THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF W.A.

NEWSLETTER

“SEASON’S GREETING”

As 1994 comes to an end and humankind enters the mystery of another new year, I often stand back and think “What’s the big deal?!” After all, one year is much the same as any other and if it wasn’t for the mostly commercial fuss-and-bother about January 1st the New Year would surely pass invisibly by.

But that’s not the point of this New Year Season. These are milestones in our life’s journey, reminding the traveller of the passing of the road. Milestones are markers along the way on which one leans back and rests the mind for a while. One stops to realise where one has reached, by what paths one has come, and in what condition one has arrived. Thus the milestones become places to pause and learn so that the next stage of life’s wandering will be walked more wisely, kindly and happily.

The New Year, then is an opportunity to be used, not refused. It may be fashionable among some to be negative and dismiss the sign-posts of time passing. Perhaps this denial comes from one’s own deep uneasiness on seeing that the day when one must let go of most that is dear is ever drawing closer. But such gloomy fears of death are not the only way to look upon the passing of a year. I often say that “Another year gone by is one more year closer to your enlightenment!” This is both true and encouraging. Also true and encouraging are the reflections of that well known sage Hagar the Horrible who remarked “Though you are not as young as you used to be ..... you are certainly not as old as you are going to be!” So this gives us energy and encouragement to get out and smile and do something useful ... while you still have the chance!

So the message of the Season is one of optimistic realism. There is always something worthwhile to be done no matter what you have to work with. “Rather light a candle, than complain about the darkness”, as the old proverb goes. Or as the Buddha said “The days and nights are relentlessly passing, how well are you spending your time?” The New Year tells us that, though time is on the run, we still have the chance to build the foundations for our own and other’s future prosperity and happiness, by making merit and developing our mind. Thus, on behalf of the Sangha, may I wish every one of you

a Meritorious Christmas and a Moral New Year
Ajahn Brahm
The *asavas* are deeply embedded cravings which usually escape our awareness. We take our delusions for granted because we know nothing else. Sometimes we have an inkling of them when our cravings run up against a barrier in someone else. But these underlying defilements are so deeply ingrained with us that we are not even sure that they exist until we start serious practice.

The first of our deeply ingrained desires is for sensual gratification. This is the greed inherent in us to have only pleasant experiences. Anyone who hasn’t practised will say, ‘Why not? Why shouldn’t I want it pleasant?’ The reason is that we cannot rely on having pleasant sense contacts and, failing to get them, unhappiness ensues. Even when one does get them they cannot last. All of us are trying to get what we want because we have craving embedded within us, based on illusion that this is ‘me’ and ‘I’ want pleasant feelings. If we think about it for a moment, what else do we want?

The second trait is our ‘craving-to-be’. We don’t want to be killed or annihilated or diminished. We want to be here and as comfortable as possible. The third one is ‘ignorance’, which is the foundation for all our difficulties because we are ignoring the fact that the other two cravings are impossible to gratify and that reality lies somewhere else.

These three desires flow out of every ordinary person. Everybody is beset by ignorance, craving for pleasant sensations and craving-to-be-here, which means being supported without any danger or fear.
If we can realise, first of all, that these mind-states are creating problems and trouble for us, we can also accept that the craving to have pleasure and comfort cannot be permanently gratified. When we consider our craving for existence, we can readily understand that it is a lost cause, since nobody survives.

Yet these two cravings underlie everything we do. If we can see for just a moment that they are not useful, then we will be interested to find out how to get rid of them. Most people cannot see any alternative and aren’t aware of the fact that these mind-states cause all our unhappiness. Whether the unhappiness is called frustration, boredom, anger, worry, fear, envy or jealousy doesn’t matter. All of them are based on these two cravings, with ignorance as their underlying foundation.

If one has given enough consideration to the fact that one is saddled with such a problem and that one would be happier without it, the interest on how to abandon it arises. The Buddha gives very explicit instruction on how to go about that.

The first mode of conduct is ‘wise consideration’. One puts one’s mind in the direction where craving for sensual gratification does not necessarily arise or grow. Instead of giving the mind more cause for craving by thinking where it could get additional pleasurable contacts, we can give the mind the possibility to see the truth, such as the reality of dukkha (unsatisfactoriness). This will not create unhappiness, because dukkha is not a personal matter; dukkha is universal. Everybody has it; one is not singled out. Naturally we give our own dukkha a special name and special reasons.

Interestingly enough, that’s all imagination. There aren’t any special causes or special dukkha. The cause is always the same, namely craving. Wise consideration is to look at all one’s desires which are not being gratified or which are not yielding the expected pleasures and then realising the unfilled craving in the mind. This is the direct experience of the truth of dukkha and of its cause, allowing for the third Noble Truth: that there is a way out.

The Buddha mentioned various unwise considerations, namely past and future lives, having a self or having no self or being aware of myself or being aware of my non-self. All of that supports the ego illusion. Instead we must consider the basic
fact of unhappiness and that its arising is due to wanting something. The stronger
our ego illusion, the more unhappiness we experience. The truth of the matter is, the
stronger the ego, the more one wants, the more dukkha. Quite simple, but difficult
to practise. Wise consideration means that one constantly pulls one’s mind back
from all imaginations and ideations and places it firmly on the moment to moment
reality. Considering dukkha objectively does not mean being full of dukkha but
rather reflecting on it. One has an introspective attitude which is objective, and sees
things as they are, not as one would like them to be, which is unrealistic wishful
thinking. If one gains insight into the law of nature then one day everything will be
as one would like it, only different from the way one would have imagined.

There are six other ways of working towards the elimination of our deeply
embedded taints, towards getting rid of ever recurring unhappiness. These work not
by trying to achieve happiness but by letting go of ingrained habit patterns. The first step is to
become aware of the reaction to one’s sense contacts. We make con-
tact automatically through our six senses,

If one gains insight into the law of
nature then one day everything will be
as one would like it, only different from
the way one would have imagined.

and the ensuing feelings are also automatic, but our reaction to those feelings is
arbitrary. Obviously we will not constantly be able to stop reacting but once in a while
it is certainly possible. We can change ourselves by not reacting to a feeling, by not
liking or disliking it. Then we are taking the first big step towards freedom from
compulsion. This needs the objectivity of mindfulness and one’s undivided atten-
tion. As one practises more and more, it becomes easier as all repetitions do. That’s
the way of subjugation recommended by the Buddha.

The next one is ‘right use’. These are all practice paths which will eventually
result in equanimity and a removal of the barriers to deep insight. Everything we own
should be something that we need. We should be very aware of the difference
between a need and a want. The Buddha said there are only four items that one really needs - food, clothing, shelter and medicine. The rest are all extras. We can check to see whether we really make use of our possessions for the benefit of others or whether they are only kept to create pleasant feelings in ourselves. If the latter, it is best to give them away. The right use of what one has means that one does not have a strong attachment to the things one owns; one is aware of the fact that they are only on loan. One knows that they are for the benefit of everyone and that there is no need to have more. This is another way again of seeing that pleasant sense contacts will not create real happiness. On the contrary they will in the end create nothing but unhappiness.

In our affluent society pleasant sense contacts are as readily available as sand on the beach. Pleasant sense contacts can be had anywhere, any time; one just has to be able to pay for them. Yet how many people do we know who are truly happy? They can all get pleasant sense contacts over and over again and have probably been getting them all their lives. That's not the answer. The way to freedom includes 'subjugation' and 'right-use'.

A further step is avoiding wrong company and wrong places; namely where pleasant sense contacts are being bartered, where people have no interest in Dhamma. Wrong people are those who have no real yearning for spiritual growth.

Our third mode of transformation is avoidance of those contacts where sensual desire and pleasant sense contacts are the main issue. The world at large, not knowing that there are alternatives, considers these the most important. This is the underlying ignorance which gives rise to the wrong view of self.

Subjugation or reacting to the pleasant sense contacts is one side of the coin; endurance, which is the enduring of the unpleasant sense contacts, is the other. When there is an unpleasant sensation, for instance in the sitting posture and the body becomes very uncomfortable, it is good practice to endure. Nobody gets away during a lifetime without physical pain. Being able to endure means that one does not have to suffer because of such pain. The more often one can endure, the more disciplined the mind becomes. Endurance can also be practised in the face of an
emotional discomfort. To be able to endure is another way of getting away from reactions which mean diminishing craving.

There is removal; letting go, dropping. Whatever we are reacting to, whether it is with anger and grief, with wanting or rejecting, envy or pride, worry or fear, we need to recognise the reaction and drop it. Removal does not mean suppression. One cannot remove what one hasn’t acknowledged first. This letting-go procedure is one of the most important aspects of spiritual maturing. The Buddha’s teachings cannot make any impact unless one practises them. ‘Letting go’ is not being attached, not owning what one thinks and feels. If one believes every thought and every feeling, if one is glued to them as the mind likes to be, then ‘letting go’ is not possible. How can we let go of something that is utterly myself? If it is ‘me’ thinking and feeling, how can we drop that? But when there is just a thought or a feeling and the objectivity of mindfulness points to its unwholesomeness or useless quality, ‘letting go’ is possible. When we can drop desires, rejections and resistances, then we have started to practise.

The Buddha said the practice is not external but strictly internal. We can wear different clothes, shave off our hair, stay up all night eat only one meal a day, but if there is no internal change, then these practices are done in vain. There has to be insight into oneself since all our desires are within. They are not in clothes or food or wakefulness. Removal, letting go, is the most important aspect of our work of purification. It applies equally to meditation. If we don’t drop discursive thinking, we cannot meditate.

The last step is cultivation which applies to meditation - the cultivation of the mind - that process which eventually will result in the seven factors of enlightenment. Mindfulness is the first of these seven factors and without it there can be no practice. Only the mind which has been cultivated has the strength and clarity to generate the factors of enlightenment, and will also be the sort of mind willing to practise diligently, because constant alertness, awareness and self-examination are required. Only a clear and strong mind is willing and able to do that.
This brings about an investigation of all phenomena (abhammas) with regard to their arising and ceasing, their essential impermanence. Everything that exists is a phenomenon; there is nothing else. If we examine in this way, then we are reflecting wisely. We can do this in the meditation practice as well as in daily living. In meditation, when the mind has been concentrated, it is essential to experience the arising of each mind moment and also the ceasing of it.

This investigation will help greatly to generate a calm mind which can see things in their true essence. When mindfulness and investigation have been practised in meditation so that they form a strong foundation, then subsequent factors will also arise which are tranquillity, joy and deep concentration. This will finally result in total equanimity. These are all necessary steps to be taken so that there is a path of practice which will not only improve meditation but will also change one's whole inner being. Certainly meditation has a great deal to do with that but it's not all of it. There are also instant reactions and confrontations, not only when other people are involved but even with trifles such as one's own meal. One is confronted with oneself being sleepy or hungry, being bored or discontented. If one doesn't use wisdom in these confrontations then it remains difficult to see a different reality. If we use introspection in our daily experiences our outlook changes.

This is a slow process and as it takes place the asavas are diminished. They only disappear for an enlightened one (Arahant) but the outflow is gradually not as strong any more. It resembles a flood in the beginning; later it may become a meandering stream and then a trickle. The practice is to change the flood into a trickle. Then it may completely dry out one day. Cultivation of the mind presupposes that we know that craving is to our detriment, as only then will we take the necessary steps towards inner peace.

By Ayya Khema
ABANDON WHAT SHOULD BE ABANDONED
(edited from "Little Dust in Our Eyes")
VEN. AJAHN GUNHAH: A PROFILE

A noted disciple of Luang Por Chah who is gaining respect in his own right as a teacher is his nephew, Ven. Ajahn Gunnah. At age 44, with 27 years as a monk, he is part of a new generation of up-and-coming meditation masters in the Thai forest tradition.

Ajahn Gunnah has something to offer nearly everyone. Half of the year he spends the greater part of each day sitting in a bamboo chair receiving guests, answering questions and chatting with his monks and nuns. If no one else is around he simply sits. His round and pudgy body shakes as he giggles, smiles and jokes with those around him. Radiating peace and loving-kindness his compassionate eyes penetrate to the heart. His is soft, gentle and motherly.

The other half of the year Ajahn Gunnah is on tudong, walking barefoot around the country. Displaying physical stamina and an ability to persevere through hardship, he has been going tudong every year since he was ordained. When he leaves on these spiritual wanderings he takes most of the monastery with him, and each year the number of his disciples increases. After Luang Por Chah’s funeral he left on foot followed by 62 others. Unperturbed by heat, rain, pain or sometimes scarcity of food (boiled banana stems for a month), Ajahn Gunnah is tough and disciplined.

Ajahn Gunnah is a traditionalist in that he strictly observes the dhutanga practices (ascetic practices recommended by the Buddha) and closely follows the simple and reclusive lifestyle of a forest monk. Yet he is quite innovative in his methods of training. He and his disciples are all vegetarians and caffeine-free. It is Ajahn Gunnah’s combination of equanimity and serene composure in the face of hardship and his nurturing compassion that attracts others, arouses respect and brings out the best in his disciples.

Whether sitting in his bamboo chair receiving guests hour after hour or enduring through some extremely trying situations on tudong, what most arouses admiration in his disciples is the extent of his even temperedness. His joyful
expression seems constant. They say he never shows any signs of fatigue, impatience or drowsiness. One rains retreat he resolved not to sleep or lie down, only resting by entering deep sates of samadhi (concentration). For three months without sleep he was not once seen to nod or yawn.

Ajahn Gunhah rarely gives a Dhamma talk, yet he is known as a great teacher. Setting an impeccable example, he teaches informally with an economy of well-timed words in a simple and direct way!. On tudong, he will push people to their limits, or creatively frustrate their desire for comfort. As if knowing the hearts of his disciples, he directs each person according to their individual tendencies.

'We were born for enlightenment, so don’t let anything make you hot and bothered. We can’t blame anyone else - we wanted to be born. Stay with the knowing and let the mind be calm, happy and peaceful. Whatever it is, watch it pass away. However, trying to develop insight without samadhi is like trying to cut down a tree with a razor blade. It’s sharp but only when combined with the weight of an axe can the tree be cut down. Make your mind serene and don’t look too far ahead or you will step on a thorn. Let your mind be cool Sabaay Sabaay* (ed: *Sabaay - Thai, meaning to be at ease).

The external conditions of Ajahn Gunhah’s monastery are cramped, crowded and next to a busy railroad line; yet due to the atmosphere he creates, many people still find it a tranquil place to practise. This is achieved by encouraging a minimum of talking and socialising. During chores, often the monks simply gesture to each other when communication is necessary. Eating, bowing and bowl washing are done slowly and quietly. Daily events are carefully orchestrated and well organised with an attention to detail. Demonstrating respect to monastic seniority is used as a tool for cultivating humility, and the interwoven roles of the community flow harmoniously with a refined politeness. There is an air of cool serenity pervading the monastery. In such an atmosphere of trust and compassion it feels safe to let go of the defences, barriers and constructs of the self.

What did this rotund and robust Ajahn do before he became a monk? He was a jockey! Ajahn Gunhah said he was successful because he had no fear of dying.
Riding bareback he wouldn’t hold on but would slap the sides of the horse with both hands. He also worked as a village medic giving medical care to prostitutes. Because of this experience, dispassion arose towards the world. He had always wanted to ordain from an early age but his father had continually forbidden it. Ajahn Gunhah said this was his greatest suffering.

Once, while alone on tudong in 1981, Ajahn Gunhah had arranged to meet up with disciples of his at Langklaburi near the Burmese border. It was two weeks before the beginning of the Rains Retreat and the monsoon rains had already begun. He needed to traverse well over a hundred kilometres through the extensive jungles and mountains of Tung Yai Wildlife Reserve. He knew he would have to travel many days without encountering any village where he could go on alms round to obtain food. There are no paths or roads through this region. He had no map, but by using a compass and following elephant trails he aimed for a range of high mountains in the distance. He frequently came across wild animals and, while walking through a track of high grass, a tiger suddenly crossed his path close enough to touch. ‘Stop, stop,’ he called out. The tiger stopped, then startled, bounded away.

For seven days Ajahn Gunhah fasted and continued walking. ‘Surviving only on samadhi,’ he carried on until he came upon the tracks of a domesticated water buffalo. Following the tracks he saw a Karen hill-tribesman gutting a barking deer he had shot. Ajahn Gunhah asked him where he lived but he didn’t speak Thai. Using sign language the Karen motioned for Ajahn Gunhah to follow him. He led him to a grass shack and disappeared.

Half an hour later he returned with a group of armed communist guerrillas - Thai students who were battling the government forces. They immediately assumed Ajahn Gunhah was a spy in monk’s garb and began interrogating him. Repeatedly cross-examining him in an attempt to expose his supposed undercover mission, they asked how long he’d been walking.

‘Seven days’.
‘Where are your supplies?’ I have none.’
‘What trail did you come on?’
'I followed no trail but simply cut through the wilderness.'

'How can that be? This entire area is a minefield!'

By this time the communists were not so sure Ajahn Gunhah actually was a spy. Since it was still before noon they ordered the Karen to boil the innards of the barking deer (a delicacy) and offered it with some plain rice to the monk. Ajahn Gunhah responded that it was his personal practice to eat only vegetarian food and that plain rice would be enough. Surprised and impressed, they gathered some forest vegetables to offer him.
After the meal the communists escorted him under guard to their main camp. The series of sentries and lookouts used birdcalls to communicate with each other.

They passed through hundreds of acres of rice paddies - enough to feed a large army - until arriving at the main camp where he was again interrogated by rebel leaders. Ajahn Gunhah told them he was a disciple of Ajahn Chah.

‘Ajahn Chah is O.K.’ they replied. ‘He teaches people to have wisdom and doesn’t try to delude the people by handing out magic amulets like some monks.’

Ajahn Gunhah simply spread metta the entire time he was captive. When they finally believed he was indeed an authentic monk they agreed to release him on the condition he wouldn’t disclose their whereabouts. He again was escorted through minefields with a guard in front and behind. Upon reaching the edge of the minefield the solders told him he could go free. As Ajahn Gunhah walked off they called out for him to stop. They ran up, put down their guns, took off their boots and bowed three times. They asked him if he wouldn’t please consent to spend the Rains Retreat with them. Ajahn Gunhah replied he was sorry but his disciples would be very worried if he didn’t show up.

He turned and continued walking.

by Ven. Chandako
(Reprinted with permission from Forest Sangha Newsletter October ‘94)
SANGHA NEWS

Instead of writing about the ordinary, uninspiring, hum-drums mani padme hum, events here at Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery over the previous three months, I thought, for a change, to give this article some ‘class’ by writing about nothing less than ULTIMATE REALITY!

To start with some very deep work was done recently when we dug the foundations for a 60 metre extension to our monastery boundary wall. We had often feared that intruders could so easily enter our monastery by simply walking around the end of the old wall which ‘conveniently’ stands just across the road from “Serpentine Nightclub”, the name I give to the scenic-view look-out opposite, which is becoming quite popular with some of the local youth late at night on weekends. Those fears ultimately turned out to be real, which is why it counts as ‘ultimate reality’! Indeed, we should have paid more heed to the sign erected on the spot by our local Shire which warned ‘Look Out’! So one moonlit night after a party at the look-out, some youths entered our monastery up to no good. Covering themselves with the shadows, they crept around the isolated buildings in the monastery grounds with their eyes searching for something to steal. They were obviously not cat-burglars since neither of our two monastery cats were stolen, but they did steal a chair from one of the monks’ huts before being scared away by another monk. The stolen chair, a ‘hot-seat’ in criminal slang, was not recovered. So this was the first reason to extend the wall. Then, on moonlit nights some confused-thinking men take pleasure in driving through the bush with a rifle shooting at kangaroos - now we live in the bush and our brown robes make us the same colour as the kangaroos! Although I’ve warned the monks not to hop up and down when these people are out shooting, to a half drunk man at the end of a rifle there’s not much to distinguish a kangaroo in the night from a light-stepping monk! Thus we decided to bite the bullet, to avoid it arriving in a more dangerous way, and the uplifting news is that the wall is going up. But ours is no ordinary wall for it contains in its very bricks the profundity of death. Since the cinerarium project, the proposed building to house the ashes of departed Buddhists, died its own death early last year, we have encouraged an alternative
tradition, common in S.E. Asia, of housing the ashes in the monastery wall, one to each pier, with a little plaque placed on the wall marking the spot. Thus the building housing the ashes becomes a useful addition to the monastery while offering a simple shrine within the grounds where relatives and friends may come to remember a dearly loved companion. Already the first ashes have been installed in the pier closest to the entrance-gate and there is room for many more. So the project gives a kind of ultimate reality to the feeling you might have that you are ‘going up the wall’!

*Installing the ashes in the monastery wall.*

Now to even higher matters, the plan or the second storey of the kitchen-dining room building is now complete and work should be commencing early this year. The upper story will consist of an empty long room - to symbolise the ultimate reality of emptiness, the furnishings will be few and simple - to symbolize the ultimate reality of surprising simplicity, and it will be used as the monks' dining room to demonstrate the ultimate reality that monks have to eat! In order to take the full
(hopefully) dishes of food up, and the empty (usually) dishes back down, we will install a dumb-waiter - to symbolize delusion of course, and two sets of stairs to go up and down will be a constant reminder of the ultimate insight into 'rise and fall'. With all the meaningful symbology incorporated into our upper-storey dining room project, it will be simply oozing ultimate reality and anyone who doesn’t get enlightened even thinking about it is a hopeless case and will be sent to work on the road gang which is yet another ultimate reality project here right now.

The monks and anagarikas on the road gang are improving the walking-meditation paths in the monastery, experimenting with a covered walkway to protect them from sun and rain and the 'generous' droppings of birds flying directly overhead! By constructing clear, straight and smooth paths for walking meditation, we are making clear, straight and smooth roads leading to enlightenment, freedom and emptiness.

Talking of which, our rain-water tanks here were showing a rather excessive amount of the ultimate reality of emptiness at the end of last winter when we expected them to be full. Fortunately, the large amount of water in our lower lake - which is a symbol for the deep, cool and clear waters of undefiled consciousness - has so much improved in its quality that it is now even drinkable and so it was pumped up into our rain-water tanks to top them all up. Indeed, the recent drought has caused many concerns to us, not least of which was the record number of flies here this year. They got into our eyes, up our noses and into our mouths - even into our food to give a new meaning, and taste, to the popular dish of fried-rice!

Which brings me onto our Kathina Ceremony held at the end of October. This year our Kathina ceremony must have had the largest attendance ever in the history of Buddhism anywhere! Millions came for the festival, and this is no exaggeration, that is if you include the flies! Late October to early November is the Kathina Ceremony season and, unfortunately, this coincides with fly-time - which symbolizes the ultimate reality that time flies! Everyone who came, including the flies, had an enjoyable day, and the weather, of course, was warm, bright and perfect – which reflects the ultimate reality of Enlightenment itself.
In December the flies disappeared, showing the permanent truth of impermanence, or the impermanent truth of permanence, whichever you like. I admit that I was happy when the flies flew off, but I was not so happy when Ajahn Norm flew off to Thailand about the same time. Unfortunately for all of us in Perth, this popular Thai monk had to return to Thailand to visit his mother. We thank him for all his help, especially his patient compassion and welcoming friendliness to all, and we look forward to seeing him back again whenever it may be, but not so the flies! Ajahn Norm returned to Thailand with Ajahn Gunhah who came to Perth for a four week visit. We also thank Ajahn Gunhah for finding the time to visit us once again in W.A so that we could for a second time benefit from his engaging smile and inspiring example. Earlier last year, in late October, we were privileged to host a brief visit from Ven. Kondannyo, a western educated Singhalese-born monk and old friend from my early

Our Sangha performing a funeral service in Perth.
years in Thailand. Ven. Kondannyo gave a well received Dhamma-talk in Dhammaloka Centre while he was here. As this article goes to press, Ajahn Jagaro is now in England, staying with Ajahn Sumedho, and demonstrating the ultimate reality that nothing is certain! He told me that his visit to U.K. will be for 6-8 weeks and then he will return to Thailand and then .......?? On March 10th, Tan Jow Koon Pannayananda plans to come to Perth to preside over the ordination ceremony of our monastery anagarikas, probably occurring on Sunday 12th March at Dhammaloka Centre in Nollamara.

Well, that's about all the news for now and so now I can take a well deserved cup of tea. And what about ultimate reality? Well, tea can be very deep, you know, especially in a monk's big cup! Moreover, I did say that I was going to write on "nothing less than ultimate reality" and, you see, what I have written is really 'nothing' and certainly 'less than ultimate reality'!

Ultimately not even here,

Ajahn Brahm
ADVANCED DHAMMA CLASSES

Advanced Dhamma Classes are now being held at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre to enable people who have been practising meditation and studying the Dhamma for some time to improve their knowledge and understanding.

Ajahn Brahm will conduct these classes on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 3pm. The text which is used is “The Word of the Buddha” and a few copies of the book are still available from Ajahn Brahm for those interested in joining the class on a regular basis.

Dates of classes for the first part of 1995 are:

January: 8 & 22
February: 12 & 26
March: 12 & 26

MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS

On the first four Saturdays of each month there will be a series of talks for new meditators given by a layperson. They will be held in the meditation room to the left of the hall between 2.30 - 3.00pm.

These introductory talks will cover the following aspects:
Week 1  What ‘meditation’ is, and basic instructions for meditating
Week 2  Problems encountered during meditation
Week 3  Meditation in daily life
Week 4  Using meditation to gain Insight or wisdom

At 3pm people attending these talks will join Ajahn in the main meditation hall for meditation, questions and discussion.

All are welcome.
WEEKEND RETREAT

A weekend meditation retreat will be held on **17, 18 and 19 March** in Safety Bay. The retreat will be conducted by Ajahn Brahm and is a wonderful opportunity to take some 'time out' to concentrate on your meditation practice.

Registration forms will be available at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre in early February.

DHAMMA SCHOOL

Dhamma classes for children will resume on 12 February, 1995 and thereafter every second and fourth Sundays of the month.

Dhamma classes will be from 12noon to 1.30pm and Sinhala classes will be between 1.45pm - 2.30pm.

If you have any questions please call Manel Fernando on 310 3654.

POYA (FULL MOON) DAYS AND FLOWER PUJA DAYS

Full moon days: Flower Puja Days
January: Sunday 15 Saturday 14
February: Tuesday 14 Saturday 18
March: Thursday 16 Saturday 18

The flower puja begins at 5.00pm at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre.
SOCIETY NEWS

With another year over it is timely to reflect on how many people contribute to the running of the Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre so that all of us are able to enjoy the Teachings in such beautiful surroundings. There are a great number of people who contribute in so many ways - cleaning, gardening, bringing and arranging flowers, ordering and mending books, running the library, the office, etc. and of course providing financial support to the Buddhist Society of WA to enable the mortgage to be paid and running expenses to be met. To everyone who contributes, in large or small ways, we say thank you for your support.

Of course, without our very inspiring Sangha we probably wouldn’t have a Centre at all! The tireless dedication of the monks and the inspiration they give by their impeccable behaviour, is greatly appreciated by us all.

About 40 people were fortunate to participate in a weekend meditation retreat given by Ajahn Brahm in late November at Gnangara. The conditions were perfect for inward reflection (cool and rainy!) and Ajahn’s talks were inspiring and extremely helpful for all. His wisdom, humour and ever happy manner helped people overcome the suffering in the body and to bring the mind back to the task at hand.

Another successful retreat was held in Albany and was attended by people from Perth and from country areas. This retreat was conducted by Ian Johnson and provided a fine opportunity for people from the Great Southern areas of WA to meet with others interested in meditation and to work on their practice.

Many people contributed to the highly successful “Aussie Night” fund raising vegetarian dinner which was held at Dhammaloka to raise funds for the Centre. The food was wonderful (it’s been said many times that Dhammaloka is the ‘best restaurant in Perth!’) and we were treated to some magnificent music by a very talented harpist and by our equally talented committee member, Ian Johnson.

We have recently begun several new opportunities for learning more about meditation and the Teachings of the Buddha. We are fortunate that Ajahn Brahm has
been offering ‘Advanced Dhamma Classes’ for people who have been practising for some time and have a reasonable basic knowledge of the Teachings of the Buddha. These classes began in November and as from January will be held twice a month - on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 3pm. Ajahn will be teaching from the book “The Word of the Buddha” and there is plenty of opportunity to ask questions. These talks are being taped and if you are unable to attend these classes you may wish to obtain a taped copy from the library.

The Saturday afternoon meditation classes continue to be very popular and to meet the needs of those attending we are now running a separate class for new meditators between 2.30 - 3pm in the small meditation room. During this time in the main hall Ajahn Brahm (or the monk in attendance) gives instruction on an aspect of meditation and at 3pm both groups come together for meditation and questions.

A new reception desk has now been built inside the Vihara, following a trial with a ‘make do’ reception area. This is working very well and is providing a focus point for people to ask questions, find out about membership and make donations. All of these tasks were previously carried out by our hard working librarians, often creating difficulties for them as they carried out their other duties. We now need to make sure that the reception desk is resourced every Friday night and if you could offer some time in this way we’d love to hear from you!

As you will see elsewhere in this Newsletter it is nearly time for our Annual General Meeting and nominations are now being called for office bearers. All are welcome to attend the AGM on Saturday 25 February, although only full members of the Society may participate. We encourage all full members to attend this very important meeting as it is necessary for us to have a quorum before the meeting can go ahead. Please come along and help in the decision making process of our Society.

We wish everyone a very happy and peaceful 1995. May you grow in the Dhamma.

The Committee
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 25th February, 1995

In accordance with the constitution of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, our Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday 25th February** 1995 at 4pm at the Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre. At this meeting the Committee of the Society is elected for the next twelve months.

Nominations are called for the positions of President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Assistant Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Assistant Treasurer and six committee members. Nomination forms are available at the reception desk at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre. All nominations must be received by the Secretary by no later than **5pm on Friday January 13, 1995**.

It is important to note that under the Society's constitution, only full members are eligible to stand for committee positions or to vote. People nominating and seconding anyone for positions must also be full members. If you are a committed Buddhist, but have not formally taken the Three Refuges and Five Precepts and/or filled out a membership form to become a full member, please do so if you wish to participate. As all nominations for membership (including changes from associate to full membership) must be accepted at a committee meeting, any application for membership (or change to full membership) must be received before the committee meeting on 18 February if the applicant wishes to be eligible to vote at the AGM. **No applications can be accepted after this date and still be eligible to vote.**

All members are asked to carefully consider who they would like to represent them on the Committee and to consider whether they could make a contribution themselves. Committee members need to be able to contribute to the planning and decision making process of the Society and to fairly represent the views of the members.

If you would like to find out more about what is involved in serving on the Committee before nominating anyone please contact our current President Jill Hanna (341 6362) or speak to Ajahn Brahm.
All full members of the Society are encouraged to attend this very important meeting to participate in the election of the Committee and to hear the reports from 1994. It is necessary for a significant number of our members to be attendance so that the meeting can be held.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As membership of the Buddhist Society of WA runs from 1 January each year, all existing memberships are now due for renewal. Membership fees are one of the primary source of funds to the Society’s General Account and are relied upon for the general maintenance and running expenses of Dhammadoka (which are considerable!), the maintenance and growth of the library, the printing and distribution of the Newsletter and ongoing administration costs .....so, please rejoin!

There has been no change to the annual fees for some years now and they will again remain the same in 1995. They are:

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

People who have not yet joined the Society, but who enjoy our facilities and/or who support the aims and objectives of the Society, are invited to apply for membership. This may be done under two categories:
- **Full membership** is available to people who consider themselves to be Buddhist - i.e. they have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and endeavour to keep the five precepts of a Buddhist lay person. Applications for full membership need to be signed by the Spiritual Director of the Society (currently Ajahn Brahm). Full members are entitled to use the library facilities, vote at the Annual General meeting and any special meetings of the Society and are eligible to hold office on the Committee.

- **Associate membership** is available to those people who may not yet meet the requirements of full membership, but who are supportive of the aims and objectives of the Society. Associate members may not vote at Society meetings nor hold office, but are entitled to use the library facilities.

Membership forms are available at the reception desk at Dhammaloka and renewals may be sent to the Treasurer or may be left at the reception desk or in the donations box in an envelope clearly marked with your name and ‘renewal of membership’.

We thank all people who have offered support to the Society over the past year through membership and encourage you all to contribute again in this manner. We need your help!
IN MEMORIAM

Ven Nyanaponika Mahathera 1901 - 1994

In the hour before dawn on Wednesday, 19th October 1994, the distinguished German scholar-monk, Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera, Founding-President and Patron of the Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), passed away at his residence, the Forest Hermitage in the Udawattakele Reserve, Kandy. At the time of his passing Ven. Nyanaponika was the senior most Theravada Buddhist monk of Western origin in the world, both in age (93) and in years in the Sangha. That same day he had completed his 57th rains as a bhikkhu.

Ven. Nyanaponika earned worldwide recognition for his authoritative expositions of Theravada Buddhism and for his lucid translations of Pali Buddhist texts into both English and German. His best known book, The Heart of Buddhist Meditation, has attained the stature of a modern Buddhist classic and has been translated into seven languages. His shorter essays from the BPS's Wheel and Bodhi Leaves series—all models of clarity and depth of thought—have been collected into a single volume, The Vision of Dhamma. He is also the author of Abhidhamma Studies, investigations into the philosophical psychology of early Buddhism. His numerous German works include several books on Satipatthana meditation, a translation of the Sutta Nipata, and a translation of the Atthasalini (currently in the press).

Ven. Nyanaponika was one of the three founders of the Buddhist Publication Society in Kandy, which he served as Editor from its birth in 1958 until 1984 and as President until 1988. From 1988 until his death he was the Society’s distinguished Patron. It was above all his sagacious guidance, his overflowing compassion, and his dedication to the Dhamma that transformed the BPS into a major Buddhist publisher bringing the teachings of the Buddha to over eighty countries around the world. His own outstanding writings and his devoted service to the Sasana through the BPS constitute one of the truly monumental contributions to Theravada Buddhism in the twentieth century.

By the immense merits of his life's achievements, may Ven. Nyanaponika be released from all misfortune in his future existences and may he attain the supreme goal of Nibbana, deliverance from all suffering.
REGULAR ACTIVITIES

DHAMMALOKA BUDDHIST CENTRE NOLLAMARA

Friday
7.00 - 7.20pm    Chanting
7.30 - 8.00pm    Guided sitting meditation
8.00 - 9.00pm    A talk on Buddhism by one of the senior monks

Saturday
10.30am          Food offering to the Sangha
2.30 - 3.00pm    Instruction for new meditators and for experienced meditators
3.00 - 4.00pm    Meditation and discussion

Sunday
8.30 - 9.15am    Sitting meditation
9.15 - 9.45am    Walking meditation and interviews
9.45 - 10.30am   Sitting meditation
10.30am          Food offering to the Sangha
12.00 - 1.30pm   Dhamma school for children is on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month
3.00 - 4.30pm    Advanced Dhamma class (2nd & 4th)

Wednesday
7.30 - 8.30pm    Unguided meditation followed by an informal discussion

Thursday
9.30 - 11.00am   Yoga, relaxation & meditation (beginners welcome)

SOUTH OF THE RIVER

Tuesday
7.00 - 9.00pm    Meditation Instruction
Meditation and Dhamma talk
Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital
Enquiries to Dave Reed, 399 1411

ADDRESSES

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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