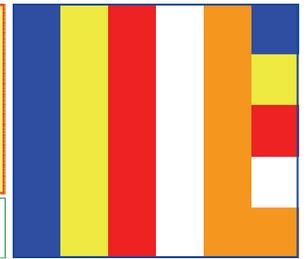


'EHIPASSIKO'

VESAK 2550 BE ~BUDDHA JAYANTHI ISSUE~ MAY 2006 CE



MAIDEN ISSUE

VOLUME - 1

BUDDHA JAYANTHI-2550

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Resident Bhikkhus

*Venerable: Dedunupitiye - Upananda Thera:

- Incumbent -in-Chief

*Venerable. Werapitiye - Somananda Thera:

-Deputy Chief Inncumbent



Patron Bhikkhus

*Most Ven. Dr. Henepola - Guneratana Mahathera

*Ajahn Sona

*Bhikkhu Pavaro



Illustrious Buddha at 'Ehipassiko'

Millions of Buddhists the world over commemorate with great veneration and gratitude, through out this Vesak month, the 2550th year of *Buddha parinibbana*,

or the demise of the Buddha, the Enlightened One, at the Malla King's Sal Grove in Kushinara, (the present township called "Kushinagar") in

India's Uttar Pradesh. The Day marks the triple occurrences—the birth of Prince Siddhartha, attainment of Buddha-hood and Buddha's demise (Parinibbana), having occurred on the Full Moon Day of the month of May (Vesak).

Today, the significance of the Vesak Day has been overwhelmingly recognized and observed by Buddhists, with ever increasing magnitude, glamour and devotion, with the steadfast spread of the unparalleled philosophy – the Buddha's Teaching, among the wise, throughout the world. United Nations, too, has declared the Vesak Day as an International day of commemoration.

May all beings be Well & Happy... !



VESAK PROGRAMME



May 12, 2006	7.00pm—Midnight	Meditation Retreat (English)
May 13, 2006	7.00am—4.00 pm	8 Precepts Retreat (Sinhala)
May 13, 2006	5.00pm—7.00 pm	Buddhapuja, Lantern lighting and Recital of Devotional Songs (Sinhala)
May 20, 2006	8.00am—1.00 pm	8 Precepts Retreat for children - (Sinhala and English)



"SUKHO BUDDHANAM UPPADO - SUKHA SADDHAMMA DESANA"



From the Editor

Homage to the Buddha !!!

The maiden issue of 'Ehipassiko' comes to you with the noble event of the Buddhist World commemorating 2550 years from the Buddha Parinibbana, dawning on this Vesak Full-moon Day.

It also coincides with the completion of two years from opening of this Sri Lankan Buddhist Temple in Calgary: the first of its kind in the vast Central Canada - a dream come true, with the enthusiasm, faith and courage exhibited by a devout Buddhist community. It is, indeed, a fruition of the mighty Blessings of the Noble Triple Gem....!

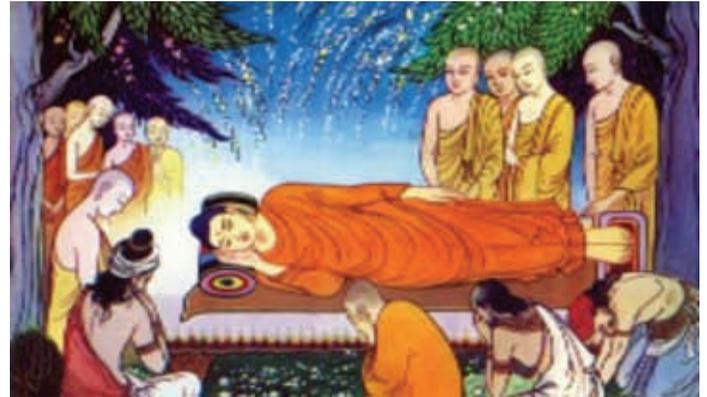
In this zealous endeavor, 'Ehipassiko' is full of gratitude, appreciation and admiration of everyone's truly encouraging support, sincere dedication and continued cooperation in the march towards realization of the objectives of 'Ehipassiko' Dhamma Service,

still in the extensively long way ahead.

Although this issue may not realize parameters of an extensive publication, it is the intension of the Chief Incumbent, Ven. Dedunupitiye Upananda Thera, to consider 'Ehipassiko' as no small an endeavor, motivated to feed the sublime wisdom to bloom in the minds of all seeking emancipation in the great philosophy - the Buddha's Teachings and His Way of Life, as best as we may, especially in a multi-faith environment..

It is our contention, strong belief and commitment that 'Ehipassiko' Journal would be your companion, true friend and a glimpse of enlightenment - a spiritual ray of light in this very short flicker of life in the formidable 'Samsaric Circle'.

In this endeavor, neither the establishment of a Theravada Buddhist Centre nor its continued and rapid growth would have become a reality, if



The Buddha Parinibbana

not for the abound dedication of Sri Lankan Buddhist Society, Calgary.

I take this opportunity to thank the SLBSC for its dedication and loyal indulgence in 'Ehipassiko' Buddhist Centre's up-keep and progress continuously, devoid of blemish.

Let me also thank all the erudite writers for their valuable contributions to this publication, without which my efforts in this direction would have just been futile.

I also respectfully value and appreciate the good guidance and assistance extended amidst usually very busy Temple schedules, by the Chief Incumbent—Venerable Upananda and his Deputy, Venerable Somananda Theras in the successful founding of this journal.

May all benefit by this venture...!

⇒ Ananda Wijesinghe
(Editor)

13th day of Vesak, 2550 BE
(Vesak Fullmoon Day)
May 13, 2006 CE
at Calgary, Alberta-Canada.
<anandaw1@yahoo.co.uk>

From Dhammapada

By oneself indeed is evil done,

By oneself is one defiled,

By oneself is evil left undone,

By oneself indeed is one purified;

Purity, impurity, depend on oneself-

No one is there who can purify another.

Incumbent-in-Chief -

Ven: Dedunupitiye Upananda Thera's Message



Ven. D. Upananda Thera

Ehipassiko, the Spiritual Unit of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Society-Calgary

Buddha in the *Ekaka Nipata* of the *Anguttara Nikaya* (Kindred Sayings) stresses that he does not know of anything conducive to the profitable as good companions. Good companionships are rare in our society, since people remain divided owing to their religious, cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds. Yet, viewed in the eyes of Dhamma, all have similar inherent human tendencies, emotions, expectations and goals in life, so that we should be able to see each other, share joy with each other, and to be compassionate towards each other in suffering. Since building and promoting a human spiritual companionship nurtured with Buddhist values is our prime objective, we have Ehipassiko open to people from all backgrounds to 'come and see' (ehipassiko).

Thanks to the Venerable Patrons, past and present SLBSC Executive Committees, SLBSC members, well-wishers, friends, and different Buddhist groups in Calgary, today we have a spiritual centre whose service is not limited to a specific religious or ethnic group but open to all. The Journal comes to you as part of our extended spiritual service to you.

We are lucky to have Mr. Ananda Wijesinghe as our Editor, who is a practicing Buddhist with a remarkable knowledge in Buddhism and varied subjects. We thank him and all the writers whose multi-faceted Buddhist insights penned for the journal are tremendously awakening.

A simple application of Dhamma into your daily life can transform you into a marvelous human being, and the maiden issue of the journal, dedicated to the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi, shall help you achieve that, thereby paying your higher homage (*paṭipatti pūjā*) to Buddha during the Vesak and beyond.

May you be well, happy and peaceful!

Yours in the Dhamma,
Venerable Dedunupitiye Upananda

Deputy Chief Incumbent -

Ven: Werapitiye Somananda Thera's Message



Ven. W. Somananda Thera

It gives me tremendous joy to send a message to the first issue of the Ehipassiko Journal, which is dedicated to the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi that falls on this year's Vesak. Since the inception of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Society- Calgary (SLBSC) few decades ago, there had been a dire need for a Temple. This long felt need was satisfied when the Ehipassiko Buddhist Centre was opened in May, 2004.

Today, Ehipassiko is a popular centre of spiritual practice for not only Buddhists of Sri Lankan origin, but also for local Canadians and other immigrant Canadians from both Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious backgrounds.

It is part of the SLBSC's objectives that a journal is published to spread the message of the Buddha. Now that this objective is also fulfilled, Ehipassiko is thereby opening another avenue of its dedication to Buddhist mission, by way of offering a resourceful Buddhist Journal.

This issue which is dedicated to Buddha Jayanthi brings you a chance of looking at Buddhism from different angles, thanks to the writers who are experts in their areas of Buddhism.

May the insight you imbibe from this issue help you celebrate a meaningful Buddha Jayanthi !

May the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem be yours !!

Venerable Werapitiye Somananda

**'Ehipassiko' Buddhist Centre,
 5107 Whitestone Road NE
 Calgary, Alberta T1Y 1T4 - Canada
 Tel: (403) 280-9729
 Website: <www.slbscalgary.org>**



Sri Lankan Buddhist Society - Calgary (SLBSC) - funded project for immediate participation (in collaboration with the Hela Sarana Foundation in the UK) in rehabilitation services in Sri Lanka, by constructing dwelling houses for the Tsunami victims in the southern coastal belt, from its debris clearance stage, saw its realization with nine (9) houses completed and donated within the past several months, starting early 2005 at Paraliya, Aluthgama, where the catastrophe, including the Train disaster also took place.

The 9 Houses completed were donated at different intervals during this period, to the following families rendered homeless, whose untold sufferings would never have been described (details given in brief below):

Name of occupant	Age	Family Size
1. W.M.Sirithunge	56	04
2. Dasantha Mendis	30	05
3. Bandu Jayasinghe	29	04
4. N.H.Pemawathie	53	05
5. H.G.Sunil Santha	43	08
6. Anulawathie Guneratne	52	02
7. Manimelwadu Jinathunga	62	06
8 K.H.Ranjan Kumara	29	03
9. Sarath Bandula	59	04



Handing-over (simple) ceremonies



Another type of house constructed

The type of houses constructed



Homage to the Exalted The Buddha's Interpretations

- A NEW WAY OF THINKING

At the time the Buddha lived in India, there were many beliefs and observances. People were steeped in varied ideas of life now and hereafter; they were searching for eternal happiness. People in Jambudwipa – Ancient India, were not altogether ignorant nor sinful. There were those like Uddaka Ramaputta and Alara Kalama – the ascetic Gotama's first teachers – who had by dint of mental striving attained states of awareness – initial stages of ecstasies. They were on a concerted quest for something higher and greater than what they had already achieved. There were the Nigantas who were fiercely compassionate, even to an extreme. There were erudite scholars like Saccaka who invited the Buddha for a very deep discussion and debate. It was a time of prosperity, it was an era of inquiry and questioning, where people of different views were constantly making an effort to find answers to what could not be outwardly seen.

The Hindus believed in a creator god they called Brahma. People were classified into 4 groups and it was

- By Srma Warusawithana

believed that they who had their origin from Brahma's turban were the highest class - the Brahmins a privileged group and then in gradually descending order were the other castes down to the lowest level – the Sudras or candalas – the low-born. The Sudras suffered enormous oppression and were assigned menial tasks. The Buddha in His infinite wisdom and unparalleled intellectual genius gave a whole new interpretation to these ideas and beliefs that reigned supreme during his life. These interpretations hold good even today - 2550 years after His passing away.

Brahma in the home

"Brahmati matha pitharo....." the Buddha boldly declared; Brahma are your parents; your mother who brought you forth into the world; your father who gave you guidance and support. Do not look for Brahma elsewhere – they are right there in your own home.

Brahma to whom is attributed the four sublime states – Metta (Loving Kindness), Karuna (Compassion), Mudita (Sympathetic/Altruistic Joy), Upeksha

(Equanimity), are all qualities found in one's parents. This simple idea of seeing Brahma every moment in one's own home is so comforting. How simple were His answers, how straightforward and above all how meaningful!

Homage to the Six Directions – 'Sigala' sees new meaning

The most comprehensive advice given to laymen is found in the Sigalovada Sutta. When the Buddha residing then in the Veluvanaramaya in Rajagaha was on one occasion going on His alms round, He beheld Sigala a young householder early one morning still draped in his wet clothes after a bath – bending and bowing and worshipping in all six directions. The Buddha stopped by and asked young Sigala why he does such reverence. Sigala replied that it was as his aged father on his death bed told him to do



everyday before his normal routine work begins “worship the six directions”. It was in deference to his father’s wish that he does so, young Sigala replied. With the characteristic wisdom of an All Enlightened One, the Buddha interpreted the words of Sigala’s father to mean much more than the literal meaning Sigala had in mind. The deep and profound interpretation is another of the most beautiful and meaningful discourses given by the Buddha to any layman to lead a virtuous life. He lists duties that must be done by each person in a society where he is one small unit. But however insignificant, the smooth progress of society depends on how each one, performs within the whole. The six directions are those who are constantly associated with one, who mingle and interact with one, every day in one’s life. One becomes an Arya Sravaka – a disciple of the Buddha whether layman or monk, if one keeps these six directions safe. The avoidance of the 4 evils – killing or harming life, stealing, sexual misconduct, and false speech; refraining from actions that are caused by hatred, fear, ignorance and delusion; also, refraining from deeds that bring about deterioration of wealth. Thus disciplined, the Arya Sravaka keeps the six directions safe and secure.

Then again an Arya Sravaka worships and reverences the six directions not in the manner Sigala did. The Buddha gave new light and meaning to the six directions; Parents who the Buddha likened to the East whence rises light, are they who shall keep one from doing wrong, encourage one to do good, see to one’s education, find a spouse at the right time, bestow a share of the wealth. Parents who have seen to a child’s upbringing must be cared for by the children in five



ways. See to their daily needs, attend to their work, keep up the good name of the family, wish them well and when their parents are no more, do good and offer such merits accrued unto them; live in such a manner that the parents will endow them with their inheritance. In similar way, the Buddha likened teachers to the South whence rich gifts come, wife and children to the West, friends and kinsmen to the North; they who serve you are likened to the direction down below; and saints and holy ones to the direction up above. In each instance, He listed the duties of each one to the other, and these duties form the best code of ethics for a lay person. A wise man, disciplined, restrained and gentle shall keep safe the six directions and no fear shall befall him.

Who is a High-born – a Brahmin?

The Brahmins in ancient India believed they were an exclusive group endowed with privileges and assets that no other caste possessed. But the Buddha gave a new interpretation to the word Brahmin. One who is gentle and not rough, one whose words are pleasing to others, not causing hatred and ill will in others, one who delights in other’s happiness and successes, one who is virtuous; such a person is a ‘Brahmin’. Dhammapada, Brahmanavagga v.26 .

To the brahmin Aggika Bharadvaja who called the Buddha a low-born ‘vasala’, the Buddha explained how one becomes a Brahmin and how one becomes a low-born, a Chandala.

“ Not by birth is one a low-born ‘vasala’, not by birth is one a Brahmin,

“By action does one become a low-born, by action too, one becomes a Brahmin”

Sopaka

The Chandala child, Sopaka, renamed Matanga when he became

From Dhammapada

Self-conquest is indeed far greater than the conquest of all other folk; Neither a god nor a spirit nor a Mara, with Brahma can win back the victory of such a person who is self-subdued, and even lives in restraint .



a disciple of the Buddha, turned out to be a rare person of exalted virtues, who was ministered upon by many kshatriyas and brahmins. This Mantanga extinguished all passions and was born in the brahma world and his caste did not hinder this exalted birth.

Suneetha the scavenger of Chandala caste was admitted into the holy order and became an Arya disciple free of bonds and was revered by kings and commoners alike.

Birth of a daughter- words of wisdom to King Kosala

King Kosala Pasenadi, who unfailingly visited the Buddha at the Jetavana monastery was on one occasion unusually subdued and sad. The King when asked by the Buddha replied that he was disappointed on the birth of a daughter. The Buddha comforted and encouraged the king to receive the tidings with joy as a daughter if brought up virtuously would prove to be even better than a son.

“A woman-child, O Lord of men, may prove

“Even a better offspring than a male” (Kindred Sayings)

The Buddha urged people to view phenomena and beliefs in a whole

new light, in a different perspective, from a sensible and meaningful angle.

Many such instances are found in the Dhamma, where the Buddha gave new meaning to traditional and oft mistaken ideas that existed in that time. These common sense interpretations of wholesome truths and conduct in lay life show the intellectual, incomparable, genius of the All-Enlightened Buddha.



Mrs. Srma Warusawithana,

graduate-teacher (retiree) enjoys writing and voluntary community work. She is presently in the US.

**Visakha Maha Upasika,*

**Gleanings from the life of Gautama Buddha and*

**Situidiyani Visakha Maha Upasika,*

among her publications, testify her erudition. Also a volunteer— teacher at Siri

Vajiragnana Dhammayatanaya,

Mharagama, it's *“Bauddha Lamayaa”*

periodical carried her writings. We hope her services will be

available soon at

“Ehipassiko’ Buddhist Centre’.

Calgary

language. This normalization process was strengthened further by Panini, who lived about 500 years BCE. and subsequently the language became very influential.

Magadhi was a dialect spoken in the Maghadan area in the eastern part of north India and was thought likely to be a composite with features assembled from different geographical areas.

Researchers cannot be certain of Maghadhi/Pali's root origins, but it is more similar to Vedic than to classical Sanskrit. There are other, parallel dialects, such as Prakrit, arising from local use, which have some basis in Sanskrit. But evidence has shown that it is Sanskrit that is the earliest and therefore the closest to some likely Indo-European origins.

BUDDHISM USES PALI

Theravada Buddhists consider that Magadhi was probably the language preferred and used by the Buddha. It was this language that came to be developed and formalised as a written language, which we now call “Pali”. Pali is a written language, but it has no special script. It should be noted that the Magadhi/Pali we have now may not be the full and accurate spoken language of those days and in fact, may not have been actually used in this present form.

Pali, (“Pali” means “text”), has a vocabulary that has special significance for the study of Buddhism, because its words have been well defined for the needs of the Buddha's teachings, which no other language could successfully define.

(Contd..on. Page 24)

History of the Pali Language

- By Roger Smith

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

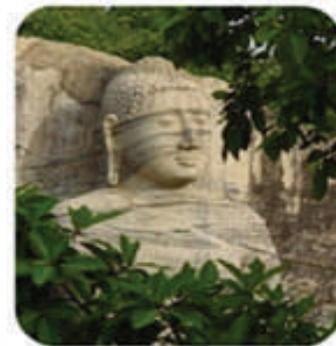
It is thought that when the Aryan-speaking peoples moved into north India, about 2000 years BCE., they brought with them many variations of the Aryan language. Some of these dialects developed literary forms (i.e., with grammar) later. The most important dialect of these was Sanskrit. The word “Sanskrit” means “the refined language” and its formalisation as a written language arose, it is thought, due to people revering it as the language of educated people and religion. As a result, they used it, but kept it separate from their daily, colloquial

BLOOMING BUDS



BUDDHA

A Journey in Search of Truth



Long, long ago a prince was born on Vesak Full-moon Day at Lumbini Sal grove. His mother's name was Mahamaya and his father's name was Suddhodana. They lived in a kingdom called Kapilavastu.

Queen Mahamaya passed away after seven days of his birth. Mahamaya's sister, Queen Maha Prajapati Gotami looked after Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha meditated on Vap festival day and his father King Suddhodana worshipped him. Vishva Mitra was Prince Siddhartha's first teacher. Prince Siddhartha was intelligent and obedient. He learned archery, fencing and horse riding. He also learned to speak Pali and Sanskrit. King Suddhodana gave Prince Siddhartha all luxuries and no sadness. He also gave him three palaces called Ramya, Suramya and Subha. Prince Siddhartha was married to King Suprabudha's daughter Princess Yasodhara. They had a son named Rahula.

One day, Prince Siddhartha saw an old man, a sick man, a dead body, an ascetic and he found out about suffering. He left the palace on an Esala Poya Day to look for the truth with Channa on horse Kanthaka. They crossed river Anoma and Prince Siddhartha cut his hair and got dressed in robes. He came to city Rajagaha in the kingdom of Magadha. King Bimbisara lived there. King Bimbisara offered to share the kingdom with him.

From Dhammapada

*"Na bhajee paapakee mittee—na bhajee purisaadhame,
Bhajeetha mittee kalyaanee—bhajeetha purisuttame".*

Associate not with evil friends, associate not with mean men: associate with good friends, associate with noble men.

Ascetic Siddhartha had teachers Alara Kalama and Uddakarama Putta. He went further to Gaya on the bank of river Neranjana. He was suffering for six years and no truth was found. He decided to go on the Middle Path

Sujatha offered Milk-Rice. He vowed that he will not get up until reaching enlightenment and sat under the Bodhi Tree. Finally he found the Truth.

- Anjalika J. Balasuriya
(Grade 2)

BUDDHA TAUGHT US MANY THINGS

Full moon day in month of May
Lord Buddha found the truth of life.

He taught us many things.
He taught us **that** life is impermanent
and many other things.

He corrected many people but one
named Devadatta, he never corrected
him only because when he tried to
correct him he would always pay revenge.

- Sathika Witharana
(Grade 2)



Let's attend Dhamma School

I go to Dhamma class every two weeks.

In Sri Lanka we can learn about our religion at school but here, we don't have a chance. So we go to Dhamma classes.

We practice Five Precepts.

1. I will not harm lives
2. I will not steal or take things belong to other people
3. I will not behave badly
4. I will not be untruthful
5. I will not take intoxicants.

We pay homage to Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha before we go to our classes and start learning. We offer flowers, light and water to Lord Buddha and worship.

My teacher is Samanthi. She teaches us Dhamma lessons and Gatha.

I learnt the life of Lord Buddha. We learn how to respect our parents, teacher and how to be a good human being.

From my Dhamma lessons I can learn many things to be a good person.

-Anjalika J. Balasuriya
(Grade 2)

BUDDHA

(by Dylan Gunaratne)

*His light, penetrating darkness
Engulfed in all the hopes
He saw those around him
And all in 'Samsara' and his own
After the moon reflected the rivers
It's tender not broken
The wind curling majestically
The heart but not spoken
The tree of eternity
The life of all light
But the merest blow could not stop it
Neither the gust of all might
He stands before us, above yet below
On ground and up high
To recognize the authority of wisdom
To show others to try .*



Dhamma School Children after Observing "Sil"
(The Eight Precepts)

Dear Parents,

All children welcome...!

Ehipassiko's one other major step forward is the inauguration of the Dhamma School in September, 2005.

As you are aware, this Buddhist Center saw light of day, in pursuance of three main objectives that you cherished thro SLBSC:

- ⇒ Promote Buddhist Education
- ⇒ Practice Buddhist Meditation
- ⇒ Dissemination of knowledge on our Buddhist Cultural Heritage

As a preliminary step towards the realization of these objectives, Sri Lankan Buddhist Society - Calgary organized the Sunday Dhamma School, for improving knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding of Buddha's Way of Life, aimed at promoting the emergence of dedicated Buddhists, amidst ventures pursued on this side of the globe, away from our motherland.

The non-Buddhist environmental influence in which Buddhist children are brought up and schooled here was given serious consideration, on deciding upon the most relevant aspects of dissemination, to start with. The classes are going on successfully, with the valuable assistance of several enthusiastic volunteer teachers.

Parents who could not send their children so far, may please do so now.

**May all benefit
by this invaluable opportunity!**



SHOULDN'T VESAK BE A NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN INDIA?

The “Buddhist Channel” asks:

In the centre of the white band, in the Indian National Flag, there is a wheel in navy blue to indicate the Dharma Chakra, the wheel of law in the Sarnath Lion Capital. This center symbol or the 'CHAKRA', is a Buddhist symbol dating back to 200th Century BCE.

It has been further elucidated that “since Buddha walked and taught his Dhamma throughout north central India, and sent his venerable monks to every corner of the country, **how is it that India does not officially recognize Vesak?**”

It was also pointed out that the national flag of India bears the Dhammacakka, the Wheel of the Law, representing the Buddha’s teaching. “Even neighbouring Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country with a relatively small population of Buddhists, celebrates Vesak as a national holiday,”

A BUDDHIST NETORK CREATED

Chinese billionaire on a “give back” motto

A West Vancouver businessman, leader of one of Hong Kong’s wealthiest and most prominent families, has given \$4 million to the University of Toronto as part of a grand plan to create a Network of Buddhist Studies programs, to span the globe: Jonathan Woodward reported in The Globe British Columbia, April 03, 2006.

The new program scheduled to have been announced in April, at the Scarborough University Campus, is the 4th institution worldwide and the second in Canada to receive millions of dollars to study and teach the East Asian religion as part of the legacy of billionaire Robert Hung-Ngai Ho (73), with the ancient Chinese property, on a motto aimed at “giving back” what has been in his family from his grandfather’s time.

The programme is an expansion to what is already existing in Thailand, Hong Kong and Vancouver—Canada.

Is Nepalese teenager a Bodhisattva?

- Janaka Perera

A Nepalese teenager Ram Bahadur Bamjan – to whom extraordinary mental powers have been attributed - has drawn much media attention for the past several months. The BBC and the French TV were among those, which focused attention on this 16-year-old youth, who has been reportedly meditating under a tree without having any food, since May last year. Controversy however surrounds this so-called Buddha boy since the Western media - in its ignorance of Buddhism - called him ‘Buddha’s reincarnation’ while skeptics on the opposite extreme have branded him a fraud. However, neither claim has been proved so far for very good reasons, according to the Venerable Mandawala Pannawansa.

In the first instance ‘reincarnation’ is an incorrect word since the Buddha did not recognize a transmigrating soul. The right word here is re-becoming (for ordinary mortals). But a Buddha is not reborn after his passing away or Parinibbana – unlike an unenlightened being. Furthermore, in November 2005 Ram Bahadur himself - having momentarily come out of his ‘samadhi’ (deep meditative posture) - totally denied that he was Buddha’s reincarnation, calling it impossibility. Insisting that he is only a ‘thapasa’ (meditating hermit), he has appealed to the public not to call him Buddha.

Some people who refused to believe that Ram could go without food for several months, observed him round the clock to see whether he was taking any meals, but had failed to detect any such thing. Others have spread a rumour that 75 percent of monies donated to maintain the spot where the youth is meditating go to Nepal’s Maoist guerillas. But to date no evidence have been found to prove any of these allegations.

On January 19, 2006, the clothes that the teenager was wearing caught fire. But nothing happened him and a video on this miracle was due to be shown in Kathmandu at the time of writing.

The problem in studying this boy, says the Venerable Pannwansa, is a group of die-hard materialists who stubbornly refuse to have an open mind on anything that the five senses cannot grasp or cannot be tested in laboratory. They scoff at meditation and other mental therapies, despite many recent discoveries that have conclusively proved that in the final analysis mind and matter are one. They at one time refused to believe that certain diseases are psychosomatic. They turn a blind eye to the fact that neurotheology (research into meditation) is an important aspect of medical research. They have remained indifferent to the revelations that the eminent Psychologist Carl Jung had made and his respect for Buddha's insight to the human mind.

SOURCE OF WEALTH IS GENEROSITY - NOT SELFISHNESS

Robert Thurman, Buddhism expert and College Professor, Columbia University, at Newport Beach Central Library, Mark Dustin/Pilot, said "We think that the source of wealth is selfishness, but it isn't... The source of wealth is generosity".

To start off, Thurman offered the explanations of Capitalism and Buddhism. Thurman, a dynamic storyteller, told the audience about Buddha, a young man who gave up a life of wealth and riches to search for the meaning of life. To share the enlightenment with the world, Buddha started an education system to help people find understanding. The merchant class, the capitalists, were big supporters of Buddha's educational system, Thurman explained.

"It was the merchant class who realized you could make yourself, be a self-made person," he added. Buddha literally means someone who has awoken from ignorance. What it really is, is an education movement, Buddhism."

The world is on the edge of the greatest wave of capitalism and the only way to approach that is for the wealthy to learn how to give", Thurman further said. Clearly now, the only solution at this time is transcendent generosity," Thurman said.

In 1962, Thurman became the first American to be ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist Monk, according to the Library Foundation. He is now a professor in the religion department of Columbia University in New York City.

- Source: Daily Pilot/Newport, California, USA

"A harmonious world begins in the mind,"

Sponsored by China's Buddhist Association and Religious Culture Communication Association, the forum is the **first major international Buddhist conference** since the founding of New China in 1949.

"Buddhism has made important contribution to world peace and human civilization in the history. The forum will play a positive role in exploring how Buddhism can contribute to building a harmonious world," .

A congratulatory letter from United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, the Buddha's vision of peace may be more relevant than ever before and called on the public to work together toward the common good and the harmonious and peaceful coexistence of all the world people.

More than 1,000 Buddhist monks, experts and politicians from 34 countries and regions attended the 3-day event. With the theme of "A harmonious world begins in the mind," the participants focussed on three topics: *Buddhism's unity and Cooperation, *Social Responsibility and *Peaceful Mission to make different nations and religions work for a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious world.

Eight Buddhist disciples from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan proposed in October 2004 to hold a World Buddhist Forum in China, a suggestion that won support from Buddhist circles in Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Source: Xinoa & (BNC)

Red Lotus Headquarters to be in Sri Lanka

The World Fellowship of Buddhist Conference, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, has scheduled The **Red Lotus International** to be formally launched under the umbrella of **World Fellowship of Buddhists**. The Headquarters will be in Sri Lanka.. This decision was a consequence of the **Global Buddhist Conference on "Buddhist Humanitarian Services in a Post-Tsunami Context"** held at the BMICH, Colombo on March 19-20, 2005, by the Buddhist Resources Centre .(Also Pge,15 for de-

Observations from the Forest
By Ajahn Sona
Birken Forest Monastery,

Buddhism in Canada:

This is the first generation of Buddhism in Canada and I'm the first generation of Canadian monk, born and raised in Canada, practising and teaching in Canada. Buddhism in North America is not that old. Theravada arrived with Sri Lankan monks in Washington DC in 1966. My own teacher, Bhante Gunaratana, arrived in 1968 and became the head of the first Theravada Buddhist temple in North America. A few other Burmese, Cambodian and Thai centres were established shortly after that, but it was not until 1988 that the first Theravada Buddhist Forest monastery was established. This was the Bhavana Society in West Virginia. Bhante Gunaratana was the teacher, and I arrived in the same year to receive the first monastic ordination at Bhavana Society. In Canada, Theravada arrived later than the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. The reason is, Tibetans arrived as refugees, because of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the 1960s. Zen Buddhism was also popular as a result of Americans' encounter with the Japanese in the second world war.

I myself first encountered monastic Buddhism in 1977, in the form of a Tibetan lama in a house in downtown Toronto, supported by three or four young Canadian men, and an ethnic Tibetan community. I later discovered a Korean Zen monastery in Toronto and began to practise meditation there in 1981. There were, as yet, no Theravada monasteries in Canada which were open to teaching meditation to Westerners. So, though I had a great interest in the Pali canon and such famous texts as the Visuddhimagga, living examples of Theravada were few and far between. In fact, I had to invent my own hermitage in the west coast mountains of British Columbia, in order to study and practise solitary meditation, as I imagined it was lived in the

time of the Buddha by monks and nuns and serious meditating lay people.

At this time I encountered, as well, an unusual woman, one of the real pioneers of Theravada in the West, and also of women's spirituality. Her name was Anagarika Dhamma Dinna. I was quite surprised and pleased to meet a Westerner who had many years before – it was still a very, very *rare* experience – gone off to Asia to study meditation in a very serious way. She had become a nun in Sri Lanka and practised with the meditation monks, had returned to Western Canada, and as a true pioneer she taught various forms of mindfulness and insight meditation. She also was an enthusiastic importer of famous Sri Lankan missionary monks. She was most happy to introduce Canadians to such luminaries as Ven. Ananda Maitreya, Ven. Piyadassi, Ven. Punnaji and Sister Ayya Khema. Many Canadians who encountered these inspiring teachers in the 1970s have continued to practise to this day.



Ajahn Sona,
 Chief Incumbent -
Birken Forest Monastery,
 Is a venerable patron of
 'Ehipassiko' Buddhist Centre,
 whose name shines in the founding of a
Theravada Meditation Centre in Calgary

These are the earliest missionary monastics in Canadian history that had any significant impact. I'm often amazed as I reflect that I am a part of this first generation of Buddhism arriving in this new continent of North America. Buddhism has never been an aggressive missionary religion, and has taken its time – in fact 2500 years – to arrive in the new world. But it has been welcomed in a very enthusiastic way by the mainstream, middle class. They have been most enthusiastic to discover the benefits of meditation and over time they also discover the tradition of generous support for monastics and monasteries, and the undertaking of precepts for laypeople. And, indeed, some of them have even become monastics, as well as lay meditation teachers. This small group has become quite influential, out of proportion to their numbers, in making people aware of the value of mindfulness practice, as well as the gentle ethics of non-violence which Buddhism advocates. The psychology of meditation has made inroads into the academic and psychotherapeutic communities in helping people deal with the stresses of modern life and providing a vision for our time of post-Christian social structures.

I returned from my monastic training in Thailand in 1994 to establish what is, as far as I know, the first Theravada forest monastery in Canada. This process began in the suburbs of Vancouver, sharing a 5 bedroom suburban house with Sri Lankan monks and a Burmese monk, where we received welcome reception from both those ethnic communities. But my heart has always been in the forest and so it was not long before a German monk and myself established a very humble dwelling in the deep forests of the West Coast. After 3½ years of obscurity we gradually gained a following of interested practitioners of meditation and the forest monastery lifestyle, and I established a more accessible retreat monastery in the interior of British Columbia. This second monastery, "Birken 2," contained such novelties as flush toilets, telephones and electricity.

Things accelerated exponentially from there, and I also began to travel around Canada and the US giving talks and retreats, and discovering an ever-growing community of seekers from the Canadian middle class. I was also often invited to give talks to the Sri Lankan and Thai ethnic Buddhist communities and to receive traditional meal offerings, or *Daana*.

These two communities – the middle class converts to Buddhism, and the Asian ethnic “born-Buddhists” – have different tastes for the forms of Buddhist practice. I’ve not found them to be in conflict, in any way, just that there is less emphasis on particular practices of meditation in the ethnic communities and more interest in *dana* and devotional ceremonies. Occasionally there are crossovers between the two communities, where Sri Lankans and Thais will attend meditation retreats, and the white Buddhist community will attend ceremonies such as funerals, ordinations, and the offering of food. So I find a happy and, I think, mutually inspiring encounter between the two communities. The ethnic communities usually admire, and have their faith increased by the diligent practice that the Canadian communities undertake, and the convert Buddhists discover and come to value the naturalness and emotional warmth that the ethnic communities bring to this rather austere religion.

To this point in Canada, there has also been a monastery established near Thunder Bay, Ontario, namely the Arrow River Forest Hermitage, with Ajahn Punnadhammo as abbot. I had a role in the establishment of this monastery in 1996, when I spent six months helping to organize the community. As well, we seem to be on the verge of establishing a new monastery in this forest tradition in Ontario, near Ottawa, with a very senior and well respected monk, Ajahn Viradhammo as abbot. This will probably be realized in the next year or so. Ajahn Viradhammo has been teach-

ing retreats in Canada for 20 years, and has a substantial community of lay meditation yogis who are very enthusiastic to establish and support this new centre. Meanwhile, in the third stage of Birken monastery we have a steady flow of visitors from across Canada and the US, and other places in the world, who come to study and practice both for short and longer periods of time, year after year. So I’m beginning to see many of the flowerings of what was an extremely obscure and rare interest in the 1970s, that is to say Buddhist practice in its various forms.

Now it is time to contemplate the future of Buddhism in Canada, and in the West in general. Basically, Canada is similar to the other European and North American countries in its progress and adaptation of Buddhism. In some ways we can see the future of Buddhism in Canada by looking at places like England, where the Western Theravada Forest tradition was established in the 1970s. We can extrapolate this to what we may see in Canada in the next decade or two. Basically, growth will tend to stabilize in the form of finished monasteries, where construction projects are not a constant feature of daily life. As well, we can confidently predict that the average seniority and experience of Western monks will steadily increase. Therefore, the combination of these two factors of completion and experience will produce a deeper, more mature sense of atmosphere and teaching skills. The beneficiaries of this stage of monastic consolidation will be, not surprisingly, the “Boomers” – those presently between 40 and 60 years old – who form the largest population in society, and who are approaching a time of life where spiritual search and practice is typically more important. I’m also particularly interested in the smaller demographic group of twenty-some thing, who

have inherited an attention-weakening, visionless post-religious society, saturated with media and technology, but without any clear idea of the basics of psychological wellbeing. This group of young people are even now showing up at monasteries and must be trained to establish themselves in stability and vision. This small handful will in turn prove to be very beneficial to their peers in a generation whom I fear are headed towards an unusual level of psychic disequilibrium.

In two other areas I feel Buddhism in the West will provide direction and leadership: ecological vision and political vision. Buddhism is a natural religion for concerning oneself for the forest environment on which the entire Earth depends. It is also an important advocate for international peace, having been, historically, the most non-violent of all religions. Buddhism, in fact, is one of the last great hopes for the contemporary world. It is time-tested, a survivor under all kinds of circumstances for 2500 years and bearing many important seeds that were ahead of their time, but which may be remarkably appropriate for this time.

“Birken 3,” our present remote and nicely established monastery, is manifesting signs of ecological concern with the installation of many energy efficient devices with environmentally low impact features. We also notice that many of the people who frequent Birken on a regular basis are from the politically and socially influential demographic of Canadian society, so we see a positive feedback loop out of the remote forest to the centres of urban culture. I can only imagine this growing stronger and deeper as time goes on.

"Come, see for yourself"

The Buddha said

'Ehipassiko'

The Buddha's way was only to show,
The path to end sorrow, to transcend woe,
His was not the method to command, to order,
But just to guide and gently implore.

The doctrine He preached full forty five years,
No challenge however great, could shake,
With His all-knowing wisdom the words He spoke
The mighty Truth is as a crystal clear lake.

Mark well His word, and heed what He taught,
Make wisdom be your guide,
Keep the word of the Dhamma in your mind,
Lord Buddha, by your side.

As you walk through the tough and beaten track,
Of cares and woes of everyday,
Remember how with confidence He said
"Come see, then weigh and consider what I say"

To the Kalamas, The Buddha kindly advised,
"Accept not any you hear or see,
Or for any other reason receive,
Let your mind see clear and only then, believe"

- Srīma Warusawithana



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Buddhist principles form the foundation upon which Sri Lanka (Hela) nation was built. The outstanding accomplishments of our people in many areas of life, during a period of time that exceeds 2200 years is largely attributable to Buddhist principles that guided their lives. The cornerstones of our cultural heritage where wisdom, creativity, compassion, generosity, spirituality and peaceful co-existence with others and with nature are emphasized, reflects the impact of Whole-some Buddhist values and norms.

Buddhist cultural history in Sinhale (Sri Lanka), includes the classical Anuradhapura-Polonaruwa era. This was a time when the population of the country was exclusively Buddhist and the country was ruled by Buddhist royalty. The Maha-Sangha was the provider of education – both secular and spiritual, and was the primary source of inspiration and guidance, in the evolution of the varied aspects of the uniquely indigenous Hela Buddhist culture reinforced during this glorious classical period of our country's history.

The strength of this cultural foundation was put to the test several times in the past, during periods of foreign invasion, devastation, plunder and exploitation. But the nation stayed intact, withstanding threats, perils and calamities, largely owing to the power and potency of its Hela Buddhist cultural foundation. The development of the country's natural, human and cultural resources, promotion of virtuous and spiritual lifestyles is reflective of our long-held traditional Buddhist principles of peaceful co-existence and integrity, in which the Maha-Sangha and lay Buddhist leadership were in the forefront.

BUDDHIST VALUES: *Our National Imprint*

“Social order brought about by globalization is founded upon ignorance (“avijja”) and delusion (“moha”), the supposition that material wealth and consumption are the criteria of good life.”

- Dr. Daya Hewapathirane



Daya Hewapathirane PhD.

TOLERANCE, OPENNESS AND PERSUASIVE POWER

Buddhism arose out of the profound psychological and ethical experience of an exceptional human being who was concerned about the fate of humanity: someone who intently and successfully pursued a spiritual quest. Buddhism is not a religion with a dogmatic canon. Buddhism functions not through crusades, but through tolerance, openness and the persuasive power of its philosophical foundation. Its insights into time and space have found a good measure of corroboration in modern science. Truth and reality have been questioned under Buddhism in ways that Western philosophy has only approached recently, under the influence of paradigm changes in natural sciences.

Tolerance and enormous adaptability of Buddhism are qualities that have remained unchanged throughout its remarkable history in many countries. Buddhism strongly promotes tolerance of other faiths, religious and social harmony, and cordial relations with other nations. With a very much down to earth philosophy of man in harmonious and cordial relationship to man, at a very visible and conceivable level, Buddhists have never stood up against any single man or group of men in the name of Buddhism, either to defend or propagate the religion. That is quite a

record for a faith with a history of more than two and a half millennia. That was very much before the time of the appearance of most of today's world religions.

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

A striking feature with the people of Heladiva (Sinhale) was that relations between people, culture and nature were compatible in harmony, well adjusted and adapted. Being an agricultural community, Hela people were grounded to their place in the natural world at the time of the arrival of European colonial powers, starting in the early 16th century. Until the time of large scale land use grab and changes during the British colonial period from the 19th century and thereafter, Hela people were self-supporting farmers living harmoniously with their environment.

THE DISRUPTIVE COLONIAL PERIOD

During the colonial period of occupation and large scale exploitation of the country's resources, the impact of Western ways of life and Christian norms became rampant. With the export-import based monoculture, urban areas assumed importance, job opportunities were centralized in these places, and so was political power. This intensified the economic pull of urban areas. Farmers were pushed off their land and the urban influx began to increase. Rural life

was beginning to collapse and people who once relied on nearby resources became tied to the export market and related economy. The gap between the rich and poor widened and anger, resentment and conflict increased. In this process, our people lost something essential – their self-sustaining society.

Adding fuel to fire, ill-advised “development” policies of successive post-independence era governments during the past five-and-a-half decades, the stable agricultural livelihood of the people, founded on the Buddhist way of life was disrupted to a great extent.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Each village or community had a group of well-respected elders and families who had earned the respect and, owing to their integrity with benevolence, generosity, virtuous nature and adherence to a life-style in-keeping with the long established indigenous culture and social values, were a source of positive influence. In Buddhist villages, they belonged to the ‘Daayaka Sabhaas’ of temples and worked closely with the Maha-Sangha in Buddhist activities based on temples. Often they were office bearers of community development and social welfare organizations.

Religious, literary and cultural pursuits flourished in these communities. There were festivities and religious functions where the entire community readily and willingly participated. Among them were spectacular festivities such as ‘Perahera’ with drumming, dancing, and music and traditional rituals of varied types. Their cultural pursuits and creativity were also reflected in the beautiful art, sculpture, architecture, pottery, handicrafts and fine arts of varied forms.

BUDDHIST POLITICAL THOUGHT

Buddha's teachings include a theory of knowledge, an ethical system and a system of law and inter-personal and inter-community relations. The political philosophy of Buddhism deals with not only the social and economic aspects of life, but also man's spiritual and ethical aspects.

Buddhist political thought emphasized in the “Dasa-Raaja-Dharma” concept (ten-fold-ethics of governance), the state or the ruler is expected to establish a just and selfless social order, in which every individual of a country is happy and contented. He went into the root cause of unhappiness, unrest and inequality of the human society and pointed out the weaknesses in the traditional and orthodox ways of ruling and controlling individuals. His ideals were primarily based on the Noble Eightfold path (The Middle-Path) He advocated that all human problems could be solved by following this eight fold path, namely Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. The political thoughts of the Buddha revolutionized the country's political scene. The Buddhist monarchical organization in the form of the Sangha was an innovation of the Buddha.

Two important political principles introduced by the Buddha were the elective principle of governance and the acceptance of the peoples' sovereignty. He introduced the voting procedures at the election of leaders of the Sangha Order, showing the importance of the freedom of expression to create public opinion in issues of general importance. He also showed that there is a close link between politics and the economy of a country. The Buddha showed that economic welfare is all

important for social stability, peace and good governance.

DEMORALIZING URBAN INFLUENCE

People from different ethnic and social backgrounds were pulled to Colombo and other urban areas, where they were cut off from their communities and cultural settings. They faced ruthless competition for jobs and basic necessities of life. Individual and cultural self-esteem were eroded by the pressure to live up to media and advertising stereotypes, whose images are based on an urban, western, English speaking consumer model, alien to the stable indigenous lifestyle. The villager or farmer was soon made to feel primitive.

Historically, the erosion of cultural integrity was a conscious goal of colonial developers. With political independence, the system of government and economic system thrust upon our people, along with the alien political party concept resulted in competition, divisiveness and animosity among people. In recent years, this trend was further accentuated by economic globalization and its socio-economic and religious ramifications in the country.

IMPACT OF THE DIVIDE AND RULE POLICY

Prior to the arrival of European colonialists the Sinhala Buddhist majority and the minorities who made the country their home, lived together for centuries without conflict. European-imposed Christianity led to serious divisions within the Sinhala community. The divide and rule policy of the British

British with preferential treatment accorded to the minority Tamil community and Christians, led to divisive feelings and polarization of the Sinhela-Tamil and the Buddhist-Christian peoples. With independence, the well-established, Western educated and economically well-off Tamil and Christian elite began to feel the erosion of their power, influence and identity. They felt threatened in the absence of the preferential treatment that they enjoyed under the British. This was the beginning of ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka.

PLIGHT OF A NATION

From the time our country was occupied by European colonial powers, the development models that were applied in our country were focused on serving the foreign interests. This approach continued even after the country attained the so-called political independence. The country's leadership and our development planners continued with the outer-oriented foreign approaches to development, the latest being the globalization process which began emerging in late 1970's. These foreign approaches have failed to bring about improvement to living conditions of the large mass of indigenous people, mainly Buddhists. Instead, they have led to untold problems and misery to them.

The large mass of the Sinhela Buddhist people in particular, suffer owing to the lack of basic necessities in life, including safety and security. They are forced to function in a socio-political system marked by the lack of virtue and moral character, being corrupt, selfish and small minded. The country's resources and environment are being misused, mismanaged and indiscriminately ex-

ploited and are in a state of depletion and degradation. The glorious cultural heritage of the nation is being destroyed. Its traditional long-standing social institutions are being undermined and treated with disrespect. Children and youth are being corrupted and misled by superficial and unwholesome aspects of foreign cultures and blind beliefs. Human relationships are strained to an extent never seen in our country in the past.

NEED FOR OVERALL TRANSFORMATION

When we adopt a Buddhist perspective on the problems of our country today, we see that something is fundamentally wrong with the way we lead our lives. The transformations we need have to be more than merely personal. It must embrace aspects of our existence - the internal and external, the personal and social. Both of these are inseparably intertwined and mutually conditioning. Our values reflect our social and economic realities, while our social and economic realities are shaped by our values. Thus, while it is in our personal lives that we have the greatest power to instigate direct change, any alterations in our personal lifestyles must also reach outwards and exercise an impact on our interpersonal relations, our social order, our political agenda, and our relationship to the natural environment. There has to be a far-reaching change in our collective views, attitudes and lifestyles.

IGNORANCE AND DELUSION

The social order brought about by globalization is founded upon ignorance ("*avijja*") and delusion ("*moha*"), namely the supposition that material wealth and consumption are the criteria of good life. According to the Buddhist texts, when ignorance infiltrates

our cognitive systems, it issues in a series of distortions ("*vipallasa*"), which infect our perception ("*sanna*"), thinking ("*citta*") and views ("*ditthi*"). The Buddha mentions four such distortions – the notions that the insubstantial is a self, and that the unbeautiful is beautiful. At the most basic impermanent is permanent, that the painful or suffering is pleasant, that the level, we perceive things in terms of these distortions. When these distorted perceptions are taken up by the thought, we start thinking in terms of them. Finally, under the combined influence of distorted perception and thought, we accept views, beliefs, doctrines, and ideologies that affirm the mistaken notions of permanence, pleasure, selfhood and beauty.

In modern commercial culture, these distortions or conceptual manifestations of ignorance dominate the thinking, attitudes, principles and policy of both producers and consumers alike. The illusions of permanence, pleasure, self, and beauty are sustained by the images that have become such an intimate part of our lives.

DEVALUATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The ultimate effect of corporate culture is to reduce the person to a mere consumer whose whole being centers on the intensity and variety of private experience in subtle ways. Greed, hatred, and delusion lead to inner disharmony and social conflict. Greed is a state of lack, need, and wants and always seeks fulfillment. Hatred in all its degrees is also a state of dissatisfaction often associated with frustrated desires and wounded pride. Delusion, taking the form of ignorance,

is a state of confusion, bewilderment and helplessness. Both greed and hatred are closely linked with delusion. The coarsest forms of these three unwholesome defilements have to be abandoned through “*sila*” (virtue), while in the advanced stages the aid of “*samadhi*” (meditation) and “*panna*” (wisdom) have to be applied. Any philosophy, or way of life, which establishes the ego as the focus of motivation and activity will inevitably perpetuate all those factors of conflict, ill-will, hatred, greed, and exploitation, which causes the human race continuous, unnecessary suffering. According to Buddhism, the excessive domination of the personality by greed of any kind is detrimental to the development of a healthy society.

WELL-ROUNDED PERSONALITY

Economic development must be placed against the wider background of the need to develop a well-rounded personality and a happy human being. In the “*Mangala Sutta*” and the “*Sigalovada Sutta*”, the Buddha has said that the happiness of the average person depends on their economic security, the enjoyment of wealth, freedom from debt, and a blameless moral and spiritual life. In a number of contexts, the economic factor is linked to a wider relationship to the “*dhamma*”.

Schumacher outlines most convincingly, a “Buddhist Economics” which has much relevance to the modern world (Schumacher, E.F. (1973), “Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered”. Blond and Briggs.) He proposes production based on a middle-ranged technology, yielding on the one hand an adequate range of material goods, and on the other, a harmony with the natural environment and its resources.

PROTECTING THE CULTURAL INHERITANCE

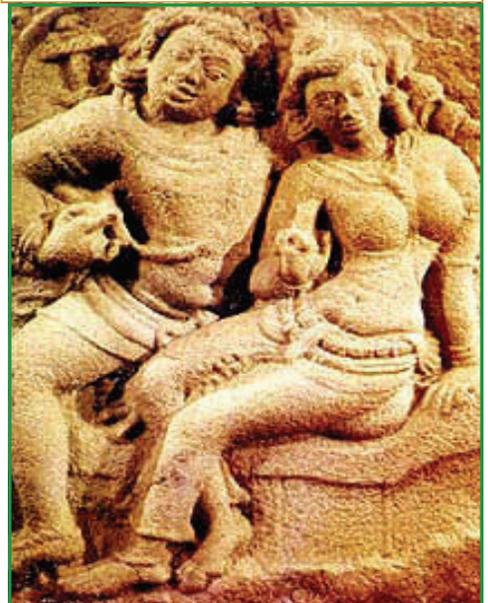
We should not let our wholesome Buddhist cultural inheritance be undermined and eroded away by economic, social and cultural trends that are incompatible with our enviable social values that took some 2300 years to develop and form the basis of life of our nation. We are duty-bound to work towards transforming and changing whatever harmful trends evident in our motherland.

The painful and disastrous effects of the three mental poisons – hatred, greed and delusion that are fast overtaking the Hela nation have to be controlled and managed for the welfare of the nation. We need to find more direct and tangible ways to serve the suffering and to relieve their misery. We need to institutionalize our efforts and attempt vigorously to find out the institutional and political ramifications of ignorance and attachment – the Second Noble Truth in Buddhism – that is on collective greed, hatred and delusion, and on new organizational strategies for addressing social evils such as injustice, war, poverty, exploitation, intolerance, and to venture into prospects for outer and inner peace in our nation. The approach involves engaging in the lives of others through compassion, sacrifice and service.

The development path of our country needs to be built from the grassroots, based on its Buddhist

way to solve the whole range of serious social, economic and environmental problems faced by the country today. Ultimately, we are talking about a spiritual awakening that comes from making a connection to others and to nature. This requires us to see the world within us, to experience more consciously the great interdependent web of life, of which we ourselves are among the strands.

Daya Hewapathirane PhD,
Managing Director,
Traveling Exhibition Service, Canada,
dedicated to glorifying,
protecting and propagating
Buddhism and the illustrious
Hela Cultural Heritage - Visual Arts
and Paintings depicted in abundant
Sri Lankan Buddhist Shrines & other
locations including World Heritage sites
(UNESCO) - is a Well known writer ad-
mirred internationally in Patriotic
Circles, for his erudition and
overwhelming, love for our beloved
motherland.- Heladiva (Sri Lanka)
Sinhale....!



Anagarikā Dhamma Dinnā:

It is no simple matter to express the dimensions or value of the spiritual influence one person can have upon another. Memory is fickle, and so much of what transpires within a relationship of meditative training can hinge on the inflections of presence and gesture. Many people received tremendous benefit from the teachings and example of Anagarikā Dhamma Dinnā; I hope they will excuse the inevitable omissions that will appear in any portrait as informal, and brief, as this.

When Anagarikā Dhamma Dinnā traveled to India and Sri Lanka in the late 1960s, it was at the prompting of deep existential urgency. Although experienced in an intense, disquieting mode, the Buddha declares this kind of urgency (*samvega*) to be a signal of spiritual maturity, a sign, we might say, that life is being seen for what it is: profoundly uncertain; soberly consequential. It is instructive and humbling to consider what must have been required for a fifty-year-old Austrian-Canadian woman to undertake such a journey, alone. In all, Anagarikā (as she was invariably called) dedicated six years to ardent practice and study in the spiritual heart of South Asia.

In many of my earliest impressions Anagarikā remain. She had a musical way of speaking and, rather like a child, she laughed in a fluid, indescribably cheerful giggle. Balancing this buoyancy of heart, was her sturdy, grandmotherly air (the potato dumplings she served visitors offer an irresistible example). One often discerned a deeper note, a palpable stillness, to her that deserves to be called formidable. Not that it was

Some words of appreciation

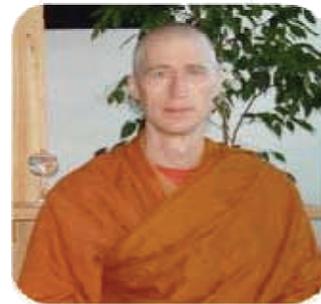
- Bhikkhu Pavaro,

(Birken Forest Monastery – Kamloops BC)

overbearing mind; rather it was a *depth* of presence to which I was unaccustomed. Anagarikā had her opinions; not everyone agreed with them all. She could be stern – I don't believe she expected each person to possess her strength of purpose, but she was a good judge of what people were capable of, and expected honest effort. When her eyes met yours they were at once kindly and uncommonly perceptive.... If these impressions have a random quality it may be because her character was so rich – and it leads me to mention a striking paradox: the fact that authority and humility could reside so naturally in the same person.

Although not infallible, her assessments of meditators' capabilities and temperament were always probing. Sometimes they were prescient. I can still recall vividly a series of observations Anagarikā made of me during a retreat interview in 1980. They were declared without fanfare, as if doing so was nothing unusual. At the time I was a little startled by their accuracy. Even many years later, though, they could resound without warning like depth charges, uncanny reminders that the practice I was engaged in possessed an agency of its own. It is worth mentioning that at the time of our original interview Anagarikā had known me for a day-and-a-half.

The teachings her students received were informed by an intelligent, refined experience of meditation and life. In turn, these were informed by her careful read-



Venerable Bhikkhu Pavaro

ings of the Theravada Sutta and Abhidhamma literatures. She expounded lucidly on the significance of *kamma* and the profound workings of dependent co-arising (*paticcasamuppada*), for instance. The rigorous psychological analysis found in the Abhidhamma was of particular appeal to her incisive mind. Following from her training under meditation masters in Sri Lanka, (in particular, Ven. Sumathipāla of Kandubodha Forest Meditation Centre), Anagarikā normally oriented her retreat instructions to mindfulness (*satī*) techniques as taught by the Burmese-influenced "insight" or *vipassana* tradition. But she was also well-versed in concentration practices leading to calm (*samatha*) and in some circumstances encouraged the use of *kasinas*, coloured disks used as aids to concentration. On other occasions meditators could be directed towards meditation on the thirty-two body parts (like the *kasinas*, also canonic, but uncommonly taught in lay retreats). Each retreat she conducted was imbued with the regular practice of loving-kindness, *metta*. Animating these formal instructions, any event – a meditator's recollection of a dream, the sound of the lunch bell – might be employed to highlight some germane point.

Another measure of Anagarikā's interest in her students' training that deserves note – in his own article Ajahn Sona has also made mention of this – is the trouble she took to arrange for visits to Western Canada by an array of eminent Buddhist monastic teachers. These extraordinary encounters – *much rarer* than is the case nowadays – offered further insights into the subtleties of meditation; as important, they enriched her students' appreciation for the ennobling possibilities of Buddhist life.

To appreciate the extent of Anagarikā's generous efforts one needs to bear in mind that *almost none of this* – the meditation techniques she imparted in detail, the Pali terminology, the Abhidhammic lists, the examples (her own, as well as others') of monastic life – was available at the time. One simply did not find easy reference to such things in a Canadian city. It also meant that most of those who arrived at her retreats, especially during the earliest years, were (to put this delicately) *beginning* in ways largely unrecognizable to us today.

At least as I understand them, the majority of Anagarikā's energies were devoted to a pair of vital interests: her own wholehearted cultivation of virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*pañña*), and, where it was sought, her encouragement of others' practice and aspirations. The passing years have demonstrated the catalytic influence of this Buddhist "pioneer" in Western Canada. Anagarikā's presence continues to be felt in many of the retreats and study groups and mature Dhamma friendships which have established themselves widely over this time. She would undoubtedly be gratified to witness the increasing numbers of lives that are being illuminated by the wise tradition she came to know and love so well.

As should be clear, these words are offered more in the form of appreciation than biography. Events Anagarikā Dhamma Dinnā described from her personal experience sometimes touched on the depths she had plumbed in herself. The great Thai Forest monk and meditation master, Ajahn Chah, has remarked that any serious practitioner will weep inconsolably more than once. The dictum would have received knowing agreement from Anagarika, who recounted having fully soaked two *saris* in her own tears during her time in Asia. I was by no means her earliest student and am confident there are others who knew her better.

Even so, although she did recount fine stories from her years of training, when she felt it served a likely that any of us can relate with precision the full extent of her transformations during that time. On the other hand, we don't need to. Surely we are correct to intuit that evidence for spiritual awakening will become manifest in the *whole conduct* of a person's life – for instance, in the depth and tone of her virtue, kindness, and wise equilibrium within life's irregular demands. To be sure, these are among the qualities this remarkable spiritual teacher and friend (*kalyana-mitta*) expressed to those fortunate enough to know her. As Venerable Piyadassi Nayaka Thera wonderfully remarked following her death in 1990, "I miss Anagarikā. She was exactly who she was."

Illusion Illusion

Birth and death – repeated game

Eternal pain – in between them

Should be suffered – any on earth

Leaving the life – to an unknown fate.

Come from where – going anywhere?

How far traveled – no idea.

Many more miles – to go somewhere

I am lost – bionic dare.

Matter, matter, matter – it's everywhere

Irrelative to time – exist nowhere

Little by little – could be aware

It's an illusion – I don't care.

- Jayampath L K Edirisinghe

~*~

The writer—Jayampath, a devout disciple of Ehipassiko Buddhist Centre passed away on Feb. 14, 2006. His beloved wife, Anomi of Calgary sent the above insight for publication in this journal.

We wish him peace and happiness during his journey

in *samsāra* unto his ultimate peace

and happiness in

*** Nirvana ***

The Bamiyan Buddhas

We are Buddhas of the Bamiyan,
for twenty-three centuries
we have stood tall in the sun,
gigantic, gazing benevolently
from our home in the mountainous terrain
as wars raged during the centuries
across the Afghanistan plains,
but then we were not harassed
and were left alone.
And now the Islamic Taliban leader
Mullah Mohammed Omar says
we should be blown up and destroyed.
And we are aware that Buddhists
around the world are shocked and annoyed.

But, why, why, why? We tend to ask
"the statues violate the tenets of Islam
as laid down in the Koran",
the Talibans say in a hurry.
But then Islam entered the valley
only in the ninth century,
and so we cannot agree
and have difficulty to comprehend
the intended vandalizing spree.

Praise! Our eyes were carved
and we saw the busy stream
of weary travellers
and mostly merchants often tired,
pitching their tents and wired
at the end of a camel caravan
when the nights set in on Bamiyan valley
with a sky of an indigo parchment really
for the stars to be pasted and twinkle.

In the mornings
we would see caravans parade
criss-crossing to trade
along the Silk Route,
some with silks from China
others with glassware from Alexandria,
bronze statues from Rome
and carved ivory from India.

Accompanying the caravans
Buddhist monks came and went.
Carved into the cliffs were monasteries
where yellow-robed monks spent
their time in meditation.
The valley was devoid of lush trees.
When Buddhism was thriving,
there were festive rituals. The silk canopies
were decorated with pennants striving
to add colour to the occasion.
Today, the Bamiyan valley
is an austere place.
the monks and pilgrims
went away many centuries ago
without leaving a trace
after Islam took over the valley.

The rock carvers draped us
in Hellenistic togas with deep folds
and ridges that were straight
inspired by the invading soldiers
of Alexander the Great.
Our faces were painted gold
and our robes with bold
colours of red and blue.
The reason for the two colours
we just don't have a clue.
But we looked impressive
yet so despondent and vulnerable,
but still we were able
to survive the hostile onslaughts
of factions that fought.

We were alright for twenty-three centuries
having been sculpted, inspired
by the invaders
but now faced death and destruction
by the Taliban marauders.

In early March
in the year two-thousand-and-one
we were attacked and hit by
an anti-aircraft weapon.
We were inanimate to defy
so lost part of our legs
and then part of our faces.

Later on March ninth
our lower bodies and the soles
of our feet were drilled with holes.
The Taliban soldiers stuffed
them with sticks of dynamite,
and about an hour after noon
they blew us to dust
and out of their sight.
The blast was greeted soon
with the Islamic rally's best
cry of "Allahu Akbar", "God is greatest"
by the Talibans who witnessed.
By then the civilized world was in shock
by this dastardly act, a knock
on the belief that religions can co-exist.
It was an act of Islamic religious bigotry
and perhaps fundamentalists medieval
brutality.
The Buddhists are revulsed at the thought
that the Talibans think the act was fine
but they stand condemned
in the eyes of mine
and that of the civilized world.

Asoka Weerasinghe Ottawa, Ontario

Asoka Weerasinghe, the *author of 14 collections of poetry* and Co-Founder of The Gloucester Spoken Art Poetry & Storytelling Series is an *award winning, poet*. Among several awards for his excellence in poetry, most significant are:-
*The Manifold Poetry award (UK),
*University of Wales, Eisted Poetry Award,
*Newfoundland and Labrador Arts & Letters Gold medal for Poetry,
*Sri Lanka State Literary Award for Poetry,
The City of Ottawa Appreciation Award for Arts and Culture and was honoured as *A Guest Poet at the Austin (Texas) International Poetry Festival In the year 2001.

Meditation Poems

Namo thassa

The autumn wind
shakes the only leaf on the tree
and drops it to the ground.
The stamp of impermanence.

Bhagavatho

Eyes closed
I see the Monarch
go south for the winter
but only to die on its way.
The acceptance of impermanence

Arahatho

The gardenia
my favourite flower
I give it to you.
My soul detached
I enjoy the supreme solitude.

Samma sambuddhassa

Suspended by a red flower
the Hummingbird is
silent and piercing
I join its ruby throated
clarity in its
uncomplicated solitude

Nammmo thassa bhagavato arahato Samma sambuddhassa

Surrounding me are trees
and I ignore the breeze
and the chorus of the songbirds
as I walk mindfully
placing one foot gently
in front of the other
along a leaf padded clear
circular path flattened by deer.
Leading me nowhere
one foot moves up
pushing aside the air when
coming down
before it touches the kabook-earth.
I am quietly content
and precise as a cutting knife
mindful that I breathe in and out
telling me that my life
is like this gentle short step
going into the unknown.
I breathe in and breathe out
I walk slowly step after step..

-Asoka Weerasinghe

Maara, Devaas and Brahmas – by Ajahn Brahm

In the Anguttara Nikaya, in the 42nd Sutta of the chapter on the 'Eights', the Buddha said that for devas in the realm of the Four Great Kings, a single day is equivalent to 50 human years (hy), one celestial year (cy) is made up of 360 such days, and such devas have a lifespan of 500 cy. A simple calculation shows that the devas in the realm of the Four Great Kings live the equivalent of 9 million human years.

The sutta continues by stating that devas in the Tavatimsa realm have a day equivalent to 100 hy and they live 1,000 cy. That is, their lifespan is equivalent to 36 million hy. The devas in the Yama realm have a day equivalent to 200 hy, and they live 2,000 cy, or 144 million hy. Each successive deva realm has a lifespan that increases by a factor of four. The devas in the Paranimitavasavatti realm have a lifespan of 9,216 million human years. It is in this realm that Mara lives..

The realm above the Paranimitavasavatti realm is the Brahma realm where devas have a lifespan of 36,864 million human years (assuming that their lifespan is four times that of previous realm). The chief of this realm Brahma (like the Judeo-Christian God), has a lifespan that extends to the end of the universe-cycle (aeon), which gives us an estimate of the size of one aeon of around 37 billion years.

When I was a theoretical physicist at Cambridge, I was taught that we are at present around 14 billion years since the big bang, or just under half way through an aeon. Thus, this figure given by the Buddha is very acceptable to modern science, whereas the Christian idea of only 6,000 years since the creation of the universe is risible. At the end of the universe cycle, Brahma/ God passes away.

In one sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 49) the Buddha's chief disciple Maha Moggallana recalled a past life when he was Mara. Mara does, indeed, make much bad karma. Maha Moggallana went to the hell realms for a long time afterwards. As the English philosopher Lord Acton said: "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely" and Mara is corrupted by his power.

Many monks teach these things and explain the various planes of existence, but people are so skeptical these days that few want to listen. They mostly want to hear about this human life and how to lessen its problems. Moreover, many of the realms in fact the higher 20 planes, are all based on Jhana. Until a person meditates and has a taste of what Jhana is, they will not be able to comprehend the meaning of such realms. Lastly, when you do bad karma, it is your doing. Mara is only able to tempt you. You make the final decision. So you receive the fruits of what you do. (Pls see P.26...)

History of the Pali..... (from:Page8)

For example, in Sanskrit, the word "Dharma" has a very wide application - it applies to physical and moral teachings, teachings generally and even to the laws of nature. But in Pali the word "Dhamma", is reserved exclusively for the Buddha's ideas. And also, in Sanskrit, "Karma" contains Hindu theistic ideas in a Hindu theistic context. But in Pali the word "Kamma", signifies the moral law as defined by the Buddha.

It is sonorous, rhythmic, mellifluous and pleasing to hear, especially when chanted properly by monks and is kept alive by Buddhist scholars, monks and devotees of Buddhism in the few remaining Theravada countries. Thus, it can be seen that Pali is the language of Theravada Buddhism.

Other schools of Buddhism, both Theravada and Mahayana schisms, which emerged soon after the Buddha's death, used the classical language of India for the propagation of the Buddha's teachings – Sanskrit. There is even a variety of Sanskrit called "Buddhist Sanskrit"

Pali language used to be called "the language of mankind's philosophy". This is because it had the most voluminous literature on religion and philosophy in the entire world before the rise of Western Scholarship.

BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY WRITTEN AND PRESERVED

Pali is the language of the Theravada Buddhist religion's record of teachings, the "The Tripitaka" (or The Three Baskets):

- ⇒ the Vinaya Pitaka (the collection of rules for Monks),
- ⇒ the Sutta Pitaka (main body of collected teachings),
- ⇒ the Abidhamma Pitaka (the more advanced teachings).

THE SPREAD OF PALI

As trade-links and communications were developed, Buddhist monks and King's emissaries throughout the region developed and spread its use. It was the "Lingua Franca" of the Buddhist countries of south and south-east Asia for well over a thousand years.

Each country subsequently developed its own Pali literature and chronicles.

THE BUDDHA

The personality of the Buddha is seen clearly in the Pali Tripitaka. He "comes across" – speaking to us from down the ages, as a very intelligent, practical man who saw the great harm arising from our defilements: anger, hatred, jealousy and revenge.

He strongly recommended all peoples to avoid hurting or injuring all other beings by using words or deeds.

Motto: "The Gift of Truth, which leads to Wisdom, is the Greatest of all Gifts"

<=><=><=>

CHINA- a major player in the Buddhist World

- By Senaka Weeraratna (BNC)

China is re-discovering the priceless value of Buddhism and the role it must play in the dissemination of Buddhism world wide.

The World Buddhist Forum (WBF) that was held in China recently was the first major step taken in the new role that China has embarked upon. On the eve of Chinese President's visit to USA, the Chinese Govt. used the WBF conference to send a strong message to Washington that the China of the future will not only be a supplier of goods and services but also a source of enlightened thinking based on Buddhism.

In the words of *Alwin Wong* from Singapore who attended the WBF Conference wrote, "*Buddhism is deeply rooted in China and is part of the Chinese culture and civilisation. From my intuition, Chinese Buddhism will be a major drive in the very near future. Moreover, with the advance in technology and wealth, Chinese Buddhism that blend with modern technology and focus on social engagement will emerge as a major force in this nation and with the support of the local government. This Forum(WFB) is just a starting point for the Chinese government to promote Buddhism, and I believe that Buddhist missionaries from China will emerge very soon to spread the teachings to all over the world.*"

China may well claim the leadership of the Buddhist world to better project its image and *Chinese culture which is rooted in Buddhism*, and in addition effectively counter American led aggressive evangelism in many parts of the world.

Buddhist Answers to Current Issues

- By Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge

A review by Dr. Padmal de Silva,
(London University),
on the latest Publication of



The role of religion in a devotee's personal life is obvious: it provides faith, comfort, and guidance for a virtuous life. In addition to this role, religion has a wider influence on mankind. Human history is full of vast influences, often positive but also at times negative, exerted by – or in the name of – religion. Societies and great civilizations have been built on the basis of various religions. Many bitter and destructive wars have also been fought in the name of religion.

In today's world, many turn to religion for answers to key issues and questions that confront mankind, including warfare, the environment, abortion, genetic modification, social equality, and a host of others. The answers a religion can offer to these wider questions are crucial for its value and relevance in the modern world, over and above its role in the life of individual devotees.

Buddhism has flourished for over two and a half millennia in Asia, and has in more recent times begun to have a wide following in the West as well. What has Buddhism to offer in relation to the burning global questions that concern the present-day society and present-day thinkers? As a major world religion it is legitimate that Buddhism's answers to these questions are explored.

This is precisely what the book under review, which is sub-titled 'Studies in Socially Engaged Humanistic Buddhism', does. It explores Buddhist answers to a host of issues that are relevant to the present day. These include: Can Buddhism, as a dogma-free humanistic spirituality, replace organized religion? How can Buddhism help in the socialization of children and youth? How can Buddhism

help to accomplish the multi-faceted goals of a 'whole person' education? What contribution can Buddhism make to the securing of peace, security and prosperity? In addition, there is a discussion of the Buddhist stance on a range of bioethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia, suicide, genetic engineering and asexual reproduction. Finally, there are chapters that deal specifically with the propagation, preservation and expanding role of Buddhism, and on the value of Sino-Indian Buddhist literature in answering current issues.

Each of the eight chapters is substantial, and gives a comprehensive discussion of the issues it covers. And each chapter stands independently, so a reader can select and read on a topic that interests him. The discussions are balanced, extremely lucid, and well-argued. They are based on Canonical and other authoritative texts. Extensive citations are given where needed. In addition, the structure of the chapters is reader-friendly, with numbered sections and a final succinct set of conclusions.

As for matters of content, much of the material will be of interest not just to Buddhists but to the wider intelligentsia concerned with global issues. The chapter on bioethical questions covers many topics that scientists, politicians and philosophers are currently struggling with, including cloning and euthanasia. The author gives an authoritative account of the Buddhist position – or, rather, his own well-argued position from the stance of Humanistic Buddhism. The value of the Buddhist input to the development of bioethical principles is emphasized.

The discussion of education is another contribution worth mentioning. The principles of education/instruction implicit in the Buddhist tradition, starting with the Buddha's own statements and practices, are clearly delineated. The Buddha was an exceptionally competent and insightful teacher, and his ideas and methods have guided the teaching traditions of many Asian Buddhist countries for centuries. The author convincingly argues that these have a relevance to the process of 'whole person' education in to-day's world.

Equally important to highlight is the chapter on peace, security and prosperity. Perhaps nothing worries the people of today more than the problem of violence, including warfare and other conflicts. The recent years have given rise to debates and discussions about unconventional warfare, preemptive wars, and terrorism. These are matters one can neither avoid nor ignore. This chapter discusses the issues in this domain in much detail. What is the stance of Buddhism with regard to war, to the enforcement of law and order, to ethnic conflict? The author, as the foremost authority on Dharmasoka and on the Sri Lankan Pali chronicle *Mahavamsa*, is perhaps better equipped to deal with this area than any other contemporary scholar. His discussion of these issues is lucid and informative, and dispels some commonly held misconceptions.

Overall, *Buddhist Answers to Current Issues* is an ambitious work that makes a significant contribution to the literature. It is an authoritative collection of essays, based as much on a

fine understanding of current issues as on unsurpassed textual scholarship. The author's mastery of the material, and the clarity of his thinking, shine through these pages. Buddhist scholars, practising Buddhists, social scientists, ethicists and many others concerned with the range of problems mankind is currently faced with will find the book a most rewarding one to read. In addition to providing information to the readers, it is bound to promote and provoke further discussion, which is the ultimate test of a successful book..



(From Page 23..)

P.S. The lifespan is the measure of the maximum length of time a being may remain in that realm. For example, if Mara passes away before his natural lifespan, then another being (with the sufficient karma) will assume that position. Just as if the Prime Minister dies or resigns, another person fills the position as soon as possible.

Note: This is an e-mail response sent to Mr. Shan Guneratne of Australia, by Ajahn Brahm, famous for crystalizing Buddhism.

Buddhism flourished in GANDHARA

Dr J.B. Disanayaka, Prof Emeritus at Sri Lanka's Colombo University, says that Gandhara was a holy land where the teachings of the Buddha flourished, especially under the reign of Asoka the Great. It is from Gandhara that the first image of the Buddha emerged.

When Gandhara developed the town of Taxila into one of the first Centres of Buddhist Education, Princes from around the region came for all studies. Taxila was built during the reign of the Kushans, a Turkish people who had moved out from China to take over Gandhara and other parts of present-day Pakistan at about 75CE.

Under the Kushan king Kanishka (128CE-151CE), Gandhara became one of Buddhism's holiest lands and attracted pilgrims from all over the world.

Gandhara collapsed under the onslaught of Muslim invaders led by Mahmood of Ghazni from the nearby Kabul valley towards the beginning of the 11th century. Gandhara's very name was forgotten – though some say Kandahar in Afghanistan was named after this ancient Buddhist empire. (Abridged from Buddhist News Communication-BNC)

RED LOTUS INTERNATIONAL- A Dire-Need Realized

Buddhist Resources Centre, Sri Lanka reports that the establishment of “Red Lotus International” is now underway as resolved at the “Global Buddhist Conference” on **Buddhist Humanitarian Services in a post-Tsunami context.**

This two-day World Buddhist Conference was held at the BMICH in March 2005, with the participation of 92 foreign participants including 52 delegates representing 20 countries in Asia, Australia, Europe and America and about 300 Maha Sangha with Most Venerable Chief Prelates, Most Venerable Maha Nayaka Theras and many a renown lay Buddhist intellectuals of outstanding reputation. The main focus was:

1. To help launch a worldwide humanitarian services organisation with a Buddhist perspective;
2. To provide an opportunity for the Sangha and laity, both international and Sri Lankan, who have been actively engaged in Tsunami relief work to meet with one another and strengthen and reinforce their commitment to a central Buddhist idea; namely helping those in distress; and
3. Facilitate effective co-operation between Sri Lankan and international Buddhist organisations and individuals engaged in disaster relief work and enhance their capacity building.

Sri Lanka is one of the worst affected countries by the Tsunami disaster of December 2004, with over 40,000 dead, nearly a million rendered homeless and thousands of children destitute and orphaned.

The government machinery, as usual, was certainly slow and it was the Buddhist Clergy and the Buddhist Temple that took the invariable leadership, in which provision of shelter and food to four to five thousand - eleven thousand people en-block, in a single temple compound, without any preparation.... ! Temple doors were open to all..The decision to launch a “Global Humanitarian Organization with a Buddhist perspective”, was approved. .Dr. Hema Goonatilake and Mr. Olcott Gunasekera were appointed as convenors .

Source: **Dr. Hema Gunatilleke, Co-ordinator,
Buddhist Research Center, Sri Lanka**

STROKE...?

REMEMBER THE 1ST THREE LETTERS - **STR**

...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

RECOGNIZING A STROKE

Thank goodness for the sense to remember the "3" steps, **STR**.
Read and Learn!

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S *Ask the individual to **SMILE**.

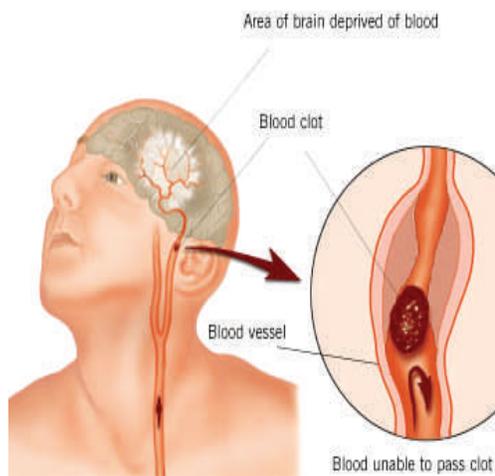
T *Ask the person to **TALK** - to **SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE** - (Coherently— for example: . . . "It is sunny out today")

R *Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out the tongue... if the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke} If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call for assistance immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

~~~~\*~~~~

...  
My friend, (Mahinda Gunasekera, President of SLUNA- Toronto) sent this to me. Its importance prompted me to publish it and spread the word. I agree. If everyone can remember something this simple, we could save some valuable lives. Seriously...  
- Editor



### STROKE IDENTIFICATION

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall - she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics) and just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food - while she appeared a bit shaken up, she went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening. her husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00pm, she passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ.

Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps she would be with us today. Some don't die. They end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead. It only takes a minute to read this...

*A neurologist says that if he can **get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke,***



-- By Anne Mahoney, PhD. R Psych. FCGPA

The Four Noble Truths, discovered by the Lord Buddha reflect the core of Buddhist doctrine. The noble truth of Dukkha (dissatisfaction), Tanha (craving) Nibbana (freedom) and Magga (noble eightfold path) are universal truths. Briefly the Four Noble Truths state: existence is dukkha, the cause of dukkha is craving, the liberation from dukkha is Nibbana and the path to the liberation is the Noble Eightfold Path. Daily life provides many opportunities to experience each of these Four Noble Truths. Lay Buddhists are able to develop a deeper understanding of the Buddhist teachings through mindful awareness and mindful reflection on these Four Noble Truths as they arise in day-to-day life. This paper reviews each of the Four Noble Truths and discusses various ways that each truth can be experienced.

## First Noble Truth: The Noble Truth of Dukkha

Anne is an adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at the Calgary University. With over twenty years of practical experience in Vipassana (Insight) Meditation, having studied under Asian and Western renown teachers, Anne also conducts Meditation classes. She leads a regular Meditating group at 'Ehipassiko' Buddhist Centre, too.

Suffering is all around us. Poverty and violence lead to suffering. Everyday disappointments and everyday pleasures also lead to suffering. Both are a source of dukkha and both provide an opportunity to experience the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha spoke of three kinds of dukkha. The first, ordinary dissatisfaction, includes both mental and physical stress. This reflects the type of stress that everyone experiences. Birth, illness, old age, death, being separated from loved ones and pleasant conditions, association with unloved ones and unpleasant conditions, not getting what one wants, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are all examples of ordinary dukkha. Typically when you are exposed to ordinary dukkha, you deny it, ignore it or distract yourself from it, rather than face it. The Buddha said you are to understand dukkha not run away from it. To do this you must investigate dukkha. In order to investigate dukkha you must be willing to acknowledge the dukkha in your lives. At this very moment, as you read this page you may be experiencing some form of physical or mental dukkha. Your body may be in pain, your mind may be restless, preoccupied or your reactions to this paper may be emotionally charged with aversion or greed for more information. All of this is dukkha. Stop reading for a moment. Bring your awareness to your body. Are there any unpleasant sensations there? If so, watch them, become aware of your judgment of those sensations and your desire to make the unpleasant sensations go away. This is dukkha. Now become aware of our

sensations there? If so, watch them, become aware of your judgment of those sensations and your desire to make the unpleasant sensations go away. This is dukkha. Now become aware of your thoughts and emotions. Are there any unpleasant (negative) thoughts or disturbing emotions (irritation, anger, boredom, restlessness, anxiety) present? If so, this is dukkha. Acknowledge any thoughts and emotions that are present. Become aware of your judgment regarding those thoughts or emotions. This is also dukkha.

The second type of dukkha is the stress you experience because things are always changing. This is the law of impermanence. The Buddha said, whatever is impermanent is suffering. You can experience this truth for yourself, as impermanence is very easy to become aware of in your daily lives. When you look at yourself in the mirror and compare that image with a picture of yourself at a younger age it is evident that you have changed physically. This is impermanence of form. You may enjoy the sensation of the sun on your body but if you remain in the sun for long the sensation of the heat becomes unpleasant. This is impermanence of feeling. You may wake up in the morning happy, by noon you are angry. This is impermanence of consciousness. Yesterday you may have thought "I like my job". Today you may think, "I hate my job" This is impermanence of thought.

Impermanence is often covered up by continuity. By repeating the same things over and over you create the delusion that things are permanent. You wake up at the same time each day and go through your daily routine. Soon that routine begins to feel stable and you begin to rely on the routine. As you become more and more attached to the routine, you experience dukkha when the routine is disrupted. In fact, the routine was never regular or stable, it was just repeated over and over again. If you take the time to reflect on how different the routine is each time you go through it you will be able to see through the delusion of permanence and see the reality of impermanence.

The third type of dukkha is the stress associated with the five aggregates. All living beings are composed of the five aggregates. The five aggregates are body

(form), sensations, perceptions, thoughts (mental formations) and consciousness. There is nothing else. No permanent soul or self. In your daily life you can experience this aspect of dukkha when you become aware of your inability to control your body, your sensations, perceptions, thoughts, emotions or your level of consciousness. Your body hurts and gets tired when you do not want it to. You may experience unpleasant sensations (hot or cold or pain) even though you do not want to experience such sensations. You may have false perceptions despite your best efforts not to do so. For example, the coiled rope on the back porch looks like a snake in the twilight of the day. You may think thoughts that disturb you or leave you feeling angry or guilty. These occurrences happen, you do not have control over them. If the aggregates truly "belonged" to you, you would feel, think, perceive what you wanted, when you wanted. You do not have control over the occurrence of these phenomena. This is what is meant by the dukkha of conditioned things. Again you are able to observe this dukkha, if you know what to watch for and if you are willing to be present with the stress of not having control, rather than running away from this reality through distraction, blame or denial.

What is the purpose of attending to dukkha? The Buddha said that the only way to understand dukkha is to experience it. It is not enough to know dukkha intellectually. Only through the experience of dukkha can you penetrate the First Noble Truth. It is mindfulness that allows one to observe dukkha in everyday life without becoming caught up in it. Mindfulness is non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Such awareness allows you to observe without attachment. The Buddha realized the truth of dukkha through the practice of Vipassana (Mindfulness). You too can use mindfulness on a daily basis to help us also realize the truth of dukkha.

### Second Noble Truth:

#### The Noble Truth of the Cause of Dukkha

Greed, desire, thirst, lust, yearning, affection and attachment are some of the characteristics included under the term craving. Craving is the mental factor that underlies all dukkha. As the Buddha indicated there are three types of craving, craving for sense pleasures, craving for existence and craving for nonexistence. Craving for sense pleasures is most easily recognized in daily life.

When you experience dissatisfaction, pain or stress it is often because of your craving for or your attachment to, sense objects. Craving arises in all six-sense bases. You crave pleasant sights, pleasant sounds, taste sensations, smells, pleasant touch sensations and pleasant thoughts. You also crave to be rid of unpleasant sensations. You crave to be rid of unpleasant

sounds, sights, smells, tastes, pain and unpleasant thoughts. Stop reading for a moment. Bring your awareness to your body. Are there any unpleasant sensations there? If so, become aware of your judgment of those sensations and your desire to make the unpleasant sensations go away. This desire is craving. Now become aware of your thoughts and emotions. Are there any unpleasant (negative) thoughts or disturbing emotions (irritation, anger, boredom, restlessness, anxiety) present? If so, become aware of your judgment of those thoughts and emotions. Can you be aware of your desire to feel peaceful and happy? That desire to be rid of the negative thoughts and emotions is craving. When you experience pleasant sensations (tastes, sounds, smells, sights, touch sensations or thoughts) you often want those pleasant sensations to continue or to be repeated. If you are currently experiencing any pleasant sensations, mindfully watch those sensations and try to be aware of the disappointment or discomfort that arises when those pleasant sensations cease. This disappointment or discomfort is because of craving.

As you go through your daily life you can, with the use of mindfulness, become aware of the cravings which occur routinely. When you wake up in the morning, you may have an unpleasant sensation in your stomach, which you label as hunger and you crave food. When you eat more food than your stomach requires, you may again have an unpleasant sensation and you crave for that unpleasant sensation to go away. While walking to work you are confronted with unpleasant odors, such as gasoline fumes or pollution in the city, suffering arises as you crave those unpleasant sensations to dissipate. Alternately, you may pass a vendor and the pleasant smell of spicy food is in the air and you find yourself drawn to that olfactory sense and crave that food. Attachment to your ideas and opinions is another aspect of craving. At work you may become attached to your ideas and want co-workers to agree with them. You may also become attached to rites and rituals, philosophy or religion. All of this is craving for pleasant sense objects.

The craving for existence is associated with belief in future life. When one acts to gain merit in the hope of having a happier rebirth, one is caught in craving for existence. Alternatively, craving for non-existence

# Dhamma in Everyday Life

is based on the belief there is no consequence to action and the belief there is no life after death nor any future existence.

In order to become experientially aware of the relationship between craving and dukkha it is necessary to use mindfulness to investigate craving or attachment. While mindfully being aware of a craving, one is able to understand the connection between craving and dissatisfaction. It is not the sensation of hunger that is unsatisfactory but the desire to get rid of the sensation that leads to dissatisfaction. It is only through this experiential understanding that one begins to penetrate the Second Noble Truth.

Craving is insatiable; it is only the object of craving that changes. Craving cannot be ended through force of will. Such suppression serves only to increase the power of craving in the long run. The only way to let go of craving is through the experiential understanding that craving does not provide satisfaction but in fact leads to more craving. This understanding grows as you become mindfully aware, over and over again, of cravings you experience as you go through daily life. As you develop an experiential awareness of how cravings rise and fall away, how they are not satisfying in the long-term, but require being fed over and over again and consequently produce more and more craving; you begin to understand the dissatisfaction inherent in all craving.

## Third Noble Truth:

### The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha

The Third Noble Truth is the noble truth of Nibbana; Nibbana means freedom from craving. It is not possible to experience Nibbana directly until path and fruit moments have been experienced. It is possible in your day-to-day life to get a glimpse of what it means to let go of craving. Every time you are able to be mindful and watch craving rise and fall away, without acting on that craving, you can experience the sense of peace and stillness which results from letting go. As you walk to work and smell the unpleasant gasoline fumes, be mindful, just be aware of the sense smell rise and fall away (rather than becoming angry, nauseous, etc.), then you can experience what it means to let go of craving. Similarly, as you pass the vendor with the attractive smell of spicy food, if you can allow that sense to be present without craving, you know freedom from craving. At times this is difficult to do and then you must watch the craving itself. Through the use of mindfulness it is possible to be aware of the craving but not act on it. For example, when you come home after work and your children are making a lot of noise you may be aware of anger arising in you and may recog-

nize this dukkha (the anger) as desire for peace and quiet. Ordinarily, you may yell at your children and tell them to be quiet, in this way you would be giving in to the craving and indirectly intensifying craving. If you are able to mindfully watch the desire for the children to be quiet and allow that desire to dissipate without making judgement or without taking any action, then, this is the moment of letting go, a moment of peace, ease and freedom. Once you have let go of the anger, you are better able to speak to your children about the noise in a calm and relaxed manner.

## The Fourth Noble Truths: The Way to End Dukkha

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to liberation, the method, outlined by the Buddha, for ending suffering. The Noble Eightfold Path is comprised of three aspects, Panna (wisdom), Sila (morality) and Samadhi (mental training). Often it is only the Sila aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path that is emphasized for lay followers of the Buddha. However, it is possible to practice all three aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path in daily life.

Sila involves Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Right Speech includes abstaining from lies, harsh speech, cruel speech, gossip and useless speech. Right Action involves abstaining from killing, stealing, over indulging the sense faculties (usually spoken of as refraining from inappropriate sexual activity) and the use of drugs and alcohol. Right Livelihood is abstaining from occupations that cause harm to oneself or others. For example, when you need to discipline your children or disagree with your spouse, you are able to do so from a place of understanding and compassion rather than from a place of anger or fear.

Cultivation of the Brahma Viharas also allows you to experience aspects of the wisdom (Panna) category of the Noble Eightfold Path in your daily life. Right Thought is the thought of non-harm, loving kindness, non-cruelty, compassion and renunciation (letting go). Every time you are momentarily able to let go of your craving, your views, your ideas or your attachments, you are practicing one aspect of renunciation. When you live the Brahma Viharas, you are practicing the other aspects of Right Thought. When you experience impermanence, dukkha and non-self in your day-to-day affairs, you are practicing Right Understanding, the second component of the wis-

# Dhamma in Everyday Life

dom category. In this way you are able to experientially begin to understand the wisdom category of the Noble Eightfold Path as part of your daily experience.

The final aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path, the samadhi aspect, relates to meditation practice. A daily meditation practice allows us to fulfill this aspect using Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration to balance and train the mind to see things as they really are: impermanent, unsatisfactory and coreless. You cannot practice Right Concentration in your daily routine but you can practice Right Mindfulness and Right Effort.

Right Effort is the effort to abstain from unwholesome thoughts, to replace unwholesome thoughts when they do arise with wholesome thoughts, to cultivate wholesome thoughts which have not yet arisen and to maintain wholesome thoughts which have already arisen. You engage in this effort when you are mindful and are able to see the arising of unwholesome thoughts, speech or actions and then use Right Effort to substitute those thoughts, speech or actions with wholesome ones. You engage in this effort whenever you practice the Brahma Viharas. For example, when you hear an unpleasant sound, rather than just becoming angry or irritated, you can reflect on the source of the dukkha, leading to the sound. You may reflect on how the person is suffering, that would lead them to yell in such a way. Compassion then arises and through this practice of Right Effort one has turned an unwholesome mental reaction into a wholesome mental reaction. Right Mindfulness is the awareness of the four foundations of mindfulness; mindfulness of body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of mind and mindfulness of content of mind. Again, as you go through your daily lives, being mindfully aware of your body sensations, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and level of consciousness, allows you to practice Right Mindfulness in your day-to-day life. The Four Noble Truths discovered by the Lord Buddha reflect the core of Buddhist doctrine. Dukkha is all around us. Everyday disappointments and everyday pleasures also lead to suffering. Both are a source of dukkha and both provide an opportunity

to experience the Buddha's teaching. Similarly, craving surrounds us. Craving is any form of judgment or emotional desire to have things different than the way they actually are. The noble truth of Nibbana is experienced when we let go of the craving and accept the situation as it is. In daily life you have a vast array of opportunities to practice letting go. When you let go you are free. The fourth noble truth, the noble eightfold path, is the method of practice for the cessation of suffering. There are three components of the Noble Eight fold path, Sila (morality), Panna (wisdom) and Samadhi (mental discipline). You can practice the sila aspect of the path when you interact with your children, spouse or community, through living the Brahma Viharas. You develop panna in two ways: (a) through cultivation of the loving friendliness (metta), compassion (karuna), appreciative joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha) and (b) reflection on the three characteristics impermanence (anicca), dissatisfaction (dukkha), corelessness (anatta) inherent in all (conditioned) phenomena.

You develop mental discipline, Samadhi, through the practice of vipassana. Vipassana can be practiced as you go through your daily lives. You can develop moment-to-moment awareness of your bodies, your sensations, your emotions, your moods and your thoughts. In this way you experience the four foundations of mindfulness in your daily lives and do not have to remove yourself from your daily lives to experience and understand the Lord Buddha's teachings.

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The epoch making event in the history of Sri Lanka and of Buddhism was the arrival of Arahant Mahinda in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. His mission was a remarkable success and in this short paper I'll attempt to discuss his mission and more particularly why the new faith introduced by Mahinda spread through out the island within a short time.

## Mahinda's father Emperor Asoka

After meeting a samanera (a novice Buddhist monk) Chandasoka (Asoka, the wicked) of India in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. embraced Buddhist faith. But he did not give up his intention to expand his empire. At the Kalinga (present Orissa) war he saw thousands of men, women and children killed and many thousands were maimed. A hundred and fifty living beings were carried off as slaves from Kalinga. Many died from famine.. That was the turning point for Chandasoka to transform into a Dhammasoka (Asoka, the righteous) and used the title Devanampiya (dear to the gods)

After becoming a true, practicing Buddhist he supported not only the Buddhist institutions, but also the other religions prevalent at that time in India such as Brahmans, Ajivakas and Jainas He made arrangements to erect rock edicts to educate people at large on the teaching of the Buddha in a simple language. The eighth Asoka edict explains toleration towards all sects: " King Devanampriya, Priyadarasin honors all sects, those who have gone forth and householders ( lay followers as well as sramanas , brahmans).He honors them with generosity and with various honors(Warder 1970: 261). Asoka spent about twenty -

eight years for the welfare and happiness of Buddhist monks and encouraged them to learn the teachings of the Buddha well.

In order to purify the sasana (message of the Buddha) and to propagate the teaching of the Buddha he convened the third Buddhist Council under his patronage, under the chairmanship of Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa.

At this council with the consent of Asoka a decision was made to send missions to nine countries: Tambapanni (Sri Lanka), Gandhara (with Kasmira), the Greek people, Him avant Aparantaka, Mahisa, Maharashtra, Vanavasa, Suvarnabhumi (lower Burma)

Emperor Asoka had a very special interest in Sri Lanka because he was a good friend of Sri Lanka and sent his son Mahinda his daughter Sangamitta and grand child to Sri Lanka.

## Mission of Arahant Mahinda

As requested by his preceptor and the Sangha, Mahinda embarked on his mission but after careful consideration he decided to postpone his mission to Sri Lanka as the king at that time was Mutasiva (307-247BC) and it may not have been possible to establish Buddhism under his patronage as he was advanced in age. Within a few months King Mutasiva of Sri Lanka passed away and his son Tissa became the king. Even before Tissa became king of Sri Lanka, he had cordial relationship with emperor Asoka through ambassadors. After his coronation as king of Sri Lanka Tissa sent gifts of precious gems to Emperor Asoka. In return Asoka sent five basic ensigns that a king ought to have and the gift of Dhamma, the teaching of Buddha. Emperor Asoka's message to king of Sri Lanka reads as follows:

"I have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and I have declared myself a lay disciple of the religion of the son of Sakiyas. Take delight, even thou, in these three, in the supreme religion of the conqueror, and come to the Refuge with faith" (Adikaram 1953:50).

King Tissa reconsecrated using the ensigns sent by Asoka and adopted the title Devanampiya (dear to the gods). According to the history of Sri Lanka, Devanampiya became the dynastic name of the long line of kings after king Devanampiya Tissa. Having observed that the time is ripe for his mission, Mahinda along with the monks Ittiya, Uttiya, Sambaka Bhaddasala, the novice Sumana and the lay disciple Bhanduka set forth on his mission and arrived at Missaka Pabbata in Mihintale on the full moon day of Poson (May - June) in 250 B.C.

Arahant Mahinda leading the mission to Sri Lanka was stated to have set out from Vidisa. Also known as Cetiya giri (with the shrine now known as Sanchi). This was the place where Theravada tradition was known to have the greatest strength at that time. Mahinda was fully convinced that his mission will be successful. He was well prepared for his mission and brought a community competent to perform most religious duties., such as the entrance of new monks into the Buddhist order and also to perform higher ordination.

This day of Mahinda's arrival happened to be a day of festival in Sri Lanka and the king Devanampiyatissa was on a hunting expedition where he met Mahinda on the Missa-

-ka mountain. After the conversation Mahinda realized that Sri Lankan king Devanampiyatissa was intelligent and quick witted and he was quite capable of understanding the Dhamma. Mahinda then preached Cullahatthipadopama sutta to the king and people (M.1.pp175-184). At the end of this sermon King and his fellow citizens embraced Buddhist faith. Afterwards citizens of all walks of life embraced Buddhism. It was primarily because of the teaching of the Buddha expounded by Mahinda and his fellow monks was more meaningful to their way of life. The royal household and the citizens of the country watched closely the newly arrived guests, their saintly manners when talking walking etc. created memorable impression on the minds of the people.

We learn from the Theravada historical texts preserved in Sri Lanka that Theravada tradition of Buddhism became permanently established in the island, and flourished ever since with minor set backs from time to time. Emperor Asoka's son Mahinda established a community of monks and also the Mahavihara at Anuradhapura. His daughter Sangamitta established a community of nuns. She brought a sapling of the Bo tree from Bodhi Gaya and planted at Anuradhapura.

According to Sri Lankan chronicles, Samantapasadika, Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, the Buddha is said to have visited Sri Lanka three times. The first visit was in the fifth month after the enlightenment and the second and third were fifth and eighth year respectively after the enlightenment. Also the King Vijaya's queen, Bhaddakaccana was sent by Pandyan king in Madhura with a thousand families of the eighteen guilds (Mv.7.48). Bhaddakaccana was very closely related to the Buddha. In the above circumstances it is fair to

assume that Buddhism was prevalent in Sri Lanka prior to the advent of Mahinda and it would have been easier to spread Mahinda's missions in Sri Lanka. Although, Buddhism was in the hearts of people it was not organized as a religion without sangha (monks).

The worship of yakshas and yakshinis was prevalent with other cults along with other ascetics like ajivakas brahmin and Jainas. They were not organized enough to challenge the spread of Buddhism introduced by Arahant Mahinda. The carnage of Kalinga war was unpleasant and it was well known in neighboring Sri Lanka and other countries. In the event of an outside interference Devanampiya Tissa knew that Asoka's help would have been forthcoming.

Among the nine countries that Asoka sent missionaries, Sri Lanka was the only perfect example of a remarkable success in his struggle to spread justice (Dhammavijaya). Furthermore, Sri Lanka became a close friend of Magadha.

It is evident from the conversation that both Mahinda and King Devanampiya Tissa had on the Missaka mountain that Mahinda's language was very similar to the language spoken in Sri Lanka at that time. There was no communication barrier between the new preachers and the citizens of Sri Lanka. It appears that Arahant Mahinda compiled the Sihala Atthakathas (commentaries) while he was in Sri Lanka.

Mahinda's message was non violence based on five precepts and the Dhamma he taught was conducive to have a good way of life. At that time the main occupation of the people of Sri Lanka was paddy cultivation based on agricultural economy and Buddhism was not a threat to the main occupation of the majority of people.

His mission to Sri Lanka brought many other benefits such as architecture, Arts and Crafts in addition to the introduction of Buddhadhamma.

### Abbreviations

Mv = Mahavamsa  
M = Majjhima nikaya

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## Back Cover Story

The Wall-painting from *Kelaniya Rajamaha Vihare* depicts *Dantha and Hemamala* conveying (hidden) the Buddha's Tooth Relic from India. The Temple's history runs to the 3rd Century BCE and was viciously targeted by many invaders, but was continuously re-constructed by successive Sinhala Kings.

The modern Kelaniya paintings are the unparalleled work of *Solias Mendis*. Dr. Daya Hewapathirana, in his *Buddhist Arts of Sri Lanka*, says, "Kelaniya paintings is the excellent artistic depiction of the human figure with detailed facial expressions. Evoking sensual and passionate feelings was not attempted in his paintings; instead, they reflect restraint and evoke a serene sense of joy... and an



After denying the Dalai Lama's visa requests for years, Russia has finally relented and allowed the Buddhist spiritual leader to visit the country. He will spend most of his time in the southern republic of Kalmykia, half of whose 300,000 residents are practicing Buddhists. How did there come to be so many Buddhists living in Kalmykia, an Ireland-sized region on Europe's eastern edge, thousands of miles from the religion's Asian heartland?

The Kalmyks, as the republic's residents are known, were once Mongolian Nomads who lived and practiced their faith on the Central Asian steppe.

A Chinese military offensive drove them westward in the 17th century, until they hit the banks of Russia's Volga River. There, they cut a deal with the Russian tsar Peter the Great: In return for being allowed to create a small kingdom, the Nomadic émigrés would defend the Russian empire's frontier against invaders.

Catherine the Great, however, didn't warm to the idea of an independent kingdom on her doorstep, and she forced the Buddhists to become Russian subjects. Her campaign of oppression caused the 300,000 former Nomads then living on the eastern side of the Volga to depart for their ancestral homeland in Central Asia. Few of them, however, survived the trip—they encountered starvation, banditry, and armed harassment by Russians and Kazakhs. Most of the Buddhists on the Volga's western side, however, stayed put; it was at this point they became known as the Kalmyks, from the Turkish word for "remnant."

Despite living as Russian subjects, the Kalmyks were free to practice Buddhism, and they built dozens of temples. Their brand of Buddhism is Lamaist in nature, similar to that of Tibet and Bhutan, with a strong strain of Shamanism thrown in. To this day, medicine men are lauded and respected figures in Kalmyk communities.

The Kalmyks almost didn't survive the Stalinist purges; during that period, virtually every Buddhist temple was destroyed. Stalin suspected the Kalmyks of being Nazi sympathizers—he thought the same about the Chechens—and had the Kalmyks deported to Siberia after World War II. They were not allowed to return until 1957, by which time their numbers had shrunk to just 70,000.

The fall of the Soviet Union brought about a Buddhist revival in Kalmykia, starting with the election of President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov in 1993. (Kalmykia is an autonomous member of the Russian Federation.) As he initially promised, President Ilyumzhinov has funded the building of several ornate Khuruls, or temples, in the capital of Elista. He has also visited the Dalai Lama at his Indian headquarters and mandated that school children study Buddhist traditions and principles. (President Ilyumzhinov also heads the World Chess Federation and spent millions on an Elista chess stadium.)

Curiously, the spiritual head of the Kalmyks is a native of Philadelphia. Erdne Ombadykow was born to Kalmyk parents and sent to study Buddhism in India as a 7-year-old. There, the Dalai Lama recognized Ombadykow as the reincarnation of Telo Tulku Rinpoche, a Buddhist saint who could supposedly revive animals from the dead. Though his wife and child live in Erie, Colo., Ombadykow currently lives in Elista, where Kalmyks revere him as a holy figure and seek his blessing. He is essentially the Buddhist equivalent of an Archbishop, overseeing a flock in Europe's only Buddhist nation.

**Source:** Sasanka Liyanage - via e-mail: as published by Brendan I. Koerner, MSN (Slate), Nov 30, 2004 - Washington, USA --

# THE NOBLE QUEST, a personal reflection of the Buddha's Teaching

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Ven: Meegoda Pannaloka

Translated by Venerable Dedunupitiye Upananda

from the Sinhala original work by Ven. Meegoda Pannaloka:

*Buduradun Soyā Daena Desū Dharmayehi Svabhāvaya*  
(*The Nature of Dhamma Discovered and Expounded by Buddha*),  
Sadeepa Publishing House, Colombo, 2005, Chap.4: First portion:

“Bududahama Gaemburu Darshanayaki”

in tribute to this Buddhist spiritual leader and scholar

who disappeared in the massive Tsunami catastrophe in Sri Lanka

on December 26, 2004.

*May he attain Nibbana...!*

Buddha's teaching is a universal outcome of a noble quest of truth, never heard of before in the present humanity. The Bodhisattva sacrificed aeons for this. The truth goes unseen from time to time in the universe, and Buddhas born into the world from time to time rediscover it, just as archaeologists unearth ancient civilizations. What is discovered is the experiential knowledge of the discoverer.

Everything in the universe including the universe itself is a whole, incessant flow of causes and effects. Everything manifest in our surroundings is an effect of a cause or causes. This is the reality of dependent arising. When no cause exists, no effect arises. When the Buddha's teaching of the Fourfold Noble Truth, which is the essence of His teaching is viewed from the angle of the dependent arising, suffering that is everybody's universal problem is an effect born of the cause of craving. When no craving exists, no suffering is born. The problem is not with the suffering itself but with its cause. Unless there is a path, the aspiration to end suffering is a mere dream of spirituality. The path Buddha discovered as part of his noble quest is “the path” leading to the end of suffering. The path is essentially the middle path, since it is devoid of unrealistic, religious extremism; it is “the Eightfold Noble Path,” since one who treads it has to take eight essential steps towards the destination of liberation from suffering.

Suffering is within oneself. So is what creates it. No one has done more research into the human mind than Buddha. Suffering is the blazing inner-fire. The total extinguishment of it is Nirvana, the permanent relief.

The mind, the mine of suffering is beyond the control of the possessor of it, as long as he is unenlightened. This is owing to its inherently complex nature that it travels far' (*dūrangama*), 'wanders alone' (*ekacara*), is 'bodiless' (*asarīra*) and 'resides in a cavern [within oneself, so that it is hard to comprehend] (*guhāsaya*).' Taming the mind which is of such nature brings the true liberation from the bondage of death. The mind now totally freed is totally pacified. The pacification is achieved through meditation. A Buddha's metaphor for the mind thus pacified is a deep lake, which is tranquil and undisturbed.

Another metaphor that occurs in the *Dantabhūmi* sutra is the summit of a formidable mountain. The summit is reached, as the mind is completely pacified. The complete pacification is the summit of wisdom that is Nirvana. One who has reached the summit views from it the suffering people that are on the plains. No quest other than this is noble.



