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MOST VEN. MEDAGAMA VAJIRAGNANA PASSES AWAY

Most Ven. Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana, the Head of the London Buddhist Vihara and the Chief Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain passed away on 15th December 2006 at Hammersmith Hospital, West London at the age of 78.

Ven. Vajiragnana was born in 1928 in Sri Lanka and at the age of 14 he was ordained as a novice monk in Hippola Viharaya, Talatuoya. He received his higher ordination at the Malwatu Vihara in Kandy in 1949. He received his monastic education in Agalawatta Patiraja Pirivena and Vidyodaya Pirivena in Colombo. He obtained the degree of Pandit from the Oriental Studies Society in 1955 and had teacher training at the Pirivena Teachers' Training College, Ratmalana. After that he became the Principal at the Parama Dhamma Chetiya Pirivena, Ratmalana. To continue his higher education he went to India and completed a Diploma course at the Sanskrit University, Varanasi and obtained an M.A. in Sanskrit at the Jadavpur University, Calcutta. In 1966 he was appointed as Assistant Head of the London Buddhist Vihara by the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust. In 1974 he became the religious director of the British Buddhist Association. He was invited to return to Sri Lanka in 1980 as the principal of the Pirivena Teachers' Training College in Ratmalana. In 1985, after the retirement of Ven. Dr. H. Sad-

dhatissa as the Head of the London Buddhist Vihara, he was appointed as Head of the London Buddhist Vihara by the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust. Then began his work to promote and teach the Buddha's teachings throughout the western world, which was a task he performed un-tingly with the greatest dedication.

When he became the Head of the Vihara he organised a teaching programme to continue to propagate the Buddha Dhamma. In 1986 he was invited by Birkbeck College (University of London) to start teaching a course on Buddhism and he continued to teach this until only a short time before his death. In 1987 he gave his full support to the burgeoning inter-faith movement by becoming a founder member of the Inter Faith Network for the U.K. This body strives to promote and develop mutual tolerance and respect between the different faiths and philosophies, which are followed by the varied communities living in UK. For 20 years he represented the Buddhist faith at the annual Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey. He attended many seminars, lectures and represented Buddhism in many important events held in UK and around the world.

To unite the Sri Lankan Sangha he started the Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha in 1991, and in 1998 he was instru-

mental in founding the Rahula Trust, a charity aimed at helping poor children to receive a good education. He is the author of many books, pamphlets and articles concerning all aspects of Buddhist teaching. In the New Year's Honours List 2006 Ven. Vajiragnana was appointed O.B.E. for his services to Inter Faith Relations. After suffering from myelodysplastic syndrome for three years, he passed away peacefully on 15th December 2006. On 20th December the body of Ven. Vajiragnana lay in state in the main hall of the Vihara for the public to view and pay their respects. This was followed by religious services held both at the Vihara and later at the crematorium. The cremation was held at West London Crematorium on 21st December amongst a large gathering of monks, lay devotees and dignitaries. Ven. Professor Bellanwila Wimalaratana, Chancellor of the Jayawardanapura University of Sri Lanka, Ven. Kurunegoda Piyatissa, Head of the New York Buddhist Vihara, Ven. Nehiniwela Piyadassi, member of the Karaka Sangha Sabha, Malwatu Viharaya, and Ven. Ambaliyadde Somananda Nayaka Thera, Chief Incumbent and Principal of the Madanwala Rajamaha Viharaya were the amongst distinguished monks who made a special effort to journey from overseas to be present for the funeral.

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ETHICS IN THERAVADA PERSPECTIVE

*by Most Venerable Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana,
Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain, Head of the London Buddhist Vihara*

Ethics occupies a position of fundamental importance in the Buddha's teachings. In the sense realm (kama loka) we recognise 11 different planes of existence, some of these are heavenly realms and some are hell realms, but the human realm is unique. To be born as a human being is a very special and fortunate event. It is only in the human realm that beings have the capacity to understand the difference between right and wrong, and then to make moral choices based on this understanding. Beings in the animal and hell realms have great difficulty in performing any wholesome actions because they cannot appreciate the difference between right and wrong. On the other hand, beings in the heavenly or deva planes are enjoying such pleasant existences that they have no motivation to perform wholesome actions. They are like human beings living off their capital. They are not creating any fresh merit and at the end of that particular life, rebirth will take place according to previously-accrued kamma. The Buddha never recommended that we should strive to be reborn in a deva loka. He placed supreme importance on the precious human birth because it is only in the human realm that we have the possibility of hearing the Dhamma and then choosing to act in accordance with it. So it is this capacity to make moral choices which makes human existence unique and this means that ethics lies at the heart of Buddhist practice.

Ethical conduct means taking care of what we do with our bodies, speech and minds; it is the foundation of all spiritual development. It is one of the

three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path - right speech, right action and right livelihood. The Buddha said, "Not possible is it, O monks, without having mastered the domain of morality (sila), to master the domain of concentration (samadhi). Not possible is it, without having mastered the domain of concentration, to master the domain of Wisdom (panna)." (A.V.22)

In determining the ethical quality of our actions, The Buddha placed supreme emphasis on the state of our minds. The first two verses of the Dhammapada state:-

"All (mental) states have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief, and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a defiled mind, then suffering follows one even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.

"All (mental) states have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief, and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows one as one's shadow that does not leave one."

An action is made either wholesome or unwholesome according to the volition in the mind at the time the action is performed. The Buddha said, "It is volition (or will - Cetana) which I call kamma. Through volition one performs kamma by means of body, speech and mind." This desire, no matter how mild it may be, is a form of craving (tanha) and it lies behind practically every activity of life. Therefore to live and to desire are more or less the same thing.

Desiring is a creative act - it creates kamma. Our personality is moulded by the accumulation of these desires. These are acts of thought, word and deed. The performance of wholesome kamma still has effects which must be experienced at a later date. Only the arahant or enlightened being creates no new kamma.

So we should think carefully before we perform any action what its consequences will be. The position has been likened to a man building a wall, or digging a ditch - he goes up or down strictly in accordance with his own efforts. The Buddha gave the following instructions to his own son, Rahula, "Rahula, for what purpose is a mirror." "For the purpose of reflecting, Lord." "Similarly, Rahula, after reflecting should bodily action be done; after reflecting should verbal action be done; after reflecting should mental action be done.

"If, when reflecting, you should realise: 'Now, this bodily action that I am desirous of performing, would be conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both myself and others.' Then, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and producing pain. Such an action with the body, you must on no account perform.

"If, on the other hand, when reflecting you realise: 'Now, this bodily action that I am desirous of performing, would conduce neither to the harm of myself, nor to that of others, nor to that of both myself and others.' Then, skilful is this bodily ac-

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tion, entailing pleasure and producing happiness. Such bodily action you should perform."

The Buddha goes on to say that such reflecting must be done before, during and after performing any bodily action. He then gives the same admonitions with regard to verbal and mental actions. There are two stages of kamma:-

1. Cetana - this is the volition. This is thought alone. It is important but for the full effect to be experienced, there is a second stage.
2. Cetayitra - having willed, one acts. Then it becomes complete.

There are two words in the Pali language which are used to designate an action as either wholesome or unwholesome. These words are kusala and akusala. When I say that another way of translating them is to say that kusala is what leads us towards nibbana, and akusala is what leads us away from nibbana, then you can see just how important is ethical behaviour.

There are ten kinds of akusala action:
body - killing, stealing, sexual misconduct.
speech - lying, slander, harsh speech, vain talk.
mind - covetousness, illwill, wrong view.

The ten kinds of kusala action are:
- generosity, morality, meditation, reverence, service, transference of merit, rejoicing in others' merit, hearing the doctrine, teaching the doctrine, straightening one's views.

Every day the committed Buddhist recites what we call the five precepts, which are the most fundamental rules of training which form the basis of all morality. These are:-

- i) to refrain from the destruction of life.
- ii) to refrain from taking that which is not freely given.
- iii) to refrain from sexual misconduct.
- iv) to refrain from false speech.
- v) to refrain from the use of intoxicating drugs or liquor.

According to Ven. Buddhaghosa, there are 6 benefits of virtue for the layperson:-

1. Non-remorse.
2. He comes into a large fortune as a result of diligence.
3. A fair name is spread abroad.
4. He can enter any assembly without fear or hesitation.
5. He dies unconfused.
6. He is reborn in a happy destiny.

For monks there are four kinds of morality consisting of Purification (catu-parisuddhi-sila). These are (1) restraint with regard to the monks' disciplinary code (patimokkha-samvara sila).

2. Restraint of the senses (indriya-samvara sila).
3. Purification of livelihood (ajiva-samvara sila).
4. Morality with regard to the four requisites (paccaya-sannissita-sila).

If we can try to regulate our life according to ethical factors, then we have laid the firm foundations for a peaceful and happy existence - both for ourselves as individuals, and for society as a whole. Furthermore, proper morality is essential for any spiritual development. Sometimes people come to Buddhism wanting to learn only about meditation in the mistaken belief that meditation is the sole thing they need to learn. But they are not aware that progress in meditation cannot be made unless our actions of speech and body have

been brought under control. We cannot hope to discipline the mind unless our speech and bodily activities have been disciplined first. In the Samyutta Nikaya it says, "What is the basis of higher states? Sila (morality) of perfect purity." (Samyutta Nikaya, v.143)

But the observance of sila alone will not lead us to nibbana. Sila are only a means of training body, speech and mind. There is in fact a danger of becoming blindly attached to the taking of precepts in the mistaken belief that their mere recitation will bring beneficial results. This is the third of the ten fetters, known as silabbataparamasa, meaning wrongful attachment to mere rites and rituals. Sila are, however, the basis on which we can build our spiritual life. Ethics are the foundation all spiritual development. The progressive nature of the path has been summarised like this, "The reward and fruit of wholesome morality is freedom from remorse, and the reward of freedom from remorse: joy; of joy: rapture; of rapture: tranquillity; of tranquillity: happiness; of happiness: concentration; of concentration: the vision and knowledge according to reality; of the vision and knowledge according to reality: turning away and detachment; of turning away and detachment: the vision and knowledge with regard to deliverance. Thus, Ananda, wholesome morality leads step by step to the Highest." (Anguttara Nikaya X.1)

VEN. B. SEELAWIMALA IS APPOINTED AS ACTING HEAD OF THE VIHARA

After the passing away of the Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana, Head of the London Buddhist Vihara, Ven. B. Seelawimala, previously Deputy Head of the Vihara, was appointed as the Acting Head of the London Buddhist Vihara. This appointment was made by the trustees of the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust in December 2006.

Ven. Seelawimala was a teacher at the Dharmaraja College in Sri Lanka before he joined the Vihara 15 years ago as a Dhammaduta monk. He graduated from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka with both a B.A. and, later, an M.A. degree. Since 1998 he has been a teacher of Theravada Buddhism in the Buddhist Society, and also an honorary chaplain to the West Middlesex University Hospital.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ENLIGHTENED?

by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

The word "buddha" was already known and in circulation before the Buddha appeared on the Indian scene. The word means "enlightened," and spiritual seekers would commonly discuss the question "Who is a Buddha? Who is enlightened?" Once an aged brahmin named Brahmáyu heard that the ascetic Gotama, the man rumoured to be a Buddha, had arrived in his town and he decided to pay him a visit. When the old brahmin arrived, the Buddha was in the midst of a discussion with many people. Since the old brahmin was highly distinguished, when he came into the midst of the crowd, everyone gave way to him. The Buddha too realised that this was a highly respected brahmin, the teacher of several generations of pupils, so he asked Brahmáyu to come right up to the front of the assembly and to take a seat beside him.

Brahmáyu then said to him, "Honorable Gotama, I would like to ask you some questions." The Buddha invited him to ask what was on his mind, and the brahmin phrased his questions in a four-line verse, the basic point of which was, "How can one be called a Buddha, an Enlightened One?" The Buddha responded in verse:

*What has to be known,
that I have known;
What has to be abandoned,
that I have abandoned;
What has to be developed,
that I have developed;
Therefore, O brahmin, I am a Buddha."*

This answer tells us, very concisely, three characteristics of an Enlightened One. These are not only three characteristics of a Buddha; they are also three objectives at which we aim in following the Buddha's teaching. If someone were to ask, "What is your fundamental purpose

in taking refuge in the Triple Gem? What is your purpose in following the precepts? What is your purpose in practising meditation?" your answer should come down to the same three points: to fully know what should be known; to abandon what should be abandoned; and to develop what should be developed. These are the goals of the Buddhist path and the three accomplishments that mark the attainment of enlightenment.

If you are familiar with the Buddha's First Sermon, you would immediately recognise that these three tasks are aligned with three of the Four Noble Truths. The first noble truth is the noble truth of dukkha, usually translated suffering, unsatisfactoriness, or stress. What is the task to be performed in relation to this noble truth of suffering? The noble truth of suffering is to be correctly "known," fully known, fully understood. The noble truth of the origin, or cause, of suffering is craving, and the task to be performed in relation to this truth is abandonment: craving is to be "abandoned." The fourth noble truth, the Noble Eightfold Path, is the truth that has to be "developed." The one noble truth that isn't mentioned in the Buddha's verse is the third truth, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. This has its own task as well: the cessation of suffering is to be "realised." But when the other three tasks are accomplished, realisation of the noble truth of the cessation of suffering will naturally follow.

What does it mean to say that our task is "to know that which should be known"? What we have to know, what we have to understand, is that which is closest to ourselves, what we usually refer to as our self. What we usually refer to as our self is this complex of body and mind. For most of us, from the time we are born right up to the time of our death, our minds face outwardly, engaged in a tire-

less quest for pleasure and sensual gratification, for the enhancement of our self, for the confirmation of our sense of ego-identity. Very few people stop and turn around to consider the question, "What is it that I call my self? What is the 'I' behind the reference I make to myself?" And yet, if you reflect for just a moment, you will see that this is the most important question we can ask. If, from the day of your birth until the day you draw your final breath, the best you can do when you are asked, "Who are you? What is your identity?" is to pull out your driver's licence or show your birth certificate, without really knowing who you are or what you are, then you've made a pretty bad job of your journey from birth to death.

Our task in following the Buddha's teaching is to investigate what it is we refer to as "I," as "my self," as "what I am." We usually take these terms to refer to some kind of persisting entity, an ego, a substantial self possessing a real identity. But the Buddha teaches that all such ideas are deceptions. When we look, when we investigate the referents of the terms, "I," "me," and "my self," what we find are just components of bodily and mental experience. To aid investigation, the Buddha has neatly classified these components of bodily and mental experience into five groups. These are called the "five aggregates of clinging" because they are the things that we ordinarily cling to with the ideas, "This is mine, this is what I am, this is my true self."

So we find, underlying these notions of "I" and "self," just these five aggregates: the aggregate of bodily form, the material substance that constitutes our bodies; the aggregate of feeling: pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings; the aggregate of perception: the mental function

of identifying the characteristics of things, acts of identifying, recognising, and remembering; the aggregate of volitional formations, the various functions connected with volition; and the aggregate of consciousness: the light of awareness arising on the basis of the six sense bases.

For each of us, this is the totality of what we call our self. Our task in following the Buddha's teaching is to come to know, to come to understand, the true nature of these five aggregates. We thereby come to know what constitutes our real identity. From birth, through adulthood, to old age and death, this whole process of life is just a succession of the five aggregates bound together as conditions and conditionally arisen phenomena. The bodily aggregate or form is the basis, and on this basis, the mental aggregates arise and pass away. Through meditation practice, we examine very deeply, with a fine focus, the nature of these five aggregates as they occur from moment to moment. We see them arising, standing, and dissolving, which gives us the insight into impermanence. From the understanding of impermanence comes the insight into suffering, the unsatisfactory nature of the five aggregates. We then realise that these changeable five aggregates are undependable, insecure, unreliable, and therefore cannot be taken as our self: they are empty or selfless.

The second project the Buddha's teaching sets for us is "to abandon that which should be abandoned." What should be abandoned are the defilements. The Buddha uses the word *kilesa* as an umbrella term that includes all the mental states that cause suffering and unhappiness in our lives. The Buddha's teaching offers a detailed investigation of the mind which enables us to understand how the mind works. But this investigation is not undertaken in the value-free way in which contemporary psychology might describe the workings of the mind. Buddhist psychology defines its values clearly and sharply. It draws definite ethical distinctions, draws them without hesitation or ambiguity, because these ethical distinctions have vital

implications for our desire to achieve happiness and avoid suffering.

According to the Buddha's teaching, unethical actions and impure mental states can never give rise to true and lasting happiness. Rather, unethical actions and defiled mental states inevitably germinate in unhappiness, in suffering. It is true that defiled states of mind, especially greed and craving, are accompanied by pleasure and enjoyment. If that weren't the case, the world would be filled with enlightened people. And yet the pleasure that accompanies present craving and greed is just a superficial coat that covers a bad seed. When that seed germinates and bears its fruits, it will bring pain and suffering either in this life, or if not in this life, then in future lives. In contrast, wholesome states of mind may sometimes be accompanied by present pain, because to develop them we have to go against the current, against the natural grain of the mind. But when those wholesome states bear their fruits, inevitably they will lead to happiness, to peace, and to inner well-being. Again, this is part of the same law, the law of moral causation.

The unwholesome mental states are called *kilesas*. The word can be translated as afflictions because they bring suffering. It can also be translated as defilements because they defile and corrupt the mind. The Buddha has analysed the nature of the defilements and has beautifully explained how they can all be traced to the three "root defilements" of greed, hatred, and delusion. Our task in following the Buddha's teaching, in practising the Dhamma, is to overcome, to eliminate, to abandon the defilements of greed and hatred that give rise to many other branch defilements. But greed and hatred spring ultimately from delusion or ignorance. And thus to eliminate all the defilements, we have to eliminate ignorance.

Ignorance is what covers up the five aggregates, what we refer to as I, mine, and myself. Thus the way to overcome ignorance or delusion is through the first task "knowing that which should be known." When we

know that which should be known, ignorance falls away - greed, hatred, and all the other defilements fall away. It isn't possible, however, to accomplish this merely by having the desire to do so. We can't expect simply to think, "I want to know that which should be known," and immediately it is known. That's why the whole practice of Buddhism is a process of walking a path. The great gift that the Buddha offers the world is not simply a profound philosophy, not simply a penetrating psychology, but a practical, systematic, step-by-step path that we can cultivate in every aspect of our lives.

To cultivate the path means to "develop that which should be developed." This is the third project the Buddha speaks of in his four-line verse: "That which should be developed, that I have developed." So what the Buddha has developed is what we have to develop. One cultivates the path in order "to abandon that which should be abandoned," namely, the defilements. And again, one cultivates the path in order "to know that which should be known," the five aggregates.

How does developing the path do this? Again, the path is structured in such a way that it proceeds not suddenly, not abruptly, but in a gradual step-by-step manner to help us climb the ladder to the ultimate freedom of enlightenment. One has to begin by keeping the coarser expression of the defilements under control. One does this by observing the precepts. One observes the Five Precepts or the Eight Precepts. These control the coarser expressions of the defilements, the defilements that erupt in the form of unwholesome actions.

Observing the precepts is not merely a matter of abstaining from negative actions. One also has to cultivate their counterparts: virtuous, wholesome actions. These suffuse the mind with pure and purifying qualities. One has to be compassionate and kindly towards others, to be honest in one's dealings with others, to be constantly truthful in one's communications,

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN ...

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to be responsible to one's family and society, to observe right livelihood, to be diligent, to be respectful of others, to be patient under difficult conditions, to be humble and upright. All these virtues gradually help to purify the mind and make the mind bright, clean, and radiant.

To develop what must be developed, it isn't sufficient merely to cultivate morality. One must go further and cultivate concentration. When we try to collect and concentrate the mind, we begin to understand how our minds work. We gain insight into the workings of our own minds. By understanding the workings of our own minds, we're gradually changing the shape of the mind. First, we are beginning to weaken and undermine those unwholesome qualities that defile the mind. We are scraping away the soil in which the unwholesome roots have been lodged. We have to remember that the unwholesome roots have been lodged in our minds throughout beginningless time. The process isn't a quick or easy one, but requires gradual, persistent, and dedicated effort.

As one practices consistently, the mind will eventually settle into firm concentration. It acquires the skills needed to remain settled upon an object consistently, without wavering, and this provides the opportunity for wisdom to arise. Wisdom is the third quality that needs to be developed. Wisdom comes through examination, through investigation.

To be sure, wisdom does not arise only from meditative concentration. Even in your day-to-day life, when you study the Buddha's teachings, especially the important discourses on the development of wisdom, such as the teachings on the five aggregates, dependent origination, and the Four Noble Truths, you are investigating the Dhamma and thereby creating the conditions for wisdom. You are generating a conceptual wisdom that is already starting to dig away at the root of ignorance. So just by studying the teaching and reflecting on the

teaching, you are already shaking the deep root of ignorance.

But the ultimate wisdom is experiential. When one has developed a strongly concentrated mind, one uses that mind to investigate the five aggregates. As one observes one's own experience, one directly sees into their real nature, into "the true characteristics of phenomena." Generally, one first sees the arising and falling away of the five aggregates. That is, one sees their impermanence. One sees that because they're impermanent, they're unsatisfactory. There's nothing worth clinging to in them. And because they're impermanent and unsatisfactory, one cannot identify with any of them as a truly existing self. This is the empty or

self-less nature of the five aggregates. This marks the arising of true insight wisdom.

With insight-wisdom, one cuts deeper and deeper into the root of ignorance until one comes to fully understand the nature of the five aggregates. When one does so, one can then say that one has "known that which should be known." And by fully knowing that which should be known, the defilements "that should be abandoned have been abandoned," and the path "that should be developed has been developed." One then realises that which should be realised, the extinction of suffering right here and now. And, in the Buddha's own words, that is what makes an Enlightened One.

TEMPTATIONS AND FIVE SENSES

Temptations arouse your senses
And make a dull life interesting.
But you've got to be cautious
Of the suffering these bring.

When your senses get trapped in temptations
There is no easy way out.
Indulgence in senses become vices
Without any doubt.

Human life is valuable and interesting thing
When you live a good disciplined life
You have no fear when your conscience is clear
These matter a lot in life.

These sense organs five do communicate
In and out of the mind,
These should not be misused
During one's life-time.

Great Ancestors Who served
Suffering Humanity in various ways
Their time was too precious for temptations
And led lives of simplicity and had humble ways.

By Mrs. Kamala Perera

MONTHLY DHAMMA TALK

From last year London Buddhist Vihara has organised monthly Dhamma talks. These talks will be held on the first Saturday of each month at 6.00pm. Renowned Dhamma teachers, professors and Venerable monks are invited to give these talks. You are welcome to attend these special lectures.

For further information please contact the Vihara.

Te: 0208 995 9493. Website. www.londonbuddhistvihara.org

2550TH BUDDHA JAYANTHI COMMEMORATION



To commemorate the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi the London Buddhist Vihara organised a programme of speeches and cultural events at Ealing Town Hall on 25th June 2006. The Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing attended the ceremony.

Venerable Seelawimala, Deputy Head of the Vihara, welcomed the gathering, and Venerable Dr. W. Kasapa administered the five precepts to start the programme. Dr. Ananda Guruge, from California, USA, was the Chief Guest Speaker. His topic was "The Relevance of Buddhism in the Modern World". Ajahn Khemadhammo, from the Forest Hermitage, and Her Excellency, Mrs. Kshenuka Seneviratne also gave talks. A message from the Head of the Vihara, Ven. Vajiragnana, was read by Ven. Bandula. The vote of thanks was given by Mr. Sudantha Abeykoon. The Anagarika Dharmapala Trust was represented by Mr. Sinha Ratnatunga. The cultural programme included items from the London Buddhist Vihara Dhamma School children and various other communities. The Channa Wijayawardena Group from Sri Lanka performed a very colourful dance, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

London Buddhist Vihara also published a commemorative volume to mark the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi. This publication consists of articles from respected monks and well known Buddhist writers around the world. This is an important publication from the Vihara. It is for free distribution, but donations are welcome to continue the activities of the Vihara. If you are interested to have a copy, please contact a resident monk.



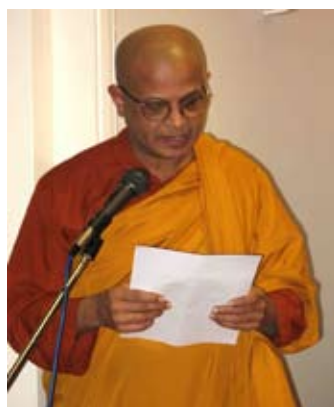
(Photographs by TISSA MADAWELA)

FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE MOST VENERABLE DR. VAJIRAGNANA, O.B.E.

On 21st December 2006 at 1.30pm a funeral service was held at the Vihara to transfer merits to Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana, who passed away on 15th December. Nearly 200 monks from Sri Lanka, Europe, USA and England participated. Ven. Seelawimala, Acting Head of the Vihara, welcomed the gathering. Administering the five precepts and the offering of mataka vastra was done by the Venerable Nehiniwela Piyadassi Thera, Member of the Karaka Sangha Sabha of Malwatta Chapter. Ven. Kurunegoda Piyatissa, New York Vihara, Luang Por Sumedho, Amaravati Monastery, Ven. Gnanissara, Jetavana Vihara, Paris, Ven. Dr. W. Kassapa, Birmingham Maha Vihara, and Ven. Ambaliyadde Somananda Nayaka Thera, Chief Incumbent of the Madanwala Rajamaha Vihara, all gave talks. Japanese, Chinese, Tibetan and Korean Buddhist traditions were also represented and chanted Buddhist sutras. The transference of merits was performed by Venerable B. Pannasena, chief pupil of Venerable Vajiragnana, and the family members of the Venerable Vajiragnana who came to attend the funeral service. After the service, the body was taken in a procession to the West London Crematorium for cremation.



A large gathering was present at the crematorium. Ven. Bellanwila Wimalaratana, Chancellor of Sri Jayawardenapura University, Venerable Khemadhammo, from the Forest Hermitage, Mr. Brian Appleyard, President of the Buddhist Society London, and Mr. Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network UK, all gave talks in appreciation of the life of the Most Venerable Vajiragnana. A message from His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse was read by Her Excellency the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Kshenuka Senviratne, who also gave a talk which was fitting for the occasion. Mr. Sudanta Abeykoon read a message from the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust, Sri Lanka. Messages from politicians, embassies, dignitaries, and monks from the different parts of the world were read by the Venerable Bandula. Dr. Lucky Panagoda concluded the funeral ceremony by giving the vote of thanks.



On the evening of 21st December, the sermon (*mataka bana*) was delivered by Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa, Head of the New York Vihara. This was attended by a large gathering. The next day dana was offered in memory of the Most Venerable Vajiragnana, beloved Head of the Vihara.





(Photographs by TISSA MADAWELA)

***“Piyo ca garu bhavaniyo - Vatta ca vacanakkamo
Gambhiran ca katham katta - Nochatthane Nayojaye”***

A great personality should have a pleasant countenance, dynamic personality, be articulate, have a philosophical outlook, be a good judge of human nature. *(Anguttara Nikaya)*

Remains of the late Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana Nayaka Thera

In accordance with the last wish of late Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana, his ashes were taken to Sri Lanka by Ven. Pannasena, his chief pupil. A special religious service was held at the Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya, organised by Ven. Prof. Bellanwila Wimalaratana Thera, Chancellor of the Sri Jayawardenapura University. The casket was received by Mr. Noel Wijenaike, Chairman of the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust, and placed in a special pavilion. Many people came to pay their respects, including many distinguished monks and other dignitaries. This was followed by a religious service, including transference of merits.

The casket was then taken to Kandy and the ashes were scattered in the river Mahaweli after the 3-month dana ceremony (15th March).



The Benefits of Long-Term Meditation

by *Venerable Dr. H. Gunaratana Nayaka Thera, USA*

Spending time in a retreat is like recharging a battery. Once you have charged a battery, you don't let it just sit around. You install it in an appliance and use it until it runs out. Then you recharge it. Similarly, when you need to recharge yourself you go for retreats.

The difference between charging a battery and going for a retreat is that the length of time spent in a retreat cannot really be equated with the time you charge a battery. If you charge a battery longer, that does not mean it can run longer. Once the battery has reached full capacity it cannot be charged any more. Charging after that point is useless. But this does not happen when you go on a long-term retreat.

First, before you go for long retreats, you should have undertaken short weekend retreats. Also, be aware of the length of the longer retreat you hope to accomplish — ten days, twenty days, a month, three months, or a year or two?

You have to prepare your mind and body for a long retreat. You do this by attending several graduated short retreats that last a weekend, three days, a week, ten days, two weeks and a month. Once you know you can handle a weekend retreat comfortably then go to the next longer one. When you know you can handle that retreat easily, move on up to the next longer one.

Preparing Yourself

Sometimes even a weekend retreat is boring and painful if you are not prepared. How can you prepare your mind? When you go for a retreat, don't bring your office with you. Leave it behind. People are generally unable to let go of their work. They are used to their daily and weekly routines full of TV, company, gossip, uncontrolled eating, drink, drugs, sex, travel, etc. When they go for re-

treats they have to let go of most of these routines.

Since they are accustomed to working under great pressure, even in retreats they are tense and anxious. They want to get something out of meditation as quickly as possible and then get back to their work. Don't go for retreat in this frame of mind. Try to think that you have left everything behind for a while and now you have all the time in the world. Nobody — no work, nothing — is going to bother you. Use all the time for your practice.

What happens to you if you do not have this kind of attitude is that you begin to feel bored and tired of meditation. You find meditation is a waste of time. You are in the same situation as when you were at work or at home or with company. If you start your retreat with this attitude, you will wish to achieve some benefit as quickly as possible, and to go home or to work to enjoy what you have been doing before you went for the retreat.

Moreover, in a short retreat you experience a great deal of pain and discomfort. As you become impatient, your aches and pains become more acute. Naturally, in a short retreat you experience more physical discomfort, for you are not used to sitting in one place for a long time or to staying in one place for a long period of time by yourself without listening to radio or watching TV, or without chatting with somebody or reading a newspaper, or perhaps doing some computer work. When you try to look at yourself introspectively, taking stock of the garbage you have within yourself, you experience a great deal of discomfort.

How much time do you have in a weekend retreat? Not more than two days. Before the body gets adjusted to the new situation, the new practice, the new discipline, the retreat

time or your holiday time is over. Then you may conclude that all you got from a retreat is aches and pains all over your body. Or boredom. Then you decide never to go for a retreat again. As you have not had any previous retreat experiences, what you don't know is that it takes a couple of days for your body to become adjusted. Short retreats, however, are beneficial for preparing yourself for a long retreat.

Group Support

People who have done meditation by themselves on their own should expect to face courageously whatever arises in their bodies and minds. Meditating alone by oneself is also beneficial in that you can make your own schedule. You can avoid any human contact. You can choose a quiet place. Even when you go to a group meditation, you meditate by yourself without worrying about other meditators.

However, group meditation also has its own benefits. When you are in a group you receive silent group support. When you feel depressed or disheartened or disappointed you can notice others meditating. When you see them, you feel encouraged. You may think: "If they can do it, I can, too. Let me try." Also, in group meditation there are times for Dhamma discussion and you can benefit from that.

In a short-term retreat, you hardly settle down and get used to the new way of looking at yourself before the retreat is over. Moreover, as we have mentioned earlier, your mind is fully preoccupied with the pain and discomfort you are going through during the whole period of a short retreat. This does not permit you to pay any attention to the changes taking place all the time.

The benefits of a longer retreat are

Continued on page 11

The benefits of...

Continued from page 10

many. You can see the changes in the aggregates taking place every moment. In long-term retreats, you have plenty of time to get over those difficulties. Noticing changes in your body and mind is a very good way to learn to overcome your hatred which keeps nagging you all the time. As long as anger troubles you, you cannot meditate properly.

Secondly, you can see clearly the connection between your intense greed

and continuous suffering. Third, you can very succinctly notice the total phenomenon of your life operating without anything permanent in it, just like an ever-running machine. You realise there is nothing you can do to stop the process of growing, but to accept it cheerfully. This is where you will achieve real relaxation, real joy and real happiness, which can be equated with eternal bliss. This is where you see that all the aggregates are inseparably functioning together.

This acceptance of yourself is the beginning of an entirely new life.

This is where you are firmly rooted in your practice. Prior to this experience you would go from retreat to retreat, looking for a better teacher or a better meditation system. Now you realise you have found it within yourself. You don't need to go anywhere, seeking another new teacher. Prior to this you would have been pretending to know meditation, possibly even teaching meditation, without knowing what you yourself were doing. Now you realise that this entire rat race is simply a waste of your time and energy.

HOW TO REMOVE GRUDGES

There are five ways of getting rid of a grudge, by means of which one can remove all grudges that have arisen within him. What five?

If a grudge arises towards any person, then one should cultivate loving-kindness towards him... or compassion ... or equanimity. In that way one can remove the grudge towards that person.

Or one should pay no attention to him and give no thought to him. In that way one can remove the grudge.

Or one may apply to that person the fact of ownership of kamma: "This worthy person is the owner of his actions, the heir of his actions; his actions are the womb (from which he has sprung), his relations and his protection. Whatever he does, good or bad, he will be heir to that."

These are the five ways of getting rid of a grudge, by means of which one can remove all grudges that have arisen within him. Anguttara Nikaya (V, 161)

COURSES FOR THE YEAR 2007 - 2008

BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS

**8 meetings starting:
Monday 04 June 2007,
7.00pm**

**The Life of the Buddha
The Four Noble Truths
The Noble Eightfold Path
Kamma
Dependent Origination
Meditation**

Tutor: Richard Jones

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara

Fees : Free (*donations are welcome*)

THE BUDDHA'S LIFE & TEACHINGS

**BIRKBECK COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**10 meetings starting:
Thursday 13 September 2007,
7.00pm**

This is a general introduction to the life of the Buddha and the fundamental principles of his teachings. Informal discussion is welcomed and by the end of the course students should have developed an appreciation of all the essential doctrines and their relevance to the world today.

Tutor: Richard Jones

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara
Fees (University Fee): £15.00

How to join: Enrol at the class on first day of attendance.

SELECTED SERMONS OF THE BUDDHA

**BIRKBECK COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**10 meetings starting:
Thursday 10 January 2008,
7.00pm**

The course examines some of the Buddha's most important discourses, addressing the same worldly issues which are just as important today as they were 2,500 years ago. By going direct to the primary sources, the student is given the opportunity to experience the style of the Buddha's own words.

Tutor: Richard Jones

Venue: London Buddhist Vihara
Fees (University Fee): £15.00

How to join: Enrol at the class on

AN

A - Z

OF BUDDHISM

INDRIYA

Controlling factors or faculties, a name given in the Buddhist texts to twenty-two (22) psychological and corporeal phenomena which perform particular functions in the mundane and supra-mundane life of individuals.

These phenomena are called faculties because they exercise a dominating, governing or controlling influence over the mental factors, associated with them, and over simultaneously-arising corporeal phenomena.

The twenty-two faculties may be classified, on the basis of their nature, into five groups: namely, (1) perceptual; (2) physical; (3) sensational; (4) spiritual; and (5) supra-mundane.

(1) The six sense-faculties, namely that of the eye (cakkhu), ear (sota), nose (ghana), tongue (jivha), body (kaya) and mind (mano), which constitute the so-called personality (attabhava).

(2) Three material qualities: femininity (itthindriya), masculinity (purisindriya) and vitality (jivindriya); the first two material qualities designated as bhavarupa determine the sex of the individual whereas the third gives life to it.

(3) The five kinds of sensations, namely, bodily pleasure (sukha), bodily pain (dukkha), gladness (somanassa), sadness (domanassa) and neutral sensations (upekkha) explain the different reactions of the personality to external stimuli. Thus these three groups, consisting of fourteen indriya faculties may be considered as sentient existence (samsara).

(4) The five spiritual faculties namely, faith (saddha) energy (virya), mindfulness (sati), concentration (samadhi) and wisdom (panna) constitute attributes of the path leading to release from sentient existence, emancipation. These faculties are therefore described as ethical or spiritual faculties.

BACK TO BASICS

VIRTUE (SILA)

Goodness is the best thing in the world;
The man of knowledge is indeed supreme.
Amongst deities and human beings,
From good and knowledge springs all victory. (Therigatha)

A noble disciple refrains from destroying living beings, from theft, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies, and from drink. This is called the treasure of virtue. (Anguttara Nikaya)

Virtue provides a person with strength to realise the noble path leading to the extinction of ill. Vice is a swamp; he who is in it, sinks. The factors of enlightenment cannot be developed by one who is involved in vice. As the earth for those who live on it, so is virtue for the yogi; he has to be supported by virtue. Essentially virtue is restraint, non-distraction is concentration, and penetration is wisdom.

If a person does not think, speak, or act in a way harmful to his own and other's welfare, he restrains his mind from ruining itself. One who examines his own thoughts, feelings, perceptions and volitions will find the natural, untrained mind inclined to do harmful things. What the virtuous person does is to gather strength for not letting the mind master him and for mastering the mind.

Virtue is necessary not only for reaching the highest happiness, Nibbana - the extinction of ill, but for living untroubled in the world too. A virtuous man gathers a great mass of wealth through diligence, his good

reputation spreads, he enters an assembly confidently, he meets his end mindfully, and is at death reborn in a happy existence, says the Buddha.

A virtuous life is a life full of excellence as it removes the corruptions of hate. Without virtue man is not different from an animal. Without a strong and pure character man decays and becomes useless to himself and others. Greatness in the dispensation of the Buddha is established in compassion through renunciation of the destruction of living beings, in honesty through renunciation of theft, in chastity through renunciation of sexual misconduct, in truthfulness through renunciation of false speech, and in sobriety through renunciation of indulgence in strong drink and mind-confusing drugs.

The virtuous man does not act hurriedly; he is patient in all circumstances, he acts only after careful thought; he acts not as a slave but as a master at all times and everywhere. Having built for himself a strong citadel of noble qualities he lives where he can never be taken by Mara. Through guarding their sense faculties, the virtuous preserve their energies, and use them for proper and useful action.

Virtue cannot thrive in minds which are fanatical, violent, avaricious, dogmatic, and inconsiderate of others' well-being. In fact one of the reasons for a man's becoming virtuous is to give fearlessness to others through kindly, thoughtful, self-denying activities. The fragrance of the most sweet-smelling flowers does not travel against the wind, but the influence of a virtuous life pervades all space, and the memory of such a man continues to sweeten the world for a long time.

(5) The last group consisting of three faculties, namely, the assurance 'I shall know what I did not yet know' (anannatam nassamitindriya), the faculty of highest knowledge (annindriya) and the faculty of him whose knowledge is made perfect (annatavindriya) is the fruit of the path resulting from the development of the five spiritual faculties listed above in the fourth group.

THE MOST VEN. DR. K. SRI DHAMMANANDA, Primate of Malaysia and Singapore, 1919-2006

The Most Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayake passed away on 31 August 2006 aged 87 and the funeral took place in Kuala Lumpur. He was an example of the highest leadership and an outstanding personality in the Buddhist world.

He was born on 18 March 1919 in Kirinda Villegge in Matara in Southern Sri Lanka, the eldest of the family, with two brothers and three sisters. His original name was Martin because under the British colonial period it was a tradition to give an English name to the child. His uncle was the local monk in the area, while his mother was a devout Buddhist, so the little Martin's mind slowly turned towards monkhood. He was ordained as a Samanera (novice) monk at the age of 12 and was given the name "Dhammananda" meaning "one who experiences happiness through Dharma". He took higher ordination in 1940.

After doing his post-graduate studies in India he spent 4 years there spread-

ing the dhamma. In 1952, from about 400 monks, he was selected to go to Malaya (Malaysia) to administer to the religious needs of the Sinhalese Buddhists in the country. Because he was Western-educated, he was a target for Christianisation by English missionaries from his youth. In Malaysia he started the resistance to this pressure which eventually matured into setting up the now world-renowned Buddhist Missionary Society. In more than forty-two years as incumbent of the Buddhist Maha Vihara, Ven. Dhammananda brought the Buddha word to countless numbers of devotees all over the world.

Besides his talks, Venerable Dhammananda has reached an even wider audience through his publications which range from the "Dhammapada" to little five-page pamphlets. He reached all levels of readers from erudite scholar monks to young school children. His whole approach to the exposition of the Dhamma was governed by his deep concern for giving the ancient teachings a contemporary relevance, to show that the Buddha's

message is timeless and has meaning that cuts across the boundaries of time, space, race, culture and even religious beliefs.

He was a person who possessed extraordinary qualities: open-minded, upright, straightforward and retaining the simplicity of a good Buddhist monk despite his high profile. He was exactly the right person to deal with the challenges that faced Buddhism during his lifetime.

He was equally at home addressing great intellectuals, ordinary lay people, or youngsters and children. Whatever the audience, his attraction to them was most effective and he could keep them spellbound. What he had to communicate varied over the years but the content always blended philosophy and science. Even a child could grasp what he said because his method of speaking was very simple and humorous. His service to mankind was exemplary and unrivalled.

VEN DR. PUHULWELLE VIPASSI NAYAKA THERA Primate of South America, 1937-2006

With sadness we record the passing away of Ven. Dr. Puhulwelle Vipassi on 26th October 2006 at Birmingham General Hospital. He was aged 69 and had suffered from a brief illness. Venerable Vipassi was the first Buddhist monk resident on the African continent in the 1980s and stayed for about two years at the Dar es Salaam Buddhist temple in Tanzania, before he set forth to serve the first Theravada Buddhist temple in South America in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was

the Abbot of the Monastery of the Buddhist Society of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. He was also a popular lecturer and writer of several books in Sinhala, English and Portuguese. He dedicated his life to the propagation of the Buddha Dhamma in different parts of the world. As a result of his outstanding services to the Buddhists of Brazil, the Supreme Sangha Sabha of Malmattu Maha Viharaya in Kandy conferred on him the title of Chief Buddhist Primate of South America. Whenever he visited Eng-

land he spent most of his time at the London Buddhist Vihara, where he was a well-known and much-respected figure. While attending 2nd Anniversary of the Birmingham Maha Vihara at the invitation of Ven. Dr. Kassapa, Head of the Vihara, Ven. Vipassi fell ill and was admitted to hospital. After a few days he passed away peacefully. Under the guidance of Ven. Dr. Kassapa, the funeral ceremony was held at the Birmingham Crematorium amongst a large gathering of monks and lay devotees.



May They Attain Nibbana!

VIHARA EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES 2006

January

12 Ven. Bandula attended a meeting with regard to misuse of the Buddha statue organised by the Sri Lanka High Commission.

23 Ven. Bandula attended a reception to meet Maj Bharat Keshar Simha, President of the World Hindu Federation at the Royal Nepal Embassy.

24 Ven. Bandula attended a reception for the launch of the Christian Muslim Forum at Lambeth Palace.

26 Ven. Bandula attended a DTI Religion and Belief Consultative seminar at The Conference Centre, DTI.

26 Ven. Bandula attended Holocaust Memorial Day at Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford organised by the London Borough of Hounslow.

27 Ven. Bandula attended Holocaust Memorial Tree-planting ceremony at Ealing Town Hall, organised by the London Borough of Ealing.

February

2 Ven. Bandula attended the executive committee meeting of the Interfaith Network UK at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

4 Ven. Bandula participated in the 58th Sri Lankan Independence Day celebrations at the Sri Lanka High Commission.

16 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mr. Wijeratna Wanniarachchige.

16 Ven. Bandula attended a second meeting with regard to misuse of the Buddha statue organised by the Sri Lanka High Commission.

19 Ven. Bandula gave a Dhamma talk at the Samadhi Meditation centre, Edmonton to mark the 2nd anniversary of the Centre.

20 Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey.

28 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mrs. Lynne Sohan at West London Crematorium.

March

10 Ven. Monks attended the funeral service of Mrs. Ellen Sepala at Slough Crematorium.

11 Ven. Monks attended the funeral service of Mr. Morawaka at New Southgate Crematorium.

14 Ven. Bandula attended the meeting of Hounslow Friends of Faith at Jamia Mosque and Islamic Centre in Hounslow.

21 Ven. Bandula attended a reception for the Baha'i New Year on the terrace of the House of Commons.

24 Ven. Bandula conducted the funeral service for Mr. Patrick Charles Trevor at West London Crematorium.

26 Ven. Monks attended the funeral service of Mr. H. Weerasekera at Rayners Park Crematorium.

29 Ven. Bandula gave a talk on Buddhism at St. Mary's Church, London, SW11.

April

9 Ven. Bandula participated in Sinhala New Year Celebrations organised by OBA Ananda College in the UK.

May

10 Ven. Bandula attended the Florence Nightingale Commemoration Service at Westminster Abbey.

11 Ven. Bandula attended the executive committee meeting of the Interfaith Network at the London School of Economics.

18 Ven. Bandula gave a talk to a group of children from Orchard House School.

21 Ven. Bandula gave a talk on OM day at Hamersmith Town Hall.

25 Ven. Monks attended the funeral of Mrs. Ranasinghe at Putney Vale Crematorium.

June

1 Ven. Bandula attended a Faith Consultative Forum at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

13 Ven. Bandula attended the service for 350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of the Jews in the British Isles, at the Synagogue, Bevis Marks.

15 Ven. Bandula attended a service of thanksgiving to mark the 80th Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen at St. Paul's Cathedral.

17 Ven. Bandula attended the anniversary celebrations of the Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park.

18 The peace walk of the Hounslow Friends of Faith visited the London Buddhist Vihara.

27 Ven. Bandula attended an Inter Faith Reception at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Durbar Court.

July

3 Ven. Bandula & Ven. Pamaratana attended the AGM of the Inter Faith Network UK at Ironmongers Hall, London, EC2Y.

5 Ven. Bandula attended the observance to promote greater understanding between the different faiths in Greater London, marking the appointment of Dr. Khalid Hammeed CBE as High Sheriff of Greater London at St. Margaret's Church.

15 Ven. Seelawimala and Ven. Soratha attended the paritta chanting at Sri Lanka High Commission to mark 2550th Buddha Jayanti.

August

11 & 12 Richard Jones attended an International Buddhist Conference in Kandy on "The Buddhist Way for a Better World" to mark the 2250th Buddha Jayanti.

29 Ven. Monks attended the funeral service of Mr. Verman Aluvihare.

September

5 Monthly Dhamma talk by Professor Dhammavithari, Narada Centre, Colombo on "The happiness of the journey and the bliss of terminating it".

18 Ven. Bandula attended the Inter Faith Network Executive Committee Meeting at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

20 Ven. Bandula attended a national service of remembrance for the UK victims of the Sharm El-sheikh, Kusadasi and Doha bombings at Southwark Cathedral.

21 Ven. Seelawimala attended the International Peace Day inter-faith service at the Sri Lanka High Commission.

21 Ven. Seelawimala attended an inter-faith discussion on the International Peace Day ceremony at Pee-do House, Hackney.

29 Ven. Bandula attended the One World Week celebration at Lampton School, Hounslow, organised by the Hounslow Friends of Faith.

October

6 Monthly Dhamma talk by Ven. Madawela Punnaji, California, on "Meditation for lay life".

8 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina ceremony at Thames Buddhist Vihara.

10 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of students from St. Mary's College, Twickenham.

12 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of students from the Strand on the Green Junior School.

13 Ven. Seelawimala gave talk at Muslim College, Ealing.

15 Ven. Bandula and Ven. Wimalajothi attended the Kathina ceremony at Letchworth Buddhist Vihara.

15 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina ceremony at Lumbini Vihara, East Ham.

16 Richard Jones gave a talk to members of Imperial College Buddhist Society.

23 Richard Jones gave a talk to members of Imperial College Buddhist Society and London University Buddhist Society.

November

1 Ven. Monks attended the funeral of Ven. Dr. Puhulwelle Vipassi Nayaka Thera at Birmingham Maha Vihara.

4 Monthly Dhamma talk by Dr. Arosha Bandara, lecturer Open University, on "Contemplation on the Dhamma".

Continued on page 15

BOOK REVIEW

THE FIRST AND BEST BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

Sutta Nipata Selections and Inspired Essays

by *Susunaga Weerapperuma*

The first half of this book contains essays covering a wide variety of topics ranging from short accounts of the lives of Ven. Ananda and Kisagotami, to wise advice on coping with the ageing process, and answering a Chinese lady's questions about meditation. The second half of the book features translations by the author of selected texts from the Sutta Nipata. In each case he includes a commentary in which he outlines the relevance of the text to contemporary issues.

The 35 chapters cover so many different subjects that there will surely be something of interest to everyone. The author shows a deep understanding of the Buddha's teachings and how to apply them in our daily life. His style is clear and straightforward, which is a pleasure to read.

There are a couple of criticisms. In his essay, "Why this lack of loving-kindness?", in several places he uses the word "affection" to characterise the quality of metta. However, the choice of this word is not without its dangers. In the Visuddhimagga Buddhaghosa clearly says that the downfall of metta is when affection (pema) develops! (At the end of this chapter the list of the 10 fetters consists of only 9 as restlessness (ud-dhacca) is omitted.)

Having used the Hiri Sutta to explain the importance of true friendship, the author closes the essay with the

surprising remark that if we could, "discover for ourselves that state of absolute self-reliance and social independence, wherein at all times the mind is no longer attached to anything or anyone. Why then the need for friends, even true ones?" The answer lies surely in the statement made by the Buddha himself that he was a kalyana mitta to all beings. "By relying upon me as a good friend, Ananda, beings subject to birth are freed from birth; beings subject to ageing are freed from ageing; beings subject to illness are freed from illness; beings subject to death are freed from death; beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair are freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair. By this method, Ananda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship." (Samyutta Nikaya, Part I, Sutta 3)

These are, however, only minor criticisms of a book which contains many valuable comments, particularly as Dr. Weerapperuma has been at pains to show the significance of the Buddha's teachings for the present day.

by *Richard Jones*

This book is available from

*New Age Books,
A-44 Naraina, Phase 1,
New Delhi – 110 028, India.*

Email: nab@vsnl.in

Website: www.newagebooksindia.com

*Price Rs.250.00 (paperback),
Rs.395.00 (cloth).*

Continued from page 14

6 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of students from William Hogarth Primary School.

7 & 14 Ven. Seelawimala gave talks to 2 groups of students from Hounslow Heath Junior School.

12 Ven. Seelawimala attended the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph.

13 Richard Jones gave a talk to members of Cambridge University Buddhist Society.

14 Ven. Seelawimala attended a chaplains' meeting at West Middlesex Hospital.

December

12 Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk to a group of students from Spring Well Junior School, Heston.

30 Ven. Seelawimala attended the funeral of Mr Sunil Munasinghe. First secretary to the High Commission in the UK at Forest Park Crematorium

OBITUARY

With heavy hearts and deep sorrow we announce the passing away of the following devotees:-

MRS. ELLEN SEPALA

Mrs. Ellen Sepala passed away and her cremation was held at Slough Crematorium on 10th March 2006 amongst a large gathering.

She is survived by her six loving children, Jayatissa, Sarath, Prem, Kusum, Indumathi and Wanmala.

MR. PIYASIRI MORAWAKA

Mr. Piyasiri Morawaka passed away on 7th March 2006 and his cremation was held at New Southgate Crematorium on 11th March amidst a large gathering.

He is survived by his loving wife Mavis and three children, Mohan, Sampath and Dushanthi.

MRS. WIMALA AMARASINGHE

Mrs. Wimala Amarasinghe was a good friend of the London Buddhist Vihara. She served as a co-ordinator, dana giver and monthly, standing order contributor to the vihara for long time. She regularly attended Vihara activities. She passed away on 17th March after a brief illness and her cremation was held on 29th March.

She is survived by her loving daughter, Mithra.

DR. HERCULES WEERASEKERA

Dr. Weerasekera was a long-standing supporter of the Vihara. He passed away after a brief illness.

His funeral was held at Rayners Park crematorium on 26th March amongst a large gathering.

He is survived by his loving wife Sumana and eight children, Rajini, Dhammika, Dharshani, Yeshica, Samudra, Manjula, Indama and Thushani.

MRS. SUSAN RANASINGHE

Mrs. Ranasinghe passed away on 20th May 2006 at the age of 95 and her cremation was held at the Putney Vale Crematorium on 25th May 2006 amongst a large gathering.

May they all attain
the bliss of Nibbana!



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Maha Bodhi Society
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SANCHI

Chetiayagiri Vihara
Maha Bodhi Society
Sanchi, Bhopal - MP

BHUBANESHWAR

Buddha Vihara,
Plot 4 Unit 9
Bhubaneswar, Orissa

NOWGARH (Lumbini)

Maha Bodhi Society
Srinivasa Ashram,
Lumbini Road
Nowgarh

LUCKNOW

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Vihara
Risaldar Park,
Lucknow-1, U. P.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sundays	2.00-3.00pm 3.00-4.15pm 6.00-7.00pm	Children's Sinhala Classes Children's Dhamma Classes Sermon and Pirith chanting
Mondays	7.00-9.00pm	Introduction to Buddhism (Eight-week course, repeated through the year)
Tuesdays	7.00-9.00pm	Advanced Buddhist Doctrine Class
Wednesdays	7.00-8.30pm	Meditation: Instruction & Practice
Thursdays	7.00-9.00pm	Theravada Buddhism London University, Faculty of Continuing Education
Saturdays	1.30-8.00pm	Monthly meditation retreat

2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 01 **Rahula Dhamma Day**

May 06 **VESAK - Buddha Day**

May 13 Blood donation Session

June 24 **POSON**

July 29 **ESALA - Dhamma Day**

Sept. 16 **FOUNDER'S DAY**

Nov. 04 **KATHINA**

Dec. 02 **SANGHAMITTA DAY**

○ 2007 (FULL MOON) POYA DAYS

January ○ 03

February ○ 01

March ○ 03

April ○ 02

May ○ 01

May ○ 31

June ○ 30

July ○ 29

August ○ 28

September ○ 26

October ○ 25

November ○ 24

December ○ 23

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A contribution was also made by Mrs. Kamala Perera and family to remember their departed relatives.

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PUNYANUMODANA

Ven. B. Seelawimala, Acting Head of the Vihara, wishes to express his sincere gratitude to all Co-ordinators and supporters for their help in making the Vihara's wide programme of activities a success.

May you be well, happy and attain Nibbana.

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