

The Yoke's on Us

On one occasion a group of elders were discussing this point: "Friends, 'the fetter' and 'the things that fetter': are these things different in meaning and also different in phrasing, or are they one in meaning and different only in phrasing?"

Then Citta, one of the great lay disciples of the Buddha, joined the conversation and gave this explanation:

"Suppose, Venerable Sirs, a black ox and a white ox were yoked together by a single harness or yoke. Would one be speaking rightly if one were to say: 'The black ox is the fetter of the white ox; the white ox is the fetter of the black ox'?"

"No, householder. The black ox is not the fetter of the white ox nor is the white ox the fetter of the black ox, but rather the single harness or yoke by which the two are yoked together: that is the fetter there."

"So too, friend, the eye is not the fetter of sights nor are sights the fetter of the eye, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both: that is the fetter there...[and so on for the ear and sounds, nose and odours, tongue and flavours, body and physical sensations]...the mind is not the fetter of mental phenomena [thoughts, emotions, memories, states of mind] nor are mental phenomena the fetter of the mind, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both: that is the fetter there."

S 41.1

What is it that blocks enlightenment? What is it that separates us from the great happiness and freedom of liberation of consciousness? What is it that the Buddha says 'feters' us like a ball and chain to Samsara? Can attachment really be separated from the objects of attachment? To understand this point the Buddha points us in the direction of examining the sensory relationship we have with our environment. The fault lies not with our sensory apparatus—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—nor with the external world.

However, when the relationship between the two is influenced by craving, anger, grasping, selfishness or unrealistic interpretations and projections, we can find ourselves bound like cows fettered to each other pulling a heavy cart.

News from Vimutti Monastery

The Community

Ajahn Chandako will be travelling to Thailand on January 7 to take part in the funeral ceremonies for his preceptor, Tan Jao Khun Maha Amorn, who passed away in November. This will be followed by the annual gathering at Luang Por Chah's monastery, Wat Pah Pong. This gathering is a huge multi-day event of meditation, Dhamma talks, pujas and Sangha meetings that attracts thousands to come and set up their glots (mosquito net umbrellas) in the forest of the monastery. At the Sangha meetings it is expected that Vimutti will pass the final ratification necessary to become an official branch monastery of Luang Por Chah. During Ajahn Chandako's time in Thailand, he will have an opportunity to research stone carvers for making Buddha statues for the stupa, meet with the organisers of the World Tipitaka Project to obtain a copy of the Pali Canon for the stupa, visit senior teachers and gather supplies for Vimutti. On January 20 he will travel to Kuala Lumpur to take part in the Ajahn Chah Remembrance Day event with many other senior disciples of Luang Por Chah. He will return to New Zealand on January 24. During his absence, Venerable Mudito will be looking after the monastery.

On New Year's Eve we had a heart warming celebration of the illusory passing of conventional time. What better way to bring in the new year than with a combination of meaningful teachings, clarity and wholesome fun. Many of the committee members and Rasindra did a great job preparing the Auckland Vihara. On occasions like this the benefits of good friendship become clear. We can all be grateful for being part of the wonderful ATBA community.

We were pleased to have Ven. Ajahn Vajiro visit Vimutti Monastery for a few days, and we hope to see him again next year for a longer visit.

On the building front, we have been designing and researching a garage to protect our vehicles and store supplies. Water from the roof would be collected in two 25,000 litre tanks, which would more than double the monastery's water supply. The earthworks for the foundation have now been completed, and the construction is planned to begin at the end of January.

The Vimutti Stupa

Update

Our architect, John, has completed and refined the architectural drawings, with thorough internal reinforcement to withstand the test of time. The starting date for building the base now rests with the building companies. Cliff made a four-sided tapered pole from a local tree trunk that will serve as the central channel for the stupa. This will be wrapped in Buddhist flags and white ceremonial scarves before being placed inside a vertical container in the center of the stupa. Ajahn Chandako has been researching Buddha carvers in Thailand and Indonesia to find the best combination of type of stone, colour, timing and artistic skill. He and Meth are also working on completing the English and Pali sets of the Tipitaka that will go inside the stupa. Meanwhile, Santi recently took a creative approach to raising money for the project. She told her friends she was going to shave her head as a fundraiser, and her friends responded with much good humoured support.

Ceremony for Enshrining Personal Items and Displaying the Relic Collection

Saturday February 19, 2011

On the full moon of February, Magha Puja, we will hold a ceremonial celebration to enshrine the personal items that people have offered for the stupa. These will then be sealed in a solid, waterproof and airtight container before being placed in the base, directly underneath the stupa. The box will then be surrounded by concrete slabs to ensure durability. Also at this time we will have a formal display of the

Vimutti relic collection, complete with explanation and discussion of what relics are, how they are formed and their benefits.

Ceremony for Enshrining the Tipitaka and Buddha Images Saturday May 21, 2011

Just after the full moon of May, Wesak or Visakha Puja, we will have the ceremony for enshrining the Tipitaka in the Stupa. These are the teachings of the Buddha that have been preserved in the Pali Canon, the oldest and most historically reliable account of what the Buddha taught. Both Pali and English versions will be included. On that day we will also be enshrining Buddha statues, the central channel pole, holy amulets, and other sacred scripts.

Personal Items

We have extended the time for people to offer personal items to be included in the base of the stupa through the month of January. So far we have received a wonderful array of items and personal messages. Thinking about what to include has been an opportunity for people to contemplate their lives, their loved ones and what is truly meaningful to them. We have received many touching bits of people's lives, alive with much history and sentimental value.

It is an extremely rare opportunity to be able to enshrine something personal in a stupa. The intention to include an object that has special relevance and meaning makes a kammic connection between your stream of consciousness and the relics. If it is done with the proper intention and devotional motivation, it will reduce the number and severity of any obstacles to practicing the Dhamma and increase the likelihood of you coming in contact with the teachings of the Buddha in future lifetimes. When you visit and circumambulate the completed stupa you will know that part of your life is enshrined there as well.

It is best if the items are not larger than a rugby ball. For example: ashes of loved ones, photos, special stones, common everyday items that reflect your life, things made of glass, earth from sacred sites, crystals, gems, greenstone, jewelry, artifacts, stone carvings, items which have a powerful symbolic value, or cards written with your individual aspirations or hopes for our planet. Another recommended

item is Kiwiana: symbols and souvenirs of New Zealand... koru art, glass kiwi coasters, a carved kiwi bird, a rugby ball, a sheep doll, etc.

You can bring items to Vimutti Monastery or to the Auckland Buddhist Vihara, and the Sangha will look after them until the ceremony of placing them inside the base.

For the complete details, background and architectural sketches,
please see

[The Vimutti Stupa](#)

Upcoming Meditation Retreats

Day of Peace

Saturday, January 29, 8:30 am-4:00 pm
Led by Ajahn Chandako and Ven. Chang Shean

This is a valuable opportunity for beginners and experienced meditators alike. This full day of meditation, instruction and silence is an excellent way to keep up with your dedication to inner peace. Meditation is a vital skill for developing calm and insight on the path to enlightenment. It has also been shown to reduce stress, strengthen the immune system and keep the left prefrontal cortex from deteriorating with age. It is a practical way to recharge your batteries and to train mindful awareness for integration into daily life. It is good to bring loose fitting clothing, a sun hat and some food for a shared lunch. Ven. Chang Shean is a Taiwanese bhikkhuni who leads the group in Chi Kung.

Held at: Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay
Registration: no need to register beforehand

One World, One Truth

Saturday May 7- Saturday May 13
Taught by Ajahn Chandako and Ven. Lhatso

In this rare and uniquely collaborative meditation retreat, these two Sangha members from the Theravada and Vajrayana traditions will spend a week exploring and discussing the common ground and differences between these two ancient ways of practice and how they manifest in the melting pot of contemporary Western Buddhism. As with previous retreats, it will be conducted in silence with thorough meditation instruction and guidance. Ven. Lhatso is a New Zealand born nun who ordained in the Tibetan tradition in 2008. The setting for the retreat will be the beautiful hills and lush bush of Te Moata.

Held at: Te Moata Retreat Centre

Registration: contact Te Moata

http://temoata.org/Te_Moata/Registration.html

Dana

All retreats and teachings held at Vimutti Buddhist Monastery are offered on a 'dana' basis. Dana is Pali for 'generosity'. Offering teachings freely is a vital principle to uphold. This system of mutual generosity means that there are no registration fees: no charge for the facilities, the food, the management, caretaking, accommodation or the teaching. To engage wisely with a system of dana means that instead of an attitude of paying for goods and services, a retreatant makes good kamma (merit or *punna*) by donating whatever amount feels right: neither too much nor too little. The natural result of generosity is an internal brightness and joy that creates a wholesome and fertile mental environment for developing meditation.

Need a Ride to the monastery?

If you are looking for a ride to Vimutti Monastery, you can post your request on our ride sharing calendar. If you are planning to drive to the monastery and have room for another person, check the calendar to see if someone needs a ride.

Click here to see [the carpooling calendar](#)

Free Firewood

Free pine firewood is available from the monastery land for anyone who would like to have it. Some is already prepared and some would need to be cut with a chainsaw.

Upcoming Events

Vimutti Buddhist Monastery and the Auckland Buddhist Vihara

Click on these links to find out more:
[Good Kamma Day](#), [Open Day](#), [Day of Peace](#)

Saturday, January 8, all day

Good Kamma Day, our monthly working bee
Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Saturday, January 29, 8:30am-4:00pm

Day of Peace, a one-day meditation workshop with Ajahn Chandako
Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Sunday, January 30, 10:30 am

Open Day, with Ajahn Chandako
An opportunity to meet the ATBA community
The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Sunday, January 30, 7:30 pm

Dhamma talk, Ajahn Chandako
The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Saturday, February 12, all day

Good Kamma Day, our monthly working bee
Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Saturday, February 19, 10:30am-4:00pm

Ceremony for Enshrining Personal Items and Relic Presentation
Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Saturday, February 26, 8:30am-4:00pm

Day of Peace, a one-day meditation workshop with Ajahn Chandako

Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Sunday, February 27, 10:30 am

Open Day, with Ajahn Chandako

An opportunity to meet the ATBA community

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Sunday, February 27, 7:30 pm

Dhamma talk, Ajahn Chandako

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

May 7-14

Meditation Retreat: One World, One Truth, with Ajahn Chandako

Te Moata Retreat Centre, Tairua, Coromandel

Sunday, May 15

Wesak Celebration

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Saturday, May 21

Enshrining Tipitaka, Buddhas and sacred items in the Stupa

Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay

Every Sunday 10:00-11:00am (except Open Day)

Chi Kung lessons with Venerable Chang Shean

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

This meditation in movement is an outstanding way to relieve stress, balance energy and develop mindfulness.

Sister Chang Shean is a Taiwanese Bhikkhuni who offers these lessons freely on a donation basis. All proceeds go to the ATBA.

Every Sunday 3:00-4:30pm

Dhamma School

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Give your children a good start in life with the ATBA Dhamma

School. Available for any child or teenager from the ages of 5-18. Contact Benita 09 520-1392

Every Sunday, 7:30 pm

Meditation, chanting and listening to a Dhamma talk

The Auckland Buddhist Vihara, 29 Harris Rd., Mt. Wellington

Useful items to donate to the Monastery

Plumbing skills

Anumodana

We rejoice in the good kamma made by the following people:

Meth for repairing our computer

Thi and Jeevendra for computer assistance

Chintaka for offering parts for the computer

Besil for car maintenance

John H for offering chairs for the Vihara

George and Irene for many household items

George for computer graphics

Irene for assisting with Buddha carvers for the stupa

Cliff for making the central pole for the stupa

Maree for organising a forest regeneration project

Nacha for assisting with Buddha carvers for the stupa

Santi for a stupa donation

Tammy for a stupa donation

Rashmi and Presanthi for a stupa donation

King Wat and Christine for a stupa donation

Ganga and Gaminee for a stupa donation

Lin for a stupa donation

Jeevendra for offering mulch at the Vihara

John H for offering the VDO player used on New Year's Eve

Freddie for offering a notebook

Benita for offering shelves and cupboards

Edward and Priscilla for arranging a cement mixer to be offered

**By the power of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha,
may these offerings be a cause for you to realise
the freedom and peace of Nibbana.**

Download the ATBA Chanting

[Evening Chanting](#)

[The Buddha's Words on Loving-kindness, the Metta Sutta](#)

Basic Introduction to Buddhism

For a simple, straightforward and easy to read introduction to the teachings of the Buddha, click on the following link

[What is Buddhism?](#)

Carpooling

To make it easier for people to visit the monastery and to reduce your carbon footprint, we have now set up a ridesharing system. If you would like to come to Vimutti but do not have a vehicle, or you would like to share a ride and petrol costs with others, please have a look at the carpooling page of our website. Both people looking for a ride and people who wish to offer a ride can post information on the site. Ridesharing is environmentally friendly, economical and brings people together.

Click here to see [the carpooling calendar](#)

Definition

Vimutti: [Pali] Release, liberation, emancipation; freedom from the fabrications and conventions of the mind. The suttas distinguish between two kinds of liberation. Liberation through wisdom (*pañña-vimutti*) describes the fully enlightened mind of a Buddha or an Arahant. Liberation through awareness (*ceto-vimutti*) is used to describe either the unbounded but temporary liberation of mind in deep samadhi (*jhana*) or the supramundane state of samadhi in the completely purified mind of a Buddha or an Arahant.

Visit our Website

For complete information on Vimutti Buddhist Monastery and the ATBA, including maps, please see our website

www.vimutti.org.nz

We wish you all much benefit and happiness from practicing meditation and leading a good life.