



# The Battle for Happiness

Danny Taylor  
Management Committee member

There are many reasons for people in the West to be attracted to Buddhism. Some of the most obvious are relaxation, a search for happiness, and the attraction to freedom (or enlightenment). This last impulse is the one the Buddha himself was focused upon and is the essence of Buddhism.

Happiness and relaxation in Buddhism are beneficial by-products of the journey to freedom. Yet for many Western people they are the main reason to meditate. As a result they become topics of fascination for many meditators, first because of their strong personal interest in experiencing these states, and second because these states in turn do seem to be strongly associated with Buddhist practice.

This article will focus on happiness. We look at its strength as a motivator, its place within Buddhism, its exploitation within the broader Western society under the banner of consumerism, and the implications this has for meditation practice.

## What's The Issue?

Happiness has over the past twenty years become a central topic of interest in mainstream psychology and society.

In recent times this interest has taken on more of an obsessional quality. When issues become themes that whole societies grapple with, it is useful to examine what it is that might be driving this at a fundamental level.

One of the reasons for this increased interest is the emerging sense that less happiness is in evidence than was once the case. The past two or three

decades have seen marked increases in levels of anxiety and depression in society. This has led to a general interest in how we can produce more happiness in our lives, and a clinical interest in how we can reverse the evident negative trends.

In the USA, where extensive information exists on all subjects psychological, it appears that levels of depression, judged objectively, have increased at an alarming rate over the past 30 years, with trends showing few real signs of slowing.

At the same time, medical practitioners in Australian studies report that anxiety conditions are either on the increase or have stabilised at very high levels, and are one of the major areas of patient concern.

With such trends in evidence it is not unreasonable that individuals affected, and society in general, would become more interested in the investigation of ways to increase happiness. It becomes a direct response to the experience that happiness is slipping away.

## Consumerism's Promise

While there are many likely forces at play in creating experiences of happiness, anxiety, and depression in society, the role of consumerism is particularly pervasive, and deserves special attention. Consumerism is the process of encouraging individuals to purchase goods and services in an ongoing stream of activity, with the implied philosophy that individual happiness will increase in the process.

The free trade in goods and services is the 'bread and butter' of modern

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economic systems. Consumerism makes endless implied promises that we will all feel better as a result of having more material goods and seemingly uplifting experiences (via services). The role of services is more subtle and less understood than that of material goods, but has its own peculiar set of implied promises about happiness.

The argument for goods is clear to most people. You'll be happier with a newer, better, more prestigious car than not, with buying rather than renting a house, with a new toaster, tennis racket, book, pair of shoes, CD, dress, computer or television, than having none of these items. The promise with goods is that I can have something that I didn't have before that will give me an ongoing source of pleasure.



Services are different. The aim is to deliver an experience, one which gives me short-term happiness, but will need to be repeated or topped-up if I'm to recapture lots of these moments. Going to a movie, eating-out, going to the hairdresser, having a travel experience, listening to live music, doing a course, are all examples of accessing "services". The promise here is that I can buy a positive experience, and that enough of these pursued and *repeated* will deliver and sustain my happiness.

While the pursuit of goods and services has always been a fundamental of Western economic systems, two significant changes have occurred in the last 30 years. The first is that society now spends considerably more on services than was previously the case. This means that people have come to accept the notion that happiness will come from repeated short term experiences, as well as from the goods they possess, and both are now pursued with gusto.

The second is that we have had an explosion of information, and a desire to consume it. The main mechanism for distributing information is television, and the information distributed is advertising and messages about 'what to own', 'how to be', 'who to be like', and 'what experiences you need to have to get there'.

Yet despite all these consumer efforts, happiness does not seem to be increasing but is now as elusive as ever.

Do people have moment to moment experiences of happiness as a result of consumerism? The answer is clearly yes. This in fact is what goods and services provide. The problem however is that all these experiences not only arise but they also pass away. And each time this happens there is a mini-experience of loss or grief.

What most people really seem to be looking for is sustained happiness, or what we know in Buddhism as contentment. The promise of consumerism is that you can have this. But that's not the experience. It's like being told that you can learn to swim, when in actuality you find yourself flapping around in the pool of life, only coming up for air for short-term relief in between periods of difficulty. In the real world we get fleeting experiences of happiness delivered by the consumption of goods, services and

other experiences. Coming to understand this as the way things really are is a depressing experience, but one that we all need to confront.

So the promise of consumerism does not seem to be delivering, but we're all addicted to the story, because of its capacity to give us some short term relief. It's also difficult to know what else to do. Indeed, increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression lower people's resilience to confronting a different reality.

## Why so much Unhappiness?

While this principle may help to explain why consumerism in itself doesn't provide sustained happiness, it doesn't help us to see why we have an *increase* in unhappiness in recent years. For a perspective on this we need to turn to more recent trends in consumer behaviour.

The last 15-20 years have seen the cumulative impact of consumerism and the 'information explosion'. While consumerism, the acquisition of goods and services, provides the promise of happiness, it is media such as television, magazines and advertising that increase the expectation that good-times are just around the corner.



The implication is that you'd be a fool to think otherwise. In the process this raises the bar on what we think is possible. Hence, while consumerism has been with us in one form or another throughout the history of Western society, it is only in more recent times that the expectations of what consumerism can deliver have increased to a new substantial level.

What is now different as a result of this process is a widening gap between our expectations and the reality of what consumerism can provide. Not because consumerism is delivering less, but because we now expect that much more from it. People have become *more* attached to the notion

that this is the primary mechanism for creating happiness.

The psychological state created by unmet expectations is *disappointment*, which is now more universal. Many individual experiences of disappointment lead to a general sense of disappointment. This in turn leads to a general sense of unhappiness, which leads in all probability to increased levels of depression in individuals and society.

The central pattern here is increased *expectations* of happiness, attachment to those expectations, and the resultant *disappointment* in failed outcomes. A case can be made that disappointment rather than depression is the curse of modern life, and that other psychological conditions indicated here are a product of this more deep-seated but less obvious phenomenon.

In many ways there is more hope to be found by viewing current issues through this lens. The origins of disappointment can be observed by individuals, within themselves, at close quarters. Not so with many other conditions. Every time we don't get what we want, or get what we don't want, disappointment arises. If we develop the capacity to recognise this at the point of arising, disappointment loses its capacity to evolve into a more sinister experience. The general incapacity in people to recognise the emergence of disappointment contributes significantly to the level of extreme emotional states which are the antithesis of happiness.

## Buddhism and Happiness

One of the aims of Buddhism is indeed to observe our functioning at the point at which experiences arise, and to then trace what happens without interfering with that experience. The non-Buddhist approach to conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression is to see them as experiences which already exist, and to eradicate them from that vantage point. The Buddhist approach to experiences, whatever they are, is not to treat symptoms, but to attack the cause.

The First Noble Truth of Buddhism, and hence the first statement on the nature of existence as espoused by the Buddha, is that the most pervasive experience for people is *dukkha* or suffering. For our purposes this can be thought of as a perpetual state of

unsatisfactoriness. This is the basic condition in which people find themselves. No matter how good things seem to be, closer examination reveals we're not really content, and we find ourselves continually searching for an elusive state of well-being. It's not enough to avoid looking at this, which is the preferred approach of many people. The experience of unsatisfactoriness has an annoying habit of re-emerging unpredictably and often. It has a life of its own.

The reason for this unsatisfactoriness as given by the Buddha is the Second Noble Truth—the reality of craving (*taṇhā*). We experience our lives as one of wanting this and wanting that, with the aim of obtaining or retaining positive experiences. And not wanting this and not wanting that, with the aim of not having negative experiences, or pushing them away. This wanting or craving is everywhere in our experience, and once recognised as an underlying condition of our existence, is noticed as continuous, perpetual, and gripping. Every time we pay attention to its possible existence we notice that it is present.

But why does craving necessarily lead to unsatisfactoriness? Because, when we look closely, nothing seems permanent. Attempts to get and retain positive experiences always lead to dissatisfaction because the experiences pass away. And attempts to get rid of negative experiences or keep them at bay lead to dissatisfaction because these or similar experiences come again. So we find that we can't keep experiences we want, and we can't prevent experiences that we don't want.

The Buddha's observation was that we're caught in a cycle of endless craving, and because of various interrelated factors such as impermanence, experience our lives as unsatisfactory at some fundamental level. The Buddha called the resultant cycle of suffering *samsāra*, emerging as it does from the interplay of attachments and the rising and passing away of phenomena.

The architects, custodians and high priests of consumerism, without thinking explicitly in these terms, have taken what the Buddha saw, recognized it as an everyday pattern, and encouraged it even more. Economies work on this pattern, with individuals hoping that the purchase of goods and

services will deliver the sort of experiences of happiness that will lead to a permanent positive state. The reason economies continue to work over time is that people fail to find this permanent positive state, and hence keep going back for more in the hope that sooner or later the pot-of-gold will be at the end of the consumer rainbow. So buying lots of goods and services is simply a societal manifestation of our rhythms of craving, wanting and attachment.

In this way, most consumers become like drug addicts, responding irrationally to short term fixes as though they will bring long term happiness. Just like addicts they lose their ability to think, and continue to respond to the bad recurring feeling with the same inadequate habit, because at least it works in the short term.



Economists talk of people making rational choices and in one sense they are right. Just as with drug addiction, it is rational to assume that consumer activity will provide a positive experience. The irrationality lies in believing this has any hope of being a long term solution to the more fundamental issues we are trying to solve within ourselves.

The Buddha was clear that events in themselves are not the problem, but our attachments to them are. There is nothing wrong in having a new car, a house, a dinner, a holiday. The problem is all in the attachments to these things as sources of pleasure, and the lack of consciousness of what's happening in our minds as we grip these experiences as hoped-for permanent states.

But the Buddha also teaches us that it is not enough to know this in theory. Every second person claims that all things are impermanent, but

if you look at the way they live their lives, they clearly don't get this at a deeper level, and have certainly not developed their minds to a level where they live a life consistent with this insight. In Buddhist terms, such people do not have genuine insight, but only speculative knowledge.

The Buddhist path is concerned with the development of the mind. As progress occurs, different qualities emerge, associated with clarity, insight and well-being. The developed mind is more conscious more of the time, a state we equate with mindfulness. In intensive meditation, we are training the mind to stay conscious, which is the only way we can then have the possibility of insight, which in turn is the means for overcoming *dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness.

Remaining conscious, we have the chance to observe our wanting, and to observe the disappointment that emerges every time we don't get what we want, or get what we don't want.

In time the mind settles, partly because it stops getting enmeshed in the derivative emotions associated with reactions to events, partly because of the calming impact of concentration, and partly because of the emerging insights which change the nature of our experience of reality.

Associated with this process is a gradual increase in happiness or well-being. It is not the happiness of specific moments, though these also exist (and often very powerfully). The deeper aspect to happiness in Buddhist practice, one so elusive in consumer society, is related to the confidence of seeing and experiencing the nature of existence in a way that is associated with faith in the inner life, self-reliance, hopefulness, and an increasing sense that you see things as they are.

This is a very powerful vantage position, in the sense it gives a person an experience of being grounded, and a confidence that this general condition hangs around.

## Lessons in Life

We need to watch our consumerist tendencies. We particularly need to watch our attachments to the possibility that particular objects or experiences will bring real happiness. We need to guard against a tendency to see ourselves as immune from marketing and advertising. Most people



# Dhamma service at BMIMC

Though we expect our current managers Kris and Shan to be with us for some time, there are always opportunities for dhamma service at BMIMC. Those considering joining the staff need to be experienced meditators with a strong commitment to dhamma service. They need to have an ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds and some familiarity with computers and common office software. Strong communication skills, both oral and written, are essential.

Additionally, the work of managing requires some combination of skills in small office administration and book-keeping, cooking and house-keeping, building, gardening and grounds maintenance.

Staff usually live-in, and are supported by the Centre's Management Committee and the broader community of local meditators. Managers receive a small stipend in addition to full board and accommodation, plus a contribution towards car use if they can provide their own vehicle. They are also entitled to sit one 9 day retreat gratis every 6 months of service.

For more information, email [bmimc@pnc.com.au](mailto:bmimc@pnc.com.au), or visit our website, [www.meditation.asn.au](http://www.meditation.asn.au).

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claim it has no impact on them, but studies show for example that customers who shop in a supermarket before lunch buy a lot more food on average than those who shop just after lunch, and this is primarily because they feel hungry. The process is subtle. Consumerism works on the basis of wants and opportunities in combination, and advertisers laugh all the way to the bank when they hear people say they are immune from their impact.

If Māra is the general state of delusion pointed to by the Buddha, then marketing is a modern day Māra, seeping into people's minds and playing on the cycle of wants and attachments that provides short term relief but longer term suffering.

The Buddha's story is one of vigilance, primarily because he recognized that the tendencies to delusion in all of us are so strong, and that consequently we need to fight the long battle of our own minds. Having objects and experiences is not the problem, but being caught in the cycle of wants, attachments and a lack of consciousness or mindfulness has a devastating impact on our being.

The Third Noble Truth provides hope, because it makes the claim that this cycle can be broken, and points the way to the last of these truths, the Eightfold Noble Path. The Buddhist perspective suggests that the only way to be vigilant to the level required to

make real progress is to follow this path, an approach combining wisdom, the ethical life and meditation practice.

This integrated approach allows the mind to develop in the way indicated here, to experience genuine insight into the nature of greed, hatred, and delusion, to see impermanence for ourselves, to see the realities and rhythms of unsatisfactoriness, and to explore the ephemeral nature of personal identity.

All this has the consequence of a genuine shift in consciousness and experience. The path of insight opens and develops, and momentum is created in the direction of freedom. The possibility of enlightenment, the central theme of the Buddhist journey, becomes the guiding light of meditation practice.

As a result, and only as a result, the general sense of happiness that is a distant star for most people in modern society becomes a reality close at hand.



*Karen and John working on the mailout for the Spring building appeal last year*

## Volunteers wanted

BMIMC relies on the generosity of our supporters to keep the Centre going—a small group of Mountains residents together with the wider network of meditators living in Sydney and beyond.

Many people who feel they have benefited from attending courses return to do volunteer work in some form. Help is nearly always wanted *in the kitchen*, either as a supervising cook or as an assistant. Please ring 4788 1024 if you would like to help cook for a coming retreat.

The Centre holds *organised community work days* where volunteers help with a range of indoor and outdoor work. Visitors bring lunch to share, and enjoy a day that is usually more social than strenuous. The work days this year are likely to be in spring, and will be announced via email.

*If there is some immediate way that you would like to become involved in the Centre, please ring the manager and let us know.*

Right throughout the year we require people on a regular basis to help with *grounds maintenance*—mowing the lawns, weeding, mulching, raking up leaves and generally tidying up. If you are a local who could spare perhaps half a day a fortnight, please let us know. We will provide the lawnmower, fuel and basic tools.

Volunteers are also welcome to work in a *temporary capacity helping to manage the Centre*, including living at the Centre for periods of between two weeks and two months as assistant managers. The work involved is generally house-keeping, grounds maintenance and retreat management.

# My Path to Now

Shane Cusack

*This is the first of a series of articles where supporters of the Centre write of their recollections of their experience of the development of Australian Buddhism. Contributions of about 1000 words are warmly invited via email to BMIMC. —Ed.*

Buddhism is my life, a constant reference point for my every action. Now, after more than twenty years of living in a Buddhist family and amongst different communities of meditators—such as that of BMIMC—I am now exploring further afield as I continue my practice in other countries and with other communities.

There comes a point in every young Buddhist's life when she must take responsibility for her own beliefs and actions, re-investigate the ideas which have guided her through life up until that point and make them her own, or discard them if they no longer apply.

My first contact with Buddhism came in the early 1980s when my parents moved to Wat Buddha Dharma to explore their spiritual paths. Though only three at the time, I still have vivid memories of the years when the Wat was full of other families with children, many residential monks and nuns under the guidance of Phra Khantipalo and Ayya Khema, and food fairs and other special occasions attended by many Asian communities from Sydney.

What did Buddhism mean to me as a small child? Very early on it was just the flavour of my everyday life and not a thing to investigate or learn. Monks and nuns I always saw as being different, not just for their strange clothes and shaved heads, but because of the respect which I knew to give them. All of the Wat kids loved the dharma stories that Khantipalo would tell us from time to time, and we were always fascinated by the different cultural practices and rituals of life at the Wat. Even through my child's eyes, Buddhism was something which I felt to be very good and very important.

Though most of my schooling was by correspondence, for one year I did attend the local primary school, an hour's drive away. One day the teacher informed the class that we were going to draw pictures of our dads. Since my father had recently ordained for a three month Rains Retreat, I immediately set about drawing a man in orange robes and a shaved head with

'my daddy is a monk' written underneath! I think that even then I felt quite happy to belong to a family that wasn't quite 'nuclear'.

We moved to the Blue Mountains when I was nine and started out living in the house which is now BMIMC. It was always a place of great tranquillity, the land rambling away from the enormous cypress tree at its centre. The cool, dark passageways and mysterious nooks and crannies of the main house used to scare me as a kid but have since transformed into peaceful spaces which I seek out during a meditation retreat.

Three years later we moved from Medlow Bath as the house was slowly transformed into a meditation centre. I entered adolescence and my thoughts on Buddhism and life in general changed dramatically. Like most of the Wat kids I went through a stage of trying anything and everything that seemed as far away as possible from the wholesome life of a Buddhist community. They were, as a friend calls them, my 'Black Years'!

Yet try as I might there was no way of shaking the rock-solid foundation which the dharma had already given me. There would come the hour during every wild party when I would finally admit to myself that I wasn't having a great time and I'd escape outside for a bit of peace and quiet. Having lived off the beaten track in places of great serenity and spiritual focus, the experience of mainstream life and its social pressures felt like a step backwards on the Path.

Doing Young Adult retreats as a teenager was like 'going home', returning to the familiar. Most often they were weekend retreats at BMIMC taken by teachers such as Malcolm Huxter or a visiting Burmese monk and they were fairly social events—late-night chat sessions in the dorms and friends disappearing into the bush every time there was a break in the meditation.

After finishing high school I worked and travelled for two years before moving to Sydney to study music

at the Conservatorium. Again, my thoughts on Buddhism shifted. Though no longer at such odds with the world, I now felt I was very much the 'frustrated practitioner'—plenty of information and experience to get me started but always the feeling that NOW wasn't a good time to sit. There was always my violin to practise, an essay to write or my body to look after.

That was when I discovered the potential of group sits. I joined with a few others to form a Young Adults discussion group at the Buddhist Library in the city. Once a month we would meet to exchange ideas on life as a young Buddhist and to meditate together. I found that the group created an energy right for meditation and despite the drone of Parramatta Road a hundred metres away, we would sit with a peacefulness which I didn't find anywhere else in Sydney. For three years these sits were almost my sole opportunity to practise formally and I would do everything to ensure my presence there (even cancelling gigs, which, for anyone who knows me, says a lot about their importance!).

I'm writing this article from the tranquillity of a Zen centre in the north of Chile where I'm staying for a few weeks while travelling. It's a little Nirvana, the perfect natural setting for a centre, almost self-sufficient in food and with an incredibly generous and welcoming *sangha*. It's an important time for me as I can now finally take responsibility for my own practice.

Being 'Buddhist' has sometimes been a label for me, like saying that 'I'm Australian' or 'a musician'. Practising Buddhism has not always been a conscious decision given the dharma contact I have had through my family and friends.

Now I'm taking an active interest in the development of my practice, experimenting with new ideas and reflecting on how to create my unique approach to the dharma. It must be a living, breathing thing, open to change and the impermanence of ideas. I will make my own path, but Buddhism paves my way.

## AROUND THE CENTRE



**K**ris Baird, the new manager of the centre has been joined by her partner, Shan, as co-manager. We welcome him to BMIMC. Shan, born of Indian descent in Malaysia, has long experience of a number of eastern wisdom traditions and is among other things, a scholar and writer of esoteric books.



**B**irth. Some will know Martina Palombi and her partner Nipako (Andrew Luff) who worked as temporary managers at the centre last winter. Nipako was for some years a monk at Chithurst Monastery (Thai forest tradition) in the UK.

They recently sent us the happy news that they now have a beautiful daughter, Elena, born in early March. Congratulations and may baby Elena and her parents live happily!



*Inquiring Mind*, published in California and distributed free to the vipassanā community, has just issued its 20th anniversary number,

in 52 pages. The work is mostly supported by donations. See [www.inquiringmind.com](http://www.inquiringmind.com) for details of how to subscribe or support.

## PATRICK KEARNEY

*Since past students will want to know Patrick Kearney's teaching schedule beyond his commitments at BMIMC, a summary is presented here.*

*Perth: 14 - 24 May: vipassanā retreat. For details, contact Norliah on (08) 9386 2450.*

*Brisbane: 29 - 30 May: weekend workshop. For details, contact Sue Sawyer (07) 3846 1438, or email [sue.sawyer@minterellision.com](mailto:sue.sawyer@minterellision.com)*

*Brisbane: Wednesday 2 June: "Is there Life-After-Life in Buddhism?" A public talk at DharmaCloud. For details contact [dharmacloud@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dharmacloud@ozemail.com.au)*

*Sydney: 4 August - 1 September, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Sutta Study course at the Buddhist Library. For details, contact Buddhist Library [info@buddhist-library.org.au](mailto:info@buddhist-library.org.au)*

*Byron Bay: 10 - 19 September: Vipassanā retreat. For details, contact Christine on (02) 6689 7116; or Ellen on (02) 6688 6307.*

*Alice Springs: 25 - 26 September: weekend workshop. For details, contact Jenny and Sue on (08) 8953 2776.*

*Armidale: 9 - 10 October: weekend workshop. For details, contact Maxine on (02) 6778 5038.*

*Sydney: Date in October. 'Buddhism in an Age of Empire'. A public talk at the Buddhist Library. For details, contact Buddhist Library [info@buddhist-library.org.au](mailto:info@buddhist-library.org.au)*

*Sydney: Saturday 30 October: Introduction to Buddhist Meditation. A one day workshop at the Buddhist Library.*

*Sunday 31 October: Intermediate Buddhist Meditation. A one day workshop at the Buddhist Library. For details, contact Buddhist Library [info@buddhistlibrary.org.au](mailto:info@buddhistlibrary.org.au)*

*Lismore: 20-21 November: weekend workshop. Kuan Yin Meditation Centre. For details, contact Christine on (02) 6689 7116; or Ellen on (02) 6688 6307.*

*Many of Patrick's articles written for past newsletters and notes from his classes are available on our website at [meditation.asn.au/patrick](http://meditation.asn.au/patrick).*

## THE COMMITTEE



**I**an Baird is a member of the BMIMC Management Committee that manages the association. In general, each member has a custodian role or portfolio responsibility.

Ian is about to go overseas for a long retreat, so we wish him well as we draw attention to the kind of work that is carried out by Committee members.

Formerly a landscaper and now involved in natural resource management, Ian has, since the early days, taken responsibility for the landscaping of the grounds, planting many of the wonderful native species that surround the meditation hall and the paths.

Visitors may notice on their next visit that a variety of native seedlings are springing up on the cleared area near the new buildings—now opened to the sun after decades of deep shading by radiata pines. There are also a good crop of the usual exotic weeds. Ian has prepared a Weed Management Plan that will guide their removal and the care of the regenerating natives.

**T**he 2004 Management Committee is: Chris MacLachlan (staff liaison), Peter Douglass (retreats and courses), Graham Wheeler (secretary & public officer), Gabrielle Cusack, Ian Baird (building & landscaping), Danny Taylor (financial), John McIntyre (publicity and fundraising) and Tara MacLachlan; and three new members, Robyn Howell, Theresa Baw and Nick Maddocks.

If you would like to become more involved in the Centre, by joining the House Committee, volunteering to work in the kitchen during retreats as a cook or assistant, or working in the garden or in some other capacity, please ring 4788 1024 or email Kris Baird, the manager.



# Annual Vesak building appeal

Vesak is a special time of the year for those who follow Buddhist teachings, commemorating the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. Vesak is usually taken as falling on the May full moon (this year May 5th) though it is celebrated on various days in May by the different Buddhist traditions.

Each Vesak we ask everyone who receives our newsletter to help us improve student facilities at the Centre by giving to the Building Fund, a donation that is wholly tax-deductible.

Since our first appeal in 2002 we have achieved a significant milestone thanks to the generosity of many. There are two new accommodation buildings, one of which is completed and in use by students.

There is still a long way to go to complete the second building and bring it into use by students. It stands locked up, without wall linings and insulation, showers and toilets and its fittings and fixtures.

We have two objectives for 2004. First, the Centre needs to repay about \$12,000 in loans by supporters that helped to bridge the funding shortfall for completing the first building. Then we can re-start the building process. About \$50,000 is needed for the fitting and finishing work, in total about \$62,000.

So this Vesak we will again be contacting past and present participants. Your donation, large or small, will bring us materially closer to finishing the second building and setting a new standard of accommodation for both men and women. If each of the 800 persons on the mailing list gave



*Sayādaw dedicates the new block*

## Dedication ceremony

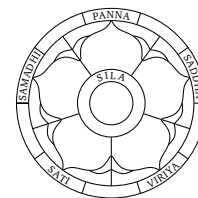
The new student accommodation unit was used for the first time by students at Sayādaw U Lakkhaṇa's retreat in November last year. The new facilities were much appreciated by the yogis.

The Sayādaw dedicated the building in a brief ceremony with a number of Pāli chants, and then inspected the seven-room unit which is yet to be finished. The Sayādaw has a great deal of experience in the building process, being responsible for the development over many years of a hospital near his monastery in upper Burma.

an average of \$10, we would raise \$8,000. If they gave \$20, we would raise \$16,000. If each gave \$50, we would raise the entire \$40,000 target.

We offer you the opportunity to make a manifest difference to the standard of facilities for meditators at BMIMC, to experience the joy of *dāna* and to contribute to the development of Buddha-dhamma in Australia by completing and sending the donation form on this page. (A letter will be sent to all of those on the mailing list).

*Thanks to all those who have helped in our sustained effort to get the buildings to this stage. Your efforts and generosity are much appreciated.*



## Vesak 2004 Building Appeal Donation form

I would like to donate -

- \$20
- \$50
- \$100
- \$200
- \$500
- \$1,000
- \$ .....

to the BMIMC Building Fund. All donations to the Building Fund are tax deductible. A special receipt will be issued.

- A. Please find enclosed my cheque payable to *BMIMC Building Fund*, or
- B. Authorisation to debit my credit card for the amount of \$ .....

Bankcard  Visa  M'card

Card No

.....

Cardholder Name .....

Expiry date .... / ....

Signature .....

*Thank you!*

Please post to:

BMIMC  
25 Rutland Road  
Medlow Bath NSW 2780



# INFORMATION REQUEST AND DONATION FORM

If you would like to receive the newsletter or make a donation to the Centre, complete this form and send to BMIMC, 25 Rutland Road, Medlow Bath, NSW 2780.

Name .....

Address .....

I would like to make a donation of \$ ..... to the Building Fund  General fund   
*Donations to the Building Fund are tax deductible*

Authorisation to debit my credit card:

Bankcard  Visa  M'card  Card No .....

Cardholder Name ..... Expiry date /

Signature .....

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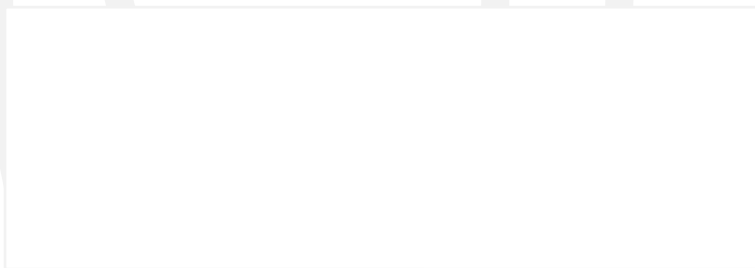
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If undeliverable return to:

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The Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre is a non-profit organisation owned and managed by the Buddha Sāsana Association of Australia.

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