佛陀在對女人談到她們在婚姻生活中的角色時，讚賞地說一個家庭的安詳和諧主要落在女人的肩膀上。他的忠告是切合實際的，他提到了不少女人應該或不應該效法的日常事物。在不同的場合裏，佛陀勸已婚婦女：

(1)不可以對丈夫懷有罪惡的思想；

(2)不可以殘酷、粗魯或霸道；

(3)不可以揮金如土，應該節儉、量入爲出；

(4)必須熱誠地守護和節省丈夫的財產和辛苦賺來的錢；

(5)必須在心理和行動上常保善良和貞潔；

(6)必須忠實，不存淫念；

(7)必須言語優雅、舉止有禮；

(8)必須仁慈、勤勉、工作努力；

(9)必須冷靜、不激動和瞭解丈夫——不僅要作丈夫的妻子，必要時還要作丈夫的朋友和顧問。

在佛陀的時代裏，其他宗教師也談到妻子對丈夫的責任和義務——特別強調妻子應替丈夫生孩子、給予忠實的服務、提供婚姻幸福和神的福佑。儒家也有這種觀念。不過，儘管儒家的戒條也載有妻子對丈夫的責任，卻不強調丈夫對妻子的責任和義務。佛陀的教理卻沒有這種對丈夫的偏見。在經中，佛陀清楚地提到丈夫對妻子的責任，以及妻子對丈夫的責任中。

丈夫對妻子必須忠實、謙恭和不輕視。把權威交給妻子和時時送飾品給妻子，這些都是丈夫的責任。

在其他不同的場合和環境下，佛陀也提供很多有用的忠告給女人。

（未完待續）

象說明了男女之間不同的障碍和環境。

雖然三藏中有某些章節也嚴厲地批評了女人的詭計和行爲，但佛陀在雜阿含中，更提出許多的女人長處：在某些環境下，女人比男人還敏慧聰明，只要實踐八正道，女人同樣可以成佛菩薩。

佛陀對女人的態度，也可以從他的朋友拘尸羅王生了一位女兒的故事看出來。拘尸羅王希望皇后能爲他生一位太子，所以當他聽到皇后生下女嬰的消息時，顯得有點不高興，但佛陀與其他的宗教師不同，他極力讚美女人，強調女人的優點，他說：

「有些女人確實比男人還好。人的君主，把她撫養長大吧！有些女人是聰明的、善良的，能夠尊敬婆婆，潔身如玉。

這麼一位高貴的夫人也許會生下一位英勇的兒子，他是三界十方的君主，統治着王國。」

佛陀在揭露女人的天性時，不僅指出她們的弱點，同時也指出她們的潛能。即使他說的話有些聽來很逆耳，但只要我們仔細地觀察以後，就可以發現佛陀從前有關女人的說法仍然適用於今日。縱然目前大多數國家對女人的態度已經比較開明、比較公平，女人也享有教育和獨立就業的機會；但女人必須忍受的不愉快經驗、她們擁有的權力、她所遭遇到的歧視、她的恐懼及對手的嫉妒，仍然不曾稍減。

佛陀對已婚婦女的忠告

儀式如祭品等。當生死的本來面貌和主宰宇宙的自然現象揭露給人們知道時，智慧和了解自然就產生了。盛行於佛陀時代對女人的歧視和偏見，就如此被糾正了，使得女人可以過着自己的正常生活。

女人的本性

儘管佛陀提高了女人的地位，但他經常做的觀察和開示仍然不昧於事實，他了解到存在於男女之間的社會和心理差異。在增一阿含和雜阿含中，就有很多這種描述。經上清楚地提到，男人的責任是要不停地追求新知，改進他自己的技藝臻於至善之境，忠於自己的工作，和養活一家人。另一方面，經上也說女人的責任是照顧家庭和丈夫。

增一阿含經載有佛陀給婚前少女的寶貴忠告。少女應該了解婚後與夫家的人相處會有某些困難，佛陀勸女子必須像對待自己父母一樣尊敬、服侍公公婆婆。佛陀要求她們尊敬丈夫的親友，以便在她們的新家庭裏產生和諧快樂的氣氛。佛陀也勸她們研究和了解丈夫的天性、活動、性格和脾氣，並且要勤快、隨時與人合作。對待僕人要謙遜有禮、和藹可親；節儉持家、量入爲出。佛陀在二千五百多年前所說的忠言，仍然適用於今日。

女人一生中所必須遭遇的障碍和苦惱，也明載於經上。女人婚後離開家的苦楚，及適應新環境的困難，都是她必須承擔的考驗和苦難。除了這些難題之外，女人在月事、懷孕和生產期中，也會有種種心理上的痛苦和折磨。這些自然現

些儀式，如此才能把和平與安全帶給死去的父親與祖父，否則他們會變成鬼回來困擾家人。已婚女人的生活是不確定的，未婚女人同樣是毫無保障。因爲婚姻被看成是神聖的事物，所以沒有結婚的年輕少女會受譏評，被社會所歧視。

在宗教修行方面，過去她們所享有的地位，卻被否認了。女人被認爲無法靠自己的功德上升天堂。她自己不能拜神，她必須完全順從丈夫才能上升天堂，即使她的丈夫惡貫滿盈。丈夫吃剩的食物，往往是留給女人吃的。

佛陀就是在這一種極端歧視和壓抑女人的環境下，降生於印度。他對於生死本來面貌，也就是對於業報輪迴的教理，改變了當時對女人的社會態度。

依據佛陀有關業報律的說法，一個人必須對自己的行爲及其後果負責。父親或祖父的幸福，並不取決於兒子或孫子的行爲。他們必須對自己的行爲負責。這種開明的教理，有助於糾正許多人的觀點，那些不能生男孩來祭祖的婦女，自自然然就不再那麼焦慮不安了。

在佛教出現後的早期，未婚女子可以不受歧視和滿足地生活，或照顧父母親和弟妹。她甚至也可以擁有大批財物、奴僕和良田；在佛陀時代，有一位金匠的女兒蘇哈，就是一個例子。但是當她聽到摩訶波闍波提講解佛法時，她立刻領會到世間一切享樂稍縱即逝的道理，「金銀財寶不能產生和平或開悟」，結果她出家爲尼。對未婚女子而言，這項舉動可說是很大的恩物。

佛陀的教義，從許多人心中掃除了迷信和無意義的禮節

佛陀爲女人打開宗教修行的大門，允許她們出家爲比丘尼——讓婦女得以參加文化和社會服務，並享有公共生活的充份機會。這種措施可說是承認了婦女對社會的重要性，並大爲增強婦女的地位。

佛陀時代對婦女的社會態度

在佛教出現以前，對婦女的社會態度，可以追溯到早期的吠陀文獻，如梨吠陀等。文獻內顯示婦女在家庭中所享有的榮耀和尊敬。在宗教的領域裏，她們也可以學習梵天的最高知識。不過，這種對婦女的自由態度，隨着時間的流逝而改變了，那時候祭司階級高高在上，駕馭着一切，他們有自己的方術、祭品和其他儀式。新的解釋加進了經典，女人不論是在體力方面或智力方面，都被認爲遠不如男人。

女人受人輕視，被看成是男人的財產或東西。她的活動空間只限於家裏，完全要聽丈夫的使喚。她不僅要做家中一切雜事，而且還要養育一個大家庭。有些祭司階級的婆羅門，雖然結婚後與太太生活在一起，但還把女人煮的飯菜認爲不乾淨，不適宜於吃。一種神話就這樣建立了：所有女人都被看成有罪的，唯一能夠讓她們不產生禍害的方法，是讓她們不停地忙碌家事和負起母親的職責。

假如一位結過婚的女人沒有生孩子或沒有生男孩，她就必須聽命於她丈夫的第二或第三位姨太太，甚至被逐出家門；因爲那時候的人深信：爲了家族的延續和祭拜祖先，每個家庭都必須有一個男孩。傳統的信仰是只有兒子才能主持這

偏見。婦女基本的無能，來自於宗教。幾乎所有宗教都把婦女描述成誘人爲惡的禍根，並且勸人嚴加提防。

根據某些宗教的神話觀念，男人被當成上帝的子民，女人則從來不曾獲得同樣的地位——上帝的女兒。有些崇拜靈魂的人則有這種觀念：男人才有靈魂，女人則無。那些認爲女人也有靈魂的人，則不相信女人的靈魂在死後能上升天堂。這些都是在某些宗教社會中的奇怪信仰。

女人也被當作世界一切罪惡的淵藪，她們被責怪爲男人在這一世和下一世所有不幸的來源。有些宗教則相信女人是不可能得救的——她們必須先轉生爲男人，然後才能獲救。

有些狂熱的宗教信徒，更禁止女人閱讀宗教經典。這種懲罰的目的，便是爲了讓女人沒有發言的機會。她們也被禁止進入崇拜的地方。假如她們被允許參加宗教活動的話，也只限於在自己的家內，參加家庭式的宗教儀式而已。這些婦女在提昇道德和精神方面所遭遇到的阻碍和困難，如今仍或多或少存在於世界某些地方，雖然許多障碍都已經解除了。

相對之下，佛教可以說是對婦女最沒有歧視態度的宗教了。

我們還沒有充份的證據顯示：佛陀是第一位給予婦女在精神修鍊方面與男人同等而無限制之機會的宗教領袖。雖然他也在某些場合指出女人的天性和弱點，他同時更肯定女人的才幹和潛能。他確實已經爲女人鋪好了一條完整宗教生活的道路。她們能夠發展和淨化她們的心，像男人一樣地悟證涅槃極樂。佛陀時代比丘尼的見證，足夠說明這項事實。

婦女在佛教中的地位

師利達摩難陀　著作
鄭　振　煌　譯中

本文係紀念一九八〇年三月九日舉行於馬來西亞可倫坡佛教寺的「婦女在宗教領域內的角色」首次婦女研討會而作。

歧視

歧視婦女是所有社會的共同特徵。不管是在非洲、美洲、亞洲或歐洲，婦女必須遭遇和克服的偏見和阻礙似乎都一樣。全世界婦女都被認爲懦弱無能，其主要原因是宗教上的

The teachings of the Buddha did not have such bias towards the husbands. In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha clearly mentioned the duties of a husband towards the wife and vice versa.

A husband should be faithful, courteous and not despising. It is the husband's duty to hand over authority to his wife and from time to time, provide her with adornments.

Other useful advice was given to women on different occasions and under different circumstances.

(To be continued)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Any contributions on Buddhism or Confucianism are most welcome. We wish to exchange TORCH OF WISDOM with any Buddhism magazine. For subscription, please send us your name and address together with yearly subscription fee:

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omical and live within her means;

(d) should zealously guard and save her husband's property and hard-earned earnings;

(e) should always be virtuous and chaste in mind and action;

(f) should be faithful and harbour no thought of any adulterous acts;

(g) should be refined in speech and polite in action;

(h) should be kind, industrious and hardworking;

(i) should be thoughtful and compassionate towards her husband and her attitude should equate that of a mother loving and protecting her son;

(j) should be modest and respectful;

(k) should be cool, calm and understanding – serving not only as a wife but also as a friend and adviser to her husband when need arises.

In the days of the Buddha, other religious teachers had also spoken on the duties and obligations of a wife towards her husband – stressing particularly on the duty of a wife bearing an off-spring for the husband, rendering faithful service and providing conjugal happiness and heavenly bliss. This view is also shared by Confucianism. However, although the duties of a wife towards the husband were laid down in the Confucian code of discipline, it did not stress the duties and obligations of the husband towards the wife.

pointed out not only their weaknesses, but also their potentialities and abilities. Even though some of his statements may appear rather unpleasant, one will find, through careful observation, that what the Buddha had said about women in days gone by generally still hold good today. Although there exist in most countries more enlightened and fairer attitudes, and educational and independent career opportunities are open to women, the unpleasant experience a woman bears, the powers she possess, the discrimination she has to put up with and her fears, and jealousies of a rival, still prevail.

BUDDHA'S ADVICE TO MARRIED WOMEN

In advising women about their role in married life, the Buddha appreciated that the peace and harmony of a home rested largely on a woman's shoulder. His advice was realistic and practical when he quoted a good number of day-to-day characteristics which a woman should or should not emulate. On diverse occasions, the Buddha counselled that a wife:—

(a) should not harbour evil thoughts against her husband;
(b) should not be cruel, harsh or domineering;
(c) should not be a spendthrift but should be econ-

tural phenomena depicting the differential handicaps and circumstances prevailing between a man and a woman.

Although in certain sections of the Tripitaka, some caustic comments were made on the wiles and behaviour of a woman, the Buddha in the Samyutta Nikaya, did bring forth many redeeming features in that, under certain circumstances, women are considered more discerning and wise than men and that women are also considered capable of attaining perfection or sainthood after treading the noble Eight-fold path.

The Buddha's attitude towards women can also be seen when the news of the birth of a daughter was brought to his friend, King Kosala. The King was displeased at the news as he expected a son, but the Buddha, unlike any other religious teacher paid a glowing tribute to women and mentioned certain characteristics that adorn a woman in the following words:—

> "Some women are indeed better (than men). Bring her up, O Lord of men. There are women who are wise, virtuous, who have high regard for mother-in-law, and who are chaste.
> To such a noble wife may be born a valiant son,
> a Lord of Realms, who rule a kingdom."

In revealing the nature of women, the Buddha had

The Anguttara Nikaya contained some valuable advice which the Buddha had given to young girls prior to their marriage. Realising that there was bound to be difficulties with the new in-laws, the girls were enjoined to give every respect to their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, serving them lovingly as they would their own parents. They were requested to honour and respect their husband's relatives and friends, thus creating a congenial and happy atmosphere in their new homes. They were also advised to study and understand their husband's nature, ascertain their activities, character and temperament, and to be useful and co-operative at all times in their new home. They should be polite, kind and watchful in their relationship with the servants and should safe-guard their husband's earnings and see to it that all household expenditures are properly regularised. Such advice given by the Buddha more than twenty five centuries ago stand good even today.

The handicaps and drawbacks under which a woman had to undergo in life were also clearly indicated. The suffering and agony to be borne by a woman in leaving her family after her marriage, and the difficulties and problems she had to encounter in trying to accommodate herself in a new environment, were the trials and tribulations she had to bear. In addition to these problems, a woman is also subjected to physiological pains and sufferings during her menstrual periods, pregnancy and child-birth. These are na-

The teachings of the Buddha had done a great deal to wipe off many superstitious beliefs and meaningless rites and rituals including animal sacrifices, from the minds of many people. When the true nature of life and death and the natural phenomena governing the universe were revealed to them, wisdom and understanding arose. This in turn helped to arrest and correct the prevailing social injustices and prejudices that were rampant against women in the days of the Buddha thus enabling women to lead their own way of life.

WOMAN'S NATURE

Despite the fact that the Buddha had elevated the status of women, he was practical in his observations and advice given from time to time in that he realised the social and physiological differences that existed between men and women. These were depicted in the Anguttara Nikaya and Samyutta Nikaya. It was clearly mentioned that a man's duty is his unending quest for knowledge, the improvement and stabilisation of his skill and craftmanship, and dedication to his work and ability to find the wherewithal for the maintenance and sustenance of his family. On the other hand it was stated, as a matter of fact, that it was the woman's duty to look after the home, and to look after her husband.

food for the woman.

It was in the midst of such extreme social discrimination and degrading attitudes towards women that the Buddha made his appearance in India. His teachings on the real nature of life and death – about karma and samsaric wanderings, gave rise to considerable changes in the social attitudes towards women in his days.

According to what the Buddha taught about the Law of Karma, one is responsible for one's own action and its consequence. The well-being of a father or grandfather does not depend upon the action of the son or grandson. They were responsible for their own actions. Such enlightened teachings helped to correct the views of many people and naturally reduced the anxiety of women who were unable to produce sons to perform the 'rites of the ancestors'

In early Buddhist period, an unmarried girl could go along, unabused, contented and adequately occupied in caring for parents and younger brothers and sisters. She might even become the owner of great possessions, of slaves, and rich fields; as did Subha, the daughter of a goldsmith, during the time of the Buddha. But when the Dhamma was taught to her by Mahapajapati, Subha realised the nature of all fleeting pleasures and that 'silver and gold lead neither to peace nor to englightenment', with the result that she entered the Order of Buddhist Nuns. This act was a great boon to the unmarried women.

and lived with their wives, yet regarded food cooked by women as impure and unfit to eat. A myth was built up – that all women were regarded as sinful and the only way to keep them out of mischief was to keep them occupied endlessly with the task of motherhood and domestic duties.

If a married woman had no children or failed to produce any male offspring, she might be superceded by a second or third wife or even turned out of the house; for there was the strong belief that there must be a male child for the continuance of family line and the performance of the 'rites of the ancestors' The traditional belief was that only a son could carry out such rituals which were thought to be very necessary for bringing peace and security to the father and grandfather after their death, otherwise they might return as ghosts to harry the family. Uncertain were the lives of married women. No less uncertainty await the unmarried ones. As marriage was considered a holy sacrament, a young girl who did not marry was badly criticised and despised by society.

In the field of religious practices, the position which they once enjoyed, was denied to them. A woman was believed to be unable to go to heaven through her own merits. She could not worship by herself, and it was believed that she could only reach heaven through unquestioning obedience to her husband, even if he happened to be a wicked person. The food left over by her husband was often the

Sangha – the Order of Nuns which truly opened to women new avenues of culture and social service and ample opportunities for public life. This had brought them to a recognition of their importance to society and greatly enhanced the status of women.

SOCIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN AT THE TIME OF THE BUDDHA

The social attitude towards women in pre-Buddhist days can be traced from the early Vedic literature, such as the Rigveda. There is evidence indicating the honour and respect which women received in their homes. In the realm of religion too, they had access to the highest knowledge of the Absolute or Brahma. However, such a liberal attitude towards women changed with the course of time, under the influence and dominance of the priestly caste along with their priestcrafts, animal sacrifices, and other ritualistic practices. New interpretations were given to the scriptures. Women came to be considered as greatly inferior to men – both physically and mentally.

A woman was looked down upon as a mere possession or a thing. Her place was the home, under the complete whims and fancies of her husband. She not only had to perform all the domestic chores, but also had to bring up a large family. Some of the priestly caste Brahmins married

ment for doing so was to have their tongues cut out. They were also discouraged from entering places of worship. If they were at all allowed to participate in religious practices, such participation was only confined within their own homes, attending to household religious ceremonies. Such hindrances and obstructions in the matter of moral and spiritual upliftment of women still exist in varying degrees in certain parts of the world, even though many barriers have been removed.

In contrast to such hindrances and bigoted religious practices, Buddhism can certainly claim to have the least discriminatory attitudes against women.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Buddha was the first religious teacher who had given women equal and unfettered opportunities in the field of spiritual development. Although he had pointed out on several occasions, the natural tendencies and weakness of women, he had also given due credit to their abilities and capabilities. He had truly paved the way for women to lead a full religious life. They were able to develop and purify their minds and realise the bliss of Nibbana in as much as men could. The testimonies of the Theris (Nuns) in the days of the Buddha speak amply of this fact.

The Buddha had opened the gates for the full participation of women in the field of religion by making them eligible for admission to what was known as the Bhikkhuni

DISCRIMINATIONS

Discrimination against women is a feature common in all societies. Whether in Africa, America, Asia or Europe, the prejudices and obstacles that woman has to encounter and surmount seemed almost identical. The peculiar disability attached to woman all over the world is based on religious bias. Woman's basic disability originates in religion. Woman is depicted as a temptress and is warned against in almost all religions of the world.

According to certain religious mythological concept, man was introduced as the son of God, but woman never found a similar standing as the daughter of God. Amongst the soul-believers, some held the notion that a soul exists only in man and not in woman. Those who claimed that woman too had a soul would not give credence that her soul could find a place in heaven after her death. Such were the strange beliefs amongst certain religious societies.

Women have also been regarded as the source of all the sins of the world and that they are blamed for the misfortunes on men in this world and the next. There was also the belief that as women, no salvation could be gained — they had to be reincarnated as men before they are able to gain their salvation.

Certain fanatical religious cults have also prohibited women from reading the religious scriptures. The punish-

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by K. Sri Dhammananda

Translated into Chinese
by Chen-huang Cheng

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