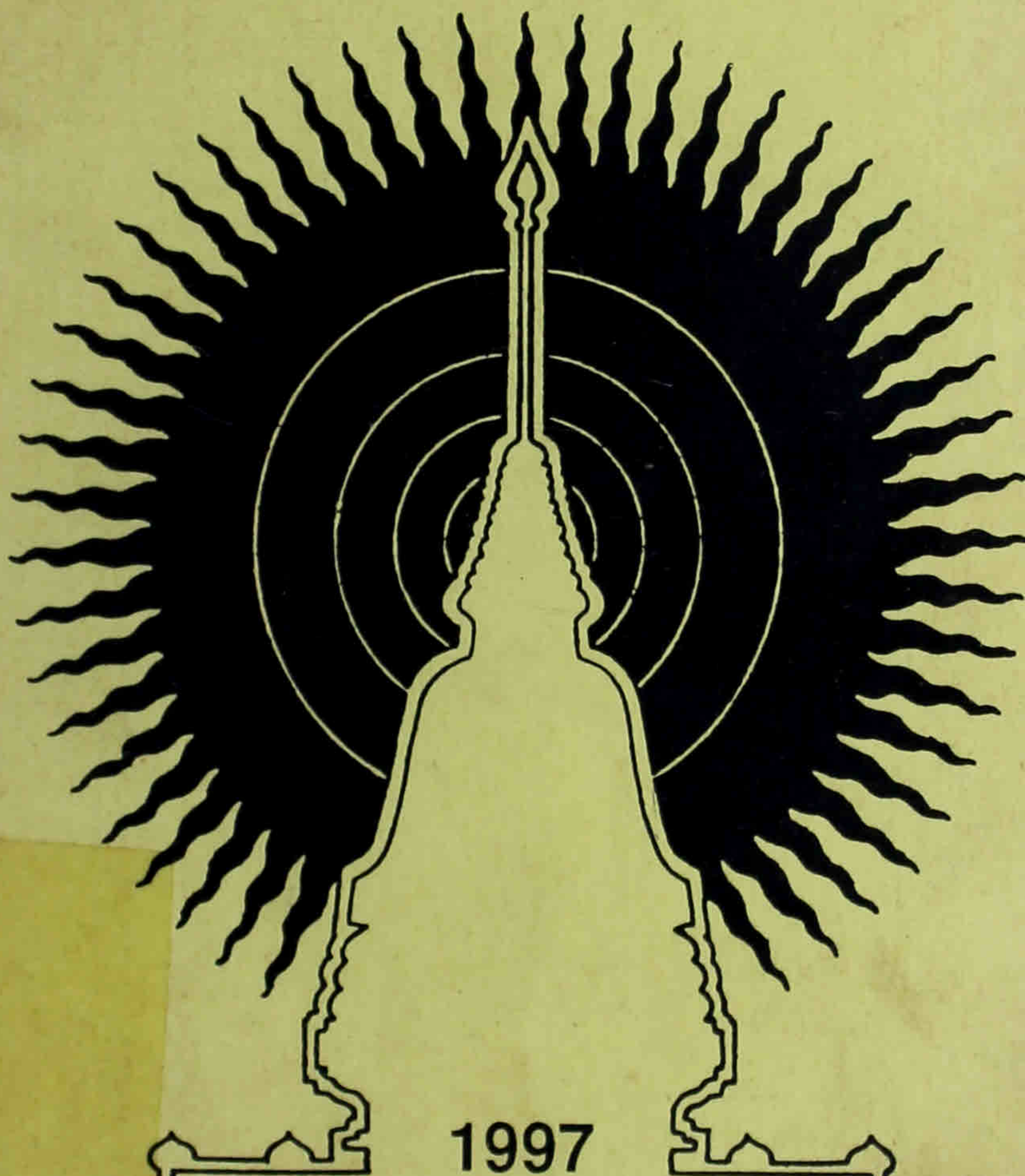


# **ECHO OF DHAMMA**

## **MANGALA VIHARA (BUDDHIST TEMPLE)**

30 JALAN EUNOS SINGAPORE 419495



1997

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*Buddha Image at New Shrine*



# ECHO OF --DHAMMA--

Quarterly Organ of the Mangala Vihara (Buddhist Temple)

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**37TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**OF**

**MANGALA VIHARA BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

**WILL BE HELD**

**ON**

**MONDAY, 31 MARCH 1997**

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**CHENG BENG CELEBRATION**

**WILL BE HELD**

**ON**

**SUNDAY, 6 APRIL 1997**

**ALL ARE INVITED**



## EDITORIAL

Chinese New Year is just over. Celebrating it means wishing one another good health, wealth/prosperity and longevity. Do all these mean craving? Is this traditional practice of wishing one another well and happy in the materialistic sense contrary to Buddha's teachings? Not at all.

For lay Buddhists it is not wrong to accumulate wealth through honest and fair means. Anathapindikka, the most devout lay disciple of the Buddha, was never told by the Buddha to stop making business and stop accumulating wealth.

Wishing one another success is one way of practising mudita. There is no jealousy in the happy wishing. By wishing others well we are also practising loving-kindness (Metta).

However, we must not forget about the Buddha's teachings about spiritual wealth. When Alavaka, the demon, asked the Buddha what the best form of wealth for man was, the Buddha answered that Faith is the greatest wealth for man. When Kasibharadvaja, the brahmin who owned farm land gave food to the Buddha in his capacity as a farm owner, the Buddha also likened Himself as a farmer who ploughed the spiritual field. As a farmer needs seed to start planting so the Buddha claimed that He too needs faith as the seed of Enlightenment.

In Buddhism, faith is to be accompanied by wisdom. Faith and wisdom must go together. Faith without wisdom is weak. There is no seeing of things as they really are. That faith is uncritical and becomes groundless. At the same time wisdom alone without faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha is incomplete. It is like a sickness that is caused by its medicine.



Indeed as the Buddha says:

They who have in the Buddha  
have faith in the best.

For those who have faith in the best  
the result is the best.

**Anguttara Nikaya II 34**

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### **ANATTA**

According to the Buddha's teaching, it is wrong to hold the opinion 'I have no self' (which is the annihilationist theory) as to hold the opinion 'I have self' (which is the eternalist theory), because both are fetters, both arising out of the false idea 'I AM'. The correct position with regard to the question of Anatta is not to take hold of any opinions or views, but to see things objectively as they are without mental projections, to see that what we call 'I', or 'being' is only a combination of physical and mental aggregates, which are working together interdependently in a flux of momentary change within the law of cause and effect and that there is nothing permanent, everlasting, unchanging and eternal in the whole of existence.



"The benefits of understanding law of kamma are that this understanding discourages one from performing unwholesome actions which have suffering as their fruit."

## UNDERSTANDING THE LAW OF KAMMA

By Dr Peter Della Santina

*Dr. P.D. Santina is a well-known Buddhist scholar and practitioner and formerly Buddhist Studies Programme co-ordinator with the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore.*

We know that what binds us in samsara are the defilements – desire, ill-will and ignorance. These defilements are something which every living being in samsara shares, whether we speak of human beings or animals or beings who live in the other realms which we do not normally perceive. In this, all living beings are alike and yet amongst all the living beings that we can normally perceive, there are many differences. For instance, some of us are wealthy, some are less wealthy, some are strong and healthy, others are disabled and so forth. There are many differences amongst living beings and even more so there are differences between animals and human beings. These differences are due to kamma. What we all share – desire, ill-will and ignorance are common to all living beings, but the particular condition in which we find ourselves is the result of our particular kamma that conditions the situation in which we may be wealthy, strong and so forth. These circumstances are decided by kamma. It is in this sense that kamma explains the differences amongst living beings. It explains why some beings are fortunate while others are less fortunate, some are happy while others are less happy. The Buddha specifi-



cally stated that kamma explains differences between living beings. You might also recall that the understanding of how kamma affects the birth of living beings in happy or unhappy circumstances — the knowledge of how living beings move from happy circumstances to unhappy circumstances, and vice versa, from unhappy to happy circumstances as a result of their kamma — was part of the Buddha's experience on the night of His enlightenment. It is kamma that explains the circumstances that living beings find themselves in.

Having said this much about the function of kamma, let us look more closely at what kamma is. Let us define kamma. Maybe we can define kamma best by first deciding what kamma is not. It is quite often the case that we find people misunderstanding the idea of kamma. This is particularly true in our daily casual use of the term. We find people saying that one cannot change one's situation because of one's kamma. In this sense, kamma becomes a sort of escape. It becomes similar to predestination or fatalism. This is emphatically not the correct understanding of kamma. It is possible that this misunderstanding of kamma has come about because of the popular idea that we have about luck and fate. It may be for this reason that our idea of kamma has become overlaid in popular thought with the notion of predestination. Kamma is not fate or predestination.

If kamma is not fate or predestination, then what is it? Let us look at the term itself. kamma means action, means 'to do'. Immediately we have an indication that the real meaning of kamma is not fate because kamma is action. It is dynamic. But it is more than simply action because it is not mechanical action. It is not unconscious or involuntary action. It is intentional, conscious, deliberate, willful action. How is it that this intentional, willful action conditions or determines our situation? It is because every action must have a reaction, an effect. This truth



has been expressed in regard to the physical Universe by the great physicist Newton who formulated the law which states that every action must have an equal and opposite reaction. In the moral sphere of conscious actions, we have a counterpart to the physical law of action and reaction, the law that every intentional, willful action must have its effect. This is why we sometimes speak either of Kamma-Vipaka, intentional action and its ripened effect, or we speak of Kamma-Phala, intentional action and its fruit. It is when we speak of intentional action together with its effect or fruit that we speak of the Law of kamma. In its most basic sense, the Law of kamma in the moral sphere teaches that similar actions will lead to similar results. Let us take an example. If we plant a mango seed, the plant that springs up will be a mango tree, and eventually it will bear a mango fruit. Alternatively, if we plant a Pong Pong seed, the tree that will spring up will be a Pong Pong tree and the fruit is a Pong Pong. As one sows, so shall one reap. According to one's action, so shall be the fruit. Similarly, in the Law of kamma, if we do a wholesome action, eventually we will get a wholesome fruit, and if we do an unwholesome action eventually we will get an unwholesome, painful result. This is what we mean when we say that causes bring about effects that are similar to the causes. This we will see very clearly when we come to specific examples of wholesome and unwholesome actions.

We can understand by means of this general introduction that kamma can be of two varieties - wholesome kamma or good kamma and unwholesome kamma or bad kamma. In order that we should not misunderstand this description of kamma, it is useful for us to look at the original term. In this case, it is kusala or akusala kamma, kamma that is wholesome or unwholesome. In order that we understand how these terms are being used, it is important that we know the real meaning of kusala and akusala. Kusala means intelligent or skillful, whereas akusala means not intelligent, not skillful. This helps us to understand how



these terms are being used, not in terms of good and evil but in terms of skillful and unskillful. In terms of intelligent and unintelligent, in terms of wholesome and unwholesome. Now how wholesome and how unwholesome? Wholesome in the sense that those actions which are beneficial to oneself and others, those actions that spring not out of desire, ill-will and ignorance, but out of renunciation, loving-kindness and compassion, and wisdom.

One may ask how does one know whether an action that is wholesome or unwholesome will produce happiness or unhappiness. The answer is time will tell. The Buddha Himself answered the question. He explained that so long as an unwholesome action does not bear its fruit of suffering, for so long a foolish person will consider that action good. But when that unwholesome action bears its fruit of suffering then he will realise that the action is unwholesome. Similarly, so long as a wholesome action does not bear its fruit of happiness, a good person may consider that action unwholesome. When it bears its fruit of happiness, then he will realise that the action is good. So one needs to judge wholesome and unwholesome action from the point of view of long-term effects. Very simply, wholesome actions result in eventual happiness for oneself and others, while unwholesome actions have the opposite result, they result in suffering for oneself and others.

Specifically, the unwholesome actions which are to be avoided relate to the three doors or means of action, and these are body, speech and mind. There are three unwholesome actions of the body, four of speech and three of mind that are to be avoided. The three unwholesome actions of body that are to be avoided are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four unwholesome actions of speech that are to be avoided are lying, slander, harsh speech and malicious gossip. The three unwholesome actions of mind that are to be avoided are greed, anger and delusion. By avoid-



ing these ten unwholesome actions we will avoid their consequences. The unwholesome actions have suffering as their fruit. The fruit of these unwholesome actions can take various forms. The fully ripened fruit of the unwholesome actions consists of rebirth in the lower realms, in the realms of suffering - hell, hungry ghosts and animals. If these unwholesome actions are not sufficient to result in rebirth in these lower realms, they will result in unhappiness in this life as a human being. Here we can see at work the principle of a cause resulting in a similar effect. For example, habitual killing which is motivated by ill-will and anger and which results in the taking of the life of other beings will result in rebirth in the hells where one's experience is saturated by anger and ill-will and where one may be repeatedly killed. If killing is not sufficiently habitual or weighty to result in rebirth in the hells, killing will result in shortened life as a human being, separation from loved ones, fear or paranoia. Here too we can see how the effect is similar to the cause. Killing shortens the life of others, deprives others of their loved ones and so forth, and so if we kill we will be liable to experience these effects. Similarly, stealing which is borne of the defilement of desire may lead to rebirth as a hungry ghost where one is totally destitute of desired objects. If it does not result in rebirth as a ghost, it will result in poverty, dependence upon others for one's livelihood and so forth. Sexual misconduct results in marital distress or unhappy marriages.

While unwholesome actions produce unwholesome results - suffering, wholesome actions produce wholesome results - happiness. One can interpret wholesome actions in two ways. One can simply regard wholesome actions as avoiding the unwholesome actions, avoiding killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and the rest. Or one can speak of wholesome actions in positive terms. Here one can refer to the list of wholesome actions that includes generosity, good conduct, meditation,



reverence, service, transference of merits, rejoicing in the merit of others, hearing the dhamma, teaching the dhamma and straightening of one's own views. Just as unwholesome actions produce suffering, these wholesome actions produce benefits. Again effects here are similar to the actions. For example, generosity results in wealth. Hearing of the dhamma results in wisdom. The wholesome actions have as their consequence similar wholesome effects just as unwholesome actions have similar unwholesome effects.

Kamma, be it wholesome or unwholesome is modified by the conditions under which the actions are performed. In other words, a wholesome or unwholesome action may be more or less strong depending upon the conditions under which it is done. The conditions which determine the weight or strength of kamma may be divided into those which refer to the subject - the doer of the action, and those which refer to the object - the being to whom the action is done. So the conditions that determine the weight of kamma apply to the subject and object of the action. Specifically, if we take the example of killing, in order for the act of killing to have its complete and unmitigated power, five conditions must be present - a living being, the awareness of the existence of a living being, the intention to kill the living being, the effort or action of killing the living being, and the consequent death of the living being. Here too, we can see the subjective and the objective conditions. The subjective conditions are the awareness of the living being, the intention to kill and the action of killing. The objective conditions are the presence of the living being and the consequent death of the living being. Similarly, there are five conditions that modify the weight of kamma and they are persistent, repeated action; action done with great intention and determination; action done without regret; action done towards those who possess extraordinary qualities; and action done towards those who have benefited one



in the past. Here too there are subjective and objective conditions. The subjective conditions are persistent action, action done with intention and action done without regret. If one does an unwholesome action again and again with great intention and without regret, the weight of the action will be enhanced. The objective conditions are the quality of the objects to whom actions are done and the nature of the relationship. In other words, if one does a wholesome or unwholesome action towards living beings who possess extraordinary qualities such as the arahants, or the Buddha, the wholesome or unwholesome action done will have greater weight. Finally the power of wholesome or unwholesome action done towards those who have benefited one in the past, such as one's parents, teachers and friends will be greater. The objective and subjective conditions together determine the weight of kamma. This is important because understanding this will help us to understand that kamma is not simply a matter of black and white, or good and bad. Kamma is moral action and moral responsibility. But the working of the Law of Kamma is very finely tuned and balanced so as to match effect with cause, so as to take into account the subjective and objective conditions that determine the nature of an action. This ensures that the effects of actions be equal to and similar to the nature of the causes.

The effects of kamma may be evident either in the short term or in the long term. Traditionally we divide kamma into three varieties related to the amount of time that is required for the effects of these actions to manifest themselves. Kamma can either manifest its effects in this very life or in the next life or only after several lives. When kamma manifests its effects in this life, we can see the fruit of kamma within a relatively short length of time. This variety of kamma is easily verifiable by any of us. For instance, when someone refuses to study, when someone indulges



in harmful distractions like alcohol and drugs, when someone begins to steal to support his harmful habits; the effects will be evident within a short time. They will be evident in loss of livelihood and friendship, ill-health and so forth. We cannot see the long-term effects of kamma, but the Buddha and His prominent disciples who have developed their minds are able to perceive directly the long-term effects. For instance, when Moggallana was beaten to death by bandits, the Buddha was able to tell that this event was the effect of this unwholesome action done many lives before was manifested only in his last life. At death we have to leave everything behind - our property and our loved ones, but our kamma will accompany us like a shadow. The Buddha said that no where on earth or in heaven can one escape one's kamma. So when the conditions are correct, dependent upon mind and body, the effects of kamma will manifest themselves just as dependent on certain conditions a mango will appear on a mango tree. We can see that even in the world of nature certain effects take longer to appear than others. If for instance, we plant the seed of a papaya, we will obtain the fruit in a shorter period than if we plant the seed of a durian. Similarly, the effects of kamma manifest either in the short term or in the long term.

Besides the two varieties of kamma, wholesome and unwholesome kamma, we should mention neutral or ineffective kamma. Neutral kamma is kamma that has no moral consequence either because the very nature of the action is such as to have no moral consequence and unintentionally. For example, sleeping, walking, breathing, eating, handicraft and so forth in themselves have no moral consequence. Similarly, unintentional action is ineffective kamma. In other words, if one accidentally steps on an insect, being unconscious of its existence, this also constitutes neutral kamma because there is no intention - the intentional element is not there.



The benefits of understanding the Law of kamma are that this understanding discourages one from performing unwholesome actions which have suffering as their fruit. Once we understand that in our own life every action will have a similar and equal reaction, once we understand that we will experience the effect of that action, wholesome or unwholesome, we will refrain from unwholesome behaviour, not wanting to experience the effects of these unwholesome actions. And similarly, understanding that wholesome actions have happiness as their fruit, we will cultivate these wholesome actions. Reflecting on the Law of kamma, of action and reaction in the moral unwholesome actions and cultisphere encourages us to renounce vate wholesome actions.

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### Man and Nature

This is Nature within and without  
There is Nature above and below  
There is Nature infront and behind  
There is Nature on both sides  
So do not say we act unnaturally  
or do not know where Nature is.

Extracts from: 'Fundamentals of Buddhism'



What is it that has given  
Buddhism the strength to  
preserve its non-violent  
principles in so many  
difficult situations?

## BUDDHISM AND NON-VIOLENCE

By Vessantara

*This article is reprinted from THE FWBO NEWSLETTER, published in Britain by Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.*

When a rebel army swept into a town in Korea, all the monks of the Zen temple fled except for the Abbot. The general came into the temple and was annoyed that the Abbot did not receive him with respect. 'Don't you know', he shouted, 'that you are looking at a man who can run you through without blinking?' 'And you,' replied the Abbot strongly, 'are looking at a man who can be run through without blinking!' The general stared at him, then made a bow and retired.

From 'The Tiger's Cave' by Trevor Leggett. (RKP 1977)

I still remember the first time I read this story. It stopped me in my tracks. I was struck by the Abbot's forceful and unexpected reply, which turns people's usual responses in such situations upside down. In contrast to the general's deadly threat the Abbot is neither aggressive nor submissive. His response is strong and decisive, but completely peaceful.

Later, I became fascinated by the contrast between the two men. Even physically I would always imagine them as opposites. I saw the rebel general in my mind's eye: tall, heavily-



built, dressed in armour, with death gleaming at his side. Facing him, a sword's length away, the Zen Buddhist abbot: short, sturdy, lean, simply-dressed in a plain monk's robe, and shaven-headed. They confront each other eye to eye, with the electric tension of sudden death between them. And as I watched they became like two statues, taking on a timeless quality, as if they had faced one another for centuries.

And so they have. Only the names and the clothes change. Since the dawn of history, two great tendencies in Man have tried to stare each other down, to outface one another. On one side are the forces of violence, fuelled by pride, fear, and hatred; on the other is the whole tradition of non-violence, based on love and wisdom, of which Buddhism is an outstanding example.

Considering these two figures, and the contrast between them, suggests many ideas. For instance, the general gains confidence not only from his sword but also from the massed forces of his army; the Abbot stands alone. This contrast recurs through the centuries. If you read the history of almost any age, your over-whelming impression will be of a melee of different groups - families, social classes, races, religious sects, and nations - clawing at one another in the fight for power and wealth. History is, largely, the story of the competition between different groups, fired by craving, hatred, and ignorance.

Against this the Buddhist tradition sets the ideal of the individual who is freed from the pulls and demands of the group. It has always encouraged men and women to think and feel for themselves, not to get swept away by the tides of hatred and fear which carry off those around them. More than this, it has urged those individuals to work on their own minds through awareness and effort, to practice the subtle alchemy of turning violence into peace and hatred



into love. It has not just exhorted people to transform themselves in this way, it has equipped them with effective ways of setting about it, by working on the mind through meditation.

Buddhism has always held out the white lotus of peace to the world. The life of its founder, Gautama the Buddha, who lived 2,500 years ago in northern India, is rich in examples for people down the centuries to follow.

At the time of his Enlightenment the Buddha-to-be is symbolically represented as coming under attack from Mara - a figure who personifies Delusion in the Buddhist texts. Mara marshals against the Buddha an army of misshapen creatures, who attack him with demented ferocity. They hurl rocks and boulders, fire flaming arrows, and launch other deadly weapons against him.

The Buddha meanwhile sits quietly in meditation. As the weapons fly towards him they are transformed into flowers, and fall gently in a petalled shower at his feet. This incident symbolically indicates the defeat of even the subtlest traces of violence in the Buddha's own mind, and the sublimation of the energies which fired it.

After his Enlightenment, the Buddha's simple lifestyle was completely rooted in non-violence. We see him threatened with assassination by jealous rivals, but sending away the followers who had gathered to defend him; meditating between two warring clans in a border dispute; or stopping a wild elephant in its tracks by the force of his concentrated loving-kindness.

His loving and non-violent approach to every situation is based on an unimaginable depth of empathy with all that lives. His approach to violence is often to persuade the aggressor to empathise with his victim. When he sees some



VEN. SUJIVA DECLARED OPENED SAMADHI KUTI - 7.12.1996





1ST. RETREAT AT SAMADHI CENTRE - 7.12.1996





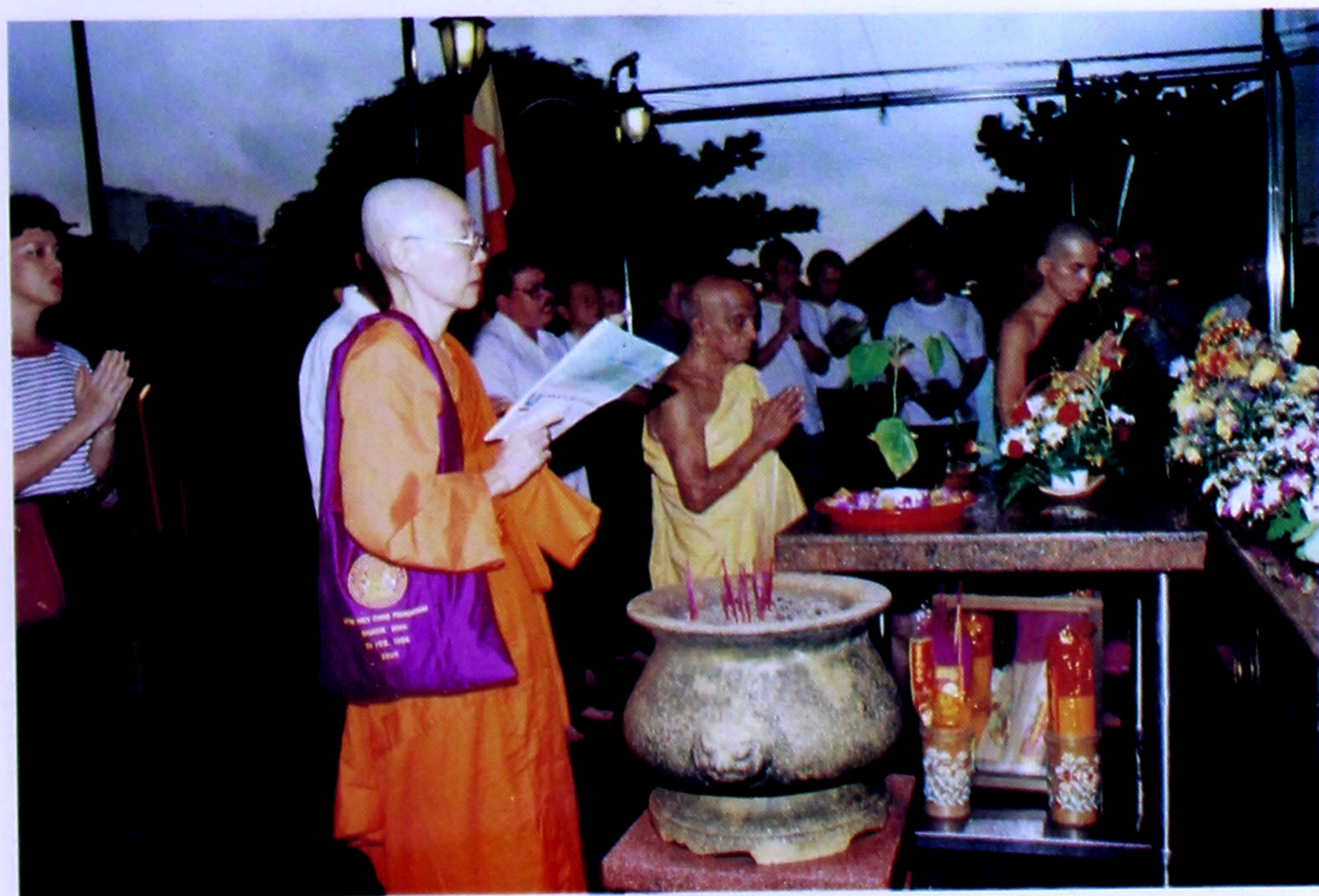
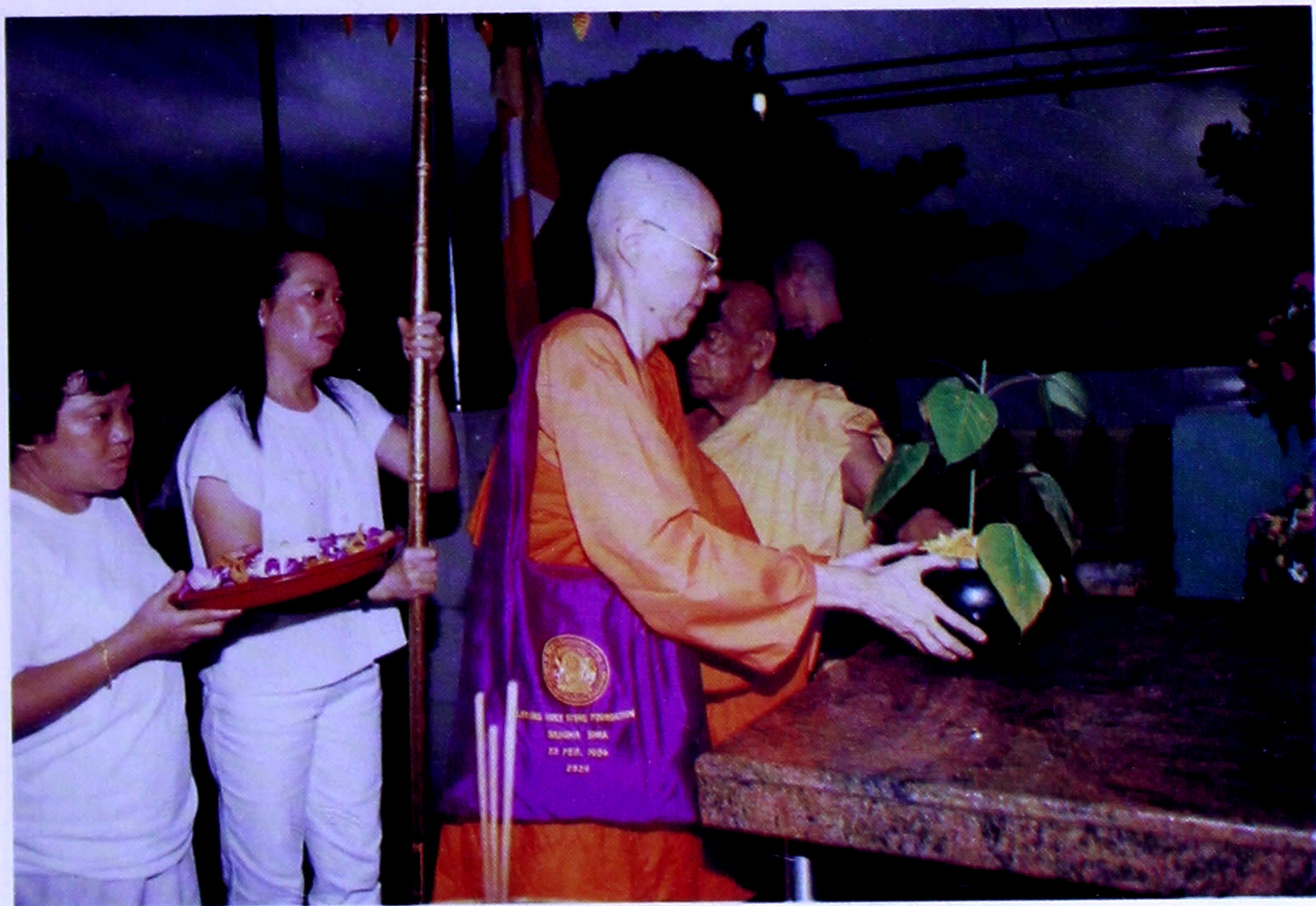
PLANTING OF A SAL TREE AT THE CENTRE













84TH BIRTHDAY OF THE RESIDENT MONK - 16.1.1997





Department for the Promotion and  
Propagation of the Sāsana





Y.M.B.A. CERTIFICATES PRESENTATION BY THE  
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SRI LANKA - 16.1.1997





BUDDHIST AND PALI UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
CERTIFICATES PRESENTATION - 16.1.1997













# CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION



WEDDING BLESSING :  
MR & MRS KOR LEE KIONG - 18.12.1996



boys throwing stones at a crow he asks them, 'Do you feel pain when you are struck?' and then helps them to imagine themselves on the receiving end of their own 'game'. (It is worth noting that the Buddha's empathy extended beyond human beings to all life. He would never permit any animal to be killed for him to eat).

His teaching gave no justification for violence in any form, not even 'righteous indignation'. He once told his monks "When men speak ill of you, thus must you train yourselves: 'Our heart shall be unwavering, no evil word will we send forth, but compassionate to others' welfare we will abide, of kindly heart without resentment; and that man who thus speaks will we suffuse with thoughts accompanied by love, and so abide; and making that our standpoint, we will suffuse the whole world with loving-thoughts, far-reaching, wide-spreading, boundless, free from hate, free from ill-will and so abide'. Thus brothers must you train yourselves."

He even went on to make the following startling statement: "Though robbers, who are highwaymen, should with a two-handed saw carve you in pieces limb by limb, yet if the mind of any of you be affected thereby, such a one is not a follower of my teaching"!

Even being sawn limb from limb is no excuse for abandoning loving-kindness.

Down through the centuries, Buddhism has taken its founder's example to heart, in theory and practice. In theory, for example, we find that Buddhist psychology gives a list of eleven 'ingredients' which are always present in any positive mental state. One of these is non-violence. If at any time the mind becomes tinged with a desire for violence - bodily, verbal, or mental - then that mental state cannot be regarded as good or desirable under any circumstances. Buddhism places crucial importance on the mind and its states. If your mental state is peaceful, then the actions which flow from it will promote peace.



In individual practice, the first of the precepts, or ethical principles, followed by all Buddhists is 'to abstain from harming living beings'. This includes animals, so Buddhism has always strongly advocated vegetarianism. The Buddha even instructed his monks to strain their drinking water, to avoid inadvertently killing any small creatures.

On a wider scale, Buddhism has always been tolerant of other beliefs. There has been no major war fought in the name of Buddhism, and no Crusades. Buddhism believes that,

'A man convinced against his will  
Stays of the same opinion still.'

Buddhist history provides many fine examples of people who understood that to try to force people to change is counter-productive. There is the Emperor Ashoka, who started his reign by soaking a large part of the Indian sub-continent in blood to expand his empire. Then, sickened by what he had done, he turned to Buddhism, and thenceforth ruled his vast territory by entirely peaceful means.

Then there is the Tibetan Buddhist Phagspa, who was teacher to one of the Moghul emperors. The emperor offered to force everyone throughout his empire to follow the Sakya sect to which Phagspa belonged. Far from being flattered and excited by this offer, and the chance to bring the entire Moghul empire under his sway, Phagspa saw that violent means could not lead to a peaceful end. So he politely declined.

At this point it is worth asking what it is that has given Buddhism the strength to preserve its non-violent principles in so many difficult situations. When your life is on the line it takes more than a sentimental feeling for peace, more than just thinking it is a good idea, to remain non-violent. The Abbot in our story could



not command the respect of a hardened soldier with mere ideas about non-violence. He would be cut down without a second thought.

What makes the difference is the Buddhist practice of meditation, which leads to insight into the nature of Reality. The Abbot has spend years in meditation, soaking himself in this insight, and it is as a living embodiment of this higher Reality that he wins the maddened general's respect.

From the Buddha onwards all those who have sincerely followed the Path of Enlightenment have come to the same understanding - an experience which soars far beyond the realm of our usual thinking. With this insight, one sees the world shorn of the conflicting opposites with which we habitually categorise our experience. The most fundamental of these habitual modes of thought is the division we make between 'self' and 'other' - the idea that we are each a separate 'self' (which in some sense stays constant despite our physical and mental changes).

This 'self' which each of us has stands separate and cut off from everything 'other'. We experience a barrier between 'us' and our environment: flowers, trees, animals, and the over four billion people who share our world.

It is the frustration caused by this view of the world which leads to violence. When 'we' are threatened by 'other' people, we attack - even if only in 'self'-defence! When 'we' need something from the 'outside' world (such as food, money or acclaim) we reach out and wrench it to us.

As the world is 'other' it does not have the same reality for us as our 'self'. So we tend to treat it as relatively unimportant compared to our needs. Sometimes we may even treat our 'self' as the only reality, and turn everything and everyone else into objects and satisfy us.



Buddhism's non-violence comes from the insight that the whole distinction we make between 'self' and 'other' is an illusion. The barriers we feel between ourselves and the world are created by our own minds. When they are taken down, through prolonged effort in meditation and outside, then we are left with what can only be described as 'panoramic awareness'. Consciousness soars to a level where it is no longer identified with a physical body located at one point in time and space. The Buddhist mediator who reaches this stage experiences consciousness as coterminous with the entire Universe.

The Abbot has had this insight. He has seen through the delusion that his consciousness is limited to his physical body, so he can face impending death without blinking an eye. He has healed the split in his own mind, and regards the general, his sword, the monastery and the surrounding hills as being as much his own self as his shaven-headed body. Identified with everything, he has nothing to gain, nothing to lose, and nothing to defend. And with nothing to gain, lose or defend, how can any violent thought cloud his mind?

The Abbot sees that violence runs contrary to the real nature of things. You can only attack another living being if you think it is separate from you. When the barriers come down, and the separation vanishes, you see that to harm anything is to harm yourself.

Moreover, if we still have a deeply-ingrained sense of separation, we will not understand that to harm others will have consequences for ourselves. If the Universe is in reality a total unit, then everything is involved with, and affected by, everything else. The Universe acts as a kind of giant 'feedback machine'. To cause suffering to the world of which we are an integral part can only bring suffering to ourselves. (Scientists are beginning to discover this in a limited way through the study of ecology).



The final lesson of the Buddhist insight into reality is that force can never solve anything. Violence is based on the frustration engendered by our own sense of separateness and limitation. But each violent act alienates us further from the world, and deepens the split in our own minds between 'self' and 'other'. This increases our frustration, which in turn leads to worse violence. The reader can find endless examples of this in modern life, from personal disputes to political clashes. This vicious circle has no end. It is for this reason that one of the oldest Buddhist texts, the *Dhammapada*, says:

'Hatred does not cease by hatred;  
hatred ceases only by love.'

If we understand this insight, it should become clear to us how the Abbot can meet the general's threat with absolute calm and conviction. We shall see too that to talk of the 'confrontation' between the general and the Abbot is only half true. The general 'confronts' the Abbot. He is threatened and offended by this impudent monk, who shows no fear, and who treats him like everyone else. He experiences the Abbot as totally separate from him so he could kill him 'without blinking an eye' - like swatting a fly.

But although the general 'confronts' the Abbot, the Abbot does not confront the general. His consciousness embraces him. He sees no division between them, no seam in the pattern of life to distinguish where 'abbot' stops and 'general' begins. So he feels for him more than the general has ever felt for himself. He is in complete harmony with him.

When the general produces his blustering threat, the Abbot produces an answer which shocks him out of his notions of how things are. With a few words the Abbot 'runs through' the general with the sword of wisdom. Some of the general's deluded and violent thinking is cut off, and he can only bow with respect.



The two figures, general and Abbot, are perfect representatives of what in the FWBO we have come to call the 'power mode' and the 'metta mode' of action. The 'power mode' is the normal way of getting things done in the world. When using it you deny the autonomy of other people. In various ways, from gross force to subtle pressure, you attempt to deprive others of their freedom to choose, so they do what you want.

'Metta' is one of the most beautiful conceptions of Buddhism. It means 'universal loving-kindness' or 'universal friendliness'. One of the most important Buddhist methods of meditation works to develop this feeling until all your actions spring from it. When this point is reached - where kindness and love for everything that lives have overcome fear and self-concern - then there is no longer any desire to coerce or bend others to your will. Instead there is a harmony with others which comes from making their welfare as important as your own. Freed from fear and hatred yourself, you can allow others their freedom. It is in this transition from the 'power mode' to the 'metta mode' that individual development essentially consists.

It should be clear from watching the Abbot leading with the general that there is nothing weak about metta. The world needs 'love and peace', but not in the starry-eyed, vague way that characterised the Hippy movement of the '60s. Metta is a flame. It is active and decisive; it is stronger than violence. The general bursts out with his threat, and meets a response which stops him in his tracks. Metta prevails.

However, one victory cannot settle the issue. The trial of strength between metta and violence has gone on down the centuries. Buddhism has kept recruiting for metta, saying 'Violence deepens the gulf between people. It solves nothing, and



is never justified. The world's sufferings can only be ended by loving-kindness'. All through history men and women have taken this message to heart, and forged themselves anew in the flames of love, transforming themselves into individuals prepared to stand up and be counted against the forces of hatred and violence.

Today the stakes in the struggle between general and Abbot are higher than ever. The general now stands armed with weapons which will not just kill the Abbot, but will destroy himself and everything which walks on the Earth. So the flame of love in the Abbot's eyes must burn even brighter, and we must all do what we can to stand at the Abbot's shoulder, and add our strength to his.

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## LIVING A NON-VIOLENT LIFE

To live a non-violent life we start with ourselves. Our first obligation is to promote a non-violent mind within ourselves. If we can achieve this then it will follow that our interaction with other living beings and with society at large will be non-violent. The first principle is to treat ourselves with love.

In the Metta Bhavana meditation practice one develops feelings of loving kindness to oneself before developing them for others. Love is the antithesis of violence, where there is love there is no violence.

by Jayamati  
(Living a Non-Violent Life)

15244

Department for the Promotion of  
Propagation of the Sasana  
B. B. V. R. A.  
Kaba-Aye, Yangon.



"Fear is a symptom of ego,  
ego-consciousness."

## Who Fears And Why?

By Chao Kun Sobhana Dhammasudhi

Chao Kun Sobhana Dhammasudhi is from  
Thailand. This article is reprinted from  
the book, **BENEFICIAL FACTORS FOR  
MEDITATION.**

You might say that in the sense of Buddhism there is no one who fears because there is no self, but "who" here refers to a person as we understand it in daily life. If we understand things as they really are we shall not have any fear. If, when you are meditating and the mind is getting deeper and deeper into the state of meditation, suddenly fear arises telling you that you should come back, do not go any further because you do not know what your problem is; and then you may be confused. "Come back", that what the voice says (the voice of Mara as we say in Buddhism) but what Mara means or refers to is the evil state of mind. The evil state of mind tries to hold you back and because you do not understand the truth, at that moment ignorance is there. 'Ignorance' in Buddhism does not mean lack of information but refers to not having understanding of the truth. You have knowledge, knowledge of nature or of mind, but it does not help you in meditation because understanding of truth is not achieved when fear arises. Fear is a symptom of ego, ego-consciousness. Ego is only an idea; it is not reality but it is a psychological concept existing in the mind. According to the Buddha (in the Dhammapada) "He whose mind is not steady or establish knows not the truth. The wisdom of a person whose confidence wavers is never perfect and this makes him fear."



Because of unsteadiness of mind or because of not understanding the truth and because there is no firm aim or firm confidence in the Path or in the way of practice, fear arises. When you are not sure whether this Path is right or not, you have doubt about the Path, you have doubt about the teaching, you have doubt about the instruction and so on. So fear arises. Sometimes because you have too much attachment to family, to possessions and things in life, that also can cause fear to arise and all this depends on the unsteady mind, because the uncultivated mind always brings about danger or unwholesome situations. It prevents us from making further progress or higher development within ourselves. This is why the mind must be cultivated and developed. When the mind is properly developed it becomes stabilised and quiet. The quiet mind brings about peace and happiness.

Because of not understanding the truth, confidence also wavers. Some people go from teacher to teacher and from place to place seeking for something to satisfy their desires. You should also "beware" of this because wavering confidence can cause fear and bring uncertainty. For people whose minds are not submerged by lust or affected by hatred, who have abandoned both good and evil (from the vigilant there is no fear) fear cannot arise. Lustful desire or in another word, attachment, is the root cause of fear but, if you can be freely detached from things you are not anxious and when you are not anxious you do not fear. Also hatred can bring about fear. You may hate somebody and also be afraid of being destroyed or injured by such a person. You fear you may be unsafe. So many feelings arise in connection with the infection of hatred but when you are not affected by any hatred or angry consciousness we can be free from fear. The point concerning abandoning both good and evil is quite important because before attaining to Enlightenment one must be able to abandon both good and evil. Good and bad are only



mental creations. They are not the Truth. When we have good times we are happy but when we have bad ones we are miserable and sorrowful and so we are afraid of losing the good ones. We create fear because of attachment to both good and evil. If we are always vigilant and observant fear cannot arise.

A vigilant person is one who practises awareness. By practising awareness we can overcome fear even though fear will arise from time to time during the practice, but because we are aware of the fear itself then we are able to overcome it. The Buddha said in the Scriptures: "Whenever fear arises whether you are standing, walking, sitting or lying down you must remain in the position and overcome the fear by noticing it, understanding it, bringing it to examination and analysis." Is it you who fear? If you analyse yourself into elements you cannot find anything or any being that fears and then fear will disappear. If not, you should ask yourself why? Why do you fear and what benefit do you get from fear? Why should you allow fear to dominate you? When you ask yourself the question 'why' and you cannot see any good from fear then you will abandon it. The only cure is awareness and vigilance, that is to notice whatever things are happening. I am sure awareness is indeed the only way just as the Buddha said. In fact there is no other direct way to be practised.

When we practise full awareness of things we are aware of our own activities, our actions, our feelings, our mental activities, thoughts, ideas, mind, hindrances, aggregates of existence, factors of Enlightenment, the Four Noble Truths, the sixfold senses through which we communicate with things both outside and inside. We can become aware of all these things and then there is nothing more to be aware of. We can say that insight has come to us because of development of awareness. Wherever awareness is, clear comprehension or wisdom is also met;



but where there is no awareness there is no wisdom and no understanding. Then it is not possible to realise the truth. Realisation of the Truth can be obtained only through the full development of awareness, and through the full development of awareness all the factors of Enlightenment will be perfected. So we must carry on our practice and become free from fear, because fear is only a state of mind. It cannot make you worse if you understand fear as just fear and nothing more, but if you allow fear to dominate you, you will feel worse. It all depends on you and your understanding. For myself I can say that I have never had fear during the practice of meditation, but I learned from the experience of teaching people here in the West that some people do have very strong fear. This is quite in agreement with the Dhamma because fear arises in people through their attachment and their ignorance. At such times it is important for meditators to consult with their instructor. We must have an instructor until we are strong enough to be on our own. When you can understand things as they truly are at any time, you will not need a teacher or instructor, but this cannot be so all at once. However, if you practise awareness constantly you earnestly will overcome fear because the more you practise awareness the more you will understand yourself and your development, and this is the way to achieve perfect happiness in life and prevent anxieties and worries from arising. You will truly say "Why worry? There is no benefit to be derived therefrom". You just learn to observe things as they are whenever they come. Let them come and go and just look at them without concern. Looking at things objectively (as they are) is the way to realise the Truth and to attain perfect happiness.



## MANGALA VIHARA DIARY

### 25 December 1996 - Sanghamitta Day

It was Christmas day and a public holiday. However, for us at Mangala Vihara it was a double special occasion as we celebrate to commemorate the planting of the Bodhi sapling brought over from India to Sri Lanka by Sanghamitta. This occasion is indeed special as, Sanghamitta was "represented" by Miss Lim Choon Puay, a long time devotee, who was ordained as a Theravada nun by another senior nun from another temple. With her ordination, she is now known as Sister Wajeera and resides at the Samadhi Centre in Pontian.

### 5 January 1997

The Shrine Hall bell clanged for morning assembly at 9.45 am for the students and teachers of the Sunday Dhamma Classes as they return to their first day of Sunday School for 1997. The kitchen also bustled to live with the return of the helpers to prepare the Sunday lunch as well as others to carry out their various chores in the temple.

### 16 January 1997

Thursday, 16 January was our Resident Monk's 84th birthday. Many members and devotees came to present and convey their birthday greetings to our Venerable Bhadanta as well as to attend the 11.00 am Puja. Sanghika Dana was also offered to monks invited from several temples during this happy occasion.

In the evening's programme commenced with the successful candidates of the 1995 YMBA Examination and students of the Path of Emancipation Chanting Class receiving their certificates from our Guest-of-Honour, Mr W. Wijayaratne, High Commissioner to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

After a short interval, the third batch of successful candidates of the Diploma in Buddhist Studies received their certificates from Mr S. Wijesekera, Registrar, Buddhist & Pali University.



Thereafter, everyone present adjourned to the Mangala Hall and erected tents for a vegetarian dinner treat in honour of Ven Bhadanta's birthday celebration.

### 17 January 1997

On 17 January 1997, gifts from well-wishers were sent to the Singapore Red Cross Society in honour of our Resident Monk's 84th birthday.

### 6 February - Lunar New Year Eve

### 7 February - Lunar New Year Day

Lunar New Year Eve - As carried out in the past years, many members and devotees came and joined in the chanting of the Mahasamaya Sutta to usher in the New Lunar Year of the Ox as well as invoke the Blessings of the Triple Gem on everyone and Singapore. After this special service, a pleasant surprise awaited everyone present as they were treated to a serving of sweet desert prepared earlier in the day by a group of volunteers.

Lunar New Year Day - Ven Bhadanta had opened the three wooden doors, adorned with the traditional red banners, to the Shrine Hall to welcome members and devotees who came to pay their respects to the Buddha and attend the 11.00 am Puja Service. Thereafter, they were treated to a lunch serving before leaving for their traditional visits.

### 31 March

The 37th Anniversary was held on Monday, 31 March 1997, with the chanting of Parittas and Suttas initiated by invited monks from several temples. Members and devotees who had attended the chanting classes conducted by Venerable Bhadanta continued with the chanting throughout the night according to their groups until the following morning of 1 April in the specially erected and decorated miniature shrine. The celebration ended with the early Buddha Puja and the distribution of Holy water and five-coloured threads.

**ROSALIE BOON**

**Hon. Secretary, Mangala Vihara (B.T.)**



## YOUTH GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

### Meditation - Retreat

It was for the first time that the committee organised a 3-day meditation retreat from 7 - 9 December 1996. It was held at Samadhi Centre at Pontian, Johore. The response was good. However, it was limited to 10 participants only. Ven Sujivo was in-attendance during the Meditation retreat. We would like to thank him for his support and kind attendance. It was held successfully.

### Art and Craft

The new term for Sunday class has just begun. Students who show interest in acquiring skills in art and craft are encouraged to join the class. Periodically selected art and craft pieces will be put up for exhibition.

### Social

The committee is planning a social visit to home for the handicapped. We would like to appeal to all members and devotees to come forward to join the social work group. Details of the visit will be announced when it is finalised. Interested parties, please contact Patrick Sng.

### Dhammuduta

There was only one service conducted. The deceased was Madam Chiang Kim Neo (wife of late Mr Fong Peck Yew) who passed on 18 January 1997. May she attain Nibbana.

**SERENE TAN**

**Secretary' 96/97**

**Youth Group Sub-Committee**



**DHAMMA SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**  
**FIRST QUARTER 1997**

The Sunday Dhamma Classes re-opened on 5 January 1997 after a long vacation of 2 months. There were 85 students present in the various classes and they are very keen to learn the Dhamma and set to sit for the coming YMBA (Colombo) Examination sometime in June. Credit should also go to the teachers who having confidence in the Buddha Sasana unselfishly serve the temple to propagate the Dhamma. Do not also forget our very devoted kitchen helpers for our Sunday lunches.

On 16 January 1997, we celebrated the 84th birthday of our Ven. Bhadanta. Before the dinner function given in his honour, certificates were given out to 48 successful candidates of the 1996 YMBA Examination. We are very grateful to His Excellency Mr N. Wijayaratne for graciously accepting our invitation to give away the certificates.

We thank the following donors for the lunch treats given from January - March '97:

05	Jan	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & family
12	Jan	Mr & Mrs Lok Boon Yan & family
		Mr & Mrs Chia Kun Zhan & family
19	Jan	Mr & Mrs Kor Lee Kiong & family
		Mr & Mrs Koh Soo Chem & family
26	Jan	Ms Malini Sng
		Lim Yong Wei, Shu Wen & Shu Xian
02	Feb	Toy Wen Da & Toy Wen Chia (Junior)
09	Feb	Holiday
16	Feb	Mr & Mrs Bernard Toy & family
23	Feb	Ms Anula Chua, Chen Yan Hui, Serene
		Tan and Mr & Mrs Lim Siam Thye & family
02	Mar	Ms Seeta Leong Mei Lian
09	Mar	Ms Y.A. Chinniah
16	Mar	Mr & Mrs Jimmy Aw
23	Mar	Ms Khoo Hong Meng
30	Mar	Quah & Wee families

**GINA LIM**

**Dhamma Supervisor '96/97**



# LIBRARY

Department for the Promotion and  
Propagation of the Sāsana  
LIBRARY  
Kaba-Aye, Yangon

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following books and magazines for the period January to March '97.

Buddhism Today	Vol 11 No. 3	Australia
Buddha's Light	No 16-18 Nov' 96-	
Newsletter	Jan' 97	Canada
Hawaii Buddhism	No 863867 Oct' 96-	
	Feb' 97	Hawaii
Nei Ming Magazine	No 296-298	Hong Kong
Mira	Vol 54 No 9-11 Jul' 96-	
	Sep' 96	India
Dharma World	Vol 23 Nov/Dec' 96	
	Vol 24 Jan/Feb' 97	Japan
Everlasting Light	Vol 7 No 153 Jul/	
Quarterly	Sep' 96	
	Vol 8 No 154 Oct/	
	Dec' 96	Malaysia
Sri Lanka News	Vol XI No 9-01 Oct	
	-Dec' 96	Sri Lanka
Golden Lotus Theatre	No 12-15	Taiwan
Ch'ien Fo Shan Magazine	No 92-94	Taiwan
Miao Lin Monthly	Vol 8 No 10-12	Taiwan
Int'l Buddhist Progress		
Society	Winter' 96	Taiwan
The Middle Way	Vol 71 No 4 Feb' 97	UK
BuduMaga	Vol 1 No. 8/9	UK
Dharma Life	Winter 96 No 3	UK
Washington Buddhist	Vol 27 No 1-3	USA
For You	No 92-94 Dec' 96-	
	Feb' 97	Singapore
Singapore Buddhist	Souvenir Magazine	
Free Clinic		Singapore
Wisdom	No 38 Oct' 96	Singapore
NUSBS	Oct/Nov/Dec' 96	Singapore
Ren Ci Hospital	Annual Report' 94/95	Singapore
Shi Cheng Chao Yin	No 6	Singapore
S'pore Chung Hwa	1995	
Free Clinic		Singapore
Wisdom News	Jan' 97	Singapore
Buddhist Digest	Jan/Feb/Mar' 97	Singapore
Nirvana	No 12 Jan-Mar' 97	Singapore
Tampines Home Newsletter	Nov-96	Singapore
30th Lotus	269/05/96	Singapore

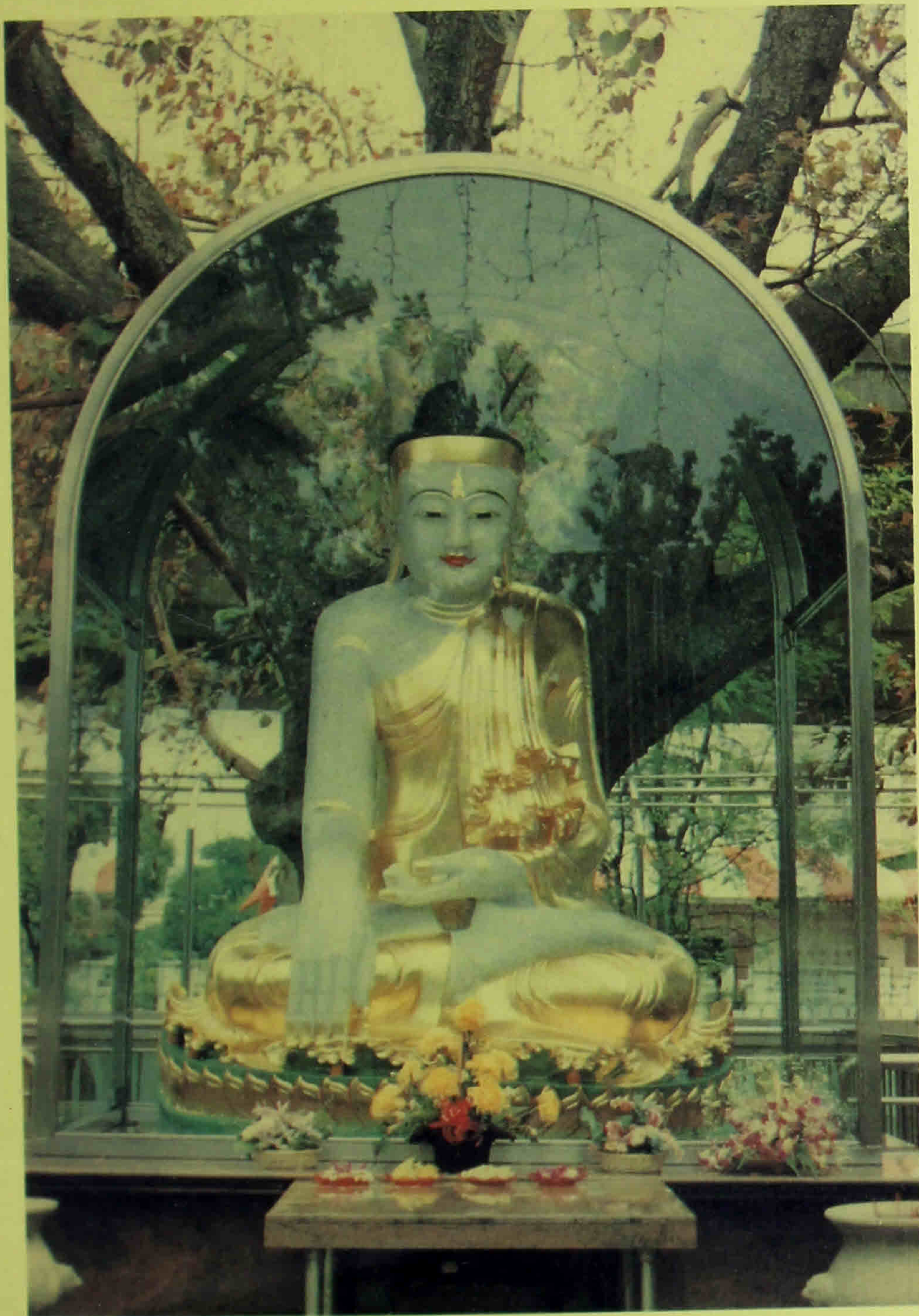
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**BODHI SHRINE** at Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple



**In Loving Memory Of**  
**Late Mr. Wong Cheong Men**  
**And Madam Foong Siew Han**

**From Mr & Mrs Wong Hoo Tung**