THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF W.A.

NEWSLETTER
April - June BE 2538 (1995)
VESAKHA DAY

Sunday 14 May 1995

The full moon day of Vesakha is an event of the utmost importance as it commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbana (final passing away) of the Lord Buddha who, through his own efforts, was able to reach the pinnacle of perfection and wisdom. This gives us all much encouragement and inspiration in that, if we make the necessary effort, we too can attain the same enlightenment.

Everyone is invited to attend the Vesakha Day celebrations at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre on Sunday 14 May.

PROGRAM FOR THE DAY

9.00am    Gathering at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre
9.30am    Group chanting, taking of the Three Refuges and the Five or Eight Precepts, auspicious chanting and Dhamma talk.
10.30am   Offering of food to the monks and sharing of a meal together
2.00pm    Taking of the Three Refuges and Five Precepts for new Buddhists, meditation and discussion for others
4 - 6.00pm Tea and biscuits
            Meditation and discussion
6 - 7.30pm Evening Ceremony including chanting, Dhamma talk and circumambulation of the shrine
7.30 - 8.00pm Traditional Sri Lankan Buddhist devotional songs
Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born in a brahmin household, in a village outside the gates of Benares, and rearing a family he supported them by field labour. He had two children, a son and a daughter. When the son was grown up, the father brought a wife home for him from a family of equal rank with his own. Thus with a female slave they composed a household of six: the Bodhisatta and his wife, the son and daughter, the daughter-in-law and the female slave. They lived happily and affectionately together. The Bodhisatta thus admonished the other five; “According as ye have received, give alms, observe holy days, keep the moral law, dwell on the thought of death, be mindful of your mortal state. For in the case of beings like ourselves, death is certain, life uncertain: all existing things are transitory and subject to decay. Therefore take heed to your ways day and night.” They readily accepted his teaching and dwelt earnestly on the thought of death.

Now one day the Bodhisatta went with his son to plough his field. The son gathered together the rubbish and set fire to it. Not far from where he was, lived a snake in an anthill. The smoke hurt the snake’s eyes. Coming out from its hole in a rage, it thought, “This is all due to that fellow,” and fastening upon him with its four teeth it bit him. The youth fell down dead. The Bodhisatta on seeing him fall, left his oxen and came to him, and finding that he was dead, he took him up and laid him at the foot of a certain tree, and covering him up with a cloak, he neither wept nor lamented.
He said, “That which is subject to dissolution is dissolved, and that which is subject to death is dead. All compound existences are transitory and liable to death.” And recognizing the transitory nature of things he went on with his ploughing. Seeing a neighbour pass close by the field, he asked, “Friend, are you going home?” And on his answering “Yes,” he said, “Please then to go to our house and say to the mistress, ‘You are not to-day as formerly to bring food for two, but to bring it for one only. And hitherto the female slave alone has brought the food, but to-day all four of you are to put on clean garments, and to come with perfumes and flowers in your hands.”

“All right,” he said, and went and spoke these very words to the brahmin’s wife. She asked, “By whom, Sir, was this message given?” “By the brahmin, lady,” he replied.

Then she understood that her son was dead. But she did not so much as tremble. Thus showing perfect self-control, and wearing white garments and with perfumes and flowers in her hand, she bade them bring food, and accompanied the other members of the family to the field. But no one of them all either shed a tear or made lamentation. The Bodhisatta, still sitting in the shade where the youth lay, ate his food. And when his meal was finished, they all took up firewood and lifting the body on to the funeral pile, they made offerings of perfumes and flowers, and then set fire to it. But not a single tear was shed by any one. All were dwelling on the thought of death. Such was the efficacy of their virtue that the throne of Sakka manifested signs of heat. Sakka said, “Who, I wonder, is anxious to bring me down from my throne?” And on reflection he discovered that the heat was due to the force of virtue existing in these people, and being highly pleased he said, “I must go to them and utter a loud cry of exultation like the roaring of a lion, and immediately afterwards fill their dwelling place with the seven treasures.” And going there in haste he stood by the side of the funeral pyre and said, “What are you doing?”
“We are burning the body of a man, my lord.”
“It is no man that you are burning,” he said. “Methinks you are roasting the flesh of some beast that you have slain.”
“Not so, my lord,” they said. “It is merely the body of a man that we are burning.”
Then he said, “It must have been some enemy.”
The Bodhisatta said, “It is our own true son, and no enemy.”
“Then he could not have been dear as a son to you.”
“He was very dear, my lord.”
“Then why do you not weep?”

Then the Bodhisatta, to explain the reason why he did not weep, uttered the first stanza:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Man quits his mortal frame, when joy in life is past,} \\
\text{E’en as a snake is wont its worn out slough to cast.} \\
\text{No friend’s lament can touch the ashes of the dead:} \\
\text{Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.}
\end{align*}
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Sakka on hearing the words of the Bodhisatta, asked the brahmin’s wife, “How, lady, did the dead man stand to you?”
“I sheltered him ten months in my womb, and suckled him at my breast, and directed the movements of his hands and feet, and he was my grown up son, my lord.”
“Granted, lady, that a father from the nature of a man may not weep, a mother’s heart surely is tender. Why then do you not weep?”

And to explain why she did not weep, she uttered a couple of stanzas:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Uncalled be hither came, unbidden soon to go;} \\
\text{E’en as he came, he went. What cause is here for woe?} \\
\text{No friend’s lament can touch the ashes of the dead:} \\
\text{Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.}
\end{align*}
\]

On hearing the words of the brahmin’s wife, Sakka asked the sister: “Lady, what was the dead man to you?”
"He was my brother, my lord."
"Lady, sisters surely are loving towards their brothers. Why do you not weep?"
But she to explain the reason why she did not weep, repeated a couple of stanzas:

Though I should fast and weep, how would it profit me?
My kith and kin alas! would more unhappy be.
No friend's lament can touch the ashes of the dead:
Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.

Sakka on hearing the words of the sister, asked his wife: "Lady, what was he to you?"
"He was my husband, my lord."
"Women surely, when a husband dies, as widows are helpless. Why do you not weep?"
But she to explain the reason why she did not weep, uttered two stanzas:

As children cry in vain to grasp the moon above,
So mortals idly mourn the loss of those they love.
No friend's lament can touch the ashes of the dead:
Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.

Sakka on hearing the words of the wife, asked the handmaid, saying, "Woman, what was he to you?"
"He was my master, my lord."
"No doubt you must have been abused and beaten and oppressed by him and therefore, thinking he is happily dead, you weep not."
"Speak not so, my lord. This does not suit his case. My young master was full of long-suffering and love and pity for me, and was as a foster child to me."
"Then why do you not weep?"
And she to explain why she did not weep, uttered a couple of stanzas:
A broken pot of earth, ah! who can piece again?
So too to mourn the dead is nought but labour vain.
No friend’s lament can touch the ashes of the dead:
Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.

Sakka after hearing what they all had to say, was greatly pleased and said, “Ye
have carefully dwelt on the thought of death. Henceforth ye are not to labour with
your own hands. I am Sakka, king of heaven. I will create the seven treasures in
countless abundance in your house. Ye are to give alms, to keep the moral law, to
observe holy days, and to take heed to your ways.” And thus admonishing them, he
filled their house with countless wealth, and so parted from them.

The Master having finished his exposition of the Law, declared the Truths and
identified the Birth: At the conclusion of the Truths the landowner attained the fruit
of the First Path: “At that time Khujuttâra was the female slave, Uppalavanna the
daughter, Rahula the son, Khema the mother, and I myself was the brahmin.”
PHRA BUA AND NOVICE LEE-AM

By N.B.

The writer first heard about the novice who could recollect his former life, while at the cremation of Phra Acharn Mun Bburidatta Thera, in February 1950. Novice Lee-am from X Village was described, together with the fact that he was due to come to the cremation ceremony. When the writer later met the novice, he talked with him and then asked about his recollection of a previous life. The novice didn't immediately answer. He said that every time he told anyone about it he invariably became ill with a fever, but because of his respect for the writer he would explain. This is what he said:

"In my previous life I was born in Koke-la Village, Ubon Rajathani, My father's name was yyy, and my mother's name was xxx. My own name was then Bua. When I was a young man, a wandering tudong monk, Phra Acharn Tong, led his bhikkhu followers to my village, teaching the public as he came. In the evening, many of the villagers would regularly gather together and go to listen to the Dhamma teaching. I took the opportunity to join in and after a time my faith grew so strong that I became his disciple. Afterwards, I requested bhikkhu-ordination and united with his group of monks which continued wandering through the jungle, visiting other villages. I travelled with him until the end of that life.

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"When the end came, everything was extinguished, but the heart that had been in the body now left it."

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Phra Acharn Tong led us to spend the Rains Retreat at Bahn Sam-Pong Village, Nakorn Panom, which was in the densest jungle and full of fever. At that time, before my very eyes and within a few days of each other, two monks became ill and died from the jungle fever. Then I became ill and each day my condition worsened, until I realised I wasn't going to make it through. Finally, I knew that I must die that very
day, for it was as if every part of my body was on fire. Realising this was truly going to be the end, I collected myself and fixed my mindfulness on the heart, being concerned that I might be heedless at the time of death.

When the end came, everything was extinguished, but the heart that had been in the body now left it. It was as if another Phra Bua had arisen from the Phra Bua who lay dead on his sleeping mat. ‘I’ stood and watched the dead Phra Bua and the monks and people who had come to visit the dead monk. My robes were on properly, with my alms bowl over one shoulder and my krot over the other. It was as if I was about to go out wandering on tudong to develop meditation, but at that time I still didn’t feel like going anywhere. I just stood and watched the monks and villagers arrange the cremation and burn my own corpse. No one there realised or knew that Phra Bua had left his body and was in fact standing there looking on. I made no attempt to attract attention but just stood there waiting, watching my corpse until it was completely consumed and all that remained were ashes and charcoal. It was from this point that I began to realise that I had really died.

After my body was burnt, I thought it best to leave - what possible advantage could there be in remaining there? So I then set out along the path and nobody perceived that a new Phra Bua had gone wandering tudong. It was just the same as when the old Phra Bua had gone, for wherever I went people would greet me and come out to receive me. They would offer food (in my alms bowl) as I continued on, always to the East. I still carried my bowl and krot and just wandered on and on without any particular destination in mind.

I then came to a place where there was a very big pavilion or hall, the like of which I had never seen in our human world. It was full of many men and women, and though they all seemed to be dressed differently they were all the same in the fullness of their suffering. Everyone looked very sad and depressed, without a sign of a smile on any face. In the midst of this hall was one large table with many office chairs but they weren’t like our human tables and chairs. On the table were two piles of books; one pile being very big and the other very small. About thirty officials were in attendance there, all dressed differently, none the same. Each officer had flashing, fearsome eyes that made the people avoid their gaze whenever it was directed in their
direction. Nobody seemed able to meet and hold such a stern gaze and everyone was very afraid. I was the only monk present who had come without coercion and so I wasn’t as much afraid of the officers as everyone else seemed to be.

Everyone was standing, nobody sat down, and that included myself as I listened to the people’s names being called. They were called in batches and sent out in groups. In one group there were about a hundred people, sometimes more, sometimes less, with only one officer in charge. A person once called always seemed terrified of the officer in charge, who each carried a strange, dangerous looking weapon in his hand.

After most of the people in the hall had been called and sent off, only two or three officers remained, while of those who had been called by name, only one old lady of about sixty years remained, and two men and one woman who hadn’t yet arrived. When all the work of sending people off was finished, the remaining officer called out the name of the old lady and invited her to go down to the lake in front of the hall. He spoke very politely and gently: “Please Madame, go down to the lake, first of all removing all your clothes, then walk through the lake and out onto the further bank. Then a heavenly vehicle will come down to receive you with a complete set of clothing and finery for you to change into.”

The lady then descended from the hall in a very graceful manner, just as if she was an upasika coming down from a monastery’s hall. The officer, meanwhile, followed her down to offer any necessary assistance, just as if he was an upasika waiting to help any visitors to the monastery. When the lady reached the lake, she removed all her clothes and walked through the water, which was only about a metre deep. A heavenly vehicle appeared and flew down from the sky and the lady was invited to come across to it. A set of clothing and jewellery (etc.) was put out and when the lady arrived the two drivers humbly and carefully helped dress her so that she became as beautiful as a heavenly maiden. This heavenly lake was full of heavenly water, with heavenly flowers full of perfume and colours of various hues. It was all so beautiful and arrested the eyes and heart so much that one could never tire of praising it. When everything was ready, the vehicle flew up into the sky like some fluffy ball of cotton wool lofted by a gust of wind. It flew by the power of her ‘past good
deeds’ with no sound or need for any type of earthly motor. I stood there watching until it disappeared from sight.

After the heavenly vehicle had taken the lady up to the heaven realm, I recalled all that I had seen and wondered why they had called out the names and sent off the people in groups with such menacing gestures, while with this lady they were so gentle and refined as if in great admiration of her. So I asked them about the announcing of the names and the dispatching in groups, and about the purpose of the two piles of books on the table. They answered: “We call the names so that we know who has already arrived and who has yet to. They are sent off in groups ... because of the different destinations according to the various degrees of ‘evil’ they have done. Some have killed their parent(s) ... some have killed water buffalo or cattle, which are animals giving much help to humans, some have killed other animals without any compassion, ... some have robbed and stolen from or cheated their fellow human beings, ... some are adulterers or seducers, ... Kamma of each type must be treated with the appropriate fruit of that kamma. While with the two piles of books, the big pile is for the names of those who have done evil, while the small pile is for those who have done good.”

I then asked about those who had been called but who had not appeared.

What would happen about them? They answered that though they hadn’t yet arrived it wouldn’t be long before they came. Whether good or evil, once their name is called they cannot not come. “And what about the lady and the vehicle that took her away. Where was she going?”, I asked. They replied, “she went to heaven because this good lady has much merit and throughout her life has been generous and done much good, and never caused trouble for anyone. Because of this, her ‘merit’ has helped her to go to the deva, happy realm.”

“...Kamma of each type must be treated with the appropriate fruit of that Kamma.”
“Well, what about me then?” I asked. “I never heard my name called at all. Where am I supposed to go?” They replied, “Your name isn’t in the accounts yet, they haven’t yet sent it. If you wish to go to heaven, please go down to the lake where the lady went, and a heavenly vehicle will soon come to receive you just as it did with her. If you want to be born as a human, please return the way you came and you will be reborn as a human being...”. I then replied, “I’m not going to heaven nor to the human realm because I’m so thirsty. First of all I must go and find some water to drink ... then I’ll go on afterwards.” They answered, “Whatever is convenient for you”.

I then said goodbye and came down from the hall and took the old way back, with my bowl and krot over their respective shoulders. I walked on and on, with the intention of trying to find a drink of water. Then I came to the village where I was born (in this life), Bahn Nam Kum. I met a woman who was going out to fetch water from a well in the surrounding fields, so I requested some drinking water from her. The woman said to me, “Please venerable sir, go and wait a little in that house over there and I will presently fetch water to offer to you.” After hearing this, I walked straight over to the house, which I could clearly see and which wasn’t so far from the well. After going up into the house and sitting down in front, I felt very tired and sleepy so I decided to lean back and lie down for a short rest, until the woman should bring the water from the well. After refreshing myself, I would then continue on my way. On lying down to rest I fell asleep for just a few moments, and on waking up where was I? I had already been born again!

At the very moment of birth, I realised I had been reborn but I wasn’t able to act out my feelings because the body was still so weak and was painful and ached all over ... At the moment of my delivery as a new born baby, I still had old memories of being a bhikkhu that did not fade or grow dim. Even though I was a baby, it still felt as if I was wearing robes and carrying my bowl and krot. I was still able to remember everything from before; as far as the village where I had been born before, my mother and father, and relatives. I could recollect it all but couldn’t say a word.

When I did start to talk, I used the special vocabulary of a bhikkhu, using the personal pronoun of ‘Atamab’ (or ‘I’) because I felt I was still a bhikkhu. This didn’t
seem to change at all, following the body of a child ... My first spoken word was 'Atamah', which followed from my previous practice and I endeavoured to pronounce it properly and articulately. When others heard me use the word Atamah, as if a bhikkhu was talking with lay followers, my parents and relatives would come and forbid my speaking in such a way. They said that I was (just) a baby and not a bhikkhu, and that I mustn't say Atamah for the world would not approve of such startling expressions. But the child kept on speaking so ... My parents then scolded me and said that for an infant to use a bhikkhu's special vocabulary was a 'sin' ... At this I became frightened and sorry, and the feeling that had accompanied me, of being a bhikkhu, faded and fell away, leaving only the body of a child. From then on, I stopped myself from talking as before.

After I was bigger, I longed to see the parents and relatives of my previous life ... and complained to my (new) parents that I wanted to visit my old home ... My parents then scolded me again, saying that I was only causing trouble for myself ... I then decided I must explain to them the truth about what had happened to me, so I told them about my previous life, my old home, becoming a bhikkhu and my death, and that I really wanted to go and visit my old house.

On hearing and knowing their son's story to be true my parents both burst into tears and felt guilty about having continually berated me before. They asked for my forgiveness ... and my mother explained that her intention had always been to look after her son, whom she loved very much ... She said that although she wouldn't forbid my visiting my old home, I should wait until I was older. And that I should consider that she was (now) my true mother, who would sacrifice even her own life for mine ... After hearing all of this, I felt very sorry for my mother and realised that I would have to put my desire to visit my old home aside because it would upset her too much.”

(After hearing all this related by Novice Lee-am) the writer asked if he had ever visited his old village in this life ... and the novice replied that he had not, nor had he met Phra Acharn Tong, but that he would certainly remember him if he met him again ... The writer then took the novice around to all the different meditation teachers
(gathered together for the cremation of Phra Acharn Mun), asking him which of them might be Phra Acharn Tong, testing him carefully ... and he did recognise the true Phra Acharn Tong, and was without any doubts, even though the writer pretended not to know ... At that time, it wasn’t possible for Phra Acharn Tong and the Novice Lee-am to meet because we were all so busy with other things, and the writer regrets losing such a perfect opportunity to corroborate the story ...

Later the same year, the writer happened to meet Phra Acharn Tong and asked him whether he had ever stayed at Bahn Sam-Pong Village (where Phra Bua said he had died). He replied that he had and that there was so much fever there that three bhikkhus had died, the last being a Phra Bua ... Then the writer explained all about Novice Lee-am ... Phra Acharn Tong remembered Phra Bua and said that he had been ordained three years when he died and his meditation had been good. Phra Acharn Tong felt it was a great loss when Phra Bua had died so young because he might have helped so many people ... Phra Acharn Tong said that he had never met Novice Lee-am and he wondered if his bodily characteristics were as before. The writer then asked how long ago had Phra Bua died, Phra Acharn Tong replied that it would be sixteen years ago. The Novice Lee-am had that very year told me that he was fifteen years old.

Translated from the Thai by Bhikkhu Ariyesako. The piece is semi-anonymous, although the translator knows the person behind these initials and has complete trust that it is genuine. The translation is quite literal, except for some repetitions that have been edited and such places are shown by ellipses ... Similar descriptions are found throughout the world, though with different cultural symbols.

Reprinted from an article which appeared in the Newsletter of Bodhinyanarama Monastery
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VESAKHA DAY

To be celebrated at Dhammadloka on Sunday 14 May, 1995

The significance of Vesak lies with the Buddha and his universal peace message.

As we recall the Buddha and his Enlightenment, we are immediately reminded of the unique and most profound knowledge and insight which arose in him on the night of his Enlightenment. This coincided with three important events which took place, corresponding to the three watches or periods of the night.

During the first watch of the night, when his mind was calm, clear and purified, light arose in him, knowledge and insight arose. He saw his previous lives, at first one, then two, three up to five, then multiples of ten... then twenty, thirty to fifty. Then 100, 1,000 and so on... As he went on with this practice, during the second watch of the night, he saw how beings die and are reborn, depending on their Karma, how they disappear and reappear from one form to another, from one plane of existence to another. Then during the final watch of the night, he saw the arising and cessation of all phenomena, mental and physical. He saw how things arose dependent on causes and conditions. This led him to perceive the arising and cessation of suffering and all forms of unsatisfactoriness, paving the way for the eradication of all taints of cravings. With the complete cessation of craving, his mind was completely liberated. He attained to Full Enlightenment. The realization dawned in him together with all psychic powers.

This wisdom and light that flashed and radiated under the historic Bodhi Tree at Buddha Gaya in the district of Bihar in Northern India, more than 2500 years ago, is of great significance to human destiny. It illuminated the way by which all could cross, from a world of superstition, or hatred and fear, to a new world of light, of true love and happiness.

The heart of the Teachings of the Buddha which remains as a universal message to mankind is contained in the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, namely,
The Noble Truth of Dukkha or Suffering
the Origin or Cause of Suffering
the End or Cessation of Suffering
the Path which leads to the Cessation of all Suffering

Wisdom, in the Buddhist context, is the realization of the fundamental truths of life, basically the Four Noble Truths. The understanding of the Four Noble Truths provides us with a proper sense of purpose and direction in life. They form the basis of problem-solving.

The message of the Buddha stands today as unaffected by time and the expansion of knowledge as when it was first enunciated.

Edited from an article written by Venerable Mahinda

Through
many a birth
I wandered in this endless cycle
of births and deaths,
seeking, but not finding,
the builder of the house.
Sorrowful
is it to be born
again and again.
O house builder!
You are seen.
You shall build no house again.
All your rafters are broken.
Your ridge-pole is shattered.
My mind has attained
the unconditioned.
Achieved is the end of craving.

DL. 153-154
SANGHA NEWS

These are remarkable times. Unbelievable things are happening. Great moments of history are occurring as if every day! But not here. Nothing happens in this monastery. Moreover, nothing happens so quietly here that you hardly notice it happening at all! This is where the action isn’t.

For example, when this summer’s wild bushfires devastated huge areas of forest around Perth, not a spark of flaming interest was kindled in our monastery forest. When the freak February storms raised violent winds, wreaking havoc in Perth, the only unpleasant wind here came from our diet of too many beans. When financial crashes made headlines on the news, the only financial crash here was when one of the anagarikas dropped the petty-cash wallet. Yes, this is where the action isn’t.

Even so, ABC T.V. created their own action here when they recorded a segment about the monastery and the city-centre for their 7.30 Report. The segment was so well received that some of the monks here couldn’t help but think where this might lead… Friday Night Live direct from Dhammaloka would sure solve the problem of how to accommodate our ever-growing audience without forever building newer and bigger centres! Moreover, the fee for international broadcasting rights would soon pay off our hefty mortgage. Back to reality, the T.V. report on us mentioned that Buddhism is now ‘trendy’. Is it not remarkable that something which hasn’t changed for 2500 years is today in Australia considered to be ‘trendy’?!

Perhaps it is because Buddhism is now trendy that the Pope felt sufficiently rattled that he pontificated about Buddhism in his recent book. Our response was that in the midst of the controversy, on the very day that the Pope landed in Australia, Ajahn Jagaro landed in Rome! We haven’t had any trouble from the Vatican since!! On the subject of the Vatican, did you know that the area of the Vatican City State is about the same area as Bodhinyana Monastery? Perhaps, like us, they started off with just an ablution block and two or three small kutis! Once I realised the similarities... well, you just can’t imagine the long-term plans that I have for this monastery! First of all, the second storey extension of our kitchen-dining room building might be a bit
bigger than originally planned, now having a great domed roof, glorious stained-glass windows and a huge classical-style mural inside on the ceiling...

Oh well, fantasy time over, our upper storey extension will have a corrugated iron roof, aluminium windows and a varnished pine ceiling. At least we won't be distracted by tourists clicking their cameras when we have our lunch. The plans for this rather modest structure, in comparison, have been approved by the Shire, the builders are presently sharpening their screwdrivers and greasing their trowels, and the action should begin any time soon. But as for now, this is where the action isn't.

Perhaps this is why some of the monks have been travelling afar during the previous three months. Ven. Nyanavisuddhi went to teach for a month at the Buddhist Society of Victoria, to get a bit of the 'action' (Buddhist action, that is) in Melbourne. I went to Albany to give a series of talks there. I thought that by going south I would escape the summer heat but instead I came back with a severe sunburn. They must have been some hot talks that I gave down in Albany! Ven. Sumangalo went

*Left to right: Venerable Sumano, Venerable Sujato and Venerable Sukhito, after their ordination.*
to New Zealand to visit his parents, travelling to Melbourne in the cab of a truck! A friend of a friend in a transport company kindly agreed to deliver a consignment of monk free of charge to the east. An airline ticket was offered to Ven. Sumangalo but he declined on the grounds that the journey in the truck would be a more moving experience! The transport company reports that he has been delivered safe and sound. Joy-oh-Joy, our wander-ful abbot, Ajahn Jagaro, has returned at last. Isn’t it amazing how quickly 1 year, 10 days and 16 hours passes?! Visitors to our monastery might see a sign hung from the entrance-gate ‘Under New Management’. One Sunday in March we lost three of our anagarikas, who all left the monastery on the same day. Fortunately, they later returned to the monastery as three ‘browned-off’ new novice monks. Phil, Andy and Sten are no more. They have been sort of ‘reincarnated’ as Venerable Novices Sukhito, Sumano and Sujato respectively. May they remain happily in robes for many a long year and may they only disrobe to go in the shower. Ven. Lungpor Pannyananda, a truly venerable and kindly Thai monk, officiated at the ordination ceremony and we extend our deepest gratitude to him for visiting Perth once again.

Ajahn Tui, a senior disciple of the well-known Thai meditation-master Ajahn Maha Bua, will be visiting Perth from April 9-13th. Then the Sri Lankan monk Ven. Dhammavihari is scheduled to come to Perth to discourse on the Dhamma from March 28th to April 4th. Also, Ajahn Vajiro, the abbot of our sister monastery in Wellington, New Zealand, will be visiting here from April 1st to April 11th.

So actually, with Ajahn Jagaro back and all these wonderful visiting monks coming, and what with the building of the dining room’s upper storey soon, it seems that Bodhinyana Monastery is where the action is. So what need is there for me to write any more words? For it is action, they say, that speaks louder than words!

Right in the Action,
Ajahn Brahm
SOCIETY NEWS

The Annual General Meeting on 25 February marked the official end of another year of the Society and the confirmation of the new committee for the forthcoming year. Reports were given, questions asked and information was passed on at the well-attended meeting. It was particularly pleasing to see a strong interest in the affairs of the Society by so many full members and a number of associate members who came along to listen and observe.

Reports of the year’s activities were presented by the Committee, and included the following points:

- attendance at Dhammaloka has grown, as has our membership which now stands at 135 full members and 438 associate members

- the debt on the Centre has been reduced by $81,000, with a total of $120,125 still outstanding. The number of people making regular contributions to the Building

*The ‘Lion Dance’ entertains people at the Chinese New Year celebration at Dhammaloka*
Fund through their bank accounts are still few however, and we would encourage others to make donations in this way

- the running of the Centre and the administration of the Society, and the printing and mailing of the newsletter etc. is now very costly, and these expenses can only be met from the General Account, which has had a very low balance at various times during the year

- improvements to the Centre included a reception desk, seats outside the house for the putting-on of shoes, a sink and tiled area in the cupboard at the back of the Dhamma Hall (for preparation of flowers), a carport, framed pictures in the house, new donation boxes in the Dhamma Hall, a suggestion box for the house and a flagpole

- the library has grown and usage is increasing. There are many volunteers now involved with the library, who do an excellent job of running this valuable service for our members

- the number of marriages performed by our marriage celebrant Dennis Sheppard has increased, and the Society has lodged an application for Jill Hanna to be accepted as a second Buddhist celebrant

- the teaching program at the Centre has expanded, with a program of visiting teachers during the Rains Retreat, Advanced Dhamma Classes (run by Ajahn Brahm), and the Introduction to Buddhist Meditation Classes held every month

- the South of the River group remains strong, with approximately 30-40 people attending every week

- the Grant-in-Aid position has been successfully shared between Yodying Taylor and Maharama Karuratana. Another grant for this service, for a further three years, has been received from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

- assets of the Society (including the monastery) are currently $2.263m
The incoming committee was confirmed as:

President          Jill Hanna
Vice President     Dennis Sheppard
Secretary          Sally Lee
Treasurer           Glenda Ingwersen
Assistant Treasurer Michael Ngo*
Committee          Ron Battersby
(* new members)     Zor Hane*
                      Shirley Jackson
                      Bronwyn Murphy
                      Judi Rushforth*
                      George Kariyawasam*

New committee - back row: Jill Hanna (President), Dennis Sheppard (Vice President), Ven Ajahn Brahm, Michael Ngo (assistant Treasurer), Glenda Ingwersen (Treasurer), front row: Judi Rushforth (kneeling), Bronwyn Murphy, Zore Hane, Shirley Jackson, Sally Lee (Secretary), George Kariyawasam (absent Ron Battersby).
Thanks were given to the outgoing committee, to manager/caretaker Phil Gurney for his hard work, and to everyone else who contributed in one way or another during the year.

A week after the AGM we were delighted to see Ajahn Jagaro return after an absence of more than a year. We welcome him back to WA, and to his role as our Spiritual Director. During the past year Ajahn Brahm had ably filled this position, and his kindness, joyfulness and skilful teaching have been a stabilising and inspiring influence to us all. We are very grateful to him. Also, we are extremely fortunate in having a wonderful and dedicated Sangha who, by their willingness to share their knowledge and wisdom with us, help us to grow in the Dhamma.

On March 8th, a long-time member of the Society and devoted supporter of the Sangha, Ratana Kay, died after a long illness (see Obituary notice elsewhere in this Newsletter). Ratana will long be remembered for her faith in the Dhamma and her continual support of the Society. Her peaceful attitude to her approaching death was a Dhamma lesson for us all. We wish her a happy rebirth.

It has been suggested that if enough people are interested, we could have a ceremony at Dhammadloka for those who are taking Australian Citizenship. If you are interested, please contact our Grant-in-Aid workers on 344 4220.

The Committee welcomes your suggestions about the running of the Society at any time. Thank you to all who have contributed in any way.

With metta,

The committee
OBITUARY

Ratana Kay died peacefully on the morning of Wednesday 8th March, surrounded by her children.

Ratana was born in Thailand but lived in Perth since 1969. From the very early days of the Buddhist Society in North Perth, Ratana was one of the most consistent and energetic of our members. Her actions spoke louder than any words written here, for whenever there was something to be done, either at the monastery or at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre, Ratana was usually the first to arrive and the last to leave. The energy she put into caring for the grounds and buildings of our Buddhist Society was an inspiration to us all. Her life focussed on Buddhism for many years. Living by the Five Moral Precepts, and often by the Eight Precepts, she read deeply into the Dhamma and meditated regularly.

In December last year Ratana was told that she had cancer in her lungs, with no cure likely. She faced the news with the marvellous equanimity which exemplified her Buddhist life. Refusing further treatment, which at best would extend her life by only a few months, she spent the final three months of her life at home, cheerful and at peace. She bore the pain of the last few days without complaint.

Perhaps her passing may be beautifully described in the words of her Australian doctor, who told her children, “Ratana died with class”.

Ratana will be missed by all her many friends among the Buddhist community.

We all wish her a very happy rebirth and thank her for her kindness, service and friendship in the life that she shared with us.

Ratana’s family wishes to thank all those who helped their mum throughout her illness, attended her funeral service to pay their final respects and made it such a beautiful farewell.
MEDITATION RETREAT

The weekend meditation retreats are proving to be very popular, with the one held recently at Safety Bay being booked out in a matter of days! It is wonderful to see so many people wanting to take the opportunity to work on their practice and we are very fortunate to have monks who are willing to give their time to help us in this way.

Those who attended this retreat say "Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu" to Ajahn Brahm for his inspiring talks and gentle encouragement given to the meditators on the retreat.

Happy meditators after the Safety Bay retreat

Here are the details of the next retreat:

23 - 25 June
Santa Maria Retreat Centre, Gnangara
Registration forms will be available at Dhammaloka in the first week of May.
SE ASIA NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Sunday 16 April

In Thailand and Laos this festival is called Songkran and in Cambodia Chaul Chnam Thmey, but most Westerners know it as the ‘Water Festival’, for at that time there occurs a lot of good-humoured throwing of water. However, there is a more serious side to this festival as it is also a time to show gratitude and respect to one’s parents and teachers.

Also, as on most other important occasions for Buddhists, it is a time for going to the Buddhist Centre to reaffirm one’s confidence in the Triple Gem and share the merit of one’s life with others. New Year celebrations will be held on Sunday 16 April at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre, Nollamara. The program will be:

9.30am  Gathering at Dhammaloka
10.00am  Taking the Three Refuges and Five Precepts
          - with auspicious chanting
10.30am  Offering of food to the monks
          Sharing of the meal with all lay people present
12.00noon  Ritual washing of the Buddha Rupa
            Blessing from the Sangha
12.30pm  Dhamma talk

ALL ARE WELCOME
POSON DAY

Saturday 10 June

Poson Day is the celebration of the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. A special Eight-Precept day will be held on Saturday 10 June at Dhammaloka. The program for the day will be:

9.00am   Taking of the Eight Precepts
10.30am  Offering of dana to the monks
12.00noon Dhamma talk
Afternoon Meditation and discussion
6.00pm    Flower Puja

FUND RAISING DINNER

Sunday 28 May

A Sri Lanka dinner will be held in the Community Hall at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre on Saturday 27 May, beginning at 6.00pm.

Tickets will be available at the Centre ($10 adults, $6 children). All proceeds will go towards the running costs of the Centre.
# Regular Activities

**Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre Nollamara**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<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</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<td>3.00 - 4.00pm</td>
<td>Instruction, meditation and discussion. Separate classes for new and experienced meditators</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>8.30 - 9.15am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
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<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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<td></td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.00 - 1.30pm</td>
<td>Dhamma school for children is on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month</td>
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<td>3.00 - 4.30pm</td>
<td>Advanced Dhamma class (2nd &amp; 4th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>7.30 - 8.30pm</td>
<td>Unguided meditation followed by an informal discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9.30 - 11.00am</td>
<td>Yoga, relaxation &amp; meditation (beginners welcome)</td>
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**South of the River**

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

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

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

Buddhist Community Services
Social Worker
Tel: 344 4220