The newsletter of
The Buddhist Society of Western Australia (Inc.)
January/February/March, 1985
The Buddhist Society of W.A.
4 Magnolia St.
North Perth, 6006
tel: (09) 444 7013.

Serpentine Buddhist Monastery
Lot 1/Kingsbury Drive
Serpentine, 6205
tel: (095) 252420

(Please address all correspondence to 4 Magnolia Street, as there is no postal service to the monastery).

REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT:
THE BUDDHIST CENTRE (VIHARA)
4 MAGNOLIA STREET, NORTH PERTH
Telephone: 444 7013

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<th>DAYS</th>
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<tr>
<td>FRIDAYS</td>
<td>7.30-8.00pm</td>
<td>Guided sitting meditation</td>
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<td>8.00-9.00</td>
<td>A talk on Buddhism by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro.</td>
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<td>SATURDAYS</td>
<td>3.00-3.45pm</td>
<td>Meditation for beginners.</td>
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<td>4.00-5.30</td>
<td>Tai Chi with Ross Anderson:</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNDAYS</td>
<td>3.00-4.00pm</td>
<td>Dhamma school for children every other Sunday beginning Feb. 10th.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.30-8.30pm</td>
<td>Sitting meditation.</td>
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Resident Sangha: Ven. Ajahn Jagaro
Ven. Brahmavamso
Ven. Paññasavaro
Samanera Ariyasila.
"Namo Tassa Bhagavato Sammasambuddhassa"

Dhamma greetings and happy new year to all;

If one can judge from the questions which people ask about Buddhism there seems to be a great interest in the teaching of rebirth and kamma. However most people like to speculate about this by projecting into the past and future trying to imagine what it is about instead of looking at the immediate reality before their very eyes. It brings to mind the Confucion proverb:

"One whose eyes are turned to the sky awaiting the thunder will miss the earthquake under one's very feet."

Similarly many people fail to see and penetrate the process of birth and death taking place at all times, all around us and within us. If we do not look and reflect on the way things are right now in the present moment then we will never understand this process and will only be speculating about it.

Before our very eyes we have the continuous flowing process of change, of birth and death. Twelve months ago the year 1984 was born, now it has grown to a ripe old age and soon it will pass away, its death conditioning the birth of a new year, 1985. This new year is as yet a mystery of unknown potential. However, much of this potential is limited and conditioned by what happened in 1984 and the previous years. If we understand that the process of birth and death is really just the process of change then we realise that birth and death is something happening continuously at all times. At dawn the sun rises and from the last dying moments of night a new day is born, to exist for a time until finally passing away at dusk, giving birth to another night.

Within our bodies and minds this same process is continuously at work. What we refer to as a person is merely a changing process of mind states and physical conditions. When a boy is born we call it a baby, as it grows it becomes a child, then a grown man and later an old man and finally a dead corpse. Through lack of close reflection we conclude that throughout this whole process it was the same person there, when in fact the process of birth and death, change, was in operation at every moment. The body was continuously changing, the states of mind, thoughts, feelings and emotions being born and dying with every conscious moment.

It is all so obvious but we do not perceive it clearly
and this reflects in the way we live our lives. Caught between the two great mysteries of birth and death we go through life grasping on to everything with our desires and aversions trying to hold everything in a static state - stopping change, or birth and death. Not only is this a futile struggle, but it is also a foolish exercise as it fails to appreciate that change is actually the wonderful process of renewal and growth. Because there is change we can all change for the better and we can all be enlightened.

On one occasion while I was living in the forest monastery in Thailand, my Teacher, Ven. Ajahn Chah came to visit and as we were walking around the meditation hall he stopped and pointed to some cracks which had developed in the brick wall. He looked at me and pointing to the cracks said, "If it wasn't for this the Buddha could not have been born!" The process of change, of birth and death, means that eventually cracks must appear in the wall, but it also means that the deluded Prince Siddathata, with his desires and aversions, doubts and fears, was able to change and become the perfectly enlightened Buddha, transcending all limitations and sufferings. And because this process of change is always here the possibility is open to us to do the same.

Sometimes a person may do or say something very foolish and one may think, "Oh, what a horrible person. They should never be forgiven for that!" Or we may even think that of ourselves, "I will never forgive myself for having been so foolish!" However that type of thinking is truly foolish for it fails to consider the process of change which means that there is the potential for a foolish person to become a wise one, for a cruel person to become a gentle one, for a miser to become a most generous and kind person. So let us not grasp too tightly to our views of others or ourselves, but rather allow, and even encourage others and ourselves to be continually reborn as someone better and more noble. We can forgive all forms of foolishness and failings because we realise that we are not static entities but changing and evolving spiritual beings.

In Buddhism we say that the practice is to know the mind, to train the mind and to liberate the mind. We can all do this because we can change, and so we are able to develop the qualities which turned Siddathata into a Buddha. So with the birth of a new year I would like to encourage us all to make the effort to be reborn as more aware and wiser people. As a guideline for our rebirth I would like to share the following short teaching given to us by Ven. Paññananda
Bhikkhu on the last night of his stay here in Perth.
May you all grow in the good Dhamma and enjoy a peaceful new year.

... Ven. Ajahn Jagaro.

"The Practise of Loving Kindness"

When we study the Buddhist scriptures we find that the Buddha had tremendous loving kindness towards all beings. He taught and helped people from all walks of life, from kings to peasants, without any discrimination. His loving kindness did not differentiate between castes, colour, nation or status therefore it was called 'all embracing'. After having appreciated this type of compassion in the example of the Buddha, it is important that we make the effort to establish this same sort of compassion within our own minds. To do this we develop and nurture thoughts of loving kindness directed to beings everywhere, without exception, with no discrimination, without any limitations whatsoever.

To put it another way, we should aim to have compassion for all beings just as we have compassion for our own being. In particular, if two people live together, a husband and wife for example, then it is very important that the husband acts with loving kindness towards his wife and that the wife acts with loving kindness towards her husband. The most important consideration in their minds should be the well being of their partner. They should purposely bring up thoughts of loving kindness as often as possible in order to make the other happy.

In the same way we should extend loving kindness outwards to our neighbours, wishing that they too will experience happiness and well being. Then we should enlarge our thoughts of loving kindness to embrace all nations, all peoples. May they all experience happiness and well being.

Whenever we wish that others may have happiness, then at that very moment we ourselves experience happiness. However, when we have thoughts which want others to suffer, then at that very moment we ourselves experience suffering. Therefore if we do not wish to experience this suffering then we should cease from harbouring thoughts of malice. When we get up in the morning we should first make ourselves peaceful and calm and then make a deliberate resolution of loving kindness, wishing that all humanity will live in peace and happiness together. Whatever we do or say, we should first think in a way to bring about happiness in others, then act accordingly.
Wherever we go, we should go with the intention to create happiness and well being for the people there.

Determine in your minds that you will use this life for the benefit of all humanity. Thinking in this way will bring about a state of well being in your own mind. Physical and mental ailments will diminish. We will go to sleep happily and wake up happily. Our facial expression will be bright, shining, beautiful and we will no longer need make up and cosmetics. We will be loved not only by human beings, but by other beings as well. For instance, if we think compassionately towards a dog and act with kindness, then it will respond with affection towards us. Whereas if we kick and beat the dog then it will hate us and be aggressive toward us. You can experiment by standing in front of a mirror and observing how your face appears when you are spreading thoughts of unlimited kindness. Your appearance will be attractive, lovely, angelic. Then, if you alter your thinking and begin to bring up cruel and hurtful thoughts, desiring harm to another, then you will notice that your face takes on the appearance of a demon, ugly and horrible.

If we take the time to develop thoughts of compassion, deliberately and consistently thinking kind thoughts, then our lives will become full of love and compassion. Indeed, morality will come automatically in our lives. We will discover that we do not want to break the Moral Precepts. We will become incapable of exploiting, hurting or killing another, whether a human being or an animal. We could not take another's possessions, nor could we commit adultery, lie, speak hurtful words nor backbite. We could not go out and become drunk for fear that we might lose our senses and do something hurtful to another being. We could not gamble, nor do anything whatsoever that is unskillful and immoral.

The benefits of developing loving kindness within is that our bodies experience well being and our minds are joyous and light. Whatever task we undertake will be done properly and our lives will develop towards goodness. Therefore we should persevere in our endeavour to establish loving kindness, compassion, within our own being, every day, every hour, every minute, every second of our day.

Tomorrow you can begin. You can experiment. As soon as you wake up, resolve to devote the whole day for the well being, the benefit, of all humanity. When you leave your home, walk along the street and meet someone, then think positive thoughts like "May you be happy and well, may you be healthy, may you experience all the pleasant things in
life. When you train your mind to think thoughts such as these and revolve to speak and act in accordance with these thoughts, then you yourself will experience a feeling of joy and well being, in both body and mind. Experiment with this tomorrow. Train your mind in this way and develop a mind full of compassion. You will find your mind becoming more and more peaceful, more and more calm. The restlessness, tensions and worries will begin to fade. Evil or bad intentions will disappear. You can prove this for yourself by trying it. In Buddhism we call the "Dhamma", the Teachings, something that you can know only through your own practice and experience, by seeing for yourself. If we do not practice the teaching ourselves then we will not have the experience and so we will not know. I ask you all to try this practice as I have explained tonight.

... translated from the Thai and adapted from a talk given by Ven. Ajahn Paññananda at the Buddhist Centre, Perth.

A MEMORABLE VISIT

In November we had the good fortune to have the Ven. Chow Koon Paññananda visit us and make himself available for the teaching of the Dhamma. His presence was a refreshing reminder of the fruits of calm and wisdom that come from a life devoted to seeking and expounding the meaning of the Buddha's Teaching. During his stay the Ven. Ajahn kindly presided over the ordination ceremony at which John Bowman undertook the training precepts of a samanera, or novice monk. After donning the brown robes representative of the monastic sangha, John also received a new Pali name, Ariya Sila, meaning 'One of Noble conduct or virtue'. We are very happy to welcome Ariya Sila as one gone forth from the home to the homeless life and would like to take this occasion to wish him a safe and steady journey along the Middle Path to Enlightenment.

At the beginning of his last talk at the Buddhist Centre, the Ven Ajahn expressed his delight at having had the
opportunity to come to Perth and encouraged everyone to develop the qualities of compassion, wisdom and purity in their lives so as to overcome their sufferings and hardships and attain true and lasting peace. The Buddhist Soc. of W.A. extended an invitation for the Ven Ajahn to return again next year, which he readily accepted, and we look forward to having him with us once again.

The "Going Forth" of John Bowman as the Samanera (Novice Monk) Ariyasila.

Dr Joanna Macy, a Buddhist scholar, author of 'Dhamma and Development' and active in the Buddhist Peace Movement will be conducting 2 half day workshops for women on 21st/22nd Feb. Please ring Sue Latter on 384 8251 for more information and registration.

The Zen Teacher, ROSHI AITKEN will be visiting Perth in February and will conduct a 2 and 4 day sesshin from 22nd-25th Feb. at the Mt Helena Centre. Roshi Aitken will also be giving a public talk while in Perth (venue as yet unsure). Please ring the Perth Zen Centre on 384 8573 for more info.

EIGHT PRECEPT OBSERVANCE DAYS: January 5th (full moon), 13th 20th and 28th. February 4th (full moon) 12th, 18th and 26th. March 5th (full moon), 13th, 20th and 28th.
NEWS FROM THE FOREST MONASTERY

A few weeks ago the first anniversary of Serpentine Buddhist Monastery slipped by unnoticed. We have been here 12 months now and already much has been accomplished. So much so that I sometimes catch myself already talking to visitors about 'the good old days' when monks were tough, when we used to sleep out beneath a tree under our umbrella mosquito nets only to be blasted awake every night by the strong summer easterlies which arrived like a train regularly around midnight; when we would work all day blunting a pick of granite bedrock trying to etch out the drains for the toilet block; then taking very cold showers out in the windy open; sitting on the open air toilet in the rain - I don't know why I call them good old days! We have come a long way since then. Now we each have huts to stay in, protected from the wind, the sun and the rain. We have hot showers and six comfortable toilet cubicles to attend to nature's calls. We have a place to eat and a place to meet. Sometimes, though, it is still a little rough at the monastery. For the past 6 weeks we have been heavily outnumbered by the flies which dive bomb into your eyes whenever you concentrate on a difficult bit of carpentry, or go exploring up your nose when you are sitting quietly, and there is the occasional dare devil stuntman fly who zooms to his doom by swooping into your mouth, to an irretrievable spot in your throat. Then there are the marsh flies who have now discovered that monks are not allowed to swat them and have disrespectfully taken full advantage. They are indeed a test of patience and compassion. However, 12 months from now, I shall probably be sitting in a new fly screened office in our new cool kitchen block writing for the newsletter about 'the good old days' when monks were tough and worked all day in the heat amongst the flies......

The Plans for the brick-walled, iron-roofed, kitchen block have now been completed and are presently at the Shire offices awaiting approval. Already we have levelled the site and begun to dig the trench for the leach drain. This building will be large, around 15m x 7m with a 2m verandah all around and will include a kitchen, dining hall, office, storeroom and one toilet. It will take many months to complete but substantial progress should be made before the next newsletter. To service the kitchen block we have had a 30,000 gallon concrete water tank built. This tank will be
filled with the rain water from the kitchen block roof which will be pumped up the hill to the tank. With the help of Russel and Robert we have erected a half log sign by the main gate reading "SERPENTINE BUDDHIST MONASTERY". We have also erected a sign reading "BUDDHIST MONASTERY" at the junction between the main road (Southwest Highway) and the turn off to the monastery (Kingsbury Drive), which should make the monastery much easier for first comers to find.

An artist's impression of the proposed kitchen/diningroom complex. Artist: Somsak Jungpakdee.

The first hut in the nun's section of the monastery has been commenced. This will be a rectangular shaped hut with an iron roof and a verandah on one side. However, we have yet to hear of any definite candidates to join the nunhood (there must be a better word). If you are a lady, over 20 years and fed up with the housework, then just think, you could be the first Buddhist nun in W.A.! The conditions are reasonable, much better than the 'good old days' last year, and though the salary is dreadful, the holidays nonexistent, job satisfaction is superb and our retirement plan is out of
this world!

As the monastery continues to develop brick by brick, I am often reminded that the qualities of mind needed in meditation, such as patience and equanimity, are also required in building a monastery. Whenever I look too far ahead to all the work which still has to be done, the very thought makes me shiver and I start thinking of Thailand. But by facing each new day one at a time, working steadily without creating deadlines, and being content at the end of the day with whatever, if anything, has been accomplished, then building a monastery becomes possible, becomes joyful, and it becomes a meditation. As the monastery buildings appear on the land so too does those qualities praised by the Buddha appear within those involved. It is not just buildings that are growing at Serpentine.

... Ven. Brahmavamso.

Venerable Ajahn Paññananda with the resident Sangha at Serpentine Monastery.
Magha Puja is celebrated on the full moon day that usually falls in the month of February or March. Magha Puja commemorates the great gathering of 1,250 Noble Disciples coming to see the Lord Buddha without previous appointment. It is also called 'Buddhist All Saints Day' in some countries. The gathering was blessed with four coincidents or factors (1) the assembled Bhikkhus were all Noble Ones, Fully Enlightened, Arahants (2) they were all personally ordained by the Lord Buddha Himself (3) they all travelled spontaneously to the town of Rajagha where the Lord Buddha was staying, without prior notice and (4) the Lord Buddha delivered to them a special Dhamma sermon wherein He summed up His Teachings, pointing out the Noble Way of life which is the means of attaining the Supreme Goal of Nibbana. The instruction He gave is summed up in the following verses:

"The not doing of all evils,
The doing of what is wholly good,
The cleansing of one's own heart,
These are the Teachings of all the Buddhas.

The not speaking of evil, the not hurting,
Being restrained according to the Rules of Discipline.
Knowing what is sufficient in taking food,
Having a secluded place for resting and meditation.
Making effort in the practice for a Pure Heart -
These are the Teachings of all the Buddhas."
The programme for Magha Puja Day will be as follows:

**Morning**
- 9.30 a.m. Gathering at the town hall.
- 10.00 Taking the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts
- 10.30 Offering of food to the monks.
- 11.00 The laypeople will share a meal.

**Evening:**
- 7.00 p.m. Evening chanting, taking the Three Refuges to and the Five Precepts. Followed by a
- 9.00 p.m. Dhamma talk and circumambulation of the shrine

**Dhamma School for Children** will begin again on Sunday 10th February at 3.00 p.m. Classes run for around one hour and are conducted by Ven. Brahmavamso and Alana Wee. Dhamma School is held on every other Sunday after 10th ie. Feb. 24th, March 3rd, 17th and 31st. All parents are encouraged to bring their children along to these interesting and invaluable classes.

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Sunday 24th February, 1985 at the Buddhist Centre, 4 Magnolia St, North Perth at 3.00 p.m. Annual reports will be presented and election of office bearers and committee members will take place. All members and friends are encouraged to attend. If you have any matters that you would like discussed at the A.G.M. please submit them to the Secretary before 1st Feb.

Don't forget **Membership Fees** for the Buddhist Society are due on the 1st January, 1985.

There will not be a monthly social for January but we will be holding a **Family Picnic** in Hyde Park on Sunday 24th Feb. at 12.30. We will be serving delicious home-cooked Cambodian food so please come along and bring your family and friends.

**The Joys of Walking to Meditation.** A few folks have started to regularly park on Farmer street near the tennis courts. I like the few minutes walk before formal meditation. The short walk, especially when the weather is so nice, gives just the needed break between the sitting of hectic driving and the sitting of calm meditation.
Dear members and friends,

Greetings in the Dhamma and a Happy New Year to you all. Thank you to all who made our 'End of the Year' social gathering such a tremendous success. This was our first charity activity and all proceeds were donated to the African Drought Relief Campaign of Community Aid Abroad and $734.60 was handed over to Mr S. Christie of C.A.A. Scott explained that the money would be used in helping establish drinking water wells in Tigray, a severely affected area in the north of Ethiopia. The excellent vegetarian meal started by Carol and Bob Dawkins and followed by additions from many other and the music afterwards was certainly a bargain at $3.50. The Chilean band 'Los Chasquis' and Huong Nguyen from Vietnam freely donated their music and truly made it an outstanding evening. We used reusable plates, glasses and forks this time and I wish to thank the folks who set about washing them - that's a real alternative to the throw-away world we so often wonder about.

Thanks too to Jim Taylor and John Peters who helped organise the visits of Ven. Paññananda and Sister Khema. Ven. Ajahn, as well as giving nightly talks at the Vihara and recording two radio programmes, visited the Benedictine monastery at New Norcia and spoke at length with some of the monks there. He also presided at the ordination of the first novice to be ordained in W.A. Sister Khema gave a series of public lectures and conducted a well-attended meditation retreat in Kalamunda. At least three who attended the retreat will be going to Sydney to be with Sister for further studies.

Thank you to all those who have worked through the year and have assisted in raising funds through our monthly social activities, especially the Thai and Sinagalese communities. These monthly socials give members and friends an opportunity to meet each other and to raise funds for the monthly repayment of $330 for the Vihara. Other outside activities for fund raising have included Ross Anderson's excellent Tai Chi classes and Helene Cotesworth's Yoga classes. Thank you.

In community education we hope the average West Australian has a little more understanding of what Buddhism really means. Throughout the year the Sangha have visited and taught at many schools and classes have visited the Vihara. Ven. Brahmavamso has taught and given instruction in meditation regularly in four of our state jails and our free 'Introduction to Buddhist Meditation' workshops through the year have been attended by over 300 people. We have received a
very positive and wide coverage through newspapers and
television as well as Maureen's and Lynne's excellent display
at the Perth Concert Hall entitled 'Buddhism - A Way Of
Life'. Probably the most widely used educational 'tool' is
this excellent newsletter (available also in Thai and
Cambodian) and diligently and professionally assembled by
our secretary Lynne. A big thanks for your tireless
support Lynne.

Those of you who have not yet visited the Serpentine
monastery should try in '85 to set aside some time to do so.
The easy drive down the South West Highway to Kingsbury
may be a pleasant hour out of Perth - leave the hussle of
the city and enjoy the tranquility of the bush. A lot has
been accomplished in just one year thanks to the great
efforts of our outstanding resident Sangha and the many lay
people who have all helped. I would especially like to thank
Colin Sloan, John Mangan and Roy Bate for all their help.

Support has come from the government in that we have re-
cieved a grant to purchase a cassette recorder plus a casset-
ette duplicating machine. The Buddhist Society is now exempt
from State Land Taxes and of course your donations to the
Perth Meditation Building Fund (Vihara) and the Forest
Monastery Building Fund (Serpentine) are both tax deductible.
Keeping track of all finances has been the job of our lovely
hard working Treasurer Rosemary Roche. Thank you Rosemary.

Last but not least I would like to thank all those who
throughout the year have regularly supported our monks with
food. The monks are entirely dependent upon us lay people
for all requisites and if you would like to join us in this
joyous act of giving we would welcome your support. I would
like to thank in particular Kampoon and Soyamanee from the
community and Jenny Mah from the Malaysian community
for their consistent support right throughout the year in
giving dana to the Sangha.

You will have by now realised just how much YOUR Buddhist
Society does and if you would like to help in any way we
would truly welcome your support. Dear friends we hear so
much about the desire for peace in the world today and we
have in our diverse Buddhist community a rare and precious
opportunity to demonstrate to the community at large that
by the development of inner peace and compassion we can all
work and live in harmony together transcending the pre-
judices and conceits of nationality, customs and language.

I apologise to any who have not been specifically thanked
and by way of apology I once again offer sincere thanks to
all. May the new year find you happy and bring you
every success. .... David Miller (President).
ABOUT THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Buddhist Society is administrated by a committee of ten Ordinary members elected annually in February. Committee meetings are held monthly, usually on the first Sunday of each month.

Membership: Associate membership is open to all interested persons, membership fees are due on the 1st January of each year.

- Single membership: $20.00
- Family membership: $30.00
- Unwaged: $15.00

Membership application forms can be found in the hallway of the Buddhist Centre.

Newsletter: A newsletter is produced every three months and is posted to all members.

Activities: Dhamma talks, meditation courses, meditation retreats, pujas, Dhamma school for children, Tai Chi and Hatha Yoga classes.

Monthly social and fund-raising lunches or suppers. All members are encouraged to come along and meet the committee and other members and friends.

Finance: The Society runs three separate accounts.

1. **General Account**: Members subscriptions and donations in this account are used to meet the cost of the newsletter and other printing, electricity and telephone and other running expenses of the Society.

2. **Perth Meditation Building Fund**: Used to pay the mortgage and maintenance expenses of the Vihara at 4 Magnolia St. We have to meet monthly mortgage repayments of $330. Donations to this account are tax deductible. Members are encouraged to make a monthly pledge so that mortgage repayments can be met. All proceeds from the monthly social go into this a/c.

3. **Forest Monastery Building Fund**: Used solely for building and maintenance expenses at Serpentine Forest Monastery. Donations to this account are also tax deductible.

MAY YOU ALL BE HAPPY AND WELL.