A Special General Meeting was held on 22 April 2018 following the resignation of Ajahn Brahm as our spiritual director. At that meeting I supported the proposal that: "The Committee may delegate any of its powers to such sub committees consisting of such members of the BSWA as the Committee thinks fit".

There are several reasons why this is important. One of these is to help reduce the enormous workload that Ajahn Brahm carries and which is no longer tenable. The other reason is that the efficient running of the BSWA is paramount: we are a volunteer, multi-million dollar, world-wide organisation which is getting steadily larger and more complex. We are no longer a small Perth temple but an internationally respected and influential organisation.

There are two aspects to the BSWA. There is the administrative side and the spiritual side. The administration of the BSWA is essentially a business involving a lot of work, much of which is imposed by statutory bodies. As with all businesses in Australia there must be legal compliance, financial compliance, constitutional compliance, compliance with local government laws, compliance with state government laws, compliance with Commonwealth law and compliance with international laws. We have to comply.

The second side of the BSWA is the spiritual side. This is where Ajahn Brahm and the rest of the Sangha can guide and mentor us. We are blessed to have a Spiritual Director and Sangha of exceptionally high calibre.

When I was the President I calculated that I averaged 30 hours a week on BSWA business. This was ridiculous. I was also working full time. I only lasted a year. Like many people who come to BSWA, I came because I was stressed and needed to relax. I never came to be on a committee. No-one does.

There are five actions we need to take:

1. To run the administrative component of BSWA as effectively, efficiently and easily as possible.
2. To ensure that the workloads of all committee members are reasonable.
3. To ensure that the people making the decisions are the right ones and we get the right advice.
4. To make sure that Ajahn Brahm, as our Spiritual Director, is not overloaded with work and his time is not wasted on trivial administrative issues.
5. To ensure that committee time is used wisely for higher order tasks, such as setting our long-term goals and spreading the Dhamma.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
Hello Members and Friends,

I am very happy to find myself again as President of our Buddhist Society. It does feel like I have had a long intense love affair with it. Ups and downs certainly but as time has gone on, a relaxation into the exquisite stillness and joy that the Buddha’s teachings bring. I feel such gratitude to our Sangha and the membership over the years. Many of them have now died. Our leadership from Ajahn Brahm and Ajahn Jagaro before him have been a wonder-full experience.

Our society is currently experiencing growing pains. With Ajahn Brahm as a catalyst, our growth has been enormous. Buddhism is growing rapidly here and around the world and our BSWA finds itself as one of the significant leaders. Although Buddhism is still young in the West, we can say that our society is becoming experienced. Our Sangha and Members serve Buddhism on external boards and committees designed to harmonise the different Buddhist groups and as far as possible allow them to speak with one voice. This is so important when we are asked to advise the “powers that be” and more generally to help our wider society grow in truth and wisdom.

It is important that the resonance of this truth and wisdom be well founded inside our BSWA, and this congruence needs to be modelled to the wider world if we are to make the Buddha’s teachings real. Experience brings about maturity and this maturity means we must take responsibility for what we model. The Buddhist ideal of managing conflict is to make consensus the first goal. If this cannot be done the majority thinking will prevail with trust from all parties. This is done in the knowledge that if the majority decision turns out to be wrong we will then use the “A.F.L.” code of Accepting, Forgiving, and Learning. The teachings of the “Triple Gem” (Buddha Dhamma Sangha) are there to guide us as we learn to see and live its wisdom and truth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Drew Bellamy and the outgoing committee for the great work they have done and to acknowledge the beneficial structures left in place for us to build on. I would also like to mention outgoing treasurer Don Weerakody, who in my view is a BSWA hero. He has handled treasury matters off and on for the society for as long as I can remember. His careful stewardship and his presence have guided our society well over many years. Thank you for your efforts Don.

Dennis Sheppard

From the President

Monks & women, Nuns & men

One of the important rules of Vinaya, for Buddhist monks as well as nuns, is the prohibition of a monk to be alone with women, and a nun to be alone with men. This is not just a rule for strict monks and nuns, but a rule which the Buddha made obligatory for all monks and nuns. This is a rule that often comes up.

In the introduction to one of the rules (“Aniyata” 1) found in the Vinayapitaka, there occurs the following story:

“At one time the Enlightened One, the Lord, was staying at Savatthi in Anathapindika’s Park, in the Jeta Grove. Then the Venerable Udayin approached this girl (a newly married daughter of one of Ven Udayin’s supporters) and having approached her, he sat down together with that girl, one man and one woman, in a secret place on a secluded, convenient seat, conversing at the right time, speaking Dhamma at the right time … Visakha (the famous lay woman disciple) saw the Venerable Udayin sitting together with that girl, one man and one woman, in a secret place on a secluded convenient seat. Seeing this, she said to the Venerable Udayin: “This is not proper, honoured sir, it is not suitable, that the master should sit together with womenfolk, one man and one woman, in a secret place on a secluded, convenient seat. Although the master has no desire for that thing (sexual intercourse), unbelieving people are difficult to convince.” The Venerable Udayin took no heed of Visakha … Visakha told this matter to the monks … The monks became vexed, annoyed and angry and told the matter to the Lord … The Lord rebuked Ven. Udayin: “How can you, foolish man, sit together with womenfolk, one man and one woman, in a secret place on a secluded, convenient seat? …” (The Lord Buddha then laid down a rule explaining …)

‘A secret place’ means secret from the eye, secret from the ear. Secret from the eye means if (the monk) covering his eye, raising his eyebrow, raising his head, he (the onlooker) is unable to see (the monk). Secret from the ear means he (the onlooker) is unable to hear ordinary speech. ‘A secluded seat’ means it is secluded by a wall, or by a door, or by a screen, or by a screen wall or by a tree or by a pillar or by a sack or it is concealed by anything whatsoever. ‘Convenient’ means it is possible to indulge in sexual intercourse.

from the Pali Text Society’s Book of the Discipline, Vol I, p 330ff
The following rule, “Aniyata” 2, is similar to the first, which I have just described, with the only change being that this time Venerable Udayin sat down with that same girl, just the two of them, in a secret place (secret from the eye, secret from the ear), that was not a secluded place (by a wall etc) nor a convenient place (for sexual intercourse). Again when Visakha spotted Venerable Udayin and the girl alone together, she rebuked the monk:

“This, honoured sir, is not right, it is not suitable for the master to sit together with womenfolk, one man and one woman, in a secret place. Although, honoured sir, the master has no desire for that thing (here referring to flirting), unbelieving people are hard to convince.

Again Ven. Udayin took no heed of Visakha’s complaint, so she told the monks who told the Lord Buddha. The Buddha then rebuked Ven. Udayin and condemned such behaviour by establishing another rule for monks.

The above quotations, directly from the Vinayapitaka, show the danger of a monk being alone with women, especially inside a room, car or building. These rules were repeated in the nuns’ Vinaya, prohibiting a nun being alone with men for similar reasons. In today’s society where allegations of sexual abuse are rife, and are often just one person’s word against another’s, keeping these important rules is more than just a protection from the opportunity for abuse, but also a guard against the suspicions spread by the malicious. Suspicions, even when untrue, are so difficult to disprove.

As the wise laywoman Visakha said “Even if the Venerable monk or nun has no desire for that thing, unbelieving people are hard to convince”.

Knowing this rule now, may we help all Buddhist monks and nuns keep their precepts well and thus help prevent allegations that are damaging to all. Please avoid being alone with a monk if you are a woman and if you are a man, avoid being alone with a nun. Thank you.

Newsletter, July-October 1997

Buddhist Survival Camp

The BSWA Kalyana Mitta group held a weekend retreat 15-17 June at Jhana Grove. It was a retreat with a difference; inspired by old-style camps where people learnt skills to help them survive in the forest, this retreat teaches people how to survive the modern world.

BSWA Kalyana Mitta Coordinator, Anusha Yatawara, spoke to the retreat leader, Venerable Akāliko, about the ideas behind the camp prior to the event.

Anusha: What is the Buddhist Survival Camp all about?  
Ven. Akāliko: The Buddha taught many useful techniques to help us deal with the problems of living in the world. But sometimes it’s hard to see how we can apply the Buddha’s teaching to the issues we face today. We tend to get so busy with life that we can feel a bit lost and confused. That’s when we need to develop some skills to get the space we need to see things clearly and experience some peace.

This retreat teaches essential Dhamma skills, introducing them in a very practical way so that participants can apply them in daily life.

What are some of the Survival Skills people will learn?  
The camp is divided into Skill Sessions that explore common problems in fun and accessible ways.

1. Retreat
   Sometimes we get so busy we become overwhelmed and exhausted. That’s when we need to develop renunciation to get some space to see things clearly again. Learn to turn off your phone and just forget about it all.

2. Relax
   We are constantly looking for excitement and new things, but we are never truly satisfied. Meditation is our time to do nothing for a change. It helps us be happy and peaceful without needing anything external at all.

3. Retrain
   Meditation helps us survive our monkey mind by identifying unhelpful thoughts that block our happiness and lead us away from peace. Learn how to let go of negative states and instead cultivate positive qualities that make us feel good.

4. Reconnect
   Sometimes people hurt us and make us unhappy. If we are not careful, strong emotions like resentment or hatred can overwhelm us and destroy our peace. Get some survival skills to deal with other people and fill your heart with positivity.

5. Recharge
   When the mind is calm and clear from meditation, we feel good and want to share it with others. Learn how to cultivate loving-kindness so that you can keep spreading the love when you go back home.
Having sub-committees can help with these goals.

Let me give you a real example. When I was the President, the Committee, with Ajahn Brahm in attendance, took something like six months to decide whether we should have a new light pole at Dhammaloka and if so, where it should be put and how much we should spend on it. We had no electrician on the committee, no lighting specialist and I had no understanding of electrical wiring; nor did we know the benefits of choosing one light pole over another.

Why are we wasting Ajahn Brahm’s expertise and wisdom on deciding where a light pole should go? And why are we having a decision made by people who are not the experts in the area?

It would be far more efficient to have a subcommittee that we could refer the matter to and say, “Could you please consider this light pole business, include an electrician on the sub-committee, and bring us your recommendations. The Committee will then make the final decision and make sure all compliance requirements are met”.

I support this motion, so that in future Ajahn Brahm, a spiritual leader of immense wisdom, compassion and generosity, does not have to sit through a committee taking six months to decide where the light pole at Dhammaloka should go, and instead can devote himself to the true purpose of the BSWA, our spiritual development.

The more effectively we run the business side of BSWA, the more time we all have to develop our meditation practice, to study the Dhamma, and to follow the Buddhist path. Isn’t that our true purpose? That is why we join the BSWA.

I now am the Chair of another voluntary organisation. The organisation is run by a committee of elected members. Their task is to ensure that we comply with our constitution and all legal and financial requirements; that we set the direction of the organisation; and that we oversee the running of it. It is not the role of the committee to do all the tasks. The committee has other non-elected members to do the tasks.

It’s the same at BSWA. The committee is there to oversee the running of the organisation and to set its direction. It is not there to do everything. The best membership-based organisations are those that are inclusive, not exclusive. This means as many people as possible within the organisation help with the task of running it. It becomes everyone’s organisation.

Do we need a member of the committee on each sub-committee? No, we do not. That would not be fair on the committee and would once again increase their workload. It is possible to think of the Armadale Meditation Group as being successfully run by a sub-committee. No committee member is involved in running it. We have one officially appointed co-ordinator who reports to the committee and he has a group of volunteers who help him run it. This model has now worked successfully for around 30 years.

We must protect and care for our own Sangha and our own volunteers. Establishing sub-committees is one way we can do this. I hope we generate many more ways in the future.

I thank those of you who supported the amendment. I hope, of course, if you visit Dhammaloka you will pay homage to the light pole and recall the benefits of having sub-committees.

Rachel Green, Former President BSWA
Marvels of sculpture

Master craftsmen in ancient Sri Lanka excelled in sculpture judging from the Buddha statues they had created over 2500 years ago. In addition to the statues their talent is also demonstrated in the intricate workmanship in the stone carvings at entrances to places of worship.

One of the greatest pieces of sculptural art of the early period dating back to the 3rd century is the Buddha statue in the first royal capital, Anuradhapura. Sculpted in dolomite marble, the statue depicts the Buddha in the ‘samadhi’ (deep meditation) mood seated in ‘virasana’ posture with the right leg placed upon the left with only the right foot visible, and displaying the ‘dhyana mudra’ – gesture of meditation.

Independent India’s first prime minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru makes reference in “The Discovery of India” to the statue after an early visit: “Some painting or sculpture or building fills me with delight, or moves me and makes me feel a strange emotion; or it just pleases me a little, or it does not affect me at all and I pass it by almost unnoticed; or it repels me….The Buddha statue at Anuradhapura in Ceylon moved me greatly and a picture of it has been my companion for many years.”

Among the colossal Buddha images created in 5th century is a magnificent free-standing Buddha at Aukana near the Kalawewa tank, 50km south-east of Anuradhapura. Carved on the face of a rock, it is arguably the tallest Buddha statue in Sri Lanka (13m) and stands on a lotus pedestal. The statue displays the ‘abhaya mudra’ (gesture of fearlessness, protection and reassurance) with the right hand raised from elbow, fingers together and the palm outward. A replica can be seen in the commercial capital, Colombo opposite the conference hall referred to as the BMICH (Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall).

In Polonnaruwa, the medieval capital of Sri Lanka, is Galvihara – a most celebrated site with a row of four large rock-cut images of the Buddha in a perfect state of preservation. Two of the images depict the seated Buddha while of the other two, one is an upright and the other a reclining Buddha. The seated Buddha shows the Buddha in deep meditation. The seven metre high standing Buddha is in a rare cross-armed pose and the 14-metre reclining Buddha is shown at the moment of his entry into ‘parinirvana’.

Historian, Professor K M de Silva writes of the reclining Buddha: “The consummate skill with which the peace of the enlightenment has been depicted, in an extraordinarily successful blend of serenity and strength, has seldom been equalled by any other Buddha image in Sri Lanka.”

Another giant free-standing 12 metres tall Buddha statue is in Maliavgila, about 15 km from Monaragala, a provincial town in south-east Sri Lanka. It is believed to have been commissioned by a 7th century prince named Aggabodhi.

Buddha statues have formed one element of the shrines built in the early times. In circular shrines known as ‘vatada-ge’ or ‘cetiyagara’ a significant feature was the seated Buddha one could see as one climbed the seven to eight steps to enter the shrine. A fine example is a well preserved 12th century circular shrine in Polonnaruwa with ornamented screen walls.

Ruins of tall Buddha images are visible in huge image houses. Lankatilaka image house in Polonnaruwa is a massive brick building 52m long, 18m wide & 17.5m high. A tall Buddha image adorns the facing wall.

By Rane Ranatunga, 4 Oct 2016
Bodhinyana’s Entry to the Rains Retreat
I was born into Buddhism but it was later in life I really felt more connected to the philosophical aspects rather than just a thing to do because my parents told me to do it.

WHAT’S YOUR BIGGEST ATTACHMENT?
Friends are the biggest thing in my life. I have so many networks of people, it’s basically my life at the moment.

WHAT DOES BUDDHISM MEAN TO YOU?
In a nutshell, the way we go about our daily life. The way our economy and self-progression works: acquiring stuff, doing more things, finding satisfaction in material goods, friends, relationships. The more you acquire, there’s always more you want. The idea of Buddhism is that rather than acquiring more to satisfy your cravings you just crave less, you just understand the reality of your mind and how it works and be mindful, satisfied and fully content with the present moment—the middle way.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?
Connecting with good people is what makes me happiest. It can range from the different social circles to my spiritual connections to a group like KM. They help me to grow as you learn from each other and connect in a way that really develops yourself.

WHAT DOES BUDDHISM MEAN TO YOU?
It is very close to my culture and was a big influence growing up in Malaysia. I now use it as a practice and a guide to live life by.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?
I don’t have one specific thing, I’m happy when I’m doing something I love. Sometimes it’s just a beautiful day, a sunny day. I think the wonderful thing is just being happy and living in the present moment.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?
I’d tell her not to worry too much, stay positive and optimistic as everything will be fine.

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO LIVE A LIFE?
Buddhism has taught me to be kind, gentle and have courage. It also taught me to be at peace with myself and others. I also enjoy eating nice food and travelling.

WHAT DOES BUDDHISM MEAN TO YOU?
A way of life, a way of living. It resonates with me and my way of living. To live a more simple life. So when I came across Buddhism, first by reading some books, and after by going to Dhammaloka, I realised it was already what I believed before.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS?
By doing meditation you rest more in the body and the mind. That way you can recharge more and be more happy. By being more rested you can live better whatever happens. By being rested you can get more joy with other people as well. We can all build up that positivity.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?
Live more in the present. Which is what meditation does. Before, when I didn’t know about meditation, I was caught up in the race of doing things faster, always better, and to achieve goals in a very anxious and driven way. Yes, of course we still have to move on but we can do so being more grounded.

Pasan Tennakoon
Renee Ong
Simone Pedretti

This is a project for people to share their life experiences and thoughts on how they choose to live their life. Please feel free to share your thoughts.

Instagram: garry_onesky Facebook: oneskyphoto

People at Dhammaloka
Members of the group also teach meditation to the women at the refuge, once a month. This year Noeline and Marlene are thanked for their devotion to this task. Noeline has now stepped down and Irene Walker has replaced her. Bringing calm to such traumatised people is surely a practical way to spread the benefits of the Dharma, isn't it?

There have been some changes in the leadership team. Rachel Green has stepped down as Co-ordinator and Doug Anderson has taken over as Co-ordinator. He is seen here showing some of the gift cards. His hat is because Rachel gave everyone in the group chocolates for Christmas and Doug was Father Christmas!

When people in our community see us applying the Dharma in our daily lives and serving the community in a calm, caring and compassionate way, surely the real benefits of meditation practice become apparent. It is also a way to reach those who otherwise may never be touched by the teachings.

Finally, simply by having the meditation group and inviting the people of Armadale and surrounding areas to come along and learn how to meditate is in itself superb community service. Long may it continue.

The challenge is here – are we all compassionate and generous in a real way or do we just think it’s a good idea?

Generosity, compassion and kindness are part of our Buddhist teachings and Ajahn Brahm frequently encourages us to practise them. The Armadale Meditation group exemplifies such behaviour in the community service that they do throughout the year. Once again, this Christmas they have collected $20 Coles/Myers gift cards to give to the mothers at the Armadale – Gosnells Women’s refuge so they can buy presents for their children. This year they reached a wonderful total of fifty-one cards. Here is Marlene Gerritsen from the group presenting the gift cards to Danita, the manager of the refuge.

However, they have done more than this. Each week members of the group, mainly Bob Steele and Marlene, fill their cars with donations from Bodhinyana monastery and the group, and take them to the refuge.

The donations include anything from food, to toiletries (as you can see Bob is holding toilet paper!) to clothes and other items. Some weeks we can barely see Marlene in her car it is so full. Look at how much Marlene and Bob have got in their cars – it is all going to the refuge. This is a fairly typical week. Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Such wonderful kindness, compassion and generosity – and a symbol of letting go in order to give to others. Thanks to everyone who has donated anything for this purpose.
The 2018 Australian Sangha Association A.G.M. and Conference Day

The 2018 ASA AGM held in Western Australia was a great success with thirty-five monastics and a number of lay people from around Australia attending.

If you would like to listen to the ASA AGM 2018 or access information about the topics discussed during the ASA Conference, simply go to the ASA in WA 2018.

Resources & Links page accessible from:
www.australiansangha.org

Verses of the Senior Monks

5.11. Soṇakutikaṇṇa

I’ve received full ordination,
I am liberated, without defilements,
I’ve seen the Blessed One myself,
And even stayed together with him.

The Blessed One, the teacher,
Spent much of the night in the open;
Then he, who is so skilled at dwelling in meditation,
Entered his dwelling.

Spreading out his outer robe,
Gotama made his bed;
Like a lion in a rocky cave,
With fear and dread abandoned.

Then, with lovely enunciation,
Soṇa, a disciple of the Buddha,
Recited the true Dhamma
In the presence of the best of Buddhas.

When he has fully understood the five aggregates,
Developed the straight path,
And arrived at the highest peace,
He will realize nibbāna without defilements.

From SuttaCentral.net, translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
New Translations Make The Buddha's Teaching Available to Everyone in Plain English.

Suttacentral.net has launched with new complete, accurate and copyright free English translation of the 4 Pali nikayas.

Although the Buddha's Teachings have been around for over 2500 years, you could not find a complete, easy to understand, and copyright free version of the texts online. Until now.

After two years of intense translation and development, suttacentral.net is offering a new English translation of the four Pali Nikayas.

This new translation allows anyone, anywhere to read the earliest Buddhist texts online, free from cost, copyright, and technical language.

Studying canonical texts is an essential feature of practice for many Buddhists. Hand in hand with meditation, the Buddha's teachings provide guidance and wisdom that help us grow and develop on the path.

While other translations exist, making the full collection of these texts freely available online in easy to read English is a revolution. It allows readers to understand the Buddha's teaching in full and fresh meaning, empowering the practice of Buddhists and facilitating the study of these scriptures.

Australian monk Sujato Bhikkhu started the project from humble beginnings in 2005. He's spent the last two years in retreat on a remote Taiwanese island, completing the new translations of the Buddha's teachings.

These new translations on Sutta Central bring all the texts together in one place, with translations that highlight the warmth, clarity, and relevance of these ancient teachings.
Bhikkhuni Nirodha on Ordaining and Renunciation

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of Bhikkhuni Nirodha and the Buddhist Fellowship (BF) to whom she granted this interview in 2012.

BF: Please tell us your background and what led you to take a Buddhist path.

Born in Austria in 1945, I arrived in Australia age twenty, newly married, and later divorced. We had no children. I enjoyed lots of travel, a relatively good life, but there slowly arose an increased awareness of no end of wanting and getting.

On a health retreat sometime in the late 1970's, feeling bored, trying to decide whether to play tennis or a card game of Bridge, a sudden deep moment of stillness arose, a sense of giving up the endless choices and mental activity. From within that depth a clear question arose in my mind: “Do I want to continue with this shallow, easy way of life, or do I want to look for the Truth?” Without hesitation there came the strong desperate answer and determination that I must look for the Truth; even more, I wanted to become the Truth.

After snapping out of this experience, life went on, but with a subtle shift in direction. I did not return to my childhood strong Christian roots, but remained open. One day in 1979, on a short visit to Sydney, my friend invited me to meet her Buddhist teacher, Anagarika Munindra-Ji, at an open-house gathering. My other plans for the day got cancelled, so on a whim, I went.

When I was introduced to the teacher, as a greeting, he said, “What are you doing?” For the first time, I understood on a deeper level, and thought, yes, I am doing nothing with my life. I answered, “I am doing nothing.”

An hour or two later, when it was announced that in a few days this teacher would give a nine-day meditation retreat in a forest monastery outside of Sydney, I knew I had to go. The retreat would be at Wat Buddha Dhamma, co-led with Ven. Ayya Khema and Ven. Khantipalo. When I told my friend, she was aghast. She cried out, “You know nothing about Buddhism! You can hardly even spell the word ‘Buddha!’” She had studied extensively before starting her path.

Yet I went to the retreat, where I followed instructions and felt at home with the Buddha’s teachings. My quest for the Truth had brought me to the Dhamma. From then on, I gratefully and happily participated in Buddhist activities as much as possible, first in Australia, then in Sri Lanka, USA, Burma, and Thailand, and now back in Australia.

BF: Venerable, please describe your feelings and thoughts when you received ordination as a nun.

Ordination was not just one experience, but three. First was the anagarika ceremony in 2001, undertaking Eight Precepts, shaving the head, and putting on white robes. There my ordinary householder life ended.

Next was the Ten Precept nun ordination in 2003, gaining brown robes, and relinquishing all money and all assets, to the shock of my friends and family. Since considerable assets were involved, even the bank rang up to make sure I was of sound mind. My loved ones had slowly adjusted to my new direction in life, yet were still stunned that I carried out the final step, leaving everything behind—this implied that the world has nothing to offer, ever. It made a big impact upon them.

Both of these ordinations were profound experiences for me, but the deepest one occurred in 2009 at my higher ordination ceremony as a bhikkhuni. The male and female Maha Sangha turned out in full force, even more than the needed number. Their full support was evident. From my heart I said these words, To end all suffering, to realize Nibbana, please raise me up out of compassion—that is, may they raise me into Sangha status.

And they did, in Pali, reciting the same phrases that the Buddha used. An indescribable unique experience happened during my ordination, of linking up, as though being received into the pure Sangha realm, with all Sangha blessings. From that day on, I gratefully enjoy the complete lifestyle that the Buddha compassionately gave his ordained disciples, which is the greatest support for the mind’s development.

THE ENLIGHTENED TIMES TEAM

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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
BF: What does it mean to renounce? You mentioned in your talks that there are two levels of renunciation—external and internal. Please elaborate.

External renunciation is quite easy, once you start to see the burden of owning anything and see that you don’t own it in the first place. “Owning” means in control—permanence. But are we really? Please contemplate this. If you see the truth, you may end up saying “thank you” to those who take away from you these burdensome possessions.

Personally, I was also struck by the question, “What good is it to sit on a pile of gold, and no one to give it to?” As someone dear to me used to say, “I prefer to give with a warm hand rather than with a cold one...!”

Because of our so-ingrained sense of self, we are constantly seeking and being reconfirmed in the world on the appearance level, desperately trying to find a place of security in an inherently unstable, unsatisfactory existence. We then finally cling to our so-called inner world, the domain of ideas, perceptions, and so on, before realizing the dissolving of inner and outer mind-made boundaries.

Realizing more and more that ALL phenomena, whether we call it in or outside—or simply everything experienced—have three things in common: unsatisfactoriness, unstableness, and inability to claim ownership. The algebra of life experiences brings one to a simple equation: “Samsara is movement, stillness is Nibbana.”

BF: Please give us an idea of what life is like in a monastery? What is your daily routine like?

Every monastery strikes some balance between group activities, work, and time for quiet reflection and meditation. The emphasis depends upon the priorities and circumstances of each monastery. The work load, for example, may be shared among a few residents or many, with or without helping hands from volunteers. The community’s highest priority may be meditation, or teaching the Dhamma, or offering ceremonies, or guiding those who are newly ordained, or building infrastructure may be the priority at times.

At Dhammasara, we presently focus on developing the community, particularly guiding newly ordained members, while also teaching the Dhamma. Also a high priority is meditation time and retreat time for our community members; therefore we allow time for that. Right now, we also must focus on developing infrastructure to give our quickly-growing community a place to reside. Depending on donations received, the building phase may be long or short.

The Causes of Mindfulness
By Ajahn Brahmali, 9th October 2017

Mindfulness is suddenly everywhere. Our news media feed us a steady stream of stories about its benefits. It is now practised by large segments of society, from school children to corporate executives, from military personnel to spiritual seekers. Many are those who think they know what it means. We have entered the era of the mindfulness movement, and there is much to be said for this development.

Yet there is a problem with all of this. Despite all the publicity, it is rarely acknowledged that mindfulness has its roots in the ancient teachings of the Buddha. As mindfulness becomes increasingly divorced from its source, we face the real danger of creating a watered down and emasculated version of the original. If we really do believe that the Buddha was onto something with his teachings on mindfulness, he deserves to be heard on how it fits into the broader context of what he taught.

One of the key characteristics of the early Buddhist teachings is their focus on causality. Nothing exists in isolation; everything is enmeshed in a network of cause and effect. This is as true for mindfulness as it is for any other phenomenon. To develop mindfulness successfully and to realise its full benefits, we desperately need to understand this causal structure. The early Buddhist teachings are full of practical advice in this area.

There are two things in particular that the suttas focus on as supporting conditions for mindfulness: morality and outlook (SN 47.3, etc.). Outlook is crucial because it determines what we value in life. If we grasp that nothing is more important for our sense of wellbeing than the state of our mind and our ability to control it, then the significance of mental training and mindfulness becomes obvious. A realistic outlook feeds directly into our ability to be mindful and gives it the priority it deserves.

Morality is equally important. Through a steady and sustained effort at living well, we transform our minds. When you live well, you feel good about yourself. When you feel good about yourself, your mind is drawn to happiness. By creating a pleasant internal environment, mindfulness happens automatically. The present moment becomes the pleasant moment.

This matters. If mindfulness does not happen by itself, we need willpower to bring it about. But relying on willpower is inherently unsatisfactory. It can only be sustained for so long before your energies are depleted. Moreover, one of the great benefits of mindfulness and meditation in general is relaxation and ease. The more we can let go of willpower, the easier this is to achieve.

For mindfulness to become a true source of improved quality of life, both for individuals and for society as a whole, we need to reassess it in light of the Buddha’s ancient wisdom. Understanding the causes of mindfulness is one of the essential ingredients in this.
ET Crossword
#4

Across
6. Sacred Buddhist text.
7. Right _____ (5th).
8. Connected.
9. School of the great vehicle.
10. School of the elder monks.
11. The 4th noble truth.

Down
1. A title the Buddha often used for himself.
2. Equanimity.
3. Aggregates.
4. Place of Gautama’s enlightenment.
5. Discourses of the Buddha.
6. Home of the temple of the tooth.

Answers on page 5

Better to light a candle than complain about the darkness.

Illustration by Melanie Sie From Happy Every Day By Ajahn Brahm and the Ehipassiko Foundation.
Dear BSWA

My name is Gabriela.

I am writing to share my immense gratitude for the work you are doing.

Ajahn Brahm’s talks helped me through a few very tough years of my life, and guided me with wisdom and kindness towards a safe inner place.

I feel so blessed to be able to tune in on youtube or download the files from your website.

There are so many healing vibes sent through his voice, so much kindness and genuine care. Not to mention the humour reaching out from the depth of one’s soul to another 😊😊😊

Thank you to the entire team working on the website & on the youtube transmissions.

Hugs to each and everyone of you. Double hugs to Ajahn Brahm since he is more cushioned.

Gabriela Cova

How (not) to start a regular meditation practice

1. Hear about the benefits of meditation
2. Set a goal to meditate n minutes every m days
3. Fail to reach goal and give up
4. Repeat steps #1-#3 k times for different values of n and m
5. Completely give up on this “regular practice” thing
6. One day randomly stumble across the BSWA YouTube channel and tune in every weekend
7. Run your own weekend retreat with talks from BSWA retreats and suddenly discover for yourself that meditation is joyful and fun
8. A month later, realize that even without step #2, you’ve meditated just about every day for the past month
9. Cross out steps #1-4

By Tracy Lau

The Fallen Tree

A tree that started from just a tiny seed
Loved the warmth of the sun truly
Yet darkness would come
And ask the saplings
“Why are you here? Why have you come?”
The saplings answered
“Because I still feel inside me the warmth of the sun!”

The saplings grew and grew into a tree
Cold winters would come and with it darkness
questioning the tree once more
“Why are you here? For what purpose, what for?”
The tree’s answer was the same
“I still feel the sun warming me inside, even through all this time “

Storms blew through, fires raged, and flood waters raised and once again darkness came
Asking the tree
“Why are you still here?! What of confusion, and pressing fears?”
The tree now tall and great spoke with faith
“I feel the sun, the light in heaven and it is great!” speaking with praise

The tree bore fruit, a starving man came, walking many nights and long days, The man gave the tree many a praise, he took the fruit and ate and ate

Then one day the tree fell...
Darkness came upon it all the same and asked the fallen tree
“Why are you here?” But no answer came
Only silence, a quiet stillness, a quiet night

At twilight, the moments of in between
A bird appeared down from the heavens perching just so on the branched below
Darkness still lingering asked the bird
“Why are you here? For what did you come?”

This song of praise the bird sung
“Sorrowing through the heavens above for many days long, I grew tired and weak, needing a place to stay, inside of me the sun warmed and pointed seeming to say “this way, this way.....” Leading me unto this perfect place, just for me!

The tree now tall and great spoke with faith
“I feel the sun, the light in heaven and it is great!” speaking with praise

The tree has a purpose in many a way indeed, great is this tree! now I can rest in a calming peace”

By Sarah McAdoo
Dhammasara’s Entry to the Rains Retreat
The Festival Of Lights

Mirrabooka shopping centre: 5th and 12 of May 2018

Dhamma School Students, SLSBS

Sarah Long

Event Assistants
Thai Cultural Community of WA

Muay Thai Promotion

Buddhist Council of Western Australia (Inc.)
www.wa.buddhistcouncil.org.au
My third visit to Albany, this time accompanied by Anagarika Stephen. Albany is a coastal city 400km South of Perth, Western Australia.

22nd - Arrived at the Elleker forest retreat at dusk, to enjoy the solitude, tranquility and joy of being back at the bush kuti.

23rd – 9 am interview on Albany Regional Radio with Liz Vincent chatting about essence of Buddhism, monastic life and our busy schedule in Albany. Back to Retreat for a delicious Dana, the first of many from generous supporters.

Pardelup Prison Farm for meditation, talk and Q&A where all 13 inmates joined in. One prisoner, Tony, in terminal stages of cancer, has maintained contact with BSWA teachings for many years, and requested his ashes be scattered at Bodhinyana Monastery. His equanimity in the face of impending death was impressive.

24th – Generous dana spread by the Thai community with blessings for the premises. Some mingling in the local community including inspection of a local coffee establishment generating curiosity about the visiting Buddhist monk. Evening guided meditation and talk at Lawley Park Tennis Club Hall attended by over 30 people. The talk broached the theme of Overcoming Anger, with Ajahn Brahm’s famous story of the Two Bad Bricks being used to illustrate. The audience also shared their own stories of dealing with anger which were moving. Lucky (Committee member) helped me out when asked about membership of BSWA.

25th – Our leading supporter, Wasana, invited us along with
around 50 guests to Joop Thai restaurant for Dana and celebrate her birthday. Wasana challenged some of her Ozzie guests to bow to the Buddha which they managed after explanation of the Three refuges and Five Precepts! Instead of ‘Happy Birthday’ we had chanting and a blessing with much mirth as the holy water was sprinkled everywhere. The afternoon Guided Meditation session at Lawley Park was also well attended. The sutta on Overcoming Anger from the Anguttara Nikaya, Book of Fives was read followed by Q&A. Questions included what cross roads in life led me to becoming a monk and how I dealt with anger related to these events.

26th – We visited a house dana and blessing for a Thai supporter who was experiencing difficult times. It was another occasion demonstrating generosity, including friends and neighbors who wished to be introduced to Buddhism. The highlight for her young son was being allowed to wash the Monk’s bowl which he did with great care!

Albany Regional Prison was next. The prisoners were full of questions. Eventually I managed to steer the questions towards meditation practice. It was very rewarding to see everyone settle following the guided meditation.

27th- The final day saw my brother Mark & his family offer us dana. We appreciated his help with our visit including organising the venue for talks. Our final engagement at “The Sanctuary” in Denmark was lovely with a turnout of over 20 locals at a beautiful venue half built into the hillside. On the whole a rewarding visit with invitations to return.
When the Lord Buddha taught the world the practice of Metta, (Unconditional Loving Kindness), He also taught three other similar & interconnected practices, namely, Karuna (Compassion), Muditha (Sympathetic Joy) & Upekkha (Equanimity). Metta is Love without clinging. These conditions are all pure mental states except Karuna, which is much more than a mental state. Karuna is the wish to remove harm & suffering of others and actually doing something to alleviate that suffering.

In fact, for Metta Meditation to work, Karuna is an essential pre-condition. Not doing any evil acts & engaging in virtuous deeds would create conducive conditions for purifying one's own mind. (Verse 183, the Buddha Vagga, Dhammapada). When one's own mind is at peace, then the mind opens up in a joyful way. Meditation becomes easier! Wishing the rest of the world happiness & peace becomes just second nature! Metta Bhavana takes off!

Such wholesome acts can be as small as helping a small insect drowning in a cup of water or could be medium to large scale depending on one's own resources & capabilities. At the family level, one could help make life a bit more comfortable for one's own spouse/partner. Washing one's own cup is a good start! Helping one's own relatives who are in need would give more happiness than ignoring their suffering. Helping unknown people who are in need would be another way of practising Karuna in an unattached way. One could use well-known, global organisations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, Buddhist Global Relief, BSWA, Oxfam etc. and/or little-known, local organisations that are personally known to each individual. If one has the desire to help, finding such local organisations is not difficult at all. Where there is a will, there is a way, always!

In the Dakkinavibhanga Sutta, (MN142), Lord Buddha discourse on different levels of results that may be gained by making offering of gifts to different beings. Lord Buddha discoursed that by giving a gift to an animal or to an immoral person, the offering may be expected to repay a thousandfold. In the same Sutta, Lord Buddha discoursed that the offering of gifts that would bring highest merits would be those gifts given to good, practising monastics that follow the Noble Eightfold Path.

Not only would such offerings bring higher results but would help purify one's own mind, making the conditions favourable to the practice of Metta meditation. We don’t have to go very far to find good practising Sangha. They are right here, in our midst, at Bodhinyana & Dhammasara Monasteries & at Patacara Hermitage. Offerings need not be just requisites & cash donations! One could clean the cottages at Jhana Grove, join the AV team at Dhammaloka, provide transport services to monastics, help in the office or similar acts. So, what are you waiting for?

Of course, the best way of practising virtuous acts is to practise the 2nd factor of the Noble Eight Fold Path, Samma Sankappa, (Right Motivation), which encompasses the motivation to renounce, having no ill-will & practising non-cruelty. No doubt, the monastic life is the most conducive way of practising Samma Sankappa. For lay-people it is also not difficult to engage in the practice of Samma Sankappa. There are various levels of practising renunciation. For example, a young man who had a very lucrative, comfortable engineering job in a global organisation, in his own home town, gave up that job to follow his dream of helping this world tackle the effect of climate change. That is Renunciation! A family, who has been sponsoring very poor students for over 25 years, said that some of the students that they sponsored are now practising as doctors somewhere in Asia but, don't know where they are! That is giving without clinging!!

So, if you wish to practise Metta meditation, don’t just sit there on the cushion but, also, go & help those in need!

*By Upasako*

*Right: Photo from Japan by Subhradip Pramanik, 2017.*

*Left: Photo from Wat Mahathat, Ayutthaya in Thailand by Rewat Wannasuk, 2015.*
Buddhists for the Environment (BFE for short) is a non-sectarian group of people, all with a strong affinity to Buddhism, who follow the Dhamma and who are concerned for the future of the earth and its natural environment. Indeed, we believe the Earth is facing unprecedented environmental problems whose consequences are of almost unimaginable magnitude. Escalating climate change is altering the global environment so drastically as to force the Earth into a new geological age. Unprecedented levels of suffering for all life on Earth, including human, will result if no action is taken to alleviate these environmental problems.

In response to these concerns last year we formed our BFE group, which hopes to grow by encouraging others with similar concerns to join us. We aim to apply universal Buddhist principles - of wisdom, gentleness, kindness and letting go - in practical ways to do what we can to care for the environment.

BFE meets every month at Dhammaloka and everyone is welcome to attend, although you might find BFE of particular relevance if you care deeply for both the Earth and the Dhamma. See below for meeting details. There is no formal membership and there is no budget but we do have a vision and a set of aims. The group is absolutely non-political.

### A Sustainable BSWA

Some of us from BSWA have started to explore ideas about how, in small, practical ways we can do things to help the BSWA community to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly. We also had discussions about how the Dhamma, and particularly our understanding of precepts and our practice of harmlessness, inspires our understanding of the environment and how we can as Buddhists act to protect it.

For example some of the practical things we can do now at Dhammaloka are:

- minimising waste (eg. by minimising use of disposable plastics and containers);
- separating and collecting all recyclable materials;
- minimising water use;
- minimising energy use.

In future Enlightened Times I look forward to reporting on the positive progress we’ve made.

We were absolutely delighted when, just before the Rains Retreat, Ajahn Brahm announced that BSWA was going to become ‘Bottled Water Free’. Since this announcement I understand that the amount of bottled water dana has decreased, filtered water dispensers have been installed at Dhammaloka and now water is offered to monastics in reusable containers. Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! So much energy has been saved, many hundreds of plastic bottles are not going into landfill and Buddhist folk are being more mindful about the impact of their actions on the environment.

Annie Keating, 2 October 2018

### BFE Meetings

**Time:** 6.00-7.30pm  
**Date:** Second Monday of each month  
**Place:** Dhammaloka Reception Area  
**Email:** buddhenvwa@gmail.com;  
**Phone (Annie):** 0419 048945
Jhana Grove Meditation Retreat Centre

Upcoming Retreats

Looking for a peaceful place to spend a quiet weekend? Heard about meditation retreats but never tried one? Want to attend but not sure if you can survive a 9-Day retreat? Don’t fret! Due to popular demand, we have added more weekend retreats into our existing offering at Jhana Grove. Find a date that suits you and plan for your next meditation vacation. You deserve a good break!

Email bookings@bswa.org
Website bswa.org → our locations → jhana grove

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.

Made a membership payment online?

This information will help us to process your payment and membership application quicker. This is especially useful if you are intending to make a reservation for a retreat.

Email Lucky at asec@bswa.org

Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

Upcoming Retreats

14 - 16 Dec, 2018
Weekend Retreat
Venerable Hasapanna
BOOKINGS OPEN  26 Oct 8pm AWST

18 - 27 Jan, 2019
9-Day Retreat
Ajahn Brahm
BOOKINGS OPEN  9 Nov 6pm AWST

01 - 03 Mar, 2019
Weekend Retreat
TBA
BOOKINGS OPEN  11 Jan 6pm AWST

05 - 07 Apr, 2019
Weekend Retreat
TBA
BOOKINGS OPEN 15 Feb 6pm AWST

All first time attendants must complete the Introduction to Meditation course at Dhammaloka (or equivalent) before starting their first retreat.

9-Day retreats are first open to Full Members, then to Associate Members and finally to Non-Members. Weekend retreats are open to ALL – both Members and Non-Members.

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

| MON  | 10:00AM – 2:00PM | ONLY for book sales and memberships |
| FRI  | 6:00PM – 7:30PM & 9:00PM – 9:30PM |
| SAT  | 2:00PM – 3:00PM & 4:00PM – 5:00PM |

WEEKDAY OFFICE HOURS

| Monday – Friday | 10:00AM – 3:00PM |

View our archive

Please visit https://bswa.org/news/newsletters/ to view the Enlightened Times Archive. We are currently in the process of updating it to include all the past issues that we can find (from as early as the late 80’s).