

Children's

Vol. 4 No. 1

March 1984

# DHAMMA



BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST VIHARA

CHILDREN' DHAMMA

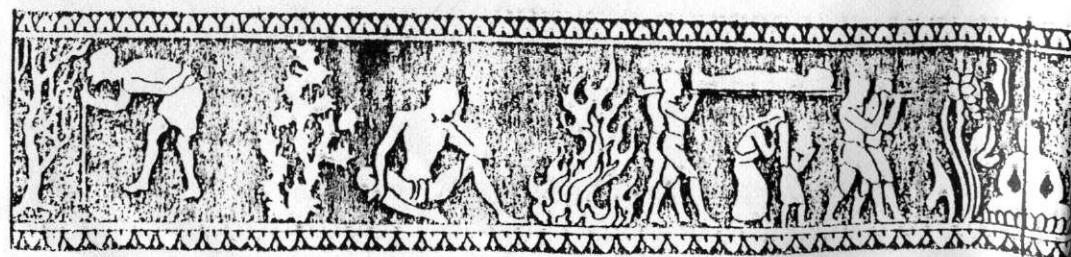
Published by: *The Birmingham Buddhist Vihara*

Edited by: *Mrs. Fuengsin Trafford*  
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*This magazine is published for the  
younger generation and is free but  
all contributions toward the cost  
of production will be most gratefully  
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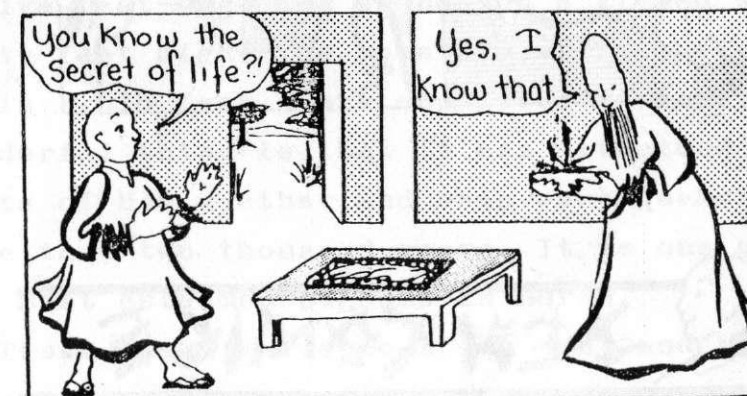
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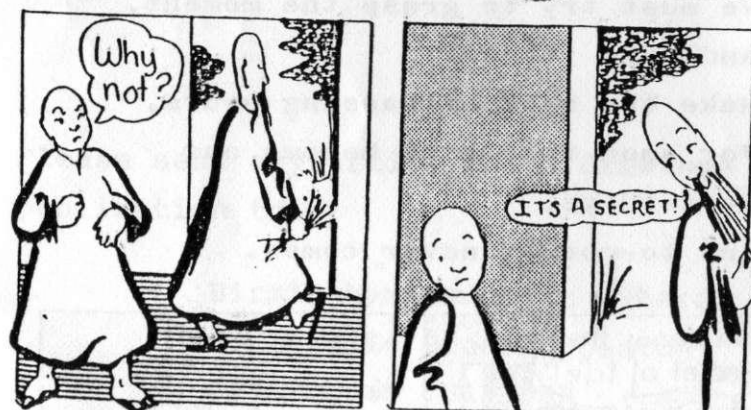
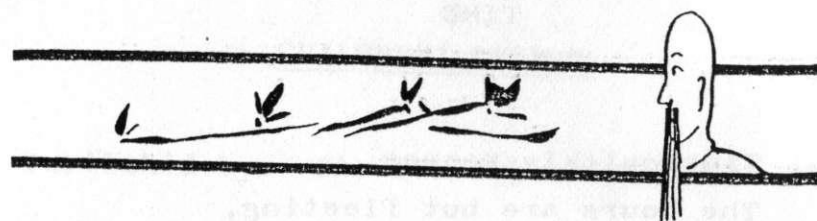


TIME

Time quickly passes,  
The hours are but fleeting,  
When with a friend we are meeting,  
All too soon it is 'hello'  
And then with a sigh, 'Goodbye'

Morning light,  
Then evening dusk.  
Where oh! where is that precious  
time inbetween,  
That should have been,  
We must try to grasp the moment,  
and hold it fast,  
Make the best of passing hours,  
For soon they will become our  
yesterdays,  
And to-morrow never comes.





## THE MARVELLOUS KYAIK-HTI-YO CHEDI OF BURMA

Adapted from an article by Ko Yin Siha

This Burmese 'chedi' or pagoda is one of the wonders of the East and unlike other wonders of the world, it was built without the use of slaves. It rests atop a standing-stone, somewhat like those found here in England and elsewhere in the world.

True to the meaning of its name it looks like the 'head of a hermit'. The hermit it was named after was called Tissa. Tissa was a prince who gave up the princely life and became 'the hermit in search of truth'. Legend says that the Buddha sent one of his chief disciples, Gavampati, to Burma to teach the Dhamma. When he met the hermit, Tissa, he gave him some of the Buddha's hairs. Tissa, dutifully, had them enshrined in what is now known as 'The Hermit's Head Pagoda'.

This pagoda is a marvel, indeed. It is twelve feet high and stands on a titled stone fifty feet high. The mountain where the pagoda is is 3,618 feet above sea level. Another wonderful thing is that it has withstood all sorts of bad weather and even earthquakes for more than two thousand years. It is one of the most esteemed pagodas in Burma.

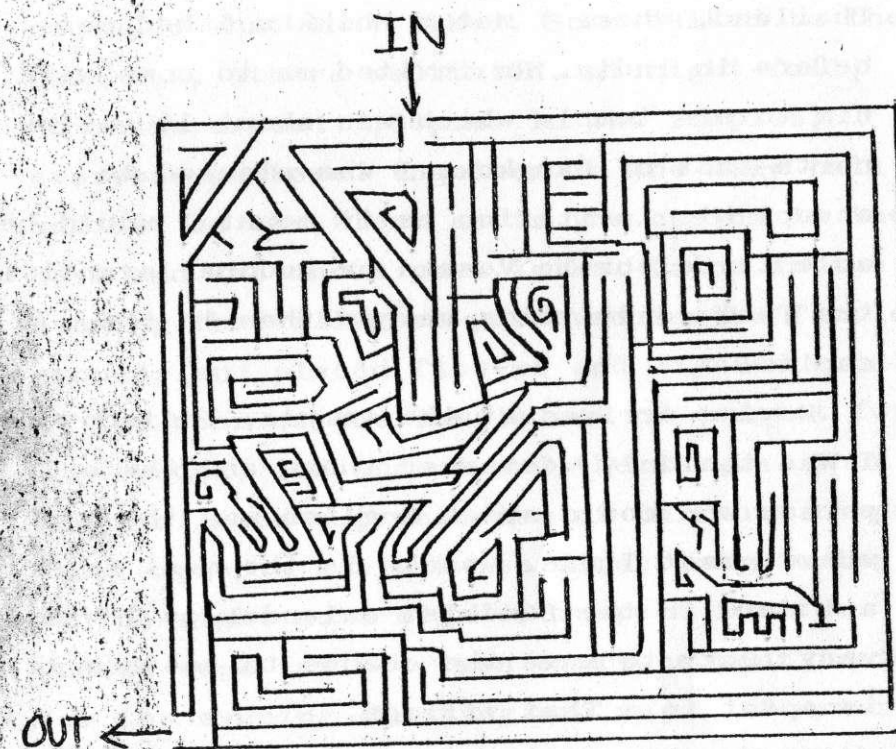
Tissa was a marvellous man too, and became a hermit of great fame. You may ask, "what is



a hermit?" A hermit is a person who chooses to live a life of aloneness so that he might sort out the difficulties of life. Hermits do all sorts of hard practices in the hope that they will become holy and wise. The great poet-saint, Milarepa, of Tibet, was also a hermit. There have been many famous hermits down through the ages.

The Buddha was a hermit too, but for all his six years of practise he did not find the answer to the problem of suffering until he took the Middle Way and became a Buddha. A Buddha is, 'one who is awake' or in other words one who understands all things. When he sat 'down under the Bodhi Tree, the tree of awakening, he was able to look patiently and deeply into the problem of suffering. He saw how it is the nature of everything in the world to come to be and cease to be and how there is no such thing as an 'I', 'Me', 'You' or 'Mine' and how if one clings to such a notion one suffers. Seeing all this is really what made him a Buddha, and thereafter he lived happily and peacefully. He neither looked to the past nor the future but lived here and now. A Buddha simply is!

DONT BE AMAZED



By Paul Trafford

## A VESAKA CELEBRATION IN THAILAND

By KARUNA BODHI

In May of 1980 I was staying at Wat Bavonives, a famous temple in Bangkok, Thailand, where I met a Bhikkhu I had met before in India. He invited me to come with him to his temple which was about 160 miles north-east of Bangkok. I was pleased to accept his invitation as it meant I would be able to celebrate Vesaka or Buddha Jayanti in the Thai countryside rather than in the capital.

Having arrived at the temple, I discovered I was the only Westerner there and the only person who could speak English was the monk whose guest I was. Vesaka is the most important date in the Buddhist calendar so I was very lucky to have the chance to see how it is spent in a Thai village.

On Vesaka morning dozens of villagers gathered at the Wat before the Bhikkhus had returned from their alms round in the village. Most of the people were dressed in white and had shaved their heads for the occasion. About 7:00a.m. the twenty or so Bhikkhus who lived in the monastery and the villagers came together for a Vesaka Puja, in Pali. They all chanted many suttas for the occasion.

Afterwards the Abbot gave a talk about the importance of Vesaka and of morality and meditation and later gave the eight precepts. Lunch for the monks was duly offered and then the lay people ate. After their meal they could do what they liked. Some talked to the Bhikkhus, others meditated. At night-fall, which is around 7:00p.m. in the Tropics, everyone gathered together in the main hall and sat on the floor as is the custom in the East and the monks gave talks. Later in the evening the villagers gathered in the Temple grounds and placed flowers and lighted candles at the door of the Temple out of respect for the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Then they followed a procession of Bhikkhus round the Temple in a clockwise direction keeping to the right as a sign of respect for the Buddha rupa inside. Then everyone went inside for the evening chanting and puja. Afterwards the Bhikkhus walked slowly back to the Vihara and the lay people followed behind. That evening the Abbot gave a second sermon and then the remaining twenty or so Bhikkhus gave talks about the Buddha's teachings. The talks did not finish until day break when it was again time for the Bhikkhus to go on their alms round. Many people had stayed awake all night to hear these talks and learn as much



as they could about the Buddha Dhamma.

I wish I could write more about those talks but as I was tired out after a busy day and not being able to understand the Thai language except what the Bhikkhu who had invited me to the Vihara for the talks so I went to bed after hearing only the first few of them.

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#### WATER

Have you ever thought how lucky we are to be able to turn on a tap in our homes and have an instant supply of fresh water?

Living things can survive without food for a surprisingly long time but without water they soon perish. The health of creatures and plant life depends upon adequate supplies of fresh water. The fact that we make offerings of water at our shrines is one of the ways we acknowledge the importance of it.

It is sad that in so many places in the world the impurities in water are the cause of much sickness, and in times of water-shortage many people suffer because not enough food can be grown to feed them. However, great efforts are being made to remedy this situation, although it is taking a long time and vast resources of technology, labour

and money are needed. A good example of what can be achieved can be seen in the country of Nepal, the Buddha's birthplace. There the fast flowing rivers are fed by the snows of the Himalayan Mountains and these tumble down through rocky gorges and over waterfalls. Sometimes there are smooth stretches of water swiftly moving, like flowing oil, at other times 'white water' cascades between narrows of rock.

Although this is very beautiful to see, it is not the best use to which water can be put. Water has great power. This power is now being harnessed to provide electricity in homes and to supply the needs of new industries. In farming areas the water is diverted for use in irrigation projects, so that more varied and better crops can be grown to feed the people of the towns and villages of Nepal. Now crops can be grown where it was impossible to do so before.

In Nepal water has been one of the means by which the country's prosperity has grown and money is now available to provide better health and social schemes for all.

This does not mean that everything has been changed. In quiet places there are small streams which still drive little water-wheels, which turn the prayer wheels so beloved by the

people who live on the mountain slopes. On and on they turn, day and night, Winter and Summer - "Om Mani Peme Hung, Om Mani Peme Hung."

Anonymous



BORN OLD

When Kalu Rimpoche visited Birmingham earlier this year he told a most interesting story.

Long ago, a young novice heard that a fair was to come to his village and he very much wanted to go. He went and told his teacher and asked him to take him. His teacher told him that there was nothing very worthwhile at the fair and there was no point in going. The novice was very disappointed and for a second time begged his teacher to let him go but he

refused. The boy lost his temper and shouted at him angrily, "I do not care, I shall go on my own and may you rot in a black hole for sixty years!" With that he stormed off.

True to the law of Karma all of us reap the result of whatever we do, think or say and so did this novice. In time he was re-born but his curse on his teacher came back on him. For sixty long, dark years he stayed an unborn baby in his mother's womb. This woman should have had ten children but only nine were ever born, but she was sure that the first one had yet to be born. Just before she died she made a will which said that upon her death the doctor should cut open her womb and see if there were not a baby there. When she died the doctor did as she had asked. It so happened that during the operation, the Buddha was passing by and he went to see what was happening. Sure enough the doctor found a very very old and wrinkled but fully grown man. The Buddha understood how he had come to take sixty years to be born and blessed him with the gift of speech. As befitted his Karma, the Buddha named him "Born Old".

Later he became a follower of the Buddha and a Bhikkhu and eventually an Arahant.

This story shows us how foolish it is to be angry, impatient and willful.

The Buddha taught :-

"Akkodhena jine kodham .."

"Conquer anger by love .."

"Khanti paramam tapo

titikkha ..

Nibbanam paranam vadami

Buddha .."

Patience is the highest  
austerity.

Nibbana is supreme, so

say the Buddhas ..

----

KRUBA SRIVICHAI by -

Fuengsin Trafford.

Kruba Srivichai was one of the most famous monks of Northern Thailand. He was an inspiration to many and was revered by thousands of monks, nuns and laymen. from cities, towns, villages and the hill-tribes. Under his guidance they came together and volunteered to rebuild, repair and restore many beautiful pagodas and temples and the roads leading to them.

They worked very hard and brought their own food. Some people gave money, food and transport. As a result of their good work magnificent ancient buildings and pagodas which had been destroyed in the war were restored to their former glory.

Kruba Srivichai's work can be found throughout the north in an area which at one time was known as "the Kingdom of Laannaa Thai".

This remarkable monk led a very holy life, and worked very hard for the Buddha-Dhamma, and he was a good example to many. In the eyes of his followers he had a kind of supernatural quality but this he always denied, saying he was just an ordinary monk. After his death his fame spread further and he was called the "Saint of Laannaa Thai".

Kruba Srivichai was born on the 11th. June 1878, (the Year of the Tiger), in a small village outside the Province of Lumpoon, called Baan Paang. He was the fourth child and had four brothers and sisters. His parents were poor and lived on a small farm which was surrounded by very high hills and thick forests. It was said that on the night just before he was born the bright moon was



suddenly darkened by a cloud and there was thunder and lightening. There was also an earthquake which shook the family's cottage. In those days this was thought to be a very good omen for a saintly person's birth. The baby was given the name "Faa Hong" which means thunder.

At the age of seven Faa Hong was very good and quiet and did not enjoy playing with children of his own age. He was very kind, never harmed animals and looked after the family's buffaloes very well. Once he freed the fish which his father had caught and kept in a jar of water. He showed deep compassion for every creature. He refused to eat meat and was content to have rice and a variety of chilli sauces for his meals. The young boy's favourite chore was to take the buffaloes to graze in a quiet and lonely field, he would then sit under a tree and contemplate. He loved to visit Wat Baan Paang, a local temple which was situated on the edge of a hill; the Abbot was called Kru Baa Kaat. According to his name he was a respected monk who had been studying and practising the Dhamma.

Faa Hong was set on going to school at Wat Baan Paang, the local education centre in

those days. He was also inspired by the monk's behaviour and way of life. Having watched his brother's ordination he was even more impressed, and later asked his parents permission to be ordained. When he was asked why he wanted to become a monk, he said it was not because he wanted to run away from the hard life of a farmer, but that he wanted to study the Dhamma and gain merit for a better rebirth for his parents. His parents were very happy to hear this and granted his wish. So Faa Hong was ordained a Samanera (novice) when he was just eighteen years old.

The new Samanera worked very hard and studied the local alphabets which were written on palm leaves. He also studied Pali and Sanskrit so that he could read the scriptures.

Over a year later Samanera Faa Hong had mastered all the local languages and went on to study the Dhamma and Vipassana Meditation. Almost every day he went up to the top of the hill to sit in solitude surrounded by all kinds of plants and trees.

Two years passed and Samanera Faa Hong was twenty one years old. He was ordained a Bhikkhu and given the Pali name "Siri Vichyo". People preferred to call him "Phra (monk) Sri Vichyo".

His teacher noticed the young monk's dedication and unblamable conduct and sent him to a superior teacher called "Kru Baa Upala" at Doi Tae to study meditation. It was the first time he had left home having a difficult journey on foot and by cart. It took several days to reach the temple although it was in the same province.

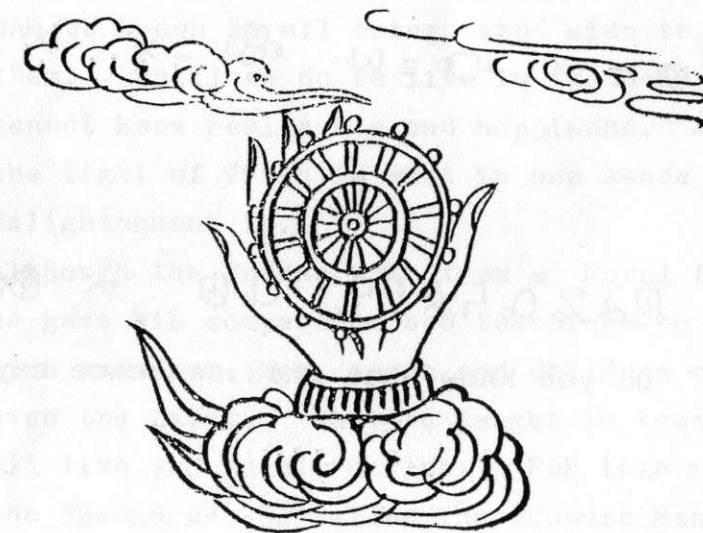
His new teacher was soon impressed with the young monk's excellent memory and undivided attention. One year later Phra Sri Vichai finished his studies and went back to Watt Baan Paang. By then his reputation for being a most worthy monk had spread. He ate only one meal a day and was a vegetarian.

Three years later the Abbot passed away and Phra Sri Vichai was appointed Abbot.

Baan Paang village was surrounded by many Hill Tribes, and they lived in the high hills and forests nearby. These people were very poor and badly needed medical care. Phra Sri Vichai had great compassion for them and wanted to teach them the Dhamma, and make them see how foolish it was to worship spirits, and took inspiration from the Buddha who used to travel to many places to teach all kinds of people. So Phra Sri Vichai went into the forests and hills to teach, spending a few days

in each village. He also healed many people with herbal medicines. These people soon realised that his medicine was more help than the spirits. He spent a month amongst the tribes and soon mastered all their languages. More and more of the Hill Tribe people e.g. Maeu, Yau, Karen, Leesaw, etc. became Buddhists and the great monk's fame spread. Many people sent their sons to be ordained by him, and to stay at Watt Baan Paang and study the Dhamma. ---

--- to be continued.



# FUN ALPHABET

By Sonja

d=a   % = b   f = c   y = d   5 = e

q = f   π = g   # = h   Q = i   \* = j

≡ = k   ⊕ = l   m = m   ☆ = n   w = o

⊖ = p   ∂ = q   A = r   ⊙ = s   % = t

∅ = u   ⊗ = v   ∞ = w   ✿ = x   ✎ = y

⊠ = z

⊖ % Q 5 ☆ f 5 Q ⊙ 2 ⊗ Q A % ∅ 5

Do you know what this sentence says?

# THE BUDDHA - THE COSMIC MAN

by Ananta Vongseta -

You may ask - who is the Buddha 'the cosmic man'. He is, because he taught the Four Noble Truths. These truths are about suffering (Dukka) and are universally true. Cosmic means universal. First of all the Buddha discovered these truths for himself and that is why we call him the Buddha. First of all he taught that suffering truly exists. Secondly he taught that suffering must have a cause. Thirdly he taught that there is a way to end this, and lastly that the Middle Way, the way that is neither too hard nor too easy is the way to put an end to suffering. These truths can be known by all beings who wish to know them. Until we do we live in the dark and cannot know real peace and happiness. Seeing the light of Truth is what in one sense Enlightenment is.

Although the Buddha came from a Royal family he gave his compassion and teachings to the rich and poor, men, women and children and even the Devas. What he taught is true for all time and in all worlds. For this reason the Buddha can be called the 'Cosmic Man'.

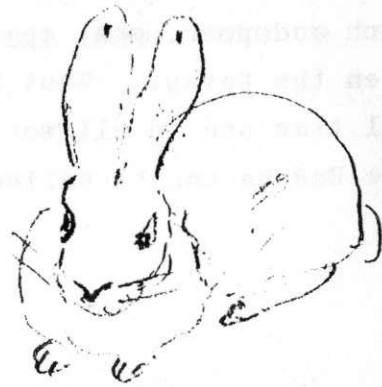


### RABBIT'S UNLUCKY DAY -

by Jamie May.

Rabbit was looking forward to his summer holidays at the seaside. However, things did not quite turn out as he had planned. First he had to have a driving lesson and then he had to pack all his things.

He set off and drove nine yards and his engine exploded! While he was mending his engine his trousers ripped! Then he saw through all the smoke a bit of the engine that needed to be replaced. After he bought it he found it was the wrong bit. He somehow managed to get the car going, he drove forty yards and one of the tyres burst. While he was buying a new tyre, his trousers fell down which rather shocked the man in the shop. Eventually he got the car going. He then drove one hundred yards down the road and he ran out of petrol. The nearest petrol station was ten miles away.



### TASHI AND THE BASKET.

by Tsering Choedon and  
Alun Davies .

Once upon a time in Tibet there lived a Father and son. The Father's name was Tashi and his son was called Dorje. As a boy Dorje never wanted for a thing. His Father dutifully gave him good food, fine clothes and sent him to school.

When Dorje grew up he married a girl called Dolma and they had a son. Dorje followed his father's example and gave the boy the best of everything and sent him to school.

Dorje's father was now very old and blind and lived with his son and family. Dorje's son loved his grandfather dearly, but all was not well. Dolma was very unhappy that the old man lived with them as his blindness made him untidy and she was always having to clear up after him. Unable to put up with him any longer she complained to Dorje, saying no one would visit them as long as his father lived with them and begged him to move the old man out. Dorje agreed and went and took a huge basket, put his father in it and carried him off to a ---

--- to a cave. When Dorje's son came home from school he could not find his beloved grandfather anywhere. Finally his father told him what had happened. He demanded that his Father bring him the basket. This puzzled Dorje and he asked his son why he wanted the basket. He replied that one day when his Father was old he would need the basket to put him in and carry him off to a cave just as he had done with his grandfather. Dorje was upset at hearing this and pointed out all the good things he had done for his son. The boy reminded him that his Father had done the same for Dorje. Dorje soon saw how foolish and unkind he had been and promptly went to fetch his Father.

#### HARRY THE HEDGEHOG.

by Tara May.

One day Harry the Hedgehog was walking down the road when he met Rabbit. As it so happened it was Rabbit's unlucky day, but that was not so for Harry. Rabbit tripped over Harry's paw on his way down the road. Rabbit carried on and Harry went to the sweet shop to buy some sweets and then went home to eat them. When he had finished he went out to buy a new car.

#### THAI FRIED RICE

--  
by Fuengsin Trafford.

I remember my journeys with my family on the Thai railway through peaceful and unspoiled countryside. For lunch we would have a cheap and tasty dish called 'Fried Rice'. Sometimes my Mother would buy food to offer to monks travelling in the same carriage. The picture of pink rice topped with fried egg and garnished with coriander leaves, sliced cucumber and spring onions is still very clear in my mind !!

#### The Recipe:

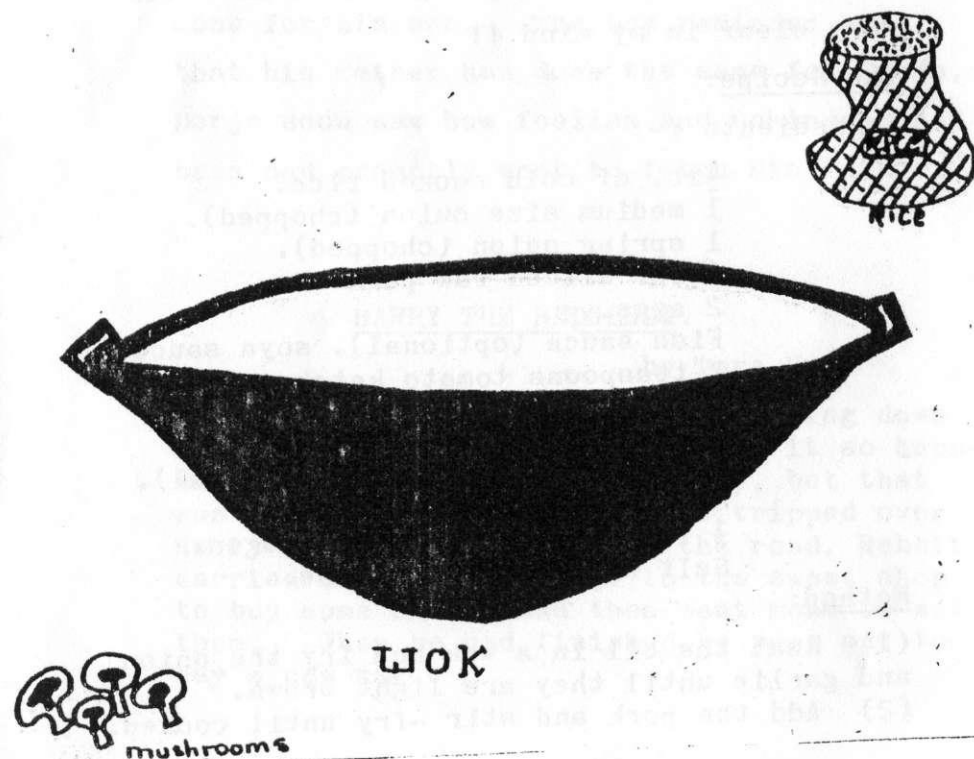
##### Ingredients :-

½ lb. of cold cooked rice.  
1 medium size onion (chopped).  
1 spring onion (chopped).  
6 oz. sliced raw pork.  
2 eggs.  
Fish sauce (optional). soya sauce.  
2 teaspoons tomato ketchup.  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil.  
1 piece of garlic (crushed).  
1 sprig of coriander (optional).  
Some thinly sliced cucumber.  
½ lemon cut in oblong wedges.  
Salt and pepper to taste.

##### Method:

- (1) Heat the oil in a wok and fry the onion and garlic until they are light brown.
- (2) Add the pork and stir-fry until cooked.

- (3) Put the rice in and mix everything in over a high heat; at the same time add the fish and soya sauces and tomato ketchup to suit personal taste.
  - (4) Stir vigourously and make a hole in the centre and drop the eggs in. Mix well and season to taste.
  - (5) Garnish with corriander leaves, spring onions, sliced cucumber and lemon.
  - (6) Serve topped with a fried egg if you wish.
- For vegetatians mushrooms may be used in place of pork.



## APOLOGY

For many reasons and many months we have not been able to publish the CHILDREN'S DHAMMA despite so many inquiries from all parts of the country and abroad. We are very grateful to all those who sent donations articles and letters of encouragement and wish to apologise for the long delay in publishing. However it should appear more regularly in future.

Editors





## BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST VIHARA

The West Midlands Buddhist Centre (Karma Kagyu Trust) established the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara in October 1981. The Vihara provides meditation sessions and teachings in the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, found in Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand and other South East Asian countries. The teachers and members of the Vihara visit schools, colleges, universities and prisons as well as other Buddhist Centres. We also publish a bi-monthly newsletter and a periodical Children's magazine. The Vihara offers weekly teachings and meditation sessions, Weekend and nine-day meditation retreats are also arranged. If you wish to find out more about the retreats or any of our activities, please write to us or telephone. (021-454-6591)

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