Enlightened TIMES

Buddhist Society of Western Australia

Issue 1, 2019

Kathina Ceremony 2018 at Dhammasara Nuns Monastery. Photo credit: Boon Tan & Matt Gibson
**Buddhism is none-the-less in England**

*By Ajahn Brahm*


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When I took refuge in Ajahn Chah as my teacher in January 1975, I made a vow never to ask to go anywhere. I would only come or go following Ajahn Chah’s instructions. In May 1983, Ajahn Chah sent me to Perth to help establish a forest monastery in Australia. A month or two after I arrived in Australia, Ajahn Chah had a stroke, was unable to speak or give any more instructions. So, keeping to my vow, I have been stuck in Perth ever since!

In those years, I have helped build a huge forest monastery, Bodhinyana, with 30 monks, a comfortable meditation centre and a beautiful monastery for Bhikkhus called Dhammasara. The Dhammasara Nuns Monastery is situated in 583 acres of beautiful forest, 70 Km distant from Bodhinyana but only 45 minutes from Perth City. It currently has a Sangha of 11 fully ordained Bhikkhunis and 3 Samaneris.

However, I was born in England, educated in England and learnt my first Dhamma and Meditation in England. Currently, there is no monastery for fully ordained nuns, Bhikkhunis, in the land of my birth. I feel a responsibility, an ethical need, to work as much as I am able to establish the first Buddhist Monastery for Bhikkhunis in a country which nurtured my early Buddhist path.

The Buddha had intended to establish the Fourfold Assembly of Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, male Upasikas and female Upasikas from the very beginning of His dispensation saying to Mara that he would only pass away when these four groups were well established.

Unfortunately, the Bhikkhuni Sangha was lost for a long time in Theravada. I have done a little to re-establish the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Australia. It has been successful beyond what I thought possible. There is a waiting list of candidates who want to renounce as Bhikkhunis and follow the path in its fullness that the Buddha had opened up for women.

There are few English Bhikkhunis and they reside overseas. There are many women from England (and other European countries) who aspire to Bhikkhuni ordination. However, even though there are many monasteries for monks, there are no monasteries at all in England for Bhikkhunis. I find this unacceptable. I am doing something about it but I need your help.

There is a fine English Bhikkhuni, Ven. Candavisuddhi, who has already sacrificed so much to wander homeless through England, teaching at Buddhist Centres and groups and retreat centres but with no residence to grow a Sangha of Bhikkhunis. She is like a skilled gardener waiting for a garden.

To find out how you can help, please see the website www.anukampaproject.org
It was a huge privilege to host Ajahn Brahmali in England this July, and he left those who attended his talks and retreats on a very wholesome high!

Ajahn was in top form, delivering intellectually lucid, spiritually rousing teachings, directly based on the suttas. He brought us closer to the Buddha as our principle Teacher, by carefully drawing out the meaning, implication and practical application of many subtle nuances in the suttas, as though spreading wide an intricately woven embroidered cloth to examine its beauty in depth.

One fascinating aspect of the gradual training we studied on retreat was wise reflection. This forms part of right effort as a means to restrain the hindrances to deep meditation.

For instance, a powerful means to undermine anger or resentment is to deliberately focus on a person’s good qualities, instead of dwelling on behaviours that we find irritating, which will only increase our rage! The Buddha likens this to moving algae aside from the surface of a pond, to uncover the cool, clear water beneath (AN 5: 162).

Such reflection also helps develop a storehouse of positive perceptions which are then right at hand to counter those perceptions giving rise to unwholesome qualities, before they obscure the mind. With proper preparation off the cushion, meditation happens naturally, we simply invite the breath in and allow it to gladden the mind.

“Finding True Freedom” was an exceptional talk to end the tour. One participant later wrote, “I would not have missed it for the world. Right from the get-go my feeling was that it was like sitting in an incredible field of love.”

On that last evening back in London, I felt particularly moved on noticing how many spiritual companions associated with Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project were present, especially as I knew no one less than three years ago!

At the end of the talk, when I was asked for an update on our progress towards establishing a Bhikkhuni Monastery in England, I said that this gathering (right in front of my eyes) IS the monastery so far! The bricks and mortar we will build on and become a monument to the spiritual friendship we share.

Ajahn Brahmali greatly enjoyed teaching and travelling in England, and gave some feedback of his own:

“Bhikkhunis are on the march in the UK! After a busy but inspiring teaching tour – with four days in London and a full week in the Peak District – I have seen first-hand the momentum that is building around Ajahn Brahm’s and Ven. Candā’s vision of establishing a bhikkhunī monastery in England. Ven. Candā’s impressive leadership skills and long experience as a monastic became evident as I worked closely with her. The heartfelt support from a large and diverse Buddhist community is equally remarkable. It is a vision for the long-term, but there is every reason to believe this will become an exceptional resource for women who value the Buddhist monastic life.”

To find out more or to volunteer for our project, see www.anukampaproject.org
We honour our founding president Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya who passed away peacefully on 19th April 2018 at the age of 86.

The funeral was presided by Ajahn Brahm as requested by Laksiri during their final chat in hospital two days prior to his death.

Laksiri initiated the Buddhist Society of WA in early 1973 with a group of supporters who regularly met at his home and then later at the Australia-Asia House to discuss the Dhamma.

He became the founding President of BSWA following Incorporation in 1974. His interest in Buddhism was sparked by his father Dr W F Jayasuriya who wrote on the Philosophy and Psychology of Buddhism.

The study of Buddhist philosophy and psychology was one of Laksiri’s abiding concerns and he published several papers on these topics.

He remained a supporter and mentor over the years as the BSWA flourished and he took great pride in its achievements.

His valued contributions to the wider community of Australia was acknowledged in the WA Parliament (Hansard 9th May 2018) by the Minister for Multicultural Interests.

Laksiri was a tireless advocate of multiculturalism, anti-racism, social welfare policy and human rights.

He used his appointments to the various advisory boards such as the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, Australian Council of Social Services and Chair in Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Western Australia, to promote these goals.

Lucky Kodituwakku
Membership Secretary,
Committee, Buddhist Society of Western Australia

Laksiri with his good friends Dr Geoff Gallop (former Premier of WA) and Ajahn Brahm.
The World Peace Meditation Conference

at the Korean Demilitarized Zone  13th October 2018

Photo Credit: © Ajahn Gaksan and Chambulseonwon Meditation Centre  2018.
Irrigators lead water,
Fletchers shape arrows,
Carpenters shape wood;
The disciplined tame themselves.

Theragāthā 1.19: Kula. From suttacentral.net
Craving is what moves the mind  
In the destruction of craving  
lies true peace

The Great Handy-work  
By Sarah Mcadoo

There once was an orphan boy  
With a curious mind  
He asked the monk  
Many answers he wished to find  
The monk replied  
"Ask the pebble, not me, you will see"  
But he paid no heed.

As a young lad  
He encountered many challenges  
That he wondered how to overcome  
He asked a wise one and they spoke  
"Ask the pebble, not me, you will see"  
Abused! he thought, he could not,  
would not do such a deed.

At a pondering age, soon problems came  
Often consuming his day  
He sought out a healing sage  
With heart and spirit they danced and sang  
"Ask the pebble.....not me.....you will see".

The man turned and walked down the path  
Bewildered and perplexed all the same  
Yet in his path there a pebble lay  
He knelt picking it up and  
held it within his hand.

He asked with meagre faith  
“What can you show me?  
What can I learn from you,?  
What do you have to say?”  
Just then he heard an Invisible Voice  
inside him speak  
“I am ....to ask you the very same”.

In that moment  
The man’s perspective changed.....  
He beheld his insignificance  
Yet in the grasp of something far greater.

Top Left:  
Oil Painting by Nicholas Allott

Bottom Left:  
Photograph by Boon Tan
Wrong Livelihood

This is the fourth article in the series about the Vinaya, that body of monastic rules and traditions binding on every Buddhist monk and nun. In this article I will discuss “wrong livelihood.”

Buddhist monastics are called bhikkhus (monks) and bhikkhunis (nuns), which literally means men and women who rely on alms for the necessities of life. That is, they depend solely on the generosity of lay supporters.

However, some monks, dissatisfied with the amount and uncertainty of alms, have tried to secure a more comfortable lifestyle by practising various crafts or trades and expecting a fee. This is called wrong livelihood.

An exhaustive list of examples of wrong livelihood can be found in the discourse of the Buddha called “Brahmajata Sutta” which is in the section of the Tipitaka called “Digha Nikaya.” It includes such “priestcraft” as: palmistry, fortune-telling, interpreting dreams, determining propitious dates or sites, exorcism, reciting protective charms, incanting malevolent spells (!), foretelling a person’s remaining lifespan, running errands for laypeople, casting astrological charts and so on.

Even earning a living in, what would be for a layperson, a good way such as practising medicine, is for a monk wrong livelihood. There is a story in the Dhammapada Commentary of such a monk who did very well out of practising as a doctor.

One day, this monk received the most delicious almsfood from a man whom he had just successfully treated. On the way back to the monastery, he met Ven. Sariputta, one of the leading disciples of the Buddha, proudly told of his doctoring and offered some of his delicacies to him. Ven. Sariputta was dismayed and walked away without saying a word.

Ven. Sariputta loved the simple tradition of depending on alms and he would not eat what was obtained by breaking the precepts, in this case through practising a craft for personal gain. When he returned to the monastery and related this incident to the Buddha, the Buddha recited the following stanzas:

“Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is shameless is coarse in thought, word and deed. He is arrogant like unto a crow. He will secure a comfortable living through unlawful means. On the other hand, life for a monk who has a sense of moral shame is not easy. “ (Dhammapada 244-245)

It is allowable for a monk skilled in medicine to treat people staying at the monastery, even to help those visiting - but not to make a business out of it.

In the texts there are several stories where the Buddha, seeing an occasion to be of service, stopped while on almsround to give an inspiring teaching to a layman. The layperson would then run into the house and get some food to offer as a “reward” but the Buddha would always refuse it.

He explained that Enlightened Ones do not teach for a fee. Teaching for personal gain is also wrong livelihood. Teaching is a monastic’s way of giving, of serving, and it should never be regarded as a profession, selling the teachings for material gain.

A corrupt monk who tells fortunes for money, gives talks in exchange for gifts or practises any similar form of wrong livelihood has a special name in Buddhism – he is called allajji (rhymes with Apache), meaning ‘shameless’.

Good monks are advised to shun shameless ones and if a group of allajji monks congregate in a neighbourhood the good monks are to go there and send them away (as in Sanghadisesa 13).

To emphasise the seriousness of the offence of wrong livelihood there is a well known quote from the Suttas. (The quote should be well known anyway, for it was printed in our newsletter two issues back!)

“There are, monks, these four stains because of which the sun and moon glow not, shine not, blaze not. What are these four? Rain clouds ... snow clouds ... smoke and dust ... and an eclipse. Even so, monks, there are these four stains because of which monks and nuns glow not, shine not, blaze not. What are these four? Drinking alcohol ... indulging in sexual intercourse ... accepting the use of gold or money ... and obtaining gifts through the wrong livelihood.” (Anguttara Nikaya 2.53)

It is clear, then, what the Buddha thought of allajji monks who predict lottery numbers, give astrology readings and so on, for personal gain. They are grouped along with a monk who gets drunk, has sexual intercourse or keeps money. Monks who practise wrong livelihood are a stain on the Sangha and should be known as such by the laypeople.

(BSWA Newsletter, July-September 1996)
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!

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:

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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.

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.

Made a membership payment online?

Email Lucky at asec@bswa.org

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.

Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre

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Update your details

Please send your updated email, phone or address details to Lucky at asec@bswa.org. This ensures that you will receive important notices and newsletters.

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).

Library Hours

**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
Tasuku Nakamura

What advice would you give your younger self?

I would advise my younger self to take it easy. I tried hard to achieve goals but after a while what I wanted to achieve changed. So it was a waste of time wanting something that eventually I lost interest in.

Taz is currently volunteering for the BSWA Online Services Team from Hakodate in Northern Japan.

Anna Maria Rivers

What does Buddhism mean to you?

A way of living. A way not to get too involved with everything in the material world and understand that there’s something greater than you. A tool for life. I love it so much it has completely changed my life.

Anna is currently an Anagarika at Dhammasara Nuns Monastery.
THE ENLIGHTENED TIMES TEAM
Editor: Nicholas Allott
Content Review: Cecilia Mitra
Page Design: Selina Lai (pages 1-3 and 12)
Nicholas Allott (pages 4-11)
Proofreading: Lawrence Van Der Zande, Natalie Mar, Rob Mathers and Shirley Cooper-Dixon.
Distribution: Lucky Kodiumuku, Eng Chuan Tan, Kit Lee Pang, Wayne Roy Finn, Lynne Jackson, Winsom Jackson, and Anne Paige.

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Please send all submissions and ideas to Nicholas the editor: editoret@bswa.org.
We consider all types of content that is relevant to the local and international BSWA community. Aim for 650 words per page.
We are also looking for more page design volunteers (we use inDesign).
Kathina Ceremony 2018
at Jhana Grove

Photo credit: Boon Tan & Matt Gibson