



# Toowoomba Buddhist Centre

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2017

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[www.toowoombabuddhistcentre.org](http://www.toowoombabuddhistcentre.org)  
<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/toowoomba>

Dear Friends,

For many of us, returning to our ordinary everyday lives and responsibilities can be quite jarring after being on retreat, when we were giving special time for our spiritual lives. It can set us wondering how best we can bring these two aspects of life together. It can feel quite daunting. The distractions, infinite information and confusion of modern life can feel like a prison, something to be escaped from only by avoidance of our social responsibilities, even by total withdrawal.

But this is not what the Buddha would have advised a Householder. Increasingly the world's population is becoming one of city-dwellers. Often many of us, in a very determined way, will include 'doses' of seclusion time to counter the complexities of our society. Kamalashila<sup>1</sup> suggests that we may be missing the point here. We allow ourselves to be distracted. However, with awareness of that, we can guard our senses. We can 'appreciate our amazing good fortune', in living at a time when there is infinite potential to meet with others and to exchange ideas. From a perspective of appreciation of our life circumstances, of our environment and world, we can cultivate 'the spiritual growth and health of all beings'. [Viryaja]

1. 'My Buddhism in the City', a talk by Kamalashila, [www.freebuddhistaudio.com](http://www.freebuddhistaudio.com)

### AUGUST 2017 CALENDAR

(Friends Nights: 7pm - 9pm)

Thu 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b><u>FRIENDS NIGHT:</u></b>	Meditation; <i>Living Ethically</i> - Ch. 2 Generosity [R]
Thu 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b><u>FRIENDS NIGHT:</u></b>	Meditation; <i>Living Ethically</i> - Ch. 2 Generosity [K]
Thu 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b><u>FRIENDS NIGHT:</u></b>	Meditation; <b>Threefold Puja</b> [R]
Thu 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b><u>FRIENDS NIGHT:</u></b>	Meditation; <i>Living Ethically</i> - Ch. 2 Generosity [K]
Thu 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b><u>FRIENDS NIGHT:</u></b>	Meditation; <i>Living Ethically</i> - Ch. 2 Generosity [V]

### ***FRIENDS NIGHT PROGRAM\*:***

So far this year in the study program, we have looked at stories from the Pali Canon, teachings from the *Udāna*, and 'suffering in the context of everyday life'. We have celebrated 50 years of Triratna, **Buddha Day** and explored the *Heart Sutra*. Last month we looked at how we might live more ethically, using Sangharakshita's book '*Living Ethically*' - the Introduction and the first chapter on *Friendship*. In August we focus on *Generosity*. In later months we'll continue to use this text covering chapters on *sexual relations*, *skillful speech* and *the ethics of views*. N.B. There are a couple of copies of the text for sale at the Centre.

**\*FRIENDS NIGHTS, on Thursdays, 7-9pm, are open to everyone, whether a beginner or more experienced, a regular or a first time visitor.** They are an opportunity for people to come together to meditate, engage in Buddhist practices, learn more about the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma, but most importantly to engage in these activities in friendship with other like-minded people. The evening's program always includes meditation and a social aspect; each month one or two devotional practices take place and other evenings have a Dharma study/activity component.

*\*There is no charge for Friends Nights, but a donation is very much appreciated, since we rely heavily on people's generosity to keep the Toowoomba Buddhist Centre operating.*

### **BOOKS FOR SALE:**

In anticipation of the Friends Night study program for the rest of the year, and the Women's Dharma study group soon to delve into 'What is the Dharma?', there are a number of books for sale at the Centre. At the moment: 'Living Ethically', 'Living Wisely', 'Living with Awareness' and 'What is the Dharma?', all by Sangharakshita; and soon to come – 'Living With Kindness'. These books take one deeper into the Dharma; they offer guidance in bringing one's everyday life and one's spiritual life into greater harmony.

### **A BOOK FOUND AT A CAFÉ:**

Unfortunately not 'Living as a River' by Bodhipaksa – please keep looking for this missing library book! But a call from the Park House Café let us know that a Toowoomba Buddhist Centre library book had been left there by someone. The book – *Mystics the Soul's Journey Into Truth* – was wrongly assumed to have a connection to a dear sangha member who died earlier this year. While the wrong assumption led to other heart-warming connections, we are still at a loss who left the book at the café. Can you 'enlighten' us?

### **RETREAT REPORT:**

The recent weekend retreat: 'Present Welfare, Future Welfare', led by Dharmalata, was a wonderful boost of positive energy for the Toowoomba sangha. Harmony within the group was quickly formed after the Friday evening introductions were made. Everyone appeared to gently de-stress after their week's activity leading up to the weekend. Meditation and a shared love of the Dharma brought the group into a calm and unified position before the lights went out and the open fire was prepared for the next day. From Saturday's beautiful sunrise, friendships continued to evolve over the whole weekend. With equal voice, all could be at ease in the tranquil spaces, each with their own personal story and acute awareness of the difficulties associated with being human. With Dharmalata's guidance and inspiration, group discussions ensued, building knowledge and providing direction on our journeys through life. It was a joy to be part of and a weekend to be cherished by all. [Simon]

### **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:**

*Living in forests far away from other people is not true seclusion. True seclusion is to be free from the power of likes and dislikes. It is also to be free from the mental attitude that one must be special because one is treading the path. Those who remove themselves to far forests often feel superior to others. They think that because they are solitary they are being guided in a special way and that those who live an ordinary life can never have that experience. But that is conceit and is no help to others. The true recluse is one who is available to others, helping them with affectionate speech and personal example.*

*Prajnaparamita*

