

Sukhi Hontu

Welcome to
Buddhist Maha Vihara



Publication of the



Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society
佛陀教义弘扬协会

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**A Warm Welcome to
Buddhist Maha
Vihara**



You have just stepped into Buddhist Maha Vihara, a sanctuary within walking distance from the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur city life.

We hope this booklet will be your guide as you explore this sanctuary at your own pace to discover its long history, rich Sri Lankan culture and Buddhist heritage. As you experience the spiritual solace here, may you also find your own spiritual solace in life.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office staff should you require further assistance or information.

Sukhi Hontu
(May you be well and happy)

Committee of Management
Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society
January 2020

Key Highlights



Buddhist Maha Vihara

The Buddhist Maha Vihara, originally and affectionately known as Brickfields Buddhist Temple in its early days was founded in 1894 by the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society (SAWS).



View of entrance, 1956



The temple has been a sanctuary for Buddha-Dhamma practice in the Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist tradition for more than a century.

With the addition of the International Buddhist Pagoda in August 1971, the status of the Brickfields Buddhist Temple was elevated to that of a Buddhist Vihara after it attained the full complement of the three main sacred objects of

veneration (Shrine Room, Bodhi Tree and Pagoda).

Through the years, the Vihara was always the focal point practices to mobilise the Buddhist community. Past and current Sangha (community of monks), volunteers, donors and friends contributed to the growth of the Buddhist Maha Vihara, foremost amongst them was the late Venerable Dr K. Sri Dhammananda.

Today, Buddhist Maha Vihara continues to serve the Buddhist Community.

Buddhist Maha Vihara Vision

To be a leading international centre for the Learning, Practice and Dissemination of the Buddha-Dhamma.



Mission

To provide a conducive environment to:

- promote scholarship and study of the Buddha-Dhamma
- propagate the Buddha-Dhamma
- be the focus of Buddhist activities for the larger community
- foster Theravada Buddhist cultural and traditional practices

Motto

Go forth, for the good, happiness and welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world.

A Sanchi style gateway



The 20 feet high Sanchi style gateway (patterned after the famous Sanchi gate in India) grace the entrance to the Buddhist Maha Vihara. It was erected on 28th August 1971.

The three emblems of the Dhammacakka on top of the gateway denotes the Noble Eightfold Path.



A decorative brick wall, embossed at regular intervals with emblems of the Dhammacakka surrounds the front and southern perimeters of the Vihara.



Lotus fountain

The fountain was erected on 23rd March 1956 and was given a major face-lift in 1986, incorporating a large replica of a lotus flower at the centre with several water jets to enhance its beauty.

Lotus represents the Buddhist ideal.



March 1956

Lotus flowers take root in muddy and murky condition and grow into beautiful flowers. Just like the lotus, irrespective of our roots and experiences in life, we can majestically rise to become pure, unsoiled and a joy to others.

The Moonstone

A unique Sri Lankan sculpture in which a devotee steps on before making his or her entrance to the Main Shrine Room or the Pagoda in this Vihara.

Sandakadapahana, the moonstone, a semi-circular stone slab with carvings, has come to depict the skill of ancient stone artists and noble intentions. These moonstones take pride of place in the sacred ruins of Anuradhapura and Polunaruwa in Sri Lanka.

The outer edge is designed with a ring of flames and below that is a ring filled with 4 types of animals - elephant, horse, lion and bull chasing each other. The next is a semi circle of undulating scrolls of creeper with a wavy stem with foliage. Next is a line of swans with a twig of flower and a leaf on their mouth. At the centre is lotus with petals all around the semi-circle on the moonstone.

The noted Sri Lankan historian and archaeologist Prof. Senarath Paranavithana viewed that the moonstones have a deep metaphysical interpretations, with each carved panel representing a spiritual stage in a person's ascent to enlightenment.



Each with a diameter of 5 $\frac{2}{3}$ feet.

Outmost ring of flower petal motif represents the fires of worldly existence (greed, hatred and delusion). They are our defilements which give rise to repeated births and deaths in this cycle of existence and its associated lamentation, pain, distress, and despair that comes into play.

Stepping on the moonstone, a devotee mentally leaves this mundane worldly existence and prepares his or her mind to experience the peace and serenity of the Shrine Room or Pagoda with the image of the Buddha and His teachings taking centre stage.

The **four animals** represents the four mortal perils of birth (elephant), aging (horse), disease (lion) and death (bull).

The **leafy creeper** next to it is a reminder of our desires or cravings which creates little fruits but only foliage.

The **swans** to represent the thoughtful ones who have left their worldly abodes to become monks or nuns. Monastic life is considered to provide the most conducive environment for advancing toward enlightenment and liberation from the temptations and vicissitudes of worldly life.

In the centre the lotus in full bloom represents enlightenment or nibbana. When one steps on the lotus, one leaves behind the mundane world and enters the sacred Shrine Room or Pagoda free from the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion which plague the worldly life.

Main Shrine Room

The magnificence beauty of the main Shrine Room with rich Sinhalese heritage.



Main Shrine Room

The first structure of the Vihara was the Main Shrine Room. The original Shrine Room was a modest rectangular shaped building measuring 36 feet by 25 feet, with a height of 16 feet with verandas.

The building had no windows but there were six large oval-shaped ornamental air vents depicting the figure of the Sun (three on either side of the walls) to provide ventilation and to allow sunlight into the interior of the shrine room. It was completed sometime during the first decade of the 20th century.



The ceremonial laying of the foundation-stone was by Mrs. C.E. Spooner, wife of the State Engineer, Selangor on 25 August 1894.

Due to the growing number of devotees, the Shrine Room building was extensively renovated and enlarged in 1924. It is of a spacious design and ornamented with carvings and mouldings after the Sinhalese style of architecture.

Further renovations to the interior of the Shrine Room took place on a massive scale and was completed on 17th May 1935. The period since the mid-1950s saw further development works being carried out to the shrine building and its interior.

In 1979, the interior walls of the Shrine Room were magnificently tiled and the veranda was raised, extended and finished off with mosaic tiles. The renovation work was completed on Wesak Day 10th May 1979.



Circa 1926



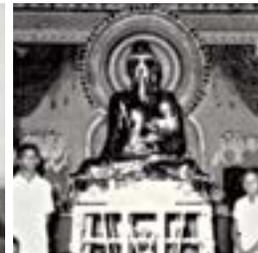
Further renovation works completed in 1979.

Buddha Images

Installed in Main Shrine Room over the years.



*1894 - 1926
One foot high*



*1926 - 1935
Five foot high*



*Since 1935
Large Image*

First two Buddha images are now kept in the International Buddhist Pagoda in this Vihara.

Main Shrine Room

Two intriguing features at the main entrance to the Shrine Room are the pair of guardian lions and the Makara Torana. The existence of both represents the incredible tolerance of Buddhism, which was quite ready to accept and absorb them into its own scheme, so that people were not disoriented.



Female guardian lion.



Male guardian lion.

Chinese guardian lions or Imperial guardian lions are a common representation of the lion in imperial China. It was donated to the Vihara and reflects the good intentions of the Chinese devotees to safe guard this Shrine Room.

The pair of lions consist of a female restraining a playful cub that is on its back (representing nurture) and the male leaning his paw upon an embroidered ball (in imperial context, representing supremacy over the world).

The Makara Torana reflects the art and architecture of Sri Lankan, brought here by the founders of the Vihara.

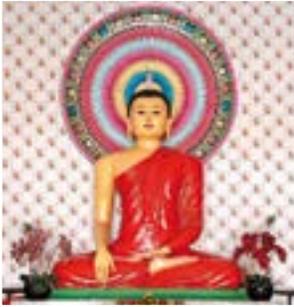
On either side of the entrance to the Shrine Room, are figures of protective earthbound spirits carrying ornamental vessels.



Makara Torana

The top panel are the auspicious signs of Naga (snake), regarded as a symbol of goodness and protection. To one who knows, it really is a sign of reassurance that one is about to enter a place where evil will not dare to step in. The signs of the sun and the moon also radiate their protective rays on the world. The rabbit in the moon reminds us of one of the best loved stories in the Buddhist Jataka tales.

A colossal Buddha image takes centre stage as one steps into the Shrine Room. The life history of Gotama Buddha unfolds here and many of the historical sites associated with the Buddha in Nepal and India have been uncovered by archeologists and the significant ones are now UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



'Buddha' refers to one who has become enlightened through his own effort and insight.

Birth 623 B.C. May full moon

Having perfected his virtues through countless life cycles, the Bodhisatta, took his final rebirth in the family of King Suddhodana and Queen Maha Maya of Kapilavatthu. The Queen gave birth to this royal child on the full-moon day, May 623 B.C., at Lumbini Park, Kapilavatthu, on the borders of Nepal. The noble prince was later given the name “Siddhattha Gotama” which means “wish fulfilled”.

Youth

As a royal child, Prince Siddhattha received a good education, including the art of warfare, being a scion of a warrior race. At the early age of sixteen, he married his beautiful cousin Princess Yasodhara, who was of equal age. He led a luxurious life, blissfully unaware of the vicissitudes of life outside the palace gates.

Renunciation

With the march of time truth gradually dawned upon him. Amidst the comfort and prosperity he realized the universality of sorrow. One glorious day, as he went out of the palace to see the world outside, he came into contact with the stark realities of life.

He saw, what is known as, the “Four Sights”, that is, an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy recluse. The first three sights convinced him of the inexorable nature of life and the universal sickness of humanity. The fourth sight, signified the means to overcome the ills of life and attain calm and peace.

At the age 29, he renounced the princely life to search for an answer to overcome the ills of life. His renunciation was unprecedented in history. He left at the height of youth, from pleasures to difficulties, from certainty of material security to uncertainty, from position of wealth and power to that of a wandering ascetic who took shelter in the cave and forest, with his ragged robe as the only protection against the sun, rain and winter winds.

Search and Struggle for Enlightenment

For six long years, as ascetic Gotama, he studied under the foremost masters of the day and learned all these religious teachers could teach him. When he could not find what he was looking for, he joined a band of ascetics and practised asceticism to its extreme.

He outdid other ascetics in every austerity they proposed, to the extent that he would have died. Realising that Enlightenment could not be gained with an exhausted body, he decided to practise moderation instead.

Temptation of Mara the Evil One

On the eve of May full moon in the year 588 B.C., seated under the Bodhi tree at Buddha Gaya, Bodhisatta Gotama made a firm resolve not to rise from his seat until he attained Buddhahood.

Demonic forces have tried to unseat him, because their king, Mara, claims that place under the Bodhi tree as theirs. “That place beneath the tree is mine! What right have you to claim it?”, roared Mara. Bodhisatta Gotama replied that he had earned the right after having practiced the Ten Perfections over several lifetimes. Unfazed, Mara replied, “Hah, I have accomplished this too! What’s more, my armies will vouch for me. Who will stand witness for you, ascetic?” Bodhisatta Gotama raised his right hand and placed his fingers upon the ground, calling upon the Earth to be his witness. It was a defining moment. Mara and demonic forces vanished.

The colossal Buddha image in this Shrine Room depicts the Buddha seated in meditation posture with His left palm upright on his lap, while His right hand touches the earth (Bhumisparsha mudra, or “the earth witness” mudra). It commemorates the Buddha’s victory over the temptation by Mara.

The Enlightenment 588 B.C. May full moon

The following morning (May full moon 588 B.C.), with the mind tranquillised and purified, he attained the supreme Enlightenment. There arose in the world a Samma Sambuddha, the fully Enlightened One. Having attained Buddhahood at the age of 35, He devoted the remainder of his life to serve humanity both by example and precept.

In Theravada Buddhism, ‘Buddha’ refers to one who has become enlightened through their own efforts and insight. A Buddha is someone who has realized the enlightenment that ends the cycle of birth and death and which brings liberation from suffering.



Figure of the Buddha in a standing position. The right hand raised with the palm facing outward denoting protection and expressing silently “Fear Not”.

**Avoid evil;
Do good;
Purify one’s mind;
This is the Teachings of the Buddhas.**

Preached the Dhamma for 45 years

Gotama Buddha walked on the dusty paths of India teaching the Dhamma so that those who heard and practised could be ennobled and free. He founded the Sangha (the order of monks and nuns), challenged the caste system, raised the status of women, taught religious freedom and free inquiry, opened the gates of deliverance to all, in every condition of life, high or low, saint or sinner. He was towering in wisdom and compassion.

Gotama Buddha had many disciples. Flanked by either side of the colossal image of the Buddha are His first and second chief disciples, Arahant Sariputta and Arahant Moggallana, shown paying their respects to the Buddha.



Arahant Sariputta

Arahant Moggallana

The lying image of the Buddha in the Shrine Room shows the Buddha at rest. The relaxation of the muscles is shown with the left foot being drawn involuntarily slightly back from the right foot. In a Parinibbana Buddha, the left foot rests exactly over the right one.



*Buddha at rest,
in lying posture*



Lord Buddha always rest on his right side.

The left foot being drawn involuntarily slightly back from the right foot.



Parinibbana 543 B.C. May full moon

After 45 years of ministry, Gotama Buddha attained Parinibbana at the age of 80 at Kusinara, leaving behind lay followers, monks and nuns, and a vast treasure store of Dhamma Teaching. The impact of His great love and dedication is still felt today.

Homage to the Buddha

Buddhist devotional practise (Buddha-Puja), sutta chantings for blessings and monks religious events are conducted in this Shrine Room.

In paying homage, a devotee bows three times to the Triple Gem in Buddhism (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) in front of this colossal image of Gotama Buddha.

Buddha-Puja

Lights, flowers and incense are commonly offered to Lord Buddha during devotional practise called “puja”. Other items offered are water, food, and medicinal drinks.

The word “puja” means honour, respect or homage, and refers to simple and meaningful ceremonies meant to strengthen and give expression to our confidence and to remind us daily of our commitment to the Noble Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha).



Offering of light

Light is a universal symbol of wisdom, just as the darkness it dispels is universally seen as a symbol of ignorance. In offering lights, we make aspiration to develop mental clarity and understanding in our life.



Offering of flowers

Flowers represents beauty, pleasures and worldly possessions because like them, although beautiful they soon fade away. Reflecting on impermanence, we develop a detached attitude towards beauty, pleasures and worldly possessions.



Offering of incense or perfumed smoke

Incense represents virtue, and in offering incense, we remind ourselves of the importance of virtue and aspire to become more virtuous. Lighted incense are placed in outdoor incense burners.

Made of bronze, these incense burners are made in China and comes with neat Chinese art and cultural design.





Image of Maitreya Bodhisatta, the future Buddha to come.

The Future Buddha

In the Buddhist Pali canon, it is stated that many Buddhas have appeared in the past and to appear in the future.

The current world cycle is an auspicious one with 5 Buddhas. Four have appeared, Gotama Buddha being the fourth. In time to come, the fifth Buddha (Maitreya Buddha) of current world cycle to take his final rebirth in the human world, strive for Enlightenment and to preach the same Dhamma that gives deliverance from repeated births and deaths.

The Belfry (Bell Tower)

The sound from the bell vibrates across the Vihara to announce the commencement of major Buddhist events and helps to compose the minds of devotees.

The bell, cast and brought from Burma in 1926, was donated to the Vihara. The belfry, bearing the inscription “1926” at the top was erected the same year in the Vihara compound.

In 1992, the belfry underwent some renovation. Whilst the top part of the bell-tower remained unchanged, the bottom half was redesigned and improved.



A close-up view of the top portion of bell-tower.

Bodhi trees in Buddhist Maha Vihara





Bodhi tree is a symbol of Buddha's Enlightenment.

Bodhi Trees (L. Ficus religiosa)

Bodhi trees in this Vihara are planted from saplings from the Sri Mahabodhi, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. The Sri Mahabodhi grew from a sapling from the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, India brought during King Asoka's reign.

Religious Significance

Bodhisatta Gotama attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya. After His Enlightenment, as a mark of gratitude and respect to the Bodhi tree, He spent one whole week in front of it standing with unblinking eyes. The Bodhi tree had served as His only shelter and protector during the period of meditation until He attained Enlightenment.

Buddhists believe that devas (celestial beings) always protect and influence the area of vicinity wherever such a Bodhi tree is planted and venerated by people. Bodhi Pujas are conducted here to invoke the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem and Devas.

Bodhi tree is also a symbol of Buddha's Enlightenment. A Bodhi tree was planted in Jetavana to represent the Buddha in His absence.

The earliest known Bodhi tree in Vihara

The first Bodhi tree grew from a sapling brought from Sri Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura in Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka) and planted here in 1911. Unfortunately, the Bodhi tree was blown down during a severe storm in 1982. Another sapling was obtained from Sri Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura and planted here on 24th October 1982.

The third Bodhi tree, a sapling also from Sri Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka was planted here on 21st May 1995 after the demise of over a 100 year old common Bo tree. The Bo tree had existed (sprouted and grown as result of bird droppings) in the grounds of the Temple when the land was acquired in 1894 by the Temple Society.



The Bodhi tree, nearest to the Pagoda was planted here in Oct 1982 after the first bodhi tree was blown down during a severe storm.

The adjacent Bodhi tree was planted in May 1995 after the demise of over a 100 years old Bo Tree

Photo above – Photographed in 1971, this first Bodhi tree was then aged 60 years.



Buddha Images under the Bodhi Trees

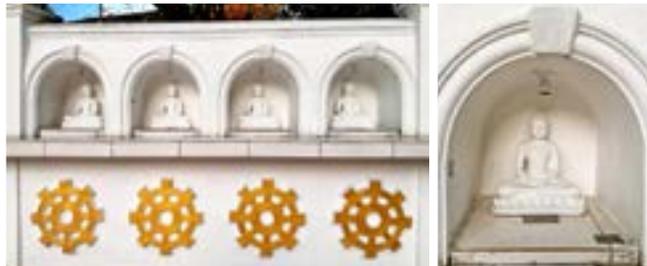
Directly under the two Bodhi trees, are 3 large outdoor Buddha images in meditation posture, symbol of Buddha's Enlightenment. These images are from Sri Lanka.



28 Buddhas

Many Buddhas appeared in the past and many to come in the future. In the Chronicles of the Buddha, names of 28 Buddhas are mentioned. These are displayed around the bodhi trees for devotees to pay homage. Devotees can invite monks to conduct Bodhi Puja and recite religious verses for blessings.

These 28 Buddhas; Having fulfilled the Ten Perfections. Defeated the hosts of the Evil One; And attained Enlightenment. By the might of the Truth; May joyous victory be yours/mine.



Bodhi Puja

Besides Buddha Puja, it is a common practise to see devotees performing Bodhi Puja, conducted within the vicinity of the Bodhi trees. Bodhi Puja can be performed to seek mundane worldly assistance from devas (celestial beings) living within the vicinity of the Bodhi trees. Assistance sought can be for any reasons, may it be blessing for speedy recovery from sickness, children sitting for major examinations, a safe journey, etc.

Puja offering items such as lights, incense, flowers, fruits, food, water and medicinal drinks are offered to the Buddha and to Devas within the vicinity of the Bodhi trees.

Devotees can also invite monks to conduct the Bodhi Puja and recite religious verses. The purpose of these devotional practise is really to perform wholesome deeds; create positive states of mind; and supported by devas and religious blessings which will help one to achieve positive results with whatever is desired.



Sala Tree (*Shorea robusta*)

Introduced from Sri Lanka, this Sala tree was planted sometime during the ministry of the Late Chief Reverend Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda.

Religious Significance

Sala tree is associated with the life of Gotama Buddha. His mother, Queen Mahamaya with her royal retinue on her way to her parental home in Devadaha, gave birth to Him in Lumbini Sala grove (modern Rumindei in Nepal) whilst standing and holding on to one of the flowering Sala tree branches.



Flowers (followed by fruits), grow directly from the Sala tree trunk.

When Buddha arrived in Kusinara and lay down between two Sala trees, out of season, the tree burst into flowering and sprinkled their petals over Lord Buddha. Buddha attained Maha Parinibbana here at the age of 80.



The flower of the Sala tree is amazingly complex and is also heavenly scented. It attracts bees also !.

The brief flowering of the Sala tree is used as a symbol to contemplate on impermanence and a rapid passing of glory.



Asoka Pillar

A commemorative Pillar

This commemorative Pillar (popularly known as the Asoka Pillar) was unveiled on 1st January 1995. Plaques, with inscriptions engraved thereon appear on each of the four sided base of the Commemorative Pillar.

The purposes of building the Asokan pillar were to commemorate the appointment of the then Venerable K Sri Dhammananda as the Chief High Priest of Malaysia and subsequently Singapore; the conferment of Johan Setia Mahkota (JSM); the 100th year Anniversary of the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society and dedication to the pioneering Sri Lankan Buddhists in founding this vihara.



Asoka Pillar

Four lions stand atop the drum, each standing back to back and each facing in the four cardinal directions. Their mouths are open roaring or symbolically spreading the Dhamma, the Four Noble Truths, across the world.

The lion is also a symbol of royalty and leadership and may represent the Buddhist King Asoka who ordered these columns to be built during his reign in India.



Asoka chakra (wheel) is mounted above the lions.

King Asoka

In the opinion of some scholars, King Asoka was born in 304 B.C., and his coronation as King took place in 325 B.C. (some 218 years after the Parinibbana of the Buddha). He reigned 37 years after this coronation and passed away in his 71st year.

After the Kalinga war, King Asoka became an ideal Buddhist monarch. His name was changed into Dharmasoka, Asoka the Righteous. Ceaselessly, he worked for the dissemination of the Dhamma, not only in India and other parts of Asia but also in Europe and Africa. With his royal patronage, Buddhism flourished in his time and he ruled in accordance with Buddha-Dhamma.



Stupa International Buddhist Pagoda

The magnificent International Buddhist Pagoda in all its glory and dignity today is an object of veneration by all Buddhists.

Stupa

International Buddhist Pagoda

Religious Significance

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha is quoted as saying that there are four classes of people who were worthy of being honoured by having stupas built over their remains, namely Samma Sambuddhas, Pacceka Buddhas, Arahants and Universal Monarchs.

The International Buddhist Pagoda

The Pagoda was built to commemorate the 9th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhist, held in Kuala Lumpur in 1969. The completed Pagoda was officially opened on 28 August 1971.

A miniature pagoda-shaped casket made of hard silver metal containing a minute particle (a bone relic) of the corporeal remains of the Buddha was enshrined atop the Pagoda, making this International Buddhist Pagoda a sacred place within the grounds of the Vihara.



The Pagoda, of Sri Lanka design is 58 feet high with a diameter of 40 feet at the base. It stands on an octagonal paved base embedded with lotus petals and adorned with Dhammachakka wheels denoting the Noble Eightfold Path.

A five foot high brass Buddha Image of Burmese origin sits facing the main entrance. This image was previously installed in the Main Shrine room during the period 1926-1935.



Incorporated in the Pagoda are miniature pagodas and Buddha Images from different countries, reflecting the glory of these countries ancient Buddhist history.

One-foot high Buddha Images and smaller ones are suitably placed on the ledge in rows round the basement of the dome with donors' names or in memory of their departed ones.

The eight concrete decorative pillars, four feet in height, in the eight corners of the Pagoda denotes the Seemamalaka or the Chapter House for the monks to perform their Vinayakarma, Uposatha Karma or the recital of their precepts, performance of Upasampada (higher ordination) and Kathina Pavarana undertaking.



Interior view of the Pagoda.

Wisma Dharma Cakra

Turning the Wheel of Dharma



Wisma Dharma Cakra

Wisma Dharma Cakra was originally constructed and completed in 1995. It underwent a major renovation in 2017-2018 and re-opened on 2nd September 2018 to cater to the activities of the Vihara and the Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School (BISDS).



The Standing Buddha image was built, inspired by the famous Aukana Buddha of Sri Lanka.

The Makara Torana and Golden Tiles now enhances the beauty of the standing large white Buddha Image with right hand raised and palm facing outwards denoting “protection”.

Asoka Hall

On the ground floor is the large Asoka Hall (named after the great historical King Asoka in India who contributed substantially to the growth and spread of Buddhism) tastefully decorated with murals all round of simulated copper tooling design depicting various scenes from the life history of Gotama Buddha and the spread of Buddhism from India to Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka.

On the first floor of Wisma Dharma Cakra are rows of standing and seated Buddha Frieze images; Jetavana and Veluvana Pavilion Gardens; and the Isipatana meditation pavilion which houses the famous Sarnath Buddha Image.

Buddha frieze images

The seated Buddha frieze images which numbered a hundred and standing Buddha frieze images numbering fifteen were completed in gold finish and are installed on the walls at the edge of the Jetavana and Veluvana gardens at the Meditation Pavilion.



Buddha Friezes in different hand mudras or hand gestures

The seated Buddha frieze image which are almost 2 feet in height comes in 5 different hand mudras or hand gestures, namely:

- Abhaya mudra (Protection, blessing)
- Bhumisparsha mudra (calling the earth or touching the earth as witness)
- Dharmacakra mudra (Teaching or giving a sermon)
- Dhyana mudra (Meditation)
- Vitarka mudra (Intellectual Argument or debate)

The standing Buddha frieze images which are almost 3 feet in height comes in 3 different hand mudras or hand gestures namely:

- Varada mudra (charity or compassion)
- Asisa mudra (a variation of the Abhaya mudra)
- Para dukkha dukkhita mudra (empathy for others' sorrow)

Jetavana (Jeta Grove)

Religious Significance

Anathapindika, the Feeder of the Helpless, was a millionaire in Savatthi. In the course of his visit to his brother-in-law in Rajagaha, upon hearing that the Buddha was living in a forest close by, an indescribable joy arose in him.

The following day, upon hearing the Dhamma from the Buddha, he attained the first stage of Sainthood. Returning to Savatthi he bought the park belong to Prince Jeta, covering, so the story goes, the whole site with gold coins, and erected the famous Jetavana Monastery at great cost.

In appreciation of Prince Jeta, he named this grove Jetavana. Here the Buddha spent nineteen rainy seasons and major discourses of the Buddha were delivered in this Jetavana. This was the second monastery offered to the Buddha and Sangha.



Veluvana (Bamboo Grove)

Religious Significance

With a large retinue of Arahant disciples, the Buddha, in accordance with the promise He made to King Bimbisara before His Enlightenment, proceeded to Rajagaha. The king, hearing of Buddha's arrival in his kingdom, went with a large following to pay his respect to the Buddha.

The King invited the Buddha and His followers to his palace for the meal. At the close of the meal on the following day the King offered his Bamboo Grove (Veluvanarama) for the use of the Buddha and His disciples. It was the first monastery offered to the Buddha and Sangha. King Bimbisara was the first royal supporter of the Buddha.

It was an ideal solitary place for monks as it was neither too far nor too close to the city. Three rainy seasons were spent in this quiet grove.



Isipatana Meditation Pavilion

In December 2017, Buddhist Maha Vihara commissioned the designing and sculpting of the Sarnath Buddha Image to Professor W.G. Sarah Gnanasiri of Sri Lanka.

It was sculptured following the Gupta art Buddha Image in Sarnath, India. The cost of the image was sponsored by a magnanimous devotee.

This Sarnath Buddha Image now seat at the centre of the Isipatana Meditation Pavilion on the First floor of Wisma Dharma Cakra. Consecration of this Buddha Image was conducted on 2nd September 2018.



Isipatana Meditation Pavilion

The brass Rathnamali Yantra was installed on the ceiling at the Meditation Pavilion for specific benefits such as for meditation and protection from harmful influence.



*Rathnamali
Yantra*

*Regal and
stunningly
beautiful
Sarnath
Buddha Image*



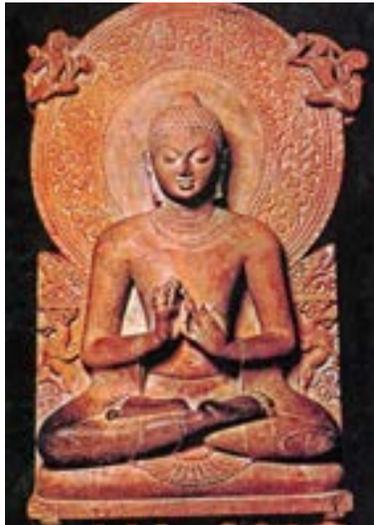
Sarnath Buddha Image

Religious Significance

The history of the Sarnath Buddha image art form came about during the Gupta Empire period of 4th to 6th century AD in India, when the monarchs were powerful and art, literature and science flourished greatly during this time.

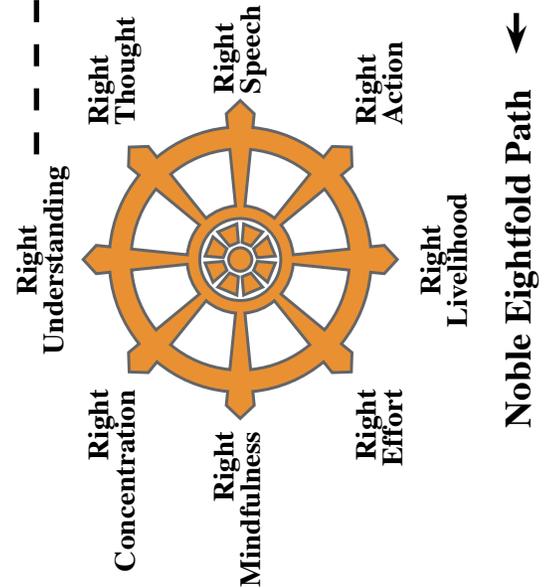
The hand gesture of the Sarnath Buddha is famously known as the Dharma Cakra or Wheel of Dharma mudra. The Dharma Cakra mudra is a preaching mudra and is formed when the thumb and index finger of both the hands touch at their tips to form a circle. This particular circle symbolises the Wheel of Dharma. The mudra represents the setting into motion of the wheel of the teaching of the Dharma.

It depicts one of the most important moments in the Buddha's life when He used his hand gesture to preach His first sermon (the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths) or Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta to the five ascetics at the Isipatana deer park at Sarnath after He attained Enlightenment.



Sarnath Buddha Image in Sarnath Museum, India

The Buddha's Teaching Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (Exposition of the founding of wisdom)



Four Noble Truths

- 1- Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness)
- 2- Samudaya (the cause)
- 3- Nirodha (the end)
- 4- Magga (the path)

The Buddha's Teaching

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

(Exposition of the founding of wisdom)



On one occasion the Blessed One was residing at the Deer Park in Isipatana, near Benares (modern day Sarnath, India).

Thereupon the Blessed One addressed the five ascetics this discourse. This was the first discourse preached by the Buddha upon His Enlightenment.

The Buddha advised His followers to follow the Noble Eightfold Path or also known as the Middle Path so as to avoid the extremes of constant attachment to sensual pleasures and self-mortification.

Every Buddhist is encouraged to mould his life according to the Noble Eightfold Path as taught by the Buddha. The Noble Eightfold Path shows us how to attain Nibbana, the final goal of human life.

Sila - Samadhi - Panna

To attain the final goal, there are three aspects to be developed by the devotee. He has to develop Sila (Morality), Samadhi (Concentration) and Panna (Wisdom).

While the three must be developed simultaneously, the intensity with which any one area is to be practised varies accordingly to a person's own spiritual development.

A devotee must first develop his morality, that is, his actions should bring good to other living beings. He does this by faithfully adhering to the precepts of abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxicated. As he develops his morality, his mind will become more easily concentrated, enabling him to develop his powers of concentration. Finally, with the development of insights, wisdom will arise, comprehending the Four Noble Truths.



Noble Eightfold Path



Not all people can become perfect in one lifetime. Sila, Samadhi, and Panna must and can be developed over many lifetimes with diligent effort. This Path finally leads to the attainment of ultimate peace (Nibbanic bliss) where there is no more unsatisfactoriness.

Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School (BISDS)



“The true and real purpose of learning the Buddha’s teachings is to gain personal development, enriching the mind and cultivating the spiritual side of us”

Late Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda

The BISDS was first established as a Religious School in 1929 with an enrolment of 12 Sinhala children who studied Sinhala language and chanting under the Bodhi tree. The school was managed by a few temple devotees. Up to 1961, the activities of the Sunday School had been conducted in temporary accommodation and conditions not too conducive for the pursuit of study.

The opening of the new school building named as the Buddhist Institution was performed on 19th November 1961. Through the years, to its credit, thousands of students attended dhamma classes under zinc roofing with minimum facilities.



Wisma Dharma Cakra, Then and Now



1995 - 2016

2018

School facilities improved substantially with the completion of the Wisma Dharma Cakra in January 1995. Having served the needs of the Vihara and the school since then, Wisma Dharma Cakra was renovated during 2017-2018 and re-opened in September 2018.

BISDS now occupies the upper floors. Over the years, many prominent monks were appointed as school principals. Teaching, training programmes and activities of the school are organised with the help of volunteer teachers and staff.

Today, BISDS has become a premier dhamma school for the dissemination of teachings of the Buddha, providing a rich Dhamma experience for students both young and adults.

The school provides students with a comprehensive Buddhist education (both in English and Mandarin) based on the Pali Canon; motivate lay people to become Dhamma teachers by providing training programmes and to provide assistance to other Sunday Dhamma Schools. Students are encouraged to study, practise and self-realise the Buddha-Dhamma, in addition to participating in school activities as part of their spiritual cultivation.

Bhikkhus (monks) **Disciples of the Buddha.**



“Good is restraint in body, restraint in speech is good, good is restraint in mind, everywhere restraint is good; the bhikkhu everywhere restrained is from all dukkha free.”

Dhammapada verse 361

Monks in this Vihara are mostly from Sri Lanka, living in accordance with the Vinaya (code of conduct for monks) as laid down by the Buddha. Wearing saffron robes, monks life of simplicity and observance of 227 precepts, conducive to the arising of mindfulness and wisdom. The Vinaya in its many practical rules defines the status of a monk as being that of a mendicant. Monks depended upon the charity of householders for their livelihood. Lay devotees provide them with the 4 material requisites—food, clothing, shelter and medicines.

By accepting the gifts of lay people, the monastics give them the opportunity to acquire merits that would help them in their spiritual progress. Lay devotees also benefited from the monks (both local and foreign) the precious gift of Buddha’s teachings, in addition to conducting religious services.

This gives rise to a relationship of respect and gratitude in which both the layperson and monk are called upon to practise their way of life and responsibilities with sensitivity and sincerity. The unbroken lineage of monks can be traced all the way to the time of Gotama Buddha.

Awasa (Monks Quarters)

It is obligatory for the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society to provide adequate accommodation facilities for the monks. A modest building (probably a timber structure with an attap roof) could have been erected in 1895 for the purpose.

The second known monks’ quarters, built around 1912 served the needs for up to 38 years. It was replaced with a third monks’ quarters, a permanent structure in 1952. Further extensions were carried out to the monks quarters between 1965 and 1967. Later, a fourth monks’ quarters, a completely renovated building was completed in 1991 and in use up to present day.



The second monks’ quarters



The third monks’ quarters



The fourth monks’ quarters

The Late Ven Dr K. Sri Dhammananda



An especially built stupa to intern the ashes of the Late Dr K. Sri Dhammananda, affectionately called the Late Chief Reverend.

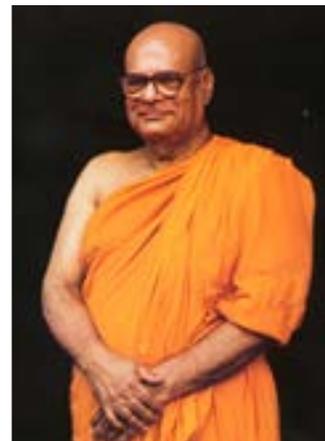
Emplacement of the Late Chief Reverend remains was held on 2nd December 2006, the first time the remains of a revered monk is enshrined in this Vihara,

The Early Years

Venerable Dr K. Sri Dhammananda was born on 18th March, 1919 to the family of K.G. Gamage in the village of Kirinde, Matara in southern Sri Lanka. His interest in Buddhism began at a young age, influenced by both a devout Buddhist mother and uncle who was the Chief Monk of a local temple. At the age of 12, he was ordained and given the name “Dhammananda” which means “one who experiences happiness through the Dhamma”. At age 22, he received higher ordination.

In 1945, he entered the Benares Hindu University in India for graduate studies in the field of Sanskrit, Hindi and Indian philosophy. He graduated with a Master’s Degree in Indian philosophy four years later.

In 1951, he was selected from among 400 monks at the Vidyalankara Pirivena, Sri Lanka for a mission to Malaya. He arrived at Brickfields Temple, now called Buddhist Maha Vihara as a resident monk, on 2 January 1952.



1919 - 2006

Through the years since his arrival in 1952

Dr K. Sri Dhammananda has been a leading light in disseminating the Buddha-Dhamma within Malaysia and abroad.

He was a respected leader in the Buddhist Community who brought about closer collaboration among the different schools of Buddhism. He was also recognised for his efforts in fostering greater inter-faith dialogue and understanding and is a founding member of the Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. He has also served as counsellor to prison inmates in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Venerable Dr K. Sri Dhammananda was a prolific writer who had written more than 74 publications. Apart from writing books, he gave lectures on Buddhism in many parts of the world. A life well lived, He passed away on 31st August 2006 at the age of 87.

From the humble beginning of P.H. Hendry Preaching Hall to Wisma K. Sri Dhammananda

P.H. Hendry Preaching Hall

For almost 50 years, the the P.H. Hendry Preaching Hall was a popular venue for meetings and gatherings of members



P.H. Hendry Hall was officially opened on 11 July 1932. community, as well as being used as a multi-purpose hall during festive seasons like Wesak, which commemorates the birth, enlightenment and parinibbana of the Buddha.

Wisma Sri Dhamma

By November 1980, with sufficient funds collected, building operations for a 3-storey structure (named Wisma Sri Dhamma) to replace the old P.H. Henry Preaching Hall began in earnest. Wisma Sri Dhamma was officially opened on 7th November 1981. The main hall on the ground floor was known as P.H. Hendry Memorial Hall. The Late Chief Reverend Dr K. Sri Dhammananda delivered many discourses in this hall.

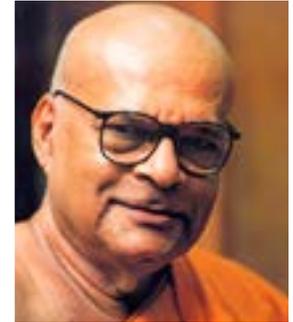
The Annexe Building, as the second phase of the Wisma Sri Dhamma project houses the kitchen and canteen facilities on the Ground Floor; Ladies' Resting Area on the First Floor and dormitories for monks/upasakas and a store-room to store the Buddhist publications on the Second Floor.



Wisma Sri Dhamma was officially opened on 7th November 1981, replacing P.H. Hendry Preaching Hall Building.

Wisma K. Sri Dhammananda

In 2018, it was decided that Wisma Sri Dhamma to be renovated to become Wisma K. Sri Dhammananda, in recognition of the Late Chief Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda's immense contribution to the spread and growth of Buddhism in the country.



Vihara Bookshop

The Vihara bookshop offers an array of Buddhist materials for sale. There are various books for adults and children, published locally and abroad.

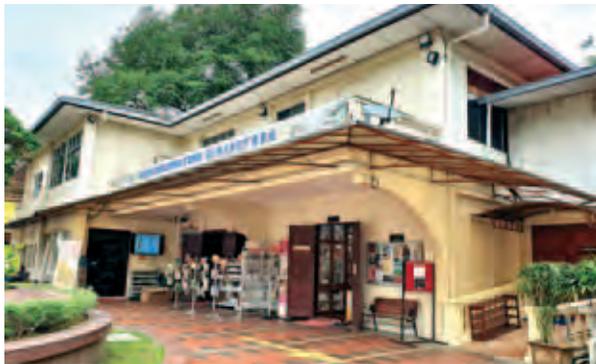
There are also other items for sale such as Buddha images, pendants, etc. Some free publications such as books and CDs too are available.

Vihara Administrative Office



The Vihara is managed by the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society. Founded in 1894, it is the oldest registered Buddhist Society in Malaysia. The Vihara office is open from Monday to Sundays, including public holidays. If you need any assistance, please contact our office staff. Here, you can also obtain information on daily and weekly activities in the Vihara.

Sukhi Hontu
(May you be well and happy)



SERVICES AVAILABLE AT BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA

- Dana for Monks (at Vihara or Home) and Bana (Sermons)
- Blessing Services / Funeral Services by Monks
- Booking of Facilities for religious functions / events
- Marriage Registration
- Full Moon / New Moon Day Puja & Free Vegetarian Lunch
- Sunday Dhamma Classes for Children & Adults
- Buddhist & Pali University Diploma, Degree & Masters Program
- K Sri Dhammananda Library
- Bookshop

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Monday to Sunday	6.30am - 7.30am	Daily Morning Buddha Puja
	11.30pm - 12.00noon	Daily Noon Buddha Puja
	7.30pm - 8.30pm	Daily Evening Buddha Puja

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon, Wed, Thurs	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Meditation Class
Tuesday	10.30am - 12.00noon	Senior Club Yoga for Beginners
	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Qigong Practise
Thursday	7.30pm - 9.00pm	Senior Club Yoga for Intermediate
Friday	1.00pm - 2.00pm	Afternoon Puja & Talk
	8.00pm - 9.30pm	Dhamma Talk
Saturday	8.30am - 10.30am	Qigong Practise
	10.30am - 11.30am	Tai Chi Practise
	2.00pm - 7.00pm	Degree & Master's in Buddhism Classes
	7.30pm - 8.30pm	Bojjhanga Puja
Sunday	8.30am - 9.30am	Morning Puja
	9.30am - 11.00am	Abhidhamma Class
	9.30am - 12.00 noon	Sunday Dhamma School for Children & for Adults
	10.00am - 11.30am	Dhamma Talk
	10.00am - 2.00pm	Traditional Chinese Medicine <i>(Every Sunday except Public Holiday)</i>
	11.00am - 12.30pm	Pali and Sutta Class
	1.30pm - 5.00pm	Sinhala Language Classes
		Sinhala Cultural Dance Classes
	2.00pm - 7.00pm	Diploma & Degree in Buddhism Classes
	3.00pm - 4.30pm	Dhamma for the Deaf <i>(fortnightly)</i>
	5.00pm	Feeding the Homeless

DONATION IN CASH OR KIND CAN BE MADE FOR:

- BISDS Building Fund - Classrooms, Meditation Pavilion, Lifts, Meeting and Counseling rooms
- Free Publications (Malaysia and Overseas) - Annually about 300,000 books in 30 Languages
- Education Fund
- Full Moon and New Moon services sponsorship
- General Maintenance of the Buddhist Maha Vihara
- Utilities (Electricity, water, telephone, administration etc)
- Illumination (lighting) of the Main Shrine Hall
- Illumination (lighting) of the Awkana Buddha & Cakra
- Monks' Dana - Offering Monk Requisites of Food, Medicine, Lodging, Robes, etc
- Welfare Fund
- Special Religious Events - Wesak
 - Annual Blessing Service
 - Annual Merit Offering
 - Kathina Pinkama (ceremony)
 - Monks' Novitiate Programme

**MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE NOBLE TRIPLE GEM
BE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**



The Abbot and the Orphan

住持长老与小孤儿

The Abbot and the Orphan animation series is produced by the Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School. The DVD's are available in the BMV office. **Each DVD is available for a donation of RM15.00.** 住持长老与小孤儿卡通系列乃周日佛法学校的制作, 众佛友可以从本会的办事处获取此卡通系列的DVD, 每片DVD只需捐款15令吉。

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Lotus flowers take root in muddy and murky conditions and grow into beautiful flowers. Just like the lotus, irrespective of our roots and experiences in life, we can majestically rise to become pure, unsoiled and a joy to others.

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Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society

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