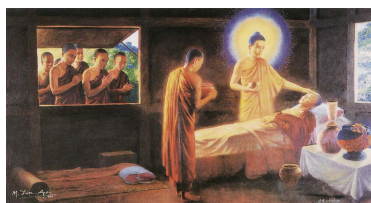


Good News from the Sangha Ward of Kandy Hospital

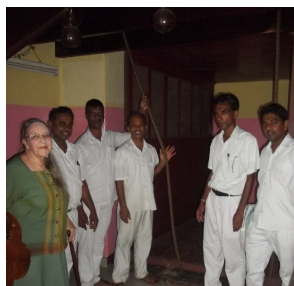


"Whoever would tend me should tend the sick."

As we mentioned in our last report, we had procured bed linen, mosquito nets, pulse oximeters, glucose meters, and blood pressure meters to donate to the Sangha Ward of Kandy Hospital. We had difficulty, however, discovering the proper contact at the hospital and how to go about making the donation. On May 17, after offering high tea at the Kandy Cancer Home, Mike and Ashoka dropped in at the Sangha Ward and asked all the right questions. Mike was able to obtain the name and phone number of a staff member who was willing to help us. As soon as Vesak celebrations were over, we called the hospital and made an appointment. On Friday, May 24, we were able to make our donation. The doctor and the other staff members were pleased to accept the supplies. There were several other auspicious results from that meeting.

The Sangha Ward is housed in a lovely building, more than a hundred and forty years old, a part of a colonial tea estate, in what was then the outskirts of Kandy. Visakha and Mike went around by the long route a wheelchair would take, while Ken, Lily, Nimal, and Ashoka used the stairs. To reach the upstairs meeting room, we climbed a solid wooden staircase. After our meeting, the staff suggested, to our

surprise, that we use the elevator. We walked down a corridor and discovered a manual wooden elevator, the first we had ever seen! It is spacious enough for a gurney, a hospital bed, or several wheelchairs with attendants. It is raised and lowered by an operator on the ground floor pulling a thick rope attached to a pulley system. Though the elevator has no doors, it is sturdy and moves smoothly and silently. The staff informed us that it dates from about 1880 and is one of two such antique elevators in the hospital compound.



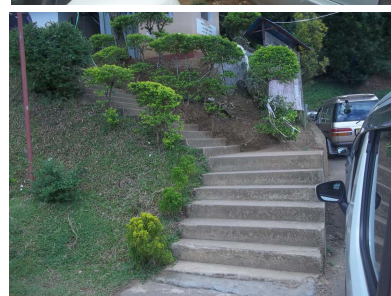
During our meeting, we informed the doctor that Mohan had told us about the need for a proper railing for the 30-step concrete stairway at the entrance to the building. As soon as we explained that we were prepared to bear the entire cost and to have our contractor, Nimal, carry out the work, the response was very enthusiastic. The staff assured us that the railing was urgently needed and told us that, since the request was from Mohan, we could confidently proceed. To be on the safe side, however, we later conferred with Amal, who offered to take a letter to the director of the hospital himself. Amal composed the letter he thought required by protocol, and Ken promptly typed it up on Buddhist Relief Mission letterhead. The next day, Amal returned the letter with the signature of the director and his stamp. This is official authorization giving Nimal permission to

carry the necessary materials into the hospital compound and to complete the project. We are amazed (and extremely pleased) at how easy it was to arrange this. It should be done very soon.

Nimal has already surveyed the site and given an estimate. He checked out other railings at the hospital and found that most of them were plain steel. Thus, he recommended a simple railing, rather than a more beautiful (and more expensive) stainless steel one. We have agreed, and he will begin work as soon as possible. He assures us that the task can be completed in two or three days. Hooray! You can see from the photos how dangerous it is for patients or visitors to navigate the stairs without a railing.

We also learned that it is possible to offer dana to the monks staying in the Sangha Ward and receiving treatment. All we need to do is contact the staff a few days in advance to find how many monastics are staying there and to schedule the dana, which should be vegetarian and low sugar, given the high number of diabetics. Of course, Lily will do the cooking, about which she is very pleased.

Just before we left, the staff showed us the rope for the elevator, which is perhaps also more than one hundred years old. It is frayed, and needs to be replaced. We promised to try to provide that, as well. Of course, we will begin searching in Bengal, a traditional source for the highest quality jute. Donations for all of these projects will be gratefully accepted.



Buddhist Relief Mission

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Page 2 contains *MORE* Good News!

MORE Good News from the Sangha Ward of Kandy Hospital



In the morning of Tuesday, June 4, Nimal began construction work on the railing. We were able to get a few photos of him and his two assistants. We went again in the early afternoon and took a few more photos. That evening, we learned that the work had been completed. We had arranged to go to the hospital on Saturday, so we expected to see the railing then. Thursday morning, Ashoka informed us that the railing had appeared in the evening news on Derana, one of the national TV stations. We googled the news and found the video. A senior monk had been admitted to the hospital and released on Wednesday. The camera followed his exit from the ward, and, to those of us in the know, the railing was just as much “news” as was his departure!



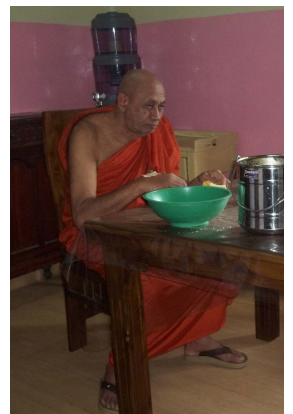
www.adaderana.lk/news/55558/ven-rathana-thero-discharges-himself-from-kandy-hospital



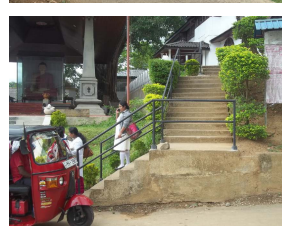
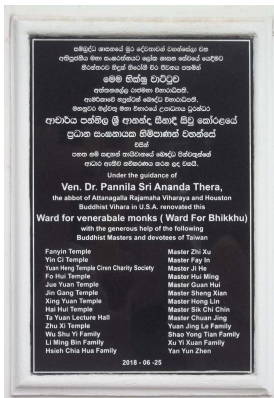
Our appointment on Saturday was to offer dana to the monks staying in the ward. We were asked us to prepare enough for the staff, as well, which we were happy to do. There were four monks, but one of them, receiving cancer treatment, was unable to take anything but liquids. When no one offers dana, food comes from the hospital's central kitchen. It was obvious that the monks appreciated the special dishes that Lily had prepared. Before lunch, one of the monks gave us the precepts and recited *paritta* and *anumodana*. It was a joyous occasion.



Before we left, the staff informed us that the rope for the elevator should be 20 meters in length. Nimal knows a shop in Colombo which, he thinks carries the rope. The staff also showed us the poor condition of the mattresses of the beds in the ward. They asked whether it would be possible for us to provide twenty new foam mattresses. We have found them at a local furniture store for 5000 rupees (\$30) each—delivery free.



As we were leaving, we noticed a plaque on the outside wall of the building. The renovation of the ward last year was sponsored by Ven, Pannila Ananda Thero. By coincidence, we had met this senior monk about 1983 at Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara in Los Angeles. On that first visit to the monastery, we showed our prototype of “Strive On With Diligence” and promised to present him with copies of all the slides. Before we left, he gifted us a beautiful silver stupa, which is still enshrined on our altar. It is, indeed, a small world.



www.hbvihara.org/about/our-bhikkhus/

Click any of these four photos to view a PDF file with all of the photos enlarged.
www.brelief.org/reports/95/sangha_ward_photos.pdf

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