Cool Unduwap Season

Posted on

> Unduwap Season refers to a ‘cool’ and calm period of the year that signifies the arrival of ‘Sanghamittā Theri’, bringing the sapling of Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi.


Buddha Gaya temple and the Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi in India.

Seeta karai Unduwap Maha Durutte’’ this old Sinhala saying means,’ in Unduwap and Duruthu, (December and January) the surroundings are very cool. The climate in Sri Lanka remains calm and cool till the end of January. ‘Unduwap Pōya’ is also very important for all Sri Lankans as a peaceful month. It signifies the arrival of ‘Sanghamittā Theri’, a great Arhat Bhikkhunī, to the country with the right branch of Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi from Budhgaya, in India. It also signifies holding the first ordination of female in Sri Lanka, with 500 women and Queen Anulāde¯vi on this Pōya day and the commencement of Sri Pāda journey to the peak of the Sri Pāda

mountain where the Footprint of The Lord Buddha was placed. However, we cannot forget the farewell from 2021, the regrettable, sorrowful year, with the ‘Corona virus’ and stepping into a prosperous, peaceful New Year 2022, especially looking forward to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

While recalling the establishment of the Bhikkhunī order on the Binara Pōya, it is important to mention the ‘Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi’, which was also escorted to Dambakola Paruna bay, in particular, Sri Lanka from India by Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā Theri with eleven other Bhikkhunī. Henceforth, Sri Lankan communities cultivated a new practice of worshiping and paying homage to The Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi with various offerings, as to The Lord Buddha. Gradually, it has become a popular religious activity among communities today, making vows to Jaya Sri Mahā Bodhi, asking solutions for various mundane purposes like getting a good education, recovering from illnesses, expecting childbirth, and mental relief. Therefore, we must pay attention to these Pu¯ja, offerings whether it is the primary purpose of Buddhism or something else. It is mentioned in the Wakkhali sutta in Tripitaka, how to really see or respect The Lord Buddha as mentioned here, ‘’Yō dhammang passathi So mang passathi’’ whoever sees the Dhamma (the doctrine) can really see me.

Therefore, who wants to see the Blessed One should study His doctrine to see the real Lord Buddha. Therefore, it must be the main purpose of Buddhists, not just Pujas or rituals.

To fulfill this purpose, a real Buddhist or any other devotee, who is keen to search the Dhamma, has to follow the doctrine thoroughly without any hesitation, discouragement, and illusion until he gains the goal.

For this, first, he must respect the Teacher – The Lord Buddha, His Doctrine, and His followers – The Sangha. Then he can commence the journey to emancipation. On the other hand, at this juncture, the Blessed One has advised the followers not to be religious prejudiced but to be free thinkers, without getting any illusion as this philosophy is profound and unable to understand very easily by unwise followers.

One can learn these ideas, concentrating the mind to the ‘Sabbāsava Sutta’ (-Discourse On All-Cankers)” Majjima Nikāya, in Tipitaka. ‘’Only for him who understands, who comprehends, is there the destruction of cankers, so I say; not for him who does not understand, who does not comprehend. Monks, for one who

wisely and intelligently realizes the fact that the unarisen cankers arise, and the arisen cankers increase; and, monks, for one who wisely realizes, the unarisen cankers do not arise, and the arisen cankers are overcome'' – Sabbāsara Sutta. M.N.

By this translated quotation of the sutra, we can understand the Blessed One and His Teachings. So, He has enunciated the doctrine to people who can understand it – to wise followers, not unwise persons.

Again, Blessed One explains the method of how to overcome cankers.

''Monks, there are cankers to be overcome by Insight.
There are cankers to be overcome by Self-control.
There are cankers to be overcome By Judicious Use.
There are cankers to be overcome by Endurance.
There are cankers to be overcome by Avoidance.
There are cankers to be overcome by elimination.
There are cankers to be overcome by Development.''

This is fascinating and psychological, so any psychology counselor can use this method as psychotherapy for their clients to overcome their mental problems and even psychosis. Therefore, I consider the Buddha's teaching as not a ritual or something else of worshiping but a technique of mind-controlling and a way leading to Enlightenment.

Therefore, once, the Blessed One has pointed out that he who follows Buddha's path must be a wise person, according to the Anguttara Nikāya. Thus, it states: "Paññāwanthassa ayang Dhammō dēsithō nāyang Dhammōduppaññassa'' – "I expound this doctrine for the wise persons, not for unwise persons." So, by all these explanations, we can understand that who wants to trace this Dhamma must be a wise person or, anyhow, must become a wise person. At this juncture, some individuals could get a wrong idea about these teachings of Blessed One, grasping the false perception. Therefore, when we teach Dhamma, we are used to showing them the right way, called 'Right Understanding', or Sammāditthi in Pāli.

To fulfill this purpose, an individual has to follow the practical Buddhism, from the very beginning of it, by doing some rituals: as pūjās, offerings and worshiping the Buddha and the Bō Tree, and offering food to Bhikkā or needy people, observing precepts and studying the doctrine. This is called 'Thri Shiksha' or Three Disciplines,

these are, 1. Training in moral conduct, (Seela) 2. Training in concentration, (Samādhi) 3. Training in wisdom, (Paññā). This is the way to gain wisdom by a real follower. Among these three, a wise person used to train the wisdom by practicing meditation, and without practicing meditation, an individual cannot reach the wisdom. So, he is called a paññāwantha or a wise person.

Meanwhile, when we talk about meditation, the way to gain wisdom, today it is practiced by western people more fascinatingly than Buddhists in Sri Lankan. But anyhow, their aim is very different from that of Buddhists.

Western people use meditation especially to get rid of mental problems, like stress, anxiety, depression, and some psychiatrists like Dr. John Kabat-Zinn have introduced meditation as a tool for good education from kindergarten to medical college.

On the other hand, some scholars like Stuart J. Eisendrath, MD. Director, UCSR Mini-Medical School, depression center, University of California, has introduced Mindfulness as a Meditation technique for recovering stress, chronic pain, psoriasis, eating disorder, fibromyalgia, cancer, parenting/childbirth, borderline personality disorder, addiction, and bipolar disorder.

Meanwhile, some neuroscientists have done some experiments about ‘how the brain changes’ during meditation with the help of different brain scanning. So, they have learned that when there are changes in the brain, the mental process also changes. Therefore, mental and physical diseases like psychosomatic illnesses could be cured. If so, can’t we get a cure for coronavirus if we used to practice Meditation or Yoga in this pandemic period for the sake of ourselves and others as well?

Also, as mentioned above, western people have gradually reached practical Buddhism, more than Sri Lankan Buddhists. Anyhow, especially in this pandemic period, it is better to prevent gathering for Bodhi Pūjā and Dāna – arms giving, but to practice something, like Mindful Meditation or Yoga and Yoga meditation for the control of the Coronavirus spreading is advisable. However, the result would not be so different; any individual, Western or East, who practices meditation might reach the goal of emancipation.



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