THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF W.A.

NEWSLETTER

VESAKHA DAY

Sunday 18 May, 1997 at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

The full moon day of May, Vesakha, is an occasion of ultimate significance as it commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbana (final passing away) of the Lord Buddha. On this full moon night, 2585 years ago, the Buddha-to-be sat alone all night in the blissful silence and profound clarity of deep meditation. Thereby He saw the Dhamma, the hard-to-see Truth that is the nature of all, mind and universe. He was perfectly enlightened, released from all suffering, at peace .... the Buddha!

The perfection of wisdom that He gained on that first Vesakha night was freely and lovingly made available to all. Even today here in Perth, this same sublime wisdom that is the Path and its Fruits is still clearly heard, echoing loudly through the centuries, transcending language and oceans. This Dhamma of the Buddha, even today, when practised, leads far away from confusion and suffering, to happiness, harmony, compassion and peace.

The Vesakha Day celebrations will be held at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre on Sunday 18 May, 1997 and all are invited to attend.

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 a 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 other
4.00 - 6.00pm Tea and biscuits, Meditation and discussion
6.00 - 6.30pm Traditional Sri Lankan Buddhist devotional songs
6.30 - 8.00pm Evening ceremony including chanting, Dhamma talk and circumambulation of the shrine
The Bliss of Letting Go

In the Buddhist world today, there is much discussion among meditators about the relevance of Jhana (to be explained below). The first question usually asked is "Must one achieve Jhana first to become fully Enlightened (Arahat), or is it possible to reach the Supreme Goal without any experience of Jhana?"

Those who ask this question are usually those who have not yet experienced Jhana themselves. It is difficult to do what is necessary to realize Jhana, so most people ask this question wanting to be told that Jhana is not essential. They want to be told that their inability is not an obstacle. They want a quick and easy way to Nibbana. Such people will be pleased and even inspired by a teacher who tells them what they wanted to hear anyway - that these Jhanas are unnecessary - and they will follow this teaching because it is convenient. Unfortunately, Truth is seldom convenient, and rarely agrees with what we want to hear.

"The First Jhana is the natural result of letting go..."

On the other hand, a meditator who has familiarity with Jhana will recognize them as blissful states of letting go, and it is right there, in the experience of letting go, that the relevance of Jhana is known. The First Jhana is the natural result of letting go of the concern for sensory pleasure (Kama Sukha), by which is meant all concern, even for mere comfort, in the realm of the five external senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch). In the First Jhana, through sustained and complete removal of all interest in these five senses, the meditator loses all sense of the body, and these five
external senses disappear. They abide wholly in the sixth sense that is pure mind, and are still, in blissful inner silence. The Buddha called this “The Bliss of Renunciation”, or the bliss of letting go. The Second Jhana is the natural result of abandoning a very subtle movement of attention towards and holding onto this blissful mind object. When this final ‘wobbling’ of attention is let go of, one experiences the even more pleasurable bliss of full inner stillness (Samadhi), where the mind is absolutely one-pointed and motionless. The Third Jhana is the natural result of letting go of the subtle excitement of rapture, and the Fourth Jhana is the natural result of letting go of happiness itself, so as to enjoy the most profound and immovable mental equanimity.

In Buddhism, experience, not speculation, and even less blind belief, is the criteria for understanding. A meditator simply does not realize what stillness, rapture, happiness or equanimity fully mean until they have become familiar with the Jhanas. But the experience of the Jhanas, these stages of letting go, give one direct understanding through experience of these mental phenomena, in particular happiness (Sukha) and suffering (Dukkha).

It is similar to the tadpole who has spent her whole life in the water but who can have no understanding of water because she has known nothing else. Then, when she grows up into a frog, lets go of the water, and attains to dry land, she knows both the nature of water and the way to go beyond it. In this simile, the water stands for Dukkha, the dry land for Jhana (not Nibbana - the frog still carries a little water on her skin upon dry land!), and the way to go beyond stands for letting go.

In this way, the practice of Jhana reveals the Path to fully ending Dukkha. The meditator who achieves Jhana will eventually ask “Why are these Jhanas so profoundly blissful? They will discover for themselves the obvious answer - “Because they are stages of letting go of that which they now see as fine forms of suffering!” When one is familiar with Jhana, and realizes the origin of the bliss therein, one will come to see for oneself that all worldly pleasures, that is, of the five external senses (which include sexuality), are merely Dukkha. The attachment to the body and its sensory adventures will begin to
fade away. One will understand clearly why all Enlightened Ones are celibate. Then, as one progresses onwards to the higher Jhanas and contemplates why each further one is ever more pleasing, one comes to understand that it is because one is letting go of refined mental attachments, such as the attachment to rapture, happiness and equanimity. It becomes clear that even these most lofty mind states are just refined forms of suffering, because when one lets them go, then more suffering goes too. The higher one goes, the more Dukkha is let go of and through this process Dukkha becomes known. One cannot know fully the Truth of Suffering, and thus the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths, except by letting go of suffering through the experience of Jhana.

It is very odd, therefore, that some suggest that the practise of Jhana leads to attachment. How can what is the practice of letting go lead to attachment? Indeed, the Buddha repeatedly said that these Jhanas should not be feared, but should be developed, and that when these Jhanas are indulged in regularly they lead to Sotapanna, Sakadagami, Anagami, and Arahant, the four stages of Enlightenment. (See the Pasadika Sutta of the Digha Nikaya).

Once Full Enlightenment is reached and all attachments are removed, then letting go into Jhana becomes as natural as a leaf released from a tree falling downwards to the ground. Indeed, one’s present ability to let go and experience the Jhana is a measure of one’s true understanding of the Dhamma and consequent lack of attachment.

Ajahn Brahm
THE BENEFITS OF ABANDONING SELF-VIEW

Self-view is the head, the chief, of all the old bad kamma that accompanies beings incessantly. As long as self-view exists, this old kamma is fiery and full of strength. It's like palm fruits in a palm grove. They always possess a tendency to fall to the ground, even though they may be attached to the tops of the palm trees. As long as the stalks are firm they remain on the trees, but as soon as the stalks weaken, they inevitably fall to the ground. In the same way, beings in whose mental make-up self-view still exists are continually obliged to descend to the lower realms. When the 'stalks' of life forces which maintain beings in higher realms are severed, they inevitably fall, just like the palm fruits. This is so because the self-view that is ever present in the mental make-up of beings is a great burden, even heavier than a mighty mountain, and gathers within its folds an infinite amount of bad kamma.

But all this old bad kamma which beings have accumulated through the beginningless round of rebirths called samsara is completely extinguished as soon as their chief - self-view - disappears entirely. Beings whose mental make-up is entirely freed from self-view have their heads turned towards the higher realms, even though they are living in the human world. They are like the mists streaming upwards from the forests and mountains of Burma in the last part of the rainy season.

Although, as it were, that old bad kamma does not wish to accompany beings, and does not wish to produce results, it is coerced into doing so. Beings take possession of their kamma through harbouring such thoughts as - "It is kamma I have committed. It's my kamma". It is because of this act of forcibly taking possession that kamma is obliged to produce its result.

In a string of beads, where an infinite number of beads are strung together by a strong silk thread, if one bead is pulled, all the other beads follow along. But if the silk thread is removed, pulling one of the beads does not disturb the others - they are no longer attached.
Those who clearly perceive the characteristic of not-self and who have rid themselves of self-view perceive that the body and mind which arise and disappear, even in the short course of one meditation sitting, are separate phenomena and not an entity. The concept of 'my self', which is like the thread, is no longer present. Their khandhas appear to them like the string of beads from which the thread has been removed. They clearly perceive that their old bad kamma is not 'I' or 'my kamma', but simply phenomena which arise and disappear in an instant. That is why this past bad kamma disappears entirely as soon as self-view disappears.

Adapted from 'Anattanisamsa' by the Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw, from his book 'The Manuals of Buddhism'

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS

Have you paid your membership subscriptions to the Buddhist Society this year?

If not, will you please either pay at the Centre or by mail (please address it to The Treasurer) to ensure that your membership is current.

Membership subscriptions are a vital part of the income for the general running expenses and upkeep of Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre and the library facilities and we encourage you to renew.

If you are interested in becoming a member for the first time, forms are available at the reception desk at Dhammaloka.
VINAYA

The place of women in Theravada monasticism is a problem no less prickly than some of the native bushes here in the monastery! But it cannot be avoided. It can only be understood in relation to the VINAYA, the body of monastic rules and regulations established by the Buddha which are binding on every Buddhist monk and nun. Thus in this the fifth article in the series about the Vinaya I will discuss the ORDINATION OF WOMEN.

'Bhikkhu' is the name which denotes a fully ordained Buddhist monk. The term literally means one who depends on alms. Correspondingly, a 'Bhikkhuni' is a fully ordained Buddhist nun. During his lifetime, the Buddha established thriving communities of both bhikkhus and bhikkunis. However, not only did the Buddha lay down more rules of discipline for the bhikkunis, 311 as against the bhikkhus' 227, but he also made it more difficult for them to be ordained.

To become a bhikkhuni a woman had to begin by asking for 'ordination' as a sikkhamana (meaning a woman in training) before an assembly of at least five bhikkunis. Her training consisted of six rules: the Five Precepts, the third being extended to complete celibacy, plus abstaining from eating outside of the morning time. Only when she had kept these six rules unbroken for two years, could she begin her training anew. Having completed her training, she should then seek an experienced bhikkhuni of at least 12 years standing to be her preceptor. A preceptor has to be agreed upon as such by the local community of bhikkunis before she may ordain another and even then, she may only ordain one candidate every other year. The candidate is first ordained in a formal meeting of at least five bhikkunis and afterwards this 'ordination on one side' is confirmed before a formal meeting of at least five bhikkhus. Only then is she a fully ordained nun according the Theravada tradition.

The Bhikkhuni Sangha flourished for many centuries and spread throughout South and East Asia. It seems to have died out in Sri Lanka in the 11th century C.E. (according to Professor Malalasekera) mainly due to the civil turmoil coming from invasion and war. The
fact that the Bhikkhuni Sangha was not re-established in the last decades of the 11th century when Sri Lanka was again peaceful, strongly suggests that there were few, if any, bhikkhunis in neighbouring lands, such as India or Burma, who could be invited to Sri Lanka to re-establish the tradition. For, as explained above, to ordain another bhikkhuni one requires a minimum of five existing bhikkhunis; once the number drops to below five then the Institution is doomed.

For many centuries the Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma have assumed that the Order of Bhikkhus died out ages ago and that it is impossible to revive. To compensate for this, other female monastic traditions have been established by the monks to help give the opportunity to women to live a simple meditative life. Such an Order is that of the white robed nuns of Thailand keeping the eight Precepts. But being a later addition, this ordination lacks the status of having been established by the Buddha and lacks the authority of an ancient tradition and thus social and cultural prejudices have been able to take root and prevail. For this reason many senior monks, such as Ajahn Sumedho in England for example, have attempted to revive and build upon the female novice ordination. Though still less than a bhikkhuni, a female novice wears brown and essentially keep 10 precepts, the last of which is abstaining from the use or possession of money. Thus a female novice is more of a renunciant than the white robed Thai nun, and, wearing robes similar in appearance to those of a monk, she may get more of the respect she deserves.

There has even been much discussion recently, that is in the last decade or so, that it may be possible to revive the full bhikkhuni ordination. There are bhikksunis of the Mahayana tradition in Taiwan and Hong Kong. (‘Bhikksuni’ is merely the Sanskrit -the language of Mahayana - equivalent of our ‘Bhikkhuni’.) If it turns out that the ordination procedure used by the Mahayana bhikksunis contains the vital ingredient of a formal resolution, put three times to a gathering of at least five bhikkhunis, informing those gathered that the candidate wishes for ordination as a bhikkhuni and asking their approval, then the ordination is probably valid by Theravada standards. Should this
be so, and I have no information on this at present, then we may see the full female counterpart of the monks restored to the Theravada tradition.

Whatever the technicalities, one should always keep in mind the old English proverb: “Where there is a will, there is a way”. I am often amazed to see how far rules can be bent under the weight of compassion. All it needs is the motive for doing the bending, and that motive will increase as do the numbers of women who show by their example a willingness to surrender to a renunciant’s life.

Ajahn Brahm

“Exalting myself endlessly
I went around passing judgement on others
but accomplishing nothing.
Looking at the faults of others
embitters the heart.
As if we were to set ourselves on fire,
becoming sooty and burned.
Whoever’s right or wrong, good or bad,
that’s their business.
Ours is to make sure
the heart looks after itself.
Don’t let unskilful attitudes buzz around it and land
Make it consummate
in merit and skill -
the result will be peace.”

From “The Ballad of Liberation from the Khandhas”
by Phra Ajahn Mun Bhuridatta Mahathera,
translated from Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
Available for free distribution in Thai and English.
SANGHA NEWS

The Sangha at Bodhinyana Monastery must move with the times. So I am introducing modern western systems of management to our ancient eastern lifestyle. Indeed, concepts like 'monetary policy' even sound like 'monastery policy' and ideas like 'work-place agreements' are just the job for an abbot, I mean the monastery C.E.O., to employ. You see, statistics have shown that at this time of the monastic year, when we do most of our building and other maintenance work, the number of resident monks declines sharply, but increases again in mid-July when the Rains Retreat starts and all the work stops! Thus, my idea of 'work-place agreements' here will mean that a monk can have a place on agreement of helping with the work! At any rate, we only work at a gentle pace for two and a half hours on each of five mornings per week, and even that is not compulsory - one is allowed to work more!

At present, at our monastery, we are concentrating on increasing our human resource potential, i.e., we are building two new monks' huts. The worker-monks are paid at the traditional rate of one-meal-a-day and, on completion of the project, are offered a free share issue in the great merit accrued. These merit-bonds are redeemable, according to standard Karmic Law, at any time in this or subsequent lifetimes and have the unique added bonus of being impossible to tax - what a deal! Being serious for a moment, helping build a monastery hut is immense good kamma. The huts here are built of brick to last a long time and, in those many years, should a resident of that hut reach a Jhana (meditative attainment) or one of the four Stages of Enlightenment, then that would be incredibly good kamma for those who built or helped finance that hut. It is a great return on a small investment, which is the meaning of wise monetary/monastery policy. We also recently completed the extension of the monastery boundary wall beyond the lower gate and it easily met our budget requirement, by which the wall had to be so strong that nothing will ever budge it! Next, we will upgrade the road running alongside our wall so that we can have our very own, monastic, Wall Street for future investment here!
In spite of all these magnificent, modern management initiatives, industrial unrest has appeared at our monastery. Our diligent monks industriously meditating have been caused much unrest by some noisy, obviously non-Buddhist, casual visitors who have shown no regard to the tranquillity and gentleness of our monastic regime. One wobbly man was seen tottering around the monastery holding a bottle of beer in one hand and a radio blaring un-monkly music in the other hand. I suspect that he had heard “this monastery’s still” and mistook the word “still” as a place to get more grog! Other visitors have let their kids run riot here, shouting and screaming around the Meditation areas and effectively disquieting all but the most deaf of our monks. I now have another understanding of the word ‘baby-boomers’! Yet other casual visitors have stomped into our ‘holy of holies’, our main Meditation Hall, slamming the doors, talking loudly and clicking their cameras within inches of our residents meditating peacefully in the Hall. Indeed, some deep meditators have been so surprised by the sudden and unexpected camera flash that they have thought, for a
moment, "This is it! The flash of Enlightenment!" only to be miserably disappointed when they opened their eyes. So something had to be done to stop our lovely monastery from turning into yet another theme-park for bored and bawdy tourists regarding our monks merely as a curious form of life to be poked, photographed and asked silly questions. We have already put up a sign on our lower gate: "No Entry - Trespassers will be Converted!" and that is working very well. Then our upper, or main gate will be closed, but not locked, from 1 p.m. onwards on weekends and public holidays. Visitors who respect that this is a monastery in which people behave quietly will always be welcome, but they will have to get out of their car at the main entrance to open the gate, then immediately close it behind them, to enter the monastery and help keep the peace. We hope that this arrangement will cause minimal inconvenience to Buddhist visitors and residents, while deterring a destructive form of wildlife - wild visitors who destroy the peace.

On the subject of visitors, peaceful and most welcome ones that is, we have been fortunate to have had several visiting Sangha at our monastery in recent months. I am a great admirer of ‘outsourcing’, which here means encouraging inspiring visitors from monasteries overseas. First we were honoured by visits from two very impressive Buddhist nuns, Sisters Vayama and Upekkha. Then we had another beneficial, but rather too short, visit from Ven. Dhammavihari of Sri Lanka. Presently, we are hosting a visit from the Thai senior monk, Ajahn Phaithoon, who is a relation of Ajahn Chah and a dear monastic friend. Ajahn Phaithoon helped me enormously in my early years as a monk in Thailand and inviting him to stay a few months here is a way of expressing my gratitude to a respected senior teacher. Also, he is such a warm and peaceful presence here.

Talking of presents, the Sangha has become concerned about the gifts of fresh food supplies to our monastery larder. For a monk, 'Supply-side Economics' contemplates no more than the supply of food in the monastery pantry. However, in the tradition of a good forest monastery, we are looking for less not more. Plenty of kind Buddhist laypeople are now bringing cooked food to the monastery every day and so now we wish to discontinue the practice of the
Anagarikas cooking some of the meal from supplies left in the pantry. Also, I am concerned at the inflationary tendencies here, by which I mean that the monks are becoming fat and some modern ‘downsizing’, you know what I mean, would not go amiss. Thus, from the beginning of April onwards we are discouraging donations of supplies of food, other than that for the monks’ breakfast.

We chose ‘from April onwards’ because on Sunday March 30th our organization will be taking on two more staff, by which I mean that two of our monastery men-in-white will be ordained as novice monks. John and Chris have both completed approximately one year’s preliminary training and are now ready for the transition to brown. Indeed, the white clothes they have been wearing for about 12 months are now almost brown anyway so it’s good time for the change. The ceremony will take place at our city centre in Nollamara, starting at 3 p.m., and all will be welcome. Anagarika John has described his present feelings about his future ordination as like someone about to get married. However, there will definitely not be a stag party for him at the monastery the night before, nor a honeymoon overseas directly after, just ever more deep and motionless meditations as befits his new title Novice (‘no vice’) John!
It is not just the Sangha that has been motionless at Serpentine, but also our monastery van which is even more ‘venerable’ than many of our monks. After almost 250,000 km of charitable work transporting our monks, the engine of our van died on the operating table at Serpentine Garage and the wheels went into re-tyrement! The Law of Rein-car-nation meant that a reconditioned engine was installed to keep it going for a year or two longer. However, the monastery is now collecting funds, through the Buddhist Society’s Treasurer, to purchase a new monk-mobile. We will literally be moved by any donations!

Which brings me back to the beginning of this article where I wrote that the Sangha must move with the times. At Bodhinyana Monastery, we have always followed the ancient tradition of moving out of bed at 4am, to the dining room for breakfast at 6:45am, moving off to work in the monastery at 7:30, back to the dining room at 10:30, moving to our huts at 12 noon, back to the dining room for a cuppa at 6pm, and moving to the Main Hall for a Dhamma talk at 7pm (one or two days a week). So even in our unchanged ancient tradition, we always move with the times! Which is the time for me to move on...

_Venerable, but moving with the times, Brahm_
MEDITATION RETREATS

Each year our Society offers three weekend retreats and one nine day retreat.

These provide perfect opportunities to cultivate peace and relaxation of the body and mind. Apart from being some time-out from the busy schedules and the sometimes mundane routine of everyday life, a retreat environment often helps us to calm the mind a little so that we can see life more clearly and be able to respond to varying situations from the position of calm and insight.

Sometimes the very idea of organizing the family to do without you for a weekend can be quite daunting, but it is well worth the effort and family members will also agree when you arrive home late Sunday afternoon feeling relaxed, patient and refreshed! So take the opportunity to put aside at least one weekend this year.

The first retreat for 1997 is March 14-16 and details of other retreat are also listed below.

The weekend retreats this year will be held at St Joseph's Retreat House, Safety Bay. This is a very well equipped old convent situated right on the bay. This venue also allows people to have the privacy of individual rooms and meals are fully catered for by very friendly Catholic nuns.

We begin the retreat on Friday night with a light supper served around 6.30pm. This is followed by a short meeting with the retreat organizers. We then join the Sangha member leading the retreat at approximately 7.30pm.

The weekend consists of alternating 45 minute sessions of sitting and walking meditation and during the course of each day meaningful advice and encouragement is given by the Ajahn (teacher). The Ajahn will usually also present two Dhamma talks each day with the opportunity for questions and discussion about meditation. There is time to discuss one's individual meditation practice, during interviews.
Except for discussion time, all of this takes place in a very soothing background of silence, enough silence to notice what is actually going on within one’s own body and mind.

In deciding to attend a retreat we’re encouraged to come without any expectations or desires, but to simply relax and allow the mind to come to peace.

Listed below are the retreats being offered during 1997. They represent a wonderful opportunity to take time out to concentrate on your meditation practice. Registration forms will be available from Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre four weeks prior to the start of each retreat.

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<th>Month</th>
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<td>Weekend Retreat</td>
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<td>December 12-21</td>
<td>Nine Day Retreat</td>
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THE FUTURE - THE NUNS' MONASTERY

Last December we were fortunate in having two senior nuns visiting us at Dhammadhoka. Ajahn Vayama, an Australian nun, who ordained and spent her first 10 years practising in Sri Lanka, and Sister Upekha from France, who has spent the last 10 years at Amaravati in the U.K., were invited to Perth by our society.

The nuns were at Wat Buddha Dhamma (N.S.W.) for the Rains Retreat, and could only spend what seemed like a very short 10 days in Perth before going on to the U.S.A.

The nuns enjoyed several peaceful days at Bodhinyana Monastery and their talks at Dhammadhoka were very warmly received. There was also the opportunity for people to enjoy informal chats, and in particular the chance to ask the nuns’ advice and opinions as to what the Buddhist Society should consider in setting up a nuns’ monastery.

One important aim of our constitution is to establish a nuns’ monastery and so offer suitable facilities and support for invited nuns. As with the establishment of Bodhinyana Monastery we have begun with small steps towards achieving our goal.

In late 1995 our society opened the Nuns’ Monastery Building Fund. All donations to this fund are tax deductible, but more importantly, we are creating the means to strengthen the Buddhist Sangha in the west, which will in turn benefit other beings.

So we may well ask “why isn’t there a nuns monastery in the west, where one can practice in seclusion?”

One answer is, that instead of complaining about the dark, we can light a candle.
SOCIETY NEWS

About forty people attended the Annual General Meeting of the Society on Saturday 22 February to hear the reports and elect a new committee to manage the affairs of the Society for another year.

Our abbot, Ven Ajahn Brahm, after giving the attendees the five precepts, gave the Spiritual Director's address on the year's highlights that included:

- the full ordination as bhikkus of four novices. It was the first time that the abbot of our monastery had performed the role of Preceptor, as Ajahn Brahm has been given the authority to carry out this role. Two more men are training for their novice ordination ceremony that is to take place on March 30th.

- there were 13 monks resident at Bodhinyana Monastery during the Rains Retreat. Lack of accommodation and water are limiting factors to the growth of the monastic community and two more monks' kutis are being constructed to increase the facilities. Although there is a great deal of interest by monks wishing to come to Bodhinyana to train, the number of teaching monks is limited which puts considerable strain on the senior monks at the monastery.

- the challenge of establishing facilities for Buddhist nuns on a par with those for our monks, is now at the forefront of our agenda, although it needs to be realised how much work and sacrifice will be needed for this venture.

Outgoing President Don Weekakody presented the Committee report for the year. Some of the key point mentioned included:

- The Society has a full membership of 152 and an associate membership of 452. Membership fees have not changed for about 10 years.

- Friday night meditation and the subsequent Dhamma talk by a monk is the main focus of the Society's activity, with an attendance of about 200 each week. Other activities include the ongoing meditation classes held on Saturdays, the introduction to meditation classes which are conducted by a layperson each month and the advanced Dhamma class that is conducted by Ajahn Brahm every fortnight.
• A milestone in the history of our society was achieved in June this year, when the outstanding building loan was paid off, and the society once again became debt free.

In 1996, $12,600.00 was received in Subscriptions,
$146,452.00 was received in Donations,
and $19,892.00 was raised at Fund-raising events.

On the expenditure side, the main expense was about $84,000, which was spent on completing the second storey of the monastery dining hall, and the extension of the monastery wall.

• The library continued to provide a great service to Buddhists and the general public. The library has approximately 1500 books available for loan, 200 reference books, 1300 tapes available for loan and 175 titles for sale.

• Three weekend, one six-day and one nine-day retreat were held in 1996. The weekend and nine-day retreats were conducted by the monks from Serpentine Monastery, and the six-day retreat by Venerable Gunaratna - a very respected visiting monk. The average attendance for a weekend retreat is about 30 to 40 people, and Venerable Gunaratna’s retreat had a record 50 participants. The six-day retreat - conducted by Ajahn Brahm - had 29 very serious meditators as participants.

• Two visiting nuns, Sisters Vayama and Upekha were with us for two weeks in November last year and in addition to the religious activities they participated in, also discussed the possibility of establishing a nuns’ monastery in Western Australia at a future date. We are hoping that Sister Vayama will spend the next rains retreat in Perth.

• From March 1996 to January 1997, the Buddhist Society Community Services had provided assistance to approximately 250 individuals and families. Assistance was provided in the area of housing, training and education, employment, social security, legal, health, immigration and counselling.

Both Ajahn Brahm and Don thanked all those who had been involved in providing support for Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre and Bodhinyana
Monastery over the year. A great number of people are involved in the successful running of the Society and the Monastery and everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated.

Following the presentation of the reports the new committee was elected for 1997. They are:

Christine Banks (President)
Judi Rushforth (Vice President)
Sally Lee (Secretary)
Lynne Jackson (Assistant Secretary)
Rodney George (Treasurer)
Ainsley Haslegrave (Assistant Treasurer)
Yupa Anson
Lim Chay Hua
Shirley Jackson
Jill Hanna
Ron Storey
Don Weerakody

The feeling of the meeting was very positive and the Society looks forward to another successful year.

The Committee

1997 Committee of the Buddhist Society of WA
BUDDHIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

It was a great loss for the Buddhist Society of WA and the Sri Lankan Community when Dr Mahanama Karunaratna, one of our Grant-in-Aid workers with our Buddhist Community Services, passed away. However, we are fortunate to have Mrs Jayanthi De Silva to replace him in this role.

Jayanthi, who came to Australian from Sri Lanka six years ago, is now studying in her final year at the University of WA for her Social Work degree. She began in her role as a GIA worker with us on 3rd February and, until recently, shared the position with Yodying Taylor, our Thai speaking GIA worker.

Sadly, Yodying has now resigned to pursue other things after many years of fine service and she will be greatly missed. We are currently interviewing for a replacement for Yodying. We take the opportunity of thanking her for her dedicated service while in the GIA role.

Our GIA workers tasks include giving information on welfare services available to newly arrived migrants, and assisting them to access these services. They also assist relevant communities on their community projects as well as working closely with mainstream service providers to give feedback for a more culturally appropriate services for members of the Buddhist community.

The Buddhist Community Services working hours are from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. We invite all members of our community to access the services offered and to seek help and support when needed.

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.
Front Cover Illustration:
Photo by John Johns
REGULAR ACTIVITIES

DHAMMALOKA BUDDHIST CENTRE

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
3.00 - 4.15pm  Instruction, meditation and discussion. Separate classes for new and experienced meditators. A four week Introduction to meditation course begins on the first Saturday of each month

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

SOUTH OF THE RIVER

Tuesday
7.00 - 9.00pm  Meditation Instruction
Meditation and Dhamma talk at Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital
Enquiries to Chris Baunton 524 1098

ADDRESSES

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Social Worker
Tel/Fax: 344 4220