

DHAMMA TALKS

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Why Have Dharma Talks?

Dharma talks are the cornerstone of every University Buddhist society. The committee should reflect on why we hold Dharma talks, their purpose and significance. The result will hopefully help the committee to realise their importance thereby motivating the committee to put in a collective effort to make them successful.

Here are some reasons for Dharma talks:

- Lecture on Buddhist practice
- To learn the teachings of the Buddha
- Insight into the dharma
- Spread the dharma
- Receive help with everyday life
- Creates a place for discussion to bounce ideas
- Interact and share experiences
- Achieve inner peace
- Distribute Dharma books
- Inspire others to practice

Exco's Roles In Dharma Talks

- Topic, speaker – Dharma Officer (DO)
- Venue – Dharma Officer, External VP
- Transport/contact speaker – DO
- Promotion – Marketing Manager, Secretary
- Refreshment – DO
- Set-up, pack-up –DO, General Coordinators
- Q&A- all committee
- Info and resources – President/VP

President / Vice-President Role

- Encourage exco attendance
- Ensure smooth organisation of talks
- Provide info for members (non-members)
- Give/show appreciation to exco
- Smile
- Publicity
- Liaising with external organisations



Secretary's Role

- Send email regarding upcoming events
- Preparing thank you letter for speaker
- Assist Dharma officer
- Q and A
- Record talk
- Attend

Treasurers Role

- Make a budget for expenditure for Dharma talks
- Arrange reimbursement for committee member out-of-pocket expenses
- Keep track of expenses incurred
- Assist Dharma officer
- Q and A
- Attend

General Co-ordinators

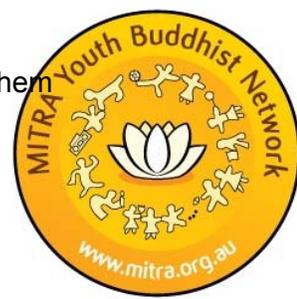
- Update website with Dharma talk information and upcoming talks
- Sending emails out
- Attendance list with contact details
- Design poster/booklets
- Provide friendly support during and after talks e.g. Q and A
- Delegated jobs

Dharma Officer

- Organise day/room/speaker/topic
- Which speaker is good for topics
- Gift for speaker, or donation to Sangha
- Transport for speaker
- Plan Dharma talk schedule for whole semester (collaborate with other societies)

Elements Of A Successful Dharma Talk

- Speaker factors: interactive talk atmosphere, “relatable”, down to earth speaker; giving gift to speaker shows respect; appropriate speaker for that topic; regular contact with speaker to inform/remind of location and topic; back up plan if speaker cannot make it at last minute
- Topic: should be interesting and/or timely- title should be attention grabbing; relevant to student life e.g. relationships, career, studies, social and cultural life
- Location: convenient, regular place so easy to remember; be aware of noise factor of surrounds; comfortable; easy to find (signage or detailed directions provided); not a theatre location as smaller venue will encourage more discussion
- Organisation: inform other societies who may have members who may be interested;
- Social factors: having enough committee members present to make people feel welcome, committee initiate Q and A to make others feel comfortable; allocating a committee member to new talk attendee to keep in touch and contact, encourages them

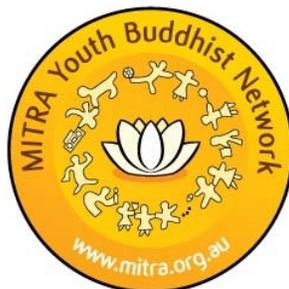


to come back; serving tea just before start of talk to make attendees feel welcome; refreshments following talk; committee to wear t shirt to make themselves visible and provides attendees a sense that they belong to a cohesive, supportive group

- Promotions: posters, website, and emails well in advance; announce next Dharma event at the end of talk.
- Location of poster: Psychology, or philosophy areas, or studies of religion; Never over other posters; Thoroughfares
- Meditation: Metta meditation before talk to encourage sense of calm and settle the mind, allows people to focus on talk. Can vary types of meditation.
- Dharma materials: should be relevant and encourage further investigation; refer to particular chapters to help newcomers; can make summary leaflets; set “homework” between talks to help with continuity and encourage Dharma practice
- Timing: have enough time for discussion; common problems can be addressed; helps members to get to know each other

Dharma Talk Protocol

1. Topic & Speaker: decide with committee and organise before semester starts
2. Collaborate with other societies
3. Book venue
4. Remind speakers of time/place/topic
5. Ask permission to record, and ask for recommended readings
6. Prepare summaries/book list for talk
7. Publicise a week before and during O-Week; email, posters, website; use Uni publications
8. Transport for Speaker
9. Set-up of room for Buddha statue, poster for atmosphere; arrange books relating to topic so that participants can read further on topic
10. Introduce speaker and topic
11. Record: distribute talk recording (obtain speaker’s verification and permission first);
12. Bowing to speaker and Buddha statue. Raise awareness of practice of bowing and ask people to join in if they feel comfortable
13. Meditation/talk
14. Questions/discussion
15. Thank speaker/gift/bow to speaker/ thank driver
16. Refreshments
17. Exco should announce future events at end of talk and encourage mingling and social interaction after the talk
18. Post-talk: follow up thank you letter
19. Obtain speaker’s verification of recorded talk;
20. Put transcript on web page



Dharma Talk Topics

How to attract people? Choose good topics

- Easier topics first, progressive topic later.
- Basic topics: Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Karma; Three Characteristics of Existence
- Then discussion of creative titles
- Everyday life ‘What is Buddhism’, are you really happy?
- Buddhist perspective on world events
- Prioritize topics to get them in and then give them Dharma that they should listen to
- Balance interest and importance of topics

