Nalanda Bulletin

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Nalanda Hemanta Retreat 2013

24 - 28 January 2013

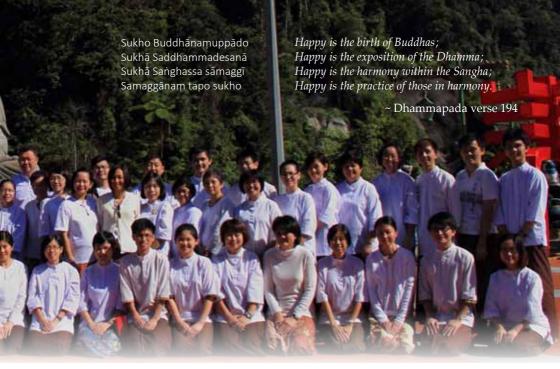
Hemanta, is the Pāli term for "winter". During the cool wintry season in India, families huddle close together in their homes for warmth. When in such close proximity for a prolonged period of time, it becomes vital for family members to learn to live together peacefully and harmoniously.

Sāmaggī, in Pāli, means "concord, unity, and harmony". Indeed, this was the atmosphere that permeated throughout the five-day Nalanda Hemanta Retreat, conducted at Chin Swee Temple in Genting Highlands from 24 – 28 January. Sixty Nalandians came together for the retreat to celebrate teamwork and co-operation. Amidst much learning, laughter and joy, new friendships were forged, and old ties fortified.

The focus of this year's Hemanta Retreat was on mindful personal conduct to effect peaceful communal living. There were also many opportunities for Dhamma discovery, meditation and reflection. In this spirit, the daily programme consisted of morning, afternoon and evening meditation, $p\bar{u}ja$ and chanting, as well as group discussions to facilitate fellowship, the exchange of ideas, and to foster mutual understanding. Mealtimes were also conducive for practice as we ate together mindfully in noble silence.

Crucial to everyone's learning were the most insightful and inspiring Dhamma teachings given by Bro. Tan, in many formal as well as informal sessions. By the last day of the retreat, Nalandians were feeling relaxed, recharged, and eagerly looking forward to the year ahead with renewed aspirations to learn, grow and serve the community.

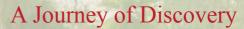
May we have the blessings to progress on the Noble Eightfold Path, and "cut the journey to woeful states" ("mangala" in Pāli). May all attain the bliss of true peace and freedom!



Sixty Nalandians comprising our leaders, divisional and departmental heads, officers, and core members, attended this year's inspiring and fruitful retreat.

Special thanks to Nalanda's Honorary Secretary, Sis. Buddhinī Tan, Bro. Charlie Teng, Sis. Joanne Tan, and Sis. Margaret Ng, for organising this retreat superbly!





Ānanda, there are four places that the faithful should visit with feelings of reverence.

What are the four?

"Here the Tathāgata was born" is the first.

DN 16: Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

"Here the Tathāgata attained supreme enlightenment" is the second.

"Here the Tathagata set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma" is the third.

"Here the Tathāgata attained the state of Nibbāna in which no element of clinging remains"

is the fourth.



Walkabout in the ancient Nalanda ruins. With Bro.Tan's insightful commentaries and teachings, even bricks and stones seem to come to life!

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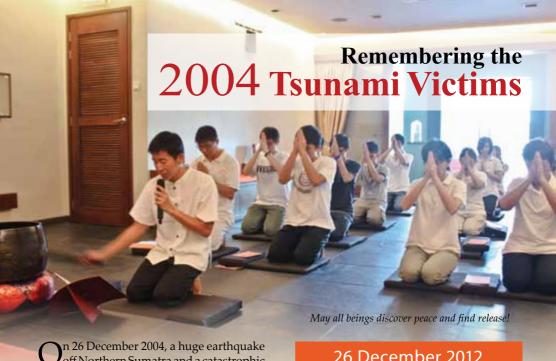
1 - 13 December 2012

A"Buddhayatra" is a special journey of discovering the Buddha-Dhamma and oneself, as a pilgrim conscientiously walks in the foot steps of the Blessed One in the sanctified "Middle Land" (i.e. India). Thus it was with great anticipation, faith and devotion that 46 pilgrims, originating from various parts of Malaysia, prepared to embark on the *yatra* to India and Nepal in early December 2012.

Calming the senses and 'looking within', the pilgrims sought a greater appreciation for the life of the Buddha, and a deeper realisation of the Dhamma. For many of us, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit and pay respect at the sacred sites. Nalanda Founder Bro. Tan's knowledgeable commentaries and insightful teachings made us feel as if we were back in the time of the Buddha, blessed by His presence at every site. What pure joy and delight!

During this journey of discovery, there was also a sense of urgency that arose in us, the pilgrims. Having seen how great cities of the past are now reduced to ruins or even nothingness, it began to sink in that impermanence is not to be taken lightly, and time is of essence. With the right mental attitude, nearly everyone on the pilgrimage undertook the Eight Precepts in an effort to exercise restraint of the senses, practise morality, and maintain wholesomeness of the mind. With great effort sown, great too were the fruits reaped!

Paying homage at the holy sites and performing meritorious deeds together, the camaraderie and new friendships with kalyana mittas (spiritual friends) cultivated throughout this Buddhayatra rounded off the pilgrimage with a warm and joyful spirit. Special heartfelt thanks to Bro. Tan, whose wonderful sharings on the Buddha and Dhamma were injected with so much life, faith and compassion. Thank you teacher; and sadhu anumodana to all pilgrims!



off Northern Sumatra and a catastrophic tsunami which followed it caused enormous devastation in many countries fringing the Indian Ocean. Around 250,000 men, women and children lost their lives in this tragedy; millions more lost their loved ones, possessions, and livelihood.

Talandians gathered on 26 December at **1**10am for a special $p\bar{u}ja$ led by Bro. Tan to commemorate those who lost their lives in the calamity. This pūja was also to honour those who valiantly and compassionately helped the victims in the aftermath of the tsunami.

26 December 2012

Tn his inspiring sharing, Bro. Tan spoke Labout the frailty of life, and how we could truly treasure it - by understanding the difference between 'nyawa' and 'jiwa'. Life is not purposeful enough by merely staying 'alive' - having life ('bernyawa') does not mean one is truly 'living' ('berjiwa'). Bro. Tan also encouraged us to wisely reflect on death - 'Maranānussati' - to gain deeper insight into the value of human existence. It was an extraordinary and memorable teaching indeed.

24-hour Chanting

24 November 2012

n Saturday, 24 November, Buddhists from all over Malaysia gathered at Samadhi Vihara, Shah Alam, to chant and radiate mettā (loving-kindness) for world peace, stability and harmony. Organised by Aloka Foundation and the Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia, the highlight of this 24-hour event was a special "Illuminating the World with Mettā" programme, during which Venerable Mahinda led devotees in Mettā Meditation, followed by a 'Lamp Offering' ceremony, symbolically illuminating the world with loving-kindness. After the ceremony, 24 Nalandians participated in the group relay-chanting from 9pm to 10pm.



Nalanda Dharma School facilitators and students had been busy repairing, repainting and preparing Nalanda House to welcome the new school year in January 2013. They were hard at work to ensure a conducive and welcoming environment for facilitators and students alike to learn the Dhamma. Besides beautifying the School, facilitators and students got to learn various skills during the preparation.

They also developed a greater sense of belonging and became more appreciative of the facilities provided for them.

Nalanda Dharma School sincerely thank Mr. Fong Chan Looi for generously sponsoring all the paint used in Nalanda House. We would also like to thank all facilitators, parents and students who came to help with the work.

May the merits accrued lead all to progress further in the Dhamma!



Dhamma School Teachers Training Programme











5 & 6 January 2013

On 5 & 6 January 2013, Nalanda Institute Malaysia (NIM) conducted a two-day Teachers Training Programme at Uttama Bodhi Vihara in Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. The 35 existing and aspiring Dhamma School teachers from 6 Buddhist Societies who participated in the weekend programme gained much knowledge and inspiration to further the noble cause of Buddhist education.

We thank Bandar Utama Buddhist Society (BUBS) Dhamma School for initiating this idea, and for inviting Nalanda Institute to design and conduct the programme. There were four sessions in this programme: 'Creative Thinking in Teaching' taught by Mr. Tan Siang Chye; 'Educational Psychology' by Mr. Teoh Hee Chong, a 'Mock Teaching' session moderated by Institute Director Mr. Vijaya Samarawickrama and Lecturer Sis. Yee Sook Fen. The last session was a dialogue between the participants and Bro. H S Tan, Bro. Siang Chye, and Bro. Hee Chong.

Positive comments were received on the overall programme, with special mention on the mock teaching and dialogue sessions. With right effort, the participating Dhamma School teachers can leverage on the knowledge and skills learnt during the programme, and together with right understanding of Buddhist values and culture, educate and inspire our future generations! Sadhu anumodana.

"There are two qualities that a Dhamma School teacher should possess - **Compassion** and **Competence**.

"Compassion is a spiritual quality; it guides our intention to serve.

"Competence is our capability to serve. A teacher has to be competent in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and culture."

Bro. Tan Ho Soon



The Buddhist Involvement & Perspective 17 Nove

on 17 November, Bro. H S Tan conducted this course to address the significance of social action from a Buddhist perspective. Ranging from simple, individual acts of charity to organised services, social action encompasses different kinds of activities that are intended to benefit humankind. In Buddhism, there is a wide range of social actions as the teaching is based on compassion and liberation from suffering.

Understanding worldly conditions, with *dukkha* (suffering) and its causes, Buddhists are better equipped to steer social actions in the right direction. To transcend *dukkha*, we need to effect the practise of Dhamma by establishing:

- 1. Morality and cultivation of virtues;
- 2. Serenity through mental cultivation;
- 3. Insight through cultivation of wisdom.

17 November 2012

There are two aspects to morality: the Five Precepts provide guidance on what one should abstain from. These same precepts can also be interpreted as the Five Ennoblers, to encourage one to take right action and commit to charitable deeds, providing service to society, helping the less fortunate as we live *in* the Dhamma.

Social action ought to be balanced with introspection. Service is a great help to a meditator because the insights from silent sittings, as well as experience gained from working with others, are both needed to understand oneself further. One's spiritual cultivation should not be separated from daily life. The right way of practice is by balancing between meditation and social service. In this way, true insight and wisdom gradually begin to arise from within.

So, brothers and sisters, let us start NOW and serve the community with joy!



13 & 20 January 2013

Nalanda Institute Malaysia's Department of Buddhist & Pāli Studies began the year by organising our very first Mandarin Buddhist Studies course. The first session was held on 13 January; it received positive response and was attended by 50 participants.

In the second session on 20 January, the participants continued their discussions on the Life of Buddha, "佛陀的生平". Everyone was inspired by the remarkable qualities of the Buddha - the greatest human being ever - who made such a profound influence on human civilisation. In His 45 years of teaching Dhamma, the Buddha exemplified the supreme qualities of compassion, effort, determination, wisdom, courage, patience, and perfect equanimity.

National Buddhist Quiz New Project!

Nalanda Institute Malaysia and Nalanda Dharma School are working together in a joint effort to organise a "National Buddhist Quiz" for teenagers in 2013. This country-wide programme aims to propagate the authentic teachings of the Buddha, and to arouse and sustain interest in Buddhist studies among adolescents.

Participants aged 13 - 16 will be required to register as a team of 4 members. The quiz will be carried out in two stages - the preliminary round is in the form of a written examination; the best performing teams in the preliminary stage qualify for the second-stage, national oral quiz.

Please look out for further information when the details are released in March 2013.





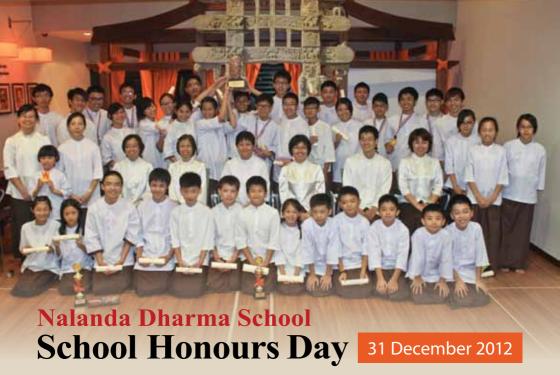


From 13 to 16 December, Nalanda Dharma School students returned to school for the 4-day 'Majjhima' Camp, which aimed to strengthen the students' Dhamma practice, as well as to revise for the *Kumāra* and *Majjhima* Examinations. Both examinations were introduced to ensure the seeds of learning planted and nurtured throughout the year have sprouted. The examinations cover a fairly wide scope comprising Pāli chanting, Dhamma knowledge, *Dhammapada* recitation, as well as knowledge about Nalanda, both at beginner's and intermediate levels.

13 – 16 December 2012

Throughout this camp, our earnest students were encouraged to observe 8 precepts in creating a more tranquil state of mind which would assist them in their revision. Apart from just plain lessons, various activities were also organised to relief the stress of the students, including a trip to Bukit Serdang for meditation, morning jogs to ensure the physical body is "energised", as well as doing house chores to provide everyone with a good studying environment.





It's the year of the Nāga!

On the last day of 2012, members of Nalanda Dharma School came together for the perfect reunion - the annual School Honours Day! This year saw a bigger family gathering with the participation of junior students from NEO Centre @ Happy Garden. It was a day for everyone to reflect and also rejoice over the efforts and commitment to learning we have put in throughout the year.

Preparations for the School Honours Day started on 29 December 2012. Volunteering to take over organising the event from facilitators, the students carried out the evening's programme wonderfully with performances to entertain everyone during dinner.

On this joyous occasion, several awards and recognitions were presented to the students. Nāga House clinched the coveted *Dhammavijaya Challenge Trophy* for 2012, by earning 2,517 points to Garuda's 2,306!

School Honour's Roll:

The 2012 medalists and excellence award recipients were :-

Gold Medalists	:	Fong Lih Herng & Chan Zhen Shun
Silver Medalists	:	Ho Yuan Zhan, Choo Yi Kang & Lim Ajit
Bronze Medalists	:	Liew Qian Yu, Liew Xuan Wei, Ng Xelynn, Nicholas Lee, Neville Lee & Lim Jie Sheng
Best Overall Student	:	Fong Lih Herng
Most Improved Students	:	Chan Yu (Senior Group) & Tai Wei Jun (Junior Group)



On the first anniversary of the first Nalanda Education & Outreach (NEO) Centre @ Happy Garden, the community of volunteers, parents and children from Nalanda Dharma School and Free School, gathered there on 11 December 2012, to show appreciation for the facility. Devotees started to gather at 6pm to clean the centre, followed by a communal potluck dinner, $p\bar{u}ja$ and a sharing session by those present. The congregation was

inspired to hear from everyone how they

have benefited greatly from the activities

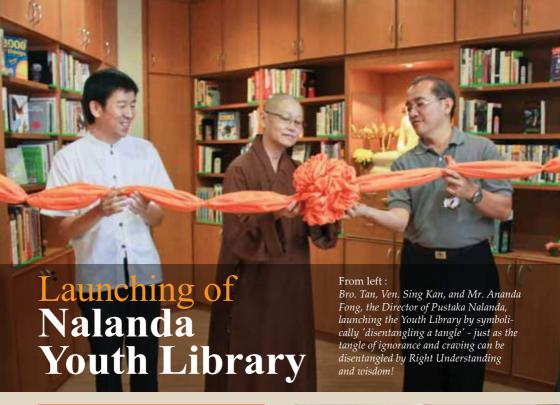
held at NEO Centre. One parent shared that he noticed her daughter becoming calmer and more hardworking after learning at NEO; while other volunteers shared their joy in being given the opportunity to serve, which in turn enriched their own lives. The night ended beautifully with *Mettā* meditation, led by Sis. Buddhinī, to show appreciation to all supporters, benefactors, volunteers, and devotees, for helping and supporting us in running the NEO Centre. May all rejoice in their wholesome deeds!

New Development: Second NEO Centre to open in Taman Johor Jaya, Johor Bahru

Plans are afoot at Nalanda Buddhist Society to launch our second NEO Centre after Happy Garden, and the first Nalanda facility outside the Klang Valley, in Taman Johor Jaya, Johor Bahru. The NEO Centre @ Johor Bahru is targeted to be operational by the second half of this year. For a start, the new centre aims to provide such services as:

- 1. Dhamma talks, meditation instructions, and Buddhist courses for the general public;
- 2. A well-stocked library and comfortable reading lounge, operated by Pustaka Nalanda; and
- 3. Periodic religious services, alms and robes offerings to venerable Sangha members.

Stay tuned for more announcements on this development via Nalanda website!



6 January 2013

Toreseeing the great potential of our Γ youths and the need for their holistic education. Pustaka Nalanda took the initiative to establish a Youth Library to cater for the intellectual development and learning needs of teenagers and younger adults. The library aims to provide quality learning resources and materials to support educational programmes offered Nalanda Dharma School, Free School and Youth Centre. Currently the Library has a catalogue of more than 500 titles which are categorized into various subjects. Check out the Library's OPAC Catalogue on-line at www.nalanda.org.my/youthlibrary.

Nalanda Youth Library is based at Nalanda Centre in Sri Serdang. It was officially launched on 6 January 2013. You are most welcome to visit the Youth Library, and make use of the available learning resources.



Membership

Membership of the Youth Library is open to the public free of charge.

Opening hours

Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am – 9 pm, The Youth Library is closed on Mondays.

Logo Design Competition Result Announcement

Mr. Alan Tan from Penang was declared the winner of Pustaka Nalanda's "Youth Library Logo Design Competition" in November 2012. Out of 9 qualifying designs, Alan's creation garnered the highest number of on-line votes on Nalanda's Facebook page. For his efforts, Alan was presented with a special gift token from Nalanda. Pustaka Director Mr. Ananda Fong traveled to Penang to present Alan the prize. Congratulations and thank you, Alan! Well-done to all!



Meet-the-Author Session

Pustaka Nalanda is inviting Mr. Vijaya Samarawickrama to review his book entitled "A Buddhist Reflects on Spirituality". To read the book on-line, please visit the website at http://bit.ly/VLX315. Alternatively, limited copies of the title can be obtained freely from Pustaka Nalanda.

After reading the book, we invite you to meet up with the author during the session on **16 March 2013**, **3.00 – 4.30pm at Nalanda Centre**. This is an opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts on the role of spirituality in Buddhism. Don't miss it!

Scan here to read the book from your mobile telephone:



Monthly Dhamma Discussions

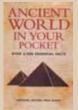
Beginning 8 March 2013, on the 2nd Friday of every month, Pustaka Nalanda will be continuing our Dhamma learning through book discussions. We have chosen two books for this purpose:

- 1. Good Question, Good Answer (Revised Edition), authored by Ven. S Dhammika; and
- 2. One Life, Five Precepts: Buddhist Ethics for Modern Living, authored by Ven. Faxun.

A simple luncheon will be served to all participants at 12 noon. You are most welcome to invite friends and colleagues to join us over the Friday lunch break to learn the Dhamma together.

Acknowledgement

We thank Bro. H S Tan, Sis. Joanne Tan, Ms. Ashley & Mr. Justin Lee, Mr. Yeap Boon Han, Sis. Rachel Ng, Mr. & Mrs. A K Lee, Mdm. Diana Ooi, Mdm. Lisa Wong, Sis. Sandra Yang, Sis. Sadhikā Tan, Mr. Soong Kok Kong, Mdm. Roslian, Sis. Sandy Lim, and Mr. Yee Chan Yew for their generous gifts of books to Nalanda Youth Library. *Sadhu anumodana!*















Pollowing the success of our Story-telling workshops held in October 2012, another training opportunity for public speaking is being organised by Pustaka Nalanda. This time it is the interesting Wayang Kulit Learning Workshop, first held on 12 January 2013, at Nalanda Centre. There will also be a few practical sessions after this inaugural workshop.

We are extending our invitation to members of Nalanda Youth Centre, Nalanda Dharma School and interested adults to join the ensuing practical sessions. If you are interested to participate, kindly submit your name and contact numbers to pustaka@nalanda.org. my. The sessions will be conducted by Nalanda Institute's talented Director, Mr. Vijaya Samarawickrama. We hope that this initiative will serve as another platform to train more people with the necessary skills to share the Dhamma, and become effective speakers/teachers eventually.

"One man is responsible for breathing life into this array of characters: the master puppeteer and story-teller known as the 'Tok Dalang'. The task of 'Tok Dalang' requires immense skills and endurance, for not only does he control the movements of the puppets, he also has to provide each one with a distinguishable voice, and at times, to sing..."

with skillful narration at the workshop.

Quoting from [allmalaysia.info]



Upcoming Events January – April 2013

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Nalanda Centre is closed from 24 – 28 January for the Hemanta Retreat.

FEB

Nalanda Centre is closed from 7-18 Feb for the Chinese New Year holidays.

MAR

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13	Nalandians' Extraordinary General Meeting	Nalanda Centre
	*中文初级佛学班一第一讲: 佛陀的生平(一)	Nalanda Centre
19	A Night with Gratitude	Nalanda Centre
	Wayang Kulit Learning Session I	Nalanda Centre
20	*中文初级佛学班一第二讲: 佛陀的生平(二)	Nalanda Centre
24–28	*Nalanda 'Hemanta Retreat'	Genting Highlands
02	<i>Pindacāra</i> - Alms-round by Sangha members at the morning market in Taman O.U.G.	NEO Centre / O.U.G. Market
	Wayang Kulit Learning Session II	Nalanda Centre
02	<i>Pindacāra</i> - Alms-round by Sangha members at the morning market in Taman O.U.G.	NEO Centre / O.U.G. Market
	*Volunteer Induction Programme (VIP) 2013	Nalanda Centre
03	*中文初级佛学班一第三讲:佛教、三宝	Nalanda Centre
08	Monthly Dhamma Discussion	Nalanda Centre
09	Meet-the-Author Session: Mr. S. Vijaya "A Buddhist Reflects on Spirituality"	Nalanda Centre
10	*中文初级佛学班一第四讲:业力、因果及轮回	Nalanda Centre
17	*中文初级佛学班一第五讲: 十善业	Nalanda Centre
	Nalanda Patron's Day Observance	Nalanda Centre
18	Nalanda Patron's Day	
06	<i>Pindacāra</i> - Alms-round by Sangha members at the morning market in Taman O.U.G.	NEO Centre / O.U.G. Market
12	Monthly Dhamma Discussion	Nalanda Centre
13	Nalanda Free School – Teachers' Training	Nalanda Centre
14	*中文初级佛学班一第六讲: 十恶业	Nalanda Centre
21	*中文初级佛学班一第七讲: 四圣谛	Nalanda Centre
28	*中文初级佛学班—第八讲: 八正道	Nalanda Centre

^{*} Registration is required for these courses / programmes.

Regular activities at Nalanda Centre include "Service Sunday" (Sundays, 9 am–12 pm) and Chanting & Meditation (Wednesdays, $8.30\,\mathrm{pm}-9.30\,\mathrm{pm}$). For full details or updates on Nalanda's many programmes, kindly log on to our website at www.nalanda.org.my

Family Well-being & Domestic Bliss

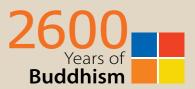
A happy family is not just about getting together on special occasions to have fun. It is an entity with a deep sense of identity and where the members consistently live by its core values. Insightful and farsighted core values tempered with wisdom will lessen conflict between family members, and give flexibility and space vital for healthy individual growth.

Bonds are forged when families spend time playing, and resting together. Create a calm and harmonious environment at home; families thrive on stability. Only when we have cultivated family well-being, could there be domestic bliss.

What are our objectives in life?

As Buddhists, we strive to attain balance and happiness in our lives, as well as to help others achieve greater joy and success in their lives, by realising the Six Well-beings:

- 1. Physical well-being and good health.
- 2. Mental well-being and joyful living.
- 3. Family well-being and domestic bliss.
- 4. Economic well-being and career success.
- 5. Interpersonal well-being and social harmony.
- 6. Spiritual well-being and inner peace.



Visit us on facebook at www.facebook.com/nalanda.org.my

Nalanda Contacts Please visit our website for the directions to Nalanda.

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Nalanda Education & Outreach (NEO) Centre, Johor Bahru

30, Jalan Dedap 26, Taman Johor Jaya, 81100 Johor Bahru, Johor.

The NEO Centre @ Johor Bahru will be operational in the second half of 2013.

Nalanda Centre is open daily from Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am to 10 pm. Closed on Mondays. Nalanda Institute, Nalanda Dharma School, and Nalanda Free School are based at Nalanda Centre, Sri Serdang.