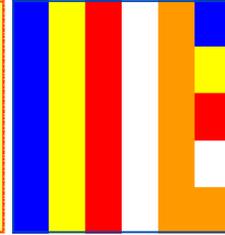




'EHIPASSIKO'



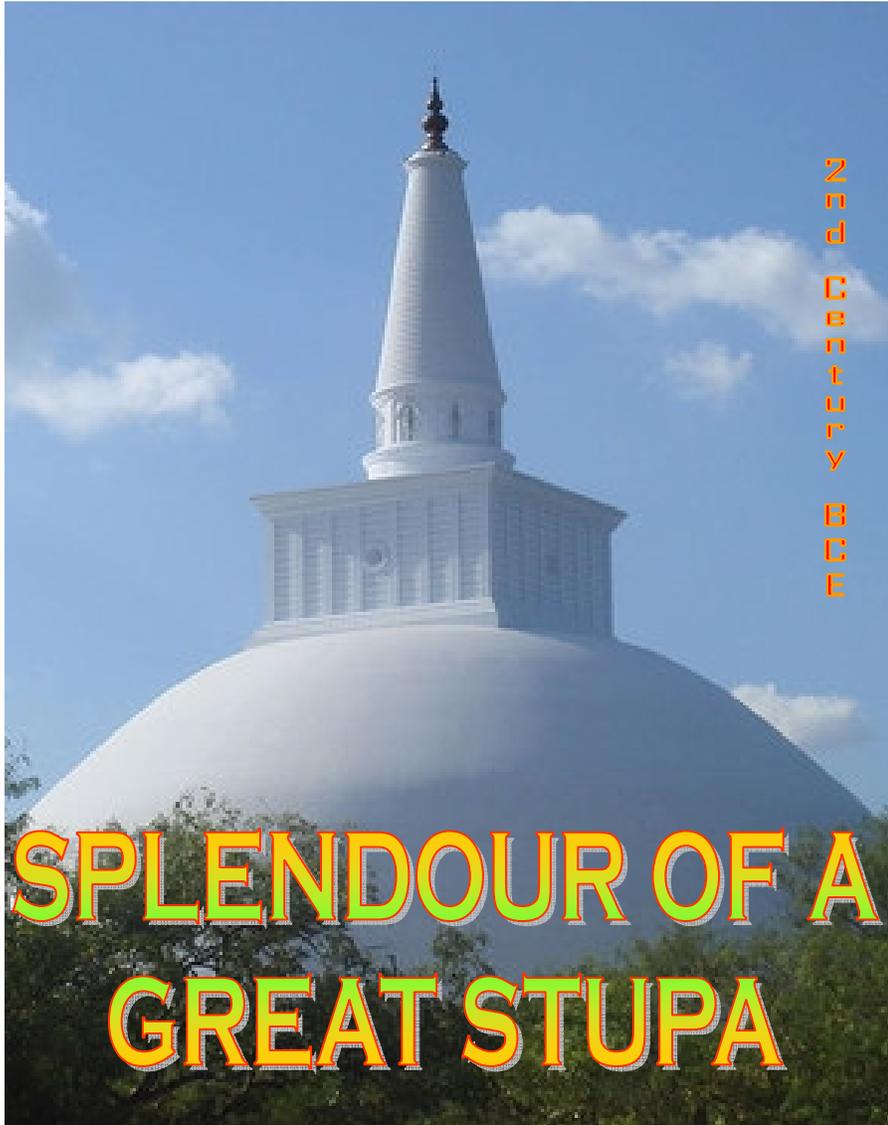
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2007 CE

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2nd CENTURY BCE

SPLENDOUR OF A GREAT STUPA

Resident Bhikkus

Chief Incumbent:

Bhante: D. Upananda

**Deputy Inmcumbent:*

Bhante W. Somananda

Patron Bhikkhus

**Most Ven. Dr.Henepola*

Gunaratana Mahathera

** Ajahn Sona*

** Bhikkhu Pavaro*

Ruwan Meli Maha Seya

Anurâdhapura, Sri Lanka

[Cover Story - P 22]



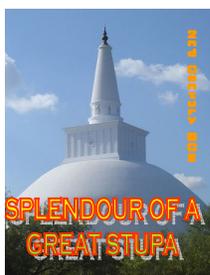
Na Cintayanto Puriso - Visesha Madigaccati



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From the Editor

Scores of world renowned philosophers, great thinkers and scientists found Buddha's teaching incomparable and exclusively fascinating. Celebrated writer *Prof. Rhys Davids* said, "Buddhist or not Buddhist, I have examined every one of the great religious systems of the world, and in none of them have I found anything to surpass, in beauty and comprehensiveness, the *Noble Eightfold Path* and the *Four Noble Truths* of the Buddha. I am content to shape my life accordingly."

It was the great modern Scientist *Albert Einstein* who re-iterated that Buddhism is the only solution to the world's endless turmoil when he said: "The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. "Buddhism has the characteristics of what would be expected in a cosmic religion for the future: it transcends a personal God, avoids dogmas and theology; it covers both the natural and spiritual, and it is based on a religious sense aspiring from the experience of all things natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. "If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism."

Luminous presentation of Buddha's teaching by enlightened and erudite intellectuals, not-so-long ago, in a background of progressive awakening of man's freedom of thought stemming from ever widening learning opportunities in a contemporary world hitherto

languished in oblivion of ignorance through compulsion could be seen steadily shedding their visions of blind faiths and dogmatic beliefs, while *religious fanaticism* is apparently returning to modernized systems of resumption of the *crusades of the Middle Ages* that killed millions of innocent men, women and children targeted in unethically forced proselytizing.

Buddhist philosophy primarily based on compassion and loving-kindness to all living beings is the only religion that never inflicted pain or resorted to bloodshed for its proliferation. Buddhism is for the Wise. Buddhism doesn't seek salvation in any superhuman power, in prayer and dogmatic belief. It's up to the individual to follow the enlightening path by oneself. "Come: see for yourself (*Ehi Passiko*)", Buddha said.

The *Exalted One* in his Supreme Enlightenment answered everything; all what science failed to respond albeit exploration and experimentation, but to agree with Buddha's *Law of Cause and Effect*: the law of the universe.

Scientists are in a continuous process of endlessly exploring the universe and experience their eventual futility. None may find a clue to solving the problem of eternal suffering, until and unless one tread the Buddha's Path to emancipation by developing one's own individual mind, realizing the eternal concept of *Anicca* (impermanence), *Dukkha* (suffering) and *Anâtma* (no-self).

'May all beings be happy and peaceful!'

Ananda Wijesinghe

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THE SCIENCE OF MEDITATION

Over many millennia, people were aware of the remarkable connection between the mind and the body. Recent scientific research in the effects of mediation on the physiology of man has discovered the basic mechanics behind this amazing connection.

Thanks to many modern investigative techniques, scientists have been able to map out the profound effects that meditation imparts on the brain. Further, several brain-directed chemical processes which cause deep-seated and wide-spread physiological effects have been uncovered

By Nimal Rajapakse, PhD.

Meditation is a technique used by man over many millennia in the hope of establishing control over the mind. Earlier forms of meditation which originated in the East primarily as a spiritual practice have now evolved into a tool used for stress reduction and achieving states of mental and physical relaxation. The 'art' of meditation, i.e. why and how meditation is practiced, has received very much interest during the last few decades particularly in the West. Especially, Buddhist meditation practice has rooted well among Westerners mainly due to the vast amount of effort by erudite Buddhist monks who arrived from the East with this invaluable gift.

However, the 'science' of meditation, i.e. understanding how meditation effects the physiology of the meditator and the outcomes of such effects have just begun to take shape thanks to several researchers based mainly in

the United States. Today, over one thousand peer-reviewed scientific research articles published in many prestigious journals are available on this subject.

Many studies have shown that meditation has not only a mental effect but wide range of profound physiological effects. In this article, key physiological effects of meditation and the mechanism of action behind such effects are briefly summarized. For in-depth information on the subject, several excellent monographs and a large number of research papers are available. These can be easily located using an internet search engine with a phrase such as 'meditation physiology' or 'science of meditation'. Such recent searches have resulted in over 1,800,000 citations, over 1000 of which are scientific research publications!

In his pioneering work on the physiological effects of meditation, Dr. Herbert Benson of

the Harvard Medical School in 1971 published the results of his first study on meditation followed by the multi-year national bestseller monograph, *The Relaxation Response*, in 1975. It is a resounding testament to Dr. Benson's revolutionary insight about the '**fight or flight response versus the relaxation response**' that this groundbreaking monograph is still available as a mass market paperback even after 35 years of initial publication!

Dr. Benson was the first to suggest that the cause for societal stress that we all experience from time to time in varying amounts is the result of our inability to react to the stressful situations in the way our bodies are programmed naturally during human evolution.

For millions of years, as creatures living in forests, our ancient ancestors reacted to threatening situations in one of two ways. If the threat was deemed manageable, they evoked the 'fight' response and fought off the threat. If the situation was deemed hopeless, they ran for their lives invoking the 'flight' response. However, once we began to become more and more 'civilized' neither of these responses became viable.

The fight or flight reflexes prepare the body for survival action using the responses given on the left column in the table (page.8). However, modern man being unable to use up the physiological energy created this way by our natural instincts, had to learn to 'cope' with the civilized norms and not respond to the stressful situations as the nature had intended us to do. The result of this is the stress that we experience. However, Dr. Benson proposed that our bodies are capable of evoking another response to curb the effects of the fight or flight response. He named this 'the relaxation response'. The principal difference between the two responses is that while the fight or

flight response is automatic, the relaxation response needs to be consciously evoked. Meditation is the technique for evoking the relaxation response which bring about the results shown in the right column in the table (please see Pg-7). Our bodies respond to meditation through the three physiological systems;

1. Autonomic Nervous System,
2. Endocrine System and
3. Musculature System.

These systems are very tightly interconnected and therefore interdependent. The chemical changes resulting in one system often has a cascading effect over the other systems.

The autonomic nervous system controls the body parts which function automatically. It has two branches; *the sympathetic nervous system* which increases arousal when the body is under threat. The effect of this system is known as the 'fight or flight response' which is characterized by increase in heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, sweating, blood glucose, blood flow to muscles, alertness etc. The other, *the parasympathetic nervous system* is responsible for restoring the body to a relaxed state.

In simple terms it can be stated that the sympathetic system is designed to handle the stressful situations and the parasympathetic system to return the body to its natural (relaxed) state.

To study what part of the brain is effected by meditation, researchers at the Harvard Medical School used MRI technology to monitor activity of the brain while the subjects meditated. They observed that meditation stimulated the sections of the brain in charge of the autonomic functions such as digestion, blood pressure

regulation etc.

The endocrine system releases hormones which modify the action of the organs in response to the signals from the autonomic system. The main organ of this system is the Adrenal gland situated above the kidneys. The adrenal gland produces the hormones adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol. These three are responsible for preparing the body for survival by invoking the appropriate response to any stressful situation at hand. Most of the other hormones are produced in the brain, particularly in the hypothalamus. These are associated with changes in the mood, pain threshold, immune system activity and the tone of smooth muscles (the muscles of the organs).

The musculature system consists of skeletal muscles (the muscles connected to the bones) and smooth muscles (the muscles of the organs). The skeletal muscles are voluntary (work as commanded by the brain) where as the smooth muscles are autonomous (work involuntarily).

All types of meditation effect all three above systems although in varying degrees. Most early research work had been done on Concentration Meditation, particularly Transcendental Meditation (TM) and Breathing Meditation (*ānāpāna*). However, more recently, publications are beginning to appear on Insight Meditation (*vipassanā*) as well.

One principal mode of physiological effect of meditation appears to stem from the control of breathing. Respiration is directly linked with the autonomic nervous system. Chemical receptors in the walls of aorta (central conduit from the heart to the body) and carotid arteries (main arteries in the neck that supply blood to the brain) help to control breathing and are sensitive to

changes of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) circulating in the blood. Over-breathing results in lower CO₂ concentration while under-breathing leads to a build up of CO₂ in blood. Mildly higher CO₂ levels result in parasympathetic dominance (relaxation) while severely higher CO₂ levels result in sympathetic dominance (fight-flight response).

Shallow and controlled breathing in meditation causes mildly high CO₂ levels and activates the parasympathetic system which leads to a feeling of relaxation with decreasing in heart rate, blood pressure, blood coagulation time and acuity of senses. These effects are the result of reduction of the so called 'stress hormones' adrenaline, cortisol etc. and the increase of endorphins, the feel good hormones, facilitated by the endocrine system as mentioned above.

A recent medical invention uses the above hypothesis to reduce high blood pressure simply by controlling the rate of breathing. An FDA approved electronic apparatus called RESPeRATE® utilizes patented technology to deliver certain kinds of breathing exercises. It is nothing more than a 'walkman' type listening device which commands the listener to breath in and out on cue.

When these exercises are performed for as little as 15 minutes a day, 3-4 times a week, they have been shown to significantly lower blood pressure with no side effects. RESPeRATE®, available for purchase for about US\$ 300 from bio-medical.com, utilizes a patented technology to pace breathing from the normal range of 14 to 19 breaths per minute to the "therapeutic zone" of under 10 breaths per minute. The same reduction of blood pressure could be simply achieved via meditation as mentioned above by controlling the rate of breathing.

Furthermore, studies of the brain using electroencephalography (EEG) during deep meditation have revealed a slowing and synchroniza-

tion of brain waves with alpha waves predominating. Emotional tension is known to severely curtail the alpha waves.

Another type of brain activity called the theta wave, which is practically non-existent in chronically stressed states, begin to emerge as the meditator enters into a deeper level of concentration. Alpha state of the brain is most conducive to creativity and to assimilation of new concepts while the theta state capable of producing deep insight and intuition. It is significant to note that increased alpha and theta activity of the brain continues to exhibit for some period of time even after the meditation session has ended.

Studies comparing different types of breathing during meditation have concluded that deep diaphragmatic (abdominal) breathing was associated with higher EEG alpha response. Thoracic (chest) breathing on the other hand produced weaker alpha response.

A popular public health web-site, WebMD, reported that follow up of several studies which began in the '80s have revealed significant cardiac and cancer benefits among groups of meditators compared to control group of non-meditators.

The results reported were quite amazing to say the least. Overall, the meditators were 23% less likely to die of heart disease and stroke. The effect of meditation on hypertension was far more pronounced than all non-drug treatments such as salt restriction, exercise and weight loss.

During meditation the concentration of stress hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol in blood goes down. Cortisol is one of the key stress hormones. Consistently high levels of Cortisol in blood result in a long list of physi-

cal ailments.

Another hormone produced in the brain, CRF(?) is the regulator of Cortisol production. Excess CRF in brain tissue is linked to depression and mood swings.

High levels of Cortisol makes the body crave for fatty food. The excess fat intake is stored in the abdominal area and the resulting abdominal obesity is a leading cause for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Another blood chemical significantly effected by meditation is Lactate. Lactate is a by-product of sugar and starch metabolism. Higher Lactate concentration in blood produces feeling of anxiety. Studies have shown up to four times as fast drop in Lactate concentration in meditators compared to subjects resting while lying down.

During meditation, blood flow to the brain increases while less blood is circulated to the rest of the body. Another blood chemical Arginine vasopressin (AVP), a beneficial compound in retaining mental alertness, have been measured up to four times the normal levels in meditators compared to control groups. AVP in synthetic form is routinely prescribed to patients with severe mental dullness due to old age.

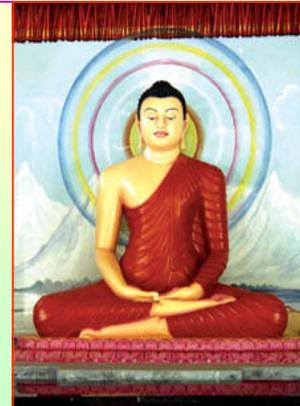
In essence, modern science has uncovered the reasons behind the well known phenomenon 'the mind-body connection'. It can be stated in simple terms that when practiced regularly over a period of time, meditation can produce profound physiological effects. It is quite satisfying to see that this age old technique has finally undergone extensive scientific scrutiny. The conclusions on the physiological benefits have been remarkable and the cascade of chemical processes uncovered in the studies are amazingly complex and intricate.

(Please refer to Page 4)

**Comparison
of the Qualities of the**

Fight or Flight

Response and the Relaxation Response



QUALITIES OF THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

Increased heart rate
 Increased blood pressure
 Increased respiratory rate
 Higher pulse rate
 Increased oxygen consumption
 Increased blood lactate
 Increased muscle tension
 Rapid production of cortisol
 Production of noradrenaline
 Unconsciously elicited
 Stress inducing
 Outer focus of attention
 Eyes wide open
 Involuntary
 External stimulus
 Surprise, unpredicted, stimulus
 Unplanned
 Active internal dialog
 Narrowing or focusing of attention
 Sensory
 Physical activity
 Physical movement
 From non-movement towards movement
 Unlearned
 Elicited by loud noise
 Builds unhappiness
 Increases rate of aging
 Helps the individual survive and evolve
 Most excitation of consciousness
 Ready for most effort
 Repeated elicitation may lead to use of narcotics and drugs
 Experience of being at odds with environment
 Attitude of resistance

QUALITIES OF THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

Decreased heart rate
 Decreased blood pressure
 Diminished respiratory rate
 Lower pulse rate
 Decreased oxygen consumption
 Decreased blood lactate
 Decreased muscle tension
 Reduction of cortisol
 Reduction of noradrenaline
 Consciously elicited
 Stress releasing
 Inner focus of attention
 Eyes shut
 Voluntary
 Internal stimulus
 Daily routine or habit as stimulus
 Planned
 Quiet, silent internal dialog
 Expansion of attention
 Senses transcended
 Mental activity
 Physiology at rest
 From movement towards non-movement
 Learned
 Elicited by subtle sound then silence
 Builds happiness
 Decreases rate of aging
 Helps the individual progress and evolve
 Least excitation of consciousness
 Least effort
 Repeated elicitation diminishes need to use drugs
 Experience of being at one with environment
 Attitude of acceptance

BUDDHISM & QUANTUM SCIENCE

The subject of Buddhism as it is known today falls into two main categories of knowledge. They are:

1. Peripheral knowledge relevant to the teachings of the Buddha such as The History of Buddhism, Buddhist Culture and The Life of The Buddha.
2. Understanding the teachings of the Buddha, which is experiencing the nature and the qualities of the mind and consciousness.

Peripheral knowledge is scholarly knowledge. One acquires such knowledge through the intellect operating through the conscious mind and left-brain. Knowledge based on the conscious mind and the left-brain is limited to the scope of our five senses. It is limited to three spatial dimensions. We cannot see or understand anything that transcends three spatial dimensions by way of rational knowledge.

The science relevant to rational knowledge is classical science, which is an intellectual exercise of the conscious mind using the left-brain. The scope of classical science is limited to the scope of the five human senses or three spatial dimensions. Therefore classical science is restricted to the aspects of nature that operate within the confines of the three familiar spatial dimensions. It is limited to what we can perceive with our sense organs. What our senses cannot perceive, classical science cannot perceive.

Classical science originated and grew in a strongly Christian environment and therefore carries a very strong Christian flavour. The first classical scientist, Galileo Galilei, got sentenced to life imprisonment because he discovered something that contradicted a teaching of Christianity. He was pardoned in 1992, 400 years after his death. Scientists such as Isaac Newton and Rene Des Cartes who laid the foundation of classical science knew that if they deviated a wee bit from the teachings of Christianity they would have to suffer the same fate as Galileo. They always had this phobia. The basic foundation laid by these scientists says that the true reality of nature is the model that existed in the mind of God at the time God created the world. That was in 5000 BC or 7000 years ago from now. The role of science is to discover the model that was in God's mind at that time. Classical science is not relevant to Buddhism, firstly because it rejects the existence of the

mind and secondly because it cannot transcend three spatial dimensions while all concepts of Buddhism transcend three dimensions

The main teaching of the Buddha is that the mind is supreme and foremost. The subject of the mind is completely beyond three dimensions. It is beyond classical science. It is beyond our intellect. It is beyond our conscious mind. It is beyond left-brain oriented knowledge. Therefore we cannot understand the teachings of the Buddha through these faculties.

The only avenue through which we can understand the teachings of the Buddha is through intuitive knowledge flowing in through the subconscious mind and the right brain. Such knowledge is not limited to three spatial dimensions. It is not limited by anything. It is holistic knowledge representing the true reality of nature. Nuclear Scientist Fritjof Capra referring to such knowledge says, 'Absolute knowledge which is direct experience of undifferentiated, undivided indeterminate suchness.' Such knowledge flows in freely once one awakens his subconscious mind and to do this one has to meditate.

Brian Weiss, Professor of Psychiatry at Mount Sinai Medical Centre in the USA says of the subconscious mind, "This is the part of the mind that lies beneath ordinary consciousness, beneath the constant bombardment of thoughts, feelings, outside stimuli and other assaults on our awareness. The subconscious mind functions at a level deeper than our usual level of awareness. In the subconscious mind mental processes occur without our conscious perception of them. We experience moments of intuition, wisdom and creativity when these subconscious processes flash into our conscious awareness. The subconscious is not limited by our imposed boundaries of logic, space and time. It can remember everything from anytime. It can transmit creative solutions to our problems. It can transcend the ordinary to touch upon wisdom far beyond our everyday capabilities. Hypnosis accesses the wisdom of It can transcend the ordinary to touch upon wisdom far beyond our everyday capabilities. Hypnosis accesses the wisdom of the subconscious in focused way in order to

A talk delivered by
Dr. Granville Dharmawardena
 President, German Dharmadutha Society
 at the Dharmavijaya Foundation,
 Colombo, Sri Lanka.

(Continued on Page 20)

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND THERAPY

By Anne Mahoney (Ph.D., R.Psych)

In Buddhism, mindfulness meditation (Vipassana) is an essential component on the path to enlightenment. Vipassana is the mental discipline, which enhances our ability to see things as they really are impermanent, unsatisfactory and coreless. Mindfulness meditation is the simple and direct practice of moment-to-moment observation of the body and the mind through calm and focused awareness. Its purpose is to provide the meditator with the necessary means to attain Nibbâna.

In the west Vipassanâ has to a large degree been removed from its roots within Buddhist spiritual practice. Most individuals interested in mindfulness meditation are not interested in attaining Nibbâna. Instead the focus has been on developing ways to live a more peaceful, harmonious, happier and less stressful life. Consequently, there has been a interest in using mindfulness meditation as a stress reduction technique, a substitute for therapy, or a psychological tool used in conjunction with therapy.

These varied applications of Vipassanâ have lead to confusion in the west regarding the role of mindfulness meditation and its purpose. Furthermore, the separation of mindfulness practice from its underlying philosophical and

practice from its underlying philosophical and spiritual roots serves to threaten the integrity of the practice. How then should we in the west approach the practice of mindfulness, so that it can meet the needs of most westerners (to have a more peaceful, harmonious, happier and less stressful life) while at the same time maintain its integrity as an essential tool on the path to enlightenment?

One answer to this dilemma may lie in the integration of mindfulness meditation and psychotherapy. Together they provide techniques for individuals to (a) observe the cycle of emotions and thought patterns that negatively impact their lives and their health and (b) experience the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and carelessness of those thoughts and emotions.

It is a common belief that the unpleasant emotions are to be avoided, denied, or ignored. Most therapies in turn, try to provide relief from unpleasant emotions through medication, behavioural coping techniques or cognitive understanding. In contrast to these approaches the integration of mindfulness meditation and psychotherapy facilitates an increased capacity to tolerate painful, emotional material. Awareness

without judgment (i.e., mindfulness) allows one to observe painful, emotional material without becoming trapped in the feelings and without intensifying the emotional pain.

Furthermore, mindful awareness allows one to experience emotions directly rather than engage the emotions cognitively. The ability to be experientially present with the emotional pain allows individuals to heal from emotional difficulties. The process of being able to heal by feeling emotions occur when one is able to remain focused on the physical sensation of the emotions (second foundation of mindfulness) rather than the content (thought processes) triggering the emotions. The direct, non-judgmental awareness allows the individual to experience the impermanence of the emotion.

While the above application of Vipassana lies outside the traditional approaches to meditation taught by the Buddha it is none-the-less consistent with those teachings, in that it affords the opportunity to experientially know the natural law of anicca-(impermanence). In this way the integrity of the teaching can be maintained while the application is adjusted to fit a Western context..



Dr. Anne Mahoney is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Her clinical focus includes working with individuals, couples and groups where issues of shame have limited clients' potential. Her intention is to help clients potential. Her intention is to help clients understand ways in which family of origin dynamics impact their current life. Anne's approach is to integrate mindfulness meditation in her clinical practice.

Anne is the Director of the Group Therapy Training Program; a nationally accredited education program which trains mental health professionals as group therapists. She is a fellow of the Canadian Group Psychotherapy Association and an adjunct at the University of Calgary. Outside her clinical practice Anne teaches meditation courses and leads meditation retreats in the Theravadin Buddhist Tradition.



A Gupta - Era Buddha Statue



Modern Science from a Buddhist Perspective

“Modern science is all cerebral and has little to do with the spiritual or emotional and therein is its weakness. So, do we really need to use science as a crutch to support Buddhism...? “

- By Janaka Perera

We often hear the argument that Buddhism should be looked at from a scientific standpoint. Instead, why not look at science from a Buddhist standpoint?

No doubt scientific discoveries often serve as useful means in teaching the Dhamma. But science as we know it today is essentially an on-going process that only leads to relative truths, half-truths and possibilities. What one scientist propounds today, another will reject tomorrow. Modern science is all cerebral and has little to do with the spiritual or emotional and therein is its weakness.

So do we really need to use science as a crutch to support Buddhism?

What we call science today had its origins in 16th Century Europe. Since then it has undergone many transformations. Old theories have been discarded and new theories have been propounded. All these are linked to the Judeo-Christian cultural environment in which Western science evolved and developed. It is the perception that nature exists primarily for man's benefit and that it should be conquered and ex-

ploited for his material success and physical well-being. In contrast, Eastern thinkers gave priority to understanding and living in harmony with nature. This is the reason that once compelled the Dalai Lama to tell a Western audience that it is far better to conquer one's inner space than outer space.

Leading Sri Lankan *Ayurvedic* physician Danister L. Perera, writing in the February 11th Sunday (2007) issue of the *Lakbima* states, "The Indian sage Haskaracharya discovered astrophysics and analyzed in depth what is really meant by the law of gravity 558 years before Sir Isaac Newton explained his theory on the subject."

Yet some people continue to use Western science as a yard stick to measure Buddhism, since they have been brainwashed to believe that it is the only way to judge reality and discover the facts of life. These persons may be scientists. But are they really scientific? Their attitude seems to be to ignore any phenomenon that cannot be explained with the normal tools of their science.

According to a **Buddhist Channel** report last year, leading American Buddhist and President of the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies B. Alan Wallace considers the Buddhist examination of interior mental states far preferable to what he calls the Western "idolatry of the brain." And he says the modern obsession with brain chemistry has created a false sense of well-being: "It is natural then to view psycho-pharmaceutical and psychotropic drugs as primary sources of happiness and relief from suffering." Wallace also chastises cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists for assuming the mind is merely the product of the physical mechanics of the brain. If everything in life is nothing but matter then nothing really matters.

This tribe of people is represented in Sri Lanka by the so-called rationalists (Ceylon Rationalist Society) the leading voice of which was the late Dr. Abraham T.Kovoor. A satire on their rigid outlook is reflected in the following sign that reportedly hangs on the wall of an aircraft plant.

"According to the theory of aero-dynamics and as may be readily demonstrated through wind tunnel experiments, the bee is unable to fly. This is because the size, weight and shape of his body in relation to the total wingspread make flying impossible. But the bee, being ignorant of these scientific truths goes ahead and flies anyway and makes a little honey everyday."

The Venerable **Ajahn Brahmavamso**, Chief Incumbent of Bodhiyana Monastery Western Australia, and former student of Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University recalls the words of a professor when he welcomed students to his Medical School in Sydney:

"Half of what we are going to teach you in

the next few years is wrong. Our problem is that we do not know which half it is!"

In the Ven. Brahmavamso's view, those were the words of a real scientist. Stressing that the Buddha Dhamma challenges everything – including logic – this bhikku asks, "How many scientists are as rigorous in their thinking as this?"

In Buddhism right effort means to enter a path that will eventually lead to the sum total of reality – not to relative truths – that will liberate the seeker from suffering. It is a path that a person has to tread alone although a master may guide him/her.

This is real science.

Buddha is deeper than Modern Idealists

"Gautama got rid of even that shade of a shadow of permanent existence by a metaphysical tour de force of great interest to the student of philosophy, seeing that it supplies the wanting half of Bishop Berkeley's well-known idealist argument. It is a remarkable indication of the subtlety of Indian speculation that Gautama should have seen deeper than the greatest of modern idealists. The tendency of enlightened thought of all today all the world over is not towards theology, but philosophy and psychology. The bark of theological dualism is drifting into danger. The fundamental principles of evolution and monism are being accepted by the thoughtful."

♦ **Prof. Huxley (Evolution And Ethics)**

Source: -Sanuja Senanayake

STILLING OF MIND CONSTRUCTION IS 'NIBBANA'

The Blessed Buddha once said:

“Here, Ānanda, the *Bhikkhu* considers it all like this: This is the supreme peace, this is the sublime calm: The standstill of all forming activities, the silencing of all *kam-mic* mental construction, the relinquishing of all substrata fuelling existence, the fading away of all craving, detachment, release, ceasing, *Nibbāna*...In this way, Ānanda, the *Bhikkhu* may enter a mental absorption in which there is no notion of I and mine, no attacks of conceiving any internal consciousness or any external objects & wherein he is both mentally released & fully liberated through understanding all...There is no inclination to I and mine-making, and no more attacks of conceit by latent tendencies to identification, egotism, & narcissism!

“Knowing both what the inner is and the outer is, one is neither stirred nor troubled any more! When thus stilled and imperturbable, there is neither any attraction, nor any aversion.

“One has crossed & escaped ageing and death...!! “

(*Sutta Nipāta* 1048)

Anguttara Nikaya - AN 3:32

Source: *Bhikku Samahitha*—(Sri Lanka)

- ◆ <http://What-Buddha-Said/.net>
- ◆ <http://groups.google.com/group/Buddha-Direct>
- ◆ http://groups.yahoo.com/group/What_Buddha_Said



DHAMMACHAKKA

Dhammachakka is the first teaching of the Buddha after Enlightenment. It means “**The Establishment of Wisdom**”, also referred to as “**Wheel of Truth**”.

In this inaugural sermon, Buddha taught us the **Four Noble Truths**, the **Middle Path** through which he attained the Supreme **Enlightenment**.

The Middle Path that leads to the ending of suffering is comprised of the **Noble Eightfold Path**: ***Right Understanding, *Right Thinking, *Right Speech, *Right Action, *Right Livelihood, *Right Effort, *Right Mindfulness and *Right Concentration**.

The **Eightfold Noble Path** leads to the understanding of the **Four Noble Truths**, which result in ending suffering on attaining **Nibbana**.

Briefly, **the Four Noble Truths are:**

- (1) ***Dukkha* (Suffering or Sorrow),**
- (2) ***The Cause of Dukkha,***
- (3) ***Ending Dukkha, and***
- (4) ***Strategy towards Ending Dukkha.***



Buddhism in the modern world

-By Alec Robertson

In these days of turmoil and unrest in the world and in keeping with the hallowed significance of the thrice blessed day of the wesak, (*1) it is therefore fitting that we direct our hearts and minds to a few of the salient and cardinal features of Buddhism which would in no small way to help to solve the problems that confront humanity today.

An important teaching of the Buddha which promotes better understanding and friendship among human beings is the doctrine of rebirth. For, according to rebirth, beings not only humans but all beings inhabiting the several world systems have almost certainly met before. We have been something to one another at some-times during the countless cycles of birth and death we have passed through. Looking at things from such a broad perspective, where our brief existence on this planet is but merely an event in the infinite series of countless births and deaths, and where the time range of human history is dwarfed to a twinkling of an eye, what are our petty squabbles over race, nationality, color caste and the other artificial barriers which we have created through our ignorance.

Not only could a man who lived in Ceylon be born again in China or Africa (or at the antipodes) but he could be born even outside the solar system on a world far off in the unfathomable depths of infinite space and even in the hells. War, strife and disharmony among the people of the world seems sheer madness in the light of such a revelation. Indeed, there among us today who are now our enemies might well have been

our very parents, brothers, sisters or close friends in previous births. Thus if we accept the doctrine of rebirth as a fundamental teaching we must for its very sake contemplate on all beings around us as our own with goodwill and loving kindness.

National and international bickering and squabbles are to some extent due to the fact that people imagine themselves to be the only beings inhabiting this world that matter. All this is because we view everything in a narrow and parochial way.

An important tenet of Buddhism which is of much significance in the context of world affairs today is that of non attachment to ideologies, theories and dogmas. The Buddha's teaching has no place for any form of emotional thinking, intellectual theories, biases and prejudices.

It is practical, rational and scientific teaching based on solid facts verifiable through experience. The attachment to any particular manner of thinking or ideology hinders and hampers a dispassionate and objective arrival at facts.

The Buddha categorically states that the clinging to views, theories or ideologies is a veritable fetter that binds us hand and foot to the shackles of existence, and which prevents us from seeing things in their true perspective. Further he says the attachment to sensual pleasure or carnal desires could be eliminated much easier and without much effort but not

one's inordinate clinging to views and ideologies.

On one occasion the Buddha delivered to his disciples stimulating and inspiring discourse on the law of cause and effect. That is, that whatever one reaps is in accord with what one sows. In conclusion, he struck a warning note in the following strain:

"O! Bhikkhus, even this view, which is so pure and so clear, if you cling to it, if you fondle it, if you treasure it, if you are attached to it, then you do not understand that the teaching is similar to a raft, which is solely for the purpose of crossing over and not for getting hold of."

Everywhere the Buddha explains this famous simile in which his teaching compared to a raft solely used for the purpose of crossing over and not to be clung to and carried on one's back.

On another occasion when he was asked by a young Brahmin to explain the idea of maintaining or protecting truth, the Buddha said: "A man has faith, if he says: "This is my faith," so far he maintains the truth. But by that he can not proceed to the absolute conclusion: "This alone is truth, and everything else is false". In other words, a man may believe what he likes and he may say: I believe this."

So far he respects truth. But because of his beliefs or faith, he should not say that what he believes in is alone the truth, and everything else is false.

The Buddha says: To be attached to one thing (to a certain view) and to look down upon other things (view) as inferior –this is the wise men call a fetter." It is quite clear that the Buddha's teaching is meant to bring peace, happiness, tranquility and sanity to individuals and the world at large. The whole doctrine taught by the Buddha leads to this end. He did not say

things just to satisfy intellectual curiosity. He was a practical teacher and taught only those things that would bring peace and happiness to mankind.

Finally when we analyze, ponder and contemplate on the four noble truths(*2) and the noble eightfold path(*3) which are the foundation and quintessence of Buddhism we find that the Buddha in unequivocal terms has given us a solution to all problems, be they economical, social, political, moral or philosophical which confront humanity in this ego-centric world. He based his teachings on the bed-rock of solid facts. He first enunciated the eternal truth that there is suffering in all its varied and manifold forms physically as well as psychological existence in the world. Then like a psychiatrist and physician par-excellence he diagnoses with his supreme wisdom the cause of this malady of suffering all beings are afflicted with. Then with a master stroke of genius he discovers that it is no other than craving or desire. This is the second noble truth. With irrefutable logic he says this craving could be eradicated and suffering brought to an end.

This is enunciated in the third Noble truth—the cessation of suffering, the cessation of craving or Nibbāna. The master reveals in precise and clear language the only remedy to all the ills of life - the Noble Eightfold Path, which is more popularly known as the middle path. The path consists of virtue, concentration or tranquility and wisdom.

Clear thinking which is an important factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, is of utmost importance and significance when the world is on the brink of a catastrophe and destruction through thermo-nuclear weapons.

Man is trying to satisfy his intellectual curiosity by trying to conquer the unfathomable depths of space, but alas! He does not under-

stand and realize that nearer home there are uncharted and unexplored regions which need to be mastered and conquered. If he understands himself, he has indeed understood the world. The conquest of himself is truly and verily the greatest of all.

*1 describes,

Wesak:

The Buddha was born, attained Nibbāna and passed away on the full moon day of the month of May which is called the *Wesak day*.

*2 describes

The Four Noble Truths

1. Sorrow
2. The reason for the sorrow.
3. The way of cessation of the sorrow
4. Nibbāna

*3 describes,

The Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right understanding
2. Right thoughts
3. Right speech
4. Right actions
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

(Courtesy: "Life of Buddha" Google Video)

BUDDHISM would remain

"Buddhism would remain what it is, even if it were proved that the Buddha never lived."

*- Christmas Humphreys,
(Buddhism)*

Modern Problems

"To read a little Buddhism is to realize that Buddhists knew, two thousand five hundred years ago, far more about our modern problems of psychology than they have yet been Given credit for.

They studied these problems long ago and found their answers too."

- Dr. Graham Howe

Dust of Evil

"Like fine dust thrown against the wind, Evil Karma falls back upon that fool who offends an inoffensive, pure and guiltless."

-Dhammapada - 125



Kelaniya - Sri Lanka

Weliwita Asarana-sarana Saranankara Sangharaja Mahathera (1698—1778)

--By Dr. Daya Hewapathirana

Prominent among the patriots of the country in its recent history, the Most Venerable Weliwita Saranankara Sangharaja Mahathera should be remembered with utmost veneration by all Sinhela people of our motherland. He was indisputably the foremost Sinhela Buddhist patriot and a true leader of Sinhela Buddhists during the colonial period of our country. His initiatives, patronage and contribution to the revival and strengthening of the Buddha Sasana (organization), the Sinhela language and Buddhist culture, are immeasurable and unsurpassed by anyone during the colonial and post colonial period of over five centuries.

HIS EARLY LIFE

Venerable Weliwita Saranankara Mahathera, was born in Weliwita in the hill country, in the year 1698, and was named Kulatunga Banda. This was a time when Sinhela Buddhist education was in disarray owing to the social instability and upheaval brought about by foreign invasions and atrocities. Literary activities were almost absent. The sangha community was in disarray. De-robing of monks was rampant owing to varied difficulties in leading such a life.

In spite of this situation, owing to his unfailing perseverance and determination, he as a young person, ventured from place to place and from teacher to teacher to learn Pali and Buddha Dhamma. He underwent great difficulties in the process. He secretly visited learned Buddhist teachers such as Leuke Ralahamy who was a prisoner at the time, to learn the Pali language, and soon became extremely proficient in the language.

HIS DHAMMA KNOWLEDGE

Soon, his knowledge of the Dhamma and the Pali and Sinhela languages was unparal-

leled at the time. He was a popular preacher and was known widely in the Sinhela community. He possessed a compelling intellect and a commanding, yet unassuming presence. It was customary for him to obtain his daily *daana* by resorting to 'pindapaatha" or visiting households where food was offered. Owing to this, he was referred to as Pindapâthika Weliwita Saranankara Thera.

The then king Sri Weera Parâkrama Narèndrasingha was overwhelmed with the great intellect and knowledge and the writing abilities of this monk, and invited him to write the book "Saaritha Sangrahaya". Besides this, he also wrote two Commentaries on the Sinhela Bodhi Wansaya and the Bhaishyamanjusâva. Overly impressed by these works, the king was instrumental in building and offering to the monk, the famous Kundsâle Raja Maha Vihâraya. Subsequently, a Bhikku organization called Weliwita organization was established, consisting of many monks from various parts of the country.

At this time the *Daladâ Perehera* and the *peraheras* of the four *devâlas* took place sepa-

rately. On the initiative of this monk these *peraheras* were combined as one gigantic cultural festival which became the annual spectacle of the Central Capital – *Mahanuwara* until today.

RESTORATION OF UPASAMPADĀ

The *Upasampadā* or the customary higher ordination of Buddhist monks was lost in the country owing to the disarray brought about in the country by ruthless foreign invaders and plunderers starting with the South Indian Tamils and subsequently by the Portuguese Catholics and the Dutch Christians. This custom was lost to the country for some fifty years during the period of turmoil owing to foreign atrocities. There were no senior Bhikkhus with higher ordination and necessary standing and qualifications to provide higher ordination to the *Samanera* or novice monks.

Venerable Weliwita Saranankara Mahathera was instrumental in seeking and obtaining assistance from Thailand and reinstating this long held custom of the Sangha community. The restoration of the *Upasampada* in the country was one of the greatest and most enduring legacies of this outstanding Mahathera.

With the assistance of the reigning king Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe, he sent delegations to Thailand then referred to as "Siyama" to invite senior Thai monks with higher ordination to visit *Heladiva* to reinstate the institution of *Upasampadā*. Three delegations were sent at different times. Delegations consisted of de-robed monks, ministers and lay members. Owing to an accident faced by the sailing boat in which the first delegation traveled, all were drowned. In the second attempt, all but one of the delegates survived while the others perished on the way owing to ill health.

The third attempt was successful and this was during the reign of king Kirthi Sri Rajas-

inghe. This delegation consisted of prominent monks and ministers who met the Thai king and senior monks of Thailand and obtained the *Upasampadā*. The delegates returned to Sinhale in the year 1746, on the *Āsala* full moon day. This delegation was led by Venerable Upāli Mahathera.

This delegation returned to the Trincomalee sea port and the letters from Thailand were presented to the Weliwita therā. The *Upasampadaa* ceremony was held in the *Malwattu Maha Viharaya* in *Mahanuwara* on a grand scale on the *Esala* full moon day of the year 1753.

The story of the bringing of higher ordination to the country is recorded in detail, in the Thai language. This document is found in the *Malwatte Maha viharaya*. The story is also found in the book "*Sangharaja Viththiya*".

APPOINTED SANGHARĀJA

Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe bestowed the *Sangharāja* title (King of the Sangha) to Venerable Weliwita Saranankara Mahathera

In the "*Watāpātha*" or the Award Paper compiled personally by the king and presented to the Weliwita monk, the king refers to the country as "*tilake*" which means the three parts of the country – the Ruhunu, Māyā and Pihiti rata. Together, these three parts of the country were known during the time as "Threesinhale".

After becoming the *Sangharāja*, he was involved extensively with activities to revive the Buddha Sāsana by assisting the Sangha, in particular the *sāmanera* or Sangha novice to pursue their learning and service to the nation.

He was in no way interested in material possessions such as land, buildings and property in general. Instead, his interest was focused on the development of an exceptional Sangha community in the country, and the welfare of the monks that he led. He traveled extensively in

the country, especially in the south to organize and restore the former prestige of the Sangha.

The leadership position and strong influence of the Sangha community of recent times, owes much to the work of this monk and his friend king Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe. He was the chief architect of the great revival of the Sangha evident during and after the latter period of his life.

BUDDHIST LITERARY REVIVAL

He was deeply interested in expanding his knowledge of the dhamma and propagating the dhamma. He wrote extensively. The Sinhela language and literary activities saw a significant improvement during this time owing to the initiative of this monk. This development is of great importance because prior to his time, Sinhela literary activities had declined greatly. He with the help of the king, brought an overall cultural resurgence among the Sinhela Buddhists in particular and in the country in general, with his initiatives in the areas of literary revival and bringing about conditions that led to the significant expansion of the generation of ordained and lay writers and poets, restoration of Buddhist temples, monasteries and places of learning, building of new temples and the significant expansion of the Sangha community in the country. All Buddhist temples damaged or destroyed by the Chola Tamil invaders and the ruthless Portuguese Catholics, were restored and new vihares built, one being the magnificent Gangaramaya at Levella Mahanuwara (Kandy). Among prominent Vihares restored elaborately were Dambulla, Dalada Maligawa, Degaldoruwa, Ridee Vihare, Hindagala, Medawela, Suriyagoda and Mulgirigala.

GENERATIONS OF BHIKKHUS

No Buddhist monk in the past was known to have had such an outstanding impact on the Sangha community of the country, and who

had such a vast number of outstanding disciples who held leadership position in Buddhist temples scattered all over the country. Among these disciples were Buddhist scholars of outstanding repute. These monks in turn helped to develop extensive generations of monks:

Among the well known generations of monks that emerged owing to the efforts of this great monk were those associated with the following Vihas:

*Kasaagala, Mulgirigala, Kamburupitiya, Okandapola,

*Kelaniya, Muthugala, Kalundewe, Ridee Viharaya,

*Kamburuwella, Weligama, Keerathige, Weragoda,

*Medawela, Tissawa, Diyasunnatha, Welagama, Annoru,

*Nakkawatta, Nettipola, Kassamgamuwa, Ganegoda,

*Ginigathpitiya, Meddepola, Rambukkawella, Degaldoruwa

*Madagamuwuwa, Kahatapitiya, Edanduwila, Nagolla,

*Bomaluwuwa, Galamadama, Inguruwatta, Ganegoda, Hallena,

*Bambunupota, Hindagolla, Galmoratuwa, Wehatenna,

*Maakehelwala, Dikpitiya, and Huri-kaduwa

among others. It was the development of these Vihâra Sangha generations that has led to further multiplication of Vihara generation of contemporary times.

EARLIEST WRITINGS ON PAPER

The popular practice at the time in the 18th century, as it was before, was writing or inscribing on Ola palm-leaves and compiling the leaves into a book. The first reference to writing on paper was at this time. The king presented the monk with a blank paper book. The monk got his disciple venerable Iriyagama to write the *Visud-*

dhi Mārgaya in this paper book. It also contains colour paintings of the *Sūvisi Vivaranaya*, *Sath Sathiya*, *Diva Guhāwa*, and the *Dahamsonda Jaataka* story. This is the first reference to paintings on paper during the *Mahanuwara* period.

ATTEMPTS TO KILL HIM

The commanding influence he had on the king, the Sinhela nobility and the Sinhela people was well known to the Christian Dutch colonialists. They made several attempts to murder him, but failed. The nobility provided the monk with necessary protection. A leading Christian clergyman of Colombo was in the forefront to kill the monk and with the assistance of some missionaries made a foiled attempt to poison the monk. This story is narrated in a book written during this time, titled "*Mandārapura Puvatha*".

Patriot D. B. Jayatileka has written a book on the great service to the nation by this outstanding scholar monk with exceptional leadership qualities and overflowing altruism. A statue of Venerable Weliwita Saranankara Sangharāja Mahathera is found in the Dambulla Vihāre, and a painting of the monk is seen in the *Daladā Māligāwa*. He passed away 229 years ago, in the year 1778, on the *Āsala* Full moon day in August. He was and continues to be a great source of inspiration to the Sinhela Buddhists.



{Continued from Page 8...}

BUDDHISM & QUANTUM SCIENCE



touch upon far beyond our everyday capabilities. Hypnosis accesses the wisdom of the subconscious in focused way in order to achieve healing.

Joseph Murphy in his book on 'The Power of Your Subconscious Mind' says, 'Within your subconscious depths lie infinite wisdom, infinite power and an infinite supply of all that is necessary. Many people are closed off to their own potential because they do not know about this storehouse of infinite intelligence and boundless love within themselves

The science that is relevant to phenomena operating beyond three spatial dimensions is quantum science. Through quantum science we can appreciate many of the teaching of the Buddha. This prompted the greatest scientist of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein to say, "If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism." Now quantum scientists, one after the other, make statements that confirm, Buddhism is the only true religion.

For example Scientists believe that the greatest discovery in the history of science is the discovery made by quantum scientist Nicholas Gisin at The Geneva University in 1997. Gisin experimentally proved that the universe is nonlocal in nature. Menas Kafatos, Professor of Physics at the George Mason University (The USA), says that Gisin's discovery has more potential to transform scientists' conception of 'the way things are' than any previous discovery in the history of science. Many other forefront scientists have described it as the most momentous discovery in the history of science.

However, in looking for examples to illustrate the nonlocal nature of the universe, scientists come to a dead end. There is nothing in the western world that can be used to illustrate Gisin's discovery. Therefore they turn to the East and quote the Surangama Sutra, the story of the Buddha's handkerchief. Sometimes they quote the discussion on the chariot in the Milinda problem. Latest books on quantum science quote Surangama Sutra. This is the only occasion scientists have looked at religions for examples to illustrate scientific truths.

Source : Yahoo Group -

Buddhist News Comment (BNC)

What Buddhism has done for WOMEN

By Dr. Richard Tilakaratne

B.A., M.A., D.E.A., Ph.D.(Paris)

A woman who is a Buddhist by birth will find it difficult to understand how Buddhism has given women a status equal to man in a man-dominated society. Buddhist women find it difficult to imagine the place they would have got in society in the absence of Buddhism.

There is a difference between a born Buddhist and a person who adopted Buddhism as his or her religion, after carefully and rationally studying the philosophy. The one who embraced Buddhism as one's new religion is able to make a progressive comparison between Buddhism and his or her former faith. Then only one can realize what a praiseworthy, incomparable and remarkable service Buddhism has done for women.

PRE-BUDDHIST WOMAN

In order to appreciate the contribution of Buddhism towards women, it is necessary to trace back into the pre-Buddhist era from the very early *vedic* teachings. *Manu* – the Indian Law giver who wrote '*MANUSMARUTI*' (The Laws of *Manu*), a code of conduct that guided and shaped the destinies of the Indian social life.

This code of conduct has restricted freedom of a woman who came to be considered inferior to every man. On some occasions, they were considered sub-human and they did not have right to recite '*Vedas*', the Hindu holy

scriptures. *Manu* has clearly said that women are sinful and they should be kept under constant vigilance. Following Sanskrit poems may prove how women were considered in ancient India and they are well recorded in *MANUSMARUTI*, and in *PANCHATANTRA*, widely known Sanskrit poetry:

*"Nasti strinam patmagyajno - Na vratam napyupostham
Patim susrusate yena - Tena svarge mahiyate"*

-*Manusmaruti*

(Unlike a man, she need not perform rituals or puja to trace her way to paradise. Faithful allegiance to her husband, and constant submissiveness to him was the only key that opened the gates of '*Svarge*' (Heaven).

*"Darsanam citta vaikalyam - Sparsanam dhana nashanam
Sayanam maranam kruyat - Stri pratyaksha rakhasii"*

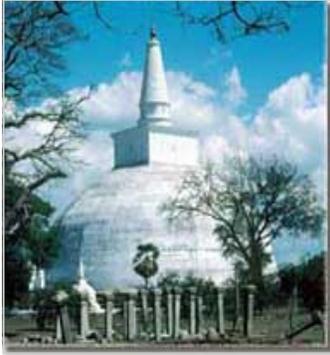
-*Panchatantra*

(Seeing a devil makes one unconscious and association with a devil will leave one wealthless, and sleeping with will lead to one's death. But, merely seeing a woman will bring one all these disasters}

DOMESTIC SERVANT

Ancient Brahmin hegemony has reduced woman to a position of a menial. She had no rights of her own, freedom to speak of, but was confined to the four walls of her house and was thought unfit for anything higher than that of being a domestic servant to her husband, father-in-law or brother-in-law. She was never regarded as the equal of man in any society and similarly she was condemned as the source of all misfortune of the society.

If a married woman can not produce a male child she might be returned to her family or will be replaced by a second or a third wife. If a young woman decides to remain as a bachelor, she was despised by the society.



The Story of Ruwan Meli Maha Seya

- By Daya Ananda Ranasinghe

(Editor, "Lanka Vitthi" published in the UK)

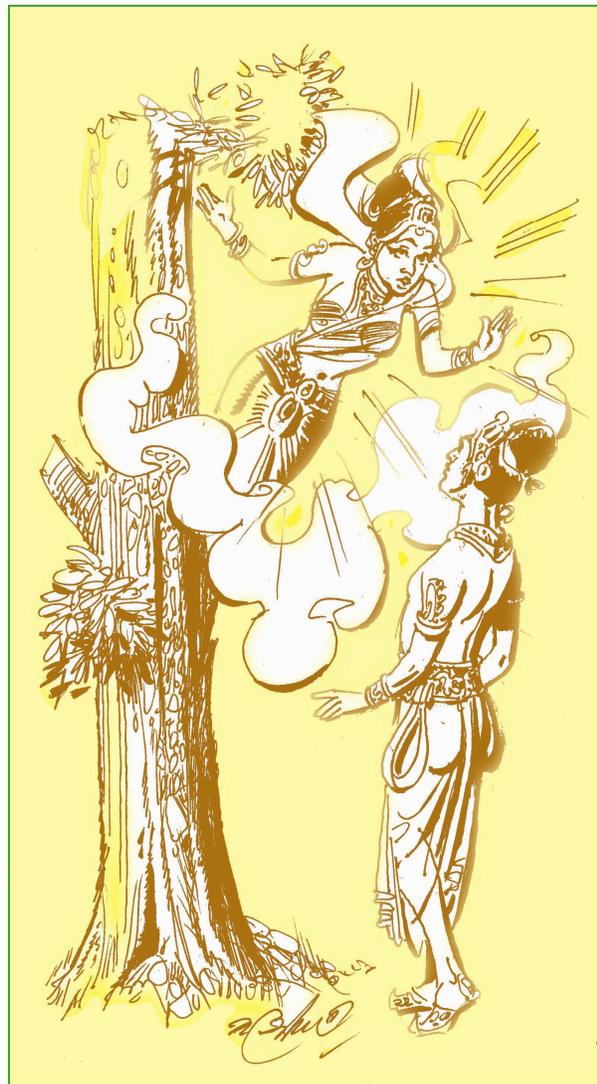
History shows that one of the great rulers of Sri Lanka, **King Dutu Gæmunu** had erected 84,000 Buddhist *Stupas* (shrines) all over the island.

In the latter years of his life, the King wanted to build yet another shrine: perhaps the biggest one of all. For this purpose he had earmarked a suitable site in Anurâdhapura, but found one obstacle - a huge '*Theambu*' tree situated exactly in the middle. King Dutu Gæmunu discussed this predicament with his Ministers and decided to cut the tree the following day itself.

That night, however, King had a dream, in which a beautiful Tree-Fairy appeared and begged the King not to cut the tree. "My name is **Swranamâli**. That tree is my permanent dwelling. If you cut the tree, I will have no place to live. Please don't destroy my home."

The King was alarmed by the dream and in the morning summoned his Royal advisers and divulged the dream to them. "Yes, it could be a bad omen to cut this tree", said the wise men. "To harass a Tree-Goddess would be very detrimental to the King as well as the country."

"I cannot find another site." protested King Gæmunu. "That's the best place I thought to erect the largest pagoda - my long felt ambition. What shall we do?" He looked at the faces of wise men for an answer.



Illustrated by

Thalangama Jayasinghe,

Renowned Sri Lankan Artist

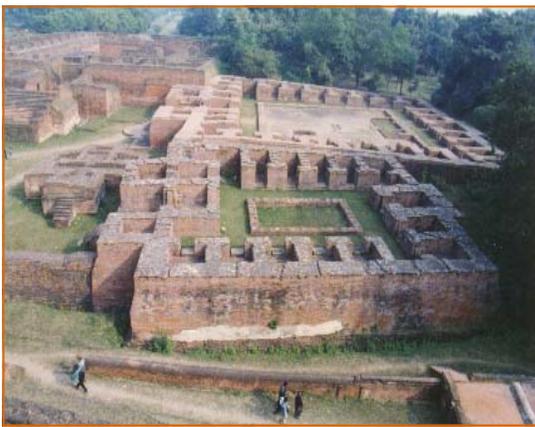
Wise men advised, “ my lord, explain your noble idea to the Tree-Fairy and implore her to leave the tree and to find another dwelling. If she moves away willingly, then there won't be any problem.”

So, the following day King Gáemunu offered some flowers at the foot of the 'Thelambu' tree and pleaded to the goddess. “I beg of you to leave this tree and find your dwelling elsewhere. Then, right here, I will be able to build the largest pagoda to enshrine the relics of Lord Buddha. This place will be the holiest shrine for countless future generations. If you do agree to vacate, I shall name the pagoda – *Swarnamâli Mahâ Chaithya* in token of my gratitude to you.”

That night the Tree-Fairy appeared again in a dream telling the King, she was ready to leave her beloved 'home' to help the King build his pagoda there.

King Gáemunu cut the tree and on that location at Anurâdhapura, erected Sri Lanka's largest pagoda, and called it *Swarnamâli Mahâ Chaithya* (named after the Tree-Fairy), later to be known as *Ruwan Meli Maha Sâeya*.

That is the legend.



A section of vast ruins of Nâlanda →

AN INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY CALLED NALANDA

The First-ever Residential University

By Roger Smith

The Nâlanda campus was an exceptionally impressive place, which included of majestic buildings of Chêtiyas, Temples, Monasteries, Hostels, Lecture Halls, Meditation Halls, Libraries, Lakes and Parks. The three great libraries of Nalanda were Ratnasâgara, Ratnadadhi, and Ratnaranjaka. Inscriptional evidence (Yasôvarmadeva) reveals that these were nine (9) storey buildings.

It was a great center of learning in ancient India, and was located in the Eastern Indian state of Bihar. Today it remains as a small village called Nâlanda. It is situated about 72 km off Patnâ, which is the capital of Bihar. Archeological remains abound of the great University.

More than 1500 years ago, or in the 5th century CE, it became the most illustrious International Buddhist University in the world. (In terms of Sri Lankan history, this was the time of illustrious *Hela* kings such as Dhâthusèna who built the great *Kalâwæwa* and *Kâsyapa* of *Sîgiriya* fame).

Nâlanda flourished up to the tenth century CE (about the end of the Classical Anurâdhapura period of Sri Lanka). Thereafter, political upheavals in India had serious negative impacts on Nâlanda. Foreigners, the Turk- Afgan Muslims who invaded

Nālanda was a place visited by the Buddha and near the birth places of the Buddha's two main disciples – Sāriyuth and Mughalan Mahātheras.

After the Buddha's passing away, a temple was built there. Emperor Asoka improved that Vihāra and also built a monastery for Bhikkhus. That monastery evolved to become a well known Buddhist learning Centre in the 1st century CE. Later it improved to become the illustrious Nālanda university in the 5th century CE.

Fa Hien, the famous Chinese pilgrim visited Nālanda in the first half of the fifth century and has left records of what he saw. Hieuen Tsiang, the other famous Chinese traveler, visited Nālanda in the beginning of the 7th century CE. He provides much information on Nālanda as a university. In fact, he was a student at Nālanda for seven years, before working there as a professor.

Several inscriptions have been discovered among the ruins of Nālanda giving further details.

It is recorded that in the 7th century, there were 10,000 students and 1500 professors in this university. The alumni of Nālanda were highly respected both inside and outside of India. It gathered together some of the best scholars of the country. Among the many outstanding Chancellors of Nālanda were the following: Nāgarjuna,

Āryadēva, Asanga, Vāsubandhu, Dinnāga, Dharmakīrthi, Shantharakshita, Dharmapāla and Shilabhadra. It is important to note that, Āryadēva, the favourite disciple of Nāgarjuna, hailed from Sri Lanka. The brothers Asanga and Vāsubandhu were successive Abbots of Nālanda. Tibetan sources indicate by name

several other great Buddhists associated with Nālanda.

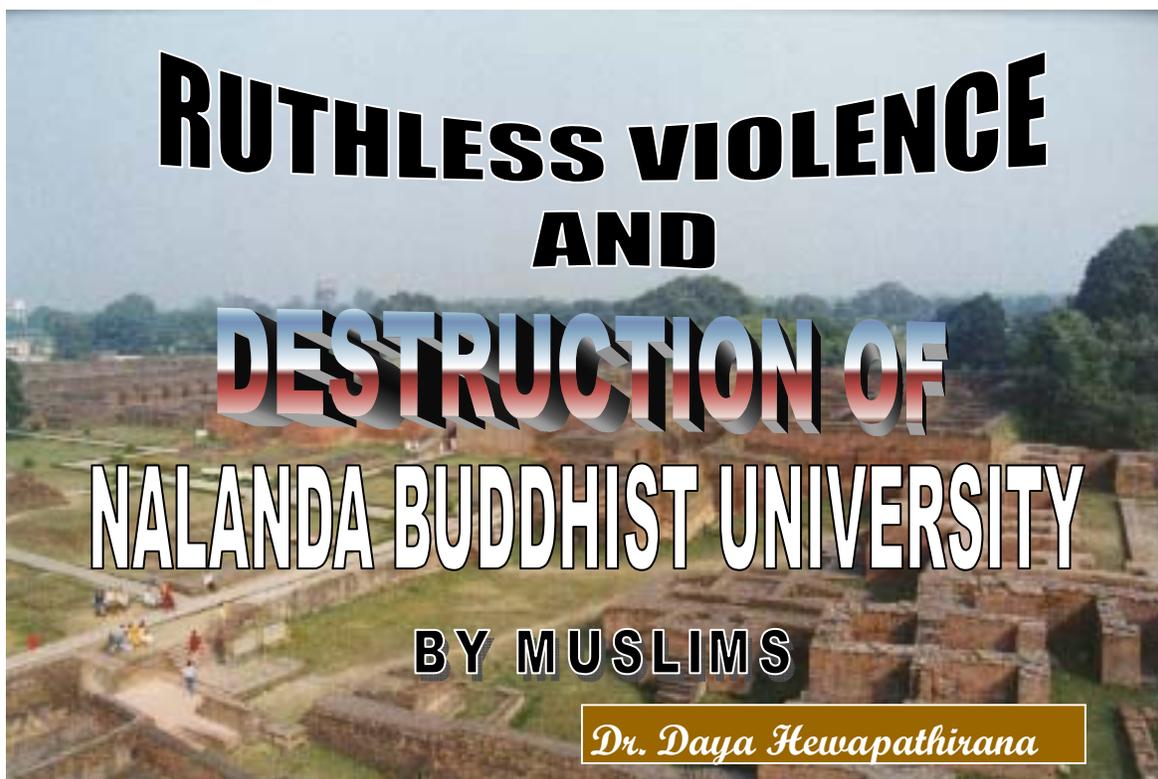
Scholar saints were the greatest attraction of Nālanda. Students from far and near flocked to sit and learn at the feet of these great scholars. There were students from Sri Lanka, Tibet, Nepal, China, Central Asia, Vietnam, Sumatra and Java. Associated with Nālanda were several thousands of monks who were men of the highest ability and talent. Some of them were from different countries.

The international character of Nālanda was quite prominent even during the time of Hieuen Tsiang's association with Nālanda in the seventh century. Strict discipline and high academic standards were maintained.

Nālanda became world famous on account of its many brilliant professors and high standard of education. The great scholars of Nālanda, produced a vast literature in all branches of knowledge. It is said that it is in the field of logic that they made their greatest contribution. It rose up to be a leading and an outstanding center of learning and intellectual activities, and also as a leading center of dissemination of knowledge in various fields.



Another section of today's Nālanda ruins



Nâlanda flourished up to the tenth century CE (about the end of the Classical Anuradhapura period of Sri Lanka). Thereafter, political upheavals in India had serious negative impacts on Nalanda. Foreigners, the Turk-Afghan Muslims who invaded India from the northwest during this period were fanatics who did not respect other people or other cultures. They took delight in destroying Indian cultural edifices and the guardians of that culture.

In the year 1198, the Muslim invaders led by Mohammad Bakhtiar Khilji, attacked and burnt down this great University. They attacked Nâlanda University, this greatest place of learning at the time in the world most mercilessly, destroying its magnificent buildings and massacring all its inmates, who at the time were mostly Buddhist monks.

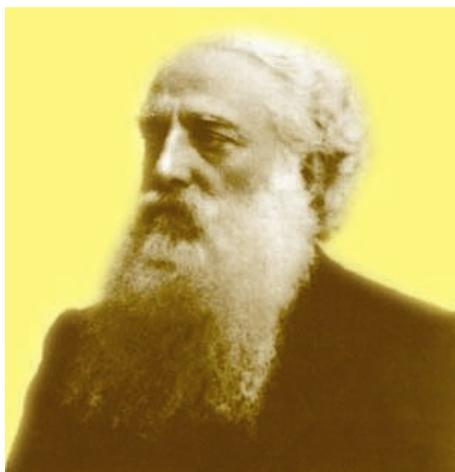
The ruthless Muslim Bakhtiar Khilji demolished the university to the ground. Mirjah, a Muslim historian has left a detailed horrid account of Khilji's vandalism and violence. The gigantic libraries of Nâlanda containing invaluable treasures of books containing invaluable treasures of books were set on fire and burned for months. The library had a total of 9 million books. The great collection of works the result of centuries of scholastic studies-and manuscripts were burnt or destroyed.

Only a few monks managed to escape with a few manuscripts to Tibet, Nèpal and other neighbouring countries. Buddhism disappeared under the brutal impact of Muslim fanaticism. Nâlanda became a deserted and desolate place for several centuries and its ruins were covered by jungle.

There is no Grip like Hatred

With meticulous planning over several years of correspondence and interaction with the prominent activists of the Sri Lankan national and revival movement, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the Founders of the *Theosophical Society* arrived in Galle, Sri Lanka on May 17, 1880. They received a heroes' welcome. Both of them officially embraced Buddhism as their personal religion on the very next day in a public function and won a nation's instant approbation.

It is remarkable how in the course of a few weeks, both Olcott and the Sri Lankan activists could identify how the visiting Theosophists' insights and skills could be utilized in the island. Olcott spoke of his admiration of Buddhism. Blavatsky attracted and entertained crowds with her occult power displayed through "angel bells and embroidered handkerchiefs." The national leaders ensured that the powers that be in the British Colony --the administrators and Christian missionaries -- took note of



Colonel Henry Steel Olcott

HENRY STEEL OLCOTT



T.S. Logo

IN SRI LANKA Death Centennial Tribute

My fictionalized account of Olcott's career in Sri Lanka, in *FREE AT LAST IN PARADISE* (authorhouse.com and buybooksontheweb.com), portrayed the people's reaction to this visit in a versified newsheet which a Sinhala-Buddhist author-publisher-newsvendor would have recited at a coach station to his customers. It ended with the following:

To a nation struggling to stand on its feet
 You indeed are a savior in time.
 May the Triple Gem and all the gods
 Protect you forever, Colonel Olcott-
 Our White Messaih, our faith, our hope.

the foreign resource now supporting them, a White Buddhist raising his voice in favor of Buddhism and Buddhists and airing their grievances. Olcott was so encouraged and enthused by his newfound mission that he came to the island over and over again as many as twenty times. His last visit was just a few weeks before his death on February 17, 1907.

Olcott needed Sri Lanka as much as Sri Lanka needed him. This symbiotic relationship proved to be mutually beneficial. Olcott found in Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera, the Principal of Vidyodaya Pirivena or Buddhist College (as it was then referred to often) an inspiring Buddhist prelate who could vouch for the White Buddhist's competence to be a spokesman for Buddhism. Highly respected and recognized for his erudition and leadership by the British administration and equally held in high esteem by both

Sangha and laity, Venerable Sumangala was at the helm of the national and religious revival movement. Thus his friendship and support was an asset for what Olcott planned to do nationally for Sri Lanka and internationally for Buddhism and Theosophy.

For Sri Lankan activists, Olcott was indispensable especially as he could impress the British and the Christian missionaries and could intercede effectively on behalf of Sri Lankan interests with the colonial masters in London. But the relationship was not without friction. Olcott's "Yankee impatience and efficiency" made him a difficult person to deal with. He had a knack for calling a spade a spade and annoying and antagonizing people. He would write to a Buddhist prelate a rude letter saying, "Get ready for my visit by not running away." Yet, a fruitful spirit of cooperation grew between them because Olcott's genuine commitment to further the interests of Sri Lankan Buddhists was recognized and acknowledged without reservation.

Olcott had at least two projects of his own and Sri Lanka had a contribution to make in both: the first was the publication of the "Buddhist Catechism according to the Sinhalese Canon." It was not an easy task for him to get the approval of Venerable Sumangala whose guarantee of authenticity was sorely needed for the book to be accepted. A major problem was that Olcott had his own view of the sumnum bonum of Buddhism, namely Nibbâna. At one point even the friendship between him and Ven. Sumangala was at stake. But the worldwide diffusion of the book in many editions and its impact as one of the earliest books introducing Buddhism to an international audience highlighted the benefit of their cooperation.

The other project of Olcott, which was internationally as effective, was the "Fourteen-point Platform on which all Buddhists could agree."

This pioneering effort to introduce an ecumenical approach to the three traditions of Buddhism and its geographical ramifications is a significant achievement of Olcott. The credit for opening this dialogue, which over a century has brought Buddhist traditions together in cooperative action goes to the White Buddhist. So also were the steps he took in Sri Lanka to unify monks of different sects or administrative units and get them to cooperate.

Olcott's plan for Sri Lanka to achieve national and religious revival was the promotion of Buddhist education through a network of prestigious schools similar to those through which professionals and administrators were trained by Christian missionaries. The national leaders, too, had given priority to schools but in the Sinhalese medium. Olcott's proposal was to establish English medium schools with the curriculum attuned to cultural and religious ideals. Fundraising was taken up in earnest. In an especially designed multipurpose wagon he toured the island reaching remote communities and mobilizing a wide range of supporters. But he was soon disappointed in that these tours could not be done other than during week-ends and no Sri Lankan had volunteered to be of full-time help. He threatened to abandon the project and return to India where he was in the process of setting up headquarters for the Theosophical Society.

A young man of 17 years of age who had just received an appointment in the government service heard of Olcott's disappointment. Named David, he was the son of a successful businessman and had received a good secondary education in English through a most prestigious Christian school and also the Royal College of Colombo. Madame Balvatsky had a hand in equipping David with skills and insights, which prepared him for a stupendous career of religious, educational and social service as "Anâgarika Dharmapâla (Homeless = Celibate, Protector of Virtue)."

With Venerable Sumangala as the spiritual guide and Dharmapâla as a dedicated Man - Friday, Olcott succeeded in establishing the Buddhist Theosophical movement as a veritable engine of Buddhist educational development of Sri Lanka. Olcott attracted a number of equally devoted young educators from U.S.A. and U.K. as well as from different ethnic groups of the island to set up and manage Buddhist English schools established in Colombo, Kandy, Galle and elsewhere. Over the last two decades these schools, which have grown to be among the most prestigious national institutions, have celebrated their centennials.

Two other contributions of Olcott to Sri Lanka's national development are also acknowledged. He was responsible for the leadership roles of his two protégés, who excelled in religious and political services to the nation. Anagârika Dharmapâla carved out for himself a parallel path with the Mahabodhi Society as the first ever international Buddhist forum. As a delegate to the first Parliament of World's Religions in 1893 in Chicago, he spearheaded a missionary movement, which took Buddhism back to its homeland, India. Dharmapâla had been a pivotal figure in the spread of Buddhism in the world and the credit for much of his work goes to Olcott.

The other protégé was Sir Don Baron Jayatilake, who began his career as an educator in the school system that Olcott established. But, in due course, he assumed an active career in national politics and achieved the highest position of political eminence that a Sri Lankan could achieve under British colonial rule as the leader of the legislature and chair of the board of ministers. There is no doubt that Olcott planted in the first generation of national leaders seeds of independence, which through a process of nonviolent constitutional reform, made Sri Lanka a free nation in 1948.

Apart from these, the Buddhists remember his services in fashioning the six-colored flag under which all Buddhists in the world identify themselves today. His successful negotiations in London with colonial masters to have the birthday of the Buddha declared a national holiday as well as to clarify the plight of the Buddhist community under colonial rule are equally recalled with gratitude.

For these most spectacular achievements, Sri Lankans have reserved their everlasting gratitude to Olcott. Schools and streets are named after him and hundreds of thousand travelers to Colombo pass his statue in front of the capital's main railway station. Schools celebrate the Olcott Day to offer him merit from religious services. "Olcott" is among the popular first names that Buddhist parents give their sons. Books and articles on him are regularly published. Postal stamps are issued in his honor from time to time. Olcott is verily a household word among the Sinhala Buddhists of Sri Lanka. Brought up from my tender years to value and emulate Olcott in his services to Buddhism, in particular, and national independence, in general, my first novel FREE AT LAST IN PARADISE is an attempt to perpetuate his memory.

His death centennial on February 17, 2007 was observed nationwide in Sri Lanka especially with religious ceremonies culminating in the customary wish:

**"May he attain the ultimate bliss of
Nibbâna!"**

By Ananda W. P. Guruge

**University of the West Rosemead,
Los Angeles County
California, USA**



Swedagong - Myanmar (Burma)

Buddhism and Social Wellbeing

“Those who think that Buddhism is interested only in lofty ideals, high moral and philosophical thought, and ignores any social and economic welfare of people, are wrong. The Buddha was interested in the happiness of men. To him happiness was not possible without leading a pure life based on moral and spiritual principles. But he knew that leading such a life was hard in unfavourable material and social conditions.

“Buddhism does not consider material welfare as an end in itself; it is only a means to an end - a higher and nobler end. But it is a means, which is indispensable in achieving a higher purpose for man's happiness. So Buddhism recognizes the need of certain minimum material conditions favourable to spiritual success - even that of a monk engaged in meditation in some solitary place.”

- Ven. Dr. Walpola. Rahula,
"What the Buddha Taught"

Tame your **A D V E R S E** Nature

“Those
with adverse thoughts
cannot understand
well said words (Dhamma).
They are
with defiled minds and a lot of
ANGER.

If you tame
your adverse nature
and
dissatisfaction

And dispel your **anger,**
know that it is
speaking good words.”

- Samyutta Nikâya:
Brâhmanasanyutta: Upâsakavagga.



WORDS OF WISDOM

from the late

Most Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayake Maha Thera

What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind.

Buddhism is open to Traditions and Customs provided they are not harmful to the welfare of others. Paradise is open not only to the followers of a particular religion, but is open to each and every person who leads a righteous and noble way of life. Buddhism is strong enough to face any modern views which pose a challenge to religion. Man has forgotten that he has a heart. He forgets that if he treats the world kindly, the world will treat him kindly in return. Hard work is the luckiest star. The real follower of the Buddha can practice this religion.

People always ask this question, where did the Buddha go or where he is living now? This is a very difficult question to answer for those who have not developed a spiritual way of life. This is because everybody thinks about life in a worldly way. It is difficult for people to understand the concept of a Buddha. Certain missionaries approach Buddhists and say that the Buddha is not a god, he was a man. He is dead and gone. What can someone gain by worshipping a dead man? But we must understand the Buddha is called *Sattha Deva-manussanam*, teacher of gods and men. Whenever the gods have any problems, they approach the Buddha to get his advice. Then they claim their god is living and that is why everyone should pray to Him instead. According to science it has taken millions of years for us to develop our mind and understanding. When their mind was not fully developed people became aware that there are some powers which make nature work.

Because they could not understand how exactly nature works, they began to think there must be a person who creates and maintains

these occurrences. To help others understand this concept they transformed this energy into a form and represented it physically as statues and paintings. These "spirits" or powers were important to make humans to do good and not to do bad things and to reward them if they were good. Always we have fear, worry, suspicion, insecurity, so we need someone to depend on for our protection. Eventually this force was transformed into a single God. Now some people depend on God for everything. That is why they try to introduce the idea of an eternal soul that departs from here and remains in heaven eternally. That is to satisfy the craving for existence forever.

The Buddha says anything that comes into existence is subjected to change, decay and extinction. When we analyze the life of the Buddha, we see he never introduced himself as a son of god or messenger of god but as an enlightened religious teacher. At the same time the Buddha was not introduced as an incarnation of another Buddha. The Buddha is not created by another Buddha: is not the re-incarnation of another Buddha. He is an individual person who by working a long period, life after life, developed and cultivated all the great qualities, virtues and wisdom which we call *pāramitās*

or perfections. When he perfected all the good qualities he gained enlightenment: which is a complete understanding of how the universe operates. He discovered there is no God who created the universe.

People ask how he could gain enlightenment without support from any god. Buddhists maintain that every individual can develop the mind to understand everything. The meaning of the word *manussa*, in many languages is human being. But the meaning of the word *Mana* is mind. Therefore *manussa* is a human being who can develop and cultivate the mind to perfection.

Besides humans there are no other living beings in this universe who can develop the mind up to that extent, to gain enlightenment. Not even divine beings can become Buddhas because they cannot develop their mind up to such an extent. They have worldly sensual, peaceful, prosperous existences but their thinking power is very poor. Only *manussa* or human being can become the Buddha or Enlightened One.

When people say Buddha is not a god, we should not try to prove that he is a god. If we try to prove this, then we actually lower the concept of enlightenment. Some people claim that their god has given a message to humanity. If that message is for all human beings in this world, why does the god not proclaim his message in the public instead of revealing it only to one man. The Buddha did not encourage anybody to believe anything or claim that he had been instructed by any power to do so. One day, a Christian priest came to see me with his followers to discuss about Buddhism and asked, "Actually, can you tell me what Buddhists believe?" Then, I told him very frankly that Buddhists do not 'believe' anything. Then he pointed to my book, "*What Buddhists Be-*

lieve" and asked "why did you write this book?" I told him, "That is why I wrote this book".

Source www.buddhistchannel.tv

The Way to Harmlessness:

The Blessed Buddha said:

I feel sympathy for the footless,
for the bipeds too I have affection;
I am kind to those with four feet,
I take care of the many-footed too.

May all creatures, all living things,
all beings one and all without exception,
experience good fortune and joy only.
May they not fall into any harm.

- *Anguttara Nikaya II, 72*

Let no one deceive another
or despise anyone anywhere,
or through anger or irritation
wish for another to suffer.

- *Khuddakapatha 9*

As I am, so indeed are others;
as others are, so indeed am I.
Having thus identified self and others,
harm no one nor have them ever harmed.

- *Sutta Nipata 705*

Friendship is the Greatest *Bhikkhu Samahita* ❄️ *Sri Lanka*

<http://What-Buddha-Said.net>
<http://groups.google.com/group/Buddha-Direct>
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/What_Buddha_Said

Come on friends! "Ehipassiko"

Be Alert, Aware and Careful in all activities... Do only Good, avoid all Evil and purify Mind! Meditate! Meditate! Meditate! In increasing equanimity.

In countless universes have we been passionate in Love with our own body (possessive clinging) and other being's bodies (sexual obsession). This has reinforced a habitual and deeply ingrained tendency to craving for form, which causes Suffering! Disgust gradually wears down this urge and then one arrives calmed at detached equanimity.

Indifference = Neither attracted nor repulsed! This mental state of equipoise, composure, serenity, and imperturbable peace is extremely pleasant, blissful and the proximate cause of true knowledge and vision...!

- Bhikku Samahitha=



Kataragama Kirivehera

"God" Concept

"The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge."

"I cannot conceive of a God who rewards and punishes his creatures, or has a will of the kind that we experience in ourselves."

- Albert Einstein

SEE YOURSELF WITHIN...!

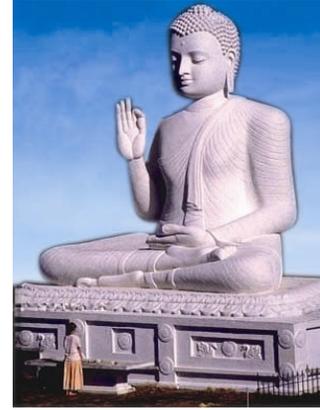
Easily seen
is the fault of others, but
one's own fault is hard to see; he
scatters the fault of others like
chaff; but his own fault he hides as a
deceitful gambler
hides the dice.

-Dhammapada 252

'Panchaseela Samadana'

Foundation of A Lay Buddhist

-By V. V .Premawardane



Remotest Opportunity:

We have obtained a human body. This is considered a most advantageous birth. We obtained this position, because in our previous life we were definitely doing certain actions which are conducive to human continuity. In a situation where we have managed to gain this exclusive opportunity in our circle of births, we should use this excellent chance to tread the correct path of goodness that yields sure benefits. As human beings, we may choose between good or evil, the beneficial or the harmful, the path of development or the path of deterioration. Now that we have achieved this remotest opportunity of birth as humans, we should live up to the status of humans.

Continued Progress:

To make the best of our human potential, we need not only a constructive aim of life, but also a life-plan towards achieving that objective. So, we should have the ground work for developing a proper sense of values; the values essential for obtaining happiness, success and security in this life as well as successive lives that promote our continued progress in the Buddhist Path towards the ultimate goal - Nibbana.

We need an honest understanding of ourselves to start with. The more we examine

ourselves, the better the chance of self-development: the invariable path to self-purification. We should speak to our conscience and ask ourselves, "how far and to what extent am I generous, kind, even-tempered, considerate, honest, good in morals, truthful, diligent, energetic, industrious, patient, tolerant and compassionate". These are, generally, the qualities of a well developed Buddhist. We should evaluate these qualities in ourselves.

World in Constant Turmoil:

Life is full of stress and strain with the complexities of a constantly changing world. In the circumstance, relaxation is an essential ingredient for achieving happiness. We can live calmly, even amidst strenuous activity by understanding the cause of stress and by regulating them. The key to managing stress is through discipline and mastering of the mind. You have to develop a deep self-awareness and self-understanding to achieve this. The base of Buddhist teaching is Mind or Consciousness. From a Buddhist perspective, mind or consciousness is the core of existence. Being rational and spiritually practical, Buddhist philosophy shows us the ideal way to achieve eternal bliss in working out our own salvation with diligence, without blindly relying on any super power. "Attahi attanō nāthō" (you are your own saviour) the Buddha said.

Skillful & Unskillful Actions:

Buddha taught us that mind is the fore-runner of all actions – the right action or the wrong, as implies (*Manō pubbangamā dhammā...etc.*). To know what is right or wrong, Buddhists look at three things: (1) the intention (2) the effect and (3) the act. If the intention is good and if it helps oneself and others, such an action is considered wholesome. When the intention is bad and the action helps neither one-self nor another, such action is considered (wrongful or evil action) unwholesome. In the *Ambalatthika Rahulōvāda Sutta (Majjima Nikāya)*, Buddha gave a simple way to know what is good and bad. That is: if your action harms yourself, to others, or both yourself and others, don't do it: it is unskillful, unwholesome or bad. If your action does no harm to yourself nor to others, perform such action: it is skilful, wholesome or good.

Practicing Buddhism

The main purpose of practicing Buddhism is to:-

- *gain peace and happiness in this life:
- *have an untortured and fortunate life here after:
- *achieve ultimate goal of perpetual happiness or supreme bliss.

A true Buddhist is not satisfied merely with the worldly life, but would strive to purify the mind and develop the ethical conduct or morality (*Seela*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Pannā*). One could finally attain the goal of Enlightenment or *Nibbāna* by leading this only reliable way or path. It is compulsory that we have to practice moral principles taught us by Buddha by degrees - little by little, for progressive removal of all impurities dominant in our mind (*Thōka thōkam khanē khanē*).

Who is a 'Disciple'?

Buddha identified the fundamental quality

of a lay disciple, in the *Mahānāma Sutta (Majjima Nikāya)*:discourse, thus:

"Ven: Sir, how does one become a disciple?"

"Mahānāma, when he takes refuge in the Enlightened one (Buddha), in His Teaching (Dhamma) and in the community of Bhikku (Sangha)".

"Venerable Sir, how does a *lay disciple* become virtuous?"

"Mahānāma, when the lay disciple:

- (1) abstains from killing
- (2) abstains from stealing
- (3) abstains from sexual misconduct
- (4) abstains from telling lies
- (5) abstains from consuming intoxicants"

So, it is essential that one who sincerely desires to become a lay disciple of the Buddha, he/she observes these "Five Precepts" basically.

According to this pronouncement, the first two steps towards becoming a *lay disciple of the Buddha (Upāsaka)* should be:

- (1) self-declaration of faithfully taking refuge in (*Saranāgamana*) and
- (2) undertaking to abide by the (5) Five Precepts.

By step -1 the disciple makes the commitment to accept the Noble Triple Gem: (1) Buddha (2) Dhamma and (3) Sangha, the the guiding ideals of his/her life, faithfully accepted with unwavering, deep-seated understanding (*Saddhā*).

Not Commandments:

A lay disciple expresses firm determination to bring his/her actions in harmony with day-to day life by the Five Precepts. *Pancha Sila (Pan Sil)* or the Five Precepts are the basic practice in Buddhism. The purpose is to eliminate crude passions that are activated through *thought, deed* and *words* spoken. Buddhist lives are embedded in them, thus enabling us to live together in civilized communities in peace and harmony, with mutual trust and respect for each other. These Precepts are not 'commandments'.



Bhante D. Upananda

Ehipassiko Buddhist Centre



Bhante W. Somananda

Sri Lankan Buddhist Society, Calgary

There are arguments over whether Buddhism is a philosophy or not, a religion or not, or both. Whatever it is, it is 'ehipassiko' (come-and-see), not come-and-believe. The following saying by the Buddha is the best source for us to see what Buddhism is:

***Do not believe in anything, simply because you have heard it,
*Do not believe in anything, simply because it is spoken and rumoured by many,
*Do not believe in anything, simply because it is found written in religious books,
*Do not believe in anything, simply because of respect to teachers, & elders on it
*Do not believe in anything, simply because it comes down for many generations.
*But after observation and analysis, agrees with reason, conducive to the
good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.**

As a place of the compassionate Buddha, Ehipassiko Buddhist Centre (EBC) caters to the spiritual needs of people from all religious backgrounds. Based on the above unique 'Ehi-passiko' ("come: see for yourself") teaching of the Buddha, it promotes rational and logical thinking and spiritual practice which attracts lot seekers of truth and happiness in daily life. *Venerable Dèdunupitiyè Upananda* and *Venerable Wèrapitiyè Somananda*, who are academically and spiritually well-trained, well-versed and experienced Buddhist monks from Sri Lanka, keep 'Ehipassiko' growing with the continued, support of the Sri Lankan, local and other ethnic Buddhist groups. The Sri Lankan Buddhist Society-Calgary (SLBSC) has set an example of selfless service to humanity by offering the invaluable gift of *Dhamma* to the people from all walks of life through its Spiritual Unit - 'Ehipassiko'.

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An air-view of Sri Daladā Māligāwa

THE CLARION CALL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THE LAND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

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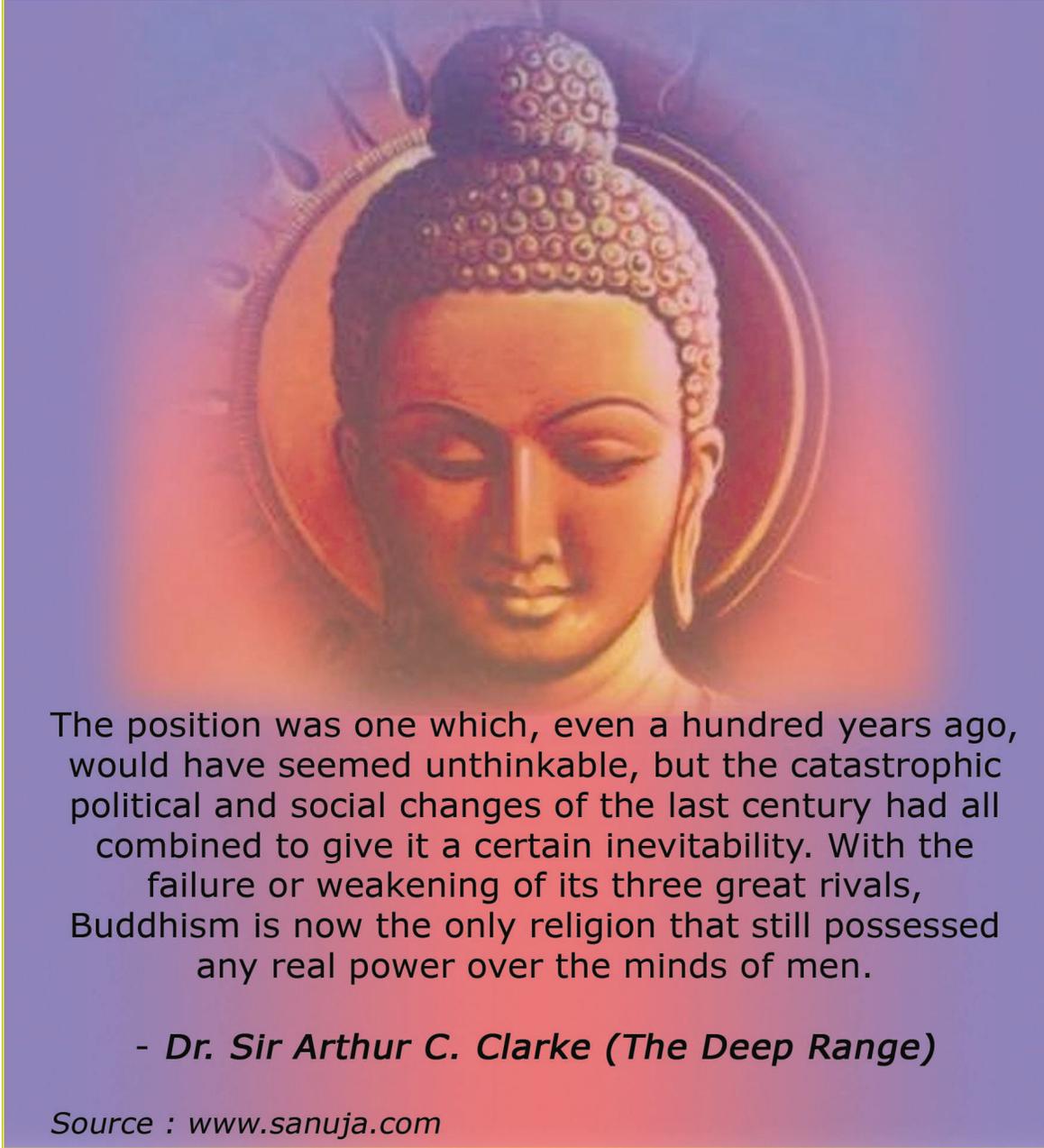
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BUDDHISM

In Another Hundred Years



The position was one which, even a hundred years ago, would have seemed unthinkable, but the catastrophic political and social changes of the last century had all combined to give it a certain inevitability. With the failure or weakening of its three great rivals, Buddhism is now the only religion that still possessed any real power over the minds of men.

- *Dr. Sir Arthur C. Clarke (The Deep Range)*

Source : www.sanuja.com

Kicc⁵am Saddhamma Sasanam - Kicc⁵o Buddhaanam Uppa⁵do

Is Buddhism Scientific...?

By Dr. Chandre Dharamawardana

[The author is a *scientist* working for the National Research Council of Canada; he is also a *Professor of Physics* at the University of Montreal. His main interests are in Quantum Mechanics, the nature of scientific knowledge, many-body theory, and nano-technology. He has worked for the French Atomic Energy commission, University of California, the University of Paris-Sorbonne-Orsay, and the *Vidyodaya University* where he was a *Professor of Chemistry* and *Vice-Chancellor*.

He was educated at Ananda & Royal Colleges, University of Ceylon and the University of Cambridge.]

If your professional life is in scientific research, and grew up in Sri Lanka, it is normal to expect that your family and friends would pose the question: **“Is Buddhism Scientific?”**

They also expect you a resounding **“Yes”** as the answer. Unfortunately, nothing is that simple, and this is a brief response to a question which needs a whole book.

BUDDHA'S SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The most striking aspect of the Buddha's teaching for a scientist is the Buddhist theory of knowledge, where, some twenty centuries before the European renaissance, the Buddha had expounded what we now recognize as the “Scientific method”. This is exposed in the well known “Kâlâma Sutta”, and the less well known “Gnâna Sutta”. The latter was unfortunately not included when the Pâli canon was put in writing, but survives in the Tibetan canon. The Kâlâma Sutta rejects the uncritical acceptance of a ‘revealed truth’ given in a ‘Holy Book’, or rejects accepting something because a revered Guru had said it. It emphasizes “*Ehipassiko...*” the need for confirmation in experience. However, the Buddha is careful to not to allow some one to carry himself away

in his own personal delusions. The Buddha states that the views of one's peers also have to be respected, thus moderating the rejection of all authority and basing oneself *only* on “*Ehipassiko...*”. However, *Ehipassiko..* alone does **not** constitute the scientific method. The scientific method involves testing and *retesting* the *Ehipassiko*-experience and treating one's conclusions based on *Ehipassiko* as merely a ‘theory’ or ‘point of view’. It needs constant review by attempting to falsify it. We don't just trust our own experience!

“EHIPASSIKO” EXPERIENCE

This is the very essential “experimental method” of science. That is, we refuse to simply believe our own “*Ehipassiko*” experience, but proceed to test it out, as a *public exercise*. This part of the scientific method is stated in the Buddha's “Gnâna Sutta”. The Buddha points out that we determine if a piece of metal is made of gold or base metal, by testing it on the jeweller's touchstone. In the same way, we need to further test every belief or theory coming from *Ehipassiko* on the touchstone of independent experience, and not just on *personal* confirmation. The result from the touchstone should be the same for everybody. That is, if a Western Marxist or a Japanese believer in Vishnu were to do the same

test, then they should get the same answer, irrespective of the social milieu, cultural biases etc., of the experimenters. We should note that the Buddha said words to this effect in the sixth century before the Christian era. As remarked by the Oxford logician H. H. Price, such thinking had to await the rise of the Cambridge school of positivism in the early 20th Century. Thus we can conclude that the Buddha's theory of knowledge was as scientific as it can get!

ANTI-NATIONALIST TRENDS

Of course, much has been written since the time of the Cambridge positivists. The Kuhnian and post-modern writers have attempted to confuse the issue by claiming that truth and knowledge are relative to, and dependent upon the social milieu where the truth is expounded or discovered. This kind of nonsense is greatly loved by social "scientists". Since all physical scientists, irrespective of their socio-cultural milieu can agree on a vast body of science, and since rockets and computers work even in outer space, we need not debate these anti-rationalist trends in epistemologies fashionable among non-scientists. However, it should be added that the Buddha was not a complete rationalist. True to the "middle-path" approach, the Buddha considered that besides 'Gnâna' obtainable via the experimental method of the Kâlâma and Gnâna Suttas, there was also "Vignâna", i.e., other types of knowledge open only to those who have attained certain types of mental training. Whether that is valid and in what sense, cannot be addressed by us.

APPROACHES POLES APART

However, unlike Archimedes or Galileo, the Buddha was not interested in applying his method to understanding the laws that govern

the physical world. In the well known *Parable of the Man dying from the Arrow*, the Buddha states that what is important is not the origin of the arrow, or from what direction it came, or of what wood the arrow is made of, etc. It is *saving the man from pain and suffering* that is paramount. The study of questions like "from where the arrow came, of what wood the arrow is made of etc." is the study of the physical world, and that is what Archimedes and Galileo did, and what modern scientists do. Such studies have indeed reduced the physical pain and suffering in the world enormously. Modern societies which have exploited science do not suffer from famines, epidemics and the fear of superstitions based on witchcraft, demons, spirits and the wrath of God. However, in Buddha's day, he looked for a moral solution to the world's problems. The Buddha was a person of unparalleled compassion and he was mainly concerned with helping a world mired in pain and suffering (*dukkha*). His goal was to sketch a moral order which he felt would lead to a more compassionate and caring world where the control of the mind is the key to eliminating *dukkha* from the world.

"OUGHT TO" AS AGAINST "IS"

Thus we have to look at the Buddha as a moral teacher rather than as an expositor of something "scientific". All moral teachings have the character of "ought" sentences. Thus we say, we "ought to" help the poor, or we "ought to" desist from violence. The Five Precepts of the Buddhists, or the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament are specific "ought" sentences.

On the other hand, all scientific statements, or empirical statements, are what are known as "is" statements. We say that the sky **is** blue, or that the grass **is** green. Thus, the moral statements and the empirical statements are in two different logical classes, and one cannot go from

different logical classes and one cannot go from one class to the other. That is, we cannot say that “because the world **is** such and such, therefore we **ought** to behave in such and such a manner”. This problem was first pointed out by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century, but was clearly known to the Buddhist philosophers of Nalanda in the 5th Century. If we accept this reasoning, then scientific truth has no bearing on morality. Thus the question “*Is Buddhism scientific?*” has no significance because Buddhism is a *practice, a path, a formula*, for a moral way of life, designed to achieve a form of disinterested, compassionate existence based on “ought” sentences. Although much more can be said about this topic, and although this answer is clearly incomplete, I will simply take the position that science is irrelevant to the “validity” of the eight-fold path.

FALSE COSMOLOGIES

There is however, a large body of Buddhist writings which is clearly unscientific and contrary to empirical knowledge, because they attempt to deal with descriptions of the physical world (i.e., they deal with “**is**” sentences which form the domain of science proper). Thus many Buddhist texts tell us that the world is flat, with mount Mahameru at the center, with the “Jambudeepa” surrounded by the four oceans, limited by outer walls. Below the earth are found the four hells, while there are 31 heavenly realms above Mahameru. As the Dalai Lama has remarked in several of his books and speeches, since the Buddhists do not regard their books as infallible sacred writings, they have no problem in replacing all false cosmologies with modern empirical knowledge. This attitude of the Dalai Lama is of course entirely consistent with the Kalama and Gnana Sutras. However, such openness to change is not found in all Buddhist quarters.

RELATIVITY & QUANTUM THEORIES

A topical question in modern cosmology is the origin of the universe. This was a topic of metaphysical speculation during the Buddha’s time. Buddha himself decided that such metaphysical questions should take the back seat while the moral issues should be given priority. However, today we can pose such questions as *physical* questions, and not *metaphysical* questions, and perhaps provide meaningful answers. This is because new tools are available to probe the very distant past. Currently, using results from the theory of relativity and the quantum theory, particle physics and observational astronomy, we believe that we are in a universe which started off from a tiny spot which blew up in a tiny fraction of a second, to become a large object, during a process called *inflation*. This was followed by a “*big bang*” where everything is expanding and “blowing up” at an ever increasing rate.

EXPANDING “BIG-BANG” UNIVERSE

Our big-bang universe is one of many such big-bang universes found in the “multiverse”, where big bangs as well as the opposite processes (black-hole processes) are occurring all the time. But we cannot communicate with the other universes as they are beyond our event horizon – i.e., a signal sent from our universe to the other universes cannot come back with information because the signal speed is limited to that of the speed of light, as decreed by Einstein, where as the “boundary” of the universe is itself expanding at the speed of light. Whether the big-bang universe will reach a maximum size and collapse back, and repeat this cyclically etc., are not decisively known to us today.

While we can find analogies from Buddhist writings for this type of cyclic world schemes, I think such analogies are simply semantic, since

the type of mathematical and scientific considerations that lead us to the present ideas are of such a far reaching nature that there is no use in harking back to those ancient ideas.

CAUSALITY GOVERNED PROCESS

Another concept of great importance is causality, i.e., "paticccasamuppâda". The knowable world is regarded as a sequence of "nâma", i.e., mental events, and "rûpa", i.e., physical events, which persist together, and evolve from instant to instant. The usual questions of whether 'rûpa' is produced from 'nâma', or *vice versa*, are not resolved and depend on each Buddhist philosopher. Some form of causality is said to govern this process, and moral forces intervene via the effect of *Karma*. How "free will" or the possibility of independent moral action is possible in this scheme is not resolved. In fact, the problem of free will and determinism exists unresolved and treated unclearly in Buddhism, just as in *all* philosophies. How *Karma* can act on an individual after eons of time in "samsâra", with the specificity of a tagged being is not at all evident.

QUANTUM MECHANICS

The modern quantum theory is the greatest achievement of the human mind as far as the scientific understanding of the world is concerned. No exceptions *what so ever* to it has been found, on earth or in distant galaxies. It has successfully incorporated determinism and indeterminism into a conceptual framework which is not easy to expose without the power of the language of mathematics. Thus philosophers and popular writers who do not wish to use mathematics end up in linguistic paradoxes that keep them busy. The quantum theory applies to subatomic particles like electrons. But all matter is made up of subatomic particles. Hence, the quantum theory applies to every

thing, and gives us the laws of matter - chemistry and biochemistry. These give the laws of molecular genetics, birth and death of cells. In principle, even human social dynamics should follow from the laws of quantum mechanics, if we only knew how to handle the mathematics of many-body interactions and complex systems. Thus our world is basically determined by the probabilities of quantum mechanics, and not by rigid deterministic laws. While the amplitudes of the quantum world are seemingly deterministic in a totally passive setting where nothing happens, they change into probabilities if any action ("measurement") is carried out. The belief that there must be a set of causes to produce a set of effects (classical causality) is replaced by the concept of processes and amplitudes of these processes. It may be possible to recast the Buddhist paticccasamuppâda into the terminology of a probabilistic quantum world and get away from the emphasis on classical causality found in the various texts of the *Abhidhamma*. That is, Buddhism may be rich enough to withstand the exacting demands of the quantum theory.

GENETICS AND REBIRTH

An area of deep difficulty is genetics and rebirth. A child is the product of the mother and the father, and the template for the child comes from the genes contained in the chromosomes of both parents. The parents' rebirth in the physical world is realized in their child. We can even dispense with two parents. We can make an exact copy of a person X by using the genes of X alone, as in cloning. The new X, even though a clone, comes into a physical world which is different to the old world where the old X lived, and hence the environment plays a role beyond the genes.

Two identical twins have the same genes. Do they have the same karma? Why has the human population of the world continued to

increase, if every being born is related to a being in a previous birth? Is it that more and more have done good deeds and acquired the chance to become humans? Or are these being coming from other universes beyond our knowledge? Obviously, contrived answers can be given to "save" the traditional Buddhist point of view. But one has to be intellectually honest, and face the fact that there are difficulties. From a more standard "scientific" point of view, the rapid spurt in population growth is simply due to modern public health, medicine and the availability of food.

IRRELEVANT QUESTION

To conclude, if we recognize that the Buddha was a *moral teacher* who proposed a way of life, a program, a religion – call it what you may - to create a caring, contented and compassionate world, then the question, "Is Buddhism Scientific?", becomes irrelevant.

BUDDHA: NEVER A SCIENTIST!

"Buddha is the Greatest Scientist in the History of Mankind." ..(?)

"I have often heard this at Bana sermons. This is completely wrong. Scientists are people who are constrained to work solely within and accept only the knowledge generated by the scientific method. They generally reject knowledge generated by the other methods. The Buddha did not use the scientific method and therefore, He is NOT a Scientist".

(Buddhism and Modern Science)
-Dr. Granville Dharmawardena,
University of Colombo

IN ANGER, YOU'LL NEVER DO!

*When you've lost your temper,
you've lost your reason, too.
You'll not be proud of anything
which in anger you may do.*

*When in anger you have spoken
And been by emotion led,
You'll have uttered something
that you'll wish you'd never said.*

*In anger you will never do
a kindly deed, or wise.
But many things for which you'll feel
you should apologize.*

*In looking back upon your life,
and all you've lost or made,
You'll never find a single time
when anger ever paid.*

*So cultivate kind patience,
and grow wise as you age.
Never act, nor speak a word
when overcome by rage.*

*Remember without fail
that when your temper flies,
You'll never do a worthy thing,
A decent deed, or wise.*

- Bohumil Ontl

Quoted for "Lanka Herald" -

By Ven. Dr. Walpola Piyananda Thera,

*Chief Sangha Nayake for the U.S.

*President, Sri Lanka Sangha Council for
the U.S. and Canada



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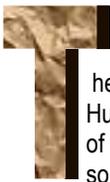
National Buddhist Organisation for Humanitarian Services

380/7, Sarana Road, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka

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RED LOTUS - SRI LANKA An appeal



The **Tsunami of December 26, 2004** brought home several important lessons. The non-existence of a Buddhist Humanitarian Association working at the national and international levels and the lack of preparedness at times of disaster were two of them. It is a well known fact that of the millions of dollars that were collected abroad, some had got dissipated due to the lack of a reliable organisation that could professionally handle such a situation. It also resulted in mushrooming of make-shift organisations whose credibility is questionable.

In this context, (as also published in our maiden issue of "Ehipassiko"), the *Global Buddhist Conference on "Humanitarian Services in a Post-Tsunami Context"* that met in May 2005 in Colombo, unanimously decided that an *"International Buddhist Humanitarian Association"*, with country affiliation be formed on similar lines to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Internationals.

Red Lotus Sri Lanka is the outcome of that decision: its membership being open to any local organization that *accepts its mission as* set out by its constitution, namely:

- 1) to prevent and alleviate suffering of all beings at times of disaster of any nature by bringing about greater preparedness at local, national and international levels through effective co-ordination, collaboration and networking and by acting as a resource bank for humanitarian services world-wide based on *the four brahmaviharas*, namely, loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity; and
- 2) to promote the Buddhist way of living as the only means of minimising and understanding such disasters.

We realise that this is a very ambitious programme needing much dedication and effort on the part of everyone connected. A strong financial base is required towards which a

"US Dollars One Hundred Thousand Fund"

has been created. **We need one hundred persons to pledge US dollars one thousand each** to be collected from among friends and well-wishers and **become a sponsor** of this Project. We make this personal appeal to you to help this worthy cause.

All remittances should be in the name of **"Red Lotus – Sri Lanka"** and could be sent directly to our :

**Bank Account # 0034 6000 0415 - Swift Code BSAMLK LX
at Sampath Bank, Thimbirigasyaya Br. Colombo 5, Sri Lanka**

Please _____ the form prescribed to make your pledge. _____ make use of

Yours in Service,

Dr. Hema Goonatilake:
Hony. Secretary

Deshabandu Olcott Gunasekera:
Hony President

Lt. Col. Anil Amarasekera
Hony. Treasurer

Please contact

**"Ehipassiko" Buddhist Centre, Calgary (403-280-9729),
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or "Red Lotus" Colombo at contact information on top for more details & forms.**

IS ALCOHOL GOOD FOR HEALTH?

- By Chek Ling Tan - BSc, (IMU, Malaysia),
MD (Dalhousie)

Research Vs Precepts

Abstinence from consuming intoxicants (alcohol and illicit drugs) is one of the 5 precepts, the observance of which is obligatory to all lay Buddhists. Illicit drugs represent many health problems and psychosocial issues around the world. However, alcohol is being re-branded as a health elixir these days, mainly due to a caseload of research studies proclaiming its health benefits. Claim *that Red Wine is good for the heart* is an outcome of such studies.

Alcohol for Health...?

Should you drink alcohol for health purposes? Does a glass of alcohol a day really keep the doctor away? If "moderate" drinking of alcohol is a health benefit as claimed by these scientific research studies, why did the Buddha lay out the 5th precept, rigidly stating that one should abstain from consuming intoxicants and not one should use alcohol in moderation for health benefits?

Following the precepts blindly without wisdom and understanding was never encouraged by Buddha. So, let us take a closer look at the reality of alcohol use, vis-à-vis its modern health claims.

Dangerous Health Hazard

Alcoholism leads to a wide range of acute and chronic physical and mental health consequences; this is a well known fact. Many well designed and well conducted research studies have supported this reality. In a 1991 statement on alcohol-related problems, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada identified alcohol as a major drug concern. Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared fighting the harmful effects of alcohol a top priority activity.

Some of the physical health problems related to alcohol use include liver cirrhosis, fatty liver, hepatitis, gastritis, pancreatitis, diabetes, myopathy, cardiomyopathy, brain damage, stroke, sexual dysfunction, infertility, obesity etc. Another important message about alcohol that rarely gets out is that it has been found to have clear relations and causes increase risk of several cancers like

cancer of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, colon cancer and breast cancer even with light consumption. An agency of WHO has classified alcohol as a carcinogen (any substance that causes cancer). Mental health problems associated with alcohol use include insomnia, depression, amnesia, hallucinosis, dementia, anxiety etc. Both alcohol intoxication and alcohol withdrawal are medical emergencies that could lead to coma and death. Drinking alcohol while pregnant can cause a range of birth defects, the most serious problem being the fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).

Use of alcohol not only affects a person on an individual level, but is also linked to many harmful consequences to society as a whole and others in the alcoholic's environment, with its role played in social problems such as child and spousal abuse, aggression and violent behaviors towards others, deterioration of productivity and job performance, and increase in unintentional injuries. On an average, four Canadians die and 200 injured every day as a result of drunken driving. It is estimated that alcohol abuse accounted for \$3.3 billion in direct health care costs alone in 2002.

Buddhist Perspective

From a Buddhist point of view, using intoxicants not only leads to health and social problems as mentioned above but most importantly, it clouds the mind, harming our seeds of wisdom. Buddhism is based on cultivating a sharp and clear mind, but use of intoxicants (even moderate consumption), leads to quite the opposite. The Buddha described 6 main disadvantages of indulging in intoxicants: loss of wealth, quarrels and strife, poor state of health/susceptibility of illnesses, loss of good name, a source of shameless, indecent behaviours and weakening of one's intellect.

Moreover, violation of the 5th precept, leads to easy breach of the other 4 precepts, as one loses self control and judgment when intoxicated. The other four Precepts (for those who are not familiar) are: abstinence from taking life, abstinence from taking what is not given, abstinence from sexual misconduct and abstinence from false speech. Looking at these first 4 precepts, it is not difficult to understand that there is no ground for the view that "moderate

use of intoxicants does no harm". However, using intoxicants for medical purposes with genuine intention, under qualified medical supervision is another matter.

"French Paradox" Influence

Now, what about the *health benefits* frequently claimed these days, attributed to alcohol consumed in "moderation"? Back in November 1991, a story on the "French paradox" (how wine protects the French from heart disease as even though their diet generally contain large amount of animal fats, they have a lower rate of heart disease than Americans) was aired on a 60 - minute TV program. Consequently, sale of liquor received its healthiest boost. Sale of red wine in the US shoot up by a whopping 44% just one month from that show.. Soon after, research studies on the health benefits of red wine and other alcoholic beverages started flowing. Those 'studies' were carried by the print media in headlines such as, "*Red wine promotes longevity*", "*Drink yourself to healthy heart*", "*Good news for beer drinkers!*" and so on. A recent widely publicized study in the New England Journal of Medicine on health benefits of alcohol has led many drinkers to congratulate themselves and many non-drinkers to wonder whether they should start drinking. All such wide publicity on positive health proclamations performed marketing miracles. Sale of liquor in Canada alone went up by 47% in the past ten years.

The tragedy is, the real facts on attributes to lower French death rate by heart disease, do not receive such prominence or attention. The French tend to consume lesser calories and lead a more active lifestyle. Wine plays only a small part of the episode. French health authorities consider alcohol their public health enemy number one.

Glaring 'Bias' Ignored

A closer examination of those studies that claimed health benefits of alcohol would reveal that many of them were poorly designed. Recently, a new research study published in the Lancet Medical Journal showed that a number of studies on beneficial effects of alcohol were flawed and that any heart health benefits from moderate or even heavy alcohol consumption would be outweighed by the risk of other health problems. As the study showed that drinking alcohol in moderation had only a negligible effect on reducing a person's risk of heart disease, it certainly contradicts a wealth of research published in the last twenty years that suggested drinking alcohol, particularly red wine, in small amounts may help to reduce heart disease risk.

According to Dr. Tim Stockwell, director of Centre for Addiction Research of British Columbia, "at least 90% of studies on heart disease have failed to take into account one very important source of bias; these studies are showing people who drink a bit live longer than people who are abstainers. The trouble is, many of those abstainers are often people who are former heavy drinkers or people who have given up drinking for health reasons." There have never been a large scale, long term, well designed clinical trials that test the effects of alcohol. No matter how carefully conducted, nearly all studies have been observational; never definitive.

Industry-Funded Research

When you look at the sources of funding behind these studies claiming alcohol health benefits, not surprisingly, many of them are funded by non other than the alcohol industry itself. Just like the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries funding their own research that makes their products look good. The alcohol industry has created its own research organizations. The wine Institute, the Alcoholic Beverage Medical Research Foundation, and the International Centre for Alcohol Policy are among the groups being funded to conduct research studies

Substitutes Ignored

Even if there are some health benefits to light or moderate alcohol drinking, there are always better substitutes out there. For example, grape juice is found to contained resveratrol (an antioxidant found in red wine that is beneficial for the heart) as well. There are also plenty of fruits out there with more antioxidants capacity such as strawberries and blueberries. Most physicians would agree that a much better way to prevent heart disease is to follow a heart-healthy diet, exercise regularly, stop smoking, and keep your weight and blood pressure under control.

One may ask, since drinking alcohol has become such a widespread phenomenon in modern society, wouldn't one who refuse to consume alcohol run the risk of being a social outcast? First of all, the fact that something is commonly practiced does not necessarily mean that it is good and wholesome. Those who advocate drinking as a factor of promoting friendship often forget to take into account of the fact that many friendships were also ruined by the effects of alcohol. Isn't the kind of friendship founded by compassion, mutual interest and understanding much more desirable than the one which is based on alcohol? One of the beauties of Buddhism is that we are taught to

always cultivate our awareness, compassion and wisdom and at the same time to maintain our confidence to do what is right and beneficial for ourselves and all other sentient beings and to say no to something we don't feel comfortable doing.

"Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense",

Buddha said.

(Contd...from Page 21...)

What Buddhism has done for Women...

RESCUE OF WOMEN

At this hour of need, Buddhism came to rescue the women from this pathetic situation. Woman was placed in equal position with man. The Buddha says "Parents are called 'Brahma' (*Brahmâti Mâtâpitarô*). The Brahma is the highest and most sacred conception in Indian thought, and in it the Buddha includes parents and Mother, a female, was referred to, out of great respect, as Brahma. The Buddha elevated the status of woman by pointing out that a woman is the mother of man and no person is worthy of greater reverence and veneration than one's mother. In later times in India, men of understanding following the injunction of the Buddha and regarding the value of a mother, declared "*Janani Janma Bhūmis câ Svargadâpi garyâsi*" (The mother and the motherland should be respected more than heaven itself)

HUSBAND AND WIFE

The relation between wife and husband is sacred and both should respect each other equally. The Buddha says that husband should look after his wife well and attend to her needs.

He pointed out certain duties towards each other: the husband should always honour his wife and never be wanting in respect to her; he should love her and be faithful to her; should secure her position and comfort and should please her by presenting her with clothing and jewellery. How understanding and sympathetic were Buddha's humane feelings towards ordinary human condition. The Buddha pointed out again that peace and harmony in a house is to a great extent ensured by a woman.

The wife, in her turn, should fulfill her duties towards her husband. There have never been a religious leader on the planet who has been so sympathetic to the pathetic plight of the woman.

WEEKNESSES OF WOMEN:

The Buddha also never failed to point out the natural tendencies and weaknesses of women in general. He gave due credit to their abilities - to exceptional talents. Various handicaps and drawbacks that a woman had to undergo (which are particularly of women) are:

- *Agony of leaving her family
- *Getting adopted to a new environment
- *Psychological and physical pain at menstruation process
- *Pregnancy , and
- *Child birth.

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN:

The Buddha praised and encouraged women whenever a woman was despised by a man. What the Buddha has said to King *Kosala* about women is equally interesting and extremely encouraging to womankind.

Once, while the King was engaged in a pious conversation with the Buddha, a messenger came and whispered into his ear that Queen *Mallika* had given birth to a daughter. The King was not pleased at this unwelcome news. The Buddha, unlike any other religious teacher, paid a glowing tribute to women and mentioned to the

King four chief characteristics that adorn a woman in the following words:

“Some women are indeed better (than men). There are women who are wise, virtuous, who regard mother-in-law as a goddess, and who are chaste. To such a noble wife may be born a valiant son, a lord of realms, who would rule a kingdom.” -*Anguttara Nikāya*

Some women are even better than men. *(Itthihipi èkacciya seyyā)* were the actual words used by the Buddha and He was the unique religious leader who has made such a bold and noble utterance in a society where women were not held in high esteem. He taught men to pay due deference and respect and to protect their sisters, treat them with humanity and tenderness, to regard them as equals and friends and to allow their daughters the same opportunities in life as they give their sons. The discourses of the Buddha in *Anguttara Nikāya* and *Samyutta Nikāya* have laid emphasis on the welfare of “the society of mothers”. The Buddha said that all progress and achievement, both mundane and super mundane are within reach of a woman. Details given above in brevity show the impact of the sublime teaching of the Buddha on the lives and experiences of women during the time of the Buddha.

THE ORDER OF NUNS:

Mahā Pajāpati Gōtamī, (the step-mother of the Buddha) approached the Buddha begging him to grant permission for women to enter the Order. The Buddha straightaway refused her request without adducing any reasons. The brave lady never gave up. But cut off her hair, donned yellow garments and, surrounded by a great number of Sākya ladies, walked from *Kapilawastu* to *Vēsali*, about 150 miles experiencing many a hardship, with swollen feet, her body covered with dust, she arrived at *Vēsali*

and stood outside the porch of the pinnacled Hall. Venerable *Ānanda*, the chief attendant of the Buddha inquired as to the reason for not granting her request :

“Are women, Lord, capable of realizing the higher levels of mental life, when they go forth from home to the homeless state under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Exalted One?”

“Yes, *Ānanda*, they are capable of doing so,” answered the Buddha. Venerable *Ānanda*, touching on a highly delicate area which Buddha could not reject, pressed on with his efforts and said, “If, venerable Sir, they are capable of attaining sanctity, then as Mahā Pajāpati Gōtami gave suckle to the Blessed One and breast fed with milk when His mother was no more and thereafter cradled and nursed him and brought him up in life, then Venerable Sir, women may be granted permission to enter the homeless state under the doctrine and discipline of the Blessed One”. Then the Buddha proclaimed eight rules for Nuns and approved women’s ordainment clamoured for by His own stepmother.

WOMEN’S GRATITUDE:

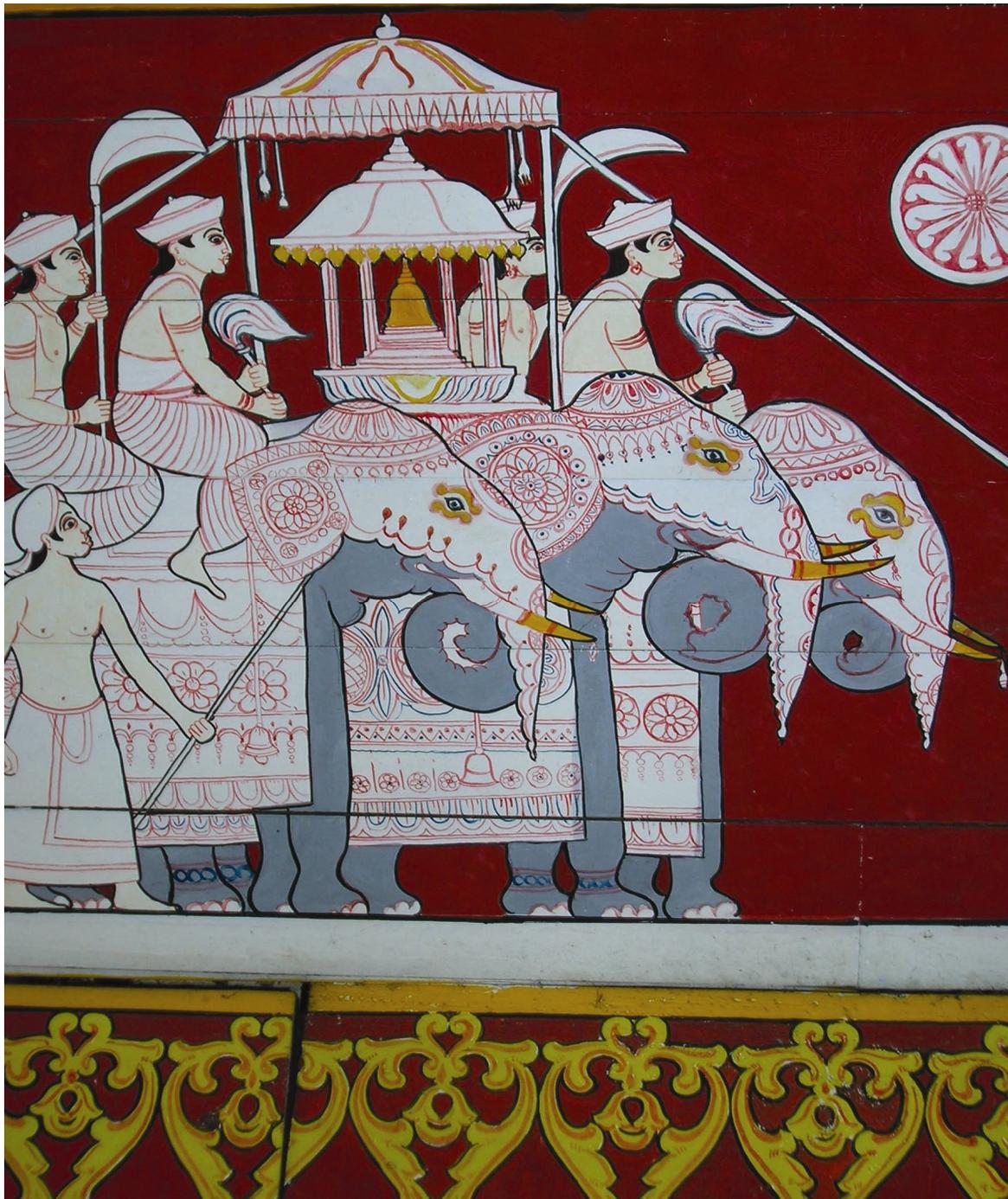
The Buddha granted the woman equal status with man and liberated them from the pathetic social negligence, gave them their due recognition, praised their noble qualities, led them to the highest spiritual position of his Dhamma and Vinaya (dispensation).

So, womankind of the world owe an eternal debt and gratitude to the Buddha for giving them their place of honour. In a nutshell, the Buddha made women to be proud of themselves.

“Oh! Buddha, Hero, homage to you!
Oh! Best of all beings who released me
and many others from pain!!”

– Mahā Pajāpatī Gōtamī

From the fascinating Daladâ Mâligâna Murals



Compiled and published by Ananda Wijesinghe, on behalf of
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