



### The Evils of Filthy Lucre

Although pecuniary gain is a must for social living, it can very easily turn into an evil in the hands of men. It has not only be earned legitimately but used legitimately as well. But, human frailties being what they are, this much-desired legitimacy in both aspects becomes violated quite easily. Owing to man's insatiate craving for wewalth it has become a very powerful force in human society. This gets amply illustrated in a saying in common parlance among our people that "money is the younger brother of God" (*sally deyyange malli*). Money is so powerful.

The phrase "filthy lucre", as commonly used, refers to any pecuniary gain of the derogatory type where the transaction takes place when something that has to be done for the common good fails to reach achievement without the offer of what is generally known as a 'bribe' or else when some foul deed is made to get through in the same way. Ethically, such 'lure' becomes 'filthy' because it is a dishonourable and a derogatory kind of gain. Here, both the giver and the taker become guilty as participants of an evil act.

Once Devadatta, the Buddha's main adversary, got the keeper of the ferocious elephant Nalagiri (Dhanapala) to release the animal at the lonely Buddha, after getting it drunk with toddy, through a bribe.

On another occasion the Buddha's enemies got a woman named Sundari to frequent the environs of the Jetavana, where the Buddha and his disciples were staying, in the evenings telling those who inquired that she was going to spend the night in the Buddha's cell!

She would spend the night in a neighbouring monastery and return in the morning to be seen by the public, showingly confirming what she had said the previous evening.

After creating the suspicious impression in the public mind the conspirators bribed a contract killer to kill Sundari and leave the body near Jetavana under a rubbish heap.

The big hullabaloo that was created lasted for about a week when the culprits were caught and duly punished.

It was by bribing a man that Magandiya, another female adversary of the Buddha, got him to revile and abuse the Buddha in the streets.

King Pasenadi Kosala had a bitter experience when he once visited the court-house to see how his ministers decided the cases and saw how they had taken bribes beforehand and decided the cases "by making true owners non-owners and non-owners the true owners" of property.

The king left the place vowing not to see their faces again meaning thereby that he would dismiss them forthwith.

In the life of Jesus Christ Judas Iscariot betrayed him for the bribe of thirty pieces of silver.

In all these classical cases related to this corrupt practice, the most noteworthy feature and the highlight that needs emphasis is that all those who resorted to this vicious practice received punishment in good measure. Nemesis was inevitable.

In the case of Devadatta, after undergoing much suffering, he finally wished to see the Buddha and seek pardon but failed to do so as he had a miserable death on the way.

The conspirators who killed Sundari were caught by the king's spies as they were quarrelling after strong drink. They were made to withdraw all the false accusations against the Buddha and were adequately punished. In the case of Magandiya she had to undergo much torture in return.

Of Judas it is said that he became filled with remorse after the crucifixion of Christ and hanged himself or according to another record he "burst asunder" in the very land he had purchased with the bribe he had taken.

Allegations of bribery and corruption are quite common even in today's society, which fact shows how the canker of bribery continues to exercise its corruptive influence on human behaviour despite the efforts taken to eradicate it down the ages. Some men, who had been accepted by public opinion as above corruption, at times fall victims to this evil thereby ruining not only their valuable public careers but their private lives as well.

Even the "gentlemen's game" of cricket has failed to remain unsullied by this pernicious evil. Highly talented international cricketers have been condemned to "the wilderness of cricket" owing to this evil getting the better of them. This highly enjoyable and popular game loses its lustre and value when gifted players stoop low to betray their own mother countries.

Even political crossovers, when done not on principles and ideologies but on pecuniary considerations, they too fall within this category. This applies to any human organisation, including religion. The primary cause behind this evil has been man's inherent craving in the form of greed getting the better of some people despite their education, position etc.

Also when Mammon becomes all-powerful in a materialistic and a consumerist society, this evil gets a boost as it has happened in this country today.

The history of this evil as succinctly delineated here teaches us the telling lesson that this is an evil which evidently has the habit of coming home to roost.

—A.G.S. Kariyawasam

# In Memoriam

## **Albert Witanachchi**

With regrets, we report the death, on June 13th, of Albert Witanachchi (age 84), a former general secretary of the Buddhist Publication Society. Albert, as he was affectionately known to everyone, joined the BPS administration in the early 1980s. In 1985, following the death of the elder Mr.T.B. Naranpanawe, he was elected general secretary. He held this position until his retirement in early 1990.

As general secretary, and even during earlier years, Albert was well-known for his friendly and amiable manner, which made all visitors to the BPS feel perfectly welcome and at home here. Being fluent in English and gifted with an adaptable mind, Albert was able to engage visitors from almost any country in lively conversation. He seemed to have at his command an inexhaustible store of humorous anecdotes, witty quotations and charming recollections. As general secretary, Albert showed a deep concern for the welfare of the BPS employees, which won him the affection of the staff. He was also keenly devoted to Ven. Nyanaponika and myself, and whenever we needed his help with any matter, he would drive out to the Forest Hermitage without a moment's hesitation. I still vividly remember the many occasions when we would drive to Colombo together in the BPS van to attend to publishing matters, take lunch at his daughter's house and return to Kandy in the evening. After his retirement, Albert continued to show a close personal interest in the BPS and often wrote to us suggesting ways to help us fulfil our mission more effectively.

May the merits of his years of service to the Dhamma enable him to make rapid progress towards the supreme goal, Nibbana!

—Bhikkhu Bodhi

## **Ayya Nyanasiri (1932-2004)**

On 28th April 2004, death removed from our midst my long-time Dhamma friend, Ven. Ayya Nyanasiri (Helen Wilder), who lived in Sri Lanka for the past twenty-six years. The last seventeen of them as a Buddhist nun. Both Helen and her husband Bob had been lecturers in English at the State University of New York, but in 1978, stirred by a sense of urgency, they left their jobs to come to Sri Lanka and plunge into the Dhamma. When her husband died in 1980, she offered her help to Ven. Nyanaponika Mahathera, who was then in his eightieth year. She served him faithfully as editorial assistant for the next four years. In June 1984, when I succeeded Ven. Nyanaponika as editor of the BPS, Helen continued to help me with the same unwavering loyalty and dedication with which she helped him. In 1987 she took ordination as a ten-precept nun. She continued to help me until 1990 when deteriorating vision compelled her to retire and dedicate more of her time to meditation. In her small cottage at Gurudeniya, she became an inspiring mentor and spiritual friend to many Buddhist women from Colombo and Kandy.

I know that Ayya had no desire to return to this world, nor did she hope for rebirth in any other world. Her aspiration was to head directly for the ultimate goal, Nibbana. I hope that in the death process she succeeded in getting this wish fulfilled.

—Bhikkhu Bodhi

## **The Malwatte Mahanayake Thera**

The most Venerable Rambukwelle Vipassi Nayakathera, who was the 25th in the hierarchy of the Malwatte Mahanayake succession, passed away on the 7th of June 2004 at the Kandy General Hospital, at the ripe age of 88 years.

Entering the Order on 12th May 1930 under the pupilage of the then chief incumbent of the Malwatte Temple, Ven. Rambukwella Sobhita Mahathera, who later became the Mahanayake, he had his education at the Vidyalankara Pirivena. He entered *upasampadā* (higher ordination) in 1938, became a committee member of the Malwatte chapter in 1950 and subsequently became the chief incumbent of the Gangārāmaya temple in 1970. He became the Mahanayake in 1989.

He became instrumental in improving the buildings under his incumbency i.e., Kundasala Rajamahaviharaya, Rambukwelle Pansala and the Malwatte building complex. He was also responsible for initiating several Dhamma schools and also was serving as a member of the Kandy friend-in-need society and the Sri Lanka Cancer Society. He went to Siam as a member of a Sri Lankan delegation in 1966.

## **Welcome new Mahanayake Thera**

The most Venerable Tibbotuvave Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Mahathera, who succeeded the afore-mentioned Nayaka Thera as the 26th Malwatte Mahanayake Thera, hails from the hamlet Tibbotuvava in the Matale district. Born as a younger son to his parents on 30th May 1944, he entered the Order on the 10th of June 1957 under the pupilage of the most Venerable Purijjala Siddhartha Saranankera and Tibbotuvava Sri Siddhartha Medhankera Theras as his teachers. Educated at the Sangharaja Privana, Kandy he passed out with Pirivana finals.

He entered higher ordination in 1964 at the Malwatte Temple and was appointed a member of the Malwatte Chapter in 1968 subsequently becoming the Registrar of the Chapter. In 1922 he succeeded the then Anunayake Thera, Ven. Rambukwelle Sri Dhammarakkhita Ratanapala Sobhita Thera, after his demise. He subsequently became the chief incumbent of the famous Rideevihara, Kurunegala. He has travelled abroad to several countries including India, Thailand and Burma.

We wish him all success in his new position.

## Books Received

(Complimentary to the Library: not available for sale with us).

- *Two Buddhist Sūtras viewed from Science*, by J.K.P. Ariyaratne, published by Stamford Lake Publications. This is a comparison of the Buddha's first two sermons, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and the Anattalakkhana Sutta, from the viewpoint of science.
- *Casket of Medicine*, an English translation of the chapters 1- 8 of the *Bhesajja Manjūsā*, which is a Pali medical treatise written by a Sinhala bhikkhu in the 13th century for the use of Buddhist monks, published in the PTS translation series No.50. Tr. by J. Liyanaratne.
- *Buddhahood Without Meditation* by Dudjons Lingpa, published by Padma Publishing, P.O. box, 279, Junction City, CA. Tr. from Tibetan it deals with different aspects of Buddhism from the point of view of Tibetan Buddhism, claiming itself as belonging to the category of *Atiyoga*.
- *Compassionate Understanding*: a series of 24 useful lectures on general Buddhism given by Rosmary and Steve Wessman during a ten-day meditation retreat at Koh Pah-ngan, Thailand. Published by Paragon House, 2700, University Avenue West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114.
- *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* by Michael Carrithers, published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi. This is an anthropological and an historical study of the lives and practices of this community of Buddhist monks of Sri Lanka.
- *Nirvana, the Highest Happiness* by Susunaga Weeraperuma, published by Vedams Books, Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. It is a miscellaneous collection of essays on Buddhism, the title of the book being that of its last chapter.
- *Small Boat, Great Mountain* by Amaro Bhikkhu, published by Abhayagiri Monastic Foundation, CA. USA. The theme of this work is the direct application to life of the Four Noble Truths.
- *Dhammapada Pali* (ධම්මපද) Published by the Central Cultural Fund (of Sri Lanka) and compiled by a panel of authors and contains the Pali text of the *Dhammapada* in Sinhala, Roman, and Tamil characters with a translation in all three languages.

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## Society News

### *Bhāvanā classes resumed*

The once popular meditation classes on Thursdays from 3.30 to 4.30 pm have been resumed. These are conducted by Mr. Upul Gamage, who succeeded the late Mr. Godwin Samararatne as the Meditation teacher conducting these classes as well as those at the Nillambe Meditation Centre.

### *Welcome Executive Director*

Mr. B. Liyanamana, a University of Ceylon honours graduate in oriental languages, has joined us as the Executive Director of the BPS effective from 1st April 2004.

With his experience of over forty years in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in several capacities such as a member of the National Library Services Board, Chairman of the Library Service Development Board, Central Province and a life-member of the Sri Lanka Boys' Scouts

Association, he can be of immense service to the BPS with his elderly genial nature helping him to maintain good human relations with the members of the staff.

### *A correction*

Dr. Ron Wijewantha, the author of **Wheel Publication No. 458-460**, writes to us as follows:

“By an oversight I had failed to include an acknowledgement page which, had it been published, would have read as follows: “Once again I wish to clearly state that I make no claim to originality in what I have presented in my essays on “Attaining Nibbana”. For the material contained therein are based on the discourse of the Buddha and the commentaries and essays thereon by various distinguished authors. Thus the ‘Overview of the Vipassana Practice’ was based essentially on the numerous writings of Mahasi Sayadaw. The chapter on ‘Meditating to Transcendence’ included, *interalia*, commentaries and sub-commentaries by Dr. Paravahera Vajiranana Nayake Thera and U Vimalaramsi. The chapter on ‘Mahayana Path to Transcendence’ was based on the writings of Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua, Charles Luk and Dr. C.T. Shen. Finally, on page 96 some lines from the monumental writings of Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi have been included. To all of the above my humble and grateful thanks.”

### *A kind appeal*

The inaugural address made by our President Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi at the UN headquarters in Washington to mark the declaration of Vesak Poya day as an internationally recognized day was printed and distributed free among our members and all its printing costs were borne by an American philanthropist.

We intend printing a Sinhala rendering of this historically significant speech to be distributed among our members not proficient in English as well, along with the first mailing, 2005. This has been getting delayed owing to the financial constraints it involves. Therefore, we extend a kind appeal to our members to contribute their mite towards this worthy project.

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## **The Temple Of The Sacred Tooth Relic**

This temple, known as the Dalada Maligawa (the Palace of the Eye-tooth Relic), enshrines the left eye-tooth relic of the Buddha. The Relic is the “diadem” of the Buddhists of Sri Lanka. It was brought here in the ninth regnal year of king Kitsiri Mevan (304-332 A.D.) from Kalinga, a country that was in the south-east of the Indian S of Orises) “to prevent its falling into the hands of a hostile king.”

The first Temple of the Tooth Relic was situated at Anuradhapura, which was then the capital of Sri Lanka. As and when a new capital was established the Tooth Relic was moved to a temple specially erected for it there: thus in turn to Polonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Kurunegala, Gampola, Jayavardha-napura Kotte and finally to Mahanuvara (Kandy).

This temple was built in the sixteenth century by King Vimala Dharma Suriya I and enlarged by King Vimala Dharma Suriya II in the late seventeenth century. The famous king Kirti Sri Rajasinha (1747-1782) added a wing to it called the Palle Mahala, containing a large image of the Buddha. The last king, Sri Vikrama Rajasinha (1798-1815), added another wing called the Pattirippuva, the Octagon, from where he used to address his subjects on important or festive occasions. It now houses a large library of ancient manuscripts written on palm leaves. The last

embellishment to the Temple is a gold-plated canopy erected over the inner shrine, which contains the sacred Tooth Relic.

This is the only visible and portable tooth relic of the Buddha available. Its association with every word uttered by the Enlightened One makes it the most sacred object of worship for the Buddhists of the entire world.

The sacred Tooth Relic is enshrined in the innermost of seven golden caskets and is displayed (but within the Temple premises only) as decided by the three custodians from time to time and also on special occasions.

The Temple is kept open from 5.30 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. daily but the doors of the Inner Shrine Room are kept open only during the following times:

5.30 a.m. to 7.00 a.m.;  
9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.; and  
6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Symbolic offerings of food are made in the forenoon and of liquids in the evening during these hours to the sacred Tooth Relic which personifies the Buddha. The beating of drums in the traditional way is also done throughout the times of these offerings, in honour of the sacred Relic.

The King of Sri Lanka was the traditional custodian of the Tooth Relic until the country was ceded to the British in 1815. Since then its custody has been vested in three personages—the Venerable Mahanayaka Theras (chief monks) of Malvatta and Asgiriya Temples and the Diyavadana Nilame, the lay custodian, elected decennially under the law to administer the affairs and conduct the traditional ceremonies of the Temple.

A procession (*perahera*) is held in honour of the Sacred Relic annually in July / August. Internationally famous as the Kandy Esala Perahaera, it is a unique pageant in which about a hundred decorated elephants, 1500 Kandyan dancers, 500 drummers and 200 torch-bearers parade the streets of Kandy for ten nights and the following day, led by the Diyavadana Nilame and the Basnayake Nilames (custodians of the important places of Hindu deities worshipped in the city) arrayed in their resplendent ancient attire. All this makes the procession the most spectacular ceremony of Asia.

We regret that we have misplaced the original writer's name of this piece on the Dalada Maligawa. Whoever he may be we are grateful to him. – Editor

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## The Path to True Welfare

### I

The path to true welfare starts with faith and devotion  
Directed to the most sublime and noble Triple Gem.  
Faith clears the mind of the dross of confusion;  
Like a seed it brings forth plentiful flowers and fruits.

II

To ensure your well-being in this life and the next,  
To protect your family and give safety to all,  
Take a firm stand on the five lofty precepts,  
Which support the jewel-mountains of noble virtues.

III

Casting dark shadows, attachment grips the heart,  
And obstructs the freedom of the unfettered mind.  
To break its firm grip and to uphold the teachings,  
Give generously with reverence, stirred by compassion.

IV

The path must be walked by those with clear vision;  
Without eyes to see you can easily lose your way.  
To acquire the right view that guides your steps,  
Delve into the study of the ocean of scriptures.

V

The clouds of ignorance obscure the sky of mind,  
Bringing the floods of misery and bondage.  
To clear away the clouds and let the light shine through  
Develop the wisdom that discerns the true marks.

VI

The world is sick, afflicted by defilements;  
The remedies it seeks bring only more pain,  
Like a physician moved by a compassionate heart,  
The Buddha prescribes medicines that cure all ills.

VII

Centuries have rolled by since the Master expired,  
Yet the wonders of his medicines have not diminished.  
Thus, while establishing ourselves in the Dhamma,  
Let us spread widely its healing powers.

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

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## Serve To Be Perfect — Be Perfect To Serve

Religion, (by religion a way of life is meant) cannot exist without society. One may say that religion is something personal and individual. But society consists of individuals.

A true religion should function not only for the spiritual or mental development of mankind, but also for the material progress. Man cannot live on thoughts alone, however wholesome they may be. Before he directs his thoughts towards mental development he should have economic security. The Buddha is emphatic on this point.

The Buddha did not all the time confine himself to a cell, but wandered from town to town and village to village, through the highways and by-ways of India. He moved more with the commoner than with the aristocrat. Kings and princes came to him for guidance and instruction, but the Master went to the poor, lowly and lost, to help them. He knew the people from the

lowliest walks of life to the highest and was well aware of the political, social and economic conditions of India during his time. That being so, he did not restrict his sermons and discussions to matters of high philosophy and advanced psychology.

## **Compassionate Teacher**

As a practical teacher of infinite compassion and understanding he was mindful of the social and economic well-being of the masses and always wished, by his advice, to alleviate the misery of people, and see that they lived without too much unhappiness. It is true that real happiness is derived from a life of purity and peace; but it is obvious that without a certain degree of material and economic security no moral and spiritual progress can be achieved.

So far as a monk is concerned, there are four requisites for progress on the path to purity and freedom. They are robes, food, a lodging and medicine. These are the bare necessities without which no human being can live. Basically, they are also the fundamental needs of a layman.

Although the Buddha did not attach much importance to material progress in the modern sense nor to mundane welfare, he did not entirely ignore it, because it is the basis for man's mental or spiritual progress as pointed out above. The Buddha was very outspoken with regard to certain aspects of material conditions and social welfare. So it is not quite correct to say that Buddhism is interested only in lofty ideals and that it ignores the social and economic welfare of people. As his discourses clearly indicate, the Buddha looked at life as a whole, in all its social, economic and political aspects.

## **Principles**

The code of conduct set forth by the Buddha is no mere negative prohibition but an affirmation of doing good — a career paved with good intentions for the welfare and happiness of all mankind. These moral principles aim at making society secure by promoting unity, harmony and right relations among people.

No man can live in isolation; we are dependent upon one another. We must learn to live together in concord and amity, without quarrels, in harmony and unison, regarding others with gentle looks of loving-kindness instead of the fierce glare of unfriendliness, and bring together those at variance and encourage those already in union.

Knowing that true social service could bring about such wholesome results, the Buddha instructed and encouraged people to be of help to themselves and to others. In Buddhism, to protect oneself is not egoism, not selfish security, but self-discipline and self-training. To the extent that we are morally and mentally strong and confident, so can we help others.

Altruism, as a principle of action, is based on our character and mental development. One must train, must guard oneself to be of service to others. A person may be large-hearted, sociable and ready to succour others, but if his private life is questionable, and leads to no good, from the stand-point of the Buddha, he neglects himself very badly, and really cannot serve others; he is no real helper of society.

## **Goodwill**

In the Sigala sutta, the discourse to the young man named Sigala, the Buddha's doctrine of love and goodwill between man and man is set forth as domestic and social ethics. The sixty one duties enumerated in this discourse speak in no uncertain terms of the moral obligations and social service of every individual in society. These are reciprocal duties to be performed by parents, teachers, husbands, wives, children, friends, relatives, neighbours, servants, workers, employees and religious men.

It is stated categorically that the king should rule righteously and not unrighteously. Never resting on his laurels, the king or ruler is expected to be kind and dutiful to his subjects like a benevolent father to his children. In order to be just, honest and upright to all without partially or favouritism the ruler is expected to avoid the four wrong ways of treating people (*agati*); that is, with desire, anger, fear and delusion. In this respect, Asoka the Great of India, may be regarded as one of the most just, wise and benevolent rulers of all time. This is shown by his edicts:

“All men are my children.”

“Just as I want my own children to enjoy all prosperity and happiness in this life and the next, so I want the same for all men.

“The world should be comforted by me. From me the world should receive happiness and not sorrow.

“There is no duty higher than to promote the happiness of the whole world.

“Work I must for the good of the whole world.”

Asoka endeavoured to educate the people not by spreading the deeper philosophy of Buddhism but by spreading the ethical and social aspects of it. He caused such teaching to be engraved on rock, and they became sermons on stones, not metaphorically but actually.

If we carefully study the history of Sri Lanka we find that those rulers who were aware of the admonitions of the Buddha, endeavoured to lead a righteous life and guided the people both morally and economically.

All other social service, our progress, economic or otherwise, should be just and righteous, not devoid of Dharma, law or truth, and not at the cost of moral and spiritual values.

## **The Heart of Buddhism**

As the Buddha so clearly pointed out, *karuṇa* (love and compassion) is the virtue that urges man to engage in all social work, to work for the good of others. If you remove *karuṇa* from the teachings of the Buddha, you remove the heart of Buddhism; for all virtues, all goodness and righteousness have as their basis, as their matrix. Compassion is surely not a flabby state of mind. It is a strong enduring thing. When a person is in distress, it is the truly compassionate man's heart that trembles.

Through love, one adds to the fund of human happiness, one makes the world brighter, nobler and purer and prepares it for the good life better than in any other way. If one has developed a love that is truly great, rid of the desire to hold and to possess, that strong clean love which is untarnished with lust of any kind, that love which does not expect material advantage and profit from the act of loving, that love which is firm but not grasping, unshakable but not tied down, gentle and settled, hard and penetrating as a diamond but unhurting, helpful but not interfering, cool, invigorating, giving more than taking, not proud but dignified, not sloppy yet soft, the love that leads one to the heights of clean achievement, then in such a one can there be no illwill at all, and he is the true social worker in the eminent sense of the term.

*So serve to be perfect. Be perfect to serve!*

Piyadassi Maha Thera  
(Sri Lanka)

# The Buddhist Publication Society

The BPS is an approved charity dedicated to making known the Teaching of the Buddha, which has a vital message for all people.

Founded in 1958, the BPS has published a wide variety of books and booklets covering a great range of topics. Its publications include accurate annotated translations of the Buddha's discourses, standard reference works, as well as original contemporary expositions of Buddhist thought and practice. These works present Buddhism as it truly is—a dynamic force which has influenced receptive minds for the past 2500 years and is still as relevant today as it was when it first arose.

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