



SAMĀDHI

JOURNAL OF THE LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA
THE FIRST AND THE FOREMOST BUDDHIST VIHARA OF THE WESTERN WORLD
ESTABLISHED IN 1926 BY THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

ISSUE No. 37

JANUARY 2011

B.E. 2554

ISSN 1368-1516

"ARISING OF SAMBUDDHA JAYANTHI"

Ven. B. Seelawimala Nayaka Thera
Head of the London Buddhist Vihara

This 2011 is a very important year in the Buddhist calendar. According to the chronology this year is equal to 2600 year of the Buddha's enlightenment. Let's see how we have to reflect this year.

Vesak, or Buddha Day, is celebrated all over the world as the most important event in the Buddhist calendar, marking the birth, enlightenment, and passing away of the Buddha. It falls in the lunar month of Vesak, which is equivalent to June in the Western calendar. Next year's event will be particularly special because it marks the 2600th anniversary of the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment.

Siddhartha renounced the life of luxury which he enjoyed for the first 29 years of his life. He left the palace and we know how hard he had to work for the next six years as he struggled to clear his mind of all negative qualities. He went to two of the leading spiritual masters of the day in order to learn whatever they had to teach. Then he practised a very strict form of asceticism in the mistaken belief that it would lead him to his goal. However, it was not until he adopted a more moderate approach, which he called the Middle Way, that he was able to make real progress and attain the Enlightened

state. Of course, this momentous attainment was not the result of a mere 6 years of effort, hard though that was. It was the result of tireless effort throughout countless lifetimes, during which he slowly but surely perfected ten special qualities which we call "parami". This event is unique in our era. He became a "Samma-Sambuddha", a self-enlightened Buddha. He had no teacher, he had to work out the right path for himself. By following the teaching which he gave, others have also attained the state of enlightenment, but none of their success would have been possible without the very special attainments of the Buddha himself. His attainment of Enlightenment has had profoundly beneficial effects all over the world. For many centuries the Buddha's dhamma became known in various Far Eastern countries. However, in the past hundred years or so the dhamma has become well established in many other countries all over the world. Countless numbers of people have been able to lead happier lives as a result of hearing and practising this teaching.

The Buddha stressed the importance of gratitude as a quality which we should all develop. We have many opportunities to practise this in our daily lives as we reflect on the kindness of other people who provide us

with the multitude of things we use (for example, our food, our clothes, our place to live). True, these things have not been given to us free of charge. Nevertheless many people have undertaken many tasks in order to produce these things, and we should feel grateful to them. If we feel gratitude to others for the provision of our material needs, how much more grateful should we feel for the gift of a teaching which can make a real difference to the way we live our lives. We have been shown a path which will lead ultimately to the complete eradication of all forms of suffering and release from conditioned existence.

So the forthcoming Sambuddha-Jayanti 2011 will be an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the Buddha's enlightenment, to give thanks for it, and to reflect on what we can do as his heirs, to preserve and spread this precious dhamma so that others can also benefit in the same way that we have done.

We are planning to hold a special celebration at Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London W6 on Sunday 29th May 2011 beginning at 2pm. You are all invited to participate in this very important event.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Maras
- Uniqueness of Buddhism
- Buddhist Attitude to Present Day Problems
- From Impermanence to Liberation
- Programmes and activities
- Back to Basics
- A-Z of Buddhism
- Obituaries
- Courses for the Year 2010

THE MĀRAS

by Venerable Dedunupitiye Upananda,
Ehipassiko Buddhist Centre, Canada

The concept of Māra occupies an important place in Buddhism. People seem to be more interested in Māra the so-called Deity, even though we often hear about all the five Māras, Khandha Māra, Kilesa Māra, Abhisankhara Māra, Maccu Māra, and Devaputta Māra.

In Buddhist spiritual practice, we are not concerned with the EXTERNAL MĀRA, the Deity, but the rest of the four INTERNAL MĀRAS. To a Buddhist enthusiastic about awakening, the so-called external Māra is of no concern.

Khandha (Sanskrit: Skandha) is our self, made of a psycho-physical combination, or simply the Mind/Mentality (Pali: Nama), and Body Corporeality (Pali: Rupa). The mind is again made of four components/abilities; vedana (feeling), sanna (perception), sankhāra (karma-creating response to sensory experience), vinnāna (consciousness). Our entire self is then Māra-created. Fascinatingly, the power to subdue this Māra nature, which is the “Buddha-potential,” is within our self.

Kilesa (Sanskrit: Klesha) are the defilements/mental impurities that impede our liberation. We continue to nourish this Māra with the best available ‘food,’ viz. evil thoughts, evil bodily actions, and evil speech. Addiction to fast food, computer games, drugs, child pornography, etc. is a smart agent of this Māra. One so addicted tends to detract from one’s normal behavior.

Abhisankhāra (Sanskrit: Abhisankhara) is the karmic energy accumulated and deposited within the sub-

liminal layer of our consciousness, or ‘psycho-microchip’ or “mental continuum” (Pali: Bhavanga-citta). As the karmic energy coexists with the memories within the psycho-microchip, we easily get dogmatized even in spirituality, thereby giving this Māra an ample chance to manipulate us. Unmindful and careless, we can easily have this Māra as our Creator, for karma is our only Creator strictly in a Buddhist sense. Mindfulness of the reality of here and now is the weapon to fight off this Māra. We tend to forget the karmic data and memories deposited in the mental continuum, whereas this Māra never does.

Maccu (Sanskrit: Mrtyu) is death which we die one day. Even though death is part of life, people in general have a dormant fear of death, therefore, remaining frightened by death. We nurture this Māra, too. A momentous awakening into the ‘khanika marana,’ or “death of the moment” that corresponds to the perpetual change of mind and body, is the way to deal with this Māra. Inability or hesitation to accept the reality of aging and obsession with and worry about the reality of youth long gone paves the way for this Māra to attack us.

Devaputta (Sanskrit: Devaputra) is the so-called external Māra believed to reign the sixth/highest heaven of pleasure, the Paranimita-Vasavatti. As he lives on the highest plain of sensual pleasure, he is also the Deity of Celestial Pleasure. It is mentioned that he came down with his retinue and struggled to block Siddhartha’s Awakening. As far as his three daughters, Tanhā (Desire), Aversion

(Arati), Passion (Raga), which are mental tendencies, are concerned, even the Deity Māra could be taken metaphorically. On the other hand, the existence of a Māra as such is possible, for there are living beings, viz. spirits, deities, angels wishing that humans be lustful and evil, so that the former feeds on the negative energy of the latter. Kilesa Māra is the internal agent of external Devaputta Māra. As one fights off the internal one, the external one has no chance to attack one. Siddhartha’s case is the best example. Those who do not believe the external one, can just deal with the internal agent.

As opposed to the internal Māras, the external Māra is the world we are entangled with. To us the world is whatever we see in our average perspective (Pali: dassana).

The Buddha, born out of the Māra-oriented world/universe, remains in the world yet untouched by the Māra. People are governed by the Māras, as long as they remain entrapped in illusion. The entire Māra force is an illusion we create through our wrong dassana, or “perspective.”

Yatha-bhuta-nana-dassana, or Perspective of As-It-Is-Ness, is our inborn power to defeat the Māras. Buddha calls it Awakening.

And Siddhartha did that, so that he became the Buddha, the Awakened One. As he ‘woke up,’ his ‘dream,’/‘illusion’ due to his clinging to the world of the Māra was gone.

Māra is here and now. So is the Buddha.

UNIQUENESS OF BUDDHISM

by Dr. Ananda W P Guruge, USA

Buddhism, as a religion, is unique in many ways. It was the earliest religion of Indian origin to attain the status of a world religion. If the racial and cultural complexity of its adherents right down the ages and their geographical distribution are taken in to consideration, it could claim to be the only Indian religion to become a World Religion, in the strict sense of the word.

It began by eschewing a number of elements, which would, ordinarily, appear indispensable for the founding of a viable religious tradition, such as godhead, a theory of creation, and the dependence on divine authority.

Its founder appealed to the judicious and critical exercise of human intelligence. He adopted a ruthless (almost clinical) method of analysing the meaning and reality of life and the universe, in a manner which would satisfy modern exponents of psychology and other behavioural sciences; but yet built, on his assessment, a way of life that offered solace and confidence to beleaguered humanity.

Missionary in character and monastic in organisation, it provided for a perpetually self-renewing body of religious and cultural leadership which, besides ensuring its spread into every nook and cranny of Asia, and its continuity for over twenty-five centuries developed and propagated a flourishing culture represented by some of man's greatest creation in art, architecture, literature and even music.

It combined, in equal proportions, a flexibility which enabled it to evolve appropriately to meet the demands of different times and climes, and a rigidity that guarantees its separate existence with a solid core of uncompromising doctrine, despite the efforts of stronger traditions to absorb it.

But it was tolerant enough to allow every form of man's spiritual and supernatural experience and belief to survive under its benign protection.

The story of evolution of this great religion is an inspiring testimony to man and his infinite capacity to achieve the utmost in thought, knowledge and creativity.

Its founder, the Buddha, was a man – one who did not claim to be anyone other than a man. He differed from others only in that he was “an enlightened man”, which incidentally, is the literal translation of his designation- the Buddha, derived from the Sanskrit root Bodh- to understand, awaken. But the process of enlightenment was not only something that he, as a man, discovered without any supernatural or divine revelation or help but also something within reach of every man. Nothing but determination, perseverance and steadfast adherence to virtue and knowledge was required to reach the zenith of perfection which the Buddha saw as feasible for man. The Buddha accepted the superiority of man. It was not a mere rhetorical statement that he made when he asserted, ‘One is one's own master’. He believed in the indomitable individuality of man and, on more than one occasion, placed his confidence in the critical acumen of the individual. His final appeal was the intellectual adequacy of man. Before him he placed his own doctrine for judgement.

When shorn of all supernatural and faith evoking accretions which inevitably surround the lives of great religious teachers, the life the Buddha is a charming story of a prince. Born to wealth and comfort, he forsakes everything in his quest for a solution to the miseries of humanity. There is no doubt about his historicity, Archaeological and literary discoveries made during the last two centuries, confirm a tradition which has been kept alive by successive

generations of devoted disciples in different parts of Asia. The Buddha laid the foundation for a spiritual and cultural movement which influenced the lives and thoughts of millions of people for over two thousand five hundred years. It has found expression in a voluminous literature in hundreds of languages, in a vast collection of works of art and in the lives of devotion of successive generations of monks and recluses who dedicated themselves to the promotion, propagation and preservation of the word the Buddha preached and the life he advocated.

No single teacher who stood before men, as a man, without claiming divine assistance, inspiration or guidance and who preached a doctrine of rationalism has evoked the response of mankind to the degree the Buddha had. Without the aid of military territorial expansion or commercial patronage, and in spite of a rare spirit of tolerance and a unique absence of centralised organisation, the Buddhist Order has spread to every corner of Asia and is now making its presence felt in the Western world as well.

Though he stood before the people as a teacher, he avoided dogmatism. He neither claimed infallibility nor demanded intellectual surrender. As a philosopher, he separated the essentials from superfluous academic issues.

Equally refreshing was the Buddha's rejection of the supernatural and the miraculous. The most effective miracle he believed in, was the power of the word to carry conviction to the listener.

He deliberately acted contrary to the prevailing social order. Not only did he denounce cast, which decreed man to be high or low according to birth, but showed that he meant what he said by making a barber of hum-

Continued on page 4

BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TO PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS

by Prof. Lilly De Silva, University of Peradeniya

Life in the modern age has become particularly trying and problematic. Though it remains a fact that our standard of living has generally improved, mankind still suffers immensely under the tensions of present day living. The physical condition of man has been reduced to such an unprecedented extent that he succumbs to untimely death by killer diseases such as cancer, heart failure and diabetes. Mentally, he is so tense that he has forgotten that art of relaxing, and he cannot even enjoy sound sleep without the aid of tranquilisers. Interpersonal relations have become so brittle, so vulnerable that the divorce rate has rocketed, letting loose a whole series of other social problems. Life, itself, has become a problematic burden. Finding a solution to make life more tolerable, more enjoyable, has become an urgent necessity.

As the word of the Buddha is of everlasting value and universal applicability and as the Buddha not only preached to monks and nuns but also to the public as well, it is useful to find a teaching of the Buddha which is relevant to our present-day problems. In the *Pattakammavagga* of the *Anguttara Nikaya* (A ii 69) the Buddha preached a sutta to Anathapindika on the fourfold pleasures of a layman. It is my considered opinion

that this sutta offers timely insight to meet the demands of the present day problems. The four types of pleasures listed here are *atthisukha*, the pleasure of having material wealth; *bhogasukha*, the pleasure of enjoying material wealth; *ananasukha*, the pleasure of being debtless; and *anavajjhasukha*, the pleasure of being blameless. Let us take these for discussion one by one and see how these sources of pleasure could be harnessed for leading a happy life in the contemporary context.

Atthisukha – Man should not only have a righteous means of living avoiding blameworthy trades such as dealing in meat, intoxicants, poison, slavery and fire-arms, he should also encourage in himself a wholesome attitude towards his righteous occupation. Say, for instance, a doctor hopes for a ‘flu epidemic as an opportunity to make a great deal of money, or if a trader hopes for a natural disaster to send food prices up, the money earned by such unprincipled individuals cannot be seen as “righteous” money. The intentions of those earning the money are impure and selfish. We should never deceive or exploit others in carrying out our occupation. We should earn our livings by working tirelessly to the benefit of all people’ Wealth created in this way is seen as righteous wealth

– *dhammika...dhammaladdha*. In addition, we might have great wealth but if we do not experience a sense of contentment with what we have, we cannot really enjoy *atthisukha* or the pleasure of having. The amassing of selfish wealth has become one of the most wide-spread maladies we see in contemporary society. It has become not a source of happiness but a source of anxiety.

Bhogasukha – Wealth has only instrumental value and the proper enjoyment of wealth is an art which is well worth carefully cultivating. Buddhism deplores both extravagance and the miserly accumulation of wealth. We must maintain a healthy balanced standard by living according to our means. If, in the enjoyment of wealth, we over-indulge in sense pleasures, we are bound to run into health hazards in a very short time. Say for instance, we over-indulge in food, just because we can afford it, we are soon overcome by physical disease. We are merely cutting off our noses to spite our faces! Moderation in food is a virtue praised in Buddhism and it is a health-promoting habit. It is paradoxical that man who actually loves himself most, should act as his own worst enemy. It is medically established that smoking causes the high-

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 3

ble origin take a place of precedence over his nearest relatives.

Even at the height of glory, he was humble, and rejected the praise offered by even his close associates. When his chief disciple Sariputta tells him, “You, Sir, are the greatest Buddha,” his response is one of severe admonition; “Do not resort to vain flattery. How can you compare me with other Buddhas when you know neither those who had been nor those who are yet to come?”

Before his death, he had founded in the Sangha (the community of monks) an ideal society, where (i) caste or class had no meaning (ii) properties were owned jointly, (iii) decisions were made democratically by common consent and compromise, and (iv) power and authority rested in the impersonal rules of discipline promulgated by the Buddha. He thus established a viable religious tradition with a strong philosophical base.

He appointed no successor: nor did he think in terms of a well defined administrative set-up. But the Sangha was provided with a strong and comprehensive constitution. In a final farewell to his disciples he stressed that he had retained in his hands no secret or esoteric doctrine and that all he knew had been taught to his disciples. He admonished them: “Strive diligently, for all phenomena are transient.”

Continued from page 4

est percentage of lung cancer, and that drinking alcohol causes irreparable damage to the brain and liver. If only man pauses to ponder over his own welfare and if only he entertains at least some degree of metta towards himself, he will not get into the clutches of these vicious habits. Wealthy men often end up in the pitiful plight of the ant fallen in the pot of honey. Such men did not know the art of enjoying bhogasukha. If we love ourselves we have to treat our bodies with proper care without taxing it with over-indulgence and deprivation. Another aspect of the joy of wealth is the art of sharing without being an Adinnapubbaka, a never-giver. If we learn to share our riches with the less fortunate, we will have the noble experience of being happy at the joy of another. At the same time we will earn the love and goodwill of others, instead of becoming the target of jealousy and intrigue.

Ananasukha – The pleasure of being debtless is the third quality discussed in our sutta. If one can be 100% debt-free, one is indeed a very fortunate person. To be really debtless in society we have to discharge our obligations scrupulously. As wage earners, we have to discharge the duties for which we are paid, otherwise we can be indebted to the wage we get. As a parent we have to fulfil we have obligations to our children. In our society, children are taught to worship and look after their parents, and it is well to bear in mind that parents too have to qualify themselves for the honour they receive by being dutiful parents. Fathers who neglect their families as a result of their addiction to vices such as drinking and gambling fall far too short of the ideal of debtlessness. We can only have the satisfaction of being debtless if we have fulfilled our obligations in all our social roles.

Anavajjasukha – the satisfaction of leading a blameless life is the highest form of satisfaction that a layman can have. Every civilised society has a code of ethics. According to Buddhism, the code of ethics regulating the life of its adherents is the Pan-

casila, the 5 precepts. If we practise these virtues, we can have the satisfaction of leading a righteous life to a great extent. Refraining from doing to others what one does not like others doing to you is the basic principle underlying these virtues. Buddhism speaks of hiri and ottappa, the sense of shame and the fear to do wrong as deva dhamma or celestial qualities. These are the basic qualities which separate humanity from the animal kingdom. Unlike animals, we have consciences which make us squeamish about doing wrong. Buddhism recognises blameless mental activity as well. Mental activities which spring from greed, hatred and delusion are unwholesome and blameworthy.

Let us see how such mental behaviour is a source of unhappiness. Take for instance the case of a person who is angry. What are the symptoms of anger? Laboured breathing, accelerated heart beat, faster circulation of blood, feeling hot, sweating, trepidation, and restlessness, are the physical manifestations of anger. These are certainly not comfortable physical experiences. Each time the cause of anger is remembered even though the physical manifestation of anger may not be that marked, we feel quite restless and ill at ease. We use expressions such as ‘boiling with anger’, ‘seething with resentment’ to mean getting angry and these sayings are literally expressive of the situation. It is just not possible for anyone to be angry and happy at the same time. An irritable person is truly a very sad person, and what is worse is that he infects others around him too with the same sadness. The cultivation of sublime modes of behaviour such as metta, karuna, mudita, and upekka are truly conducive to happy living. Those who live with such attitudes habitually are pleasant and amicable people who could be happy alone as well as in company.

If we truly understand the significance of the fourfold pleasure elucidated in our sutta and translate them in to action, life will be much more pleasant and happy even in this modern age.

AN A - Z OF BUDDHISM

JIVITINDRIYA

Life, vitality, life-controlling faculty.

Jivitindriya is two-fold – namely, psychic life (*Nama Jivitindriya*) and physical life (*Rupa-Jivitindriya*). Mental states are vitalised by psychic life, while material phenomena are vitalised by physical life.

As lotuses are sustained by water, an infant is sustained by a nurse, so are mental states and material phenomena sustained by *Jivitindriya*. As with everything else, *Jivitindriya* are constantly arising and passing away, but *Rupa-Jivitindriya* lasts longer than *Nama-Jivitindriya*. One *Rupa-Jivitindriya* lasts for seventeen thought moments. Seventeen *Nama-Jivitindras* arise and perish during the brief life of one *Rupa-Jivitindriya*.

There is a certain kind of *Rupa-Jivitindriya* in plant life. But, *Rupa-Jivitindriya* in men and animal is differentiated from that which exists in plants because the former is conditioned by past Kamma. Both *Nama-Jivitindriya* and *Rupa-Jivitindriya* arise at the moment of conception. They simultaneously perish at the moment of decease. Hence death is regarded as the destruction of this *Jivitindriya*. Immediately after, due to the power of Kamma, another *Nama-Jivitindriya* arises in the subsequent birth at the moment of conception. Simultaneous with the arising of the one *Nama-Jivitindriya* there arise three *Rupa-Jivitindriyas* in the case of a human being.

Just as a boatman depends on the boat and the boat depends on the boatman, even so *Jivitindriya* depends on mind and matter, and mind and matter depend on *Jivitindriya*.

VESAK CELEBRATION - 2010



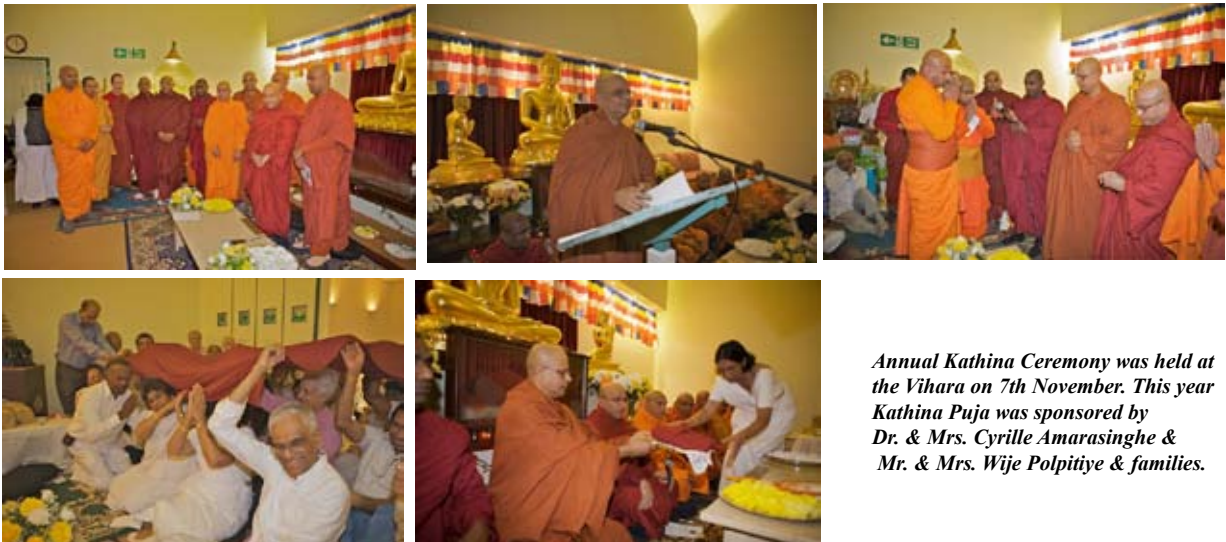
29th and 30th May 2010 Vesak celebration was held at the Vihara. 29th May, Sunday Dhamma School children observed eight precepts and 30th May, the Programme started with hoisting Buddhist flag by HE Justice Nihal Jayasinghe, the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in the United Kingdom and lighting the oil lamp by the representative of the Embassy of Myanmar. Guest speaker was Prof. Chandra Wickramasinghe. Ven. Seelawimala, Ven. Bandula and Ven. K. Ariyaratana gave sermons and Ven. Nagase from Peace Pagoda did a special chanting for Harmony and Peace. At the end parents of the Dhamma School presented a devotional song programme.

A SPECIAL LECTURE BY DR. ANANDA GURUGE

A special lecture on "Buddhism in the West" was delivered by a world renowned Buddhist scholar Dr. Ananda Guruge at the London Buddhist Vihara on 10th August 2010.



KATHINA CELEBRATIONS - 2010



Annual Kathina Ceremony was held at the Vihara on 7th November. This year Kathina Puja was sponsored by Dr. & Mrs. Cyrille Amarasinghe & Mr. & Mrs. Wije Polpitiye & families.

FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS - 2010



To commemorate both the 146th birthday of Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the London Buddhist Vihara, and the 84th anniversary of the London Buddhist Vihara, a special religious programme was held at the Vihara on 18th and 19th September.

This year, the Vihara organised a special commemorative Competition for our students of the Sunday Dhamma School to give them an opportunity to learn about the life of Anagarika Dharmapala and his work for the revival of Buddhism. This popular and successful competition was organised into three sections (Essay writing, Speech making and Powerpoint Presentations) and was open to two groups of young people (Junior and Senior Pupils). Madam Mrs Jayasinghe, wife of the current High Commissioner for Sri Lanka, presented the prizes and certificates to the winners and participants of this competition.

This year Dharmapala memorial lecture was delivered by Dr. Ananda Wickremeratne, Associate Member of the University of Chicago and Lecturer in the Theology Department of Loyola University, Chicago , U.S.A.

A Bodhi Puja was held in the early evening which was followed by Paritta Chanting from 7.30 p.m. till midnight by members of the Sangha from Sri Lankan Buddhist temples in the UK. On the following morning, Dana was offered to the Sangha and the merits were transferred to Anagarika Dharmapala and all those who have helped in the LBV's development over the last eighty four years.

FELICITATION CEREMONY FOR AJAHN SUMEDHO, 20 NOVEMBER 2010



A Felicitation Ceremony for Ajahn Sumedho, Abbot of the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery Hertfordshire, was held at the London Buddhist Vihara on Saturday 20th November. After 40 consecutive years of being Abbot of this popular and busy Buddhist Monastery, Ajahn Sumedho stepped down as Abbot of Amaravati. He is being replaced by Ajahn Amaro from Abhayagiri Buddhist Vihara in California.

The Ceremony was organized by the London Buddhist Vihara coordinating committee at the request of Ven. Bogoda Seelawimala Nayaka Thera. Many Buddhist monks and nuns from various different temples in London together with a large number of lay devotees attended the evening ceremony to pay their respects and offer their good wishes for the future to one of the most important figures in British Buddhism over the last forty years.

FROM IMPERMANENCE TO LIBERATION

by *Bhante Henepola Gunaratna*

Buddha's contemporaries like Heraclitus saw the impermanence of everything and said that one cannot step into the same river twice. We don't really know anything else they may have said about impermanence, nor do we know what they did with their knowledge of impermanence. Mere theoretical knowledge of impermanence does not do anything for us, unless it is used for some purpose. The ancient Greeks seem to have stopped right there, apparently without knowing what to do with this knowledge.

When I was in the Buddhist Vihara in Washington D.C. there was a little baby boy. He was only ten days old. His father brought him to the Vihara very often. This very tiny little baby appeared to be very happy to see me. When he began to crawl he crawled towards me and affectionately stretched his hands towards me to be lifted and be carried. He grew up like my own child. One day, when he was almost ten years old, and I returned to the Vihara from one of my trips, he came to me and wanted to hug me. I told him, "You are big, and you are unhuggable." The boy said: "Bhante, let us face facts. Everything is impermanent. I am grown up and you cannot hug me any more."

Not only philosophers and scientists but also even this little boy knows that everything is impermanent.

Mathematics

Almost twenty-five or thirty years ago a very good friend of mine took a walk with me. He was a very serious meditator. So, whenever he and I were together, we would discuss something related to meditation. During this particular walk I said to him that everything is impermanent. Being a mathematician he asked me, "What about mathematics? Is mathematics impermanent too?"

I was quiet for a while, thinking how

best to answer his question, when he said, "I don't think of mathematics as impermanent."

Ever since then, I have been thinking about it. I always thought he was right. "Yes mathematics is something permanent."

Then one day this thought occurred to me again during my meditation paying attention to impermanence. I saw that impermanence does not exist in isolation by itself. There must be some thing to be impermanent. If there is nothing there is no impermanence. In the absence of anything, impermanence does not make any sense. Then I asked myself "How about mathematics? Can mathematics exist by itself without any object to work with?"

Just as impermanence does not make any sense without any object, mathematics does not make any sense if there are no objects in the entire universe for the mathematics or mathematicians to work with. If there are no beings to make use of the application of mathematics, then all the theories of mathematics don't make any sense.

As long as objects exist, impermanence exists. Similarly, as long as objects exist, mathematics exists. Because the objects are impermanent, the mathematics that uses those impermanent objects is also impermanent. So, from that perspective, mathematics cannot be permanent.

We can all understand impermanence superficially. But deep down in our subconscious mind a sense of permanence is lurking. So we keep patching up our broken teeth, wrinkled dry skin, brittle nails, grey hair, hunched backs, weak eyes, impaired hearing, becoming sick, breaking bones and many other things caused by impermanence in this fragile body. Similarly our moods, our feel-

ings, our thoughts, our perceptions, and our memories all go through many changes in every moment. We take medicines, see mental health specialists, and do many other things, including meditation, to correct our minds. While we are doing all this, impermanence is still going on crushing everything inside our body and mind very systematically. While all the organs, all the cells, nervous system, quality of blood, capacity of oxygen content in the lungs and the bone structure are going through this very rapid and unmistakable change, no matter how much we patch up on the surface and beneath the skin, impermanence is working its course very consistently underground or inside the body and mind. Nothing on earth, no science, no technology, no magic can help to stop this change. It keeps burning everything systematically.

Seeing impermanence is the key that opens our mind to see suffering, and non-self. The moment we understand this very clearly, our mind opens to the fact that things change without leaving a trace behind to trace the path that impermanence has taken. This is called signlessness. This awareness evaporates the desire for anything impermanent. It also evaporates our hatred or resentment from our mind. Then naturally, this clean mind becomes fully aware of not having any immovable mover, which sometimes is called self or soul by some people. This element of Dhamma, this steady intrinsic nature of all, this law of Dhamma is known in Buddhism as emptiness of self. Seeing impermanence with wisdom is the key to nonattachment, cessation and abandonment.

Discovering impermanence the Buddha, independently, without anybody's support, went a few steps further and with his profound wisdom he saw that not only is it impossible

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

for a man to step into the same river twice, but he also saw clearly that the same man cannot step into the same river twice. And yet, even this knowledge doesn't do any service to us.

The Buddha is the only one who saw the connection between impermanence and suffering and the elimination of suffering. He did not try to stop impermanence by attaining enlightenment. He knew that it is an impossible and unattainable goal. So, the Buddha not only saw that everything is impermanent, he also realized that impermanence has a very direct relationship with suffering. It is not impermanence itself that causes suffering, but the clinging to impermanent things that causes suffering, and by not clinging to impermanent things that suffering can finally be brought to an end.

It is not simply because things are impermanent that we suffer, but it is because of our attachment to impermanent things that we suffer. The Buddha points out in Mahāsuññata Sutta that suffering arises from the attachment to impermanent things.

“I do not see even a single kind of form, Ānanda, from the change and alteration of which there would not arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who lusts for it and takes delight in it.” (MN 122)

This passage clearly states that suffering arises from the attachment to form not because the form is impermanent but because we are attached to impermanent form. When we attain full enlightenment we do not suffer. This happens not because we make any impermanent thing permanent. This happens only when we give up our attachment to impermanent things. Impermanent things continue to be impermanent whether we attain enlightenment or not. We don't stop their impermanent nature that exists whether the Buddhas come into existence or not. If impermanence itself causes suffering even after attainment of enlightenment, the enlightened individual would continue to suffer because he or she

has not been able to stop impermanence being impermanent. Suffering can be stopped by not being attached to impermanent things, but it is impossible to make impermanent objects permanent.

The nature of the Dhamma

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established element of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All that is conditioned is impermanent. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and thus understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, classifies and clarifies it: all that is conditioned is impermanent.

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established condition of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All that is conditioned is unsatisfactory. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and thus understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, and clarifies it: all that is conditioned is unsatisfactory.

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established condition of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All dhammas are without self. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, and clarifies it: all dhammas are without self.” (A I 286)

“Seeing thus, impermanence, suffering and selflessness of all conditioned things, one becomes disenchanted with everything. Disenchantment leads to dispassion towards everything. With a dispassionate mind one sees cessation of everything. With this insight or wisdom one lets go of attachment. This is how one becomes insightful into reality. Alternately being dispassionate, he liberates himself from suffering. Being liberated, he knows that he is liberated, has ended birth, has lived the noble life, has done what was to be done, and there is nothing more to be done.

This means attaining full liberation from suffering begins with perfect awareness of impermanence.

Here we must remember that disenchantment does not mean anything negative. It is the positive and mature attitude of someone who is spiritually grown into spiritual adulthood. The Buddha has given a very meaningful simile of children playing with sand castles on beaches. While making castles and playing with them children imagine that they are real castles. After a while, they grow tired of playing with these castles. Then they break them and scatter them here and there. Adults watching them playing with the sand castles are amused, reflecting on the nature of the children's minds. Neither the adults nor children are disgusted or disappointed with the sand castles. They simply let the castles go.

Likewise, the attachment to impermanent objects (feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness) is the cause of suffering. Because things are changing without any prior notice, unsatisfactoriness arises. Since there is nothing to stop or control impermanence, the realization arises that there is no self. Seeing with wisdom this entire process, mindful meditators are disenchanted with all conditioned things.

So the Buddha used the knowledge of impermanence to gain liberation from suffering and attain permanent peace. Other philosophers saw impermanence and yet still stayed in saṃsāra. They did not know what to do with the knowledge of impermanence.

Important Speeches held at the Vihara in 2010

July

“Beyond Self”

Bhante Mahinda, Australia

August

“Buddhism in the West”

Dr. Ananda Guruge, USA

September

“Founder's Day Memorial Lecture”

by Dr. Ananda Wickremaratne, USA

VIHARA ACTIVITIES - 2010

May

15th. Ven. Seelawimala participated in the Buddha Bathing ceremony at Fo Guan Temple together with our Dhamma school children

23rd Ven. Maonks attended the Dana ceremony at Sri Lanka High Commission in connection with Vesak celebrations.

27th. Venerable Monks attended funeral service for Mrs Irine Nanayakkara at New Southgate Crematorium.

29th. Children's Vesak Celebrations at the Vihara

30th. Vesak celebrations at the Vihara

June

1st. Ven. Ariyaratana started advance Dhamma Class

5th. Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk on Vaisakha Purnima Celebration at Action Priory Hall organised by the Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dhamma Society.

6th. Blood Donation day at the Vihara

7th. Buddhism for beginner's class started

15th. Ven. Susara gave a talk to a group of students from Good Shepherd School, Shepherd Bush.

20th. Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk on 'OM Day' at Hammersmith town hall and Dhamma school children also participated.

26th. Ven. Bandula and Ven. Ariyaratana attended the Poson Celebrations at Letchworth Buddhist Vihara.

26th. Ven. Bandula and Ven. Ariyaratana attended the annual chanting ceremony at Jetavana Vihara at Birmingham.

27th. Poson Day Celebrations at the Vihara

July

3rd. Ven. Monks attended the annual chanting ceremony at the Thames Buddhist Vihara

3rd. Fund-raising dinner at the Vihara

8th. Ven. Seelawimala attended AGM Interfaith Network UK.

14th. Ven. Mahinda, Abbot Aloka Buddha Vihara, Perth, Australia gave a talk at the Vihara

25th. Esala Celebrations at the Vihara

28th. Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha meeting

August

3rd. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Mr Jayantha Warnakulasooriya at West Norwood Crematorium.

10th. Dr. Ananda Guruge gave a talk at the Vihara on 'Buddhism in the West'

17th. Ven. Seelawimala conducted the funeral service for Mr. Michael Alfred at Islington Crematorium.

19th. Ven. Bandula attended Dana ceremony at Shannon, Ireland

20th-22nd. Ven. Seelawimala participated conference at Fly in Cambridge on 'Harmony and Peace'.

22nd. Ven. Bandula attended the 10th anniversary celebrations of Buddhist Community Centre, Letchworth.

24th. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Dr. Jeeva Siriwardane at Golders Green Crematorium.

28th. Ven. Seelawimala participated Buddha Jayanti Committee meeting at Buddhism Society.

September

10th. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Mr. L. C. Nadarajah at Mortlake Crematorium.

11th. Founder's Day completion on Anagara Dharmapala was held among the Dhamma School children.

18th. Founders day competition prize giving ceremony was held at the Vihara and memorial talk was delivered by Dr. Ananda Wickremaratne and paritta chanting ceremony was held.

19th. Dana offering and transference of merit on founder's day.

30th. Sheena Napier participated in Metropolitan Police Faith Communities Day at Ealing Police Station.

October

2nd. Health Awareness Day organised by Vishakha P. P. Association UK led by Dr. Harshi Borlessa.

13th. Ven. K Ariyaratana gave a talk to a group of students from Ipswich High School for Girls.

16th. Ven. Seelawimala participated at Sambuddha-Jayanthi 2011 committee meeting at Buddhist Society.

16th. Fund raising dinner organised by Parents and Teachers of the Dhamma School.

22th. Ven. Ariyaratana participated at PTM Smart Partnership Dialogue programme, Victoria.

22nd. Ven. Seelawimala gave a talk at an Interfaith Civic Ceremony at the Birmingham Maha Vihara in connection with this Vihara's anniversary celebrations.

22nd-23rd. Ven. Bandula and Ven. Soratha participated all night chanting ceremony and the Kathina ceremony of the Birmingham Maha Vihara.

23rd. Ven. Seelawimala participated Kathina Ceremony at Thames Buddhist Vihara.

28th. Ven. Ariyaratana gave a talk at Imperial College, Buddhist Society.

30th. Ven. Seelawimala participated in the Kathina ceremony at Letchworth Buddhist Vihara.

30th. Ven. Bandula participated in the Kathina ceremony at Samadhi Meditation Centre at Edmonton

31st. Ven. Bandula and Ven. Wimalajothi participated in Kathina Ceremony at Letchworth Dhammaniketanaya.

November

7th. Kathina Ceremony at the Vihara.

13th. Sambuddha Jayanthi committee meeting was held at the Vihara.

14th. Ven. Bandula attended the Kathina ceremony at Eastham Lumbini Vihara

14th. Ven. Seelawimala attended Remembrance Day ceremony at Cenotaph.

19th Ven. Monks attended the Paritta chanting ceremony and almsgiving on 20th at Sri Lanka High Commission to invoke blessings onto President and the people of Sri Lanka on the assumption of the second term of office by H. E. the President, Mahinda Rajapakse.

20th. Mr. Wijeratne Bandara attended Interfaith Day at Hounslow Civic Centre.

20th. Ajahn Sumedho Felicitation ceremony at the Vihara.

21th. Ven. Seelawimala attended the Kathina ceremony at Redbridge Buddhist Vihara.

21st. Ven. Seelawimala attended a conference on "Reflections and Understanding from nine faiths UK" organised by Jain Centre, Colindale.

23rd. Ven. Seelawimala participated general synod of the Church of England at Church House, Westminster.

24th. Ven. Seelawimala participated a discussion on "Religions for Peace" at House of Lords.

25th. Ven. Wimalajothi gave a talk at the Vihara in a interfaith meeting organised by Richmond Interfaith Group.

December

4th. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Mr. Premaratna Abeyssekera at Hanworth Crematorium.

13th. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Master Chelaka Muthukumarana.

16th. Ven. Monks attended the funeral service for Mrs. Thusitha Wijayasinghe at Kingston Crematorium.

The Seven Stages of Purification (Satta Visuddhi)

The path of practice leading to the attainment of Nibbana unfolds in seven stages, known as the Seven Stages of Purification (Satta Visuddhi). The seven in order are:

1. Purification of Virtue
(*silavisuddhi*)
2. Purification of Mind
(*cittavisuddhi*)
3. Purification of View
(*ditthivisuddhi*)
4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt
(*kankhavataranavisuddhi*)
5. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is Path and Not-Path
(*maggamaggananadassanavisuddhi*)
6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way
(*patipadanadassanavisuddhi*)
7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision (*nanadassana visuddhi*).

In the attainment of Nibbana itself our minds are in direct relation to the seventh and last stage of this series, the Purification of Knowledge and Vision, which is the knowledge of the supramundane path. But this purification cannot be attained all at once, since the seven stages of purification form a causally-related series in which one has to pass through the first six purification before one can arrive at the seventh.

The only direct canonical reference to the Seven Stages of Purification is found in the Rathavinita Sutta (The Discourse on the Relay of Chariots) M.N, 24. In the Dasuttara Sutta of the Digha Nikaya, sutta No. 34, these seven purifications are counted among nine items collectively called factors of endeavour tending to purification (*parisuddhi-padhaniyanga*), the last two of which are purification of wisdom and purification of deliverance. In the Rathavinita Sutta, the Seven Stages of Purification are presented through a dialogue in which the questions of the Venerable Sariputta are met with striking replies from the Venerable Punna Mantaniputta. The reply reveals

that not even the seventh and last purification is to be regarded as the purpose of living the holy life. The purpose is nothing but the complete extinction of all defilements without any kind of grasping. In other words, it is the attainment of Nibbana.

In the case of the seven purifications, the purity implied is reckoned in terms of the elimination of the unwholesome factors opposed to each purification. Purification of Virtue implies the purity obtained through abstinence from bodily and verbal misconduct as well as from wrong livelihood. Purification of Mind is the purity resulting from cleansing the mind of attachment, aversion, inertia, restlessness and conflict, and from securing it against their influx. Purification of View is brought about by dispelling the distortions of wrong views. Purification by Overcoming Doubt is purity through the conquest of all doubts concerning the pattern of samsaric existence. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of what is Path and Not-Path signifies the purity attained by passing beyond the alluring distractions which arise in the course of insight meditation. Purification of Knowledge and Vision of the Way is the purity resulting from the temporary removal of defilements which obstruct the path of practice. And lastly, Purification of Knowledge and Vision is the complete purity gained by eradicating defilements together with their underlying tendencies by means of the supramundane paths. Purification by Knowledge and Vision consists of the knowledge of the four paths – the path of Stream entry, the path of Once-returner, the path of Non-returner and the path of Arahantship.

We are going to discuss these Seven Stages of Purification in details in our next issues of Samadhi.

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

Mrs Irene Nanayakkara. Passed away and funeral was held on 27th May at New Southgate Crematorium. She is survived by her loving two children Sanath and Nayana

Mr. Jayantha Warnakulasuriya. Passed away on 2nd August and funeral was held on 3rd August at West Norwood Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Thusita and two children Ravin and Tanya.

Dr. Jeewa Siriwardena. Passed away on 18th August and funeral was held on 24th August at Golders Green Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Sitha and three children, Ajith, Ruwani and Dilani.

Mr. Nihal Madawela. Passed away on 5th November in Sri Lanka and funeral was held on 8th November at Matale General Cemetery. He is survived by his loving wife Dulcie and three children, Githal, Roshan and Yvone.

Mr. L. C. Nadarajah. Passed away on 6th September and funeral was held 10th September at Mortlake Crematorium. He is survived by his loving wife Malini and two children Medini and Tinet.

Mr. Premaratna Abeysekera. Passed away on 24th November and funeral was held on 4th December at South West Middlesex Crematorium, Hanworth. He is survived by his loving wife Amitha Padmini, and three children Dulamani, Lileepa and Buddhika.

Master Chelaka Mutukumarana. Loving son of Gamini and Priyangika and brother of Gihan passed away on 3rd December and funeral was held on 13th December at South West Middlesex Crematorium, Hanworth.

Mrs Thusitha Wijayasinghe. Loving mother of Ruwani and Prasanna passed away on 7th December and funeral was held on 16th December at Kingston Crematorium.

**May they all attain the bliss of
Nibbana!**

COURSES FOR THE YEAR 2011

THE BUDDHA'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS

**10 meetings starting:
Thursday 13th January 2011
7.00pm**

Tutor: Julian Wall
Venue: London Buddhist Vihara
Fees : Free (donations are welcome)
How to join: Enrol at the class .

LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA

Dharmapala Building
The Avenue
London W4 1UD
Tel: 020 8995 9493
Fax: 020 8994 8130
e-mail:

london.vihara@virgin.net
website

www.londonbuddhistvihara.org

SRI LANKA - Head office

Anagarika Dharmapala Trust
130 Pujya Hikkaduwe Sri
Sumangala Nahimi Mawatha
Colombo - 10 Sri Lanka

AFFILIATED CENTRES:

INDIA - CALCUTTA

Maha Bodhi Society of India
4-A Bankim Chatterjee Street
Calcutta - 700073, India

BUDDHA GAYA

Maha Bodhi Society,
Buddha Gaya
Gaya, Bihar

SARNATH

Maha Bodhi Society
Mulagandhakuti Vihara
Sarnath, Varanasi, UP

NEW DELHI

Maha Bodhi Society
Buddha Vihara,
Mandir Marg,
New Delhi - 110 001

MADRAS

Maha Bodhi Society
17 Kennet Lane
Egmore, Madras - 8

SANCHI

Chetiyaigiri 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 |
| Saturdays | 1.30-8.00pm | Monthly meditation retreat (Last Saturday of every month except August & December) |

○ 2011 (FULL MOON) POYA DAYS

| | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| January | ○ | 19 |
| February | ○ | 17 |
| March | ○ | 19 |
| April | ○ | 17 |
| May | ○ | 17 |
| June | ○ | 15 |
| July | ○ | 14 |
| August | ○ | 13 |
| September | ○ | 11 |
| October | ○ | 11 |
| November | ○ | 10 |
| December | ○ | 10 |

PUNYANUMODANA

Ven. B. Seelawimala, 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.

2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| March 27 | Rahula Dhamma Day |
| May 16 | VESAK - Buddha Day |
| June 05 | Blood donation Session |
| June 19 | POSON |
| July 17 | ESALA - Dhamma Day |
| Sept. 17 | FOUNDER'S DAY |
| Nov. 06 | KATHINA |
| Dec. 11 | SANGHAMITTA DAY |

SAMADHI SPONSORS

This issue of Samadhi is sponsored by Mr Dharmasiri & Dr. Mrs Mala Weerasinghe in memory of Mr. B W A H A (BAWA) Weerasinghe, Former Science Teacher, Royal College, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

We invite our readers and supporters of the Vihara to sponsor SAMADHI. This will greatly help us in meeting the cost of its publication.

Data Protection Act: The mailing list used for SAMADHI is maintained on computer. If you object to your record being kept on our computer file, please write to London Buddhist Vihara, and we will remove it.

Typeset by Venerable T. Bandula

Published & Distributed by the LONDON BUDDHIST VIHARA, The Avenue, London W4 1UD. Tel: 0208 995 9493 Fax: 0208 994-8130

Printed by Ability Printing, 236 Imperial Drive, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 7HJ, Tel: 0208 4291234