

SAMĀDHI

JOURNAL OF THE LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA
THE FIRST AND THE FOREMOST BUDDHIST VIHARA OF THE WESTERN WORLD
ESTABLISHED IN 1926 BY THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

ISSUE No. 30 -32

MAY 2007 - MAY 2008

B.E. 2551

ISSN 1368-1516

VEN. B. SEELAWIMALA APPOINTED AS NEW HEAD OF THE LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA AND CHIEF SANGHA NAYAKA OF GREAT BRITAIN

We are pleased to announce that Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala has been confirmed in two important appointments. The first is as head of the London Buddhist Vihara. This appointment has been made by the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust, which is the body responsible for the management of the London Buddhist Vihara. Previously Ven. Seelawimala had been appointed as Deputy Head of the Vihara and then, following the death of the Most Ven. Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana, he was appointed as Acting Head. He has now been confirmed in this post as Head of the Vihara.

Ven. Seelawimala's second appointment is as Chief Sangha Nayake of Great Britain. This has been made by the Malwatte Chapter of the Siyam Nikaya, Kandy. The ceremony took place in Kandy on the 2nd May 2008.

Ven. Seelawimala Thera was born in the village of Bogoda in Kurunegala district. He comes from a devout Buddhist family and was religiously inclined even as a child. He was ordained as a samanera at the age of 14 under the tutorship of Ven. Bala-

lle Seelaratana Nayaka Thera, the chief incumbent of Palagala Purana Vihara at Polgahawela. Ven. Seelaratana was also the chief Adhikarana Sangha Nayaka of Dambadeni-Harispattuwa.

In 1964 he started his primary education at the Heramitigala Shastralankara Pirivena, Pilimatalawa, studying under the supervision of its Principal, Ven. Pilimatalawa Chandajothi Nayaka Thera, who was also a close relation of his.

He studied diligently and in 1971 was admitted to the University of Peradeniya, where he received his B.A. honours degree in history. He then became a teacher, working in several schools such as the Hindagala Maha Vidyalaya and Dharmaraja College, Kandy.

He continued with his higher studies and went on to obtain his M.A. degree from the University of Peradeniya on the influence of Hinduism on Buddhism with special reference to the Kanydan period. He was fortunate to be tutored by the well-known Professor of History, Leslie Gunawardhana.

In 1992, the Most Ven. Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana Thera invited Ven. Seelawimala to come to live and work at the London Buddhist Vihara as a resident monk. This represented a significant challenge which required him to adjust to a different culture, climate and language if he was to flourish as a dhammaduta monk. In this respect he received help and guidance from two eminent monks who had themselves made a successful adjustment. The first of these was Most Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana himself, who had already built up much experience of dhammaduta work. Secondly, he was fortunate to meet the eminent scholar Ven. Professor Walpola Rahula Thera, who visited the London Buddhist Vihara on several occasions and with whom Ven. Seelawimala had many useful discussions.

Knowledge of the Buddha's teaching is becoming increasingly spread throughout the West, but there are still many people who know little or nothing of his sublime Dhamma. We wish Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera every success as Head of the London Buddhist Vihara and in his continuing dhammaduta mission.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Buddhism and Environmental Protection
- Doubt - Wholesome and Unwholesome
- The Transference of Merits
- Programmes and activities
- A-Z of Buddhism
- Back to Basics
- Courses for the Year 2008
- Obituaries

BUDDHISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

by Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala Nayaka Thera,
Head of the London Buddhist Vihara

Today there is no greater threat to the long-term security of life on this planet than the twin problems of climate change and environmental degradation. We are consuming the world's finite natural resources at a speed which is unsustainable. Many species of living creatures have become or are near to becoming extinct because we have destroyed the environments in which they live. Forests which took thousands of years to grow are being destroyed in order to obtain wood products and provide more land for farming, and farm land is becoming over-exploited or damaged by the excessive use of chemicals. The air we breathe is becoming dangerously polluted, and the sea too is soiled with our waste. As the earth's population continues to expand and the demand for food and material goods continues to grow, the environment is coming under unprecedented pressure.

How can Buddhism help to solve these problems? The challenge which we face as Buddhists is to show that the Buddha's teachings are as relevant to our world today as they were to his world then.

By failing to recognise that the world's resources are not unlimited, but are finite, we pursue the goal of endless economic growth even though this is leading to depletion of the earth's finite resources. We are like moths drawn inexorably towards the candle flame, victims of our own greed, attachment and ignorance.

We must therefore call into question the ethics of promoting a lifestyle of unbridled consumption, consumerism, producing and selling the largest quantity of goods without regard for whether there is a real need for them and without regard for the environment.

The fifth factor on the Noble Eightfold Path is *samma ajiva*, right livelihood. The Buddha gave a precise definition of this – refraining from trading in weapons, living beings, animals to be killed, intoxicating substances and poisons (AN 5:177). But I think we can also expand this definition to mean refraining from any activity which has a damaging effect on other living beings and on the environment which we all share. This is not so much right livelihood, as right lifestyle.

It is by adopting Buddhist principles of right livelihood that widespread environmental damage can be avoided. Unfortunately, this teaching “goes against the stream” (*patisotagami*) of people's natural inclinations to seek the maximum possible amount of sensual pleasure, regardless of the consequences. Due to non-understanding and selfish attachments, we continue to maximise our material wealth without thinking of the effects of our actions. But this is a short-sighted policy. Buddhism has a vital part to play in helping to make people aware that their actions have consequences, both for themselves and for the rest of the planet.

What can we do in order to help spread awareness? First, we must teach others to be aware of and take responsibility for their own actions. The Buddha taught that all our volitional actions have effects. This is the law of cause and effect, *kamma* and *vipaka*. In the Ambalathika Rahulovada Sutta the Buddha spoke to his son, Rahula, “What is the purpose of a mirror? For the purpose of reflection, Venerable Sir. So too, Rahula, an action with the body should be done after repeated reflection.” (M.i.416) Rahula is told to reflect on whether the intended action will be his own affliction, the affliction of others or the affliction of both. Similarly, we too should reflect on the consequences which all our actions will have on other people and the environment.

Secondly, the Buddha taught the quality of *appicchata*, meaning “having few wishes”, or “being content with little”. This is one of the qualities mentioned in the Karaniya Metta Sutta as a pre-requisite for the development of loving-kindness. Contentment means satisfying our needs, but not indulging in our greed. How many of us can truly say that we have few wishes? To lead a life of having simple wants and few desires is beneficial in two senses. First, it benefits the environment by reducing the pressure on the world's limited resources. Secondly, it also benefits us individually because we are striving to reduce the unskillful qualities of craving and attachment.

We know from the second Noble Truth that craving leads to suffering.

Thirdly, we can strive to develop the supreme Buddhist qualities of loving-kindness (*metta*) and compassion (*karuna*). Unconditional, unselfish love and boundless compassion for all living creatures will ensure that we do everything we possibly can to bring about the happiness and well-being of all living creatures and the protection of the environment we all share.

Each of us has individual, personal responsibility to protect the environment. This is not something we can leave to other people or "the government". We must set a good example of considerate living to our fellow men. We must reduce our own levels of consumption and avoid excessive or unnecessary use of finite resources, whether it is leaving unwanted electric lights switched on, or creating unnecessary rubbish. We must show by our own lifestyle that we have love and compassion for all living creatures and their environment.

Much of this is only sound common sense. Many good environmen-

tal practices can be adopted simply out of enlightened self-interest. But Buddhism's vital contribution is to go beyond matters of a purely selfish nature. It teaches us that love, compassion and caring for others are wholesome actions, and that selfish craving and attachment are the cause of all our ills. An understanding of the Dhamma gives us two things. First, it gives us reasons for protecting others and the environment. Secondly, it gives us the means in order to achieve these goals.

The whole teaching of the Buddha on the subject of the environment is beautifully summarised in a verse from the Dhammapada. "As a bee, without harming the flower, its colour or scent, flies away collecting only the honey, even so should the sage wander in the village." (Dhp.v.49)

BE VIGILANT

If one holds oneself dear, one should protect oneself well. During every one of the three watches the wise man should keep vigil.

(Dhammapada 157)

AN A - Z OF BUDDHISM

INDRIYA SAMATTA

Harmony of faculties. This is related to the five spiritual faculties: Faith, Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom. Of these, there are two pairs of faculties in each of which both faculties should counterbalance each other, namely: faith and wisdom on the one hand; energy and concentration on the other. For excessive faith with deficient wisdom leads to blind belief, whilst excessive wisdom with deficient faith leads to cunning. In the same way, great energy with weak concentration leads to restlessness, whilst strong concentration with deficient energy leads to indolence. For both faculties in each of the two pairs a balanced degree of intensity is desirable; however, mindfulness should be allowed to develop to the highest degree of strength.

INDRIYA-SAMVARA SILA

Morality consisting of purity of restraint of the senses. "Whenever the monk perceives a form with the eye, a sound with the ear, an odour with the nose, a taste with the tongue, an impression with the body, an object with the mind, he neither adheres to the appearance as a whole, nor to its parts. And he strives to ward off that through which evil and unwholesome things, greed and sorrow, would arise if he remained with unguarded senses; and he watches over his senses, restrains his senses." (M 38).

IRIYA-PATHA

Ways of Movements, Bodily Postures i.e. walking, standing, sitting, lying down. In the Satipatthana Sutta they form the subject of a contemplation and an exercise in mindfulness.

COURSES FOR THE YEAR 2008

BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS

**8 meetings starting:
Monday 02 June 2008,
7.00pm**

**The Life of the Buddha
The Four Noble Truths
The Noble Eightfold Path
Kamma
Dependent Origination
Meditation**

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Fees : Free (*donations are welcome*)

How to join: Enrol at the class on first day of attendance.

THE BUDDHA'S LIFE & TEACHINGS

**BIRKBECK COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**10 meetings starting:
Thursday 11 September 2008,
7.00pm**

This is a general introduction to the life of the Buddha and the fundamental principles of his teachings. Informal discussion is welcomed and by the end of the course students should have developed an appreciation of all the essential doctrines and their relevance to the world today.

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Fees (University Fee): £15.00

How to join: Enrol at the class on first day of attendance.

DOUBT - Wholesome and Unwholesome

by Richard Jones

In Buddhism we distinguish between two kinds of doubt: investigative doubt and sceptical doubt. The first kind is wholesome, the second kind is not. The Pali words *kankha* and *vicikiccha* can be used to describe these two kinds.

Investigative Doubt

In the first sense of the word, doubt is a constructive state of mind. It is beneficial if it makes us question and investigate, and leads us to reach a definite conclusion. It is this kind of questioning which makes us verify or test the truth of something which is open to investigation. In the Kalamas Sutta, when the Buddha was asked by the Kalamas about their uncertainty concerning various religious teachings, he said to them, "It is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter which is doubtful." So the Buddha agrees that it is right to have doubts, and this kind of doubt can be resolved by skillful investigation. The Buddha continues, "Now, look you Kalamas, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea 'This is our teacher'. But, Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome, and wrong and bad, then give them up..... and you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them." So here the Buddha is encouraging the Kalamas to investigate matters for themselves and not to accept any teaching blindly.

The Buddha said that we should not accept even his own teachings unquestioningly, but we must investigate them and test them for ourselves. In the *Ratanasara samuccaya*, he says, "Like the goldsmith

knows the piece of gold by cutting and rubbing that it is real gold, similarly the *dhamma* should be studied." The second of the seven factors of enlightenment is "investigation of the *dhamma*" (*dhamma vicaya sambhojjanga*). This means the process of study, practice and realisation of the *dhamma*.

Right up till the end of his life the Buddha was concerned to ensure that his followers had understood his teachings correctly. Even as he lay on his death-bed, he found the energy to say to his assembled monks, "It may be that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, Monks! Let yourselves not be given to remorse later on, with the thought: The Master was with us, face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him." He repeated this exhortation twice more, but the monks remained silent. Venerable Ananda then said, "Marvelous, Lord, most wonderful it is! This faith I have in the community of monks, that not even one monk is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path or the practice." The Buddha replied, "Out of faith, Ananda, you speak thus. But here, Ananda, the Tathagatha knows for certain that among this community of monks there is not even one monk who is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path or the practice." Even in the last hours of his life the Buddha remained an incomparable teacher, devoted to ensuring that mankind should understand and benefit from his teachings.

Sceptical Doubt

The second kind of doubt is sceptical doubt or uncertainty. This is a negative, destructive state of mind which does not lead anywhere. Because of this it is impossible to "come to growth, increase and ful-

fillment in this Dhamma and Discipline" (M.i.101) This kind of doubt is either indecisive or it tries to take many sides. It stems from the lack of desire to think things out and to come to a conclusion. It has the nature of wavering and shows itself as indecision. It is caused by unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikara*). This is unwholesome as it paralyzes thinking and prevents spiritual progress. *Vicikiccha* is one of the ten fetters (*samyojana*) and the five hindrances (*nivarana*). Because it hinders us from seeing things clearly, it is likened to dirty water clouded with mud. It is also likened to the state of a traveller in a desert who worries whether or not there may be thieves on the way. He goes forward a little, stops, and then turns back while his mind vacillates, lacking in conviction and certainty. This is a state of mind which can mean we go round in circles, achieving nothing.

This doubt prevents us from accepting the Buddha as a teacher and his doctrines as a means to eradicate Suffering (*dukkha*). Eight examples of sceptical doubt are: Doubt about (i) The Buddha, (ii) the Dhamma, (iii) the Sangha, (iv) the training (*thri sikkha: sila-samadhi-panna*), (v) the past, (vi) the future, (vii) the past and the future, (viii) dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*). To explain these in greater detail:

1. Did the Buddha did know the Four Noble Truths; he did understand the knowledges which are gained through enlightenment? These knowledges are the extinction of all cankers (*asavakkhaya nana*), remembrance of former existences (*pubbe nivasanusaya nana*), knowledge of the vanishing and reappearing of beings (*cutupapata nana*), etc.
2. Are there really the nine-fold supramundane (*navalokuttara*) *dhammas*?
3. Are there saints, or *Ariya puggala sangha*?

4. Are the threefold trainings of *sila-samadhi-panna* a help to us in crossing over *samsara*?
5. Did the five aggregates exist in the past?
6. Will they exist in the future?
7. Did they exist in the past and will they exist in the future?
8. Are these five aggregates the result of our past ignorance (*avijja*), conditions (*sankhara*) and dependent origination?

It is very difficult to see our way out of this kind of doubt; that is why it is a hindrance, especially for meditators. It disturbs the meditation and hinders successful concentration, preventing the attainment of *samadhi*. Temporarily it can be suppressed by the jhanic factor of sustained application of the mind to the object of meditation (*vicara*).

The other techniques recommended for the overcoming of doubt are:-

1. Becoming learned in the Buddha's teachings.
2. Asking questions about Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha.
3. Understanding the disciplinary rules.
4. Developing faith (strong commitment) in the Triple Gem.

5. Having a good friend – kalyana mitta who has confidence in the teachings.
6. Practising suitable talk concerning disadvantages of doubt and advantages of removing doubt.

Point no. 4 is the development of faith (*saddha*) in the Triple Gem. When we talk about faith, this does not mean blind faith, which has no place in the Buddha's teaching. What we mean by faith is "confidence based on knowledge". When someone starts to follow the Buddhist path, he begins to see that the teachings bring him real benefits, so he becomes increasingly confident that they will lead him to the ultimate goal. The further he progresses, the more confident he becomes in the Triple Gem. He develops wise reflection (*yoniso manasikara*), which leads to correct understanding of the law of cause and effect (*kamma & vipaka*) and the process of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*).

Eventually, doubt is eradicated by

attaining the state of stream-entry (*sotapanna*). In the Seven Stages of Purification, the fourth is "purity by overcoming doubt" (*kankha-vitara-na-visuddhi*). One of the changing states of mind is doubt. Purity by overcoming doubt is the knowledge that comes from comprehending the conditions for the arising of mental and physical phenomena. The meditator understands and realises that all mental and material processes are conditioned or conditioning. Apart from these, there is no person or self who performs or governs this phenomenal world. This is called purity of insight by overcoming doubt. He who is endowed with this knowledge is said to have gained insight and is assured of freedom. In the Upali Sutta (MN 56) it says that the householder Upali, "saw the *Dhamma*, attained the *Dhamma*, understood the *Dhamma*, fathomed the *Dhamma*; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation." (M.i.380)

PURITY AND IMPURITY DEPEND ON ONESELF

By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself, indeed, is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one purifies another. (Dhammapada 165)

THREE MENTALITIES

There are, O monks, three types of persons found in the world. What three? There is one with a mind like an open sore; one with a mind like lightning; one with a mind like a diamond.

Of what nature, monks, is the person with a mind like an open sore? He is one who is irascible and irritable. If he is criticized even slightly he loses his temper and becomes angry and upset; he is stubborn and displays anger, hatred and resentment. Just as, for instance, a festering sore, if struck by a stick or a sherd, will discharge matter all the more, even so is the person who is irascible... and displays anger, hatred and resentment. Such a person is said to have a mind

like an open sore.

And of what nature is the person with a mind like lightning? He is one who understands as it really is, "This is suffering"; he understands as it really is, "This is origin of suffering"; he understands as it really is, "This is the cessation of suffering"; he understands as it really is, "This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering." Just as a man with good sight can see objects in the darkness of night by a flash of lightning, even so a person understands these Four Noble Truths as they really are. Such a person is said to have a mind like lightning.

And of what nature is a person with a mind like a diamond? He is one who,

by the destruction of the taints, in this very life enters and dwells in the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, having realized it for himself by direct knowledge. Just as there is nothing that a diamond cannot cut, be it gem or rock, even so a certain person, by the destruction of the taints, in this very life enters and dwells in the taintless liberation of mind, liberation of wisdom, having realized it for himself by direct knowledge. Such a person is said to have a mind like a diamond.

These three types of persons are found in the world.

(Anguttara Nikaya, III 25)

**VEN. B. SEELAWIMALA, HEAD OF LBV, APPOINTED
AS CHIEF SANGHA NAYAKA OF GREAT BRITAIN**



Ven Bogoda Seelawimala, Head of London Buddhist Vihara, was appointed as the Chief Sangha Nayake of Great Britain by the Most Venerable Thibbatuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Mahanayake Thero and the Supreme Sangha Sabha at Malwatta Maha Viharaya in Kandy. The investiture ceremony was held on Friday 2 May 2008 at 3.00 pm at the historical Uposathaghara at Malwatta Maha Viharaya, Kandy, Sri Lanka. The ceremony was presided over by Ven. Niyangoda Vijithasiri Anunayaka Thera of Malwatta Chapter.

Ven. Seelawimala Thera made a speech in which he paid a tribute to the Mahanayake of the Malwatta Chapter Ven. Thibbotuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Thera, the Ven. Aluthgama Dhammananda Thera, and the founder of the London Buddhist Vihara, Anagarika Dharmapala and late Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana, former Head of the London Buddhist Vihara.

Among those present were the Anunayaka of the Asgiriya Chapter Ven. Galagama Sri Attadassi, Lekakadhikari of the Malwatta Chapter Ven. Walgowwagoda Wimalabuddhi, Ven. Prof. Bellanwila Wimalarathana, Ven. Pallattara Sumanajothi, Ven. Thumbulle Seelakkanda, Ven. Pahalagama Somarathana Chief Incumbent of the Thames Buddhist Vihara in London, Governor of the Central Province, Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Chief Minister Sarath Ekanayake, Mayor of Kandy L.B. Aluvihare, Chief Editor, The Sunday Times, Sinha Rathnathunga, Dr. Lucky Panagoda, Gamani Amarasekera and SSP, Asoka Manamperi.



Annual Kathina ceremony held at the Vihara



Prof. Richard Gombrich and Bhikkhuni Kusuma delivered lectures at Poson Celebrations 2007

PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA FELICITATES VEN. SEELAWIMALA



Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera, newly-appointed Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain, was felicitated by His Excellency The President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees, Colombo. Venerable Dr. Bellanwila Wimalarathana, Ven. Aluthgama Dhammananda Nayaka Thera, Ven. Pallattara Sumana-jothi Nayaka Thera also participated on that occasion at Temple Trees. Hon. Mr. Rohitha Bogollagama, Foreign Minister, Mr. Lalith Weerathunga, The Private Secretary of the President and many other dignitaries were present to witness the occasion.



DONATION OF ROBES

London Buddhist Vihara donated a large quantity of monk's robes to Anagarika Dharmapala Trust to distribute in Hambantota area. Trico International Ltd arranged to ship these robes to Sri Lanka and ADT distributed them to needy temples in Hambantota District.



H. E. High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Mrs. Kshenuka Seneviratne distributed presents to the children on Rahula Dhamma Day 2007



VISIT TO IRAN

Ven. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera, Head of the London Buddhist Vihara, attended a conference on mutual understanding of Buddhism and Islam at Tehran, Iran from 13-21 October 2007. He attended as a member of a bhikkhu delegation from Sri Lanka. This was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka and the Islam Cultural and Islamic Relations Organisation, Iran.

The delegation comprised of Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala, London Buddhist Vihara, Ven. Dr. Kolupitiye Mahinda Sangharakkhita, Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya, Ven. Athuraliye Rathana, MP, Ven. Dr. Kirinde Assaji, Sri Jinarathana Bhikkhu Abhyasa Vidyalaya, Gangaramaya, Ven. Dr. Makadawara Ananda, Senior Lecturer the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Peradeniya, Ven. Koggalle Wijitha, Abinawaramaya, Kataragama and Ven. Polpitimukalane Pannasiri. During this visit the delegation visited important places and met distinguished political and religious leaders in Iran.

THE TRANSFERENCE OF MERIT IN THERAVADA BUDDHISM

by Dr. Upali Abeyesiri

Rites to propitiate or help to improve the quality of the after-life of departed relatives have been practised by mankind from pre-historic times. In Pre-Buddhist India, under Vedic belief, departed individuals became a spirit or 'preta' without a physical body and suffered because they were unable to obtain any sustenance. The 'preta' depended on the descendants, especially a son, to perform certain rites prescribed in the Vedas in order to develop a physical body in the first instance and then to enter the world of the dead or 'pitr'.¹

The first rite was 'Sradha' which involved giving ritually-prepared balls of food 'Pinda' daily for ten days. During this period the spirit of the departed was supposed to gain parts of a body each day and a complete body at the end. The second rite was again a special 'Pinda' offering prepared with the priests officiating and was called 'Sapindikarana'.² These rites virtually completed the duties of a son.

Towards the later Vedic period, this simple pattern of belief about the after-life began to change. Survival after death in a more complex pattern evolved ending in a cyclic existence from which it was thought desirable to escape or attain 'Moksa'. Several theories of after-life were prevalent in the Upanishad teachings, with some contradicting others. It was generally accepted that an individual could influence his after-life by performing certain actions or rites prescribed in the Vedas. These actions were named 'Kamma' and it was thought that the correct performance of these with the Brahmin priests officiating caused the accumulation of the effects as 'merits'. These merits determined the course of the after-life. In addition to these rites,

performing duties appropriate to the 'Varna' (or the caste one was borne into), not breaking taboos prescribed in the Vedas, such as cutting wood without performing the 'agnihotra' rite, or killing and eating animals or even herbs without correct rituals, were also thought to lead to accumulation of merits.³

Kamma or actions also began to develop an ethical value, especially in a negative sense. Breaking of taboos as mentioned above, a thief of gold, a drinker of spirits, a murderer of a Brahmin priest and a defiler of one's teacher's bed accumulated negative kamma or demerits and suffering in the after-life.⁴

A further development was the ability to transfer these merits between individuals. There are instances of such transfer between sexual partners⁵ and between father and son.⁶ With this possibility of transference of merits, the 'Sradha' and 'Sapindikarana' rites became more complex.

The non-Vedic traditions, however, did not accept the act of transfer of merits, except Buddhism. Carvaka tradition condemned the act outright. 'If the 'Sradha' produces gratification to beings who are dead, then here, too, in the case of travellers when they start, it is needless to give provisions for the journey. People at home could eat and satisfy the traveller's hunger'.⁷ In the tradition of Jainism, an individual had to suffer the consequences of his or her Kamma. There was no room for transference to another individual and the 'Sradha' ceremony was rejected.⁸

The basic theory of Kamma in Buddhism reiterates that the results of kamma are borne by the individual and no other. The Tripitaka is full

of passages confirming the theory. However in one of the sub-commentaries - *Paramattadipani tika* – there is a description of two kinds of effects or results. The individual who committed the kamma bears the results, good or bad, but there may also be an effect on the community into which he is born. This effect is called '*nissanda phala*', in contrast to the former, which is '*kamma-phala*'. The story of the banker Ananda, who spent his whole life amassing wealth and preached against giving away any, is described to explain the '*Nissanda phala*'. He was born in his next life in a community of out-casts and the whole community suffered untold miseries from the time of his conception until he was expelled from the community as a child.

Buddhism supported the transfer of merits to other individuals, in the same life and also in the after-life. In many discourses for lay disciples one of the duties of a son is to perform meritorious acts and transfer the merits to departed parents. One of the main instances often quoted is that of king Bimbisara of Rajagaha. Upon his enquiry (no doubt influenced by the prevalent vedic 'Sradha' and Sapindikarana' rites) about what should be done to help departed relatives who may be born in unpleasant spheres, the Buddha advised performing dana or giving four requisites (food, clothes, shelter and medicines) and transference of merits gained thereby to the departed relatives.

More detailed discussion occurs between the Brahmin Janussoni and the Buddha⁹. The Brahmin directly inquires whether all deceased relatives gain by the act of transference of merits. Buddha replies that some do not but some do. He goes on to describe the five main spheres of life

where a being may be reborn, and explains that only those who are reborn in the 'petha' sphere (spirit sphere) benefit from transference of merit.

This is elaborated in the *Tirokudda Petha Vasthu*. According to this discourse the spirits of departed relatives are supposed to hover around the abodes of their descendants, hoping that they would perform meritorious kamma. Even when the living descendants perform such acts, unless they remember their relatives and transfer the merits, the spirits are unable to gain benefits. It is said that there is no means of sustenance apart from the benefits gained from transfer of merits in the 'petha' sphere. In the commentaries and Questions of King Milinda, Petha beings are divided into four types. Of these only the type called *Paradattupajivino* may benefit from transfer of merits.

Some stanzas from this discourse are chanted during the pouring of water from a jar to an open cup by the individuals who wish to transfer merits, in the ceremony of transference of merits practised now. The jar is symbolic of the person with merits and the open cup symbolic of the receiving *petha*.

The acceptance of the transference of merit in Buddhism has baffled many scholars who feel it is a contradiction to the theory of kamma. They have put forward many theories to explain this 'inconsistency'. The most accepted is that due to its popularity at the time, 'Sraddha' rites were adapted and accepted by Buddhism, without an adequate explanation of

why it does not contradict the theory of kamma. Another theory is that the transfer of merits was accepted with change of name from '*kamma - dana*' to '*Patti - dana*'. The word *patti* is supposed to have been borrowed from the Sarvastivadins.¹⁰

However, the transfer of merit in Buddhism can in fact be well explained if one analyses it using the kamma theory. First consider the possibility of transfer of effects of kamma between living individuals. The act of transfer of merit and also of acceptance of such transferred merit, are considered among the wholesome or positive kamma as *patti-dana* and *pattanumodhana*. Such instances are common in the Tripitaka. Two such instances are described below:

1. The Buddha in one of his previous lives was born in a community of fisherman. Though he did no active fishing, he enjoyed watching the death struggle of landed fish. As a consequence he suffered from episodes of migraine in his life as the Buddha.¹¹

2. The banker Anathapindika spent millions buying and converting the Jeta Park before offering it as a *vihara* to the Buddha. As a consequence of this and numerous other generous deeds he performed, he was born in the *deva* sphere (sphere of gods). A poor neighbour who watched and gained mental satisfaction from his meritorious acts was also born in the same sphere.

These two instances clearly show that individuals, in these examples

the fisherman and Anathapindika, reaped the effects of the physical kamma (wholesome in one case and unwholesome in the other) they committed. The mental kamma committed by observing and appreciating the physical kamma of these individuals was reaped separately by the Buddha and the poor neighbour.

Similarly there is no reason why '*petha*' spirits may not perform mental kamma of their own by observing and accepting the transfer of merits performed by their living descendants. Thus transfer of merit does not mean a direct transfer of the effects of kamma from one individual to another.

References

1. Rodrigues, H. Hinduism. 2006;87-88
2. Knipe, DM. Sapindikarana, the human rites of entry into heaven.;111-124
3. Kieth, AB. The religion and philosophy of Vedas and Upanishads.
4. Deussen, P. The philosophies of the Upanishads. 1906; 366
5. Bhadranyake. Upanishads; 6.4.3 and 6.4.12
6. Kausitaki. Upanishads; 2.15
Chandogya. Upanishads; 4.14
7. Cowell, EB. Sarvadarsnasangraha of Madhava (translation).1904; 10
8. Karma and rebirth in classical Indian Tradition isbn.81-208-1679-4; 235
9. Anguttaranikaya. Janussoni wagga.
10. Gombrich, R. How Buddhism Began.1997; 57
11. Pabbakamma Pilothikapdana

Calm Patience and Enduring Tolerance

*Patience is a super-human character
That gives an individual
Many things such as these
Strength Stability and Power*

*With calm patience
And average intelligence
When confronted with problems
You are sure to find good solutions*

*Patience leads you
To many good things
Reduces anger and increases tolerance
That keeps you well balanced*

*With these two good characters combined
You gain valuable variety of experience
These become useful on occasions
And you become knowledgeable citizens*

by Mrs. Kamala Perera

VIHARA EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES 2007

January

06 Dr. Arosha Bandara, lecturer in the Open University, gave the monthly Dhamma talk on "Contemplation on the Dhamma"

08 15 & 16 Ven. Seelawimala gave talks to 3 groups of children from Springwell Junior School, Heston

23 Ven. Bandula attended the meeting of the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of the Interfaith Network

25 Ven. Bandula attended the Holocaust Memorial Day Civic Event at the Civic Centre, Hounslow

February

04 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Independence Day Celebrations at the Sri Lanka High Commission

06 Mr. Anil Goonewardene, a barrister and teacher of the Buddhist Society, gave monthly the Dhamma talk as a part of Navam Full Moon day programme on "The Workings of Kamma"

07 Ven. Bandula attended an Executive meeting of Interfaith Network UK

12 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mrs Sally Louise Howard at Mortlake crematorium

18 Ven. Bandula participated in and gave a talk at the Inter-Faith Diversity Celebration organised by SLSCO-FLAME

22 Ven. Bandula attended Faith Communities Consultative Forum (FCCF)

March

03 Dr. Matisha Gunatillake, a psychiatrist at Lewisham Hospital, gave the monthly Dhamma talk on "Going Nowhere, the Path to Nibbana"

11 Ven. Bandula attended the funeral of Mrs Surangani Ellepola at Lewisham Crematorium

12 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Commonwealth Observance Day at Westminster Abbey

12 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to 25 foreign children from the Global Exchange Voluntary Programme

12 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mrs Diana Butler at West London Crematorium

17 Ven. Seelawimala attended the bi-centenary anniversary of the Slave Abolition Act in U.K. at Westminster Abbey

17 & 18 3-month memorial service for Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana. Ven. Dr. Deegalle Mahinda delivered the commemorative sermon

22 Ven. Bandula attended the Bahai New Year reception on the terrace of the House of Commons

28 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from William Hogarth School, Chiswick

April

07 Mrs. Radhika Abeysekera, author of many Buddhist books and the founder of Manitoba Buddhist

Vihara in Canada, gave a Dhamma talk on "Why I am a Practising Buddhist"

08 Ven. Bandula attended the Sinhalese New Year Celebrations organised by Hounslow Janahanda Foundation

08 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral service of Ven. Myo-kyo-Ni, the vice-president of the Buddhist Society, in Luton

14 Ven. Bandula and Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Sri Lankan New Year Celebrations at Feltham Community Hall

15 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Sinhalese New Year Celebrations organised by OBA Ananda College at Northolt Community Centre

20 Ajahn Brahmavanso, Abbot of Bodhiyana Buddhist Monastery, Perth, Australia gave a Dhamma talk on "Buddhism and God"

21 Ven. Bandula and Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Sinhalese New Year Celebrations organised by Heathrow Community Centre

May

02 Ven. Bandula gave a talk to a group of children from Orchard House School

03 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from William Hogarth School

05 Ven. Bandula attended the opening ceremony of the Sri Lankan Community Centre, Hounslow

08 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from St. Stephen's Primary School, Shepherd's Bush

08 Ven. Bandula and Ven. Wimalajothi attended the funeral ceremony of Mr. Bandula Wijeratna at North-East Surrey Crematorium

10 Ven. Seelawimala and Ven. Bandula attended the funeral ceremony of Mr. Weerasiri at Mortlake Crematorium

17 Ven. Bandula attended the presentation of the Interfaith Gold Medallion to Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Place, organised by the Three Faiths Forum

19 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Buddhist Society Vesak Celebration

19 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Buddha Bathing ceremony at Fo-Guang Temple

June

03 Ven. Seelawimala attended the OM day celebration organised by the Unity Forum of Indogenic Religions at Fulham Town Hall

12 Ven. Buddhadasa gave a Dhamma talk at the University of East Ham

16 Ven. Wimalajothi and Ven. Buddhadasa attended the anniversary celebrations of the Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park

18 Ven. Buddhadasa and Richard Jones attended Cambridge University Buddhist Society garden party

20 Richard Jones gave a talk to a group 50 Spanish visitors

20 & 22 Ven. Buddhadasa gave a talk to a group of children from Brockhill College, Kent

21 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Orchard House School

25 Ven. Bandula attended an Executive Committee Meeting of the Interfaith Network

27 Ven. Monks attended the funeral of Mr. Karl Goonasena at Hendon Crematorium

28 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Camberwell School

29-30 Bhante Gunaratana, Head of the Bhavana Society in West Virginia, USA conducted a retreat and gave dhamma talks

30 Ven. Seelawimala attended the opening ceremony of Satipanya Buddhist Meditation Centre, Wales

July

07 Ven. Buddhadasa gave a Dhamma talk on "The Intelligent Heart"

16 Ven. Bandula attended the AGM of the Interfaith Network UK in Coventry

August

September

04 Ven. Bandula attended a blessing ceremony for fund raising for the conservation of the Asian elephant, organised by Elephant Family

08 Ven. Bandula attended a service of prayer for peace in Sri Lanka, organised by the Sri Lankan Christian Association

08 Dr. Daya Perera gave the monthly Dhamma talk on "Some aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path with reference to Samadhi"

15 Peace and safety programme organised in partnership with the Metropolitan Police

October

06 Blessing ceremony for peace and harmony in Myanmar, organised by Fo-Guan Temple, London

07 Founder's Day Ceremony at the Three Wheels, Japanese Spiritual Centre

09 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Ipswich High School

12 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Haberdashers Boys School, Hounslow

12 Welcome and blessing ceremony for Ven. Seelawimala at Redbridge Buddhist Vihara

Continued on page 11

BACK TO BASICS

SHAME AND FEAR (HIRI - OTTAPPA)

A noble person is endowed with a sense of shame, is ashamed of doing wrong in thought, word, and bodily behaviour, and is ashamed of committing evil, bad deeds. This is called the treasure of the sense of shame.

A noble person is endowed with a sense of fear, is afraid of doing wrong in thought, word and bodily behaviour, and is afraid of committing evil, bad deeds. This is called the treasure of the sense of fear.

Principally connected with the sense of shame is self respect and principally connected with the sense of fear is the censure of the wise. These two qualities, shame and fear, are also called the protectors of the world. True and good people, with fear and shame, with these bright qualities, are said to be those who are god-like in the world. These two qualities have always been praised by the Buddhas, because they provide an effective stimulus to noble action. The person who has these two qualities will keep oneself from slackening and going astray.

The person with a sense of shame and fear has a lofty standard of con-

duct. Morally he is very sensitive. He will never be careless of the means he uses to achieve his ends. For him the end cannot justify the means. The means must always be clean, non-violent, truthful, sober and honest. Nothing, not even the doctrine and discipline of the Buddha, will be defended dishonestly. If he is attacked, he will not retaliate. Retaliation is wrong according to the Parable of the Saw taught by the Buddha. In that instruction he said, "Were villainous dacoits with a two-handled saw to cut off a man's limbs and were he ever then tainted in mind, he would not be carrying out my instruction". The sensitive person, he who is endowed with a sense of fear and shame, keeps these words of the Buddha in mind at all times, especially in times of stress and meets with compassion his opponents who wish to destroy him.

The effective observance of the Buddha's teaching depends on the practice of universal compassion and the true follower of the Buddha will think of those who know not what they do with a compassionate mind, grown great, lofty, boundless and free from enmity and ill-will.

Continued from page 10

13-21 Ven. Seelawimala was a member of a special bhikkhu delegation from Sri Lanka at a conference on mutual understanding of Buddhism and Islam, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka and Islamic Cultural and Islamic Relations Organisation, Iran

25 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at Imperial College, South Kensington

28 Ven. Bandula and Ven Wimalajothi attended the Kathina Ceremony at Letchworth Buddhist Vihara

31 Theravada Sangha Meeting at the Vihara

November

01 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at Imperial College, South Kensington

1-2 Ven. Bandula attended the chanting and Kathina Ceremony at Buddhist Vihara in Rome

11 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph

11 Ven. Bandula attended the chanting and Kathina ceremony at Birmingham Mahavihara, Birmingham

18 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Kathina ceremony at Lumbini Vihara, East Ham

19 60th Wedding Anniversary Religious Service for Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip at Westminster Abbey

20 Richard Jones gave talks at St Mary's School, Gerrards Cross, Bucks

21 Interfaith Meeting at Hammersmith Prison

25 Ven. Wimalajothi attended a memorial service for Brother Daniel Faivre at Westminster Cathedral

OBITUARY

With heavy hearts and deep sorrow we announce the passing away of the following devotees:-

MRS. SURANGANI ELLEPOLA

Mrs. Surangani Ellepola was a long-standing supporter, dana-giver and monthly standing order contributor to the Vihara. She passed away after a brief illness.

Her funeral was held at Lewisham Crematorium on 11th March amongst a large gathering.

She is survived by her loving husband Tilak and three children, Emil, Shyamain and Asitha.

MR. KALIDASA GOONASENA

Mr. Karl Goonaseena, a good friend of the Vihara, passed away on 27th June and his funeral was held at Hendon Crematorium on 5th July amidst a large gathering.

He is survived by his loving wife Reneira and five children.

MRS. SRIYA AMARAJEewa

Mrs. Sriya Amarajeewa was a coordinator and a long-standing supporter and regular dana-giver of the Vihara. She regularly attended and generously supported the Vihara activities. After a brief illness she passed away on 27th November and her cremation was held at Southgate Crematorium on 3rd December 2007 amongst a large gathering.

She is survived by her loving husband Dr. Amarajeewa and two children, Anoma and Rohana.

May they all attain the bliss of Nibbana!

December

3 Ven. monks attended the funeral ceremony of Mrs. Sriya Amarajeewa at Southgate Crematorium

4 Ven. monks attended the funeral ceremony of Mr. Nanayakkara Gunawardena at Golders Green Crematorium.

5 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of children from Hounslow Heath Junior School

11 Ven. Seelawimala attended a chaplains' meeting at Ealing Hospital

15-16 1st Death Anniversary of Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana. The memorial sermon was given by Ven. Long Po Sumedho, Amaravathi Monastery

LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA

Dharmapala Building
The Avenue
London W4 1UD
Tel: 020 8995 9493
Fax: 020 8994 8130
e-mail:

london.vihara@virgin.net
website

www.londonbuddhistvihara.org

SRI LANKA - Head office

Anagarika Dharmapala Trust
130 Pujya Hikkaduwe Sri
Sumangala Nahimi Mawatha
Colombo - 10 Sri Lanka

AFFILIATED CENTRES:

INDIA - CALCUTTA

Maha Bodhi Society of India
4-A Bankim Chatterjee Street
Calcutta - 700073, India

BUDDHA GAYA

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Gaya
Gaya, Bihar

SARNATH

Maha Bodhi Society
Mulagandhakuti Vihara
Sarnath, Varanasi, UP

NEW DELHI

Maha Bodhi Society
Buddha Vihara,
Mandir Marg,
New Delhi - 110 001

MADRAS

Maha Bodhi Society
17 Kennet Lane
Egmore, Madras - 8

SANCHI

Chetiayagiri Vihara
Maha Bodhi Society
Sanchi, Bhopal - MP

BHUBANESHWAR

Buddha Vihara,
Plot 4 Unit 9
Bhubaneswar, Orissa

NOWGARH (Lumbini)

Maha Bodhi Society
Srinivasa Ashram,
Lumbini Road
Nowgarh

LUCKNOW

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Vihara
Risaldar Park,
Lucknow-1, U. P.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sundays	2.00-3.00pm 3.00-4.15pm 6.00-7.00pm	Children's Sinhala Classes Children's Dhamma Classes Sermon and Pirith chanting
Mondays	7.00-9.00pm	Introduction to Buddhism (Eight-week course, repeated through the year)
Tuesdays	7.00-7.30pm 7.30-9.00pm	Chanting Class Advanced Buddhist Doctrine Class
Wednesdays	7.00-8.30pm	Meditation: Instruction & Practice
Thursdays	7.00-9.00pm	Theravada Buddhism London University, Faculty of Continuing Education
Saturdays	1.30-8.00pm	Monthly meditation retreat

Saturday of every month except August & December)

(Last

2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 06 **Rahula Dhamma Day**

May 18 **VESAK - Buddha Day**

June 01 **Blood donation Session**

June 22 **POSON**

July 20 **ESALA - Dhamma Day**

Sept. 14 **FOUNDER'S DAY**

Nov. 02 **KATHINA**

Dec. 14 **SANGHAMITTA DAY**

○ 2008 (FULL MOON) POYA DAYS

January ○ 22

February ○ 20

March ○ 21

April ○ 19

May ○ 19

June ○ 18

July ○ 17

August ○ 16

September ○ 14

October ○ 14

November ○ 12

December ○ 12

PUNYANUMODANA

Ven. B. Seelawimala, Head of the Vihara, wishes to express his sincere gratitude to all Co-ordinators and supporters for their help in making the Vihara's wide programme of activities a success.

May you be well, happy and attain Nibbana.

SAMĀDHI SPONSORS

We invite our readers and supporters of the Vihara to sponsor SAMADHI. This will greatly help us in meeting the cost of its publication.

Data Protection Act: The mailing list used for SAMADHI is maintained on computer. If you object to your record being kept on our computer file, please write to London Buddhist Vihara, and we will remove it.

Typeset by Venerable T. Bandula

Published & Distributed by the LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA, The Avenue, London W4 1UD. Tel: 020-8995 9493 Fax: 020-8994-8130

Printed by