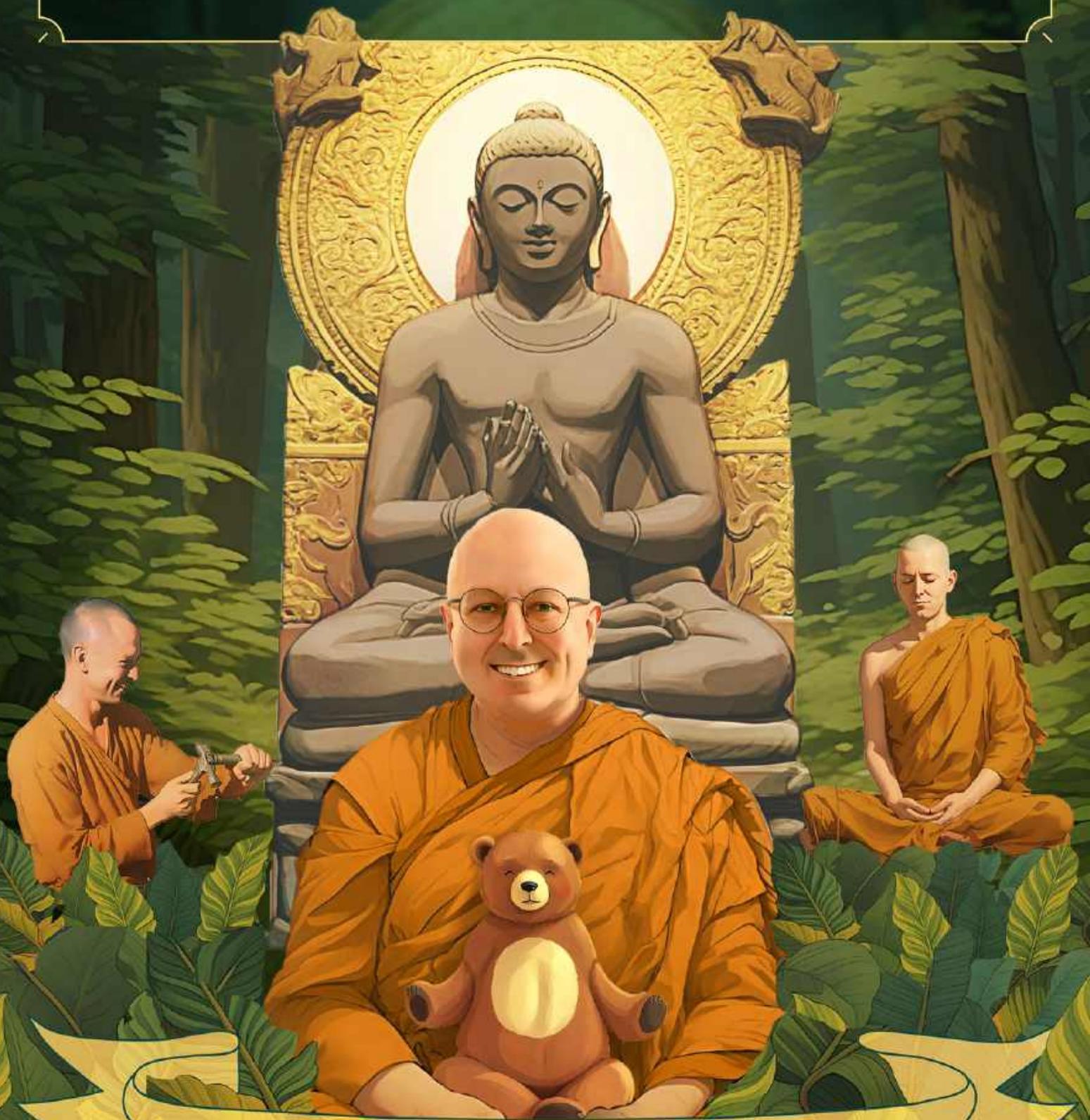
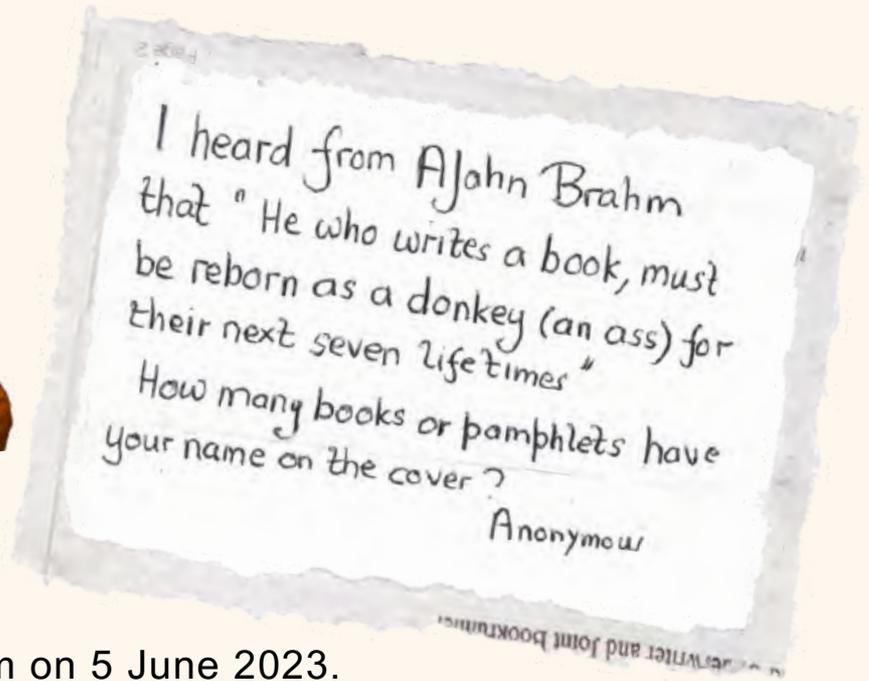
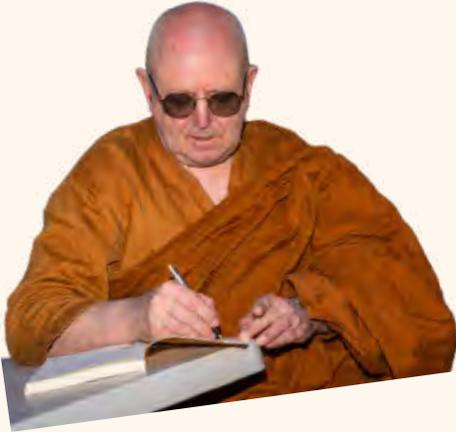


SOFT AS COTTON . . . 
— STRONG AS **STEEL**



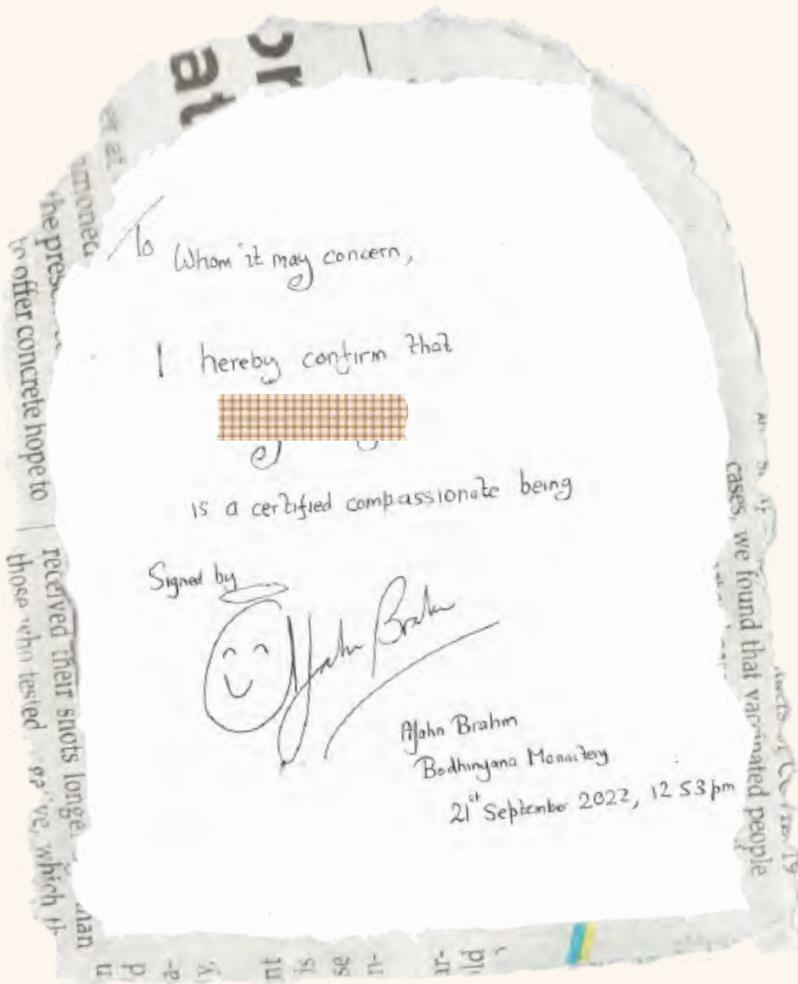
Ajahn Brahm's 50th Bhikkhu Anniversary

A Funny and Caring Monk



Written by Ajahn Brahm on 5 June 2023.

Ajahn Brahmali was pranked by Ajahn Brahm during the June 2024 Sutta Retreat when Ajahn Brahm included this anonymously handwritten question during the Q&A.



During a difficult time for a BSWA volunteer facing criticism, Ajahn Brahm invited them to Bodhinyana.

To show support, he spontaneously wrote a heartfelt 'certificate' on recycled paper, affirming their kindness and compassion.

SOFT AS COTTON
STRONG AS STEEL

AJAHN BRAHM'S
50TH BHIKKHU ANNIVERSARY
(5TH DECEMBER 2024)

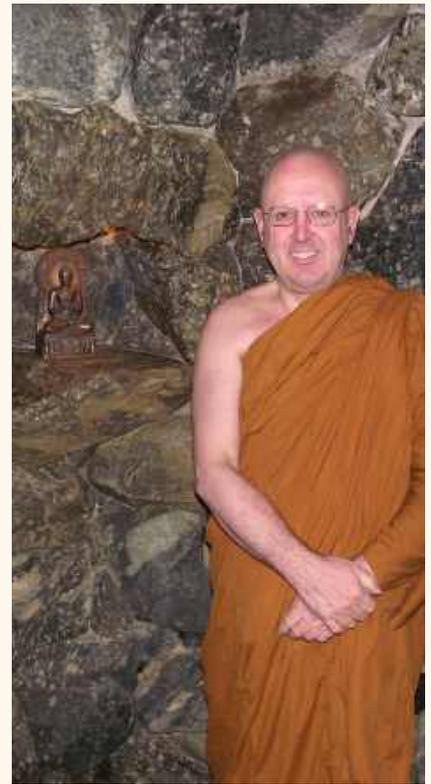
PUSH-UP x3



SMILE!

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OPENING REFLECTION



By Sol Hanna, BSWA Ex-President and Honorary Member

Ajahn Brahm's impact upon the world in the twenty-first century is both broad and deep. In terms of breadth of influence, Ajahn Brahm's teachings have been listened to well over millions of times in print, audio and video formats as well as in person at countless public talks, and in multiple languages! Ajahn Brahm's teachings have been translated into at least twelve different languages. The Polish language YouTube channel which features mostly translated Dhamma talks by Ajahn Brahm has had over 37 million views. The number of listens to Ajahn Brahm's teachings via YouTube and podcast formats alone is well over 100 million.

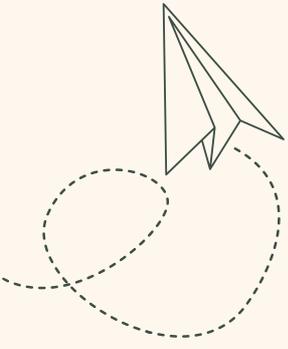
One can begin to appreciate the depth of impact of Ajahn Brahm's teachings when you read the comments that people make to his talks online. The comments frequently express gratitude. Quite a few go so far as to say that his teachings have saved their lives.

Ajahn Brahm's teachings have led many people to deep tranquillity and insight. It's impossible to quantify this. However, if you've seen some of the people coming off a nine-day meditation retreat by Ajahn Brahm with open, relaxed expression in their faces and a radiance in their eyes, you can get a sense for how tranquil and powerful is the place that Ajahn Brahm's instruction leads to. Then there's the hundreds of people who've given up all they own and even left their names behind to go forth as a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, out of faith in him.

Ajahn Brahm has had a powerful and positive impact upon the lives of millions of people so far during his fifty years as a monk. And his teachings will echo through time, influencing people for decades, if not centuries to come. All of this came from a simple monk with no money, no property and who looks forward to nothing more than the next opportunity to sit quietly in meditation. He never sought out this fame and positive repute. As recently as 2000, he was writing articles in Buddhist journals under a pseudonym in order to avoid the problems that would come with fame. He never goes to give a talk anywhere unless he's invited. He knows very little about marketing, computers nor the internet. All of these things came and found him. So who is Ajahn Brahm and what has led to him having such a tremendously positive influence in the modern world?

In the pages that follow you will read stories of personal transformation - both of Ajahn Brahm himself and of many of his disciples. There are stories that will make you laugh and stories that will bring you to tears. These are stories of spiritual insight which stemmed from the profoundly wise and compassionate teachings of Ajahn Brahm. These stories begin with the personal transformation of London boy Peter Betts into Venerable Brahmavamsa, and finally into the well known and loved spiritual teacher Ajahn Brahm. It is the sincere wish of everyone who has contributed to this publication that you will be moved by these stories of perseverance, faith, kindness, stillness and wisdom. We also hope that you are inspired by how one simple monk can go on to impact the lives of millions of people around the world. Confirmation that the Sasana is alive and well twenty-six centuries after the Lord Buddha delivered his first teaching.

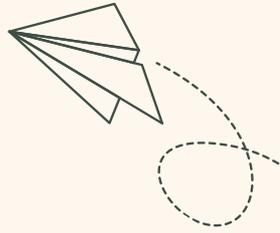




The meaning of life
IS
the meaning that you give
to your life



Ajahn Brahm **A Life**
of Service



Ajahn Brahm - A Life of Service

Early Years

Ajahn Brahmavamsa (meaning “He of Brahma’s lineage) Mahathera (known simply as Ajahn Brahm) entered the human world on 7th August 1951 on a summer’s day, in London, United Kingdom. He was a ray of sunshine for his parents, and was known as baby Betts initially, as his parents had no name for a boy as they were certain they were having a daughter. He was later named Peter Betts.



Peter had been born into a working class family in post-war London, a time of relative hardship for many people, including the Betts family. They lived in a council flat, designated for people with limited means.

Despite the lack of material wealth, Peter grew up in a caring and loving household. It was in this household that Peter’s father famously told the young adolescent, “The door of my house is always open to you, no matter what you do in life.”



One Christmas, Peter was given a fishing rod by his grandfather. Before the youngster got the opportunity to make any bad kamma, his father decided he first needed to test the rod. Testing ... testing ... break! The fishing rod was no more. Grandfather was upset, and Peter was furious. Only later did he understand his good fortune in being saved from killing animals.

Peter was a diligent student at school and received a scholarship to study Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University. At Cambridge he joined the university’s Buddhist Society and after a few weeks, at the age of 18, he saw a monk for the first time. It planted a seed in him that grew over the years while in Cambridge and over time, to become a monk.

After graduating from Cambridge, he taught in a high school for one year before travelling to Thailand to become a monk.

His Life as a Bhikkhu

Ordained as a monk (bhikkhu) by Somdet Buddhajahn at Wat Saket in Bangkok in 1974, Ajahn Brahm travelled to north-east Thailand in January 1975 and became a student of meditation master Ajahn Chah at Wat Pa Pong. In that same year he became a founding Sangha member of Wat Pa Nanachat, a monastery established close by to Wat Pa Pong by Ajahn Chah to cater for the increasing number of foreigners that were coming to ordain and train with him. Ajahn Brahm became the Vinaya (code of monastic discipline) master at Wat Pah Nanachat from 1975 until his departure in 1983. His Vinaya notes are still authoritative for most Western Buddhist monks in the Theravada tradition.



In 1983, Ajahn Sumedho asked Ajahn Brahm to travel to Perth to assist Ajahn Jagaro. Later that year, BSWA purchased a rural and forested property south of Perth to create Bodhinyana Monastery - the first monastery in the Ajahn Chah's forest tradition in the Southern Hemisphere. In 1995, Ajahn Brahm became the Abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery upon the departure of Ajahn Jagaro, and remains the Abbot to this day.

In 2002 Ajahn Brahm entered a 6-month meditation retreat. He didn't speak to a single person for six months; he even picked up his food from a box. All he did was meditate and read the occasional sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya. After the six months Ajahn Brahm was beaming. His mind had been so peaceful for so long that for the first few days after the retreat he was virtually unable to speak. After he regained his powers of speech, he gave a talk to the Sangha called "Six months of bliss."

In October 2004, he was awarded the John Curtin Medal for his vision, leadership and service to the Australian community by Curtin University; and in 2006 the King of Thailand conferred upon Ajahn Brahm the title "Tan Chao Khun" which is something akin to being appointed a bishop. As a result, Bodhinyana Monastery receives a symbolic monk's robe every year from the King of Thailand, a sign of royal patronage of the monastery.

Establishment of Dhammasara Nuns' Monastery

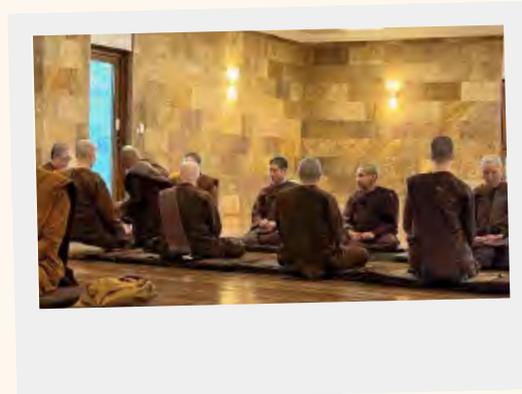
In 1997, Ajahn Brahm was the main driving force in establishing an independent and separate nuns' monastery, namely Dhammasara Nuns' Monastery at Gidgegannup north-east of Perth. Dhammasara gradually developed under the pioneering leadership and capable hands of the abbot, the late Ajahn Vāyāmā and continues to progress under Ajahn Hasapanna as Abbot.



Bhikkhuni Ordination

Then in October 2009, Ajahn Brahm was instrumental in facilitating the Bhikkhuni ordination. It is possibly the most momentous event in the history of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia. The event was later listed by an American Buddhist pundit as the third most significant event in the entire Buddhist world in 2009.

Almost a decade after the pioneering bhikkhunī ordination, its positive consequences continued to be felt. In June 2019, Ajahn Brahm was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, an honour bestowed by Queen Elizabeth, "for significant service to Buddhism, and to gender equality."



Building the Retreat Centre

In 2001 the Buddhist Society acquired a property diagonally across Kingsbury Drive from Bodhinyana Monastery. The Sangha decided to build a kuṭi for monastics, with all facilities, enabling long-term and independent retreats. The kuṭi was built and has since housed a number of monastics, both male and female including residing and visiting monastics.

In 2003 Ajahn Brahm first suggested that the new property would be suitable for a retreat centre as the Buddhist Society had been renting premises for its retreats for a couple of decades and a dedicated Buddhist retreat centre was considered by many as highly desirable. The new property was seen as an ideal location for many reasons: it was secluded and quiet, with beautiful natural bushlands; it was close to Bodhinyana Monastery, which would allow Ajahn Brahm to teach retreatants while simultaneously keeping an eye on the monastery; and the Buddhist Society did not need to look for another piece of land.

If it hadn't been for Ajahn Brahm's optimism, the Buddhist Society might never have had a retreat centre.

By the end of 2008 the retreat centre was fully financed by Ajahn Brahm's supporters locally and overseas. The opening ceremony was held in April 2009. The name of the centre, Jhana Grove, had been suggested by one of Ajahn Brahm's disciples to honour his style of teaching. It was a proud moment. Another amazing vision from Ajahn Brahm.



Spreading the Dhamma

Ajahn Brahm has almost unlimited energy for teaching the Dhamma. He has a deep conviction that he has an important message to deliver, and his audience can usually sense that they are receiving the genuine article. Add his remarkable wit and sense of humour, and it is easy to see why he is such a popular teacher and speaker.

Ajahn Brahm's teachings have resonated not just in Asia but also in the West. His first book, *Opening the Door of Your Heart*, has been translated into 15 different European languages. His second book, *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond*, is often quoted in meditation circles as an authoritative guide on meditation. He has a large following in Europe and North America.

In the end, the most important reasons for Ajahn Brahm's success as a teacher are simply his high energy levels and his willingness to work tirelessly. How does he achieve this? By being at ease and relaxed in virtually all situations, and by enjoying what he does. And by not taking himself at all seriously.



Currently, Ajahn Brahm is the Abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery, the Spiritual Director of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, the founding Chair of the Australian Sangha Association, the Spiritual Director of Santi Forest Monastery in New South Wales, the Spiritual Advisor to the Buddhist Society of Victoria (including Newbury Buddhist Monastery) in Victoria and Bodhinyana International Foundation in Hong Kong, the Spiritual Patron of the Buddhist Fellowship in Singapore and Ehipassiko Foundation of Indonesia, and the inspiration behind the Brahm Centre in Singapore, and the Ajahn Brahm Society of Sri Lanka.

He has also written several books including 'Opening the Door of Your Heart', 'Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond' (A Meditator's Handbook), 'The Art of Disappearing', to name a few.

His Dhamma talks are downloaded in the millions and have inspired many to come to Australia to take up ordination at both Bodhinyana and Dhammasara Monasteries.

Despite all that he has given and continues to give, he lives simply in a small cave in the forest, has no money or bank account, and enjoys nothing more than a cup of tea and sitting in meditation.

Journey of Ajahn Brahm 7 August 2024 (6.5 mins)

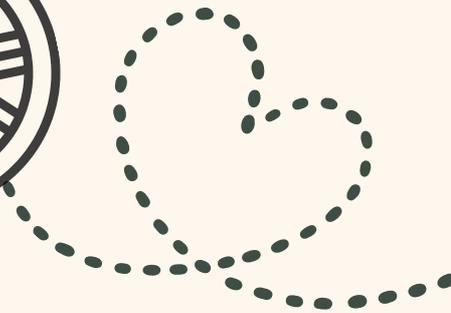
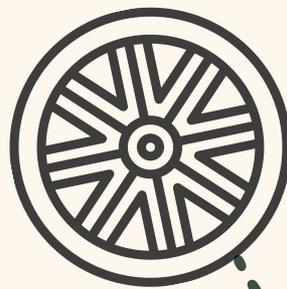
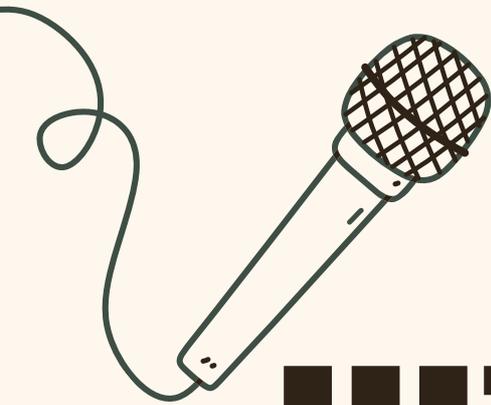


<https://youtu.be/Fg4IRHoruWM>



You may read Ajahn Brahm's full biography in the following book: **Emptiness and Stillness**
<https://bswa.org/teaching/emptiness-stillness-tribute-ajahn-brahm/>

Excerpt from "Meet Ajahn Brahm" from "Peaceful Times - February 2024".



Wisdom of the Dhamma



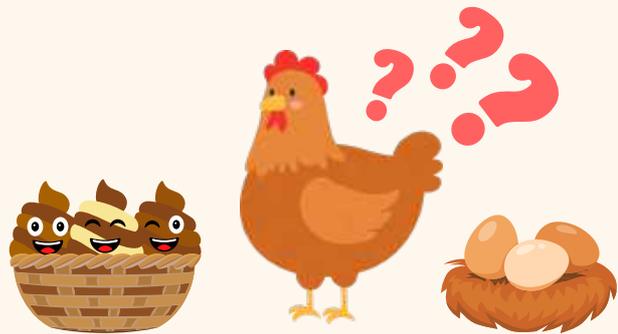
Metta to the Past

(taken from Opening up to Kindfulness, lightly edited)

A long time ago, there were two chicken farmers in neighbouring farms.

The first chicken farmer would get up early in the morning, take a basket and go to the chicken shed to take the produce of the previous night. He opened the door of the chicken shed, went inside and collected all the chicken dung — all the little pellets which the chickens had excreted the night before.

He put that into his basket and left all the eggs in the shed to rot. Now that was a very dumb chicken farmer.



The second chicken farmer went into the shed in the morning with his basket. He collected all the eggs and left the chicken shit to rot. That was a clever chicken farmer because with the chicken eggs he could make an omelette for his family and also sell the remainder in the market.

The moral of that story is: whenever we think of the past, when we collect the memories of what we "produced" the previous day, week or year, what do we collect? Do we collect the poo or the eggs? I think many of you will identify with the first type of chicken farmer.

Why is it that we collect only smelly unpleasant stuff and leave the eggs or the good stuff to rot? We forget about the good stuff which has happened to us.

For example, you may come home from work, and your partner might say, "Did you have a good day at work today?" What do you remember? What do you bring home from work? "No. My boss argued with me today." Or, "The telephone was out of order." "The computer crashed." Why is it that we always collect the stinky, rotten stuff?

Instead, when we look at the past, we can be like the second chicken farmer. We can collect the beautiful stuff and leave all the rubbish back in the office to rot there. Why is it that when we come home from university, from work, or even just from shopping, we can't just say, "Oh, I had a wonderful time today."?

The point is: as human beings, we have been taught to have a fault-finding mind. So whenever we look at the past, we always remember what went wrong. We collect the dung. We don't collect the eggs.

Sometimes people say: "Oh, but Ajahn Brahm, if you don't remember the bad stuff, you'll probably repeat the mistakes of the past. You can learn from your mistakes."

Any psychologist would know something which the Buddha taught thousands of years ago: you learn much more from your successes than you learn from your mistakes. So if we can remember all the wonderful things that happened in the past, all the great achievements and successes that we've been part of, not only does that encourage us and lift up our happiness and energy, but it also makes us want to repeat those successes.

When I was young, I was told: "If you just recall all the good things you've done, you'll get a big head." "Don't praise yourself, don't remember the good things from the past, just remember your faults. Work on those and become a better person."

BUT! You become a better person not by looking at your faults but by remembering all the good things that happened. Also, you don't get a big head—you get a big heart. This is what we're supposed to be doing in life: to get big hearts.

As you allow the past to come in and as you embrace everything which has ever happened to you, there is forgiveness. There's an old Australian story about this.

There were two soldiers in their sixties meeting together at a reunion. Both had served in the Malay Peninsula during the Second World War. When they were in Singapore, the Japanese army captured that city and they were interned in a prisoner-of-war camp and treated very badly. However, they were among the few lucky ones who survived—but only just. They became great friends because of the troubles they'd been through together.

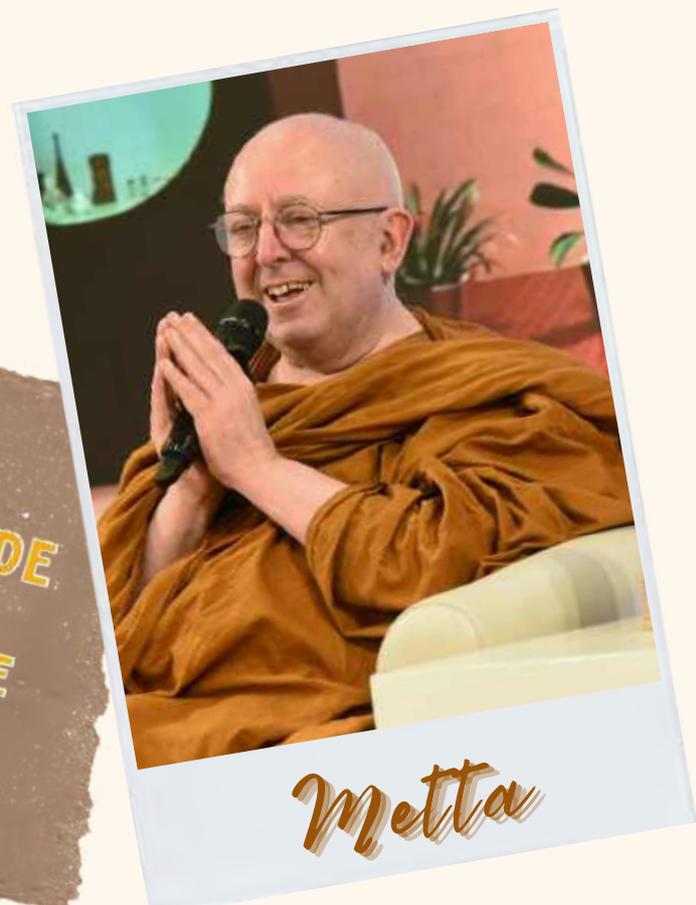
At that reunion one said to the other, "Mate, have you forgiven the Japanese yet for what they did to us in those camps during the war?" His friend said, "Forgive? I can never forgive what they did to us and the way they killed and tortured our friends. Never! What about you?" His friend said, "I forgave them years ago. You, my friend, are still in that prison camp." That was such a meaningful exchange. Until that old soldier could forgive, he was still being tortured by the experience of his past.

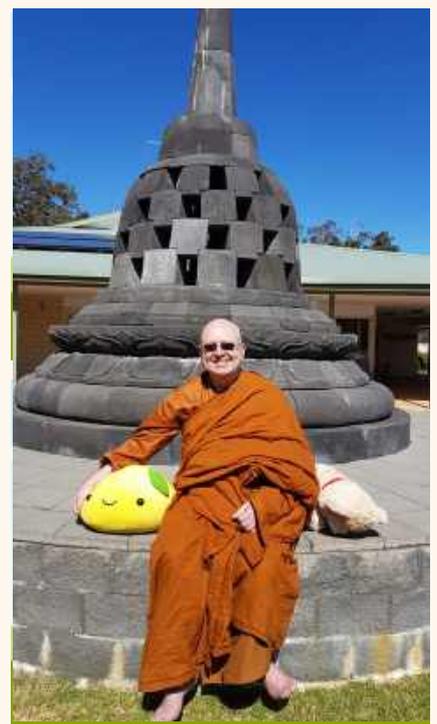


This is one of the problems we have when we carry the terrible burden and pain of the past. What metta does is to accept, embrace, forgive, and learn. When we say we forgive the past, it doesn't mean that we approve of the past. We are not saying, "What a wonderful thing that was." What we do is to embrace it.

Lastly, whenever a person close to you, someone you love, gets angry at you, never think that it's your fault. It has nothing to do with you; it's everything to do with them. They are scolding you, not because you've done something wrong, but because they're not feeling well or they're hurt, and they're taking it out on the ones they love. It's a way of releasing pent-up tension. Deep down they think their partner will understand them.

If someone shouts at you, don't get upset; just give that person a big hug and say: "Never mind." Don't take it personally. This is how we forgive the past.





The Original Manuscript of "Opening the Door of Your Heart"

THE TWO BAD BRICKS

When I showed our first visitors around our fledgling monastery, I'd always try to take them somewhere else than past my brick wall. I hated anyone seeing it. I took them another way round. Then one day, some 3-4 months after finishing the wall, I was walking with a visitor and he saw that brick wall.

"That's a nice wall", he casually remarked.

"Sir", I replied in surprise "have you left your glasses in your car? Are you visually impaired? Can't you see those two bad bricks which spoil the whole wall?"

What he said next changed my whole view of that wall, of myself, and of many other aspects of life. He said "Yes. I can see those two bad bricks. But I can also see the 998 good bricks as well."

HOW TO TAKE A BREAK

Without hesitation, the old monk said "The hall is finished."

"What do you mean 'the hall is finished'?", the visitor replied, taken aback, "It hasn't got a roof. There are no doors or windows. There are pieces of wood and cement bags all over the place. Are you going to leave it like that? Are you mad? What do you mean 'The hall is finished'?"

The old abbot smiled and gently replied "What's done is finished" and then he went away to meditate.

That is the only way to have a retreat or to take a break. Otherwise our work is never finished.

postscript: I told this story to a large audience one Friday evening in Perth. On the following Sunday, an angry parent came to tell me off. He had attended that talk together with his teenage son. On Saturday evening, his son wanted to go out with his friends. The father asked him "Have you finished your homework yet, son?"

His son replied "As Ajahn Brahm taught us at the temple last night, Dad, what's done is finished! See ya."

So the following week I taught:-

4.
THE IDIOTS GUIDE TO PEACE OF MIND

A network diagram with grey nodes and lines, some nodes highlighted in light blue, set against a white background.

Tributes

from Ajahn Brahm's
Monastic Network

A solid orange horizontal bar.

Bodhinyana Monastery

Western Australia, Australia

bswa.org/location/bodhinyana-monastery



Ajahn Brahm, The Mole

by Ajahn Brahmali

Strewth, this is how it happened.

I was handed a recording of a talk by a meditation teacher I had never heard of. I was told in a hushed voice to “Give it straight back when you’re finished!” There was an air of secrecy. I had the sense of being let in on something special, something the people in charge were not quite happy about. It was exciting. As so often, contraband had the sweetest of tastes. I had been introduced to Ajahn Brahm, the mole.

The above incident happened over thirty years ago, well before my arrival in Perth. I later discovered that Ajahn Brahm is the epitome of an open and accessible spiritual teacher. Still, he has always relished the role of the outsider, the one who challenges when no-one else is willing, a character trait that sometimes consigns him to the underground.

His independence is one of Ajahn Brahm’s most striking qualities. Looking at the history of Buddhism, the greats of the past were strong individuals who were unafraid of going against the mainstream. Indeed, the Buddha himself is the foremost example of this. He broke radically with the philosophical and spiritual traditions of the day. Most fundamentally, where everyone else was seeing a self, he argued there was no such thing.

There are many contemporary examples, too. Ajahn Chah distanced himself from an often-decadent Sangha in Thailand. He followed the monastic rules. He meditated. He sought advice only from a few impressive monks, such as Ajahn Mun.



Ajahn Brahm, The Mole (cont.)

He often raised eyebrows – or rather, he would have, if monks in Thailand didn't shave them off! – as when he ate from his almsbowl in the presence of the King. Ajahn Chah was not afraid of charting his own course.

Then there is the German monk Ven. Nyanavimala. He started his monastic life at the Island Hermitage in Sri Lanka, where he studied and learnt the suttas by heart. He then wandered all over the island for 35 years, looking for suitable places to stay and practice meditation. Like Ajahn Chah, he is regarded as one of the true meditation masters of the modern age.

Of course, independence and rebelliousness are no guarantee of wisdom. Some people choose to be outsiders because of ego, greed, or to build a following. In such cases it is worse than useless. But when independence is combined with a questioning mind and an uncompromising search for truth, it has the potential to give rise to profound insight. It is such individuals who become the great teachers and sages in our world.

Ajahn Brahm fits the mould of such independent monks. From the very beginning he went his own way. Where tradition suggested that you just follow your teacher, Ajahn Brahm studied the monastic rules and the suttas in detail. Where tradition said that samādhi was a sidetrack and vipassanā meditation the way to go, Ajahn Brahm taught the importance of jhāna, partly inspired by the suttas. Where most monasteries are based on communal participation in various activities, Ajahn Brahm set up a monastery that, in his own words, was “a community of hermits”. Where many people said that women cannot receive the full ordination, Ajahn Brahm disagreed and set out to fill the gap.

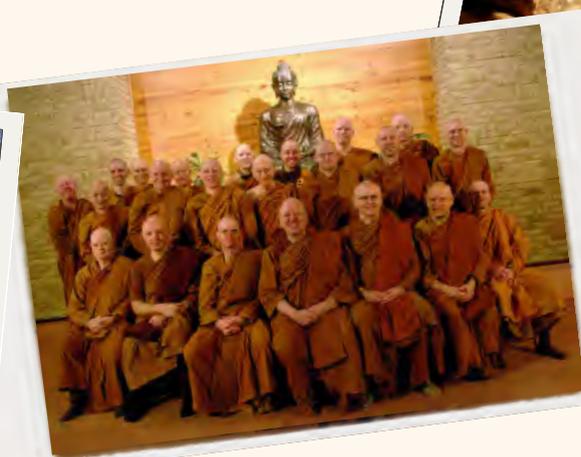
Ajahn Brahm, The Mole (cont.)

Sometimes being independent had dire consequences. Part of the reason his teachings were passed to me in secrecy on that day over 30 years ago was that he was already controversial for teaching the jhānas. Yet that was only a foretaste. After the bhikkhunī ordination in Perth in 2009, he was severely criticised and ostracised by his peers at a large meeting in Thailand. I later asked him how he felt about it. He told me that he only did one thing: he asked himself if he had done anything wrong. When he realised he had not, he let it all go. Questioning, the search for truth, and full integrity.

In celebrating the 50th anniversary of Ajahn Brahm's ordination, we are celebrating a remarkable life. I suspect his only regret is all the attention that comes with this. In one way he might be a mole, but in another way he is a very public figure. I have no doubt that he would prefer to be a mole in both ways, and that, if he could, he would go deep underground and disappear from the world. Paradoxically, given all the publicity around this anniversary, **the best gift we can give Ajahn Brahm is offering him more space and leaving him alone.** He can then become the true mole that he has always aspired to be.

Happy anniversary, Ajahn!

With much respect,
Ajahn Brahmali



Dhammasara Monastery

Western Australia, Australia

bswa.org/location/dhammasara-monastery



Dear Ajahn Brahm,

We wish to express our heartfelt congratulations and anumodanā on this landmark occasion, the fiftieth anniversary of your bhikkhu ordination.

In those fifty years you have done so much, with such an open heart, to support women in monastic life, beginning in the very early days when eight or ten precept nuns were welcomed to stay and practice at Bodhiñāna Monastery and to whom you offered encouragement and, after you became the abbot, guidance and teachings.

Then came the pivotal role you played in the establishment of Dhammasāra in 1998 – from finding the property and acquiring it at that thrilling auction, fundraising to construct the initial buildings (the modest but magic everything-can-be-done-here - Nuns' Cottage and a few kutis) and then even more major fundraising to construct the expansive Sala Complex with full facilities as well as proper access road into the monastery, completed in 2016, that today enables a much bigger monastic community to exist and function.

At the same time, you have also given invaluable assistance in developing the “human infrastructure,” centred on the nuns themselves. You have provided teachings on both Dhamma and Vinaya as well as support and advice on monastery business when needed, while at the same time encouraging, and indeed sometimes insisting on, the independence of the Dhammasāra Nuns' Community in running their own affairs.



And who can forget the historic occasion of the first bhikkhunī ordination in the Theravāda tradition in Australia on October 22, 2009, when the four ten-precept nuns of Dhammasāra took full ordination? We certainly can't. The crucial part you played in that, and the unwavering way you stood behind it, despite a storm of criticism and at great personal cost, will always be remembered by us with deep gratitude.

Since then you have continued to support the higher ordination of each and every bhikkhunī at Dhammasāra (as well as many more outside the Dhammasāra community, even from the Tibetan tradition) by serving as Kammavācācāriya (officiant) in the bhikkhu side of the Dual-Sangha ordination procedure. After we have ordained as bhikkhunīs, you then continue to nurture us, from a distance, with fortnightly ovādas (short teachings), monastic Dhamma teachings, and personal support and guidance when requested.

You have also given the opportunity for nuns, not just from Dhammasāra but from all over the world, to attend your meditation retreats at Jhana Grove or spend the rains retreat (or longer) there under your guidance. Moreover, you have helped to support the establishment or growth of other bhikkhunī monasteries such as our branch Santi in New South Wales, Newbury in Victoria, and Anukampa in the UK.

It is rare to find a monk who has devoted so much time, energy, and care to help women live a well-supported monastic life with conducive conditions for Dhamma practice on par with bhikkhus. At the end of each of our ordinations, you have exhorted us on how taking on the higher precepts of a bhikkhunī empowers the stillness of one’s mind, which in turn empowers one’s wisdom, which is what enables full liberation from all suffering. As you say, “It’s all because of your precepts. So they’re really important.”

Thank you for being an inspirational exemplar of one who has lived half a century according to those higher precepts, dedicated fully to the study, practice and realisation of the Dhamma, as well as to selfless service to the Bhikkhu and Bhikkhunī Sanghas, the Buddhasāna, and beyond.

It is also rare to find a true kalyānamitta, in the higher sense of the word. Thank you for being ours.

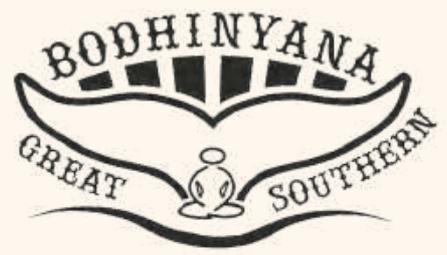
May you continue to enjoy good health and have many more fruitful (nay, sausage-ful) years in the robes for the benefit of all sentient beings.

With deep respect,
gratitude and muditā,
The Dhammasara Community



Bodhinyana Great Southern Western Australia, Australia

[bswa.org/location/
bodhinyana-great-southern-project-2/](http://bswa.org/location/bodhinyana-great-southern-project-2/)



How lucky I was to meet Ajahn Brahm.

Had no idea who I was about to meet (almost 20 years ago) when by chance a Thai friend took me to Bodhinyana Monastery for dana for the very first time.

With her English poor at best, she didn't bother making any effort explaining what we were about to experience, only saying "we go see Ajahn Palm...he a VERY BIG ajahn".

Being a fair dinkum, born and bred Aussie bogan with no understanding of anything other than V-8 muscle cars and Harley Davidson motorcycles, I had absolutely no idea where she was taking me.

I'd never even been to a church let alone a Buddhist Monastery, I actually thought she was taking me to some sort of weird ancient cultural thing where they did a heap of spooky oriental rituals, and that we'd be hanging out with other crazy weirdos.

However, as Ajahn Brahm and his monks approached for rice pindapata, all of my misconceived ideas including preconceptions about Buddhist monks being asian were completely turned upside down.

Instead I found myself in the presence of something very unique and special, something I'd never experienced before - peace, real peace, personified by Ajahn Brahm - this changed my mind forever and for the better.

Never having any ability or interest in reading, I failed high school English, so acquiring an academic understanding of the Buddhist texts was out of my reach.

After ordaining as a monk, this literary shortcoming instead became a stroke of luck; and rather than immersing myself in volumes of printed literature I was instead able to focus entirely on watching and listening to Ajahn Brahm - but not what he 'preached', rather how he 'walked the talk'.

Never needing to ask Ajahn one single question, everything I needed to know - the Buddha's teachings, the Dhamma and the Vinaya - was already right there in front of me, in every single one of Ajahn Brahm's words and actions.

Thank you Ajahn Brahm.

Kindest wishes and gratitude,

Ajahn Mudu (head monk)

Bodhinyana Great Southern Hermitage



Kusala Hermitage

Western Australia, Australia

bswa.org/location/kusala-hermitage



KUSALA HERMITAGE

The Kusala Ajahns
wish to chime in and exclaim



HIP-HIP-SADHUUUUU!!!



for Ajahn Brahm's 50th Bhikkhu Birthday

Many happy non-returns into
this or any other world!

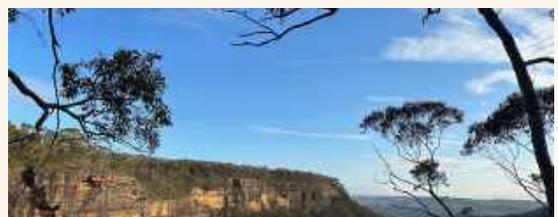
Ajahns Santutthi,
Jhanarato (J.R.) & Bodhidhaja

The Best Thing Ever

by Ayya Karunika

Meeting Ajahn Brahm was the best thing that happened in my life! When I arrived in Western Australia for my higher education, I had no idea who Ajahn Brahm was. However, it must have been my good kamma that the first Sri Lankan family I met in Perth were disciples of Ajahn. They invited me to join them on Friday evenings to go to Dhammaloka Centre to listen to Ajahn's talks. I have to be honest and say that the real reason I agreed as a young uni student was the prospect of having a yummy Sri Lankan dinner with my newly befriended family. Little did I know the entertainment which lay ahead, filled with jokes, inspiring stories and incredible wisdom from Ajahn Brahm.

Ajahn's teachings blew my mind. Even though I was born a Buddhist, this was the first time I heard the true teachings of the Buddha, and they made so much sense to me. I was hooked. Let me tell you a secret. Ajahn has the power to transform you. After listening to him and practicing according to his teaching, I lost all of my hair, wore brown robes and transformed into a nun. I am forever grateful to Ajahn Brahm for giving me and many other women the opportunity to become bhikkhunis and live this beautiful spiritual life.





What you learn from his way of teaching is exceptional. But if you have the opportunity to work with him, then you know that what you learn from his behaviour and conduct is at another level. I consider myself fortunate to have had many such opportunities over two decades. As the building project manager of Dhammasara's main monastery complex, I had to face many challenges. On one such occasion, when I was particularly worried about the builders making mistakes, Ajahn gave me a call. He was overseas at the time, but he still found the time to speak to me. He asked me whether I was working with humans or robots? I answered humans. Then he shared the wisdom that it is the nature of human beings to make mistakes! He advised me to accept the fact that the builders will make many mistakes and that we will raise more funds if we need to. Then he said, 'I'd rather lose money than lose a monastic'. This advice changed my entire approach to the building project, and it was stress free from that point on.

Another profound teaching I have benefited enormously from is his incredible ability to forgive and let go. I am not proud of admitting being a scallywag at times. After asking for forgiveness and having been forgiven so kindly by Ajahn, I managed to do the same stupid thing again. And what does Ajahn Brahm do? He forgives me always one more time. In fact, I even told him that I am still capable of reoffending. He then asked me whether I can forgive myself. When I meekly nodded, he told me to climb two steps and allow myself to fall back one step and keep going like that. His level of compassion and forgiveness is out of this world

I want to take this precious opportunity to thank Ajahn Brahm for the many ways he has helped me on the path and, most importunately, express my sincere gratitude for accepting me for who I am, for trusting me that I will do my best and for always giving me one more chance. I am sure I am not alone in saying this: the world is so very fortunate to have such an exceptional human being touching many hearts and saving many lives.

Congratulations Ajahn Brahm for making it to your 50th bhikkhu anniversary. May you live long for the benefit of many! Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu!

With great respect,

Ayya Karunika Theri

Santi Forest Monastery, New South Wales, Australia.



Patacara Bhikkhuni Hermitage

Western Australia, Australia

patacarabhikkhunihermitage.com



Greetings from Patacara Bhikkhuni Hermitage.

It is with deep respect that we offer our heartfelt congratulations to Ajahn Brahm on his 50th anniversary as a Bhikkhu.

We have the greatest appreciation for the work he has put into his practice on the Eightfold Path. Ajahn Brahm's teaching and service to the Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni Sangha and the Buddhist community is a tremendous contribution. In particular, we are deeply grateful for his role in making the first Bhikkhuni Ordination in Australia possible in 2009.

May he have good health, happiness and strength. May he attain Nibbana.

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu.

With respect, gratitude and mudita,
Ayya Seri





The Monk from Snowy River

Ajahn Brahm, the monk who won the hearts of the wild West and beyond

by the NBM Bhikkhu Sangha



The Buddha: *“Though they might manage a diverse spectrum of duties for their spiritual companions, they still feel a keen regard for the training in higher ethics, higher mind, and higher wisdom. Suppose there was a cow with a baby calf. She watches her calf devotedly as she grazes. In the same way, this is the nature of a person accomplished in view.*

MN 48: The Kosambians Sutta

<https://suttacentral.net/mn48/en/sujato>



WOW, Dear Ajahn Brahm. You’ve been wearing the banner of the Arahants for 50 YEARS NOW! Please savour all that has been achieved in those 50 years! All the incredible service you have given to the world, and, Ajahn, it certainly needs it, more than ever!

THANK YOU for your inspirational support and guidance for Newbury Monastery, even before the Monastery was founded in 2014! Without your incredible material support, it’s doubtful whether we would be here today! Your presence at our ‘fun-raising’ events really brought ‘oomph’ to them, and made it possible to realise the vision of establishing a four-fold community here at Newbury.

The Monk from Snowy River (cont.)



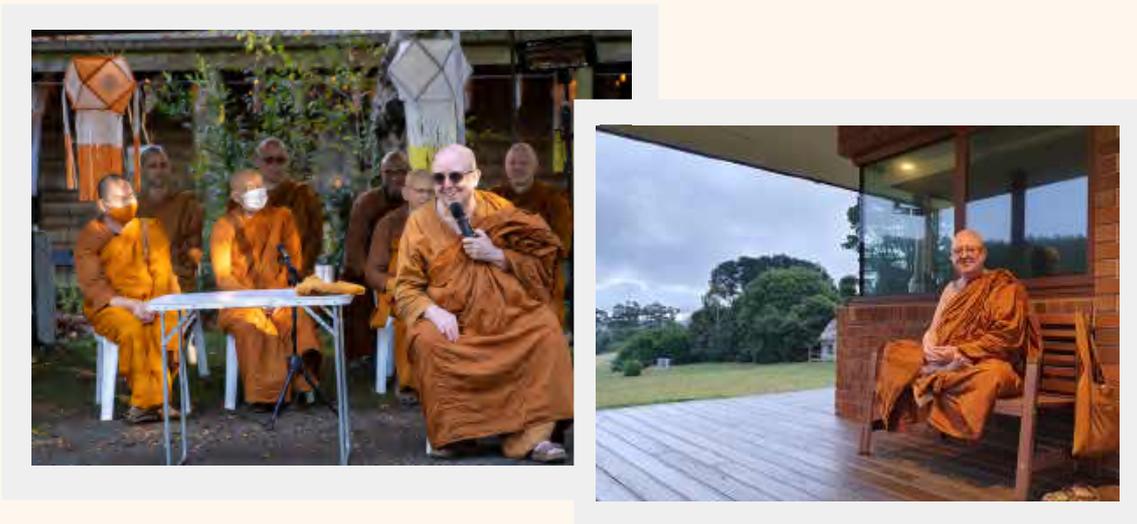
FEBRUARY 2022

And, thank you for your incredible Dhamma support, which has nourished this Community. You have been such a great role model for us as monastics, showing us how to live the Spiritual Life in a relaxed, happy and wise way. And as the quotation above mentions, you always remember and remind us what's important, amidst all the projects and busyness - the PRACTICE of virtue, stillness and wisdom. You are like a compass showing true north, or as the quotation above mentions, you have devotedly watched over us like a cow with her baby calf!

Your seemingly boundless kindness has touched all of us. And, thank you so much for your humour, especially all the bad jokes; it has helped us to 'lighten up' at times when we need it, and brought us back to the moment. You are such an inspiring example to us of giving the Dhamma, even when you are ill or exhausted. Your dedication to Vinaya, coming from compassion rather than fault finding, has been a great support and encouragement for the Sangha to practise the Vinaya well. You have also been a great example of one with few wishes, frugality: a reminder to us not to get caught up in acquiring and storing things.

The Monk from Snowy River (cont.)

However, Ajahn, your most extraordinary gift has been your devotion to meditation, especially the deep meditations, and the detailed and hands-on advice and encouragement you have given so freely and gleefully all these years! You are indeed worthy of your name, ‘in the lineage of Brahma’, the realm of the Jhāna Meditations. On top of these accolades, is your profound understanding of the Dhamma powered by your meditation, and your ability to present it with such clarity, depth and power.



As you know, Ajahn, much of the movie, “The Man from Snowy River” was made at Newbury. A humorous thought came to mind for a sequel, entitled “The Monk from Snowy River” with yours truly as the monk. What fun!

So, Ajahn, with climate change in mind, please keep Newbury in mind as ‘your summer residence.’

Thank you for blessing us for so long! May you continue to be a blessing to yourself, us and the world for as long as possible, Ajahn. And may you continue in excellent health!

Newbury Buddhist Monastery

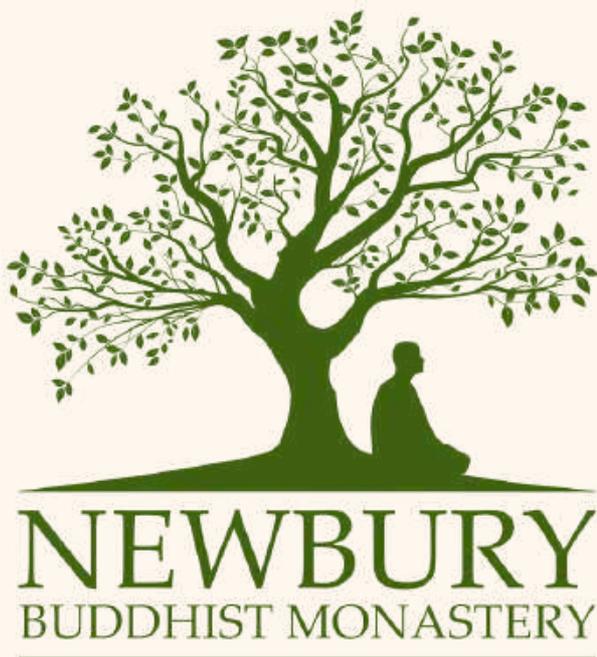
Victoria, Australia

bsv.net.au/monastery



*It is hard to find the noblest of men;
He is not born everywhere nor in every clan.
To whichever clan such a wise man is born,
That clan prospers.*

~ Dhammapada Verse 193 ~



Dear Ajahn Brahm,

You ARE that rare wise man born into the monastic clan.

Transcending worldly goals and values; understanding that AWAKENING TO UNIVERSAL TRUTH is possible regardless of gender.

We are most grateful Ajahn, and we will endeavour to strive with diligence on the Noble 8-fold Path!

With veneration: The nuns' community at
Newbury Buddhist Monastery.

Anukampa Grove Bhikkhuni Monastery

South East England, United Kingdom

anukampaproject.org



Dearly Revered Ajahn Brahm,

On your 50th Bhikkhu Anniversary I smile deeply within my heart, for this was the beginning of an exemplary life of renunciation and service that continues to benefit millions of people around the world, in unfathomable ways.

After morphing from a working-class boy in Acton into an outstanding Cambridge graduate, you had the wisdom to stop “becoming” anything at all - by renouncing! And this was the biggest gift you could offer, to others and yourself.

I sometimes joke that I was waiting for you to ordain before being born (I am 50 next May), and who knows, maybe there is some truth to this! What I can say for sure is that being acquainted with such a Noble kalyanamitta as your “non-self” is an unparalleled blessing. Indeed, without your spiritual integrity and courage, I (and many other women) almost certainly would not have had an opportunity to receive bhikkhuni ordination. And your duty of care did not end there – you continue to guide me with immense patience and kindness, throughout the ups and downs of my life as a bhikkhuni intent on the fruits of the Path.

They say that faith moves mountains - in my case, faith, or “inspired confidence,” (pasada) makes monasteries! In addition to the deep stillness and wisdom you have developed, your capacity to serve selflessly and joyfully makes you stand out. Inspired confidence arose in me through seeing you embody this perfect combination of profound practice and selfless service. I thought: “Yes, this is how I want my monastic life to develop!”



Whilst I'm still a toddler on the Path by comparison, the confidence and gratitude you inspire helps me set aside self-imposed limitations and take up the opportunities you have given me, not only to meditate but also to serve in a meaningful way, through establishing Britain's first Bhikkhuni Monastery, Anukampa Grove!

Your friendship and support throughout the long (and often arduous) journey have been steadfast. The way you support me is always encouraging and empowering; never undermining. Something you once said to me underscores your approach – when I told you that I regard you as my Dhamma Father, you replied: “I don't have daughters; I have sisters.”

Like all your disciples, I look up to you with tremendous respect. And like all “highly eliminated” masters (of all genders), you regard each one of us – including marginalised members of society that others may shut out – with respect in turn. This enables us to believe in and nurture our own capacity for freedom and peace, and hopefully be a cause for someone else to encounter the Dhamma. In this way, the blessings of your life keep rippling out.

Thank you for showing us that the qualities of the Dhamma that you radiate are universal and can be developed by all. May we rejoice in your freedom and express our gratitude to you through practicing well. And may you, Ajahn, be out of this world (...but not quite yet, sorry)!

With much metta, mudita, gratitude and respect,
Ven. (Ajahn) Canda



Snp 2.8 - The Boat / Dhamma (Nāvā) Sutta

If you would learn the teaching from someone, honor them as the gods honor Indra. Then they will have confidence in you, and being learned, they reveal the teaching.

Heeding well, an attentive one, practicing in line with that teaching grows intelligent, discerning, and subtle through diligently sticking close to such a person.

But associating with a petty fool who falls short of the goal, jealous, then unable to discern the teaching in this life, one proceeds to death still plagued by doubts.

It's like a man who has plunged into a river, a rushing torrent in spate. As they are swept away downstream, how could they help others across?

Just so, one unable to discern the teaching, who hasn't studied the meaning under the learned, not knowing it oneself, still plagued by doubts, how could they help others to contemplate?

But one who has embarked on a strong boat equipped with rudder and oar, would bring many others across there with skill, care, and intelligence.

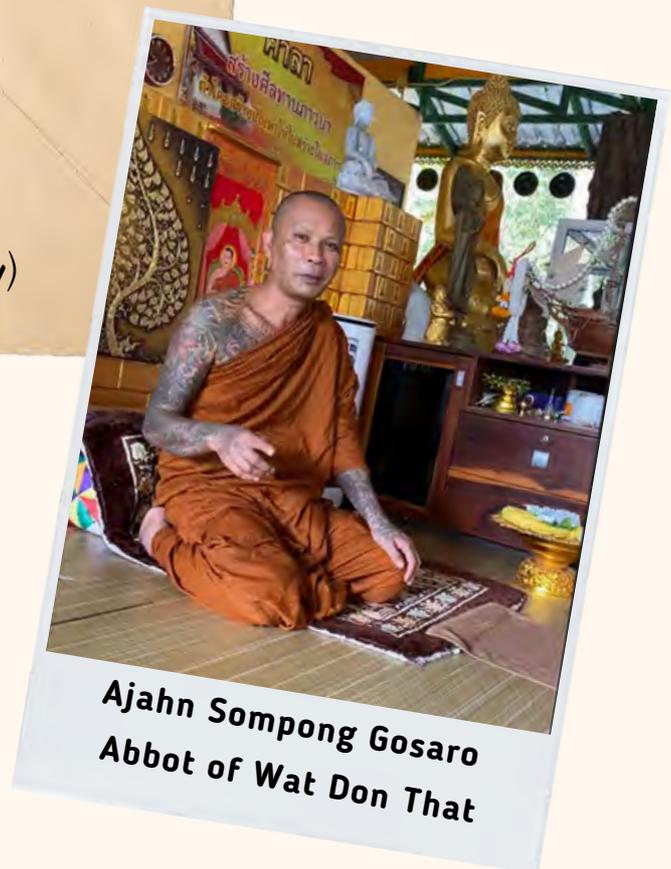
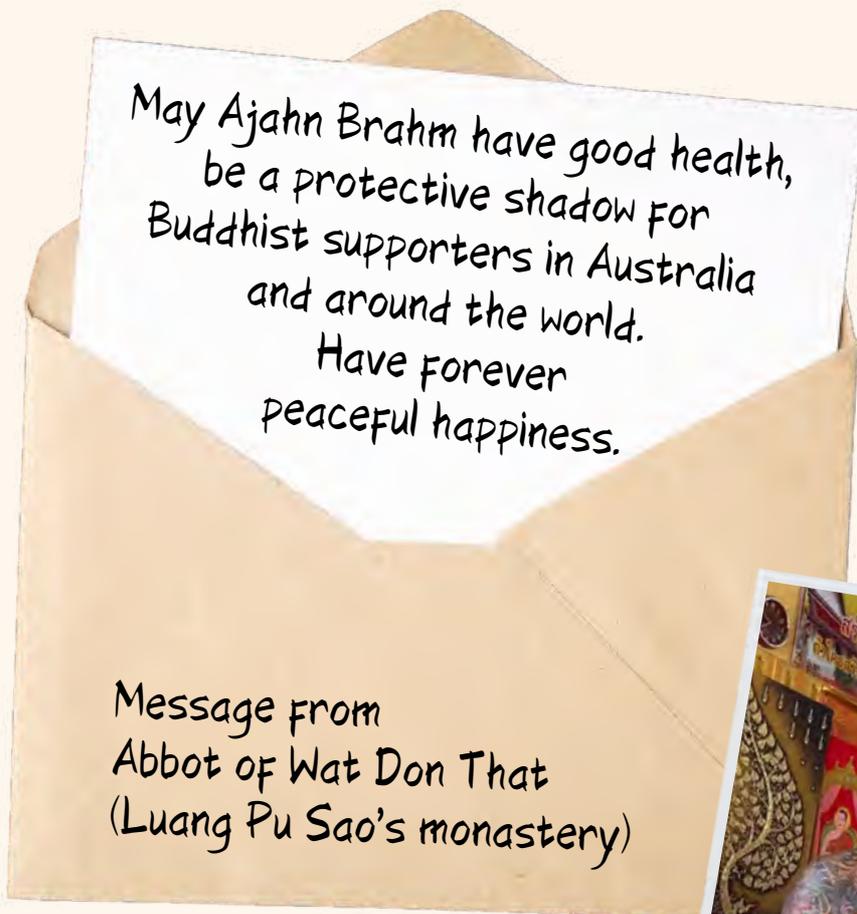
So too one who understands — a knowledge master, evolved, learned, and unflappable — can help others to contemplate, so long as they are prepared to listen carefully.

That's why you should spend time with a true person, intelligent and learned. Having understood the meaning, putting it into practice, one who understands the teaching would find happiness.

Wat Don That
Phibun Mangsahan District,
Ubon Ratchathani Province,
Thailand

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อ.พิบูลมังสาหาร
จ.อุบลราชธานี
ประเทศไทย

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Ajahn Sompong Gosaro
Abbot of Wat Don That

Wat Pah Ampawan

**Chon Buri District,
Chon Buri Province,
Thailand**



วัดป่าอัมพวัน

จ.เมืองชลบุรี

จ.ชลบุรี

ประเทศไทย

www.watpahampawan.com

MUDHITAJITTA

On this auspicious occasion of 50 vassas for Ajahn Brahm, expressing mudhitajitta and delight that Ajahn has been able to maintain monastic livelihood, upholding and practising vinaya of The Lord Buddha as an example for the Buddhist faithful and for disciples to continue conducting along the right path.

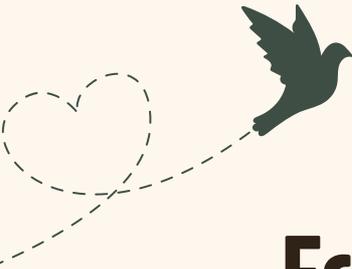
I, as a fellow monastic, express my delight and respect. May Ajahn have longevity, be prosperous on this path and be a refuge for disciples always.

With delight,
Phra Jundee



Ajahn Jundee, Abbot of Wat Pah Ampawan





From Inspiration to Ordination



Monastics Shaped by Ajahn Brahm



THANK YOU
FOR EVERYTHING!



Dear Ajahn, THANK YOU for everything:

- giving me the rare opportunity to ordain as a Buddhist monk.
- your smile and warmth, your lightness of being, that gave me the confidence and courage that I could live the monk's life for the 'freedom (nissarana) from all suffering'. I remember you mentioning quite often that the smiles of the Thai monks at Wat Buddhapadipa in London encouraged you to ordain in Thailand.
- the 240 volt charge of Metta that I experienced, totally 'out-of-the-blue,' during my first teaching, which I attribute to you, as I wasn't teaching Metta at all.
- those walks with you along Gardiner's Creek, near the BSV in Melbourne, on crisp Melbourne mornings when I was a novice in 1997. I still remember on one occasion when we were walking and my mind became really silent.
- for the quality time and advice you have given me, especially at times when I needed it most!
- and for being the best landlord ever, allowing me to stay in the kuti at Newbury dedicated to you.

Nissarano
Newbury Buddhist Monastery



Vesak 2024



Gratitude

Respectful greetings to Ajahn Brahm and most sincere appreciation and respect to your life dedicated to the Buddha's teachings; for truly living it and hence benefiting us all on every level.

May we be worthy of it and follow humbly in your footsteps in our own small way.

I am presently staying at the nuns Vihara in Leumeah, Sydney, especially established for old and sick nuns - admitting slowly that I qualify for it, ha ha. Bhikkhuni Upekkha from Perth is also spending the Vassa here with me, and so in my last years I have ideal conditions to deepen my practice and prepare for nirodha...

Keeping our message brief, as you would have thousands to read.

As ever, much sincere and great respect and gratitude,
Ven. Nirodha & Ven. Upekkha
Santi Forest Monastery



If you were given even half a chance, you would flourish.



I started to feel the call to monastic life back in 2003 when I was 25, while I was still living in Thailand. However, many people – monks or strangely, even female lay practitioners – said (at least to women) that it was not necessary to ordain to practice Dhamma seriously, or that when women say they want to ordain it's usually just on a fickle emotional whim and they wouldn't actually last long if they did. Some women told me that remaining a laywoman keeping eight precepts was even more conducive for practice than becoming a maechee,[1] where you may end up mainly cooking and cleaning for the monks. There were some supportive voices, but they were few and far between. It was not terribly encouraging. So I just nursed my aspiration quietly.

I met you for the first time after attending a Dhamma talk you gave in Bangkok in 2005. Soon after that, I was excited to learn that in Perth there was an independent 10-precept nuns' monastery affiliated with yours. I tucked that information away in my mental - and physical - filing cabinet. My yearning for monastic life grew stronger and so in 2008 I asked to interview you for an article on women's ordination I planned to write for the Bangkok Post.

To this day I remember very distinctly one sentence you said: "Many women, like you, would like to lead the monastic life. If you were given even half a chance, you would flourish." Finally, a monk who took a woman's interest in ordaining seriously, honoured it as being sincere, and openly affirmed that the opportunity to live as a monastic was needed by women just as it was by men. I was heartened. And emboldened.

So when you suggested I try staying at Dhammasara, I eagerly applied. I spent six weeks at Dhammasara in Dec. 2008 - Jan. 2009. At that time the nuns were still keeping ten precepts, but bhikkhuni ordination was being discussed and it seemed, considered for the future. Not long after my stay, I told you "It helped me decide that yes, I do want to ordain, and that I want to do it as a bhikkhuni." You replied, "It's gonna be tough, tough as ever, but you'll be opening up the way for many women to follow." "Well, that's why I want to do it." When I said this, your eyes sparkled, and in that moment I knew that that was your heart's wish - your selfless motivation in supporting bhikkhuni ordination.

Nonetheless, some nagging doubts about bhikkhuni ordination still cropped up in my mind, because when I talked to different monks in Thailand – Thai and Western – even one very well-respected Thai senior monk reputed to have "finished his work," they raised red flags. They said bhikkhuni ordination in the Theravada lineage could not be revived legitimately according to the Vinaya, or even if it could, bhikkhunis couldn't keep their Vinaya properly in the modern age, or they couldn't receive proper training with no senior bhikkhunis existing to teach them, or that ordaining as a bhikkhuni would trap you in a very confined circle with few bhikkhunis and monasteries for them in existence or few bhikkhu monasteries where they would be allowed to stay. One senior monk from the forest tradition which I followed, known for its strict adherence to the Vinaya (monastic rules) even said that if they allowed bhikkhunis into their tradition, it would drag down their Vinaya standards.

[1] White-robed shaven-headed female keeping eight precepts, considered in some respects a "nun" but technically still classified as an upasika (lay female devotee). Some live in mainly bhikkhu monasteries, others in independent maechee centres.



Again, not terribly encouraging. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that all this actually caused me a great deal of pain. Even if they may have said these things out of kind intentions. It reminded me of a cartoon I once saw of a bunch of boys in a tree house with a big sign tacked outside “Girls Keep Out!” But this wasn’t just a tree house. It was the Dhamma home I had finally found, where I wished to live out my most deeply cherished aspiration. And it wasn’t just a bunch of boys. It was the Sangha, teachers, and tradition I had previously completely respected, in an unconflicted way.

So I asked to interview you for another article, to pose to you all these questions people had raised and hear what I reckoned would be a different – more uplifting – take on them. Your answers were cogent and well-substantiated. They turned the conventional “wisdom” on the topic on its head. I hoped they would broaden the minds of any who read the article when it was published in April 2009.[2] Personally, they helped a great deal to allay my doubts. Considered together with Bhikkhu Bodhi’s seminal paper on bhikkhuni ordination, correspondence I had with the well-known progressive Thai monk Phra Paisal Visalo, and works by the pioneering Thai bhikkhuni Ven. Dhammananda, I became convinced intellectually that bhikkhuni ordination could be done and the bhikkhuni life could be led in accordance with the Vinaya.

But somehow, irrespective of my brain, I also just had this conviction deep in my bones: the modern Theravada revival of the bhikkhuni order was right according to both Dhamma and Vinaya. It’s what the Buddha would have wanted, and he would be rolling in his Parinibbana (so to speak, respectfully) if he knew how long it had been left for dead. I knew it would do great good, not just for women, but for the Buddhasasana, and even the world. So despite all the nay-saying from others, when I went forth as a samaneri (in Thailand) in July 2009, it was with a light and happy heart, free of any doubt.

And when I took bhikkhuni ordination in March 2012, held at Dhammasara and the second part at Bodhinyana, it was a most joyous occasion. It meant a great deal to me to be warmly welcomed not only by the bhikkhunis, but also by the bhikkhus, into the Dual Sangha – part of the family with my sisters and brothers in (patchwork) robes.

Thank you, Ajahn, for playing such an integral role in my path to bhikkhuni-hood. It was a great blessing to have you presiding over the bhikkhu side of my ordination. At the end of the ceremony, you gave this rousing exhortation: “Remember why you become bhikkhunis? To become enlightened. So really go for it. To become great beacons of hope for especially the female Sangha in this world.”

May it be so!

With immense gratitude and respect,
Munissara Bhikkhuni
Dhammasara Monastery

GO FOR IT



[2] The full transcript of this interview is available at <https://bswa.org/bswp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Why-Not.pdf>



I did a retreat with Ajahn Brahm years ago in Hong Kong. What a strange monk with his robes falling off, telling funny stories and signing books like a super star! At the same time, I was utterly intrigued. His meditation instructions led to very peaceful experiences, and the wisdom told through those simple, funny stories touched me deeply. I remember my friend said to me, "Well, he is just a good speaker." I thought to myself, "I don't think so. This monk teaches from experience."

Since that retreat, I was in touch with both the beauty and the contradictions in the Theravada tradition. Before my novice ordination, I listened to a talk he gave about the 2009 bhikkhuni ordination controversy. With tears streaming down my face, I was feeling so grateful that I had found a teacher who truly practices what he preaches. Teachers like Ajahn Brahm inspire me to trust that Dhamma teachings such as notself and kindness can be lived fully as Buddhist monastics, with joy, integrity and wisdom. It is more than just a monk standing up for gender equity. A healthy and balanced Sangha externally is a reflection of healthy development of our own minds. When our minds are partial, the way we develop our communities and societies will be partial, imbalanced and lacking harmony. By acting with integrity, Ajahn Brahm models highly developed and well-balanced cultivation of all the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

My deepest gratitude to Ajahn Brahm for his teachings and presence. May we all follow his example of living a life of joy, wisdom and tremendous kindness!

Bhikkhuni Pasada
Dhammasara Monastery



Ajahn Brahm has been my teacher for 20 years now. He has been the trusty guiding light for me all this time, and I cannot imagine getting where I am now without him. Most of the time, it's the little things a teacher gives you that you later appreciate, and it's the little things that keep pushing you towards nibbāna. What I most appreciate after living and learning from Ajahn is his consistent, easy-going personality. Many want to hear amazing stories, but living with someone you can trust and who trusts you has been the very thing that has taken me this far. And as we have all learned from Ajahn, enlightenment doesn't have to be all hard yakka, it can be done with good humour.

Life is suffering, but if you smile, it doesn't hurt so much.

With metta,
Ajahn Mudito
Newbury Buddhist Monastery



★ Grateful ★



Congratulations on this most auspicious occasion on which we rejoice with our teacher, who has given his life selflessly to help anyone understand the path to the deathless - the most valuable yet not easy to be appreciated and be accepted by everyone.

Ajahn Brahm is very wise, approachable, generous, grateful and kind. He teaches openly, freely sharing about everything he has experienced from the early period of his practice and throughout his monastic life - illnesses he contracted, pain, thirst, hunger etc. Having come from London and living in the backwaters of Thailand, he suffered, endured and recovered. Even a simple thing like a toothache had to be endured without going to a dentist. So, he had to improvise, like focusing on the pain till it's gone. Injections in hospitals were done with old and blunt needles which had to be stabbed into him. There were times when he was so sick with scrub typhus - almost to the point of death - when his teacher Ajahn Chah paid him a visit. All he did was to cleverly use psychology on him by saying "either you are going to get better, or you are going to die". Those words were enough to help a wise monk like Ajahn Brahm to recover from his illness. It was his wisdom and good kamma that helped him throughout the many episodes like this.

I met Ajahn Brahm when our family migrated to Perth from Kuala Lumpur in 1989. Through the recommendation of friends, we started visiting Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre and Bodhinyana Monastery. At the Buddhist Centre we listened to his Dhamma talks which were excellent as they were related to life. We were so attracted to it that we continued to frequent Dhammaloka and Bodhinyana for 17 years. I gained full confidence in him and considered him to be my lifelong teacher. I started practicing as a Buddhist. In 1992 Ajahn Jagaro asked me to become the Assistant Secretary on the BSWA Committee and from 1993-1997 it was an honour to serve as Secretary. Ajahn Brahm always received my minutes of the meeting with a big smile, even though my English was not very good.

Finally, after the death of my husband, I joined Dhammasara Nuns Monastery and became an anagarika in 2009 at the age of 67, and then a samaneri in 2011. When I became a Bhikkhuni in 2014, I was sooo [this is not a typo] happy because I feel I am now a full member of the Sangha. The name Gotami was chosen for me by my brother the late Bhante Dhammavuddho. It means "Distinguished Daughter" (of the Buddha).

I am very grateful to Ajahn Brahm. Without his teaching, I may not have become a nun, and without his support, may not have been able to do it at such an advanced age.

With much metta and gratitude,
Gotami Bhikkhuni
Dhammasara Monastery



Magically Inspiring

I remember vividly the time I “met” Ajahn Brahm in 2010. My story is unusual in that I was already an eight precept nun, living in Myanmar; however, due to ill-health I was struggling. Late one muggy night, I randomly picked and played an early “rains” talk on a CD by some unknown English monk (!) and was blown away by the outpouring of wisdom. Visceral feelings of peace, confidence and bliss overcame me - and the course of my monastic life changed forever.

After several letters to Ajahn Brahm, I felt compelled to seek him out. A few months later, I took leave of my preceptor in Myanmar and travelled to Germany to join Ajahn's retreat. It was a risk, not knowing if he would accept me as his student, nor having any means to support myself. During one Dhamma talk, Ajahn looked me straight in the eyes as he spoke of deep meditation and cessation. Despite 14 years of intensive practice in Asia and being well-acquainted with the Buddha's teachings, the power of Ajahn's conviction shifted something in me and spurred a deeper letting go. This helped me persevere through the uncertain years to follow.

About sixteen months later, at a small gathering in England, I met Ajahn Brahm again. He clearly remembered me and told me about bhikkhunis practicing in Perth. I was already booked in to spend the 2012 rains retreat at Bodhinyana Monastery and my heart leapt with hope. The prospect of full ordination felt congruent with the renunciation that had long since happened internally, yet that I never knew could be possible for me! With calm assurance Ajahn said, "Get to Australia and we'll take it from there." I had the sense that I was now being carried by a gentle, benevolent current - my faith had been well-placed. It was a magically inspiring time.

Later I was blessed to spend three years at Dhammasara with the bhikkhunis that Ajahn had told me about! And in April 2014 I entered the Buddha's dual Sangha – a global community of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. The Buddha gave women full bhikkhuni ordination because it is the most powerful vehicle for our Enlightenment. Training as the Buddha himself encouraged me to do, has strengthened my refuge in the Triple Gem and given me more courage to let go and serve in whatever ways I'm asked to do. As a result, practice has taken on a meaning beyond my own liberation.

By Venerable (Ajahn) Canda Bhikkhuni
Anukampa Grove Bhikkhuni Monastery





**"Supposing a tree fell down, Pooh,
when we were underneath it?"**

**"Suppose it didn't"
said Pooh after careful thought.
Piglet was comforted by this.**

- A. A. Milne

As someone who, like Piglet, tends naturally towards worrying and expecting the worst to happen, it has been tremendously helpful to learn from Ajahn Brahm, who like Pooh, seems to work on the assumption that things will work out and even if things go wrong, they won't go wrong in the way we expect so why bother worrying!

If not for the happiness and inspiration that I found here in Perth after my first visit in 2010, I would never have had the courage to let go enough to seek ordination. Ajahn Brahm's Wednesday night talks have nourished and sustained me through my monastic life. They have helped me to not expect disaster and catastrophe to strike at any given moment and to trust in my own and the goodness of others.

With Metta,
Ven. Acala
Dhammasara Monastery



YOU ROCK !



Thank you

An insignificantly-looking tree stood in a forest among seemingly beautiful trees. It was uneven, unbalanced, gnarly, knotty and weather-beaten. This tree stood for my mind which due to decades of conditioning felt chronically insecure, anxious and fearful. Ajahn Brahm sees the inherent beauty and potential in all minds and that with nurture each and every one will reveal its radiance. From the start, Ajahn saw the promising good qualities in this mind. Ajahn was convinced of this truth way ahead of time before I did and with whole-hearted encouragement, unrivalled support and boundless patience, was instrumental in helping to encourage me to believe also.

The belief on my part unfolded ever so slowly and gradually. It is only now, after decades in lay life and almost seven years as bhikkhu, that I see the abundance in beauty and a glimpse of unlimited potential of this mind. I'm now much more confident, positive and courageous. I ordained with Ajahn Brahm due to Ajahn's kindness, compassion and reputation as a meditation master. Only recently did I realise that I have the best teacher in Ajahn for this mind to unlock its potential.

Thank You, Ajahn.

With immense gratitude,
Nivato Bhikkhu
Bodhinyana Great Southern





Sadhu !!! 50 years service as a monk. A few times Ajahn had said he has run out of topics to talk about in the Dhamma talk. Ajahn, I can reassure you HAVEN'T!!!! Till these days, from moment to moment it still inspired, motivated and again and again pointed out how beautiful this path is. Thanks.

From Venerable Jhāyako
Bodhinyana Monastery



'Conditions fall apart.
Persist with diligence.' [DN16](#)

"Khaya-vaya-dhammā saṅkhārā,
Appamādena sampādehāti."



From Venerable Mettaji
Bodhinyana Monastery





Slowly, Slowly, Little by Little

In the early 90s, Friday nights would find me and my family at Dhammaloka, where we listened to a quiet monk say very sensible things. For me, this monk, Ajahn Brahm, became the standard by which other teachers were measured. Back then, I didn't understand the Buddha's teachings very well, but I knew I wanted the happiness that Ajahn talked about and seemed to have. And so, almost unknowingly, I set out on a lifelong quest.

I watched our Ajahn grow kinder, more confident and, in a gentle way, more powerful in his presence. His teaching style seemed to evolve out of a deep well of compassion and was so joyfully infectious that large numbers began to practise the Dhamma. This evolution of monk and teacher was, for me, powerful evidence for the efficacy of the Buddha's Teachings.

My idea of heaven was a nine-day retreat with Ajahn Brahm. I trusted in the influence he had upon my life and so I valued the 9-day retreats as if the greatest wealth was on offer – and of course, it was.

Ajahn Brahm is the safest person I know. There was a time when I would get teary while talking to him. He would reach behind and bring out a box of tissues. This became a habit for a while. In such humble ways, he was a role model.

Earlier this year, he was at my Bhikkhunī ordination, for me the culmination of a long journey that he had inspired, but also, a new beginning. Due to his ongoing influence, it offers the best chance of “slowly, slowly, little by little” - as he might say - hopefully following in his footsteps.

Much metta,
Ven. Vimutti
Dhammasara Monastery





During the Rains retreat of 2023, as a novice monk, I was the designated attendant one evening. I could see that Ajahn was extremely tired when he arrived. He was quieter than usual, sat and after taking a sip from his tea, said that he'd like to meditate for a while. He sat upright and closed his eyes. I closed my eyes as well; all I could hear was the ticking of the clock on the wall behind me.

But after a couple of minutes I could hear Ajahn stirring and when I opened my eyes I saw that he had changed his mind, was taking another sip of tea and looking at me. He then began to recount stories of his life as a young monk in Thailand that were inspiring and instructive. Ajahn, tired as he was, had decided to use this precious time to teach a young novice and help him along the path. Almost daily in the time I've been at Bodhinyana, I've seen examples of Ajahn Brahm selflessly teaching and guiding members of the community with his joyful patience and kindness. For me, he has brought the Buddha's path to life and his conduct is a guide to how I can understand and practice the Dhamma and Vinaya.

~ Ven Akincana
Bodhinyana Monastery



It's my good fortune that I met this extraordinary Dhamma teacher. Forever I would be grateful to Ajahn for showing me the Buddha's Eightfold Path. Hearing him gave me the faith to become a Bhikkhu, commit my life to the Dhamma, to practice for Nibbana. ~ Bhante Saddhavihari, Bodhinyana Monastery



A Riddle Wrapped In A Mystery Inside An Enigma

Magicians tend not to be subtle characters. Their sleight of hand and misdirection (don't forget the flashy costumes) are compelling and draw us into amazing displays. Nothing like that, however, was on the menu when Ajahn Brahm made his appearance to me on a laptop screen in rural Texas. Something more alluring than pulling a rabbit out of a hat was showcased in a simple brown-robed monk, the size of a can of baked beans. What excellent conversion magic, indeed!

Having caught the ordination bug a few months before my exposure to Ajahn, I was exhausting my internet search acumen. Trying to find a lead on something that resonated with this feeling, connected to what I perceived was the essence of what is good to do in this very life. Introduced to Ajahn first by talks given at Jhana Grove via internet (in rural Texas), I was drawn into the vortex of bad jokes and deep Dhamma. Aha! This surely was a person who exemplifies some of these things I too wanted to develop.

The connection was sustained by listening to the library of talks available on the internet. A steady drip-feed of Dhamma over the years. Even including the prestigious rains retreat that I received on a CD from a Bhikkhu at Bodhinyana some years ago. In brief, Ajahn is “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Confounding words of humour and meaning I'm joyed to have encountered in this life.

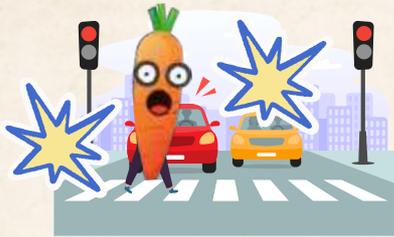
Ven. Sītibhūto, Bodhinyana Monastery



The Best Joke Ever



When I attended my first Ajahn Brahm retreat, Ajahn told a joke. You may have heard it before. It went something like this –



A carrot was crossing the road one day when he was hit by a car. Paramedics were called to the scene and the carrot was taken away to the emergency ward. The wife of the carrot was called and when she arrived, her beloved partner the carrot was lying in a bed in the ICU, hooked up to life support.

The wife of the carrot pleaded with the doctor on duty to tell her how her partner was. He turned to her and said, “Well, I’ve got some good news, and some bad news. The good news is he’ll live.” She sighed, and then looked up to the doctor once more, “... And what’s the bad news?” “The bad news is... he’s going to be a vegetable for the rest of his life.”

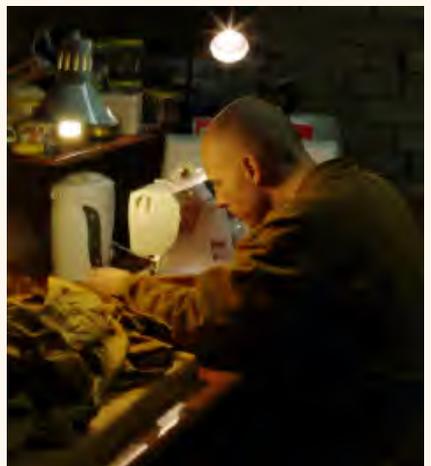
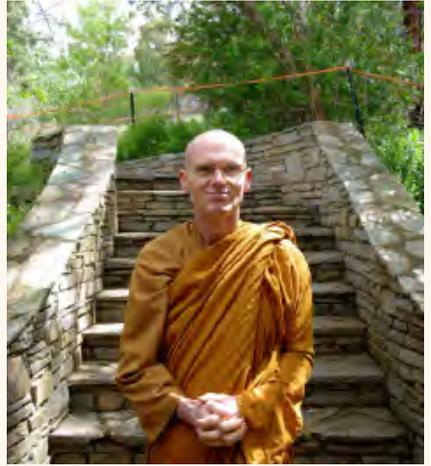
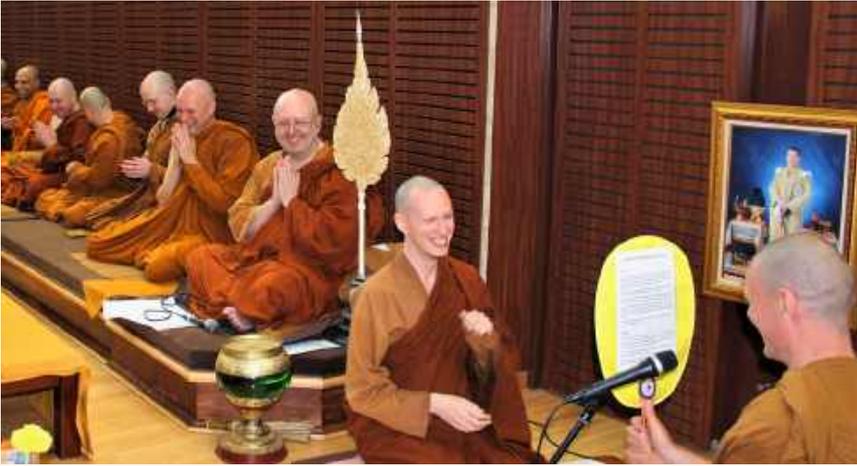
After saying the punchline, Ajahn was giggling so hard he was struggling to breathe, and tears were rolling down his cheeks. A few people groaned and shook their heads, but then began to smile, and a wave of laughter swept through the room. I couldn’t stop giggling myself.

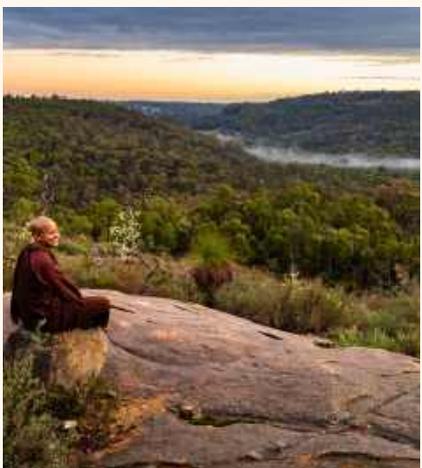


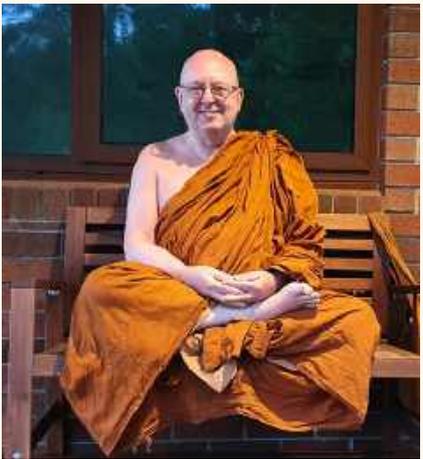
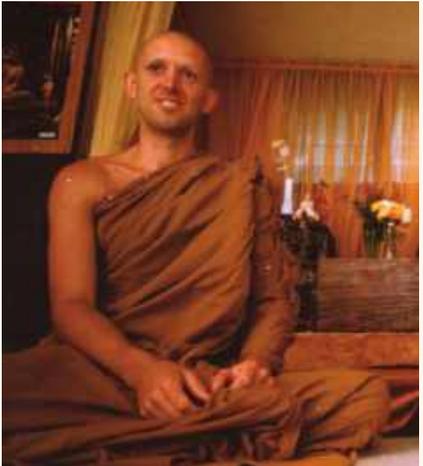
Ajahn Brahm has many amazing qualities – he’s an embodiment of Dhamma, a profound and magnetic teacher, a leader of spiritual communities – but he’ll always be the man that showed us how to smile.

Happy 50 years Ajahn. Sadhu!

Ven. Kimbila, Bodhinyana Monastery









Wisdom for the
World

Lay People Uplifted by Ajahn Brahm





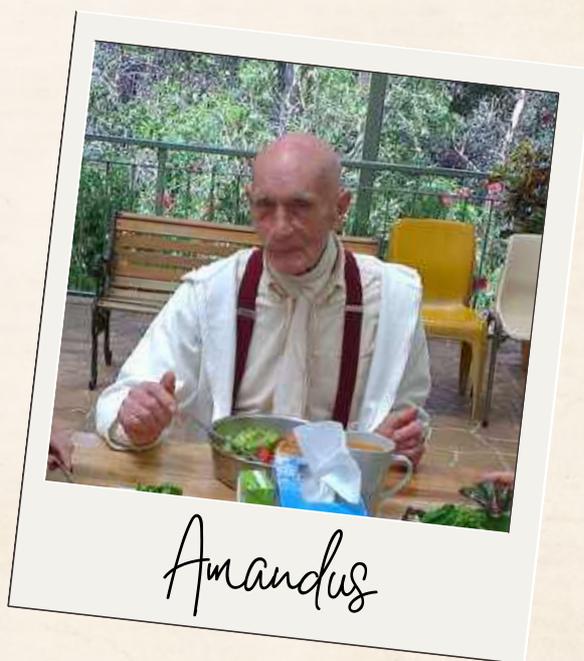
Started at the Small House on Magnolia Street...



My foundation with Ajahn started at the small house on Magnolia Street. The local phonebook directed me there after a chance encounter seeing a monk walking around the nearby park. At the time, Ajahn was the number two monk to Ajahn Jagaro.

The Buddha's invitation to explore the teaching for ourselves and not believe his authority had already resonated with me, so this attraction was quite natural. I was glad to have this option available to me in Western Australia and save me the headache of going to Thailand and learn another language for the sake of practicing Buddhism. Having said that, in June 1983, I went to Bodhinyana Monastery for the first time and intended to stay there, but I left after the first day. It felt very lonely when Ajahn Jagaro and Ajahn Brahm would go back to their kutis and nobody else was around. Over time I would stay for longer and longer periods.

Something I really appreciate is when Ajahn Brahm says something, he means it. It's not empty talk. One of the inspiring things about Ajahn is his capacity to accept people where they are. There were times when I would be tempted to pull the pin and leave thinking that would be freedom. Especially in the early days when all of the training and tight schedule was so new. There was no alternative even if I wanted to go somewhere else. Now there isn't any worry about going anywhere.



Amandus
Western Australia



A Personal Story of Gratitude and Hope - How Ajahn Brahm Saved My Life

Ajahn Brahm quite literally saved my life. I discovered his teachings - or rather, they found me - at a critical point in my life. I had just fled an abusive marriage, living in constant stress and feeling an overwhelming sense of worthlessness. My physical health was deteriorating, and mentally I was on a path to self-destruction - I was "drowning". His talks became a lifeline, like a hand extended to someone sinking. They gave me enough clarity to catch my breath, and from there, I was able to swim to safety on my own.

For the first time, I heard that I mattered - that my health and peace couldn't be ignored. I learned that there are no bad decisions, only unhelpful reactions to life's events. That in order to care for others, I had to first take care of myself. I learned to forgive others and myself, so the past no longer weighed me down.

It took me a few years but today I live in full health and peace. I meditate, listen to Dhamma talks, and follow the Five Precepts. I am filled with hope, forgiveness, and kindness toward others (including those who have hurt me the most). I will forever be grateful for this and I will do everything I can to spread that kindness.

Agnieszka
Poland





The "Question Guy"

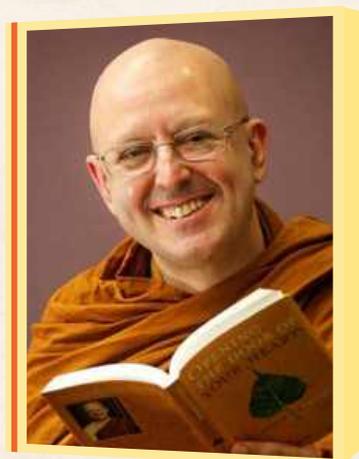
Ajahn Brahm came into my life as an accident when I saw a guy reading "Opening the door to your heart" at a Surfing retreat. That was more than 2 years ago and the rest is history.

I am the Indian guy living in Amsterdam who calls Ajahn Brahm every few months to ask annoying questions to which in his classic British style, he never gives straight answers. And I love it :)

I have read all of his books and have truly seen him as my mentor & teacher. I've gifted his books to many of my friends as well.

On a serious note, he's played a pivotal role in my meditation practice of >2 hrs a day, having the superpower to help people & change the world for the better. Can't thank him enough.

Akshay
Netherlands





The Little Tadpole

Dear Ven Ajahn,

Congratulations for being a Monk for 50 years, Ajahn!

Not just any old monk, but a Well Practising, Ethical Member of the Elite Maha Sangha, showing us the Path to Freedom.!

Your many Teachings have been very beneficial & Fruitful to our whole family, Ajahn, since 1988.

On top of all that what stands out for me is your Fable about the Little Tadpole who got a PhD in Hydrology & thought she knew all about water, yet really knew what water was only when, she jumped out of water as a Frog!

Even though, I have listened to that story a number of times, only about a year ago, whilst at home, that I really understood its meaning & with that, the Reality of Our Existence!

Thank you Ajahn!

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhuuuuuuuuuuuuu!

With Reverence & Metta,
Ananda
(On behalf of Shamalee, too)
Western Australia





Thank you for being in my life

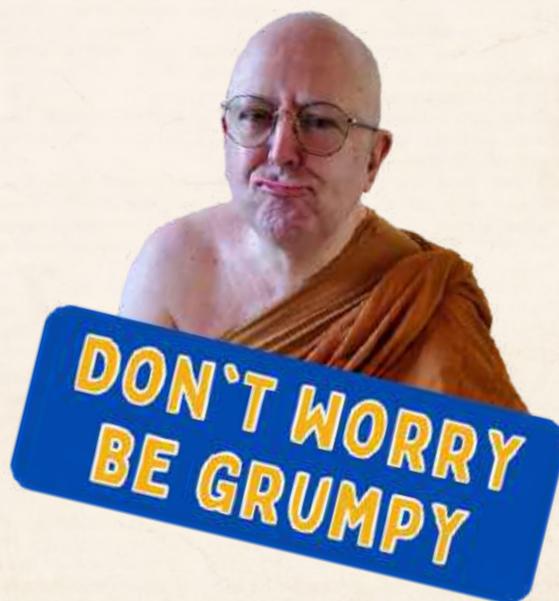
I've been following Ajahn Brahm for nearly 8 years.

He came into my life at a time when I was really ill and couldn't meditate.

His teachings on kindness, and the idea that the most important person is the one in front of you, gave me the permission to be grumpy, truly feel the emotions and make peace with what I was experiencing.

Thank you, Ajahn, for being in my life!

Ariane
Hong Kong





Uplift My Spirit

I first came across Ajahn Brahm's Dhamma Talk on YouTube in 2015 and have listened to numerous talks since then. Ajahn Brahm's Dhamma talks always lift my spirits up. They are insightful, practical, simple and wise and inspire me to be a better person. I actually enjoy his repetitive jokes as I think they help remember and reinforce the positive nature in myself and see the same in others. I also have three books written by Ajahn Brahm & two of these, 'Kindfulness' and 'Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung' convey practicing kindness, empathy and wisdom with simple stories and experiences that have been my refuge in times of stress.

It was a privilege to meet Ajahn Brahm in 2017 at the 10th Global Buddhist conference in Toronto. I'm looking forward to another opportunity either in the United States or in Western Australia.

I wish Ajahn Brahm long life and great health, and I hope his teachings reach as many people as possible regardless of country, religion, caste or creed so everyone lives in harmony.

With warm regards,
Deepa
United States of America





Joy & Peace

It was 12 years ago that I read Ajahn Brahm's book, "Opening the Door of Your Heart", which stimulated my interest in Buddhism. The stories resonated with me, the meanings deepening with every successive read. Then I discovered his talks and I often "go to bed" with Ajahn Brahm.

He uses simple language and stories, which make the Buddhist philosophies, easy to understand. He is entertaining and his ability to laugh at himself, and life, and make his audience laugh too, is "gold".

I have been to see Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery and when he visits Albany. I was so thrilled to learn of the Buddhist Monks coming to Albany and I have attended the Meditation Talks since they began here.

Ajahn Brahm's kind, wise words have eased the suffering that I was experiencing. He has taught me better ways of dealing with life's challenges, bringing greater joy and peace.

Delys
Western Australia





Showing the Way

When Ajahn Brahm's visited the UK in October 2016, I joined no less than 6 Dhamma sessions in 6 days from Tue 25th to Sun 30th. These were via Skype at the London Buddhist Vihara, and then in person at Cambridge University, Thames Buddhist Vihara, Jamyang Buddhist Centre, Mary Ward House and finally at the London Buddhist Society.

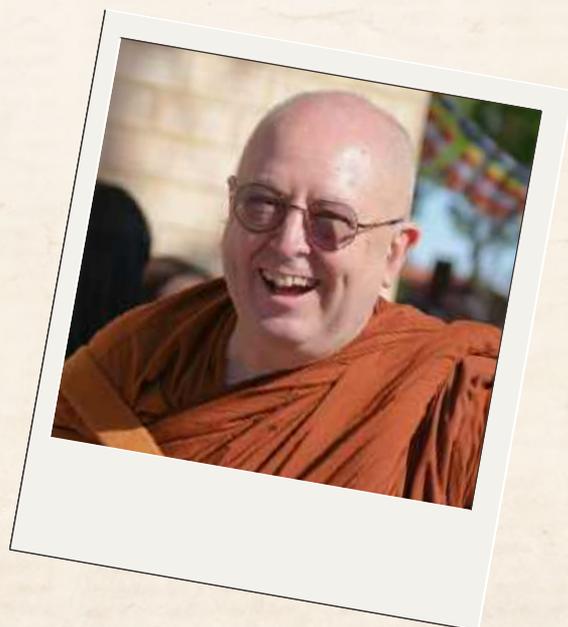
I learnt that,

- 1) The purpose of life is the purpose I give it.
- 2) The highest purpose is contentment and resulting peace of mind.
- 3) The way to contentment is letting go, not wanting, and stilling the mind.

I still have desires I wish to satisfy - from sensual to the loftier and spiritual - but I have started to let go and experience peace of mind. Importantly, I established BODHI MAGGA, an online mindfulness programme held monthly featuring experienced meditators who are helping others in the community to nurture their practice of Buddhist meditation.

I am grateful to Ajahn Brahm for showing the way.

Don
United Kingdom





Ha Ha Sip!

Treading in the footsteps of Buddha - the secret's out! hope, humility, forgiveness, determination and leadership through compassion and loving kindness. Should we take for granted what we have, believing it will last forever? What would life be like without Dhammaloka, Dhammasara or Bodhinyana? A world without Ajahn Brahm?

Influencing lives and landscapes in Western Australia and beyond, he made me and others laugh - A LOT! Using his native English makes Buddhist teachings accessible and understandable to us. Raising his voice for equal recognition of all human beings; he has championed women's ordination by providing places for women to be safe and become Buddhist teachers.

Encouraging retreat and reflection, with a flourishing Jhana Grove Centre caring for vulnerable people and their families.

Enabling Buddhist integration locally, through networks, international connections and supporting sustainable development goals.

Embracing digital platforms - created innovation and leadership of Buddhist teaching online and participation by Buddhists globally.

Francesca
Western Australia





Please care for Ajahn

I have known Ajahn Brahm since 2013. Since then, I have been his attendant whenever he taught in Hong Kong, sometimes sharing a suite with him. Through glimpsing into his “private life,” I know first-hand that he works nonstop in his room between his guided meditation sessions and Dhamma talks, from answering daily floods of emails to chanting for the sick and dying.

Constantly sacrificing his rest for others, Ajahn Brahm sometimes feels so exhausted that he literally collapses on his bed after a very long day! Yet, he never complains; even when people repeatedly ask him questions he has already addressed or pressure him for more fundraising, he always treats them with mettā and karuṇā.

Please care for Ajahn Brahm with loving-kindness and compassion rather than overworking him. He has selflessly and wholeheartedly served others for 50 years.

Thank you very much.

With gratitude and mettā,

Gerald
Hong Kong





Kindfulness

I have followed Ajahn Brahm for about 5 years.

Ajahn Brahm helped me in many things, the most with the idea of kindness. That kindness is important, including to oneself. And to take the meditations without expectation and just observing how they come and develop.

Also in showing how to meditate with enjoyment and not with strict rules which I initially encountered in the 'traditional' way and often led to physical pain.

With kindness, for me, Ajahn Brahm created sort-of a new aspect and almost 'reformation' in Buddhism.

With metta and best wishes,

Gunther
United Kingdom





A Better Person



Dear Ajahn Brahm,

One day, a friend gave me a number of cassette tapes with Dhamma talks from different monks.

I listened to them, one by one.

I realised that I liked to listen to one special teacher, Ajahn Brahm.

I returned all the other tapes.

I became a member of BSV.



When you visited Melbourne, I went to your talks and programs with our daughter.

She too liked to participate.

I realised that I have become a much better person, after listening to your talks.

After moving from Melbourne to Perth, I was lucky enough to participate in your retreats and then also join the rains retreats in Jhana Grove.

Your simple way of delivering Dhamma influenced me.

I think I have been following you for about 30 years.

May Ajahn be blessed with the Noble Triple Gem.

With much Metta and Gratitude,

Indrani

Western Australia



Most Grateful to Ajahn Brahm



Dearest all at BSWA,

Thank you so much for all your invaluable work and support to Ajahn Brahm and BSWA from day 1.

Here's how this amazing Teacher turned my life around:

In 2007, out of gratitude to a friend, I extended her to stay in my home whilst she was waiting for hers to be ready. Unfortunately, living together is a different story.

One naive decision brought forth more nightmarish ones, as I struggled to alienate myself from her.

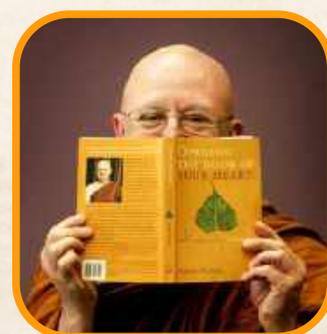
In 2009, another friend handed me Ajahn Brahm's *Opening the Door of Your Heart*, which turned my wrong view to Right View. From embracing alcohol for comfort, I took refuge in the Triple Gems, taking up the five precepts. My first Jhana Grove retreat in 2010, affirmed my faith in the Triple Gems and in 2021, I took up the eight precepts till today.

Ajahn Brahm's unreserved deep rooted metta and compassion in what, how and why he taught the way he does is a heart opener in my encounters with others.

Ajahn Brahm's teachings aligned with the EBT (Evidence Based Training) evokes light and clear understanding. Immensely grateful to Ajahn Brahm.

Thank you so much BSWA.

Gratefully yours,
Jen
Malaysia





An Inspirational Spiritual Companion and Teacher

I first met Ajahn Brahm in Thailand in 1980 and in 1982 he assisted in my Bhikkhu ordination at Ajahn Chah's monastery in Wat Pah Pong. Later I came to Perth to assist with the setting up of Bodhinyana Monastery and spent many hours learning building skills, patience, perseverance, always accompanied by Ajahn Brahm's good humour and compassion.

After disrobing I returned to Perth to help out in many roles over the years, and Ajahn has always been a very supportive and an inspirational spiritual companion and teacher.

I vividly remember being at a retreat in Albany with him where he gave four two-hour talks over the weekend consisting mainly of interesting stories and anecdotes and I was thinking at the last one he can't possibly have more stories to tell, but amazingly he did!

SADHU, SADHU, SADHU for all that has transpired over your 50 years as a monk.

Jesper
Victoria, Australia





Be VEEERY careful if you listen to this man! He is dangerous. Behind his cute smile, kind words and charming British accent lie truly sinister second intentions. The cold reality is that this man wants one thing and one thing ONLY. To end you and all of your precious attachments. Be warned!!! If you allow yourself to fall prey to his soothing words, wise counsel and infectious good humour, you will soon find yourself violently catapulted from Samsara into the luminous abyss of Nibbana.

Not only did Kruba Ajahn Brahm save me from the sharp claws of suicidal depression 12 years ago, he taught me the radical kindness that now guides and drives my actions. Today, I'm doing my very best to keep the eight precepts every day and live an increasingly monastic life while still in the lay world. If the brainwashing continues, who knows where I WON'T be in the future!

Thanks a lot!

Lots of metta,
Joe
Brazil





Treasure to this World



Dear Ajahn Brahm,

I have been following you for 1 to 2 years and chose to do so because I can see and hear that you are an authentic embodiment of Buddhist values.

I sense very strongly from you, your Dhamma talks and meditation teachings that your path is one with heart and that is perhaps the most important aspect of a teacher to me.

I love the way you use humour to teach the Dhamma, and I love the pure nature of your humour. I love and admire that you speak up for the freedom and equality of all people, and as a woman I am not drawn to male dominated hierarchies in any forum.

I love your tolerance and courage to live by your values and stand up for the LGBTQI community. The world needs more tolerance, and love which you inspire in me along with dedication to my meditation practice and the teachings of the Buddha.

The gift of your virtue, wisdom and compassion has and continues to inspire and motivate me to develop those qualities in myself and to see them in others. You are a treasure to this world on which no value can ever be placed. Thank you for your heart touching service to me, and to all people in Perth, in Western Australia and in the world. It brings tears to my eyes to write this to you Ajahn Brahm, because it is joyous to recognise in you the high level to which the human spirit can be elevated.

I love you and everything you represent and stand for.

Regards
Kerry
Western Australia





Ajahn Brahm Saved My Life



It was very hard to make this short...

I started listening to Ajahn Brahm on March 17th, 2021.

I was in hospital during covid for breast cancer surgery. My surgery went wrong and I got internal bleeding so had to have another surgery, I almost died.

Because of Covid I was stuck alone in a room for a week, just laying there waiting for cancer results, stuck with an IV. No one could visit. Nurses only gave medicine and food; and left. It was very traumatic.

I asked my friend in England how to keep my sanity. She sent me a Dhamma talk with Ajahn Brahm, and that Dhamma talk saved my life. During chemotherapy I sat for hours listening to him to stay calm.

One day, my friend called and told me that Ajahn Brahm was coming to Oxford, England; so my daughter and I flew to England and went to listen to him.

A dream come true.

I'm so grateful!

I don't know what and how I would have made it through all this without his teachings. It has changed my life.

And I still listen to him every day

Thank you so much

Kristina
Sweden





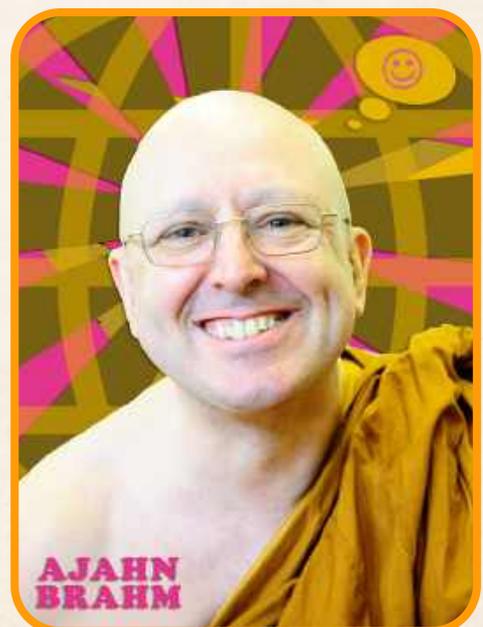
A Blessing

Over nearly 40 years I have enjoyed Ajahn Brahm's wit and compassion, with his ability to deliver Buddha's teachings interwoven with his own life experiences. This has helped me and many others to relate and in turn, apply it in our own lives journey.

The books written by Ajahn Brahm have also been an immense help. Humorous, profound, meaningful but being written word, always there to reference should I forget. The referencing was especially helpful as I began the practice of meditation.

To sum it up, Ajahn Brahm has been a blessing to Buddhism, the Dhamma, the Sangha and the wider community.

Lucky
Western Australia





I Have Been Brainwashed!!!

My first retreat with Ajahn was in 2006. I have followed his teachings ever since and been fortunate to do many retreats with him.

He has literally changed my life. His stories from the two bad bricks to the nun with the torn robe and the cow have penetrated deep into my mind on a daily basis. He often says in his talks that he is brainwashing us and indeed I have been brainwashed.

Some of the ways his teachings have influenced my life are:

- I meditate daily with his BSWA meditations online
- I take myself and life in general more lightly
- I remember "good enough"
- I have simplified my life
 - downsized, have less, need less and freed up time to be in nature
- I try to only sweep when I am sweeping
- I try to be kind and non judgemental

Thank you Ajahn.

Mary
Western Australia





As my love began to flourish....



First I met you at a bookshop.

There was "Die Kuh, die weinte" which caught my attention.

I love this book and I love the writer from now on.

Luckily I found out that there a Friday Night Talks on YouTube, which I followed. My English wasn't that good, but with the years (more than 10) it gets better, I can understand better now.

Your voice is so familiar to me and I feel very much connected. When I have bad times, your tone and humour brings me home to myself, and I start to calm down quickly.

Last year, I had some problems with my local Dhamma Teacher, and it made me feel very sad and disconnected.

I asked my heart and its answer leads me to the other side of the world to Jhana Grove. There your pure charisma of metta and kindness let something heal inside of me.

I see everything is self made and can be changed. When there is pure love for you, it is possible to love myself in that way. The Egoist when constructed, can also be reconnected some day. I will dedicate the rest of my life to achieve that. There is no word for my deepest gratitude to you.

Please dear Ajahn let the Dhamma flow a very long time and take so many people out of cow-dung as possible.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu

I bow down to your Non Self

Petra

GERMANY



The Supreme Role Model

Ajahn Brahm is my revered teacher and Kalyana Mitta since 1994. I am a Buddhist by birth and my Dhamma path was limited to devotional practices based on faith and an inclination to support the Buddha sasana. I had little motivation to practice the Dhamma.

My appreciation of the value of Buddhist meditation was limited until I started following Ajahn Brahm. He cleared dust in my eyes and restored my vision to see the “Word of the Buddha”. I have matured in the spiritual path since meeting Ajahn. I am fortunate to be living in Perth where I can develop my practice and support the Buddha sasana as well. Ajahn Brahm lives what he teaches, and is the supreme role model one can ever have.

My wish is that divine beings who rejoice in Buddha Dhamma protect Ajahn Brahm to enable him to enjoy a long life in good health.

Prem

Western Australia





Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu

Happy fiftieth Anniversary Ajahn Brahm from Aotearoa, New Zealand.

I want to offer my heartfelt appreciation and joy on this wonderful anniversary of Ajahn Brahm's leadership and care of our Buddhist family.

I have experienced love, adventure, wellbeing, generosity, respect and the true nature of living through Ajahn's teaching of the Dhamma. This spreads and radiates anatta, metta, kindness by megawaves.

Thank you for all of the service and Dhamma you generously and selflessly give.

Anumodana,

Pricilla
New Zealand





Forever Grateful

I discovered Ajahn Brahm at a precarious time.

After reading some Ajahn Sumedho and a bit of Ajahn Chah in 2019, I found my way to the online offerings of BSWA just as COVID began. As the world underwent great trials, I underwent a simultaneous spiritual reinvention, molting and changing as a driven graduate theology student just beginning to taste the Dhamma. From Ajahn Brahm, who possessed just the right mixture of sardonic wit and warm paternalism to reach me, I learned not to exert myself so strenuously, not to grasp so tightly, to stop and be accepting.

Thanks to him and the the monks around him, I also became more familiar with the “bliss” of meditation, the great depth of it. I owe Ajahn Brahm much, and I am forever grateful to him and the entire tradition for teaching the Dhamma.

Reese

United States of America

WHEN IT
IS COLD
HAVE
A

WARM HEART





Thank you for being there for our Mother



In 2010, Mum travelled to India to visit her sick brother, but soon fell seriously ill herself. What began as an infection escalated within a brief few days to life-threatening sepsis.

Shortly after returning to Perth, mum was taken to Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department and immediately admitted to hospital.

In our distress, we contacted Ajahn Brahm. He came straight away accompanied by our friend, Anagarika Amandus. Ajahn Brahm brought mega metta, humour and wisdom.

Ajahn's chanting was a tremendously powerful blessing for all present including the neighbouring patient whose hands were spontaneously placed in anjali throughout.

Soon afterwards, the medical team treated her sepsis with different medication which proved successful. Mum began to improve.

While the role of the medical team was undoubtedly invaluable, Ajahn Brahm's tremendous generosity of heart was apparent as he tended to our mum. He offered her a blessing with 'everything he's got'.

Thank you sincerely Ajahn Brahm, we feel your deeply kind presence made all the difference to our mum surviving sepsis.

With metta,
Rose Pope (now 78 years old)
& Pope's family
Western Australia





How Ajahn Brahm influenced my life!

Ajahn Brahm played a pivotal role in changing my life. I have been following Ajahn Brahm for nearly 5 years now. After a 16-year relationship breakup, with issues at work and many problems with parents, I was quite depressed and was feeling lost. Accidently I came across the YouTube video “Letting go” by Ajahn Brahm which helped to truly change my life and the way I was thinking. Honestly, it brought me peace and changed the way I see things. I was able to get over the past and happily move on. I invest in myself a lot to do good and help others. It brings me a lot of joy.

Besides, maybe I am the only one who does work outs listening to Ajahn Brahm’s podcasts on Spotify, oh I can imagine him laughing if he is reading this note!

Thank you, Ajahn, my dream is to visit BSWA one day.

Best Regards
Sarala
Malaysia





A Message to Ajahn Brahm

About 10 years ago, I read an article in a Thai news Magazine I bought from a bookstore in Thai Town, Los Angeles; it was about this monk named Ajahn Brahm who ordained Bhikkhunis in Australia. I grew up in Thailand and was well aware that ordaining Bhikkhunis was against the Thai Buddhist tradition; and I thought that this Ajahn Brahm was very very brave.

I started listening to Ajahn's talks during the time when I was struggling with life and I had decided to renounce many things in the Thai tradition, including Buddhism. The first Dhamma talk that I listened to went straight to my heart; it was about how to deal with teenagers, Ajahn said to trust them. My daughter was about 15 at that time.

I like the gentle way that Ajahn teaches; to be kind, and to care, the emperor's three questions, the anger eating demon, to let go, etc. Ajahn's teachings guided me back to Thai Buddhism again with clearer view that this is the way.

Ajahn showed me the path with his two bad bricks which has led me to harmony in life, Ajahn reminded me that I don't have to blow up all my mistakes with dynamites, and that I am a beautiful tree in the forest.

With utmost respect and
gratitude to Ajahn Brahm,

Sriprinya 'Bee'
United States of America





Gratitude for Ajahn Brahm

I started listening to Ajahn Brahm when I first learned about Theravada tradition in 2019. During that time I was going through some tough times in my personal life. Because of his teachings (and humour), I was able to make a big decision. My faith in Buddha Dhamma grew deeper and deeper when I started implementing what the Buddha taught, and I can see the sweet fruit of this spiritual path.

Now I can say that because of Ajahn Brahm and other great teachers. I understand why this path is called “beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle”, and I am sure it will be even “more beautiful in the end”.

I feel so much gratitude for Ajahn Brahm for making Dhamma so much fun for me.

Much metta.

Vandana

United States of America

Beautiful





Ajahn Brahm is Free



I've been listening to Ajahn Brahm's teachings on meditation and Dhamma for over 25 years now. I can't begin to express the impact his joyful presence has had on my life. One thing for sure is how consistent he is. Firstly, in his regard for others, by being completely and wholly attentive, attuned and gracious to whomever he is with. His unique brand of consistency builds deep faith and trust. He inspires me through his fine conduct to at least try to be more consistent in my own practice; to try to be consistently peaceful, kind and gentle. To try to turn up with a generous spirit, to help and not harm, and to do whatever good you can. Like the old Bing Crosby song, he always, "accentuates the positive", seeing the best in everyone.

Secondly, he is consistently sincere and serious about Dhamma exposition, giving sound, studious, clear explanations on mindfulness and meditation. He can also be silly, playful, good humoured and alive with wit. Just when you think you've heard every analogy, story, anecdote, joke or psychological tidbit, from his back catalogue of books and talks, he'll come out with something new; he's consistently surprising!

However you may have come across him, whether by chance, recognition or intuition, online or in person, we've all reaped the benefits and the gifts of his life's work. With a big heart and a vision for being inclusive of all, from the beginning, he's also been an important catalyst for innovations in how Dhamma is shared in our modern age. Through his organisational and material achievements (the Societies, Dhamma centres and forest monasteries that have been built) his efforts have provided many like-minded seekers with the precious spaces and opportunities for solitude, silence and stillness to investigate the mind. They supply the oxygen that sustains the spiritual life and ultimately the natural world as well. Ajahn Brahm has always been consistently kind and welcoming to me, saying directly on many occasions on retreats, or at his monastery, "You're most welcome, here." Words I have taken to heart and for his warm-heartedness, my gratitude is immense.

His energy is remarkable, his generosity boundless and he's a dear, spiritual friend. But he, doesn't need any praise or accolades, because Ajahn Brahm is free. (The freest person I've ever met, anyway.) Congratulations Ajahn, on 50 happy, golden, luminous years! We all respect and appreciate you so much!

Vicki
Western Australia



CLOSING THE BOOK, BUT NOT THE JOURNEY



By Lynne Jackson,

BSWA Honorary Member, Female Caretaker - Dhammaloka

This book is to celebrate and rejoice in the 50th anniversary of Ajahn Brahm's bhikkhu ordination. What an amazing accomplishment! Fifty years of selfless service to the Sangha and lay people of Australia and the world.

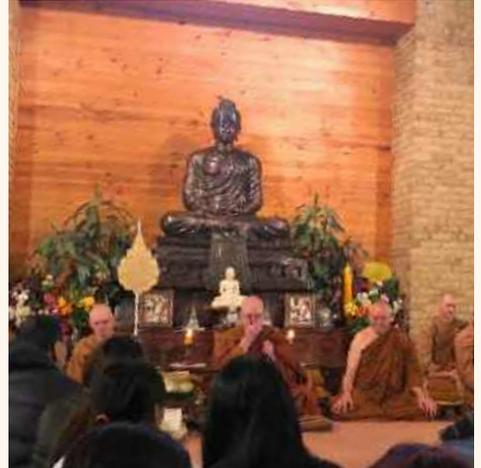
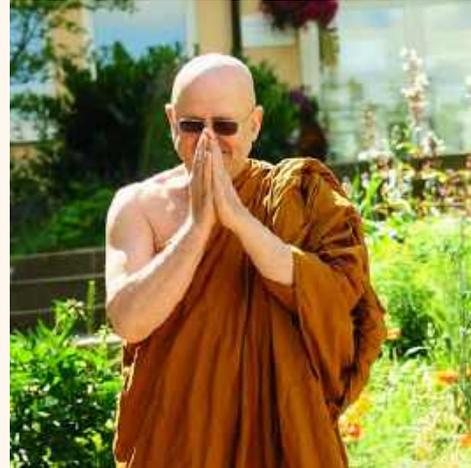
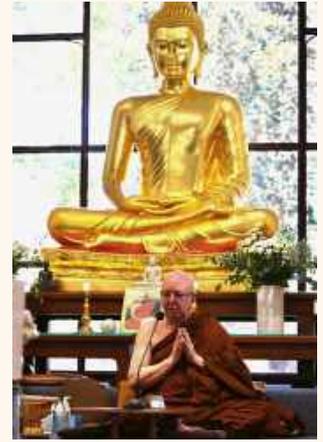
What is so remarkable is that Ajahn Brahm established the four fold Sangha in Australia. The Bhikkhuni Sangha, Bhikkhu Sangha, lay women and lay men making available to all, the liberating teachings of the Buddha.

Ajahn Brahm is a kind, gentle, open hearted, marvellous listener, compassionate, wise, insightful and inspiring Dhamma Teacher.

I am so grateful for all he has kindly taught me and once when I wanted to express my gratitude for all the help he had given me over the years, Ajahn Brahm replied, "You will show true gratitude when you continue practising Dhamma".

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu

May you live a healthy and long life, Ajahn Brahm.



Acknowledgements

The BSWA would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to this celebration. Your support and involvement have made it possible to honour Ajahn Brahm's remarkable journey in a way that resonates with warmth, humour and wisdom.



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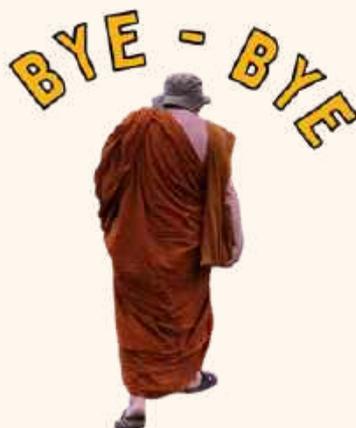
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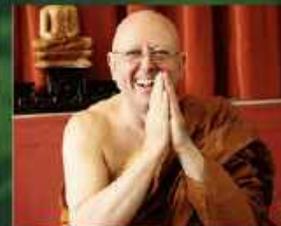
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Make peace, be kind, be gentle



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