THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF W.A.

NEWSLETTER

July - September BE 2537 (1994)
BEGINNING OF THE RAINS RETREAT
BODHINYANA MONASTERY
Sunday 24th July, 1994

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 place, either in a monastery or alone in a suitable place. This is a period when external work is kept to a minimum and the emphasis is placed on developing peace and wisdom. Quiet surroundings, good Dhamma friends and many hours of meditation provide wonderful support for this noble goal.

This year we will be celebrating the "entry to the Rains" at Bodhinyana Monastery on Sunday 24th July. The programme for the day will include:

9.30am  Gathering at the Monastery
10.00am  Taking of the Three Refuges and Five Precepts
          Auspicious chanting and a short Dhamma talk
10.30am  Offering of dana to the Sangha
11.00am  Sharing a meal
12.00pm  Offering of requisites to the Sangha
2 - 4.00pm Meditation and Dhamma talk

All Welcome
There are a lot of good things happening in the world today, but unfortunately there are also a lot of unpleasant things going on at the same time. The most obvious and striking failure of humanity is the inability to live in peace and harmony with one another. We have so many conflicts, so many separations of human beings according to race, colour, beliefs, politics and religion. There seems to be a never ending source of conflict and strife in human beings even though it is so obvious that all human beings are striving for happiness. Whatever we do in life, whatever we undertake, wherever we go it is always in the quest for happiness. If we really contemplate the motivation behind all our actions, be it study, work, relationships, involvement in political or religious movements, the basic motivation behind that action is the quest for peace and true happiness.

Buddhism is primarily concerned with peace. We say that the Buddha was one who was at peace, and that he taught the path to peace. So I feel that Buddhism must have something very, very relevant to share with human beings especially about the path to peace and true happiness.

In Buddhism we say that we strive to protect ourselves and to protect others. By protecting myself, I protect others, by protecting others, I protect myself. So the aim of a Buddhist is to create outer harmony and inner peace. We say that “The mind is the forerunner to all things”. The quality of the mind is that which determines the quality of life, so that if we see continuous strife, confusion and conflict in the world, wars, discriminations and exploitations then that can only reflect the quality of the minds of human beings. So the individual minds of human beings must also be in a state of confusion, conflict, oppression and aggression, because all actions, whether good or bad, have “mind as the forerunner”. In Buddhism we place great emphasis on the mind. We train the mind so that we begin to understand the mind, and ultimately to liberate it.
Most people are very much caught up in living in concepts, beliefs and ideas. We live in the world of ideas, thinking about life, existence, ourselves and liberation, but that is not the real experience of the way things are. Thinking about means ‘going around’, not going to the centre or point. The Buddha was very much concerned with the practice rather than theory and I think what Buddhism has to offer humanity today is a way of getting to know the mind, training the mind and liberating the mind. If Buddhism just remains in the realm of intellect, that is study, the accumulation of knowledge, ideas and concepts, logical as they may be intellectually, gratifying and satisfying and stimulating as they may be, that will still not resolve the essence of the problem that humanity faces today.

The essence of the problem is conflict.

In the realm of conditioned phenomena (and conditioned phenomena here refers to all physical, material or mental phenomena) everything that is created is called in Pali “Sankhara”, that which arises and passes away. As long as we abide in the realm of conditioned phenomena then there will always be a multiplicity. There will always be a never ending variety, a never ending multiplicity, and where there is multiplicity there can never be complete peace because there is always conflict, there is always disagreement.

Peace in the world is directly related to the peace of individual human beings, they are not separate, but very much related to each other. To create inner peace within individual human beings is to contribute to the outer peace of this world, because if we have peaceful human beings, we will have a peaceful world. If we have human beings who are confused and in conflict, the world will remain in confusion and conflict. If Buddhism is going to have this ability to contribute to world peace by contributing to the individual human being’s realisation of peace, we must really apply the teachings of the Buddha, we must really get to its heart.
So I very much stress the importance of practising the teachings of the Buddha, getting to know the mind, training the mind. In order to liberate the mind it requires an approach which aims at this particular end, the true peace of the mind. How can we realise true peace of the mind? It's certainly not by believing. Belief is always in the realm of concept and duality and where there is duality there must be conflict. So I think that when we teach Buddhism and Buddhist meditation we should very much be stressing the essence of the Buddha's teaching, which is the way to peace. We should remember that what the Buddha taught was a path or a road. He did not teach the "Lokuttara Dhamma", or the ultimate truth as this truth cannot be taught. All He could teach was the "Sammuti Dhamma", which means the conceptual or conventional Dhamma which he compared to a raft. This raft is to get us from this shore to the other - but please remember that the raft is not the other shore.

His Teachings are also likened to a road to be journeyed upon, but the road is not the destination. With rafts and roads there will always be a variety and if we attach to them as being something absolute, there will always be conflict.

The Buddha was pointing towards letting go, liberation of the mind, not towards tying up the mind with more concepts, ideas and beliefs. The Buddha was very much pointing to the way of liberating the mind from all concepts, all views, opinions and all belief. He was pointing to the essence of mind, and the essence of mind is not a concept. The essence of mind is not a view, an opinion, a belief or a thought. The essence of mind is bright and empty, it is the knowing mind, the Buddha-mind - the 'one who knows'.

This seems all very abstract in the beginning because when we talk about getting to know the mind, training the mind, liberating the mind, unless one has taken time to stop and question and enquire one doesn't really know what this means. This is why meditation is very important, but not meditation as a particular technique, the technique is only concerned with getting to know the mind and training the mind. The Buddha Himself taught many different meditation techniques and we can find many, many more techniques than one finds in the Buddhist scriptures. The technique is just a tool to be used, not some thing absolute in itself.
This practise of meditation, of getting to know the mind, of training and liberating the mind is very, very important. It’s a way to start breaking through the concepts, of not just thinking about life, but beginning to actually experience life, experience reality.

As we train the mind in this concentration then we begin to understand what the mind does, what the mind is, what the mind is doing all the time and we begin to appreciate what the monkey mind really is. The monkey mind is always jumping from one thing to another, it’s the mind that is always conceiving and thinking, living in concepts and continually reacting with desire and aversion to the experiences that we encounter.

So we begin to notice the mind, what it does, how it reacts, the contents of the mind. This is the first step in training the mind. Then we begin to discipline the mind, instead of just letting it run about jumping from one thing to another in a continuous stream of blind activity we begin to say .... Stop! Let’s just see if we can abide in the here and now and stop thinking about the here and now. Try to stop and be present here and now using a meditation technique.

Now as the mind becomes more peaceful, clear and tranquil through repeated training, then we can begin to reflect. What does it mean to reflect? It means to look closely. If we want to understand the nature of the world and existence where can we possibly look other than in this very mind. The Buddha said that the Dhamma is to be seen in this fathom long body with it’s perceptions and feelings. Within this body and mind Dhamma is to be seen, so that when we train the mind and the mind is reasonably clear we can look and see everything within the mind. The mind is that which knows, the body can only offer the sense faculties of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and the brain the facility for thinking and creating. What is it that knows? It is the mind that knows. Where is the world? It is in the mind. It is the mind which knows the world through the senses, there is no other way that we can know the world. So, if we want to understand the world, if we want to understand the nature of existence we must come and look at the nature of the mind. We must come and observe and enquire into the mind, we must dwell within and observe with a clear mind.
Now this is of great benefit and of great value to humanity and to individual peace, because it is the way to resolve all duality and all conflicts because when we begin to look deeply and observe the mind we can begin to stop living in the world of concepts and stop living in the world of just believing. As Buddhists we are not interested in just believing something. The Buddha was pointing to something which was beyond concepts, beyond views and opinions, beyond just belief. He was pointing to something that can be experienced, the essence of the mind which can know the nature of all conditioned phenomena. The source of strife is that people believe conditioned phenomena, they take refuge in views and opinions through attachment. To take refuge means to ‘hold on to’, and what do we hold onto? The fact that there is so much conflict in the world can only indicate that people hold onto conditioned phenomena, hold on to the body as being self, my body. If I hold on to the opinion that I am a European, a male then I am at odds with the Asian, and the female. I have made a difference, a distinction and a separation. Or if I hold on to my views that we should have nuclear disarmament, then I am at odds again with the people who believe that there should not be nuclear disarmament. If I believe there is no God, so I am at odds with the person who says “I believe there is a God”. Now we see that the source of conflict and limitation here is this believing in or taking refuge in concepts, conditioned phenomena, sankhara.

As a Buddhist, one who takes refuge in the Buddha, ‘the one who knows’, this is not a concept, an idea or a belief, it is a knowing in the present moment. As a Buddhist we take refuge in the Dhamma, not the Dhamma as the spoken or written
word or the concepts and cultural peculiarities of one sect or another, but the Dhamma as the realisation of 'the way things are'. The Dhamma is the truth of the way things are, so that now, through meditation, we incline towards this knowing through the mind, that which is peaceful and clear through the mind. We begin to reflect and have a new perspective on ourselves and the experience of life.

We as Buddhists have a wonderful message which is of great relevance, so if we as individual Buddhists can be an example of this, by living in this way, by practising in this way, then I think we will be truly a benefit to this world and to Buddhism.

So this is a practice which is of great relevance to us as individual human beings striving for true peace and happiness, but also of relevance to the world as a whole because it is the way to resolve all the conflicts, it is the way for humanity to get beyond the duality and begin to resolve the source of all conflict. Without this ability to turn to the depths and essence of the mind to gain a true perspective on this life, humanity will always be caught in the conceptual, there will always be multiplicity and duality. For Buddhist people who want to follow in the path of the Buddha this is something we can really offer to humanity today and we can offer it not just by talking about it, but essentially by living it.

We as Buddhists have a wonderful message which is of great relevance, so if we as individual Buddhists can be an example of this, by living in this way, by practising in this way, then I think we will be truly a benefit to this world and to Buddhism.

Taken from a talk given by Ven Ajahn Jagaro in Thailand
THE MEANING OF THE WORD “MERIT” IN THE BUDDHA’S TEACHING

For many of us who come to the Buddha’s Teaching from a modern educated culture, wishing to free ourselves from materialistic ways of thinking, the word “merit” can carry some negative connotations. Yet merit is the usual translation of the word “punnya” which is repeatedly praised in the Pali record of the Buddha’s discourses. In the Dhammapada the Buddha states:

“If one wishes to make merit, one should do so often and be pleased to do it for happiness (sukha) comes from accumulating merit”.

This arising of happiness indicates how the gradual teaching of the Buddha operates in practice, happiness (sukha) being one of the essential factors of concentration in meditation.

When Visakha was questioned by the Buddha as to what advantages she expected from her great generosity, she replied that when she knew she was contributing to the fruits of recluseship of some visiting recluse through their partaking of her offerings, great delight leading to joy (piti) would arise in her mind. This would calm her body and give rise to ease (sukha) which helped her mind to concentrate, while promoting the development of spiritual faculties and powers along with the factors of enlightenment. The Buddha is reported to have made an exclamation of approval of Visakha’s comments.

The principle also applies to monks and nuns: “Monks, do not fear acts of merit; they are equivalent to happiness”, the Buddha advised. “I know very well that for a long time I have experienced desirable, pleasant and agreeable results from meritorious deeds often performed”. (Anguttara VII 58B)
The phenomenon of merit applies to the cultivation of the path at all levels. It is a meritorious act even to throw away the water after washing one's plate with the generous thought: "May the particles of food in the washing water be food for the creatures on the ground". How much more so to feed a human being. The sutta then hastens to add that is more meritorious to feed a virtuous person.

We have to be especially careful to "speak only words of kindness, never words unkind".

Another discourse states that it is not possible to estimate the amount of merit that accrues when an offering is endowed with the following six factors: the donor is happy at the thought of giving prior to the offering, pleased at the time of offering, satisfied after the offering is made (there are no regrets!), the recipient should be free from greed, free from hatred and free from delusion, or embarked on a course of training to eliminate these. The merit is then said to be as immeasurable as the waters in the ocean.

If only one could follow the following instructions!:
"Focus and fill the mind with joy of giving and from this secure position you will be free from ill-will. In absence of passions, if you imbue the mind with boundless loving kindness maintaining constant care and alertness day and night, then the metta will spread infinitely in each direction".

The merit is also said to further increase when dedicated to all sentient beings emphasizing one's parents, one's teachers, benevolent spirits and all realms of existence. Surely one should get at least one good meditation from such ceremony!

There is a remarkable story of the previous Buddha Kassapa, who on two occasions helped himself to the possessions of his close lay-disciple Ghitakara who experienced continuous joy (piti) for two weeks after each of these demonstrations.
of the trust between them. The Buddha Gotama stated that if beings knew as he knew the results of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them with others. One should give to those in need “like an overturned pot holding nothing back”, giving according to need: “food, clothes, lamps, transport, shelter and where appropriate, the highest instruction in Dhamma”. More recently Mother Teresa has said: ‘To give until it hurts.’

It is not necessary to have much in order to practise generosity. Offerings given by one of meagre resources are considered especially valuable: “One should first care for one’s spouse and children, employees and dependents. There are five timely gifts: to one who has just arrived, to one who is leaving, to the sick, when food is hard to get, and the first fruits of field and orchard should be given to the virtuous.”

Giving only in order to gain future results is less profitable than giving in order to beautify the mind; yet giving is stated to be a cause for rebirth in a heavenly realm. One should keep future results in mind when giving with one’s own hand, thoughtfully, with reverence, giving things that are good (Anguttara III 172) When giving to the needy special sensitivity is required.

Regarding the gift of virtue: “There are these five gifts, known from ancient times, known for long, known by tradition, ancient and unrejected; not rejected before they are not rejected now and will not be rejected in the future; they are unrepudiated by intelligent recluses and Brabmins. What are these five gifts? Herein a noble disciple gives up the taking of life and abstains from it; gives up sexual misconduct and abstains from it; gives up wrong speech and abstains from it; and gives up intoxicating drinks and drugs and abstains from them. By abstaining from these, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, freedom from hostility and oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility and op-
pression, one will oneself enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility and oppression. These are the five great gifts.” (Anguttara VIII 39).

When we have been engaged in mental cultivation for a while and have refined our life to a good degree, we can find that verbal indiscretion is our greatest weakness. When in positions of authority or responsibility, we have to be especially careful to “speak only words of kindness, never words unkind.” (Vin. IV 5). If we do instruct or criticise others we should establish the following conditions: The suggestion should be from a kindly heart, at the right time and place where the recipient will not be caused embarrassment, and is not irritated, busy or tired. Lastly the admonisher should resolve to speak gently, to the point, and without fear. (Vin. Cv IX 1 - 2).

Finally on meditation: “One who protects oneself protects others. One who protects others protects oneself. How does one who protects oneself protect others? By sustaining meditation, cultivating it and practising it frequently. How does one who protects others protect oneself? By patience, by harmlessness, by the condition of love, and by the condition of tender care.” (Samyutta V 169).

Written by Ven. Sumungalo

Footnote: The quotation marks (”) indicate Pali sayings of the Buddha
SANGHA NEWS

You can tell Buddhism is catching on in Australia, that it is becoming increasingly popular, when someone rings up our Monastery and asks the monks to perform a funeral ceremony for a recently deceased Buddhist dog! When asked whether internment or cremation was more fitting I answered, of course, that the usual preference for Buddhist dogs is to bury their bones in the garden! We did not attend the ceremony, it being thought sufficient just to give advice, moreover according to our records the dog was not a fully paid up member of our Buddhist Society, although I did later do some chanting to wish the dog a good rebirth - as a corgi in Buckingham Palace! I realise that some may think this is going too far, even that it proves beyond doubt that this monastery is going to the dogs, but the story goes to show how far Buddhism is now spreading, and how deep it is now buried in the hearts of Australians and in their gardens as well.

On the subject of going too far, Ajahn Jagaro has gone too far away (at least for many of us here in Perth) and is now in Sri Lanka having a well deserved retreat. His original plan was to be back before Vesak in mid-May, but he phoned a few weeks before asking if he could stay a “little bit longer”. The “little bit longer” turns out to be at least 6 months! Oh dear, Oh my, Oh gosh! (which is the extent of expletive language a monk is allowed), my easy life as No. 2 monk had come to an end, my good karma of many years had finally expired, now I would really have to work, work like a dog - and I’ve already mentioned what happened to the last Buddhist dog! But, seriously, all of us are happy that Ajahn Jagaro can have a long break. A member of our Society who tracked him down in Sri Lanka two months into his retreat remarked how very relaxed and peaceful, how well Ajahn Jagaro looked. Our sincere best wishes to Ajahn Jagaro for a fruitful retreat. It was mentioned that he will probably come back to Australia at the end of the year ....the year 1994 I seriously hope!

Ajahn Jagaro has not been the only monk ascending higher planes! Ajahn Nyanadhammo ascended in an Ansett jet to help with Vesak in Darwin. I ascended in an Airbus to officiate at the dedication ceremony and Vesak at the Buddhist Society of Victoria’s new city centre, Buddhhaloka, in Melbourne, which was also attended by
the new deputy leader of the Liberal Party, Peter Costello (see photo). And Venerables Sumangalo and Santidhammo flew off to Brisbane for 3 weeks to help the Buddhists of Queensland. As one person put it, our monastery in Serpentine has the first Rent-a-Monk service ever set up in Australia!

But the Dial-a-Monk service has been operating a long time. Often people ring up the monastery for help with their problems. Once someone rang all the way from Sydney asking for a sermon over the phone to be recorded for SBS radio and broadcast the next day! Then another lady rang from somewhere deep in the outback and said that being 1,000 or so miles from the nearest Buddhist monk and feeling depressed, would I recite the auspicious chants for her over the phone!

I wouldn't really mind if our chanting were better. In March and April earlier this year we were in the midst of a record drought. It had not rained in the monastery
for several hot months. The grounds were tinder dry threatening another bush fire, many trees were wilting and dying of thirst, and our normally placid kangaroos with nothing to eat began to have a mean and hungry look in their eyes. One of the monks found a chant for bringing on rain in an old Thai book of chants so we gave it a go. We had been practising the rain chant for many days when, as I entered the Main Hall for a meeting one evening, I noticed the clouds coming in from the West! This was our chance so we gave the rain chant everything we had. When I went outside the Hall barely an hour later, the stars were twinkling brightly in a cloudless night sky! Undeterred we continued doing the rain chant at every meeting, except for one evening when I forgot to do the chant. You guessed it...that night it rained! Not very much rain, but enough to dampen our enthusiasm for this dry as dust chant. A week or two later after we gave up the rain chant altogether, came the violent May storm with cascades of rain over the Vesak weekend! Please keep it a secret that our recitation of the rain chant may have been responsible for the drought and the subsequent storm - someone might sue us for an arm and a leg.

Which brings me onto the tale, or rather the arm, of one of our residents. We found the kangaroo in trouble by the lake. It had been shot in the arm and two splintered bones showed through a grisly wound in the flesh. Ajahn Norm comforted the young male as he tied a makeshift bandage over the wild kangaroo’s wound, but as we went to fetch help the kangaroo bit off the bandage and disappeared in the bush. We found him the next day half delirious from the infection arising from the wound and called the local vet. Unfortunately, the arm was so badly injured it had to be amputated. After the operation and still groggy from the anaesthetic our kangaroo was brought home, though it had to kept inside for another few hours. Some monks who will remain nameless thought the best place to put the kangaroo until it recovered was in the ladies toilet and washroom down by the lake! Fortunately, and I mean that, no women came to visit that afternoon for if some had come and gone to answer nature’s call they’d have got quite a surprise to find a kangaroo in the loo! Our one armed kangaroo has recovered very well and is now one of the friendliest of all. He seems to manage alright with only one paw, except for some itches which he now finds impossible to reach. One arm for a kangaroo is just not up to scratch!
Our cinerarium project for housing the dead itself died a death when the quotes from the builders showed how much it would cost. After much grave consideration, so to say, it seemed better that we provide alternative and less expensive accommodation for our permanent guests in the existing buildings already in the monastery - either on shelves in the rear of our Main Hall, in cavities built into the pillars of the monastery wall (which is the tradition in Thailand) or simply scattered in the grounds. This also has the advantage that if two of our deceased members never got on well together when they were alive, their ashes can be placed in separate locations rather than in the cinerarium on a shelf side-by-side for the rest of the aeon!

May all beings rest in peace, both those dead and those still alive!

Ajahn Brahm
COMMITTEE NEWS

It has been a busy time over the past quarter with many events and happenings taking place within our Society.

Vesakha day was well attended despite the wild weather. Many people, came to take the 3 refuges and 5 precepts of a lay Buddhist, some for the first time. Our Sri Lankan community put in a big effort to beautify Dhammaloka with very decorative lanterns made mainly by the children. The choir also played its part in uplifting those attending by singing wonderful Buddhist songs, setting everyone in the right frame of mind for the visually stunning circumambulation ceremony. These cultural traditions, brought to our Centre by our diverse communities, play a very healthy role in fostering understanding, peace and tolerance within each of us and our community at large.

REPORT ON EVENTS

It is pleasing to report that the monthly flower puja’s and the Wednesday night sitting practice are enjoying an increasing attendance. We encourage all members to join in when they are able. The “Water Festival” celebrations held in April this year were also an opportunity for practice and merit making, coupled with good fun. The members attending the weekend retreat conducted by Venerable Ajahn Brahman have reported a worthwhile weekend with a dedicated practice of the Buddha’s teachings and a good time.

Many people came along for the Thai fundraising dinner in April. Delicious and authentic Thai food was enjoyed and the night served to provide financial support for our mortgage. Probably the best thing that comes from the various gastronomic nights that our different communities stage at the Buddhist Society is the opportunity to meet each other socially.
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS CLOSURE

A couple of working bees have been held over the past few months allowing us to bring the maintenance of our Centre back up to scratch. One of the most significant jobs undertaken was to close off the old pedestrian access way with a fence. The committee is pleased to have this work in hand, because the “access way” caused us some trouble with thieves and vandals. We have tried before to close the lane, but the time was not ripe. This time, no objection was raised by the Council, in fact they seemed to support us. We had surveyed the use of the lane and found it to be minimal, further, only a very short time need be added to a journey around the road. The two houses at the back of our Centre were pleased to support our application to the Council, and will equally share the land abutting their sites, once the Council have been paid the market value of the land. We were lucky in this regard because the “access” was only an easement over our property. We owned the land but could not use it, so the financial cost to our Society was only the legal fees to remove the easement. We are now looking for ideas to redevelop the garden area outside the old hall and would be grateful for any suggestions.

SUGGESTION BOX

This is a good time to mention the new suggestion box that has been placed in the Vihara next to the notice board. The committee would welcome any ideas that members might have to make our Centre run more smoothly — to make things more accessible. We would welcome any feedback, positive and negative.

FLOWERS

Another job that has been completed over the past quarter is a bench and sink unit, with plumbing, in one of the cupboards in the Dhammasala. We have installed this unit to make life easier for the people who organise the flowers for the shrine each week. Have you noticed that every week there is a magnificent display of flowers on our shrine, due mainly to the efforts of Shirley Jackson. Shirley has organised the flowers for many years and we thank her for her efforts. If anyone would like to help with provision of flowers for the shrine, Shirley would love to hear from you.
SOCIAL WORK

The Grant in Aid workers employed by our Society are continuing their fine work within the Buddhist Community of Western Australia. The current funding period for this work is soon coming up for renewal, so we have made application to continue the program for another three years. The Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Department have indicated that we are in a good position to continue attracting the funds and are very pleased with the work our Officers have done to date. We are hopeful that this arm of our Buddhist Society work will continue into the future.

In future newsletters we will bring you more information about the work our Grant in Aid workers are doing, however this time, space allows us only to mention that Ying and Karu are looking for volunteers who may be able to bring specialised help to Buddhist people in need. We are especially looking for anyone with legal training, and counselling skills. If there are members who have these skills or perhaps the ability to train others, we would love to hear from you. It is good to have access to Buddhist people to do this work in some situations, because then the benefit of the Buddha’s teaching can be practically applied.

RAINS RETREAT

The time of the 3 months rains retreat is approaching once again. Most members will be familiar with the Theravadan practice that requires monks to stay in one place over the so called “rains” period in tropical counties. Our monks will be honouring this practice by staying put at Bodhinyana monastery for the three months.

The Rains is a good time for the lay community at Dhammaloka to practice and strengthen personal practice, in the same way that the monks use the time. It is also a time for the lay community to consolidate, support each other and bring into operation the practical needs required to make our Centre function properly without the monks.
The committee have arranged a full program of speakers and leaders for all the regular activities we have. There will be invited speakers and teachers from outside our Centre as well as experienced lay speakers and leaders from within our own community. The committee is aiming to put a lot of energy into the Rains Retreat period at Dhammaloka this year, so we invite everyone to come along, take part and support the activities organised. A list of everything happening together with the speakers and topics can be found on the notice board.

Yours in the Dhamma

The Committee.

The beautiful lanterns made by the Sri Lankan community for Vesakha Day.
PRISON MEDITATION CLASSES

The Buddhist Society is often requested to run meditation classes at various institutions such as Universities, schools and prisons. At present, classes are being run at Curtin University, Swanbourne High School (for 13 staff members) and Casuarina Maximum Security Prison.

Earlier this year, members were asked to support a request for donations towards purchasing cushions for the Prison Meditation Classes and many kind people immediately responded. 12 cushions (or zafus) were purchased and special permission was granted for them to be taken into the prison. The Buddhist Society member who is conducting the classes was looked at somewhat askance and thoroughly searched as he arrived at the security entrance with two large garbage bags full of blue and grey cushions! The cushions are kept locked up in a storeroom between classes.

The men attending the classes were extremely grateful for them as the floor, although carpeted, is quite hard. They were also quite moved to hear of the spontaneous generosity of those who donated the cushions. Some extra money given was used to buy some books and some taped talks were also donated for quite a respectable little Buddhist meditation library which is brought out at each class so that the men can borrow from it.

There have been more than 20 prisoners who have come to the classes. A few have come to every class and others drop in from time to time. The classes are run between 4:15pm and 5:30pm on Thursday afternoons, during the prisoners’ 2 hours of recreation time. The education officer who organised the classes also attends as she is a keen meditator. Some of the prison officers have also expressed interest and a class for them may eventuate in the future.

Thankyou to those who supported this worthwhile project.
INTER-FAITH SEMINAR AND DISCUSSION GROUP

A Committee member recently took part in an Inter-Faith Seminar which was held as an “Extension Course” at the University of W.A. There were speakers from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Bahai as well as contributions from Krishna Consciousness, Sai Baba and others. The course lasted for six weeks and was attended by 25 people. All of those taking part agreed it was a very successful venture and plans for similar courses in the future are being developed.

The group that organised the Course, meets once a month at the homes or Centres of the various members and discussion centres around developing an understanding and appreciation of one another’s religion. It has been quite a challenge to represent the Buddhist perspective on these occasions considering that all the other religions are totally theistically orientated. Much diplomacy is required! However, apart from appreciating those facets that we all have in common and in allowing the differences, one can actually learn and appreciate a great deal more about one’s own religion at the same time.

The meeting of this group for June was hosted by the Buddhist Society in our Library.

If any members of the Society are interested in the activities of this group, please ask one of the committee members for details.
### REGULAR ACTIVITIES

**DHAMMALOKA BUDDHIST CENTRE NOLLAMARA**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</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 (note special programme during August - September)</td>
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<td>Saturday</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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00-4.00pm</td>
<td>Meditation and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>8.30-9.15am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.15-9.45am</td>
<td>Walking meditation and interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.45-10.30am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.00-1.30pm</td>
<td>Dhamma school for children is on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>7.30-8.30am</td>
<td>Unguided meditation followed by an informal discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9.30-11.00am</td>
<td>Yoga, relaxation &amp; meditation (beginners welcome)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOUTH OF THE RIVER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>7.00-9.00pm</td>
<td>Meditation Instruction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Meditation and Dhamma talk</td>
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<td>Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enquiries to Dave Reed, 399 1411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADDRESSES**

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

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

Buddhist Community Services  
Social Worker  
Tel: 344 4220