THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WA

NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JULY
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Youth Group

A Buddhist Youth Group meets every third Sunday of the month, between 4:30 and 5:30pm, in the Dhamma Hall at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre, Nollamara. The group is for 15-21 year olds, or thereabouts and is led by Ajahn Brahm. The group learns meditation, Buddhist principles and discusses their use in real life.

For further information, please contact Ajahn Brahm.

Good Kamma and the Dole

Centrelink has now approved both Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine and Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre in Nollamara as 'volunteer organisations for Centrelink purposes'. This means that a person without employment can perform voluntary work at either of these places and be free from the requirement for 'Job Search'. For more information, please contact our President, Binh Anson, our caretaker, Jim Taylor, or Ajahn Brahm. Or you can contact Centrelink.

End of the World? No Way!

The end of the world-as-we-know-it is coming soon, according to some, with the end of the millennium. Y2K and all that! However, for the supporters of Dhammasara, the nuns' monastery, the world is just beginning!

Now is a good time to make some good Kamma by helping with a donation to our Nuns' Monastery project. All donations over $2.00 are tax deductible, which is like the end of the world in the eyes of the Australian Taxation Office. Get in now while there is still time and help our Buddhist women make a true 'end of the world' by realising Nibbana. For further information, please contact our Treasurer, Carol, quickly while the computer still works!
NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMASAMBUDDHASSA

The Five Hindrances (Nivarana)

The major obstacles to successful meditation and liberating insight take the form of one or more of the Five Hindrances. The whole practice leading to Enlightenment can be well expressed as the effort to overcome the Five Hindrances, at first suppressing them temporarily in order to experience Jhana and Insight, and then overcoming them permanently through the full development of the Noble Eightfold Path.

So, what are these Five Hindrances? They are:

1. KAMACCHANDA - Sensory Desire
2. VYAPADA - Ill Will
3. THINA-MIDDHA - Sloth and Torpor
4. UDDHACCA-KUKKUCCA - Restlessness and Remorse
5. VICIKICCHĀ - Doubt

1 - Sensory desire refers to that particular type of wanting that seeks for happiness through the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and physical feeling. It specifically excludes any aspiration for happiness through the sixth sense of mind alone.

In its extreme form, sensory desire is an obsession to find pleasure in such things as sexual intimacy, good food or fine music. But it also includes the desire to replace irritating or even painful five-sense experiences with pleasant ones, i.e. the desire for sensory comfort.

The Lord Buddha compared sensory desire to taking out a loan. Any pleasure one experiences through these five senses must be repaid through the unpleasantness of separation, loss or hungry emptiness which follow relentlessly when the pleasure is used up. As with any loan, there is also the matter of interest and thus, as the Lord Buddha said, the pleasure is small compared to the suffering repaid.

In meditation, one transcends sensory desire for the period by letting go of concern for this body and its five sense activity. Some imagine that the five senses are there to serve and protect the body, but the truth is that the body is there to serve the five senses
as they play in the world ever seeking delight. Indeed, the Lord Buddha once said, "The five senses ARE the world" and to leave the world, to enjoy the other worldly bliss of Jhana, one must give up for a time ALL concern for the body and its five senses.

When sensory desire is transcended, the mind of the meditator has no interest in the promise of pleasure or even comfort with this body. The body disappears and the five senses all switch off. The mind becomes calm and free to look within. The difference between the five sense activity and its transcendence is like the difference between looking out of a window and looking in a mirror. The mind that is free from five sense activity can truly look within and see its real nature. Only from that can wisdom arise as to what we are, from where and why?!

**2 Ill will** refers to the desire to punish, hurt or destroy. It includes sheer hatred of a person, or even a situation, and it can generate so much energy that it is both seductive and addictive. At the time, it always appears justified for such is its power that it easily corrupts our ability to judge fairly. It also includes ill will towards oneself, otherwise known as guilt, which denies oneself any possibility of happiness. In meditation, ill will can appear as dislike towards the meditation object itself, rejecting it so that one's attention is forced to wander elsewhere.

The Lord Buddha likened ill will to being sick. Just as sickness denies one the freedom and happiness of health, so ill will denies one the freedom and happiness of peace.

Ill will is overcome by applying Metta, loving kindness. When it is ill will towards a person, Metta teaches one to see more in that person than all that which hurts you, to understand why that person hurt you (often because they were hurting intensely themselves), and encourages one to put aside one's own pain to look with compassion on the other. But if this is more than one can do, Metta to oneself leads one to refuse to dwell in ill will to that person, so as to stop them from hurting you further with the memory of those deeds. Similarly, if it is ill will towards oneself, Metta sees more than one's own faults, can understand one's own faults, and finds the courage to forgive them, learn from their lesson and let them go. Then, if it is ill will towards the mediation object (often the reason why a meditator cannot find peace) Metta embraces the meditation object with care and delight. For
example, just as a mother has a natural Metta towards her child, so a meditator can look on their breath, say, with the very same quality of caring attention. Then it will be just as unlikely to lose the breath through forgetfulness as it is unlikely for a mother to forget her baby in the shopping mall, and it would be just as improbable to drop the breath for some distracting thought as it is for a distracted mother to drop her baby! When ill will is overcome, it allows lasting relationships with other people, with oneself and, in meditation, a lasting, enjoyable relationship with the meditation object, one that can mature into the full embrace of absorption.

3 Sloth and torpor refers to that heaviness of body and dullness of mind which drag one down into disabling inertia and thick depression. The Lord Buddha compared it to being imprisoned in a cramped, dark cell, unable to move freely in the bright sunshine outside. In meditation, it causes weak and intermittent mindfulness which can even lead to falling asleep in meditation without even realising it!

Sloth and torpor is overcome by rousing energy. Energy is always available but few know how to turn on the switch, as it were. Setting a goal, a reasonable goal, is a wise and effective way to generate energy, as is deliberately developing interest in the task at hand. A young child has a natural interest, and consequent energy, because its world is so new. Thus, if one can learn to look at one's life, or one's meditation, with a 'beginner's mind' one can see ever new angles and fresh possibilities which keep one distant from sloth and torpor, alive and energetic. Similarly, one can develop delight in whatever one is doing by training one's perception to see the beautiful in the ordinary, thereby generating the interest which avoids the half-death that is sloth and torpor.

The mind has two main functions, 'doing' and 'knowing'. The way of meditation is to calm the 'doing' to complete tranquillity while maintaining the 'knowing'. Sloth and torpor occur when one carelessly calms both the 'doing' and the 'knowing', unable to distinguish between them.

Sloth and torpor is a common problem which can creep up and smother one slowly. A skilful meditator keeps a sharp look-out for the first signs of sloth and torpor and is thus able to spot its approach and take evasive action before it's too late. Like coming
to a fork in a road, one can take that mental path leading away from sloth and torpor. Sloth and torpor is an unpleasant state of body and mind, too stiff to leap into the bliss of Jhana and too blinded to spot any insights. In short, it is a complete waste of precious time.

4 Restlessness refers to a mind which is like a monkey, always swinging on to the next branch, never able to stay long with anything. It is caused by the fault-finding state of mind which cannot be satisfied with things as they are, and so has to move on to the promise of something better, forever just beyond.

The Lord Buddha compared restlessness to being a slave, continually having to jump to the orders of a tyrannical boss who always demands perfection and so never lets one stop.

Restlessness is overcome by developing contentment, which is the opposite of fault-finding. One learns the simple joy of being satisfied with little, rather than always wanting more. One is grateful for this moment, rather than picking out its deficiencies. For instance, in meditation restlessness is often the impatience to move quickly on to the next stage. The fastest progress, though is achieved by those who are content with the stage they are on now. It is the deepening of that contentment that ripens into the next stage. So be careful of wanting to get on with it and instead learn how to rest in appreciative contentment. That way, the 'doing' disappears and the meditation blossoms.

Remorse refers to a specific type of restlessness which is the karmic effect of one's misdeeds. The only way to overcome remorse, the restlessness of a bad conscience, is to purify one's virtue and become kind, wise and gentle. It is virtually impossible for the immoral or the self indulgent to make deep progress in meditation.

5 Doubt refers to the disturbing inner questions at a time when one should be silently moving deeper. Doubt can question one's own ability "Can I do This?", or question the method "Is this the right way?", or even question the meaning "What is this?". It should be remembered that such questions are obstacles to meditation because they are asked at the wrong time and thus become an intrusion, obscuring one's clarity.
The Lord Buddha likened doubt to being lost in a desert, not recognising any landmarks.

Such doubt is overcome by gathering clear instructions, having a good map, so that one can recognise the subtle landmarks in the unfamiliar territory of deep meditation and so know which way to go. Doubt in one's ability is overcome by nurturing self-confidence with a good teacher. A meditation teacher is like a coach who convinces the sports team that they can succeed. The Lord Buddha stated that one can, one will, reach Jhana and Enlightenment if one carefully and patiently follows the instructions. The only uncertainty is 'when'! Experience also overcomes doubt about one's ability and also doubt whether this is the right path. As one realised for oneself the beautiful stages of the path, one discovers that one is indeed capable of the very highest, and that this is the path that leads one there.

The doubt that takes the form of constant assessing "Is this Jhana?" "How am I going?", is overcome by realising that such questions are best left to the end, to the final couple of minutes of the meditation. A jury only makes its judgement at the end of the trial, when all the evidence has been presented. Similarly, a skilful meditator pursues a silent gathering of evidence, reviewing it only at the end to uncover its meaning.

The end of doubt, in meditation, is described by a mind which has full trust in the silence, and so doesn't interfere with any inner speech. Like having a good chauffeur, one sits silently on the journey out of trust in the driver.

Any problem which arises in meditation will be one of these Five Hindrances, or a combination. So, if one experiences any difficulty, use the scheme of the Five Hindrances as a 'check list' to identify the main problem. Then you will know the appropriate remedy, apply it carefully, and go beyond the obstacle into deeper meditation.

When the Five Hindrances are fully overcome, there is no barrier between the meditator and the bliss of Jhana. Therefore, the certain test that these Five Hindrances are really overcome is the ability to access Jhana.

Ajahn Brahmavamso
It was a cold, still, cloud blackened night at the isolated monastery. The darkness was thick like a wall and the silence was on edge, waiting to be hacked apart by the eerie shriek coming from out of the shadows, as unnerving as death. But that was not all that was creeping out of the shadows. There are some matters, horrible things, that we monks don't usually mention ... GHOSTS! Yes, my readers, I can confirm that there was a ghost at our monastery. While I was away in Malaysia and Singapore in November, somebody composed the Sangha News article for this newsletter's previous issue, and it was not me ... it was a ghost-writer!

Indeed, I was so busy in Malaysia and Singapore that there was not a ghost of a chance, as they say, for me to write anything there. I gave 52 public talks in 26 days. It nearly killed me but not quite, which is why I almost, but didn't quite, make the dead-line! Anyway, ghost-writers are always dying to write something, so I let them get on with it while I enjoyed teaching the Dhamma to such an appreciative and eager audience. It was my first visit there and so when they invited me back, I suggested a return on January 1st 2000, so that they could advertise my visit as "The Second Coming"! In that part of the world, the most important work is 'Marketing'. So, perhaps, I should go next time with a logo printed on my monk's robe "Sermons Ρ Us"??!

Ajahn Brahmavamso giving one of his many talks while in Malaysia and Singapore
Meanwhile, back at Bodhinyana Monastery, the monks were being haunted by an awful spectre of imminent doom. Growling monsters on many wheels, clay laden road trains, were planning to wail and shriek along Kingsbury Drive, putting a fear of early death into all other road users, including our own visitors, and disturbing the other-worldly repose of those of our ancestors whose ashes have been laid to rest, entombed in our monastery wall. There they lie, quiet for the time being, beside the very road along which these jagging juggernauts want to slither and thump. Indeed, the whole scenario is like something out of a horror movie, that could only be exorcised by an ancient and secretive rite, comprehensible only to those few initiates high up in the cult - an injunction by lawyers in the Supreme Court of WA! The outcome of the sacrificial rite (our Buddhist Society had to sacrifice a lot of its money) is yet undecided. We wait now, prepared, lest the 'Demons from the Clay Pits' mutate back to life from out of the jargon filled jungle of the Supreme Court!

Another ancient rite but one more easily understood, interestingly, was the ordination in early January of two new bhikkhus (fully ordained monks) at our monastery. The new bhikkhus are Ven. Dhammaviriyo and Ven. Jotidhammo. It was a wonderful ceremony that I will always remember for its incredible warmth - it was such a hot day and hundreds of our supporters were packed into our Hall. With all those supporters, otherwise called fans, one would have expected it to be cooler! But no, it was like a witch's cauldron in there and I felt more like a frier than a monk. And as for an air conditioner, for monks who are bald anyway, who 'ain't got no 'air, who'd ever think of giving us 'air conditioning?

Fortunately, it was a much cooler afternoon in late January when we held another ordination ceremony at our City Centre in Nollamara. This time, Anagarika Sol, formerly assistant caretaker at Dhammaloka and bass player in a local rock band, became a novice monk with a new name, Upasamo. For him, it was only a close shave between being a long haired rock star or a bald monk. "Hair today - gone tomorrow", you could say, or "from funk to monk" as our local Sunday paper succinctly said. Novice Upasamo admitted afterwards to being a bit nervous during the ceremony. So many people attended that for our ex-band member, it became his biggest ever gig. Then who wouldn't be nervous on becoming a novice monk? After all, entering the Sangha is a hair-razing experience!
Which brings me back to other hair-raising things that creep in the dark and go "Bump!" in the middle of the night. Last year, in our monastery kitchen, this described the legions of creepy crawly cockroaches who regarded our kitchen as their home, taking unfair advantage of our Buddhist precept not to kill. So we outwitted them instead. Ven. Brahmali organised new cockroach challenging kitchen cupboards and appliances, doing much of the work himself. Our Venerable bug-buster's 'pièce de résistance' (French for making the pests stop resisting) was his ingenious Buddhist cockroach trap (see design below). As a result, the monastery food doesn't seem as 'crunchy' as before, but it doesn't bug us.

_Buddhist Cockroach Trap_

The trap consists of two biscuit tins on top of each other. The top tin has a 25w electric bulb to provide heat to the bottom biscuit tin. The bottom tin has small holes at ground level for the cockroaches to crawl in. Inside are catfood, a moist sponge and something to provide tight narrow gaps (we use an old piece of plastic pipe with a piece of square concrete jammed inside). Cockroaches like (1) heat (2) humidity (3) catfood and (4) tight narrow gaps - hence the design.

Designed by Bodhinyana Compassion Industries - Nobel Prize Pending.
We also did work extending our monastery wall to the end of our boundary along Kingsbury Drive in order to give us more peace from passing traffic, more security from desperados and more niches in which to place the ashes of the departed. My aim is to have a wall around the whole monastery with ashes in every niche. Then we’ll have so many ghosts protecting us all around that no thief would dare to enter at night - if the cops don't get 'em, the corpses will! - nor would clay truck operators risk desecrating our cemetery for fear of invoking the angry curses of so many powerful unseen presences. We would be safe, because cemeteries are grave affairs. Even our twentieth kuti (monk's hut), completed in January and sponsored through Ven. Nissarano's family, was dedicated to the Venerable's deceased father, Mr Louis Sauzier, keeping in the spirit, so to say.

Fortunately, all these building projects were completed by the end of January, giving our Sangha the opportunity for a semi-retreat throughout the month of February. Maintenance work and external commitments were minimised and the focus was put more firmly on our main purpose of meditation. As this monastery becomes ever more established and the building work declines, there will be increasing opportunity for ghost-meditation. By which I mean, being dead to the world under the label R.I.P., resting in peace.

Alas, gone to the other side, as they say, is Ajahn Khemanando who recently flew to Thailand (the 'other side' of the equator) to visit his old haunts for a year or so. Also 'dear and departed' is Ajahn Ariyasilo who has gone to England to be with his ancestors and, lastly, Ven. Khantipalo is soon to 'pass over' into Burma for this year's Rains Retreat.

So that is all the comings, goings and goings-on here at this monastery. Or is that all? In the remote depths of the Jarrah forest, in a spooky hollow where even monks dare not go, in the dead of night, they say, terrifying monsters prowl in the murky gloom. This is to be expected, because there is only the tiniest difference between a terrific monastery and a terrifying monastery!

See the next horrific episode in the next issue,

Ajahn Brahm.
KINDNESS AND THE CLEVER CAT

This is the true story of a Buddhist cat. Her name is Kit Cat. She was born in the hollow of an old log lying in the grounds of the Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine. Even when she was a newborn kitten, she was clever. When the big brown monks found her, she came out from her log straight away. She knew that the kind monks would feed her for life. And so we did.

Little Kit Cat soon grew from a little ball of fur to a big ball of fur. She was, and still is, a well loved monastery cat. One day, we found her with a bird in her mouth. The bird was dead. Kit Cat had killed her. The monks love birds as well as cats. In fact, the Buddha taught us to love all animals and be kind to them all. But Kit Cat did not understand this. It is a cat's nature to catch birds. They catch birds without thinking. It was so sad to see a cat that was so good in every other way go killing beautiful birds.

Something had to be done. We put a little bell around Kit Cat's neck. But she was so clever that she could move through the bushes without even a 'tinkle'. She still caught birds. "Maybe we could tie the big monastery bell, the one which takes three monks to lift, around her neck", one of the monks joked, "That would stop her killing birds!" But that would be cruel and it is wrong to be cruel.

The monks met and talked. It was decided that Kit Cat must be taken to another home. It was a sad day when we made that decision. "Goodbye, dear little Kit Cat." A home in the city with not so many birds as here in the bush would be better, we agreed. It was an even sadder day when she eventually left. She did not want to go. She had to be put in a sack, as gently as we could, tied up and placed where your feet go in the back of a car. We had carefully found her a good home. A gentle Buddhist lady had a nice house by the beach, in a suburb called Watermans, to the north of Perth. I hoped that Kit Cat would like her new home by the sea. But clever little Kit Cat had other plans, as we shall soon see!

The kind lady who adopted Kit Cat was also very clever. She kept Kit Cat inside the house for all of three days. She fed her delicious cat food. Cats like lots of good food. She hoped that Kit Cat would like it in her new home so much that she would not run
away. But on a hot Saturday afternoon, when the kind lady opened the front door just a tiny little bit, Kit Cat ran out and was off like a bullet. In a flash of fur, she was through the front gate. In seconds, she had reached the end of the road. Then she was gone. The kind lady raced after her. Kit Cat was too fast. She was gone. The kind lady searched all over the neighbourhood but she could not find Kit Cat. She began to worry about the poor cat. Kit Cat had never been in a big city before. She was a bush cat. She did not know about fast cars and big angry dogs. Where would she go? What would she eat? Who would look after her?

It was a hot Saturday in summer when this happened. I was in our Buddhist Temple in Nollamara, where the Dhamma School is held. The kind lady phoned me and told me the bad news. Kit Cat had gone. I too worried about dear Kit Cat. She was not used to the big roads and many cars. I hoped she would not be run over by a truck and killed. I hoped she would be safe. I need not have worried. Kit Cat is much cleverer than I am!

Exactly two hours after her escape from the house in Watermans, I heard a strange sound by the door of the Nollamara Temple. Something was, sort of, 'mewing'! We had no cat in our city temple, so what could this be? When I opened the wooden door, a very familiar whiskered face was staring up at me. "Meeow! Meeow!" which is cat-language for "Please let me in". It was Kit Cat all right. Her paws were hot, almost burned, and she was as thirsty as any cat has ever been. When I gave her a saucer of milk, she lapped it up quicker than you can say "Purrrr!" I thought she would lick up the saucer as well, so I quickly filled it again.

Now, it is about 10 kilometres from Watermans to Nollamara and Kit Cat covered that distance in exactly two hours. I cannot walk that fast. But what is really strange is that Kit Cat did not know where to go! She was a monastery cat, a bush cat, who had never been into the city. Not even once. She could not read a street map. She could not ask for directions. She could not use a telephone. She was a cat! So, how do you think Kit Cat could
find me among all the houses and people in the suburbs of Perth? How could she find me in a house she had never been to? Could it be kindness...?

Yes! Kindness is a miracle. Kindness brings friends together, no matter how far apart they go. Kindness showed her the way to the Nollamara Temple. May kindness show you the way too, if ever you become lost.

Kit Cat is now back in her home, in the Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine. I have not seen her catch birds for many years now. Perhaps one becomes clever in a different way as one becomes older. And Kit Cat is an old cat now. But she is just as clever. If you come to our Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine and bring some food that she likes, she'll come and find you. I have no doubt about that!

Written by Ajahn Brahm with help from Kit Cat.

A Great Walk

Late last year, just too late to be included in out last issue, Keith Soord completed a 60km sponsored walk from his home in East Cannington to Bodhinyana Monastery in Serpentine. Keith, one of the very early members of our Buddhist Society, had just won a ten-year battle with cancer and wanted to perform an act of merit out of gratitude. He especially wanted to do this to honour the memory of his deceased parents. Exactly $1,000 was raised and was offered to the new Nuns' Monastery, Dhammasara. Keith was 74 years old!

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!
Dhammasara News

Like the tender shoot from a germinated seed that silently pokes its head unnoticed through the soil, Dhammasara came to life quietly but joyfully on December 5 1998. That was the day I took up residence in temporary accommodation on the land at Gidgegannup.

About thirty people were on hand to help set up the caravan/kuti, and the small tent we use for the offering and sharing of dana, to dig the pit toilets, assemble the shower and toilet enclosures, put in the kitchen sink (Yes we even have a kitchen sink!), and lay out the pipes from the water tank we had had brought in so there would be water on tap.

Most of the work was completed by midday and the first dana was offered in the little blue tent, and shared by everyone present. My heartfelt thanks to all those folks, some of whom I was meeting that day for the first time.

Throughout December people brought dana and necessities everyday; sometimes one person and on other occasions up to twenty people arrived to offer and share the meal. A couple of families and individuals brought dana every week. Ajahn Brahm also visited, leading a group of supporters who on that day first took food to offer at Bodhinyana, then came to offer the meal and other requisites at Dhammasara.

Enthusiastic, hard working volunteers gathered on several further occasions to toil in 35°C plus heat, to clear the trees from the path the electricity line will follow to bring power onto the site, to level the area around the dana tent, to erect a garden shed to provide space for stores and equipment, and to put up a shade cloth over the caravan.

It's been a delight to see that such events have drawn support for the fledgling monastery from all the various communities within the Buddhist Society, from all ages and from both genders. Many thanks to those volunteers, and to the generous donors of the garden shed and tarpaulin. Thanks too, to the women who have come to be my companions during working bees, who've accompanied me to various meetings and driven me to Dhammadloka and Bodhinyana.

People need to have a pioneering spirit to bring dana and be involved in work here while facilities are still so basic and small
scale. This encourages a feeling of common purpose and connectedness among those who do participate. People who have been seeing each other at a distance for years at the city centre, have had the chance to chat and meet in a more personal way through sharing dana together in the small tent, or while downing a well earned cup of tea at the end of a hard afternoons work.

On January 20, Swan Shire Council gave the long awaited official approval for our use of the site as a nuns' monastery. We still have to submit specific building plans before construction of the buildings can commence, but in the meantime work has begun on upgrading the roads, preparing for the dams, and is proceeding for connection of electricity. The cost of bringing power to the site, exclusive of our on site underground cabling costs, is around $13,000.

Everything to do with the development of the site is very expensive, so your continued efforts at fundraising, especially the Friday night food sales, are very much appreciated.

The December Car Boot Sale raised over $1000, and at the 1 January New Year Dana, donations, mainly from the Thai Community, exceeded $4000. Many thanks to all those involved, some of whom were seen helping to set up camp at Dhammasara on Saturday, and then enthusiastically selling goods at the car boot sale the next day. Such wholehearted support, and the many acts of kindness I have received from so many people, are a great encouragement to the Abbot, to take things one step at a time, and not to feel overwhelmed by the immensity of the project.

In January I went to Sydney and taught a weekend retreat at the Wat Buddha Dhamma, gave a public talk and met with my supporters there. People were enthusiastic about the prospect of a nuns' monastery in Australia, and offered over $1000 to the building fund in the weekend retreat alone.

In Sydney, it always made people chuckle, in talking about Dhammasara and my role as abbot, when I confessed that as yet I am the only nun here. Well, before I was an abbot without a monastery, and that has changed. So, no doubt in due course there will be other nuns in residence here too.

In fact, we are looking forward to the likelihood of a visit from Sister Jitindriya, an Australia nun with the Amaravati community of Ajahn Sumedho. She will be spending the Rains Residence at
Bodhinyana this year, and if possible will spend some time at Dhammasara before that.

I have accepted the invitation to attend the opening of the new temple at Amaravati in the first week of July, my air ticket having been generously offered by one of my supporters in Sydney. So I will leave for England at the end of June, returning around 18 July, before the start of the Rains. This visit will give me the opportunity to meet with the Nuns' Community there and discuss firsthand, the prospects of future long-term visits to Dhammasara from senior nuns at the English monastery. It's pleasing to see Dhammasara already forging links with the wider community of forest monasteries of this tradition.

Speaking of the wider community, closer to home, having attended a meeting of the local Progress Association, and having made contact with our immediate neighbours, my impression is that generally people in the area welcome our presence because we intend to use the land sensitively, retaining the bush cover, and building so as to have minimal impact on the natural environment.

As long as it doesn't interfere with the peace and privacy of neighbouring properties, residents have no objections to a nuns' monastery flourishing here.

Our intentions are good news too, for the many other beings with whom we share this land; notably the larger creatures like kangaroos, wallabies and emus. (I have only seen one emu so far, but there may be more.)

As I write this at the end of February, I have been on semi retreat for a month, and people have been generously offering the meal without coming to speak to me.

However, by the time you read this, it will be back to the normal routine of people coming to offer the meal daily, to receive a short Dhamma talk, and to share the meal with other dana givers. From March 1 you are welcome to visit any day from 10:30 am to 12:30 am. If you are bringing dana on the weekend, do check to make sure I am not spending the day at Dhammaloka. Check the dana roster.

In the Maha Mangala Sutta, the Buddha said that to live in a dwelling place suitable for your purpose, is one of the highest blessings in life. There is no doubt that in Dhammasara we have a most suitable location and dwelling space for those who want to
cultivate their mind according to the Buddha’s teachings. Not only those who have the opportunity to stay here will be fortunate. Those who are able to come for a visit only, will also benefit from the monastery’s easy access from Perth, and from the tranquil and refreshing atmosphere of this land.

At the New Year dana at Dhammaloka, a family offered a table for one of the Buddha statues that will be installed in the completed monastery.

It was very fitting that amongst all our temporary and improvised facilities, the first ‘permanent’ item of furniture should be for the Buddha. Thereby acknowledging in a subtle but striking way that all this wonderful energy, the opportunities to give and to serve in this project, the project itself, flow from the Buddha’s enlightenment, and arise because of our tremendous faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

May Dhammasara continue to grow and thrive, and may all beings benefit from the presence of the Triple Gem in our lives, and now in Gidgegannup.

With Metta
Ajahn Vayama

Helping Hands at Dhammasara
1998 Executive Committee Report
to the AGM, 20th February 1999

During 1998, we have endeavoured to follow the spirit of our Constitution: encouraging the learning and practising of the Buddha's Teaching within the Theravada tradition by all members, supporting our community of monks and nun, maintaining and developing our Buddhist centres and monasteries, and maintaining friendly contacts with other Buddhist organisations with compatible aims and objectives.

Members of the 1998 Executive Committee are: Binh Anson (President), John Hall (Vice President), Lynne Jackson (Secretary), Cherry Jackson (Assistant Secretary), Rodney George (Treasurer), Carol Cahill (Assistant Treasurer), Sally Lee (Librarian), Linda Ellis, Roland Bruss, Shirley Jackson, Susan Lee, Brian Haffenden, Bronwyn Murphy (non-voting) and Norbert Hummer (non-voting).

We are very grateful to receive valuable guidance and advice from the Society's Spiritual Director, Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso, and the senior monks, Venerable Ajahn Nyanadhammo and Ajahn Khemmanando. In addition, we are very fortunate to have Sister Ajahn Vayama who accepted to be the head nun of the new nuns' monastery, Dhammasara.

During the year, we have held 13 monthly meetings on the third Sunday of each month, we also held urgent, special meetings to discuss matters related to the court case on the proposed development of the Serpentine clay pit and the truck haulage route. Special thanks to Susan Towler and other members who have enthusiastically helped and spent their precious time in this court case. Ajahn Nyanadhammo and Venerable Sujato were the prime movers behind the scene, who have spent hours of hard work to contact relevant people and collect information for the case.

Highlight of the year was the purchase of 600 acre of bushland in Gidgegannup to establish a nuns' monastery, after months of hard work by the nuns sub-committee led by Chris Bank. Special thanks to all members of this sub-committee for a job well done.

The land was first spotted by Ajahn Brahm, Ron Battersby and Bianca Di Bua, information collected by Denis Sheppard, and successfully bought at the May auction by Eddy Fernando as the Society's representative, with the cost of $650,000. Thanks to our
A number of accidents on this section of Kingsbury Drive has already been recorded, including a death around 12 years ago when a truck lost control on the steep slope down the scarp and 17 instances of vehicles being unable to stop at the junction of Kingsbury Drive and the Southwest Highway, careering out of control across the Highway and through the fence into the neighbouring property. (According to N. Kentish, property owner)

4 This would also generate "truck noise level up to 76dB(A) on the Premises [our Monastery] which is up to 46 dB(A) above ambient noise at the rate of approximately 15 per hour for up to 12 hours per day, will have significant impact on the residents, which normally will result in vigorous complaints and threats of legal action."

Source: Herring Storer Acoustics

5 Such noise generated by this proposal would be inimical to the practice of meditation at our monastery and would cause the monks to leave.

Source: The Buddhist Tipitaka (The Canon containing the Teachings of the Buddha)

6 Should the monastery be forced to relocate, the huge investment of energy and money put in over 15 years could never be adequately recovered. (At present the monetary value of the monastery is estimated at $1.8 million.)

7 The Buddhist community in Western Australia will thereby be severely hindered from practising their religion which has, for 25 centuries, been monastery centred.

Further Action

Due to the extreme seriousness of the threat to our monastery, the Buddhist Society of W.A. will continue to fight this development. It appears that the Supreme Court Judgement means that Metro Brick will have to initiate a completely new Extractive Industries Licence, giving us many opportunities to object to the development and stop it.

A subcommittee of professionals in this area has been formed from our members and friends both to decide on an effective strategy and to raise funds. We would appreciate whatever support you can offer us.
Meditation Retreats 1999

April 1\textsuperscript{st} – 7\textsuperscript{th}

Nine-day retreat
Redemptorist Retreat House, North Perth

April 30\textsuperscript{th} – May 2\textsuperscript{nd}

St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

June 4\textsuperscript{th} – 6\textsuperscript{th}

St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

November 19\textsuperscript{th} – 21\textsuperscript{st}

St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

Registration forms are available from the notice board at Dhammaloka four weeks before the start of each retreat.

In order to simplify registration please forward full payment with the registration form.

As the retreats are always very popular, early registration is advisable.

Enquiries: Bianca & Ron
9299-7185
**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

**Saturday**
- 10:30am Food offering to the Sangha in the Community Hall
- 3:00 – 4:15pm Meditation – instruction and discussion conducted by one of our senior Sangha. A 4-week ‘Introduction to Meditation’ Course begins on the first Saturday of each month throughout the year.

**Sunday**
- 8:30 – 10:30am Sitting and walking meditation
- 10:30am Food offering to the Sangha
- 10:30 – 12:00n Dhamma Class for children on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. For more Information Tel: Mrs Fernando – 93103654
- 3:00 – 4:30pm Advanced Dhamma class on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.
- 4:30 – 5:30pm Youth Group for 15-21 year olds, on the 3rd Sunday of each month

**Library Hours:**

**Friday**
- 6:00 – 7:30pm and 9:00 – 10:00pm

**Saturday**
- 2:00 – 3:00pm and 4:00 – 5:00pm

**South of the River**

**Tuesday**
- 7:00 – 9:00pm Meditation and Dhamma talk at Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital. For more information Tel: Jim Hanna – 94932841

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**Addresses**

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Dhammasara  
Lot 233 Reen Road  
Gidgegannup

email: ansonb@iinet.net.au