perception improves. Through the wholesome action the person accumulates good *Kamma*. Joy and interest result and the process keeps spiralling upwards.

4 THE CONNECTION TO WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME MENTAL STATES

In previous discussions we came across wholesome and unwholesome mental factors. The unwholesome mental states need to be abandoned and the wholesome mental states enhanced. The tools to use are in the universals (the set of 7) and the occasional factors (the set of 6).

The ethically variable 13 mental states play a central role in life, the wholesome and unwholesome mental states adding colour to the mind. One cannot deal with these without the active support of the 13 key mental states

5 THE BASIC FUNCTION OF ATTENTION

The basic function of attention is to bring other mental factors on to the object. In this way the other mental factors are brought to the surface (dealing with the object). If the perception of the object is not settled or wavering then attention will bring up that factor to settle the issue. Therefore if attention is poor, a perception, for example, will also be poor. The varying examination results of school students provide examples of the results of poor attention.

A driver will fail to concentrate when attention is poor. Accidents can result when drivers keep chatting to other passengers or are distracted by a mobile phone conversation.

6 THE BALANCING FUNCTION OF ATTENTION

Attention also functions as a charioteer dealing with several horses running differently. The slow ones are speeded up. Similarly, attention sets the consciousness and the associated mental factors on the object.

7 THE COUPLING OF ATTENTION WITH WISDOM AND IGNORANCE

When attention is coupled with wisdom we can call that mental factor as wise attention (*yoniso manasikara*). This enables fast spiritual progress. The opposite is also true. If your attention is coupled with ignorance then the ignorant attention will cause a lowering of spirituality. This is treated as the key to effective practice.

8 THE RELATION OF ATTENTION TO MINDFULNESS

It is interesting that mindfulness that plays a central role in life is one of the wholesome mental states, although it plays an important role in reducing unwholesome mental factors and in developing wholesome mental factors. Yet it is not attention.

Mindfulness is a wholesome mental state and therefore is not an ethically variable mental state in the group of 7 or 6 mentioned earlier. Attention has a directing function. Mindfulness has an enabling function. When mindfulness (without delusion or reduced

delusion) is working on the mind, wise attention is brought about to check the value of the current object. Hence there is a type of link between attention and mindfulness.

UNIT 14B

USEFULNESS OF NEUTRAL MENTAL STATES IN BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

1 MINDFULNESS CAN BE ENERGISED THROUGH MEDITATION

It is important to recognise that there is mindfulness in everyone's mind at all times, though it might not be sufficiently energised at a given time. When a client says that he or she has no mindfulness, what is implied is that it is not energised. Clients need help to energise mindfulness. How can that be done? Repeated practice under proper guidance is one way of making mindfulness intense or sharp.

A convenient starting point is the current space, time and surrounding. We can use our senses to observe these and remember these in changing circumstances. Such memory amounts to simple mindfulness. While doing a painting inside a room if one wonders whether it is early morning or late evening, then the mindfulness is not sharp. The concentration (on the painting) may have been intense in this case.

At a higher level one can observe the breaking of rules or precepts. Suppose one has agreed to refrain from killing. The moment that rule is about to be broken one should remember the precept. That helps to sharpen the mindfulness. This is one reason behind the negative definitions found in the five precepts and higher precepts. Apart from the merits of observing the rules one can also energise mindfulness.

Mindfulness does not imply that the mind is full of anything. It is simply the presence of mind; being here and now. Some say 'mindfulness' is a misnomer, but we are not going to debate it here.

At a still higher level one can be mindful of thoughts going through the mind and whether any thoughts are wholesome or unwholesome. This in fact happens in meditation. Once mindfulness is sharpened and energised, it will stay that way for a long time and help the mind to move towards peace and happiness.

2 CONCENTRATION CAN BE ENERGISED THROUGH MEDITATION

Mindfulness itself contributes to concentration. At the beginning, the concentration is not on one object but a group of objects like space, time and surrounding. Yet it excludes objects further away. To that extent there is concentration. By meditating on single objects like the breath, or on loving kindness, concentration can be energised and sharpened. Once sharpened it continues to remain sharp for a long time.

In breathing meditation one starts with calming the mind, progresses to mindfulness of surroundings, and then to mindfulness of breathing. That leads to concentration.

3 ATTENTION CAN BE DEVELOPED THROUGH PRACTISE SUPPORTED BY MEDITATION

It is common experience to pay attention to one thing or another at a given time. The mind has this in-built ability to pay attention so much so that we even fail to notice that there is attention present. However, when attention shifts from one object to the other it can be observed. Shifting attention and noticing that it is shifting sharpens the mental state of attention.

It is not enough to pay attention to one object all the time but we need to develop the ability to shift attention from one object to another, when we need to do so. Continued attention to objects that we should leave in the past is a significant problem. This is a kind of inertia. We need to practise shifting attention.

Attention on physical objects is possible in the present moment. But, attention on mental objects (memories) is not easy to cut off. One method of cutting them off is the understanding of the futility of paying attention to such past memories. This can be sharpened by meditation.

4 ONE CAN PRACTISE SHIFTING ATTENTION FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER

The first thing to realise is that shifting of attention is not something that happens but something that we do. We can practice this in the physical world and that training would be useful in regard to mental objects.

Think of a bee. How long does a bee stay on one flower? It shifts its attention to another very quickly. The bee does it easily. Once the bee leaves a flower it probably leaves memories behind. Human beings do not leave memories behind and they carry heavy baggage, even to the next life. Comparatively speaking, the bee is lucky!

A client can be taught to leave mental objects behind by drawing attention to the present physical experiences of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

5 INITIAL APPLICATION FOLLOWS THE SHIFTING OF ATTENTION.

When the mind shifts attention from one object to another, we say there is the mental state of initial application. That means one is now working on a new object. For example, when one drives home from work and parks the car in the garage, there is this initial application with regard to your home. However, the mind may still be carrying the features of events that happened at work. If it was full of anger, that anger will be cast upon the spouse even when he or she greets you lovingly.

The mental state of initial application must be used to cut off the past unwholesome mental states, if any. Otherwise life becomes unpleasant for no reason. This is real experience and not just a theory. In Venerable Ajahn Chah's tradition originating in Laos and Thailand, great

emphasis is placed on this matter. *Ajahn Brhmavanso* from Perth is a superb exponent of this idea.

6 ILLUSTRATION OF DECISIONS PROMOTING PROGRESS

Some people keep floating among good things but never really land on them. They keep complaining that they continue missing everything. What is missing is the decision to hone in on the good things. Many people entering temples behave in this way. They hover around talking to people and even to monks or nuns, but fail to land on anything useful. Later they complain about the temple. Simply they failed to decide to do something beneficial.

The bee that lands on a new flower will hover around for a second and decides that it should go in for the honey that is there in plenty. The little bee makes a decision. Highly educated and trained individuals sometimes fail in this regard.

It is the **decision** that is vital.

The Buddhist chaplain *needs to help clients to use this mental mechanism of decision which opens the door to progress*. People hovering around shops, politicians hovering among crowds, managers hovering around endless meetings are wasting time. They are not contributing to progress as long as they fail to make decisions.

7 JOY AND HAPPINESS CAN BE EXPERIENCED IN REAL SITUATIONS

The bee that decided to take the honey from a flower naturally feels a sense of joy as a result of the experience. That mental state of joy prompts the bee to seek another flower. When a decision is made and action taken the results follow. The joy of seeing the results must be observed so that a platform is created for further useful action. This is not an idea from the author as it is repeatedly found in the Buddha Dhamma.

A despondent and pessimistic client can be advised to observe the joy of an achievement so that more doors are opened for more progress. Joy can change the mood of the client.

Joy and smiles can also trigger tranquillity of the physical body, as if there were no ailments at all. At the very least, learn to 'wear' a smile even if the smile cannot be genuine. That can have a reverse effect and generate a smile in the mind.

8 ALL THESE HELP TO CREATE INTEREST AND TO SUSTAIN INTEREST

Shifting attention to things of use, initial application on the object chosen, continued application of the mind on the chosen object, achieving beneficial results and the resulting joy and happiness and the resultant tranquillity of the body all lead to greater interest in the object or pursuit. The interest will start another cycle of success and iterations follow. This way we can use these naturally occurring mental states to reduce our problems.

More knowledge and more practice help.

UNIT 15A

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM PERCEPTIONS

1 SENSATION OR MENTAL FEELING DOES NOT VARY FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER

When one of the six senses makes contact with an object either external or internal (being a memory) the mental state of feeling or sensation arises in consciousness. It is an impression created in the mind as a result of the object coming into the purview of the mind. Feeling can be pleasant or unpleasant or be neutral (no pleasure and no pain).

For example if one burns a finger by mistakenly touching a hot kettle the feeling is one of pain. Even if the mind is very advanced, the pain is there. How one handles it may be different. That is not what we are considering here.

Similarly, if you drink a little water when you are thirsty, there is a feeling of pleasure. Even a saint will feel pleased to drink water when thirsty. It is a different matter that a child might be more agitated in this situation than an adult.

Sitting on a chair for five minutes might not be pleasant or unpleasant, so we can say it is a neutral feeling.

2 PERCEPTIONS BELONG TO INDIVIDUALS AND ARE RARELY SHARED

Once there is a sensation, the mind nearly always tries to place a particular sign on it after examining it in the context of similar experiences that it had encountered before. The sign could be good or bad, desirable or undesirable, and so on. This sign will depend on the experiences of the person in the past. **The perception might not fit the facts or reality; the perception is justified in terms of memories, regardless of its alignment with reality.** As each person has different memories on the same or similar objects, the perceptions of individuals on the same sensation or similar sensation will differ.

Differences of opinion, conflicts, and arguments arise from perceptions. If one realises that perceptions vary from one person to another, the futility of arguments becomes apparent.

Suppose two people went to see a film. Assuming both people had the same faculties of seeing and hearing, one would expect both people to have seen the film in exactly the same way and to have received the same sensations. However, in reality, the perceptions of the whole film or even particular scenes in the film might vary widely between the two people. One person might love it, the other might find it a little depressing or boring. This is because of our past experience, and due to mental fabrications based on our past perceptions and memories.

Another example is our attitudes being different towards people from different countries. This is also based on our past experience. Once we get to know such people our perceptions might also change. People differ in regard to needs, wants and wishes, depending on perceptions.

The choice of cars, houses, consumables, partners, political parties, books, colours, art productions and architectural creations all differ in this manner.

3 NEUTRAL, WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME 'SIGNS' IN THE MIND AND THEIR IMPACT

In our minds some behaviours are marked as good and wholesome and others as bad and unwholesome. Rightly or wrongly we have made those marks. Those marks have been placed depending on our past experience. Whenever something happens we check against those marks and form perceptions about the happening. No two people would fully agree on perceptions as to what is good and what is bad.

For example, people who earnestly follow rules tend to put low marks on those who do not follow rules to the same extent. When this attitude continues for some time, dislike or even hatred develops in the mind against the people who do not follow the rules. A feeling of superiority may also develop, leading to conceit, pride and a thickening of the self-concept. That person then tends to descend down the spiritual ladder as a result of the perceptions that were allowed to settle in the mind.

This person could have avoided this decline if a little more wisdom had been summoned in these situations.

In a similar manner a person might place wholesome marks on an unwholesome action by being misled by bare compassion and a sense of being good and reasonable. This might lead the person to ignoble friends. In the long term this could be harmful. Again wisdom could have helped.

Placing neutral marks on clearly good or bad actions can turn out to be damaging in a spiritual sense.

4 UNDERSTANDING DEEP ROOTED TENDENCIES AND MENTAL REMNANTS

People usually ignore dangerous perceptions in their minds on the assumption that these are based on true facts and correct opinions. Left there for long periods, life after life, these perceptions sink to the bottom of the mind and remain invisible. **Very invisible perceptions are called taints. These are like the smell absorbed by wine barrels even if no wine was kept in them for long periods.** The smell might not be there until conditions change. For example, water might bring up the smell. People from Sri Lanka may have observed this phenomenon in the case of toddy pots made of clay. The moment water is put into a dry,

old toddy pot the smell of toddy comes up. Even a slight trigger can work to rouse up the taints in the mind to a high degree of activity and cause damage.

A person having such an experience starts wondering how it all happened. Originally, it might have been a relatively innocent perception that got nourished and accepted and finally entered the deepest parts of the mind, staying hidden most of the time.

Such old perceptions could also be held in the mind at different levels of hiding. The more obvious ones can be caught during meditation.

5 THREE STAGES OF HEATING UP DEEP ROOTED TENDENCIES AND MENTAL REMNANTS

Impurities of the mind that had originated via perceptions can exist at different levels of hiding. The top most layer can burst into strong verbal or bodily actions due to a small trigger. The next lower level impurities can churn around in the mind causing a mental disturbance given a simple trigger. The third level of impurities might be further from common experience but can be roused up with suitable triggers. At the deepest level the taints remain almost completely hidden.

Taints are eliminated only when a person attains enlightenment at the fourth stage.

UNIT 15B

COPING WITH PROBLEMS ARISING FROM PERCEPTIONS

1 ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF PERCEPTIONS

In our relations with people, things around us and various situations that arise, we always think that we are actually dealing with those people, things and situations as they are. In fact that rarely happens. We are actually dealing with our memories and perceptions about those people, things and situations.

Consider a few common experiences to see whether this is true. Suppose I am working in a new project team with a few colleagues with whom I meet almost every day. Imagine one of them is slow in output and that affects my ability to deliver my work on time. I now tend to form a perception of that person as being lazy and incapable. One day the lighting system in the office is improved, and suddenly the output of that person improves, and the project manager praises him. I get a little angry and jealous. I think the project manager is partial and unfair that he is now praising this 'lazy' person who had caused delays to the project delivery. I think that way because of my previous perception of that person. In fact the person was not lazy but the lighting in the area was poor for some time and he struggled due to a prevailing issue with poor sight.

I now need to improve by clearing my incorrect perception of this person. Otherwise my wrong perception will continue to cause me problems in dealings with this person and the project manager.

When we buy appliances from shops our decisions are based on perceptions. Usually these are based on what other people had said before or based on advertisements. Advertising is a way of creating perceptions. We make them our own. Once the perception captures the mind we forget to search for the true facts. We are blind to reality. Buying goods based on brands and labels is an example of how our purchasing decisions are based on manipulated perceptions.

If a child had a bad experience with another student or teacher when the child first went to school, the child might think poorly of the school and become averse to going to school altogether because of that perception.

Politics runs on manipulated perceptions and rarely on facts. We live with millions of perceptions in our minds. Many are the result of our own past mistakes. Others planted there by third parties without being noticed by us, as is the case with advertising.

Hence when we say this is good or that is bad, we need to check whether these ideas are based on real facts and try to keep an open mind.

Chapters 8 and 9 of 'Buddhist Psychology' by Rahu Sarath-Chandra provide detailed information about perceptions and their impact on our lives. It is important to know how perceptions are intensified within the mind of a person. A client who understands this can be helped to recover from trauma, for example.

2 DISSOLVING HARMFUL PERCEPTIONS IN MEDITATION

When the mind has entered a calm state, and one keeps observing what goes on in the mind without taking interest in the contents of the thoughts, one is likely to notice thoughts based on troublesome perceptions such as 'I hate that man' or 'I really crave for that type of food' and so on. At that point one can look for the origin of that kind of idea. One possible origin of such thoughts will be ignorance or delusion. Because of the limitations of our own knowledge, we tend to rush into various opinions. After a time we look for evidence to support such opinions. Thus the perceptions become sharp and strong. However, when it is discovered that the original opinions may have been wrong the troublesome perceptions begin to dissolve.

A client needs to learn the basics of meditation and try to practise meditation. Then the chaplain can help the client to see the stupidity behind many perceptions that caused the client so much trouble. That knowledge is the key to dissolving perceptions. Dhamma knowledge helps in this process.

Some types of reflections can speed up the process of dissolution. Page 104 of 'Buddhist Psychology' by Rahu Sarath-Chandra gives a series of such reflections.

3 OBSERVING THE RISE IN ENERGY LEVEL OF A REMNANT PERCEPTION

Sometimes a perception based on hatred like 'I just cannot put up with that woman' can remain dormant when one is engaged in physical activity or wholesome activities. The moment an event evokes hatred in general, that specific dormant perception could surface again for no apparent reason. The memory is revived and re-recorded in a stronger manner. Thus the original perception of dislike of that woman can continue to grow into a strong or violence-based hatred. This is all happening in the mind.

A client can be taught to notice the occasion when a poor perception tends to rise and that no one else is responsible for that rise in energy level. If an external factor is enhancing the bad perception, then that factor can be avoided for the time being if it can be identified and understood.

When poor perceptions are causing angst in the mind, the person should practise 'letting go of them'. A client can be taught to notice the rising energy level of a poor perception and make a mental note of that fact and let those thoughts just pass. The action one takes is to 'notice'. While that action is taking place the bad thought will quietly pass. If it comes again let it pass in the same way.

4 LEARNING TO ENJOY THE DISSOLUTION OF TROUBLESOME PERCEPTION

The dissolution of perceptions or the reduction of their energy level is not a casual event. It is a great achievement. The client must be taught to treat it as an achievement and then enjoy that achievement. That can trigger the development of a new and wholesome culture of the mind.

Conversely, when a bad perception accumulates energy, it becomes heavy baggage to be carried by the mind and the person. That heaviness causes pain, both mental and physical. It prompts the formation of more and more unwholesome perceptions, all tending to increase suffering. Understanding this helps prompt the client to take positive action as described above.

It is possible that the client will become frustrated due to the lack of there are no quick results. If this Dhamma is understood the frustration can be contained for the moment. One cannot destroy bad perceptions by force. All action must be gradual and based on wise understanding. If one keeps striving, good results are very likely to follow.

5 IT IS EASIER TO SOFTEN PERCEPTIONS THAN TO CHANGE THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT

This unit has to be understood by considering actual or formulated cases. That understanding must be re-examined by each participant in relation to their own troublesome perceptions. Going too deep into theoretical considerations is not necessary. It might prove to be difficult. Examining real experiences is much easier and far more effective.

Calming meditation such as breathing meditation can be helpful. Once the method is understood and becomes a conviction, even in day to day life, one can observe the formation of harmful perceptions and how these perceptions add to our suffering.

In other words, without spending money or making costly changes to our environment, **one can achieve a high level of happiness simply by clearing one's poor perceptions.**

UNIT 16A

COMPOSITION OF A THOUGHT AND THE THOUGHT PROCESS

1 THE COMPONENTS OF A SINGLE STANDARD THOUGHT

Thoughts are generated in the mind when a person comes into contact with an object. Basically, there are two types of objects. The first is physical objects meaning those objects that can be contacted through the five physical senses, namely the eye, ear, nose, tongue and touch. The second type is mental objects. This means objects that are held in memory. These memories could have been the result of contact made by the five physical senses on earlier occasions in this or a previous life.

The standard thought for the five physical senses is different from that of the standard for the sixth sense, the mind.

In both types a thought consists of a series of *Cittas* (Units of Consciousness) that follow in a sequential series. For example, a thought caused by the eye contacting a visible object runs as follows, each line indicating a *citta*:

1	Ab	<i>Atita Bhavanga</i>	Continuation <i>citta</i> after the last thought
2	Bc	<i>Bhavanga Calana</i>	Vibrating <i>citta</i>
3	Bu	<i>Upacceda Bhavanga</i>	<i>Citta</i> breaking off from the last thought
4	Pv	<i>Dvara Vajjana</i>	Sense door adverting <i>citta</i>
5	Cv	<i>Cakkhu Vinnana</i>	Eye consciousness
6	Sm	<i>Sampaticchana</i>	Receiving <i>citta</i>
7	Sn	<i>Santirana</i>	Investigating <i>citta</i>
8	Vt	<i>Vottapana</i>	Determining <i>citta</i>
9-15	Jv	<i>Javana</i>	Impulse (or action) <i>citta</i>
16-17	Td	<i>Tadarammana</i>	Registering <i>citta</i>

These 17 units of consciousness (*citta*) form one thought.

The standard thought generated by a mind object can be stated as follows:

Ab-Bc-Bu, Mn, Jv-Jv-Jv- Jv-Jv-Jv-Jv, Td-Td, B-B-B-B

The new code 'Mn' stands for 'mind door adverting'. The B's at the end are continuum *cittas* that do not perform a function.

Referring to the eye sense based thought, the first three *Bhavangas* help to move from the last thought to the new thought. The *cittas* that follow them perform the functions of adverting, receiving information, investigating the information and determining the object. The *Javanas* are active thinking that are likely to create good or bad *Kamma*. The last 2 *cittas* register the information in memory.

In the case of the mind sense generated thought, Pv to Vt are all performed in the mind itself. Hence *Javana cittas* start immediately.

There are so many variations of the components of a thought depending on the actual situations of a sense contacting an object. All these are not considered here.

Thoughts occur so fast in time that within a very short period of time, a multitude of thoughts may occur and we do not normally notice the process. An experienced meditator has a chance of observing the thought process, particularly when *Javana* starts. If the *Javanas* are unwholesome, the thought can be abandoned by seeking a wholesome object. All *cittas* other than *Javanas* are generated by *Kamma*. This explains differing behaviours among different people when put into the same situation or when presented with the same physical object.

It must be noted that the *cittas* are not connected by any sort of continuous solid string. This helps us to understand that there is no soul or self hiding inside the thought series. If the soul is not in the body and not in the mind, then where is it? There is no solid permanent entity that can be called a soul.

2 THINKING AND INTER-MINGLING OF THOUGHTS LEADING TO RESTLESSNESS AND ANXIETY

Thinking means a series of thoughts, one following the other, usually on one object or a group of objects taken together. Suppose the person is trying to think of many different objects at the same time. What the person really does is to run a series of thoughts on one object, then abandon it and move to another object and then yet another. Hence within a minute or two, a large number of thoughts occur, many abandoned before completion. This may lead to the mental state of restlessness (*Uddhacca*). This may also eventually lead to worry, anxiety and similar problems.

It sets up a bad habit if allowed to happen continuously. Calming meditation helps to improve this situation.

3 THOUGHTS ON ONE OBJECT PROCEEDING WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

When we pay attention to one object continuously or almost continuously for a period of time, there results calmness of the mind due to one-pointedness (hundred percent or even much less). An example is meditating on the material objects like *kasinas*, and also meditating on the breath. One-pointedness when practised for long periods can lead to

Absorptions or *Jhanas*. Mastery of *Jhanas* helps in insight meditation which in turn opens the way to Enlightenment.

Even if one does not attain *Jhanas*, raising the level of concentration close to full concentration can have tremendous beneficial effects. In fact it opens the way to effective insight meditation.

4 FULL CONCENTRATION OR ABSORPTION (JHANA)

Full concentration or Absorption can be attained with a set of *Jhana* factors. These factors are Initial Application (*Vitakka*), sustained Application (*Vicara*), Joy (*Piti*), Tranquillity (*Sukha*) and Equanimity (*Upekkha*). In the first *Jhana* all five factors are present. When the first factor is absent, it is the second *Jhana* and so on. In the fifth *Jhana*, according to *Abhidhamma*, only equanimity is present.

From the 5th *Jhana* it is possible to progress to four other *Jhanas* that take immaterial objects as the objects of concentration, namely, *citta* (consciousness), space, nothingness and lastly, Neither Perception nor Non-Perception.

5 THE STAGE AT WHICH A HARMFUL THOUGHT OUGHT TO BE ARRESTED

As mentioned before, in a thought arising from a physical sense, the 9th *citta* is the first action *citta* (also called an impulse). It is generated by the individual, primarily based on will power. If the person has advanced mindfulness, the person can notice whether the *Javana* is wholesome or unwholesome. At once the person can abandon the thought if unwholesome.

People who have low mindfulness might notice the nature of the *Javana* much later and then generate a thought using a wholesome mental state (*cetasika*). Even then, a second thought a moment later can be arrested. It is not too late. As thoughts occur one after the other very fast the first opportunity of arresting a thought could be missed. Thoughts on the same object get repeated. Hence a later opportunity could be used to arrest a harmful thought.

UNIT 16B

ART OF MANAGING THOUGHTS

1 HELPING TO ESTABLISH A NEW TREND OF THOUGHTS

There are those who brood over past experiences. There are others who dream about the future. In either case there is no useful thinking. Brooding over past events can lead to what is called worry in *Abhidhamma*. This can eventually become harmful.

The client may attempt to explain the brooding as being the review of a past event in an attempt to do better in the future. Sometimes there is only a thin line between thinking clearly about a past event and brooding over it.

If a person is actually thinking of a past event, such thinking ought to be devoid of emotions such as hatred or greed. In practical terms these emotions must be kept to a minimum. With reduced emotions one can try to analyse the event to see things as they were. In brooding there is hardly any analytical thinking but the mind is carried away by the strength of emotions. That is not thinking. It is mere remembering coloured by the emotions and perceptions of what may have occurred.

Such brooding is called worry (*kukkuchcha*) in *Abhidhamma*. It is a waste of time and energy and a pollution of mental states. The more polluted the mental states are, life becomes more and more miserable.

The client needs to be taught about its harmful effects. The need to let go of the past event and to move forward needs to be clarified. Once this basic understanding is established, actual progress can be attempted. Chaplains often come across this problem of clients brooding over a bad experience in the recent past. The more one broods the more difficult it is to break the loop of brooding and the feeling of disenchantment.

One technique of letting go of the past event that causes worry is to change the environment. First a change in the physical environment is necessary. The mind responds to the new environment. New and fresh thoughts arise. A simple change is to get out of one's room, and out of one's house. A walk in a park or on the beach is still better. This creates a better environment in the mind and further progress can be made.

2 TEMPLES, MONASTERIES AND NUNNERIES AS ALTERNATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

A physical break from past events is also achieved by making a visit to a monastery, nunnery or temple where a religious atmosphere prevails. The time of the visit is important. Initially a desolate place might not be helpful. An active place full of people is more helpful. The colours, lights and sweet smells and the presence of devotees, what they do, the presence of monks and nuns and what they do, can all accentuate the environment. In this regard the

serenity of a pagoda (stupa or cetiya) and the serenity under a Bodhi tree contribute a great deal.

The arguments about the usefulness of all these things to attain enlightenment are not relevant here. The objective is more mundane. If the client cannot have at a minimum peace of mind here and now, higher aims such as enlightenment are mere dreams.

3 MEDITATION ON RELIGIOUS OBJECTS DISPLACES HARMFUL THOUGHTS

Harmful thoughts about past events and about future vague possibilities can be dissipated by changing the environment. The result might be temporary and then other techniques can click in.

Once such initial clearance is achieved, positive action can be taken to drive away such thoughts. Meditation on religious objects is one such technique. Different objects may suit different individuals. Possible religious objects are a pagoda, Buddha statue, a casket of Buddha relics, a Bodhi tree or a neat and tidy Dhamma hall with just a few items in it.

Some background knowledge about the religious object is necessary. Similarly the client needs to have a minimum amount of faith in the Triple Gem. It is assumed that the person has some intelligence and wisdom.

Calming meditation such as observing the in and out breath is necessary. About five minutes must be devoted to think of the purity of the Buddha, to think of loving kindness to all, the true (repulsive) nature of the body and the certainty of death (and the uncertainty of the time of death). These are preparations.

Once the preparations are completed, thoughts can be directed towards the selected religious object. Some details of the object must be noted and recollected over and over again. All these can be done with eyes wide open. After sometime the meditator can close the eyes and the final meditation can be committed to memory, so to speak.

Whenever the worrying event or agitations come back to disturb the mind this experience with a religious object can be recalled, displacing those harmful memories.

In general, building memories of wholesome experiences will tend to displace rubbish from the mind. It will make room for the performance of wholesome deeds both worldly and other-worldly in the future. For example, people who cannot sleep because they remember bad experiences at night will find such imagery as discussed above very helpful. Children who are disturbed by bad dreams would do well to try and dispel such material using this technique. This technique can help in many other situations such as a bad experience at the work place, or being involved in a less than civilised argument with another, and so on.

4 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TENDS TO IMPORT NEW THOUGHT TRENDS

Another way of moving away from harmful lines of thought is the engagement in some physical activity. This can be done at home if the atmosphere is acceptable. Otherwise one can go to another place like a sports ground or a place of activity. A temple is also a useful place in this regard.

In a temple a simple activity which can be performed at any time is sweeping and cleaning the grounds. This can be done as a meditation by concentrating on every little part or step of the work one does. The person needs to keep all senses active and observe the work being done. One can be mindful of whatever else is happening in the temple but should avoid taking too much of interest in those happenings. In other words there must be concentration on the work being done but there can be mindfulness or awareness of the surrounding. Some call this activity meditation. The activity must not be too fast.

Simply walking, either alone or with a friend, can have a similar effect. If the friend is a Buddhist chaplain and verbally engages the person now and then, it is so much the better.

5 PARTICIPATION IN WHOLESOME POSITIVE ACTIVITIES STRENGTHENS THE MIND

Wholesome and positive activities can be found in many places. Activities in a temple are of particular importance. Examples are organised offerings to the Buddha (*Buddha Puja*), Dhamma sermons, Dhamma discussions and group meditations. *Chantings (Paritta)*, illuminations, drumming and processions (parades) are interesting activities.

There are some people who believe they are intellectuals with a significant amount of knowledge, and hold the view that some of these ritualistic activities are nonsensical and that these do not contribute to one's liberation from suffering. It is true that rituals must not be practised in the belief that such practice by itself can lead to liberation. However, if the rituals are practised knowing that these by themselves do not lead to enlightenment, then a good deal of spiritual progress can be achieved through rituals. Sadly, this fact is little understood by educated people. Some say that rituals are not suitable for practitioners in Australia. These statements are based on poor understanding and false wisdom. ***(When the author organised people in ethnic communities in Brisbane to set up a system of seven temples in the early 1980s, there was vehement opposition, apparently based on this type of false wisdom. Fortunately confidence and sensible understanding prevailed.)***

A Buddhist chaplain needs to remember not to fall into this kind of trap out of compassion for suffering clients.

For a client troubled by wasteful thoughts participation in rituals can be immensely beneficial to cleanse the mind. A good knowledge of the Dhamma can make the difference. Listening to the chanting of discourses rhythmically is an example of passive participation of a ritual without much understanding of the content.

Wisdom is not necessarily the most reliable basis of practising Buddhism. Getting established in confidence in the Buddha is the key to successful practice. That confidence, however, must be based on understanding. The latter does require some amount of wisdom.

6 MEDITATION AS A CIRCUIT BREAKER IN THOUGHT ENTANGLEMENTS

If the person has had some training in any type of meditation, the practice of a familiar meditation for a period can also serve as a circuit breaker. In this case the object of meditation prevails over the troublesome object. Walking, breathing and loving kindness meditation can be tried out for this purpose.

In order to disentangle a set of harmful thoughts, one can at will switch on to a strong object of meditation.

UNIT 17A

BASIS OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

1 FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The best known basis of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths:

- 1 There is suffering
- 2 There is a cause of suffering
- 3 There is an end to suffering
- 4 There is a way to end suffering

These truths were taught by the Buddha in his very first discourse in Benares, North India. A person who realises these truths in the ways recommended attains enlightenment. In this discourse suffering itself has been detailed in one paragraph of eight factors:

- (1) Birth,
- (2) Decay,
- (3) Disease,
- (4) Death
- (5) Associating with the unpleasant
- (6) Separation from the pleasant
- (7) Not getting the things one desires
- (8) The five aggregates of clinging (that make up an individual)

In a later discourse (*Sacca Vibhanga Sutta*) five extensions were added:

- (9) Grief (*Soka*)
- (10) Lamentation (*Parideva*)
- (11) Agony (*Dukkha*)
- (12) Melancholy (*Domanassa*), and
- (13) Tribulation (*Upayasa*)

We all have experienced many of these, although some people refuse to acknowledge that there is suffering. There is, no doubt, fleeting pleasure in the midst of a sea of suffering. If

one cannot recognise these four truths at all, the rest of the philosophy cannot help such a person.

Interestingly, this does not imply pessimism and lack of hope. To one who understands Buddhism, there is optimism and hope all the way.

2 NOBLE EIGHT FOLD PATH

The fourth noble truth is that there is a way out of suffering and that it consists of eight strands of practice, namely Right View, Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

There is no sequence of practice. One can start on any strand. A little reflection reveals that the practice on one strand prompts the practice of all others. Right View is like a steering wheel. One needs to adjust it all the time in accordance with the Dhamma. The ultimate right view is to set the direction towards enlightenment. It is like setting the GPS navigation system in a car before commencing the journey.

Right Effort refers to mental effort. When a person has reached a certain level of mental development, the last three strands of effort, mindfulness and concentration are made to enhance one another, first slowly and then rapidly. This enables the fast development of all other strands. This is explained in the 'The Great Discourse on the Forty'. This implies meditation. This discourse also adds two more strands, Right Wisdom and Right Liberation.

3 KAMMA (KARMA) AND THE OTHER NORMS OF THE UNIVERSE

The theory is that the universe runs on certain norms or laws:

Physical Laws

Biological Laws

Seasonal Laws

Mind-related Laws

Kamma Law

Law relating to Abnormalities

This suggests the possibility that all is not dictated by *Kamma*. There is also no indication that one or more laws are dominant. The pragmatic approach seems to be to treat all systems as evidenced and acceptable. Some suggest that the set of norms set out above prevailed before the Buddha. Others believe that this is not part of the Dhamma as Buddha taught. Either way, there is no harm in accepting that these laws do prevail in the world.

4 THEORIES OF DEPENDANT ORIGINATION CONDITONALITY

Events are caused by appropriate conditions. This theory is an attempt made to present a chain of links, each link being the main cause of the succeeding link. The starting point is ignorance. Ignorance causes mental formations. The latter causes consciousness and so on up to death. The wider theory is that of conditionality incorporating twenty four (24) conditions. What we need to know is that things that happen do happen due to prevailing conditions and usually there is a main cause among those conditions.

5 METHODS OF ASCERTAINING THE TRUTH

There have been many religions in the past, and there will continue to be many religions in the future. This poses a dilemma for the thinking person. How does one recognise what is the truth and what is merely a belief? The *Kalama* Princes raised this question with the Buddha. The *Kalama Sutta* was the result.

The Buddha rejected the prevailing common criteria as ultimate determinants of truth and these included the following:

Revelation

Tradition

Hearsay

Religious texts

Appearance of the teacher

The idea of 'Our Teacher'

Mere Logic

Inference

Speculation

The Buddha encouraged intelligent understanding, critical judgment and self-experience. One needs to inquire whether an action is wholesome or unwholesome and convince oneself through one's own experience. Learning from senior practitioners is encouraged. Hence nothing is a dogma in Buddhism. There is room for free enquiry. Accepting teachings blindly is not recommended.

6 THE THREE SIGNATA OF EXISTENCE

Existence in the universe has three common features called the signata of existence. These are:

Impermanence (*Anicca*)

Suffering (*Dukkha*)

Non-substantiality (*Anatta*)

The first is the feature of constant change. This is evidenced in modern science with regard to physical and biological formations. The Buddha has seen the nature of impermanence in regard to the mind. We too can see it to some extent in meditation.

Suffering has many forms. Most of us have experienced some form of agony, even if it was for a short period. Things that are difficult to bear always imply suffering. Suffering itself is subject to change over time but it never ceases to be a feature of existence. Many people fail to see this aspect. While some pleasures are there, these are usually fleeting.

The third feature is more difficult to understand. What it says is that there is nothing in a being that is ever lasting and passing from one life to another, that could be described as one's soul as believed in other religions. While there is some continuity of an individual there is nothing substantial that always continues. The continuity is an illusion. There is no denial of individuality and individual responsibility but there is a rejection of something substantial and permanent that passes from one life to another. The new born person is not the same person as before and also not an entirely new person. The connection seems to be causation. The new life is caused by what was done before. It is not that a soul moved from one place to the other.

7 THE FIVE MENTAL HINDRANCES

There are five mental hindrances to spiritual progress. These hindrances can be suspended when in full concentration, also called Absorptions (*Jhanas*). They are uprooted at the level of enlightenment. These are:

HINDRANCE	SUPRESSING JHANA FACTOR
Addiction to sense pleasures	One-pointedness
Hatred	Joy
Sloth and Torpor	Initial Application
Restlessness and Worry	Tranquillity
Sceptical doubt	Sustained Application

Each of these has been discussed before. The five factors of absorptions have the ability to suppress a corresponding hindrance. The *Jhana* factors are (1) Initial Application (*Vitakka*), (2) Sustained Application (*Vicara*), (3) Joy (*Piti*), (4) Tranquillity (*Sukha*), and (5) One-pointedness of mind (*Ekaggata*). The correspondence is depicted in the table above.

Different types of Dhamma practice are able to reduce the hindrances gradually over a period of time. The absorptions do this instantly but when the absorption ends the suspension also ends.

Gradual and continuing practices can be illustrated by Loving Kindness, both day to day practice and meditation, which work as an antidote to hatred. Compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity also can help in the process. Compassion can be extended by actual services rendered to those in need.

Another illustration is the use of loathsomeness meditation (*Asubha Bhavana*) and negative aspects of otherwise desirable objects (*Adinawa*), to reduce addiction to sense pleasures via the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body touch. Body touch is arguably the most powerful sense pleasure. At a minimum it can give comfort (for a baby for example), and at its height can lead to lust at an uncontrollable level.

8 DEATH AND REBIRTH

Death and rebirth have been mentioned before. Strictly speaking death occurs every moment but we cannot easily notice it. We notice it when the mind gets separated from the body as per the conventional death recognised by ordinary people and by the registrar of deaths.

Similarly, rebirth occurs in the womb but we recognise it nine months later when the registrar of births recognises it.

There is no soul that moves from one place to the other. The thought process continues across conventional death and rebirth. *Kamma* provides the backing force in this process. The process ends when the chain of dependent arising is broken by steadfast practice of what the Buddha taught.

UNIT 17B

HOW BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY FACILITATES CHAPLAINCY WORK

1 PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS CAN BE APPLIED IN ANY SITUATION INVOLVING A PROBLEM CONFRONTED BY THE CHAPLAIN OR THE CLIENT

The generalised thinking behind the four noble truths can be stated as follows:

- 1 There exists a problem
- 2 There must be a cause for the problem
- 3 There must be a solution to the problem
- 4 There must be a path leading to the solution of the problem

The client in a bad situation might not see things in this manner. The chaplain can help the client to think clearly. The need to accept that there is a problem is important. It is necessary to identify the problem as clearly as possible. Once the problem is identified, an attempt must be made to discover the cause or causes behind the problem.

Then we make the assumption that when the causes are eliminated or reduced, a solution to the problem becomes visible. Then an attempt is made to eliminate the causes of the problem. A solution should result.

In trying this method there can be failures as incorrect assumptions are made. Hence a clear path is needed. The chaplain needs to help the client in clarifying the path to the solution of the identified problem.

In ascertaining causes of a problem one needs to look for causes that are attributable to one-self. Those are the ones that can be eliminated as one is able to control them. External causes might be difficult to eliminate, though they may be easier to see.

Take the case of two neighbours who had an argument and soured relations as a result. If I am one of them I can easily attribute the cause of the problem to the neighbour. In fact it might be reasonable to think so. Yet, that cause is hard to eliminate because I am not in control of my neighbour's mind. If part of the cause can be attributed to me, then I have the ability to eliminate that part. Then a step is taken to find a solution.

In this particular case, souring of relations is the problem, the cause is probably harsh words used in the arguments, the solution is to restore relations, and the path is to accept responsibility for what I said, and perhaps apologise to the neighbour. If the neighbour is a sensible person, he or she also might do likewise.

The possibility of choosing the best path needs to be recognised as otherwise results might be delayed.

2 CHAPLAINS CAN SHOW THAT THE SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM INVOLVES A PATH TO A SOLUTION WHICH CAN BE STYLED LIKE THE NOBLE EIGHT FOLD PATH.

A path to a solution can be styled similar to the Noble Eightfold Path. Whatever path is chosen the client needs to be advised to avoid extremes. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of the three major strands of morality, concentration and wisdom. The path to solve any problem needs to involve the same ideas. To be truthful, to avoid harsh words, to avoid slanders and accusations and to avoid meaningless words through waffling equates to a moral approach. Being calm and thinking clearly about the situation amounts to minimal concentration. To ensure that the analysis and the intended solution are correct and proper amounts to wisdom. In each of these the chaplain can provide guidance.

3 DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE WORKING OF KAMMA USING STORIES FROM TEXTS, OR OTHER STORIES KNOWN TO THE CHAPLAIN OR THE CLIENT.

Most stories from the Dhamma books or from other sources have a moral. Mostly, these illustrate that if someone did something unwholesome, that person will sooner or later suffer for such actions.

4 EDUCATING A CLIENT REGARDING THE NATURE OF SUFFERING

Suffering has been discussed before. In the case of a client the acceptance of the idea of suffering as a feature of existence may lead to loss of hope and a feeling of pessimism. The client needs to learn how to see the bright side of the story. If you honestly accept that 'this is indeed suffering', the fact that you understand it can be a source of joy. In other words the knowledge of suffering can be moved from the realm of emotions (some mental states) and cast in the realm of consciousness (*citta*). Actually the client can now think of ways out of suffering by changing behaviour, by doing meditation and seeing things as they are, thereby casting away the clouds of emotion.

Those who really come to know a little about suffering then become happy because they know the thief and they can get rid of the thief at least eventually. Those who do not have that much of knowledge become dismayed to experience suffering and keep dreaming of a world without suffering. They achieve nothing.

5 DEMONSTRATION OF A PATH TO RECOVERY AND THE NEED FOR A PATH

Using the idea behind the fourth Noble Truth, the client can be educated to understand that there is always a path to extricate oneself from even the worst situation. The Buddha said so. It is up to us to open our eyes and see the path. It might not be near and might not be clear but we have the ability to see it. This is where some knowledge of the Dhamma could help. A very easy entry point to the path of recovery is to mind one's speech. For example

one can determine to avoid speaking ill of others. One can use some of the precepts to enter the path.

6 DEMONSTRATING THE USEFULNESS OF KAMMA THEORY TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS

Assume I am in deep trouble. According to *kamma* theory, I might have done something wrong in the past. Immediately that reflection brings solace because at least I seem to know what has happened.

I can become happy when I realise that I can create new, good *kamma* by doing wholesome deeds. Then I can move to examine what wholesome deeds I can do. By building a large enough pile of good deeds, I know according to *kamma* theory that my bad *kamm*as can be kept at bay.

If someone did something wrong, and if it hurt me badly, I need not waste my energy by seeking retribution from that person as I know the bad *kamma* is not mine and it belongs to the other person.

Similar illustrations can be researched depending on the client's ability to understand.

7 HELPING A CLIENT TO DISCOVER THE HINDRANCES TO PROGRESS

When progress is impeded, the client should be helped to analyse the causes. There are always some causes that are connected to us. One can start from those causes and try to eliminate these. If others are responsible, the client needs to proceed on the basis of the four sublime behaviours, including compassion. One needs to avoid immoral behaviour at all costs.

8 DEMONSTRATING THE NEED FOR URGENCY DUE TO THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

For lethargic people it is useful to remember that life can be short. We do not know how long we would live. It does not help to waste time. Striving on with diligence is the teaching.

The inevitability of death can also help us to overcome enmities. After all, the other person will also die someday. The relevance of our concerns about them will then be insignificant or even meaningless.

However, death need not be discussed too much or too early in the engagement with clients who are frightened by the thought of death.

UNIT 18A

IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUAL

1 THE FIVE AGGREGATES ARE TOGETHER CALLED A PERSON

The idea of an individual and how we understand it are affected by the common idea that a person has a soul. Most other religions believe in an eternal, solid soul in every person and indeed even some Buddhists find it hard to think of an individual devoid of a soul. The concept of an individual person not having a soul or continuing self is naturally difficult to grasp.

However, if we go back to the thought process discussed briefly in Units 16A and 16B, a thought is a series of *cittas* (units of consciousness) arising and ceasing one after the other in a sequence. There was nothing linking them into a chain or string, or something that represented permanency, substantiality or solidity. That is how the mind works. There was no solid or permanent entity on which the series of *cittas* was based. Each *citta* arose on its own merits and then ceased to exist, giving way to the next *citta* which similarly arose and ceased.

That is as far as the mind is concerned. Where the body is concerned, elementary science has taught us that all cells that together form the body keep changing constantly, hence why we look so different in appearance at all stages of life, from a foetus to an aged person. Again there is no place for a permanent soul. If the soul cannot be seen either in the body or in the mind, where is it?

The so-called individual, according to Buddhism, comprises of five aggregates as follows:

Matter (*Rupa*)

Feeling (*Vedana*)

Perceptions (*Sanna*)

Mental formations (*Sankhara*)

Consciousness (*Vinnana*)

The person does not have anything other than these five elements. These elements keep heaping up over time (conceptually) and so are called aggregates. The heap of matter (i.e., the physical body) looks constant but we know it is not.

It is useful to have a basic understanding about the five aggregates. The body consists of different types of matter. One classification is solids, liquids, gases and heat. Heat quite rightly is classified as matter. **This was not known to Newtonian science. However, relatively recently, Albert Einstein and connected scientists proved that energy, including**

heat, is another type of matter, as represented by the famous equation $E = mc^2$ where the 'E' represents energy, 'm' is the mass of an object (i.e. the matter) and 'c' is the speed of light. In quantum physics matter and energy are the same, confirming the presumptions in Buddhist *Abhidhamma*.

One may also analyse the body into atoms and sub-atomic particles. Buddhism offers another analysis in the breakdown of the body into 32 parts. The main thing to note is that matter is constantly changing. Consequently, there is nothing permanent or substantial to be found in the physical body.

Feelings keep changing depending on what we contact. Perceptions keep changing with new experiences. Mental formations are fabrications or constructions of the mind which again keep changing. *Citta* keeps changing due to the impact of past *Kamma* or new *Kamma* created by the person in the *Javana cittas*.

Hence this body-mind combination keeps changing all the time and there is no room for a substantial and solid unchanging entity to be called a self or a soul.

To many people, however, the stream of changing aggregates above seems to represent a self. We can assume the notion of such a self as a working basis until we reach enlightenment.

2 USE AND MISUSE OF THE CONCEPT OF NO SOUL

As just mentioned it is useful to avoid taking a strong view that there is a self or that there is no-self. This is not a matter for creating views, especially strong views, in our minds. It is a matter that needs to be understood in a pragmatic way by observation, adjustment of behaviour, and examining the nature of the change that occurs.

For practical purposes, for us to get on with the rest of the world, we need to tentatively accept the self-idea where responsibility is concerned. One cannot afford to commit murder and say I am not responsible because there is no entity to be called "I". That is not going to help the person anyway. The stream of consciousness and the stream of matter called myself are continuing and is responsible for actions committed regardless of the presence or absence of a soul.

At the same time we try to abandon old ideas of a permanent and subtle, substantial soul within ourselves. Whatever remains is what we have done by thought, word or deed. That is *Kamma* and the creations of *Kamma*.

Other aspect to reduce gradually is derivations of the self-idea such as pride, conceit, greed and hatred. Why are we proud? It is because of the self-idea and the view that I am in one way or another superior to the other person. The stronger our idea of identity is, the greater is the pride. Despite all his wonderful achievements the Buddha was not proud. He was not conceited. He was indeed very humble. He had finally destroyed the self-idea.

Though we are not enlightened, we can observe the ill-effects of pride. An excessively proud person becomes the butt end of many jokes and eventually looks a fool in the eyes of others. In a practical sense it is unwise to increase pride. Society respects people for their capabilities and services, but one must not expect such respect to be automatically forthcoming. It is not for me to be proud about what great things I may have done. It is up to others to recognise it. If they do not, so be it as nothing has been lost if that recognition is not forthcoming.

3 GREED AND ITS CONNECTION TO THE SELF IDEA

It is because we think of a soul or substantial and permanent self that we are so greedy for resources. We collect and accumulate things for the sustenance and continuation of this soul. It then does not matter what happens to other souls. My soul is always more important than those of others. To go to an extreme in this endeavour is certainly selfish. At one time, when there was a real threat of nuclear war, there were some people who built nuclear shelters for their families. Even if the rest of the world got totally destroyed, they expected to survive and take control of the new world.

The idea of clinging on to life under all circumstances and not accepting the inevitability of death is also due to the idea of a soul.

Greed ends only at the third stage of enlightenment. Yet some aspects of the self-idea still remain. Conceit, for example, remains to be abandoned only when a person becomes an Arahant.

4 OTHER MENTAL STATES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO THE SELF IDEA

Hatred towards other individuals is closely connected to the self-idea. The other person is also treated as having a permanent soul. That other soul is assumed to have certain aspects that are repulsive. Hence, I hate that person. Suppose we did not attribute the self-idea to that other person. He or she is also a collection of matter and mind that are constantly changing. If that person was bad at one time, we should be able to accept that he or she could be better at another time if we refrain from attributing a soul to that person. Hence, I develop and maintain hatred towards another on the basis of my own perceptions involving a permanent entity called a soul. The moment I manage to abandon that perception even partially, the hatred is reduced.

Jealousy and avarice also have connections with the self-idea.

5 WHOLESOME MENTAL STATES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO THE SELF IDEA

Wholesome mental states too are developed based on the self-idea. One who performs good deeds needs to be careful not to be carried away with the pride that results from it. A typical sign of such pride is when one starts to compare one's good actions with actions of others. One then begins to develop an unhealthy sense of piety and self-righteousness. This

can then lead to condemning others as being bad or not as good as I am. If one is not mindful, pride and conceit can easily dominate the good actions. This can result in the merits of the good actions being tainted or coloured by the self-idea, causing the resultant *Kamma* to become weak.

Secondly the good action ceases to be skilful in that it will contribute less towards the person's progress towards enlightenment. This is because although the value of the good action still remains, the growth of the pride and conceit becomes an impediment to further spiritual progress.

Thirdly, the person might do good things in the future simply motivated by the admiration and praise received from others. The true focus of good actions will be partly lost.

UNIT 18B

SELF-IDEA AS A CHALLENGE IN BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

1 DEMONSTRATION OF THE VARIABILITY OF RESPONSES TO THE STIMULI OF THE ENVIRONMENT DEPENDING ON THE STRENGTH OF ONE'S IDEA OF THE SELF

Suppose your client has faced a natural disaster such as a flood. Thousands of people might have been affected. Many have died, many are hospitalised, some are starving, some cannot find their loved ones while others have lost their property.

Due to the self-concept, the client may be concerned predominantly about his or her losses. Some losses might be negligible and some could be substantial but the thinking of the client is about his or her losses only. The focus is there and the suffering is therefore accentuated.

Many people may have some things saved against all expectations. It is useful to examine the impact of the self-idea on the client.

If the client constantly harps on the losses incurred by him or her, oblivious to the experience of all others, the client's self-idea or soul idea may be strong, unless some other major reason can explain that behaviour. In a case like this a philosophical approach might not be of help. It is more effective to draw the client's attention to the plight of other people. A couple of shocking examples could help the client to change track. The overall picture of the disaster can also be absorbing.

A recollection of the eight vicissitudes of life could help to draw attention to externalities rather than internal feelings. The eight are gain and loss, praise and blame, good repute and bad repute, sorrow and happiness. These things come and go and we have to face each of these for a period of time.

Recollection of compassion towards others who suffered losses can also help to break away from concentrating on the self-idea. What action is being taken by government and volunteers, other chaplains, religious groups and so on can be examples.

An exclamation that we hear often is 'Why me, why me'. This is all because of the self-idea.

Fear of non-recovery and pending annihilation are also common. Here the client can be helped to see ways out of the current experience. The fact that worse things have happened and that ultimately recovery was achieved could help the client to see a better path.

2 DEMONSTRATE HOW THE SELF CONCEPT HELPS WHEN ONE NEEDS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S SITUATION.

Suppose an argument broke out between me and my neighbour. I can look for more arguments and add fuel to the fire. Possibly the other party also will do so. This will never

end. It might end up in a result which is harmful to all parties. At the end of the day one might wonder why all this had happened.

In a case like this, one can use the self-idea to attempt recovery or to reduce further damage. Firstly, one feels ashamed to have gone through a bad situation. This is because of self-esteem. One can then examine why things escalated until one traces back to a word or two that one spoke which helped to turn the conversation sour. Now, one takes or feels the need to take responsibility for what eventually happened.

Due to self-esteem and pride, it is difficult to publicly accept responsibility for whatever turned sour. Then one has to realise the obstacle to progress is the self-idea and the associated pride that prevents one from admitting responsibility. Once you get over the self-idea to some extent, the problem can be solved.

This is a case where the self-idea can be used to overcome a bad situation. First, the existence of the self is used as a basis and then the non-existence of a self is applied. In either case at the back of one's mind it is necessary to remember that there is no substantial and permanent entity to be called a self or a soul. The self-idea used here for something good is merely a working basis for progress.

3 DISPUTES BETWEEN SPOUSES AND THE SELF-IDEA

The example given above applies here too. Spouses need to have conversations so that household duties can be carried out effectively. Mistakes are often made in conversations for all kinds of reasons. A mistake on the part of one spouse can be turned into a type of battle by the other because of that other's self-idea, or ego. The escalation of a verbal dispute is nearly always ego related on the part of both spouses or at least one.

In a case like this one needs to stop for a while and re-examine the conversation in an attempt to discover the point at which it truly degraded. Invariably one will discover the part played by one's ego at some point. It is then a case of being humble and being able to climb down a little, and accepting responsibility. The fact that you might be able to prove that the other spouse is a really worthless case is not relevant. One needs to manage one's ego to reduce disputes, usually on meaningless topics.

Arguments can give the feeling of victory in battle to a person who carries a massive ego. One should realise that having won all the battles, one might still lose the war. The relationship might end, placing all the parties in agony. One needs to imagine the unbearable agony forced onto the innocent minds of little children.

Keep reviewing your words and actions and the thoughts that precede. You will see that most of these are connected to foolishness, and the latter is based on the ego or the self-idea. It is a strong and hidden mental state. Strangely the ego idea aims at enhancing one's position but in fact it ultimately degrades and muddles one's position. Most people do not

seem to recognise this simple fact. Even if they do recognise it, they are likely to forget it at the required moment.

4 DISCIPLINING CHILDREN AND THE SELF- IDEA

Using physical punishments to discipline children is a matter being debated in many societies. Parents claim that they resort to such actions out of love for the children. Let the debate continue. In a recent television programme, some people from Africa revealed that by giving physical punishments to the child, the mother gets relieved of part of her stress. We need to respect them for the admission as it is an admission of the impact of the ego or self-idea. The mother's soul needs to be appeased and let the child suffer a little for the sake of the mother. This may have become part of a culture.

Many Asian cultures would not admit that. They generally claim that physical punishment of children is for genuine disciplinary purposes. Despite these debates, there are many parents who negotiate and reason with children to teach good behaviour. The writer recalls his family of seven and how the father and mother disciplined this large family. The mother would never punish the children for anything but somehow managed to elicit proper behaviour from the children on the whole. The father's only punishment was to look at the wrong doer and sometimes ask a question from the wrong doer. That was enough. The three girls and the four boys were always reputed for good behaviour. There must be many families like that. What is the secret?

The secret of success or failure in disciplining children depends significantly on the knowledge and wisdom of parents and their reduced and well managed ego.

5 WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND THE SELF- IDEA

Greed for power and money can be a spoiler in the work place. Hidden tendencies might cause friction among co-workers. In addition, the self-idea can become a killer instinct. Even the least educated and foolish manager can have a massive ego about his or her capabilities, thereby damaging all human relations and therefore productivity. They might spend their entire life time in this manner, until perhaps a disaster like a corporate crash occurs.

Subordinates who have intelligence see such people as a joke and try to manage their managers for private advantage. They feed the manager's ego in a subtle manner.

In management meetings it makes sense to talk less by using fewer words and sharp and strong phrases, and to think before talking. You do not know which little word would hit the ego of a powerful fool. Changing jobs may not help as the next place may be a little bit worse.

All of these examples highlight the lack of realisation of one of the three signata of existence, i.e., no soul.

UNIT 19A

TECHNIQUE OF TENTATIVE ACCEPTANCE OF A SITUATION

1 EIGHT VICISSITUDES OF LIFE (GAIN, FAME, PRAISE, HAPPINESS AND OPPOSITES)

The world keeps rolling along in its own way. What happens in the world might be good for us as individuals or bad for us at different times. The Dhamma lists eight things called the vicissitudes of life in four pairs of opposites as follows:

Gain	Loss
Fame	Ill-fame
Praise	Blame
Happiness	Sadness

Common experience is that we get highly elated when there is a gain such as a business gain or a salary increase with a new job. When we experience a loss such as a business loss, investment loss or a loss of a job or status, then we become despondent. This may happen not to us as individuals but even as a member of a group, a sports team or even an entire nation. A win is followed by elation and jubilation, and a loss is followed by disappointment.

What makes a gain for us might well be a loss to another but we rarely think of it that way. This is because of the lack of true understanding of the self-idea. Although I am myself distinct from others by name and features, yet I am part of a mass of processes going on in the world. The more one appreciates this truth we can have a higher level of equanimity and get disturbed much less due to both gains and losses.

Even the Buddha experienced losses. When *Devadatta* set up his own faction of monks and tried to take over the Buddha *Sasana* from the Buddha while he was living, it was a loss. It is in the nature of the world that there are people like *Devadatta*.

If that was the case then, there is nothing surprising in ordinary worldlings like us losing possessions now and then. The point is to realise that this is part of the world and we learn to accept it as a fact. That makes life easier to handle.

Fame and ill-fame occur damaging the reputation of the best of people. The Buddha had a great deal of fame but there were many instances in which he was falsely accused of misdoings, albeit mistakenly. Still he remained calm and equanimous. It is impossible to imagine why a person like the Buddha lost his fame even for short periods. That is the way with the world.

Praise and blame are nothing new in school or at work. Politicians know this all too well. When things go wrong all the blame is heaped on the political leaders of the day.

All of us have experienced happiness and sadness in turn, sometimes in extreme fashion. Acceptance of this as a part of life makes things easier to handle. Acceptance makes it easy to tide over difficulties.

Similar to the waves in the deep ocean and the repeated movement of the water upwards and downwards, the opposites continue to happen in the world. The point is not to take ownership of these events as our own, but to see these as normal, repeating occurrences in the world we live in.

2 IDEA OF KAMMA (KARMA) AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RESULTS OF ONE'S KAMMA

Broadly speaking if we accept *Kamma* theory as a reasonable explanation of our experience of the world, we could attribute any gain or loss to a good or bad *Kamma* committed in the past, either in this life or another.

In other words, our *Kamma* might be seizing opportunities to mature and show results at the appropriate junctures consonant with ongoing ups and downs in the world. For example, while the global financial crisis was setting in, I might have felt strongly inclined to dump all my savings on the share market as massive changes are occurring. As the crisis was gathering momentum, my past bad *Kamma* may have generated the feelings in my mind to attempt to generate quick income by investing in a volatile market.

It would not take too long to discover my folly and lose all I had accumulated. It is really not the world that put me into trouble but my own doing (*Kamma*). Such a perspective allows me to take responsibility for the loss. There is less room for lament after the loss. If anything, I have learnt a good lesson before the next crisis.

3 THE LAMENTATION OF 'WHY ME?' IS MEANINGLESS

When the world is taking its own course, perhaps unbeknownst to us, events can affect all individuals either in a good or bad manner. It is up to each individual to either own the event as their own or refrain from doing so. Those who unwittingly own the event as their own can get shaken, sometimes violently. Those others can remain calm.

Those who lament 'why me?' should take the trouble to look at the experience of others in the same situation. There are so many others in similar or worse troubles.

This is again a consequence of incorrectly looking at the world as a collection of individuals and things and not as an intertwined process. A person having this mentality looks at oneself as an independent individual and the trouble being experienced as a blow given by another individual.

This can also lead to blaming others for what has happened to me without taking any responsibility or trying to understand what has actually happened.

4 COMMON PITFALL OF LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO BLAME

As mentioned above incorrect assessment of the ups and downs of the world may lead to blaming others. When this happens hatred is generated, thus creating new problems. If there is no individual to blame, people choose to blame some collective or group, such as a different religious or ethnic group, or the government.

5 ACCEPTING THE BIOLOGICAL NORM OFTEN PROVIDES SOLACE

Sickness and old age primarily go hand in hand with the biological norm. For example, our teeth become weak and sick due to biological processes. While we can defer or control these to some extent, we cannot overcome these completely. One might even lose all the teeth. If a denture cannot be fixed, it will cause significant suffering for the rest of life. If only we accept the operation of the biological law, there is no need to lament as one can get around the unpleasant eventuality in different ways.

Any physical pain is limited. One can make the mental pain either unbearable or light using the technique of acceptance.

Similarly, accepting the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time of death, one can live happily until the event happens.

Accepting the operation of the other universal norms (niyamas) similarly helps us to tide over good and bad experiences.

6 ACCEPTING THE LAWS OF THE MIND AND MENTAL STATES

A more subtle technique can be used when mental states change suddenly. Spiritual practitioners often worry why this happens. Part of the reason is that there are hidden mental states such as lust that can be awakened with unseen triggers. This is the way with the mind. One can remember this and simply observe what is happening in the mind. That itself may lead to solutions.

UNIT 19B

TRAINING THE CLIENT IN TENTATIVELY ACCEPTING A SITUATION

1 OBSERVING THE CHANGE OF FORTUNES FOR ONE AND ALL AS A PART OF LIFE

As mentioned before life is not presented on a platter with nothing to complain about. At times everything seems to go well and at other times everything seems to go badly. This process of change is part of life and needs to be accepted as a fact of life. It is part of the fundamental philosophy implied in Buddhism. Nothing remains unchanged, even when we really want them to stay as they are.

Among the eight vicissitudes of life, sometimes there is happiness or at least sense pleasure. Within seconds it may change to sadness or even agony and distress. Again it can change back to happiness. We have observed this before and we can expect this to happen in the future.

When the writer came to Australia in 1978, he noticed Australian people saying '*these things happen*', or '*she'll be right, mate*' when something went wrong. These people were mostly non-Buddhist but they had a grasp of the Buddhist principle of acceptance. They would then move on more easily if an unpleasant event occurred (incidentally, to the credit of Australian people, the writer made many more observations of the same type over the years).

Similarly, we make gains at times and then we sustain losses in all spheres of life. We must develop the ability to say '*these things happen*' and move on as best as we could. If we continue to complain and lament about what had happened, no progress is possible and we waste a lot of energy by refusing to accept what had happened.

Another similar possibility is receiving praise at one time and then receiving blame at another time from the same person, whether they be a manager at work or your spouse. It is worth examining the causes behind why we were blamed, and having done that, we need to accept the status quo tentatively and move on.

One needs to observe changes of fortunes over time and work out a policy of moving on through tentative acceptance. In the work place, this is absolutely important. This is also important in the home environment, especially for people with families.

So far we have discussed external events and happenings.

The principle of tentative acceptance is also applicable in the internal environment. What has been going on in the mind of the client in a particular situation? It may be that he or she is brooding over memories. The client might now be wishing that those events had never occurred. What has happened is already in the past and any damage caused, both external and internal, has to be tentatively accepted. Otherwise constant worry might cause even

more damage. We need to learn to accept the present situation tentatively and move forward, perhaps with the help of a chaplain.

2 CREATING GOOD KAMMA IS A SOLUTION TO CURRENT PROBLEMS

Acceptance as discussed above does not imply inaction. Active engagement in wholesome activities can have multiple benefits for the client. Firstly, the wholesome actions would create good *Kamma* and the latter has the potential to produce good results. These good results might be able to tone down the ill effects of the previous happenings. A simple belief in this process might in fact enhance the results.

Secondly, in the process of creating good *Kamma*, the mind of the client is cleared of rubbish that can well be discarded. Tentative acceptance can enhance the process.

Thirdly, continuing this process renders the mind reasonably clean. It becomes calm and at least less agitated. The mind is now stronger and energetic to examine future courses of action. This might not be immediate but eventual.

This situation may initially be good enough for the client but it can be taken to a much higher level. Using the unfortunate occurrence as a stepping stone, one can now try higher levels of achievement in sensible acceptance.

3 LEARNING TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF TENTATIVE ACCEPTANCE AS A PLATFORM TO MOVE ON TO A MORE ACCEPTABLE SITUATION

Tentative acceptance of a post-event situation should not be looked upon as a kind of feel-good therapy. It is also not an attempt at blinding the client's mind at the behest of another, meaning the chaplain.

The practical meaning of tentative acceptance is the creation of a platform to spring into real recovery. So long as the client keeps worrying over what had happened, the client will stay confused and depressed. The client will not see hope for the future, being obsessed with this confusion. The time wasted can also bring in new and unexpected problems.

One possibility is unilateral reactions on the part of the client that can result in further trouble. Another possibility is minor ailments. These can make things even more hopeless.

The chaplain needs to help the client to understand the futility of worry. According to *Abhidhamma* worry occurs when a person has made a serious mistake or sustained a significant loss which the person thinks could have been avoided if only he or she 'had done this little thing or that'. So the person's mind keeps oscillating between the past experience and the present moment. Apart from the oscillation nothing useful dawns on the person. Hence, there is waste of time and loss of hope on a continuing basis. In this poor situation the client might be prompted to irrational thinking and action. That is dangerous. If the chaplain asks the client why he or she is doing this the answer might be 'I am planning a way

out'. The fact is that there cannot be conscious planning while worry keeps going on. It is the chaplain's duty to point this out and come back to the principle of tentative acceptance. It is not accepting defeat. It is a way to move forward.

4 LEARNING HOW NEW PROBLEMS GET CREATED WHEN BLAME IS ASSIGNED TO SOMEONE ELSE, WHATEVER THE JUSTIFICATIONS

When people get into the habit of blaming others and external factors for everything, the mental state of anger keeps lingering. With people who take responsibility for whatever happens, goodwill has a chance of spreading and prevailing.

A client who thinks in this manner can be trained to see how one can take responsibility for a current experience.

5 TRAINING A CLIENT TO OBSERVE THE NORMS OF THE UNIVERSE (NIYAMAS)

A chaplain can help a client to observe the working of the norms of the universe such as the law of seasons, law of living things, law of Karma, law of the mind, law of celestial bodies and so on, seen by many as the laws of nature.

These laws keep working whatever we as individual might wish should happen. It is hard to change or manipulate these. The next best is to accept these laws and observe their doings. Perhaps we can mitigate losses as a result. We can make the best out of what is virtually inevitable.

UNIT 20A

FORMULAE FOR PRACTICE BASED DEVELOPMENT OF BEHAVIOUR

1 SETS OF PRECEPTS FOR A CONTENTED LIFE AND FOR HARMONIOUS LIVING

In the Theravada tradition as well as in the Mahayana tradition there are many sets of precepts, firstly aimed at self-development and secondly at harmonious living with other people and the environment. The ideas behind the sets of precepts are similar.

The five precepts form the best known set. These are stated as actions to refrain from the following: killing, stealing, misuse of the senses, telling lies, and taking intoxicants.

Observance of these five precepts effectively contributes to a person's development in a spiritual sense while at the same time resulting in peace and harmony in society. Extending the meanings of the five precepts, hurting another living being amounts to partial destruction of life. Taking the possessions of another unless given by the owner may amount to stealing. Misusing the senses hurts another and can amount to stealing a person from the protector of the person. Telling lies can deceive others and cause loss to them. Intoxication implies the complete or partial loss of the mind, which in turn can cause hurt to oneself and others.

There are also the so-called positive approaches to the five precepts. The precept itself is to refrain from a wrong act. In addition one can perform related right acts. For example, while undertaking to avoid killing, one can also undertake to save lives. Life-guards at the beach is an example of this practice. The positive actions train the person to avoid the wrongs even more completely.

Protecting the property of others is a positive approach to the second precept relating to the avoidance of stealing. A tenant can look after the property of the land owner in this manner.

One might wonder why the precepts are worded as negatives. One obvious use of a negative statement is that when a precept is broken, it rings a bell. Hence your mindfulness is aroused. At a high level of mindfulness there is a better chance to hold on to the precepts with ease in the future. It is a type of cyclical process.

The precept relating to false speech can be extended to cover wrongful speech. Thus we can refrain from slandering, using harsh words, gossip, meaningless talk and so on. To avoid a wrong livelihood also can be a precept.

It is stated that ascetic *Siddhartha* observed the eight precepts of livelihood until he attained Buddhahood. It included the five precepts in effect plus avoiding slandering, harsh words, frivolous speech and wrong livelihood.

2 THREEFOLD LEARNING (DISCIPLINE, CONCENTRATION AND WISDOM)

This terminology is used in Mahayana Buddhism. In Theravada this set is regarded as the initial level of practice as a Buddhist. The precepts for lay persons and for monks and nuns are together called codes of discipline. When a person disciplines the body, the mind tends to follow suit. The mind gets disciplined. Instead of running all over achieving very little, the person now becomes able to dwell on small, useful areas. Concentration results from continued practice of discipline.

As mentioned above, precepts awaken mindfulness and the latter grows into concentration. In concentration the radius of unplanned movement of the mind is gradually reduced. At a high level, the mind can stay on a single object for a long time. In deep concentration a person attains Absorptions or *Jhanas*.

At this level the impurities of the mind called hindrances are suspended or inactivated temporarily. This clears the ground for wisdom. Wisdom develops further through insight, seeing the true nature of all things.

3 THE TEN TYPES OF VIRTUOUS CONDUCT (THE TEN GREAT VOWS)

Another type of practice taken from Pure Land Mahayana is based on the following ten great vows:

- 1 Pay respect to all Buddhas
- 2 Praise the 'Thus Come One'
- 3 Make offerings extensively
- 4 Regret *Karmic* obstacles
- 5 Be joyful regarding others
- 6 Appeal to the Buddha to turn the wheel of Dhamma
- 7 Request the Buddha to reside in this world
- 8 Constantly be a diligent follower of the Buddha's teachings
- 9 Accord with all sentient beings
- 10 Dedicate all merits

In Sri Lanka (Theravada) the ten great meritorious actions are highly regarded. A few of these items are in the above list.

The ten great meritorious actions are as follows:

Generosity

Morality

Meditation

Reverence

Service to others

Giving merits

Rejoicing in other's merits

Hearing the Dhamma

Teaching the Dhamma

Straightening one's views

In passing it is mentioned that monks and nuns attempt to follow more than 200 rules, although only a few are compulsory. Most of these rules are intended to help perpetuate the Sangha, some are intended to protect the Sangha, and others help to train new members of the Sangha.

4 DEVELOPING THE THREE CONDITIONS (SKILFUL ACTIONS, PRECEPTS, MIND DEVELOPMENT)

Another way of looking at practice is to base it on the performance of skilful (*Kusala*) actions. Morality and codes of conduct help in further advancement. There are seven types of purification of virtues. These are not detailed here. Finally, one needs to develop one's mind.

5 OTHER FORMULAE OF PRACTICE

The Dhamma is full of formulae for practice. One can choose suitable formulae. There are numerous aids to practice. Primarily the aim is to reduce unwholesome or unskilful actions and to increase wholesome or skilful actions. For example, the five hindrances and defilements (nine are given in one set in *Abhidhamma* Categories) need to be weakened and eliminated. The ten fetters to enlightenment need to be overcome.

This creates a clean sheet gradually. Then the thirty seven factors conducive to enlightenment can be developed.

UNIT 20B

HELPING A CLIENT IN IMPROVING BEHAVIOUR

1 TAKING PRECEPTS AND OBSERVING THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

In the case of a client, the starting point cannot be pre-determined. Once the chaplain gets to know the client and a plan for recovery is in place, the chaplain can work out the point at which practice can start. Making offerings to the Buddha in a temple might be a good start. Taking some precepts can form part of the procedure for making offerings.

Most Mahayana centres have very formal and elaborate ceremonies to make offerings to the Buddha. These are not just rituals as some suggest. The meaning behind them runs deeper than what is apparent.

Precepts may or may not be chosen from a standard set like the five precepts. Whether precepts are standard or non-standard, the client must be helped to understand what they mean and what benefits might accrue.

For example, if one precept was defined as 'Not to hurt or kill any sentient being' the client needs to ask for the true meaning and likely benefits. Unintended or accidental hurting of beings does not amount to the breaking of the precept. As you keep practising you will become kinder and more compassionate. The immediate benefit is that others feel safe with you and they will reciprocate. There is no need to advertise the observance of this precept.

Although the practice might look small and narrow the change in behaviour could well be much wider.

2 PRACTISING MEDITATION INITIALLY FOR SHORT PERIODS

Just like in the case of precepts, simplicity and relevance is important. The type of meditation should be simple and the period must not be tiring.

A very simple meditation can be just remaining silent, say, for five minutes. The question can be asked 'Was it useful?'. Another question could be about what was going through the client's mind. The answer will never be exact but will be indicative of the troubles experienced.

Sitting quietly and wishing others well is another simple meditation. It must be determined what the nature of the wish should be. The chaplain can help the client to build a chain of people to wish in this manner. This group can eventually include those who appear to have done wrong to the client. It must be brief and simple.

Another simple meditation is walking quietly and looking at the path being trodden. The concentration is on the alternate movements of the feet. Mindfulness needs to cover the path.

A client who is not used to meditation is likely to say that there is no time for meditation. The chaplain ought to draw the client's attention to points at which we commonly waste time. Examples are: waiting at the bus stop, sitting in the toilet, waiting for the doctor, sitting in the train, aimlessly watching television, unduly surfing the internet, spending lengthy periods on social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and so on.

3 PRACTISING A SELECTED VIRTUE FOR A SELECTED PERIOD

The chaplain can help the client to select a simple virtue. Suppose the selected virtue was to avoid meaningless or frivolous talk. The time period might be, say, one week. At the end of the period an assessment can be made about the process and the benefits experienced.

The experience can be extended or varied depending on comments provided.

4 LEARNING AND PRACTISING INSIGHT MEDITATION

The starting point is calming meditation. Whatever object is selected the aim here is to reduce the movements of the mind from one object to another. Using the calmness one can concentrate on one object for a length of time. A commonly used object for both calming and concentration is breathing.

Within the meditation on the breath, one will quickly notice the difference between matter and mind. One aspect is the air striking the nostril, which is a fabrication of matter. On the other hand, one can notice that the incoming air is relatively cold and the outgoing air is relatively warm. These are two sensations. Sensations are part of the mind. One thinks and feels hotness or coldness. Here we distinguish between mind and matter (Nama and Rupa).

We begin to see what is normally not seen. We train ourselves in insight. We can also see that the in-breath which sustains life lasts only for a short time. Life virtually arises for that short time and effectively ceases. Here we see the first of the three signata, impermanence, or the feature of continuous change in phenomena. We begin to see what is not normally seen.

Insight meditation can also be practised at all times without recourse to formal meditation when one gets skilled in the art of paying attention to the three signata as essential features of all things we come across, material or immaterial.

5 LEARNING TO CHANT SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURES

Participating in the chanting of scriptures can be an interesting and absorbing activity. For one who is not trained and experienced, it might not be easy to join in a chanting one is not familiar with. The rhythm and the accent need to be learnt. However, participation in

silence can be quite useful, initially. Here the person can develop concentration even without understanding the chanting. It is the sound that keeps your mind on track. It can be more satisfying if the person has respect for the words chanted as being the words of the Buddha, and has a basic idea of what is being chanted.

When a client is being introduced to chanting it is best to check what languages and culture he or she is familiar with. Short chantings can be more helpful at the start.

6 LEARNING TO MAKE OFFERINGS TO THE BUDDHA

Making offerings to the Buddha has some similarities with chanting. It also amounts to a meditation if the chanting is understood. Usually lights, incense and flowers are offered. The stanzas chanted have a meaning in terms of the Dhamma. A basic understanding of the stanzas helps a person to concentrate or reflect on the meaning while chanting. One can also participate by silently listening.

The visual effect of the ceremony can be a long lasting memory. Such a memory can help to clear out or suspend a harmful memory.

7 RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

Some people have the habit of dismissing ceremonies as a waste of time and they believe that these are suitable only for untrained minds. This is probably not true. Can we say that the bark of a tree is pretty much useless and get rid of the bark? The tree will die and the flowers and fruits lost forever. It is hard for us to practise in a vacuum.

It may be true that ceremonies do not take us to enlightenment. However, they do help to keep people within the fold so that they do not lose their way completely pushed around by the pressures of the world.

Ceremonies can be used as a basis for reflection on points we learn from the Dhamma. It can also lead us to meditation. It can keep us in contact with noble friends and their practices. Constant meditation might cause weariness. Ceremonies can help the practitioner deal with the weariness arising from more serious practice.

UNIT 21A

FORMULAE FOR PRACTICE - DIVINE CONDUCT

1 MEANING AND VALUE OF LOVING KINDNESS

Divine conduct (*Brahma Vihara*) consists of four aspects as follows:

Loving-Kindness	<i>Metta</i>
Compassion	<i>Karuna</i>
Appreciative-Joy	<i>Mudita</i>
Equanimity	<i>Upekkha</i>

Loving-kindness is a coined word meaning a mental state of goodwill towards all beings with no exceptions or discriminations. It is boundless and devoid of any reservations whatsoever. It is not a bodily or verbal action but a dynamic state of mind. However, when a person continually practises *metta* it is likely that the speech and actions all begin to reflect that attitude of goodwill.

The goodwill is not extended with some expectation of gaining something in return, but it can have a reciprocal effect on the receiver of the goodwill.

Most of us do have selective goodwill and the goodwill is toned down or even turn into antagonism the moment we come across a person we do not like, or if a person whom we generally like behaves in a manner which is not pleasing to us. Such behaviour can be observed amongst family members at times. Then it is not true *metta* as there is discrimination as to when the goodwill is shown.

***Metta* cannot be based on conditions.** For example, if I say that I will show goodwill to a person if only he behaved well, then that is conditional. It might still be a reasonably good mental state, but will not be classified as *metta*.

If one extends goodwill provided that he or she would be held in respect by others for the conduct, then also it is conditional and would not amount to *metta*. This illustrates that there can be goodwill but not *metta* in many situations.

Lord Buddha was the ultimate epitome of *metta*. Advantages of practising *metta* and the disadvantages of not practising *metta* have been mentioned in the scriptures. Some of the advantages are:

Ability to sleep well

Protection from injury

Ability to face people

Being received well by others

Passing away peacefully

Birth in higher planes

The question whether radiation of goodwill has any effect on other people is asked often. The important fact is that the practice of loving kindness has a wholesome effect on oneself regardless of what happens at the other end. There is evidence that those who receive the radiated *metta* develop a friendly disposition towards the person practising *metta*.

One can practise *metta* meditation. In the recommended method the radiation of *metta* is towards beings in all directions, above, below, in front and behind, on the right or the left without contemplating individuals or groups. However, meditation teachers often tell students to radiate *metta* towards oneself first, and then to the closest individuals and finally to everyone in some order. The idea of goodwill is broad and general. This seems to be a method of developing the mind. In the process a high level of concentration can be achieved. In fact the suggestion is that absorptions (*Jhanas*) can be attained. It is also suggested that this technique can lead to the third stage of enlightenment of non-returner (*Anagami*).

When practising *metta*, one is likely to encounter or remember people who are not friendly, or invoke aversion or even hatred in one's mind. This can pose a difficult obstacle to overcome. It can be used as a technique of reducing enmities. The very idea of goodwill can be defined as wishing a person good health, happiness, freedom from suffering and freedom from enmity, and so on. This method has its benefits for beginners.

Contemplating individuals also has the danger of feeding into the self-idea or even importing the soul idea. It can also lead to desires including lust. Hence it is important to be aware of pride and conceit when one is using this method. One also needs to be careful in selecting individuals as targets of *metta* meditation, keeping in mind the possibility of love and lust creeping in.

2 MEANING AND VALUE OF COMPASSION (KARUNA)

Compassion appears to be a variation of the idea of goodwill. In *metta* a target individual might be absent altogether. In compassion there is a target person and that person is experiencing some difficulty and suffering from some condition. This implies that the practice of compassion as a mental state is likely to prompt doing something to alleviate the condition experienced by the person suffering.

In the story in which goats were prepared for a sacrificial offering by a pious Brahmin, the Buddha showed compassion towards a little goat and picked it up in his arms. This illustrates

that there was not only loving kindness but also compassion. To quote a modern day example the Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation (originating in Taiwan) almost exclusively conducts relief projects in many countries, regardless of race or religion of the beneficiaries. Whilst they built a large number of houses in Hambantota, Sri Lanka after the Tsunami, they also built many schools in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country. They have a centre in Gold Coast and in Sunnybank (Brisbane) area.

The Karuna Foundation in Brisbane which provides palliative care is another example.

The Catholic nun Mother Theresa's work in India was a fine example of compassion in practice.

Compassion too can be practised as a meditation. However, one needs to take care to avoid getting into depressions by constantly reflecting on the sufferings of others like cancer patients or other patients close to death.

3 MEANING OF SYMPATHETIC JOY, APPRECIATIVE JOY, GLADNESS FOR OTHERS' HAPPINESS

This again is a case of sustaining and radiating goodwill. This time the target is a happy and successful person. As a result of the other person's happiness, one becomes glad too. A target person is again in the scene.

Sympathetic joy can be practised as a meditation.

It has the ability to reduce jealousy in general. It affords the opportunity to be happy all the time.

4 MEANING OF EQUANIMITY IN BASIC TERMS

The term equanimity as used here in connection with divine conduct is an extension of goodwill. Normally we tend to resent something that is not to our liking. With improved goodwill we can train the mind with equanimity to reduce that resentment. In practising loving-kindness we might slip into liking the object of attention. With equanimity we can train our mind to pull back and stay in equipoise. Being equanimous we can then afford to stay undisturbed when confronted with objects that prompt either attraction or repulsion.

Equanimity by itself is peace.

In a situation that normally would have prompted compassion, or in a situation that normally would have prompted appreciative joy, equanimity can keep us in balance. This is peace.

5 IDEA OF DIVINE CONDUCT

Divine conduct in all four forms can re-condition the mind so that it can improve further and at the same time make life pleasant and peaceful for oneself and all others. With equanimity the practitioner comes to peace and helps to promote peace for all.

6 DIVINE CONDUCT IN LARGE GROUPS

Divine conduct is not just a religious concept. One can see divine conduct in practice everywhere, not only by individuals but also by large groups such as countries. When a large and powerful country demonstrates goodwill, neighbouring countries can live without fear.

In great disasters everybody pulls together with compassion.

UNIT 21B

HELPING A CLIENT TO PRACTISE DIVINE CONDUCT

1 PRACTICE OF LOVING-KINDNESS TO ALL AND MEDITATION ON LOVING-KINDNESS

In practical terms loving-kindness (*metta*) is a therapy for hatred and anger. The fact is that hatred is capable of arising in all of us. It might either get toned down or become stronger at times due to prevailing conditions. Hatred might sound a strong term. There are so many synonyms for hatred. We should use this term as a generic word. Even a term like dislike is a derivative of hatred, having a lower degree of intensity.

Hence, when a client denies having hatred towards another, alternative terms must be used to help the client to understand the point at which it is possible to notice that there is hatred in the mind. If the client continues to deny, then a corrective therapy could be in vain. The point of acceptance needs to be reached.

Having reached a reasonable point the chaplain needs to decide the level and type of therapy that best suits the client.

A possible starting point could be to understand that anger hurts me more than the other person. If I am angry, it is I who suffer. If I believe that another person did something really wrong, why should I suffer for that by being angry?

In what ways can I reduce that anger in my mind? One thing is to trace back to my responsibility for whatever happened. That is a good enough reason to reduce my anger. The other person might have made a mistake at a bad time. Things change all the time (because of the theory of change and impermanence), so why should my anger stay with me forever? Even that must reduce and vanish some time.

Another useful technique is reflecting on the certainty of death. No one is going to live forever. Once a person is dead, whatever anger that was in the mind becomes totally irrelevant. This applies to me as well as to the other person. When a person understands the certainty of death, mental states such as hatred tend to become irrelevant. Then loving-kindness has an opportunity to take root in the mind.

These ideas need to be applied in a practical way and there is no need to pay too much attention to theoretical detail.

For most clients the method of radiating *metta* would be to use the idea of a chain of persons and a chain of wishes. In fact it would be easier to start with a small chain of persons and a single wish like 'May you be well'. The small chain of persons could include loved ones such as parents, spouses and children. With a small chain like this the client would be in a comfort zone in which the idea of loving kindness meditation could be performed. After further grounding in this technique, the client can be asked to increase the

length of the chain to include other types of people, and finally even to those who are disliked.

Similarly, the goodwill wishes too can be expanded as appropriate.

2 PRACTICE OF COMPASSION TOWARDS THOSE IN DIFFICULTY AND MEDITATION ON COMPASSION

It is possible to practise compassion meditation having in mind a target person or a group of persons experiencing difficulty in the same way as loving kindness meditation. The obvious wish would be that the target person be able to get out of the difficulty. This can be promoted by contemplating the target person first as a happy person, secondly, as an unhappy person and thirdly, as a relieved person. Contemplating the three phases would help sharpen the wish of relief from suffering.

Using the idea of the three phases will also prevent the client from slipping into sadness and depression, particularly if he or she is prone to descend that way.

Another way of preventing descending into sadness is to select a remote group as the target for wishing relief. That way personal involvement is reduced. For example, the remote group can be a target group experiencing difficulty due to natural events such as famines or floods.

Volunteering to work in a charity committed to giving compassionate relief to communities could be very helpful to some clients. This way the client gets a chance to work with noble friends committed to a cause, expecting nothing in return. This affords a method of changing focus from the self to other people. One tends to forget personal issues and begins to think of universal realities.

In these situations the chaplain needs to examine whether physical work or work that involves thinking is better suited to the client. People who suffer because they focus too much on the self would benefit more in donating physical labour.

3 PRACTICE OF GLADNESS FOR THE HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS OF OTHERS AND MEDITATION ON SUCH GLADNESS

When there is a danger of sliding into depression in looking at the suffering of others, gladness (*mudita*) meditation can serve as a solution. Here we train ourselves to be happy when we see someone else being successful and happy. There is no wish to have a share in that success, or wish that we may also achieve similar success. It is simply being genuinely happy for the other person. For example, if two friends are vying for the same university entrance scores to study medicine, if one fails to gain the necessary score but the other achieves it, the one who failed can still show genuine gladness for the achievement of the friend, despite one's own disappointment.

By practising appreciative joy all the time, one can overcome jealousy which is harmful to both parties. Jealousy involves hatred and lies hidden in the mind. Many people make the mistake of assuming that they are free from jealousy. They may be free from gross jealousy which becomes obvious to other people, but there is always subtle jealousy which others do not see and you yourself cannot see.

To a client the other aspect is that appreciative joy is a source of gladness. Gladness might be in short supply after a bad personal experience. From simple loving kindness the mind can be trained to develop appreciative joy.

One difficulty is that appreciative joy may not occur in a case where the other person succeeds in a matter in which one fails. If this difficulty can be surmounted through practice, the mental state reached could result in much happiness.

Again, practising meditation on appreciative joy needs a target person who is experiencing happiness. One needs to know the basis of that person's gladness. One's wish could be that the target person should be even happier for whatever has occurred. The more one concentrates on it, the more one's own happiness grows.

A young client may benefit by learning to appreciate the success of other students in studies and examinations. Older people can learn to appreciate the success of others in community work, trades, families, professions and business.

A client can be encouraged to participate in a wholesome activity organised by another and feel a sense of happiness for the actions of that other.

4 PRACTICE OF EQUANIMITY IN REAL SITUATIONS AND MEDITATION ON EQUANIMITY

In a situation of compassion, a person was unhappy and I wished relief for that person. In the case of appreciative-joy, a person was happy and I wished that person even more happiness. In the first situation I could have got dragged into sadness. In the second case I could have got dragged into enjoyment. From a spiritual point of view it is beneficial if we can stay with hardly any movement towards either extreme.

In other words, true happiness results from staying in balance. This means equanimity. When presented with an object we either like or dislike, we should try to stay in equilibrium. The more we succeed, the more we become genuinely happy.

Another way of looking at this is to try to keep the mind in the present. The very fact that the mind is in the present without referring to the past or the future means there is contentment and happiness. Thus the source of happiness or sadness is not in the objects we confront but in the ability to have presence of mind.

UNIT 22A

METHODS OF DEVELOPING WISDOM

1 DEVELOPMENT OF MINDFULNESS USING THE BODY-MIND CONCEPT

In very general terms the effective management of thoughts, words and deeds tend to awaken wisdom. Wisdom is a natural gift of the mind but it needs to be actively uncovered and developed. All the different formulae for the practice of the Dhamma eventually lead to wisdom. However, certain types of practice help to achieve higher wisdom with ease and speed.

Practice that includes meditation is necessary for the development of wisdom. Mindfulness (*Sati*) meditation is of particular importance. Mindfulness meditation helps in developing awareness. If one does not know what is going through the mind and what mental state one is in at any given moment, it is obviously difficult to pursue a wholesome path of mental development.

At the same time if the energy of the mind is not directed properly, it will be wasted in constantly searching for objects. Such a mind is restless (*Uddhaccha*). In order to use the full potential of the mind, the constant churn in the mind needs to be reduced and the mind needs to settle in concentration on one or more selected objects.

Such effort helps to develop both concentration and mindfulness meditation. This needs wholesome effort and continuing effort. The right (wholesome) effort, right mindfulness and right concentration when practised earnestly tend to gather momentum. **In the discourse on the Great 40 (Majjima Nikaya 117), the Buddha explains the effectiveness of this trilogy as the effectiveness of a machine.**

The writer suggests that repeated operation of this trio has the nature of cleaning the mind and resulting in wholesome thoughts, including wholesome views or directions of progress. Wholesome thoughts cause wholesome deeds in speech and bodily actions. These ensure right livelihood.

Thus, starting from the micro-cycle of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, we progress through a larger cycle, both of them together covering the eight aspects of the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

Continued and diligent practice upon maturity results in right liberation and that in turn results in right wisdom (or simply wisdom) in its full sense. The person who reaches this stage is called an enlightened person or *Arahant*.

One of the impediments to progress towards total wisdom is the ingrained idea of the soul. So long as we cling on to the idea of an eternal, unchanging entity within us designated as a soul, we fail to see the truth and our spiritual progress is inhibited. In the Great Discourse on

Mindfulness (*Maha Satipatthana Sutta Digha Nikaya 22*), the Buddha elaborates a series of meditations on the body and the mind that help to develop mindfulness. The practice of the recommended methods of meditation actually results in right concentration, right mindfulness and right effort. The contemplation of important aspects of the Dhamma is also included.

This may be the reason why the Buddha refers to the system of these methods as the one and only way to attain enlightenment. There is no need to make this a dogma and reject other valuable practices which can aid in progress. The type of practice depends on the person at a given time. So long as the general direction is clear, it is not a problem.

Understanding the individual as a body-mind process through meditation makes it easier to step on to the path and progress on the path to wisdom. The body and the mind function as a combination but are capable of being separated by the power of the mind itself. Permanent separation is noticed only at conventional death. That separation too is instantaneous.

The separability of the body and the mind leaves hardly any room for that entity called a soul. This invites us to consider the three signata or features of existence.

2 CONTEMPLATION OF THE THREE FEATURES OF EXISTENCE

The three features of existence, namely, feature of change, feature of suffering and the feature of absence of substance are not easy to observe and to that extent the level of wisdom of a person is low. In other words most of us live and think on the assumption that things are more or less permanent, that things are more or less pleasurable and that I have an eternal and unique soul that is totally different from the souls of others.

Some people might intellectually understand that these assumptions are not true. But even those people function on the basis that these assumptions are true. We are used to thinking that way. That is the ignorance we suffer from.

The shock of a sudden change awakens our wisdom for a while but it subsides soon afterwards. So we continue in a web of ignorance. The Buddha saw this and taught us to see things as they are.

Observation of the self and the external world provides examples of impermanence. It is possible to contemplate the fact of continuous change. Such contemplation helps to create the groundwork necessary to apply mindfulness to see the truth of change at a subtle level. To the advanced meditator mindfulness becomes the key practice to clear ignorance. ***Although some do not seem to agree, the writer feels that the starting point of observation and reflection or contemplation does serve a valuable purpose.***

Due to the fact that one cannot cling on to a relatively satisfactory situation permanently, invariably suffering results. Continuous change implies a flow and a process rather than never-changing, substantial things. This suggests that there is no possibility of a soul.

These reflections lead gradually to higher levels of wisdom.

3 MEDITATION ON ONE'S SENSES

Observation of the working of the six senses initially facilitates morality (*Sila*). It also leads to a deep understanding of all mental processes. That understanding contributes to wisdom. One can meditate on the operation of the senses, thus strengthening this understanding. The five physical senses work in the present only. The sixth sense, the mind can work on the past, present or future.

When a sense confronts an object (for example, when the visual sense confronts a physical object such as a flower or a person), a sensation or feeling results in the mind. The feeling is compared with a similar memory from a past experience and the mind creates a perception of the object. Thereafter the mind deals with the perception. If the perception is desirable the mind moves in one way and if it is not desirable the mind moves in a different way. The mind comes to conclusions and creates more perceptions as it pleases. Regardless of what is there in the world, the world that we create is built upon a myriad of perceptions in the mind.

Thus we rarely see things as they really are. Our perceptions cloud the mind and thus we happily live in our own ignorance. The more we are able to see a perception as simply being our own creation, wisdom arises and becomes sharper.

4 CONTINUOUS CORRECTION OF VIEWS

Another factor that clouds our wisdom is views. Dogmatic views can be dangerous. Strong views can be disadvantageous. Mild views that leave room for communications and keep the mind open to consider different views are workable.

Some hold strong views assuming that the view is the result of their wisdom. The fact is quite the opposite. The stronger one's view is, the level of stupidity, or lack of wisdom, becomes more and more obvious. This seems like a paradox but it is in fact the truth. If one observes a discussion amongst those who hold particular views, very quickly those with strong views begin to look more foolish than others.

Even when it comes to the Dhamma one should not be dogmatic. We need to always keep an open mind and be prepared to listen to other and opposing views. It is only at the fourth stage of enlightenment a person overcomes the trap of clinging on to views.

UNIT 22B

DEVELOPMENT OF WISDOM IN PRACTICE

1 DEVELOPING THE (BODHISATTVA) PERFECTIONS AND RELATED PRACTICES

It is not suggested that there is some sort of trick or secret method of developing wisdom. There are some direct methods and other indirect methods involving circumlocution. Indirect methods are more inclusive and are broader in content. Direct methods are narrow in content. For example, ethical living is a broad practice, whereas insight meditation is a narrow practice. Regardless of the methods, the final result is enlightenment. Some may complete the journey as *Arahants* and a few may achieve Buddhahood. The thinking in Mahayana is aligned towards broad practice in which every person aspires to be a Buddha.

An aspirant to Buddhahood needs to practice a whole range of Dhammas. In Theravada there are ten perfections to complete if one aspires to be a Buddha. In Mahayana there are six perfections. Some of the elements in the two systems are similar and a few are different.

A client can be encouraged to practice the perfections as best as he or she can. While doing so the client should be taught to observe the benefits of the practice. Although the perfections are listed in a particular order, the chaplain ought to persuade the client to start from the most comfortable element of the system.

For example, the practise of generosity coupled with loving-kindness may be a simple starting point. One need not be wealthy to be generous. Consideration for others is a human quality that embodies generosity. It arises from kindness. With this practice, as time goes on, one tends to be less selfish. To the extent that the self-idea is reduced, there arises wisdom.

2 ASKING QUESTIONS FROM THOSE WHO KNOW

The direct method of sharpening wisdom mentioned in discourses is identifying those who know and asking questions from them. In fact, it is said that those who ask questions and learn from the answers are likely to be reborn as wise people themselves. It is clear that humility is necessary to treat another as wise. Wisdom is not a commodity one can buy directly. Wider practice, including the likes of humility, also contributes to the growth of wisdom.

Asking questions is an art. It is not easy. One needs to think clearly to frame a question. That itself tends to sharpen wisdom. The process of assessing the answer can also sharpen wisdom. Accepting the answer to the extent to which it can be accepted in one's own experience also involves wisdom.

In general, Dhammas cannot be developed in isolation but in conglomerates. Wisdom is not only a sharp tool but also a wide faculty.

3 RIGHT EFFORT, RIGHT MINDFULNESS AND RIGHT CONCENTRATION WORKING TOGETHER AND LEADING TO RIGHT VIEW

These four are a selection from the noble eight fold path. Of particular importance is the trio of effort, mindfulness and concentration. From a worldly point of view if one looks for progress in any aspect of life, one must put in the correct amount of effort. The chaplain needs to educate the client to understand that ultimately one's own effort (not the effort put in by others) is what brings about progress. Some guidance might be necessary to choose right effort and avoid getting stuck in wrong effort.

For example, a student who fails examinations might decide to cut down on sleep and devote more and more time to study. That might be the wrong effort. The right effort could be to re-examine the methods of study being used.

At every stage of progress the client needs to be mindful of his or her surroundings, space and time, personal associates and so on in a physical sense. That mindfulness must extend to awareness of what goes on in the mind. Firstly, it is simple awareness, with no effort being expended to stop any unwholesome thoughts. Secondly, reviewing thoughts for quality and usefulness can be helpful. In a practical sense this constant review of thoughts and subsequent actions eventually leads to mindfulness.

When a person reviews the thoughts and actions to see if these were beneficial, it should not be a fleeting consideration but a concentrated consideration. In other words there must be good concentration in a self-review. Rushing can result in harmful conclusions being reached.

When one is mindful, applies effort and concentrates effectively, it results in the re-alignment or correction of one's views. One then corrects the direction of actions. This further results in right views. The stronger right views become, all the other aspects of the Path (including effort, mindfulness and concentration) rise to higher levels. This results in mental progress. In this scenario, speech, actions and livelihood then become right with little effort.

The Buddha says that effort, mindfulness and concentration can develop one after the other and rise together spirally.

This development gradually raises the level of one's wisdom.

4 CONTINUAL REVIEW OF MENTAL ACTIVITY

There are those who acknowledge the importance of mindfulness but complain that it is hard to develop mindfulness through meditation. Meditation itself is not easy.

In practice there are other ways of developing wisdom. One of these is continual review of thoughts and actions after the event. However, if there is too much of a delay between the

event and the review, then facts might be lost and the review will then be less useful. Thus, it is a useful practice to develop the habit of reviewing one's actions at least on a daily basis.

A review has the nature of asking questions but this time the questions are not addressed to another person. One has to answer one's own questions, perhaps with help from another. There are different types of reviews. As mentioned, one type is to review the day's work prior to going to sleep. Another is to review actions soon after the event or as soon as possible. A third way is to review actions as they occur. Before actions are taken, an anticipatory review is also possible.

In every type of review effort has to be expended. Mindfulness is very useful and there must be concentration. Right views are the likely result. A combination of these factors with right thinking that follows is indeed wisdom. This methodology does not involve meditation in a formal sense.

5 WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE

In popular terms a wise person has much intelligence. It does not mean that a very intelligent individual is necessarily wise. For most people, intelligence is akin to a birth right and does not change much as life moves on. Intelligence might get sharpened with particular types of training and experience. Intelligence can be measured.

Wisdom has a spiritual quality. In Buddhism understanding the Four Noble Truths is Enlightenment, or the pinnacle of wisdom. This achievement can be made easier or faster if one has intelligence. At an elementary level if one is able to sort out what ought to be done and what ought not to be done at every moment, then there is wisdom. A very intelligent and educated person can be an utter fool in this way if the person chooses the wrong action at every turn. Sometimes, anger or greed could be the cause of the wrong action. Such unwholesome mental states predominate precisely because of the lack of wisdom. That foolishness is often rooted also in the ego concept.

UNIT 23A

VALUE OF INNER CONTENTMENT

1 UNDERSTANDING OUR DUTIES TOWARDS SOCIETY

Generosity is a well-known duty towards society. This duty is recognised in all religions. In this context **generosity** needs to be understood in its widest connotation. The tendency is to view it in a narrow sense. For example, in some cases giving to the poor is considered generosity. In other cases giving to religious people such as monks and nuns is considered generosity. When this type of narrow idea is used the value of generosity might get lost.

To be happy within one's own mind one should not cling onto narrow concepts. More inclusive concepts are more helpful in promoting happiness within. For example, being considerate towards the whole of society as an attitude of mind and performing generous acts within one's capabilities is likely to create happiness for one. That type of wide connotation obviously promotes satisfaction and harmony in society.

In Buddhism cleansing one's mind is a primary aim of generosity. More specifically, one needs to tone down attachment to all kinds of physical and mental objects. Money is a physical object we all desire. Good fame is a mental object many people desire. As a result of attachment, we find it difficult to part with things we desire. The practice of generosity helps us to reduce these attachments. **Pure generosity is entirely free from attachment. In practice the level of purity can be enhanced through informed and thoughtful practice.**

The more one renounces, the more other people get. Their contentment is a result of our practice of generosity.

Praising another where praise is desirable is an act of generosity. Kindness has links with generosity. It is similar to loving kindness.

Morality is another type of duty we owe to society. While performing that duty we can also achieve contentment within. For example, if one holds on to the moral principle of not hurting another being, the rest of society can be free from fear of being hurt. That is a source of satisfaction and contentment. From one's own point of view contentment arises within one's own mind in that there are no memories or thoughts of hurting others. There are no worries about past mistakes of that type. All the benefits of non-hurting accrue to the person. There is an implied assurance of protection for oneself in the future.

Again there is no need to confine the idea of morality to some precepts. Precepts can be used as parameters defining our responsibilities. A general attitude of maintaining discipline all the time would be a far more useful way of practising morality. When one lays too much emphasis on rules or precepts, one can claim false satisfaction in observing some rules and breaking others. That is not beneficial for the person or to the rest of society. While one can avoid telling lies or using harsh words, there is no obvious duty implied to refine one's

speech, for example. A general belief in morality and consideration can promote the refinement of speech.

For the harmonious and peaceful functioning of society **pleasant speech** is a necessity. Without it relations among people can become uneasy and sour. Hence we owe pleasant speech as a duty towards society. Pleasant speech can make or break a family. In the work place pleasant speech can create a pleasant atmosphere and help one to keep one's job. In the community a person's acceptance will depend on pleasant speech. In politics, peace is ensured mainly by pleasant speech and not by power which can come and go at any time. One unpleasant word can destroy a politician or cause serious trouble for a whole nation.

In general **wholesome living** results in a sense of contentment. It also gives contentment and satisfaction to the rest of society as the contribution from the individual causes no harm to others and may also be beneficial to others.

2 THE IDEA OF SELF FULFILMENT AND ITS RELATION TO SOCIETY

Each individual is interested in achieving his or her own goals. So long as these goals are harmless to one and to others, it is well and good. A sense of achievement gives a feeling of contentment and therefore happiness to the individual. His or her aims are fulfilled. That fulfilment contributes to the contentment of the rest of society.

The initial pursuits might look selfish and self-centred but the eventual result can be beneficial to the whole of society. The story of the Buddha is a good example. His final pursuits were aimed at enlightenment for himself. The contentment of society on account of that achievement is continuing to be evident.

3 SEVEN TYPES OF NOBLE WEALTH VIS-A-VIS WORLDLY WEALTH AS BASES OF CONTENTMENT

While the Buddha did not frown upon worldly wealth or the accumulation of such wealth, he laid emphasis on what he called noble wealth as a superior type of possession. In fact it seems that the development of noble wealth is a pre-requisite for the accumulation of worldly wealth in a sustainable and satisfying manner.

One definition of noble wealth popular in Theravada Buddhism includes the following seven factors:

- | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Confidence | <i>Saddha</i> |
| 2 | Virtue | <i>Sila</i> |
| 3 | Moral Shame | <i>Hiri</i> |
| 4 | Moral Fear | <i>Ottappa</i> |

5	Listening	<i>Suta</i>
6	Giving	<i>Caga</i>
7	Wisdom	<i>Panna</i>

We have come across all these in this course. Suffice it to say that if one thinks of a person who does not possess any one of these, he or she will most likely struggle to earn and sustain the means of earning worldly wealth.

For example, if one does not have moral shame the methods employed to earn money can be very lowly such as by bribery or stealing. Such ill-earned money does not stay in that persons hand or when it does, the person lives in fear of being exposed. Hence, the shortfall in moral shame results in a shortfall in worldly wealth in the long run.

A business person who does not listen to others cannot work effectively with people. If in addition, such a person does not care about listening to the Dhamma, the person remains a fool and unable to develop wisdom.

It is worth examining each factor and to understand the impact on contentment for oneself and for the rest of society.

4 FACTORS THAT PROMOTE ONE'S OWN WORLDLY HAPPINESS WITHOUT HARMING OTHERS

A system of four factors that help a person to achieve worldly happiness without harming others has been given by the Buddha. These are:

1	Skill and Energy	<i>Utthana Sampada</i>
2	Protective Measures	<i>Arakkhaka Sampada</i>
3	Noble Friends	<i>Kalyana Mittata</i>
4	Frugality	<i>Samajjivikata</i>

One cannot be lazy and indolent. One needs to work energetically and with diligence. Working hard all the time may not pay dividends unless one has acquired the necessary skills through training and education.

Once a person has accumulated wealth, the wealth needs to be protected from the sun and rain and from animals and thieves.

Noble friends will help in the task and ignoble associates are likely to make one fail. This can happen in a job, business or in social endeavours.

Wealth accumulated must be put to good use and bad uses must be avoided.

These are true for all, whether one is an adult in lay life, a child, monk or nun. Only the specific descriptions will be different. These are equally true for business people or for the employed.

UNIT 23B

TRAINING A CLIENT TO BE CONTENTED

1 WORKING TOWARDS SELF SATISFACTION ON A TENTATIVE BASIS

A client experiencing the effects of a trauma will not be quite ready for lengthy sermons or to perform positive actions. The Buddhist chaplain needs to use learning and skill to secure some connection with the client and try to identify immediate needs such as overcoming symptoms of problems being experienced or personal needs such as food, clothing and shelter. If the chaplain can help the client to secure such needs, a tentative satisfaction will be achieved by the client. At least for the time being, the client could achieve a sense of contentment.

As more individuals secure contentment the group as a whole would achieve contentment. This needs to be used as a basis for whatever work is planned by the chaplain.

2 PRACTISING THE ART OF GIVING

The chaplain needs to set an example in giving. This does not mean that the chaplain should spend his or her own resources such as money and materials to please clients. There are other means of giving.

The idea is that the client's interest in giving can be brought to the forefront. This helps in changing or shifting the focus from the client's problems. This can lead to some contentment. In the long term this may lead to a solution to existing problems, depending on the situation.

3 DEVELOPING MORAL SHAME AND MORAL FEAR (NOT SHAME AND FEAR AS SUCH)

The tendency of some people is to engage in rash actions to deal with a bad experience. In such actions, no thoughts are spared to consider consequences and implications. Costs and benefits are not properly weighed.

The chaplain needs to draw attention to these details in such a way that the client is dissuaded from engaging in rash behaviour in the future. Relating actual stories of rash actions and their consequences may be useful. The chaplain needs to avoid theoretical explanations from the Dhamma or *Abhidhamma* in matters such as this.

4 DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LISTENING HABITS

We have discussed in earlier units about the need for the chaplain to develop listening skills. A client may derive contentment simply from the behaviour of the chaplain who listens and exhibits the art of listening. The client gains satisfaction from meeting a person (chaplain) who is willing to listen.

That provides a strong working basis. As mentioned earlier, tentative contentment is a strong enough platform for substantive work planned by the chaplain.

5 BUILDING A CIRCLE OF NOBLE FRIENDS

This topic has been discussed in detail in an earlier unit. The chaplain will derive immense benefit from having a circle of noble friends. The Sangha and other chaplains are likely to be included in that circle. To the extent that it is relevant, parts of this circle can be extended to the client who might not have the ability to build up a circle of noble friends for himself or herself.

Suppose the chaplain manages to improve the situation of the client. It is then the noble friends who help to keep the improvements intact. For example, imagine a client pulling out of a serious trauma he or she had experienced. Suppose also that the Sangha in a particular temple formed the chaplain's circle of noble friends. Then the client's progress can be enhanced or maintained by entering that circle with the help of the chaplain.

After sometime in the circle, the client can be taught some Dhamma relating to noble friends. That knowledge can make the client independent of the chaplain at that stage.

We should not forget the most valuable noble friend, namely the Buddha. The process of introducing the Buddha should start from basics and slowly advance to understanding of His conduct, knowledge and attainments. The element of faith should result from this exercise, but it must not be forced upon the client.

6 BUILDING A HABIT OF FRUGALITY AND NOT WASTING

In many situations involving family economics it will be clear that frugality is missing in the client or an associate of the client. The need to live within one's means needs to be inculcated. Relevant stories or relating the experience of others can help in the process.

In many parts of the world, it is more than obvious that many people do not care about living within their means. Spiralling credit card debt is one small example of this. One reason is that it has become a habit. Another reason, particularly in a country such as Australia, is that the government has a relative abundance of financial resources. The country is famous for its prosperity. Children learn to waste what they have because they know replacements will come from the parents. Adults keep taking worthless risks as there is heavy dependence on insurance. They forget that the insurance companies can never give health or a life back. If the government is low on funds, it can raise loans payable by those to be born. However, within the whole set up of the larger culture, there are pockets of mini-cultures that manage material wealth far more effectively.

If this is a major aspect of the problems being faced by a client, the chaplain needs to address it squarely. The solutions are always at hand if only a change of attitude is possible. The chaplain need not take the garb of a financial adviser, which can be against the law. The

chaplain can easily use common sense or demonstrate his or her own way of living as an example.

7 MAINTAINING ENERGY AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

Nothing can succeed if one becomes too zealous. It imports restlessness which is wasteful. Anecdotal stories can help a client to understand this idea, as many people do not grasp the theory behind restlessness.

One must apply reasonable energy and have reasonable interest, but not more. A reasonable level of energy can be sustained for a longer time without the risk of tiredness or frustration setting in.

Usually energy is wasted due to lack of skill. An example is keeping accounts in one's own way and getting confused at the end of the financial year, not being able to file the tax returns correctly. Methods of accounting have existed for a long time and you do not have to rediscover the same or other methods. There are even companies which help clients manage their budgets and help them out of debt.

Skills can be picked up from those who know. There is no need to follow courses on everything.

8 TAKING MEASURES TO PROTECT THE LITTLE THAT ONE HAS

Again assuming economic practices, it is essential that a client understands the need to protect what he or she has earned. Otherwise things will be lost at the same speed as one earns. One needs to see where the loop holes are and plug them one by one. Just amassing wealth is foolish unless there are suitable protection mechanisms. Forgetting or electing not to pay insurance is a good example.

There are examples of clients who ruined their lives simply by ignoring to pay insurance or to keep assets safe and protected from various situations and people.

UNIT 24A

LEARNING BUDDHIST MEDITATION

1 THE MEANING OF MEDITATION

In very general terms we can say that meditation means growing the mind. Growing plants is a useful parallel to help understand meditation. The first step in growing a plant is selecting a suitable location. Make sure the location has sunshine and is not over exposed to wind. Then we need to clear the ground of grass and weeds. Weeds might be difficult to completely eradicate as roots might remain. The ground has to be prepared by softening it. Some good soil may need to be mixed in. Water and fertilizer need to be added. After the seedling is put in place we need to look after the plant by continually adding water and fertilizer and preventing weeds from returning. If grass or weeds reappear, it has to be uprooted to the best of our ability. A little grass remaining does not really matter. The main thing is to have reasonable control over wild growth. Even after all this the plant might be slow to grow. So we need a person who knows a little more than us to get an opinion as to remedies and suggested methods for nurturing the plant. With experience we get more successful and confident. There is no need to become despondent if the plant initially shows signs of withering. This is common experience. Many before us succeeded in growing similar plants, so there is no reason why we cannot succeed.

Each of these steps can be translated into our interest in meditation. Unless one decides to cultivate the mind, the tendency is for the mind to acquire every type of wild thought and these will grow in the mind endlessly. Eventually, one can lose sight of the mind and the wild thoughts will appear to be the whole mind. One will feel that this is the way with the world and do nothing to improve matters.

Wild thoughts are reflected in equally bad words and actions. A noble friend may approach you to say that some rules must be established and followed in order to clear the mind. Precepts could help but simpler rules need not be ignored. Discipline, virtue and morality help to calm and clear the mind. One need not wait until all rubbish is fully cleared. On the basis of what little clearance is achieved for the time being, growth of the mind through meditation can progress. There is tentative success. That success must be observed so that joy, assurance and confidence are generated. These things help in ensuring progress.

The practice of morality needs to be preceded by the practice of generosity. Generosity is usually visible and audible and so it is easier to practise and to observe. Morality is more abstract and needs more conviction to practice. When the mind is set on the path of generosity it is easy to transfer that knowledge into morality.

Morality has the ability to calm the mind and to clear the mind to some extent. Using the partly cleared mind one can concentrate on a selected object such as loving kindness, or the breath, and try to keep the mind continually or continuously on the object. A teacher can

help when difficulties are experienced. While calming and concentration are experienced to begin with, eventually the mind can pay attention to what is going through the mind in reference to the features of existence. This aspect is usually called insight meditation, or seeing things as they are.

2 THERE ARE MANY METHODS OF MEDITATION LISTED IN THE ‘THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MINDFULNESS’

This discourse (Digha Nikaya 22) enumerates forty different methods of meditation that lead to the development of mindfulness. The implication is that mindfulness is the key to attaining enlightenment and these methods eventually or immediately help to develop mindfulness.

There are many different terms used in meditation and it is useful to examine whether there are connections among the terms. There is also the question whether all terms mean one and the same thing and if that is so why there are so many different terms. Some of these terms are calming (*Samatha*), concentration (*Samadhi*), insight (*Vipassana*), awareness, bare awareness, attention (*Manasikara*), one-pointedness (*Ekaggata*), initial application (*Vitakka*), sustained application (*Vicara*) and so on.

Calming means a reduction in the incessant speed, frequency and extent of movement of the mind from one object to another. Concentration implies a very small or defined radius of movement of the mind around the object. One-pointedness results when the radius is zero or virtually zero. Insight implies a sharp mind able to penetrate the depths of reality far beyond the apparent superficiality. Awareness indicates knowledge of what is in the mind and what is in the environment. Attention indicates the preference or choice of the mind for one or more objects. Initial application shows that the mind has abandoned one object and moved on to another. Sustained application means that the mind is continually examining an object.

If any of these is developing in the mind one can safely conclude that the mind is cultivated to some extent. It also means that other aspects of meditation are likely to be promoted. For example, if the mind has become calm it is very likely that it will come into concentration soon.

The discourse lists four major types of meditations depending on the meditation object chosen:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Meditation on the body | <i>Kayanussati</i> |
| 2 | Meditation on feelings | <i>Vedananussati</i> |
| 3 | Meditation on the mind | <i>Cittanussati</i> |
| 4 | Meditation on mental objects | <i>Dhammanussati</i> |

Each major category has a number of sub-categories. For example, the first body meditation is breathing meditation. This is followed by meditation on postures, and so on. Walking meditation is in this category.

In the case of meditation on the mind there are two aspects. Firstly, consciousness itself can be the object. Secondly, any mental state can be the object. For example, if one is agitated the object can be the agitation.

In the fourth category almost anything in memory can be used as the object but actual reference is made to important mental objects. One mental object of importance is the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. Another is the set of features of existence.

The first and second categories generally lead to calming, concentration and mindfulness. The third and fourth categories generally lead to insight.

However, in the case of breathing meditation one can practise calming, concentration, mindfulness and insight all in different stages of the process. It is worth noting that ascetic *Siddhartha* used this method in attaining enlightenment.

3 SELECTING A METHOD OR A SERIES BY CONSULTING A TEACHER

When a person is trying to learn meditation (and we keep learning all the time), it makes sense to be associated with another person, preferably one who knows more and ideally an accomplished meditation teacher. The reason is that one can learn methods from books but when a problem arises a teacher becomes immensely helpful.

4 THE AIM OF MEDITATION NEEDS TO BE CLARIFIED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL

A teacher can be useful to clarify the reason why a person wishes to learn meditation. Many people want to learn meditation to get over current problems such as stress or lack of concentration. There are others who aim at enlightenment. Some look for a combination. The motivation could vary. Therefore, methods need to be selected to suit the current aims of the individual.

UNIT 24B

TEACHING OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION

1 TEST WHETHER YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE PURPOSE

An instructor in meditation must be sure about his or her own understanding of meditation before attempting to teach another. This does not mean that the instructor should know all about meditation. There are many levels of understanding and practice. A Buddhist chaplain is not going to instruct the client on how to attain enlightenment or even an absorption (*Jhana*) through meditation. For the client to attain some level of calm and peace is all that might be required. The chaplain has to provide instructions within this context.

The method of teaching is equally important. For example, it may not be necessary to teach the full lotus posture to a client. The lotus position is not a must for sitting meditation. Even a half lotus position may be unnecessary. All that is needed is a comfortable posture that will neither make the client sleep nor weep out of pain. Even sitting on a chair would do.

The choice of method of meditation is also important. It should suit the client depending on the previous level of exposure the client has had to these concepts. If the chaplain is not sure, it is good to discuss with a meditation teacher. A wrong start could be damaging.

In some cases, simply sitting quietly is all that is needed. People who are fearful about what is going on need not close their eyes in meditation. The idea that all physical senses must be closed or kept under control is not correct. Sitting quietly listening to the sounds from the birds or distant traffic or from the ocean can help in calming the mind.

2 TEST WHETHER YOU HAVE PRACTISED ENOUGH TO HELP A CLIENT

Acquiring knowledge about meditation and the methods of teaching would be of no avail if the chaplain has not practised meditation for some time, particularly in the presence of teachers. Again, it is not necessary to become an expert in meditation before teaching others. Nevertheless, one needs to be confident to handle the task.

3 UNDERSTAND THE ABILITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CLIENT

The reason why the client needs to learn meditation must be well understood. We must not forget that the client has gone through difficult experiences. The client's mind may be weak in some ways. Meditation should not be a burden to the client. The need to attain calmness is a common reason. The need to pay attention to things, remember things in some detail and be aware of what goes on in the environment might also be reasons to learn meditation. The inability to control or manage hatred or strong desires might also be reasons. It might not be easy to find out the real reason as the client might not have the capacity to see it clearly or to articulate his or her needs.

To a great extent the chaplain has to lead the way. Even when the reasons are clarified, the chaplain must use skills to ascertain the abilities of the client. Some idea of the client's behaviour and attainments in familiar environments such as school, work place and social groups can help to gauge the abilities of the client.

4 ASSESS PROGRESS THROUGH THE QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE CLIENT

The client must be instructed to report on progress and be encouraged to ask questions. As most people go through similar difficulties in meditation at the beginning, the questions asked can indicate the progress made by the client. Further advice will help the client to try again and attain progress.

5 CHOICE OF MEDITATION OBJECTS

The choice of an object for meditation depends on the condition of the mind of the client at a given time. The client's health is also relevant.

A person whose mind is full of hatred may find it difficult to practise loving-kindness meditation at the beginning. Initially, the person's mind has to be prepared for it. Teaching some Dhamma connected with the management of hatred will be useful. On that basis the practice of walking meditation could help to achieve some calmness. Based on that calmness the chaplain can now teach a little more of the relevant Dhamma. It ought to be pointed out to the client that the hatred is in his or her mind and is not a feature of some thing or person out there. The power of loving-kindness can also be learnt. The benefits of filling the mind with kindness need to be explained. If at this stage, the client's mind is reasonably soft and malleable, the client can be taught loving-kindness meditation. Even at that point spreading goodwill in the twelve directions in turn is preferable to the method of making good wishes towards individuals or groups.

Similarly, a person beset with strong sexual desires will not grasp foulness meditation immediately. As far as his or her thoughts go, there is nothing foul about the other person's body. This problem exists not only with regards to sexual desires but also in regard to all other sensual desires. During the Buddha's time, a young man received instructions for meditation from a certain senior monk. He made no progress. He was told to understand and review the thirty two parts of the body and their foulness at that level of analysis. When the matter was reported to the Buddha he reviewed the young man's thinking. He was given to beauty and enjoyment, art and music, etc. The Buddha used this as the starting point. With his supernatural powers he created a beautiful scene of lotus flowers, bright and sweet smelling. The young man was thrilled to see this and got absorbed in the scene. The Buddha then made it appear how the flowers withered and gradually dried up. The young man's mind was able to grasp the truth that all component things are subject to decay. The meditation was successful.

People who have studied mathematics, science, logic, medicine and similar subjects at a high level sustain a firm belief in the scientific method, analysis etc. Believing in anything could be anathema to such people. Instructing them to practise meditation on the qualities of the Buddha based on faith may not work. Faith is not recognised as a part of the scientific method. It is counter-productive trying to prove to such a person that the scientific method itself might be defective and the fundamentals of science are changing.

In such cases it makes sense to analyse the concept of the Buddha quite apart from the beautiful personality and marvellous spiritual attainments, including absorptions and supernormal powers. The reason is that there is no tested evidence to look at these attributes of the Buddha; these are based mostly on belief.

It would be more effective to teach the Dhamma, including an analysis of the concept of the Buddha in an abstract sense. For example, what do the terms Buddha, *Araham*, Teacher of humans and gods, etc., mean? Now, the object of meditation is the concept of the Buddha. Having succeeded in this meditation, one can and should go back to the faith-based, beautiful personality of the Buddha.

The more one reflects on the Buddha and his attributes, the more we understand how small we are, whatever qualifications we might have. This way the clouds of stupidity can be pushed away and one gets a better chance of becoming truly wise through meditation.

THE END OF THE 48 UNITS

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With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

*** The Vows of Samantabhadra ***

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

*** The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra ***