THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WA

NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER – MARCH
BE2541 (1998-9)
The Basic Method of Meditation – Part 3
(Edited from a talk given by Ajahn Brahm
during the recent 9 day retreat in North Perth)

Parts 1 and 2 describe the first four stages (as they are called here) of meditation. These are:
1. Present moment awareness.
2. Silent awareness of the present moment.
3. Silent present moment awareness of the breath.
4. Full sustained attention on the breath.

Each of these stages need to be well developed before going in to the next stage. When one rushes through these ‘stages of letting go’ then the higher stages will be unreachable. It is like constructing a tall building with inadequate foundations. The first storey is built quickly and so is the second and third storey. When the fourth storey is added, though, the structure begins to wobble a bit. Then when they try to add a fifth storey it all comes tumbling down. So please take a lot of time on these four initial stages, making them all firm and stable, before proceeding on to the fifth stage. You should be able to maintain the fourth stage, ‘full sustained attention on the breath’, aware of every moment of the breath without a single break, for two or three hundred breaths in succession with ease. I am not saying to count the breaths during this stage, but I am giving an indication of the sort of time interval that one should remain with stage 4 before proceeding further. In meditation, patience is the fastest way!

The fifth stage is called ‘full sustained attention on the beautiful breath’. Often, this stage flows on naturally, seamlessly, from the previous stage. As one’s full attention rests easily and continuously on the experience of breath, with nothing interrupting the even flow of awareness, the breath calms down. It changes from a coarse, ordinary breath, to a very smooth and peaceful ‘beautiful breath’. The mind recognises this beautiful breath and delights in it. The mind experiences a
deepening of contentment. It is happy just to be there watching this beautiful breath. The mind does not need to be forced. It stays with the beautiful breath by itself. ‘You’ don’t do anything. If you try and do something at this stage, you disturb the whole process, the beauty is lost and, like landing on a snake’s head in the game of snakes and ladders, you go back many squares. The ‘doer’ has to disappear from this stage of the meditation on, with just the ‘knower’ passively observing.

A helpful trick to achieve this stage is to break the inner silence just once and gently think to yourself “calm”. That’s all. At this stage of the meditation, the mind is usually so sensitive that just a little nudge like this causes the mind to follow the instruction obediently. The breath calms down and the beautiful breath emerges.

When you are passively observing just the beautiful breath in the moment, the perception of ‘in’ (breath) or ‘out’ (breath), or beginning or middle or end of a breath, should all be allowed to disappear. All that is known is this experience of the beautiful breath happening now. The mind is not concerned with what part of the breath cycle this is in, nor on what part of the body this is occurring. Here we are simplifying the object of meditation, the experience of breath in the moment, stripping away all unnecessary details, moving beyond the duality of ‘in’ and ‘out’, and just being aware of a beautiful breath which appears smooth and continuous, hardly changing at all.

Do absolutely nothing and see how smooth and beautiful and timeless the breath can appear. See how calm you can allow it to be. Take time to savour the sweetness of the beautiful breath, ever calmer, ever sweeter.

Now the breath will disappear, not when ‘you’ want it to but when there is enough calm, leaving only ‘the beautiful’. A simile from English literature might help. In Lewis Carrol’s ‘Alice in Wonderland’, Alice and the White Queen saw a vision of a smiling Cheshire cat appear in the sky. As they watched, first the cat’s tail disappeared, then its paws followed by the rest of its legs. Soon the Cheshire cat’s torso completely vanished leaving only the cat’s head, still with a smile. Then the head started to fade into nothing,
from the ears and whiskers inwards, and soon the smiling cat’s head had completely disappeared – except for the smile which still remained in the sky! This was a smile without any lips to do the smiling, but a visible smile nevertheless. This is an accurate analogy for the process of letting go happening at this point in meditation. The cat with a smile on her face stands for the beautiful breath. The cat disappearing represents the breath disappearing and the disembodied smile still visible in the sky stands for the pure mental object ‘beauty’ clearly visible in the mind.

This pure mental object is called a NIMITTA. ‘Nimitta’ means ‘a sign’, here a mental sign. This is a real object in the landscape of the mind (CITTA) and when it appears for the first time it is extremely strange. One simply has not experienced anything like it before. Nevertheless, the mental activity called ‘perception’ searches through its memory bank of life experiences for something even a little bit similar in order to supply a description to the mind. For most meditators, this ‘disembodied beauty’, this mental joy, is perceived as a beautiful light. It is not a light. The eyes are closed and the sight consciousness has long been turned off. It is the mind consciousness freed for the first time from the world of the five senses. It is like the full moon, here standing for the radiant mind, coming out from behind the clouds, here standing for the world of the five senses. It is the mind manifesting, not a light, but for most it appears like a light, it is perceived as a light, because this imperfect description is the best that perception can offer.

For other meditators, perception chooses to describe this first appearance of mind in terms of physical sensation, such as intense tranquillity or ecstasy. Again, the body consciousness (that which experiences pleasure and pain, heat and cold and so on) has long since closed down and this is not a physical feeling. It is just ‘perceived’ as similar to pleasure. Some see a white light, some a gold star, some a blue pearl...the important fact to know is that they are all describing the same phenomena. They all experience the same pure mental object and these different details are added by their different perceptions.
You can recognise a Nimitta by the following 6 features: 1. It appears only after the 5th stage of the meditation, after the meditator has been with the beautiful breath for a long time; 2. It appears when the breath disappears; 3. It only comes with the external five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are completely absent; 4. It manifests only in the silent mind, when descriptive thoughts (inner speech) are totally absent; 5. It is strange but powerfully attractive; 6. It is a beautifully simple object. I mention these features so that you may distinguish real nimittas from imaginary ones.

The sixth stage, then, is called ‘experiencing the beautiful nimitta’. It is achieved when one lets go of the body, thought, and the five senses (including the awareness of the breath) so completely that only the beautiful nimitta remains.

Sometimes when the nimitta first arises it may appear ‘dull’. In this stage, one should go immediately back to the previous stage of the meditation, continuous silent awareness of the beautiful breath. One has moved to the nimitta too soon. Sometimes the nimitta is bright but unstable, flashing on and off like a lighthouse beacon and then disappearing.

Nimitta

Again this shows that you have left the beautiful breath too early. One must be able to sustain one’s attention on the beautiful breath with ease for a long, long time before the mind is capable of maintaining clear attention on the far more subtle nimitta. So train the mind on the beautiful breath, train it patiently and diligently, then when it is time to go on to the nimitta, it is bright, stable and easy to sustain.

The main reason why the nimitta can appear dull is that the depth of contentment is too shallow. You are still ‘wanting’ something. Usually, you are wanting the bright nimitta or you are wanting Jhana. Remember, and this is important, Jhanas are states of letting go, incredibly deep states of contentment. So give away the hungry mind, develop contentment on the beautiful breath and the nimitta and Jhana will happen by themselves.

The main reason why the nimitta is unstable is because the ‘doer’ just will not stop interfering. The ‘doer’ is the controller, the back
seat driver, always getting involved where it does not belong and messing everything up. This meditation is a natural process of coming to rest and it requires ‘you’ to get out of the way completely. Deep meditation only occurs when you really let go, and this means REALLY LET GO to the point that the process becomes inaccessible to the ‘doer’.

A skilful means to achieve such profound letting go is to deliberately offer the gift of confidence to the nimitta. Interrupt the silence just for a moment, so so gently, and whisper as it were inside your mind that you give complete trust to the nimitta, so that the ‘doer’ can relinquish all control and just disappear. The mind, represented here by the nimitta before you, will then take over the process as you watch it all happen.

You do not need to do anything here because the intense beauty of the nimitta is more than capable of holding the attention without your assistance. Be careful, here, not to go assessing. Questions such as ‘What is this?’, ‘Is this Jhana?’, ‘What should I do next?’, and so on are all the work of ‘the doer’ trying to get involved again. This is disturbing the process. You may assess everything once the journey is over. A good scientist only assesses the experiment at the end, when all the data is in. So now, do not assess or try to work it all out. There is no need to pay attention to the edge of the nimitta ‘Is it round or oval?’, ‘Is the edge clear or fuzzy?’ This is all unnecessary and just leads to more diversity, more duality of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, and more disturbance.

Let the mind incline where it wants, which is usually to the centre of the nimitta. The centre is where the most beautiful part lies, where the light is most brilliant and pure. Let go and just enjoy the ride as the attention gets drawn into the centre and falls right inside, or as the light expands all around enveloping you totally. This is, in fact, one and the same experience perceived from different perspectives. Let the mind merge in the bliss. Let the seventh stage of this path of meditation, Jhana, occur.

There are two common obstacles at the door into Jhana: exhilaration and fear. Exhilaration is becoming excited. If, at this point, the mind thinks “Wow, this is it!” then the Jhana is most unlikely to happen. This ‘Wow’ response needs to be subdued in
favour of absolute passivity. You can leave all the ‘Wows’ until after emerging from the Jhana, where they properly belong. The more likely obstacle, though, is fear. Fear arises at the recognition of the sheer power and bliss of the Jhana, or else at the recognition that to go fully inside the Jhana, something must be left behind – You! The ‘doer’ is silent before Jhana but still there. Inside Jhana, the ‘doer’ is completely gone. The ‘knower’ is still functioning, you are fully aware, but all the controls are now beyond reach. You cannot even form a single thought, let alone make a decision. The will is frozen, and this can appear scary to the beginner. Never before in you whole life have you ever experienced being so stripped of all control yet so fully awake. The fear is the fear of surrendering something so essentially personal as the will to do.

This fear can be overcome through confidence in the Buddha’s Teachings together with the enticing bliss just ahead that one can see as the reward. The Lord Buddha often said that this bliss of Jhana “should not be feared but should be followed, developed and practised often” (LATUKIKOPAMA SUTTA, MAJJHIMA NIKAYA). So before fear arises, offer your full confidence to that bliss and maintain faith in the Lord Buddha’s Teachings and the example of the Noble Disciples. Trust the Dhamma and let the Jhana warmly embrace you for an effortless, body-less and ego-less, blissful experience that will be the most profound of your life. Have the courage to fully relinquish control for a while and experience all this for yourself.

If it is a Jhana it will last a long time. It does not deserve to be called Jhana if it lasts only a few minutes. Usually, the higher Jhanas persist for many hours. Once inside, there is no choice. You will emerge from the Jhana only when the mind is ready to come out, when the ‘fuel’ of relinquishment that was built up before is all used up. These are such still and satisfying states of consciousness that their very nature is to persist for a very long time. Another feature of Jhana is that it occurs only after the nimitta is discerned as described above. Furthermore, you should know that while in any Jhana it is impossible to experience the body (e.g. physical pain), hear a sound from outside or produce any thought, not even ‘good’ thoughts. There is just a clear
singleness of perception, an experience of non-dualistic bliss which continues unchanging for a very long time. This is not a trance, but a state of heightened awareness. This is said so that you may know for yourself whether what you take to be a Jhana is real or imaginary.

There is much more to meditation, but here only the basic method has been described using seven stages culminating with the First Jhana. Much more could be said about the ‘five hindrances’ and how they are overcome, about the meaning of mindfulness and how it is used, about the Four Satipatthana and the Four Roads to Success (IDDHIPADA) and the Five Controlling Faculties (INDRIYA) and, of course, about the higher Jhanas. All these concern this practice of meditation but must be left for another occasion.

For those who are misled to conceive of all this as ‘just Samatha practice’ without regard to Insight (Vippassana), please know that this is neither Vipassana nor Samatha. It is called ‘Bhavana’, the method taught by the Lord Buddha and repeated in the Forest Tradition of N.E. Thailand of which my teacher, Ven. Ajahn Chah, was a part. Ajahn Chah often said that Samatha and Vipassana can not be separated, nor can the pair be developed apart from Right View, Right Thought, Right Moral Conduct and so forth. Indeed, to make progress on the above seven stages, the meditator needs an understanding and acceptance of the Lord Buddha’s Teachings and one’s precepts must be pure. Insight will be needed to achieve each of these stages, that is insight into the meaning of ‘letting go’. The further one develops these stages, the more profound will be the insight, and if you reach as far as Jhana then it will change your whole understanding. As it were, Insight dances around Jhana and Jhana dances around Insight. This is the Path to Nibbana for, the Lord Buddha said, “for one who indulges in Jhana, four results are to be expected: Stream Winner, Once Returner, Non Returner or Arahant” (PASADIKA SUTTA, DIGHA NIHAYA).

Ajahn Brahmavamso
'NOT THE SANGHA NEWS'

Warning this issue of 'Sangha News' may cause shock, dismay and, in extreme cases, lead to symptoms of withdrawal in regular readers! It does not contain any intentional jokes or puns. You've guessed; Ajahn Brahm is away.

Ajahn Brahm left on Wednesday 21 August for a 3 week teaching tour of Malaysia, his first visit there. It could hardly be called a holiday, as Ajahn will conduct two five day meditation retreats and during the 21 days he will give an awesome 34 talks. From reports relayed to us Ajahn's talks have been enthusiastically received with record crowds, in some places spilling-out into the garden.

Just before his departure, we received an advance copy of a new booklet by Ajahn Brahm, the first to be published under his name, which a generous Malaysian supporter has produced. It is entitled "The Basic Method of Meditation" and is a compilation of Ajahn Brahm's meditation instruction from the last three newsletters. Copies should be available soon.

Another Rains Retreat has passed, the 15th for the Monastery, all too quickly, it seems. It has been characterised by harmony and steady progress in this gradual training, not to mention some pretty chilly days and nights. Each Rains Retreat seems to build on previous years and the sense of solidity, strength and depth grows year by year.

During the Rains Retreat, the support from the lay community bringing food and other supplies was inspiring and even more abundant than in previous years. Numbers ranged from 20 to 80 supporters each day. One family brought food every day, bar one, of the retreat and for 10 days before it, which represents a total distance travelled to and from the Monastery of nearly 12,000-km. Apart from the practical considerations, such generosity provides fuel for inspiration and encouragement for the whole monastic community to practise even harder.

The format of the retreat followed that of previous years: a weekly meeting for chanting and a Dhamma talk and a weekly teaching for novice monks and male and female anagarikas (8 preceptors)
on the fundamentals of Dhamma, using Ven. Nyanatiloka's "The Word of the Buddha" as a framework. Each member of the community, apart from the senior monks, had a fortnightly interview with Ajahn Brahm. All of the monks took turns to have a two-week silent retreat in their huts, with food being brought to them. Next year, it is proposed to have, for the first time, a month long retreat for the whole community in February, the hottest month of the year, and all activities, except teaching at the city Centre, will be suspended.

The Kathina Ceremony, the offering to the Sangha of cloth to sew a robe and other supplies, marked the official end of the Rains Retreat on Sunday 11 October. This year Christine Banks, a former president, offered the Kathina cloth on behalf of the Buddhist community. Fortunately the rain held off during the parts of the ceremony held outside and the serious rain did not begin until later that afternoon.

The end of the Rains Retreat heralded the beginning of a very busy time at the Monastery. The weekend after the Kathina, Ajahn Brahm travelled to Melbourne for the opening of the Sanghaloka Forest Hermitage on Saturday 17 October. It is located in the picturesque Dandenong Ranges amidst tree ferns and tall mountain ash trees. Its primary purpose will be for a small group of monks to practise in relative seclusion without regular teaching commitments. It is hoped that other similar hermitages will be established elsewhere in Australia in the future.
Since the end of the Rains Retreat, the Monastery has been most concerned by the recommendation to the local Council that Kingsbury Drive, the road in front of the Monastery, be used for all heavy haulage trucks to and from a proposed clay pit nearby. These trucks would pass the Monastery every 4 minutes, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Saturday for a potential of 6 weeks this summer.

Our concern is that this will lead to Kingsbury Drive becoming a heavy haulage-trucking route. This would have a serious impact on the peace and quiet of the Monastery, as well as the safety of visitors. Convoys of trucks pose a grave road safety hazard for all users of Kingsbury Drive.

We hope that Council will decide not to go ahead with this recommendation and will instead retain its previous decision to have trucks go up Kingsbury Drive to the clay pit and return to Southwest Highway via Scrivener Road. This proposal would halve truck traffic on Kingsbury Drive, making it safer and quieter for all concerned. The support and action by the Buddhist Society and other individuals, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, has been truly impressive and the Sangha is most grateful and appreciative. We are hopeful that this issue will be settled successfully in a skilful and sensitive manner.

Regular visitors will be surprised and delighted to hear that the long awaited renovating of the Monastery's kitchen, due to health considerations, is planned for mid-December. It will include new elevated cupboards, with sliding drawers, that will help minimise cockroaches and other pest problems, new flooring, as well as new refrigerators, stove and microwave, finances permitting. The kitchen will be out of action from 7 to 16 December for work to be completed and during that time temporary measures will be in place.

Other plans for the forthcoming year include the completion of the last 100 metres of the front wall of the Monastery. It is also proposed, funds allowing, to build separate accommodation for anagarikas, trainees for the monkhood ('the men in white'), consisting of a unit with 3 or 4 rooms with an attached walking path for each room. Not only will it give anagarikas a more
secluded environment in which to practise and a clearer sense of identity as part of the monastic community but also it will free the guest accommodation for visitors.

January 1999 will, be an auspicious month as two ordination ceremonies are planned. On 3 January, there will be a higher ordination ceremony at the Monastery and on the 31 January there will be a novice ordination held at the Dhammaloka Centre. Everyone is most welcome to attend these significant and happy occasions. There will be more information closer to the time.

In mid-November we are expecting a visit, for about a week, from Ajahn Anan, a well respected disciple of Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Somchai and Ajahn Kalayano. We also look forward very much to a return visit from Ven. Dhammavihari, an erudite and engaging Sri Lankan monk, for a short time from the 26 November.

We hope readers have not suffered too many adverse effects from this joke and pun free issue of 'Sangha News'. If you have suffered, we recommend you immediately read an old 'Sangha News' to regain your equilibrium and to take heart that the situation is impermanent and will be remedied with the return shortly of Ajahn Brahm.

'Not Ajahn Brahm'

Anagarikas Sol and Danny
Between a Brick and a Hard Place

This article is to inform readers about an important issue the Buddhist Society is dealing with at this present time. That is the heavy trucking past the front gate of the Monastery by Metro Brick from a proposed clay pit nearby. The Buddhist Society objects to the turning of Kingsbury drive, which runs in front of the Monastery, into a heavy trucking route, particularly after a number of accidents by clay trucks on this steep and dangerous road. This proposal would mean a heavy truck past the Monastery every 4 minutes from 6:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Saturday, for a potential of 6 weeks this summer, possibly for the next 25 years.

The Buddhist Society feels it has an important responsibility to its members concerning this issue for the following reasons:

1) The protection of the Monastery environment as a suitable place for the Sangha and for Buddhist practise.
2) The Safety of the Buddhist community who visit the Monastery so they can fulfil their religious aspirations.
3) The prospect of Kingsbury Drive becoming a heavy truck routs.
4) Continued lack of prior consultation with the Buddhist Society by the relevant government agencies about developments that will have a serious impact on the Monastery, i.e. proposed gravel pit, proposed rifle range, and this proposed clay pit.

Therefore, the Buddhist Society proposed to the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale a compromise that the trucking of clay be shared between the two access roads to the clay pit, that is the trucks travel empty up Kingsbury Drive, load with clay and then travel down Scrivener Road to the South Western Highway. The justification for this compromise was based on the following reasons:

1) Scrivener Road has been used by the Council for the past 30 years for heavy trucking.
2) There have been no recorded accidents involving trucks on Scrivener Road in the last 30 years of operation; unlike Kingsbury Drive, where there have been 3
accidents, including a fatality. In addition, 13 vehicles (including one clay truck) have careened across South Western Highway unable to stop. This is a disaster about to happen.

3) The one way truck traffic would avoid the real danger of convoys of trucks passing each other.

4) A traffic consultant has advised us that Scrivener Road will be generally safer for trucks, with inexpensive upgrading.

5) Scrivener Road is the legal access for the clay pit.

6) There are far fewer residents on Scrivener Road.

7) Scrivener Road is not used for other purposes, such as tourist traffic, access to Karnet Prison Farm, cyclists, school bus, etc., as is the case on Kingsbury Drive.

This compromise was accepted and endorsed at a full meeting of the Council of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale on June 22\textsuperscript{nd}, which was a fair and reasonable outcome for all concerned in that all affected groups shared the burden of this proposed clay pit. The Minister for the Environment wrote to express her pleasure at our compromise accepted by the Council. We thought this was the end of the matter but Metro Brick and a number of residents on Scrivener Road strove to overturn this Council decision. The Planning Committee Meeting of the Council on Monday 19\textsuperscript{th} October, under heavy pressure and mis-information from Metro Brick and some residents of Scrivener Road, recommended to council that it overturn the compromise, ignoring the advice of its own Technical Services Officers and the Buddhist Society representatives.

At an Extraordinary Meeting of the Buddhist Society on the 21\textsuperscript{st} October it was resolved to seek legal advice on whether the Council can legally overturn a properly made decision without giving the Buddhist Society redress. It was also resolved to use all resources available to us so that no denial of natural justice occurs, as relevant documentation had not been made available to the Buddhist Society to put our case forward. On the basis of legal advice and due to the lateness of the process our only recourse was to seek a Supreme Court injunction, which in essence questions the legal right of the Council to overturn its previous decision. Our case was heard by the Supreme Court which recommended it go
before a hearing of the full bench of the Supreme court on November 11th, 1998.

The Buddhist Society has also appealed to the Minister of the Environment and the Environmental Protection Authority to reassess this proposal in light of its extensive impact on local residents. For that purpose the Buddhist Society has commissioned a road safety audit, a noise impact study, a social and cultural impact study and is considering undertaking a covenant with the National Trust, as well as looking at possible heritage listing.

We hope that the relevant government agencies will consider the uniqueness of Bodhinyana Monastery, its importance to the Buddhist Community and our grave concern for the safety of users of Kingsbury Drive, including visitors to the Monastery.

The reason these events have taken such a serious turn, and that we have been forced into this position, has been largely brought about by the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale’s reversal of the compromise decision and the lateness in the day at which they informed us of the fact. The Buddhist Society has been prepared throughout the proceedings to compromise and negotiate, even in the past week, but none of the other parties – Metro Brick, Scrivener Road residents or Council – have been prepared to give us an inch.

The Buddhist Society would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the many people who have helped to seek a suitable and fair outcome to this difficult situation. Especially, to the 150 people who attended the council Meeting on Monday evening, 26th October, to express their support and respect for the Monastery and Sangha, by their presence. Some Councillors later commented how impressed they were by their peaceful and well conducted presence. In particular, we would like to thank Ms Susan Towler, who is the official Buddhist society co-ordinator on this matter and has given endless time and effort, Sarkis Petrossian, who has freely given invaluable advice on road safety, Les Stein, our legal representative in court who has offered his services, time and advice ‘pro bono’ to the Society, Gretta Lee and Paul MacQueen, our tireless solicitors.
In conclusion, our position has been highlighted in the statement by our President, Dr Binh Anson, who said he felt he had a moral responsibility to all the members of the Buddhist Society of W.A. who visit the Monastery, to do all he can to protect them from the danger of losing their life in a road accident on Kingsbury Drive with a clay truck. Therefore, he felt the Committee should do all it can to make the Council abide by the compromise decision. It was also summarised by Ajahn Brahmavamso when he stated that “It is easier to build a monastery than to protect it. Silence and peace are invaluable.”

The Buddhist Society realises there will be considerable costs, particularly legal expenses, but feels that the safety of its members and the protection of the Monastery more than warrants this expense. We will keep all our members informed of the outcome.

Clay truck overturned on Kingsbury Drive January 1998
PILGRIMAGE TO THE
HOLY SITES IN INDIA

From Thursday 25th February
to Saturday 13th March 1999

led by

Ajahn Nyanadhammo

This is an experience of a lifetime, to visit the
sites where Buddha was born, Enlightened,
first taught, and passed into Parinibbana.

There are a few places still available for this tour, but
you will need to be quick as arrangements, including
payment, need to be finalised by Friday 11th December
1998. Accommodation will be in quality hotels with a
selection of cuisines available. If you are interested in
more information please contact:

Phalinee Sawangying  Tel:  9456 0593
9456 0849
0419 941 478

Or ask at the reception desk in the foyer at
Dhammaloka Centre.
Meditation Retreats 1999

March 5th – 7th

St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

April 1st – 7th

Nine-day retreat
Redemptorist Retreat House, North Perth

April 30th – May 2nd

St Joseph’s Retreat House, Safety Bay

June 4th – 6th

St Joseph’s Retreat House

November 19th – 21st

St Joseph’s Retreat House

Registration forms are available from the notice-board at Dhammaloka four weeks prior to the start of each retreat.

In order to simplify registration please forward full payment with the registration form.

As the retreats are always very popular, early registration is advisable.

Enquiries: Bianca & Ron – 9299-7185
Apology

In the last Newsletter part of a paragraph was missed.

My profound appologies to Ven. Piyaratana and to Ajahn Vayama for the way this read.

Joyce Sinclair
Editor

Dhammasara

Ajahn Vayama and her attendant Elizabeth Gorski are shortly to take up residence in a caravan at Dhammasara, Gidgegannup. Due to a generous offer by a builder we are now able to begin building on the site earlier than expected.

Fundraising is continuing for this project and if you have any skills and time to offer please contact Chris Banks. I am sure Chris will be able to find work for willing hands. This is an excellent way to gain merit!

Under the notice board at Dhammadloka we have a diagram representing the power cable required for Dhammasara, divided into sections representing one-metre lengths. This power cable is costing $20 per metre. Thank you to all those who have already donated towards this.
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As this is the last newsletter for this year (with the next one being due in March), we are including in this Newsletter an early reminder about the renewal of membership.

As membership of the Buddhist Society of WA runs from 1 January each year, all existing memberships are due for renewal from that date. Membership fees are one of the primary sources of funds to the Society's General Account and are relied upon for the general maintenance and running expenses of Dhammaloka (which are considerable!), the maintenance and growth of the library, the printing and distribution of this Newsletter and ongoing administration costs ...... so, please rejoin!

There has been no change to the annual fees for some years now and they will again remain the same in 1999. They are:

- $40 for family membership
- $30 for single membership
- $20 for unwaged people
- $30 for unwaged couple

People who have not yet joined the Society, but who enjoy our facilities and/or who support the aims and objectives of the Society, are invited to apply for membership. This may be done under two categories:

**Full membership** is available to people who consider themselves to be Buddhists - i.e. they have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and endeavour to keep the five precepts of a Buddhist lay person. Applications for full membership need to be signed by the Spiritual Director of the Society (currently Ven. Ajahn Brahm). Full members are entitled to use the library facilities, vote at the Annual General Meeting and any special meetings of the Society and are eligible to hold office on the Committee.

**Associate membership** is available to those people who may not yet meet the requirements of full membership, but who are supportive of the aims and objectives of the Society. Associate members may not vote at Society meetings nor hold office, but are entitled to use the library facilities.

Membership forms are available at the reception desk at Dhammaloka and renewals may be sent to the Treasurer or may be left at the reception desk or in the donations box in an envelope clearly marked with your name and renewal of membership!

We thank all people who have offered support to the Society over the past year through membership and encourage you all to contribute again.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, 20th FEBRUARY, 1999

In accordance with the constitution of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, our Annual General Meeting will be, held on Saturday 20th February 1999 at 4:30pm at the Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre. At this meeting the committee of the Society is elected for the next twelve months.

Nominations are called for the positions of President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Assistant Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Assistant Treasurer and six committee members. Nomination forms are available at the reception desk at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre. All nominations must be received by the Secretary by no later than 5pm on Friday 15th January, 1999.

It is important to note that under the Society's constitution, only full members are eligible to stand for committee positions or to vote. People nominating and seconding anyone for positions must also be full members. If you are a committed Buddhist, but have not formally taken the Three Refuges and Five Precepts and/or filled out a membership form to become a full member, please do so if you wish to participate. As all nominations for membership (including changes from associate to full membership) must be accepted at a committee meeting, any application for membership (or change to full membership) must be received before the committee meeting on 16th January 1999 if the applicant wishes to be eligible to vote at the AGM. No applications can be accepted after this date and still be eligible to vote.

All members are asked to carefully consider who they would like to represent them on the Committee and to consider whether they could make a contribution themselves. Committee members need to be able to contribute to the planning and decision making process of the Society and to fairly represent the views of the members.

If you would like to find out more about what is involved in serving on the Committee before nominating anyone please contact our current President, Binh Anson, or speak to Ven. Ajahn Brahm.
Regular Activities
Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

Friday
7:00 - 7:20pm  Chanting
7:30 - 8:00pm  Guided Sitting Meditation
8:00 - 9:00pm  A talk on Buddhism

Saturday
10:30am  Food offering to the Sangha in the Community Hall
3:00 - 4:15pm  Meditation – instruction and discussion conducted by one of our senior Sangha.
A 4-week 'Introduction to Meditation’
Course begins on the first Saturday of each Month throughout the year.

Sunday
8:30 - 10:30am  Sitting and walking meditation
10:30am  Food offering to the Sangha
10:30 - 12:00n  Dhamma Class for children on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. For more Information Tel: Mrs Fernando - 93103654
3:00 - 4:30pm  Advanced Dhamma class on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

Library Hours:
Friday 6:00 - 7:30pm and 9:00 - 10:00pm
Saturday 2:00 - 3:00pm and 4:00 - 5:00pm

South of the River

Tuesday 7:00 - 9:00pm  Meditation and Dhamma talk at Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital. For more information Tel: Jim Hanna - 94932841

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