



Buddhist Publication Society

Newsletter

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The 50th Anniversary of the BPS

The history of Buddhism is filled with surprises. At its origins in the fifth century, Buddhism appeared to be just one among a multitude of spiritual teachings competing for the loyalty and devotion of the population of northern India. But in the third century B.C., King Asoka embraced the Dhamma, and Buddhism became a world religion. Under the sponsorship of King Asoka, Buddhism spread throughout greater India and even beyond, to Sri Lanka, southeast Asia, and as far west as Persia and the Middle East.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European scholars began to study Buddhism—partly to obtain a scholarly understanding of this strange Oriental religion, partly to make it easier for Christian missions to convert the Buddhist lands to Christianity. However, their translations of Buddhist texts and scholarly studies made Buddhism intelligible to a sizeable number of people in the West, who came to appreciate the Buddha's teachings and to adopt them in their own lives. Before long a work like Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* could appear, painting a picture of Buddhism that appealed to Westerners as much as it did to those from Asian lands.

Another surprise in the history of Buddhism occurred in Sri Lanka during the second half of the twentieth century. At the very beginning of 1958, a small group of Sri Lankan lay Buddhists met with a German scholar-monk at the Forest Hermitage in Kandy to present a proposal to publish paperbound booklets on Theravada Buddhism. To this end, they established a new organization which they called the Buddhist Publication Society. The founders assumed that once they had published a small series of booklets, all they would have to do is maintain the existing titles in print and thus the active phase of their organization would last only a few years.

However, a surprising outcome, utterly unforeseen, was in store for them. Their first publications provoked an enthusiastic response that far exceeded their expectations. The demand for more authentic booklets on the Dhamma pressed in upon them from the far corners of the world, even from places where one would never have suspected the Dhamma was known. Donations and subscriptions made their publishing work financially feasible; people came forward to help with the expanding volume of work; new manuscripts and material for manuscripts surfaced unexpectedly.

As one year gave way to the next, the BPS continued to grow, and before long the Society was respected throughout the Buddhist world as the foremost specialist publisher on Theravada Buddhism. Today its catalog offers a wide range of booklets and full-size books in both English and Sinhala. In the field of Buddhist publishing the three initials "B-P-S" are taken as a mark of reliability and authenticity.

This year the BPS celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Half a century has gone by since that small group of men met at the Forest Hermitage. Half a century has gone by since the first Wheel booklets rolled off the press. Half a century has gone by since a dream was transformed into reality. Half a century means a lot of work. It has meant hours of planning publications, editing manuscripts, typesetting and proofing, filling orders, renewing memberships. It has

meant countless hearts and minds joined together, expressing their devotion to the Dhamma in selfless action and harmonious joy.

The BPS was able to survive and flourish through the combined efforts of many people. Above all, it was the vision and determination of its founding president, Ven. Nyanaponika, that sustained the BPS through the first 26 years of its existence; the visionary spirit of Ven. Nyanaponika continues to inspire everyone who has been involved with the BPS through the decades. Nevertheless, it is the hard work and dedication of its present management and staff that maintains the life of the BPS today. As we all look back at the past history of BPS, over this fifty years' period, we have good reason to rejoice, good reason to be proud of the Society's past successes. Everyone who has sincerely and selflessly contributed to the work of the BPS deserves appreciation. We must, however, turn our attention to the future. We need new contributions of talent and labor to enable the BPS to march ahead boldly into the years and decades to come. Let us hope that fifty years from now, a later generation will be able to look back over a longer past as it commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the BPS.

—Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, President

Congratulations and Felicitations From Around the World

Felicitations Message from Ajahn Sumedho

When I first became interested in Theravada Buddhism while living in Malaysia more than four decades ago, there was a dearth of available literature on the subject in English. So I would send for tracts and books from the Buddhist Publication Society in Kandy, Sri Lanka. One of the books I received was Venerable Nyanatiloka's *Word of the Buddha*, which was a succinct synopsis of the Four Noble Truths. The quotations were all taken from the Pali scripture and organised under the appropriate headings of each of the Four Noble Truths.

This small booklet was the only teaching material I took with me when I began a yearlong retreat at a monastery in Thailand after becoming a samanera (novice monk) in 1966. None of the monks spoke English and I had no grasp of the Thai language, so I could not understand the Dhamma talks or engage in discussions with other monks. All I had for inspiration and instruction was that synopsis of the Four Noble Truths. I spent the year in a little hut reading and rereading the booklet and putting the teachings into practise.

That year of 1966 was a year of profound insight which led me on to the higher ordination and to live my life with the Four Noble Truths as my constant companion.

I have felt a deep gratitude to The Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy ever since, a gratitude and appreciation of their intentions and efforts to make the teachings from the Pali Canon available to the ever increasing interest in Buddhism all over the world.

I, therefore, send my felicitations to the Buddhist Publication Society for their 50th anniversary celebrations. May they continue their good work for many more years to come.

With Metta,
Venerable Ajahn Sumedho

Message from Ven. Ajahn Brahmavamso

Congratulations on the Auspicious Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the BPS

To all at the Buddhist Publication Society,

Although the Buddha explicitly stated that birth is suffering, the birth of the BPS 50 years ago actually alleviated much suffering. Its many publications, widely read throughout the modern world, have spread the true Dhamma in a very accessible way. Without the BPS, Buddhism today would be diminished, especially in the West.

Almost 40 years ago, when I was a young student member of the Cambridge University Buddhist Society, I picked up my first book from their library, which was the BPS edition of the famous meditation manual *The Vimuttimaggā*. Even though I did not understand much of it at the time, it planted powerful seeds in me that only came to fruition many years later. Those books from the BPS that I read as a young student, stood out from all others, in that they explained the authentic teachings of the Lord Buddha in the clearest of English.

Even today, as Abbot of a Western monastery, I use the BPS publication *The Word of the Buddha* as a standard textbook, with which I teach every Anagarika (postulant) and Novice Monk who comes to train here in Australia. It is crucial that Westerners, who have no cultural background in Buddhism, get to hear the Dhamma that was taught by the Lord Buddha Himself. Otherwise, they become confused by later, misleading teachings, that masquerade as Buddhism.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton said that “the pen is mightier than the sword”. Today, we might update this saying to “the printing press, like that of the BPS, is mightier than the terrorist”. From ignorance comes violence, from wisdom comes peace. So publishers such as the BPS have a vital role in bringing peace to our times.

So thank you, BPS, for your 50 years of invaluable service to the Dhamma, especially in the Western world. May you continue for many more years to publish and reprint books on the Dhamma, for the education, inspiration and coolness of heart, of those with little dust in their eyes.

With Mega metta,
Ajahn Brahm,
Abbot of Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery.
Western Australia

Message from Ven. K. Ñāṇananda

The Buddhist Publication Society deserves our congratulations on completing 50 years of laudable service to the cause of the spread of the Buddha word. From small beginnings, it has now built up a worldwide network for the distribution of hundreds of its publications which cover a wide range of topics on various aspects of Buddhism. The foresight of the founders

could well be appreciated now, against the background of the mounting interest in Buddhism all over the world today. On this 50th anniversary I wish more strength with the blessings of the triple gem to the present editorial board and the management staff in their dedication to the task of dissemination of the precious Dhamma.

Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda
Pothgul Aranya Senasanaya,
“Pahan Kanuwa”, Kandegedara, Devalegama.

24th April 2008

Reminiscences of Bhikkhunī Kusumā

It won't be an exaggeration if I confess that my whole life changed due to the BPS. Nearly 50 years ago I first started reading BPS publications which came by post regularly. During that time I was immersed in duties, having six children and a regular job as a science teacher and later as a university lecturer. I was working very hard, unable to rest or relax rushing through the day. The only time I sit and relax is when reading BPS booklets!

I enjoyed most reading books by Ven. Nyanaponika. The Power of Mindfulness I read over and over again. In 1969 I left for USA on a scholarship and my constant companions were BPS books. The Heart of Buddhist Meditation gave me great joy. Back home, I wanted to share the joy with my friends in the neighbourhood. We all met every Saturday morning and we discussed the Dhamma by reading chapters of BPS publications. This continued for a number of years and I found myself able to speak the Dhamma to public audiences.

I entered the Bhikkhuni order in 1996 at Sarnath, India. Now, in the evening of my life, I completed building the Ayya Khema Meditation Retreat Centre. I owe all my success to BPS and invite all of you interested in the Dhamma to support BPS and also, if in Sri Lanka, to please spend a short retreat at Ayya Khema Centre.

Nibbāna paccayo hotu!
Bhikkhunī Kusumā
24/04/2008 – Sri Lanka

Message from Bhante Dhammika

Patiently and quietly for the last fifty years the BPS has published and distributed books on Buddhism. Even though it was sometimes working in difficult conditions, it did not fail to meet its commitment to send books to its members. From small beginnings it has grown into an organization which could truly be said to have had a significant impact on the spread of the Dhamma throughout the English-speaking world. Having written several books for the BPS and occasionally helped them in an unofficial capacity I know that it is rather understated in much of what it does. But on this, its 50th anniversary, I think it has every right to give itself a rousing and hearty three cheers. May it long continue its good work.

Bhante S. Dhammika
Singapore

Message from Dr. Ariyaratne

I take delight in writing a congratulatory message on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Buddhist Publication Society. It is a pleasant coincidence that this year is also the 50th anniversary of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. I vividly remember how the late Mr. Abeysekera and Prof K.N. Jayatillake and several devoted Buddhist scholars, under the

guidance of late Ven. Nyanaponika, toiled hard to lay a strong foundation for the propagation of the Buddha Dhamma worldwide through the printed word. They performed this global task in a small building overlooking the Kandy Lake and in the vicinity of the sacred Temple of the Tooth. Today, at the same location, the Society functions with many more facilities. I remember how in those days the entire educated Buddhist community in Sri Lanka admired and supported their efforts. The pioneers of the Society in their lifetime itself saw the success of their efforts, so much so that almost every English-speaking country in the world had subscribers to the numerous publications that were published. The quality of the publications and those who authored them were of the highest calibre. We are indebted to all those who, through the years, have continued to sustain the BPS in its noble task of spreading the Dhamma.

A.T. Ariyaratne
Founder of Sarvodaya Shramadana

Message from Dr. Hecker

Since the Venerable Nyanaponika founded the BPS in 1958, I have been connected with him in friendship always, not only through exchanges of letters, but also through personal encounters. In 1970 I visited him for some days in the Forest Hermitage, later I met him often on vacation in Locarno, and when he visited Hamburg twice I accompanied him hiking through the heath. A topic we talked about a lot was the expansion of the series *The Wheel*, and I am indebted to his having my *Biographies of followers of the Buddha* translated into English, which he published in the series *Lives of the Disciples of The Wheel* in seven booklets. His successor, the Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi thereupon facilitated an edition with Wisdom Books under the title *Great Disciples of the Buddha*. His successor, the Venerable Nyanatusita partly translated my book on the autobiography of the Venerable Nyanatiloka from German into English, which will appear soon as a book with BPS. In addition, an English translation of my book on the similes of the Buddha is in preparation.

For the next 50 years I wish the BPS a continuing wholesome, conciliatory influence on the war-torn island of Sri Lanka through the spreading of the teaching of the Buddha. And I would be delighted if the Buddhist Publication Society would also include writings of Western Theravadins and progressive Mahayanists who are true to the spirit of the original teaching, but do not always wholly conform to the traditional terminology.

Dr. Hellmuth Hecker
Hamburg (Germany), April 24, 2008

Felicitations Message

When first I became aware of the Buddhist Publication Society is difficult to recall, but it could not have been later than March of 1971 during a visit to Bodh Gaya. Just across the road from the great temple is an office of the Mahabodhi Society, complete with a pilgrims' rest, guest house, library and book agency. No doubt it was here that I first came across the *Wheel* series and the burgeoning catalogue of other BPS titles. Over the course of the next few years I continued to pursue an interest in Vipassana meditation, and, in India in the 1970s, the most easily procurable of reputable English-language Dhamma books for a novice meditator were those of the BPS.

In the fall of 1975, a trip to Sri Lanka afforded an opportunity to investigate the source of these so-helpful booklets. From the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, I recall walking down a tranquil, shady lane, overhung by flowering branches, which ran alongside a delightful expanse

of water. On the left and slightly above the road was my destination, the unassuming offices of the BPS.

A diminutive man emerged from behind a desk shrouded by papers and books cantilevered this way and that. He took time from his scribal labours to offer his visitor a chair next to his desk, a glass of water, a cup of tea, a snack. As we spoke, the soft twittering of birds fluttered through the open windows overlooking the lake — an idyllic setting for Dhamma work.

I did not know that Richard Abeyasekera was one of the founders of the BPS, nor did he tell me, but he patiently answered my many questions, pointing out this or that book as a reliable elaboration on a topic. Captivated by the birds and my host, I volunteered to help out for a few days if help were needed. Richard responded with alacrity — I had probably let drop that my university major was mathematics, a discipline which he perhaps deemed pertinent to assembling packets of Wheels, 50 in each, if I remember correctly. My equipment was a grass mat upon which to work; the days passed agreeably. Although my stay was not overlong, it afforded me a few pleasant strolls in town and rambles in the surrounding hills with Richard, especially a visit to the Forest Hermitage to see his old friend and BPS cofounder, the Ven. Nyanaponika.

Their modest idea, first prompted by Mr. A.S. Karunaratna, of starting a series of inexpensive paperback booklets on Buddhism, chiefly for distribution abroad, was already 17 years old at that time, and growing. Even if unforeseen earlier, the development of the BPS happened to coincide with the swelling interest in Buddhism throughout the '60s and '70s. How Dhamma works! As then, so too now — throughout these 50 years the BPS has become increasingly relevant, challenging its readers to examine the teaching of the Buddha, and hence themselves. May the Buddhist Publication Society continue its service for another half century and beyond, dispensing wisdom to an ever more troubled humanity.

Luke Matthews
Executive Director
Pariyatti Books, USA

The Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy: A Brief Account of Its Contributions to Buddhist Literature

The Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy (BPS) has reached its fiftieth birthday. At this age it is enjoying a life span far longer than its founders had ever foreseen for it when they established the BPS on New Year's Day 1958. The society was born in the Forest Hermitage in Udawattakele, a wooded hill just behind the Dalada Maligawa, the famous Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. The idea of creating such a society first took shape in late 1957 in the mind of a prominent Kandyan lawyer, A.S. Karunaratna, a former mayor of the town. One day, while he was printing a small booklet on Buddhism to be distributed free in memory of a deceased relative, the thought occurred to him of issuing a series of such publications—small paperbound booklets in English on various aspects of the Dhamma that could be distributed throughout the world.

Karunaratna discussed this idea with a friend of his, a retired school master named Richard Abeyasekera, who took it up with enthusiasm. Together, they approached the German-born scholar-monk, Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, and asked him to serve as editor for this undertaking. The three constituted themselves into an informal society, with Ven. Nyanaponika as honorary secretary (later president), Karunaratna as honorary treasurer, and Abeyasekera as assistant secretary (later general secretary). For the first three years the BPS grew up in the Forest Hermitage, until in February 1961 an office was at last obtained within the town of Kandy itself, off the drive running alongside the lovely Kandy Lake. To meet the need for still more accommodation, in 1981 the BPS began to construct a large new building on the premises of the old one. This building, designed in traditional Kandyan style architecture, was formally opened in April 1985 and has continued to serve as the BPS's headquarters down to the present day.

Originally the founders intended to issue only a limited series of booklets in English on basic Buddhism and then to end this venture into the publishing world. However, the formative period of the BPS coincided with the unexpected upsurge of a world-wide interest in the Dhamma, and as this interest escalated so did the demand for authentic Buddhist literature. Thus the BPS found its first publications greeted with an enthusiastic welcome, both in Asia and the West. Encouraged by this reception, its founders abandoned their original limited aim and instead embarked on an ongoing publishing programme which still continues to grow.

In 1975 the BPS became a government approved charity with the purpose of making known the Teachings of the Buddha all over the world. The BPS is based in Sri Lanka, but, in accordance with Buddhist principles, it is a non-nationalistic and non-sectarian organization aiming at making available Theravada Buddhist literature to whoever is interested regardless of race, culture or religion. The BPS primarily publishes books in English and Sinhala, but recently a few titles in Tamil and even a title in Spanish have been added.

Today the BPS regularly supplies Buddhist literature to almost 3,000 subscriber members all over the world, in some eighty countries. Even during the Cold War period its publications managed to penetrate behind the Iron Curtain to countries where Buddhist literature was scarce. Its titles have been translated into many other languages, including German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech, Polish, Sinhala, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, and Chinese. For many Buddhists world-wide, the three initials signify authenticity and authority in Theravada Buddhist literature.

The BPS's English-language publications fall into three classes: two series of booklets called *The Wheel* and *Bodhi Leaves*, and full-size books. In addition, the BPS issues a Sinhala-language counterpart of *The Wheel* called *Damsak* (= *Dhamma-cakka*), and a series of full-size books in Sinhala called *Kalana Mithuru* (= *Kalyanamitra*) Books. From 1960 until 1998, *Damsak* was edited by the famous Sri Lankan missionary monk, Ven. Piyadassi Nāyaka Thera. After his death in 1998, responsibility for the Sinhala publications was taken over by his assistant, A.G.S. Kariyawasam until his untimely death in 2005. Currently, Mr. Senadheera is looking after the Sinhalese publications.

The Wheel consists of substantial booklets, typically ranging from 40 to 80 pages. Since the inception of BPS in 1958 239 booklets have been published, though not all have been maintained in print. The booklets cover a wide range of topics, as can be seen from the BPS catalogue, which classifies the *Wheels* into the following categories: Introductory Booklets; Specific Teachings (on the main topics of Buddhist doctrine, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, dependent origination, the three marks of existence, kamma and rebirth, and so forth); Meditation and Mind Training; Dhamma Reflections (more personal explorations of the relevance of Buddhist principles for spiritual understanding and practice); Philosophy and Psychology; Faith and Devotion; Monastic Life; Comparative Studies; Buddhist History and Culture; Buddhism and the World Today; Translations from the Pali Canon; Non-Canonical Buddhist Literature. All *Wheel* Publications are being digitalised, proofread and typeset, and they are being issued in bound volumes and put on the BPS website (www.bps.lk).

Bodhi Leaf publications are a series of smaller booklets, hand-sized, between 16 and 40 pages in length. Its range of categories is similar to that of the *Wheel*, but the tone is less expository and more conversational. *Bodhi Leaves* are intended to offer personal insights into the Buddha's teachings, close-up focus on specific ethical and social problems, and practical guidelines to living by the light of the Dhamma. This series was discontinued some years ago, but the issues are being made available in digital format on the BPS website.

The authors of both series of booklets come from virtually every continent—Asia, Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Australia. They include Buddhists of Asian countries trained in a traditional monastic setting, academic scholars, and Western converts to Buddhism, who bring to the understanding of the Dhamma perspectives fashioned by a modern scientific education. Beneath their differences, what almost all our authors have in common is a combination of scholarly competence, rigor of thought, and personal commitment to the Dhamma as a practical way of life. Hence the *Wheel* and *Bodhi Leaves* booklets present Buddhism as an illuminating system of thought and practice that can offer viable solutions to the great spiritual and ethical problems confronting thoughtful men and women in the contemporary world. The literature does not attempt to pit Buddhism against other religions and creeds in a sectarian spirit of competition and one-upmanship, but offers followers of other religions insights that can help them lead a deeper and more rewarding spiritual life.

The BPS's line of full-size books ranges from basic introductions to advanced texts on the finer points of Buddhist doctrine and practice. Books on basic Buddhism include several comprehensive surveys that have long been regarded as essential reference works. Ven. Nārada Thera's *The Buddha and His Teachings* gives an informative account of the Master's life and teaching, highlighting the doctrines of kamma and rebirth, meditation, the nature of Nibbāna, and the way to enlightenment. For a complete biography of the Buddha, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's *Life of the Buddha* is unique; a vivid and moving portrait of the Enlightened One composed almost entirely from texts of the Pali Canon. This is our most popular title, and though in print for over thirty-five years it is still constantly in demand. For an illuminating account of the Buddha's path two authoritative works can be recommended. One is Piyadassi Thera's popular

The Buddha's Ancient Path, the other is Bhikkhu Bodhi's *The Noble Eightfold Path*. Both works offer detailed explanations of each of the eight factors of the path, thus showing how Buddhism is to be practised as a way of life.

For original source material on the Dhamma, two compilations by the great German scholar-monk Nyanatiloka Thera (Ven. Nyanaponika's teacher) are still unsurpassed in helping the bewildered neophyte find his or her way through the vast maze of canonical material. The more elementary is *The Word of the Buddha*, first compiled in 1906 and subject to some sixteen reprints. This book arranges the Buddha's sayings around the framework of the Four Noble Truths. The more advanced title is *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance*, which documents the Buddha's own instructions on all the different methods of meditation, both for concentration and insight, and arranges them according to the pattern of the seven stages of purification.

The BPS also publishes accurate translations of several small classics from the Pali Canon, including *The Dhammapada*, translated by Achariya Buddharakkhita, and (in one volume) *The Udāna and the Itivuttaka*, translated by John Ireland. For more advanced students, Bhikkhu Bodhi has issued translations of four major Pali suttas along with their commentaries and excerpts from the subcommentaries. The first of these is the best one to start with: *The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views*, a translation of the Brahmajāla Sutta and its commentaries. The others are: *The Discourse on the Root of Existence* (the Mūlapariyāya Sutta); *The Great Discourse on Causation* (the Mahānidāna Sutta); and *The Discourse on the Fruits of Recluship* (the Sāmaññaphala Sutta).

BPS books on meditation give qualified guidance in both the practical methods of meditation and the underlying theory. A thorough and informative survey is Amadeo Solé-Leris's *Tranquillity and Insight*, which systematically explores both *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation according to the classical sources and their modern adaptations. An outstanding work that has achieved the status of a modern classic is Nyanaponika Thera's *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. Basic instructions in insight meditation are found in Mahāsi Sayādaw's *Practical Insight Meditation*, while Jack Kornfield's *Modern Buddhist Masters* collects tracts from a range of contemporary Theravada meditation masters from Burma and Thailand. A work with a unique flavour is *The Seven Stages of Purification* by the late Mātara Sri Nāṇarama Mahāthera, one of Sri Lanka's most respected meditation masters of recent times. One of his pupils, working under his guidance, has composed a treatise called *The Seven Contemplations of Insight*, a brilliant and lively work which combines rich scholarship and practical experience in explaining the insights that arise in the course of vipassanā meditation.

The Abhidhamma is a systematic arrangement of the Buddha's philosophical and psychological teachings, defining the theory that lies behind his more pragmatically oriented discourses. Serious students of the Abhidhamma will need *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, a translation of the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* complete with a detailed explanatory guide by the Burmese Sayādaw U Rewatadhamma and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Nyanaponika Thera's brilliant *Abhidhamma Studies* demonstrates the practical relevance of the Abhidhamma to the spiritual life. To find one's way through the seven books of the canonical Abhidhamma, no student can do without Nyanatiloka Thera's *Guide through the Abhidhamma Pitaka*. Readers eager to explore the full range of classical Theravada thought will need to study Achariya Buddhaghosa's masterpiece, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*. This is a virtual encyclopaedia of Buddhist doctrine and meditation, which gives detailed coverage to all the meditation subjects and, in its middle chapters, a survey of the Abhidhamma. This is published by BPS in the outstanding translation by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli.

Over the years BPS has published works by the greatest Burmese scholar-monk of recent times, Ledi Sayādaw, the author of some seventy manuals touching on almost every aspect of

Theravada Buddhist philosophy. The Wheel series includes Ledi Sayādaw's *Manual of Insight (Vipassanā Dīpanī)*, *The Requisites of Enlightenment (Bodhipakkhiya Dīpanī)*, *The Noble Eightfold Path and Its Factors (Maggaṅga Dīpanī)*, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Relations (Paṭṭhānuddesa Dīpanī)* and the *Manual of Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpāna Dīpanī)*. *The Manual of the Supreme Man (Uttamapurisa Dīpanī)* and, recently, the *Manual of Light* and the *Manual of the Path of Higher Knowledge (Alin Kyan and Vijjāmagga Dīpanī)* were published in book form. In their totality, these manuals make a valuable contribution to Buddhist literature in English.

In the late 1990s the BPS entered into co-publication agreements with the major Buddhist publisher in the West. The purpose of this step is to make our own works more readily available to readers in the Americas and Europe. We also co-publish works on Theravada Buddhism first issued by Western publishers, to make them more easily available for Asian readers. Our partner in both areas of cooperation has been Wisdom Publications in Boston. Together with Wisdom we issued Asian editions of two complete Nikāyas from the Pali Canon: *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the Dīgha Nikāya by Maurice Walshe, and *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the Majjhima Nikāya originally made by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli in the 1950s, which I had edited and annotated for publication in 1995.

Works first issued by Wisdom Publications, and then taken over for the Asian readership by BPS, include: U Pandita's *In This Very Life* and Ayya Khema's *Being Nobody, Going Nowhere*. Along with Wisdom, we also publish a wonderful collection of biographies called *The Great Disciples of the Buddha*. This book, an anthology from our "Lives of the Disciples" series of Wheel booklets, brings to life for the modern reader such outstanding figures as Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Mahākassapa, Ānanda, Kisāgotamī, Paṭācārā, and Anāthapiṇḍika.

Also a full-time co-publisher for BPS in the Americas was appointed. This is Pariyatti Books, which is affiliated with the Vipassana Research Academy established at Igatpuri by Sri S.N. Goenka. VRPA has created an imprint called BPS Pariyatti Editions, which has undertaken to publish American editions of our *Path of Purification*, *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, and other popular BPS titles. Thereby our classical line of Theravada Buddhist works is much better represented in the Americas, where interest in Buddhism of all schools is surging.

This survey has presented only a mere sampling of BPS's contributions to contemporary Buddhist literature. Altogether, our publications constitute a voluminous reference library on Theravada Buddhism. Since the teachings emphasized by the Theravada tradition form the foundation for the entire Buddhist tradition, it need hardly be said that BPS publications can also help those involved in the study and practice of other schools of Buddhism discover the roots of their own tradition. Thereby they will gain an appreciation of the core of Buddhist doctrine common to all schools, a factor far more important for Buddhist unity than their circumstantial differences.

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

Note: The author served as the editor of the BPS from 1984 until 2002 and has remained its president since 1988. The above article, written in 2000, draws freely upon an earlier article on the BPS by Albert Witanachchi, former general secretary of the Society, and a later updated version of the same article by A.G.S. Kariyawasam, editor of the BPS's line of Sinhala publications. It was revised by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita, the current editor of the BPS, and Ven. Bodhi himself.

The Future of the BPS: Challenges to Meet

The BPS has reached a milestone. For fifty years the BPS has been steadily meeting an increasing global demand for Buddhist literature and this is a great reason to rejoice. In this article the current editor of the BPS adds some details to Ven. Bodhi's article on the foundation of the BPS and then focuses on the future of the BPS.

Although it is well known that the BPS was founded in 1958, it is little known that the idea of forming such a society had been around for a longer time. In 1949, Ven. Ñāṇatiloka, Ven. Nyanaponika's teacher and a renowned Buddhist writer and translator of Pali scriptures, had started the Island Hermitage Publications in order to publish his works and the works of other monks staying at the Island Hermitage. The Island Hermitage was the monastery for Western Buddhist monks that Ven. Nyanatiloka had founded in 1911 on a small island in a lagoon near Dodanduva. It became the centre of the missionary activities of Ven. Nyanatiloka and his disciples and Ven. Nyanaponika became a Buddhist monk there in 1936. The only works that were published by Island Hermitage Publications were Ven. Nyanatiloka's renowned Buddhist Dictionary and Ven. Nyanaponika's Abhidhamma Studies. The failure of this enterprise was probably because of the difficulties with the distribution of books.

Later, in early 1952, during the preparations for the Sixth Council (*Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana*) in Rangoon, Burma, Ven. Nyanatiloka introduced and commended a speech by Ven. Nyanaponika which he had helped drafting. In this speech (which will be reproduced in the forthcoming *Life of Ñāṇatiloka*) Ven. Nyanaponika encouraged the Sixth Council to help with the foundation of a Buddhist Publishing House with the purpose of propagating Buddhism internationally through Buddhist literature. He suggested that Sri Lanka would be the best place to do so and also said that a primary requisite for such literary propagation would be a few series of booklets with reliable and accessible information about Theravada Buddhism. After this, nothing happened with these plans for some years. Eventually, the kamma Ven. Nyanaponika created by suggesting the founding of an international Buddhist publishing house seems to have ripened when he consented to A. S. Karunaratna's request to help with the series of booklets. With the foundation of the Buddhist Publication Society, the publication of the Wheel and Bodhi Leaf series, and the abilities of Richard Abeyasekera—whose great enthusiasm and energy kept the BPS going on and expanding—these proposals made to the Sixth Council were eventually put into effect.

Thus it could be said that the BPS is, indirectly, also the fruit of the missionary endeavors of Ven. Nyanatiloka and an outcome of the Sixth Council.

* * *

Now I will focus on the future of the BPS. When the BPS was founded in 1958, it was the only specifically Buddhist publisher in the world and, as Ven. Nyanaponika predicted in his 1952 speech, it was immediately meeting a great global demand for inexpensive and authentic Buddhist literature. This situation remained so for about thirty years until several other Buddhist publishing houses in Asia as well as in the West were founded. Some of these publishers, especially the ones in the USA, have much more resources, technical capabilities and distribution networks than the BPS has. Nevertheless, the BPS is still the only major publishing house which specifically publishes Theravada literature and it has many unique and strong resources which enable it to continue publishing high quality books.

The challenges for the BPS to meet are as follows. In relation to the Sri Lankan base, younger generations of members and supporters need to be attracted. The second generation of Sri Lankan members who have supported the BPS with much goodwill and kindness for the past few decades, and who were educated in English, is now reaching a more advanced age.

Younger Sinhalese are less fluent in English nowadays and English-language books are not as relevant to them as they were to the older generations. Moreover, the pace and material demands of life, such as the demands of work and study, have also increased greatly and younger generations have therefore less time to devote to religion.

Nevertheless, the interest in Dhamma is not decreasing among young educated people in Sri Lanka as may be seen, for example, in the immensely popular reform movement centring around Venerable Kiribathgoda Nyanananda. There are still young, educated people in Sri Lanka who are interested in English Dhamma books, not to mention the large population of Sinhalese emigrants in the West, who often learn about different practices of Buddhism, become interested in meditation, and want to read about the Dhamma in English. Hopefully, talented young Sinhalese people will come forward and help the BPS to continue its mission to spread the Buddha's teachings throughout the world.

During recent years the BPS has started to publish more works in Sinhala to meet the demand of local people, and Ven. Nyanaponika's essays, as contained in *The Vision of Dhamma*, are all being translated into Sinhala.

Another gap which is being bridged is the technological divide. In the days of Ven. Nyanaponika, books were typeset and printed manually, but nowadays printing is done digitally and customers expect books to be of a much higher product quality. Three years ago many publications were out of print. These have had to be digitally re-typeset in order to reprint them. Now many of them have been reprinted with a considerable improvement in quality and presentation but the project is still going on, which is very time-consuming. A team of proofreaders from all over the world is helping the current editor of the BPS with this difficult task. Sri Lankan printers are now able to use modern technology and books can now be printed at reasonable standards in Kandy and Colombo. More than forty-five books have been printed and reprinted during the last three years and many more are to come.

The Dhamma is also increasingly disseminated through non-printed media: through the internet, through audio-CDs, e-books, audio-books, etc. Nowadays, a publishing house can no longer do without a website because modern customers are used to searching for and purchasing books online. The Internet has opened up a great opportunity for the BPS to make the Dhamma more widely available. To meet this demand, the current editor has been placing emphasis on developing a good quality website and the BPS website is expanding and improving steadily. The Online Library already contains many of the Wheel Publications and Bodhi Leaves and within a year or two will contain all of them. All of the available BPS publications are listed on the website and the BPS catalogue can be downloaded as a PDF file. Many digitalised BPS books can also be read and searched by way of Google Books, an innovative online search facility which helps to make BPS books accessible. Much more can be done in the internet field by the BPS but at present the qualified manpower to do so is insufficient.

Recently, after much delay and difficulty, the BPS finally managed to arrange a means by which customers can pay for books through the internet. A kind benefactor helped the BPS set up an account with Paypal, an online payment system. Customers can now order books directly from our website and pay online. This allows customers to transfer funds from abroad without the need to send cheques by ordinary mail, an arrangement which is much more convenient for the BPS as well as for our customers. The membership fees can also be paid this way.

In relation to publication, besides the challenge of reprinting older titles that are out of print, BPS faces the challenge of publishing new books. Currently, the BPS is preparing several new titles for publication. One is the *The Life of Nyanatiloka*, autobiography of Nyanatiloka Thera, the renowned German Buddhist pioneer and the teacher of Nyanaponika Thera. Another is *Sacred*

Island, a book on the sacred Buddhist sites in Sri Lanka written by Ven. S. Dhammika. This will be a useful and informative companion to his guide to the sacred places in India, *Middle Land, Middle Way*, a revised edition of which will also be published by the BPS this year. A revised edition of *The Path of Freedom*, the translation of the *Vimuttimagga* (the predecessor of the *Visuddhimagga*), is being prepared by the editor of the BPS, with the help of several scholars enlisted for this project. *Similes of the Buddha*, a translation of a work written in German by Dr. Hecker, is also in preparation. There are several other valuable books written in German worthy of being published by the BPS but we are still seeking translators competent in both German and English. *The Manual on the Subjects of Meditation (Kammaṭṭhāna Dīpanī)* a large, comprehensive manual on meditation written by the Ledi Sayādaw, is also being prepared for publication. There are also plans to publish a book on the history and practices of Buddhist nuns called *Buddhist Nuns* written by Dr. Mohan Wijeyaratna. In addition, *Peace in the Buddha's Discourses*, an anthology and discussion of the concept of peace in the suttas by Dennis Candy, has been published as the Vesak membership book. Finally, *Jataka Stories of the Buddha*, retellings by Ken and Visakha Kawasaki of about 250 of the Jātaka stories, will also be published this year (in two or three volumes), making accessible to a wider public these edifying as well as amusing stories, which are very popular and influential in Asia.

Another area where considerable changes have taken place in recent years is the physical premises of the BPS. Nowadays, visitors will now notice the large bookshop and a substantial reference library. In the past the BPS bookshop was mainly selling BPS books, but now makes available a wide range of Buddhist books related to Theravada Buddhism, in Sinhalese as well as English, published in Sri Lanka as well as abroad. Some rare and hard to obtain books can be found in the bookshop, as well as books published by Wisdom Publications in the USA and by Indian publishers such as Motilal Banarsidass.

To conclude and summarize, the BPS is a vital organisation meeting the demands and challenges of Buddhists today. The BPS looks forward to continue serving its members and meet the global demand for reliable, and authentic, Buddhist works, to the best of its ability in times to come.

Bhikkhu Nyanatusita

The Buddhist Publication Society in a Global Perspective

There is ample evidence that in the current period the Buddhist religion is gaining new adherents at a healthy rate in countries and regions of the world where previously it had none, or very few. It is also enjoying a vigorous resurgence in India, the land of its birth, where it had almost completely died out several centuries ago.

The reasons for this are many and cannot be said to spring from a single cause. For example, in my own country of birth, the United Kingdom, the reasons for the present growth in the number of Buddhists include: the discovery of the Buddha's teachings in India by some 19th century British intellectuals and sensitive members of the colonial administration; the influx of Buddhist migrants from Asia into the UK in the post-World War II period; the inability of western theistic religions to respond to the crises of confidence engendered in their followers by the mass slaughter of two world wars and by the discoveries of modern science; the failure of western materialist and consumerist values and culture to bring inner satisfaction and peace to the people of the West; the availability and growth of cheap world-wide travel and the development of "the global village".

But, whatever the reasons, Buddhism's expansion into countries where it was previously unknown is an undeniable and encouraging world-wide phenomena. So far as the western countries are concerned, the main traditions which are experiencing growth are centred around Tibetan, Zen, Theravada and various hybrid forms of "Western" Buddhism. Other religious traditions, along with other real and pseudo-spiritual teachings, are also enjoying growth in the West. These include a growing interest in various branches of Hinduism, Islam, Yoga, Sufism, Christian Mysticism, New-Ageism, as well as various types of religious fundamentalism.

Such circumstances have tended to lead to the growth of a "spiritual supermarket" in the West, and inevitably many of the millions of Westerners who are finding their own religious, or non-religious, upbringing lacking relevance will tend to experiment and mix these various teachings and traditions. Sometimes the result of this mixing has been to leave people even more confused and deluded than before.

In this situation the Buddhist Publication Society has had, and continues to have, an important, perhaps even a unique, stabilising role to play in the midst of this world-wide growth and interest in Buddhism and other spiritual traditions. This is due to the BPS's role as the publisher and propagator of the heart-wood of Theravada Buddhism and of what we might call authentic Pali Buddhism, particularly as expounded in all its richness and profundity in the Pali canon (or collection) of the oldest and most complete layer of the Dhamma as teachings.

In recent years this role has been greatly enhanced by the Society's association with Wisdom Publications of Boston, USA. This is shown, for example, by Wisdom publishing modern English translations for the world-wide market of the *Dīgha*, *Majjhima* and *Samyutta Nikāyas*. All three translators of these works, Maurice Walshe, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, and Bhikkhu Bodhi, are closely associated with the Theravada tradition of Sri Lanka and with the work of the Buddhist Publication Society. Wisdom themselves, it should be pointed out, publish books from all the world's Buddhist traditions.

We live in a period of great religious change, development and synthesis and it is very important that the millions of people world-wide (including those here in Sri Lanka) who are experiencing these changes have a reliable source of authentic universal Dhamma teachings, as well as teachings appropriate to their own culture. Fortunately, so far as authentic Pali Buddhism is concerned, Buddhists world-wide can look to the Buddhist Publication Society to

continue to provide literature at an affordable price based on the oldest record of the Dhamma and the tradition. They can also rely on the BPS to continue to provide advice and guidance in printed form for the general reader based on the teachings of modern masters, all themselves well-founded in that tradition. In fulfilling these twin roles, the Buddhist Publication Society may be said to be unique in the world today.

Dennis Candy
April 2008

The Buddha's True Miracle

To the Buddha several so-called "miracles" (in Pali *pāṭihāriya*) are ascribed. But they should not be taken as something that goes against the laws of nature. They should rather be understood as instances of an extraordinary power of mind that wields control not only over the body of the person having that power, but also to some extent over external matter. Hence these "miracles" should better be called "supernormal powers". Especially, the so-called magical powers belong to them, and the Buddha is said to have had these faculties and to have shown some of them when it brought true benefit to others.

Though the Buddha may have had these faculties to an unusually high degree, yet they are certainly not unique to a Perfectly Enlightened One. Not only did some of his Arahāt disciples have them too, but also great personages of other religions possessed them. According to modern parapsychology, it is also quite possible that more people than we think have some of these supernormal faculties, at least in a rudimentary degree. Furthermore, these miraculous, magical or supernormal powers are, in themselves, nothing "holy" or spiritual. They can be owned even by evil-minded persons. Devadatta, too, had some of these powers. Hence, no man should be admired or worshipped just for the sake of magical feats, even if these are genuine. The Buddha himself did not wish to be praised for some inferior things to which those miraculous powers belong, but he should be honoured for the sake of the true significance of his enlightenment. The Buddha also forbade his disciples to display magical powers. He did not wish them to achieve false popularity for such a reason.

In consideration of what has been said in the preceding paragraph, this article will not give an enumeration or explanation of the Buddha's "miraculous" powers, but it was thought to be more appropriate to quote what the Buddha himself thought to be the true and the best miracle.

It is said in the Kevaṭṭa Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya No. 11):

"There are three sorts of miracles (*pāṭihāriya*), Kevaṭṭa, which I, having myself understood and realized them, make known: the miracle of magic (*iddhi-pāṭihāriya*), the miracle of thought-reading (*ādesanā-pāṭihāriya*) and the miracle of instruction (*anusāsanī-pāṭihāriya*). It is because I perceive danger in the practice of the miracle of magic, ... of the miracle of thought-reading, that I loathe and abhor and am ashamed of them."

Furthermore, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN 3:60), an intelligent Brahmin, after having heard from the Buddha about these three miracles, is introduced as saying:

“Master Gotama, as to the miracles of magic and thought-reading, only he who performs them enjoys their fruits, and they belong only to him who performs them. These two miracles, Master Gotama, appear to me as having the nature of illusions. But as to the miracle of instruction, this appeals to me as more noble and sublime.”

And the Buddha approved the words of the Brahmin.

Now, some might ask: “What is so marvellous about instruction? Today, all sorts of instructions are easily available, free or against payment.” True, but the Buddha’s instruction is of a very different kind. It teaches how to uproot the causes of suffering. To be able to give such an instruction is marvellous, indeed. It had required age-long and most strenuous preparation for cultivating the Perfection (pāramī) of virtue and wisdom needed for the Enlightenment which enabled such instruction. This instruction was a bold challenge to the world-creating forces of craving and ignorance, manifesting themselves in all the thirty-one Realms of Existence, from the very highest to the lowest. That the Buddha was able to give voice to that daring challenge through his instructions in Dhamma, was a miracle, indeed. His instruction was so convincing and his guidance so thorough that there were many who followed the Supreme Conqueror, the Buddha, in the conquest of craving and ignorance, having realized final liberation as Arahats. There were many more who had set their feet firmly on the Path and attained to the certitude of reaching the Goal. And there were untold numbers throughout those many generations, who inspired by that marvel of instructions started and continued on the road of gradual progress. But still larger have been the numbers of those whose echo of the miracle of instruction was just a heartfelt confidence in the Great Teacher and a deep devotion towards him, which saved them from being entirely submerged in worldliness and the grosser defilements. That all this was, and still is, possible, is a miraculous result of the Buddha’s instruction, indeed.

To those who have been born in a Buddhist country and are Buddhists by way of family tradition, their allegiance to the Buddha and his Teaching has too often become a sort of “dear habit.” It has lost the sense of wonderment that in a world which is so much darkened by greed, hatred and ignorance, a Buddha and his Dhamma could appear. By thoughtfully considering man’s situation in this world, that sense of joyful wonder should be recovered and should be made a part of a Saddhā (faith) that is linked with understanding.

Inspired by such Saddhā and wonderment, may hearts and minds unfold and be open to receive the “miracle of instruction”!

Nyanaponika Thera
May 1978

(This article was found among the author’s literary remains and has probably not been published before.)

Is There a “Freedom of Will?”

In those olden days when this question was posed first (and when “process thinking” had not yet entered the field of psychology, but was the preserve of the Buddha Dhamma), there seem to have been quite a number of assumptions in regard to this problem:

Some believed that there could be only either an absolute Freedom (of will or whatsoever) or none at all,

While, in fact, in a conditioned world of mind and matter, nothing is absolute, but all is relative, that is, related;

That “will” is a kind of separable, isolated entity (just as other qualities were supposed to be),

While, in fact, it is inseparable from other mental faculties/functions; it is related;

That “Freedom” (and only the mundane/*lokiya* is meant) can be complete independence,

While, in fact, there is only Dependent Origination, and interdependence, of conditioned phenomena.

“Will” does not operate in a mental vacuum. An absolutely i.e. unconditioned free will would just be whimsical arbitrariness (which, however, may also have its subliminal conditioning). But will is, of course, always motivated.

Hence one should better speak, with C.J. Ducasse, of a (relative) Freedom of Choice. Actual (i.e. possible) choices might range from extremely limited (almost nil) to very wide. To have and to see choices is what truly distinguishes a human being from the animal world’s mostly instinctive level (with limited exceptions among higher animals). Ingrained habits, deep-seated passions, rash impulses will severely restrict the Freedom of Choice. Though our Freedom of Will or Freedom of Moral Choice is conditioned, it is not determined per se, though it sometimes comes very close to it in the cases just mentioned.

Our will or our choices are “free” only to the extent we are free of greed, hatred and delusion. When in bondage to them, we are “unfree.” Yet, as these three unwholesome roots too are conditioned, a “conditioned cessation” of them is possible.

According to the Dhamma, there are only two sets of mental processes which have definite, irreversible and unmodifiable results (though calling them “determined” would not be apt). Firstly, on the “dark side”, the five “heinous offences” (matricide, patricide etc. *ānantarika*) lead unavoidably to rebirth in the Lower Worlds, in the next existence. But when the outcome of that evil Kamma is exhausted, the road to progress is open again; hence there is no “eternal damnation”, no final determination. On the “bright side”, the Path-moment (*magga*) of Stream-entry (up to Arahatta) is immediately and irreversibly followed by the corresponding moment of Fruition (*phala*).

It seems paradoxical that only the Arahata can be called “absolutely determined” in his conduct, in so far as, in the moral realm, he has no choice whatsoever than to act speak and thing on a way that is entirely free of greed, hatred and delusion.

The three lower stages of Sainthood are similarly, but only partly, “determined” according to the degree of their achievements, (see the note 4 to my *Anguttara Anthology*, part I, page 13f).

It is Right Mindfulness that is of decisive help in widening the range of our freedom, by making us aware of existing choices and enabling us to make the right choices.

Nyanaponika
13.02.1981

Buddhism and Sound Pollution

Last year a law was finally passed in Sri Lanka to curb community sound pollution, which is considered a serious health hazard. Judging from articles and letters published in Sinhalese newspapers, many people are seriously disturbed by loudspeaker noise and are looking forward for this law to take effect. The authors of the letters and articles complain about the various kinds of loud sounds produced by the loudspeakers of religious institutions, music-shows, politicians, ice-cream and lottery sellers, schools, etc, and the mentally and physically disturbing effects of these loud and unnecessary sounds.

Western Buddhists who are visiting Buddhist countries in Asia for the first time are surprised on how noisy the environment is due to the blatant use of loudspeakers. They are even more surprised when discovering that a lot, if not most, of the noise is coming from Buddhist temples and institutions. Religious institutions of any kind, all attempting to assert their importance over others, are known to be noisy—a famous German statesman once remarked that church-bells are the artillery of the Christian clergy. The Buddhist newcomers though, having learned the original Buddhist teachings, expect Buddhist monasteries to be very quiet places, but reality is often otherwise. Buddhist village and city temples are among the worst sound-polluters in the world. In Burma, loud chanting of the huge Abhidhamma text called Paṭṭhāna is blared for hours and days from loudspeakers. In Sri Lanka very slow and long drawn “protective” (paritta) chanting is sometimes chanted through loudspeakers for the whole night until dawn. Many people in Sri Lanka don’t need to use an alarm clock and are automatically forced to wake up at 5 am every day because Buddhist “protective” chanting recordings are blared from neighbourhood temple loudspeakers for an hour. The Uposatha or observance days, when Buddhist laypeople come to the monasteries and take the eight precepts, are often the noisiest days because of the five-precept chanting and sermons blared over loudspeakers. Likewise in Thailand and Cambodia Buddhist ceremonies (and any kind of ceremonies and meetings) are not complete without loudspeakers.

It is not only foreign Buddhist visitors who are suffering from the noise, Asian Buddhist meditators too are troubled. There are many forest monasteries where the meditating monks are regularly disturbed by loudspeaker noises from temples and houses kilometres away. For example, the author of this article could hear at the time of working on this article, early in the evening on a Saturday at a hermitage on a hill in Kandy, a strange multi-religious melange of the following loudspeaker sounds: Buddhist chanting from three temples, Sinhala Christian folk music from a church (which had been going on non-stop the whole day), and prayer calls from several mosques.

For anyone familiar with the original teachings of the Buddha, the deliberate sound-pollution caused by Buddhists appears to be in straight contradiction to- the Buddha’s own example and advice. There are many instances in the Buddhist scriptures that indicate that Buddha and his disciples were lovers of quiet and peace, and were commending it to others. For example, in several discourses it is related that when ascetics of other sects saw the Buddha coming to visit them, one of them would say: “Be quiet, Sirs! Don’t make a sound! It is the ascetic Gotama who is coming. That venerable is a lover of quietness (appasadda, lit. “without sound,” can also be translated as “silence”), one who praises quietness.” Similarly, when a disciple of the Buddha, such as Ānanda or Anāthapiṇḍika, would come to visit ascetics, one of them would say, “Be quiet ... The venerables are lovers of quietness, *disciplined in quietness*, praising quietness.” The phrase “disciplined in quietness” suggests that the Buddha trained his pupils in being quiet.

There are two training rules in the Buddhist monk's Code of Discipline (Pāṭimokkha), which state that a monk should be quiet while going and sitting in inhabited areas. The origin story to the rules is as follows:

The Buddha was living at Sāvattihī ... At that time the group of six bhikkhus was going among the houses making a loud, great sound. People looked down upon it, complained, became irritated: "How can the sons of the Sakyan go among the houses making a loud, great sound?"

[The Buddha came to hear about it, called the monks, and said:] "Foolish men, how can you go among the houses making a loud, great sound?! It will not lead to faith in those who have no faith; it will not lead to the increase [in numbers] of those who have faith' ... [and he laid down the training rule:] 'I shall go quietly in inhabited areas, this is a training to be done."

In the Monuments to the Dhamma Discourse (MN 89), King Pasenadi said that he was greatly impressed by the discipline of a large assembly listening to the Buddha because there was not a single sound to be heard other than the Buddha speaking. In the Dīgha Nikāya (DN 25) the noisy members of other sects and the quiet, silent Buddha are contrasted:

"Different are these wanderers of other sects, who, having assembled and come together, are noisy, making loud and great sounds, and are engaging in various kinds of pointless talk such as talk about kings ne who uses remote dwellings in forests, woods, and groves, which are quiet, free from loud voices, deserted, secluded from people, conducive to seclusion."

In the Cātumā Sutta (MN 67), it is related that a large group of monks headed by Sāriputta and Moggallāna came to visit the Buddha. The monks, when arriving in the monastery, made some noise while greeting resident monks and setting up their lodgings. Hearing the noise, the Buddha asked his attendant Ānanda, "Who are these loud and noisy people? They are like fishermen hawking fish." Then, after calling the visiting monks, the Buddha dismissed them and told them to leave the monastery.

Why did the Buddha put so much emphasis on a quiet and peaceful environment? The reason is simple: it is much easier to concentrate and focus the mind in a quiet environment than in a noisy one. Only a peaceful, quiet environment provides the right conditions for concentration and contemplation. This is why, for example, in libraries there are signboards forbidding library users to speak loudly and to make noise. In the context of Buddhist meditation, anyone who has tried to meditate knows how sounds draw away the mind from its object of meditation. Experienced meditators say that when the mind becomes quite calm, a sudden loud sound can be physically and mentally quite shocking and painful. According to the Buddha, loud sound is a major obstacle, a "thorn", to the first deep and stable stage of meditative calm, jhāna.

It is part of virtuous conduct to leave one's neighbours in quiet and peace. The noise one makes does not stop at the walls of one's house but can affect the whole community. When one deliberately disturbs others and deprives them of the opportunity to study, think, meditate, or rest, it can be considered a harmful act and therefore unwholesome. The harmful effect of loudspeaker sounds is exemplified by a modern way of torture: loud pop music is blasted for hours and days from loudspeakers at suspects and victims in order to break their will.

Of course, there are occasions when the use of loudspeakers can be justified; for example when a monk gives a sermon to a large crowd of people who otherwise would not be able to hear him. But there is no need to turn the loudspeakers on louder than is necessary to reach the whole crowd and to turn them outward from the crowd so as to make the sound heard from

miles away, as is often the case now. The sermon should only be audible to those who are motivated enough to come to the place where the speech is given.

The Buddha's teachings emphasise compassion, tolerance and non-violence. The Buddha, the peaceful sage, would strongly disagree with anyone noisily blaring his teachings through loudspeakers, disturbing the peace and quiet of many, including those who try to practise his teachings in the way he most recommended, i.e., through meditation. Until recently, the Buddha's teaching was quietly spread by way of mouth and writing all over Asia ; there was no need for loudspeakers. The sound of sermons and chanting could not be heard from kilometres away, but instead was confined to the place where it belonged. There was no need to play loud "protective" chanting recordings in order to protect Buddhism and assert its importance over other religions. On the contrary, as is shown, in the passages quoted above, members of other religions were impressed by the Buddha and his followers because of their quiet demeanour.

The loudspeaker was only invented in the 20th century and there is no indication that Buddhists' faith has been strengthened because of its use. On the contrary, making loud sounds seems antithetical to faith. It does not lead to inspiring faith in those who have no faith and to the increase in those who have faith, which are the reasons for the Buddha laying down disciplinary rules.

Bhikkhu Nyanatusita

Notes and News

Paritta Chanting and Dāna

On the night from Saturday the 17th till Sunday the 18th a special all night paritta chanting was held at the BPS. On the 19th a special dāna (meal) was given to the Saṅgha. Exactly fifty monks from monasteries in Kandy participated in the meal.



Newspaper Article on the BPS and the Forest Hermitage.

A journalist from the Sunday Times visited the BPS and the Forest Hermitage and her report is available at the Sunday Times website <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/080518/Plus/plus000010.html> and the



Buddhist Channel: <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=9,6449,0,0,1,0>

Paypal Online Payment System.

The BPS website's online ordering system is finally working. BPS members and customers can now pay for books and memberships by way of Paypal through the BPS website (www.bps.lk).

New books from Pali Text Society and Indian publishers at the BPS bookshop

Pali Text Society books and new books from several Indian publishers such as Motilal Banarsidass are available at the BPS bookshop at reduced prices. For more information, see the BPS website. The PTS books can only be ordered in South and Southeast Asia.

New Books and Reprints

- *The Manual of Light And the Manual of the Path to Higher Knowledge: Two Expositions of the Buddha's Teaching* by Ledi Sayādaw. 2007, 184 pp., 21 cm, BP 426S, Price: \$ 4.50

This book contains two advanced expositions on the development of higher insight knowledge by the renowned Burmese scholar monk and meditation master Ledi Sayādaw. The expositions deal with profound topics such as Dependent Origination, Kamma, Causality, Nibbāna, etc.

The Manual of the Path of Higher Knowledge has never been published in English translation, while *The Manual of Light* has never been published in its entirety.

- *The Questions of King Milinda: An Abridgement of the Milindapa.* Edited by N.K.G. Mendis 2007, 208 pp., 22 cm, BP 217S, Price:\$ 5.00

The *Milindapañhā* is one of the great classics of Pali Buddhist literature, a spirited dialogue between the Greek king Milinda and the Buddhist sage Nāgasena. The dialogue touches on many subtle problems of Buddhist philosophy and practice, dealing with them with wit and eloquence. This abridged edition has been adapted from the long-standing translation by I.B. Horner.

- *The Discourse on The All-Embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and Its Commentaries,* Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2007, 370 pp., 22 cm, BP 209S, Price: \$ 8.00

The Brahmajāla, one of the Buddha's most important discourses, weaves a net of sixty-two cases capturing all the speculative views on the self and the world. The massive commentary and subcommentary allow for a close in-depth study of the work. The book contains a lengthy treatise on the Theravada conception of the Bodhisattva ideal. The long introduction is itself a modern philosophical commentary on the sutta.

- *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma,* Bhikkhu Bodhi, General Editor. 2007, 426 pp. 22 cm BP 304S Price: \$ 9.00 (International Edition)

This is the classical introduction to the study of Abhidhamma, the Buddhist philosophy of mind and mental processes. The work contains a translation of Acariya Anuruddha's Abhidhammatthasangaha along with the Pali text and a detailed explanatory guide to this ancient philosophical psychology. A long introduction explains the basic principles of the Abhidhamma. Includes 48 charts and tables.

- *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom,* translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita 2007, 158 pp., 21 cm, BP 203S, Price: \$4.50. Available in book size or miniature

The most beloved Buddhist classic of all time, the Dhammapada is an anthology of over 400 verses on the ethics, meditation, and wisdom of Buddhism.

- *Abhidhamma Studies: Researches in Buddhist Psychology*, by Nyanaponika Thera 2007, 178 pp., 21 cm, BP 303S, Price: Rs. 225.00 (For sale in Asia only, except for BPS members)

Bold and brilliant essays exploring the psychological and philosophical foundations of the Abhidhamma. Shows the practical relevance to the spiritual life of the Abhidhamma's methodical psychological analysis.

- *The Requisites of Enlightenment*, by Ledi Sayadaw. 2007, 138 pp. 21 cm BP 412S Price: \$3.00

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