Sāsanārakkha

✣ NEWSLETTER OF SASANARAKKHA BUDDHIST SANCTUARY a special project of Taiping Insight Meditation Society ✣ *RESTRICTED CIRCULATION ONLY* ✣ Issue 1 ✣ April 2000 ✣

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Taiping Buddhists' Pride

By Looi Sow Fei

The setting up of Sasanarakkha Buddhist Sanctuary (SBS) will be a historical event in terms of the growth of Buddhism in Malaysia. It will be the nurturing ground for a home-grown Sangha, the members of which will understand and be sensitive to the needs of Buddhism in Malaysia. It will be a sanctuary for Malaysian Theravada monks to study, practise and teach the Vinaya as laid out in the original scriptural tradition. It will be a haven for monks to experiment with the practice of the dhutangas and meditation according to individual capability and aptitude.

VERITABLE HAVEN FOR A SANCTUARY...May the Sasana be as well-nurtured as the durian trees at the site.

SBS is the brainchild of Venerable Aggacitta—the fruit of his vision for a Malaysian Theravada Buddhist identity. It is also a project under the auspices of the Taiping Insight Meditation Society (TIMS). We, together with the rest of the Buddhist community, will provide help and support as we are committed to make this project a success.

TIMS in particular, and the Buddhist community of Taiping in general, are proud that Taiping has been chosen as the supportive hinterland of SBS. The Sanctuary will be situated on a 43,505 square-metre (or 10¾ acre) piece of hilly and undulating land on the outskirts of Taiping town, bounded by forests, orchards and a cemetery. The initial capital cost of making SBS a reality is estimated at RM2 million. This includes the purchase of the land (RM350,000) and the construction of various buildings namely, monks' kutis, a water sima and a main structure to house special-purpose rooms such as a library, an assembly hall, lecture rooms, a kitchen and store rooms. SBS is expected to be operational by the year 2001.

A pro tem committee, comprising people from different parts of the country, has been formed to raise funds and to take charge of the construction of SBS. In February some members of the committee together with Venerable Aggacitta visited Wat Pah Nanachat, a forest monastery in Ubon, Thailand, to learn about its organisation and management. This was followed by another visit to the Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine, Western Australia, in March.

The pro tem committee has already met and discussed plans to raise funds. A web site has been set up to promote SBS fund-raising projects and to disseminate up-to-date information on the progress of the SBS project. The official launching of the project has been scheduled for 14 May at SJBA. Another plan is to hold mammoth vegetarian dinners in different regions of the country.

TIMS appeals to its members and friends to donate generously towards this project. Do not be put off by the target sum of RM2 million. Each person's contribution, however small, will bring us that much nearer to the target. Please contact any member of the general committee of TIMS if you wish to contribute. If your donation is by cheque, please make it payable to 'TIMS (SBS Project Fund)'. Thank you. ✣

Adapted from an article in TIMS's Newsletter (26 March 2000)

EDITORIAL

HELPING EACH OTHER

My favourite line about the future was uttered by an American baseball player some time back. "The future," he said, "is pretty much like the present...only there's a lot more of it." It reminds me of the *Bhaddekaratta Sutta* which teaches us to "live in the present, because the past is gone, and the future is yet to come."

The ambitious yet noble project, Sasanarakkha Buddhist Sanctuary (SBS), is about the past, present and future. Its Spiritual Director, Venerable Aggacitta, understands the past where local Buddhists who became monks had no suitable place for training. The present situation, unfortunately, has not improved much. By setting up SBS now we are laying the foundation stones for a centre where monks can be trained in the *Dhammavinaya* according to the Pali tradition.

It is obvious that the primary aim of a monk is to win liberation from *samsara*. This is explained in the *Samaññaphala Sutta* which elaborates the benefits of being a monk. However, it also mentions that such benefits should be shared with the laity. For this reason, there is a mutually functional relationship between the monks and the laity. SBS is an example of this relationship because it will eventually produce properly trained monks to minister to the needs of the growing number of Malaysian Buddhists who are seeking meaningful applications of the Dhamma.

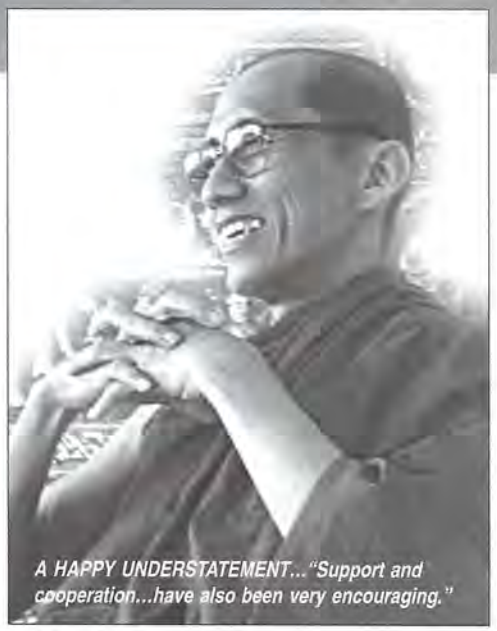
To date SBS has received encouraging support from Buddhist organisations in the country. This inaugural issue is at the core of SBS's mission: to help you understand—and keep up with—developments in the SBS project. We trust that you will enjoy, and be stimulated, by our work. But like what the baseball player said, there's a lot more to do to make SBS a successful reality.

With metta and all good wishes,

✣

Spiritual Director's Address *Aggacitta Bhikkhu*

Coming of Age



A HAPPY UNDERSTATEMENT... "Support and cooperation...have also been very encouraging."

After more than four decades of looking up to foreign monks for Dhamma teaching and guidance, it seems that we have finally come of age to crystallise our deepest hopes. Not that we are ungrateful to our venerable foreign teachers who have bequeathed us not only the Buddha's Teachings, but also their rich cultures and traditions. Not that we were unaware of the importance and inevitability of having our own home-grown Sangha. We wanted, but we were lacking. The Dhamma has its own way of unfolding at the right time and place—the second millennium in Taiping.

The events, developments and articles in this newsletter are only the preparations for a long process involved in grooming our young Malaysian monks to become responsible, well-trained Sangha leaders of our Buddhist community. Although the Taiping Insight Meditation Society (TIMS) will be the parent body under which SBS will be managed, we must all bear in mind that SBS is a national project. From experience we all know the crucial importance of local support in successfully managing and operating a centre on a daily basis. At the same time, TIMS by itself would not be able to raise the funds required to launch and operate the Sanctuary. For this reason, a pro-tem committee comprising leaders and active members of several Buddhist organisations from Selangor, Perak and Penang has been formed to spearhead the fund-raising campaign. Support and cooperation from other Buddhist organisations and individuals throughout the country and elsewhere have also been very encouraging.

To date, we have

- signed the S&P Agreement and paid 10% of the total cost of the land,
- established a web site,
- distributed flyers and donation forms,
- issued invitation cards for the official launching of the project,
- produced this newsletter, and
- planned a road-show in major towns in East and West Malaysia.

On 14th May, the project will be officially launched in Subang Jaya Buddhist Association at 9.00am. A mammoth vegetarian dinner is also scheduled to be held in July.

Looking at the commitment, creativity and efforts of all those determined to make SBS a desideratum come true, I am overwhelmed by a deep sense of humility. Like all of you, I am only an instrument of a Greater Plan, a cogwheel in a Cosmic Machine. As the jigsaw of a Malaysian Buddhist identity becomes more tangible, let us close the bonds of our collective effort toward realising our long-cherished vision.

May the Guardian Devas of the Sasana bless us with inspired guidance, harmony, perseverance, compassionate wisdom, success and protection for the long-term welfare and happiness of the many. ✣

SBS Fund-raising Project

Welcome to our Official Launching!

■ 14 May 2000 ■ Subang Jaya Buddhist Association Tel: 03 7348181/7315299 Fax: 7315262

9.00am	Arrival of guests
9.10	Observance of Five Precepts
9.20	Speech by Organising Chairman, Bro Lee Lee Kim
9.30	Speech by Religious Patron, Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thera
9.45	Speech by Spiritual Director, Ven Aggacitta
10.00	Speech by Guest-of-Honour
10.15	Presentation of cheques and pledges by Buddhist organisations and well-wishers
10.45	Welcome to the Exhibition Hall
11.30	Sanghikadana
	Light Refreshment for all

Organised and supported by: Subang Jaya Buddhist Association (SJBA), Buddhist Wisdom Centre (BWC), Selangor Buddhist Vipassana Meditation Society (SBVMS), Buddhist Gem Fellowship (BGF), Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre (MBMC), Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia (YBAM), Buddhist Missionary Society (BMS), Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society (SAWS), Buddha Dhamma Centre (BDC), Ipoh Buddha Dhamma Association (IBDA), Klang and Coast Buddhist Association (KCBA).

The Heart of SBS

Inspiration, aspiration and commitment are some of the factors that have brought us together to work with creative joy, in harmonious cooperation. Let us share with you our throbbing heart—the core movers of SBS—so that you too can be inspired to contribute your talent, aptitude and commitment to SBS, the future *we* can help to shape *now*.

Religious Patron	Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thera
Spiritual Director	Venerable Aggacitta
Project Facilitator	Goh Keat Soon (TIMS)
Secretary	Ooi Siew Swan (BGF)

COORDINATORS

Finance	Ng Kian Chong (TIMS)
Fund-raising	Lee Lee Kim (BWC)
Donation Receipt	Doreen Lim (Sukhi Hotu, Pg) Eng Lai Hiang

FUND-RAISING RELATED PROJECTS

Chairman of Official Launch	Lee Lee Kim (BWC)
Multi-media Producers	Victor Wee (BGF) Tan Joo Lan
Road-show Organiser	Low Weng Kuan (BWC)

MEDIA & WEB

Publishing and Design Work	Hor Tuck Loon (Sukhi Hotu, PJ)
Web Technical Adviser	Khong Wye Keen (BWC)
Webmaster (English)	Chan Lai Fun (Sukhi Hotu, PJ)
Webmaster (Mandarin)	*Vacant—Help needed*

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Architecture and Planning	Kim and Jade Saw
Geophysical Engineering	Soo Kian Sin
Land Surveying	Yap Seng Peng
Civil & Structural Engineering	Tan Buck Soon (BGF)
Mechanical and Electrical Engineering	Fong Chin On (IBDA)
Agro-forestry, Agriculture, Horticulture and Landscaping	Chiu Sheng Bin
Quantity Surveying	Quek Jin Keat (BWC)
Site Supervision	TM Tan

Legal Advisers	Vincent Ng (BGF) Wong Yin Voon (BGF)

We gratefully acknowledge the inspired support and assistance of all benefactors involved especially the above volunteers for the pro tem committee.

If you feel inspired to participate in our collective efforts please contact Ms **Ooi Siew Swan** at 03 9817135 (o) / 03 4318281 (h).

Explorations in Brickfields

By Lim Lay Hoon

"TAKING the first few steps with daddy's help makes baby more confident and stable" may not be the Buddha's words but they make sense. In the process of crystallising the vision of SBS we decided to disclose our plans to Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda, considered by many to be the Father of modern Theravada Buddhism in Malaysia. The pro tem committee was keen to explore the possibility of obtaining his patronage, and support from BMS and SAWS.

So, on 28 March 2000, at 6.00pm, Venerable Aggacitta together with members from different Buddhist societies, including Mrs. Tan Teik Beng, Sis. Low Weng Kuan, Bro. Goh Keat Soon, Bro. Lee Lee Kim, Bro. Rasika Quek, Bro. Leong Kok Wai, and Bro. Tan Buck Soon paid a courtesy call on Venerable Dr K Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thera, the Chief Abbot of the Buddhist Maha Vihara in Brickfields.

In the meeting, "Chief Reverend", as he is fondly called, was in good humour. He expressed his willingness to support the project and gave some helpful suggestions.

The project was initially known as the "Sasanarakkha Buddhist Seminary" but Chief had his reservations because of its Christian connotation. He advised on the use of innocuous sounding words to avoid misunderstanding with our "non-Buddhist brothers".

On the question of launching the project officially, Chief thought it was a good idea and even agreed to launch it. He also consented to be the religious patron of SBS and to contribute a short message in support of the project in the fund-raising flyer.

On the following evening (Wednesday, 29 March), a meeting was held with the Secretary of BMS, Treasurer of SAWS and a committee member of BMS Youth Section. Almost the same people representing SBS were present at the meeting to give a brief account of the project, its constitution and how the funds will be managed.

The representatives requested TIMS to send an official request so that they could present it at their next committee meeting and they promised to help in ways within their means to ensure the success of SBS. ✣

WHOLLY GOOD TRINITY...The Father and the Son discussing the Spirit of SBS.

Lessons From Wat 'No Ajahn Chah'

By Saccesi

Inside futuristic sima hall

Side entrance to dining hall

External view of pyramidal sima hall

At the cremation pyre

Surveying the meditation hall

Monks collecting food after almsround

Having heard so much about the monastic life at Ajahn Chah's forest monasteries for foreign monks, we decided to make a study tour of the Mother of them all, Wat Pah Nanachat in Ubol Ratchatani, Thailand. The monastery started in a "communal forest" (a patch of forestland reserved by the local authorities for cremation) at the invitation of the nearby villagers in the early seventies. Ajahn Sumedho, one of the senior-most Western monk disciples of Ajahn Chah, was among the pioneering foreign Sangha members there. Of course, the legendary Theravadin "Zen" Master (as he was often portrayed to be) Ajahn Chah was no longer there, but still we believed we could learn some lessons from his legacy.

A weeklong study tour of Wat Pah Nanachat would help to greatly enhance our knowledge and experience regarding:

1 The ownership, physical planning and layout of a forest monastery;
2 The design and construction of monastery buildings and service facilities (e.g. water supply, filtration, etc.);
3 The administration and management of Sangha affairs by the Sangha (e.g. decision-making, the distribution and usage of Sanghika property);
4 The financial management/policies of Sanghika fund;
5 The role of lay supporters in the management of a forest monastery;
6 The constitution of the association/society/committee helping to manage the forest monastery;
7 Other matters pertaining to our objective.

A group of us comprising four monks, six men and four women met at Don Muang International Airport, Bangkok, 9th February 2000. Venerables Aggacitta, Mahanyano, Tejadhamma and Kumara, Chuah Aik Sam, Chai Peng Hooi, Doreen Lim, Ng Kian Chong, Ooi Eng Huat, Mr Goh Keat Soon, Tan Guan Soon and Eng Lai Hiang flew in together from Penang, while Dr and Mrs Wong Wai Cheong came from KLIA. In the evening we took a connecting local flight to Ubol Ratchatani. Due to a miscommunication, the resident Sangha of Wat Pah Nanachat were not aware of our arrival plans although a letter was sent to them a few weeks earlier. Fortunately, Choo Chee Keong of BWC had arrived beforehand by bus all the way from PJ and had dropped in at the Wat to confirm our travel and boarding arrangements. By then the monastery van was already booked so Chee Keong rushed to the airport to inform us of the news.

We had to hire two vans because of the size of the contingent. The monks and the luggage arrived at the Wat at about 8 pm and were greeted by the resident Sangha. The lay devotees came much later, after their dinner. We were told that the Abbot, Ajahn Jayasaro, and a large group of monks had left for Chiengmai a few days ago for a meditation retreat and would be back only on 15th February, the eve of our return to Malaysia. A visiting Mahathera from Australia, Ajahn Nyanadhammo, was then the acting Abbot.

After we introduced ourselves and informed the resident Sangha of the purpose of our visit, Ajahn Nyanadhammo was very supportive and helpful. He had already made arrangements for our board and lodging, and planned a conducted tour of the monastery, situated in more than 100 acres of primary and secondary forestland, for the next day. He also gave many constructive suggestions regarding our drafts for the SBS constitution and the amendments to TIMS constitution. Moreover, he urged Ven Aggacitta to visit Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery near Serpentine, Western Australia, where he had been the assistant to its Abbot, Ajahn Brahm, for several years. The overall planning of the forest monastery and the design of the individual buildings were splendid, he said. Ajahn Brahm would also be an ideal Abbot to meet and consult on our constitutions and plans to set up a forest monastery in Malaysia because of his learning, experience and accomplishments.

Venerable Aggacitta remarked that he was very impressed by the systematic way

in which the junior monks were trained. Formal hierarchical respect and punctilious observance of many monastic duties prescribed in the scriptures were commendable features of their structured training. "For me, it was refreshing and inspiring to see these aspects of the Vinaya actually being practised. It is my personal observation that for many modern monks, these practices are only long-lost traditions safely buried in the scriptures," he said.

However, there seemed to be too much compulsory communal activities (e.g. early morning chanting (starting at 4.00 am), eating together in the dining hall, afternoon chores, evening tea break) that the individual monk might not have enough free time for secluded study or practice. We did not notice any formal teaching of the Dhammavinaya during our weeklong stay. We were told that the Patimokkha was only formally taught during the Vassa. They have a splendid library well stocked with Buddhist and miscellaneous literature, and the monks were expected to do self-study and approach more learned and experienced monks to clear their doubts.

We learned some interesting lessons by studying the evolution of the monk's kuti because there were several generations of it, all within the same monastery compound. "I notice that each generation is an improvement over the previous one," remarked Ven Aggacitta, "based on certain natural principles of climatic building design. I remember having studied them during my undergrad days at USM." Theirs is a hot-dry climate while ours is hot-wet, so we can adapt some of their innovative ideas to suit our particular environment. They have also devised various ways to ward of disturbances from pests like bats, rats, lizards, termites and ants, which would be useful to us.

As in established traditional Asian Buddhist cultures, the administration and management of the Wat is very much biased towards authoritarianism. So the Wat does not have a constitution, and most of the time, whatever the Abbot says goes. Even the lay management committee members are appointed by the Abbot, and the allocation of funds for any particular purpose depends largely on the Abbot's decision. Resident monks are not allowed to have personal *kappiyakarakas* to manage funds entrusted to them. All funds belong to the Wat and any requests from the monks for any requisite not found in the storeroom must go through the Abbot. Although most, if not all of the monastery buildings have been formally donated to the Sangha of the

BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP...Devices to ward off pests may look awful but they make life more comfortable.

Four Quarters, the Abbot can exert a powerful influence on a monk's right of stay in the Wat according to his discretion. The ownership and status of the monastery land are complicated issues that are not relevant to us because they are based on a different set of laws peculiar to a Buddhist country.

The Malaysian contingent would like to take this opportunity to thank all those kind and generous people in Thailand who helped to make our trip such a fruitful and enjoyable experience. We are especially grateful to the Sangha at Wat Pah Nanachat; the Abbot of the Sangha Resthouse, KM 27; Khun Vilai; and the lay supporters of Wat Pah Nanachat.

There are always pros and cons in every situation and the legacy of Ajahn Chah is no exception. As Malaysians who are brought up in more "democratic" ways, we may raise our eyebrows over some of the findings mentioned above, or perhaps applaud the survival of old-fashioned values in some. In the best interests of our modern Malaysian Buddhist community, we should perhaps try to work out a sound and healthy balance of power, discretion, freedom and mutual trust among the Abbot, resident monks and management committee.

It may be worthy of note that although the Buddha himself was an authoritative lawmaker, or *Dhammasami* (Master of the Law), as he is referred to in the scriptures, He did not appoint a successor just before His *parinibbana*, when requested to do so by Ven Ananda. No doubt He was an authoritarian, but an exceptional one who was omniscient, and possessed the extraordinary virtues of infinite compassion, loving-kindness and wisdom. Certainly He must have been aware that none of His disciples after Him could ever qualify to be an omniscient authoritarian with infinite, compassionate, loving, wisdom. As Lord Acton once said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." ✣

WHAT, NO AJAHN CHAH?...The realistic wax model of Ajahn Chah really made his absence felt by not appearing in this auto-flash shot.

Sāsanārakkha News Team for this issue

Editor-in-Chief Benny Liow
Associate Editor Ang Siew Mun
Contributors Chuah Aik Sam, Lim Lay Hoon, Looi Sow Fei, Saccesi

Photo credits Chuah Aik Sam, Eng Lai Hiang, Hor Tuck Loon, Law Hui Ming, Lim Lay Hoon, Tan Guan Soon

Layout & Design
Sukhi Hotu

This issue of **Sāsanārakkha** (5000 copies) is sponsored by the Leang family. **Who's next?**

SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD...The main building reflects the monks' way of life.

Up the hills down under

By Chuah Aik Sam

Little did we know we would be roaming up the hills down under until Ven Aggacitta took some lessons at Wat "No Ajahn Chah" (see page 4). Acting on Acting Abbot Ajahn Nyanadhammo's good advertisement, we left for Perth 19 March 2000 on a fact-finding and study mission. Our entourage, consisting of 12 Malaysian devotees, was headed by Venerable Aggacitta and Ajahn Mahanyano. The target destination was Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery. The aim was to study and learn, first-hand, the ropes of managing a forest monastery.

The Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery is located on the hills of the Darling Range, situated about 60km south of Perth, near the small town of Serpentine. It is spread over 392,559 square metres (or 97 acres) of undulating land overlooking the Indian Ocean. Twenty simple yet well-structured huts, scattered among the trees and bushlands, provide accommodation for the monks. In the central area stands the meditation hall, kitchen-cum-dining hall, the abbot's hut and guest accommodations. Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso, popularly known as Ajahn Brahm, is the current abbot of Bodhinyana.

A number of areas were looked into such as the architecture of the buildings and huts, landscaping, financial management, daily activities, chores, etc... Ajahn Brahm advised on many aspects related to the management of a forest monastery. With his years of experience, his advice was indeed invaluable for the setting up of SBS. Ajahn Brahm wittily described Sasanarakkha as a "monks' factory" for Malaysian Buddhists. Two Buddhist devotees from Perth have agreed to become official collection centres for the SBS project fund. We returned on 26 March with an achieved mission and wonderful memories.

We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Ajahn Brahm, the monks in Bodhinyana and the devotees of Perth for making our mission a fruitful and memorable one. ✣

MONASTERY INMATES STANDING ON THEIR OWN TWO FEET...Not as independent as the forest monks, though.

BLESSED ARE THE BLESSERS... "I never had such good food when I was a young monk in Thailand," said the Abbot to his monks.

Bringing SBS to MBMC

By Chuah Aik Sam

The 150-odd devotees who gathered at the MBMC main hall on the evening of 17 March 2000 must have been thrilled by an unusual event. More than 20 years after leaving his alma mater, Venerable Aggacitta returned to give his first public talk. Entitled "Groundwork for a Malaysian Theravada Buddhist Identity", the talk seemed to strike a fitting consonance with the non-Thai interior of the MBMC main building that was externally clad in very Thai embellishments.

Venerable Aggacitta emphasised the importance of teaching, learning *and practising* the Vinaya in order to firmly establish and vitalise the Buddhasasana in Malaysia. Rather than blindly copying foreign Buddhist practices, he pointed out that we Malaysians should endeavour to understand the principles of the Dhammavinaya based on the original scriptural tradition. We can then apply this understanding to our dynamic environment and begin to evolve our own Malaysian Theravada Buddhist identity, he said.

The Venerable explained that SBS was envisaged in order to prepare the groundwork for realising this vision. It will be a sanctuary for monks to deepen their knowledge, understanding and practice of the Dhammavinaya. As much as SBS will emphasise the cultivation of moral discipline through the practice of the Vinaya and *dhutangas* (ascetic practices), it will also encourage meditation for higher spiritual development. Each monk will be given the freedom to choose his own method of meditation according to individual capability and aptitude.

For interested students, Pali studies will also be offered so that they can gain direct access to the scriptural tradition. As part of a long-term plan, monks who are already well established in the theory and practice of the Dhamma-vinaya can opt for *dhammaduta* courses in a Malaysian Theravada Buddhist context. SBS will aspire to produce a new breed of virtuous and learned monks having the insight and foresight to apply the principles of the Dhammavinaya in innovative ways that not only conform to the scriptural tradition but also contribute to the evolution of a modern Malaysian Theravada Buddhist identity.

At the conclusion of the talk, colourful transparencies of the proposed site for SBS were projected. The devotees left MBMC awed by the picturesque photos. They took

(continued on page 7)

Date with Eternal Peace

By *Lim Lay Hoon*

THESE days, the spotlight seems to be shining on the small town of Taiping. This "town of eternal peace" is nestled in the foothills of Larut Hills and it is among these hills that the Sasanarakkha Buddhist Sanctuary will be situated. The site is a 43,505-square-metre (or 10¾-acre) piece of durian orchard with rolling hills and undulating slopes. Within it, springs and brooks feed a rushing river flowing through the adjacent state land. The site is accessible only by 4-wheel drive, motorcycle or on foot. Tombstones of the Hokkien cemetery guard the entrance to the laterite trail that leads to the land.

For those of us who walk up, the short hike becomes more challenging as the ascent increasingly steepens. The badly eroded trail opens out onto a small clearing where a two-storey cottage is perched on a slope. This is presently occupied by the orchard caretaker. The cottage, with an attached toilet, piped spring water and a store room is now a ready-made *kuti* for the Sanctuary.

On Saturday, 11 March 2000, some members of the SBS pro tem committee, and members and friends of the TIMS went for a site visit cum picnic. The visitors from Kuala Lumpur and Penang include Bro. Lee Lee Kim, Bro. Leong Kok Wai, Sis. Ivy Wee, Sis. Eng Lai Hiang, Sis. Doreen Lim, as well as architects Kim and Jade Saw.

It was at the caretaker's cottage that we picnicked while Bhante Aggacitta was busy discussing site and building plans with the two architects. The monastery will be developed to harmonise with the site's natural landscape.

After tucking into the sumptuous array of home-cooked food, the visitors were shown various possible sites for the location of buildings. First we climbed up to a high spot from where the best view can be seen. Standing there, one can have a breathtaking panoramic view of Taiping and its surroundings that stretches right up to the Straits of Malacca. Bro. Lee Lee Kim suggested that the main building of the Sanctuary be located at that spot. "To make the most of the panoramic view, the front of the building should be made of glass walls," he added.

We then proceeded to a brook near the edge of the site. The architects were then consulted as to the feasibility of building a water *sima* there. They said that it had good potential.

The next spot visited was the waterfall on the adjacent land. Getting there involved rambling through thick undergrowth, scrambling up and down rocks and negotiating steep slopes. However, once there, the enticing sight and sounds of the charging waters made the challenging and adventurous walk worth the effort. The falling torrents of water are natural jacuzzis under which one can sit for a water massage, and just below the plunging waters is a natural pool of crystal clear water ideal for swimming. All of us had a splashing time and felt invigorated. It is said that waterfalls are places of great natural energy and healing. The negative ions, which are produced naturally from the action of water descending, revitalise and add fillip to our well being.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD...Breathing in the panoramic view of Taiping and its surroundings from a high spot of the site.

MAJESTIC NEIGHBOUR...The enchanting waterfall and crystal clear pool just next to the SBS land.

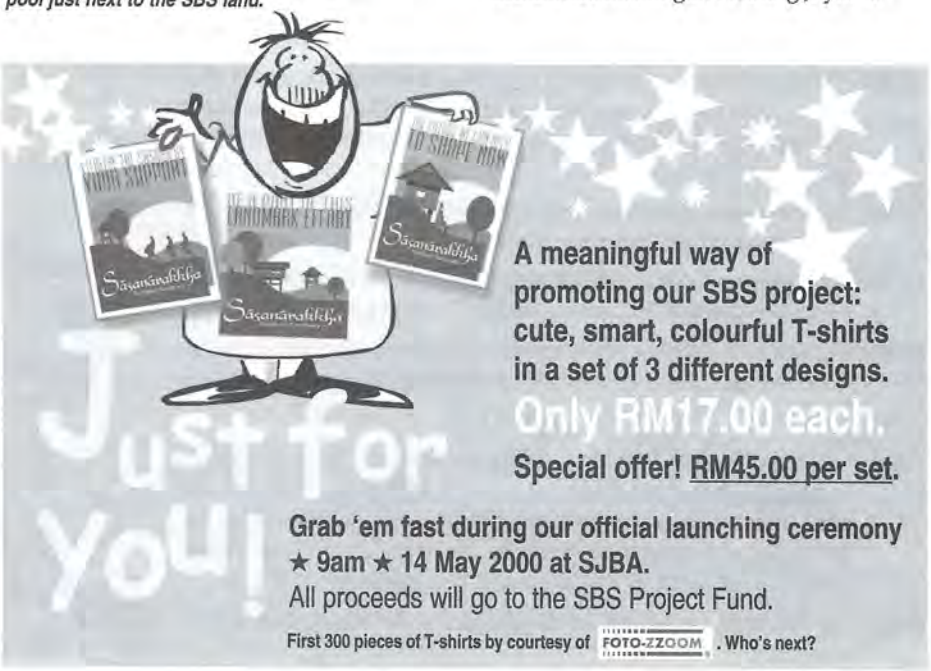
All too soon, it was time to go back. Our visitors will surely agree that the proposed site—a place where one can forget the hustle and bustle of the 'outside' world in order to soak up its spirituality—is the ideal haven for the Sanctuary. ✣

(continued from page 6)

BRINGING SBS TO MBMC

home with them a vivid picture of Venerable Aggacitta's vision as well as the conviction that the SBS project is worthy of their support.

The following day, the MBMC Committee met with Venerable Aggacitta. After discussing the details of the SBS and TIMS constitutions, and knowing more about the objectives of SBS, the MBMC committee heartily agreed to give all the support they can. They even suggested they could become the main coordinator of the northern region. So Bhante invited representatives from MBMC to attend the next SBS pro tem committee meeting in Petaling Jaya. ✣



Unfoldment

Things have been unfolding at a quick pace since the idea of setting up a local monk-training centre was crystallised. We'd like to share with you the beautiful and exciting process of our development and offer you the opportunity to participate in our inspired, collective efforts.

28 Jan First meeting at BWC with representatives from BWC, SBVMS, SJBA and BGF, and other "free-lance" Buddhists to discuss SBS project and whether it should be under TIMS or a separate body. The consensus is that chances of getting it officially registered as a separate body would be very slim and time consuming. Suggestions are given on how to amend TIMS constitution so as to allow associate members and non-members to sit in the SBS committee. After the fruitful discussion Ven Aggacitta announces that the project has to be shelved indefinitely because of TNB plans to build high-tension cables across the proposed 21-acre site.

7 Feb Another suitable site is found! We have a look at the scenic 10¾ acres of hilly durian orchard with springs and brooks.

9 Feb SBS founders leave Penang for weeklong study tour of Ajahn Chah's forest monastery for foreign monks at Wat Pah Nanachat, Thailand.

19 Feb Interview with Ven Aggacitta by Mitra Chong and Selena Chew for Eastern Horizon, journal of YBAM, at Mr Siah's house in Klang.

20 Feb Meeting at BWC with some of its members and How Eng Keong (SBVMS) on how to co-ordinate a national fund-raising campaign for the SBS project.

2 Mar Ven Aggacitta gives a talk accompanied by photo projections in SJBA entitled "Groundwork for a Malaysian Theravada Buddhist Identity". A meeting and discussion is held after the talk between Ven Aggacitta and some committee members of SJBA.

7 Mar Second meeting at BWC with representatives from TIMS, BWC, SBVMS, SJBA, BGF, BMS and KCBA, and other "free-lance" Buddhists to introduce and explain SBS as a national project. Volunteers then decide to form a pro tem committee in order to plan, co-ordinate and launch the fund-raising campaign.

11 Mar Visit of proposed site for SBS by visitors from Selangor and Penang accompanied by members and friends of TIMS.

13 Mar First Pro tem Committee meeting at BWC.

15 Mar Sales and Purchase Agreement signed.

17 Mar Ven Aggacitta gives a talk accompanied by photo projections in MBMC entitled "Groundwork for a Malaysian Theravada Buddhist Identity".

18 Mar Ven Aggacitta and some MBMC committee members discuss the SBS project, TIMS and SBS constitutions and MBMC aspirations. At the end of the meeting, the committee agrees that MBMC will be an authorised collection centre for SBS funds.

19 Mar Malaysian contingent leaves for weeklong study tour of Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery, Serpentine, Western Australia.

28 Mar Ven Aggacitta, together with members from different Buddhist societies, meets with Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda at Brickfields Maha Vihara.

29 Mar Ven Aggacitta, together with members from different Buddhist societies, meets with representatives from BMS and SAWS at Brickfields Maha Vihara.

31 Mar Second Pro tem Committee meeting at BWC.

1 Apr Ven Aggacitta visits Teluk Intan for the first time and has lunch dana in Persatuan Buddhis Hilir Perak. He conducts a "Dhamma dialogue" with some of its members after lunch about the Persatuan's activities and the SBS project. On behalf of the Persatuan, the committee members present agree to collect funds for the SBS project for a certain period of time.

8 Apr The SBS flyers are out! Soft launch taking it slow and steady since today is a Saturday.

Road-show calendar

Hi, everyone! We're delighted to inform you of our coming road-show in major towns throughout East and West Malaysia.
Spread the word around and bring your family and friends along, OK? See ya at the following dates and venues!

29 Apr Sat **8pm**	**Nalanda Reading Room and Archives** 11A Jalan Seri Ampang 1, Taman Seri Ampang, 31400 Ipoh. ✆ Ms Lee Siew Chee 05 5461389 (h)
30 Apr Sun **8pm**	**Wisma Mahinda, Mahindarama Buddhist Temple.** 2 Kampar Road, 10460 Penang. ✆ 04 2825944 ✆ Ms Doreen Lim 04 8277118 (o)
1 May Mon **9am**	**2808-S Taman Golf,** 05250 Alor Star, Kedah. ✆ 04-7329220 Lunch dana at 10.45am. ✆ Ms Doreen Lim 04 8277118 (o)
7 May Sun **10am-9pm**	**Ipoh Parade, Perak.** Occasion: IBDA of Ipoh will be putting up a stall on Theravada Buddhism and SBS Project. This is part of an exhibition organised by YBAM of Ipoh to celebrate Wesak. ✆ Ms Lee Siew Chee 05 5461389 (h)
21 May Sun	**Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.** Details to be confirmed. ✆ Mr Eng Kwan Hai 019 8809374
3 Jun	**Mint Hotel, KL** (exhibition). Details to be confirmed.
July	**Kuching, Sarawak.** Details to be confirmed. ✆ Ms Wendy Francis 019 886 7299

It's a Deal!

The Sales and Purchase Agreement for the SBS land was signed on 15 March 2000. TIMS advanced RM35,000 from its General Fund to the SBS Project Fund to pay the 10% deposit. The balance of RM315,000 has to be paid up within three months after this date.

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