

Dutt Laboratory

Newsletter – May 2015

BUDDHA PURNIMA



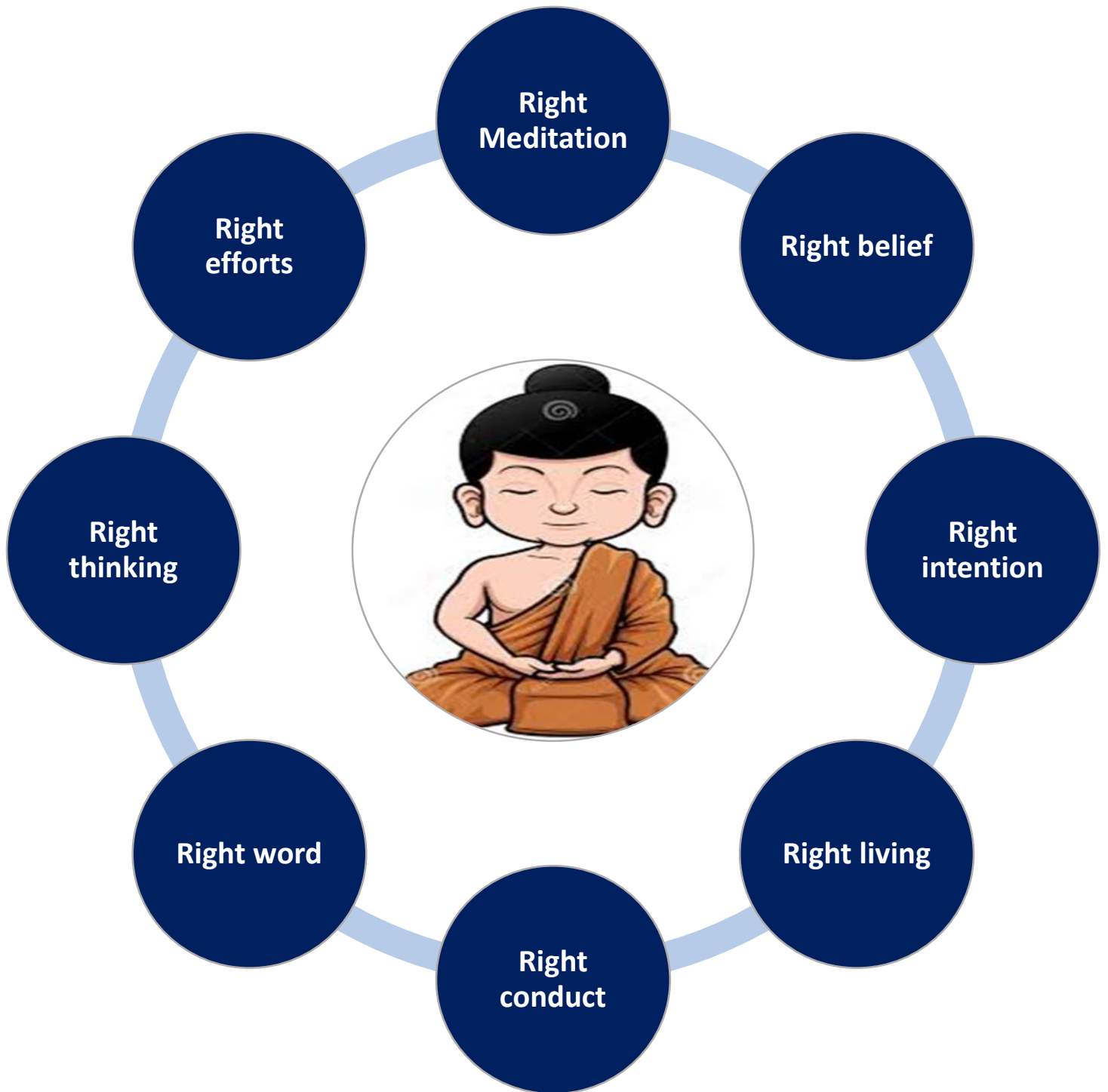
LIFE STORY OF LORD BUDDHA

In the year 624 BC, in Kapilawaththu (Nepal) Siddhartha Gautama was born as a prince. His father was King Suddhodana and his mother was Queen Mahamaya. When he was sixteen he finished his education and he married Princess Yasodara. King Suddhodana handed over his kingdom to his son Siddhartha. They had a baby name Rahula. When king Siddhartha was 29 years old he decided to renounce lay life. Siddhartha left from his kingdom and went to several well-known teachers to study the ultimate nature of reality. But their teachings didn't satisfy him and he set out to find his own path. Six years later he went to Bodgaya near the Neranjana River and sat under a tree.

Siddhartha's mind was calm and relaxed. As he sat his concentration deepened and his wisdom grew brighter. In this clear and peaceful state of mind he began to examine the true nature of life. "What is the cause of suffering," he asked himself, "and what is the path to everlasting joy?" In his mind's eye he looked far beyond his own country, far beyond his own world. Soon the sun, planets, the stars out in space and distant galaxies of the universe all appeared to him in his meditation. He saw how everything, from the smallest speck of dust to the largest star was linked together in a constantly changing pattern: growing, decaying and growing again. Everything was related. Nothing happened without a cause and every cause had an effect on everything else.

As he realized this, deeper truths appeared to his mind. He looked deeply into himself and discovered that his life as Siddhartha the Prince was but the latest in a series of lifetimes that had no beginning - and that the same was true of everyone. We are born, live and die not one time, but again and again. He saw that death is only the separation of the mind from its present body. After death the importance of Karma is central to the next journey. When one life ends, another begins - and in this way the wheel of death and birth keeps spinning around and around. He also saw one life to the next we are constantly changing and constantly affecting one another. Sometimes we are rich and comfortable; sometimes we are poor and miserable. Occasionally we experience pleasure, but more often we find ourselves with problems. And Siddhartha also saw that as our conditions change, so do our relations with others. We have all been each other's friend and enemy, mother and father, son and daughter thousands upon thousands of times in the past.

Then he looked at all of the suffering in the world. And he saw how living beings create their own misery and joy. Blind to the truth that everything is always changing, they lie, steal and even kill to get the things that they want, even though these things can never give them the lasting happiness they desire. And the more their minds fill with greed and hate, the more they harm each other - and themselves! Each harmful action leads them to more and more unhappiness. They are searching for peace yet find nothing but pain. Finally, he discovered the way to end all this suffering. He was filled with a radiant clear light. He was no longer an ordinary person. With a calm and peaceful smile, he arose from his meditation. In the golden daybreak, so it is said, Siddhartha looked up and saw the morning star. And then a great understanding came to him. He saw in his mind all the life of the world and the planets; of all the past and all the future. He understood the meaning of existence, of why we are here on this earth and what has created us. At long last he found the truth; he attained enlightenment and established the principles of Karma. Now he was the Lord Buddha, the fully liberated one, awakened and enlightened. The search of six long years had ended. It was a day when the full-moon shone, casting a bright silver light on the whole countryside, a day in the month of Vesak (May).



THE EIGHTFOLD PATH TO ACHIEVE ENLIGHTENMENT



The poem is an attempt to describe the feelings of a kid suffering from cancer of the bone...

DELAY

*A thought occurred to me
That I couldn't bend my knee
Had a pain in my muscle
Yet ignored it completely*

*Kept getting the "medicine"
I knew it never would help me
And the pain now grew beyond my knee
Keeping me in utmost agony*

*Day after day the pain grew
Soon I realized the days left were few
Why didn't I report the day I saw
The limp in my walk, the fallen jaw*

*I don't wanna take pain along
I'm too small to sing this song
But, I would say this before parting
Just say it, don't keep waiting...*

-Mukul Godbole



Profile Reading

Hey Guys!

Did you know, that it is illegal to chew gum in Singapore? Or, that the population of Ukraine is decreasing, instead of increasing? By the year 2050, Ukraine will have just 60% of its current population!

Most of us have interests apart from science. One of mine is to learn fun facts about the world! While the internet has made this easy-peasy, I wish to learn them in person, by actually travelling to as many places as I can!

When going for a trip with a group of friends, we once met a Croatian gentleman. We chitchatted with him, and asked him what he did for a living. He told us he was a tour guide in Croatia. He had a rather unusual lifestyle. He works for six months a year, guiding tourists and saving as much money as he can. And then, in the next six months, he travels for pleasure! He chooses a continent, or a bunch of countries, and explores all the nooks and corners and tries out new things daily! His job as a tourist guide doesn't allow him a life of too much luxury. He openly told us, that he barely has any worldly possessions. No car, no house of his own, and just a bank account with bare minimum savings. What he does have, however, is a head full of memories, and a camera full of breath-taking photos!

A lifestyle like this is completely unheard of in India. Most of us would dismiss Evan as a 'Hippie' or an 'Awara'. But being in a Cancer Institute, and seeing patients suffer daily, and die suddenly, should make us prepare our bucket lists soon, and rethink our future plans. It may not be possible for us, who are in a conventional profession like research, to spend six months out of work. But work gives us some opportunities to go to different labs in the world! I think we should make the best of these chances. Who knows what the future has in store for us? Maybe it's in our best interests to live life to the fullest! ☺

"I'd learned so much from traveling to familiar places that I figured I'd learn twice as much by going to a place I knew nothing about." - Gerry Abbey, Cheers, Beers, and Eastern Promise