

THE BROTHERHOOD

CHAPTER ONE

DUTIES OF THE BROTHERHOOD

I RENUNCIANTS

1. A man who wishes to become my disciple must be willing to give up all direct relations with his family, the social life of the world and all dependence upon wealth.

A man who has given up all such relations for the sake of the Dharma and has no abiding place for either his body or mind has become my disciple and is to be called a renunciant.

Though his feet leave their imprints in my footsteps and his hands carry my garment, if his mind is disturbed by greed, he is far from me. Though he dresses like a monk, if he does not accept the teaching, he does not see me.

But if he has removed all greed and his mind is pure and peaceful, he is very close to me though he be thousands of miles away. If he receives the Dharma, he sees me in it.

Duties of the Brotherhood

2. My disciples, the renunciants must observe the four rules and build their lives upon them.

First, they wear old and cast-off garments; second, they get their food through alms-begging; third, their home is where night finds them as under a tree or on a rock; and, fourth, they use only a special medicine made from cattle urine laid down by the Brotherhood.

To carry a bowl in the hand and go from house to house is a beggar's life, but a brother is not compelled to do so by others, he is not forced into it by circumstances or by temptation; he does it of his own free will because he knows that a life of faith will keep him away from the delusions of life, will help him to avoid suffering, and will lead him toward Enlightenment.

The life of a renunciant is not an easy one; he ought not to undertake it if he can not keep his mind free from greed and anger or if he can not control his mind or his five senses.

3. He who believes himself to be a renunciant and to be able to answer when he is asked about it, must be able to say:

“I am willing to undertake whatever is necessary to

Duties of the Brotherhood

be a renunciant. I will be sincere about it and will try to accomplish the purpose for becoming one. I will be grateful to those who help me by donations and will try to make them happy by my earnestness and good life."

To be a renunciant he must train himself in many ways: He must be sensitive to shame and dishonor when he fails; he must keep his body, speech and mind pure if his life is to be pure; he must guard the gates of his five senses; he must not lose control of his mind for the sake of some passing pleasure; he must not praise himself or rebuke others; and he must not be idle or given to lengthy sleep.

In the evening he should have a time for quiet sitting and meditation and a short walk before retiring. For peaceful sleep he should rest on the right side with his feet together and his last thought should be of the time when he wishes to rise in the early morning. Early in the morning he should have another time for quiet sitting and meditation and a short walk afterwards.

During the whole day he should always maintain an alert mind, keeping both body and mind under control, resisting all tendency towards greed, anger, foolishness, sleepiness, inattention, regret, suspicion, and all worldly desires.

Duties of the Brotherhood

Thus, with his mind concentrated, he should cultivate excellent wisdom and aim only at perfect Enlightenment.

4. If a renunciant, forgetting himself, lapses into greed, anger, resentment, jealousy, conceit, self-praise, or insincerity, he is like one carrying a keen two-edged sword, covered only by a thin cloth.

He is not a renunciant simply because he wears a monk's rags and carries a begging bowl; he is not a renunciant just because he recites scriptures easily; he is only a man of straw and nothing more.

Even if his external appearance is that of a monk, he can not remove his worldly desires. He is not a renunciant; he is no more than an infant clothed in a monk's robe.

Those who are able to concentrate and control the mind, who contain wisdom, who have removed all worldly desires, and whose only purpose is to attain Enlightenment - only these can be called the true renunciant.

A true renunciant determines to reach his goal of Enlightenment even though he loses his last drop of blood and his bones crumble into powder. Such a man,

Duties of the Brotherhood

trying his best, will finally attain the goal and give evidence of it by his ability to do the meritorious deeds of a renunciant.

5. The mission of a renunciant is to carry forward the light of the Buddha's teachings. He must preach to everyone; he must wake up sleeping people; he must correct false ideas; he must help people have a right viewpoint; he must go everywhere to spread the teaching even at the risk of his own life.

The mission of a renunciant is not an easy one, so he who aspires to it should wear Buddha's clothes, sit on Buddha's seat and enter into Buddha's room.

To wear Buddha's clothes means to be humble and to practice endurance; to sit on Buddha's seat means to see matter as non-substantial and to have no attachments; to enter into Buddha's room means to share His all-embracing great compassion and to have sympathy for everyone.

Duties of the Brotherhood

6. Those who wish to teach the Buddha's teaching acceptably must be concerned about four things: first, they must be concerned about their own behavior; second, they must be concerned about their choice of words when they approach and teach people; third, they must be concerned about their motive for teaching and the end they wish to accomplish; and fourth, they must be concerned about the great compassion.

Firstly, to be a good teacher of the Dharma, then, a renunciant must first of all have his feet well set on the ground of endurance; he must be modest; he must not be extreme or desire publicity; he must constantly think of the emptiness of things; and he must not become attached to anything. If he is thus concerned he will be capable of right conduct.

Secondly, he must exercise caution in approaching people and situations. He must avoid people who are living evil lives or people of authority; he must avoid opposite sex. Then he must approach people in a friendly way; he must always remember that things rise from a combination of causes and conditions, and, standing at that point, he must not blame or abuse them, or speak of their mistakes, or hold them in light esteem.

Thirdly, he must keep his mind peaceful, considering Buddha as his spiritual father, considering other

Duties of the Brotherhood

renunciants who are training for Enlightenment as his teachers, and looking upon everyone with great compassion. Then he must teach all equally.

Fourthly, he must let his spirit of compassion display itself, even as Buddha did, to the utmost degree. Especially he should let his spirit of compassion flow out to those who do not know enough to seek Enlightenment. He should wish that they might seek Enlightenment, and then he should follow his wishes with unselfish effort to awaken their interest.

II LAY FOLLOWERS

1. It has already been explained that to become a disciple of Buddha one must believe in the Three Treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Samgha.

To become a lay follower one must have an unshakable faith in Buddha, must believe in His teachings, Dharma, study and put precepts into practice, and must cherish the Brotherhood, Samgha.

Lay followers should follow the Five Precepts: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie or deceive, and not to use intoxicants.

Duties of the Brotherhood

Lay followers should not only believe in the Three Treasures and keep the precepts by themselves, but also they should, as far as they are able, help others observe them, especially their relatives and friends, trying to awaken in them an unshakable faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Samgha, so that they, too, may share in Buddha's compassion.

Lay followers should always remember that the reason they believe in the Three Treasures and keep the precepts is to enable themselves ultimately to attain Enlightenment, and for that reason they should, though living in the world of desires, avoid becoming attached to such desires.

Lay followers should always keep in mind that sooner or later they will be obliged to part with their parents and families and pass away from this life of birth and death; therefore, they should not become attached to things of this life but should set their minds on the world of Enlightenment, wherein nothing passes away.

2. If lay followers want to awaken an earnest and undisturbed faith in the Buddha's teachings, they should realize within their minds a quiet and undisturbed happiness, that will shine out on all their surroundings and will be reflected back to them.

Duties of the Brotherhood

This mind of faith is pure and gentle, always patient and enduring, never arguing, never causing suffering to others but always pondering the Three Treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Samgha. Thus happiness spontaneously rises in their minds, and the light for Enlightenment can be found everywhere.

Since they are resting in the bosom of Buddha by faith, they are kept far from having a selfish mind, from attachment to their possessions, and, therefore, they have no fear in their daily life or dread of being criticized.

They will have no fear about their future death since they believe in the birth in Buddha's Land. Since they have faith in the truth and the holiness of the teachings, they can express their thoughts freely and without fear.

Since their minds are filled with compassion for all people, they will make no distinctions among them but will treat all alike, and since their minds are free from likes and dislikes it will be pure and equitable and happy for them to do any good deed.

Whether they live in adversity or in prosperity, it will make no difference to the increase of their faith. If they cherish humility, if they respect the Buddha's teachings,

Duties of the Brotherhood

if they are consistent in speech and action, if they are guided by wisdom, if their mind is as immovable as a mountain, then they will make steady progress on the path to Enlightenment.

And though they are forced to live in a difficult situation and among people of impure minds, if they cherish faith in Buddha they can ever lead them toward better deeds.

3. Therefore, one should first have the wish of hearing the Buddha's teachings.

If anyone should tell him that it would be necessary for him to go through fire to gain Enlightenment, then he should be willing to pass through such a fire.

There is satisfaction in hearing the Buddha's name, that is worth passing through a world filled with fires.

If one wishes to follow the Buddha's teaching one must not be egoistic or self-willed, but should cherish feelings of good-will toward all alike; one should respect those who are worthy of respect; one should serve those who are worthy of service and treat everyone with uniform kindness.

Duties of the Brotherhood

Thus, lay followers are to train their own minds first and not be disturbed by the actions of others. In this manner, they are to receive the Buddha's teaching and put it into practice, not envying others, not being influenced by others, and not considering other ways.

Those who do not believe in the Buddha's teaching have a narrow vision and, consequently, a disturbed mind. But those who believe in the Buddha's teaching, believe that there is a great wisdom and a great compassion embracing everything and, in that faith, they are undisturbed by trifles.

4. Those who hear and receive the Buddha's teaching know that their lives are transient and that their bodies are merely the aggregation of sufferings and the source of all evils, and so they do not become attached to them.

At the same time, they do not neglect to take good care of their bodies, not because they wish to enjoy the physical pleasures of the body, but because the body is temporarily necessary for the attainment of wisdom and for their mission of explaining the path to others.

If they do not take good care of their bodies they can not live long. If they do not live long, they can not

Duties of the Brotherhood

practice the teaching personally or transmit it to others.

If a man wishes to cross a river he is very careful of his raft. If he has a long journey to make, he takes good care of his horse. So, if a man seeks to attain Enlightenment he must take good care of his body.

The disciples of Buddha must wear clothing to protect the body from extremes of heat and cold and to cover its private parts, and should not wear it for decoration.

They must eat food to nourish the body so that they may hear and receive and explain the teaching, but they should not eat for mere enjoyment.

They must live in the house of Enlightenment to be protected from the thieves of worldly passions and from the storms of evil teaching, and they should use the house for its real purpose and not for display or the concealment of selfish practices.

Thus, one should value things and use them solely in their relation to Enlightenment and the teaching. He should not possess them or become attached to them for selfish reasons but only as they serve a useful purpose in carrying the teaching to others.

Duties of the Brotherhood

Therefore, his mind should always dwell on the teaching even when he is living with his family. He should care for them with a wise and sympathetic mind, seeking various means to awaken faith in their minds.

5. Lay members of the Buddha's Samgha should study the following lessons every day: How to serve their parents, how to live with their wives and children, how to control themselves, and how to serve Buddha.

To best serve their parents they must learn to practice kindness toward all animate life. To live happily with their wives and children they must keep away from lust and thoughts of selfish comfort.

While hearing the music of the family life they must not forget the sweeter music of the teaching, and while living in the shelter of the home, they should often seek the safer shelter of Zen practice, where wise men find refuge from all impurity and all disturbance.

When laymen are giving offerings they should remove all greed from their hearts; when they are in the midst of crowds, their minds should be in the company of wise men; when they face misfortune, they should keep their minds tranquil and free from hindrances.

Duties of the Brotherhood

When they take refuge in the Buddha, they should seek His wisdom.

When they take refuge in the Dharma, they should seek its truth which is like a great ocean of wisdom.

When they take refuge in the Samgha, they should seek its peaceful fellowship unobstructed by selfish interests.

When they wear clothes, they must not forget to put on also the garment of goodness and humility.

When they want to relieve themselves, they must wish to discharge all greed, anger and foolishness from their minds.

When they are toiling on an up-hill road, they should think of it as the road to Enlightenment that will carry them beyond the world of delusion. When they are following an easy road, they should take advantage of its easier conditions to make greater progress toward Buddhahood.

When they see a bridge, they must wish to construct the bridge of the teaching to let the people cross.

Duties of the Brotherhood

When they meet a sorrowful man, they should lament the bitterness of this ever-changing world.

When they see a greedy man, they should have a great longing to keep free from the illusions of this life and to attain the true riches of Enlightenment.

When they see savory food, they must be on guard; when they see distasteful food, they should wish that greed might never return.

During the intense heat of summer, they must wish to be away from the heat of worldly desires and gain the fresh coolness of Enlightenment. During the unbearable cold of winter, they must think of the warmth of Buddha's great compassion.

When they recite the sacred scriptures, they should be determined not to forget them and resolve to put their teaching into practice.

When they think of Buddha, they should cherish a deep wish to have eyes like Buddha.

As they fall asleep at night, they should wish that their body, speech and mind might be purified and refreshed; when they awake in the morning, their first wish should be that during that day their minds might be

Duties of the Brotherhood

clear to understand all things.

6. Those who follow the teaching of Buddha, because they understand that everything is characterized by "non-substantiality," do not treat lightly the things that enter into a man's life, but they receive them for what they are and then try to make them fit tools for Enlightenment.

They must not think that this world is meaningless and filled with confusion, while the world of Enlightenment is full of meaning and peace. Rather, they should taste the way of Enlightenment in all the affairs of this world.

If a man looks upon the world with defiled eyes dimmed by ignorance, he will see it filled with error; but if he looks upon it with clear wisdom, he will see it as the world of Enlightenment, which it is.

The fact is there is only one world, not two worlds, one meaningless and the other full of meaning, or one good and the other bad. People only think there are two worlds, due to their discriminating faculty.

If they could rid themselves of these discriminations and keep their minds pure with the light of wisdom, then they would see only one world in which everything is meaningful.

Duties of the Brotherhood

7. Those who believe in Buddha taste this universal purity of oneness in everything, and in that mind they feel compassion for all and have a humble attitude to serve everyone.

Therefore, they should cleanse their minds of all pride and cherish humility, courtesy and service. Their minds should be like the fruitful earth that nourishes everything without partiality, that serves without complaint, that endures patiently, that is always zealous, that finds its highest joy in serving all poor people by planting in their minds the seeds of the Buddha's teaching.

Thus, the mind that has compassion for poor people, becomes a mother to all people, honors all people, looks upon all as personal friends, and respects them as parents.

Therefore, though thousands of people may have hard feelings and cherish ill-will toward Buddhist lay followers, they can do no harm, for such harm is like a drop of poison in the waters of a great ocean.

8. A lay follower will enjoy his happiness by habits of recollection, reflection and thanksgiving. He will come to

Duties of the Brotherhood

realize that his faith is Buddha's compassion itself and that it has been bestowed upon him by Buddha.

There are no seeds of faith in the mud of worldly passion, but, because of Buddha's compassion, the seeds of faith may be sown there, and they will purify the mind until it has faith to believe in Buddha.

As has been said, the fragrant Chandana tree can not grow in a forest of Eranda trees. In a like manner, the seeds of faith in Buddha can not be in the bosom of delusion.

But actually, the flower of joy is blooming there, so we must conclude that while its blossoms are in the bosom of delusion, its roots are elsewhere; namely, its roots are in the bosom of Buddha.

If a lay follower becomes ego-centered, he will become jealous, envious, hateful and harmful, because his mind has become defiled with greed, anger and foolishness. But if he returns to Buddha, he will accomplish even a greater service for Buddha as mentioned above. It is, indeed, beyond any expression.

Duties of the Brotherhood

III

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO TRUE WAY OF LIVING

1. It is wrong to think that misfortunes come from the east or from the west; they originate within one's own mind. Therefore, it is foolish to guard against misfortunes from the external world and leave the inner mind uncontrolled.

There is a custom that has come down from ancient times that common people still follow. When they get up in the morning, they first wash their face and rinse their mouth, and then they bow in the six directions – to the east, west, south, north, above and below – wishing that no misfortune may come to them from any direction and that they may have a peaceful day.

But it is different in the Buddha's teaching. Buddha teaches that we are to pay respect to the six directions of Truth and then that we are to behave wisely and virtuously and thus prevent all misfortunes.

To guard the gates in these six directions, people are to remove the defilement of the “four deeds,” restrain the “four evil minds,” and plug the “six holes” which cause the loss of house and property.

Duties of the Brotherhood

By the “four deeds” it is meant killing, stealing, committing adultery and falsehood. The “four evil minds ” are greed, anger, foolishness and fear. The “six holes” which cause the loss of wealth are desire for intoxicating drinks and behaving foolishly, staying up late at night and losing the mind in frivolity, indulging in musical and theatre entertainments, gambling, associating with evil companions, and neglecting one’s duties.

After removing these four defilements, avoiding these four evil states of mind, and plugging these six holes of waste, the disciples of Buddha do reverence to the six directions of Truth.

Now, what are these six directions of Truth? They are east for the way of parents and child, south for the way of teacher and pupil, west for the way of husband and wife, north for the way of friends, below for the way of master and servant, and above for the way of serving those who expound the teachings.

First, as for the way of the parents and child in the eastern direction, the child should carry out five deeds. One should take care of the parents, work for the sake of the parents, protect the family lineage, inherit the family property, and hold memorial service for the ancestors.

In return the parents should carry out five deeds for the child. They should avoid wrong deeds, promote good deeds, have the child acquire knowledge and skills, see it to that one gets married, and hand over the family pro-

Duties of the Brotherhood

perty at an appropriate time. If these five things are followed, the way of the parents and the child in the eastern direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of the teacher and student in the southern direction, the student should stand when the teacher approaches, attend to the teacher's needs closely, should listen earnestly to the teacher, not neglect offerings for the teacher, and receive his teachings with respect.

In return the teacher should guide the student by conducting oneself properly, correctly pass on everything that the teacher has learned, have the student not forget what he has learned, and prepare the way for the student to receive honors as well as benefits and respect anywhere. Thus, the way of the teacher and student in the southern direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of the husband and wife in the western direction, the husband should treat her with respect, courtesy and faithfulness, entrust her with decision-making, and present her with gifts. The wife should carry out all her work well, attend to the needs of the family members, be faithful to her husband, protect the family property, and make the family affairs go well. Thus, the way of the husband and wife in the western direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of friends in the northern direction, one should provide them with what one's friends lack, speak to them with kindness, work for their bene-

Duties of the Brotherhood

fits, always be thoughtful, and treat them with honesty.

One should make effort to prevent one's friends from falling into wrong ways, protect their property in the event they lose their way, listen to their concerns when they have problems, lend them a helping hand in times of trouble, and support their family when necessary. Thus, the way of friends in the northern direction will be one of peace without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of the master and servant in the lower direction, one should observe the following five points in dealing with one's servants. Make the servants work in accordance with their ability, provide good meals and ample compensation, care for them with kindness when they are sick, share with them any delicious food, and have them rest at appropriate times.

In turn, a servant should serve one's master with the following points in mind. One should get up in the morning before the master, go to sleep after the master, be honest at all times, be proficient in one's work, and not bring disgrace to the master's good name. Thus, the way of the master and servant in the lower direction will be one of peace without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of serving those who preach the teachings in the upper direction, one should treat those who preach the teachings with utmost respect in body, speech and mind. One should also welcome the preachers with courtesy, listen and observe their teachings, and make offerings for them.

Duties of the Brotherhood

In turn, one who preaches the teachings should reject evil, foster goodness, be compassionate with good heart, preach the moral standards, make the listeners understand the teachings fully, and have the people attain the state of peace. Thus, the way of serving those who preach the teachings in the upper direction will be one of peace without sorrow.

A person who bows in the six directions does not do so in order to escape from external misfortunes. A person does it in order to be on one's guard to prevent evils from arising within one's own mind.

2. A person should recognize among one's acquaintances those with whom one should associate and those with whom one should not.

The ones with whom a person should not associate are those who are greedy, clever talkers, flatterers or wasters.

The ones with whom a person should associate are those who are helpful, who are willing to share happinesses as well as sufferings, who give good advice and who have a sympathetic heart.

A true friend, the one with whom a person may safely associate, will always stick closely to the right way, will worry secretly about one's friend's welfare, will con-

Duties of the Brotherhood

sole the friend in misfortune, will offer him a helping hand when he needs it, will keep his secrets, and will always give him good advice.

It is very difficult to find a friend like this, and, therefore, one should try very hard to be a friend like this. As the sun warms the fruitful earth, so a good friend shines in society because of one's good deeds.

3. It would be impossible for a son to repay his parents for their gracious kindness, even if he could carry his father on his right shoulder and his mother on his left for one hundred long years.

And even if he could bathe the bodies of his parents in sweet-smelling ointments for a hundred years, serve as an ideal son, gain a throne for them, and give them all the luxuries of the world, still he would not be able to repay them sufficiently for the great indebtedness of gratitude he owes to them.

But if he leads his parents to Buddha and explains the Buddha's teachings to them, and persuades them to give up a wrong course and follow a right one, leading them to give up all greed and enjoy the practice of offering, then he will be more than repaying them.

4. A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another, the

Duties of the Brotherhood

home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another, it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden.

If discord arises within one's family, one should not blame others but should examine one's own mind and follow a right path.

5. Once there was a man of deep faith. His father died when he was young; he lived happily with his mother, and then he took a wife.

At first, they lived happily together and then, because of a small misunderstanding, the wife and her mother-in-law came to dislike each other. This dislike grew until finally the mother left the young couple to live by herself.

After the mother-in-law left, a son was born to the young couple. A rumor reached the mother-in-law that the young wife had said, "My mother-in-law was always annoying me and as long as she lived with us nothing pleasant ever happened; but as soon as she went we had this happy event."

This rumor angered the mother-in-law who exclaimed, "If the husband's mother is chased away from the house and a happy event takes place, then things have come to a pretty pass. Righteousness must have disappeared from the world."

Duties of the Brotherhood

Then the mother shouted, "Now, we must have a funeral of this 'righteousness'." Like a mad woman she went to the cemetery to hold a funeral service.

The god Indra, hearing of this incident, appeared in front of the woman and tried to reason with her, but in vain.

The god Indra then said to her, "If so, I must burn the child and his mother to death. Will that satisfy you?"

Hearing this, the mother-in-law realized her mistake, apologized for her anger, and begged the god Indra to save the lives of the child and his mother. At the same time, the young wife and her husband realized their injustice to the old woman and went to the cemetery to seek her. The god Indra reconciled them and thereafter they lived together as a happy family.

Righteousness is never lost forever unless one casts it away oneself. Righteousness occasionally may seem to disappear but, in fact, it never disappears. When it seems to be disappearing, it is because one is losing the righteousness of one's own mind.

Discordant minds often bring disaster. A trifling misunderstanding may be followed by great misfortune. This is especially to be guarded against in family life.

Duties of the Brotherhood

6. In family life, the question as to how the daily expenses are to be met always requires the utmost care. Every member must work hard like the diligent ants and the busy bees. No one must rely upon the industry of others, or expect their charity.

On the other hand, a man must not consider what he has earned as totally his own. Some of it must be shared with others, some of it must be saved for an emergency, some of it must be set aside for the needs of the community, and some of it must be devoted to the needs of the religious teachers.

One should always remember that nothing in the world can strictly be called "mine." What comes to a person comes to him because of a combination of causes and conditions; it can be kept by him only temporarily and, therefore, he must not use it selfishly or for unworthy purposes.

7. When Syamavati, the queen-consort of King Udayana, offered Ananda five hundred garments, Ananda received them with great satisfaction.

The King, hearing of it, suspected Ananda of dishonesty, so he went to Ananda and asked what he was going to do with these five hundred garments.

Duties of the Brotherhood

Ananda replied: "Oh, King, many of the brothers are in rags; I am going to distribute the garments among the brothers."

"What will you do with the old garments?"

"We will make bed-covers out of them."

"What will you do with the old bed-covers?"

"We will make pillow-cases."

"What will you do with the old pillow-cases?"

"We will make floor-covers out of them."

"What will you do with the old floor-covers?"

"We will use them for foot-towels."

"What will you do with the old foot-towels?"

"We will use them for floor-mops."

"What will you do with the old mops?"

"Your Highness, we will tear them into pieces, mix them with mud and use the mud to plaster the house-walls."

Every article entrusted to us must be used with good care in some useful way, because it is not "ours" but is only entrusted to us temporarily.

8. The relation of husband and wife was not designed merely for their convenience. It has a deeper significance than the mere association of two physical bodies in one house. Husband and wife should take advantage of the intimacies of their association to help each other in training their minds in the holy teaching.

Duties of the Brotherhood

An old couple, an “ideal couple” as they were called, once came to Buddha and said, “Lord, we were married after we had been acquainted in childhood and there has never been a cloud in our happiness. Please tell us if we can be remarried in the next life.”

The Buddha gave them this wise answer: — “If you both have exactly the same faith, if you both received the teaching in exactly the same way, if you perform charity in the same way and if you have the same wisdom, then you will have the same mind in the next birth.”

9. There are no distinctions of sex on the path to Enlightenment. If a woman makes up her mind to seek Enlightenment, she will become a heroine of the True Path.

Mallika, the daughter of King Prasenajit and the Queen of King Ayodhya, was such a heroine. She had great faith in the teaching of the Blessed One and made in His presence the ten following vows:

“My Lord, until I gain Enlightenment I will not violate the sacred precepts; I will not be arrogant before people who are older than myself; I will not become angry with anyone.”

“I will not be jealous of others or envy their possessions; I will not be selfish either in mind or property; I will try to make poor people happy with the things I

Duties of the Brotherhood

receive and will not hoard them for myself."

"I will receive all people courteously, give them what they need, and speak kindly to them; consider their circumstances and not my convenience; and try to benefit them without partiality."

"If I see others in solitude, in prison, or suffering from disease or other troubles, I will try to relieve them and make them happy, by explaining the reasons and laws to them."

"If I see others catching living animals and being cruel to them or violating any such precept, I will punish them if they are to be punished, or teach them if they are to be taught, and then I will try to undo what they have done and correct their mistakes, to the best of my ability."

"I will not forget to hear the right teaching, for I know that when one neglects the right teaching one quickly falls away from the truth that abides everywhere, and will fail to reach the shore of Enlightenment."

Then she made the following three wishes to save poor people: "First, I will try to make everyone peaceful. This wish, I believe, in whatever life I may hereafter receive, will be the root of goodness that will grow into

Duties of the Brotherhood

the wisdom of good teaching.”

“Second, after I have received the wisdom of good teaching, I will untiringly teach all people.”

“Third, I will protect the true teaching, even at the sacrifice of my own body, life or property.”

The true significance of family life is the opportunity it gives for mutual encouragement and aid on the path to Enlightenment. If a woman has the same mind to seek Enlightenment, and makes the same vows and wishes, may become as great a disciple of Buddha as Mallika was.

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING A BUDDHA LAND

I THE HARMONY OF BROTHERHOOD

1. Let us imagine a desert country lying in absolute darkness with many living things swarming blindly about in it.

Naturally they will be frightened and as they run about without recognizing one another during the night, there will be frequent squirming and loneliness. This is indeed a pitiful sight.

Then let us imagine that suddenly a superior person with a torch appears and everything around becomes bright and clear.

The living beings in the dark solitude suddenly find a great relief as they look about to recognize one another and happily share their companionship.

By "a desert country" is meant a world of human life when it lies in the darkness of ignorance. Those who have no light of wisdom in their minds wander about in

Building a Buddha Land

loneliness and fear. They were born alone and die alone; they do not know how to associate with their fellow human in peaceful harmony, and they are naturally despondent and fearful.

By “a superior person with torch” is meant Buddha assuming a human form, and by His wisdom and compassion He illumines the world.

In this light people find themselves as well as others and are glad to establish human fellowship and harmonious relations.

Thousands of people may live in a community but it is not one of real fellowship until they know each other and have sympathy for one another.

A true community has faith and wisdom that illuminate it. It is a place where the people know and trust one another and where there is social harmony.

In fact, harmony is the life and real meaning of a true community or an organization.

2. Of organizations, there are three kinds. First, there are those that are organized on the basis of the power, wealth or authority of great leaders.

Building a Buddha Land

Second, there are those that are organized because of its convenience to the members, which will continue to exist as long as the members satisfy their conveniences and do not quarrel.

Third, there are those that are organized with some good teaching as its center and harmony as its very life.

Of course, the third or last of these is the only true organization, for in it the members live in one spirit, from which the unity of spirit and various kinds of virtue will arise. In such an organization there will prevail harmony, satisfaction and happiness.

Enlightenment is like rain that falls on a mountain and gathers into rivulets that run into brooks, and then into rivers which finally flow into the ocean.

The rain of the sacred teaching falls on all people alike without regard to their conditions or circumstances. Those who accept it gather into small groups, then into organizations, then into communities and, finally, find themselves in the great Ocean of Enlightenment.

The minds of these people mix like milk and water and finally organize into a harmonious Brotherhood.

Building a Buddha Land

Thus, the true teaching is the fundamental requirement of a perfect organization and, as mentioned above, it is the light which enables people to recognize one another, to become adjusted to one another and to smooth out the rough places in their thinking.

Thus, the organization that is formed on the perfect teachings of Buddha can be called a Samgha.

They should observe these teachings and train their minds accordingly. Thus, the Buddha's Samgha will theoretically include everyone, but, in fact, only those who have the same religious faith are members.

3. The Buddha's Samgha will have two types of members:-there will be those who are teaching the lay members, and those who are supporting the teachers by offering the needed food and clothing. They together will disseminate and perpetuate the teaching.

Then, to make the Samgha complete, there must be perfect harmony among the members. The teachers teach the members and the members honor the teachers so that there can be harmony between them.

Members of the Buddha's Samgha should associate together with affectionate sympathy, being happy to live together with fellow-followers, and seeking to become one in spirit.

4. There are six things that will help to lead a Samgha to harmony. They are: first, sincerity of speech; second, sincerity and kindness of action; third, sincerity and sympathy of spirit; fourth, equal sharing of common property; fifth, following the same pure precepts; and sixth, all having right views.

Among these things, the sixth or "all having right views" forms the nucleus, with the other five serving as wrappings for it.

There are two sets of seven rules to be followed if the Brotherhood is to be a success. The first is, as a group:

(1) they should gather together frequently to listen to the teachings and to discuss them;

(2) they should mingle freely and respect one another;

(3) they should revere the teaching and respect the rules and not change them;

Building a Buddha Land

(4) elder and younger members are to treat each other with courtesy;

(5) they should let sincerity and reverence mark their bearing.

(6) they should purify their minds in a quiet place which they should, nevertheless, offer to others before taking it for themselves.

(7) they should love all people, treat visitors cordially, and console the sick with kindness. A Samgha that follows these rules will never decline.

The second is, individually each should: (1) maintain a pure spirit and not ask for too many things; (2) maintain integrity and remove all greed; (3) be patient and not argue; (4) keep silent and not talk idly; (5) submit to the regulations and not be overbearing; (6) maintain an even mind and not follow different teachings; and (7) be thrifty and frugal in daily living.

If its members follow these rules, the Samgha will endure and never decline.

5. As mentioned above, a Samgha should maintain harmony in its very essence; therefore, one without harmony can not be called a brotherhood. Each member

should be on guard not to be the cause of discord. If discord appears it should be removed as early as possible, for discord will soon ruin any organization.

Blood stains can not be removed by more blood; resentment can not be removed by more resentment; resentment can be removed only by forgetting it.

6. Once there was a king named Calamity, whose country was conquered by a neighboring warlike king named Brahmadatta. King Calamity, after hiding with his wife and son for a time, was captured but fortunately his son, the prince, could escape.

The prince tried to find some way of saving his father but in vain. On the day of his father's execution, the prince in disguise made his way into the execution ground where he could do nothing but watch in mortification the death of his ill-fated father.

The father noticed his son in the crowd and muttered as if talking to himself, "Do not search for a long time; do not act hastily; resentment can be calmed only by forgetting it."

Afterward, the prince sought after some way of revenge for a long time. At last he was employed as an attendant in the Brahmadatta's palace and came to win

Building a Buddha Land

the king's favors.

On a day when the king went hunting, the prince sought some opportunity for revenge. The prince was able to lead his master into a lonely place, and the king, being very weary, fell asleep with his head on the lap of the prince, so fully had he come to trust the prince.

The prince drew his dagger and placed it at the king's throat but then hesitated. The words his father had expressed at the moment of his execution flashed into his mind and although he tried again he could not kill the king. Suddenly the king awoke and told the prince that he had had a bad dream in which the son of King Calamity was trying to kill him.

The prince, flourishing the dagger in his hand, hastily grasped the king and, identifying himself as the son of King Calamity, declared that the time had finally come for him to avenge his father. Yet he could not do so, and suddenly he cast his dagger down and fell on his knees in front of the king.

When the king heard the prince's story and the final words of his father, he was very impressed and apologized to the prince. Later, he restored the former kingdom to the prince and their two countries came to live in friendship for a long time.

Building a Buddha Land

The dying words of King Calamity, "Do not search for a long time," mean that resentment should not be cherished for long, and "Do not act hastily" mean that friendship should not be broken hastily.

Resentment can not be satisfied by resentment; it can only be removed by forgetting it.

In the fellowship of a Brotherhood that is based on the harmony of right teaching, every member should always appreciate the spirit of this story.

Not only the members of the Brotherhood but also people in general should appreciate and practice this spirit in their daily lives.

II THE BUDDHA'S LAND

1. As has been explained, if a Brotherhood does not forget its duty of spreading Buddha's teaching and of living in harmony, it will steadily grow larger and its teaching will spread more widely.

This means that more and more people will be seeking Enlightenment, and it also means that the evil armies of greed, anger, and foolishness, which are led by the devil of ignorance and lust, will begin to retreat, and that

Building a Buddha Land

wisdom, light, faith and joy will dominate.

The devil's dominion is full of greed, darkness, struggling, fighting, swords and bloodshed, and is replete with jealousy, prejudice, hatred, cheating, flattering, fawning, secrecy and abuse.

Now suppose that the light of wisdom shines upon that dominion, and the rain of compassion falls upon it, and faith begins to take root, and the blossoms of joy begin to spread their fragrance. Then that devil's domain will turn into Buddha's Pure Land.

And just like a soft breeze and a few blossoms on a branch that tell the coming of spring, so when a person attains Enlightenment, grass, trees, mountains, rivers and all other things begin to throb with new life.

If a person's mind becomes pure, his surroundings will also become pure.

2. In a land where the true teaching prevails, every dweller has a pure and tranquil mind. Indeed, Buddha's compassion untiringly benefits all people, and His shining spirit exorcizes all impurities from their minds.

A pure mind soon becomes a deep mind, a mind that is commensurate with the Noble Path, a mind that

Building a Buddha Land

loves to give, a mind that loves to keep the precepts, an enduring mind, a zealous mind, a calm mind, a wise mind, a compassionate mind, a mind that leads people to Enlightenment by many and skillful means. Thus shall the Buddha's Land be built.

A home with one's wife and children is transformed into a home where Buddha is present; a country that suffers because of social distinctions is likewise transformed into a fellowship of kindred spirits.

A golden palace that is blood-stained can not be the abiding place for Buddha. A small hut where the moonlight leaks in through chinks in the roof can be transformed into a place where Buddha will abide, if the mind of its master is pure.

When a Buddha Land is founded upon the pure mind of a single person, that single pure mind draws other kindred minds to itself in the Samgha. Faith in Buddha spreads from individual to family, from family to village, from village to towns, to cities, to countries, and finally to the whole world.

Indeed, earnestness and faithfulness in spreading the teaching of the Dharma are what build the Buddha Land.

Building a Buddha Land

3. To be sure, when viewed from one angle, the world with all its greed and injustice and bloodshed appears as a devil's world; but, as people come to believe in Buddha's Enlightenment, blood will be turned into milk and greed into compassion, and then, the devil's land becomes a Buddha Land of Purity.

It seems an impossible task to empty an ocean with a small ladle, but the determination to do it, even if it takes many, many lives, is the mind with which one should receive Buddha's Enlightenment.

Buddha is waiting on the other shore; that is, His world of Enlightenment, wherein there is no greed, no anger, no ignorance, no suffering, no agony, but where there are only the light of wisdom and the rain of compassion.

It is a land of peace, a refuge for those who suffer and who are in sorrow and agony; a place of rest for those who take a break in their spreading of the teachings of the Dharma.

In this Pure Land there are boundless Light and everlasting Life. Those who reach this haven will never return to the world of delusion.

Indeed, this Pure Land, where the flowers perfume

Building a Buddha Land

the air with wisdom and the birds sing the holy Dharma, is the final destination for all mankind.

4. Though this Pure Land is the place for taking rest, it is not the place for idleness. Its beds of fragrant flowers are not for slothful indolence, but are the places for refreshment and rest, where one regains energy and zeal to continue the Buddha's mission of Enlightenment.

Buddha's mission is everlasting. As long as people live and creatures exist, and as long as selfish and defiled minds create their own worlds and circumstances, there will be no end to His mission.

The children of Buddha, who have crossed to the Pure Land by means of the great power of Amida, may be zealous to return to the land whence they came and where they still have ties. There they will take their part in the Buddha's mission.

As the light of a small candle will spread from one to another in succession, so the light of Buddha's compassion will pass on from one mind to another endlessly.

The children of Buddha, realizing His spirit of compassion, adopt His task of Enlightenment and Purification, and pass it on from one generation to another in order to make the Buddha's Land glorified eternally

Building a Buddha Land

and forever.

III

THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED GLORY IN BUDDHA'S LAND

1. Syamavati, the consort of King Udayana, was deeply devoted to Buddha.

She lived in the innermost courts of the palace and did not go out, but her maid, Uttara, who had an excellent memory, used to go out and attend the Buddha's preachings.

On her return, the maid would repeat to the Queen the teachings of the Blessed One, and thus the Queen deepened her wisdom and faith.

The second wife of the King was jealous of the first wife and sought to kill her. She slandered her to the King until finally he believed her and sought to kill his first wife, Syamavati.

Queen Syamavati stood in front of the King so calmly that he had no heart to kill her. Regaining control of himself he apologized to her for his distrust.

The jealousy of the second wife increased and she

Building a Buddha Land

sent wicked men to set fire to the innermost courts of the palace during the King's absence from home. Syamavati remained calm, quieted and encouraged the bewildered maids, and then, without fear, died peacefully in the spirit she had learned from the Blessed One. Uttara died with her in the fire.

Among the many women disciples of Buddha, these two were most highly honored: Queen Syamavati as a compassionate spirit and her maid, Uttara, as a good listener.

2. Prince Mahanama, of the Shakya clan and a cousin of Buddha, had great faith in the teachings of Buddha and was one of his most faithful followers.

At that time a violent king named Virudaka of Kosala conquered the Shakya clan. Prince Mahanama went to the King and sought the lives of his people, but the King would not listen to him. He then proposed that the King would let as many prisoners escape as could run away while he himself remained underwater in a nearby pond.

To this the King assented, thinking that the time would be very short for him to be able to stay underwater.

Building a Buddha Land

The gate of the castle was opened as Mahanama dived into the water and the people rushed for safety. But Mahanama did not come up, sacrificing his life for the lives of his people by tying his hair to the underwater root of a willow tree.

3. Utpalavarna was a famous nun whose wisdom was compared with that of Maudgalyayana, a great disciple of Buddha. She was, indeed, the nun of all nuns and was always their leader, never tiring of teaching them.

Devadatta was a very wicked and cruel man who poisoned the mind of King Ajatasatru and persuaded him to turn against the teachings of Buddha. But later, King Ajatasatru repented, broke off his friendship with Devadatta, and became a humble disciple of Buddha.

At one time when Devadatta was repulsed from the castle gate in an attempt to see the King, he met Utpalavarna coming out. It made him very angry, so he struck and seriously wounded her.

She returned to her convent in great pain and when the other nuns tried to console her she said to them: "Sisters, human life is the unforeseen, everything is transient and egoless. Only the world of Enlightenment is

tranquil and peaceful. You must keep on with your training." Then she passed away quietly.

4. Angulimalya, once a terrible bandit who had killed many people, was saved by the Blessed One, and he became one of His disciples.

One day he went begging in a town and endured much hardship and suffering for his past evil deeds.

The villagers fell upon him and beat him severely, but he went back to the Blessed One with his body still bleeding, falling at His feet and thanking Him for the opportunity that had come to him to suffer for his former cruel deeds.

He said, "Blessed One, my name originally was 'No Harming,' but because of my ignorance, I took many precious lives, and from each I took a finger; because of that, I came to be called Angulimalya, the collector of fingers!"

"Then, through your compassion, I learned wisdom and became devoted to the three treasures of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha. When a man drives a horse or a cow he has to use a whip or a rope, but you, the Blessed One, purified my mind without the use of whip or rope or hook.

Building a Buddha Land

“Today, Blessed One, I have suffered only what was my due. I do not wish to live, I do not wish to die. I only wait for my time to come.”

5. Maudgalyayana, together with the venerable Sariputra, was one of the Buddha's two greatest disciples. When the teachers of other religions saw that the pure water of the Buddha's teachings was spreading among the people and found the people eagerly drinking it, they became jealous and applied various hindrances to his preaching.

But none of the hindrances could stop or prevent his teaching from spreading widely. The followers of the other religions attempted to kill Maudgalyayana.

Twice he escaped but the third time he was surrounded by many heathens and fell under their blows.

Sustained by Enlightenment, he calmly received their blows, and though his flesh was torn and his bones crushed, he died peacefully.

AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA

(The Book of the Gradual Sayings)

Monks, there is one person whose birth into the world is for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many: who is born out of compassion for the world, for the profit, welfare and happiness of heavenly beings and mankind. Who is that person? It is a Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. This, monks, is that one person.

Monks, the manifestation of one person is hard to find in the world. Of what person? Of a Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. He is the one person.

Monks, hard to be found in the world is that one extraordinary person. What person? A Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. He is the one person.

Monks, the death of one person is to be regretted by all. Of what person? Of a Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. He is the one person.

Monks, there is one person born into the world who is incomparable and unequalled. Who is that person? It is a Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. He is the one person.

Monks, the manifestation of one person is the manifestation of a mighty eye, a mighty light, a mighty radiance. Of what person? Of a Tathagata who is an Arahat, a fully Enlightened One. He is the one person. (*Aṅguttara Nikāya I-13*)

