

Embracing the Light of Dhamma



Words of Wisdom

“A single word of truth,
which calms the mind, is
better to hear than a
thousand irrelevant
words”

*The Dhammapada,
Verse 100*

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the latest edition of our society's newsletter. To all our fellow Melbourne University Buddhist Studies Society (MUBSS) 'buddhies', welcome back! I hope you had a great summer vacation, and are all geared up to start off the first semester of the new millennium with a big bang. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to those entering the MUBSS family.

We hope that you will all learn a great deal from our activities, and that through them you will be able to make many more dhamma friends (kalyana mitta), and experience the joy of contributing to and sharing in the happiness and welfare of others.

It's with both sadness and joy that our president for 2000-2001, **Ranmal Samarawickrama**, left MUBSS in February, more than a month before the end of his term. Ranmal will work as a District Field Officer for the United Nations in East Timor. He will be responsible for the implementation of health, education and other U.N. policies as part of the reconstruction of East Timor.

Ranmal has been instrumental and inspirational in the successful revival of MUBSS in 2000. He will be truly missed and may the Dhamma guide and protect him.

In place of Ranmal, MUBSS would like to welcome our interim president until the April Annual General Meeting, **Kim Tan**. Kim has some great practical ideas that will not only help kick-start MUBSS at the beginning of the year but also provide a focal point for the direction of MUBSS for the entire year (see her article "Year 2001: Metta in Motion").

Last but not least, do not forget to visit our website at <http://come.to/mubss> or <http://mubss.n3.net>.

Short History of MUBSS

In 1992, a small group of about 6 Malaysian first-year students studying at the University of Melbourne started what is still known as the Melbourne University Buddhist Studies Society. Even though a separate student Buddhist society was founded a few years earlier, this has proved to be the most enduring.

Currently the society is undergoing a "renaissance", with an aim to lay the foundations for the long term success of the society. We are also very encouraged and inspired by the energetic cooperation, help and participation of students from other tertiary institutions around Victoria; in particular, students from RMIT, and Monash University, Caulfield Campus.



The MUBSS family.
Potluck Night 2000,
held on 1 September,
2000. It was a night of
wonderful fellowship
through the sharing of
food ("potluck"), informal
discussions, and fun
games.

MUBSS Activities:

Enhance your uni life by participating in:

Temple Visits

*On special occasions like
Wesak and Kathina, why
not come along?!*

Weekly Dhamma Talks

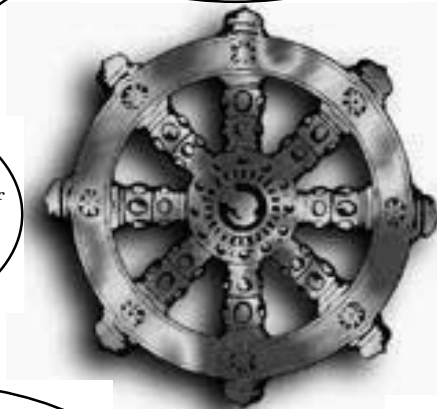
*Here's your chance to listen
to talks from guests speakers*

Singing Sessions

*Join us in our sing-a-long
sessions, usually after
the Dhamma talks*

Buddhism Awareness Week

*Come along and join the fun of
organizing this huge annual
event*



Visits to retirement vil- lages, nursing homes

*Join us in spreading joyful
cheer among our senior citi-
zens*

Contribute towards our newslet- ter, website

*We always welcome new ideas, arti-
cles and suggestions to better the
society*

Picnic, Potluck

*There's nothing like a social
get-together with food in
mind, too!*

Do not pursue the past.
Do not lose yourself in the future.
The past no longer is.
The future has not yet come.
Looking deeply at life as it is
in the very here and now,
the practitioner dwells in
stability and freedom.

- *Thich Nhat Hanh*



Year 2000: *A Wind of Change*

A brief look into our past year's activities.

It was a memorable year indeed! Who could forget the magnificent displays of fireworks from various countries around the world to kick off the new century? It proved to be an exciting one for MUBSS as well!

We started the year's calendar of activities with a series of Dhamma talks on general aspects of Buddhism, including our decision to practice Buddhism, and an introduction to Buddhist meditation (for more information, visit our website). "Sadhu" to Dr Saman Fernando and Michael Wells, both of whom facilitated and conducted the talks.

To commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of the Lord Buddha, a number of our members attended the Wesak celebrations organized by the Buddhist Society of Victoria at East Malvern. We started the day by observing the precepts, followed by a meditation session and a Dhamma talk given by Ajahn Vajiro. We were also fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in dana (making formal offerings to the Sangha).



Dana during the Wesak celebrations

Perhaps one of the most memorable event of the year for MUBSS was the two day workshop conducted at the end of our winter holidays by Venerable Mahinda. The first day of the workshop was conducted at The Buddhist Society of Victoria (Sadhu to BSV committee and members for providing us with the venue) and saw an attendance of more than 30 students from universities around Victoria, including the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Monash University, Deakin University, Victoria University of Technology and, of course, the University of Melbourne. Attendance on the second day was equally inspiring and supportive.

Over the two days, Ven. Mahinda spoke on topics relating Buddhism to a university student's life. The topics discussed were very relevant, and all who attended were inspired to no end.

Not only that, it was a vital step in establishing closer ties amongst Buddhist students from different universities. We are deeply indebted to Bhante for conducting the workshop. Many thanks to Brian White, the BSV committee and the MUBSS committee for organizing and conducting the event.



Ven. Mahinda conducting a workshop

The year 2000 also marked the inaugural launch of the MUBSS website (<http://come.to/mubss> or <http://mubss.n3.net>). The purpose of this is to update members and non-members alike on our society's activities, as well as being a source of information about various issues relating to Buddhism. It also offers an opportunity for members to contribute ideas relating to their own experiences with Buddhism. Many thanks to Henry Chau for his tireless efforts in making the website a success.

Last year, we organized the first 'potluck' activity in the society's history, to promote interaction and build rapport amongst our members. The night proved a success, and we had the opportunity to officially appoint Brian White as our lay advisor. We are indeed grateful to Brian for consenting, and Sadhu to him!

We successfully organised a series of Dhamma talks and discussions throughout second semester. At this point, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Sangha and non-Sangha members, who played a vital role in contributing to the success of the activities.

We hope, with the start of the new semester in 2001, that more members will come forth with a wave of new ideas to continue to inspire and uplift the Buddhist community in tertiary environments. May we strive to uphold the Dhamma in our hearts!

Mei Khing Ong

Year 2001: *Metta in Motion*

Last Year saw the rebirth of MUBSS, which underwent several significant transitions. The start of year 2001 similarly heralds some unexpected beginnings.

Ranmal Samarawickrama, who served as president of the society for the term 2000/2001 recently received an appointment with the United Nations. While we will certainly miss him, it is undeniably a wonderful opportunity for him, and a great source of inspiration for all of us. At the same time, I am grateful for this opportunity to perform a dana by filling the post of Interim President until the next AGM in April.

Our main focus for this academic year is WELFARE SERVICES; both within MUBSS and the society at large, benefiting members and non-members alike. This important aim accords with the ever-pervasive Buddhist principle of Compassion (Karuna). It would be apt to mention the 3 other sublime states that we aspire to cultivate : Loving-kindness (Metta), Sympathetic Joy (Mudita) and Equanimity (Upekkha). Clearly, spiritual development and enlightenment cannot be attained through mere theorizing, or stoic philosophizing. Our energies need also be directed towards real action; and what better way to accomplish inner realization than by external practice?

As far as the big picture is concerned, there will certainly be greater direct contact with nursing homes and other social service organizations, where members can serve wholeheartedly. We will require the support of members who would provide aid to new students in terms of accommodation, logistics, as well as counseling on a personal level when requested. This form of service is established to transcend barriers and forge a greater sense of fellowship, camaraderie, and give an insight into the true spirit of "Esprit De Corps".

With the recent rejuvenation of MUBSS, there is only one way to proceed; Let us live in the now and look forward.

With Metta,
Kim Tan



How to contact MUBSS

The following are various ways you can reach us to find out more about our activities and us:

E-mail: **buddhistsociety_unimelb@hotmail.com**

Snail mail: **Box 27
Student Union
University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010
Australia**

Website: **<http://come.to/mubss> or <http://mubss.n3.net>**

Calling out to all budding MUBSS committee members!!

It won't be long (April) when we will be holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in which we review our past year's activities, thank the old committee, and elect new members. If you are interested in being a part of the MUBSS committee, please do not hesitate to contact MUBSS via email. You may nominate yourself or someone else (provided he or she knows about it) for a particular position.

Feedback

Do you like the range of activities we offer? Do you find our website useful? What about this newsletter? We like to listen to your ideas and opinions on how we can improve MUBSS. Furthermore, we welcome your contributions, such as articles for the website or the next edition of the newsletter.

Acknowledgments

The Editor would like to thank Mei Khing Ong not only for her contributions to this newsletter but also for her wonderful work for MUBSS last year. Thank you also to Kim and Corey for their contributions and diligent editorial work.

Thank you to everyone involved in MUBSS. You have made the past year a huge success! Last but not least, MUBSS is grateful for the continual support of the Melbourne University Student Union Inc. (MUSU).

When we see clearly with *vijja* and see Dhamma, then there is nobody to become anything or to achieve or to attain. Things are as they are. Good is done and bad is refrained from in action and speech. There is doing good. What is there left to do in life but to be virtuous? Isn't that the beauty of our humanity? What is truly joyful and lovely about being human is our ability to be virtuous. The human experience is for virtue and goodness and refraining from doing evil harmful things to ourselves and others. I can't think of anything else worth doing!

The Way It Is - Ajahn Sumedho

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