

ZEN NOTES



GUIDE FOR BUDDHIST LAYMEN

Translated by The Buddhist Information Centre, 50, Green Path, Colombo, Ceylon. Somewhat abridged. Spelling follows Pali.

In Rajagaha, there lived a young man named Sigala. His wealthy parents were stream-entrants (sotapanna), disciples of the Buddha, incapable of deviating from the Noble Eightfold Path of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, which lead to perfect purity, enlightenment, and the bliss of Nibbana.

Sigala had no confidence in the Buddha or the Dhamma or the Sangha, and had a wrong sense of values. Although his parents often advised him to visit the Buddha or his great disciples, such as the venerable Theras Sariputta, Moggallana, Maha Kassapa and others, Sigala would reply, "I will have nothing to do with your recluses. Paying homage to them would make my back ache and my knees rough. I should have to sit on the ground and soil and wear out my clothes. And if I were to sit and talk with them, getting to know them, I would have to invite them for meals and eventually provide them with the three requisites. This would be an expense to me. I see no advantage in visiting your recluses."

The parents were unable to persuade their son to visit the Buddha or his disciples. Finally the father on his deathbed thought of asking his son to worship the six quarters, hoping that some day the Buddha or his disciples would enlighten him on the significance of worship. With this hope in view he called his son to his bedside and told him to rise early in the morning and worship the six quarters. Since deathbed wishes are always respected, the son dutifully obeyed.

One day, when the Blessed One was surveying the world, at dawn, he saw Sigala engaged in worshipping the various quarters and decided to discourse to him on the subject as the father had expected. So he went to Sigala on his way to Rajagaha for alms and delivered this discourse, which sets forth all the duties of the layman. Therefore this Sutta is called Gihi-Vinaya, the layman's code of discipline.

SIGALOVADA SUTTA--Thus I have heard: Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove in the Squirrels' Feeding Ground in Rajagaha.

Now at this time Sigala, a young householder, rising early in the morning, went forth from Rajagaha, and with wet hair, and wet clothes, with hands clasped and uplifted, worshiped the various quarters: east, south, west, north, the nadir and the zenith.

The Blessed One dressed himself early that morning, took bowl and robe and entered Rajagaha for alms. When he saw Sigala the young householder, he asked him why he was worshipping the six quarters.

"Lord, my father, when he was dying, said to me: 'Dear son, you should worship the various quarters.' Therefore, Lord, esteeming, venerating and respecting my father's word, I rise early in the morning and worship these six quarters.'"

"But in the Ariyan discipline, young householder, the six quarters are not to be worshiped thus."

"How then, Lord, should the six quarters be worshiped? It would be excellent, Lord, if the Blessed One would teach me how to worship according to the Ariyan discipline."

"Then listen and pay good heed, householder, and I will speak."

"Very well, Lord," replied Sigala and the Blessed One said: "Insofar as, young householder, the Ariyan disciple has abandoned the four evil deeds, insofar as he commits no sinful action in four ways, insofar as he avoids the six causes leading to the loss of wealth, he, thus shunning these fourteen evils, protects the six quarters and enters the

path to victory in both worlds. Here and hereafter he progresses."

"What are the four evil deeds he abandons?"

"Taking the life of living beings, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, uttering falsehood."

"In what four ways does he commit no sinful action?"

"One who pursues a wrong course of life through desire and affection, through hate, fear or ignorance, commits a sinful action. The Ariyan disciple commits no sinful action in these four ways.

"The good reputation of him who pursues a wrong course of life through desire and affection, hate, fear and ignorance fades away, like the moon in the dark fortnight.

"The good reputation of him who never pursues a wrong course of life through desire and affection, hate, fear and ignorance comes to fullness, like the moon in the bright fortnight.

"What are the six causes for the loss of wealth that he avoids? Indulgence in liquor that brings about intoxication and heedlessness is a cause for the loss of wealth. Sauntering the streets at unseemly hours, visiting theatrical shows, indulgence in gambling and negligence, association with evil friends, and indulging in idleness are causes for the loss of wealth.

"There are, young householder, six disadvantages in indulging in liquor that causes intoxication and negligence: loss of wealth in this life, increase of quarrels, susceptibility to sickness, a bad reputation, shameless uncovering of one's body, weakening of wisdom.

“There are six disadvantages in sauntering the streets at unseemly hours: he himself is not protected or guarded, his wife and children are unprotected; his wealth is not protected; he is suspected for crimes not committed; false rumors are spread about him; he gets involved in various troubles.

“There are six disadvantages in visiting theatrical shows. He constantly harbors such thoughts as: where is there dancing, singing, music, ballad recitation, hand-music, playing with drums.

“There are six disadvantages in indulgence in gambling: the victor causes enmity; the defeated grieves over his loss; loss of wealth; in a court of law his word is not accepted, has no effect; his friends and companions despise him; he is not desired by those who take or give in marriage, saying that a gambler is not fit to support a wife.

“There are six disadvantages in association with evil friends; those who are addicted to women, to gambling, to liquor, to fraudulence, to deceiving and to violence are his friends and companions.

“There are six disadvantages in indulging in idleness: he does not work saying that it is too cold, too hot, too late, too early, that he is too hungry, too full. Thus as he shirks his work constantly, he does not accumulate wealth, and what he has is wasted.

“There are these four who should be known as enemies in the guise of friends: he who only takes without giving in return; the man of words, not deeds; the flatterer; the spendthrift.

“In four ways should the man who only takes be known as an enemy in the guise of a friend; he only takes; he gives little and expects much in return; he does his work out of fear; he associates with his friend for his own gain.

“In four ways should the man of words, not deeds be known as an enemy in the guise of a friend: he favors you with past good intentions; he favors you with kindly, but useless talk; when opportunity for service arises he pretends to be helpless.

“In four ways should the flatterer be known as an enemy in the guise of a friend: he allows his friend to commit evil deeds; he does not endorse the good deeds of his friend; he praises him in his presence; he censures him in his absence.

“In four ways should the spendthrift companion be known as an enemy in the guise of a friend: he is your friend in indulging in liquor; in sauntering the streets at unseemly hours; in visiting theatrical shows; in indulging in gambling.

“There are four who should be known as friends who are good-hearted: he who helps, he who is the same in pleasure and pain; he who declares what is good or salutary; he who sympathizes.

“In four ways should he who is a helper be known as a good-hearted friend: he protects you when you are negligent; he protects your wealth when you are negligent; he is a refuge when you are terrified; he gives a double amount of what you need when occasion arises.

“In four ways should he who is the same in pleasure and pain be known as a good-hearted friend; he

tells you his secrets: he conceals your secrets: he does not abandon you when you are in distress; he sacrifices even his life for your sake.

"In four ways should he who declares what is good or salutary be known as a good-hearted friend: he forbids you to do evil; he establishes you in virtue; he causes you to hear what you had not heard before; he shows you the way to heaven.

"In four ways should the sympathizer be known as a good-hearted friend: he does not rejoice over your misfortune; he rejoices over your good fortune; he prevents others from speaking ill of you; he praises those who speak well of you.

"The wise man should know these four friends and should associate with them again and again, as a mother with her own child.

"Whoso is wise and virtuous shines forth like a blazing fire. To him gathering wealth as a bee collects honey, wealth accumulates as an anthill is heaped up gradually.

"After gathering wealth, the layman able to lead a household life should divide his wealth into four parts. Thereby he makes friends. Let him enjoy one portion. Let him use two to conduct his business. Let him save the fourth portion for times of distress.

"How, young householder, does the Ariyan disciple protect the six quarters? These, young householder, are to be known as the six quarters: parents should be known as the east teachers as the south, wife and children as the west, friends and colleagues as the north, unpaid and paid servants and workmen as the nadir and recluses and brahmins (arahants)

as the zenith.

"Young householder, in five ways a child should serve his parents as the eastern quarter: by them supported, he shall support them; he shall do their duties for them; he shall protect the lineage and tradition of his family; he shall regulate his life in keeping with his inheritance; and he shall give alms (to the Sangha) in memory of his kith and kin who have passed away.

"In these five ways, parents thus cared for by their children, as the eastern quarter, show their compassion to them: they ward off evil from him; they establish him in that which is good and noble; they train him for a calling in keeping with the family tradition; they arrange a suitable partner for him; they give over his inheritance in due time.

"In these five ways, parents thus served by them as the eastern quarter compassionate their children. Thus the eastern quarter is for him made safe and free from fear.

"Young householder, in five ways should a pupil wait upon his teachers as the southern quarter: by standing up in their presence; by ministering to them; by eager attentiveness; by ministration; by attentively receiving instruction.

"In these five ways, teachers thus cared for by their pupils as the southern quarter show their compassion to him: they train him in the right way, they make him grasp what is to be grasped; they instruct him in every branch of learning; they introduce him to their friends and companions; they afford him protection in every quarter. Thus the southern quarter is for him made

safe and free from fear.

“ In five ways should a husband tend his wife as the western quarter: by honor; by respect; by faithfulness; by handing over authority to her; by giving her ornaments.

“ In these five ways a wife thus cared for by her husband as the western quarter compassionates him: by doing her work well; by hospitality to both her husband's and her relatives; by faithfulness; by protecting what he earns; by skill and diligence in all her duties. Thus the western quarter is for him made safe and free from fear.

“ In five ways should a clansman minister to his friends and colleagues as the northern quarter: by liberality; by kind speech; by doing good in their interest; by treating them as he treats himself: by honesty.

“ In these five ways friends and colleagues ministered to as the northern quarter compassionate the clansmen: when negligent, they protect him; they protect his property; when terrified they are a refuge for him; they do not forsake him when he is in distress; they honor his posterity. Thus the northern quarter is for him made safe and free from fear.

“ In five ways should a master tend his unpaid and paid servants and workmen as the nadir: by allotting work to them according to their strength; by supplying them with food and wages; by nursing them when sick; by sharing delicacies with them; by giving them timely relaxation.

“ In five ways, unpaid and paid servants and workmen thus cared for by their master as the nadir show

their compassion for him: they get up before the master; they retire to rest after him; they take only what is given to them; they do their work well; they have praise for him. Thus the nadir is for him made safe and free from fear.

“ In five ways should a layman minister to recluses and brahmins as the zenith: by friendly actions of body; of speech, and of thought, by keeping open house to them; by supplying their material needs.

“ In these six ways, recluses and brahmins thus ministered to as the zenith, compassionate him: they forbid him to do evil; they establish him in virtue; they wish him well; they teach him what he has not heard before; they correct and purify what he has heard; they reveal to him the path to heaven. Thus the zenith is for him made safe and free from fear.

“ Wise, virtuous, gentle, knowing his obligations as a householder humble and not stubborn, the layman wins renown. Treating others kindly, ever wishing to make friends, easily spoken to, unselfish, and giving advice and guidance to his fellows, he wins renown. Liberality, kind speech, doing good in the interest of others, showing impartiality to others at suitable places as the occasion demands, these kind dispositions are to the world as the linchpin is to the carriage that moves.

“ Lacking these dispositions no mother will receive the honor and respect her child should pay her; nor will a father, just because he is a parent. Since the wise give thought to these dispositions, they attain greatness and earn the praise of the world.

BUDDHISM IN CEYLON, Part 2--The Vi-haras, where the monks lived and worked, were not only the centers of Buddhist propagation but also the schools where the whole population received their education. Here were developed the virtues of gentleness and tolerance, hospitality, peace and harmony, generosity and mutual service that characterize the Sinhalese.

During peaceful times art and culture flourished. Architecture, drama and literature, dancing, painting and music were an important part of life. Probably the first images of the Buddha were made here.

In the 1st Century B.C. the sacred texts of Buddhism were committed to writing for the first time. Five hundred arhat monks took part in determining and collecting the authentic words of the Buddha into the Three Baskets of Sutra, Vinaya and Abhidharma. This tremendous task was followed by the intensive study of these writings and the writing of innumerable learned commentaries and treatises in Pali and Sinhalese.

Scholars from abroad came to Anuradhapura not only to study the orthodox texts, but also the teachings of the unorthodox Buddhist sects of India at the Abhayagiri Vihara, where a dissident group broke away from the Mahavihara and carried on as a separate sect. In spite of political opposition of national scale, the teachings of the heretics survived along with the Theravada.

The names Vaitulya and Vaipulya, often applied to the unorthodox teachings, seem to have denoted Mahayanism in general rather than a particular school. Probably they referred to the teachings of Nagarjuna.

Buddhist ritual took the arrival of the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha in 312 A.D. as a cue to develop. The Tooth became the greatest national treasure of Ceylon and its possession the essential qualification for kingship. Its present resting-place is in Kandy, where the Temple of the Tooth Relic is visited annually by millions of pilgrims from all parts of the world.

In the 10th Century the Cholas of South India moved into Ceylon and did everything possible to destroy Buddhism. The Order of monks was almost wiped out. In 1055 A.D. Vijayabahu I was able to drive out the conquerors and unify Ceylon. One of his first acts was to send tribute to Burma and to invite a chapter of twenty elders to restore the Sasana (Buddhist religion) in Ceylon. From then until now these two countries have cooperated religiously to mutual advantage. Two successors of this king carried on his work. As by this time Buddhism had almost disappeared from India, Ceylon assumed leadership in the Buddhist world, which has continued until today. The orthodox sect established by Mahinda came to be regarded as the custodian of Buddhism in its purest form.

The arrival of the Portuguese in Ceylon in 1505 A.D. proved a turning point in the Island's history. "There is no page in the story of European colonisation," writes Sir Emerson Tennant, one-time Lt. Governor in Ceylon, "more gloomy and repulsive than that which recounts the proceedings of the Portuguese in Ceylon... They appeared in the Indian Seas in the threefold character of merchants, missionaries and

pirates. Their ostensible motto was, 'amity, commerce, and religion;' but their expeditions consisted of soldiers as well as adventurers, and included friars and a chaplain-major; and their instructions were, 'to begin by preaching but, that failing, to proceed to the decision of the sword.'"

They occupied the maritime provinces of Ceylon and remained there for 150 years, oppressing the people with unbelievable cruelty.

They were driven away by the Dutch, whose main concern was trade. They did not persecute the Buddhists. From them, the Catholics were obliged to obtain the protection of the Sinhala Buddhist kings who held the mainland. The latter gave them lands to establish seminaries and permitted their priests to preach even in the capital.

The Buddhists had suffered so much under the Portuguese that they once again had to ask for outside help, this time from Siam (Thailand), whose king sent a chapter of twenty monks who restored the Higher Ordination of Monks, with the Malwatte Vihara in Kandy as their headquarters. This and another vihara in Kandy continue to this day at the head of the largest sect, numbering more than 10,000.

Sometime later missions to Burma resulted in the establishment of two other sects, or Nikayas, in addition to the earlier Siam Nikaya. These were called Amarapura and Ramanna. All three give allegiance to the orthodox Theravada and there are no doctrinal differences, the only points of variance being the interpretation of certain minor rules.

In 1796, the British took over the Dutch possessions in Ceylon. So far, the Sinhala Buddhist kings had continued to rule in the centre of the Island, while three European races successively occupied the maritime regions. In 1815, the whole of the country passed into the hands of the British. According to one clause of the treaty the British undertook to "protect and maintain the religion of the Buddha" and to preserve inviolate the rites and ceremonies connected with it.

Generally speaking, British administrators in Ceylon tried to observe the terms of the Kandyan Convention, at least in the letter. But the pressure of Christian missionary bodies in England often proved too strong to resist and the consequent damage to Buddhism was almost irreparable. No education was allowed except in schools where the most important part of the curriculum was the compulsory study of the Bible. Ambitious Buddhists were obliged to become Christians to get on in the world. Others were ashamed to own themselves Buddhists in public. In the course of time, there came into being a strongly favored minority of Ceylonese, educated in English, bearing foreign names, who controlled the administration of the country. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of acres of land which had belonged to Buddhist institutions were expropriated. Some was given to the missionaries for their churches and schools. Public funds were used for the construction of churches and Christian priests were paid government salaries from public revenue.

The policy followed by the colonial rulers was that laid down by Lord Acton, Regius Professor of History in Cambridge University. "The religion and manners of the orientals naturally support one another; neither can be changed without the other. Hence, the pioneer of civilization has to get rid of the religion to enable him to introduce a better culture and the pioneer of Christianity has to get rid of native culture before he can establish his religion."

The growth of Rationalism in England gave courage to some Buddhist scholars in Ceylon to challenge the superiority claimed for Christianity over other faiths. There were fierce controversies between the Buddhists and Christians on the rival merits of their religions. Most notable was one in August 1873, held in the form of a public debate. The Buddhist scored a triumphant victory and the results were of momentous significance, as a report of it in English fell into the hands of Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, co-founder and President of the Theosophical Society, who was so greatly attracted that he visited Ceylon and declared himself a follower of the Faith. He was so shocked by the situation of the Buddhists that he embarked on the task of getting them out of their difficulties. Seeing that nothing could be done while the missionaries had such a strong hold that there were only two schools under Buddhist management, he founded the Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society for the establishment of Buddhist schools everywhere. He also brought about the declaration of

the full-moon day of May as a public holiday. With his help, the Buddhists regained their self-respect and a great awakening of national culture began. As a symbol of unity they adopted the six-colored flag that was destined to become the symbol of international Buddhism.

The most energetic of the new leaders to spring up was the Anagarika Dharmapala. He was a fiery speaker who won laurels not only in Ceylon but even in America where he represented Buddhism at the World Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893.

In order to revive Buddhism in India, he founded the Maha Bodhi Society, whose chief object was to obtain for the Buddhists the site at Buddha Gaya where the Buddha had attained Enlightenment. Two main centres of learning were established, and many smaller to the extent of 150 or more.

In 1948 the Sinhalese regained their independence and were inspired to take the lead in uniting the 550 million Buddhists all over the world. In June 1950 the inaugural meeting of the World Fellowship of Buddhists took place in the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy. At the same time they are trying to purify and revive Buddhism in Ceylon itself.

The 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's death, according to tradition, half the life-span of Buddhism, found the Sasana flourishing in Ceylon, where nearly 6000 monasteries, with 15,000 monks, were once again educating the children and spreading the Dhamma far and wide.

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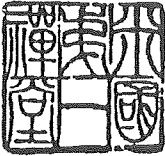
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