

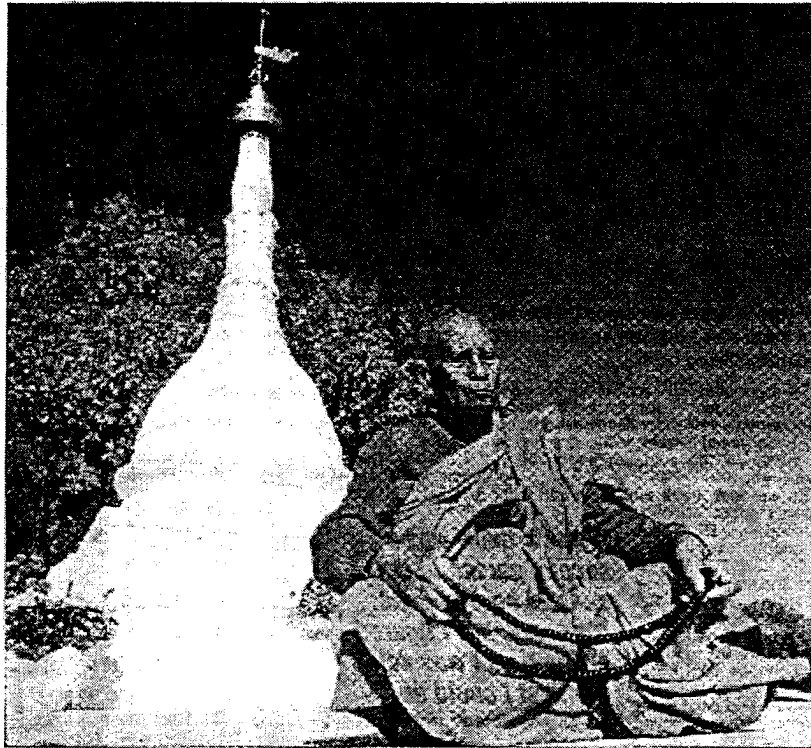


BODHI LEAVES

A newsletter created by children for children

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A gift of peace and harmony



Venerable Sayadaw U Thila Wunta, a 90-year old monk from Myanmar, meditates in front of a newly erected Buddhist pagoda near the ruins of Trappist monastery in St. Norbert.

Manitoba's Peace Pagoda

On Monday the 25th of September at 6:00 in the morning we had the opening ceremony of Manitoba's Peace Pagoda. The brilliant white pagoda glowed magnificently under the moonlit sky. The soft chanting of paritta rose

into the sky and beckoned the Devas. Very slowly the chanting grew louder. The orange robed Buddhist Monks walked serenely towards the pagoda.

Manitoba's peace pagoda lies in St. Norbert beside the ruins of the Trappist monastery. Although it may seem very small when compared with

some of the magnificent churches and cathedrals of other major religions, it represents a step forward for the entire Buddhist community of Manitoba. The shrine, called the Peace Pagoda, is only about eighteen feet tall and about ten feet in diameter, but it contains a very tiny portion of the relics of the Lord Buddha. This makes it very special. The shape of the pagoda reflects the various stages of the mind of an enlightened being.

The monk who started the project, Sayadaw Wunta, is a very senior Buddhist monk from Burma. He is ninety years old and has been practicing the Dhamma all his life. He has spent most of his life in the Burmese jungle practicing meditation on loving kindness and compassion to all living beings. Every few years, he takes a tour of the world during which he visits many different countries to spread his knowledge of the Dhamma. His goal is to build a peace pagoda in every country in the world.

We are very fortunate that Winnipeg was selected for the Peace Pagoda in Canada. It is a symbol of compassion and Peace as Buddhists meditate on loving kindness and compassion beneath it.

My family and I, along with the rest of the Sri Lankan Buddhist community in Winnipeg went to help with its construction. We were able to assist in the painting of the pagoda and some other final touches. We also had the good fortune to contribute financially towards the completion of the pagoda. This treasure was built under the direction of the Sayadaw Wunta in five days by a "thousand hands". Buddhists from all over Manitoba came to help to lay a brick, cement and paint the pagoda. Everyone who helped felt extremely fortunate to have been able to contribute to the construction of such a great monument.

Chamal Abeysekera (17)



The Bodhi Citta

This year the Manitoba Buddhist Vihara started meditation classes. The community meditates every other Sunday under the guidance of our Dhamma friend Mikel. Medi-

tation plays an important role in attaining enlightenment. Bodhi Citta means "Awakening Mind". Before one can obtain enlightenment

one must first make a strong aspiration to do so. Then one must strive and work hard to attain their goal by nurturing their "Awakening Mind". From this point onwards every effort must be

made to practice generosity, morality, and mental development to perfection so that the "Awakening Mind" will flourish like a beautiful flower.

Chayanika Abeysekera (14)



The Five Laws (Niyamas)

According to the Buddha everything that happens is not due to Karma. Karma is only one of the five laws that operate in our world. An event may occur due to any one of the five laws: Utu Niyama, Bija Niyama, Chitta Niyama, Damma Niyama or Karma Niyama.

Utu Niyama explains all events that happen due to inorganic occurrences. Some

examples are weather, earthquakes, and volcanoes. The root cause of Utu Niyama is heat energy.

"It is the knowledge of the law of cause and effect, action and reaction, that urges a man to refrain from evil and gather good. A believer in cause and effect knows only too well that it is his own actions that make his life miserable or otherwise"

*Dr. Paul Dahlke,
Buddhists Essays*

Bija Niyama explains all the similarities that occur to organic things due to genetics. An example would be a rice seed creating a

rice plant and not an orange tree. Another example is how a child has the same hair colour or eye colour as their parents.

Damma Niyama explains all things that occur because of natural laws. An example would be the law of gravity.

Chitta Niyama explains all the things that occur because of the development of one's mind. One example would be the ability to move through astral travel.

The above mentioned laws explain similarities passed down through generations and gives the cause of certain disasters. However karma is the law that explains and gives reasons why there are inequalities among mankind. The law of Karma explains Cause and Effect.

Hasantha Gunaratne (14)

Patachara

Long ago, at the time of the Buddha, there was a business family. They had only one daughter in the family. They also had a servant to clean the house.

The daughter fell in love with the servant and eloped with him. The parents were very sad. When the girl remembered her parents she wanted to visit them. They had to

If one longing for sensual pleasure achieves it, yes, he is enraptured at heart. The mortal gets what he wants but if for that person - longing, desiring - the pleasures diminish he's shattered as if shot with an arrow.

-Gotama Buddha

go through a forest to see her parents. It was raining heavily. The man wanted to make a little hut for shelter. He went to cut some trees. He was bitten by a snake and died. The girl cried. She decided to go to visit her parents with her two little children.

On the way they had to cross a river. The river was full with the water because of the rain. She could not carry two children at the same time. She left one on the side of the river and crossed the river with the other. She then came back for the other child. She saw an eagle grab her baby and fly away. She said, "shoo shoo" to the bird. The toddler who was on the other side of the river thought that Mama was calling

him. He jumped into the river. She saw the toddler disappearing in the deep water.

She lost her husband and two sons in one day. It was unbearable pain. Crying, she went to see her parents. She found that their house

had broken because of the heavy rain. Her parents too were dead. It was too much pain for her. She became mentally sick. She ran on the roads naked.

People started to call her Patachara. A passerby, who felt sorry for her, sent her to the Buddha.

The Buddha looked at her with compassion. He brought her back to consciousness. Somebody threw her a cloth to cover her body. She told her sad story to the Buddha. The Buddha listened to her and taught her about suffering and death. She decided to become a nun. Later on she became an Arahant.

The Buddha advised people not to hurt their parents. Our parents love us and do a lot for us. We must be grateful and good to our parents.

Ashan Dissanayaka (10)



The Lasting Effects of Generosity

One day a princess named Sumana went to the Buddha and asked Him three questions related to generosity.

The first question was about two men that were equally wise and had the same amount of confidence in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. One of them was very generous and the other was not. If both of them were to go to heaven after death, would there be any difference in the pleasures they would receive? The Buddha answered that there would be a difference. The one who was generous would get more than the other who was not. The one who gave more, would have a better complexion, would have more luxuries as well as a longer life span. Also the one that gave more would be one of the higher Devas while the one who gave less would be one of the lower Devas. The person who gave more would also be looked at with love and affection and would be liked by all.

Princess Sumana then asked her second question. She asked if the two Devas passed away and became humans would there be a difference in their status? The Buddha said that the one who gave more would still have more than the other. The person that gave more would have more luxuries, a better complexion and a longer life as before.

Princess Sumana's third question was that if these two men were then ordained to be monks, would they both be the same? The Buddha answered that they would not be the same. The one who gave more would have a higher rank among the monks and will receive more robes and alms than the one that had not given.

What I learned from this story is that the effects of generosity given with a pure mind last a long time.



Nilupama Wanigasekara (12)

Beauty does not last

At the time of the Buddha there was a very pretty queen named Kema who did not want to go to the temple. The reason she did not want to go to the temple was

because she had heard that the Buddha had said that beauty was a very uncertain thing. Kema was very proud of her beauty and did not want to meet the Buddha.

King Bimbisara who was a devoted follower of the Buddha wanted to trick Kema into meeting the Buddha. He described the beautiful flowers that grew in the forest where the Buddha was staying. Kema who loved beautiful things decided to visit the Buddha to see the flowers. The Buddha saw Kema approach and realized that her pride in her looks was a hindrance to her development.

He created a lady who was even more beautiful than Kema and had her fan him. Kema could not believe her eyes. Here was some one even more beautiful than her. As she looked at the beautiful girl she saw her grow old. She saw her grow very old and fall down.

Kema realized that the same thing would happen to her. She listened to the Buddha who was teaching the Dhamma. Kema attained enlightenment and became a nun. She turned out to be the Buddha's smartest nun. The Buddha appointed her as his chief female disciple and foremost in wisdom.

Neeliya Dissanayaka (12)



The Buddha's Compassion

Once there was a monk named Tissa who was very sick. Tissa would constantly get big painful boils all over his skin. Sometimes the boils would pop and yellowish - white pus would spill out. All of the pus would get on Tissa's robe and the robe would stick to him. The other monks did not help Tissa because he smelled bad and they did not want the pus to get all over themselves.

When the Buddha heard about this, He went to help Tissa. The Buddha cleaned Tissa and his robes, and then gave him a clean robe to put on.

Tissa was still in pain but not in as much pain as before. The Buddha then taught him the Dhamma. Before long Tissa attained enlightenment and passed away. The Buddha then encouraged others to be kind to the sick by saying, "He who tends the sick tends me."

The monks asked the Buddha why Tissa who had wisdom to attain enlightenment suffered with boils. The

"He who tends the sick, tends me."

Gotama Buddha

Buddha said that in one of his previous births Tissa was a hunter. He hunted and killed birds for the king. If there were any birds left, he used to break their wings and feet and keep them for the following day as meat would spoil if the birds were killed. Tissa would also sometimes use the extra birds for his meals.

One day an enlightened monk came for alms. Tissa gave the meal he had prepared for himself with happiness to the monk to eat. He then listened to the monk, gave up killing, and changed his ways. Because of that Tissa became a wise monk, but because he was cruel to the birds he had the serious illness with boils.

The Buddha taught us to be very compassionate and to never shorten the lives of others.

Thisaru Nilmalgoda (11)



The Virtue of Patience
(Kantivada Jataka)

Once upon a time there was a king who lived in a castle with his wives. One beautiful day

they went outside for an outing. After some time the king fell asleep. His wives left him and went deep into the forest. The king woke up and he looked for his wives but they were not there. He looked around and found footprints and broken flowers on the ground. He followed the trail and found his wives looking at and listening to an ascetic who was teaching them.

The worse of the two is he who when abused retaliates. One who does not retaliate wins the battle hard to win.
-Gotama Buddha

The king was very angry. He cut off the ascetic's arms and legs. But the ascetic did not get angry. Instead he forgave the king for his cruelty.

The ascetic was our Bodhisatta. In this birth our Bodhisatta completed the virtue of patience.

A little later there was an earthquake. The cruel king was killed by the earthquake and got a big punishment.

Colin Dissanayaka (9)



Compassion

Compassion or loving-kindness is the wish for happi-

ness of all living things. Its power is such that by radiating thoughts of loving-kindness one can tame wild animals and even turn murderers into good human beings.

The Buddha said that an unwholesome deed could be counteracted by a wholesome deed. That is, by showing compassion to the person who does the unwholesome deed. Verse 223 of the Dhammapada states: Conquer anger by love, Conquer evil by good, Conquer the stingy by giving; Conquer the liar by truth.

Instances of hatred being overcome by compassion are seen in the stories of Angulimala and the Elephant Nalagiri.

Angulimala was instructed by his teacher to bring a thousand human fingers. In obedience to his teacher, he went to the forest and killed people to collect the fingers. When the Buddha went to this forest where Angulimala was, Angulimala thought that he could collect another finger, but the Buddha by his compassion towards Angulimala subdued the murderer, who became a monk.

When Devadatta failed in his first attempt to kill the Buddha, he sent the intoxicated Elephant Nalagiri to kill the Buddha. When the furious elephant approached the Buddha, the Buddha controlled the elephant's anger by radi-

ating thoughts of loving kindness towards the animal.

From this we see that compassion or loving-kindness is a powerful weapon to overcome the anger and ill will of others.

Sohani Amarasekera (12)



Our Teacher Mrs. Abeysekera gave a talk on "The Buddhist Virtue of Compassion" to 75 students in the world religion class at the University of Manitoba.

At the end the students were asked to write briefly what they found most interesting. Here are some of their comments:

The loving compassion of Buddhism has taught me the common qualities we all have as human beings. We all aim and strive to diminish suffering from our daily lives. However it is only through offering our selves that we are capable of achieving long-term happiness. Material objects and feelings of satisfying our needs are merely temporary. It is only the deeds that we do to ease the suffering of others that will provide us with an everlasting feeling of joy, love, and compassion.

Alex Gronice

Not one drop of blood has been shed in the name of the Buddha in 2500 years. How many other followers of major world religions can say the same? Buddhism's extreme compassion has some parallels to Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. It is amazing that their compassion is to every human being.

Linda Orminasau

The most interesting thing that I found during the presentation on the Buddhist virtue of compassion was when Mrs. Abeysekera explained the figures of the worlds military budget and the good that the wealth of nations could do to the entire world. The talk on Buddhism definitely opened my eyes. Even though we have talked about Buddhism I never realized exactly what it is and what one feels when they practice Buddhist compassion. The meditation aspect of this presentation showed me how a person can come to feel and recognize compassion.

Rory Brett

Circulate this newsletter by passing it on to another child. Visit us on the web at: <http://www.winnipeg.freenet.mb.ca/slam/buddhism/>

Editor and Producer

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Are you aware that:

4% of the world's annual military budget would reduce world global illiteracy by half?

8% would stabilize the world population by 2015?

12% would ensure the health care of the entire world population?

The compassionate Buddha included right livelihood in the moral code of his followers. As Buddhists we are expected to refrain from a livelihood that includes the manufacture or sale of weapons or chemicals that cause suffering and destruction to others. If the compassionate teachings of the Buddha were practiced universally, and the funding was redirected, we would no longer have global illiteracy and the healthcare of the entire world population would be no cause for concern.

