THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WA

NEWSLETTER
AUGUST - NOVEMBER
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Kathina Ceremony
Sunday October 31st, 1999

The Sangha entered their three month Rains Retreat on 25th July 1999. Traditionally at the end of the three-months, lay Buddhists take the opportunity to make offerings of robes and other requisites to the resident Sangha. This being the seventeenth year of the rains retreat at Bodhinyana Monastery there will be seventeen monastics in residence.

The Kathina Ceremony simply requires that a layperson or a group of lay people choose a day on which to offer to the Sangha cloth, sufficient to make at least one of the monk's three robes. On receiving the cloth, the monks elect one amongst them to be the recipient of the Kathina Robe. This is offered to a monk who has remained within the monastery for the duration of the Rains Retreat, and is considered, by the other monks, worthy of this special offering. All the Sangha assist in making the Kathina Robe, which must be completed before the next day, they then present it to the recipient monk. Having successfully done this, the monks are then allowed to use the rest of the cloth and the other requisites offered on the Kathina day.

This is an opportunity for all the Buddhist community to join in a harmonious expression of support for our Sangha, and for those who benefit from the Teaching to show their appreciation and support for the Sangha.

Programme for the Day

9:30am   Gathering at the monastery
10:00am  Receiving the precepts and chanting
10:30am  Offering of food to the Sangha and sharing a meal
12noon   Offering of the Kathina Robe
          Blessing by the Sangha
          Dhamma talk
NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO
SAMMASAMBUDDHASSA

Ajaan Sao's Teaching

A Reminiscence of Phra Ajaan Sao Kantasilo

Transcribed from a talk by Phra Ajaan Phut Thaniyo

Translated from the Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

In our day and age, the practice of going into the forest to meditate
and follow the ascetic dhotanga practices began with Phra Ajaan
Sao Kantasilo: the teacher of Phra Ajaan Mun and, by extension,
Phra Ajaan Singh and Phra Ajaan Lee. Phra Ajaan Sao was
inclined to be not a preacher or a speaker, but a doer. When he
taught his students, he said very little. And those who studied
directly under him are now elders who speak very little, who rarely
preach, having picked up the habit from their teacher. Thus, as
Phra Ajaan Sao was not a preacher, I would like to tell you a little
of the way in which he taught meditation,

How did Phra Ajaan Sao teach? If it so happened that someone
came to him, saying, "Ajaan, sir, I want to practice meditation.
How should I go about it?" he would answer, "Meditate on the
word 'Buddho'."

If the person asked, "What does 'Buddho' mean?" Ajaan Sao would
answer, "Don't ask."

"What will happen after I've meditated on "Buddho"?

"Don't ask. Your only duty is simply to repeat the word 'Buddho'
over and over in your mind."

That's how he taught: no long, drawn-out explanations.

Now, if the student was sincere in putting the Ajaan's instructions
into practice and was persistent in practising the repetition if his
mind then became calm and bright from entering into
concentration, he would come and ask Ajaan Sao: "When
meditating on 'Buddho' my state of mind becomes such-and-such.
What should I do now?" If it was right, Ajaan Sao would say,
"Keep on meditating" If not, he would say, "You have to do
such-and-such. What you're doing isn't right."
For example, once when I was his attendant novice, a senior monk of the Mahanikaya sect came and placed himself under his direction as a beginning student in meditation, Ajaan Sao taught him to meditate on 'Buddho'. Now, when the monk settled down on 'Buddho', his mind became calm and, once it was calm and bright then he stopped repeating 'Buddho'. At this point, his mind was simply blank. Afterwards, he sent his attention out, following the brightness, and a number of visions began to arise: spirits of the dead, hungry ghosts, divine beings, people, animals, mountains, forests.... Sometimes it seemed as if he, or rather, his mind, left his body and went wandering through the forest and wilderness, seeing the various things mentioned above. Afterwards, he went and told Ajaan Sao, "When I meditated down to the point were the mind became calm and bright, it then went out, following the bright light, visions of ghosts, divine beings, people, and animals appeared. Sometimes it, seemed as if I went out following the visions."

As soon as Ajaan Sao heard this, he said, "This isn't right. For the mind to go knowing and seeing outside isn't right, You have to make it know inside."

The monk then asked, "How should I go about making it know inside?"

Phra Ajaan Sao answered, "When the mind is in a bright state like that, when it has forgotten or abandoned its repetition and is simply sitting empty and still, look for the breath. If the sensation of the breath appears in your awareness, focus on the breath as your object and then simply keep track of it, following it inward until the mind becomes even calmer and brighter."

And so the monk followed the Ajaan's instructions until finally the mind settled down in threshold concentration (upacara samadhi), following which the breath became more and more refined, ultimately to the point where it disappeared. His sensation of having a body also disappeared, leaving just the state in which the mind was sitting absolutely still, a state of awareness itself standing out clear, with no sense of going forward or back, no sense of where the mind was, because at that moment there was just the mind, all on its own. At this point, the monk, came again to ask, "After my mind has become calm and bright, and I fix my attention on the breath and follow the breath inward until it reaches a state of being absolutely quiet and still - so still that nothing is
left, the breath doesn't appear, the sense of having a body vanishes, only the mind stands out, brilliant and still: When it's like this, is it right or wrong?"

"Whether it's right or wrong," the Ajaan answered, "take that as your standard. Make an effort to be able to do this as often as possible, and only when you're skilled at it should you come and see me again."

So the monk followed the Ajaan's instructions and later was able to make his mind still to the point that there was no sense of having a body and the breath disappeared more and more often. He became more and more skilled, and his mind became more and more firm. Eventually, after he had been making his mind still very frequently - because as a rule, there's the principle that virtue develops concentration, concentration develops discernment, discernment develops the mind - when his concentration became powerful and strong, it gave rise to abhinna - heightened knowledge and true insight. Knowledge of what? Knowledge of the true nature of the mind, that is, knowing the states, of the mind as they occur in the present. Or so he said.

After he had left this level of concentration and came to see Ajaan Sao, he was told, "This level of concentration is fixed penetration (appana samadhi). You can rest assured that in this level of concentration there is no insight or knowledge of anything at all. There's only the brightness and the stillness. If the mind is forever in that state, it will be stuck simply on that level of stillness. So once you've made the mind still like this, watch for the interval where it begins to stir out of its concentration. As soon as the mind has a sense that it's beginning to take up an object - no matter what object may appear first - focus on the act of taking up all object. That's what you should examine."

The monk followed the Ajaan's instructions and afterwards he was able to make fair progress in the level of his mind.

This is one instance of how Phra Ajaan Sao taught his pupils - teaching just a little at a time, giving only the very heart of the practice, almost as if he would say, "Do this, and this, and this," with no explanations at all. Sometimes I would wonder about his way of teaching. That is, I would compare it with books I had read or with the Dhamma-talks I heard given by other teachers. For example, Phra Ajaan Singh wrote a small handbook for the practice of meditation, entitled, Taking the Triple Refuge and the
Techniques of Meditation, and in it he said that in practising meditation you must, before all else, sit with your body straight and establish mindfulness directly in front of you. That's how he put it, but not how Ajaan Sao would put it. Still, the principles they taught were one and the same, the only difference being that Ajaan Sao was not a preacher, and so didn't make use of a lot of rhetoric.

As he explained to me: "When we make up our mind to repeat 'Buddho', the act of making up the mind is in itself the act of establishing mindfulness. When we keep thinking 'Buddho' and are not willing to let the mind slip away from 'Buddho', our mindfulness and alertness are already healthy and strong, always watching over the mind to keep it with 'Buddho'. As soon as our attention slips away, so that we forget to think 'Buddho' and go thinking of something else, it's a sign that there's a lapse in our mindfulness. But if we can keep our mindfulness under control and can think 'Buddho, Buddho' continuously, with no gaps, our mindfulness is already strong, so there's no need to go 'establishing mindfulness' anywhere. To think of an object so that it is coupled with the mind is, in and of itself, the act of getting mindfulness established." That was how he explained it to me,

This was one instance of how I saw and heard Phra Ajaan Sao touching meditation, and should be enough to serve us all as food for thought.

Pra Ajaan Phut

Pra Ajahn Phut was a respected and well-known meditator in the Thai forest tradition who recently passed away.
SANGHA NEWS

As we have tentatively come to grips with the digital age here at Bodhinyana, we were surprised to see our new hi-tech mini disc player expressing emotions previously considered to be the province of beings of higher mental development. A wrong button elicited the somewhat patronising response - "sorry". It must be a painful experience for that poor machine to have to endure the pathetic fumblings of mere flesh and blood entities. This could well be a growth area for Sangha counselling services. With all our time saving devices, humans don't have time to be neurotic anymore. Deprived of this essential fuel for dinner party conversation, we will no doubt see an explosive growth in disturbed digital devices (DDDs) as we project our inner conflicts on to those most dear to us - our computers, disk drives and assorted kitchen appliances. No longer will our children - those grubby residues of our primate years - suffice as the repository for the mental confusion we inherited from our parents. We can relegate the children to the test tube while happily deranging all things digital. All those paranoid PCs, frenzied fax machines, haywire hard disks and manic modems - I'm sure they will be swarming over the Monastery before long, seeking a kind word from the few humans left who will give them the respect they deserve.

Meanwhile, Ven. Upasamo has been engaged in a deeply meaningful sharing experience with a digital recording studio. He overcame the computer's deeply ingrained sense of shame when asked to perform the degrading task of reprocessing some of our noisy old meditation tapes. Thankfully, the computer was able to successfully integrate this traumatic experience, due no doubt to skilful teachings of non-self in the tapes. The new digitally remastered phobia free tapes will soon be available for you to play to your DDDs if they are interested in taking up meditation.

In March, Ajahn Nyanadhammo assisted by Ven. Sujato led a group of twenty enthusiastic pilgrims on our annual tour of the Holy Sites of India and Nepal. As well as being a welcome respite from digital mayhem in a land that still has the luxury to afford old-fashioned types of trauma, this was a wonderful inspiration for all that went. To see where the Buddha lived, to walk where he walked, and to sit where he sat, was a literally hair-raising experience. The teachings seemed ever present there, sitting on the
grass at the Jetavana, feeling the cool breeze of dawn on the Vulture's Peak or listening to the glorious tangle of chanting at Bodhgaya. Credit must go to Ajahn Nyanadhammo for giving such an inspiring account of the Buddha's life, and to Phalinee for overcoming formidable obstacles in that low-tech land to organise such a smooth, comfortable trip. Next year's pilgrimage will be in February/March with Ajahn Brahmnvamso leading.

Shortly after returning from India Ajahn Nyanadhammo together with Ven. Chandako and Anagarika Pablo travelled north to visit the holy sites of the Pilbara. Even though the reflection "this is where they dug up a billion tonnes of dirt" may not seem as inspiring as "this where the Lord Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment", still they did their best by accepting invitations to teach in Port Hedland, Newman, Wickham/Roebourne and Broome. It's a lot further for the monks to go to these places in meatspace than in cyberspace, so visits are few and far between and Buddhists in those far-flung reaches become hungry for the Dhamma and very appreciative of the monks visiting. Indeed, the monks from Bodhinyana were received with great care and kindness everywhere they went.

Ajahn Brahmnvamso has recently returned from a trip to England together with Ven. Brahmali. His major intention for the trip was to escape having to write the "Sangha News" article, showing once again his boundless compassion for all sentient beings by not inflicting his puns on them yet again. While in England he took the opportunity to attend the opening of the spectacular new Dhamma hall at Amaravati. There were around 150 monastics and thousands of lay people there for a powerful display of the "coming of age" of the western Sangha. Ajahn Brahm also had the opportunity to catch up with many monks who were his old friends from his years in Thailand. The hall itself was specially constructed out of recycled timbers so that although it is new, it looks old. Ajahn Brahm's mum was very pleased with the fluffy wombat, which her son brought all the way from Australia for her.

Building in the Monastery has continued at a slower pace, with the completion of our twentieth (and last) hut, and site preparation for a planned new anagarika's dormitory. This four-roomed dwelling with covered walking meditation paths will be situated near the top of the dam, opposite the existing men's dormitory. It will bring the total accommodation for the Monastery to its maximum capacity
of thirty-one humans. Regular readers of this column will be aware that Bodhinyana's front wall has been going downhill for a long time. Well, now it has reached the end of the line and soon may be going right round the bend, proving that low-tech artefacts have just as much right to emotional imbalance as their high-tech cousins.

A particularly poignant lesson in impermanence was supplied by the recent passing away of our two cherished chainsaws. They were heartlessly traded in on shiny new models on the flimsy pretext that the old ones didn't work any more - as if a chainsaw were a mere mechanical device, devoid of any feelings. Meanwhile, five hundred trees have been offered by a generous donor, thus ensuring plenty of work for our new chainsaws in the future. This should give them a sense of meaning and fulfilment in their otherwise bleak existence.

As the present sweeps us ever faster into the future, it is not surprising that change overtakes the residents of the monastery, too. Ajahn Ariyasilo has returned to England. Ven. Chandako has gone back to a remote hermitage overlooking the Mekong River in Thailand, and Ven. Khantipalo has spent some time in Malaysia with Ven. Dhammavuddho before travelling to spend the rains in Burma at Pa Auk Sayadaw's Monastery. Some may say it is mere coincidence that two monks from Pa Auk Monastery, Ajahn Guttasilo and Ven Dhammarangsee have come here for the rains retreat.

You may have worked out that this is our 17th rains retreat, and according to long established tradition we should have 17 monks. Alas, this year there are only 16 monks but thankfully Sister Jitindriya has come from England to our rescue by becoming the 17th monastic resident for the rains. You may call this "cooking the books", but we call it "retrospective residential realignment" which looks much better on your PC screen.

I realise I am probably driving you all crazy by now, so may I suggest that you give this article to your computers to read. I believe we should all do what we can to help the development of artificial intelligence, as efforts to develop natural intelligence appear to have become somewhat unsuccessful.

May your computers be happy!

Ven. Sitripiyo
CLAY PIT UPDATE

Our efforts to protect Bodhinyana Monastery and the users of Kingsbury Drive from the noise and dangers of intensive clay truck haulage continue. We are appealing to the Minister for the Environment to do a comprehensive, environmental impact assessment of the entire project. This would examine issues such as noise disturbance, traffic safety, social impact, justification of the project and consideration of alternatives. We are yet to receive a response from the minister. We also have a submission before the Shire objecting to the licence renewal, and we are lobbying Main Roads to have Kingsbury Drive removed from their lists of trucking routes.

The Supreme Court has passed judgement on the costs of the court case, and has ordered that the Buddhist Society must, as the losing party, pay the costs for all parties. The amount is not known yet, but it will be considerable. When deciding to take this court action, the broad-based feeling within the Buddhist Society was that this action was the only known way to try to protect the Society's members, the monks and the public. This has been borne out to the extent that the Court's judgement, which was based on narrow technical grounds, indicated that environmental and social concerns should be addressed in the planning stages. However, all the relevant authorities left the issue of transport routes - the most critical environmental and social impact of this project - to be addressed by the Shire in its final granting of an extractive industry licence. This, the Court said, could not be done. This failure of due process means that the environmental and social impacts of the trucking have not yet been addressed by any relevant authority. This has opened the opportunity for the appeal to the Minister for the Environment to properly address these crucial issues.

We would like to thank all the members of the Buddhist Society who have offered their support sending many hundreds of letters. If you have not yet sent a letter of support to the Minister for the Environment, there is still time. I would particularly like to thank Susan Towler, Beng Ee, Su Lloyd, Moon Kean Lee, Binh Anson and Ananda Thilakasiri for their invaluable sacrifice of time and effort on the Buddhist Society's behalf. If you have any questions about this matter, please contact me at Bodhinyana.

Ven. Sujato
Dhammasara News

Over the past seven months as the heat of summer has given way to the rain and cold of winter, Dhammasara has been steadily putting down roots.

In terms of infrastructure, electricity is now on site at our boundary and sufficient donations have been received to cover the cost of connecting the electricity underground to the building site. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this fund.

Three dams have been constructed and are already filing with water. Several of the access roads have been upgraded, much to the relief of those who bring dana regularly.

We have a new winter-wise shed (rain/wind proof), complete with heating, as the venue for the daily food offering. Thanks to the generous donors, and the volunteer construction crew.

On the Dhamma front, in addition to various other teaching, I have led two weekend retreats at Safety Bay, giving some people their first opportunity to practise meditation under the guidance of a nun.

Supporters continue to come daily to offer the meal and other requisites, and to enjoy the beauty of the natural environment. On several occasions they have brought with them visiting Buddhists from as far afield as Hawaii, Malaysia, Singapore, Sydney and Melbourne. The visitors have expressed their appreciation for what we are doing here in Perth, seeing Dhammasara as a resource that will benefit Buddhists everywhere.
Visitors during June and July have had the chance to meet Sister Jitindriya, from the Amarovati community in England. We are delighted that she has been able to spend five weeks at Dhammasara, before going to Bodhinyana for the Rains.

I will be in residence at Dhammasara during the Rainy Season Retreat from July to October. The daily programme will be as usual, with visitors welcome between 10:30am and 12:30pm, except in September. I will be on silent retreat for that month and those who wish to bring dana during September are requested to please leave it in the dana shed without speaking to me.

Dhammasara is being established through the continuous efforts of many people. Special thanks to Prem for overseeing the construction at the dams, and to Chris, Albert and Jacky for making themselves available whenever needed.

To all those who bring dana regularly, and who cook and bake for the Friday night food stalls, to Max for the bottomless well of clear water, and to Don and Hemali who have been supplying the lighting for my caravan since I moved in, many thanks.

Each act of generosity and loving kindness grounded in faith in The Triple Gem nourishes the roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion within us. May our participation in this wonderful project help the seed of enlightenment bear fruit in our hearts.

With Metta
Ajahn Vayama
Born Again
An article by Sanitsude Ekachai in
Bangkok Post September 28th, 1998

Ood was a chatty little girl, but when she started talking about events that happened before she was born, her parents were shocked.

The girl's mother, Mrs Sam-ang Mungkerd recalls "We were stricken by fear. Back in my home village in Khon Kaen, we believe that a child who remembers a past life will be taken away by the spirit of her old mother."

To suppress such "weird" behaviour, they threatened the baby that if she did not stop talking nonsense, they would stop taking her out. "It worked, at least at home," she recalls.

Later, kindergarten teachers visited Mrs Sam-ang and asked if the child talked about strange things at home like she did at school. Now Ood is 16 and remembers nothing of her childhood quiriness.

"Suppression is the typical reaction of parents when children talk of a previous life," says Sutdy-Vajrabhaya, 54, who has spent six years investigating and documenting the paranormal phenomenon. Some distraught parents, he adds, even go so far as burning the child with lit incense or throwing him or her from an upper floor as "shock therapy" to stop the child's eerie behaviour.

Although he believes baby Ood's story, it remains just a weak case without the testimonies or documentation. And, like most past-life memory stories that float around, it will end up merely a family fable of no scientific bearing.

Systematic investigation and documentation, he says, can change that.

"Rebirth is an important Buddhist teaching. Believers, however, embrace it out of faith while many Thais today wrongly dismiss it as irrelevant to one's spiritual pursuits," he explains. "But if we investigate and document the phenomenon systematically, strong empirical data on past life memories can scientifically confirm the Buddhist teachings on rebirth," he says.

Buddhism sees rebirth as part of Samsara, or the Wheel of Existence. It teaches that this unbroken chain of lifetimes driven
by greed, anger and delusion is the root cause of human beings' sufferings.

An understanding of rebirth is also central to the Buddhist doctrine of compassion, since it teaches that every being - whether human and animal - is related in one way or another as spouses, children, siblings, or relatives at a certain point in time across the inconceivable continuum of lifetimes.

Mr Sudya wants to return respectability to the belief in rebirth. That is why he joined the research team of Prof Ian Stevenson, a world-famous US-based scholar in paranormal science, six years ago.

Mr Sudya's task is to scout for Thai children who claim to remember previous lives. Then with Dr Jurgen Keil and Dr Jim Tucker, the team investigate the cases through methodical interviews with the subjects and primary witnesses, followed by cross-checking with the family of the deceased whom the child claims to remember. They also obtain evidence such as post-mortem and medical documents where necessary.

The case is considered to be verified when the child's statements - often involving family secrets - match unmistakably with the life of the deceased, and when there is strong evidences that the child could not have obtained the information from others.

The Thai research is part of Prof Stevenson's worldwide study that he has been conducting for more than 30 years. To date, he has found over 2,600 rebirth cases in different cultures across the globe.

As a psychiatrist and the director of the Division of Personality Studies at the University of Virginia, Prof Stevenson's interest in rebirth did not come from religious interests but from his dissatisfaction with modern theories of human personality.

He believes that genetics and environmental influences often cannot explain many personality abnormalities that happen early in life. Some children, for example, show phobias in early infancy without having had any traumatic experiences, and with no history of similar abnormalities in their family. He also points out that some one-egg twins are also markedly different from each other.

Furthermore, there is little in conventional theories that can explain the existence of transsexuality or birthmarks. Why are some boys and girls born with the belief that they are trapped inside the wrong
body? And why are some children born with certain birthmarks or birth defects affecting particular parts of the body and not other parts?

Three decades of rigorous research has convinced him that rebirth is often a better explanation for a child's unusual behaviour. While most see past-life memory as a rare and bizarre phenomenon, Prof Stevenson's growing database has found similar behavioural patterns across cultures among children who claim to remember a past life.

For example, these children start talking about a past life early in life, usually between the ages of two and four. They generally stop doing so between five and eight. They forget it all when they are adults. About one-third of them have phobias which are related to the manner of death of the person whose life they remember. More than half of these deaths are violent, or tai hong in Thai. Interestingly, over one-third of these children have birthmarks (moles or nevi) or birth defects that correspond to wounds, mostly fatal, on the deceased person.

According to Mr Sutdya, up to eighty percent of cases are reborn as the same sex. For those who were reborn as the different sex, Prof Stevenson reports that many of them become transsexuals.

The research also claims that the time gap between death and rebirth of a child who remembers a past life is, on average, 10 years, says Mr Sutdya.

With an eye for detail, the rebirth researchers look for the distance between the location of death and rebirth, the relationship between old and new families, the mother's dreams and cravings while pregnant, and the child's idiosyncrasies which correspond to the person whose life he or she remembers.

Thai Findings

After six years of playing detective in the world of the supernatural, Mr Sutdya has found 50 rebirth cases. Among them:

Tukata: At five, she stunned her parents by telling them that in her previous life, she died from dengue fever at the age of ten. Typical of most rebirth cases, Tukata insisted that her parents take her to see her old family. As in most strong rebirth cases, the two families lived far apart and never knew each other before.

To see if the girl's claims were true or not, her parents dropped her in front of her old village. She ran unaided to her old house,
jumped up to hug her old mother who was completely caught by surprise, called her brothers and sisters by their nicknames, and asked for the amulet which she wanted to have back.

**Guy:** The boy was born with an infected wound on his head and a scar-like birthmark on his right hand. At about the age of three, he told his parents that in his past life he was named Sawat and worked as a spy for Communist guerrillas. He said he was shot while taking a nap with his right hand resting over his head; the bullet cut through his hand and forehead and killed him instantly.

The boy insisted that he go to see his old parents who happened to be in the same extended family. Once there, he correctly identified family members and belongings. The boy refused, however, to talk to Sawat's estranged wife, saying he still hated her. He also became angry when he saw that his possessions had been moved, typical behaviour in rebirth cases.

Relatives say the boy has the same tough-guy traits as the man whose life he remembers. Sawat used to kill buffaloes and eat the meat raw. When pregnant, Guy's mother had strong cravings for raw meat which stopped after delivery. The memory of slaughter, however, distressed Guy so much that he decided never to touch beef again.

**Bow:** She was born with a deformed sternum, and from the age of about 17 months, she screamed in fright every time she saw a collapsible table. Now four years old, she told Mr Sutdya that in her previous life, she was named Or and died by being crushed by a collapsible table while playing under it at the age of six.

**Pao:** The boy was born with ring-like marks around his ankles and fingers, and a scar on his nose. At three, he began talking in detail about how he died in his past life. He said he was looting the house of a villager named Tong who used a long sharp knife to kill him. He said his fingers were cut and his ankles were tied. He expressed the wish to get revenge on his killer.

**Tum:** The boy was born with a black naevus on his right chest and only one testicle. At 14 months old, he started talking about his past life as Ee, a relative who had died in a motorcycle accident. Ee's parents were convinced that Tum used to be their son due to the wounds he sustained in the accident: Ee's corpse only had one testicle left. His parents had also dabbed soot on the dead boy's right chest, telling his spirit to bring the sign back in his next life.
When taken to his old family's house, Tum rightly identified Ee's picture, called his siblings by their nicknames and knew of the personal problems of other relatives.

**Om**: Her mother has an "announcing dream" in which a young relative named Lek asked to live with her. Lek had died from head wounds sustained in a motorcycle accident, and consequent brain surgery could not save him. When Om was born, four people saw blood gush from her head.

The girl insisted on going to see her old family who lived in another district. She correctly commented on the furnishing of the house and asked for her personal belongings, a watch and a bank savings book. The girl also told one relative that he still owed Lek nine baht. That relative admitted that it was true.

As for phobias, Om showed a great fear of needles. Her old parents said an undertaker had used needles to sew up Lek's mouth, a death ritual believed to prevent the spirit of a person who died young and in a violent manner from haunting the living.

Om also refused to climb trees, explaining that she fell from a tree and broke her arm in her previous life. Lek's family confirmed it. Om and Lek also shared similar tastes in food.

**Experimental Birthmarks**

Given the Christian belief that there is no life after death and the prevalent scepticism towards the paranormal, rebirth research and findings are looked upon with suspicion in the West. In Thailand, however, Prof Stevenson's research has strengthened the belief in rebirth, which is already part of Buddhist teachings.

Substantial data also helps return respect to some old beliefs in the paranormal - such as announcing dreams, strange cravings and the rebirth of ancestors into the same family - which young people often dismiss as fantasies.

In addition, Thailand also has a unique death ritual which has become an important indicator to rebirth researchers - that of applying soot or red lime to the corpse to identify the person when he or she is reborn.

Research data shows that this experimental marking does, in fact, work. Out of 28 rebirth cases Mr Sutdy found this year, 17 were born with these markings. Those made with soot become black nevi which stays for life, he says, while those made with red lime become red nevi which fade in adulthood.
Dana at Dhammasara

Dhammasara is located at 233 Reen Road, Gidgegannup, just off the Toodyay Road. Our farm gate is 2.7km along Reen Road on the left. The gate lock has a security number. You can contact Chris Banks on (08) 9448 0854 for the security lock number. "Mud Maps" For directions to the Nuns' Monastery are on the notice board at Dhammadloka Buddhist Centre. Also on the notice board is a Dana Roster for the Dhammasara. Dana is offered daily at the campsite at 10:30am in the new green shed. The campsite turn off is sign posted 1.6km along the main gravel road.

DRINKING WATER is most appreciated when bringing dana please.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME DAILY FROM 10:30am to 12:30pm. Gentlemen please ensure you bring a female with you when visiting. During the month of SEPTEMBER, Sister Ajahn Vayama will be on silent retreat, so during than month please leave dana silently for her in the green shed.

If you would like to donate some time at the Dhammasara, we are having a two-day BUSY BEE on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th August from 8am to 10:30am and 1pm to 4pm. Please come along at any time that suits you. This busy bee is to start our Fire Management Plan by cutting up dry dead timber and tidying up the forest floor. Free firewood dears!!! We also hope to plant some young tree seedlings around the new dams.

Please feel free to bring along any of the following:

- Fit friends and children
- Garden Gloves
- Chainsaws, Handsaws
- Shovels
- Picks
- Hole Diggers

We will stop for dana at 10:30am both days.

Many new friendships have been fostered on these magic days.

To date we still owe $20,000 for the land. Donations to the Nuns' Monastery Building Fund are tax deductible.
The Journey of Compassion

It had been such a long time since the last visit to Port Hedland by Ajahn Brahmavamso in the middle of 1995. The recent visit to Port Hedland by Ajahn Nyanadhammo and Phra Chandako was like a wonderful rain that poured down to an isolated drought stricken area. Due to the long distance from Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery we have inevitably become ignorant Buddhists, but it all changed after the arrival of Ajahn Nyanadhammo and his companions. They guided us back to the right path, advised those who needed help and encouraged us to maintain harmony and corporation amongst ourselves. All of their teachings ensured a more happy life and would be remembered by us for a long time.

Parm Dahlke
On behalf of the Thai community in Port Hedland.

Ajahn Nyandhammo, Ven Chandako
Lay Supporters in Port Hedland
UNDERSTANDING BUDDHIST
ETIQUETTE

The Buddhist Society of Western Australia

Dhammaloka is a place for Buddhist meditation and teaching and you may notice those attending the centre observe certain forms of etiquette.

Our society is multicultural, small gestures can mean a lot, and moderation in behaviour helps to maintain the peaceful environment, which will be a benefit to all. Being mindful of physical gestures helps to create awareness and respect in the mind.

An optional gesture of respect is to bow three times in homage to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, or simply hold the hands with palms together and slightly lower the head. To lower the head below that of another is a mark of respect towards other people and cultivates a humble mind.

Another simple gesture is being mindful to avoid pointing the feet towards an image of the Buddha or another person.

As the monks and nuns are bound by precepts, they are prohibited from having physical contact with the opposite gender. You may offer objects by placing them within reach for the monk or nun to accept. In this tradition, if you wish to offer food or a drink, it is customary to place the item on a cloth held by the monk or nun.

It is customary to remove the footwear and any headgear before entering the buildings. Clothing should be comfortable and suitably modest.

Please remain in the hall during meditation and dhamma talks. Should you need to leave, do so quietly so as not to disturb others.

May all beings be well and happy.

Executive Committee,
The Buddhist Society of Western Australia
CONGRATULATIONS
TO
ELIZABETH BELL

On Monday 14 June 1999, the Queen's Birthday, Elizabeth was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in recognition of her outstanding and consistent contribution to Buddhism in Australia and the Buddhist community.

Elizabeth has been involved with the Buddhist Society of Victoria for over thirty years and has been its president many times. She has guided it with characteristic kindness, humility and wisdom, that has contributed to its success today.

Meditation Retreats 1999

November 19th – 21st

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

ADDRESSES

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Dhammasara
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Gidgegannup