Vesak & Songkran Celebrations at Dhammaloka

This year's Songkran and Vesak were both highly attended and more carefully organised than ever. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped to create happiness for our neighbours, council and everyone who attended. These events were a truly great display of Buddhist caring, harmony and fun! An extra special thank you goes out to Nollamara Primary School for providing us with additional parking.
Dear Fellow Buddhist,

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Enlightened Times and welcome to the new members of the 2017 Committee after our AGM last month. I also note the weather is changing as we enter the Noonygar Aboriginal traditional of weather cycle Djeran, or cool and wet season, that begins in April and is season four out of six.

Listening to other people’s view of reality and evaluating them against your own is a sign of a healthy Buddhist mind and an opportunity to expand beyond your current conditioning. I had a hard lesson in this when my mainly western-based scientific conditioning, which I thought supreme over all others, was exposed as incomplete and almost cost me my life.

In 2004 I was working as an exploration geologist (after discharge from the military) in the Kimberley for a small minerals company. At one particular time in the campaign, we ventured onto bushland for a geological mapping excursion. Earlier locals warned part of this area to us as Aboriginal Women’s special land where men had no business. Dismissing these claims as superstitious fallacy we headed out, then in a short amount of time myself and another Geologist, through a series of strange coincidences came close to dying out in the bush. Recovering from the ordeal I realised my reliance on scientific rational was inadequate, as it couldn’t explain what had happened, especially after we had been warned. From this point on science as supreme loosened its grip on me and I decided that I needed to be inclusive of other explanations of reality, they didn’t have to be science based, they just had to be right. At the time this beginning acceptance that other views, even from other cultures, could be correct actually became quiet refreshing for me as I broadened my horizon.

Continued on p4

What the Buddha said about eating meat

Since the very beginning of Buddhism over 2500 years ago, Buddhist monks and nuns have depended on almsfood. They were, and still are, prohibited from growing their own food, storing their own provisions or cooking their own meals. Instead, every morning they would make their day’s meal out of whatever was freely given to them by lay supporters. Be it rich or coarse, delicious or tasteless, it was to be accepted with gratitude and eaten, regarding it as medicine. The Buddha laid down several rules forbidding monks from asking for the food that they liked. As a result, they would receive just the sort of meals that ordinary people ate – and that was often meat.

A rich and influential General by the name of Siha (‘Lion’), once visited the Buddha. A famous lay supporter of the Jain monks, he was so impressed and inspired by the Teachings he heard from the Buddha that he took refuge in the Triple Gem and became a Buddhist. Siha then invited the Buddha and a large number of monks accompanying Him, to a meal at his house in the city the following morning. In preparation for the meal, Siha told one of his servants to buy some meat from the market for the feast. When the Jain monks heard of their erstwhile patron’s conversion to Buddhism and the meal that he was preparing for the Buddha and the monks, they were somewhat peeved:

Now at the time many Niganthas (Jain monks), waving their arms, were moaning from carriage road to carriage road, from cross road to cross road in the city: ‘Today a fat beast, killed by Siha the general, is made into a meal for the recluse Gotama (the Buddha), the recluse Gotama makes use of this meat knowing that it was killed on purpose for him, that the deed was done for his sake’…

Book of the Discipline, Vol. 4, p. 324
Siha was making the ethical distinction between buying meat already prepared for sale and ordering a certain animal to be killed, a distinction which is not obvious to many westerners but which recurs throughout the Buddha's own teachings. Then, to clarify the position on meat eating to the monks, the Buddha said:

Monks, I allow you fish and meat that are quite pure in three respects: if they are not seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk. But, you should not knowingly make use of meat killed on purpose for you.

There are many places in the Buddhist scriptures which tell of the Buddha and his monks being offered meat and eating it. One of the most interesting of these passages occurs in the introductory story to a totally unrelated rule (Nissaggiya Pacittiya 5) and the observation that the meat is purely incidental to the main theme of the story emphasizes the authenticity of the passage:

Uppalavanna (meaning 'she of the lotus-like complexion') was one of the two chief female disciples of the Buddha. She was ordained as a nun while still a young woman and soon became fully enlightened. As well as being an arahant (enlightened) she also possessed various psychic powers to the extent that the Buddha declared her to be foremost among all the women in this field. Once, while Uppalavanna was meditating alone in the afternoon in the 'Blind-Men's Grove', a secluded forest outside of the city of Savatthi, some thieves passed by.

The thieves had just stolen a cow, butchered it and were escaping with the meat. Seeing the composed and serene nun, the chief of the thieves quickly put some of the meat in a leaf-bag and left it for her. Uppalavanna picked up the meat and resolved to give it to the Buddha. Early next morning, having had the meat prepared, she rose into the air and flew to where the Buddha was staying, in the Bamboo Grove outside of Rajagaha, over 200 kilometres as the crow (or nun?) flies!

Though there is no specific mention of the Buddha actually consuming this meat, obviously a nun of such high attainments would certainly have known what the Buddha ate.

However there are some meats which are specifically prohibited for monks to eat: human meat, for obvious reasons; meat from elephants and horses as these were then considered royal animals; dog meat - as this was considered by ordinary people to be disgusting; and meat from snakes, lions, tigers, panthers, bears and hyenas - because one who had just eaten the flesh of such dangerous jungle animals was thought to give forth such a smell as to draw forth revenge from the same species!

Towards the end of the Buddha's life, his cousin Devadatta attempted to usurp the leadership of the Order of monks. In order to win support from other monks, Devadatta tried to be more strict than the Buddha and show Him up as indulgent. Devadatta proposed to the Buddha that all the monks should henceforth be vegetarians. The Buddha refused and repeated once again the regulation that he had established years before, that monks and nuns may eat fish or meat as long as it is not from an animal whose meat is specifically forbidden, and as long as they had no reason to believe that the animal was slaughtered specifically for them.

The Vinaya, then, is quite clear on this matter. Monks and nuns may eat meat.

Unfortunately, meat eating is often seen by westerners as an indulgence on the part of the monks. Nothing could be further from the truth - I was a strict vegetarian for three years before I became a monk. In my first years as a monk in North-East Thailand, when I bravely faced many a meal of sticky rice and boiled frog (the whole body bones and all), or rubbery snails, red-ant curry or fried grasshoppers - I would have given ANYTHING to be a vegetarian again! On my first Christmas in N.E. Thailand an American came to visit the monastery a week or so before the 25th. It seemed too good to be true, he had a turkey farm and yes, he quickly understood how we lived and promised us a turkey for Christmas. He said that he would choose a nice fat one especially for us... and my heart sank. We cannot accept meat knowing it was killed especially for monks. We refused his offer. So I had to settle for part of the villager's meal - frogs again.

Monks may not exercise choice when it comes to food and that is much harder than being a vegetarian. Nonetheless, we may encourage vegetarianism and if our lay supporters brought only vegetarian food and no meat, well... monks may not complain either! May you take the hint and be kind to animals.

Originally published: BSWA Newsletter, April-June 1990
With this I will leave you with my quote of the edition, this time it’s from the 1995 Japanese cult classic movie Ghost in the Shell. I note this film has been remade this year, the original was a sci-fi expose on what constitutes human. The context of the quote is where an AI system is taking over a cybernetic organism...heady stuff. From Aboriginal spirituality to intelligent computer systems it’s all within the realms of Buddhism.

Major Motoko Kusanagi:

You talk about redefining my identity. I want a guarantee that I can still be myself.

The Puppet Master:

There isn’t one. Why would you wish to? All things change in a dynamic environment. Your effort to remain what you are is what limits you.

With metta
Drew Bellamy
President, Buddhist Society of Western Australia

Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project update and our flourishing Facebook following

With the spiritual guidance of Venerable Candā and the wider volunteer team of Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project, my role of Facebook page coordinator has become both a support for personal Dhamma practice as well as a wholesome hobby. Frequent updates and Dhamma sharing has been my remit, working closely with the vision of Ven. Candā as she takes mindful steps towards the establishment of a UK bhikkhuni monastery. Not only does the page receive daily interactions globally but we are also receiving much appreciated messages of support. Through the promotion of events both on our own page and in Buddhist groups on Facebook, gradually more people are becoming aware of our effort to bring the bhikkhuni branch of the Fourfold Assembly to UK soil! It is very much an exciting time to be involved with such a significant development in the Buddha-Sāsana.

We continue to have the valued support and spiritual guidance of the most senior of the Western Australian Sangha members – a boon not to be under-estimated.

Most recently, Perth-based Veronica Darmali set up an online YouCaring page to raise funds for Anukampa by
Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project

pledging to have her head shaved for her 29th birthday. On her fundraising page, Veronica states how lucky she feels having Dhammasara Bhikkhuni Monastery on her doorstep which is well-established and supported thanks to Ajahn Brahm. She would like to see a similar set up for Bhikkhnis in England too, hence her fundraising challenge.

Her intentions did not go unnoticed with the grand total of over $4,440 having been raised at the time of writing. Sadhu and a huge thank you to Veronica for her brave and noble effort!

May it help pave the way towards final liberation from suffering!

We are thrilled to announce that on 12 April, Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project became a Registered Charity, No 1172570! This is a wonderful development and an important milestone on our path to success.
Dear Members,

The Society held its most recent Annual General Meeting on 18 March. It was a very well attended event with many questions from members at the meeting and the swearing in of the new Committee and your President starting a second term.

The AGM was well conducted but long, and there was concern from some members about rumours that the BSWA was going to be replacing the Committee with highly paid Managers, which is not true. These rumours had grown out of the fact that a Sub-committee has been appointed to investigate Committee portfolios and suggest ways to address the concern that some of our volunteers have very high workloads.

The most common question about this at the AGM was that the Sub-committee may contract out all jobs, with no Dana/Service opportunities left for volunteers. This is not the case and the Sub-committee is only making recommendations to the main Committee, which we will bring to the members. The BSWA is not in a financial or philosophical position to mass-contract out work of the Society, but perhaps we do have shortfalls in some areas that need to be addressed. Members with concerns should remember that we do have some part time paid staff in Administration, Treasury and even Gardening, so whatever the Sub committee comes up with in six months’ time would probably not be a departure from what we already do. I will inform the Members of the progress on this; in the meantime, any Member is welcome to request a copy of Committee minutes through our Administration desk.

With metta
Drew Bellamy
President, Buddhist Society of Western Australia
The Truth, Beauty & Power of Stillness

Stillness is the unmistakable energy that exists right in the heart of the present moment. Using a meditation practice that harnesses a stepped and increasingly refined calibration to observe the mind, anyone can experience it for themselves. It is however subtle and easily overlooked without dedicated and careful practice. It is also helpful to have some guidance from someone who knows the path, because without the development of right view and intention, stillness will remain disguised by worldly conditions. To this end, self-reflection in meditation is needed to neutralise, see through and “let go” the conditions that create and make the universe. This includes the conditions that make us into the physical and mental beings that we are.

We need to see, at least momentarily in the beginning, the conditioning that aggregates and then fuses over aeons of time and space. With this knowledge we can employ a process of “calcination” that allows the conditions to relax, separate and unify back into the primary constituent before aggregation happened. This is where we find the “pure consciousness” of “stillness”, before it moves to be compounded and conditioned. This still conscious energy is fungible and is at the core of our being!

The Buddhist path is a way to set up the right conditions to experience this stillness. To see beyond any “doubt” we need to practice to make the mind content so that it is stable and not grasping at “desires” or, on the other hand, not trying to escape what it finds “averse”. The balance sought should also include a calm mind that is not “restless” or languishing in “sloth or torpor”. With these “Five Hindrances” (shown in italics) in balance the mind can then concentrate correctly and become “one pointed”. At the same time it can become mindful which allows the attention to be sustained over time. Then when the right balance of energy is present, the mind can be sustained with a penetrating awareness. To arrive at this “place” of stillness the mind also requires a certain level of purity. Preliminary work is required to satisfy our own mind that we are earning our living well, so that we are relatively free of guilt. Our speech and actions as we interact with others also needs to be relatively blameless, so that our conscience is clear and not nagging us. With these conditions satisfied the right view and intention will gradually arise. The above is basically a description of the Buddha’s Eightfold path of practice which is also described as the FOURTH

NOBLE TRUTH of Buddhism. The factors of the Eightfold path are underlined.

Wisdom is the key that allows us to make deep spiritual sense of what we experience. As stillness, or more accurately, still consciousness gradually becomes well known, we begin to see that this is the energy that creates the conditions of our life. We realise that all conditions are created from this pure still consciousness. We can see the conditions of our life consciously arising from the still spaciousness and then going on to finish in this same matrix of stillness. We can also see how the aggregated conditions resonate with the still consciousness that is feeding back on itself- all arising and finishing countless times in each moment. This in turn is resonating to create the momentum for the time scales we experience, right through to the cycles of the universe. Everything is beginning and ending! We realise that we are experiencing the SECOND AND THIRD NOBLE TRUTH of the Buddha’s path. We are starting to realise what the Buddha realised.

The truth and beauty becomes compelling and causes us to look even more deeply into the stillness. Clarity comes to the fore as the momentum of this paradoxical one pointed view expands with mindfulness to include all of time and space. Suddenly and very naturally the still consciousness is finished, with the knowledge that the entire world has unified in this mind. Consciousness feeding back on itself has finished leaving an island of knowing that paradoxically contains the whole. Stillness no longer has an identity because the consciousness that facilitates it has finished with the paradox of the external. It is no longer feeding back into the moment because this experience has unified everything. The realisation comes that this unified mind will not be reborn at death. It has seen the deathless.

As the momentum of this experience subsides, the Universe reasserts itself just as naturally as it finished. The stillness returns to feed back the space-time that has been re-established. But; things are different now! The mind knows that the re-established world is an illusion. The Dukka as defined in the FIRST NOBLE TRUTH has been clearly seen. One knows that the conditions of the world are illusory. Wisdom has matured and one knows there is no going back. The Buddha’s Four Noble Truths (in capitals above) have been seen and understood. The three characteristics of the Buddha’s wisdom can be clearly seen in the understanding of “Dukka” (unsatisfactory disease suffering) “Annica” (impermanence) and “Anatta” (Not Self). “The tiger has you in his mouth and will not let you go!”

Dennis Sheppard
The Buddhist Global Relief started in June 2008 sparked by Bhikkhu Bodhi’s essay in the September 2007 Buddhist magazine, Lion’s Roar. In this essay, Ven. Bodhi challenged Western Buddhists “to stand up as an advocate for justice in the world, a voice of conscience for those victims of social, economic, and political injustice who cannot stand up and speak for themselves.” After reading the essay, several of Ven. Bodhi’s students decided to put his words into action. Meetings were held and a point of focus was reached: BGR would target its efforts at global hunger by supporting local projects in developing countries to achieve self-sufficiency through improved food technology.

Since 2008 BGR has grown tremendously. For example, in 2015 we supported 34 projects aimed at hunger relief, sustainable agriculture, women’s livelihood, and education of children—especially girls. These efforts are inspired by BGR’s vision of “a world in which all can avail themselves of the basic material supports of a meaningful life—food, clothing, housing and health care.”

Although the projects BGR supports are small, these small seeds have grown into mighty trees. “Our Projects” section on BGR’s website (buddhistglobalrelief.org) demonstrates this. By educating a few girls in Cambodia, we have significantly changed their lives and their communities. By training women farmers in northern India in new farming techniques, they have been able to withstand climate change. Simple breadfruit trees, distributed to schools in Jamaica and family farmers in Haiti, yield basketball-sized fruits rich in vitamins and proteins.

Of particular interest to BSWA members is our partnership with the Bodhicitta Foundation (visit bodhicitta-vihara.com), an NGO founded by Australian Tibetan nun, Ayya Yeshe. She has spent over 8 years in the slums of Nagpur, India working with the “untouchable” Dalit community. BGR is currently in its third year of a partnership with the Bodhicitta Foundation to create a hostel for 30 girls aged 10-20. The girls enjoy counseling, leadership training and recreational activities. They are very happy and motivated, growing in confidence as their health improves and they gain the skills necessary to help their communities.

In order to fund its projects, BGR annually sponsors a series of “Walks to Feed the Hungry.” These walks are our primary fundraising and publicity events. In fall 2016, BGR held ten U.S. walks in cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York and Houston. Also, in summer 2016, walks were held in Guildford, Surrey UK by the New Buddha Way and in Nagpur, India by the Bodhicitta Foundation. BGR’s walks are the work of many volunteers who organize them, post them on our website, announce them on Facebook, then organize tables at the sites and join in the walks. Monastics representing a wide spectrum of American Buddhism also participate in these walks. The donations made to sponsor individual walkers are BGR’s lifeline and main source of fundraising. The funds raised by these walks, in turn, sponsor BGR’s many projects around the world.

Bearing in mind the Buddha’s statements that “hunger is the worst kind of illness” and “the gift of food is the gift of life,” we feel these projects not only save lives but also give others the chance to live with hope and dignity. We feel BGR’s volunteers and donors are forging bonds of solidarity with people around the world. May the merits of these offerings fill the world with the joy of giving!

Kim Behan
BGR Director of Programs
Tom Green
BSWA Life Member
Yes, the group has reached a huge milestone and been going for 30 years. We celebrated on May 2nd with a packed house, a wonderful guided meditation and talk by Ajahn Brahm, and then ate lots of food! Stephen and Fadwa kindly donated a huge birthday cake and Ajahn Brahm blessed it, he said, “to make sure there is no cholesterol in it!”

Junior monk Venerable Akaliko, joined Ajahn Brahm at the celebrations. Venerable Akaliko has only taught once at the group and on his first night he was naturally a bit nervous. He explained that when he thought about teaching he had realised it would all be okay because “There was no fail in Armadale”. We delighted in the comment and made it our motto and hence the T-shirt.

The group started in the Gosnells library and was established by Bianca Di Bua and her husband in 1987. The group grew and finally moved to Community Health on the Armadale hospital site and is now at capacity most nights with 60 attending.

Although Ajahn Jagaro first taught there, Ajahn Brahm followed not long after and continues to teach there regularly. He often refers to the group as “Club Med Armadale”, so that was on the back of the T-shirts. A key difference though is that Club Med Armadale is free!

I attended the very first meditation group 30 years ago and Doug Anderson, assistant co-ordinator, has been going for 26 years. However, we have a very dynamic and friendly group of 10 in the total leadership team, and big thanks are given to Bob, Marlene, Dave, Matt, Stephen, Lauren, Noeline and Pinder, for making everything run like clockwork. These days also, thanks to Bob and Sol, through whom all the talks given by the monks at the group are recorded and placed as podcasts on the BSWA website.

I was a stress bunny when I began. Everyone told me I ought to learn to meditate. I hated it at first, I was so restless, but I persevered and now I love meditating, it is so peaceful and calming. I am so grateful to all the monks for their teachings, and especially to Ajahn Brahm for giving so much ongoing support to the Armadale group. His teachings have had an enormous and positive influence on my life. Thank you.

The Armadale group has been a life-line to many. The benefits of attending it have been summed up perfectly by one of our members, Kelly, who says she has had more benefits than she ever anticipated:

“Initially I just wanted to see what it was all about and find out whether or not it could help with some of my stress and anxieties. What I gained was so much more than that. It has given me the ability to actually let go of unhelpful thoughts or at least recognise when they arise. I can now deal with stress and conflicts with more patience. I worry less about uncertainties in the future and just focus on what I can achieve in the present moment.

I don’t get aggravated easily by things other people say or do that I don’t agree with. Instead I can look at situations more objectively and with kindness. It feels like a huge weight has been lifted.”

From the depth of my heart, thank you to everyone who attends, runs and teaches at the Armadale group. You make an enormous difference to people’s lives. Those of you who come are as important as anyone - without you there would be no group. Keep on coming for another 30 years!

Thanks so much also to Community Health for all their generosity and support over the years and to the security guys at Armadale hospital who look after us every night without fail! You make a difference too.

The group is open every Tuesday evening at 6:50 and “There is no fail in Armadale”, so beginners are always welcome.
CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEXT ISSUE
Please send all submissions and ideas to Nicholas the editor: editoret@bswa.org.
We consider all visual, text and game based ideas that promote and are relevant to the local and international BSWA community. Thank you for your support.
Guidelines: 350-650 words

THE ENLIGHTENED TIMES TEAM
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Layout: PJ Gunasekera
Distribution: Lucky Kodituwakku, Eng Tan, Wayne Finn, Winsome Jackson and Shiroma Mendis.
Regular Contributors: Ajahn Brahm, Drew Bellamy, Dennis Sheppard, Rane Ranatunga
Content Review and External Affairs: Cecilia Mitra
Proofreading: Priya Barnes, Tracy Lau, Shirley Cooper-Dixon, Rachel Green

Our Vesak Celebrations
Sunday 7 May 2017

Little Bodhisattva

Think: Happy, at rest, may all beings be happy at heart. Whatever beings there may be, weak or strong, without exception, long, large middling, short, subtle, blatant, seen & unseen, near & far, born & seeking birth: May all beings be happy at heart

ACROSS
2. Gods.
5. The Buddha’s family name.
6. Cessation.
9. The ................. path.
10. Venerable sir.
11. A nun.

DOWN
1. The rules of monastic discipline.
2. Suffering.
3. An Enlightened Being.
4. Stillness.
7. A very famous tree.

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Guidelines: 350-650 words
The human life is like a puff of smoke
Drifting away in to this "cloud" world
Success is only like an icicle
And Failure is like soap bubbles
Glory or disgrace is the same as the smoke
Love and hate is similar to morning dew
Hardness or happiness ashes over in dream
Good or bad things are like ying birds wings
The time is over as in a blink
To be or not to be is the same as the moonlight on water surface
Life passes over as the gust of wind
The final will return to blue sky.

"All conditioned things are impermanent - when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering."
Dhammapada v277

The Life in My Eyes
Goa Thuong Thich Thanh Tu
June 1984
Made a membership payment online?

Please write to the Assistant Secretary as soon as possible with the following information:
- Payment method
- Date of payment
- Amount
- Name
- Address
- Contact details
- Membership Number

Please include the following information as well, depending on your payment method:

- **Paid by PayPal**
  Please advise the credit card owner’s name if it is different from the member’s name.

- **Paid by Bank transfer or Deposit**
  Whether paid into the BSWA Westpac or BSWA Bankwest bank account.

**Paid by Cash at the library**
Aforementioned personal and payment details.

**Paid by Cheque**
1. Whether handed in to Dhammaloka office or sent by post,
2. Date handed in or posted,
3. Cheque number.

Email Lucky at asec@bswa.org

Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

Regular Activities

Please check our website to keep up to date with our regular activities or call our office on 9345 1711. The Centre is always open between 10am - 3pm for you to walk around the grounds and to use the Shrine Room (on the right hand side of the Main Hall) for meditation or contemplation.

https://bswa.org/dhammaloka/

**LIBRARY HOURS**

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**WEEKDAY OFFICE HOURS**

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