

# BODHI BULLETIN

DHARMA NEWS FROM BODHI MONASTERY • NOV/DEC 2004



## News Briefs

### The Problem of Conflict

By Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

It is one of the bitterest ironies of human life that although almost all human beings cherish a desire to live in peace, we continually find ourselves caught in conflict, pitted against others in relationships marred by tension, distrust, or open hostility. This irony is particularly poignant because it is immediately evident to us that cordial, harmonious

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relations with others are a necessary condition for our own genuine happiness. Not only do such relations allow us to pursue undisturbed the goals we consider essential to our personal fulfillment, but they bring us the deeper joy of meaningful communion with our fellow human beings. Quarrels and disputes, in contrast, are always intrinsically painful. They lead to a hardening of our subjective armor; they tighten the knots of anger and hate; they erupt in violence and destruction. Indeed, whatever the outcome of conflict may be – whether victory or defeat – the

result itself is ultimately harmful for both victor and victim alike. Nevertheless, although harmonious living promises such rich blessings while conflict entails so much harm and misery, our lives – and the lives of those around us – are usually entangled in a raveled net of conflicts and disputes. Conflict may simmer within as silent suspicion and resentment or it may explode into violent rage and devastation. It may involve us at the level of personal relationships, or as members of an ethnic group, a political party, a social class, or a nation. But in one or another of its many manifestations, the presence of conflict in our lives seems inescapable. Peace and harmony hover in the distance as beautiful dreams or as noble ideals which we admire from a distance. But when reality knocks and dreams are dispelled, we find ourselves drawn, often against our better judgment, into an arena where the pleasures that we seek exact as their price the hard cash of struggle and contention.

While the Buddha made liberation from suffering the ultimate goal of his teaching, he also sought to teach people how to live in harmony. Such harmony is desirable not only as a source of satisfaction in itself, but also because it is a prerequisite for treading the path to the higher freedom. The final peace of enlightenment can arise only in a mind that is at peace with others, and the mind can only be at peace with others when we are actively committed to a course of training that enables us to remove the roots of conflict buried deep within our hearts.

Once, in ancient India, Sakka the Ruler of the Gods came to the Buddha and asked: "By what bonds are people bound whereby, though they wish to live in peace, without hate and hostility, they yet live in conflict, with hate and hostility." The Buddha replied: "It is the bonds of envy and avarice that so bind people that, though they wish to live in peace, they live in conflict, with hate and hostility." If we trace external conflicts back

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#### Shifu Returns from Taiwan

On October 27th, Ven. Jen-Chun and Ven. Guo-Ching returned from an extended trip to Taiwan. While there Shifu underwent two surgeries. We are happy to have him back at Bodhi Monastery. Information about Shifu's classes and lectures will be sent by e-mail bulletin.

#### Saturday Morning Study Groups on Ven. Yin-Shun Essays Continue

Time: 9:50-10:50 am  
English-speaking: *Selected translations of Miao Yun (Wonderful Cloud) Series*  
Chinese-speaking: *Human-Centered Buddhism that Accords with Dharma Principles and Suits the World*

#### Saturday Afternoon Lectures on the "Sutta-Nipata"

Time: 12:40-1:30 pm, Alternate Saturdays  
On October 16th, Bhante began a new series of Saturday Dharma talks based on the *Sutta-Nipata*. The *Sutta-Nipata* contains some of the oldest discourses in the Pali Canon. It is a rich source of texts offering guidance to both lay Buddhists and monastics.

#### Bodhi Kids Program Fall Session Continues

Classes for Ages: 4-13 years old  
Dates: Saturdays, Nov. 6th & 20th, Dec. 4th  
Time: 9:50-11am  
Info/Registration: Duke DeGroat 973 940 0711 or email, duke@thedukeagency.com

The *Bodhi Kids for Friendliness Program* is taught by lay people with monastic guidance and is open to all children from any religious background. *Bodhi Kids'* goal is to promote a lifestyle based on the virtues of loving-kindness and respect to all sentient beings. After class the kids and parents are welcome to join the vegetarian lunch at 11:15 am.

#### Thank You to Our Guest Lecturers Ven. Zu-Ren and Ven. Analayo

Lectures given by Venerable Zu-Ren and Venerable Analayo in the early fall were greatly appreciated. Ven. Zu-Ren lectured in late September in both English and Chinese on the Madhyamika philosophy, "The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way."

Ven. Analayo gave a Dharma talk on October 2nd on "Pali Discourses and Their Parallels in the Chinese Agamas." We look forward to his next visit to Bodhi Monastery in April 2005.

Please make a note of Bodhi Monastery's new e-mail address:  
contactus@bodhimonastery.net

## Conflict *(continued from front)*

to their source, we will find that they originate not in wealth, position, or possessions, but in the mind itself. They spring up because we envy others for the things they own and the qualities they possess which we desire for ourselves, and because we are driven by an unquenchable avarice to extend the boundaries of what we can label "mine."

Envy and avarice in turn are grounded in two more fundamental psychological conditions. Envy arises because we identify things as "I," because we perpetually seek to establish a personal identity for ourselves internally and to project that identity outward for others to recognize and accept. Avarice arises because we appropriate: we attempt to carve out a territory for ourselves and to furnish that territory with possessions that will titillate our greed and sense of self-importance.

Since conflict is rooted in envy and avarice, it follows that the path to non-conflict must be a course of relinquishment, of removing the constrictive thoughts and desires that pivot around the notions of "I" and "mine," the drives to identify and to possess. This course reaches consummation with the full maturity of wisdom, with insight into the empty, selfless nature of all things; for it is this insight which exposes the hollowness of the notions of "I" and "mine" that underlie envy and avarice. However, although we may now be far from realizing the final liberation from clinging, the path leading to it is a gradual one, growing out of simpler, more basic steps that lie very close to our feet.

Two such necessary steps are changes in attitude with the power to transmute envy and avarice. One is altruistic joy (*mudita*), the ability to view the success of others with the same gladness we experience at our own success. The other is generosity (*caga*), the readiness to give and to relinquish. The former is the specific antidote for envy, the latter the antidote for avarice. What is common to both is that they lift the sense of identity up from its narrow fixation on the self, and expand it so that it encompasses others who share our desire to be happy and free from suffering.

As private individuals we cannot hope to resolve by our private will the larger patterns of conflict that engulf the societies and nations to which we belong. We live in a world that thrives on conflict, and in which the forces that nurture conflict are pervasive, obstinate, and terribly powerful. But as followers of the Buddha what we can do and must do is to testify by our attitudes and conduct to the supremacy of peace. We must avoid words and actions that engender animosity; we must always act in ways that will help to heal divisions and demonstrate the value of harmony and concord. The model we must emulate is that provided by the Buddha's description of the true disciple as "one who unites the divided, who promotes friendships, enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, and who speaks words that promote concord."

*(Adapted from the Buddhist Publication Society Newsletter No. 13, 1989)*

## Bodhi Monastery Group Meditation

The Sunday Meditation Group continues to meet every Sunday from 9:30-10:45 am. Anyone wanting to incorporate meditation into their lives can join this group. It is guided by the resident monks. Currently, we first sit for 30 minutes, walk for 15 minutes, and then sit again, leaving time for a short question and answer period at the end. We finish with the Sharing of Merits.

Every first Sunday of the month one of the Venerables gives a guided introduction to sitting and walking meditation. This is held from 9-9:30 am and is followed immediately by the regular group meditation. The intro class will be held on November 7th and December 5th.

We also welcome anyone to join the daily evening meditation from 5:05-6pm following the Daily Liturgy from 4:30-5pm which is also open to the public.

## November/December Dharma Schedule

### SATURDAYS:

9:50 - 10:50 am	Study Groups/Lectures
10:50 - 11:15 pm	Work period
11:15 - 12:15 pm	Lunch and cleanup
12:40 - 1:30 pm	Dharma discourse by Ven. Bodhi, Ven. Xin-Xing or guest lecturer
1:40 - 2:00 pm	Dharma discussions
2:30 - 4:30 pm	Pali class

### FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH:

9:50 - 10:30 am	Dharma discourse by Ven. Jen-Chun
10:40 - 11:10 pm	Devotional Service

(The rest of the schedule follows as above.)

### SUNDAYS:

9:00 - 9:30 am (First Sunday of each month)	Beginners instruction in meditation
9:30 - 11:00 am (Every Sunday)	Meditation Group guided by Ven. Bodhi & Ven. Xin-Xing

### WEEKDAYS:

Tuesdays, 7 - 8 pm*	Sutta Study Class with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi (in English)
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\*Cancelled Nov. 2nd

### DAILY:

4:30 - 5 pm	Chanting Liturgy
5:05 - 6 pm	Sitting meditation

### Bhante's 10-Lecture Series "The Buddha's Teaching As It Is" Now Available Online as MP3 Files

Please go to our website for more detailed information on this series of lectures.

**Samples of "Word of the Buddha"  
Sutta Study Lectures Available as Well**  
Also posted on the site are sample lectures in mp3 format of Bhante's "Word of the Buddha" series of lectures on the Majjhima Nikaya. We will eventually have the series recorded on CD.

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BODHI MONASTERY

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