



Toowoomba Buddhist Centre

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021

4-6 Cress Street

Toowoomba Qld 4350

www.toowoombabuddhistcentre.org

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/toowoomba>

Dear Friends,

Every year during May we celebrate the premier festival in the Buddhist world. It is known as Vesak (pronounced Wesak) and celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death (Parinirvana) of the Buddha, all on the first full moon day in May. (Wesak being the name of this month in the Indian calendar.)

We consider ourselves fortunate to have been born ourselves so close to the birth of this human being who was to become the most recent Buddha - only some 25 generations ago.

Also, we celebrate the Buddha's Enlightenment, during which he developed insight into the Law of Conditionality, and was thus able to free himself from the web of conditions in his own mind that caused suffering, death and rebirth. He was able, in the present, to unbind himself from the web that tied him to the world of conditioned existence. This is known as the Unbinding or Nirvana, and is considered entry into a self-transcending immortality beyond time and space. Because he was human before this event and achieved it with a normal human mind, he left behind teachings (the Dharma) to help any human achieve the same result. Many did even in his lifetime.

Finally we celebrate the death or Parinirvana of the Buddha – the 'Total Unbinding'. This is so named because, although the Buddha was already unbound because of his enlightenment, that is free, of conditionality (and thus producing no new karma), he was still in a body (due to previous karma – past conditionality). So when the body died this was the unbinding of the last chain of conditionality – 'total' unbinding. He left conditioned existence. In a sense this was no 'big deal' as he was already mentally in the 'beyond'. His disciples who witnessed the paranirvana described it as awe-inspiring and hair-raising! Indeed, all this is exciting and inspiring to Buddhists and why we celebrate it on this day. [Roger]

FEBRUARY 2021 CALENDAR – *Friends Nights are from 7 to 9pm*

Thu 4th FRIENDS NIGHT: Meditation and activity led by Hridayaja

Thu 11th FRIENDS NIGHT: Meditation; **Parinirvana Day** Celebration

Thu 18th FRIENDS NIGHT: Meditation; Study Noble 8 Fold Path

Thu 25th FRIENDS NIGHT: Meditation; Study Noble 8 Fold Path

FRIENDS NIGHTS* - Thursdays, 7-9pm**

Friends Nights 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 such as pujas and to learn more about the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma. Most importantly, they are an opportunity to engage in these activities in friendship with other like-minded people. The evening's program includes meditation and a cuppa and chat followed by some study. Each month usually includes devotional practices with a Dharma study/activity component on other evenings. **Study in February** will continue with the Noble 8 Eightfold Path. We are currently looking at 'The Four Right Efforts.' This is about how we work with our positive and negative mental states. It provides a Dharmic formula around how we can work with 'Preventing' and 'Eradicating' unskillful mental states and also 'Developing' and 'Maintaining' skillful mental states.

There are plenty of spots to attend Friends nights so come and join us, you don't need to book in or let us know you are coming. Hridaya will be leading the first Thursday night in February. Hridaya is an order member from Brisbane. Some of you will know her, as she has had a long association with the Toowoomba Buddhist Centre.

SINCERE THANKS

To Alan Pearson and Bruno our heartfelt thanks for replacing some rotten boards on the front deck of the centre. They also plan to repaint the deck which will freshen up the whole front.

Also, our thanks to the women who clean and tidy the interior to provide a welcoming space in which to meet as sangha.

Their generosity and willingness embodies the spirit of Buddha and our gratitude is unbounded.

PARINIRVANA DAY

Parinirvana Day is an important event when Buddhists everywhere celebrate the death of the Buddha. It is not a time of sadness for it marks the moment when the Buddha's Enlightenment came to full fruition, his final Nirvana.

Parinirvana Day is an appreciative celebration of life, death and the wonder of existence, and offers a positive context to cherish and remember those near and dear to us who have died. Please feel free to bring a photograph of a loved one who is no longer with us, to place on the shrine.

RETREATS IN 2021

We are planning to have two residential retreats at the James Byrne Centre this year. The dates are; **22nd-25th of April** and **23rd-27th of September**. Note these retreats are both a little longer than usual. More details will be in the March newsletter.

WORKING BEE

The working bee planned for Sunday 31st January is now on: **Sunday 28th February 10am to 2pm.**

My apologies for any inconvenience. The focus for the working bee will be to clear the weeds and growth from behind the building and under the loquat tree, tidy the gardens and vines and hedge, trim trees in parking area. So that means trimmers, saws, hedgers shovels and forks, utes or trailers, etc. See you there!!

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts.

With our thoughts we make the world.

(Dhammapada)

