THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF W.A.

NEWSLETTER
November — February BE 2541 (1998)
NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO
SAMMASAMBUDDHASSA

THE ‘D—’ WORD!

While I was enjoying a period of complete retreat in early September, seeing no-one except for the novice who brought food to my hut, a famous Princess died and was buried. I was much later told that a great tidal wave of grief had swept over whole nations and that, for many days after, the light was dim in millions of hearts. I was blissfully unaware of all of that. Even now I find it incredible that our people behave in such a way, that they wear such suffering even with pride. Buddhist perspectives are desperately needed in our society and so I have decided to write this article on the ultimate taboo, the ‘D——’ word, Death!

I have sat on the rear benches at many a funeral service, there to pay respect to a friend I will see no more, and I have listened closely to the words of the preacher, the family and friends. “Clem passed over.” “Jane went to God.” “Leanne is now reunited with her husband in heaven.” “Boontum is now resting in peace.” Not once did I hear the “D——” word. For a moment I would think that no-one had died. If it wasn’t for the ‘stiff’ in the box up the front, I too would have been caught in this custom of denying death.

The real tragedy here is the denial of death, to the point that it isn’t polite to mention the word, even at a funeral! Buddhism shows that it is this very denial of death that causes the shock when it inevitably happens and then generates the grief which claws at the heart. We would be a much richer, saner and more happy society if we would talk about death. Often. Death, in fact, is not as bad as it sounds!

What dies anyway? The corpse at the funeral home that you view quickly with a mix of fear and respect is not the person that you once knew and loved. That they look so peaceful there in the coffin only speaks for the skill of the embalmers who positioned the mouth in a slight smile before the muscles set hard and who injected dye into the blood vessels to mask the grey pallor of unadorned death. It is
but a doll that you see in the coffin, painted and preened, a compassionate deceit.

Buddhism boasts the teaching of rebirth. Rebirth is not a theory, it is a fact. When you have developed deep meditation, when you can abide in bliss observing only the mind, the fact of rebirth becomes as obvious as the radiant sun in a cloudless sky. When your car, your vehicle, is sent to the recycling yard, do you get annihilated with it? Or does the driver just move into another vehicle? When you realise that that which we call mind, or the stream of consciousness, flows on in a causal sequence into a new life, why would you grieve for the worn out shell left behind?

I only feel sadness when bad people die. I feel sad that they have wasted this precious human life in selfishness and greed, hurting others rather than caring for them. The Law of Kamma is a basic Truth about existence which applies to all beings whether they believe in it or not. A person who has lived a bad life will suffer because of it in subsequent lives. That is what makes me sad. But when a good person dies, one well known for their virtue, charity and compassion, then I actually feel joy. They have done very well and will reap a rich harvest of happiness for their good Kamma in their future lives. I feel happy for them.

For example, my own father died when I was only 16. I loved my Dad a lot. He was to me a very great man. That is why I felt happy when he died and never grieved for him once, not at his funeral, not ever since. To me, it was just as I used to feel after going as a young man to a concert in London. After having heard a thrilling rock band or a magnificent orchestra, when the performance had ended and I walked home in the cold empty night along the grey stone pavement slabs moistened with London drizzle and reflecting the dim street lights like so many candles around a coffin, knowing that I would never hear that same maestro again - I felt exhilarated. What powerful music! What a marvellous performance! How lucky I was to have been there for such a time! And that is exactly how I felt at my own Dad’s cremation. What a truly marvellous performance you showed me, Dad! How lucky I was to have known you for those 16 years! I felt thrilled.
Mourners grieve not for the dead, but for themselves. They cry out of confusion, out of custom and out of fear, not understanding death. Often they get angry, shouting with their tears that the one who had died was far too young for death. I was told recently of a lady who was told by her doctor that she had gout - “It can’t be!”, she protested, “Only old people get gout.” She was 85 years old! The truth of the matter is that no-one is too young to die. Not even you who are reading this.

A monk in Thailand many years ago, living alone in a hut in the jungle, noticed the leaves strewn on the jungle floor which had been ripped off the trees by the previous night’s storm. They were mostly old brown leaves, as you would expect, which had lived a full life on the branches and twigs. Among the old leaves there were some younger, yellow leaves, some green leaves as well and even some fresh green leaves which could only have sprouted a short time before the storm - also lying dead upon the forest floor. The monk then looked up to see that most of the leaves still alive on the tree were the young green leaves, but among the green leaves, although many young leaves had perished, there were a few wrinkled brown leaves still clinging on - in spite of the storm! That is the nature of leaves in a storm. It is also the very same nature that brings death to young children, the fresh green leaves of our species, while the wrinkled old brown leaves remain for another year. What purpose is gained by getting angry at nature? When, like that monk, you open your eyes to nature’s way, it removes the sting of an untimely death.

Reflections such as these help you to understand death. When you have understood death you make your peace with death and embrace
it as an integral part of our life. Do you love life? Or do you only love part of life, the pleasing part? If you are one who is longing for peace then learn to love life, the whole of life, including death. Not that you have to like death, for a mother will love her child, but not always like him, especially when he wakes her up crying again at 2am! A mother’s love accepts such suffering as part of having a child. When you have such compassion for life, you can accept that part we call death, with no self pity, anger, denial or grief.

Think about death, as often as you can. When you regularly remember that your time here is limited and gets less every day, then the hours become more vital and too important to waste. How can you get angry at those whom you love when you remember that they, or you, may die at any hour? How can you fritter away your years in aimless amusements when you can see in your mind your own coffin being fashioned even as you read this? Knowing this much, can you do anything else but be kind, caring and gentle, and earnestly do all those other things that the Buddha encouraged? Kamma is all that you will take with you and it is never too early to prepare for the journey, it is only and all too often, too late.

Contemplating death often in this way actually makes you a better person, and a far happier one too. Then when a loved one dies, or even a young Princess, you do not suffer. The Buddha once said that in all your many lives you have all cried more tears than all the salt water in the oceans! When will there be an end of all your sad tears? The one who has died surely does not want you to cry. Moreover, when it is your turn to die, when you are the “main feature” of a funeral service, you can die with the peace of one who was wise and with heaps of good Kamma to take along the way. Your friends will then smile, remembering you with joy, and leaving you with the thought “What a marvellous performance it was that she gave us.”

Ajahn Brahm
VINAYA

MAY A MONK ACT AS A DOCTOR?

A recurring misunderstanding among some lay Buddhists is that a monk may practise as a doctor to the laity. Some monks do become skilled in herbal medicine and other traditional therapies but when, if ever, are they allowed by their precepts to behave as a doctor?

The Lord Buddha once said “Whoever, monks, would tend me, he should tend the sick” and this well known saying has often been used to justify a monk acting as a doctor. However, the saying is taken out of context as will soon be clear. The full passage, found in that section of the Vinayapitaka called the Mahavagga, chapter 8 verse 26, relates the story of the Lord Buddha coming across a fellow monk who was suffering from dysentery. With the help of Ven Ananda, the Lord Buddha cleaned and settled the sick monk. Shortly afterwards, the Lord Buddha addressed the Sangha:

“Monks, you have not a mother, you have not a father who might tend you. If you, monks, do not tend one another, then who is there who will tend you? Whoever, monks would tend me, he should tend the sick.”

From the Pali Text Society’s translation, Book of the Discipline, Vol 4 p432

The full passage makes it abundantly clear that when the Lord Buddha said “Whoever would tend me should tend the sick”, His meaning was for monks to look after any fellow monks who were sick. He was not referring to monks acting as doctors to the laity.

In fact, the Lord Buddha said several times that acting as a doctor to lay people is, for a monk, Wrong Livelihood (MICCHA-AJIVA) directly contrary to the fifth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path and a Debased Art (TIRACCHANA-VIJJA). For example, in the very first Sutta in the first collection of Suttas, being the Brahmajala Sutta of the Digha Nikaya, the Lord Buddha said:
27. "Whereas some recluses and brahmans while living on the food offered by the faithful, earn their living by a wrong means of livelihood (MICCHA-AJIVA), by such debased arts (TIRACCHANA-VIJJA) as: promising gifts to deities in return for favours; fulfilling such promises; demonology; reciting spells after entering an earthen house; inducing virility and impotence; preparing and consecrating sites for a house; giving ceremonial mouthwashes and bathing; offering sacrificial fires; administering emetics, purgatives, expectorants and phlemagogues; administering ear medicine; eye medicine, nose medicine, collyrium and counter ointments; curing cataracts, practising surgery, practising as a children's doctor; administering medicines to cure bodily diseases and balms to counter their after effects - the recluse Gotama (the Lord Buddha) abstains from such wrong means of livelihood, from such debased arts."

(From The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views, p61, being the Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy's English edition of the Brahmajalā Sutta)

Thus the Lord Buddha clearly condemned any monk who makes his living by behaving as a doctor to the laity.

The tradition that has come down to all Theravada Buddhist monks is that described in the Samantapasadika, the great commentary on the Vinaya Pitaka compiled by Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka in the 5th century C.E. This authoritative work states that a monk may prescribe and supply medicines to his fellow monastics (monks and nuns), to his parents or to those looking after his parents, and to any laypeople staying in the monastery or vihara either preparing to go forth as monks or just staying to help the monks. Also, a monk may prescribe but not supply medicines to his brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents and to whatever travellers, bandits, people wounded in battle and those without relatives who come to the monastery or vihara for emergency help. Should a monk prescribe or supply medicines beyond this allowance he commits an offence against his precepts (a DUKKATA offence). Further, if he prescribes or supplies a medicine to a layperson for a material gift in return,
then he incurs another offence against his precepts for “corrupting families” (KULADUSAKA). That is what is stated in the Samantapasadika Vinaya Commentary, respected in all Theravada Buddhist countries. The passage may be found in the Pali Text Society’s edition of the Samantapasadika page 469f (unfortunately this work is in Pali and no English translation is available yet).

This answer from the authoritative texts to the question “May a monk act as a doctor?” shows a wise balance which recognises a monk’s duty to his parents, his responsibilities to those monks and laypeople staying with him in his monastery, and his compassion to all those visiting his monastery for emergency help. It prevents in any circumstances receiving any material reward for such services. Moreover, it remembers that the role of a Buddhist monk towards the laity is not to act as a doctor to the body but to act as a kind sage, a doctor to the mind.

Ajahn Brahm

ORDINATION

On Sunday 28th December, at 2pm at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre Anangarika Richard will take ordination as a novice.

All are welcome at this auspicious ceremony.

YOUTH GROUP

The Buddhist Youth Group meets on the third Sunday of every month at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre between 4.30pm - 5.30pm. This group, which is run by Ajahn Brahm, is for all Buddhist Youth who are aged between 16 and the early 20s. The program for the meetings include Meditation, a Dhamma talk and discussion. This is a wonderful forum for Buddhist youth to meet with like minded young people who are interested in the Dhamma. All are welcome to attend.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANTING

The following is part of a transcribed talk given
Dr Mahanama Karunaratana at Dhammaloka
Buddhist Centre on 27 September 1996.

Introduction:

In Buddhist countries, mostly in traditional Buddhist countries in Asia, Buddhists pay great respect and honour to the practice called Paritta, chanting a set of discourses of the Buddha as an act of protection. This chanting is performed according to a rhythm in a musical note and is associated with simple rituals. Although not widely practised in the Western Buddhist world, it is paving its way through slowly. The emphasis in the countries where Buddhism is new, is on meditative practices aiming at the development of insight, which of course is the aim of all those who follow the teaching of the Buddha.

My attempt this evening is to discuss the significance of this practice of chanting and to see how, when practised, the contents relate to the development of insight.

The term Paritta, in Pali, implies protection from all directions, protection from all forms of evil and dangers and also to attain success (Sabba Sampatti Siddhiya) by eliminating all suffering, all fears and all ailments.

The tradition is to invite all divine beings of the universe to this ceremony, by saying: "May the divine beings of the entire universe come here to listen to the Dhamma which confers happiness in this world, both human and divine, and lead to the freedom of being enlightened."

According to Buddhist cosmology associated with the relevant literature, the effect of the Buddha’s teaching is extended across billions of spheres or world systems called Cakkavata, defined as the ‘space/globe’ which receives light from one solar and lunar system, i.e. one sun and one moon. The existence of many such spheres or globes is noted. The impact of the Buddha’s teaching is
felt by all. This may be a traditional way of explaining how the Buddha’s message of great compassion was expressed beyond the global limits. However, the idea is to invite, in addition to human beings, all non human beings to partake in the chanting as observers or listeners.

The earliest mention we find of a situation where a particular discourse is chanted is the instance where the Buddha instructs Ananda to wander through the Vajjian Republic in India, which was hit by three forms of calamity, namely famine, sickness and the influence of evil spirits. As a means of eliminating these calamities and cleansing the environment, the Buddha asked Ananda to chant the Ratana Sutta, the discourse on the Triple Gem, accompanied by the sprinkling of water from his begging bowl. Ananda followed suit and it is said that all calamities were washed away and the kingdom was refreshed.

If we look at the contents of the discourse, it is an expression of the sublime qualities of the Triple Gem; the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha. In this Sutta the qualities of the Buddha are mentioned in three stanzas, Dhamma in two stanzas and the Sangha from the beginning to the attainment of enlightenment in seven stanzas. At the end of each stanza the blessing, accompanied by sprinkling of water, is invoked as “By this truth, may you be well and happy”. Water in the eastern tradition is a symbol of purity, bringing coolness and calm to the disturbed mind.

This brings us to an interesting aspect of the Dhamma. That is, that the truth stands as an unbreakable power. What the chanting does is to refer to this unfathomable quality of truth and makes a solemn declaration repeatedly. “This is true and by the power of this Truth may happiness come upon hearers.” This can be seen in many discourses included in the collection of texts used for chanting. The Angulimala Paritta, the discourse of Angulimala is an interesting example.

Angulimala, an innocent student misguided by his teacher who was misinformed by fellow students, became a dangerous killer. He had killed 999 people. One day he was waiting for his last prey to make his mission complete by killing 1,000 people. On that day three
forces went to get him. His mother to beg him to stop this violence, the King’s army to capture him and the Buddha to save him from killing his mother. Having listened to the Buddha, and following his guidance, he became an Arahant, an Enlightened One. One day he saw a young mother who was in acute labour pains and experiencing complications in the delivery of her baby. Out of compassion he related the story to the Buddha who asked him to do this solemn declaration. This discourse, a very short one, says, “Dear sister, ever since my noble birth I do not recall that I have killed any living being. By this truth may you and your baby be well”.

Don’t you find something strange here? Angulimala who had purposely killed 999 people says that from his birth he has not killed anyone. Well, the answer is there in the discourse itself. “Ariyaaya jatiya jato” .... since I was born in the noble community, i.e. became an enlightened person, so there is no contradiction. What I want to show here is that this is also an act of solemn declaration; “by the power of this truth may you be well”. This Sutta has become a favourite of expecting mothers in the Asian Buddhist countries. It is customary to have a coconut or water blessed with the chanting which is then taken immediately, or close to the time of labour, by the mother.

Among the texts of this collection there are discourses dealing with how to create well being by practising kindness and virtue, such as the discourse on Blessings, (Mangala Sutta); discourses on downfall, (Parabhava); and the discourse about the injustice of discrimination, social or otherwise, (Vasala). These are used as reminders that practising virtue and the prevention of unwholesome deeds and thoughts is a way of generating and developing safety, both mental and physical. When one listens to the contents of these discourses and practises them in day to day life, the environment becomes a much healthier place to live in. The discourse on Blessings concludes that “Those who, thus acting, are everywhere unconquered, attain happiness”.

This talk will be continued in the next edition of this Newsletter.
SANGHA NEWS

Following an old and respected tradition, in this article there will be the good (Sangha) news and the bad (Sangha) news! First the good news:-

These are good times at Bodhinyana Monastery. As I write this, the annual Rains Retreat is in its final few days and all the Sangha here are having a good time. As I tell our visitors, we are the “good time monks”! Incredible as it may sound, some people still think that having a good time is meeting beautiful people at a weekend party, or going to a local tavern for a drink and a talk, or carousing up to the wee hours at a pricey night club - unbelievable! Of course, my idea of a good time, and I hope my readers’ as well (I live in such hope, that is, of still having some readers!), is meeting the truly beautiful people at the daily dana (meal offering) at our monastery, or going to the local temple to drink in the nectar of an inspiring Dhamma talk, or cultivating inner bliss up to the wee hours of the morning in priceless meditation. These are the sort of recreational activities that bring joy, inspiration and inner contentment, which are just some of the exquisite pleasures of a refined consciousness. They uplift the mind to a beautiful and unsullied high. Which is why for the past few months we have really been living the high-life in Bodhinyana’s high-society of monastic high-flyers. High, higher and hi-yo-all! From the Sangha way up at Serpentine. Ahhh! This is the good life.

Continuing the good news, on the auspicious occasion of the Entry to the Rains Retreat Ceremony, a good number of good people came to perform a good deal of good karma by offering lots of ‘goodies’ to our good monks. Even the weather was good, making it all good fun doing good to the good by the good and for your good. My goodness! And your goodness too, over a number of years, has made this monastery look so good, “elegant” even, as one visitor of good taste recently remarked. This year was our 14th Retreat at Bodhinyana Monastery and we had 14 monastics for the retreat. Three years ago, at our 11th Retreat, there were 11 monks, at our 12th Retreat there were 12 monks, and last retreat there were 13 monks! This is called ‘inflation’ and if I don’t get it under control soon, in a few years time there will be too many monks here. Like my use of the word ‘good’ this will be as they say, too much of a ‘good’ thing!
What a good job it was, building 2 new kutis (monks' huts) early in the year. A good job, that is, that they were finished in time for the retreat to accommodate all our monks. We are bursting at the seams, as they say, by which I do not mean that we are all getting too fat(!), but I mean that the size of the monastic community here only just fits the buildings. There are now 15 kutis here and after the retreat we intend to build another 4, this time having a professional builder do the work. I am getting too old now to mix concrete and lay bricks, even though a recent visitor who was asked how long she thought I had been a monk guessed “2 years?”. She thought that I looked far too young to have been a monk for 23 years (vanity, by the way, made me include this story). So if you too want to stay looking young, then lead the good life, just like the monks.

Just before the retreat, good ol' Ajahn Nyana expedited the excavation of an expansive new dam or reservoir, a good way down in our valley. More residents here means more water is used, especially for monks who like to live a clean life! The surrounds of the new lake, the third in our monastery now, need some more landscaping next autumn but for now all I can say about our three sources of water here is, Well! Well! Well!

Ajaha Nyanadhammo at the new dam
This year's retreat was exceptionally quiet for us, even though I had to go into Perth twice to conduct two funerals. In this 'good news' article, it was a case of "Good Grief!". I also had to go into town once to a suburban house to exorcise some ghosts with some Buddhist chanting. My chanting can be so bad that any self-respecting ghost usually runs away fast when I begin the chanting. So, as you would expect, I left the family concerned in good spirits! Meanwhile, back at the monastery, the Sangha have been diligently meditating alone in their huts, doing nothing one may say. In fact, our monks are so good at doing nothing at this time of year that they qualify to be called a "good for nothing bunch"! I mean this, of course, in the most complimentary way. Now, when you are reading this, our quiet retreat will have ended, which now brings me on to the bad (Sangha) news that I mentioned at the beginning.

The bad news, I'm sad to say, is that due to many factors, personal and otherwise, my future as abbot here is, well, up in the air. That's right, after the Kathina Ceremony I fly off to Sydney to give a nine day meditation retreat there, then a few weeks after my return I fly off again this time to Thailand in January and to India in February. That is what I meant, sorry, when I said my future is "up in the air"! I will be travelling with Ven Sukhito on the trip to India and Thailand, leading a group of Buddhists from Perth to the holy places there. We'll be back in mid February, all being good!

Thus there's not really any bad news from the Sangha at Serpentine. How could there be? So good-on-yer and good-bye for now,

Spreading the 'good' word,

Ajahn "good-goody" Brahm

PS: Our local Shire's Building Surveyor came to our monastery today. It was not to check our buildings, but just that he was passing this way. He had been telling his companion, a Shire administrator, new to the area, that the Buddhist monastery here was an amazing experience. "You go through that gate and the whole world stops. You could hear a pin drop in there. It is that peaceful." He told me that was what he had said before they came in and that his friend was taken aback at how true those words were. Our local Building Surveyor knows that it is not just huts and halls that we have built here in Serpentine.
MEDITATION RETREATS

We are very fortunate in Perth that we are frequently offered the chance to attend a meditation retreat. These retreats are a wonderful opportunity to receive special guidance and focussed teachings in the practice of meditation under the skilful guidance of a Sangha member.

The retreat program for the rest of this year and 1998 is:

December 12 - 21  Nine day Retreat at the Redemptorist Retreat House, North Perth

March 6 - 8      Weekend Retreat at St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

March 27 - April 5 Nine day Retreat led by Ven Gunaratana at the Redemptorist Retreat House, North Perth

June 26 - 28   Weekend Retreat at St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

November 20 - 22 Weekend Retreat at St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

December         (date to be Nine day Retreat confirmed)

Registration forms will be available from Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre four weeks prior to the start of each retreat.

If you are unable to attend (and even if you are able to!), perhaps you would considering sponsoring, or part sponsoring, a person who would like to go, but is unable to find the funds at this time.

If you have any queries regarding these retreats, please phone Bianca or Ron on 9299 7185.
ADVANCED DHAMMA CLASS

The Advanced Dhamma Classes are held at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre to enable people who have been practising meditation and studying Dhamma for some time to improve their knowledge and understanding. Ajahn Brahm takes these classes using the Majjhima Nikaya (The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha) as the accompanying text.

As Ajahn Brahm will be away in early November, the Advanced Dhamma Class, which is normally held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, will only be held on the following dates between 3pm - 4.30pm:

November 30 - Sutta 128, Upakkilesa Sutta, On Imperfections
December 7 - Sutta 54, Potaliya Sutta, To Potaliya
December 28, Sutta 51, Kandaraka Sutta, To Kandaraka

The 1998 program will be announced later in this year.

AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST MEDITATION

For several years now we have been running a series of talks at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre, held on the first four Saturdays of each month, entitled An Introduction to Buddhist Meditation. The fact that new people are continuing to come along to these talks is an indication of the need for, and interest in, meditation in our community. The classes are conducted by a layperson between 3.00pm - 4.15pm and 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 and walking meditation
Week 4: Using meditation to gain Insight and wisdom and Loving Kindness meditation

Everyone is welcome to attend. A series of audio tapes covering these subjects is also available in the library for a cost of $10.
SOCIETY NEWS

As the Rains Retreat has now ended we extend thanks to Ron and Bianca for organising a very interesting program while our Sangha were on Retreat. It is very pleasing to see many maturing Buddhist lay people guiding the meditation classes during the Rains Retreat in order to support the Sangha in retreat time. Many thanks to the guest speakers who provided inspiring talks on Fridays nights during the Rains Retreat.

The seed which we planted some time ago for the growth of a future Nuns’ Monastery is indeed growing well. Thanks to some wonderfully generous donors, who wished to mark the birth of their daughter with a contribution to the development of a place for Nuns to practice (in case she may wish to ordain one day), we have had a healthy boost to our funds which now stand at over $118,000! Our dream is to buy a suitable place for Nuns to practice in Western Australia, quite separate from our male Sangha, allowing peaceful conditions and a supportive environment for their practice to flourish. The Buddhist Society is looking forward to inviting Theravadan nuns to Perth in the future in the hope that we can support and nurture their practice in the west. If you’d like to make a contribution to this dream, we have dedicated an account for this purpose, the Nuns’ Monastery Building Fund, which is a tax deductible account.

In recent times we have seen a band of willing workers meticulously cleaning the standing Buddha rupa outside the Meditation Hall at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre (much of the cleaning was done with

Willing workers cleaning the Buddha rupa
toothbrushes!). This was a big task and one which was carried out with much devotion. Our thanks to the many people who were involved in this - the results are fantastic!

The Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre has often been called the Best Restaurant in Perth because of the delicious fund raising dinners which have been held over the years. We will once again be giving people an opportunity to prove this right! The Thai community of the Buddhist Society invite you to a Thai Lunch on Sunday 23rd November. Tickets are available at reception. We are also planning to have a vegetarian dinner to raise funds for the Nuns' Monastery Building Fund some time in January, so watch the noticeboard at Dhammaloka for the date and details!

We are delighted to welcome our new Assistant Caretaker at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre. Sol Hanna, known to many as a friendly library volunteer, generously took on the role as Assistant Caretaker in August and is doing a wonderful job.

The Dhamma Circle co-ordinated by committee member John Hall has organised very enjoyable social outings this winter for new and longstanding Buddhist people on a monthly basis. These outings have included a vegetarian meal at Analakshmi Restaurant, a walk, and a picnic by the river. If you are new to Perth, new to Buddhism, or would simply like to meet some Buddhist friends and would like to join in future outings please call John Hall on 938 1059.

After many years of funding from the Federal Government for the provision of a Grant-in-Aid worker for our Buddhist community, the grant was not renewed and this service has been discontinued.
We thank all the Grant-in-Aid workers we had over the years, together with the volunteers who helped with the administration of the grants, for all their hard work and dedication in helping those people within our community who needed support. We are hoping to service the needs of our Thai community with a voluntary Thai speaking social worker in the future.

Your services are needed! Nominations will soon be called for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and six committee members for 1998. This is wonderful opportunity to make merit by serving on the Committee and making a contribution to the spreading of the Dhamma. Nominations will close at 5pm, Friday 16th January and the Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21st February. To be eligible for office, and to vote at the Annual General Meeting in February, you will need to be a full member of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, so perhaps this is an ideal time to upgrade your membership. Forms are available at Dhammaloka from the reception desk.

Finally, as this is the last Newsletter of the year we take the opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed in so many ways - by taking on duties, financial support, helping at busy bees, working on the committee, doing flowers, cleaning, producing the newsletter, gardening, office work, library duties etc - during the year. So much happens 'behind the scenes' to enable us to have such a wonderful Centre to spread the Dhamma to many people. May you enjoy the fruits of your kamma!

*The Committee*
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY, 21st FEBRUARY, 1998

In accordance with the constitution of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21st February, 1998 at 4.30pm 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 16th January, 1998.

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 14th 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, Chris Banks on 9448 0854, or speak to Ajahn Brahm.
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As this is the last newsletter for this year (with the next one being due in March), we are including in this Newsletter an early reminder about the renewal of membership.

As membership of the Buddhist Society of WA runs from 1 January each year, all existing memberships are due for renewal from that date. Membership fees are one of the primary sources 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 this 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 1998. They are:

$40 for family membership
$30 for single membership
$20 people 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 Buddhists - ie 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 Dhammadoka 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
FOR SALE

Meditation cushions and stools are available for sale at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre for $25 each.

All proceeds go to the Nuns' Monastery Building Fund.
# Regular Activities

## Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.30 - 8.00pm</td>
<td>Guided sitting meditation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.00 - 9.00pm</td>
<td>A talk on Buddhism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Food offering to the Sangha</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00 - 4.15pm</td>
<td>Instruction, meditation and discussion</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Separate classes for new and experienced meditators. A four week <em>Introduction to Meditation</em> course begins on the first Saturday of each month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>8.30 - 9.15am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.15 - 9.45am</td>
<td>Walking meditation and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.45 - 10.30am</td>
<td>Sitting meditation</td>
</tr>
<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 on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00 - 4.30pm</td>
<td>Advanced Dhamma class (dates as noted inside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>7.30 - 8.30pm</td>
<td>Unguided meditation</td>
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## 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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation and Dhamma talk at Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enquiries to Chris Baunton 9524 1098</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Addresses

The Buddhist Society of WA (Inc)
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