Wesak Day Celebrations
“If anyone becomes inspired to practise this Noble path of moral conduct, meditation and insight shown by our blessed teacher - THE BUDDHA - as a way out of problems and suffering towards reaching the ultimate peace and happiness, our world will be so much better.”

Ajahn Brahmavamso (Ajahn Brahm) has shown that the Buddha’s teachings, though deep and profound, are simple and can be realised within our own hearts.

It is often only after we hear something many times that our minds blossom to realise the teachings of the Buddha with a much deeper meaning. In this era with a greater need for moral and spiritual values, Ajahn Brahm’s skilful means of teaching and spreading the Dhamma to the understanding and sensitivity of its audience is indeed great.

In April 1983, Ajahn Brahm arrived from Thailand to Perth, Western Australia after spending nearly 9 years in Thailand. His ordination as a Buddhist monk following the Theravada Thai Forest tradition was by the Abbot of Watt Saket in December 1974. Ajahn Brahm subsequently studied and trained under Venerable Ajahn Chah.

Soon after arriving in Perth, Ajahn Brahm moved into a small Vihara in Magnolia Street, Perth owned by the Buddhist Association of Western Australia (BSWA). The BSWA had long wished to establish a proper forest monastery. After the Rains in 1983, the then Abbott and Ajahn Brahm chose a secluded property of 97 acres of bush land in Serpentine to establish the current Bodhinyana Monastery. Despite lack of facilities, the Sangha (monks) moved to Serpentine in 1983.

With the establishment of this monastery, the Sangha began to grow and Ajahn Brahm became an inspiration to the Perth Sangha and his leadership influenced many monks, nuns and lay community to practise the Buddha’s teachings.

Since Ajahn Brahm’s arrival in WA, his emphasis on a simple and direct approach to the practice of the Dhamma and its applications in daily life has inspired large numbers of people who are interested in the teachings of the Buddha, not only in WA and Australia but around the world.

For those who are searching for inner peace and happiness in the mind, Ajahn Brahm’s talks from the depths of his own meditative experiences have helped. While demonstrating a selfless devotion to the task of presenting the Buddha’s teaching to the world, Ajahn Brahm’s calm, simple and pleasant personality has touched the lives of so many people. His remarkable and unique sense of humour has made him a popular teacher and speaker.

In the year 2001, the BSWA acquired more land opposite the Bodhinyana Monastery in Serpentine and in 2003 Ajahn Brahm initiated the establishment of a centre. In 2009 the Jhana Grove Retreat Centre was completed with funds from donors around the world. Since then Jhana Grove has become a primary venue for meditation with devotees from Australia and worldwide.

Dhammasara, the forest monastery for nuns, came to life under the guidance and sustained efforts of Ajahn Brahm. Possibly one of the most significant events in the history of the BSWA was the ordination of the Bhikkuni nuns in 2009. Ajahn Brahm ensured that the ordination of Bhikkunis was possible within the limits of the monastic vinaya (discipline). This was in addition to ordaining many monks from numerous nationalities.

Ajahn Brahm has authored many publications and books on the Buddha’s teachings and ensured the transfer of Dhamma from the scriptures into the minds of people. It is significant these teachings are more than 2,550 years old, before the birth of Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad. Ajahn Brahm epitomises that a religion can be spread through kindness and tolerance.

Ajahn Brahm can be considered a great Buddhist teacher and communicator, who has endeavoured to use Buddhism as a tool to bring true peace and happiness. Moreover, Ajahn Brahm has made an enormous contribution to cross religious understanding and harmony through his many years of active engagements in religious educational activities. His devotional commitments and achievements have won widespread admiration of many around the world.

Today, Ajahn Brahm is the Abbott and Spiritual director of the BSWA. May he enjoy good health, long life, peace and happiness and continue to inspire and benefit other fellow beings. May Ajahn Brahm be successful in his future endeavours and fulfil all the Noble aspirations.
Whilst undoubtedly an opportunity to rejoice with a party of serenity and contemplation (as Ajahn Brahm would wish), it is also a time to appreciate the work of our venerable monk who has been instrumental in spreading the message of Dhamma here and around the world, and in doing so, attracting more practitioners of Buddhism.

To help mark this milestone, the BSWA wishes to embark on a membership drive for all those whose lives have been touched by Ajahn Brahm to become members, and also those who may have let their membership lapse. The memberships raise much needed funds to continue the good work that Ajahn Brahm started all those years ago.

The current annual fee for new members and renewals is A$50. The memberships and donations received are vital as it directly contributes to the management and operations of facilities and administration. All this is done with the ultimate aim of spreading the virtues of Dhamma.

If you are able to and would like to play a part, please do so online at www.bswa.org (under Membership, shop). Alternatively, you can complete the details in the enclosed Membership Application form and post it (with a cheque or money order only) or take it in person to Dhammaloka Library with cash, cheque or credit card.

Editor's Report

Hello everyone. I hope you enjoy this Winter edition of the Enlightened Times. This is the first edition for me and is very exciting. I have been coming to Dhammaloka for about 3 years and I love all of the wonderful activities they provide. I have just finished the weekend meditation retreat at Jhana Grove with Venerable Hasapanna and I highly recommend it. The food is delicious, prepared with love by Bianca and the view out there is amazing. It is way better than a resort! The peace and quiet is rejuvenating.

I had the wonderful experience of interviewing our youngest nuns and hope you enjoy reading about their journeys into Buddhism. Also in this edition are:

- interviews with some of our Sanga regarding the ordination of nuns,
- a somewhat humorous account of a first retreat experience (which we can all relate to)
- events that took place and are still to come,
- and our new committee members.

I would love to receive lots of your own articles and photos for future editions, or ideas for future articles that you would like to read about. If you don’t want to write an article but have some interesting photos please still send them to me. Please provide Word documents for text and photos in JPEG format, at least 1 meg where possible. If you have sent me an article and it didn’t go to print it will still be considered for future articles. Send me a reminder email and I will find out why it didn’t go to print and get back to you.

Kindfully,
Your new editor, Di.

Loving-Kindness

“One’s mind is quickly concentrated” is one of the eleven benefits of loving-kindness. That’s the reason for starting every meditation session with loving thoughts for yourself.

The mind cannot concentrate without the three foundations of generosity, moral conduct, and loving-kindness. These are the pillars of meditation, which support meditation practice.

Loving-kindness, as a feeling in one’s heart, is an absolute essential for concentration because it creates peace and calmness in the mind. If that’s lacking, more loving-kindness meditation at the beginning of each session may be helpful in order to cultivate lovingness within yourself.

Ayya Khema ‘Being Nobody, Going Nowhere’.
How does someone new to Buddhism react to visiting the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India? In this article, Thomas gives his account...

At the beginning of this year, I had the good fortune of travelling to India with my partner and her family. We travelled around the north of the country to various different cities. Exploring India's culture was a unique experience, but one facet of that culture was particularly captivating: India's spirituality. Of all the cities we travelled to, none was quite as spiritual as Varanasi. Also known as Benares, it is considered a Holy City by Buddhists and Hindus alike. This is an account of the experiences I had there with a particular focus on Sarnath, a place sacred to Buddhism and now very close to my own heart.

Varanasi is a city which deserves an introduction. It is a very peculiar place as far as modern cities go. More people walk on the roads than drive cars. Bulls and cows also roam freely amongst them. None of the typical urban dreariness of other cities is to be found in Varanasi. Instead, the atmosphere is proverbially electrified by a sense of the spiritual.

In the evening the city's streets will be flooded by a torrential crowd of people. They make their way briskly down to the banks of the Ganges. It is here that the nightly blessing of the river is performed. My party and I witnessed this event from a wooden boat on the Ganges itself (or Mother Ganga as it is known in India). Seven Hindu priests with red and yellow robes conducted the carefully choreographed ritual to the sound of chiming bells. They used fire, incense and flower petals to make their benedictions. A huge crowd gathered on the banks of the Mother Ganges to watch the ceremony. The crowd was so large that it stretched from one visible side of the river bank to the other. A little further down the river, drums sounded and large pyres burned at the cremation grounds. The dead are taken here not to be mourned, but to celebrate their transition from one cycle to the next.

Hindus from all around are drawn to this place, but so are Buddhists. It is not uncommon to see groups of monks – mostly Tibetan – roaming around Varanasi. This is because the city lies just 13 kilometres away from one of Buddhism's four most sacrosanct locations, Sarnath. This is the place where the Buddha gave his first sermon.

I had the privilege of exploring Sarnath during my stay in Varanasi. Of all the places I had been to up until that point, Sarnath left the strongest impression on me.

The Deer Park was my first destination. It is an area about the size of any other large park and has a similar appearance. There is green grass growing everywhere and trees pepper the landscape. A number of structures had been built there. After hundreds of years, however, most of them are now ruined as the impermanence of the world catches up with them.

One monument did stand the test of time and towered above all else in Sarnath. It stood in stark contrast to the other ruins surrounding it. This was the Dhamek Stupa originally built by King Ashoka. It is said that the stupa is built on the exact location where the Buddha gave his sermon.

Elsewhere in Sarnath was a more contemporary temple built to commemorate the sermon. To one side of the temple there is a Bodhi Tree. At its base there is a series of statues. The scene depicted Buddha preaching to the five ascetics that went on to be his disciples. When I was here I approached a man attending to people as they took their shoes off. I asked him about the Bodhi Tree. He explained that the tree in Sarnath is from the seed of a Sri Lankan tree, which in turn was grown from a seed of the original tree the Buddha gained enlightenment under. What a perfect metaphor for the preservation and growth of a centuries-old spiritual philosophy!

It is what Sarnath represents that I found most inspiring about it. When the Buddha gave the first sermon of his philosophy he sat with just five other people. Over the next two and a half thousand years, that philosophy spread from just five people to hundreds of millions.

The sermon itself would have been a very humble event. Historians of the time would have assigned little significance to it. Humble though it was, that event triggered a tremor of spiritual inspiration that sweeps across vast expanses of both time and geography. In my opinion, this was because the sermon included something more important than a great audience: a message that was qualitatively great. Though not a Buddhist myself, I can't help but contemplate this fact with wonder.

Sarnath must seem even more astonishing to those who travelled there as life-long devotees of the Buddha's teachings. I would highly recommend a pilgrimage to Sarnath for any Buddhist who has the means. It is a magical place where even in the present moment, a long and rich past is evoked.
It's 3.45am and a gong is reverberating through the sleepy bush of Dharug National Park, Wiseman's Ferry. I reluctantly drag my protesting body out of bed and get dressed. I say 'hello' to another woman in my dormitory and she just stares back at me! 'Whoops,' this is a meditation retreat and I'm not supposed to be talking.

In spite of my tiredness, it's a beautiful hour to be up and the stillness of the forest brings serenity to my mind. My feet crunching on the frosty ground is the only sound to be heard and the bush is dotted with torch lights as everyone makes their way to the main hall of this isolated forest monastery. I traipse into the meditation hall and thanks to the warm glow of the candle-lit altar find the spot where I put my cushion the evening before. There are a few people already meditating, encompassed in blankets.

I sit down trying to make myself as comfortable as possible and then the fun begins.

Watch the breath the monk had said. Breathing in.... 'that woman could have at least smiled when I said hello', breathing out....'why do we have to start sooo early?' Breathing in.... 'I wonder what we'll have for breakie?' Breathing out.... 'I can hear someone snoring, or maybe it's me!'

The gong sounds and it's time for walking meditation. Everyone finds a path of about 20 paces and walks back and forth focusing the mind on the feeling of the feet on the ground. This is easier and my mind settles down to the task at hand. After a while I stop and look around and find it hard not to burst out laughing as suddenly everyone, including me, looks so hilarious.

Another bell announcing breakfast. I see my husband making his way to the dining hall and smile and start to talk to him. He gives me a frown and reminds me 'no talking'. Now I'm really angry. I know that's the rule but surely he doesn't have to be so serious.

Back to the hall for more meditating and as the sun shines through the window I have a hard time trying to keep awake and stop my head from nodding. To make matters worse the teacher's watch seems to have stopped and who knows when he’ll ring the bell!

As we line up for lunch a strange feeling of humiliation overtakes me. I don't think I've ever had to line up for food before and to do so in silence, without distracting conversation, brings my pride to the forefront.

After lunch there is a one hour nap. I literally just put my head on the pillow when the gong rings after what seems like one minute. By evening I am just about ready to throw in the towel when the teacher gives such an inspiring talk that I am hooked again for another day.

Finally the last day of the retreat arrived and I can’t say I wasn’t glad but then again something had changed in me. The beauty of the forest, the sounds of the birds, which I hardly noticed 10 days ago, now astounded me. The previous afternoon I was shocked to realise I was actually having fun just lying on my back looking up at the clouds. Glimpses of happiness had sneaked into my mind as I had slowed down, shut up and took time out from the frantic race of life.

This was my first taste of a meditation retreat, almost 30 years ago and marked the beginning of a lifelong quest of self discovery! The intensity and range of emotions it brought up in me was truly revealing. And at retreats nowadays, maybe I’m the woman who just stares when someone talks to me as now, I, truly savour the delicious flavour of noble silence!

Venerable Amaranatho is coming back to Perth! For the third year, BSWA is co-hosting his teaching tour with the Cambodian Buddhist Society of WA. If you have participated in his teachings in the past you will know that Venerable Amaranatho brings a fresh and contemporary approach to the timelessness of the Buddha's teachings.

He will be returning to Perth from August to November, running courses, workshops and retreats to compliment the Buddhist practices you may have. The courses and retreats are participative in nature, with a blend of activities, discussion, reflection, and meditative guidance. They explore the relationships we have with ourselves, with others, and with the world around us, and help us realize the limitations we impose on ourselves and how we can be free from these. He facilitates a safe space to recognize your own wisdom, through co-exploration, playfulness, and love.

He has had a traditional Theravada training as an alms mendicant and lived at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England for 10 years, before going back to the roots of the forest tradition to wander.

Some of the events being organized in this tour are:
9 day retreat at Jhana Grove; Nanga weekend camp; 8 week course From Stress to Freedom; 6 week course Heart of the Community; public talks at Dhammaloka; one-day workshops including Stress Buster and Opening to Vulnerability. You can find more about Amaranatho, the events and book online at www.playfulmonk.net

By Irene de Silva

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This was my first taste of a meditation retreat, almost 30 years ago and marked the beginning of a lifelong quest of self discovery! The intensity and range of emotions it brought up in me was truly revealing. And at retreats nowadays, maybe I’m the woman who just stares when someone talks to me as now, I, truly savour the delicious flavour of noble silence!
It is said that the ancient Buddhist texts recording the Buddha's teachings should be read in the light of that very Teaching, that is with compassion and wisdom. Our Practice, based as it is within the foundations of the Four Noble Truths and Eight Fold Path, guides us quite specifically to cultivate the wholesome, to discard the unwholesome; part of this is to do what is compassionate and to cultivate compassionate perceptions. So why, to echo something Bhante Sujato said to me, do some of us, when talking about Bhikkhunis, keep focusing on the negatives?

I didn't know I did this until I read an open letter by the Ven Sudhamma Bhikkhuni. Historically conditioned negative perceptions that I had unknowingly been brought with became very clear because this Ven Bhikkhuni was presenting their very opposite. It was a delightful surprise to read her letter and I am sure Ven Sudhamma will not mind me quoting her here. I present here, a few extracts, the full letter is available at:

http://www.bhikkhuni.net/perth/Buddhist%20Scholars%20Response%20to%20the%20Validity%20of%20Bhikkhuni%20Ordination%20-%20071209.pdf

We find, on investigation, that the Buddha followed a principle of working hard to ensure women receive the best conditions for success in the holy life, from ease of ordination, to high quality mentoring, to staying focused. … [The] flexible effort to make bhikkhunis ordinations more accessible, when needed, is the original principle demonstrated by the Buddha.

He stated specifically that a bhikkhu should go to help a bhikkhuni or female novice if, for examples, she is ill, she suffers from dissatisfaction with the holy life, she suffers remove, or she has gotten into trouble and needs rehabilitation or an advocate; in such cases, the Buddha said, with the thought of being of help, "you should go, monks, even if not sent for, all the more if sent for". If a bhikkhuni candidate wishes to be ordained during Vassa, the Buddha said, and she sends a messenger to monks saying that she wishes them to come, then "you should go, monks, even if not sent for, all the more if sent for," with the intention of participating in the ordination. (The same is true if a novice nun wishes to start the training towards ordination.) (Mv.III.6.12-29).

Listen to how the Buddha described bhikkunis: “[A] bhikkhuni is auspicious, a bhikkhuni is the essential, a bhikkhuni is a learner, a bhikkhuni is an adept...” (Vīnī 2.131). … There can be no doubt as to original principals regarding women entering and ordaining here. I present here, a few extracts, the full letter is available at:

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There are many stories in the texts that demonstrate the Buddha's great compassion and support towards the Bhikkhuni Sangha, what is your favourite of these?

Bhante Sujato: There are so many. One which has always been quite meaningful for me was the story of Bhadda. She gives in her own verses, it's her own words, she went to see the Buddha and he taught her the Dhamma and she asked for the going forth and he said, 'Ehi Bhadda,' Come Bhadda, and this was my full ordination... it's just so, so straightforward, so welcoming, there are no issues at all. There's a clean, emotional connection there, without any of the fuss.

Bhikkhu Brahmali: It is perhaps not widely appreciated that the Buddha made it quite clear that bhikkhunis should take other bhikkhunis as their role models. At AN2:131 the Buddha specifically says that the bhikkhunis Kheimi and Uppalavatari should serve as the “measure” for other bhikkhunis: “a faithful bhikkhuni should rightly aspire thus: ‘may I be like the bhikkhuni Kheimi and the bhikkhuni Uppalavatari.’” It is remarkable that the Buddha must have realized the importance for bhikkhunis to have role models of their own gender

There was a lady who came into the temple totally naked, without a stitch of clothing, on her and she was very young, she'd just given birth. So imagine sort of this young flames comes into our centre in town, you know, totally naked. What would people do? They'd tell her to get out of here. Sometimes that's what happens when, you know, young girls come in, they're sort of dressed like they're going to a night club.

But what the Buddha did was say, 'no, bring her in' and then put a robe around her and he taught her Dhamma and that's one of the greatest teachers that ever happened...because the Buddha never rejected anybody because they were badly dressed. And that was a very beautiful story.

When I read the Therigatha, I kept on reading story after story of these women; they became Bhikkhunis and they were practising and what happened was that they were getting no where until this great teacher came and then in a few days they were Enlightened; and that teacher was Patacara. That is one hell of a teacher. That is really good; that's what I really love.

Ajahn Brahm, one could say that you had a very 'big vision' for Dhammadarsa. When they were looking for land they were looking for a little piece of land and you found this big piece of land. I'm going to play Mara's advocate a bit. How do we reconcile this 'big vision' with the values of simplicity, contentment and going against craving.

It is because simplicity, contentment and craving should be balanced against kindness, compassion. The big picture is looking for the benefit and happiness of not just one person but the whole world.

I've been around a long time as a monk and you see just what works, especially for monastics. They want a beautiful place to stay. Not in a house in a suburb, not in sort of a tiny farm surrounded by other farms. The just want this beautiful solitude, as does everybody else who visits there. So this is what simplicity means. There are places just so simple: there's nature, it hasn't really been developed at all. It's not craving for personal things, but letting go of them for the benefit of the world. There's a great difference between metta and craving. Metta wishes well for all beings; craving just wants for oneself.

Ajahn Brahm, you could be the wrong person to ask this…in relation to Bodhinyana, in relation to the Buddhist community, the nun's community, if you had a 'wish list', what would that be?

A wish list: may all beings be at peace and Enlightened.

Exactly, I'm the wrong person to ask…you don’t have wish lists. You just react to the moment and just see what needs to be done today.

But in the future you obviously, you hope...it's actually happening...that Dhammadarsa will be a strong monastery with lots of old nuns who've been bhikkhunis for years and years and years. These great solid rocks around to build the next generation of bhikkhunis.

In the first years at Wat Nanachat there were very, very few elderly Western bhikkhunis for years and years and years. These great solid rocks to the moment and just see what needs to be done today.

Yes, I hope so too.
Meet Our Committee Members

President
Miss Linda Janice Phillips

Vice President
Miss Lynne Campbell Jackson

Honorary Treasurer
Mrs San Wong

Assistant Treasurer
Mrs Pey Loke

Honorary Secretary
Ms Valarie Filevski

Assistant Secretary
Mrs Lucky Kodituwakku

Web Services Coordinator
‘PJ’ Gunasekera

Web Design
Mr Lincoln Mitchell

Communications Editor
Mrs Dianne Newland

Dhammaloka Community Coordinator
Mrs Mukta Barua

Buddhist Society
Western Australia
The Armadale meditation group has just celebrated its 26th anniversary by holding an evening of gratitude. The room was packed with about 60 people present. During the evening a book of thank you letters was presented by one of our members, Kelly, to Ajahn Brahm, who has been teaching at the group for many years.

On receiving the book he said, “Gratitude is very important. While it is easier to grumble about people, it is far more useful to express gratitude towards them”.

The book contained many personally written letters by individual members of the meditation group. Each letter thanked an individual monk (or a group of monks) who had taught meditation there over the 26 years.

The letters showed just how valuable the meditation and teachings have been, and how much the monks are appreciated, each and every one of them. One woman, Noeline, wrote “My life has definitely changed since I started attending the group. The meditations and talks have been invaluable and as I strive to apply such every day I am finding a happiness and contentment I never thought possible.”

Another person, Sarah, who is fairly new to the group wrote, “Dear Ajahn Sujato, Your soft gentle voice took me into a tranquil peace that I have never before experienced. On the day of meeting you my whole outlook changed and everybody in my life has noticed that change. Thank you with all my heart”.

Such letters were typical of the many received. There were of course a lot of thank yous to Ajahn Brahm and some even thanked him for his jokes! One person wrote, “Dear Ajahn Brahm, You are the gardener who has planted many seeds in the garden of my mind. You water in the seeds with your jokes and wonderful humour so they may take root. I am happy to say that some beautiful flowers have been produced. I am forever grateful that I have had the opportunity of hearing your teachings.”

And this came from Graeme, “I would like to say how much Ajahn Brahm and Ajahn Appicchato have changed my life since I first appeared in the Armadale Meditation Group. I learned meditation from them so well that now I practise for two hours every day and have become a practising Buddhist in Thailand.”

It wasn’t just the present teachers who were thanked though, many from the past were also acknowledged, such as Ajahn Nyanatusita, Ajahn Vissudhi, Venerable Khemavarro, Ajahn Nyanadhammo and Venerable Nissarano. For example, Anne wrote, “Dear Ajahn Nyanatusita, You gave me my first introduction into Buddhism, of which I knew nothing. You made the Buddha’s teaching come alive. Your wise words and gentle demeanour taught me to accept the way things are. I can still see you looking up and asking “Is that clear?” It usually was. Thank you.”

There was even a letter thanking Ajahn Jagaro who first started the group along with Bianca and Ron in 1987. We were also delighted that Bianca included a special greeting in the book too.

Venerable Buddharakkhita was also in attendance and received a personal thank you and was given a gift by Anna, the youngest member of the group. Another member, Andrew, also presented a card with a $260 donation towards monastery expenses on behalf of the group, $10 a year is a bargain, isn’t it! At the end all rose to give the monks a standing ovation.

Then everyone ate a wonderful and huge supper provided by the members and organised brilliantly by Tania Pawlek. People had the opportunity to talk to Ajahn Brahm and Venerable Buddharakkhita and there was a line of people wanting to have their photograph taken with them!

Rachel Green, the present co-ordinator of the group attended the very first meeting of the group back in 1987. She said, “Everyone is welcome to attend the group, from any age or background. It is wonderful to see the calmness and relaxation that people gain. As Buddhists we need to avoid evil, to do good, and to purify our minds. We are certainly doing good for the Armadale community”.

Thank you sincerely to all the Sangha past and present who have taught at the group.
Looking at our membership list, we have thousands of members in Perth who we rarely see at our Buddhist Temple. Of course, we know how life goes. You joined the Buddhist Society because you appreciate the importance of meditation. But life is busy, there is so much to get done, family to see, things to do. You intend to get back here one day, because you know how good you feel when you do come here and listen to Ajahn Brahm talking. In fact, you might resolve to come to the Temple soon, but somehow time goes by, you feel more stressed and busy and you’ve never managed to get here yet.

You can only improve your life if you take charge of yourself. Much as we would like to think so, simply reading this magazine is not enough to change your life. It takes a desire on your part to simply make your life happier. Ajahn Brahm has a wonderful saying: "Meditate for 30 minutes every day. If you don’t have time to do that, then meditate for 60 minutes.” There is a lesson there, that we should not allow ourselves to get lost in the busy routines of life. So if you haven’t been in a while, give yourself a break and determine to change the direction of your life, now, today, this Friday.

If you’re having trouble trying to meditate, then one 30 minute session on a Friday night is unlikely to cure it, but at least it is a start. It is not just about Friday nights. We have so many things going on at Dhammaloka of a weekend and through the week. Take a break from your life and come and join in with the many activities. They are not all about meditation, but they certainly are about absorbing the Buddhist way of living into your soul.

For example, come and join in one of the Dana offerings on a Saturday or Sunday morning. If you’ve never been, you have missed a wonderful way to relax and start the day. Roll up by 10:30am, bring a plate of food, or a bottle of juice, or some kind of contribution toward the food offering. The monks chant, bless the food and take their morning meal, and then we all join in and eat too. It is very relaxed, and a wonderful way to associate and chat with other Buddhists, and to feel happy in a beautiful environment.

We have Introduction to Meditation sessions at 3pm every Saturday, as well as other meditation sessions and classes. Now that our Dana Hall has been fully refurbished, our gardens redesigned, and our Bodhi Tree looking glorious and resplendent, we are starting to add other community activities. On Wednesday nights, you can come and join in free yoga classes with other members (monastery donation suggested) and we will be adding other classes and other activities soon. If you can’t meditate, at least you can associate with like-minded people in a positive environment, which will help you the motivation to get back into your meditation.

You can also visit the monks or the nuns at their monastery each morning and join in the Dana offering there, and of course we have regular meditation retreats at Jhana Grove. These are incredibly popular and get booked out rapidly, so you need to be coming along Friday nights to be aware of when they are being held.

It is too easy to lose touch with what matters in life, and to sink under the deluge of busy activities. You joined as a member because you wanted to change your life for the better and saw the value in the teachings of the Buddha. Now is a good time to reconnect with those and we will be looking out for you to return and give you a big welcome as we try to help you along in the Buddhist path.

With Metta
Linda Phillips , President
Words from our youngest Anagarikaas on becoming Samaneris

Anagarikaas: “homeless one”.  
A person who has given up most or all of his worldly possessions and responsibilities to commit full-time to Buddhist practice. They take on 8 precepts for the entire anagarikaa period, which could be for life. Anagarikaas usually wear white robes or clothes. The main difference between the 8 precepts of an Anagarika and the 10 precepts of a novice monk or nun (Samaneri) is the rule of not handling money.

Samaneri: after the applicant has requested the teacher to ordain her a samaneri (novice), she formally takes up the 3 Refuges and the 10 Precepts. Samaneris are given a new name in Pali and exchange their robes, usually from white to brown.

8 Precepts
1. to refrain from destroying living creatures;
2. to refrain from taking that which is not given;
3. to refrain from sexual activity;
4. to refrain from incorrect speech;
5. to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness;
6. to refrain from eating at the forbidden time (ie., after noon);
7. to refrain from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments, wearing garlands, using perfumes and beautifying the body with cosmetics;
8. to refrain from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place.

10 Precepts includes all of the above plus refraining from accepting gold and silver (money).
I had the wonderful privilege of talking with our youngest anagarikaas, Analaya and Dulani about their novice ordination and their spiritual path as to date.

Analaya came into monastic life in the midst of university studies. She gave up her studies to live a very simple life at home. Buddhism was always an element in her life, but she was not taken to temples or involved in the rituals of Buddhism. She very much liked the philosophy and logic of Buddhism. She came into meditation again through yoga where she felt the reconnection with her inner strength to care for herself with intention, which she had never felt before. Ayya Khema's talks were among the first Buddhist teachings she listened to. Shortly after that she started listening to Ajahn Brahm's Friday night talks. More than the content of their teachings, she was deeply touched and inspired by the warmth, strength, and wisdom in which they conveyed the Dhamma, and felt very strongly that she also wanted to live as a renunciant.

Dulani grew up in Melbourne and was working as a hydro geologist for 4 years. She visited Dhammasara both in 2010 and in 2011, and then moved to Perth in 2012 with her parents. She was raised as a Buddhist and during her teenage years realized that she couldn't see the point in all of the rituals and so stopped going to the temple. She then found another forest monastery in Victoria where a disciple of Ajahn Chah's (Ajahn Kalayano) was teaching meditation, and it was through this practice of meditation, and the inspiring example of these simple, meditating monks that drew her back to Buddhism for the second time.

Both girls became anagarikaas last year after having long stays, of 3 months or more, in the monastery. The process is simple: if you feel ready then you can request to take up training as an anagarikaa. As anagarikaas they keep 8 precepts and can still handle money. They trained for 1 year as anagarikaas. As samaneris they can no longer live their lives wholeheartedly, honestly, and true to their ideals in another. The monastic lifestyle is very conducive to this process.

When I asked the girls what advice they would give to people starting out in Buddhism, they both agreed to take it one step at a time, come and try it out, even stay for a bit. You don't have to make up your mind now about any of it. Dulani mentioned that when she decided to become an anagarikaa, her attitude was to try it out and see how it goes, and she says the same for becoming a samaneri, as long as she is happy doing this. Analaya said that even when she knew she wanted to become a nun she kept the attitude that you never know what life is going to offer you and what you will be called to do. She quotes, “what you miss in this hour no eternity can return,” and said that for her it is about practicing now, whether you are a lay person, an anagarikaa, or a nun. The form of Buddhism is there for everyone, whether as a lay person or monastic, to help us grow in peace and wisdom.

I asked the girls if there was anything more that we can do as a community to help them in their spiritual path and they were very compassionate and grateful for how much the community is doing. They said they are always so surprised how much support they receive, not just for bringing them food, or for how much people care for them and offer their services, but for our devotion to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, and the sincerity with which we commit ourselves to follow the eight-fold path. They also felt that the Buddhist Society of Western Australia was an exceptionally beautiful and cohesive community, considering the diversity of culture, age, and background of the people present at any Friday night talk. Finally I asked them what advice they would give to our world leaders. Dulani immediately said they need to meditate more, especially to practice loving kindness. Analaya said that they should live their lives wholeheartedly, honestly, and true to their ideals in order to earn people's trust and respect, which cannot be bought with money or acquired through force and fear. She reminded us of Gandhi, a little being in his loin cloth, but he did everything by example. She felt the same of Ajahn Brahm, that he is living it.

The girls had their samaneri ordination on Sunday 19th May. We watched them ask forgiveness from their parents and preceptor, Ven. Hasapanna, and then proceed with the going forth ceremony that was chanted in Pali. After receiving their robes from Ven. Hasapanna, they left to change out of their white anagarikaa robes, and returned in brown robes as Sister Analaya, which means no abiding, and Sister Acala, which means unshakeable. Many, many people came to witness this ceremony and were touched to see these two, very humble girls flowing into the next phase of their spiritual journey.
Upcoming Activities

Dhammaloka

**Monday**
2pm - 3pm  Guided Meditation for those with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. All are welcome

**Wednesday**
10am - Beginner’s Yoga and Tai Chi classes at Dhammaloka Community Hall.
6:30pm - Evening Yoga class at Dhammaloka Community Hall.

*Please do not eat 2 hrs before yoga, bring a mat.*

**Friday**
7pm - Chanting
7:30pm - Guided meditation by a senior monk or nun  8pm - 9:15pm  Dhamma Talk

**Saturday**
10:30am - Offering of food to the Sangha  3pm - On-going meditation
3pm - Introduction to Meditation Class (Starts every 1st Saturday of the month)

**Sunday**
9am-10am - Children’s Dhamma Class (Please contact Lee Chan 9am-6pm before attending the class) - 10:30am - Offering of food to the sangha  3pm - 4:15pm - Sutta Classes (Only on every 2nd Sundays of the month)

*Full Moon* (Poya) Days 9am-4:30pm - 23 June, 20 July, 24 August, 21 September.

Note: There will be no Children’s Dhamma Class between 14/7/13 - 29/9/13, and on 17 July

**Dhammaloka Library Opening Hours**
FRIDAY: 6.00 - 7.30pm (closes, then reopens) 9.00 - 10.00pm
SATURDAY: 2.00 - 3.00pm (closes then reopens) 4.15 - 5.00pm

**Meditation Retreats at Jhana Grove Retreat Centre**

**Nine Day Retreats**
29 Nov - 8 Dec 2013 (Ajahn Brahm) Bookings: 6 Sept (Full Members) 13 Sept (Other) ) 17 - 26 Jan 2014 (Ajahn Brahm) Bookings: 25 Oct 2013 (Full Members) 1 Nov 2013 (Other)
17 - 26 April 2014 (Ajahn Brahm) Bookings: 24 Jan (Full Members) 31 Jan (Other Application)

**Weekend Retreats**
28 Feb - 2 March 2014 Sutta Retreat with Ajahn Brahmali Bookings 10 Jan 2014 (Open to all)
30 May - 1 June 2014 (Senior Sangha) Bookings: 18 April 2014 (Open to all)

**Armadale Meditation Group**
Meditation Class - every Tuesday, 7pm - 8:30pm

**Other Events**
Early Buddhism Course - 9am-5pm - 22 June, 27 July

**Entry to Rains Retreat**
Dhammasara 14 July 2013 / Bodhinyana 21 July 2013

*The activities are correct at time of printing.
Please contact BSWA (info@bswa.org) to verify the times closer to the date.*