May all beings hear the Dhamma;
May all beings be at peace.
"NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMASAMBUDHASSA"

The most important thing in our lives is the cultivation of the mind. If we are honest we will see that most of the time we are concerned only with our bodies. The greater portion of our lives is spent cultivating, protecting, clothing, sheltering, comforting, warming and feeding our bodies. But a healthy body does not always mean a healthy mind. When we begin to look, listen and become aware of ourselves we recognise that the mind is far from healthy. What does this mean? It means that we are not at all happy, joyful or peaceful in the mind. It is filled with all sorts of nagging complaints, irritations, negativity, pettiness, jealousies, envy, desires, expectations, fears and worries. These are what we call the nagging problems or ailments of the mind. These days, especially in the West, more and more people are becoming aware of these ailments of the mind and are seeking for a way to cure or at least to reduce these ailments so that the mind can be truly peaceful, happy and joyful. This is why people are now turning towards the practice of meditation and to different paths of spiritual training and cultivation. Whichever path we choose, the aim of all people is basically the same. We all seek happiness. We all strive to have a peaceful and happy mind.

Christmas is traditionally a time of love and peace, peace for all the world and love for humanity. It is a time when we are supposed to be loving everyone with a peaceful and loving heart. But then we may notice that our lives are not quite up to this ideal, and so there is this seeking, this interest in mind cultivation. And which path should we tread? This we must find out for ourselves as the great Teachers only point the way.

So one comes to this Buddhist Centre and hears a description of the path in Buddhist terminology; we practice Buddhist meditation using a specific technique and method of training. But remember that one’s aim and interest is to realise peace and happiness and each one of you must reflect on your own experience. We are all different yet we are all the same.
When the Lord Buddha described a human being he did not say that some are made up like this and others are made up like that. He said that all bodies are composed of the four elements, water, earth, heat and air and that all humans also have feelings, they have the ability to perceive and remember, to conceive and construct and all have consciousness. All human beings who are as yet unenlightened have the same problems, they are not really happy or really peaceful. So as human beings there is this great affinity which we have for each other, this sense that we all aspire for peace and happiness and we are all in the same boat together.

How can we find this peace? A very important thing in our lives is our attitude. Right attitude, I would say, is the most important thing. If you have the wrong attitude there is suffering and difficulty but if you have the right attitude there is peace. We have all sat in meditation tonight concentrating on our breath and what have we experienced? Peacefulness or tension? It just depends on your attitude, doesn’t it?

What does it mean to be peaceful? Sometimes we have such ideals about what it means. If we think that our mind must always be still and completely steady that is very difficult to sustain in our ordinary lives with so many contacts and conflicts.

So we have to have a different idea of peace, we must change our attitude. What is the right attitude we should develop which will bring about peace and relaxation of the mind? It is the attitude of accepting things as they are right now. By allowing things to be as they are right now brings about this relaxation and peace of mind. If you don’t accept and are working from the idea of expectation, having to have, this has to be, this has to happen or this is the way it should be, you are refusing the present. When you refuse the present there is always tension and you are even further away from peace.

So the first thing is just accepting and learning acceptance. When thoughts come, you know them, let them go. You accept that that is quite natural, that’s just the way of the mind. That is the way it is, right now. This accepting attitude immediately gives you a sense of peace and relaxation. Now this is very, very important because if you approach
meditation with a sense of gain and achievement, expectation or force then it’s no longer an exercise in peace.

We are meditating to be peaceful, so be peaceful from the very start, by having a peaceful approach. We practice the spiritual path to be peaceful so the important thing is to be peaceful in this one moment. Now the stress here on peacefulness is not necessarily stillness. It does not mean emptiness, stillness of mind with no thoughts. To be peaceful does not mean that we have to go through the whole day without getting uptight in the slightest way, without any friction, restlessness or conflict. It does not mean that we go through the whole day smiling like the Buddha statue. You are not that, you are a human being with feelings and senses, living in a sensitive body. So if you have this ideal that to be peaceful means to go around like the Buddha statue you are just going to be more and more disappointed, which means less and less peaceful. So again this accepting attitude, accepting the situation, yourself and what you are experiencing in life brings relaxation. There is relaxation if you can just accept.

This attitude of acceptance is also the means to develop love. We all have this very high ideal of what love should be, that we should love others and all humanity. To love you simply means I can accept you and give you space to be without developing aversion or being overly critical, without wanting to do something to change you. This is the first step in loving, accepting, allowing others to be, to give them space and not dwelling in aversion. Dwelling in aversion means that you’re picking the faults, picking what you don’t like or agree with and dwelling on it.
You become obsessed with the faults so that rather than loving you
are trying to destroy the other person in your mind. So acceptance here
is a foundation for love to arise. Just as we accept the present situation
now within what we are experiencing in the mind, so we accept people
as they are with their limitations and differences, giving them room to
exist.

When we begin to develop this attitude, peace arises in the mind,
peace with ourselves and others and out of that peacefulness arises all
that is noble, worthy and skilful. From peace comes mindfulness.

The Lord Buddha said that just as the footprint of an elephant can
encumber the footprint of every other living animal, in the same way,
from the basis of peacefulness and mindfulness all other skilful
Dhammas can grow, be cultivated and developed.

I remember when I first started meditating this accepting attitude
was the one thing that was so hard. While training under Ven Ajahn Chah
there were two things which he seemed to me to stress greatly. Firstly
was morality and secondly, attitude. Morality or discipline was just the
way of doing things, a way of living that was orderly, so that we could
live together and then around that discipline was the cultivation of right
attitude. Whether one is living in a monastery or within a family, until
one has this right attitude it will always be difficult and a struggle. But
as soon as one develops this right attitude there is peace and a sense
of relief. Don't have such high ideals of peace and love that they are
impossible to attain in this human form with all our limitations.

With a new attitude begin to see that peace does not mean always
being blissed out, loving everybody and everything. This attitude of
acceptance means accepting things just as they are now, relaxing into
and giving space to people and situations.

*Taken from a talk by Ven Ajahn Jagaro*
IN MEMORY OF VEN AJAHN CHAH

The 16th of January 1993 will be the first anniversary of Ven Ajahn Chah's death. To commemorate this occasion, disciples from all over Thailand and other countries will gather together at Wat Nong Pah Pong in North East Thailand.

The cremation of Ven Ajahn Chah’s body will take place on a day between the 10th and the 20th of January. This ten day period will be a time of devotional and meditative practice in honour of this great master.

May we all remember his teachings, his example and his love so that we can follow in his footsteps as heirs to his Dhamma.
APPROACHING DEATH

Today I have brought nothing material of any substance to offer you, only Dhamma, the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Listen well. You should understand that even the Buddha himself, with his great store of accumulated virtue, could not avoid physical death. When he reached old age he relinquished his body and let go of its heavy burden. Now you too must learn to be satisfied with the many years you’ve already depended on your body. You should feel that it’s enough.

You can compare it to household utensils that you’ve had for a long time: your cups, saucers, plates and so on. When you first had them they were clean and shining, but now after using them for so long, they’re starting to wear out. Some are already broken, some have disappeared and those that are left are deteriorating, they have no stable form, and it’s their nature to be like that. Your body is the same way: it’s been continually changing right from the day you were born, through childhood and youth, until now it’s reached old age. You must accept that. The Buddha said that conditions (sankharas), whether they are internal conditions, bodily conditions, or external conditions, are not-self, their nature is to change. Contemplate this truth until you see it clearly.

This very lump of flesh that lies here in decline is saccadhamma, the truth. The truth of this body is saccadhamma, and it is the unchanging teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha taught us to look at the body, to contemplate it and to come to terms with its nature. We must be able to be at peace with the body, whatever state it is in. The Buddha taught that we should ensure that it’s only the body that is locked up in gaol, and not let the mind be imprisoned along with it. Now as your body begins to run down and deteriorate with it, keep the mind separate. Give energy to the mind by realising the truth of the way things are. The Lord Buddha taught that this is the nature of the body, it can’t be any other way; having been born it gets old and sick and then it dies. This is a great truth that you are presently encountering. Look at the body with wisdom and realise it.
Even if your house is flooded or burnt to the ground, whatever the danger that threatens it, let it concern only the house. If there's a flood, don't let it flood your mind. If there's a fire, don't let it burn your heart, let it be merely the house, that which is external to you, that is flooded and burned. Allow the mind to let go of its attachments. The time is ripe.

So the Buddha taught us to scan and examine this body, from the soles of the feet up to the crown of the head and then back down to the feet again. Just take a look at the body. What sort of things do you see? Is there anything intrinsically clean there? Can you find any abiding essence? This whole body is steadily degenerating and the Buddha taught to see that it doesn't belong to us. It's natural for the body to be this way, because all conditioned phenomena are subject to change. How else would you have it be? Actually there's nothing wrong with the way the body is. It's not the body that causes you suffering, it's your wrong thinking. When you see the right wrongly, there's bound to be confusion.

It's like the water of a river. It naturally flows down the gradient, it never flows against it, that's its nature. If a person was to go and stand on a river bank and seeing the water flowing swiftly down its course, foolishly want it to flow back up the gradient, he would suffer. Whatever he was doing his wrong thinking would allow him no peace of mind. He would be unhappy because of his wrong view, thinking against the stream. If he had right view he would see that the water must inevitably flow down the gradient and until he realised and accepted that fact the man would be agitated and upset.

Your body has followed its natural course from birth until now it's old and sick and you can't forbid it from doing that, that's the way it is. Wanting it to be different would be as foolish as wanting a duck to be like a chicken. When you see that that's impossible; that a duck has to be a duck, that a chicken has to be a chicken and that bodies have to get old and die, you will find strength and energy. However much you want the body to go on and last for a long time, it won't do that. The Buddha said:
Anicca vata sankhara
Uppadavayadhammino
Upajjhita nurujjhanti
Tesam vupasamo sukho

The word ‘sankhara’ refers to this body and mind. Sankharas are impermanent and unstable, having come into being they disappear, having arisen they pass away and yet everyone wants them to be permanent. This is foolishness. Look at the breath. Having come in it goes out. That’s its nature, that’s how it has to be. The inhalation and exhalation have to alternate. There must be change. Sankharas exist through change, you can’t prevent it. Just think; could you exhale without inhaling? Would it feel good? Or could you just inhale? We want things to be permanent but they can’t be, it’s impossible. Once the breath has come in, it must go out, when it’s gone out it comes in again and that’s natural, isn’t it? Having been born we get old and sick and then we die, and that’s totally natural and normal. It’s because sankharas have done their job, because the in breaths and out breaths have alternated in this way, that the human race is still here today.

As soon as we’re born we’re dead. Our birth and our death are just one thing. It’s like a tree: when there’s a root there must be twigs. When there are twigs, there must be a root. You can’t have one without the other. It’s a little funny to see how at a death people are so grief-stricken and distracted, tearful and sad, and at a birth how happy and delighted. It’s delusion. Nobody has ever looked at this clearly. I think if you really want to cry then it would be better to do so when someone’s born. For actually birth is death, death is birth, the root is the twig, the twig is the root. If you’ve got to cry, cry at the root, cry at the birth. Look closely: if there was no birth there would be no death. Can you understand this?

Don’t think a lot. Just think ‘this is the way things are’. It’s your work, your duty. Right now nobody can help you, there’s nothing that your family and your possessions can do for you. All that can help you now is the correct awareness.
So let go, put everything down, everything except the knowing. Don’t be fooled if visions or sounds arise in your mind during meditation. Put them all down. Don’t take hold of anything at all. Just stay with this nondual awareness. Don’t worry about the past or the future, just be still and you will reach the place where there’s no advancing, no retreating and no stopping, where there’s nothing to grasp at or cling to. Why? Because there’s no self, no ‘me’ or ‘mine’. It’s all gone. The Buddha taught us to be emptied of everything in this way, not to carry anything with us. To know, and having known, let go.

So don’t waver. Let go. Throw it all away.

*Taken from a talk given by Ven Ajahn Chah*
As Ajahn Brahm has gone to visit his mother and also to spend some time at the monasteries in England, the lot of writing the Sangha News has fallen to me. To be honest in the last few months there have not been many ‘events’. The main event was the Rains Retreat which is what I will write about.

This year for the Rains Retreat we had 13 people: 6 monks, 1 nun and 6 anagarikas. Due to the great efforts of Ajahn Brahm on the building sites, by the time the Rains Retreat began each person had their own kuti (hut). A great privilege compared to conditions in other countries where even having one’s own room is considered a luxury!

Then, as pictured in the last newsletter, under the directions of Ajahn Nyanadhamo, each kuti was provided with its own walking path. So physical conditions were very good with abundant delicious alms food being provided almost every day by diligent lay supporters, thus taking a burden off the anagarika’s shoulders.

For the first few weeks of the retreat we had morning and evening meetings with excellent classes on the Vinaya (the monastic discipline) by Ajahn Brahm and Ajahn Nyanadhamo. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings we had Dhamma talks given by Ajahn Jagaro, Ajahn Brahm and Ajahn Nyanadhamo which were very helpful as all three have a different approach to practise and teaching which seems to compliment each other.

On Saturday evenings the monks took it in turns to present a Sutta (discourse of the Buddha) adding ideas and perspectives from their own experience to what can often be a fairly dry and bare discourse. Then the rest of the day was available for personal practice and study according to one’s own inclination.

In the middle of the Retreat we were blessed by a visit from Ven Piyadassi Mahathera, whose knowledge and love of the Dhamma and warm presence touched us all.
After a few weeks morning and evening meetings were dropped and the monks in turn were given the opportunity to do some solitary practice for a few weeks. In the solitary retreat contact with people was kept to a minimum with even the meals being brought to the retreatant. This lack of stimulation, particularly to the ears and tongue, is very conducive to allowing the mind to settle down and become more peaceful.

Never really having had the opportunity or the inclination to do a solitary retreat before, and being naturally gregarious, I wondered how I would do. Much to my surprise I settled in well, didn’t fall apart and benefited greatly from the experience. In talking to the other monks I think that they benefited similarly.

The retreat ended and the busy-ness of danas, funerals, teaching and work soon removed the calm peaceful states and we had a lesson in impermanence, i.e. “Peaceful states are dependant on certain conditions. When those conditions change then so do the mind states.” In one sense quite disturbing, but also it acts as a spur to attain to that peaceful state which is not dependant on conditions, Nibbana.

At the Kathina ceremony, the population of the monastery rose from 13 to about 513, seemingly more people than ever before, and a good day was had by all.

*lay people bring offerings to the Sangha at the Kathina ceremony.*
Traditionally after the Rains is a time for travel and visits. This was no exception and within two weeks Ajahn Brahm had gone to England, Ajahn Nyanadhammo to Adelaide, Ven. Sumangalo to Malaysia and I was spending a week with my parents (over here from England) showing them the beauty of the South-West.

*Ven Summangalo in Brichfields Temple, Kuala Lumpur on the last day of the 17th Annual Noviciate program with Ven Dhammananda, Ven Amata, Ven Mahinda and Sister Sumitra.*

In January Ajahn Jagaro will be joining Ajahn Brahm and several hundred monks and nuns and probably several hundred thousand lay people, at the funeral of Ajahn Chah, in North East Thailand. At that time we are fortunate that Ven. Santikaro, the senior western disciple of Ajahn Buddhadassa, will be coming to visit WA.

So lots of change, both externally and internally, but the overall feeling was one of gratefulness at being able to spend this Rains Retreat with such ideal conditions for practice. The monastic community would like to express their gratitude to all the people who helped make this possible with their unselfish support and encouragement. In particular we would like to express our gratitude to Ajahn Jagaro and Ajahn Brahm whose hard work and dedication over the past 10 years, have resulted in what, by any standards anywhere in the world, is a beautiful monastery and an exceptional City Centre and Buddhist Society.

*With metta*

*Ven. Kovudo*
MEDITATION RETREATS

WEEKEND RETREAT

_Friday 22 - Sunday 24 January_

This retreat will be conducted by an American Monk, Ven. Ajahn Santikaro, a disciple of the renowned Buddhist meditation Master, Ven. Ajahn Buddhadasa and will be held at “Peace be Still” Retreat Centre, 100 Chittering Road, Chittering. There will be a charge of $80 to cover food and accommodation. Registration forms are available at the Vihara.

LONG WEEKEND RETREAT

_Friday 26 Feb - Monday 1 March_

This retreat will be held over the Labour Day long weekend and will be held at St Joseph’s Convent in Safety Bay. Registration forms will be available at the Vihara late in January.

2 WEEK RETREAT

_Saturday 17 April - Sunday 2 May_

Ven Amatha Gavesi will be conducting a 2 week retreat at Bodhinyana Monastery from Saturday 17th April to Sunday May 2nd. Accommodation will be provided for lay people at the Serpentine Caravan Park.

Requirements for participants are that they must:

* be experienced meditators
* be able to keep the 8 precepts on the retreat
* wear white on the retreat.

Registration forms will be available from the Vihara in the New Year.
DHAMMA SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Approximately 20 children have attended each of the 4 Saturday Dhamma School Workshops for children aged 8 to 13 and the vast majority of the children have asked for the course to continue. Ven. Kovido and Ven. Sumangalo have decided to continue Dhamma School on a fortnightly basis on Saturdays from 3 - 4pm. Classes will be held on Saturday 6 Feb, 20 Feb, 6 March, 20 March and 3 April. Children are asked to bring a notebook, pencil and their chanting book to all classes.

John Treasure has kindly offered to take a separate class for 6 and 7 year olds if there are enough children interested. This class will be held at the Vihara from 3 - 3.45pm, followed by refreshments until 4pm on the same dates as above. Children are asked to bring a notebook, pencil and colouring in pencils or textas. If you would like your child to attend this class would you please phone John on 294 1814 before the 31st January.

Both of the Dhamma School classes will follow a structured teaching program and children attending are expected to be well behaved, interested and willing to participate in activities.

All children are asked to come at 2.45pm on the first day to enrol.

Ven Sumangalo and Dhamma School children sitting meditation
BUDDHIST SOCIETY NEWS

It is always a pleasure to serve at the Buddhist Society as the members and friends with whom one interacts and works along side are all such good hearted, generous people. Many people have put in enormous efforts this year to raise funds for our building projects at Nollamara. Our sincere thanks go to the Thai ladies who have cooked for several fundraising lunches this year and to the Sri Lankan members for their fine vegetarian dinner recently.

*Helpers of the Thai Fundraising Lunch.*

Our thanks too go to Bianca who baked an amazing number of delicious Christmas cakes this month to raise funds for the new building project. Margaret Willcocks has generously continued to provide her gentle yoga/relaxation classes at the Buddhist Society this year and donates class fees to the Society.

Yodying, our Social Worker, recently organised a special Sunday for children to honour their mothers. This was well attended and most inspiring (see following article).
A special thank you to Khun Somchai from Bangkok who kindly brought another devoted group of Thai Buddhist people to visit Perth for a week to attend the Kathina Ceremony. We are grateful for their generous support to our Sangha at Bodhinyana Monastery.

*Khum Somchai with members of the Committee at the dinner held at the Vihara to welcome the Thai visitors.*

The extensions for the new Library at the Vihara are finished and when we are able to purchase fittings and furniture for the area it will be very beautiful indeed and a valuable resource for members who wish to learn more of the Dhamma.

**LIBRARY HOURS continue to be:**

- Fridays: 6 - 7:20pm
  9 - 10:00pm
- Saturdays: 2 - 3:00pm
  4 - 5:00pm

We are hoping in the new year to have a larger stock of books for sale and some beautiful Buddha Ruppas from Thailand and Malaysia available.

One of our faithful members, Mrs Trinood Brown, is off to Thailand on December 30th. She is joining lay disciples of Ajahn Jundee’s monastery and together they have taken on the enormous and most meritorious task of cooking for the thousands and thousands of guests
who will attend Luang Por Chah's funeral in January in Ubon. To Trinood and to those who donated money for this project, Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu.

If things get a bit hectic for you on Christmas Day you can always go to your room to meditate. Breathe gently and let go! Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas and more meditation in the New Year. We look forward to seeing you at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday February 20th. Please stay for a cuppa after the meeting!

With Metta

The Committee.

Children paying their respects to Ajahn Jagaro during the ceremony to honour Mothers.
WHY I LOVE MY MOTHER

Our mother gives birth to us. A mother's milk is of great value for it nurtures us until we grow. And her guidance is even more important as it helps us become good and virtuous people.

Even if the child does something wrong, the mother will always love the child. So when we grow up we should look after our mother in gratitude for all that she has done for us from the time of birth until we're grown up.

With loving care a mother looks after her child protecting the child from pain and sickness. In the same way we should attend to all her needs when she is sick.

The importance of one's mother is beyond measure and one can never truly repay the debt. So even when grown up we should try to practice the things our mothers have taught us. And while we are still young we should not be stubborn or naughty, but rather try to be always respectful towards her.

If we are good our mother will give us all the things we need, but if we are naughty she will have to punish us.

The special importance of our mother is something that we should not forget throughout or life. Our mother is the first person in our life; if not for her we would not be living now.

Written by Jarunee Sawangying  
(aged 13 years)  
for the day to honour Mothers
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the Buddhist Society of WA will be held on Saturday 20th February, 1993 at 4.00pm at the Vihara. This is the time of the year when the Committee of the Society is elected for the next twelve months.

Nominations are called for the positions of President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Assistant Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Assistant Treasurer, and six committee members. Nomination forms are available at the Vihara.

It is important to note that under the Society’s constitution, only ordinary members are allowed to stand for the committee or vote. People nominating and seconding anyone must also be an ordinary member. If you are a committed Buddhist but have not formally taken the three refuges and the five precepts and filled out an ordinary membership application form, please do so if you wish to participate.

All nominations must be received by 5pm on Friday January 15th, 1993.

If you would like to find out more about serving on the Committee please contact our current President Don Weerakody or speak to Ven Ajahn Jagaro.

Ordinary members are invited to attend this very important meeting and to participate in the decision making process of the Society.
Membership of the Buddhist Society of WA is now due for renewal as our membership year runs from 1 January. All existing members of the Society are invited to renew their membership for 1993.

People who have not yet joined the Society are invited to apply for membership. You may do so under two categories:

1. Ordinary membership is available to people who consider themselves to be Buddhists - i.e. take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and who endeavour to undertake the five precepts of a Buddhist lay person.

2. Associate membership is available to those people who may not meet the requirements of Ordinary membership but who are supportive of the aims and objectives of the Society. Associate members may not hold office on the Society's committee nor vote at Society meetings. Associate membership entitles people to use the library facilities.

Membership fees are the same for both categories and are:

$40 for family membership, $30 for single membership, $20 for unwaged people.

Membership forms are available at the Vihara and renewals may be paid to the Treasurer.
COMMUNITY SERVICES

After Kanthi de Tissera resigned as Grant-in-Aid worker, the Buddhist Society of W.A. appointed Yodying Taylor to the position. Yodying is well qualified with a Masters Degree in Social Work from Thailand and has also had considerable experience in Australia. Her work plan from the Buddhist Society is broadly as follows:

1. Provide casework and referral services to the appropriate service providers.

2. Advocate and advise Government Departments on the welfare needs concerning the WA Buddhist community, including ethnic groups such as Burmese, Cambodian, Lao, Malaysian, Singaporean, Sri Lankan (Sinhalese) and Thai.

3. Provide information sessions for interest groups and communities.

4. Work with ethnic Buddhist communities mentioned earlier to strengthen their sense of belonging to the wider Australian society, while simultaneously maintaining their own cultural identify, as well as developing community self-help.

Yodying would very much appreciate it if the members of the Buddhist Society would participate by giving her feedback or comment on the services provided and identifying the needs of each community.
THE DREAM MATERIALISES!

The beautiful new meditation hall and the extension to the house and library at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre are almost completed! The library has been in use for some weeks now although new fittings and furniture are still required. Apart from some minor works, the extensions to the house, including the Monks’ quarters have been completed.

*The new Meditation Hall nears completion.*

By the time this newsletter is printed the majority of the work on the meditation hall will be completed. The house at number 14 has been demolished to make way for the carpark and has given us all a good view of the new building. There is still a great deal of work to be done in landscaping the gardens and erecting the front fence and the plans for these are underway. Funds for these projects are limited and we will be looking for help in many ways. Please keep on the lookout for notices at the Vihara about what help is needed and how you can contribute to our inspiring new Centre which will enable many people to hear the Dhamma.

As circumstances have changed and the house at number 12 will now not be sold, the Buddhist Society will be taking on a mortgage of approximately $120,000 and we will be looking to all our members and supporters for help in paying this off. If you are able to make regular contributions of any size you are invited to join the New Vihara Building Fund. Forms are available at the Centre or by contacting the Treasurer. All donations to the Building Fund are tax deductible.
BUY A BRICK

Everyone is invited to help create a new Dhamma environment for the benefit of all beings by "buying a brick" in the new Buddhist Centre. $20 per brick will help build the new Meditation Hall and if you'd like to be part of this project fill in the Building Fund envelope at the Nollamara Centre, stating the number of bricks you would like to contribute and place it in the donation box (or send it to the Treasurer). Remember donations to this Fund are tax deductible.

KONG HEE FATT CHOY... AN INVITATION TO CELEBRATE CHAP GOH MEH

(Chinese New Year of the rooster)

Date: Saturday 6th February, 1993
Time: 6.30pm
Venue: Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre,
18 - 20 Nanson Way, Nollamara.

Chinese food will be served and there will be cultural entertainment.

Tickets are available for $10 for adults, $5 for children at the Vihara on Friday evenings.
NO MAN WALKS SO TALL AS WHEN HE STOOPS TO HELP A CHILD

These are the words displayed on a building within the Pakkred Home for Crippled Children in Bangkok. The building was donated to the Home by the Freemasons of Lodge St John 1072.

For some four years I have been travelling frequently between Australia and Thailand paving the way for drug addicts and alcoholics who seek help, to make the journey to the Thamkrabok Monastery in Saraburi to cleanse themselves of their addiction. Being a Freemason, I visited Lodge St John there in August 92 and became a member by affiliation.

Very quickly I became aware of the many and varied acts of charity and benevolence work the Lodge undertakes. Besides supporting the children at Pakkred, the Lodge has, for about four years, made finance available to enable young amputees to receive artificial limbs. All of the children come from very poor families throughout Thailand, some even being deserted. This wonderful work continues.

![Image of a group visiting the Grand Lodge](image)

The group visit Grand Lodge to say thank you to the Grand Master Freemason M.W. Bro Curnow-Knucley.

Having visited the Home when a quantity of equipment was being donated, I came up with an idea which was quickly supported by others. The idea became a reality.

On 1st November, I arrived at Perth Airport with two young amputees, Norgow (16) and Preecha (17). Both boys were born without complete arms or legs. With us were Khun Boonchert and Khun Luechai, two Thai prosthesis technicians. All four were selected for the project by the Doctors that attend to and treat young Thai amputees.

On our arrival we were met by members of the Thai community in WA who made the group so welcome. The very first visit next day was to
Bodhinyana Monastery to meet Ven Ajahn Jagaro and to pay respects to the Buddha. Finally we were at the Rehabilitation, Artificial Limbs and Appliance Centre (RALAC). The work then began.

Medical examinations, consultations, castings, moulds, fittings, balancing, testing and after three weeks both boys received new legs. Also they received an extension for their left arm (both being left handed) which will enable them to write. A bonus was the total co-operation and friendships that evolved between the group and the wonderful people at RALAC. The Thai technicians assisted in the creation of the new limbs, and also spent one full week working alongside the RALAC team.

As each week unfolded the group witnessed the hospitality, generosity and friendship Australians are renowned for. Invitations to host the group came in from so many. Through this article I join the group in expressing our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who made the project possible.

Many things, I believe, were achieved in this project. It brought Thailand and Australia a little closer together. It linked a variety of groups and individuals together in a worthy project. It has created many friendships. It saw an exchange of ideas and technology between the prosthesis technicians. And above all we have helped two very special young men as they step forward into tomorrow and the years ahead.

People helping people. Thanks to you all.
Brian Haffenden

* To meet the printer's deadline, this article was penned two weeks before departing for Thailand. May we call this Part 1? With Part 2 to follow? Then the story will be completely "Thai'd" up?
Khanti ca sovacassata  To be patient and obedient
Samanan ca dassanam  To visit with spiritual people
Kalene dhamma-sakaccha  To discuss the Dhamma at the right time
Etam Mangalam uttaman  This is a blessing supreme

These words of the Buddha best express the good fortune that we enjoy in being part of the Youth Buddhist’s group. The opportunity to meet and interact with people of our own age that are interested in spiritual matters is a source of strength and empowerment in a world in which we are constantly bombarded with material temptations. In Buddhist group you are often reminded of the teachings of the Blessed One “All that is mine, dear and delightful will change and vanish.”

Two of our lifelong members, Samali and Martin, have left us to go to Sri Lanka where they will be practicing under Venerable Amitha Gavesi, one of the most eminent Teachers of that country. Several other members of our group will also be visiting Sir Lanka. may joyous victory be theirs.

Two of our members are now representing the Young Buddhist’s Group on the Ethnic Community Council Sub-Committee. Liz and Ananda who have taken up this task, hope that this will give the opportunity to meet and network with other groups of young people. This will be of value with publicity and fundraising.

All those who are interested in attending the group are reminded that we meet every second Sunday. All people between 15-25 are welcome. For more information ring Shamara on 386 2171.

Last, but by no means least, our thanks to Ven Sumungalo and Ven Kovido for the help and Teachings that they have given us.
BUDDHIST MARRIAGES

Some years ago Ajahn Jagaro asked me to consider the possibility of becoming the official Marriage Celebrant for our Society as there had been some enquiries from our growing community about Buddhist marriages. (Our monks are unable to accept this duty in our tradition, as their precepts preclude the holding of any “Official Office”.) I must admit a feeling of some trepidation in accepting this responsibility, mainly because I had never thought much about marriage - including my own, or its importance, but now I felt there needed to be at least some understanding and confidence in marriage as an institution, so this whole question was reflected back at me.

This whole process has been of great benefit for myself and Dianne, my wife, as it has give us an opportunity to redefine and reassess our marriage, and the results have been positive.

A lot of our members and supporters will not realise that we have an official “Buddhist Marriage Celebrant” associated with our Society, so this article is a good way to publicise the service. There have been many marriages performed to date, for both devout Buddhist couples, and couples who are sympathetic but don’t choose, or are not ready to use our Centre. We have had marriages that include blessings from our monks, sometimes with the full cultural traditions of the various groups that make up our Centre. We have also had the simplest of marriage ceremonies within the surroundings of a home, garden or park.

At the beginning the biggest fear for me was performing the ceremony part of the service, as I felt a bit like a bull in a china shop. I felt uncomfortable performing, and being part of the focus of a service that was essentially very beautiful. My past conditioning had been not to allow myself to expose that softer, dare I say - romantic, but very human side of my nature. I am very much more at home with these feelings now and even welcome new ideas that will make a service as beautiful as possible.

I have come to see that the most important thing about a wedding day is to make it as special as it can be in order to raise it up in our consciousness. To develop as much awareness of the day as we can. With
this process, the memory of the day can act as a trigger to recall the vows and pledges we make on our wedding day. In this way the vows and pledges will become a boon or a dedication to help with future negative times in our marriages. With awareness we can then bring in all the skilful means that the institution of our religion offers. We can then benefit from reflection on all of the Buddha’s teachings and the precepts.

A good marriage ceremony also allows the guests to be part of the rejoicing. Everyone, can join in the well wishing and sympathetic joy that is easily aroused. For those of us already married, the vows and pledges being made give us the opportunity to reflect on our own marriages and relationships. It can be a time to redefine and sharpen up ourselves within our union. It is quite wonderful to be within the aura of fresh love, and feel its exquisite passion and its pain.

_Dennis Sheppard officiating at the marriage of Brigie Lowry and Paul Fraser_

Of course ideal Buddhist marriages will always have a strong emphasis on the Triple Gem. The Refuge of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha will continue to become a greater haven for us and our marriages. This can make our lives together even more secure. The Buddha highly recommended that our practice should always remain to develop greater awareness and understanding of ourselves. The need to develop greater peace and stillness within ourselves, which will naturally make our marriages more harmonious, happy and understanding. In Buddhist marriages there is no holy sacrament or union with a higher power. We understand that we must take responsibility for ourselves. Our happiness is our own responsibility.

_Dennis Sheppard_
**REGULAR ACTIVITIES.**

**DHAMMALOKA BUDDHIST CENTRE NOLLAMARA**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
<td>7.00 - 7.20pm</td>
<td>Chanting</td>
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<td>7.30 - 8.00pm</td>
<td>Guided sitting meditation</td>
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<td>8.00 - 9.00pm</td>
<td>A talk on Buddhism by one of the senior monks</td>
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<td><strong>Saturday</strong></td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.30 - 3.00pm</td>
<td>Instruction for new meditators</td>
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<td>3.00 - 4.00pm</td>
<td>Meditation and discussion</td>
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<td>Dhamma school for children</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
<td>8.30 - 9.15am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
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<td>9.15 - 9.45am</td>
<td>Walking meditation &amp; Interviews</td>
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<td>9.45 - 10.30am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
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<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong> &amp; <strong>Thursday</strong></td>
<td>7.30 - 8.30am</td>
<td>Yoga, Relaxation &amp; Meditation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(Beginners welcome)</td>
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<td><strong>SOUTH OF THE RIVER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Instruction for beginners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.30 - 9.00pm</td>
<td>Meditation and Dhamma talk</td>
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<td>Community Health Centre, Armadale Kelmstown Hospital</td>
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**ADDRESSES**

The Buddhist Society of WA (Inc)
Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre
18 - 20 Nanson Way
Nollamara WA 6061
Tel: 345 1711

Buddhist Community Services
Social Worker
Tel: 344 4220

Bodhinyana Monastery
Lot 1 Kingsbury Drive
Serpentine WA 6205
Tel: 525 2420