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Inauguration of 1000th Birth Anniversary of Atisa Dipankar Srijnan - Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1983.

Chief Martial Law Administrator, (C.M.L.A.) Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad inaugurated the Week-long programme commencing on 26th February, 1983. A full report of this event appeared in the Bangladesh Observer, 20th February, 1983, at Page 1, under the heading "All Religions enjoy equal rights".

The C.M.L.A. said it was a matter of great pride that Atisa Dipankar Srijnan had established Bangladesh in the comity of nations an honourable position by his unique contributions in the field of knowledge. Therefore, Dipankar is not only the asset and pride of the Buddhist community; rather he is the pride of Bangladesh and an asset for the whole nation.

The C.M.L.A. hoped that the people being imbued with the ideals of sacrifice, patriotism, friendship and love of mankind of Atisa Dipankar would take part in the greater struggle of building the nation. He called upon the participating delegates to carry with them the message of peace, fraternity, brotherhood, love and non-violence from the people of Bangladesh to the people of their respective countries. Besides Bangladesh, about 50 delegates from about 20 countries took part in the celebration.

John D. Hughes, Director of B.D.C. (Upwey), representing Australia at the Conference, would like to express his sincere gratitude to the C.M.L.A. for the support of the Conference he arranged for all delegates, and the effective manner in which such support was carried out by his Staff. Subsequent to the inauguration, John Hughes had the privilege of meeting the C.M.L.A. at a reception for delegates and was able to pass on greetings and goodwill at a personal level with the hope that all could build a happy and prosperous "new Bangladesh".

The travel facilities provided over much of Bangladesh by the Organisers proved useful. In particular John Hughes was especially grateful to be able to visit the Australian War Cemetery to do offerings for those who passed away and others who have died in Bangladesh. Since the Australian soldiers' karma brought them to a resting place cemetery far from the land of their birth into an area where there was some Buddhism practiced in the past, the offerings done should be helpful to many beings.

May the merit made by these actions bring happiness to the people of Bangladesh and those who guide them.

BUDDHISM IN BANGLADESH

Condensed from an article in "The Bangladesh Observer", Monday 28th February, 1983, by D. P. Barua.

Buddhism in Bangladesh has an ancient history, evidenced by numerous architectural monuments and archaeological sites where many images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas have been unearthed. Historical evidence shows that in the third century B.C., Bangladesh came under Buddhist influence when part of Ashoka's vast empire, and a number of Chinese pilgrims have left accounts of the religion flourishing there in those early centuries.

The Buddhist University Nalanda, which came into prominence in the sixth century, was patronised from Bengal, and headed by the illustrious Bhikkhu Shilabhadra, who had been born of a royal family of Dhaka.

From the eighth to thirteenth centuries, said to be the golden age of Bangladesh, Buddhism enjoyed royal patronage, and it influenced both religious and secular life there, generating new creativity in all spheres of culture and knowledge. Big monasteries were built, and became centres of learning. The architectural pattern as far as the Borobudhur in Java, was influenced by such places. The ruins along the eleven-mile range of Mainamati-Lalmai hills speak of a flourishing Buddhist civilisation at that time.

The greatest Buddhist centre on the sub-continent after the decline of Nalanda was Pandita Vihara, the major Tantric Mahayana School, near Chittagong. The famous saint and philosopher Atisha Dipankar Srijnan, and the scholar-monk Tilopa, who preached Buddhism in Bhutan, lived and studied in this Vihara.

Buddhism in Bangladesh had influence at that time far beyond its frontiers into South-east Asia, and the Bengali Atisha voyaged there to study and preach this religion. On his return he responded to an invitation to Tibet, where he revived Buddhism. He is the author of more than one hundred religious and philosophical books, and his influence reached far away into Mongolia, Korea and central Asia.

Bangladeshi literature owes its appearance, more than one thousand years ago, to the "Charyapadas", mystical songs full of Buddhist thought, and at that same time a remarkable school of art, comparable to the Gupta school, distinguished itself with the creation of Buddhist images in meditation.

The end of Buddhism in ancient Bangladesh is mainly attributed to its degeneration, lack of royal patronage, persecution by other forces in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and absorption into the Shakti movement in the fourteenth. The surviving Siddhacharyas escaped into neighbouring Nepal and Tibet, with their scriptures and literature, which were to greatly influence those countries. Only in this century has the discovery of Bengali Buddhist literature in those places revealed much of Buddhism in ancient Bangladesh. Buddhism became extinct in Bangladesh, although its ideals of equality and fraternity persisted for a very long time.

Buddhism in modern Bangladesh may be seven to eight hundred years old, but

appears unrelated to that which prevailed in ancient Bengal. The ancestors of present-day Buddhists are said to have emigrated from ancient Magadha (modern Bihar and Vajji region, Uttar Pradesh, India) following the militant emergence and resurgence of Brahmanism in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

In one of the longest journeys of ancient times, they first went to Assam, and finally to Chittagong, where they found a natural refuge between hills and sea. They rebuilt their religious and cultural base in keeping with their original tradition. The present-day Buddhists, called "Barua", maintain the unbroken link with those ancient Buddhists.

They were later joined there by surviving Buddhists from ancient central Bengal.

Buddhism has passed through various phases in Bangladesh. Contact with Burma and Sri Lanka, where Theravada Buddhism is practised, has brought in new ideas, but the Barua community's overall situation among other religions has greatly influenced its social and religious life.

Good news concerning Buddhism in Burma

The B.D.C. (Upwey) has been advised that:-

- (i) (Pali) education university to be built.
- (ii) Following this there will be missionaries for Burma and other countries.
- (iii) Buddhist religion will be known all over the world.

About three years ago, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Sangha Association of Burma agreed to build this university, and now it is to be built soon.

Before the Sangha Association was formed all of the examining of monks was carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, but now this is being done by the Sangha Association of Burma with the assistance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

If the university is built, the Sangha Association of Burma will run it. The aim of the university is to train missionaries for Burma and other countries. There will be one section in Rangoon and one in Mandalay.

In the university:-

- (i) There will be training for those who have passed their basic training in Buddhism.
- (ii) There will be advanced training to a master's level for those who have completed their first level.

A committee of three senior monks of the Sangha Association of Burma has been formed to establish the university. Many well-qualified monks and ordinary people are willing to teach at the university.

There are 16 monks with degrees and 10 monks with other qualifications who are presently being trained for the positions of head monks at monasteries. They are being taught by authors and various other teachers so it is seen that there are suitable

teachers available for the university

In Rangoon at Kaba Aye, the sites for two buildings have been chosen. In Mandalay the site for the university is in the old palace compound. The old buildings suffered damage during the war, but they will be rebuilt. The site has been donated by a head monk from Nwe Qwe.

It is anticipated that a graduation hall and 20 lecture rooms will be built in Mandalay. The people of the suburb of Say Jo (Mandalay) are collecting money to build the graduation hall. So far money for 14 lecture rooms out of 20 has been promised by other people.

Some Considerations affecting the formation of a Victorian Fellowship of Buddhists

An association of Buddhist Groups in Queensland was recently formed. On the 24th March, 1983, a meeting of leaders of the Victorian Buddhist Groups was held at the Loden Mahayana Centre at Balaclava under the chairmanship of Toby Gillies.

It was agreed that a meeting be arranged to form a Victorian Fellowship of Buddhists in the near future. John Hughes prepared the following comments to be forwarded to all Buddhist Groups. Other Australian States could follow suit. The future outcome would be the natural formation of a representative Australian National Body.

1.0 Aims and Objects

It would be easy for all groups in Victoria to agree on similar aims and objects of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. The W.F.B. Constitution has the following aims:

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- (a) To promote among the members strict observance and practice of the teachings of the Buddha;
- (b) To secure unity, solidarity, and brotherhood amongst Buddhists;
- (c) To propagate the sublime doctrine of the Buddha;
- (d) To organise and carry on activities in the field of social, educational, cultural, and other humanitarian services;
- (e) To work for securing peace and harmony amongst men and happiness for all beings and to collaborate with other organisations working for the same ends.

1.1 Need for harmonising aims and objectives with established overseas groups.

Whenever a new body is set up, it is inevitable that some written form of aims and objectives is agreed upon. The process of agreement is generally arrived at by discussion before consensus often allows the arrival at some arbitrary wording to be agreed to. With the passage of time the assumptions arise that the specific wording arrived at is sacrosanct and the usual structures built into constitutions requires difficulties in changing the wording of the constitution, since the supposed sacrosanct nature of the original wording becomes an object of veneration and the spirit behind the original meeting tends to get lost by the undue attachment to the wording of the original aims and objectives agreed upon by the foundation members.

As a consequence of this process difficulties arise in the future in harmonising the written aims and objectives with those of bodies at an international level with which affiliation becomes desirable.

FOR THIS REASON IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE PRECISE WORDING OF THE W.F.B. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES BE USED BY A VICTORIAN FELLOWSHIP OF BUDDHISTS ASSOCIATION.

It must be seen that the formation of State fellowships should be harmonised so that ultimately a federation being able to represent Buddhists at a National level would naturally be formed.

From a National level, such a body would automatically seek affiliation overseas with International bodies of which the W.F.B. is the most credible having some status at even United Nations level.

In the Constitution of the World Fellowship of Buddhists Sec.4, which deals with the mechanisms of achieving its aims and objectives, it is stated "The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall refrain from involving itself directly or indirectly in any political activity."

2.0 Restraint from involving in political activity

In the many possibilities which exist where there are appreciable numbers of Buddhists, whose belief in and practice of Buddhism are free and unrestricted one possibility is that such a group may become the political arm in the propaganda sense of one or other political ideologies. Differing political ideologies are a cause of conflict. Ideology is defined by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as "A system of ideas concerning phenomena especially those of social life; the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or an individual." By this definition the mundane practice of Buddhism is in itself an ideology. For this reason a significant influence on ideology which is likely to possess a vital moral force, appealing convincingly to the conscience of mankind is Buddhism, whose traditional role as actions is for "the welfare of the many, the happiness of the many, out of compassion", as enjoined by the Buddha from the very inception of his mission. Historically, therefore, the Buddhists have a duty to be in the forefront with their moral, altruistic attitudes. The working out of this altruism which involves a strategy of activity to ensure the survival and development of humanity is the only legitimate "political" activity open to Buddhists, so if Buddhists solve their own problems, that, by itself, will be a major step in helping humanity as a whole.

3.0 Methodology of Strategy

A very important guideline for the examination of strategies would be the methodology of comprehensive analysis which the Buddha recommended in the Maha-sati-patthana-sutta; that is, to analyse each issue first the point of view of one's self, then from the point of view of others, and finally from the point of view jointly of one's self and others.

4.0 Strategies for Action

It is impractical to think of acting in co-operation with international organisations and bodies unless the Australian Buddhist community is strong enough to make its presence felt in them. This strength has to come in two ways:

First: there should be unity, understanding and identity of interest and concern within the Australian Buddhist community itself; and,

Second: the deficit in numerical terms has to be compensated for with a moral strength based on unequivocal principles and steadfast adherence to the value system which Buddhism upholds.

5.0 Conclusion

When agreement has been reached on the principles stated above, it is suggested that the Victorian Buddhist groups study Ananda W.P. Guruge's paper "Survival and Development of Humanity - The Buddhist Approach", which was presented to the Conference of World Buddhist Leaders and Scholars, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1st - 5th June, 1982. The present writer was Australian delegate to this conference.

May the merit of this paper secure a sense of unity, solidarity and brotherhood among Australian Buddhists.

Dhamma Talk at Victorian National Gallery

John Hughes of B.D.C. (Upwey) gave a talk on Buddhism to approximately 80 High School Students at the Victorian National Gallery on 31st. March, 1983. The National Gallery has a fine collection of many Buddhist images. In the same week, the National Gallery placed on public display a \$300,000 Indian 2nd Century A.D. Bodhisattva sculpture. The talk was delivered in the hall containing these images.

This is the second year that John Hughes has addressed students from this High School.

Film Night "Gandhi"

Members of B.D.C.(Upwey) and members of Kagyu Ewam korlang Centre, Kew, attended a film night on 10th April, 1983 in Melbourne to the film "Ghandi". For the younger generation of Australians who may not have heard of Ghandi, the force of the Mahatma's ideas expressed may be beneficial. As a Karma Yogi, the Mahatma

exercised great power at a critical time in Indian history. (see further page 12)

Appointment of Ven. Ananda Mangala Maha Thera of Sri Lanka Amarapura Maha Nikaya in Singapore and Malaysia

Members of B.D.C.(Upwey) express great happiness on hearing of the appointment of Ven. Ananda Mangala Maha Thera which was reported in "The Young Buddhist 1982", the annual journal of the Singapore Buddha-Yana Organisation (SBYU).

An English translation of the Letter of Appointment appears at page 107/108 of this publication.

The Letter of Appointment, granted by the Executive Committee of the Amarapura Maha Nikaya, presided over by His Eminence the most Venerable Pandita Brahmanawatte Dhamma Kithi Tissa, who bears with distinction the Honorary Title of "Gnanawimala Vangha Vathansa Ariyawansalankara", the Chief Incumbent of the Purana Vihara of Naga-deepa, who is possessed of saintly virtues as befits one bearing the heavy burden of responsibility in maintaining the Buddha Sasana as a flaming torch in the noble island of Sri Lanka, confers on the Venerable Ananda Maha Thera, the Buddhist Counsellor of the Sri Lanka Amarapura Nikaya in Singapore and The Founder Incumbent of the Singapore Buddha-Yana Organisation Centre, the Honorary Title of "Saddharma Keerti Sri Pandita Dhammaloka Vansadvaja", and appoints him as the "Sangha Nayaka of Singapore and Malaysia".

On B.D.C.(Upwey) Newsletter No.7 (March, 1982) we published a summary of a talk by the Venerable (pp 6 / 9).

At the World Conference of Buddhist Leaders and Buddhist Scholars in June, 1982, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the Venerable presented a paper entitled "Ti-Sarana - A Dedicated Commitment". John D. Hughes of B.D.C.(Upwey) attended this conference and had the benefit of hearing the great oratory powers of the Venerable. In his paper, the analysis was made to overcome the great degree of confusion today about the role of monks in society. He pointed out that "There can be no room for double standards in the Dhamma and confidence and faith must grow through experience and conviction. The excellence of the Dasa Kusalakamma and the Dasa Paramita are avenues which one must graze upon. The Law of Kamma cannot mean any fatalistic attitude of mind to surrender to external forces but a deep understanding of the nature of the Law of Kamma and the working out of a solution to break asunder the bonds that bind us to the Wheel of Kamma. Every devotional exercise, the chanting of paritta, the traditional ceremony attuned to the Triple Gem, must be studied to understand the abstract terms of "Anicca, Dukka and Anatta". The act of veneration and worship cannot be akin to the "pujas" done by other religious groups, which invoke a God or Gods to redeem them. The objects used in the ceremony of veneration of the Triple Gem are to be understood as mere symbols to communicate the essence of decreasing greed, hatred and delusion"

In the Venerable's paper in The Young Buddhist, 1982, entitled "The Incomparable Scientific Buddha Dhamma", he makes the point that "It is now time for Buddhists all over the world to make a serious commitment to their own Faith. Multi-religious

Dialogue or Religious Co-existence does not mean that Buddhists participate as "believers" in the religious services of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Taoists. A Buddhist could very sincerely assist such believers to conduct their respective religious services peacefully. A Buddhist CAN ONLY BEAR WITNESS TO THE FAITH OF OTHERS, BUT CANNOT ACCEPT THE BELIEF OF THE OTHER RELIGIONS".

These ideas should be meditated on by Buddhists throughout the world until their firm understanding is clear. By this practice the "politics of Religion" would not become detached from the "Practice of Buddhism".

Ven. Maha Ghosananda's visit to B.D.C.(Upwey) on 18th March, 1983

The Cambodian Venerable Maha Ghosananda gave a Dhamma talk at B.D.C. (Upwey) on 18th March, 1983. He referred to the fact that the One is food. All beings rely on food of some type. The eater becomes the eaten. The killer becomes the killed. The eater of kusala kamma (good action) is time. Therefore, we should become mindful of this eating process. To cure our troubles, the Venerable provided B.D.C. (Upwey) with the following:

THE FIVE REFLECTIONS
(To be chanted before each meal)

First: This meal is the labour of countless beings -
 Let us accept this offering with gratitude.

Second: This meal is taken to strengthen our exertions, for greed and opinion
are
 strong -
 Let us deserve this offering,

Third: This meal is taken to help us become clear and generous -
 Let us pay attention.

Fourth: This meal is taken to nourish and sustain our practice -
 Let us be moderate,

Fifth: This meal is taken to help all beings attain the Buddha Way
 Let us practice wholeheartedly,

(To be chanted after the meal)

This meal is finished; our strength is restored:
We vow to help all beings attain the Buddha Way,

John Hughes thanked the Venerable for his teaching, and made an offering of a Buddha image to the Venerable. May the merit of these Teachings help make peace for the Cambodian people.

THE FOUR NUTRIENTS OF LIFE - (The Wheel Publication 105/106 -

Nyanaponika Thera)

The following is an extract from the above publication:- (pp 18 - 23)

Monks, when a monk becomes entirely dispassionate towards One thing, when his lust for it entirely fades away, when he is entirely liberated from it, then he is one who, after fully comprehending the Goal, makes an end of suffering here and now.

"What one thing? "All beings subsist by nutriment. When a monk becomes entirely dispassionate towards this one thing (Nutriment), when his lust for it entirely fades away, when he is entirely liberated from it, and when he sees the complete ending of it, then, O monks, he is one who, after fully comprehending the Goal, makes an end of suffering here and now".

Anguttara-Nikaya, Dasaka Nipata (The Tens)
Sutta No. 27

The Discourse on "Son's Flesh" or The Similes for the Four Nutriments:

At Savatthi.

"There are, O monks, four nutriments for the sustenance of beings born and for the support of beings seeking birth. What are the four?

"Edible food, coarse and fine; secondly, sense-impressions; thirdly, volitional thought; fourthly, consciousness.

"How, O monks, should the nutriment "Edible Food" be considered? Suppose a couple, husband and wife, have set out on a journey through the desert, carrying only limited provisions. They have with them their only son dearly beloved by them. Now, while these two travelled through the desert, their limited stock of provisions ran out and came to an end; but there was still a stretch of desert not yet crossed. Then the two thought: Our small stock of provisions has run out, it has come to an end; and there is still a stretch of desert that is not yet crossed. Should we not kill our only son, so dearly beloved, prepare dried and roasted meat, and eating our son's flesh, we may cross in that way the remaining part of the desert, lest all three of us perish?"

"And these two, husband and wife killed their only son, so dearly beloved by them, prepared dried and roasted meat, and, eating their son's flesh, crossed in that way the remaining part of the desert. And while eating their son's flesh, they were beating their breast and crying: "Where are you, our only and beloved son? Where are you our only and beloved son?"

"What do you think, O monks? Will they eat the food for the pleasure of it, for enjoyment, for comeliness' sake, for (the body's) embellishment?"

"Certainly not, O Lord."

"Will they not rather eat the food merely for the sake of crossing the desert?"

"So it is, O Lord."

"In the same manner, I say, O monks, should edible food be considered. If, O monks, the nutriment Edible Food is comprehended, the lust for the five sense-objects is (thereby) comprehended. And if lust for the for sense-objects is comprehended, there is no fetter by which enchained a Noble Disciple might come to this world again.

"And how, O monks, should the nutriment 'Sense-impression' be considered? Suppose, O monks, there is a skinned cow that stands close to a wall, then the creatures living in the wall will nibble at the cow; and if the skinned cow stands near a tree, then the creatures living in the tree will nibble at it; if it stands in the water, the creatures living in the water will nibble at it; if it stands in the open air, the creatures living in the air will nibble at it. Wherever that skinned cow stands, the creatures living there will nibble at it.

"In that manner, I say, O monks should the nutriment 'Sense-impression' be considered. If the nutriment 'Sense-impression' is comprehended, the three kinds of feeling are thereby comprehended. And if the three kinds of feeling are comprehended, there is I say no further work left to do for the Noble Disciple.

"And how, O monks, should the nutriment 'Volitional Thought' be considered? Suppose, O monks, there is a pit of glowing embers, filled to cover a man's height, with embers glowing without flames and smoke. Now a man comes that way, who loves life and does not wish to die, who wishes for happiness and detests suffering. Then two strong men would seize both his arms and drag him to the pit of glowing embers: Then O monks, far away from it would recoil, that man's will far away from it his longing, far away his inclination. And why? Because the man knows: "If I fall into that pit of glowing embers I shall meet death or deadly pain."

"In that manner, I say, O monks should the nutriment "Volitional Thought" be considered. If the nutriment "Volitional Thought" is comprehended, the three kinds of craving (sensual craving, craving for eternal existence, craving for self-annihilation) are thereby comprehended. And if the three kinds of craving are comprehended, there is, I say, no further work left to do for the Noble Disciple.

"And how, O monks, should the nutrient "Consciousness" be considered: Suppose, O monks, people have seized a criminal, a robber, and brought him before the king saying: "This is a criminal, a robber, O majesty! Mete out to him the punishment you think fit !" Then the king would tell them: "Go, and in the morning strike this man with a hundred spears." At noon the king would ask his men: "How is that man ?" - "He is still alive your Majesty." - "Then go and strike him again at noon time with a hundred spears !" So they did, and in the evening the king asks them again: "How is that man ?"--"He is still alive."-- "Then go and in the evening strike him again with a hundred spears!" And so they did.

"What do you think, O monks? Will that man, struck with three hundred spears during a day, suffer pain and torment owing to that?"-- "Even if he were to be struck only by a single spear, he would suffer pain and torment, owing to that. How much more if he is being struck by three hundred spears!"

"In that manner, I say, O monks, should the nutriment "Consciousness" be considered. If the nutriment "Consciousness" is comprehended, Mind and Body are thereby comprehended. And if Mind and Body are comprehended, there is, I say, no further work left to do for the Noble Disciple."

Samyutta-Nikaya, vol. I I:
Nidana-Samyutta, Sutta 63

Surameraya Majjapamadatthana Veramani

The following is taken from the article "The Five Precepts - Panca Sila" by Maha Upasaka U Nu, published in "The Young Buddhist 1982", the journal of the Singapore Buddha-Yana Organisation (SBYO).

"The beneficial results of refraining from taking intoxicants:" The person who vigilantly and steadfastly observes this Surameraya Precept reaches the World of Devas on his death. When he expires in the world of Devas, and is reborn in the world of human beings, he is endowed with the following qualities:

1. being mindful of anything that is to be done at a given time;
2. being endowed with intelligence and intellectual powers;
3. being always alert at all times;
4. having initiative and enterprise to meet all coming events;
5. being industrious;
6. being free from deafness and dumbness
7. being free from madness;
8. being free from shocks and alarms
9. being free from oppression or restriction;
10. being free from a hateful attitude towards others;
11. being free from grudge and envy;
12. having always truthful speech;
13. being, free from rough and futile speech and from back-biting;
14. being aware of the gratitude owed to others;
15. being able to make return for the favours of others;
16. being generous and charitable;
17. having Moral Practice;
18. being fair and just;
19. not being given to anger;
20. having a sense of decency and a dread of evil;
21. having true belief;
22. being in a noble or worthy state of life;
23. being wise,
24. having discretion and judgement as to advantages and disadvantages of any situation or question.

Surapana

"The bad results of taking intoxicants:" The person who takes intoxicants is extremely likely, on his death, to reach one of four lower planes of existence, and after that, if he should be reborn in the human world, he is liable to suffer from madness, or psychopathic complaints; or he may be a deaf and dumb person.

A Buddha Rupa for R.M.I.T. (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)

When I first thought of having a Buddha image at R.M.I.T., I approached all the other religious and cultural groups which may have been interested in the notion of having a Multi-Religious-Cultural garden, with images representing the different groups, opening up communication between the different groups.

This notion was not received with enthusiasm from some groups, but the process of communicating with the different groups was an interesting exercise. This issue is of importance if religions are to operate side by side. Buddhists should adopt the attitude expressed by His Holiness The Dalai Lama during his visit to Australia, of Universal Responsibility, and not get involved in disputing ideals of opinion.

Even though the notion of a Multi-Religious-Cultural garden was not received so well, I continued with the plan to have a Buddha image at R.M.I.T.. Funding for the project was supplied through the R.M.I.T. Union Arts Activities, and getting the image made and located at R.M.I.T. involved many other campus organisations and committees. To all these people I am very grateful. May they prosper in the Dhamma.

Even though at the writing of this article the garden is not yet landscaped, the Buddha image is an aesthetically pleasing image, and this is the way I hope it will be received by the majority of people, causing it to have a respectable and safe existence on the campus of R.M.I.T.

For those who are Buddhists, it represents the Body of the Buddha, and calls to mind the Path taught by the Buddha. In this respect it is an object of veneration.

The image is made from cement and sand reinforced. It was cast from moulds in plaster, modelled originally in clay. The height is approximately 4 feet, with the actual image being life size. It is based on the "Navatala" system of proportion, which is based on certain cosmological ideas relating to the ideal world picture. This is reproduced in a smaller body, also constructed in the ideal basis. In this way we have the image of the ideal Man.

Those interested in more details on the making of Buddhist Art can contact Allan Wallis through the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey). The making of Buddhist art should be done observing, as if in meditation, and in this way you will come to good results. Be mindful and vigilant, paying respects to the original Teacher and the Dhamma. Finish with the ignorance that causes so much trouble.

The process of making the Buddha image took many hours of laborious work, confronting problems, doubts and Mara attacks, but the results are very satisfying. May the merit of this action benefit all sentient beings, may they come to peace.

Paramita for Bushfire victims

In 16th February, 1983, extensive forest fires occurred in the State of Victoria and other Australian States. The "Ash Wednesday" were the most disastrous since

the year 1938 C.E. in terms of forest destroyed and human lives lost. In such an event, an almost immeasurable number of animal lives are lost, as well as the "end" of the "tree homes" of devas (gnats). Such a fire causes dread in the three realms of possible rebirth. The fires burnt for several days and came within 1/2 Km of B.D.C.(Upwey).

Members of B. D. C. (Upwey) undertook paramita for such Beings on their Friday meditation on 18th February, 1983. The comments, discussed on B.D.C. (Upwey) Newsletter No. 8 (June, 1982) under the heading "Puja for departed friends" may be well-considered by any meditator following such paramita.

If the "grasping nature of dull mind" arises during such practice, it must be replaced with the "non-grasping nature of bright mind", otherwise harm will come to the practitioner. The "real" nature of heat and suffering to the meditator must not be grasped at by strong compassion (karuna) and loving kindness (metta) should be generated with equanimity (upekkha). These Brahma World qualities will develop rapidly if the meditator has the determined vigour (viriyā (Pali) virya (Skt)) for such practice.

The dangers are real. For example, some years ago, the author (J.D.H.) met a young Australian woman who played around with a method of remembering former states of existence. Unfortunately for her, she experienced a "former birth" where "she" was burned to death in that state. The result was that she was in bed for several days suffering from painful burns which appeared on her present body. No benefit can arise where lack of mindfulness occurs.

For those who keep five precepts (at least) and who are practical meditators, paramita of this nature may be done without harm.

The deva's (gnats) may be led to a new abode by guiding to the meditator's visualisation of the new abode, suitable for such beings. If the conditions arise, the benefits of a human rebirth following the Middle Way could be explained to the billions of departing animals with the strong wish that they be well and happy.

If the meditator has too much uneasiness about such direct methods, resource may be made to verbal formulae, known as Gatha or Mantrah, the chanting of which is believed to achieve a desired result by generating magical power or by compelling the assistance of superhuman divinities. Parittas or Rakkhanas are originally prayers. Paritta is a technical term derived from the root "ta" (rakkhati) to rescue, to protect, to guard with the prefix "pari" ~ all around (samantato) from all directions.

Paritta may therefore be interpreted as Buddhist Protection Charms or Buddhist Raksha Mantras. (For more details, ref: Eleven Holy Discourses of Protection MAHA PARITTA PALI by Sao Htun Hmat Win, Director of Research and Scriptures, published by Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, Burma, 1981.)

The widely-known Metta-Sutta is an example which could be used on such occasions, if required.

These methods may also be used to assist humans and animals that we are with at the time of death (in every day life, not only disasters) to obtain a "good" rebirth where they can hear Dhamma. If we send metta (loving kindness) and chant (either aloud or silently) this will have the effect of quietening and brightening the being's mind at the moment of death, and pull them towards Dhamma. Although very few of us may have the opportunity to be with a human at the moment of death, most of us have at sometime been with animals such as pets, or wild animal such as birds or mice, at their death, and this practice is of great benefit to these beings.

International Buddhist Women's Centre

This Centre was officially opened on 10 October 1982, at Madiwela-kotte Sri Lanka, by Ayya Khema. Sister Khema is a Buddhist nun from Australia who spends much time at Wat Buddha Dhamma in New South Wales.

Franny Sime, who was Facilitator at B.D.C. (Upwey) has left here and is to become a Buddhist Nun under Sister Khema. Members of B.D.C. (Upwey) gave a farewell party to Franny Sime before she left the Centre. We wish her well and hope that she becomes totally free and equal to the Buddha she venerates.

Sister Khema translated from the German Buddhist Magazine "Wissen und Wandel" XVIII 3 (1972) XXLI 1/2 (1976), stories of Nuns in the time of the Buddha. This was published as The Wheel Publication No. 292/293 under the title "Buddhist Women in the Time of the Buddha" by Hellmuth Hecker (B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka 1982).

The Buddha's Teachings are for men, women and Devas. One story concerning Kisagotami, the mother with the dead child, who was told by the Buddha to find mustard seeds from a house where no one had died, is a well-known Buddhist story.

What no words had been able to convey to her, her own experience - going to from door to door - made clear to her. She understood the law of existence, the being fettered to always re-occurring deaths. In this way, the Buddha was able to heal her obsession and bring her to an acceptance of reality. Because her mind had matured, she became a stream-winner after hearing the Buddha proclaim just one verse. She became a Nun and later became one of the Arahants, the fully Enlightened Ones.

She says; "Woman's state is painful" declares the Trainer of tameable men. A wife with others is Painful, and once having born a child, some even cut their throats; others of delicate constitution poison take, then pain again; and then there's the baby obstructing the birth killing the mother too."

It would be excellent if women, and especially women in Western countries could study the B.P.S text and understand what true "Women's Liberation" means to a Buddhist mind.

The lineage of higher ordination for Buddhist Nuns is still intact in Taiwan and

this resource should be carefully nurtured and preserved by Nuns (Bhikkhunis).

The Ven. Shig Hiu Wan of China Academy Institute for the Study of Buddhist Culture who holds this lineage is a great scholar and visited Australia in 1971, invited by Australian National University, Canberra, to take part in the 28th Congress of Orientalists, and in 1973 in Sydney to inaugurate the Buddhist "Prajna Hall" of the Chinese Buddhist Society of Australia.

May all meditators who experience the six realms of Celestial beings (Devaloka) superior to the Human world, help the Bhikkhuni Sangha become firmly established for the benefit of the many.

Since Devas sooner or later sink into lower states of existence, may some devote their present merit to the protection of the Bhikkhuni Sangha, for their own future when they will be reborn in the human world.

Film Night "Gandhi" (Cont from page 6)

There are six comprehensive philosophies of non-violence in Indian thought. These philosophies are (1) Jainism (2) Buddhism (3) the Vedas (4) the Dharmasastras (5) the Puranas (6) Gandhi and his followers.

Ahimsa is often wrongly assumed to have the etymological meaning "non-killing". The root (hims) = harm. The root (han) = kill. So the verb "hims" was not limited to killing. Ahimsa has the meaning "physical Non-injury" (ref. Ahimsa Non-Violence in Indian Tradition by Unto Tatinen, pub. Rider and Company, 1976).

After Independence and Gandhi's death, most of his expedient political followers entered into power-politics, according to Titanen. Under Vinoba Bhave leadership, the Gandhian movement or Sarvodaya (welfare for all) was reorganised and claims to be a moral alternative to socialism and violent Marxism. (ref. page 124 ibid)

Vinoba is convinced that non-violence is sufficiently powerful to change the entire society. Ahimsa does not command, it suggests. Capacity for peace can be helped by Buddhist metta meditation practice.

Easter Meditation Course conducted by Ven. U. Pannathami Thera

Students from B.D.C.(Upwey) attended a meditation course, arranged by Mr. John Chow of Chinese Buddhist Association of Victoria, together with students from Monash University Buddhist Society and Kagyu Centre. The location was 10 Jayson St., Burwood East, 3151, Victoria. Allan Wallis of B.D.C. (Upwey) acted as the Venerable's attendant.

It should be noted that reference to Sotapan stage of five members of B.D.C. (Upwey) in our Newsletter No.10 (December, 1982) was made by John Hughes and not the Venerable, as he never certifies this stage. If any being should be under any misconception in this matter, John Hughes wishes to make this clear. The

Venerable does not give decision for Sotapan, and even if correct, there must be said "Sadu, Sadu, Sadu" (well-done) only. A Sotapan may lose this lower stage, even in the Buddha's time, but generally can recover with more practice.

The course, from 1st to 5th April, 1983, was excellent and out thanks go to the Venerable and John Chow.

After the course, the Venerable left for Perth, Western Australia, to give Dhamma Teaching, with Allan Wallis as his attendant.

The following is a list of some students of Venerable Pannathami's who would like to enter into correspondence with other students:

Zigrid Georges P.O. Box 433, with difficulty Kingston, A.C.T. 2064. Aus.	writes English reads German, French and Latvian
---	--

Lyn Penrose 5/15 Baden St. , Coogee, N.S.W. 2034, Aus.	English
--	---------

Marissa Pearson 5/18 George St. Oaks Estate, 2620, N.S.W. Aus.	English
--	---------

Vincent Cavuoto, 22 Pender St. , Thornbury, Vic. Aus.	English Italian
---	--------------------

Richard Wu International House, 96 City Rd., Chippendale N.S.W. 2008 Aus.	English Chinese
--	--------------------

Anne Roberts 8 Adair St., Scullin, 2614 A.C.T.U. Aus.	English
---	---------

Lee Lin Kang, Apt. Block 66, marine Drive 15-184, Singapore, 1544	English
---	---------

Than Aye, Radio Officer, M.T. Straits Bahati, No. 75 Jalan Benaan Kapal, Kallang Park Industrial Estate, Singapore 1439	English Burmese
--	--------------------

Neo Teck Eng,
14 Jalan Abiad 8,
Johor Bahru, Johor,
Malaysia.

English

Soma Loh Kum Seng,
Apt. Block 16
Telok Blangah Crescent,
13-334,
Singapore, 0409

English

Ho Kuan Ann,
Apt. Block 110
Commonwealth Cres.,
09-286
Singapore, 0314

English

Tan Teow Kee,
Apt. Block 36, Circuit Rd.,
15-418,
Singapore, 1337

English

K.S. Lim,
Blk. 76 Lorong Limau,
13-23,
Singapore, 1232

English

Han Jon Han
Blk. 326 Clementi Ave., 5
09-157,
Singapore, 0512

English

Mdm. Toh Chye Hoon,
11 Lorong Geh Chong Keat,
Penang,
Malaysia

English

Soka Gakkai International(S.G.I.) becomes NGO of ECOSOC.

Soka Gakkai News vol. 8, No. 170 (April, 1983) advises that S.G.I. was approved on 18th February, 1983, as a non-government organisation (NGO) with consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). B.D.C. (Upwey) welcomes this news and praises S.G.I. efforts in the cause of world peace.

The World fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) is duly recognised by UNESCO as an international NGO with the status of category B (Information and Consultative Relations). For example, the WFB was represented at the Sixteenth Session of UNESCO in Paris, 12th-14th November, 1970.

Buddhists can give maximum respect to the independence and freedom of the races

and people on the international plane. NGO's, whose goals and character are transnational, can be instrumental in helping to bring about disarmament

Puja for Medicine Buddha

A one-day Puja will be held on 15th May, 1983, at B.D.C.(Upwey) commencing at 9.30 a.m.

Padmasambhava Prayer Flag Gift

Our Tibetan Friend in the Dhamma, Kalsang Tsering's brother, arranged a gift to B.D.C.(Upwey) of a Prayer Flag. This rare valuable gift will be flown when some great, new, special work is undertaken at this Centre. May the merit of the gift help all their family and friends. This Centre relies on gifts since it does not charge for teachings.

Australian visit by the Nun Pravarajika Ajaya Prana of Kama Krishna Sarada Vedanta Society

John Hughes and a member of B.D.C. (Upwey) had discussions with this Nun on 4th April, 1983, when she visited Melbourne to teach. Discussion centred on the future possibility of an Australian Interfaith Conference for peace involving the different religious groups in this country. It was agreed that such an Interfaith conference should be kept free from political resolutions. There are several worthwhile institutions with political leaning or engagement, such as the World Conference on Religions and Peace (W.C.R.P), the Asian Conference on Religions and Peace(A.C.R.P.) and the Asian Buddhist Conference on Peace (A.B.C.P.) It is thought an Australian Interfaith Conference could a consensus on phenomenological methods based on ahimsa.

A POEM FROM A STUDENT

Oh please can I come to Nirvana,
Oh please can I come there today,
I'm in such a hurry to not have to worry,
And I promise to do what you say.

Oh please do you give out gold medals,
Or certificates in pretty frames,
I gave Dad his slippers and did all Mum's dishes
And I took out the garbage today.

Oh please could you make me a teacher,
Or a Bodhisattva would do,
I've done all my chores and I'm terribly bored,
How I'd love something different to do.

Oh please can't I come to Nirvana,
Out of this hot summer heat,
Wait, my friend's here from school

And they've got their own pool,
So I'll come to Nirvana next week.

(No comment needed. J.D.H.)

THE BODHIPATHAPRADIPA

At the 1000th Birth Anniversary of Atisa Dipankar Srijnan-Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1983, Conference in Bangladesh, The Buddhist Association of China Peking presented John Hughes with a copy of the Bodhipathapradipa, 1st Edition, 1978. This edition has the Bodhipathapradipa in Tibetan, Chinese and English. The English translation is reproduced here.

B.D.C.(Upwey) has a great sense of gratitude to the Buddhist Association of China, Peking for their meritorious act in producing such a valuable text. May the merit of this work bring peace to the Chinese people and Buddhists.

THE BODHIPATHAPRADIPA

by ATISA DIPAMKARA SRIJNANA - Translated into English by Li Jung-hsi

Translator's note: After arriving in the Tibetan region in 1038 at the invitation of Yeses hod, ruler of the Mnahrís area of Tibet the Ven. Atisa Dipamkara Srijnana wrote a number of treatises on Buddhism, of which the one that had a comparatively great influence and is well-known, in this concise Bodhipathapradipa. It was composed at the request of Byan-chub hod, the then ruler of Mnahrís, when the author first reached Tibet, and in co-operation with Dge-bahi blo-gros, a Tibetan Buddhist scholar, he produced a Tibetan version of this work, which has been handed down to the present.

Although this treatise is concise in structure, it is ample in meaning dealing with the three Vidyas of Sila, Samadhi and Prajna, as well as the grades of progress in the practice of both exoteric and esoteric teachings of Buddhism, and pointing out the way leading to the attainment of Bodhi. It not only played an important role in the Buddhism then prevalent in Tibet, but also exerted a great influence upon the later development of Buddhism in that region of China. The Bkah gdams-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism was founded by Tson-kha-pa by the end of the 14th century in accordance with the theories expounded by the Ven. Atisa. Tson-kha-pa's "Ryan-chub-lam gyi rim-pa (The Order of the Bodhi Way)" is actually an extension and exposition of this treatise.

In memory of the superior event of a portion of the Ven. Atisa's ashes returning to his homeland Bangladesh, the Buddhist Association of China prepared an English translation of this treatise to be published for the convenience of the Buddhist scholars of Bangladesh and other countries in the study of this treatise. It is hoped that through such Buddhist cultural exchange we may promote mutual understanding and friendly relations between the Buddhists of China and the Buddhist and cultural circles of Bangladesh and other countries.

Homage to Manjusri Kumara Bodhisattva.

Homage to all the Buddhas, the Dharmas and the Sanghas with a

mind of great
respect.

At the request of my good disciple Byan-chu hod,
I compose this treatise of A Lamp of the Bodhi Way.

As there are inferior, medium and superior qualities, there are three grades of Persons, which must be differentiated to show their distinct aspects.

If a person, by some expedient method, aims at acquiring pleasures in the round of rebirth only for his own benefit, such a person is one of inferior quality.

If a person, being disgusted with the pleasures of the three realms, refrains from committing evils and seeks only his own Nirvana, such a person is one of medium quality.

If a person, taking his own suffering as an example, wishes to terminate other people's sufferings, such a person is one of superior quality.

For those unusual persons who desire to gain supreme Bodhi, I reiterate the expedient methods as taught by various teachers. Painted images of various Buddhas and relic containers should be arranged, and flowers, incense etc., be offered to them. The seven kinds of oblations, such as mentioned in the Samantabhadra pranidhana may also be offered them. These persons should deeply believe in the Triple-Gem with a firm intention that they will never regress until realising Mahabodhi, and kneeling on the ground with their hands palm to palm, they should first repeat thrice the Tri-sarana. They should then cherish the mind of compassion towards all living beings and contemplate the three evils of existence, such as the sufferings of birth, death, etc., and on the living beings who are oppressed and troubled by the sufferings, and vow to save them from the various sufferings and the causes of sufferings, so as to cultivate the mind of Bodhi without regression.

In the Avatamsaka-sutra Maitreya Bodhisattva has extensively expounded the merits of cherishing the mind of such great vows. Either by reading that sutra or by hearing from a teacher, one may know the boundless merits of the mind of Mahabodhi, on account of this, one should foster the mind of Bodhi repeatedly from time to time. In the Sresthinpradhanasura-paripriccha-sutra the merits of cherishing the mind of Bodhi are also extensively explained. The following are three stanzas extracted from this sutra:

The merits of Bodhi-mind are greater than material substances that may fill up the whole universe.

If a man offers as many jewels and gems as sands in the Ganges to all Buddhas in all Buddha-worlds, his merits are not as great as the merits of one who joins his hands palm to palm to pay respect to Mahabodhi.

This last offering is the best, of which the merits are boundless.

Having thus fostered the mind of Bodhi, they should make efforts to increase it. In

order to remember this mind of Bodhi in future lives, they should also study the points of learning as taught in the Catur-dharma-sutra.

If they do not observe the Vinaya rules which have the mind of Bodhi as their substantial nature, they cannot increase their mind of Bodhi vows. In order to increase the perfect Bodhi vows, they must try to observe with effort the Bodhisattva Vinaya rules.

Those who constantly observe the seven classes of Pratimoksa-samvara are competent observers of the Bodhisattva Vinaya rules and not otherwise. In the seven classes of Pratimoksa-samvara, emphasis is laid on Brahmacharya, and thus they are Bhiksu Vinaya rules.

These should be received from a good teacher possessing virtues according to the rituals as described in the Chapter on the Sila of Bodhisattva-bhumi. A good teacher is one who has received the rules in the proper way, observes them in a strict manner and is competent to transmit them to others with a mind of compassion.

If one tries hard to find a good teacher, but fails to do so, there are other rituals for receiving the Vinaya rules. For instance, in the Manjusri-alamkara-buddhaksetra-sutra, it is said, "I shall now explain the method of cherishing the mind of Bodhi, adopted by Manjusri when he was King Sunya in a former birth. In the presence of various Buddhas in his visualisation, he fostered the perfect mind of Bodhi, wishing to save all living beings from the round of rebirth.

From now on till the moment of gaining Bodhi, they should vow to suppress such emotions as hatred, anger, stinginess and jealousy. They should practice Brahmacharya, cut off all evils and avarice, take delight in observing the Vinaya rules, and always follow the examples of the Buddha.

Without desiring to gain their own Bodhi in haste, they should stay to the last moment in the round of rebirth to save the last living being. They should purify innumerable Buddha-lands which are beyond thought and words, and make all those who repeat their names gain benefits and always live in the ten quarters.

They should make their bodily, oral and mental deeds pure, and never do an evil deed.

The cause of the purification of one's own bodily, oral and mental deeds is the observance of the Vinaya rules, which have the Bodhi mind as their substantial nature. Thus one should study well the three kinds of Sila, to which one must pay the greatest respect.

Therefore, by observing with effort the Bodhisattva Vinaya rules in a pure manner, one may get all the necessary provisions for gaining Mahabodhi.

Perfect blessedness and wisdom are the causes of one's own provisions for gaining Mahabodhi, and all the Buddhas said that one must possess the supernatural powers. Just as a bird that is not fully fledged cannot fly in the air, one who does not possess the supernatural powers cannot do anything which is beneficial to the living beings. The blessedness accumulated in one day and night by a person who possess supernatural powers far surpasses the blessedness accumulated in a hundred lives by a

person who does not possess supernatural powers.

Those who wish to gain speedily the provisions for realising Mahabodhi must be diligent so as to be able to possess supernatural powers. This cannot be done by those who are idle and lazy.

Those who have not achieved Samatha, certainly cannot achieve supernatural powers. In order to achieve Samatha one must be diligent to practise it.

If the elements of Samatha are incomplete, one cannot achieve Samadhi even though one practised it for a thousand years with effort. Therefore, one must pay good attention to the elements, such as explained in the Chapter on the Provisions of Samadhi.

Then with one chosen object, one should fix one's mind on the nature of goodness. If by practising Yoga, one could achieve Samatha, one could also thus achieve the supernatural powers.

Without Prajna-paramita-yoga, one cannot clear away the various hindrances, and in order to break the hindrance of passions and delusion and the hindrance of worldly wisdom, one should always practice Prajna-paramita-yoga and other expedient methods.

It is said in the sutras that Prajna without expedience, or expedience without Prajna, is also passion and delusion. Therefore, Prajna and expedience should not be separated.

What is Prajna and what is expedience? In order to answer these questions, I shall now explain the differences between expedience and Prajna.

Besides the Prajna-paramita, the Dana-paramita and all other good provisions, the Buddhas have said, are expediencies.

It is by practising Prajna with the force gained by expedience, and not by practicing non-ego alone, that one can realise Bodhi in a speedy way.

The wisdom of understanding that the Dharmas of Skandha, Dhatu and Ayatana are non-existing and devoid of an intrinsic nature, the Buddhas said, is Prajna.

To say that they were produced from existence, is illogical. To say that they were produced from non-existence, they would be like illusory flowers in the sky. To say that they were produced from both existence and non-existence, it then commits both the two faulty fallacies. To say that they were produced neither from existence nor from non-existence, then they could not be produced at all.

All things are not born by themselves, nor by other things, nor by both themselves and other things, and they are not born without a cause. Therefore, they do not have a self-nature of extrinsic substance.

If one observes all Dharmas, one will see that their substance and nature are neither one nor separate. Therefore, we know decidedly that they are entirely devoid of a self-nature.

In the Sunyata-saptati-karika and the Madhyamaka-sastra, there are many correct arguments for the establishment of the voidness of self nature of all Dharmas. As the expositions are detailed and complicated, I am not going to reiterate them here, and have only briefly stated the above points to facilitate the studies and practises of my school.

To practise the theory of non-ego from the insight that all Dharmas are devoid of a self-nature is to practise Prajna.

From the viewpoint of Prajna, one sees no self-nature in all Dharma, and, from the same correct observation, one sees no self-nature in Prajna too. One should practise this theory without differentiation.

We should know that the three Dhatus were produced from differentiation and have differentiation as their substance and nature. Therefore, to cut off all differentiations for ever is to gain supreme Nirvana. The Blessed One has said, "Differentiation is a great ignorance which causes one to fall into the sea of rebirth. Stay in the Samadhi of non-differentiation, which is like space and voidness". In the Aprabhedavatara-dharani, it is also said, "If the sons of the Buddha in practising the right Dharma, meditate on non-differentiation, they will be able to surpass the hindrances of differentiation and gradually gain the fruit of non-differentiation." After having understand according to the right theory of the holy teaching, that all Dharmas have no birth and have no self-nature, they should then practise the Samadhi of non-differentiation. By practising such Samadhi, one could gradually gain the Stage of Warmth up to the Stage of Extreme Happiness, and even the Bodhi of Buddhahood is not far beyond one's reach.

If one wishes to perform such functions as the elimination of disaster or the increment of happiness by the power of dharanis or to achieve the supernatural powers of the eight great Siddhis of the Talismanic Vase, etc., so as to complete the provisions for Bodhi with the Way of Ease and Joy, or to practise the dharanis as mentioned in the Tantra, one must perform manual and oral services to an Acarya in order to get his baptism, and offer him money and valuables and other offerings, as well as act according to his instructions, so as to make him pleased. As the Teacher is pleased, he will give the baptism of a perfect Acarya, which can purify all sins and make one a competent person to practice Siddhi.

As it was prohibited in the Sakkra-tantra at the time of the Buddha, the Brahmacarins should not receive the esoteric baptism and the wisdom baptism. If a Brahmacarin receives such baptisms, he violates the Brahmacaraya Vinaya rules, as it is against the Buddhas prohibitio, and breaks the rule of the class of excommunication. He will certainly fall into the evil ways of existence and will not gain any achievement. Those who have received baptism from an Acarya and have been initiated into the truth, may listen to and preach on the various Tantras, perform fire-oblation or make a sacrifice without committing any fault.

At the request of Ban-chub hod, the Ven. Dipamkara has briefly stated the Path of Bodhi, according to the teachings recorded in the Sutras and Tantras.

The Bodhipathapradipa is composed by the Ven. Dipamkara Srijnana and translated into Tibetan by him in collaboration with Dge-bahi blo-gros. This treatise is written at the Mtho-Idin Monastery in the Shan-Shun area.

Please refer Graphical Image No: N11.?.1 & 2

Photos: This Buddha Image was built by Alan Wallis when he was a student at R.M.I.T. May the merits of this work bring happiness to all beings.

THE MOUNTEASTERLY
Monday, April 11, 1983

John's in search of that elusive peace.

What do a middle-aged Upwey life assurance salesman and an Indian prince who died 2,500 years ago have in common?

The answer lies in both of these men's search for the absolute spiritual state, Nirvana. John Hughes is a Buddhist: he runs the Buddhist Discussion Centre in Upwey.

Mr. Hughes, who is recognised throughout Australia and the Pan-Buddhist movement throughout the world as a foremost teacher of meditation has just returned from a five-day conference in Bangladesh.

The conference brought representatives from 20 non-aligned nations together to study the teachings and the example the revered Buddhist Scholar, Atisa Dipankar Srijnan who was born in Bangladesh 1,000 years ago.

Formerly East Pakistan, Bangladesh has been a war-torn country for many years and civil order is maintained by strict marshal law.

The Chief marshal and Law Administrator of Bangladesh opened the conference and gave assurances that the State would respect the rights of Buddhists who are a minority religious group in Bangladesh to freedom of religious expression.

At the conference Mr. Hughes conducted a number of meditation sessions. John says that meditation is the main path by which Buddhists achieve a profound sense of self-awareness and inner peace. "By reducing the tensions and conflicts within oneself the individual is then free to reach out to his fellow man. For being free from hate and greed himself he then can be a force for peace and friendliness throughout the world", says John.

John believes deeply that the path of the Enlightened One, the Buddha's way, a way through which modern man can be relieved of the many neuroses that beset the

individual and poison our society.

He describes a neurotic person as one who is unable to care for the well-being and happiness of others: "He can't solve his own inner conflicts so he creates problems for others; what you give out comes back to you."

As a meditation teacher John has had a heavy involvement with drug addicts, helping them through counselling and meditation to kick their habit.

Although there are many levels of enlightenment for Buddhists, most devotees of this religion follow six simple precepts: do not harm or kill even the lowest living creature; give freely and receive gratefully but do not seize by force or fraud; speak the truth because a lie hurts most of all the liar; do not drink alcohol or take drugs because they cloud the mind; and be faithful to marriage vows.

Whilst in Bangladesh John Hughes visited the Australian War Cemetery where he made food offerings to our soldiers lost in World War two.

In August he will visit China at the invitation of the Buddhist Association of China.

While Buddhism is traditionally associated with India, China and South-east Asia, in recent years its influence has spread throughout the world. In Australia today there are over a hundred practising groups.

Please refer Graphical Image No: N11.?1

Photo: JOHN Hughes, director of the Buddhist

Discussion

recent

Centre in Upwey takes his place amongst delegates at

Buddhist Conference in Bangladesh.

Schools Commission Report - Reduction of Racial Prejudice

Part 5 The author of this article, John D. Hughes, Associate Dip. Chem, T.T.T.C., of the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd., 33 Brooking St., Upwey, 3158, Victoria, Australia, is a Buddhist of many years' standing and teaches meditation in the Buddhist tradition at this Centre. He is well by all the Buddhist groups in Australia and has their co-operation in the documentation of each Australian group's teaching.

This project was supported by a grant from the Commonwealth made under an innovation program of the Schools Commission. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission.

THAILAND BUDDHISM - Teacher's Guide

The Maha Makut Foundation has a central Temple staffed by Monks. The parent body is in Bangkok, Thailand. This is the oldest continuous Buddhist Order in the world.

Titles of Monks

"Acharn" means "Meditation Master".

"Bhikkhu" means "beggar" (since Monks beg for their food).

"Phra" is the usual title for Monks.

In modern Thailand, approximately 94% of its population regard themselves as Buddhists. The form of Buddhism is Theravada (as opposed to Mahayana in Japan and China).

The complex set of rules followed by the Monks at Wat Buddharangsee is outside the scope of this Part. Let two examples be mentioned (as well as the Five precepts undertaken by Buddhist lay persons - see Information Sheet 1.4). Monks undertake not to touch women. This means that it is not permitted for a woman to pass a bowl by hand, since contact is "through" the bowl. The Monk places a cloth on the ground, the woman passes the bowl on to the cloth, then the Monk draws the cloth and bowl towards him. As a second example, the Monk does not eat solid food after noon. It is usual for a Monk to have a layman as an attendant since the Monk cannot be in a room alone with a woman.

During the rainy season, Monks do not normally travel, but stay at one place for several months. For example, in 1978, Tan Acharn Boonyarith, Abbot of Wat Buddharangsee stayed in Richmond, Melbourne and taught at the Buddhist Society of Victoria, The Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) and other places during that time.

Phra Khantipalo spends much time at Wat Buddhadhamma Forest Meditation Centre in 220 acres of mostly virgin bush at Ten Mile Hollow, Wiseman's Ferry, N.S.W. The daily program consists of meditation twice daily, together with chanting in both Pali and English.

For history of Wat Buddharangsee see Information Sheet 5.1. For a detailed Monk's life see the letter - Information Sheet 5.2. Wat Buddharangsee issues monthly newsletters. For an example of teaching see Information Sheet 5.3.

5.1 is from Buddhist Studies No.7, January 1977 - Chinese Buddhist Society of Australia. It is recommended that "A Dictionary of Buddhism" by T.O. Ling, Charles Scribner's 1972 SBN 684-12763-6 be used as a reference for the many aspects of Thailand Buddhism.

The slides in Part 1 of Monks in saffron robes illustrate Thailand Buddhists. Many Asians and Australians have been taught by Monks from Thailand. Many Australians have taken robes and study under Tan Acharns. The term "Tan" means "Venerable".

The life-style of the Thailand Acharns is shown by the example of Acharn Chah. See Information Sheet 5.4 This was provided from a private printing supplied by the Ven. Acharn Boonyarith to the Author (J.D.H.).

Chanting in Pali and English can be seen on Information Sheet 7.6. See also tape of Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) and Monash Tape.

5.1 The Opening of Wat Buddharangsee (B. Johnson)

The opening of Wat Buddharangsee on May 25th, 1975, marked the end of five year's work for the "Committee for Establishing a Permanent Headquarters for the Buddhist Monks in the State of New South Wales".

In April, 1968, the Most Venerable Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara of Wat Bovoranives Vihara, Director of the Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya foundation, and his party visited Australia at the request of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales on a fact finding tour to determine whether or not there was sufficient interest in Buddhism in Australia to warrant the establishment of a permanent mission.

On their return to Thailand it was decided that a local committee in Sydney should be formed to look into the costs involved, and to examine the difficulties that might be encountered. This committee was established under the chairmanship of His Excellency Prasong Bunchoem, then Thai Ambassador to Australia. As early as 1969, a shy, quiet Thai woman had indicated that she was interested in the costs in establishing such a mission in Sydney, and when the decisions were made, and the costs known, Khunying Lamun Meenahan gave such a generous donation that the purchase of a suitable property was assured.

To gain first-hand experience with the problems and conditions likely to be met, two monks came to Australia and took up residence in rented premises in 1973. Phra Pariyattikav and Phra Khantipalo were very well received indeed, and this ready and easy acceptance along with the obvious need of their services indicated that there was need of teaching Buddhist monks on a permanent basis.

With the need established, and finance secured, the difficult task of finding a suitable property began.

Of all those examined, the house finally purchased at 88 Stanmore Rd., Stanmore, was the most suitable. In February, 1975, the documents were signed and there was in Australia now a permanent headquarters for Buddhist monks.

The official opening was held on 25th May, 1975 - this date having been chosen to coincide with Visakha Puja Day. To officiate at the opening the most Venerable Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara led a group of eight monks to Sydney. Also present were the two monks at the time resident here and Bhikkhu Tellewatte Rahula, a Sri Lankan monk teaching at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Accompanying the monks was a party of twelve lay persons, including the donor of the finance, Khunying Lamun, and the former Ambassador, Mr. Prasong Bunchoem.

A request had been submitted to His Majesty the King of Thailand for a name for the mission. His Majesty most graciously granted this request, and the name "Wat Buddharangsee", meaning "The Light of the Buddha", was given. His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn of Thailand, who was studying in Australia,

was invited to perform the opening. After a welcome address by His Excellency Mr. Vavadh na Pobe jra, Thailand's Ambassador to Australia, His Royal Highness anointed the brass plate inscribed with the name "Wat Buddharangsee", and then signed a commemorative marble plaque.

Both of these tablets have been fixed to the front of the building.

Following the opening, a service was held in a large marquee erected on the back lawn.

In the evening, Vasakha Puja Celebrations were held, and the house and garden were overflowing with people who had gathered for this historic observance. The traditional candlelight circumambulation was held around the large Buddha image, especially installed outside to allow the large number of people to take part.

Wat Buddharangsee Dhammaduta Work

Wat Buddharangsee at 88 Stanmore Road, Stanmore, N.S.W., has been able to spread interest in and knowledge of the Buddhadhamma, according to the Theravadin tradition, in many directions.

Each morning and evening there is chanting and meditation in the beautifully appointed shrine room at the Wat and a number of Australian Buddhists usually attend the evening sessions.

Each Saturday afternoon Phra Khantipalo was invited to give lectures on Buddhism and its application to modern living at New South Wales University and the Tathagatha Lodge in Sydney.

A large number of secondary school children have visited the Wat during the past months, being especially interested in the Buddha images in the shrine room and the utensils used by the monks in their daily life. These were explained to the children by the resident monks and a short discourse on some of the Buddha's teachings were given to them. Quite a few pertinent questions were asked by the children.

During the months of October, November and December, Phra Khantipalo and Ilse Ledermann led well attended weekend retreats in the Sydney suburb of Cheltenham to teach meditation practice and a basic understanding of Dhamma.

In November Phra Khantipalo also led a 10 day retreat near Nimbin, at the Channon and Ilse Ledermann gave meditation instructions and Dhamma discourses in Melbourne (Vic.) and Adelaide (S.A.). In December she taught at Morpeth near Newcastle and Wauchope near Port Macquarie.

Phra Khantipalo and Ilse Ledermann also spent 3 days at the Down- to - Earth Festival at Bredbo near Canberra, giving 3 daily meditation workshops, which were well attended and some of the participants have since come to attend full length meditation courses offered during January. The whole of that month Phra Khantipalo and Ilse Ledermann spent at the meditation centre at The Channon near Nimbin, instructing about 120 young Australians in meditation practice and the fundamentals of the

Buddha's Teachings. The Meditation Centre, situated in the forest and provided with several kutis and a Sala, proved an excellent site for outer silence and inner contemplation.

Two young Australians left Wat Buddharangsee in the latter part of 1977 to undertake training as Bhikkhus in the forest Wats of the Thammayutika in N.E. Thailand. Another young Australian was given the "Going Forth" as a Samanera (novice) at Wat Buddharangsee by Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara, Abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara, Bangkok. The Somdej visited Sydney enroute to New Zealand, having previously been with other Maha Theras to Java, where he ordained sixty novices. His party also stayed in Perth, W.A. for a few days.

In February, Ilse Ledermann gave a talk in Brisbane on "What the Buddha taught" and a weekend meditation retreat in the Blue Mountains (N.S.W.) at the end of the month. Phra Khantipalo spent February in Perth, W.A., giving a one week course and some talks, followed by a fortnight in Adelaide, S.A., before returning to Wat Buddharangsee in early April.

Courtesy: Ilse Ledermann

LETTER FROM BHIKKHU SUSOBHANO 5.2

August 25th, 1977

MY DAILY LIFE AT WAT BUDDHARANGSEE IN SYDNEY

My Dear Sister,

Seasonal Dharma Greetings,

Thank you for writing letters and encouraging me in my religious life. I appreciate your creative ideas concerning the role of religion in society and the nation as a whole. In fact, your comment on the Buddha's essential teachings on Impermanence, Conflict or Suffering and non-Self in not only worth memorising but also putting them into actual practice in one's daily life. In your last letter you asked me, "How are you spending your days in Sydney?" Well, I feel it is not so easy to answer your question. Anyhow, here in this letter, I shall try to give you a general picture of how my days fly by in Sydney.

First of all, let me introduce the monastery I am living in and serving. It is called "WAT BUDDHARANGSEE" meaning the "Monastery of the Buddha's Radiance". It was founded in 1975 by the Mahamakut foundation of Thailand in co-operation with Buddhists in Australia, especially those residing in and around Sydney. The Wat is situated at 88 Stanmore Road, Stanmore, N.S.W., 2048, Australia. It is about 20 minutes drive from Sydney Airport. There are two houses in the monastery: one with a Beautiful shrine-Room, a library and five other rooms for use, the other house at the back is for lay-attendants and visitors. In between the houses is a beautiful garden with a variety of native flowers and plants. Although the Wat is not as convenient as most monasteries I have seen and stayed in Thailand yet many people often find it an oasis in the middle of bustling Sydney City. I think, when you come to visit us you

will find more about Wat Buddharangsee for yourself than I can put into words here.

At present here are three Bhikkhus residing during this year's Rains-Residence. Venerable Phra Maha Samai, originally from Laos is the Abbot, Venerable Phra Khantipalo, a famous Theravada Buddhist writer is from England, and me from Nepal you know already. All of us became Bhikkhus in Thailand and have been sent here to help Australian Buddhists understand Buddhism better, especially the Theravada tradition.

MORNING:

My daily life at Wat Buddharangsee in Sydney is simple, which is suitable for the monastic life I am leading. Usually I wake up at 5.00 a.m., pay my homage to the Buddha three times and then prepare myself to go to join the group meditation practice from 5.30 to 6.30 a.m. It is followed by 30 minutes of morning chanting.

You might be curious or interested to know about what "meditation practice and chanting" mean. Well, they might mean different things to different people. Let me tell you what those terms mean to me, each in turn. For the Buddhist people, "Meditation Practice" which is the translation of the Pali term "Kammathana" meaning a "Place of Foundation to Work in". Since it is related with higher development in Buddhist life, meditation practice reminds us of our duty towards Mind Cultivation that leads one to the Freedom of Mind.

Please pardon me sister for using big phrases like "mind cultivation and Freedom of mind" in this letter. I could not find better and simpler terms that can cover all the meanings as these words do. Sorry about that, but as you know that great religious men are concerned in finding the true meaning of "life", they have to seek a proper way to follow. Our teacher, the Buddha, who lived around 6th Century B.C. in India is one of them. At the age of 35 the Buddha discovered the Middle Way leading to freedom of mind and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. He then travelled for 45 years teaching the way to troubled people out of Compassion, so that those willing to be trained and follow his instructions would also be able to be master of their minds and make an end of suffering.

Here I shan't tell you all about meditation practise in detail. Let us just take it as a thing that each and every one should practice every day for a few minutes. Its purpose is to experience calmness in one's mind here and now. The first stage of practice is quite simple. What you have to do is sit still, keeping your back erect and concentrate on a given object, say for instance, watching one's breath as it comes in and goes out of the nostrils naturally. It is something like learning the ABC when we are young. Just as voluminous literature is written using only the 26 letters, so with this very means of mindfulness of breathing one can reach higher attainments, even to liberation. The Buddha often instructed his disciples saying that the frequent practice of mindfulness of breathing is of great fruit, of great result. So I hope, Sister, you will try it if you have not. But if you have been doing it for quite a while, then you should continue to practice it as part of your daily life.

Coming to the term "chanting", it means to chant or recollect the Virtue of the Buddha, the Enlightened Teacher, Dharma, the path to Enlightenment and Sangha, the

holy Community of the Buddha's noble disciples. The chanting is done in Pali verses. Strictly speaking, we Buddhists do not believe in "praying and worship", for just believing is not enough for us: it does not solve our problems. We do believe in actual practice so that one is benefited without delay. By chanting these great virtues, one is inspired to do noble deeds doing which one protects oneself from falling into miserable states.

After the morning meditation and chanting, I usually go to sweep the front yard of the Wat. I like doing this. The fallen leaves on the ground remind me of some facts inherent in a human's life. Just like a leaf of a tree might fall down on the ground because of being old, or diseased or blown away by a strong wind, so also is the life of the body. Life is uncertain: it might come to an end at any time and place. In our society life is becoming increasingly complex. The benefits of scientific and technological developments are questionable. The Buddha says "Beings live to die". So leaves sprout on the tree to fall down sooner or later turn to dust once again. But the death of a man's body is not an end to what he has done when he was alive. He has to reap the fruit of his Karma, intentional actions. Wholesome acts bring agreeable results, whereas unwholesome acts bear painful results. "The result of an ordinary man's past deed follows him beyond the grave yard", an ancient saying goes.

Between 7.00 and 8.00 a.m. I take breakfast with two above mentioned holy brothers. Here in Sydney I do not go on alms round to collect food as I used to do in Thailand. We have an attendant and quite a number of strong Buddhist supporters who provide us with our daily necessities such as robes, food, shelter, and medicine. We are, indeed, well looked after.

The work from 8.00 to 11.00 a.m. varies according to the day. There might be visitors coming to visit us, or sometimes we are invited to a supporter's house. If there is no special work to do, then I withdraw into my room and look at something to do. It might be Dharma books or writing or other personal works. Between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m. I must finish my meal. As a Bhikkhu I am not allowed to take food after midday. The forenoon meal may vary on different days. We have supporters of different nationalities such as Thai, Burmese, Ceylonese, Chinese, Laotian, Australian etc.. It is, therefore, natural to have variety of food which is quite alright with me. I have been used to different foods since I left Nepal six years ago.

Buddhist people coming to offer food and so on to the Bhikkhus in a monastery as a part of their practice of generosity, is a common thing. They also request Bhikkhus to give them five principal precepts to observe. Bhikkhus chant and bless them before and after the lunch for their happiness, long life and prosperity.

AFTERNOON:

Since I am the youngest of three Bhikkhus staying at the Wat, I have more time of my own. Except when there is something to do jointly or assigned me specially to do as work in the afternoon, I go to my room again and spend the day at will. If the body needs a rest, I take a little nap. If not then I look at my weekly timetable. I have arranged it in such a way that I might be keeping in touch with the languages so far I have been interested in or are familiar with. In between my studies, I often practice meditation by my self. I believe it helps my study and spiritual growth as well.

You might perhaps have noticed how a Bhikkhu's life is different from that of a householder who has to look after the family. It is true and is meant to be so. The Buddha has shown and laid down a gradual and progressive monastic lifestyle for Bhikkhus, that is to say, a Bhikkhu has to lead his life within the reasonable boundary of monastic rules and disciplines. Besides, he is expected to control his six senses, practice moderation in food and lead an energetic life guided by mindfulness and heedfulness with regard to body, feeling, mind and Dharmas, mind-objects. He should live a simple life with the least disturbance but advancing one's insight development. He strives to liberate his mind from mental pollution's like greed, hatred and delusion, so that eventually he will secure his final deliverance.

The life of a Bhikkhu is indeed harmless all round. But it is not likely that the majority of people can lead such an ideal life. I myself often wonder whether this journey would be successfully carried out by me. Human weaknesses and shortcomings are still strong. I think you understand what I mean to say. We all have a lot of things to learn and work for.

At 5 p.m. I usually take my bath. The weather in Sydney is not hot. I often think of how often we need to have an "outward cleaning" when there is so much to clean on the inside. After the bath I have some soft drink. It might be a plain cup of coffee or tea or a glass of fruit juice.

NIGHT:

In the evening I go to join in the evening chanting which begins at 6.30 p.m. A senior Bhikkhu will lead it. The evening chanting is a little bit longer than that of the morning. We chant some discourse of the Buddha too. Between 7.15 and 8.15 p.m. we sit in the group meditation once again. During meditation sitting everyone has to keep quiet and still as much as possible because disturbing other's peacefulness is a way of accumulating unwholesome deeds.

Often there is a discussion on the Dharma after the meditation. It usually concentrates on how to overcome difficulties during one's practice. Someone from the group brings a cup of tea to us. We are separated by 10 p.m. Before going to sleep I read some teachings of the Buddha. Then I pay homage to the Triple Gem facing a Buddha image placed in front of the pillow. I also practice Metta-bhavana, Loving-kindness, towards all beings. After this I lie down to sleep keeping in mind to wake up at 5.00 a.m. the following morning. The room is quiet. You can imagine how well I sleep!

So far I have written here a short description of how I spend my days at Wat Buddharangsee in Sydney. Besides, I frequently go to join Dharma classes outside of the monastery. It inspires me a lot. I was also taken to see some beautiful country around Sydney.

Please do write to me now and then, and give my best wishes to all the members of your family. Here I am keeping quite well. All the best to you. Until next letter, goodbye, Sister.

May you ever grow in the Dharma,

* * * * *

WAT BUDDHARANGSEE - The Heart of Buddhism. 5.3

There are few people who go through life without some troubles, of mind or of body. Everyone feels the touch of pain some time in their lives; either they are sick, or old age is painful, or they fear the pain of dying, death and what follows.

But many people do not know that if only they took some interest in the state of their minds, much pain and suffering, especially mental troubles, would be cleared away. We hurry to a doctor when the body is sick but when the mind is sick with greed and desire, anger and aversion. or with dull delusion, we do little or nothing. Perhaps we think that this state of the mind is natural and nothing can be done about it. If so, we must go on suffering.

But it is difficult to train one's mind for the mind is swiftly changing. We need to start our training by taking in hand our actions of body and speech. When we train body and speech with the moral precepts which one may undertake, then one can train the mind well in meditation.

This training of mind, speech and body is the teaching of the Buddha, the Awakened One, he who awoke from the sleep of defilements of the mind, greed, aversion, and delusion, to become the Buddha, in India, over 2500 years ago. He was born in a royal family as the heir to the throne, but he saw that luxury and the pleasures of the world merely cover up the troubles of people; they do not cure them. So he gave up his palace, luxury and family and wandered in the forest to look for the way to cure his own mind and to know with certainty why all beings have to experience troubles. After rejecting bodily mortification as the way and parting from various teachers with whom he had stayed, he found the answer within himself by sitting in meditation. The Buddha, the essence of Enlightenment, is the first of the Three Treasures in which a Buddhist has confidence.

For forty-five years the Buddha, walking all over North India, taught the Way that he had discovered in himself. He taught it to anyone who was interested to listen. Those who were interested to listen soon wished to practise, because they saw that this Way was practical and thorough. This Way is called Dhamma and consists of three parts: Moral Conduct, Meditation and Wisdom.

Moral conduct is the governing of bodily and speech actions. It is because few people do this that the world is so full of strife - quarrels, violence, strikes, rebellions and wars. When people do not understand that desires and aversions give rise to actions such as killing and taking what is not given, then they act as they please but they cause themselves and others to suffer. So the Buddha laid down Five Precepts as the basic moral code; each being phrased like this: "I undertake the rule of training to refrain from.....", and the five things to refrain from are: "killing living creatures; taking what is not given; wrong conduct in sexual pleasures; false speech; distilled and fermented intoxicants which are the cause of carelessness".

When a person tries to keep these precepts, then he can make an effort with meditation. Meditation means concentrating the mind and ridding it of wandering thoughts. This is to calm the mind down by concentrating on one subject without discursiveness, usually an aspect of one's body or mind. Increasing concentration and calm bring about peaceful mind and insight.

Acharn Chah 5.4

Acharn Chah was born into a large and comfortable family in a rural village in the Lao area of Northeast Thailand. He ordained as a novice in early youth and reaching the age of twenty, took higher ordination as a bhikkhu (monk). Beyond the fourth grade education standard in the village schools, he studied some basic Dharma and scriptures as a young monk. Later he practiced meditation under the guidance of several of the local forest teachers in the Lao-speaking ascetic tradition. He walked for a number of years in the style of an ascetic monk, sleeping under the trees and in the forest, and spent a short but enlightening period with Acharn Mun, about the most famous and powerful Thai-Lao meditation master of this century. After many years of travel and practice, he returned to settle in a thick forest grove near the village of his birth. This place was uninhabited, known as a place of cobras, as he said, the perfect location for a forest monk. Around Acharn formed a large monastery as more and more monks, nuns and lay people came to hear his teaching and stay on with him. Now there are disciples teaching in more than a dozen mountain and forest branch temples throughout Northeast Thailand.

On entering Wat Ba Pong one is apt to first encounter monks drawing water from a well, and a sign on the path which says: "You there, be quiet! We're trying to meditate." Although there is a group meditation and chanting twice a day and usually an evening talk by Acharn Chah, the heart of the meditation is the way of life. Monks work sewing robes, sweeping the forest paths and live extremely simply. Monks here follow the ascetic precepts limiting meals to one a day and limiting their number of possessions, robes and living places. Monks live in individual cottages spread throughout the forest and practice their walking meditation on cleared paths under the trees.

Discipline is extremely strict leading to a simple and harmoniously regulated community life and cutting away at the ego needs for outward display of individuality.

Acharn Chah welcomes Westerners and more than a dozen have lived and studied with him, often for many months or years. Wisdom is a way of living and being, and Acharn Chah has preserved the special simple life style of the monks as organised by the Buddha for learning Dhamma today.