

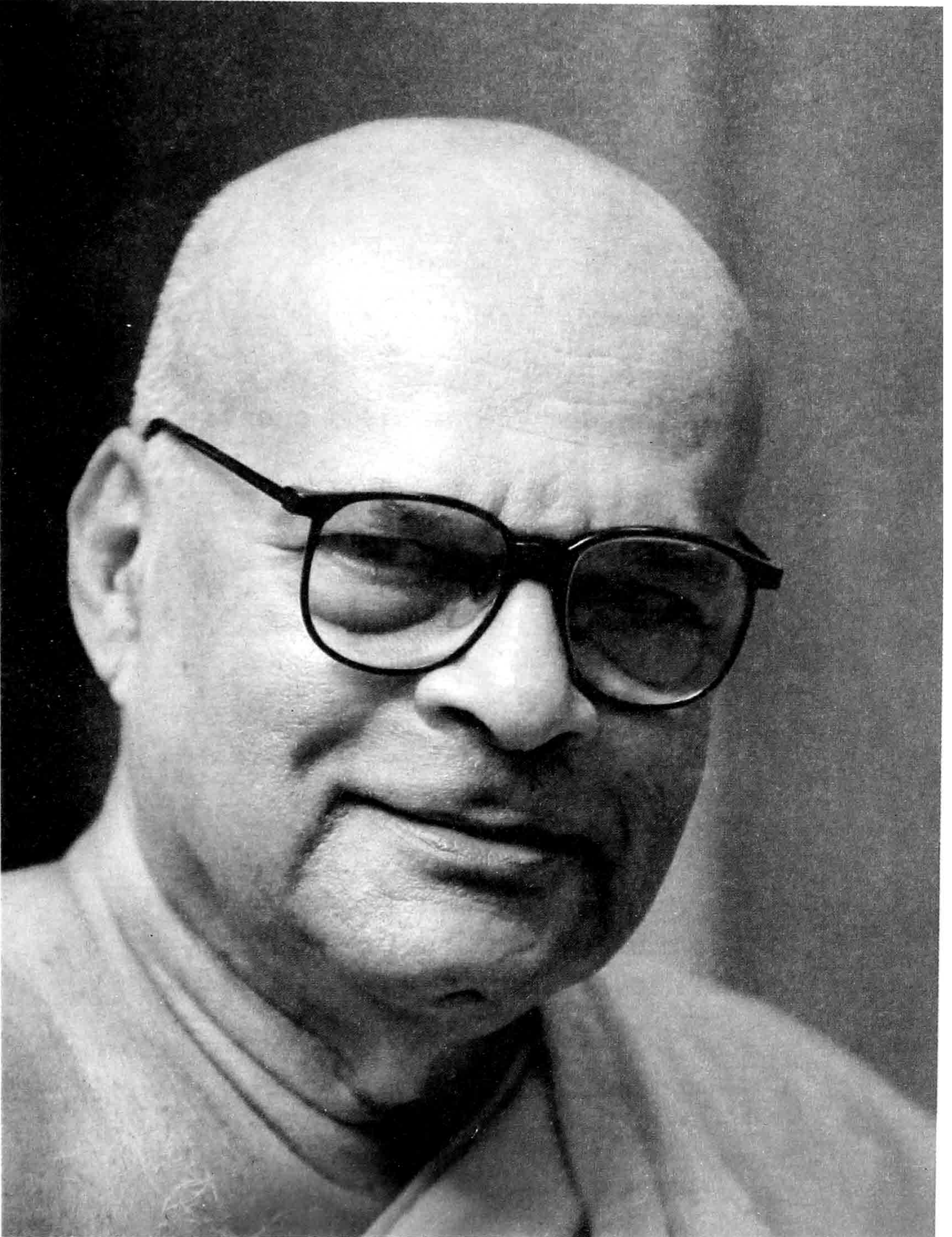
WHERE IS THE BUDDHA?

Revised Edition



Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda

R000000



Ven. Dr. Kirinde. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera J.S.M, Ph.D., D.Litt
18th March 1918 - 31st August 2006

Publication of the



Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society

佛陀教义弘扬协会

Buddhist Maha Vihara

123, Jalan Berhala, Brickfields, 50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: 603-22741141 Fax: 603-22732570

E-Mail : info@buddhistmahavihara.com

Website : www.buddhistmahavihara.com

www.ksridhammananda.com

Published for Free Distribution in conjunction with the
3 Month Memorial Service for the Late
Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera

1st Print - November 2006 (12,000 copies)

Printed by Pressmarks (M) Sdn. Bhd.

ISBN : 978-983-2515-99-9

This is the last book written by the late Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera who passed away on 31st August, 2006. At the time of his demise the Most Venerable was in the process of editing the manuscript and the Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia decided to print 50,000 copies of the unfinished work to highlight the fact that Ven. Chief was devoted to spreading the Dhamma even to the end of his days and to give the mourners something to remember him by.

The Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia has generously given permission to the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society to reprint this book in the final revised version to mark the third month of the Venerable's passing away. We are confident that Ven. Chief would approve of the revision because it was undertaken by Mr. Vijaya Samarawickrama who had worked very closely with him in preparing his books for publication over the last thirty five years.

Committee of Management
Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society
Buddhist Maha Vihara
November 2006

WHERE IS THE BUDDHA?

People usually ask where the Buddha went after he passed away or where he is living now. The answer to this question is very complicated and especially difficult for those who do not have a deep knowledge of Buddhist spirituality and who are used only to understand the world from a materialistic point of view. Most of us today have difficulty understanding the concept of a Buddha. We therefore think of him as a human being who “has gone” somewhere after death. This problem arises because we are always taught that the Buddha was not a god, but a human. It is not so simple. The Buddha was *NEITHER* god *NOR* human. So we must approach the two questions we asked earlier with the understanding of what Buddhahood means.

Who is the Buddha?

Sometimes certain missionaries approach Buddhists and say that since we say the Buddha is not a god, that he was a man, and that he is dead and gone, what can someone gain by worshipping such a mortal? To answer them we must understand that the Buddha is called *Sattha Deva-manussanam*, teacher of gods and men. This is a very important description. The Buddha was born as a mere mortal, yes, but he transcended his human limitations by developing his mind and thereby went beyond both humans and gods. There are many instances where the gods came to the Buddha to ask him to explain such problems like where to find real happiness and about whether the world

was created by a supreme deity. Whether we want to believe this or not, the answers which are recorded in our books point out clearly that the Buddha was clearly ahead of his time, explaining the universe in ways which are very much in keeping with the developments of modern science. Buddhists are never confronted by the embarrassing situation where we have to change our understanding of the world each time science makes a new discovery. The Buddha has taught that we evolved as human beings and were not created, just as has been proven by modern science. According to the Buddha also, religion came about to satisfy human needs.

It has taken millions of years for humans to develop the mind through the slow process of evolution. The human race moved through various stages of understanding from animism where they believed everything in nature was alive and peopled with invisible spirits, to the belief in many gods, then a single god, and finally to declare that these are all natural phenomena free of any divine control. When the mind was not fully developed people assumed that there are some powers which make nature work the way it does and they began to think there must be a some intelligent force who creates and maintains these occurrences. To understand this force they represented it in visual forms as statues and paintings. Their leaders used the concepts of “spirits” or powers to make humans behave in socially accepted ways. For example, they said if their followers would act in the interest of the group (by not stealing, killing etc)

they would be rewarded by the spirits or punished if they acted otherwise. Humans are always beset with fear, worry, suspicion, insecurity, so they need someone or something to depend on for protection against these problems. Believing that the unknown forces would help them, they started to pray to them. At first, all of nature was worshipped (animism). These were then raised to the level of multiple gods (polytheism) and finally the concept of a single Creator God evolved. So we see that religions have their origins in trying to make sense of how nature operates and to gain power over it. What first began as a response to particular problems as they arose — for success in hunting, to ward off disease, for example — in time led people to depend on God for everything. They were afraid of death and did not know what happened after this life. So they tried to cheat death by inventing the concept of a soul which is permanent. They introduced the idea of an eternal soul that departs from here and remains in heaven eternally. This is to satisfy the craving for eternal existence. The Buddha however said anything that comes into existence is subjected to change, decay and extinction. This is very much in keeping with the concept of change in modern science.

It is true that the Buddha is not a god. When we analyze his life, we see he never introduced himself as a son of god or messenger of god but as an enlightened religious teacher. Some other religions describe him as an incarnation of another Buddha or as another god. There is nothing in the

existent teaching of the Buddha to support this view. He was an individual person who, by striving over a very long period, life after life, developed and cultivated all the great qualities, virtues, discipline and wisdom which we call *paramitas* or perfections. When he had perfected all the good qualities he gained enlightenment. Enlightenment is a complete understanding of how the universe operates. It operates according to natural, impersonal, cosmic laws which we call Dharma. He discovered there is no God who created the universe or who regulates it. Any human being can discover this law, live according to its principles and be free from all sufferings.

People ask how anyone can become a perfect being without support from any god. Buddhists maintain that every individual can develop the mind to understand every thing in this universe. The meaning of the word *manussa*, in many languages is human being. But *manussa* carries a far greater significance than this. It is made up of two words, *mano* and *ussa*. *Mano* is mind, and *ussa* is to develop. Therefore *manussa* is a human being who can develop and cultivate the mind to perfection. Human beings are unique because besides humans there are no living beings in this universe who can develop the mind to the extent of gaining enlightenment. Not even divine beings (*devas*, gods) can become Buddhas because they cannot develop their mind up to such an extent. This is why we said earlier that even the gods come to the Buddha for advice. They have worldly

sensual, peaceful, prosperous existences but their thinking power is limited. Their purpose is simply to enjoy a pleasurable existence. They cannot understand suffering. Only *manussa* or human being can become the Buddha or Enlightened One because humans can enjoy both happiness and suffering in the same lifetime and realize that the search for happiness is a worthwhile pursuit. Therefore the achievement of a Buddha far transcends anything gods can do. It is a waste of time to argue with people who insist that their gods are superior to the Buddha because the Buddha was a mere man. We must know that Buddhahood is a profoundly supreme state, beyond human or divine understanding. And simply talking about this state cannot produce understanding because our capacity for thinking is limited. In this connection we may mention that this is why Lao Tzu also said that it is impossible to understand the Tao: "The Tao which can be talked about is not the eternal Tao."

Some people claim that the Buddha's wisdom was revealed to him by an outside source. Buddhists flatly reject this claim because their stand is that if any divine power wants to reveal something, it can easily do so publicly so that everyone can hear what was said. Buddhists reject divine revelation. They maintain that the Buddha gained enlightenment through the application of his own effort. The Buddha did not encourage anybody to believe anything or claim that he had been instructed by a higher power to do so.

Having lived as a human being the Buddha taught us all to raise ourselves to the highest level of perfection. But we do not rely on the Buddha to save us. We can only do that by following the Teachings ourselves. The followers of all the other religions greet others, saying “God, bless you”, but Buddhists very seldom greet others, saying “Buddha bless you”. Buddhists recite *Buddham Saranam Gacchami* (I go to the Buddha for my refuge).

Buddhists are now asked, “if you believe that you can take refuge in the Buddha why not greet others saying, ‘The Buddha bless you’?” This is because real blessing comes as a result of our own effort to perform wise actions. Taking Refuge is like becoming a student, to commit yourself to follow the teachings of the Buddha, but you must learn, practice and realize by yourself. No one else can do that for you. The Buddha is a teacher, not a savior. We respect him by following his teachings, not by praying to him to grant us favors.

Again we must understand that when we look at images of the Buddha, we are not simply worshipping the image. The image reminds us to remember the advice given by the Buddha to follow a decent way of life. Once a monk called Vakkali would come and sit down in front of the Buddha and watch him everyday. One day the Buddha asked him “What are you doing?” Vakkali replied, “Sir, when I look at your physical body, it gives me a lot of happiness.” Then the

Buddha said, “Vakkali, by watching this dirty, filthy, impermanent physical body what do you gain? You only entertain your emotion; you do not gain knowledge or understanding. You cannot see the real Buddha through the physical body. Buddha is not the physical body.” Then he said, “Only one who understands the dharma taught by the Buddha sees the real Buddha.” The real Buddha appears in the mind when we understand what the Buddha taught.

Here you can understand the Buddha was not particular about the physical body. When you study the history of India, for nearly 500 years there never was any Buddha image because the Buddha did not encourage anybody to erect images of him. It is the Greeks who created Buddha images and other forms of religious symbols. Now of course different forms of Buddha images have spread all over the world.

Followers of some religions condemn us as idol worshippers because actually they do not know what Buddhists are doing. To a Buddhist the Buddha is the symbol of his teaching. The image itself is not important. We can use anything to remind us of the Buddha — a tree, a pagoda, even a lighted lamp — but we must move beyond that to remember his teaching and to practice it. A popular Buddhist tale will illustrate this point. A few hundred years after the Buddha, there was a well-known monk called Upagutta. He was a very popular preacher. When he gave a talk, thousands of

people assembled. Mara the evil one was very unhappy because more and more people were becoming religious. (Mara is personified as the Evil One). This Mara started to perform very attractive entertainment, dancing, singing and merry making in front of the temple. Then the devotees slowly turned to watch Mara. Nobody came and listened to his talk. Upagutta decided to teach Mara a good lesson and he also went to watch the performance. When the performance was ended Upagutta said he really appreciated it. "In appreciation of your performance I would like to put a garland on your neck." Mara was very happy. When Upagutta put it on, Mara felt it tightening around his neck like a python. He tried to pull it out but could not. Then he went to Shakra, the king of the gods and asked him for help to remove the garland. Shakra also tried his best but he also could not take it out. Then he went to Brahma who was regarded as creator god at that time and asked him to remove the garland. He also tried to take it out but was unsuccessful. Then Brahma told him that only the one who put it on could remove it. So Mara had to come back to Venerable Upagutta and beg him to take it out otherwise he would die. Then Upagutta said, "It is not difficult but I will only do it under two conditions. First, you must promise in future that you're not going to disturb any of our religious services." Mara agreed. "The second thing is that you must show me what the Buddha looked like. You have seen the Buddha before because on many occasions you tried to disturb the Buddha. You have the supernatural power to

represent the physical body.” Mara said, “Yes, I can do that if you promise not to worship me when I appear as the Buddha because I am not holy.” Then Venerable Upagutta said, “I am not going to worship you.” So, Mara transformed himself. However when he appeared as the Buddha, Venerable Upagutta immediately paid his respects. Then Mara shouted, “You promised that you would not worship me.” Upagutta replied “ Of course I do not worship Mara, I worship the Buddha.”

This is only a story, of course, but it is a very good example for people to tell others the meaning of worshipping the image of the Buddha. When you keep a Buddha image and pay homage, or when you take a Buddha image as an object for meditation, that is not worshipping the idol. You invite the Buddha into your mind through this symbol. It is a religious symbol.

How the Buddha image appeals to the human mind can be understood in the following incident. During the Second World War in Burma the commander in chief of the army found a beautiful small Buddha image. It was so appealing to his mind. He sent this image to Sir Winston Churchill, who was the Prime Minister of England at that time with a note saying, “Please keep this image on your table. Whenever you have any worries or disturbances please look at the face of this image. I believe that you will be able to calm your mind.”

Mr. Nehru the former Prime Minister of India was once arrested by the British government. When he was in the jail he had a small Buddha image in his pocket. He took out this image and kept it on the table and looked at it and thought, "In spite of so many troubles, problems and difficulties in this world, if the Buddha could manage to maintain a smiling face, why not we follow this great man?"

Anatole France who was a French scholar, visited London Museum and for the first time in his life he saw a Buddha image. Having seen this Buddha image, he said, "If god has come down from heaven to this earth he would be none other than this figure."

However an image is not essential. There are many who can practise the teaching of the Buddha without any image. It is not compulsory that they must have an image. We don't worship, we don't pray, we don't ask anything from the image but we pay homage, we respect to the memory of a great religious man.

Buddhists are accused by some evangelists of being idol worshippers, but sadly many Buddhists do not know how to reply to them. One of our members had been keeping a Buddha image for 45 years in his house. One day some missionaries came and told him that he was worshipping a devil. He did not know how to reply to them. This is surprising because for 45 years he had been worshipping the image and he did not know what to say when people

condemned it. This is the weakness of some of our Buddhists. They blindly follow tradition, worshipping, praying, offering, chanting but they do not try to understand the teachings of the Buddha. With or without the Buddha image you can practise the teachings of the Buddha. The physical body is not the Buddha. But we do keep images of the Buddha in our homes out of respect. We do not pray to the image itself, it is a symbol of what we believe, just as a flag is not the country, but simply to remind us of the nation to which we belong.

According to the Mahayana school of Buddhism there are 3 bodies of the Buddha or 3 *kayas*, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, dharmakaya. The Buddha used the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya for daily, visible activities like eating, sleeping, walking, talking, advising and preaching. All these activities were carried out through the physical body. However, when the Buddha attained *parinirvana* (or final passing away) these two bodies disappeared, leaving dharmakaya or dharma body of the Buddha which cannot disappear. This is why we can 'see' the Buddha even today, by remembering, understanding and following his Teaching.

The two other bodies of the Buddha are temporary but the Dharmakaya is eternal. The Buddha has stated "Whether the Buddha appears or not, dharma exists forever in this world". Buddhas do not create the dharma, they merely

discover it by themselves without any help from god or teacher. When a Buddha appears he knows people have forgotten the real dharma. “This dharma that I understood is not a new dharma created by me”, said the Buddha. This dharma has always existed but people have misinterpreted it, creating wrong concepts according to their own imagination and completely polluting the purity of the dharma. Once the Buddha has taught the dharma many people try to follow it, but they do not have the Buddha’s intelligence so they misinterpret the teaching, giving it their own meaning.

It is even happening today, 2500 years after the Buddha revealed the truth as dharma. People are doing wrong things in many countries in the name of the Buddha. It is not that they do not follow the advice given by the Buddha. But they introduce their traditional cultural practices mixed with Buddhism and introduce it as Buddhism. As Buddhists, we must try to learn what the Buddha taught and try to strictly practise it without being misguided by false interpretations.

What do Buddhists Believe?

One day, a Christian friend who is a priest came to see me with his followers to discuss about Buddhism and asked, “Actually can you tell me what Buddhists believe?” Then I told him very kindly that Buddhists do not ‘believe’ anything. He pointed to my book *What Buddhists Believe* and asked

“why did you write this book?” I told him, “That is why I wrote this book, for you to read and see whether there is anything for you to simply *believe*. What Buddhists believe is nothing; they have to replace belief with understanding.”

“In that case,” he asked, “can you tell me what Buddhists do?” I told him that the Buddha has given the answer to that question, by declaring that instead of believing, one must practise pariyatti, patipatti and pativeda, i.e. understand, practise, realize, everything he or she hears.

First we must strive to understand because we must not blindly believe anything that we cannot understand. The Buddha says you must try to understand. If you do not understand you will create wrong ideas according to your own imagination which is not based on reason and commonsense. In his teachings in the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the way to Enlightenment, the first requirement is sammaditthi, i.e. right understanding. The Buddha started his mission by asking his followers to develop right understanding rather than blind faith or belief.

After learning we gain wonderful knowledge about Buddha and his teachings. But knowledge alone is not enough, we have to practise what we have learned with understanding. It is only when we practice that we experience the result or the effect and verify whether the teachings are true or false. It is then that we come to know, or realize that it is true. These are the three methods that the Buddha taught for us

to become noble human beings: to learn and understand, to practice, and to realize. There is no room for blind faith in Buddhism. This is the way to live in this world to get rid of our suffering. The Buddha's method of introducing religion was not by asking us to *believe* anything but to learn, practise and experience the results. The Buddha's method is a practical one. He actively discouraged fruitless philosophical discussions on our origins and our lives after death, but encouraged us to live *this* life in peace. For instance, the Buddha says that you must be kind and honest. After understanding why he teaches these qualities we must try to practise them, after which we can experience the effects when everybody respects us and recognizes us as very kind, very honest humans. As a result, nobody will disturb us or accuse us. That is the good result that we experience. It is as simple (or if you wish, as difficult) as that!

One might say it is very idealistic to expect everyone to have the same level of understanding. That is why they say we must have divine laws to make us behave correctly. It is the fear of punishment which will make us good. On the contrary, the Buddha says we must try to understand his teachings according to the level of our own intellectual capacity. We can test the results of the practice ourselves. We understand why some things are wrong and why some things are right. We do not do certain actions simply because the orders or commandments come from heaven but because

we understand how we should act as rational beings. As *manussa* we have a thinking mind and common sense which we must use to understand why some action is beneficial to us and to other beings. Our understanding and our own experience is enough to know why something is wrong or right.

Here is another example. The Buddha advised us not to destroy other living beings. He did not introduce this as a religious law because an understanding human being should know that killing is cruel. We should not refrain from killing because of fear of punishment. It is not difficult for us to understand why killing is bad because when another person comes and tries to kill us we certainly do not like it. Again he says when you have valuable things stolen by somebody, how would you feel? In the same way when we steal others' property they also do not like it. It is not necessary for us to get orders from any god or Buddha or Jesus to understand this simple concept. Religious teachers appear in the world to remind us what we have neglected or forgotten as part of our natural goodness. According to the Buddha all human beings have instinctive moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*otappa*) which should be developed to keep them from harming others. Our own experience and understanding is more than enough for us to know why certain things are right or wrong.

The Buddha advised us to think and understand. We have

the sense of reasoning. We have common sense unlike other living beings which also have a mind but cannot think rationally. Their minds are limited to find food, shelter, protection and sensual pleasure. They cannot extend their mind further. But human beings have a mind to think and understand up to the maximum level. This is why scientists have explored and discovered many things which we never heard of before. There is no other living being in this world which can develop the mind up to the extent. That is why only a human being can become a Buddha. Only by developing their minds can human beings gain enlightenment.

As long as we are born into this world, within a lifetime, physically and mentally we experience enormous suffering, worries, problems, pain, difficulties, calamities and unsatisfactoriness. There is nobody in this world who can say that he or she is fully satisfied with this life. Everybody complains and grumbles about physical or mental problems. By understanding this situation through his own development of insight the Buddha stopped the process rebirth with its inevitable consequences of old age, disease, decay and death. That is true salvation. Salvation means freedom from physical and mental suffering. By *existing* in physical form or any other form we cannot overcome our physical and mental suffering. This even applies to the gods, because even heaven is not a permanent place. There is no such thing as eternal happiness in heaven. The gods

are not free from ignorance, pride or jealousy.

We crave for existence. This craving and attachment are very strong in our mind. But we want to exist in spite of all these sufferings and troubles, pain and sicknesses and many other problems because of our craving and ignorance. This is the cause of suffering. Therefore if we don't like to suffer, the best thing is to stop this birth.

No one who is born is exempted from physical or mental suffering. Look at what is happening in this world. The whole world is a battlefield, all over the world people create violence and bloodshed and war and destruction. In manyways animals are better than human beings. Animals can live without creating many unnecessary problems which cause suffering. Of course they do kill and fight, but it is simply for survival, not for the kind of greed we humans develop — the craving for material goods, for power, for fame, for recognition, for sensual pleasure and so on. Animals do not act out of selfish greed. When they are hungry they go out and catch another living being, satisfy their hunger and go to sleep. But human beings cannot be satisfied without craving for so many other unnecessary things. Craving and attachment are so strong in our human minds. Because of that jealousy, enmity, anger, ill-will, cruelty and wickedness arise. Other living beings do not develop their cruelty up to that extent. What is worse is that our superior intelligence helps us to inflict greater pain than animals ever will — we

have the capacity to produce weapons that indiscriminately destroy innocent creatures and humans as well as the natural environment. The irony is that animals have no laws or ethical rules to guide them whereas humans do and yet it is humans who display the most violent tendencies. Human beings have religion. But sadly religion is abused. The purpose of religion is to guide humans to be noble, compassionate and caring. Religion is not only to make people worship and pray but to do some service to other living beings by avoiding evil thoughts so that we can serve others. Devotional aspects of religion are important but that alone cannot develop the mind to gain proper understanding or wisdom. The Buddha was very clear that mere rituals cannot bring happiness. Only mental purification can. Before the passing away of the Buddha many people assembled with flowers to offer and pay respect to him. The Buddha asked them to go back. He said if they really wanted to respect him, instead of offering flowers, and worshipping, they should practise at least one of his teachings. Only then would they really respect the Buddha.

People ask where the Buddha is. To practise Buddhism it is not necessary for us to know where the Buddha is, or where he went. Take for instance electricity which was discovered by somebody. Is it necessary for us to know the person who discovered electricity, where he is and from which country he came and his name? Our duty is to make use of the electricity. Again those who have discovered atoms

or atomic energy can use this atomic energy for constructive or destructive purposes. So it is our duty to make use of this energy in a proper manner. It is not necessary to know actually who discovered this atomic energy. People have discovered the computer and television but it is not necessary for us to know their names and details; our duty is to use them.

In the same manner do not ask where the Buddha is, or where he went. If the dharma, what he taught, is true, available and effective why is it necessary to know where the Buddha is? The Buddha never said that he can send us to heaven or hell. The Buddha can tell you what to do and what not to do to gain our salvation. That is the only thing the Buddha can do. Your duty is to practise what the Buddha taught. And while the Buddha is no longer with us, his teaching, the dharma is there to guide us. That is all that matters, not where the Buddha has gone. We have to understand the teachings and use them to get ourselves out of our present state of suffering through diligent self-effort.

“Purity and impurity depend on oneself
No one can purify another”

Believers of other religions say that divine powers can wash away the sins committed by people. The Buddha declared that sin cannot be created by one person, and washed away by another. Neither Buddha nor god can do that. When a

person is going to die and says that he believes in a particular god, after all the sinful things that he committed, can any god take away his sins? For instance maybe you are very hot tempered and you know it is wrong but you do not know how to get rid of it. So can you go to any god and pray and ask him to take away the cruelty from your mind? Do you think any god can do that? You may even go and worship the Buddha and ask the Buddha to take away your cruelty. But the Buddha also cannot take it away from your mind. The Buddha can only tell you how to remove your anger with your own effort. No one can help you but yourself through your understanding. You yourself must realize, "this anger is dangerous, can create lots of trouble, problems and difficulties and harm and disturb others. I must try to reduce anger by using my own mental energy and create strong determination to eradicate anger from the mind." So the Buddha or God cannot wash away sins created by us. We alone can do that.

On this problem of removing the result of wrong doing, there is a good advice given by the Buddha. If anyone has committed a bad deed or bad karma, they cannot get rid of the effects by praying to god or Buddha. However when they come to know that they have committed the bad deeds, they must stop committing bad deeds again. They must create a strong determination in the mind to create more and more good karma or meritorious deeds. When meritorious deeds and wholesome states of mind are developed, the effect of

the bad karma that has been committed earlier can be overcome. So, only increased good karma can reduce the effects of bad karma. It has nothing to do with begging for forgiveness.

Take for instance Angulimala, the murderer who killed nearly one thousand human beings. When the Buddha came to know about it, he went to see him. Angulimala wanted to kill him because he had completed 999 murders. His vow was to kill 1000 people, so he was very happy when he saw the Buddha because he thought it would be easy to kill an unarmed monk. On this occasion the Buddha performed a little miracle, although it was very rare for him to do so. Knowing it was difficult to control this man by preaching, the Buddha walked at a normal speed but miraculously appeared to move fast to make Angulimala to chase him. Although the man ran nearly 4 miles, he could not come near to the Buddha. Finally he asked the Buddha to stop and the Buddha knew it was time for him to talk to him. He said "I have already stopped; you're the one who runs." Angulimala said, "how can you say you have stopped, I saw you moving." The Buddha replied, "I have stopped means I have stopped killing or destroying other living beings. You are the one who is running means you are still committing evil. If you stop running after the things in this world then you can catch up with me." Then Angulimala realized that he was wrong in committing harmful actions which would drag him endlessly through samsara and decided to follow

the Buddha. He became a monk and started to meditate. Later he attained arahanthood and gained nirvanic bliss. Bad karma had no chance to come and catch him. He went on developing good karma and the bad karma had no chance to affect him. The Buddha taught this method to overcome the effect of bad karma — not by praying to any god but by doing more and more meritorious deeds.

Where is the Buddha?

Now that we have discussed who a Buddha is and his method of teaching us to become perfect human beings, we can ask our main question “Where is the Buddha?” Can we say he is in heaven or he is living in nirvana or he is living somewhere else ? Where did he go ? We must remember that all these questions arise from a worldly point of view. After gaining enlightenment Buddha said “*ayamantimajati natthidanipunabavo*” — this is my last birth and there is no more becoming again. He said, “I have already stopped becoming again and again in this world, life after life, and experiencing endless suffering”. Here we see that the Buddha had broken the cause which makes us go round and round in samsara: he was not going to be reborn ever again in heaven or on earth. He had destroyed the very cause which makes us humans go repeatedly from birth to death and birth to death endlessly. He did not *go* anywhere: he simply released himself from pain, happiness, suffering, pleasure: all the emotions which keep changing and creating pain.

He let go of existence. In the same way as we cannot ask where a flame goes when it is blown off, we cannot say that a Buddha goes anywhere. He simply ceases to exist according to our limited understanding of the word.

If I say that the Buddha is living in any part of the universe in physical form it is against his teachings. On the other hand if I say that the Buddha is *not living* in any part of the universe in physical form many people are not very happy because they have nothing to pray to for help in their daily existence. They say the Buddha's non-existence amounts to nothingness. Why pray to nothing? But the truth is: It is not nothingness; it is the ending of physical and mental suffering and experiencing nirvanic bliss or salvation free from physical form. It is not fruitful for us to debate whether the Buddha is living or not. If the doctrine or the teaching is available for us to experience peace, satisfaction in our life that is more than enough for us. Let us take a doctor who has discovered a very effective medicine. If the medicine is available, if it can cure sicknesses, is it necessary for us to know where this doctor is and whether he is still living or not? The important thing is to get rid of our sicknesses by taking the medicine. In the same manner the teachings of the Buddha are more than enough for us to get rid of our sufferings. The Buddha has given us the right to think freely to understand whether something is wrong by using our common sense or reasoning for us to understand the real nature of things that come into existence.

There is nothing in any part of the universe which exists without changing, without decaying and without extinguishing because all these are the combination of elements and mental and karmic energies. Therefore it is impossible for these energies and elements to remain forever without changing. If you can understand this then the teachings of the Buddha will help you to understand how to face your problems and difficulties, to overcome your unsatisfactoriness.

Otherwise we will have to face physical and mental suffering, unsatisfactoriness and disappointment. We have to actwisely to get rid of our problems. It is difficult for us to get rid of our suffering simply by praying, worshipping to anybody but through understanding the nature of our problems and difficulties and the cause of our problems and difficulties, we will be able to get rid of such problems.

If people say he has gone to nirvana then they think nirvana is a place. Nirvana is not a place; it is a mental state for us to achieve to experience our final salvation. We cannot say the Buddha has gone somewhere or is existing somewhere but he experiences the nirvanic bliss or the final goal of life.

So the best answer to the question "Where is The Buddha?" is, the Buddha is in your mind which has realized the Ultimate Truth.

May you all be well and happy.

**BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA
FREE DHAMMA PUBLICATIONS UPDATE
JANUARY – SEPTEMBER 2006**

	No. of Copies	
	(FULL YEAR PLAN)	(ACTUAL)
SINHALA (Printed in Sri Lanka)	60,000	30,000
ENGLISH	52,500	40,000
MANDARIN	39,500	53,000
TAMIL	51,000	17,000
BAHASA MALAYSIA	24,500	7,000
HINDI (Printed in India)	15,000	6,000
KANNADA (Printed in India)	9,000	6,000
THAI	NIL	3,500
TELEGU	6,000	NIL
KHEMER	NIL	1,428
BURMESE	NIL	NIL
KHISWAHILI (AFRICAN)	NIL	
DHAMMA TALKS (CDs)	15,000	NIL
TOTAL FREE PUBLICATIONS	272,500	163,928
	RM	RM
Total Cost	170,875	74,288.40
POSTAGE		8,123.60
TOTAL COST		82,412.00
<u>DONATION RECEIVED FOR:</u>		
FREE PUBLICATIONS		59,891.90
AWKANA LIGHTING		7,150.00
DHAMMA DANA TILLS		4,925.51
TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED		71,967.41
DEFICIT FOR YEAR		(10,444.59)

Our free publications in 14 languages are currently distributed at 25 Buddhist temples and centers in Malaysia and more than 300 centers in North America, Europe, Australasia, Sri Lanka, India, Africa and Singapore.

SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA

- Booking for Dana (Alms Giving) and Bana (Sermons)
- Blessing Services / Funeral Services by Monks
- Booking of Facilities for religious functions/ events
- Marriage Registration
- Full Moon and New Moon Day Services
- Sunday Dhamma Classes
- Sri Dhamma Library
- Tape Library
- Bookshop
- Correspondence Course
- Kindergarten - Tadika Sudharma
- PARAMA Business & I.T. Training Centre
- Weekly Activities
 - Chanting Tuesday & Friday 7.30p.m.
 - Special Talk Friday 1.00p.m.
 - Dhamma Talk Friday 8.00p.m.
 - Meditation Monday & Thursday 8.00p.m.
 - Service & Talk Sunday 8.30a.m.
 - Dhamma School Sunday 8.30a.m.

DONATION IN CASH OR KIND CAN BE MADE FOR :

- Buddhist Propagation
- Education Fund
- Project Buddho Africa
- Full Moon and New Moon services sponsorship
- General Maintenance of the Buddhist Maha Vihara
- Illumination (lighting) of the Main Shrine Hall
- Illumination (lighting) of the Awkana Buddha & Cakra
- Monks Dana
- Monks Requisites
- Welfare Fund
- Special Religious Events
 - Wesak
 - Annual Blessing Service
 - Annual Merit Offering Ceremony
 - Kathina Pinkama (ceremony)
 - Monks' Novitiate Programme

**MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE
NOBLE TRIPLE GEM
BE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**

DONATION FORM

Buddhist Maha Vihara
123, Jalan Berhala
Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur
Wilayah Persekutuan
Malaysia

Tel: 603-22741141 Fax: 603-22732570

I / We would like to make a donation to the Buddhist Maha Vihara.

Name :

Address :

.....

:

Amount: **RM**

Towards : ☐ The cost of reprinting this book

☐

Others, please specify

.....

All cheques can made payable to: **BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA** or TT to
“**BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA**” ACCOUNT NO. 0061-10-003018-0, **EON
BANK BERHAD, BRICKFIELDS, KL.** Kindly send us a copy of your
BANK SLIP so that we can send you an **OFFICIAL RECEIPT**.

Tribute to Chief

For generations our family has been closely connected with the Buddhist Maha Vihara. Our beloved Nayake Hamdru / Chief has been the pillar of spiritual growth not just for our family but also for the nation. He was always looked upon as a paternal master and continues to shape and inspire our contribution back to humanity by doing Service through Love & Compassion.

Thank you, Chief.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu.

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MR. & MRS. P. PETER DE SILVA**



REGARD PARENTS AS GODS

In the Manggala Sutta the Buddha says, "support of Father and Mother is the highest good fortune". Two persons to whom one can never repay their debts - your father and mother. Even if you were to carry them on your back and live a hundred years, supporting them with food, medicine and cleaning them, even this would not repay them.

OUR MOTHER has told us repeatedly not to mourn her loss and to be strong. She had trouble providing for her own plate but her love for humanity is incomparable. Her principles were just as time evolved, she adapted with enthusiasm and openness.

BEAUTIFUL, POWERFULL, LOVING, STRONG AND GIVING THAT'S HOW WE REMEMBER HER. SHE IS A TRUE AND OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP.

As we miss her presence, we will not forget the love and humility that she had passed on to those who knew her. We pledge to continuously be in service to all in need without prejudice.

CHILDREN'S DUTIES TO PARENTS.

Support their parents in every possible way, perform those duties that need to be performed, maintain the lineage and tradition of the family and look after the inheritance and give alms (perform religious rites) on their behalf when they pass on.

With Metta

Sons & Daughters-in-law, Daughters & Sons-in-law, grand children, great grand children and all loved ones.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



MR. & MRS. A. P. L. JAYAWARDENA

MR. SIMON DHANAPALA
JAYAWARDENA

REGARD PARENTS AS GODS

Worshipping Mother

Dasa Māse Uraeykatvā. Pōseti Uddikāranaān.
Āyu Dighan Wassasatan. Mātu Pādam Namā Maham.
For keeping me in your womb for ten months and for
protecting and nurturing me so well,
I worship you (at your feet) dearest mother: I wish you a
blissful life of a hundred years !

Worshipping Father

Vuddhikāro Alingitvā. Chumbitvā Piya Puttakam.
Rāja Majjham Supatittam. Pitu Pādam Namā Maham.
I worship the feet of my father who kisses and caresses me,
and places me amongst kings when it comes to my welfare.

Blessing Mother

I have no words to recount the hardships dearest mother you
underwent, on my behalf, from the day I was born.
I dearly worship you, loving mother.
When I cried you lulled me to sleep, with deep love and affection.
You washed me and cleansed me so caringly.
Oh dearest mother, may you attain NIBBĀNA

Blessing Father

I have no words to recount the sacrifices dearest father you made,
for my welfare and well-being, since my childhood.
I deeply worship you noble father.
Whenever I was upset or hurt, you comforted me so tenderly.
You cared for me and helped me in every way possible.

Oh loving father, may you attain NIBBĀNA.

*This booklet is sponsored by family members
of the late Madam Somavathy Jayawardena
and Mr. & Mrs. A. P. L. Jayawardena*



Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society

Buddhist Maha Vihara
123, Jalan Berhala, Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: 603-22741141 Fax: 603-22732570
E-Mail: info@buddhistmahavihara.com
Website: www.buddhistmahavihara.com
www.ksridhammananda.com

ISBN 978-983-2515-99-9



9 789832 515999