



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

# Ti-Sarana

## NEWS

90, DUKU ROAD, SINGAPORE 429254. TEL: 6345 6741 Fax: 6348 0844  
Email: tisarana@singnet.com.sg Website: www.tisarana.org.sg

NEWSLETTER ISSUE JUL/AUG 2009

### Vassana Message:

#### The Significance of Chanting Ratana Sutta

Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association has made arrangements to chant the **Ratana Sutta** during this year's rainy retreat period. The proposed chanting is conducted to invoke the blessings of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, specially, for the members and devotees of the association and in general to all Singaporeans. It is worthwhile to find out why the **Ratana Sutta** has been selected to be chanted during the forthcoming three months period of the rainy retreat.

The history of chanting the **Ratana Sutta** goes back to the time of the Buddha. It is recorded in the scriptures that during the time of the Buddha, the people of Vesali were overwhelmed by three kinds of fear, namely; fear caused by famine followed by plague and the influence of non-humans. When these fears continued to spread gradually without any sign of relief, Licchavis, the rulers of the country decided to invite the Buddha to the country. Their representatives crossed over the River Ganges to invite the Buddha, who was then living in Rajagaha. King Bimbisara having come to know that the Buddha had been invited to visit the grief stricken citizens of Vesali, prepared everything for the Buddha's journey. The king decorated the road up to the Ganges and when the Buddha set out from Rajagaha for Vesali, the king followed the Buddha up to the River Ganges to bid farewell and see him off. The Buddha on arriving in Vesali recited the **Ratana Sutta**. He then instructed Venerable Ananda to go round the city together with the Licchavi princes and sprinkle the chanted water from the Buddha's bowl. Venerable Ananda who had learned the sutta by heart went round the city chanting and sprinkling the holy water as the Buddha had instructed him. Torrential rains fell and gradually calm reigned and the three fears disappeared. The country soon became prosperous again. The Mahayana version of the sutta is found in the Mahavastu under the title 'Savstyanagāthā'.

What is so miraculous about this sutta? It is an asseveration of truth. True qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are recounted and the strength of their truthfulness is invoked for blessings and for the fulfillment of the desired objective. From time immemorial the asseveration of truth is considered as an effective means of fulfillment of a desired objective. The last three stanzas of the sutta praising the Triple Gem are said to have been uttered by Sakka, the chief of the Tāvatisa Heaven.

During the Buddha's time there were no economic woes as we have today. Economic woes are the modern version of the three fears faced by the people of Vesali. Those days, human life based on agriculture and husbandry flowed on smoothly until a natural calamity broke out and interrupted the process.

(Continued on page 2)

- Vassana Message:  
The Significance of  
Chanting Ratana  
Sutta - page 1
- Vidvan Sarvatra  
Pujyate - page 2
- Snap Shots of  
Vesak Celebrations  
- page 3
- Sunday Dhamma  
Classes - page 4
- The story of Junior  
Sangha Rakkhita
- Intake for 2009  
Diploma in  
Buddhism - page 5
- The Ratana Sutta
- Vassāvāsa Ceremony  
- page 6
- Vassana Cultivation  
- page 7
- Plain Mindfulness  
(Satipathāna  
Meditation) by  
Dr. Ng Yuen Yen
- Ullambana Service  
(Dedication of  
Merits to Departed  
Beings) 28<sup>th</sup> Aug to  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sep  
- page 8

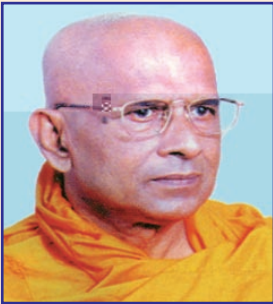
(continued from page 1)

When there was a famine, every aspect of life whether economic, family, domestic or social was crippled. These are influences beyond our control and the natural calamities that take place in the world from time to time are such happenings. In the wake of the economic downturn and recession, the chanting of the **Ratana Sutta** would undoubtedly allay the fears of uncertainty haunting us and will pacify the tension of hopelessness. Besides, when the threat of an epidemic is also around the corner, the chanting of the Ratana Sutta is most opportune and a fitting religious undertaking.

Therefore all are welcome to participate in the chanting sessions of **Ratana Sutta** at TBA during the period of rainy retreat.

May all beings be well and happy!

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Maha Thera  
Chief Resident Monk



## **Vidvan Sarvatra Pujiyate** - Scholar is honoured everywhere **A Legacy of Excellence!**

The Management Committee of Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association is honoured to announce that our chief advisor, the most Venerable Dr. Pategama Gnanarama Maha Thera will be conferred an Honorary Degree of the Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.), honoris causa by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, in recognition of his great contributions to the field of academic Buddhist Studies. The D.Litt. degree is the highest honoris causa that one can obtain from a University in the field of Humanities.

Venerable Dr. Gnanarama is a leading Buddhist scholar in the field of Social Dimensions of Buddhism. Among his many academic works in Buddhist Studies, the 'Mission Accomplished' is an excellent piece of work. It is a new approach to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta with different perspectives, historical, sociological, philosophical and doctrinal etc. Bhante's linguistic achievement is par excellence and he has sound working knowledge in Sinhala, Pali, Sanskrit and English. He contributed his linguistic skills as a member of the editorial board of 'Glossary of Technical Terms (English Sinhala) in Philosophy and Logic' published by the Government of Sri Lanka in 1989. Bhante has contributed a number of academic articles and conference papers over five decades. As a teacher and University professor he has done great service in Sri Lanka. In his role as principal of Buddhist and Pali College in Singapore, he has contributed tremendously in promoting academic Buddhist Studies in Singapore for over 15 years since its establishment in 1993. We are extremely happy to share this serene happiness with Bhante at this significant moment. We wish him happiness and good health.

### **N.B.**

We will be organizing a trip to Colombo in August 2009 to witness the conferment of the title of D. Litt. on Bhante. Those who are interested in participating can contact any of the Management Committee members for details.

# Snap shots of Vesak Day Celebrations



*Cleaning of the Buddha Relic Chamber and Shrine Hall prior to Vesak*



*Blessing of bottled water for Vesak*



*Vesak Day - Homage to the Buddha Relics, Buddha Pūjā and Blessings for members and devotees*



*Recitation of the Jayamangala Gathā during the Buddha Relic Candlelight Procession and Evening Pūjā*



*After the Evening Pūjā Service - Performances by the students and their parents and screening of a video clip by Sis Amara Chia*

# SUNDAY DHAMMA CLASSES



Moment by moment life flows by and it is never the same. A thought springs up in one's head and in a split second it is gone. In comes another, and that is gone too. The essence of this experience is change. No two moments are the same.

Once, there lived in SavatrieETBrieETBriseniorETBrimonkETBriby the name of SangheETBriRakkhita.ETBriWhen Sa

## The Ratana Sutta

The Ratana Sutta is one of the rare original suttas uttered by the Buddha with its original prose and wordings dating to that period as researched by scholars. This sutta was taught to ward off calamities and removal of obstacles.

The Ratana Sutta restored the hope and confidence of the people of Vesali during the time of the Buddha. When they saw the immediate effect of the Buddha's powerful chants (it is said that once the word "Yan Kinci" was uttered there was heavy rain which cleansed the place from the smell of decayed corpses). Later the Buddha gave a sermon on the power of Saddha to help people stay focused and maintain a healthy frame of mind during times of crisis.

It has been a tradition handed down over the centuries that whenever someone is in danger or in an impending hostile environment, lawsuits or encountering obstacles in their environment, lives etc, Theravada monks have advised them to do 7 days of Pūjā, with the recitation of the Ratana Sutta.

This year the Venerables at Ti-Sarana are reciting the Ratana Sutta for more than 1,000 times during the Vassana period. Having faith in the Buddha's power, walking the Buddha's Path and embarking on a resolute spiritual practice during this Vassana will help to mitigate the negative karma and allow positive karma to come forth. And by participating in the chanting of the Ratana Sutta during this period of financial downturn and fear of a flu epidemic, we can invoke the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem to rid our country from such fearful situations. Through our whole-hearted practice of the Buddha's Teachings and by the powers of our positive energies may all members and devotees be well and happy!

May the power of the Ratana Sutta clear away negative thoughts of greed, anger and delusion!

May the power of the Ratana Sutta help to improve the economic environment!

May all sentient beings be well and happy!

Contributed by Bro Hemasiri Lim

### **VASSĀVĀSA Ceremony (7<sup>th</sup> July, Tues.)**

This year Bro. Ivan Tan and Sis. Nirodha (Dorine) Tan will represent the community of lay male and female members and devotees to invite the Venerables to formally observe Vassana at Ti-Sarana. They will pledge on behalf of Ti-Sarana Dhamma Community to provide the necessary requisites of food, robe, medicine and shelter to the Bhantes during the three months of "Rainy Retreat".

#### **Programme for the Invitation to Vassana Ceremony**

7.30 pm	Evening Pūjā
8.15 pm	Inviting Venerables to Vassāvasā
8.30 pm	Sermon by a Venerable
8.45 pm	Recitation of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta
10.00 pm	Gilanapaccaya for Venerables
10.05 pm	Light Refreshment for Members & Devotees

Do come to express your appreciation and gratitude to the Bhantes for their years of support and guidance accorded to us.

## Vassana Cultivation from 8<sup>th</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> October

Many members and devotees have recorded their aspirations/wishes on pieces of paper, folded them into lotuses and deposited them into a big white lotus container which symbolizes the “Wish Fulfilling Pot” (Bhadraghata) on Vesak Day. During this Vassana period, the Venerables will be chanting the Ratana Sutta up to 1,016 times to invoke the blessings of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha to bless all members, devotees and sentient beings and for the fulfillment of these aspirations. Those who wish to write their aspirations can still do so. The paper and guide to fold it to a lotus are available at the office.

The timing of the recitation of Ratana Sutta is as follows:

### Weekdays (Mon. to Fri.)

- 10.30 am - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (5 times) by Bhantes
- 11.00 am - Buddha Pūjā Service
- 7.30 pm - Pūjā Service
- 8.00 pm - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (5 times) by Bhantes

### Saturdays

- 10.30 am - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (6 times) by Bhantes
- 11.00 am - Buddha Pūjā Service
- 6.30 pm - Pūjā Service
- 7.00 pm - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (6 times) by Bhantes

### Sundays

#### Morning

- 10.15 am - Pūjā Service by Children of the Sunday Dhamma Classes
- 11.00 am - Buddha Pūjā Service by members & devotees
- 12.30 pm - Dhamma Talk/discussion
- 1.30 pm - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (6 times) by Bhantes

#### Evening

- 6.30 pm - Pūjā Service
- 7.00 pm - Chanting of the Ratana Sutta (6 times) by Bhantes



*Folding the paper into a lotus after recording their aspirations on it*



*Placing the paper lotus into the “Wish Fulfilling” Lotus*

As explained by Bhante Gnanarama in his Vassana message on page 1 and 2 and Bro Hemasiri Lim on page 6, the recitation and the act of listening with Saddha (Confidence) to the chanting of Suttas are powerful forces that can not only provide protection in every way and diminish the unpleasantness or uncertainties that one is going through in the current economic environment but also bring about positive changes to one’s life. The belief in the efficacy of chanting Suttas/Parittas to avert fearful confrontations or unexpected calamities, provide protection by warding off sorrows, anxieties and ills is available for all to experience during these three months of Vassana cultivation.

Do make time to be present during the recitation of Ratana Sutta by the Bhantes during these three months. Members and devotees can recite softly together with the Bhantes or sit in silence, listening/meditating on the words of the Buddha and at the end of the chanting wish for the fulfillment of their aspirations. This will be followed by Kathina celebration on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2009 when members and devotees can offer robes and 8-requisites to the Venerables in appreciation of their guidance and spiritual support. Orders for robes and 8-requisites can be placed now at the office.

# **Plain Mindfulness (Satipathana Meditation) by Dr. Ng Yuen Yen**