

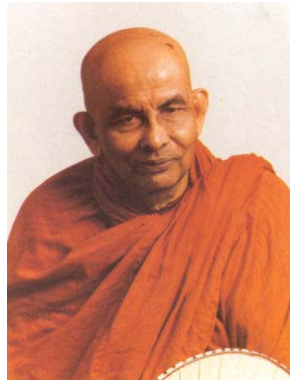
**THE
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*Quarterly Newsletter of the
Washington
Buddhist Vihara
Winter 2007*

-Dedication-

This issue of The Washington Buddhist is dedicated to the founder of the Washington Buddhist Vihara Society, late Most Venerable Madihe Pannasiha Maha Nayaka Thera, in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Society.



The most worshipful Maha Nayaka Thera Ven. Madihe Pannasiha pioneered the establishment of the Washington Buddhist Vihara, in the year 1965. His intention was to guide the forlorn modern generation, through the wisdom of the Buddha's Dhamma, along the way to world peace and to the ultimate peace of Nirvana.



N E W S



The

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L E T T E R

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Weekly

Sunday	9.30 a.m.	Sunday Dhamma School for Children (meets every other Sunday through the academic year)
	7.00 p.m.	Meditation (Washington Mindfulness Community)
Wednesday	6.30 p.m.	Yoga Class
	7.30 p.m.	Meditation Class (Metta or Loving Kindness Meditation)
Thursday	7.00 p.m.	Meditation Class (ZEN)
Friday	7.00 p.m.	Sutta Study Class (every other Friday)
Saturday	7.00 p.m.	Meditation Class (Anapanasati or Breathing Meditation)
By Arrangement	By arrangement	Sinhala Class for adults

Sunday Dhamma School

A Sunday Dhamma School for Children is conducted in English on every other Sunday in the Fall and Spring semesters. Topics of study and discussion include the life of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Arahats, and Jataka tales. Please call Bhante Dhammasiri at (202) 723-0773 or Email Udaya at uranawaka@hotmail.com or Romesh at romesh70@hotmail.com for schedules. The Dhamma School is currently in session through Spring semester 2007.

Pictured below: Bhante Vidura, the principle of the Sunday School, conducts a puja.



Notes and News: Kathina 2006



The Kathina Ceremony for 2006 was held on October 15. It was sponsored by Mr. Sanath and Mrs. Lalita Gunatilake, and Mrs. Aruna Denipitiya and their friends. The ceremony was well-attended by many members of the Washington Buddhist Vihara, Buddhists from the Washington metropolitan area and other states, and well-wishers of Buddhism, who offered gifts to the Vihara and to whom was transferred much merit. We thank all those in attendance for their kind support.

Following is a photo journal of the 2006 Kathina ceremony.



The Most Venerable Batuwahene Buddharakkhita declares the opening of the new shrine room by offering the first puja. Bhante Buddharakkhita is Chief Sanghanayaka of Southern Sri Lanka. This kind monk is very generous, well-loved and respected by all religious communities in Sri Lanka for his hospitality and kind attention to all pilgrims.

Notes and News



Most Ven. Buddharakkhita Nayaka Thera, Ven. Akuretiye Nanda Maha Thera, and Ven. Galayaye Piyabassi Nayaka Thera of Kingsbury Buddhist Temple of London are pictured in this photo.

Seated to the far left is His Excellency the Ambassador, Mr. Bernard Gunatilayke.



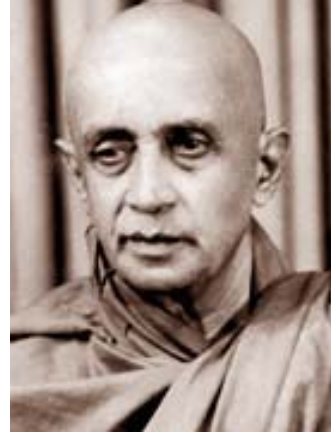
The main sponsors of the Kathina Ceremony, Mr. Sanath and Mrs. Lalita Gunatilake, and Mrs. Aruna Denipitiya, participating in the events. The sponsors, headed by

Mr. Sanath Gunatilake, did a memorable and wonderful job by taking care of the resident monks for the whole three months prior to the ceremony.

Notes and News

Venerable Ampitiya Sri Rahula Nayaka Thera,

who established the Bhikkhu Training Center at Maharagama, Sri Lanka, in 1958 with Madihe Pannasiha Maha Nayake Thera, was born on Christmas Day, December 25, 1914. While Venerable Madihe Pannasiha Maha Nayake Thera was busy spreading the dharma nationally and internationally, it was left to this venerable monk to take care of the day-to-day affairs at Maharagama, thus forming the mainstay of the Sasana Sevaka Society. He trained many hundreds of monks who have established temples in many countries such as Australia, USA, Canada, England, and so on. Our President, Bhante Dhammasiri, was ordained as the first of these monks in 1960. Venerable Sri Rahula is now the chief monk at Maharagama, where he continues to reside. The Washington Buddhist Vihara wishes him a very happy birthday, good health, well-being and happiness.



2007 - Happy New Year to All Our Members and Supporters – 2007

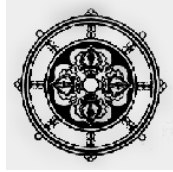
The annual New Year's Day Celebration at the Washington Buddhist Vihara will be held on January 1, 2007.

On this day, there will be a special milk rice Pooja and chanting of blessing sutras for our Dayakas, friends, well-wishers, and the whole world. The celebration convenes at 9:30.



Finding a Place From Which to Start

By Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi



When one sets out to choose a religion, how does one make the right choice? Different religions offer us such different perspectives on the nature of human life, and such different paths of practice, that it is impossible to find a unifying scheme capable of reconciling their opposing claims. Yet so much depends on the choice we make. Most religions tell us that the world is the creation of an all-powerful God, and they say that if we want to find salvation we must accept this God in faith and love him with all our being. The problem we face, however, is that different religions describe their God quite differently, in ways that are not mutually compatible, and we have no means at our disposal for determining which description is true and which is false; it is also possible that they are all unacceptable. Some religions teach that we live but a single life on earth and then spend eternity in another realm depending on how we behaved in this life; other religions teach that we pass through many lives, in this world and in other worlds, until we attain liberation from the chain of rebirths.

Buddhism is a non-theistic religion that teaches rebirth. It does not accept any concept of a creator God, yet it teaches that we migrate from life to life, in the human realm and in other realms, depending on our karma, our intentional actions. When I teach the Dhamma, I do not hesitate to teach these basic tenets of Buddhist doctrine. It is not unusual for newcomers to Buddhism to approach me and raise the question about how much of Buddhist doctrine they must accept before they can integrate Buddhist practices into their daily lives. Do they have to believe in rebirth? Do they have to believe in heavens and hells? Do they have to believe in gods and hungry ghosts?

I never urge others to uncritically take on board the whole package of classical Buddhist doctrines and beliefs. For me, these teachings of Buddhism are not dogmas that one has to accept blindly. In fact, I usually appreciate it more when the person who comes to me expresses honest doubts and reservations. Then I know that this person is ready to examine the teachings with full earnestness, and once they do gain confidence in the Dhamma, it is likely that this confidence will be firm and steady.

The Buddha, too, didn't expect those who came to him for guidance to surrender to him and place unquestioning faith in everything he said. Faith is critical to progress on the Buddhist path, for it is the seed out of which all wholesome qualities grow, the light that guides us through the darkness of doubt and confusion. But for faith to germinate and send down healthy roots, it has to be planted in nourishing soil, and the proper soil for faith is not

a mind that has been covered into belief by dogmatic demands, by fear of punishment and hopes of rewards in a blissful afterlife. The Buddha treated those who inquired from him as rational adults capable of arriving at informed decisions. Instead of using threats and bribes, he appealed to two capacities readily available to all of us, capacities that we can draw upon to find a suitable starting point for resolving our spiritual doubts. One is the ability to reflect on our own experience, to evaluate our own experience honestly and lucidly. The other is the ability to extrapolate from our experience, that is, to draw inferences from what lies within the range of our immediate experience to wider areas of life that are relevant to us but not directly accessible to observation.

The starting point for all reflection in Buddhism is a universal urge that lies at the bottom of our being: the desire to avoid pain and suffering and to find happiness and well-being. To acknowledge this truth does not require that we assent to any doctrines that appeal to matters beyond range of our own experience. We need only look into our own minds, and it will then become clear that the desire to avoid pain and suffering, and to achieve happiness and true well-being, underlies all our thought and action. It is this desire that shapes our lives, that comes to expression in our plans and projects, our visions and undertakings; it is this aspiration for freedom from sorrow and the realization of happiness that becomes diffused in a thousand hopes and fears.

Beginning with this observation, we can then translate our basic aim into a pair of questions: (1) What can we do to avoid suffering? And: (2) What can we do to achieve happiness? When we posit these questions, we can see that most of the time we are, in fact, acting to avoid suffering and to achieve happiness. Yet, if ordinary unguided actions, based on spontaneous instinct and calculated self-interest, automatically guaranteed us the happiness we so deeply desire, we wouldn't be discontented with our mundane lives or feel a need for spiritual guidance. Our problem is that our natural, everyday actions don't fulfill our desire for deep and superior happiness. To the contrary, they either keep us tethered to dull, wearisome routines or, if we behave unwisely, plunge us into conflict and misery. Therefore the questions that we frame have to be expressed more precisely. What we have to ask is: (1) What should we do to avoid long-term harm and suffering? And: (2) What should we do to achieve long-term happiness and well-being?

This reformulation differs from the previous one in three respects. First, it qualifies the suffering that we want to avoid and the happiness we want to attain as "long-term," thereby indicating that what we seek is not merely transitory gratification, which may quickly be followed by bitterness and regrets, but stable, solid, and lasting benefits. Second, it links "suffering" with "harm," indicating that what we seek to avoid is not only felt pain but also personal damage, which may include damage to the moral fabric of our character. And third, it links "happiness" with "well-being," indicating that what we

want to achieve is not only a state of felt pleasure, a peak of euphoria, but a state of inner well-being secure against future loss.

Once we put the questions in these terms, the Buddha asks us to use our own experience as a guide for determining the right answers. He first tells us where we shouldn't turn for answers. In the well-known Kalama Sutta (Anguttara Nikaya III 65), he advises us not to look to authoritative traditions, to lineages of teachers, to collections of sacred texts. This does not mean that traditions, lineages, and sacred texts can't give us helpful answers. It doesn't mean that they are wrong. It just means that they aren't insusceptible to doubt. The traditions may have been handed down impeccably, but they could be wrong. The texts might be regarded as sacred, as divine revelation, but they might be the work of human authors and their teachings might be far from holy. The Buddha also tells us not to rely on abstract logic and reasoning. Again, this doesn't mean that logic and reasoning are useless. It just means that the answers they give will always be open to doubt. A chain of reasoning can be flawless as it proceeds from premises to conclusions; but the premises are axiomatic, taken for granted, and they might be questionable. Or the movement from one step of reasoning to the next might be faulty. Hence, even when employed with utmost skill, logic can lead to contradictory conclusions. Further, the Buddha tells us not to be swept away by impressive speakers and charismatic teachers. This doesn't mean that we can't learn from others, or that the guidance given by spiritual teachers is inherently untrustworthy. It is just that different

teachers, equally impressive and charismatic, might teach different things, which each claims to be the highest truth; they might give different answers to the most critical spiritual questions. We are looking, however, for an unshakable platform on which to stand, for some truths that are beyond doubt and questioning.

What we want to find is a secure and solid base upon which we can establish faith; we don't want to begin with a demand for faith. The Buddha therefore says that we should begin with things that we can know for ourselves, and take that as our starting point. When we know for ourselves what leads to our harm and suffering, then we will know what we have to avoid; when we know for ourselves what leads to our well-being and happiness, then we will know what we have to pursue and develop.

To be sure, the Buddha doesn't leave us to our own devices. Nor does he simply give us a meditation technique to practice and tell us that we don't have to think of any wider issues but just direct our minds to our meditation subject. The Buddha does not ground the spiritual life upon mere technique, but sets technique within a context, and to find an appropriate context for the technique we have to begin by clarifying the aim of our practice.

To help us get clear about our aim, the Buddha poses certain questions that steer our thinking into the proper channels. These questions do not take us into the mists of metaphysical speculation, into theories about the origin

and ending of the world. They do not make any appeals for belief in things that lie beyond the range of observation. They take us, rather, towards an examination of our own minds and reflection on our own actions. The questions he asks -- or wants us to ask ourselves -- relate to intentionality, the fundamental motives of thought, emotion, and action. The Buddha wants us to ask ourselves whether, when greed, hatred, and ignorance arise in our minds, they arise for our good or for our harm. The answer, naturally, will be that greed, hatred, and ignorance arise for our harm. They might give us pleasure, but what they bring is a transient pleasure, which may well be followed by long-term harm. We can see that they arise for our own harm, and they also drive us to act in ways that bring harm and suffering to others. The degree of harm and suffering they cause may not be particularly obvious in every individual instance, but when we consider the consequences of greed, hatred, and ignorance functioning as motives for action on a global scale, the danger becomes staggering. On reflection, we can see that actions springing from greed, hatred, and ignorance can be terribly destructive. Indeed, such reflection would reveal to us very much the world that leaps out at us from our daily news reports: a world afflicted by senseless violence and brutality, by agonizing wars, by reckless over-exploitation of our natural resources; a world, moreover, in which those most responsible for harm shamelessly resort to mendacious stratagems to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. But if we can see this when the picture is blown up globally, we can then return to any given instance of greed, hatred, and delusion, and recognize that it is from

these small seeds, these unwholesome driving forces of thought and action, that terrible calamities arise and bring so much misery. We can then further realize that if we are to secure our own well-being and happiness, and to promote the well-being and happiness of others, it is necessary for us to restrain and overcome our own greed, hatred, and delusion. This then becomes the first requirement of a spiritual path.

The next series of questions the Buddha poses brings to light the opposite side of the mind. He asks us to consider whether, when non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion arise in our minds, they arise for our good or for our harm. These three terms, formulated in the negative, are synonymous with generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom. When we reflect, we can see that generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom arise for our welfare and happiness. When we are able to give freely to others, out of concern for their well-being, we experience lightness and peace, freedom from the grip of attachment. When our hearts rise above anger and hatred and radiate loving-kindness, a genuine wish for the welfare and happiness of others, we experience joy and harmony. When our minds are illuminated with the light of understanding, when we see and understand true principles, we experience brightness and clarity. We can then realize that if we are to secure our own well-being and happiness, and to promote the well-being and happiness of others, it is necessary for us to cultivate generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom. This then becomes the second requirement of a spiritual path.

Thus, we can understand, right here and now, that greed, hatred, and delusion are the roots of harm and suffering, while non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion -- or generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom -- are the roots of happiness and well-being. On this basis we can be certain that whatever else we require from a spiritual teaching, whatever other principles it might teach, it must take as its principal aim the elimination of greed, hatred, and delusion, and it must esteem such values as generosity, love, and wisdom.

For the Buddha, this understanding does not yet mark the achievement of right view, the view that leads onward towards the ultimate goal of his teaching, liberation from suffering. Right view begins with an acceptance of the principle of karma, which holds that our actions inevitably bring their fruits or results, and this principle depends upon acceptance of its corollary, the idea of rebirth. But an understanding of the immediately visible consequences of the unwholesome and wholesome roots offers a starting point for placing confidence in the Buddha as one who teaches a doctrine that is good and beneficial in all respects, a teaching that cannot lead astray. Once one gains confidence in the Buddha by examining those aspects of his teaching that come into range of one's immediate experience, one can then place trust in him as one who speaks truthfully about things that lie beyond range of one's immediate experience. And on the basis of this trust one can devote oneself wholeheartedly to the practice of his teaching.

But even the final goal of the Buddha's teaching is continuous with the certitude that we achieve as our starting point. At the beginning, through reflection, we gain confidence that a worthy spiritual discipline must be one that leads to the overcoming of greed, hatred, and delusion. The final goal of the Buddha's path is Nibbana, and in the suttas we find Nibbana defined precisely as "the extinguishing of greed, the extinguishing of hatred, the extinguishing of delusion." The practice of the Dhamma is a gradual process of removing greed, hatred, and delusion, of replacing them with greater generosity, with greater loving-kindness and compassion, with greater wisdom and understanding. The confidence that comes by gaining faith in the Buddha is the confidence that it is possible to eradicate greed, hatred, and delusion entirely. With faith, one takes up the practice of the Buddha's path in the confidence that this path leads to the end of greed, hatred, and delusion.



Venerable Thalalle Chandakitthi: A Paragon of Altruism

By Venerable Upananda Thero Dedunupitiye



Buddhism is a way of emotional well-being on a daily basis which eventually leads to the permanent well-being of Nirvana. Acting for the well-being of others while maintaining one's own well-being through the practice of Muditta (altruism) is integral to daily Buddhist practice. Venerable Thalalle Chandakitthi Thero is a paragon of altruism. Altruism is the opposite of jealousy.

Born Jagath Chandrakirithi Gajanayake on February 27, blessed with a unique karmic fortune to have devout, respectable Buddhists of Mr. S. H. Gajanayake and Mrs. Sarna Gajanayake of Talalla, Matara, Sri Lanka, and a brother and a sister of the same calibre, he got ordained a Buddhist monk at age 12 on September 25, 1988, at the Matara branch of the Mahagarama Siri Vajirajana Monastic Training Institute located at Maddewatta, under the tutelage of the late Most Venerable Madihe Sri Pannaseeha Mahanayake Thero and the Most Venerable Ampitiye Sri Rahula Mahathero. Upon completion of his mandatory monastic training he received his Upamsapada (full ordination) on June 26, 1996. Since his novitiate ordination the prestigious Bhikkhu Training Centre has been his place of spirituality.

Right from his childhood Venerable Chandakitthi would outshine children in his village and fellow monks as well. Most obviously, he has been blessed with the three essential positive impacts of life that Buddha has shown: past life (samsaric), genetic (parental) and social, which makes a magnificent personality. He could earn the highest monastic academic credential of Pundit Degree in Oriental Studies at tender age 19. Setting another example of wisdom, he earned his M.A. in Pali and Buddhist Studies at age 21. It is absolutely evergreen in his memories that he worked as a monastic teacher for eight years at the Monastic Training Institute teaching Buddhism and Buddhist source languages even to students elder to him, himself being very young. Probably the best organized Buddhist youth retreat in Sri Lanka, Tharuna Seela Samadanaya of his Centre achieved incredible success during Venerable Chandakitthi's invaluable service to it as its chief organizer for eight years. It was the late Mahanayake Thero who selected him for this responsible post.

An untiring Buddhist monk motivated with altruism, Venerable Chandakitthi would never miss his daily intense meditation practice despite a busy daily work schedule. He enhanced his unshaken nature of the mind amid vicissitudes of life, during his rigorous meditation practice at the Vajirarama Forest Hermitage at Bowlawatta, Kandy. The Mahanayake Thero and his monastic teachers would unreservedly praise him for his ability of fulfilling missions he is assigned to, among which are his service-in-residence to the Washington Buddhist Vihara, USA, and Narada Mandira on Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. After every mission, he is jubilant, since he never fails.

Marking a turning point in his social service, Venerable Chandakitthi inaugurated his Dhammadipa Foundation in 2004, through which he has put his altruism into practice in various ways, among which are housing projects for tsunami victims, and an annual donation of a house to a poor family in memory of the late Mahanayake Thero on the latter's birthday. Deeply concerned with unfortunate sanitary conditions of ten impoverished families in Udawalawa area, he built toilet facilities for them. These are ongoing projects. His future projects include a scholarship program under which impoverished schoolchildren will receive funding for their studies and educational expenses, a book bank for medical students in Sri Lanka with heavy economic burdens, which would be a collection of textbooks and other relevant books used in medical schools, and a solar power project for a remote, impoverished village at Deniyaya. His effort in educating schoolchildren to be spiritual through his meditation retreats and dialogues Sri Lanka-wide has been an eye-opener to educators.

Venerable Chandakitthi has visited Canada a number of times. Every time he is in Canada, most people ask him the question, "How soon will you come back?" He puts into action what he preaches. Altruism is the secret of his happiness and power to serve the world. You can share his altruism by funding his services to humanity. He can be reached at chandakitthi@yahoo.com or at (94) 11-5264117.

Reprinted from the October, 2006, Sri Lankan Reporter. Bhante Chandakitthi recently resided at the Washington Buddhist Vihara where he gave many dhamma talks and performed many good works.



ON LOCATION: Organ Dana

By Asoka Bandarage

When my mother suddenly became ill, I rushed to her side at the hospital in Kandy, the pre-colonial capital of Sri Lanka, where she was being operated on. It was a close call, but thanks to the excellent skills and care of Dr. Harischandra, the country's leading kidney surgeon, my mother's life was saved. During that trip, when I spent most of my time in the public hospital, my eyes were opened to a spectrum of human pain, suffering, compassion, and generosity in a more compelling way than during all my previous visits home.

An endless stream of patients and families pour into the kidney unit of the Kandy hospital every day. It is the only hospital in the country that provides free kidney dialysis and transplants; thus, the vast majority of the patients who come there are poor-so poor that many may forego procedures and medications that require payment. The dialysis patients have to come in several times a week. Too weak to travel alone, they come with family members. Frequently, after dialysis, some patients and their loved ones sleep together on the hospital floors, as there are not enough beds.

In some countries, selling human organs is a lucrative business. It is reported that in India and Egypt, a poor person can sell a kidney for \$10,000 to \$15,000. In Sri Lanka, sale of kidneys is officially banned. In order to deter buying and selling, kidney donations are accepted only from relatives and members of the clergy. In Sri Lanka, there is high

demand; the prevalence of kidney disease in rural agricultural regions has lead many health officials to suspect a link to the use of certain pesticides already banned in the West. Thus, patients can wait years for a kidney, and many die in great pain before one becomes available.

In response, many Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have come forward to donate their kidneys. More than fifty monks have donated kidneys in the Kandy hospital alone over the last five years, about twenty-five percent of all donations in that period. These monks are young and healthy males in the prime of their lives. Like most of the Buddhist clergy in the country, they come from relatively poor villages. Yet, as monks, they have received the traditional Buddhist training in the cultivation of nonattachment, compassion, and generosity.

I had the good fortune to speak with a number of these donor monks in my mother's hospital ward. From our conversations, I learned that the monks themselves go in search of the needy, responding to newspaper ads calling for kidney donors. They choose to undergo the extensive tests and painful surgery without expecting fame or fortune in return.

Max Weber, the German sociologist, wrote that Buddhism is an “other worldly” religion with little relevance to the modern world. The late Pope John Paul II wrote that Buddhism was too concerned with suffering and the negative aspects of life, and contemporary sociologists and anthropologists have frequently presented Sri Lankan monks as ethno-religious fundamentalists, opposed to reconciliation with the secessionist

minority Tamils. Even new Buddhists in the West often depict themselves as progressive practitioners as opposed to the ritualistic and dogmatic Asian Buddhists. What is frequently overlooked, however, in these Western reflections on Buddhism in Asia, is the deep acculturation of Buddhist values in the daily lives of the people-and among the community of monks in particular. In fact, the compassionate and selfless acts of the kidney donor monks in Sri Lanka have become so commonplace that they are now taken for granted, scarcely making the news.

One night, toward the end of her stay in the hospital, my mother's ward was transformed into a spiritual abode. A young monk was awaiting kidney removal surgery the next morning, and several monks from his temple arrived to chant pirith, or traditional Buddhist blessings. Sitting on chairs covered with white cloth, the monks chanted sutras melodiously; the patients listened, lying on their beds while the hospital staff and patients' families lay on the floor.

After the chanting, a white thread was cut into small pieces and bound around our wrists, a symbol of our human connection and the protection that comes from living by the dharma.

Asoka Bandarage, Ph.D., has written extensively on Buddhism, Sri Lanka, and international development. She is a professor of Asian Studies and Government at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She is also a strong supporter of the Washington Buddhist Vihara. The above article first appeared in Tricycle: The Buddhist Review and is reprinted here with the gracious written permission of the author.



**Message from
Venerable Maharagama Dhammasiri Maha Thero
(Siri Vajiranana Dharmayatanadhikari,
President, Washington Buddhist Vihara and the Chief Sangha Nayaka of
North America.)**

May the blessings of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha be with the Sasana Sevaka Samitiya on its golden jubilee celebrations.

Fifty years ago Sasana Sevaka Samitiya - with the Late Mr.D.L.F.Pedris as the first president- was established by the Late-Most Venerable Madihe Pannasiha Mahanayake Thero and the Most Ven. A. Sri Rahula Maha Thera with the help of the Buddhist philanthropists who wanted to work for the betterment of Buddha Sasana. The only living Buddhist prelate who has been with the SSS throughout is the Most-Venerable Ampitiye Rahula Maha Thero. Undisputedly, these two masters were ideal role models for Buddhist monks involved in both social and religious services for the benefit of all. They served the society without stepping off the path of monastic discipline, though the

services were widespread and crossed geographical and social boundaries. The SSS was there, as it is today, to sponsor any service initiated by the monastic leadership.

The first noteworthy service of the SSS was the establishment of the Bhikkhu Training Center at Maharagama Siri Vajirjnana Dharmayatanaya. I still remember how I and my brother-monks grew up at Dharmayatanaya under the guidance and security of the well-learned senior Buddhist monks who taught us with advice and noble behavior. Four requisites for monks were provided to us by the SSS. The members and office bearers of the SSS fulfilled the role of our parents and adult relatives and friends. The training that we received was ideal for monastic life and the environment that we lived in was ideal for our upbringing.

Under the guidance of the late-Most Venerable Mahanayeke Thero and the Most Ven. Ampitiye Sri rahula Maha Thera, the SSS provided multifaceted services to society. Among those services were the Sunday Dharma School, full-moon day retreats organized every month with parallel activities for youth and adults, chaplain services for patients in government hospitals, establishing branch centers in different parts of Sri Lanka and abroad, and editing a trilingual Buddhist Dictionary (Pali, English, and Sinhala) and other Buddhist books to educate both clergy and laity.

Soon there was a great demand for the social services of the SSS, and the Dharma Vijaya Foundation was established to handle matters related to Social Welfare under the guidance of the Dhamma. Sasanadhara Kantha Samithiya, Siri Vajiranana Dhamma School, Taruna Seela Samadanaya and the Janavijaya Foundation also work for the

welfare of the Buddhist world under the umbrella of this great Society. For fifty years the SSS continued to progress, giving the maximum benefits of its progress to society.

Services of the SSS began as a small spring of water and grew to become a river that quenched the thirst of thousands of needy people. I congratulate the Sasana Sevaka Samitiya at their golden jubilee celebrations. At this juncture we pay our respect and gratitude to the Late-Most Ven.Madihe Pannasiha Mahanayake Maha Thero and the Most Ven.A.Sri Rahula Maha Thera. May all the members of SSS and my brother monks who guide them be blessed with good health, longevity and other resources.

May all beings be well and happy,

Maharagama Dhammasiri Nayaka Thera



Māvamaṁṁetha puṁṁassa ~ ßna maü taü àgamissatiü.
Udabindunipàtena ~ udakumbho pi pàrati,
Pàrati dhāro puṁṁassa, ~ thokathokam-pi àcinaü.

Do not disregard merit, saying "It will not come nigh unto me"; by the falling of drops even a water-jar is filled; likewise the wise man, gathering little by little, fills himself with good.

Verse 122 of the Dhammaphada, from the website www.metta.lk

Vihara Expansion Project Update

December, 2007

Dear Members and Friends of the Vihara,

Many gracious thanks for your kind offerings which have enabled the Vihara to successfully near completion of its expansion project. Already the shrine room is complete, which allowed us to accommodate many more well-wishers on Kathina Day. The new kitchen is also almost complete, along with the new two bedrooms upstairs and the renovation of the basement. This project would not have been so successful without the outpouring of support from the community. We never imagined there would be so much support, but this project truly revealed the kindness and generosity of all of our friends. The temple is a place of worship as well as a residence for monks; when you donate a dwelling place to the sangha – or to anyone - you give everything. This is also a great birthday gift to the Vihara, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Remember, the temple belongs to the entire community and to the future generations of the Buddhist community, which encompasses many nations and has no boundaries.

Anyone wishing to find out what donations are still needed is invited to contact us at 202-723-0773 or email mdsiril@yahoo.com.

In Metta,

Bhante Dhammasiri



A view of the new shrine room, where the Buddha, torchbearer for human kind, may be venerated always.



A view of the beautiful new kitchen

Support the Vihara by Becoming a Member!

Buddhist Vihara Society, Inc.
5017 16th Street N.W
Washington, D.C 20011
(202) 723-0773

Membership Application

Dear Sir,

I, Mr./Mrs/Miss/Dr/Rev (Circle One)

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

I wish to enroll myself as a member of the Washington Buddhist Vihara Society, Inc., and enclose herewith a check for my membership: Life membership \$250.00, Annual Standard membership \$25.00, Annual Student membership \$15.00 (Circle One)

I am a Buddhist/friend of Buddhsim (circle one)

Date: _____ Signature _____



Washington Buddhist Vihara
5017 16 th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20011
Tel(202) 723-0773

The Washington Buddhist Vihara, founded in 1965, and incorporated as a Society in 1966, under the patronage of Most Venerable Madihe Pannasiha Mahanayaka Thera, with Venerable Bope Vinitha Thera as its first President is a religious and educational center dedicated to presenting Buddhist thought, practice, and culture. It is staffed by resident monks who are available to discuss the various aspects of Buddhism, teach meditation, offer informal courses and by invitation, give lectures and meditation workshops at universities, schools, churches, and community groups.

The Vihara also operates a Buddhist Book Service with a mail order service; a free list of current stock is available on request. The Vihara Library contains works covering all facets of Buddhism. Every Sunday at 3.00 p.m. there is a devotional service which is followed by Dhamma discussion and meditation. Visitors, regardless of religious affiliation, are invited to participate in Vihara activities as well as come in and browse in the library and Book Service. The meditation room and shrine room are always open for individual meditation and devotion.

(The Logo & Seal of the Washington Buddhist Vihara were created by Mr. S.A.D Subasinghe in 1965)

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