



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

Ti-Sarana

NEWS

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Vesak Message from Bhante:

VESAK WITH A DIFFERENCE

With this year's annual Vesak ceremony which falls on 17th of May, Buddhists all over the world are preparing to celebrate a significant phase of the life of the Buddha and the history of Buddhism. In 1956, we celebrated the Buddha Jayanti in commemoration of the completion of 2,500 years of Buddha's *Parinibbāna* or the Final Passing Away. Vesak, as all of us know, is observed in commemoration of the three major events of the life of the Buddha - the Birth, Enlightenment and Demise of the Buddha. The Buddha was born in Kapilavatthu at the Himalayan foothills in Nepal, attained Enlightenment under the foot of the Bodhi Tree at Buddhagaya, Gaya in India and the Final Passing Away occurred at the Sala Grove at Kusinara. All of these three significant events related to the life of the Buddha occurred on the full moon day of May called Vesak.

The young prince Siddhattha, the Buddha-to-be renounced his luxurious life in the palace, donned the yellow robe of an ascetic and began to practise austere ascetic penances for six years with the fervent hope of attaining enlightenment. Since all his efforts aimed at the goal of enlightenment were fruitless, he gave up strict asceticism he had resorted to and proceeded to the Bodhi Tree at Buddhagaya, where he settled down at its foot to practise meditation on the concentration technique he had discovered.

The Attainment of Enlightenment

As a result of strenuous, resolved and continuous meditation, in the first watch of the night (i.e. between 6 pm – 10 pm), before the dawn of the Vesak full moon, he realized the knowledge of knowing the previous births, technically called ante-natal retro-cognition (*pubbenivāsānussati ñāna*) by which he was able to purify his vision with reference to past births of himself and others. In the second watch of the night (i.e. 10 pm – 2 am) with the appearance of the knowledge of knowing the births and deaths at present (*cutūpapātañāna*), he cleared his vision with regards to the present. In the last watch of the night (i.e. 2 am – 6 am) with the attainment of the knowledge of the destruction of cankers (*āsavakkhayakarañāna*) he attained the Perfect Enlightenment by destroying all cankers. Later these threefold knowledge, probably for easy understanding, have been described, classified and presented as five, six, eight and seventy-three-fold. Prince Siddhattha, at the age of 35 was Fully Awakened, in other words, Perfectly Enlightened and thence forward was known as the Buddha. This significant event occurred 2,600 years ago on the full moon day of Vesak, which falls on 17th May this year.

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The Greatest Teacher who ever lived on Earth

After the Enlightenment, until his Final Passing Away at the age of 80, he devoted himself to enlightening others. Touring on foot covering a vast area of the Indian subcontinent, addressing people of every walk of life, he awakened them from their “dogmatic slumbers” and instilled an urgency of moral awareness in them. His teaching, unlike the prevailing moral and philosophical speculations and hypotheses, taught a practical doctrine, open for examination and yielding result here and now. Contrary to the existing systems of thought, his teaching is universal and beyond the boundaries of class, caste, tribe or race. It is global and embraces every segment of human society. He never claimed that he was a divinity or a saviour. But, he pointed out that every individual is in possession of a latent intellectual potentiality which can be bloomed into maturity for emancipation and he emphasized the fact that each and every individual is lord of himself. Thus for the first time in the history of religions, here is a Teacher, who claimed that he was only showing the way and human beings themselves have the responsibility to navigate thoughtfully and model their future for their and others’ welfare.

As Buddhists, who admire and emulate the path shown by the greatest Teacher, who ever lived on Earth, let us celebrate the 2,600 anniversary of the Enlightenment on this Vesak day ceremonially, and in a fitting manner to reflect the Buddha’s exceptional compassion, unique wisdom and magnanimous personality by cultivating serene and composed pious emotion with commitment and dedication.

HAPPY VESAK TO ALL!

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahāthera

Calendar of Events – May /June 2011

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| 8th May 2011 | – | Vesak Preparations |
| 14th May 2011 | – | Special Vesak Blessing Service |
| 17th May 2011 | – | Vesak Day |
| 22nd May 2011 | – | Sunday Dāna Chefs’ Day |
| 29th May 2011 | – | Movie – The Little Buddha |
| 26th June 2011 | – | Dhamma discussion led by Ven. R. Ānanda Thera |

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUNDAY DHAMMA SCHOOL

Dhamma School Welfare Day

On the bright sunny morning of 20th March 2011, 35 volunteers - including Bhante Gnanarama, Bhante Ānanda, adults, youths and young children, came together and jointly brought 12 wheelchair-bound elderly residents from the Bright Hill Evergreen Home on an excursion to the Marina Barrage.

Initially, we were all rather apprehensive of our ability to take good care of our elderly friends. But things worked out well and our excursion went smoothly. This was despite the large crowds and the closure of some areas because our visit coincided with World Water Day. We still managed to bring our elderly friends up to the Marina Bridge and the Green Roof, where they could enjoy the scenery and fresh air, and feel the comforting warmth of the sun.

All of us gained much from this excursion – we enjoyed interacting with the elderly and felt a great sense of satisfaction when we saw the smiles on their faces. Although we could only take 12 of our elderly friends on this excursion due to our limited resources, we were glad that we could at least brighten up their lives for that one Sunday morning by doing something different.

One thing I believe we all learnt from this excursion is that actions motivated by love and sincerity count and a simple outing can bring real joy to people. I am really glad that our 12 friends enjoyed themselves.

Carol Chung,
Sunday Dhamma Student



Helping hands to board the bus



A group photo



Gifts to the elderly friends at the Home

WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Musical Hi-Tea Get-Together on 10th Apr. 2011 (Sun.)

Bro. Khemaka David Chew, President of the Association welcomed more than 400 guests who turned up at Orchard Hotel at 1.30 pm to support and participate in the fund raising event for our welfare activities. The Ti-Sarana Cookbook, published to raise funds to meet the running costs of Metta Youth Centre (MYC), Sri Lanka, was presented by Ms Elena Chua to Bhante Ratanasiri who is also the Religious Adviser to the children's home.

We are grateful and appreciative of all the members, devotees and well-wishers who came forward to support, participate and make donations at the event. We look forward to receiving the sponsorship form, Help Support MYC – Be “A Friend of MYC” which can be found in the Annual Report 2010 of MYC. Please contact us for copies of the Ti-Sarana Cookbook and the Annual Report 2010 of MYC.



A section of the guests



Welcome address by Bro. Khemaka



Blessing by Bhantes



Here is our donation

VESAK CELEBRATIONS

Celebrate the 2,600 anniversary of the Enlightenment of Siddhattha Gotama Bodhisatta by volunteering your services at Ti-Sarana. Two Sundays prior to Vesak Day, we will be cleaning the premises before putting up Buddhist flags, labeling the bottles of water for blessing and preparing food for members and devotees on Vesak Day.

All are welcomed to participate at the Special Vesak Blessing Service which will be held on 14th May 2011 (Sat.). Our Bhantes together with invited Venerables from other Buddhist organizations will recite Suttas and Parittas to bless the bottled water which will be distributed on Vesak Day.

On Vesak Day, the Sacred Buddha Relics will be unveiled for veneration from 8 am to 5.30 pm. Members and devotees are encouraged to pay homage to the Buddha Relics which are unveiled only on Vesak Day. In the evening the Buddha Relic Candlelight procession will start at 6.15 pm followed by Evening Pūjā. Do come and rejoice with us.

Donations received for Vesak are used for the welfare of our Bhantes, the activities of the Sunday Dhamma School, maintenance of the premises and the Sangha Abode (monks' residence) and welfare activities. To donate, please fill up the enclosed form and mail it with your donation to the Honorary Treasurer.

Special Vesak Blessing Service (14th May 2011, Sat.)

6.30 pm	Evening Pūjā
7.00 pm	Gilanapaccaya for Venerables
7.05 pm	Light Refreshment for members and devotees
7.20 pm	Invitation of Sacred Buddha Relics to Shrine Hall
7.30 pm	Recitation of Suttas and Parittas by Venerables
9.00 pm	Blessings by Venerables

Vesak Day Programme (17th May 2011, Tues.)

Morning

7.00 am	Hoisting of the National and the Buddhist Flags
7.05 am	Buddha Pūjā
7.15 am	Breakfast for the Mahāsaṅgha
8.00 am	Unveiling of the Sacred Buddha Relics
8.30 am	Blessing for Vesak Helpers
10.45 am	Buddha Pūjā
11.30 am	Dāna for the Mahāsaṅgha
11.35 am	Vegetarian Lunch for members and devotees

Evening

6.15 pm	Assemble for the Buddha Relics Candlelight Procession
6.30 pm	Invitation of the Buddha Relics for Candlelight Procession
6.45 pm	Sacred Buddha Relics Procession
7.45 pm	Evening Pūjā
8.30 pm	Dhamma Talk
8.40 pm	Blessing by Venerables
8.50 pm	Gilanapaccaya for Venerables
8.55 pm	Light Refreshment for members and devotees

**The Management Committee and our Bhantes wish
all members and devotees a Very Happy and Blessed Vesak!**