



BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Newsletter

Autumn 1985

No. 02

TWO FACES OF DHAMMA

On first encounter Buddhism confronts us as a paradox. Intellectually, it appears a freethinker's delight: sober, realistic, undogmatic, almost scientific in its outlook and method. But if we come into contact with the living Dhamma from within, we soon discover that it has another side which seems the antithesis of all our rationalistic presuppositions. We still don't meet rigid creeds or random speculation, but we do come upon religious ideals of renunciation, contemplation and devotion; a body of doctrines dealing with matters transcending sense perception and thought; and - perhaps most disconcerting - a program of training in which faith figures as a cardinal virtue, doubt as a hindrance, barrier and fetter.

When we try to determine our own relationship with the Dhamma eventually we find ourselves challenged to make sense out of its two seemingly irreconcilable faces: the empiricist face turned to the world, telling us to investigate and verify things for ourselves, and the religious face turned to the Beyond, advising us to dispel our doubts and place trust in the Teacher and his Teaching.

One way we can resolve this dilemma is by accepting only one face of the Dhamma as authentic and rejecting the other as spurious or superfluous. Thus, with traditional Buddhist pietism, we can embrace the religious side of faith and devotion, but shy off from the hardheaded worldview and the task of critical inquiry; or, with modern Buddhist apologetics, we can extol the Dhamma's empiricism and resemblance to science, but stumble embarrassingly over the religious side. Yet reflection on what a genuine Buddhist spirituality truly requires, makes it clear that both faces of the Dhamma are equally authentic and that both must be taken into account. If we fail to do so, not only do we risk adopting a lopsided view of the teaching, but our own involvement with the Dhamma is likely to be hampered by partiality and conflicting attitudes.

The problem remains, however, of bringing together the two faces of the Dhamma without sidling into self-contradiction. The key, we suggest, to achieving this reconciliation, and thus to securing the internal consistency of our own perspective and practice, lies in considering two fundamental points the guiding purpose of the Dhamma; and second, the strategy it employs to achieve that purpose. The purpose is the attainment of deliverance from suffering. The Dhamma does not aim at acquiring factual information about the world, and thus, despite a compatibility with science, its goals and concerns are necessarily different from those of the latter. Primarily and essentially, the Dhamma is a path to spiritual emancipation, to liberation from the round of repeated birth, death and suffering. Offered to us as the irreplaceable means of deliverance, the Dhamma does not seek mere intellectual

assent, but commands a response that is bound to be fully religious. It addresses us at the bedrock of our being, and there it awakens the faith, devotion and commitment appropriate when the final goal of our existence is at stake.

But for Buddhism faith and devotion are only spurs which impel us to enter and persevere along the path; by themselves they cannot ensure deliverance. The primary cause of bondage and suffering, the Buddha teaches, is ignorance regarding the true nature of existence; thence in the Buddhist strategy of liberation the primary instrument must be wisdom, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are. Investigation and critical inquiry, cool and uncommitted, constitute the first step towards wisdom, enabling us to resolve our doubts and gain a conceptual grasp of the truths upon which our deliverance depends. But doubt and questioning cannot continue indefinitely. Once we have decided that the Dhamma is to be our vehicle to spiritual freedom, we have to step on board: we must leave our hesitancy behind and enter the course of training which will lead us from faith to liberating vision.

For those who approach the Dhamma in quest of intellectual or emotional gratification, inevitably it will show two faces, and one will always remain a puzzle. But if we are prepared to approach the Dhamma on its own terms, as the way to release from suffering, there will not be two faces at all. Instead we will see what was there from the start: the single face of Dhamma which, like any other face, presents two complementary sides.

Bhikkhu Bodhi

EXPLORING THE WHEELS

"Who is Francis Story and what else has he written?" How often we are asked that! But we are not surprised, for Francis Story was a convincing interpreter of the Dhamma who combined a clear understanding of the Buddha's teaching with a deep personal conviction of its truth, and gave expression to his thoughts lucid, flowing prose.

Francis Story was born in Surrey, England, in 1910, and educated at London University. He became a Buddhist through self-conviction at the age of sixteen. Through the impact of the suffering he witnessed during World War II, and the tragic death of his wife, he resolved to devote his life to the practice and propagation of Buddhism. After periods of study and missionary work in India and Burma, in 1957 Francis Story came to Sri Lanka, where for more than ten years he unstintingly gave his help to our work at BPS. In 1970 he developed bone cancer, and went to London for treatment, where he died in 1971. He faced his death with the courage and serenity of a true Buddhist. Refusing drugs which would have alleviated his pain but prevented a dear mind, from his hospital bed he held Dhamma talks with his many visitors, and urged them to follow the path of Buddhism. The eminent Buddhist scholar, L.B. Homer, wrote: "His last few weeks were an inspiration and example to us all."

BPS has published the collected works of this gifted writer in three volumes. The Buddhist Outlook, Volume I, contains essays, dialogues, posthumous writings and poems. (Hardback: \$7.50) Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience Volume II, includes all of his essays, thoughts and case studies on rebirth, with an introduction by Dr. Ian Stevenson. (Hardback: \$8.80; softback: \$7.50) Dimensions of Buddhist Thought, Volume III, is a compilation of

the WHEELS and BODHI LEAVES which he had written (Hardback: \$8.80; softback: \$7.50)

A few of the individual issues should be noted. Francis Story was keenly interested in science and cosmology, and his extensive reading in these fields enabled him to explore at length the relationship between the Buddha's teaching and modern science. "The Scientific approach to Buddhism" (BL B 29) and "A Larger Rationalism" (BL B 55) present an overview of Francis Story's approach to this relationship "Of Gods and Men" (BL B 4) and Gods and the Universe (WH 180/181) present aspects of Buddhist cosmology. His brilliant essays The Case for Rebirth (WH 12/13) and The Four Noble Truths: Fundamentals of Buddhism (WH 34/35) have been so well received over the years that they might be considered modern Buddhist classics.

We also carry in stock Gleanings in Time, non-Buddhist stories and poems from the pen of this multi-faceted man. (Softback: \$2.00)

A passage from his essay "Buddhism and the Future" conveys the flavour of his writing:

The religion of the future will be a Buddhist religion; of that there can be no doubt. But for that to be so, it must recapture the spirit of the universal creed proclaimed by Buddha, with its vital principles of morality, wisdom, compassion and all-embracing brotherhood.... It is only Buddhism that can deal with the problems we have created for ourselves - the predicaments that arise from craving, hatred and ignorance; the problems that come from man not realising his true nature or where his lasting happiness really lies. By reconciling religion with scientific knowledge, Buddhism can restore the lost spiritual values and open the way to the next stage in man's evolution

(The Buddhist Outlook, p.57)

NEW BOOK RELEASE

The Dhammapadam: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom. Translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddhārakkhita. Introduction by Bhikkhu Bodhi. 82+34 pp. U.S.\$3.00; SLRs 40.

The Dhammapadam is the best known scripture of Theravada Buddhism, a world religious classic, and one of the most beloved spiritual testaments of all time. An anthology of 423 verses spoken by the Buddha, the Dhammapadam serves as a perfect compendium of his teachings for study, reflection and contemplation.

The translator of this new BPS edition, Acharya Buddhārakkhita, is a practising Buddhist monk of Indian nationality, Director of the Maha Bodhi Society Centre in Bangalore, and founder of the Buddha Yoga Meditation Society in the United States. A long term student of the work, in his translation he ably transmits the spirit and content as well as the style of the original. In contrast to many other translations which have tended to be either too free or too pedantic, Ven. Buddhārakkhita skillfully combines clarity and vigour of expression with careful fidelity to the intended meaning of the verses as they are understood in the living Theravada Buddhist tradition. The introduction by Bhikkhu Bodhi delineated the systematic structure underlying the diverse themes of the Dhammapadam, and shows how the work embodies the essential teachings of early Buddhism.

This compact handy volume is not only ideal for personal use, but will also make a beautiful gift which can bring others the light of the Dhamma in one of its most inspiring expressions. For Vesak, Christmas, New Year's, birthday, or as a simple gesture of friendship, why not present a copy of the Dhammapada? It may be just what is needed to help someone else advance a few steps further along the Path.

IN MEMORIAM: T.B. NARANPANAWE (1906-1985)

It is with great sorrow and a sense of tremendous loss that we report the passing away of our honorary general secretary, Mr. T.B. Naranpanawe, on 22 August 1985. In his 77th year, he expired suddenly due to heart failure while visiting relations in Anuradhapura, the sacred city of Sri Lankan Buddhism. The event brought shock and sadness to many people involved in Buddhist activities, both here and abroad, but for us at the BPS his death came as an especially heavy blow. T.B., as he was known to his friends and co-workers, began his work for the BPS during the early years of its existence. While serving as special commissioner on the Gampola Town Council, he would leave his office after each day, come to the BPS, and continue working, often into the night. A trusted aid of Richard Abeyasekara, the founding general secretary, T.B. in time became a joint secretary of the Society, and during the last years of Richard's life bore the bulk of the BPS's administrative responsibilities. When Richard expired in 1982, the Board of Management unanimously elected T.B. to succeed him. As general secretary, T.B. won the admiration of his colleagues through his energy, patience, and persistence. His skill in fulfilling the Society's goals was seen particularly in his contribution to the construction of our new headquarters, which opened this past April.

The more a man's mind is dear and dean, the more will he be free from suffering. T.B. Naranpanawe had a well-trained mind, clear and dean, and thus he left his body which little pain: Though he is no longer with us, his devoted work and good name endure in our memory, and inspire us to continue our service to the Dhamma.

May he soon attain Nibbana!

Raja Weerakoon

A VISITOR FROM WISDOM

On 10 September 1985, BPS was honoured with the visit of Dr. Nicholas Ribush, executive-director of Wisdom Publications, London, who met with the Ven. Nyanaponika Mahathera, Bhikkhu Bodhi, and BPS staff members for an' exchange of information on the work of publishing the Dhamma. Wisdom, the publishing wing of the foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Buddhism, has in a short span of time become a leading international publisher of Buddhist books, thanks largely to the capable leadership of Dr. Ribush. Originally formed for the purpose of issuing works representative of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the firm has recently been expanding its scope to undertake publication of works from other Buddhist traditions as well. They are now in the process of publishing a new translation of the Dīgha Nikāya by M.O.'C. Watshe, a frequent contributor to our WHEEL and BODHI LEAVES series, and have expressed interest in publishing other

scriptures front the Theravada Canon. They will also carry BPS publications and include them in their future mail order catalogue. For their present catalogue of books, cassettes, and art work, interested readers may write to: Wisdom Publications, 23, Daring Street, London WC1, England.

QUOTEWORTHY

Our deeds will travel with us from afar

And what we have been makes us what we are.

George Eliot

Lord Buddha's message of truth, peace, compassion and tolerance is as relevant as it was many centuries ago. The passage of time has made its flame shine with greater luminosity. Rampant materialism and the pursuit of individual success at all costs have eroded the ties of brotherhood and community. In these circumstances it is necessary to remember and propagate the message of compassion of Lord Buddha so that hatred can be replaced by love, strife by peace, and confrontation by co-operation.

Dr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow
Director-General, UNESCO

The great symbols of Buddhism, the stupa, the footprint, the lotus, and the Wheel of the Doctrine, have taken innumerable forms in the hands of Buddhist artists. The image of the Buddha himself has inspired deep devotion and given aesthetic fulfilment to sculptors and painters. My father had by his bedside a photograph of one of the most famous of the statues of the Buddha. (A Samadhi Buddha at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka) In these beautiful and moving portrayals of the Buddha, the outer form is but a symbol of that which is formless and transcends description. The image of the Buddha raises us above and beyond the clamorous present, manifesting silence and peace.

Indira Gandhi
Late Prime Minister of India

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Today I received the new BPS publications with the first issue of your newsletter. I would like to congratulate you on its style and content and its aims. I think it is an excellent idea. I very much liked the editorial article and thought of sending it thoughtful, searching friends who do not know Buddha's teaching yet.

Ayya Khema Dodanduwa,

Sri Lanka

It was with interest and joy that I read the newsletter that your Society has started as a new feature of your valuable publications. While it will serve to bring the world Buddhist community closer, it will have the added advantage of providing the disciples of the Blessed

One, and also those interested in the Teaching, with a forum for the interchange of news and knowledge of the Dhamma. I wish your new venture all success.

Sir! Perera QC

Colombo, Sri Lanka

On receiving the last set of books I much impressed by the newsletter that came with them and thought I would write in right away. I wish to help in spreading the Dhamma in whatever way I can I thank the BPS and all the personnel for the immense service they are doing for the suffering world at large.

D.P.Perera Bandarawela,

Sri Lanka

Good timing: We had sent a lady professor of philosophy in Poland a selection of our books on Buddhist ethics, as we had learned that ethics is her specialty. Acknowledging the books, she writes: "This was a very nice surprise, as in the second semester I shall deal with Buddhist ethics, so the books came just in time."

FOR SPANISH STUDENTS OF THE DHAMMA

We have compiled a list of books on Buddhism published in Spanish; a number of these are translations of BPS publications. The list will be sent free on request, but please include an International Reply Coupon to cover the cost of postage.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE RE

WHEEL issues on the lineup for future publication include-the following:

Paul R. Fleischman, *The Therapeutic Action of Vipassana & Why I Sit*. American psychiatrist Paul Fleischman conducts a psychiatric practice with his patients during the workweek, but on his own time he conducts another practice on himself -the discipline of "sitting." In the first essay in this issue he explores from his own experience in both fields the psychotherapeutic benefits of insight meditation; in the second he provides an eloquent personal statement of the reasons for his own whole-hearted commitment to the practice of sitting.

Ledi Sayadaw, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Relations (Patthana Dipani)*. This work, a modern Buddhist classic long unavailable to the West is being reissued by BPS in response to an expanding interest in the Abhidhamma. In it Ledi Sayadaw, one of Burma's most eminent scholar-monks of recent times, expounds the complex Abhidhamma philosophy of conditional relations. His clear explanations and lively illustrations help to make a difficult subject more accessible, and pave the way towards a better grasp of this central Abhidhamma teaching.

Helmuth Hecker, *The Life of Anathapindika*. Anathapindika was the chief lay disciple of the Buddha, a multi-millionaire who was also a man of deep spiritual insight and

bountiful compassion, whose very name means "feeder of the poor." This biographical study continues our "Lives of the Disciples" series.

We would appreciate very much hearing your comments on our present publications, and your suggestions for future publications.

BPS

Buddhist Publication Society

P.O. Box 61, 54, Sangharaja Mawatha

Kandy, Sri Lanka

Tel: +94 81 2237283 Fax: +94 81 2223679

E mail: bps@sltnet.lk

Website: <http://www.pbs.lk>