

# Buddhist Publication Society Newsletter

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## Our Mind is Our Best Friend

by Bhikkhu Bodhi

In our lives we often distinguish people as enemies and friends. We consider as enemies those people who are bent on harming us, on doing some damage to us or to our loved ones. And we consider as friends those people who wish to benefit us, to provide for our welfare and the well-being of those close to us.

An enemy might slander us by spreading false rumors about us; but if we know that we are not guilty of the fault he ascribes to us we have no need to worry. An enemy might even harm us physically; in the worst scenario, he might kill us. But even if the enemy kills us, we need not be overly despondent. For if we have a good mind, a strong mind, a well-developed and virtuous mind, then although the body dies, the mind will go on to some fortunate state of existence in the future. But if our mind strays from the path of Dhamma, if we surrender to the impulses of selfishness, greed, and hatred, then we will suffer far more in life after life than we would when the enemy takes our life. So long as the enemy is not able to harm our mind, we can still consider ourselves secure.

We consider as friends or benefactors the people who benefit us. Of all the people in our lives who benefit us, the most important, from the worldly point of view, are our parents. Yet, even if our parents look after all our material and social needs, they wouldn't be benefiting us as much as they would if they give us moral instruction, give us guidance in the right way of life. When they give us wise instruction in the proper

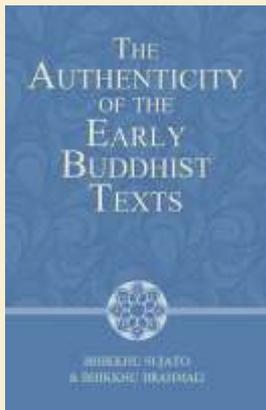
conduct of life, whether we accept it or not depends upon ourselves, and that means that it depends upon our own minds. This is why the Buddha makes the mind the focal point of his entire teaching. The mind is the central force in our lives, and the whole quality of our lives is just a reflection of the quality of our own minds.

The Buddha teaches the way to develop the mind, to elevate the mind. His teaching is not intended for those who are already enlightened sages, but for ordinary people living very ordinary lives. What he teaches is how to transform the defiled mind, the mind troubled by afflictions, desires, sorrow, pain and suffering, into the enlightened mind, the liberated mind, the mind that is radiant with wisdom, loving-kindness, and compassion, into a mind that is peaceful and content under any circumstances.

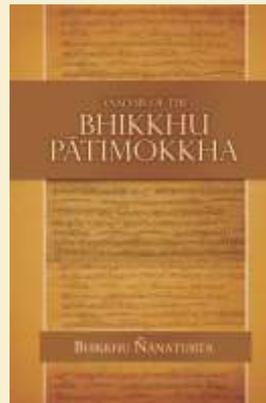
This is illustrated by the famous simile of the lotus flower. The lotus begins growing at the bottom of a muddy pond, but it rises up through the muddy water until it emerges from the pond, unfolds its petals, and reveals its sublime beauty. In practicing the Dhamma, we begin with our ordinary mind, which is like the lotus seed in the mud, the mind soiled by desires and delusions. By following the Buddha's instructions step by step we elevate the mind above the mud of the world, we unfold its petals of virtuous qualities, until it opens fully and displays its radiant beauty.

*(Excerpt from a talk given in  
2002 at Bodhi Monastery.)*

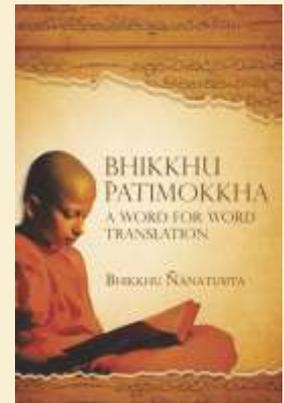
## NEW BOOKS



*The Authenticity of Early Buddhist Text*  
by Bhikkhu Sujato & Bhikkhu Brahmali  
BP435s Rs. 200.00 \$4.00

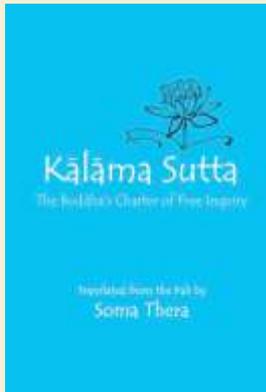


*Analysis of the Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*  
by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita  
BP626s Rs. 400.00 \$8.00

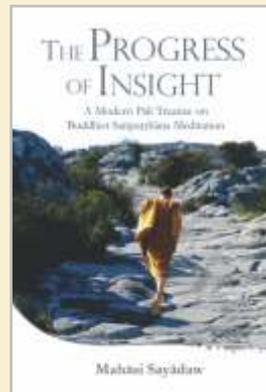


*The Bhikkhu Pātimokkha: A Word for Word Translation*  
by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita  
BP627s Rs. 150.00 \$ 3.00

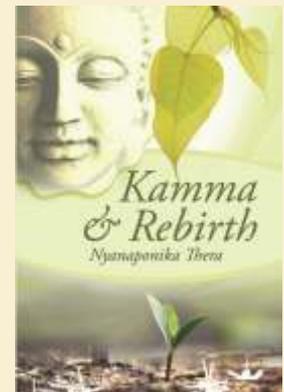
## REPRINTS



*Kālāma Sutta*  
by Soma Thera  
BP227s Rs. 40.00 \$ 0.75

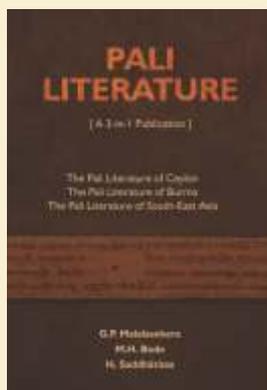


*The Progress of Insight*  
by Mahāsi Sayādaw  
BP504s Rs. 100.00 \$ 2.00



*Kamma & Rebirth*  
by Nyanaponika Thera  
BP436s Rs. 50.00 \$1.00

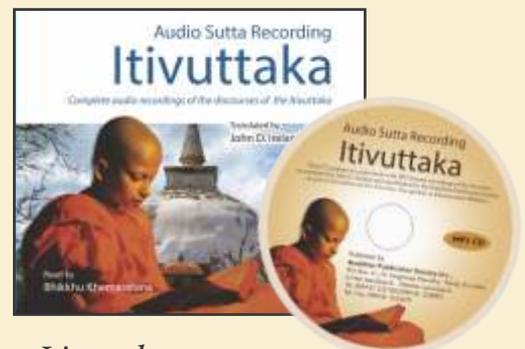
## FORTHCOMING



*Pali Literature*  
(A 3-in-1 Publication)  
*Pali Lit. of Ceylon*  
by G.P. Malalasekara  
*Pali Lit. of Burma*  
by M.H. Bode  
& *Pali Lit. of South-East Asia*  
by H. Saddhatissa

- *Collected Wheel Publications*  
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## CD'S



*Itivuttaka*  
(Audio Sutta Recording)  
Translated by John D. Ireland

## BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY INC.

P.O. Box. 61, 54, Sangharaja Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Tel: 0094 81 2237283/0094 81 2238901 Fax: 0094 81 2223679  
E-Mail: bps@bps.lk Website: www.bps.lk