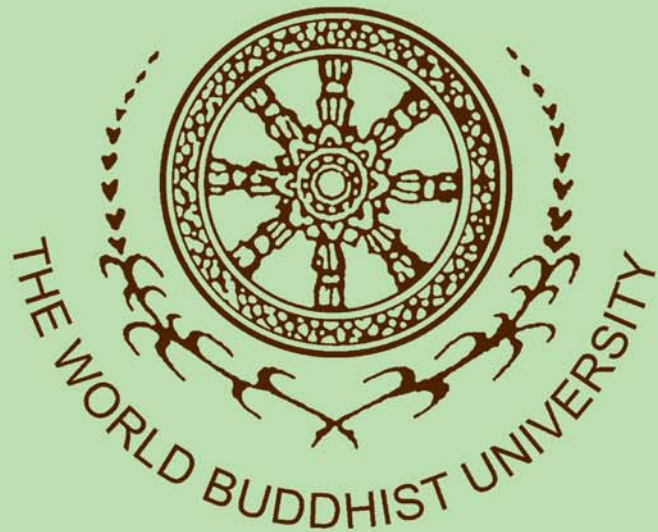




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Introduction

I am very pleased and sincerely thankful to all contributors to this Issue of the **Journal**. Many of our WBU Councilors whose articles appear in it surely enlighten our minds and bring great joy to our hearts through their profound thought. I urge all readers to share valuable ideas and suggestions by sending us news, book reviews, and articles on Buddhism. I am sure that the **Journal of the World Buddhist University** can serve as one of the best means for unity and cooperation of all Buddhists.

From November 14 to 17, 2008, some may attend the 7th Meeting of the World Buddhist University in Tokyo, Japan. This will be a great occasion for working together toward the development and the better future of our University. I hope that the articles in this **Journal** may somehow inspire all readers to implement the Buddhist teachings in their practices and encourage all participants of the Meeting to cooperate with one another for the best of the University.

Pataraporn Sirikanchana
Editor

The Message of Lord Buddha

*Prof. D.R. Bhalerao **

The strength of Buddha's thought lies in the emphasis on conduct. Buddha tried to build his framework of ethics, not on the shifting sands of metaphysics or theology but on the rock of facts. In this sense he was an arch realist whose feet were planted firmly in the inner layers of actual experience. He was not interested in evolving a new scheme of the universe or of philosophy; he was concerned with the service of man, here and now. He wanted to instill a new sense of duty into the people of his time, of self-evolution, of a pursuit of the good. He pulled their attention back from the other world to the world of their dwelling. "Type of the wise who soar but never roam."

This was far more meaningful for the common folk than abstruse transcendentalism or elaborate dogma. He brought about an awakening among the people by wide travels and preaching and worked for the uplift of the common man by helping him to work for his own good.

So unbounded was his love for man, that after he achieved his enlightenment, he incessantly struggled to help him take to the right path by persistent effort. Just as a prince he could have lived a life of luxury; so he could have lived in his lofty isolation after enlightenment. But he preferred to be in the midst of the people to draw them out of the slough of despair and dogma. He aspired for a human integration on the plane of an inner realization of the basic oneness of men. To his disciples he therefore gave this benevolent message : "Go unto all lands and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high are all one, and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea." Is not this a much loftier conception of the equality of men than the one enunciated by the economist or the politician? Born as it was of a deep-seated love for humanity it, has a perennial freshness.

For all time to come, Lord Buddha pronounced an eternal verity which man has put to proof as it were from time to time at his own peril, namely "Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred: hatred ceases by love." Two thousand five hundred years after, a war weary world articulated its realization of the truth of this statement in the preamble to the Human Rights Charter forged on the anvil of untold agony and suffering; "Wars are born in the minds of men and it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be built." Gautama Buddha's message is old yet ever new and ever true. "Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good," Lord Buddha said, all life is a becoming, an endless progression of self-changing and self-forming. These truths have therefore to be constantly realized and incarnated in our action individually and collectively.

Buddha put forward a philosophy of action that suited the practical wants of the people of his time, and in fact of all times. In many ways is his teaching therefore helpful in reconciling the conflict between faith and science in this age of science and technology. "Let knowledge grow from more to more, but more of wisdom in us dwell," said Tennyson. The dilemma of our times that knowledge grows but wisdom lingers must seek an answer in the teaching of the Master who in fact did make a distinction

* Councilor of the World Buddhist University (Thailand)

between knowledge and wisdom. Not the mere acquisition of knowledge but through it an understanding of the essence of things is wisdom. Knowledge he accepted as the subsoil of experience for further exploration, and refused to launch out of the pale of knowledge into vague surmise. That is the reason why he neither affirms nor denies the existence of God or an absolute. "If by the absolute," he says, "is meant something out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any known reasoning. How can we know that anything unrelated to other things exists at all? The whole universe, as we know it, is a system of relations; we know nothing that is, or can be unrelated." In other words, our periphery is what we know.

This should not lead us to the conclusion that he denies the existence of what lies outside the bounds of knowledge. He only prefers to keep quiet in this matter. When Parivvajika Vacchagotta asked him whether there was an atman or not, Buddha was silent. When Anand later asked him why he was silent, he clarified that he did not wish to be classed with the theorists or to say anything that would have added to his confusion. But his silence did not imply his denial. It may be a fruitless effort to imagine the unimaginable. He would therefore restrict himself to a discussion of things which are within the comprehension of our intellect, largely because his was an action-oriented precept intended to encourage people to work out for themselves their own happiness in day to day life and finally Nirvana. Atheism or Agnosticism cannot be attributed to him because he does not deny the existence of unknown truths. "Where does wisdom dwell, Nagasen?" "No where, O King." "Then Sir, there is no such thing as wisdom." "Where does the wind dwell, O King?" "Not anywhere, Sir." "So there is no such thing as wind." To postulate the nonexistence of anything on the ground of our lack of knowledge is to be guilty of an error. Buddha, was not interested in wasting time on the logically indemonstrable. His main concern was with ethical principles, not with confusing metaphysics. He wished to lay stress on exploration founded on experience and not on guess work howsoever erudite.

From his own spiritual experience, Lord Buddha came to the conclusion that there were four noble truths: that there was suffering, that it has a cause, that it can be suppressed and that there is a way to accomplish them, because of his acceptance of suffering as inseparable from life, it is sometimes said that his thought was pessimistic. It really was far from it. Buddha was no bland escapist to close his eyes to what he saw around him. He wanted to face it to find a way out of it. "If way to a better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst," as Thomas Hardy put it. So the Master probed into suffering to find that "birth is painful, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful; union with the unpleasant is painful; painful is the separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment are painful." The Blessed one, however, does not rest with the acknowledgement of suffering as intrinsic to life, but he urges our belief into the liberating power of ethical discipline and perfectibility of human nature. He directs us to the supreme goal, the elimination of all desire to attain a life of a finer quality, an arhat state.

The central core of Buddha's thought about suffering and the remedy for it lies in the fourth noble truth - the Middle Path (Majjhima Patipada) which abundantly reveals how utterly averse he was to all extremes.

Gentle and compassionate to all mankind, he liked to experiment with himself first. So the two extremes to be avoided, he tried for himself and found them to be useless. The first extreme is the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which he says is 'low, common unprofitable and the way of the ordinary people.' The other is the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which again is 'painful, unworthy and unprofitable.' The middle path, he discovered through personal experience, 'gives vision and knowledge, which leads to calm insight, enlightenment, Nirvana.' This is the path which is generally known as the Noble Eightfold path (Ariya Atthangika-Magga) composed of eight divisions - Right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. Practically, the whole teaching of the Buddha to which he devoted himself during forty five years, deals in some way or other with this path. He explained it to different people in different ways and in different words according to their capacity to understand and follow him. But the essence of those many thousand discourses scattered in the Buddhist scriptures is found in the Noble Eightfold Path.

This eightfold path aims at prompting and perfecting the three essentials of Buddhist training and discipline. Ethical conduct (sila) mental discipline (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). Ethical conduct is built on the vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings on which the Buddha's teaching is based. "He prayeth best who loveth best; All things both great and small." May I repeat that the great Master was not interested in propounding dry philosophical dogma or setting up a school of thought or an order of followers. He gave his teaching for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world.

How profound his compassion for mankind was could be seen in the readiness with which he gave freely of himself to anyone who approached him. There is the story of a man named Dighajanu who went to him and said: Venerable sir, we are ordinary lay men, leading a family life with wife and children. Would the Blessed one teach us some doctrines that will be conducive to our happiness in this world and hereafter? The Buddha readily consents and tells him that there are four things conducive to a man's happiness in this world. First, he should be skilled, efficient, earnest and energetic in whatever profession he is engaged, and he should know it well. Second, he should protect his income which he has thus earned righteously with the sweat of his brow; third he should have good friends who are faithful, learned, virtuous, liberal and intelligent, who will help him along the right path away from evil; fourth, he should spend reasonably, in proportion to his income, neither too much nor too little. For happiness hereafter, he should have faith, be ethical in conduct, practice charity and develop wisdom. Similar advice he gave to the banker Anathpindika, who founded for him the celebrated Jetavana Monastery at Savath.

Above everything, Buddha cared for the all embracing happiness of man and wanted to create an environment in which the individual and the society to which he belonged would be so interdependent that each would contribute to the other's well-being. Buddha did not want the few to prosper at the cost of the many, nor did he want the many to force their will upon the few. His was the vision of a social order in which material prosperity was coeval with moral and spiritual values, and man's consideration for man was no less than his consideration for himself or God.

So fervent was his wish to put an end to hatred and war, to see the reign of peace and goodwill established on earth, that he even visited the field of battle and by personal intervention prevented the war between the Sakyas and the Koliyas on the issue of the waters of the Rohin. It was he who stopped King Ajatshatru from attacking the Vajjis.

In the days of Lord Buddha as in our own times, there were unjust and tyrannous rulers who disregarded the just aspirations of the people, tortured, persecuted and oppressed them. He was deeply moved by these atrocities and, as the Dharmapada - atthakatha records, he applied himself to the problem of good government. A country to be happy must have a just government, says the Lord. The Jataka tells us of the Ten Duties of the King, i.e. the Government. One of these the truth is: (avirodha), non-opposition, non-obstruction. The government should not oppose the will of the people, should not prevent any measures that are conducive to the well being of the people. It should govern in harmony with the wishes of its people.

“The victor breeds hatred,” says the Master, while the justness of the cause inspires men to suffer inhuman tortures willingly. Fear and suspicion lead to tyranny. There can be peace only through confidence in the moral law. This is Buddha’s message. It needs perhaps an Ashoka to have the courage and conviction to put it into practice. The fact remains that it is practicable. History contains no evidence to show that any neighbouring power took advantage of Ashoka’s piety, to attack him, nor was there any revolt or rebellion within his empire during his lifetime.

For us engaged in reconstructing our socio-economic life in India, the message of Buddha has much contemporary significance. Our economic programme has its roots in what he outlined. The Kurt/adantha-sutta of the Digha-Nikaya suggests that grain and other facilities for agriculture should be provided for farmers and cultivators; capital should be provided for traders and those engaged in business, adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed. What we need with this socialistic place of regeneration is individual and collective commitment with an emphasis on values in actual practice. The least we can do to create a new society is to pin our faith to self-dependence, efficiency and endeavour.

Buddha’s life and thought were like an open book. He disliked all exoteric or secret doctrines. “6 disciples, there are three to whom secrecy belongs and not openness - to women, to priestly wisdom, to false doctrine.” “I have,” he said, “preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrines, for am respect of the truths, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of teacher who keeps something back.”

When finally the end came to a glorious life of eighty crowded years, the Lord called his disciples and asked them if they had any doubts. They were silent, whereupon the Blessed one addressed them: “And now, brethren, I take my leave of you: all the constituents of being are transitory; work out your salvation with diligence.”

The conception of the Buddha, to which innumerable loving hands have given shape in carven stone and marble and bronze, seems to symbolize the whole spirit of Buddha’s thought, or at least one vital aspect of it. Seated on the lotus flower, calm and impassive, above passion and desire, beyond the storm and strife of this world, so far away he seems, out of reach, unattainable. Yet again we look and behind those still, unmoving features there is a passion and an emotion, strange and more powerful than the passions and emotions we have known. His eyes are closed, but some power of the spirit

looks out of them, and a vital energy fills the frame. The ages roll by and Buddha seems not so far away after all; his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle but, calm eyed, to face it, and to see in life ever greater opportunities for growth and advancement.

I would end with the wish that his noble spirit may inspire us to pursue our tasks in life with faith and courage and keep us to the Middle Path.

**A Public Lecture under the auspices of the Pali and
Buddhist University, All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress
and Buddhist Times Limited, April 4, 2008,
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

How to Maintain Sri Lanka's Leadership in Buddhist Studies

Ananda W.P. Guruge

Let me at the very outset express my deepest gratitude to Venerable Wegama Piyaratana, Mr. Jagath Sumathipala and Dr. (Mrs.) Hema Goonetilake and the organizations they represent namely the Pali and Buddhist University, All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress and the Buddhist Times Limited for providing me this opportunity to speak to you on a subject, which is very close to my heart. I am also very thankful to all of you for your presence as well as your interest in the subject.

“How to Maintain Sri Lanka's Leadership in Buddhist Studies” is a concern that I have had ever since I began to pursue the study of Buddhism and its culture almost six decades ago. I have been impressed by a galaxy of extremely talented Sri Lankan scholars who dedicated their lives to the promotion of Buddhist Studies. I have also been inspired by them to follow their footsteps. The most widely known, recognized and esteemed worldwide among them had been none other than Professor Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera. Therefore may I, with your permission, dedicate this evening to his memory with gratitude and admiration. I am further impelled to do so as we are assembled here in a place, which owes its existence to the far-sighted vision of Professor Malalasekera.

This year marks the one hundred and tenth birth anniversary of Dr. Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera. His daughter Chithra most appropriately named the Commemoration Volume published on the occasion of his hundredth birth anniversary **“The Many Men that Malalasekera Was.”** It was again my proud privilege to have been asked to contribute to it. As I said in it, Dr. Malalasekera had been my mentor in many ways.

As my fields of studies happened to be Sanskrit and History, I did not have him as a teacher in the University. But being the editor of the first ever Buddhist Journal PATIPADA (1948) of the University of Ceylon (then only one and located in Colombo), I had his guidance on a daily basis on all aspects of editing and publishing a journal. At the age of nineteen, his advice was indispensable. But what he taught me has helped me right through my life, during which I have edited many journals nationally and internationally and published in Sinhala and English as many as 51 books. I was so inspired by him that, I requested and obtained special permission to attend a class in which he taught “Pali Unseen” to senior students. He would choose a Canonical passage at random and show how it could be explained and translated.

If ever he did more than five lines during a period, the passage was too easy or commonplace. Usually each word was analyzed grammatically, syntactically and contextually with copious comparisons from a wide array of disciplines. His encyclopedic knowledge and prodigious memory mesmerized the class. He was a born teacher with ample gifts of the gab. His oratorical skills, displayed in eloquently spoken

English and Sinhala, held us spellbound. Trained by my father from age nine to be a public speaker, I could appreciate how much he had advanced in utilizing the spoken word to convince an audience. He became an instant role-model and I acknowledge it with gratitude for all I have achieved in this field.

The initial preparations for the World Fellowship of Buddhists were made in the first year of my post-graduate studies. My assistance was sought as a helper to P.C. Perera and Leelananda Caldera who were Joint Secretaries of the host organization, namely All Ceylon Buddhist Congress. In this assignment I observed the above average capacity of Dr. Malalasekara as an organizer. No detail was too small or unimportant for his minute attention - whether it be a substantive issue demanding intellectual inputs or a practical affair like logistics and accommodation of foreign guests. As regard the latter aspect I was amazed by his social abilities. It appeared that all he needed was a simple telephone call to find willing hosts, donors or volunteers for whatever required to be done. That a good organizer should have adequate friends to accede to his or her requests was another important lesson I learned from him.

I was rewarded for my early association with Dr. Malalasekara by being invited often to his regular radio program called the "Brain Trust." We responded to questions sent in by listeners. How he conducted the discussion with due consideration to the specialized knowledge of each participating member, giving ample time to each, was fascinating. I was impressed by his charitable patience. Once I expressed my admiration and his insightful response was, "In any discussion, wait for two minutes and someone else would say what you want to say much better than you could." I have found this to be true both nationally and internationally. This to me has been another benefit from his mentorship.

In one of these Brain Trust discussions we had to respond to a question whether leisure was essential for creativity in art and literature. Dr. Malalasekara opened the discussion by saying that all his work had been done while running to attend to numerous obligations and that none of his books or articles would have ever seen this light of day if he waited for either leisure or a peaceful environment to write. It turned out to be a hot debate and the last few minutes jarred with a cacophony of dissents. The next day's newspaper had some nasty comments on the lack of discipline of Brain Trust members. I had always been convinced that anything can be done at any time provided each thing occupied one's fullest attention required for it to be accomplished. I had learned from my scout master in school -- an Italian Roman Catholic Jesuit -- that every minute of the day can be filled with productive work if you utilized the "crevice time," namely the minutes wasted in waiting for things.. Again, I owe my overall productivity to the confidence and encouragement I received from Dr. Malasekera to the pursuit of what he called "working while being on the run."

Our association, amounting to a much cherished lifetimefriendship, developed when I assumed responsibility for 2500 Buddha Jayanti in 1954. He honored me with a visit to my home in Hampden Lane, Wellawatte, and there seated in the verandah, we drafted the proposal to include the compilation and the publication of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism in English in the Buddha Jayanti Program. We met often and worked together in implementing the program of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya. He was always available when advice was needed and, whenever things went wrong, he was there to help as well to defend me.

Over two decades I had numerous occasions to come to know him not merely as a savant and national leader but also as a human being. His philosophy of life he exposed in Pali as “Parattham patipajjatha”--Work for the good of others. He was a great story teller and his repertoire of folklore replete with Sinhala doggerels was equally fascinating. He had a funny story for every occasion and one of his talents was to parody Pali gathas. Traveling with him by car both in Sri Lanka and abroad turned out to be most memorable as there was never a dull moment.

This unique human being -- in fact, a harmonious symbiosis of many men of diverse talents in one person, as his gifted daughter saw him -- had one major objective in life : namely the promotion of Buddhism and Buddhist Studies. Historically he carried the torch lit by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, Anagarika Dharmapala and Sir Don Baron Jayatilake and spared no effort to restore Buddhism to its rightful place as a way of life. What he achieved as the President of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress in redressing the grievances of Buddhists in general and assuring the welfare of the disadvantaged Buddhists, in particular, is a saga, which would take many hours to recount. It is the same devotion to the cause of Buddhism that prompted him to initiate action to found the World Fellowship of Buddhism.

Dr. Malalasekara combined this activism with scholarship in equal measure. He was primarily an educator starting in high school at Ananda College, proceeding to the University College in Colombo and finally becoming a Professor of Pali and Dean of Oriental Studies of the University of the Ceylon. His students included eminent academicians like Professors N.A. Jayawickrama, E. R. de S. Sarathchandra, K.N. Jayatilleke, Jotiya Dheersekara (now Venerable Dhammavihari), W.S. Karunaratne, Ratna Handukande, Sudharma Panditha, Lily de Silva, Jinadasa Perera and Y. Karunadasa, eminent monastic leaders like Venerable Madihe Pannaseeha, Dikwela Piyananda, Ganegama Saranankara and Henpitigedara Nanavasa, and well known civil servants like M. J. Perera, D. G. Dayaratne and Vincent Panditha.

He spent most of his time and energy in explaining the Buddha Dhamma to the masses through frequent speeches at temples, schools and public events, with stimulating articles in newspapers and magazines and regular broadcasts on Buddhism and national culture through radio. In these processes of public education and conscientization, Professor Malalasekara superseded the output of his distinguished role models, Anagarika Dharmapala and Sir Don Baron Jayatilake. While I am pleased that his insightful articles continue to reappear with increasing frequency in the world media, I wonder whether anyone has thought of compiling them for easy retrieval. I wish a national scholar or documentalist thinks of at least cataloging his writings.

What is most admirable is that Professor Malalasekara did devote his attention to scholarly research as well. He obtained his Ph.D. on a History of Pali Literature of Ceylon. His *magnum opus*, the Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, remains an indispensable reference work for all students of Pali and Buddhism. His critical editions of Vamsatthappakasin , the Mahavamsa T ka, and the Extended Mahavamsa (of Thai or Cambodian origin) are significant contributions to the study of the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Collaborating with K.N. Jayatilleke, he developed several monographs on race and peace for UNESCO. He was equally interested in Sinhala language and literature and his English-Sinhala Dictionary is still widely used. His students like Dr. (Mrs.) Ludowyk, Walpola Rahula, Charles Godage and L. P. N. Perera had been inspired

and directed to undertake studies on miracles, history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Buddhist deities and Vinaya. By directing his colleagues to specialize in different traditions of Buddhism, Professor Malalasekara diversified the academic capacity of Sri Lankan Universities to cover all branches and aspects of Buddhist Studies. It is also to his credit that the Encyclopedia of Buddhism in English, which he started, was well designed so that its continuation was greatly facilitated. His personal output of articles, besides what he obtained from a band of international scholars, is incredibly substantial.

After his colorful career as a diplomat serving as the first Sri Lankan Ambassador to the Soviet Union, High Commissioner in Canada and Britain and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, he returned to chair the National Commission for Higher Education, which was created by the University Act of 1965. Once again, it was a pleasure for me work with him. An issue that we discussed at that time is the subject that I have chosen for this talk today. That is **“How to Maintain Sri Lanka’s Leadership in Buddhist Studies.”** We have been both concerned that not enough was being done in this field, even though the creation of Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara universities had this as a main objective. Fifty years after the founding of these two universities, which have now become Sri Jayawardenepura and Kelaniya Universities, this issue needs to be raised again and with far greater concern and urgency.

In a memo around 1915, the renowned Pali scholar, Lord Chalmers, as Governor of Ceylon, urged for a university for Sri Lanka and emphasized the importance of promoting Oriental Studies as the principal objective. He was fully convinced of the high standards of studies in Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhala, which were reached and maintained by a number of Venerable scholar-monks, on whom the pioneering Western scholars depended heavily for source material and guidance. One of them, Viggo Fausboll of Denmark, the translator of Dhammapada into Latin in 1858 and the editor of the Jatakas, called our scholar-monks the “Living Fountains of Buddhism.” In my book “From the Living Fountains of Buddhism” published in 1984, I have amply described the contribution made to Buddhist Scholarship by Venerables Dodanduwe Piyaratnatissa, Waskaduwe Sri Subhuti, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Ratmalane Dhammaloka, Weligama Sumangala, Aluthgama Seelakkhandha and Polwatte Buddhadatta theras. It is with their guidance, assistance and advice, that eminent Western scholars like Robert C. Childres, T. W. Rhys Davids, Rheinhold Rost, Mrs. C. A. F Rhys Davids, Henry Clarke Warren, F. L. Woodward, J. F. Dickinson, Edmund Hardy, J. Minayeff, William Stede, and Wilhelm Geiger made their impressive contributions to BuddhistStudies. In the words of Fausboll,

*We, Europeans, must, of course, stand in
need of such help as we are so far from the living
fountains of Buddhism and so scantily furnished
with materials*

The tradition set by them had continued without a break and among their successors as esteemed scholar-monks were those like Venerables Widurupola Piyatissa, Baddegama Piyaratana, Baddegama Wimalavamsa, Welivitiye Punnaratana, Kiriwattuduwe Pannasara, Yakkaduwe pannarama, Ambalangoda Dhammakusala, Rerukane Nanawimala, Kosgoda Dhammavamsa, Welivitiye Sorata, Dehigaspe Punnasara, Moratuwe Sasaratana, Henpitigedara Nanasiha, Sirimalwatte Ananda,

Balangoda Ananda Maitreya, Akuretiye Wimalvamsa, Hammalawa Saddhatissa and Walpola Rahula, to name just a handful out of several hundred whose contribution to scholarly literature in Buddhist Studies was substantial. To this list can be added many more whose interests were more in Sinhala literature, history and creative writing. Once Martin Wickramasinghe told me that Sinhala publishing and book trade could survive and flourish only because the monks were not only readers but book-buyers. Vidyodatta and Vidyalandara Pirivenas, in addition, extended their services to foreign scholars and some well-known Pali and Buddhist scholars like Sarath Chandra Das, Dharmanand Kosambi, Rahul Sankrityayana, Jagadish Kashyap, Ananda Kausalyana and Padmanabha Jaini are among their alumni. To Vidyodaya University's credit is the Jain scholar Bhagchand Jain, who with a Ph. D. from it, became the Professor and Head of the Department of Pali and Prakrit in Nagpur University and authored several works on Buddhism in English and Hindi.

In 1928 the Chinese Buddhist reformer Venerable Master Tai-Xu visited Sri Lanka to observe the condition of Buddhism. He came with the pre-conceived notion that the Buddhist tradition of South and Southeast Asia, which he knew as and called Hinayana, was inferior and he could inject some life into it. But on his return he wrote most enthusiastically on what he observed. He said,

They [bhikshus, sramaneras, upasakas, upasikas and sramaneras of Ceylon] have made great efforts **to study the doctrines and observe the precepts. That is why many Buddhists, not only Buddhists from Burma and Thailand, but also scholars doing research on the Theravada Buddhism in the Pali language all over the world have come to study Buddhism in Ceylon.** Buddhists in Ceylon are widely engaged in many causes such as social welfare, culture, education, and so forth, **thus giving benefits to the state, society and even the broader masses in the world.** This marks the great spirit of compassionate love in Buddhism. Though Buddhism in Ceylon is generally considered to be Theravada Buddhism, it is indeed the practice of Mahayana Buddhism. (*Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu (The Works of Venerable Tai Xu)* Vol. 35 pp 26-30; emphasis mine)

What impressed him most was that foreign scholars were coming to Sri Lanka to study Buddhism and Buddhist education was well developed.

What I refer to as Buddhist Studies is a conglomeration of disciplines ranging from the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan canonical texts, and religious, philosophical and social interpretations of such teachings to the entire Asian culture of many dimensions which evolved under the inspiration and guidance of the Buddha's precept and practice. As such, the study of Buddhist, art, and

architecture, poetic and prose literature, and history of Buddhism in various cultural milieus form a part of Buddhist Studies. In each of these fields Sri Lanka has had many a distinguished scholar who attained international recognition for high level contributions, published primarily in English.

Mudaliyars L. C. Wijesinha, Louis De Soysa, E. R. Gunaratne and W. F. Gunawardhana, along with the famous Minipahankartru, belonged to an earlier generation. T. W. Rhys Davids has reported that in 1881 when he planned to set up an organization for the publication of sacred books of east, including Hindu and Jain scriptures, it turned out to be the Pali Text Society serving the cause of Buddhist Studies because of the overriding support of Sri Lankan Buddhist scholar-monks and laity-whose names are listed in his report.

In more recent times, Sri Lanka's leadership in Buddhist Studies was maintained by a number of scholars of significant versatility who wrote in English for publication abroad. Ananda K. Cumaraswamy dealt with primarily art but delved into philosophy and comparative religion. Senerat Paranavitana's contributions to the study of the history of Buddhism were through epigraphy, archeology and art. Venerable Ambalangoda Polwatte Buddhaddatta corresponded in Pali with Wilhelm Geiger and Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids and excelled as a critic of Geiger's translation of Mahavamsa and an editor of Pali texts on Abhidhamma for the Pali Text Society of London. The Island Hermitage of Dodanduwa as the home of the most distinguished German and Czech scholar-monks, Venerables Nyanatiloka, Nyanasatta, Nyanaponika and Nyanamoli became an active center of Buddhist Studies and the collective contribution of these monks to the study and propagation of Buddhism has remained a source of inspiration. Similarly, Vajirarama in Bambalapitiya, Colombo, under the wise direction of Venerable Palane Vajiranana Mahanayaka Thera produced scholar-monks of the highest caliber like Venerable Narada, Kheminda, Soma, Kassapa (Dr. Cassius Pereira) and Piyadassi whose interpretive writings and translations were meant for the general reader and who reached out to wider audiences as eloquent exponents of the Buddha's teachings. It was with such a background that a generation of university-trained monks like Venerable Suriyagoda Sri Sumangala, Paravaheera Vajiranana, Kananke Vajiranana and Urugoda Dhammananda promoted Pali and Buddhist Studies. I have come across several statements in Western publications in which Sri Lanka's leadership in the field of Buddhist Studies is acknowledged with admiration and gratitude.

The question that we need to ask ourselves now is whether our record today is comparable to what we are hitherto recognized for. With the expansion of institutional infrastructure for research and publication and the spectacular expansion of education, we should show a corresponding increase in the number of scholars and their publications.

In my generation, I am able to vouch for the service rendered to Buddhist Studies by my seniors like Professor O. H. de A. Wijesekera, initially a Pali grammarian but later a Vedic scholar with a flare for comparative studies relating to Buddhism, Dr. N. A. Jayawickrema, whose analysis of the Suttanipata and whose studies on the Pali chronicles and commentaries are well received, Dr. K. N. Jayatilleke, whose treatise on Buddhist epistemology remains a most authoritative work on the subject and whose insightful essays on Buddhism, economics and science are still in wide circulations, Dr. E. R. de S. Saratchandra whose study on the Abhidhamma and especially its concept of Bhavangacitta is highly acclaimed, Dr. Jotiya Dheerasesekera (now Venerable Dhammavihari), whose

work on the Vinaya and his contribution as editor of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism are widely appreciated, Venerable Dr. Walpola Rahula, whose “What the Buddha Taught” has achieved the unique distinction of being rendered reputedly into over fifty languages, Venerable Hammalawa Saddhatissa, whose work on Buddhist ethics and the translation of Suttanipata have earned him much credit, and Dr. Hiran F. Jayasuriya, the Sanskritist, whose edition of the section of the Prajnaparamita found in the gold plates of Jetavanarama merit special mention.

I too have a host of remarkable scholars as my contemporaries whose writings in English have reached a wider circle of readers outside Sri Lanka. Among them are Dr. Y. Karunadasa whose scholarly contributions are matched by his superior skills in teaching and guiding research, Dr. W. S. Karunaratne whose book on causality is well received and whose ability for disseminating knowledge through oral communication remains legendary, Drs. Lily de Silva and Ratna Handurukanda, whose research findings are regularly published and Dr. W. G. Weeraratne and Sanath Nanayakkara, who have assiduously carried on the compilation of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism. To this list must be added a number of scholars who pursued doctoral studies abroad and produced some significant works bearing on history such as Drs. R. A. L. H. Gunawardane, Amaradasa Liyanagamage, Venerable Yatadolawatte Dhammavisuddhi, Mangala Ilangasinghe, and Dr. (Mrs.) Hema Goonetilake. There is ample activity in the fields of research and publication as regards Buddhist Studies in Sri Lanka and our Universities have well qualified and well trained faculty members. Several have important publications to their credit in English, some published abroad.

Yet, in 1993, the Chinese scholar, Yang Zong Wen, who published a treatise on contemporary Buddhism in the world (*Dan Dai Fo Jiao*) in Beijing, mentioned only four scholars of Sri Lankan origin as widely known and named Dr. Malalasekera, Venerables Walpola Rahula and Hammalawa Saddhatissa and me. By this time Dr. Malasekera had already passed away and the other three of us were resident and working outside Sri Lanka. Still serving as the Sri Lankan Ambassador in the United States of America, I embarked on a search for the kind of attention our scholars received in the international scene. I was indeed quite pleased when I found many whose work was well known and well-received. Dr. Senake Bandaranaike’s exceptional contribution to the study of Buddhist art and archaeology was widely recognized and he also had the distinction of making the back page of the International Herald Tribune. Dr. Roland Silva’s work on Buddhist architecture of Sri Lanka was equally rated and he was elected to the prestigious position of the President of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Professor K. N. Jayatilleke’s writings were disseminated in frequent reprints and quoted by scholars. Dr. W. F. Jaysuriya’s pioneering works on Buddhist Abhidhamma and psychology were in circulation and demand. David J. Kalupahana, Padmal de Silva and Padmasiri de Silva, who like me were resident outside Sri Lanka, were being recognized for their well researched works on Buddhist philosophy and psychology.

Of course, there was a new brand of scholars who dealt with sociological, anthropological and political aspects of contemporary Buddhist societies rather than Buddhism or its history. Among such scholars of Sri Lankan origin to gain international

attention in these fields were those like Gananath Obeysekera, Stanley J. Tambiah, Mohan Wijeratne, S. L. Seneviratne and Dr. Sarath Amunugama. I have, however, had difficulty in including some of their work within the strict definition of Buddhist Studies.

I have examined the circumstances, which enabled scholars of Sri Lankan origin to gain an international reputation and here are my findings:

1. They all belong to a time when learning of Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhala received a very high priority in the educational system and the Sangha of Sri Lanka had produced some remarkably inspiring and influential scholar-monks.
2. All of those scholars were proficient in Pali and Sanskrit and could use original sources with confidence and ease. Some of them were also gaining proficiency in other Canonical languages like Chinese and Tibetan.
3. They had an excellent command of English both spoken and written. They could also use other research languages useful for Buddhist Studies such as French, German and Japanese.
4. They published books in English and other foreign languages and contributed articles to prestigious journals with pan-world circulation.
5. They participated in seminars and conferences organized by foreign universities and such other institutions as the Royal Asiatic Societies, International Association of Buddhist Studies, International Association of Sanskrit Studies etc. They presented learned papers and exposed themselves to peer review by the international academia.
6. They interacted with scholars around the world by keeping abreast of on-going research, corresponding with specialists in their areas of specialization, publishing reviews of current publications and being helpful to research students engaged in doctoral studies.

I have excluded one asset that some of them had, namely a foreign education. This was not found to be an essential factor. Any strategy we develop to maintain the Sri Lankan leadership in Buddhist activities has to be based on these advantages that the current internationally recognized scholars enjoy. The following are the actions that I wish to recommend for the immediate consideration of all concerned:

1. It is my conviction that the atmosphere required for the promotion of Buddhist studies has to be developed by a resurgence of dedication to scholarship in the Sangha. The higher education of the Sangha with due emphasis on original scriptural sources in Pali, Sanskrit and other Canonical languages is indispensable. One is no doubt appalled by the falling standard of Pali learning in the country. It is hardly taught in schools and one cannot be altogether satisfied with the standard of Pali teaching in the Pirivenas. Sanskrit has gone down even further. Without a very high level of proficiency in these languages, few monastics are in a position to produce the kind of scholarly work that those of a previous generation could. It is the Sangha that had preserved the study of Pali and Sanskrit not only through the Pirivenas but also through schools. Serious attention has to be given to the promotion of these languages if Sri Lanka has to retain its leadership in Buddhist Studies.

2. A critical mass of research scholars should acquire an excellent command of the spoken and written English because the fruits of their labors would never be known outside the Island unless they are presented in impeccable standard English. At the same time, our scholars should be able to access the research that is being done in the world. Without such access at least through the medium of English, the greatest danger in our institutions of higher education is that students are not introduced to new knowledge.
3. Some at least among them should proceed to gain some degree of proficiency in research languages useful for Buddhist Studies such as Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese as well as French, German and Italian.
4. Scholars with ability to speak and write in foreign languages should be given every opportunity (**with financial provisions for membership fees, travel and subsidies for publications**) to
 - a become members of international professional associations and organizations such as the Royal Asiatic Societies, International Association of Buddhist Studies, Indian Association of Buddhist Studies, International Association of Sanskrit Studies, etc.;
 - b contribute well-researched learned articles to recognized peer-reviewed foreign journals and also to have their books published abroad. (Equally important is to get articles and books of high quality in national languages translated into foreign languages. It must be stated here that Sri Lankan scholars do publish annually a substantial number of learned articles in English in Felicitation and Commemorative Volumes, the Sri Lankan Journal of Buddhist Studies and University Journals but their outreach to the world is very limited. The efforts of Professors Y. Karunadasa, Asanga Tilakaratna and Venerable Kuala Lumpur Dhammajoti in this regard are very creditable. The speedy completion of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism has also to receive the highest priority.)
 - c review in national journals important works by foreign scholars both for the purpose of apprising local scholars and students of the availability of new research findings and also to let the international scholars know that their work is under scrutiny by our scholars;
 - d participate in international seminars and conferences, presenting papers and interacting with worldwide scholars to have an international peer review of research done by them in Sri Lanka;
 - e organize periodically international conferences inviting recognized scholars of the world and conducting them with the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness. (In this regard, my experience prompts me to say that several recent Buddhist parleys failed to impress our foreign participants because the preparations had been inadequate, the quality of presentations questionable and use of time and resources ill-planned. But these are problems that we should be able to solve with careful use of all available resources, including the scholars of Sri Lankan origin active in the world scene):
 - f find and use opportunities to go to foreign universities on sabbatical and short-term leave to do teaching and research as done currently some of our

scholars as Venerable Dr. Kakkapalliye Anuruddha, and Drs. Y. Karunadasa, Asanga Tilakaratne and Chandima Wijebandara.

All these can be summarized in one sentence: **increase the international visibility of Sri Lankan scholars and their capacity for high level contribution to Buddhist Studies.**

A final question to be addressed is whether there is any scope for new research in Buddhist Studies in Sri Lanka. Some time back there was an impression that Pali sources had been adequately examined and the age of discovery had come to an end in Sri Lanka. The Conference of World Buddhist Leaders and Scholars convened by the Government of Sri Lanka and the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Colombo in 1982 discussed this issue and made a recommendation as follows:

Promotion of Buddhist Studies and Research:

Considering that two hundred years of Buddhist Studies in the Western World have produced translations, interpretations, evaluations and re-statements of the Buddhist doctrines almost entirely by Non-Buddhists and they need now to be re-examined with a view to rectifying some serious misunderstandings which such studies have brought into existence; *Noting with regret that* the resources of Buddhist studies are rapidly diminishing and hence scholars linguistically equipped to correct such errors in translations will gradually become fewer,

It is recommended that:

- (1) Faculties of Buddhist Studies, Departments of Pali, Buddhist Sanskrit and such other disciplines contributing to Buddhist Studies in all Universities, Colleges and such other institutions of higher education be urged to cooperate in a joint program of re-evaluating the existing Buddhist studies;
- (2) Objectives, operational methods, work plans and resource mobilization for such programs be developed by the Secretariat of this Conference;
- (3) Governments, private foundations and philanthropists and international cultural financing agencies be approached to assist the Programs; and
- (4) A periodical be devoted to the promotion of this program mainly—
 - (a) by sharing experiences and information among scholars in the field, and
 - (b) by publishing results of their researches having a bearing on correcting misconceptions, mistranslations, and mistakes relating to Buddhism.

Though the projects recommended had not been formally incorporated in a program, many recent scholars have begun to take action. Venerables Nyanaponika, Nyanamoli and Bodhi, operating through the Buddhist Publications Society of Kandy

has made a very impressive contribution. New translations of Pali Suttapitka are being published. But there is still ample scope for continuing activity in this aspect.

As regards re-evaluating past work and conclusions, my own efforts with regard to the history of Buddhism in my studies on the Mahavamsa and Emperor Asoka have revealed that archaeological findings and access to hitherto unexamined literary sources offer a whole range of possibilities for revision of hunches and pre-conceived notions of early scholars. Another line of investigation has been indicated by the studies of Venerable Payutto (now known as Dhammapitaka) of Thailand on Buddhism and Science. Again my more recent studies in Socially Engaged Humanistic Buddhism as in the two works *Buddhist Answers to Current Issues*, (Bloomington, Indiana 2004) and *Buddhism, Economics and Science* (Bloomington, Indiana 2008) and the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism (1999-2006) have shown that a growing interest exists as regards information on how the Buddha's teachings and Buddhism as practiced can contribute to human development today.

Buddhism is being recognized as the fastest growing religion in Western societies both in terms of new converts and more so in terms of friends of Buddhism, who seek to study and practice various aspects of Buddhism. Both on account of a series of diaspora from China, Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam, adherents to Northern Schools of Buddhism are numerically preponderant. Interestingly, the intellectual interactions between these ethnic Buddhists and those devoted to Buddhism in the West have created a new demand for a deep understanding of early Buddhism as preserved in Pali sources in Southern Buddhism. A similar tendency is evident in the traditionally Northern Buddhist countries also. This demand has been further increased by the popularization of Vipassana Meditation by Mahopasaka S. N. Goenka. What the world needs today is not confined to what is in Pali. The Sinhala works on Buddhism have as much relevance and the translation of Sinhala classics into world languages is also a contribution to Buddhist Studies.

Both Myanmar and Thailand have begun to respond to this demand. Opportunities exist for Sri Lankan scholars to initiate cooperative activities with the growing institutions in Southeast Asia such as the World Buddhist University, established by the World Fellowship of Buddhists, and International Association of Buddhist Universities, initiated by Venerable Thepsaphong (now known as Dharmakosajahn). I am gratified to note that Dr. Sumanapala Gammangoda is scheduled to lead a team of scholars from Kelaniya University to conduct a panel discussion on Buddhist Ethics in a Conference organized by this Association to be held in Bangkok in September this year. Another opportunity, which is available for Sri Lankans to cooperate in a significant international venture is to participate in contributing to the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) led by Professor Lewis R. Lancaster of University of California Berkeley. Such involvement will also enable our scholars to be trained in using high-tech tools of research, which are increasingly becoming indispensable.

Let me conclude with a fervent plea. Sri Lanka has many firsts in the history of Buddhism: developing commentaries on the Buddha's teachings in the national language (3rd century BCE), reducing to writing the Buddhist canon and its commentaries (1st century BCE), sending bhikkhunis to China to establish the *bhikkhunisasana* (5th century), enabling the dissemination of the commentaries to a wider readership through translations into Pali (5th century), unification of Southern and Northern traditions

of Buddhism and evolving a form of ecumenical Buddhism (12th century), spreading that form of Buddhism to Southeast Asia along with Pali literature and traditions of Buddhist architecture and art (12th - 15th century), being the foremost centre of Buddhist scholarship from the nineteenth century, taking Buddhism back to India, its land of origin (19th- 20th century), serving as the focal point from which Buddhist missionaries took Buddhism to all continents in modern times, and restoring the *bhikkhunisasana* in Southern Buddhism (20th century). This record needs to be maintained and no efforts should be spared.

May the Sangha of Sri Lanka rise up to the challenges of the time and may the powers that be, namely and most importantly the educators and scholars take upon themselves the task of maintaining Sri Lanka's leadership in Buddhist Studies. **This can easily be a major objective of the preparations for the next major event in the history of Buddhism-the 2600th anniversary of the attainment of Buddhahood in 2011-2012.**

P.S. I apologize to any scholars or institutions whose work or contribution has not been mentioned because my effort has been only to pick some examples to illustrate the points I make. It is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of Sri Lankan Buddhist Studies. I would gladly include any missing information if I am apprised of it – AG

Buddhist Learning Culture

*Dr. Somboon Duangsamosorn**

There has of recent been much criticism against the traditional method of learning in Eastern Cultures which have got a bad name as to be learning by heart or rote learning which is said to be devoid of fruitful learning. Some educators have been arguing that this method does not encourage students to think, leave alone how to think. Critics believe that learning by heart is a serious hindrance to thinking development, and they compare those who have received their knowledge through learning by heart to parrots or mynahs. Some even have gone further and said that in Thailand there are not learning schools (*rong rien*) but only teaching schools (*rong sorn*) where students are taught to memorize textbooks without proper understanding, as a result they are not knowledgeable and their thinking power is not developed.

Negative criticism against learning by heart or “Mukhapatha”, as it is termed in the Pali language, is not appropriate in the Buddhist learning culture. Buddhist scholars, indeed, do not deny the significance of learning by heart because in Buddhist studies, Sanskrit and Pali terms are best acquired when learnt by heart before proper understanding can take place through the process of interpretation, explanation and logical thinking which lead to the correct practice.

A few years ago, during an official visit to the Ministry of Education in Myanmar by the Committee on Religion, Art and Culture, the House of Representatives of the Thai Parliament, it was a big surprise to learn that nine Burmese Buddhist monks had learned by heart and successfully memorized 84,000 discourses of the Tipitaka; the Vinaya Pitaka with 21,000 discourses, the Suttantaka Pitaka with 21,000 discourses and the Abhidhamma Pitaka with 42,000 discourses. The Three Pitakas or the Three Baskets of Lord Buddha’s Doctrine have been published in 45 thick volumes in Thai, and believably the same or more volumes in Burmese. The nine Burmese Buddhist monks could recite the Tipitaka with every word, phrase and sentence perfectly in place before a panel of qualified monks who opened page by page, reading along and checking every line. What a great perseverance upheld by those nine monks!

Good memory and Mukhapatha have been playing a very significant role in sustainably perpetuating Buddhism, particularly the Theravada Sect. Without Mukhapatha continuously practiced by the Most Venerable Bhikkhus or Mahatheras, Burma or Myanmar might not have such an important learning centre like the International Theravada University. Likewise, Thailand would not have the Mahamakut Buddhist University, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, International Buddhist College and a learning centre like the World Buddhist University. With a strong and firm faith in our Buddhist Learning Culture in mind, Buddhist scholars and all Buddhists are not easily shaken by negative criticism inflicted by some educationists whose vision is rather limited, because we, the Buddhists are not only taught to memorize important Buddhist words, terms, phrases and sentences in the texts by which we are obliged to learn by means of listening, but we are also taught to logically think whether or not what

* Rector of the International Buddhist College

we have learnt is logical or illogical, reasonable or unreasonable, practically possible or impossible.

Therefore, learning by heart can be regarded as one of the means to reach the objectives of learning that have been clearly stated by the UNESCO as:

1. Learn to know the subjects theoretically
2. Learn to do or act accordingly
3. Learn to live peacefully with others in the work place and in society
4. Learn to be skilled professional

In order to obtain the four objectives of education as mentioned above, Reverend Brother Dr. Prathip Martin Kamolmas, f.s.g., President Emeritus of Assumption University has affirmed the importance of this learning method as appropriate, i.e. “Learn how to learn” without which the four objectives of learning cannot be achieved. Learning how to learn does function in conformity with the Buddhist Culture that aims at the acquisition of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment respectively to be free from suffering. The method of “Learn how to learn” in the Buddhist Learning Culture is classified into three steps namely:

1. Sutamayapanya: Knowledge is derived by Listening.
2. Jintamayapanya: Knowledge is derived by Logical Thinking.
3. Bhavanamayapanya: Knowledge is derived by Practice.

In addition, the Buddhist Learning Culture is also aptly described as taking place in four steps according to a Buddhist proverb which is:

Su Ji Pu Li Vinimutto
Kathang So Pandito Bhave.
Without Listening, Thinking, Asking
and Writing down, how can one
Become a Learned One?

This proverb reaffirms the four forceful methods of learning as a means to acquire knowledge. It may be noticed here that Listening is ranked Number One as an important element to learning. The reason why listening is placed first is that it seems to be a serious problem in the process of learning, not only of old but also these days in many institutes of higher education, religious and secular alike. It is known that the listening span of our students is hardly fifteen minutes, and then they start talking among themselves. If they fail in either mid-term or final examinations, they blame the lecturers who have to bear the disturbances in the noisy classrooms. Theoretically and practically, listening is a very important means to acquire knowledge. This argument is aptly shown in a Buddhist proverb which says:

“Sussusang Labhate Panyang”, which means “Good Listening brings forth knowledge.” It is also true that a good speaker is also a good listener, as a good listener firmly stores a lot of information, facts, stories and anecdotes, and this explains the reason why he is a good speaker. An outstanding role model can be cited here as an example.

The Most Venerable Professor Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn (Prayoon Mererk, Pali 9, Ph.D), Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is one of the best speakers today. His utterances in either Thai or English are highly informative, full of facts and illustrations, in other words his speeches are interesting, entertaining and effective in purpose. Looking at their structure and content it can be said that his speeches are beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful in the end. His introduction never fails to capture the audience. The body of his speech keeps the audience's mind attentive throughout and his ending notes in the conclusion leave the audience with an unforgettable impression in their minds. He has earned this quality of success precisely because he is always a good listener. The Most Venerable once related in a speech how he learned from a taxi driver's conversation:

As he travelled in a taxi from Wat Prayoonwongsawas in Thonburi to Wat Mahathat in Bangkok, where Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is situated, he attentively listened to the driver who talked at great length how to manage the mind when one is facing the problems of greed, anger and illusion. The taxi driver then asked the Most Venerable about the bad letters and the good letters of the Thai alphabet, whether he had been taught in school, college or university. The Most Venerable answered, "No, I have not been taught, so I don't know." The taxi driver then explained that the bad letters are:

Lor = Lobha - greed
Kor = Krodh - anger
Lor = Loang/Moha - illusion

and the good ones are:

Phor = Phor - enough
Hor = Hai - pardon
Chor = Changthoe or Changman (Let it be)

At that very moment, a fellow driver at the back of their taxi sounded his horn that could drive any sane man to distraction, but the taxi driver merely said, "Changthoe." At the destination, the Most Venerable drew three 20-Baht banknotes and handed them to the driver, saying, "Though the fare was agreed at 50 Baht, I would like to give you 10 Baht more as a token of paying homage to your Dhamma Talk. The driver declined to take it and said, "I only take the fare as agreed."

This story, of course, has not been told by the Most Venerable merely to entertain us or to teach us how a person can learn from listening, but we must go deeper and consider the fact that he is telling us something very important about the taxi driver's ethics and virtues (Jariyadhamma and Gunadhamma).

In the Buddhist Learning Culture, thinking is strongly encouraged. There are plenty of fables and parables in the scriptures, but everyday examples are often cited by Buddhist teachers. In schools, colleges, institutes and universities, the thinking process is stimulated by logical argument and analysis of the facts and subjects the students have learnt, that hopefully have not escaped them and remained in their memory. In other words, evaluation and criticism are based on facts not on feelings. Thus, those whose memory power is good have always something to say.

Recently, a boy of six years in Mexico could give a very relevant talk at a university to lecturers and students of medical science. When asked how this was

possible, he cited the power of a good memory. Obviously, rules, rules of law, principles and regulations that remain in good memory, acquired by means of learning by heart, can be recalled at anytime, and thus practically developed for proper understanding through the logical thinking process. Critics of our Eastern learning culture always argue that it is more important to develop understanding instead of memory. How can the two be separated? Reverend Brother Dr. Cyril Siriroj Viriyasirimongkol, f.s.g., a former Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and an all-time philosopher of Assumption University asked, “How can a forgetful person develop understanding? If you don’t remember anything, you can neither think nor understand.”

What one has learnt from listening can be stored in “a repository of information which can be further developed into knowledge and wisdom respectively,” said Reverend Brother Dr. Bancha Saenghiran, f.s.g., Rector of Assumption University (ABAC) on the topic of developing thinking power.

Just imagine if a Buddhist cannot remember the five precepts, how can he observe them as a Buddhist way of life? Similarly, a Christian who does not remember the Ten Commandments may commit sins easily. Likewise, a physician whose memory is very poor may prescribe the wrong medicine to a patient which may cause death. Very often we hear stories about surgeons who forget scissors or other medical instruments in the stomach of patients after an operation.

Learning by heart functions like the repeated process of existence and extinction that generates memory. Whatever occurs repeatedly in the mind by seeing, hearing and experiencing, one remembers, but what has occurred in the mind for a short period of time, will quickly be forgotten and disappear. For example, after being introduced to a person whose figure, name, surname, voice, etc. have come into one’s mind, one remembers, but meeting again after a long time, the two may not recognize each other. Similarly, after a few years of graduation, a former student has come to a teacher and asked. “Sir, do you remember me”? “Yes, but your name has escaped me,” is what the teacher answers.

Some important terminologies, rules, disciplines that one has to remember must be repeatedly thought of and verbally recited to keep them fresh in the memory, otherwise they will be forgotten, as memory (Sanna) itself is impermanent (Anijja). It is the law of nature that one is bound to remember and forget. Both memory and forgetfulness are what we have to live with. However, we may remember and forget anything in our life, but the most important thing is that we must not forget our Buddhist Learning Culture.

January 17, 2008

Poverty Reduction in the Buddhist Perspective*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pataraporn Sirikanchana

Poverty is a shortcoming in human life. It makes one less than others in dignity, success, happiness, opportunity, and so on. A Society in which poverty prevails will soon be weakened and shattered. It is noted that crimes and conflicts are common occurrences in a poor community. Whether it is true or not, there should be a solution to the matter.

1. The Meaning of Poverty

Poverty is the situation of lacking all necessities of life. It can be classified into absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is experienced by someone who has less than she needs in order to be in good health and in normal condition. In Buddhism, absolute poverty is the lack of the Four Necessities of Life which are clothing, food, medicine, and shelter.¹ On the other hand, relative poverty is a scarcity of the means of subsistence when compared to others or when it is below the standard of living in a society. Some thinkers suggest that poverty in any given nation should be defined as the economic condition of a family having an income less than one-half of the median family income for the nation.² Especially, the way of life which prevails among the very poor has common features such as low education, unemployment, superstition, present-time orientation and hopelessness, regardless of the particular time and society involved in any given case.³ In Thailand, severe cases of poverty exist in the Northwest, the Northeast, and the farthest South of Thailand.⁴

2. Causes of Poverty

Causes of poverty can be differentiated into internal and external. Internal cause of poverty rests in knowledge, habit, way of life, point of view, and discipline of a person. For example, indulgence in alcohol can lead one to poverty. Though to be heedlessly intoxicated is a demeritorious deed, Thai lay Buddhists do not strictly abstain from intoxicants:

Alcoholic beverages are sold openly, under government monopoly. They can be consumed in all public cafés and restaurants and drunken people are no rare sight⁵

Drinking is a popular practice of most Thai men. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906-1993), a Thai Buddhist monk and a great thinker who was honored by the UNESCO as

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¹ Vin. I. 58 (The Tripitaka).

² Thomas Ford Hoult, *Dicionary of Modern Sociology* (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1977), p. 245

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴ <http://service.nso.go.th/nso/povertymap/poverty.html>

⁵ B.J. Terwiel, *Monks and Magic* (Bangkok: Carftman Press Co., Ltd., 1975), p. 194

one of the World Great Personalities in C.E. 2006, commented that drinking became a part of Thai life and tradition:

During the funeral site, the host has to prepare liquor and alcoholic drinks, kill an ox, buffalo, or pig, in order to cook food for Buddhist guests who come to devour it in the house of the family of the deceased.⁶

Not only drinking but also gambling, association with bad people, and prodigality are sources of poverty relating to a person's attitudes and way of life.

External cause of poverty can be found in a person's surrounding and socio-political situation. In a capitalist society, a person is lured to overspend, live luxuriously and, finally, run into debt. Having been bankrupted, s/he becomes poor and victim of her/his society. Besides, in some cases, a person can be oppressed and exploited by a capitalist, e.g., a labourer is unfairly taken advantage of by the employer.

The Buddhist Scriptures (The Tripitaka) assert 6 causes of poverty in the teaching of Apayamukha ways of ruin.

- 1) Addiction to intoxicants leading to actual loss of wealth, quarrels, liability to disease, disgrace, shamelessness and weakened intelligence.
- 2) Roaming the streets at unseemly hours leading to carelessness of self-protection, carelessness of one's wife and children, carelessness of one's property, being a suspected criminal, being a victim of rumours and being subjected to trouble.
- 3) Frequently enjoy watching shows, e.g., singing, dancing, and musical entertainment.
- 4) Indulgence in gambling leading to trouble such as being hated by losers, losing money when being a loser and being untrustworthy.
- 5) Association with bad companions leading to be gamblers, seducers, drunkards, forgers, swindlers and bullies.
- 6) Laziness⁷

3. Buddhist Teachings for Poverty Reduction

Poverty is not only a personal problem but also a social failure. It is not marked by less or more income but rather by moral values of social members. Poverty cannot be solved by increasing all necessary resources for the poor. The solution of poverty, however, depends on the rich's conscience and responsibility for other social members. The rich should learn to give than to get in order to help the poor out and to cooperate with the poor to overcome poverty in their society. The problem of poverty arises because the poor are unjustly treated in their society, incapable of earning their living properly, and without any objective of moral development of their lives.

⁶ Buddhadasa-bhikkhu, *Chat Mankong Dai Duay Sasana* (securing the nation through religion) (Bangkok: Somchai Press, 1981), p. 20. (In Thai).

⁷ D. III. 182-184 in Phra Tepvethee (Prayudh Payutto), *Dictionary of Buddhism*, 6th ed. (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn-rajabidyalaya, B.E. 2532/1989). pp. 176-178.

Poverty reduction can be managed through the Buddhist teachings as suggested by Arnold Kotler as follows:

The **Cakkavatti-sihanada Sutta** clearly states that poverty is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, and cruelty. **The Kutadanta Sutta** explains how futile it is to try to suppress crime through harsh punishment. The Buddha suggests that in order to eradicate crime, economic conditions should be improved.⁸

Obviously, all social problems and crimes caused by poverty can be eradicated through a proper income of the people and sufficient necessities of life for the people provided by the State. **The Cakkavatti sihanada Sutta** describes duties of a universal king as follows:

- 1) A universal king should uphold righteousness.
- 2) A universal king should protect his family and dependants.
- 3) A universal king should protect his soldiers.
- 4) A universal king should protect his colonial leaders.
- 5) A universal king should protect his civil servants.
- 6) A universal king should protect and support Brahmins and householders.
- 7) A universal king should protect and support town and country dwellers.
- 8) A universal king should protect all the ordained.
- 9) A universal king should protect all endangered species.
- 10) A universal king should not allow all wrong doings in the Kingdom.
- 11) A universal king should give alms to the poor in order to eliminate poverty in the kingdom.
- 12) A universal king should regularly visit religious authorities and the learned in order to develop his moral virtues.⁹

Similarly, in **the Kutadanta Sutta**, the Buddha preached the right method of sacrifice in order to obtain utility and happiness. The **Sutta** narrated Kutadanta Brahmin's advice to king Maha-vijita that all thieves in the kingdom should be eradicated by means of economic improvement, e.g., giving them and the people food seeds to grow in the field, providing all diligent merchants with some investments, and supporting all civil servants with food and wages. Having done these, the royal property would increase, thieves and rebels would disappear from the country, and all people would feel secure and live happily at home. Kutadanta Brahmin emphasized that the king should neither kill

⁸ Arnold Kotler, "Buddhism Must Be Engaged," in *Radical Conservatism: Buddhism in the Contemporary World*, ed. Sulak Sivaraksa (Bangkok: The Sathira koses-Naga pradipa Foundation, 1990), p. 135.

⁹ D. III. 61. (The Tripitaka).

nor imprison his opponents because the rest who could flee would return to take revenge on him later.¹⁰

Apart from the roles of rulers or the State in poverty reduction, the Buddhist teachings also encourage the poor to overcome their misfortune. In fact, the Buddhist teachings prepare one to secure oneself financially and live in sustainable happiness. If one happens to be poor, one needs to follow the Buddhist teachings to free oneself from poverty as well. The Buddhist teaching which guides one to be able to manage with one's own income in order to be financially secured is the teaching of Bhogavibhaga (the fourfold division of money). According to this teaching, one had better divide one's income into 4 parts : 1) One part is for one's own living, taking care of one's dependants, and public services. 2) Two parts are for investing in one's business. 3) One part is for saving.¹¹

After having managed one's income properly, one needs to make the best use of one's own income following the Buddhist teachings as follows : 1) Spending for happiness and comfort of oneself and one's dependants. 2) Spending for the good of one's friends and colleagues. 3) Spending for the protection of oneself against all misfortunes. 4) Spending for relatives, guests, religious offering, dedication of merit to the dead, and taxes.¹² In order to secure one's financial status and happiness, the Buddhist

teachings assert virtuous practices leading to temporal welfare as follows : 1) One needs to work hard, be well trained in one's profession, and be diligent. 2) One needs to take a good care of one's own possessions. 3) One needs to associate with good people. 4) One needs to live economically.¹³

The Buddhist teachings in the **Tripitaka** (the Buddhist Scriptures) emphasize moderation in one's living as the best method for overcoming poverty. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, The King of Thailand promotes the Theory of Sufficient Economy in order to help Thai people out of their poverty. The Theory of Sufficient Economy advocates the Buddhist teaching of moderation.

The word "sufficiency" means more than "self-reliance." "Sufficiency" denotes being less greedy. Whenever one is less greedy, one will take less advantage of others. Living sufficiently means living moderately, honestly, and less greedily. People in any country who live sufficiently will be peacefully happy.¹⁴

¹⁰ Digha-nikaya, Silakhandhavagga, Kutadanta Sutta (The Tripitaka).

¹¹ D. III. 188. (The Tripitaka).

¹² A. III. 45. (The Tripitaka).

¹³ A. IV. 281. (The Tripitaka).

¹⁴ His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Speech in The National Research Council of Thailand, Section of Economic, *His Majesty the King's Sufficient Economy and the Economists' Analysis of Meaning* (Bangkok: Kasetra Blue Print, B.E. 2546/2003), p. 19. (In Thai)

If one lives moderately and avoids being too extravagant, one will be able to have enough for oneself, be free from debts, and be able to live happily. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu also suggests that the rich should be responsible for the poor in their society and act according to the rich in the time of the Buddha:

Whenever peacemakers have more than they need, they donate the rest to others. This was the way of life of the person of means (sresthi) in the time of the Buddha. Sresthi literally means “the Noblest.” Today, we have only selfish capitalists who oppress and take advantage of the poor. We cannot find sresthi who are philanthropic and righteous. Sresthi in the time of the Buddha treated their servants and all others with respect. They worked together, ate the same kind of food, observed the Buddhist Sabbath together, and so on. In particular, the sresthi built alms-houses to serve the poor, ascetics and all in need. A peacemaker should adopt the spirit and practices of the sresthi in the Buddha’s time so that all members of society can live happily and peacefully together.¹⁵

4. Buddhist Work for the Poor in Thai Society

Practical ways for solving problems of poverty should be initiated within a community in which its members learn to cope with their own difficulties. The leader of a community always plays important roles and should have governmental support in order to effectively fulfill all needs of the community.

In Thai Buddhist communities outside Bangkok in which most people are poor and hopeless, leaders who introduce them to new lives are normally monks. For example, Phra Khamkhian Suvanno, the abbot of the Sukhato Forest Hermitage, continuously helps poor villagers overcome their difficulties through his many projects. He began with his Buddhist preaching to villagers when he first came to stay in Tha Mafai Wan Village in Chaiyaphum Province, Thailand, where most people were lawless and undisciplined. He expected to clean villagers from being drunkards and thieves. He also advised villagers to raise animals, establish fish farms and so on. He asserted that mental development through the Buddhist moral teachings and meditation is necessary as the foundation of right view and good practices.¹⁶

¹⁵ Buddhadasa, “Till the World Is With Peace,” trans. Pataraporn Sirikanchana, in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, ed. Donald K. Swearer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 205.

¹⁶ Pataraporn Sirikanchana, *Monks’ Duties according to the Buddhist Discipline: Thought and Roles of Phra Khamkhian Suvanno in Community Development* (Bangkok: The Printing House of Thammasat University, B.E. 2536/1993), pp. 46-47. (In Thai).

Similarly, Phra Boonrod Adhipunno came to Saithong Village in Kalasin Province, Thailand, and helped villagers turn the community into the Drinking Free Village. First, he preached the evil of drinking, and being alcoholic. Then he offered jobs in his temple for those who could quit drinking. Moreover, he taught children to understand Buddhist morality and practices accordingly. He also initiated many projects which effectively freed villagers from their poor lives.¹⁷

Another attempt to fight against poverty of villagers can be seen in the roles of Phra Kroo Pipattanachot, the abbot of Don Temple in Songkhla Province in Southern Thailand. He is the founder of the Bank of Life aiming at freeing the community of the Hua Kwai (Buffalo's Head) Village from all debts. The Bank of Life is a form of banking of which the objectives are rather for helping its customers than sharing the benefits. A villager should deposit 30 bahts (about one dollar) in the Bank every month. Those who want to take out a loan should sign the agreement one month ahead. They cannot take out a loan more than a double amount of their deposit and should pay the interest of one percent per month. All benefits from this banking system go to hospital welfare for all villagers and educational funds for children in the village.

There are also many organizations working for the poor in Thailand. Nevertheless, poverty is rather a complicate problem. One needs to fight against poverty from within and to have supports from outside. Poverty is a matter of one's own attitudes, way of life, and behavior as well as external oppressions. How to overcome poverty is thus not a personal matter but a social responsibility to seek cooperation of all members.

5. Mutual Understanding and Cooperation of Different Faiths for Social Development

Each country is composed of people of different faiths who need to live together, relate to one another, and find peaceful happiness side by side throughout their lives. If one looks into the essence of all religious teachings, one will see that all religions encourage humankind to get rid of their selfishness and extend love and compassion to others. The teaching of compassion is a guiding light leading Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and other religious members to free themselves and others from misfortunes, e.g., poverty, injustice, and wars.

Buddhism, both Theravada and Mahayana denominations, propagates the concept and practice of compassion and loving kindness towards all beings. The **Mahavastu** depicts the ideal of the Buddha-to-be (Bodhisattva) who embodies compassion and morally inspires the Buddhists as follows:

They are Bodhisattvas who live on from life to life in the possession of manifold good qualities. They are Bodhisattva who have won the mastery over karma, and made their deeds renowned through their accumulation of merit... They are devoted to the highest good. They win converts by the means of sympathetic appeal...

¹⁷ Theera Vacharapranee et al., *The Drinking-Free Village* (no city: Champathong Printing Press, B.E. 2550/2007), pp. 24-27. (In Thai).

They are skilled in bringing solace to those in trouble and misfortune. They do not hesitate to render all kinds of service. In all matters they are untiring in their purpose.¹⁸

In Mahayana Buddhism, the Bodhisattva is the exemplar of a compassionate person who releases all beings from misfortune. In other words, any social member and organization who act as the Bodhisattva will be able to save the poor from difficulties.

Theravada Buddhism also promotes compassion and loving kindness. In **Metta Sutta**, the Buddha preaches the boundless loving kindness:

Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so, let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world, above below and across without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.¹⁹

Loving kindness leads a person to compassion and charity. When a person, with the spirit of loving kindness, meets the poor, s/he will be internally urged to give. In giving, a person does not perform charity as a physical act, but with his or her heart. There is joy in every act of giving. It is an act of generosity based on compassion when a person realises that someone else is in need of help and s/he is in the position to offer the help.

In Islam, there are duties which Muslims are expected to perform as part of their obligations toward God. For example, all Muslims who have income and are fairly well-off are urged to pay **zakat**. **Zakat** is alms paid for the sake of the needy, and calculated on the basis of a percentage of certain specific kinds of property which Muslims own. Besides, the fast during the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every adult Muslim of sound health with exceptions made for travelers, the sick and infirm, pregnant women, and so on. Fasting begins at daybreak and lasts for the entire day until sunset. During this period, all food, drink, and smoking are forbidden. This practice brings the rich and the poor together. The rich may learn to understand more how the poor suffer from lacking all necessities of life.

The Sermon on the Mount delivered by Jesus clearly expresses love for the poor:

How blest are those who know that
they are poor;
the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹⁸ The Mahavastu quoted in Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht, ed., *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 272-273.

¹⁹ The *Metta Sutta* quoted in K. Sri Dhammananda, *What Buddhists Believe* (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1998), p. 168.

How blest are the sorrowful;
They shall find consolation.

How blest are those of a gentle spirit;
They shall have the earth for their possession.

How blest are those who hunger and thirst to see right prevail;
They shall be satisfied.

How blest are those who show mercy;
Mercy shall be shown to them.

How blest are those whose hearts are pure;
They shall see God.²⁰

Religions of the world today need to be socially engaged. All religious organizations can work through their own religious teachings and cooperate with one another to help other unfortunate social members. In Thailand, many projects and activities can be set up and run by all religious members in order to solve the problem of poverty such as:

1) Educational Project

Different faith-based organizations provide informal schools, intensive courses, and regular lectures on languages, morality, and ways to earn one's living for the poor free of charge.

2) Workshop Project

Workshop projects can be set up for poor people in their community on the topics of religious beliefs and practices, social problem orientation, and community development.

3) Training Project

Poor people should be trained to make a better living in every way they need under the sponsorship of religious organization.

4) Volunteer Project

Religious members who are knowledgeable and willing to serve a poor community can be volunteers to repair bridges, houses, to teach children, and so on.

5) Financial Support Project

Faith-based organizations may provide financial support to poor people to fight against their poverty and injustice, e.g., scholarship, funds, and so on.

The amount of poor people in any country is the indication of weakness of that country. Though it may be impossible to completely eradicate poverty from the world, it

²⁰ The Sermon on the Mount quoted in Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht, ed., *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology*, p. 119.

is necessary to set a limit to its growth. Faith-based organizations may join together and make the best of the mission since they can work for the development of human minds through religious teachings as well as on external support.

Won Buddhist View on Equality

Dr. Pal Khn Chon

The aim of my study is to examine various aspects of equality in the Scripture of Won Buddhism. According to the Scripture, the thoughts on equality can be roughly divided into two concepts.

First, although we are able to make distinctions and discriminations in the visible world on the basis on oneself and others, saints and ordinary persons, beauty and ugliness, wisdom and foolishness, there are no differences in the ultimate reality or in our original minds. The section relating to the Truth of Il-Won-Sang, in the Scripture, says that Il-Won is the origin of all being in the universe, the mind-seal of all Buddhas and saints, the original Nature of all living creatures, the state in which there is no difference. As may well be understood by the above sayings, the real nature of all creatures, which includes human beings, come from one source, the One Truth, that is, Il-Won-Truth. In Nirvana Sutra, there is also a saying that every sentient being has the Buddha Nature. These words have something in common with the Il-Won-Sang Truth, and makes it possible to respect human rights in our various societies. The Great Master said that in the coming days the power of human beings will be more valued than that of the power of Heaven, and that the great power of Buddhas and Bodisattvas will be rendered to all people.

Second, the Great Master suggested the Four Essentials as the means to obtain an equal society, and to get rid of undue discrimination. What are the Four Essentials? What will the society be like, when all people continue practicing the Four Essentials. The following four articles suggest some of the answers.

(1) Self-Ability

Without self-ability, it would be impossible to lead human lives. The Great Master said, “Unless one is an helpless infant, senile oldster or seriously ill, in all other cases, one must cultivate self-ability so that one can perform one’s unavoidable duty and obligation, and, as far as one can, take care of those who do not have self-ability.” His teachings could be summarized by the activity principle: Unless absolutely incapable situation, (for example, children, old age, illness, psychopath, and so on), we should cultivate self-ability on a study basis. The phrase “on a study basis” takes on a new and important meaning. Just like studying unknown things consecutively, the same is true for self-Ability in that we cultivate it case by case. The world is well represented by the perception and practice of Self-Ability.

(2) The Wise Man First

The whole of mankind should be intelligent enough to be able to construct a paradise on this earth village, irrespective of their status, sex, age and the likes of those who practice Wise Man First. Without knowledge, we are unable to correct absurdities and defend our basic rights. The Principle of the Wise Man First in the Scripture says, “as it is natural for the wise man to teach the fool and for the fool to learn from the wise man, assuming that in any situation one wants to learn, one ought not to get attached to unreasonable systems of discrimination, but should fulfill only what one is aiming at.” The Great Master often said that one’s character is established mostly through learning.

To practice “The Wise Man First”, above all else, the Scripture says that all the articles relating to the unreasonable system of discriminations from the past should be abolished, discrimination between the nobility and peasantry, men and women, among different races, nationalities, and so on. Then what types of teachers are we to learn from? According to the section of Articles of the Wise Man First, five types of teachers are introduced. The first, if one finds a person whose way of using his original Nature and his moral conduct is superior to one’s own, then one ought to recognize that he is one’s teacher. The second, if one finds a person whose ability to handle political or administrative affairs is superior to one’s own, then one ought to know that he is one’s own teacher. The third, if one finds a person whose knowledge of living is superior to one’s own, then one ought to know that he is one’s own teacher. The fourth, if one finds a person whose learning and technique is superior to one’s own, then one ought to know that he is one’s own teacher. The fifth, if one finds a person whose common sense is superior to one’s own, one ought to know that he is one’s own teacher. In the past we lived in a closed society based on status, so that persons of high status did not learn anything from a person of a lower social standing. The attitude prevailing in the past societies was detrimental to the development of our educational systems. In Won Buddhism, any one superior, in any sphere, is regarded as one’s own teacher. One does not have to regard all superior people as one’s teachers at all times, but only those when one needs to learn something from them. Ven. Chongsan said. “Between intelligence and foolishness there is basically no difference, but the intelligent has the obligation to lead the foolish.” And he went on to say, “as we strive to change those who do not want to learn and teach into those who learn and teach willingly, our society would no doubt get full of knowledge and wisdom.” What should be stressed here is the giving of equal opportunity to those who are eager for learning and acquiring knowledge.

(3) The Education of the Children of Others

If the educational system is limited, or if the concept of education does not transcend the boundaries of oneself and others, then world civilization will be retarded. In order for all brethren to be endowed with a blessed life, it is a public duty to educate all younger generations, by expanding all educational organizations and abolishing the boundaries between oneself and others. Long time ago western societies fully developed their educational systems, but in Asian countries, excluding Japan, they were passive to open the gate of education widely. Of course, nowadays we seldom see a lack of education even in Asian countries. The facts of past education systems were as follows; Government and society neither made a positive effort nor offered inducements for education; the educational system was so restricted that neither female nor the lower classes could ever think of being educated; there were few educated people who applied their learning for the benefit of the public because of the lack of organized public opinion and communications. Opinions on education were rarely exchanged; the idea of education did not transcend the boundaries of oneself and others. So men of property, if they had not their own children, tried vainly only to have children and missed the opportunities to educate people, while poor men, though they were eager to educate their children were unable to do so, because of their financial problems, so they also missed the opportunity to educate people.

The Scripture suggests three articles of the education of other's children. The first, at this good opportunity as we have now, the defects in our educational system are to be removed. One must help educational organizations to educate children whether one is childless or not; if possible, one is to educate as many children of others as possible, with the idea that they are one's own children. The second, a nation or society must establish a wide variety of educational organizations so as to be able to educate with a positive effort. The third, any religious orders, societies, nations, and the world, or, any individuals who practice the articles of the education of other people's children should be honored and respected in accordance with the degree of their meritorious deeds.

(4) Respect for Those Dedicated to the Public Welfare

To construct a paradise in the world, there should be many people devoting themselves to their societies in every field. According to the Principles of Respects for Those Dedicated to Public Welfare in the Scripture, it states that if the world respects those who dedicate themselves to public welfare, then there will be many who will dedicate themselves to the welfare of the world; if a nation respects those who dedicate themselves to public welfare, then there will be many who will dedicate themselves to the welfare of the nation; and if a society or a religious order respects those who dedicate themselves to the welfare of the society or the religious order, there will be many who will dedicate themselves to the welfare of the society or the religious order. The public, therefore, must respect those who contribute in various ways to the world, to a nation, a society, or a religious order in the way just as children pay respect to their parents.

Our societies will be brightened to the extent when a lot more dedicators appear, and be duly rewarded by the people. Of course, we should not serve the public with the intention of being compensated, but those who share in such benefits should express their thanks by bringing those dedicators before the bright light. In the Scripture, the Articles of Respect for Those Dedicated to Public Welfare says, "We must distinguish between those who work for their own family and those for public welfare; and if both are worthwhile, we must put priority on the work for public welfare by transcending the sense of boundary between one's self and that of others. Those who dedicate themselves to public welfare are to be supported in old age by the public according to the degrees of their meritorious deeds; and after their death the public must take on the responsibility for an honorable funeral. Their pictures and personal histories must be recorded and commemorated forever."

Ven. Chongsan said, "In the future, those who are truthful and work for the public good will become the noblest men in the world. On the contrary, those who indulge in selfishness and restrict themselves only to their family unit will find it difficult to make their way in life. Only public-minded men will be welcomed everywhere." The high quality of human life could be found mostly in the dedicated activities for public welfare. The names of the dedicated people for the public welfare will remain in the minds of world people.

To summarize, we can achieve an equal society with human rights, knowledge, education, and dedicated lifestyle to public welfare through practicing the Four Essentials. The Won Buddhist view on equality can also be regarded as a concept for world peace.

Book Review

G.C. Nayak, *Nirvan/a in Candrakirti's Prasannapada. A Study in the Madhyamika Concept of Nirvan/a in the Context of Indian Thought. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla, 2006. 107 pp. ISBN 81-7986-066-3.*

The present monograph by Professor Nayak, **Nirvana in Candrakirti's Prasannapada**, (referred to hereafter as NCP) is the sequel to his *Madhyamika Sunyata*, being a reappraisal of Madhyamika philosophical enterprise with special reference to Nagarjuna and Candrakirti (New Delhi, 2001). In the first chapter of his book the author discusses the 'Concept of Freedom (Moks/a and Nirvan/a) in Indian Thought,' beginning with the historical Buddha whom, apart from being a 'world teacher' and 'great leader of men', he considers 'the originator of a new trend in the Indian philosophical tradition'. He briefly deals with Nagarjuna, the Svatantrika and Prasangika schools of the Madhyamikas, then with Nagarjuna's *magnum opus*, viz. the *Mulamadhyamakakarikas*, and finally introduces the commentary on the latter work and main source of the present study, viz. Candrakirti's *Prasannapada*. In the context of Indian thought, as the author points out, freedom is understood as being free from suffering (*duhkha*) which is due to *avidya*, nescience, and insight-knowledge (*jana*) is regarded as both a means of attaining freedom / liberation and as itself being freedom (NCP, p. 16). To clarify the Indian concept of freedom, Nayak compares the Madhyamika understanding of it chiefly with that of Vedanta by quoting Sankara or drawing on the *Pancadasi* of Vidyaranya. He concludes the first chapter by saying that "...the concept of *nirvana* as *sarvakalpanak saya* (cessation of all essentialist thought-constructions) in Candrakirti's *Prasannapada* highlights the very core of Buddhist thought and is so very vital for a proper assessment of the contribution of the Buddhist philosophy to Indian as well as world-culture" (NCP, p. 26).

In chapter 2 'Nirvana as Kalpanaks/aya in the Context of Buddhist Anatma' is treated. The means to bring about *kalpanaksaya* – another translation of this term would be 'cessation of falsely imagining' – is the Madhyamikas' therapeutic philosophy-cum-soteriology consisting in the analytical deconstruction of all sorts of 'self-nature' (*svabhava*) and dogmatically thinking in terms of 'essence' and 'substance'. On account of this rigorous procedure, as Nayak writes (NCP, p. 10), "Madhyamika philosophy itself has also been grossly misunderstood throughout the ages because of its critical attitude which is unparalleled in the history of philosophy, Indian as well as Western," and with reference to *nairatmya*, '[the teaching of] insubstantiality', whose yogic realisation is prerequisite to *kalpanak saya*, he further says about this specifically Buddhist doctrine that "it will be a gross misunderstanding, rather sheer injustice, to label it as nihilism and to look for an absurd annihilation or denial of our practical life (*vyavahara*) in any of its typical manifestation" (NCP, p. 30). Chapter 3 is entitled 'Essentialist Thought-Constructions (*Kalpana*) vis-à-vis *Sunyata* as Essencelessness (*Nihsvabhav ata*)'. So as to facilitate an understanding of essencelessness the author first clarifies the meaning of

svabhava with the help of a comparison of the pre-Buddhist Svabhavavada and Essentialism in Western philosophy and then by giving Candrak rti's definition of selfnature / essence pertaining to all things or factors of existence which "are supposed to be immutably fixed and independent metaphysical essences... *Svabhava* is *akrtaka*, not created, not originating from any agent... It does not depend on *hetu* and *pratyaya* to come into existence" (NCP, p. 43). *Svabhava* thus characterised would necessarily involve so many consequential absurdities: Because of the static nature of "essence" it would be impossible, for instance, to get rid of the mental defilements (*klesa*) and thereby realise final emancipation, *nirvana*. Contrary to *svabhava* being unconditioned and uncreated, essencelessness relates to conditioned / dependent origination (*prat tyasamutpada*). According to Nagarjuna and Candrak rti, in Nayak's words, "The exact or the true nature of things (*tattva*) therefore lies in *prat tyasamutpada* which is the same as *sunyata* in the sense of *svabhava sunyata* or *nihsvabhava*, the realisation of which alone gives rise to... freedom from thoughtconstructions" (NCP, p. 44).

The topic of chapter 4 is '*Nirvana* in Early Buddhism and in *Prasannapada*'. In order to substantiate his own observations the author quotes some well-known scholars, for instance G.C. Pande who has rightly made it clear that the later philosophical theories of the Madhyamikas or Yogacaras are not mere constructions, since they are based on the original *Nikaya /Agama* texts of the Tripiṭaka. The same scholar also refers to the Theravada sources according to which *nibbana* is "positive, experienceable, indescribable, and supreme, the most worthwhile" (NCP, p. 49) and, moreover, is 'characterised by peace' (*santilakkhana*). However, when Pande underlines the correctness of the Madhyamika interpretation of *nirvana* as being Absolute Reality, confirmed by "the trend of thought about *Nirvana* in ancient Buddhist literature" and according "best with the Upanisadic atmosphere," Nayak is emphatic that emptiness (*sunyata*) as essencelessness cannot be taken as Absolute Reality which at the conceptual level corresponds to the Upanisadic or Vedantic *Brahman*, also being "transcendent to thought-categories" (NCP, p. 54). Whilst a number of scholars translate *paramartha* both as the 'supreme goal' and 'the absolute', Nayak is very cautious about using the latter translation; he, instead, renders *paramartha* as the 'highest good' and comes to the conclusion that "The *sunyata* philosophy of Nagarjuna and Candrak rti is critical philosophy *par excellence* and this should in no case be utilised for the purpose of establishing a metaphysical doctrine of the absolutistic, monistic, the transcendentalist or of any other type for that matter "(NCP, p. 56). It may be mentioned, all the same, that scholars like E. Conze or J. W. de Jong, who had no Vedantic axe to grind, used the expression 'the absolute' in the same sense as "a *summum bonum* which is free from thoughtconstruction" is referred to by Nayak.

In chapter 5 'Some Theoretical and Practical Implications' are considered. As a corollary to the realisation of essencelessness and becoming totally free from thoughtconstructions, as indicated, according to *Bodhicaryavatara* IX, v. 56c (*sunyata dukkhasaman*) and its *Panjika* to IX, v. 1 (Vaidya edition, p. 169, 1. 23f.), *sunyata* not only extinguishes all suffering, but also occasions a bodhisattva's great compassion (*mahakaruna*) for sentient beings. Now for some, as the author mentions, here a problem arises, viz. how far compassion or even a Buddha's or bodhisattva's great compassion would be compatible with the law of karma, viz. that one has to reap what one sows. Here it would have sufficed to stress that Buddhism has nothing to do with fatalism or

determinism. By referring to Pali texts, to Mahayana scriptures and by quoting modern authors, even a very remarkable passage from *Hamlet*, Nayak impressively argues in favour of the *arhat*'s, *j vanmukta*'s, bodhisattva's and Buddha's magnanimity, sympathy and great compassion for all beings, thereby refuting the above-mentioned charge of 'sunnyavada = nihilism': It is only by finally realising perfection of wisdom (*prajnaparamita*) and thus getting rid of mental defilements once and for all that genuine altruism, sympathy and compassion of 'the true friends of sentient beings' can arise. In chapter 6 the author offers his 'Conclusion'. Particularly with regard to the 'attack on essentialism' in the *Prasannapada*, he speaks of "a unique philosophy of human freedom, in the whole of human history, advocated by Candrak rti through his philosophical enterprise." The author also draws attention to the fact that essentialism has been a dominant feature of Western thought and that it was the later Wittgenstein who mounted a trenchant attack on essentialism being reminiscent of the Madhyamikas' attack on *svabhavavada*. Moreover, Nayak examines a comparison drawn between the Buddhist *nirvana* and Aristotle's *eudaimonia*. Since *eudaimonia* is taken as "the active exercise of the powers of the (virtuous) soul in conformity to reason" (NCP, p. 88), the author thinks such comparison ultimately pointless. In conclusion, he makes a foray into Ch'an / Zen Buddhism and its Indian counterpart, viz. the Sahajayana, whose masters were the incomparable embodiments of Madhyamika philosophy.

Only in a few places of NCP issue may be taken with the author. On p. 20 it says: "Enlightenment consists in mastering a technique as it were and this in no way conflicts with our normal awareness," and on p. 37 it is correctly stated, after a quotation in the *Prasannapada*, that "Candrak rti... speaks of the Tathagata as one who is never engaged in thoughtconstruction." The wording "our normal awareness" lends itself well to misunderstanding. Our normal awareness is mostly under the sway of the *klesas*, and the "technique" to finally overcome them is *smrtyupasthana*, the systematic cultivation of mindfulness. Furthermore, enlightenment (*bodhi*) is the apex of various kinds of insight-knowledge resulting from the said cultivation, and the Tathagata "never engaged in thoughtconstruction" means that his right mindfulness is established spontaneously and without interruption (an *avenikadharmā*) whether he abides in meditation or in his everyday routine.

NCP, p. 29: When referring to the Pali *Dhammapada*, it is not possible to cite a Sanskrit version (cf. *Udanavarga*, Bernhard, 1965: *Atmavarga*, vv. 11–26: *atmatv ihatmano nathah*). NCP, p. 41: The statement "Even the Buddhist *anatma* tradition, as opposed to the *atma* tradition of Vedanta, is a sort of essentialistic denial or critique of *Atman*," to this reviewer seems to contradict what the author writes elsewhere in the book. Cf. in this context, for example, *Kasyapaparivarta*, section 57, quoted at *Prasannapada (Madhyamakasastra*, Vaidya, 1960), p. 153: *atmeti Kasyapa ayam eko 'ntah / nairatmyam ity ayamdvit yo 'ntah / yad etad anayor antayour madhyam... aniketam / iyam ucyate Kas yapa madhyama pratipad dharmanam/ bhutapratyavekseti//*

NCP, p. 86: "Prajna consists in freedom from the captivity or bondage of essentialist picture-thinking (*sarva-kalpāna-ksaya*), and that is all," certainly gives the impression of being an understatement. Here the reviewer may be permitted to quote from the excellent general introduction by Paul Williams on the Madhyamikas' philosophical enterprise on p. XXV of C. Crosby and A. Skilton, *Santideva. The Bodhicaryavatara* (Oxford, 1996):

What is of enduring value and contemporary significance here is the critical enterprise itself, the employment of the analytic investigative mind in the spiritual path in a way which refuses to be taken in by new and often subtle forms of grasping attachment but sees relentless critical probing as a means of letting go, creating a more balanced perspective which will aid in the project of effectively helping others. The spiritual path is not one of comfortable feelings and acceptance. It is deeply uncomfortable, and one cause of that necessary uncomfortableness is the persistent search for truth through employing rather than denying our critical faculties.

Unfortunately in the present monograph many printing errors and deficient reference occur. The great merit of this book by a professional philosopher, nevertheless, because of his presenting Madhyamika philosophy in its proper perspective and thereby rectifying earlier misconceptions is incontestable.

About the writer

Bhikkhu Pasadika

Bhikkhu Pasadika, Ph.D., was Hon. Professor in the Department of Indology and Tibetology, Philipp's University Marburg, teaching Pali, Buddhist Sanskrit and classical Tibetan until 2007. Previously, he also was in charge of the Chair of Indology for some years at W rzburg University and visiting professor at Ruhr University Bochum, teaching Sanskrit. He is a member of Monastre bouddhique Linh Son at Joinville-le-Pont (Paris).

In the News

WBU Celebrates 9th Anniversary with Dhamma Lecture and Meditation

Early this year, on Tuesday, January 15, B.E. 2551 (2008), the University office organized a religious ceremony with a Dhamma lecture and meditation session held at Sanya Dhammasakdi Auditorium, WFB Headquarters, Benjasiri Park, Bangkok to commemorate the World Buddhist University's 9th Anniversary. More than two hundred guests attended the sermon on the topic "Dhamma and World Peace" by Ven. Aryawangso, Abbot of a forest monastery from Lampun province. In the afternoon, Ven. Aryawangso led the distinguished guests and participants in the meditation practice session.

WBU Patron Passes Away

Phra Ubali Kunupamajarn, Abbot of Wat Raikhing, a well known monk of Thailand and long-time supporter of WBU passed away after a long bout of illness on February 13, this year. Phra Ubali Kunupamajarn was Abbot of Wat Raikhing for almost 50 years. During his life, he was known to support the education of Bhikkhus, build schools, a library, a hospital and other education centers. He also set up scholarships for young Bhikkhus and lay students desirous of higher learning but who lacked funding. Phra Ubali Kunupamajarn supported WBU from the very beginning and donated a considerable amount to the WBU fund for Buddhist studies.

The Vesak Celebration in Thailand

On May 18, B.E. 2551 (2008), Mr. Ruangdej Srimuni, director of the WBU Centre, Thailand, led the WBU delegates to join delegates from Buddhist organizations around the World in the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations at the UN Conference Centre, Bangkok and Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom. The event hosted by Mahachulalongkorn-rajabidyalaya University of Thailand drew Buddhist delegates from more than 40 nations worldwide. The all-day event was highlighted by speeches from respectable world Buddhist figures, including panel discussions on important world issues and cultural performances. About 2,000 delegates attended the celebrations.