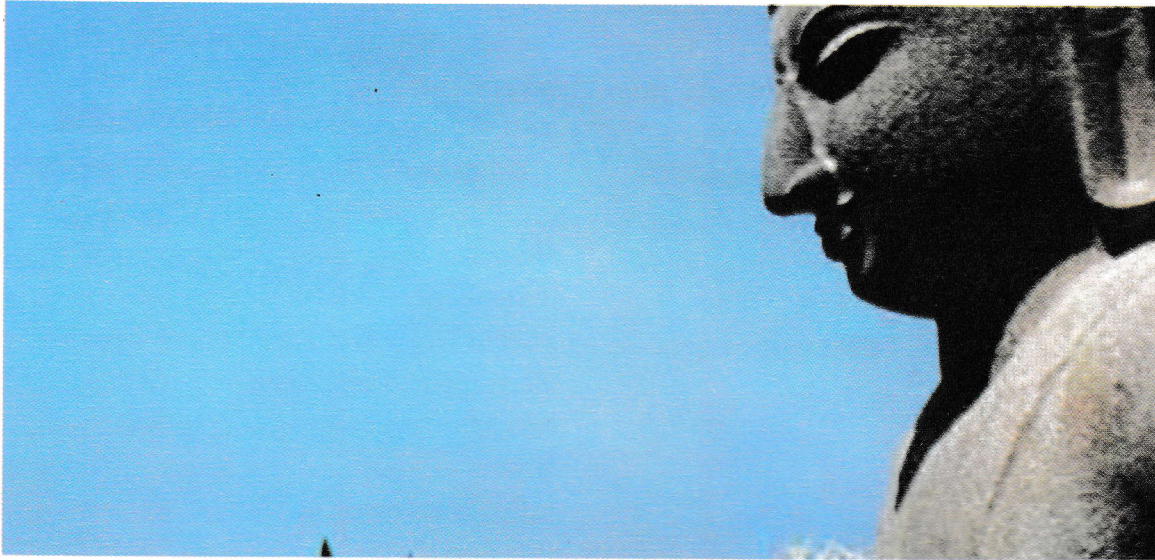


Buddhism and Motherhood



Motherhood will be with us as long as the cycle of rebirth continues, or till the last living creature achieves Nibbana, or becomes a non-returner. In modern terms, as long as multi-cellular creatures depend on biological reproduction, with the female caring for the fertilized ovum, and nursing the infant, motherhood will remain in this universe.

Buddha Dhamma will always be with us, whatever creed we believed in, whether we live in Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam, Thailand, China, United Kingdom, Russia or the United States, because it is a universal truth. We have a Pali gatha to worship Mother.

“For protecting me within the womb - for almost ten months, and for bringing me up well, I worship the feet of my mother wishing her a life of hundred years.”

In the Mitta Sutta we have “*mata mittam*

sake ghare” (Mother is one's friend at home).

“Just as with her own life, a mother shields from hurt, her own son, her only child, let all-embracing thoughts, for all beings be yours.” (Karaniya Metta Sutta, Samyutta Nikaya)

“The support of Mother and Father, the nourishing of spouse and children, by means of a peaceful occupation, this is the supreme blessing.” (Maha Mangala sutta)

In Sri Lanka, we have a saying that our “Mother is the Buddha at home.” It is also a common wish; “May our Mother attain Buddhahood!” A few decades ago, men got those words tattooed on their chests. In our culture Mother has always come first, *Mata Pitu*; Mother and Father.

We see a unique relationship between Buddhahood and motherhood. Many centuries ago, one of the local poets used the term, '*Ama Meniyo*' to refer to Buddha.