THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
July/August/September 1986 (2529)

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REGULAR ACTIVITIES

AT THE BUDDHIST CENTRE (VIHARA)
4 MAGNOLIA ST
NORTH PERTH, 6006
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.
tel: (09) 444 7013

FRIDAYS:
7.30-8.00 pm
Guided sitting meditation

8.00-9.00 pm
A talk on Buddhism by
Venerable Ajahn Jagaro

SATURDAYS:
9.00 am
Offering the one meal of the day
to the Sangha.

3.00-3.45 pm
Meditation class for beginners

7.30-8.30 pm
Sitting meditation.

SUNDAYS:
4.00 pm
Dhamma school for children
(alternate weeks).

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Please note the Sangha have their one meal of the day at
9.00 a.m. when at the Vihara in North Perth and 10.30 a.m.
when at the monastery.

BODHINYANA MONASTERY
LOT 1, KINGSBURY DRIVE
SERPENTINE, 6205
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
tel: (095) 252420.
Dear Dhamma friends,

Various cultures have different views or attitudes on life, and having lived in Thailand for ten years before returning to Australia 4 years ago it is interesting to make some comparisons. The intention is not one of critical analysis in terms of one being better than the other but rather a reflection on attitudes so as to help us develop an appropriate attitude to life in general and the practice of Buddhism in particular.

For example in Thailand there is an often heard phrase which portrays much of the average Thai attitude to most happenings in life. It is 'my pen rai' which translates roughly as 'never mind'. Now this general attitude of 'my pen rai' can be seen as a very useful way of remaining light hearted and balanced in life, not taking one's problems too seriously or too personally. Though of course if taken to an extreme it can lead to disinterest and laziness, but if used skilfully it can be very beneficial.

From my experience I would say that the Thai people use this little phrase quite skilfully to reduce their mental suffering and frustration. So maybe there is a lesson that can be learned here because the sense of frustration seems to be such a common experience amongst western people. Having developed the intellect to such a high degree we can conceive many wonderful ideals in our minds. We can easily conceive thoughts of world peace or of enlightenment but usually the practical realities of our lives fall far short of those ideals. Thus frustration and disappointment can arise unless there is in the back of the mind that little whisper of 'never mind' or even better 'never mind, just keep trying!'

I think that the 'never mind, just keep trying' attitude can be very helpful for western laypeople who are becoming interested in the study and practice of Buddhism.

If one is born into a Buddhist culture then during ones life one slowly assimilates many of the Buddhist principles and tries to follow some of them. However for western people coming into Buddhism the experience is usually far more dramatic. Instead of a gradual immersion it is more like a jump into the deep end of the pool. The Dhamma books which people read, and most of the Dhamma teachings heard, present Buddhism at a very high level. Laypeople with family and work responsibilities, romantic involvements and so many other worldly pursuits are quite often given the same Dhamma teach-
ings as that given to monks and nuns who have renounced the world. So it is only natural that the layperson hearing those teachings will often feel a sense of dilemma. The teachings of 'non attachment' and 'not following desire' or that 'nothing in the world is worth having' and 'children and loved ones are really just a source of suffering' are not exactly compatible with the interests and responsibilities of family people. In the same way the continual emphasis on formal meditation quite often seems to be at odds with the complicated and preoccupied life of the layperson.

This is not to say that these teachings are wrong or even inappropriate. They are indeed true teachings and also very useful for they instil in the mind an inclination towards the quest for total liberation. However it is important to know how to use such teachings within the context of ones present position in life until such time that one is able to step beyond that state.

So as a layperson what is possible? Yes Enlightenment is possible; wisdom is possible; very high meditation states are possible. But of more relevance and importance to you is what you are actually experiencing as you try to apply the Buddha's Teachings in your life. If you are experiencing frustration disappointment it may indicate too high ideals without an appreciation of the limitations in your life. It may be time to listen to that little voice in the back of your mind that is saying 'never mind, just keep trying'.

Just to become a little bit more generous and a little kinder while being that bit more sensitive and aware is already a step on the path. It is only a matter of taking a step whenever you can and no road is too long.

May the path to peace be a peaceful one for you.

With metta, Jagaro Bhikkhu.

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"STAY WITH THE KNOWING"

Adapted from a translation of a Dhamma talk given by Ven. Ajahn Fun.

In meditation when the mind becomes peaceful and still its nature will be pliant, gentle and refined. You will feel extremely light and experience a profound sense of well being. All feelings of pain disappear here and even sitting long on a hard floor is no longer a problem. All becomes still as your attention settles immovable on the object of meditation. You do not want for anything else because you have seen the source of all that is skilful and unskilful and so now you know the
remedy. It is like a wise doctor who having understood the ailment can then prescribe the right medicine.

The cause of all that is unskilful is simply the mind which will not stop, which refuses to rest. This mind is lost in ambition and hence is in a flurry of activity. It is busily creating all sorts of kamma much of which is unskilful and perpetuating your being in the cycle of birth and death.

Do you see this mind? You try to still it but it will not stop. You try to instruct it but it will not learn. It is like an obstinate, delinquent child who will not obey anyone. Such a mind that is untrained cannot be a refuge for you. However if you train this mind until it becomes pliant and flexible then it can be of real benefit to you and it can be your refuge. It will be as if you have the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha come together within your own mind. This mind will be radiant and having realized the Dhamma your practice will naturally be pure and kind resulting in a peaceful and gentle state of being.

This is tranquility of body and mind where peacefulness pervades throughout. It can only be achieved by careful attention and persistent introspection. Whenever the mind moves from this point it will lead you into creating kamma resulting in more becoming and more birth. If you want to stop creating endless kamma and suffering its results then train yourself to cut this habitual mental activity. Learn to stay with the knowing. Take note of this knowing, where it is, and keep your attention there. There is nothing else to do, just stay with the knowing. Whatever it is that arises, simply know it. The Buddha is this 'one who knows'. If you don't attach to any of the things that arise, they won't stick to you. When you simply observe them then you don't get caught by anything and so there is no suffering. Let it all go and the mind becomes empty. Non-attachment is just this seeing and letting go.

But how to let go? When you clearly see the suffering which results from attachment then letting go happens spontaneously and the mind becomes still. There remains only a feeling of lightness and contentedness with clarity and purity. This is the happiness that the Buddha spoke of when He said that no happiness can equal that of a peaceful mind.

So practise until you encounter this state within yourself. In meditation turn your attention inwards and focus on that 'knowing'. This knowing is not a self or ego it is just knowing. 'The one who knows' does not die nor does it break up; it lacks nothing, it is not suffering, it does not want, it is not difficult, it does not irritate. From beginningless
time this knowing has been; before the Buddha's Enlightenment it was and after the Enlightenment it was just the same. It is only a question of whether you realize it or not!

When you do not fully know this you attach to whatever arises as being self and so you suffer accordingly. In ignorance one gets lost in mental creations thus grasping at them. But when there is wisdom then you do not attach to anything that arises, you do not make anything of it. By seeing clearly and knowing according to truth nothing can deceive you. All that is needed is to establish your attention at the point of knowing and stay there.

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SANGHA NEWS

It is winter time at Bodhinyana Monastery. The hillside is green with the new grass, the dam is full and the creek is flowing, bubbling through the heart of our land. On those dry, sunny, blue-sky days of winter it is a delight, a pleasure still 'allowable' to a renunciate, just to wander with no destination through the warm green paddocks, along the falling rock-strewn course of the stream and into the silent bush. When it is overcast and rainy then it is good meditation weather, by which I mean it is a time to withdraw within ones mind, to that warm silence of cross legged meditation, yet another delight. It is not that Buddhist monks and nuns give up all pleasure, it is just that we give up the coarse for the refined, the uncertain for the unshakeable.

The annual three month Rains Retreat begins soon in mid-July and, as implied by the name, it is the season to withdraw and meditate. All those work projects required in establishing the physical monastery are stopped and the residents will pick up the task of building the spiritual monastery, establishing wisdom, stillness and compassion within themselves. One could erect the most magnificent cathedrals but they would be heartless without kind and wise people living within. It is the spiritual monastery that inspires.

As I write this article it is that time of year when the Sangha is most busy with building work. It is only a month and a 'bit' to the start of the Retreat and there is at least two months work yet to be done! But it doesn't matter. By diligently working, one day at a time, what gets done is well done, happily done, and what is left incomplete can be finished after the Retreat. Deadlines only kill. The two monk's huts we began in December should be complete for only paving the verandah remains to be done. We have a new abbot's hut well under way. At the moment the brick walls are being constructed
by a local bricklayer whose qualifications seem most suitable for him to be employed on the abbot's residence - he has laid bricks at Buckingham Palace! I am not suggesting that the abbot's hut will be anything like that London mansion but I am trying to sneak a look at his trowel to see if it is engraved with the logo 'By appointment to .. (you know who!)'!  

The abbot's hut will have its own bathroom so that it may also be used to accommodate elderly visiting senior monks from Thailand and elsewhere. The other major building project current is landscaping around the kitchen-hall area and for this we have hired a professional. At first it looked like a disaster area around the hall - the big earthmoving machinery had just left when heavy rains fell and there was mud and muck everywhere. Now, as the stone walls are going up with drainage pipes beneath, it is looking like money well spent. Not only will it look aesthetically pleasing but it will also solve the problems of erosion and drainage around the site while providing extra areas for visitors to walk and sit and talk on Buddhism. The beautiful bell from Thailand has also arrived and is now installed looking magnificent in the new bell house (see photo above).
We have one new member of our Sangha, Anthony Vella from Melbourne, who shaved his head and took the 8-Precepts on the full moon day of Vesak to become an 'anagarika' - one who has left the 'home' life. It is the first step to becoming a monk.

Ordination of Anthony Vella as an anagarika.

Two days after his ordination we took him to the Vesak celebration at North Perth Town Hall where he survived his first test admirably - we all went on almsround within the hall and such an enormous amount of food was given (with an equal amount of joy I would add) that our new anagarika was seen mindfully carrying his small bowl filled to the brim and beyong without toppling the biscuit a Cambodian lady had precariously balanced on the very top of the mound. On that evening of Vesak a large gathering silently circumambulated the hall three times, holding candles, incense and flowers while mediating within on the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha - a beautiful tradition celebrated in stillness and reflection throughout the world on Vesak night. The chanting afterwards was 'sooo bee-yootiful' crooned one inspired lady afterwards 'that I could have died'. We appreciated the compliment but we are glad she didn't!

Another new 'member' of the monastery is our new 8-seater Mazda bus which is to be used to ferry monks, nuns, novices
and anagarikas to town for dana at peoples houses, for Vesak
and other celebrations, for the regular weekend talks, to
schools, to prisons .. wherever we go to spread the teachings
of Buddhism. Our old Volkswagen 'kombi' van was spluttering and
groaning under the weight of impermanence and its days were
obviously numbered. The valiant old kombi van has done such
remarkable service to the cause of Buddhism that if it is at
all possible for a machine to make merit, I am sure it will be
reinCARnated as a Rolls Royce or at least a Mercedes! A few
days ago at the timber yard we often frequent one of the
workers was amazed that the old van was still going - "Is
that the same kombi van?", he asked, "the same engine? Wow
you guys must be good at praying!" Of course, it is not
laying that gives long life, but selfless, generous service
to others. May you all live long!

Brahmavamso Bhikkhu.

The celebration of Vesak 1986 at the North Perth Town Hall —
laypeople offering dana to the resident Sangha.
A BUDDHA STATUE FOR BODHINYANA MONASTERY

In a previous newsletter we printed a photograph of the clay model of a beautiful Buddha image being made in Thailand for our monastery in Perth. We are now happy to report that the brass casting of the Buddha statue and the supporting base took place on the 8th February, 1986. The casting ceremony was presided over by Ven. Tahn Jow Koon Pannyananda with many monks and laypeople being present for the auspicious occasion.

We are indeed grateful to the many faithful and generous people who have contributed towards the making of this beautiful Buddha image which will be an inspiring symbol for all the Buddhist community in Perth.

The brass Buddha statue weighs 350 kgms and is 150 cms high while the supporting base weighs 600 kgms and is 88 cms high.

May the sight of this image of a human being who attained to true peace, wisdom and compassion encourage us all to realize that same Buddha within us.

Venerable Tahn Jow Koon Pannyananda presiding over the casting of the Buddha image - 8th February, 1986.
THE RAINS RETREAT AT BODHINYANA MONASTERY

During the Lord Buddha's time a rule was laid down for all monks and nuns directing that they should spend the three lunar months of the rainy season in one particular place, either in a monastery with fellow monks or alone in a suitable location.

Traditionally this is a period when external work is kept to a minimum and the emphasis is placed on developing one's introspective meditation practice, facilitated by the quiet surroundings and many hours of formal meditation.

The monastic Rains Retreat (Vassavaso) usually begins the day after the full moon of July. In fact the full moon in July is Asalha Puja which commemorates the start of the Lord Buddha's Teaching career for it was on that day that He gave his first sermon to the five ascetics.

On SUNDAY 20th JULY, 1986 we will celebrate both Asalha Puja and the "ENTRY INTO THE RAINS RETREAT" at our monastery in Serpentine and we invite all the Buddhist community together with their friends to join us on this auspicious occasion.

The programme for this day will include:

10.00 am Auspicious chanting by the Sangha and a short Dhamma talk on the significance of this day.

10.30 am Offering dana to the Sangha.

11.00 am Sharing a meal for all the laypeople present.

2.00-4.00 pm Meditation and a Dhamma talk.

All welcome - please come along and join us for this joyous occasion at Bodhinyana Monastery, Lot 1 Kingsbury Drive, Serpentine - telephone (095) 252420.
Buddhist books on sale at the Vihara

As it is very difficult to find any good Dhamma books in any of the usual book shops in Perth the committee of the Buddhist Society felt that it would be good to have a small selection of recommended books on sale at the Vihara. Rather than being a commercial undertaking the idea is to make good Dhamma books available to interested people.

At present we have in stock the following books -


"Heart Wood From The Bo Tree" - Buddhhasasa Bhikkhu - $5.00

"The Buddha" - Michael Carrithers - $4.00

"What the Buddha Taught" - Walpola Rahula - $8.00 (kindly donated by John and Joan Peaty).

"The Buddha Speaks Here and Now" - $6.00

"Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" - Shunryu Suzuki - $12.50

"The Buddha's Ancient Path" - Venerable Piyadassi Thera -$7.50

"Calm and Insight" - Venerable Khantipalo Thera - $8.50

"The Experience of Insight" - Joseph Goldstein - $6.00

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COMMITTEE NEWS

We were most grateful to the large number of members who attended the Special General Meeting held on Saturday 31th May. Also several members sent in proxy votes to support the committee's move to change section 7 and 8 of the constitution which will now allow us to approve new applications for membership more quickly and members not paying their subs for over 12 months will lose their membership.

At our recent committee meeting Mrs Suparb Delaney was co-opted on to our committee after her return from Thailand. Once again Suparb has offered to care for the Thai library books at the Vihara.

This year each committee member has taken on one main task to help the Buddhist Society and it has distributed the workload more evenly. All members of the Society are welcome to share their ideas at our Saturday monthly meetings at 4.00pm after the meditation class at 3.00 pm.

We are still looking for a suitable piece of real estate for our new Vihara in the inner suburbs of Perth. Please keep
your eyes open and notify us if you see a suitable large property for sale.

Hopefully within the next month we will be welcoming a Cambodian refugee family to Perth whom we have sponsored through the government backed Community Refugee Settlement Scheme. This family will contain two old Grandmothers, a husband and wife with two small children. Any donations of furniture, linen, warm clothes etc would be appreciated and can be left at the Vihara. If you would like to help in this scheme please ring the co-ordinator David Miller on telephone 459 3606 (home).

A formal invitation from the Society has been extended to Venerable Jundee Kantasaro, a disciple of Ven. Ajahn Chah in Thailand to join the resident Sangha at the monastery for a period of two years. Ven. Ajahn Jagaro is in Thailand at the moment and will be returning on 12th July and we are hoping that Ven. Kantasaro and Ven. Ajahn Jagaro will travel back to Perth together.

All good things must come to an end and so we must say good bye to Venerable Nyanandhаммо who is returning to Thailand at the end of July. We wish him good health and a joyful treading of the path to peace.

May you all hear the gift of the Dhamma and grow in its wisdom.

Christine Banks (President).

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**Dhamma School For Children**

Don't forget the Dhamma school for children which is held every second Sunday at 4.00 at the Vihara in North Perth. Ven. Brahavamso is the teacher and judging by the laughter which emits from the shrine room a good time is had by all. Classes run for around an hour and are structured for children from 8 to 14 years. For more information please ring Ven. Brahavamso on (95) 252420 at the monastery.

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**Weekend Meditation Retreat**

The Buddhist Society will be conducting another weekend meditation retreat beginning the evening of Friday 5th September to Sunday 7th. The retreat will be held at the Mt Helena Centre of Theosophy and will be led by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro. For registration and more information see insert in this newsletter or ring Mrs Phyllis Voss on 399 1616 (home). The cost of the weekend is $30 which covers accommodation and food - the teachings are of course free.
THE SIMILE OF THE SAW

An extract from Discourse 21 of the Middle Length Collection translated by Venerable Nyanamoli Thera.

"Even were bandits savagely to sever you limb from limb with a two handled saw, one who entertained hate in ones heart on that account would not be one who carried out my teaching.

Now this is how you should train herein: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no bad words, and we shall abide compassionate with a mind of loving kindness and no inner hate.

We shall abide with a mind of loving kindness extending to that person, and we shall abide with an abundant, exalted mind of loving kindness, without hostility or ill-will, extending over the all-encompassing world as its supporting object'.

That is how you should train yourself".

THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE GODS

Anguttara-Nikaya, Catukka-nipate (The Fours) No. 33

"Now there arises in the world the Blessed One, who is holy, fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and pure conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of humans in need of guidance, the teacher of gods and humans, enlightened and blessed.

He thus teaches Dhamma: 'This is personality; this the origination of personality; this the cessation of personality; this is the way leading to the cessation of personality'.

And those gods who are long lived, resplendent in beauty, who dwell full of happiness and for a long time in lofty heavenly realms, even they, having heard the Perfect One teaching Dhamma, are mostly beset by fear, agitation and trembling.

'Alas, we who, in fact, are impermanent, believed that we were permanent! We who, in fact, are evanescent, believed that we were ever-lasting! We who, in fact, are non-eternal, believed that we were eternal! But truly we are impermanent, evanescent, non-eternal and engrossed in personality'".
AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST MEDITATION

A series of four workshops exploring the meditation techniques of both calm and insight as taught by the Buddha will be conducted at the North Perth Migrant Resource Centre, 66 Angove Street, North Perth.

These workshops will be led by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro commencing Sunday 14th September.

Please bring along a suitable cushion for sitting meditation and wear loose and comfortable clothing.

These workshops are of course free and open to all who are interested whether you are a practising Buddhist or not.

Dates: Sundays September 14th, 21st, 28th and Sunday October 5th.

Time: 3.00 to 4.30 p.m.

Place: The North Perth Migrant Resource Centre, 66 Angove Street, North Perth.

Cost: Free.

THAI LANGUAGE CLASSES

In an effort to foster communication and sharing among members, Mrs Suparb Delaney has kindly offered to conduct conversational Thai Language classes for beginners. The classes will be held at the Vihara between 7.00 and 8.00 pm on Wednesdays for two months, commencing 9th July. A donation of $3.00 per class will be requested from participants and these funds will contribute to the New Vihara Fund. The classes will be very beneficial and fun. Everyone is welcome. For further details contact the Vihara on 444 7013 or Kathy Shiels on 381 4929.

PICNIC IN KINGS PARK

Our Thai friends are organizing a Thai picnic luncheon on Sunday 21st September at 12 noon in Kings Park. This will be a most enjoyable day so please keep this date free. To indicate your intention to attend and for more information on exact location please contact the Vihara on 444 7013.