



Three Jewels

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Links to Buddhist Websites

[Blue Lotus Temple](#)
[Ten Directions Zen Community](#)
[Woodstock Zen Group](#)
[Dharma.org](#)
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Confidence

~ **Venerable Sathi Peradeniye**

Once there was a prince who went to visit Buddha and he asked, "What are the steps for enlightenment or awakening?" Buddha said that there are five steps. Someone can cultivate these steps within a few seconds, few days, few weeks, few years or a few lifetimes. The steps to enlightenment are: confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. The prince told Buddha that he had never thought about confidence. He said that he thought Buddha was teaching about faith. Buddha said, "No, I never talked about faith. I always encouraged effort to cultivate confidence." The prince asked, "What is wrong with faith? Doesn't faith build confidence?", and Buddha said, "No."

What does confidence do and what should we have to cultivate confidence?
What is the difference between faith and confidence?

To have confidence, what should one have? To have confidence we should understand. As an example, most of us might have confidence that we can sit for half an hour. We have gained confidence with experience. Maybe we have started with five minutes, then ten and so on. When someone has sat for a half an hour without moving, without pain, it gave confidence to the mind. Now each time when we sit down, we sit with that confidence that we can meditate for a half an hour. When we learn and know about ourselves, we have faith, too. It is not just faith that we have, but it is faith with the confidence and the experience. Faith without confidence believes that we can do something. Confidence helps us to know we can do something. That confidence came from the experience of doing something. With confidence we don't have fear or doubt. Once we don't have fear or doubt, we will be able to do what we want to, but with faith only, we still have fear or doubt. When we have fear and doubt we are uneasy and unsure of ourselves. Then we become restless. If we have confidence without fear and doubt, we will not worry.

The athlete who is doing a high jump for the first time can't jump very high. However, after doing the jump a number of times and having the experience, he will have some confidence about himself. That person knows himself. He has no fear and doubt.

Buddha talked about a different kind of confidence. He talked about how we react with our feelings. How do we manage ourselves and face situations? Most of the time, we have doubt and fear about the future and our life. This is because we don't know that if we have a well trained mind we have no fear. If we know our mind very well, then whatever arises, we can face it. That kind of confidence will give us an easy life because we have confidence about ourselves and our mind.

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Think about the past. How many times have we faced a painful situation, but no matter what happened we had to get through it? Sometimes we were able to face those experiences with a happy face. Sometimes we faced it with an unhappy face. However, the point is that we got through the situation either way. Now, when we think about those experiences, we can see that we had limited access to change the situation. No matter what happens, we have to understand what we can do or what our capacity is to change something. Only we can do that. If we have confidence about our capacity to do the right job with the resources we have, that's a confidence we build within ourselves to carry into the future. With that confidence we see that, whatever happens, we will be okay. We will find a way to face those situations by ourselves. When we have that confidence, we will not have the fear about tomorrow or the future. We will have no doubt about our capacity or our energy. That is how we build confidence.

If we sit down for a half an hour, someone may ask us if we could still do that when we become 90 years old. We will know that if we can do it today, then we will be able to do it tomorrow. That confidence will allow us to carry ourselves into that age. If we can maintain peace right now, we can maintain peace in death, too. If we can do it today, we will be able to do it tomorrow also. That is the confidence that a lot of monks and meditators gain with their practice. There were many occasions when some monks were asked if they could maintain the same peace in death. Most of them replied by saying, "Yes, I have confidence. I can maintain this peace all the time no matter what arises in a situation."

Sometimes a person won't meditate because they don't want to sit for a half an hour without moving. They will say that maybe they can do it for only five minutes. They say that because they don't have confidence that they can sit for longer. We can help people by showing them their capacity. Buddha started by showing that if we have the same body and same mind that anybody can meditate. We must ask ourselves, "If I have the same body and the same mind, then why can't I do what he is doing?" We need to have confidence to lead us into the effort. We need effort to develop our practice and this applies with everything. We can practice with our business, work, or whatever we do. We need to say that if we can do this a little bit, than we can do a little more.

When we want to meditate we should know, even though we have all things distracting us, we should not go with those things. We should not react or involve with those distractions. We then begin to learn about that and we are concentrating on what we are doing. It is the same way with our daily activities, business and work. We must think about what the subject of that activity is and not all kinds of extra things outside of that. We then learn our capacity, subject and environment. This will give us a clear understanding of how to act, what to do, and how to choose. It will not just be knowing, but a very clear understanding of the nature of our experience. We call that wisdom.

That is how we apply the five steps of enlightenment: confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Once we get into wisdom, there is no opportunity to have pain because we see reality.

Something happens to your leg and you cannot sit down as you used to. You have to understand what your capacity is and what to do about that leg. Then you can understand without complaining about your leg when you get older. It understands without hate. Then, we don't get into hating aging. This way you will maintain joy and happiness all the time. So, when someone has those five qualities 100%, those people are known as awakened ones. They make sure, no matter what happens, that they maintain joy. So, we need cultivate and develop wisdom toward ourselves. When we cultivate confidence we learn about our emotions and our feelings.

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Blue Lotus Buddhist Temple Calendar of Events

Sunday, March 25, 2007

Sutra Discussion

Sunday, April 15, 2007

Beginners' Retreat

Sutra Discussion

Sunday, April 22, 2007

Vipassana Day Retreat

Tuesday, May 1, 2007

Moonlight Meditation

Saturday, May 12, 2007

Visakha

(Buddha Day Celebration)

Sunday, May 20, 2007

Beginners' Retreat

Sutra Discussion

Sunday, May 27, 2007

Special Dharma Talk

Tranquility Through Inner

Observation

Given by Bhante Saranapala

Saturday, June 2, 2007

Change of Mind Day

That way those emotions will not trap us. Then we recognize those things are not us. The arising is due to foreign experience outside of us.

Once Buddha visited Bhante Rahula, his son before his renunciation. He saw that Rahula had a mirror in his room. He asked him what the mirror was for. Rahula said that it was for watching his face and cleaning it if needed. Then Buddha said, "Use your mindfulness to observe words and clean words. Use your mindfulness to observe action and clean actions from wrong actions. We should use these things as we use mirror." If you don't recognize what is happening, if you have a dot of ink on your face, you will eventually have it all over your face. That's what we do most of the time with our words and our actions. It gets all over. Sometimes that is why we say things we shouldn't. Then, that makes a bigger mess than what we had to begin with.

Develop confidence toward yourself by understanding you.

News & Notes

Join us for Bingo! The first Saturday of each month, starting on May 5, will be an afternoon of Bingo held downstairs in the Congregational Unitarian Church in Woodstock. Bring a friend or family member for an afternoon of fun. Bingo will be played between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM, and refreshments and snacks will be available for a modest price. Come and enjoy while supporting the Blue Lotus Temple and Congregational Unitarian Church.

Offering Blessings and loving-kindness is something we do together during each meditation. We gather our good merits, and wish happiness and health to a friend or loved one. Knowing the positive energy just one person can generate, think about the power of the group as a whole. By coming together as a spiritual community, we can offer support to each other during difficult times. If you would like the Blue Lotus meditation group to send a blessing of loving-kindness to you or a family member or friend, please email info@bluelotustemple.org with your request. If you would like to include the person's name, relation to you and difficulty (i.e. illness or death in the family) we will include them with our blessing in the next meditation session.

Financial Support Pledge Forms are an important tool for our organization's financial planning. If you are making a regular weekly, monthly or annual donation to the Temple, please complete a new Financial Support Pledge Form for 2007. The forms are available during our meditation sessions. Completed forms can be remitted with your next donation either via mail or by placing the form in the weekly donation basket. With your continued support, we are able to grow as a community and provide more opportunities for learning and spiritual development.

Sponsor a Monk for Vesakha Day by making a donation of \$100. We are planning to have 20 Monks participate this year adding color and great energy to our celebration. A sign up sheet is available at weekly meditation practice or donations can be sent to Blue Lotus Temple in Crystal Lake.

Blue Lotus Buddhist Temple
Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 16, 2007
Father's Day Meditation

Sunday, June 24, 2007
Sutra Discussion

Friday, June 29, 2007
Moonlight Meditation

Sunday, July 8, 2007
Beginners' Retreat

Saturday, July 14, 2007
Annual Precept-Taking
Ceremony

Sunday, July 22, 2007
Day Retreat in
William Bay

Sunday, July 29, 2007
Moonlight Meditation

"In sensory knowledge that is very often illusionary, people find themselves thereby repeatedly proving themselves wrong. That's why we need momentous awakening. This poem encapsulates that reality."

~ **Venerable Sujatha Peradeniye**

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN FIVE SHORT CHAPTERS by Portia Nelson

I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place
but, it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
my eyes are open
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.