



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

Ti-Sarana

NEWS

90, DUKU ROAD, SINGAPORE 429254. TEL: 6345 6741 Fax: 6348 0844
Email: tisarana@singnet.com.sg Website: www.tisarana.org.sg

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Buddha on the Value of Human Life

Buddhism teaches us that to be born as a human being is an extremely rare event and evaluates human life for a better living for the sake of this very life and after. In order to illustrate this fact, the Buddha has drawn the Parable of the **Blind Turtle and the Yoke**. The Buddha addressing the monks said:

“Suppose a man throws into the sea a yoke with one hole in it, and the east wind carries it to the west, west wind carries it to the east, and the north wind carries it to the south, south wind carries it to the north. And suppose there is a blind turtle that comes up once at the end of each century. What would you think, O, monks? Would that blind turtle be able to put its neck through that hole in the yoke?”

“It might, Sir, sometime or other at the end of a long period,” the monks answered.

The Buddha continued:

“O, monks the blind turtle would take less time to put its neck into that yoke with a single hole in it than a fool, who once gone to perdition, would take to regain the human state, I say. Why is that? Because there is no practising of good there, no practising of what is righteous, no doing of what is wholesome, no performance of meritorious deeds. There prevails only mutual devouring and slaughter of the weak.”

As emphasised in Buddhism, the fact to be born as a human being is an extremely rare event for two reasons. Firstly, one realises the enormous suffering that a person has to undergo in his wandering in the cyclic existence of birth and death, and therefore, strives to escape from the cycle of birth and death. Secondly, in order to inculcate an awareness of urgency in the mind of humans to practise what is righteous, just and wholesome, which leads to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In other words, one should be good and do good during his lifetime deriving the best out of living a human life.

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Since Buddhism is an ethico-philosophical religion, its ethical aspect dominates from beginning to end. The Path to attain the goal is called Middle Path and characterised by eight constituents qualified as 'correct' or 'right'. All verbal, bodily and mental actions of an individual should be 'right' in the sense that they should not be harmful to oneself and others. For instance, Right Thoughts are thoughts of letting go, loving kindness and non-violence. Right Livelihood is living by wholesome means of livelihood. On the other hand, wrong livelihood means gaining a living by earning wealth through ways and means that are detrimental to other beings and it is considered as a transgression of social and ethical norms.

The Pali word for man is '*manussa*' (*Sanskrit: manusya, Gothic: manna*). Hinduism connects the word to a mythical ancestor called 'manu' and gives the meaning 'offspring of manu'. But the Buddhist scholars as far back as in the 5th century have given an ethical twist to the word and defined it in conformity with Buddhist ethics as "**man is called manussa because of the fullness of the mind**". Buddha says in the Dhammapada that everyone trembles at the rod, life is dear to everyone, therefore, one should not kill and also should not cause to kill (Dhammapada 197). In order to highlight to how Buddhism evaluates human life full of love and compassion here is an incident recorded in the Buddhist scriptures:

Once a battle ensued between the Sakya and Koliya clans in India over the waters of a river called Rohini. These two clans lived on the either side of the dam of the river. The dam had been constructed across the river and they had been in the habit of cultivating their fields with the waters of the Rohini River. When there was a severe drought, a violent quarrel arose between the two peoples and gradually it turned into a battle. Then the Buddha appeared there in the nick of time and convinced them of the folly of killing each other for the sake of some water. The Buddha questioned the two contending parties:

"Why are you clansmen in battle array?"

"For the sake of the waters of the Rohini River, Sir."

"Tell me what is more valuable, water or human lives." Buddha asked them.

"Human lives." They answered.

Thereupon the Buddha asked them whether it is proper to kill each other for water, which is of less value than life. Being thoroughly convinced by the Buddha's timely mediation and pertinent explanation of the value of life, they gave up the battle, reconciled and re-established friendly relations.

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahā Thera

*Once again, the Mahā Sangha and the Management
Committee congratulate Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahā Thero
on the occasion of the Conferment of D. Litt.
by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.*

Highlights of My First Trip to Sri Lanka

Ven. Dr. Gnanarama Mahā Thero was conferred the Doctor of Literature Degree by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. We attended the convocation ceremony together with him on 21st Aug 2009 at the Bandaranayaka Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo. Some of us were there to receive our B.A. degree in Buddhist Studies. The ceremony was a grand event, well attended by bhikkhus, parents and friends. We put on graduation gowns and went up the stage, one by one, to receive our scroll, together with the other bhikkhu graduates. After the ceremony, it was time for photographs to be taken to record the memorable event.



*Felicitation Ceremony
At Purvarama Viharaya*

A felicitation ceremony was held at the Purvarama Viharaya (Ven. Gnanarama's temple) on the 23rd Aug for Ven. Gnanarama. Prominent members of the Mahā Sangha, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources were present. Speakers at the ceremony praised Ven. Gnanarama's many contributions and work in propagating the Buddha Dhamma. We were entertained by song and dance performances by Dhamma class students and later treated to a sumptuous lunch. We also visited the Isura Lama Sevana (a Children's Home) which is supported by Purvarama Viharaya. We brought gifts for the 19 children staying at the Home and it was a joy seeing their delighted faces when they received their presents.



At the Isura Lama Sevana

On 24th Aug, we visited the Metta Youth Centre (MYC) in Matara. We were greeted by a welcoming ceremony that included a band performance by the children of the Home. The recently completed Language Lab, established with the kind donation from the Sim Family in memory of the late Dhammacariya Sim Choon Kim and Mrs Molly Sim, was officially declared opened that morning in the presence of Mr Tusita Vanigasingha, Additional Govt. Agent for Matara district, other officials and members of the Maha Sangha. Guests were entertained by a concert performed by the children. Later, we interacted with the children in singing songs and shared jokes and music. They showed us their dormitories, the vegetable and fruit patches grown by them.



*Official Opening of The
Language Lab at MYC*

That evening we attended Pūjā with the children at the Rohana Sangha Sabha Simamalaka, Matara, led by the Most Ven. Atthudawe Sri Rahula Mahā Nayaka Thero, Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna. Rev. Ong (Code 4, Singapore) who was visiting Sri Lanka was also present. We were very impressed with the children's discipline and well mannered nature. All of us were very touched when they bid us goodbye the next day by kneeling down and touching our feet.



*Mr Tusita Vanigasingha
trying ou the equipment
at the Language Lab*

One of the highlights of our nine days in Sri Lanka was our visit to Kandy. We had Pūjā at the Tooth Relic Temple. With Ven. Ratanasiri, we had the opportunity to enter the Inner Chamber to pay our respects to the Tooth Relic.

In Colombo, some of the temples we visited included Sambuddhaloka Viharaya (Ven. Indasara's temple), Bodhirukkharama Vihara, Talahena, Malabe (Bhante Chandawimala's master's temple), Bodhi Buddhist Centre (Ven. Nanda's temple), Samadhi Buddhist Centre (Ven. Buddhasiri's temple). In all these temples we were warmly welcomed and treated to refreshments which all of us enjoyed.

Later in Hambantota we visited Tissamaharama Rajamaha Viharaya (Ven. Ananda's master's temple) and had the opportunity to view the Ola Leaves where Suttas and Parittas were recorded, as well as many other photographs of historical value. Other places of interests we visited were the Hummanaya Blow Hole, Kataragama Kirivehera (an ancient Pagoda) and a Hindu Temple, Buduruwagala and Maligavila where statues of Buddha and Mahayana Bodhisattvas were erected during the 7th Century A.D. At the Udawalawe Transit Camp for baby elephants, we saw how young elephants were fed with milk.

Last but not least, we wish to thank Ven. Ratanasiri who kindly accompanied us on the trip and always arrived ahead of us at each stop to ensure that we were safe and comfortable.

Article contributed by Lau Kim Koon
Teacher of YMBA Dhamma Class



Evening Pūjā at Rohana Sangha Sabha Simamalaka, Matara



Blessing by Mahā Nayaka Thero



Statue of Buddha at Maligavila Vihara

Snap shots of events held during Vassāna Observation



Blessing for Serene & Ben's Baby (1st Month)



Satipathāna Meditation Session with Dr. Ng Yuen Yen



Celebrating Teacher's Day

Vassāna Observation

Following the invitation on 7th July by Sis. Nirodhā and Bro. Ivan to observe Vassāna at Ti-Sarana, the Bhantes have been chanting the Ratana Sutta daily for 10 to 12 times to invoke the blessings of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha on all members, devotees and sentient beings and for the fulfillment of the aspirations/wishes of participants who have placed their recorded aspirations inside the big white lotus container at the Shrine Hall.

All are welcome to join in the recitation of the Ratana Sutta with the Bhantes at 10.30 am (before Morning Pūjā) and during the Evening Pūjā.

The daily chanting of the Ratana Sutta will continue till 10th Oct. 2009 when a Special Blessing Service will be held at 6.30 pm to bless bottled water for members and devotees. Kathina Day Offerings Ceremony will be held on 11th Oct. 2009 (Sun.)

Offering Of Robes/8-Requisites On Kathina Day (11 Oct. 2009)

Members and devotees are encouraged to participate in the offering of Robes or Eight Requisites to the Sangha in respect, appreciation and gratitude of their guidance in our spiritual cultivation.

There will be a cutting and sewing session of the Kathina Robe to be offered in the evening to the Venerables who have observed Vassāna retreat at Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association. All are welcome to participate in the cutting of the Kathina Cloth and Offering of the Kathina Robe in the evening.

Members and devotees who wish to make offerings to the Mahā Sangha can place orders for Robes (at \$40 each) and Eight Requisites (at \$80 per set) by completing and submitting the Kathina Day Offerings form with their donations to the TBA Honorary Treasurer.

Refuge Taking & Conferment Of Buddhist Names on Kathina Day (11 Oct. 2009)

We will be holding the Refuge Taking & Conferment Of Buddhist Names Ceremony on Kathina Day. In Theravada tradition, a Buddhist name is given in Pali which was the language used by the Buddha in His Teachings. A Pali Buddhist name is always meaningful and positive. Members and devotees who wish to have a Buddhist name conferred for them by Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama are to fill up the form attached with this newsletter. The duly completed form is to be submitted to Bhante Gnanarama by 25th Sept. 2009.

Members and devotees who have requested and submitted their form for a Buddhist name must attend the Refuge Taking & Conferment Of Buddhist Name Ceremony on Kathina Day. Prior to the ceremony, they will be advised on the ceremonial procedures. At this ceremony, certificate stating the Buddhist name of the requestor will be presented to him/her by Bhante. On this ceremonial occasion, the requestors for Buddhist name must be attired in white and must be at TBA at 12 noon.



Invitation to Vassāna



Chanting the Ratana Sutta



Robes & 8-Requisites for offerings to Mahā Sangha

Blessing of Bottled Water on 10th Oct. 2009, Sat.

6.30 pm	Buddha Pūjā
7.15 pm	Gilanapaccaya For Venerables
7.20 pm	Light Refreshment For Members & Devotees
7.30 pm	Invitation Of The Buddha Relics To The Shrine Hall
7.45 pm	Invitation To Mahā Sangha To Commence Special Chanting
9.00 pm	Blessing By Venerables For Members And Devotees

Kathina Programme on 11th Oct. 2009, Sun.

Day

7.00 am	Members & Devotees Assemble For Procession
7.15 am	Kathina Cīvara Procession To Shrine Hall
7.30 am	Arrival Of Mahā Sangha and Buddha Pūjā
7.50 am	Invitation Of Mahā Sangha To Participate In Kathina Offerings
8.00 am	Address By President Of Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association Address By Chief Religious Advisor Offering Of Kathina Cīvara To Mahā Sangha Offering Of Robes To Mahā Sangha
8.20 am	Blessing By Mahā Sangha For Members & Devotees
8.35 am	Offering Morning Dāna [Breakfast] To Mahā Sangha
8.45 am	Recitation Of Metta Bhavana To Permeate Loving Kindness To All Beings
9.00 am	Offerings Of Robes/8-Requisites By Members & Devotees To Mahā Sangha
10.00 am	Cutting & Sewing The Kathina Cīvara
11.00 am	Buddha Pūjā
11.45 am	Dāna For Venerables
12.00 noon	Vegetarian Lunch For Members & Devotees

Conferment Of Buddhist Names Ceremony

12.30 pm	Refuge Taking By Preceptors Who Have Requested For A Buddhist Name
12.45 pm	Observance Of The Five Precepts
1.00 pm	Conferment Of Buddhist Name By Venerable
1.20 pm	Recitation Of Chattamānavaka Gāthā

Evening

6.30 pm	Pūjā
7.15 pm	Offerings Of Kathina Robe By Members & Devotees To Venerables
7.30 pm	Dhamma Talk By A Venerable
7.45 pm	Blessing By Venerables For Members & Devotees
8.00 pm	Gilanapaccaya For Venerables
8.05 pm	Light Refreshment For Members & Devotees