



ABVA Insights

DECEMBER 2025



WELCOME

We are happy to welcome you to the latest edition of the ABVA newsletter. This space is created to keep our community connected, inspired, and informed. Here, you'll find updates on temple events, Dhamma teachings, stories, artwork from our students, and many other meaningful contributions from our community.

Thank you for being part of our temple family. May this newsletter bring you peace, joy, and a deeper connection to the Dhamma.

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MESSAGE FROM SPIRITUAL LEADER

Today, we can clearly observe how rapidly the world continues to advance in science and technology. Yet, despite these remarkable achievements, statistics reveal a steady rise in mental health challenges across societies. This naturally gives rise to an important question: why has modern science been unable to fully alleviate or prevent mental suffering?

Modern science and technology are largely grounded in material perspectives. While significant attention is given to the study of the brain, comparatively little emphasis is placed on understanding the deeper workings of the mind itself.

More than two thousand five hundred years ago, however, the Buddha offered profound and timeless teachings on the nature of the human mind. He explained that countless mental afflictions arise within us—what are known as kilesa, or defilements. The Buddha identified three fundamental roots from which all defilements emerge: greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha). According to the Buddha's teachings, these three roots are the underlying causes of all mental suffering. Until the mind is liberated from these defilements, true and lasting mental well-being cannot be attained.

The path prescribed by the Buddha for this liberation is meditation. Even experiencing a single moment free from the burden of defilements brings a sense of joy, lightness, and relief that is difficult to express in words. Therefore, as we stand at the threshold of a new year, let us resolve to cultivate purity of mind and engage in meditation, even to a small degree, so that we may pass the coming year with greater health, peace, and happiness.



MESSAGE FROM SPIRITUAL LEADER

අද ලෝකය ඉතා සීගුයෙන් විද්‍යාව හා තාක්ෂණය අතින් දිනේන් දින දියුණුවන ආකාරය අප සැමටම දැකගත් හැකිය. කෙදීනක හෝ නැති තරමට විද්‍යාව හා තාක්ෂණය මෙතරම් දියුණුවක් ලැබුව ද මානසික ව්‍යාධීන්ගෙන් පෙළෙන ප්‍රජාව දිනේන් දිනේන් දින ඉහළ යන බව ඒ පිළිබඳ දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණය කරන විට දැකගත හැකිය. නවීන විද්‍යාව එම මානසික ව්‍යාධීන් සමනය කිරීමට හෝ පාලනය කිරීමට අනුග්‍රහයක් නොවනේ මන්ද යන කාරණාව අප සැමට ඇතිවන පොදු ගැටළුවකි. නවීන විද්‍යාව හා තාක්ෂණය පදනම් වී ඇත්තේ හෝතිකත්වය මතය. නවීන විද්‍යාව මනස පිළිබඳ හැදැරීමට වැඩි අවධානයක් යොමුකරනු වෙනුවට මොලය පිළිබඳ වැඩි අවධානයක් යොමුකර ඇති බව පෙනේ.

එහෙත් මිට වසර දෙදහස් පන්සිය ගණනකට ඉහත දී බුදු රජාණන් වහන්සේ මිනිස් සිත පිළිබඳව ඉදිරිපත් කළ ඉගෙන්වීම අදටත් සාධාරණය. බුදු රජාණන් වහන්සේ මිනිස් සින්හි හටගන්නා ව්‍යාධීන් එක්දහස් පන්සියකක් පමණ පෙන්වා දෙයි. ඒවානම් අප සිත් තුළ හටගන්නා ක්ලේශයන්ය. සියලු ක්ලේශයන්ට මූල තුනක් බුදු රජාණන් වහන්සේ දක්වයි. ඒ ලෝහ, ද්‍රව්‍ය හා මෝහ ලෙස දැක්විය හැක. බුදු දහමට අනුව, සියලු මානසික රෝග සඳහා මූල්‍යන් මේ මූල තුනයි. එබැවින් මේ ක්ලේශයන්ගෙන් සිත නිදහස් කරන තුරු පරිපුර්ණ මානසික සුවයක් අපට අත්පත් කරගත නොහැකිය.

ඒ නිදහස් කරගැනීම සඳහා ඇති වැඩසිළිවෙළ හාවනාවයි. මොහොතකට හෝ යමකුට කෙළෙසුන්ගෙන් වන පීඩාවෙන් අත්මිදි වාසය කළ හැකි නම් එය ඇති කරන ප්‍රීතිය, සැහැල්ලුව හා සහනය වචනවලින් පැහැදිලි කළ නොහැකිය. එබැවින් මේ වර්ෂයක් ගෙවී නව වර්ෂයක් අහිමුවෙහි සිටින අප සැවොම එළැඳෙන වර්ෂය සුවයෙන් හා සතුටින් ගතකිරීමට සිතන්නේ නම් යම් පමණකට හෝ හාවනා කිරීමට හිත පිරිසිදු කිරීමට සිතත්වා.



Alberta Insight Meditation Centre

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the group of youth who took the lead in reviving this newsletter. Their commitment strengthens our connection with the next generation and helps make our charity a place where youth can grow in leadership and spirituality. I warmly invite you to share your feedback with them.

I also want to extend our collective blessings to our motherland, Sri Lanka, wishing it strength and resilience as it recovers from the recent devastating natural disaster. Many of you generously contributed to the temple's coordinated donation effort, and we will continue supporting the country through trusted means. Sri Lanka remains one of the few places where Theravada Buddhist Teachings are preserved in their purity, so your generosity carries great merit.

Friends, we began this ABVA year with a mandate to establish a transparent and accountable governance process. From the outset, we prioritized projects, shared information before acting, listened to your input, and undertook a major effort to develop policies and procedures that strengthen our organization's sustainability. This work has also shown the need to update our bylaws to ensure lasting impact. Before proceeding with legal steps, I plan to host asynchronous community consultations to share details of all draft policies and bylaw revisions, and gather your input so the process accommodates the community's best interests.

Finally, thank you all for your continued support -- through your advice, good wishes, and financial contributions -- and for participating in the programs and events that support our community's spiritual well-being.

I wish you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year ahead!



A LOOK BACK: KEY EVENTS OF 2025

WINDOW REPLACEMENT INITIATIVE

MANY MERITS FOR ALL YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

This year, you collectively donated \$39,533.46. Together with last year's contributions, the treasurer received \$44,633.46 in total for this project. This left us with a surplus of \$2,634.51. We will save this surplus in the temple's building fund, which we are maintaining for the future construction of a Dhamma Hall. We have seen this same exceptional community support before. Once again, this project demonstrated the value of community consultation, transparency, and our collective commitment to go above and beyond common practice.

Before



After



COMMEMORATIVE MULUTHAN POOJA

The Muluthan Pooja is a beautifully rare and meaningful ceremony. This special event involves presenting an entire meal offering at the Temple of the Tooth Relic, one traditionally has to supply 44 items, including a specific measure of new rice, 32 varieties of vegetables, condiments, fruits, flowers, and other items to the Sangha as an act of deep gratitude, generosity, and devotion. It is considered one of the most powerful ways to cultivate merit, strengthen communal harmony, and honour the Triple Gem. As a Buddhist community living abroad, we are truly fortunate to have the opportunity to host in such a sacred and uncommon event to offer to the relics at our temple of November 9th, allowing us to preserve our heritage and accumulate blessings.



KATHINA CEREMONY

The 2025 Rains Retreat Season began on June 29th with preparations for a special robe (vasi salu) and continued with the Vassana invitations to the Maha Sangha on July 5th. Throughout the three months, the sponsoring group organized weekly Sutra Deshana, Vipassana meditation sessions, and monthly Dhamma discussions, offering our community meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth. The season concluded with the Kathina Ceremony from October 17th to 19th, which included Gilanpasa Dana, all-night Pirith chanting, daily dana offerings, and the final Kathina robe offering and Dhamma discourse. This year's program was made possible through the generosity and dedication of 11 devoted families, whose support strengthened our community's unity and devotion.



"Just as a Snake sheds its skin, we must shed our past over and over again"
-Buddha

UPCOMING EVENTS:

EVERY SUNDAYS- 2:00PM TO 3:30 PM DHAMMA SCHOOL:

Dhamma School is a place where children learn the teachings of the Buddha in a fun, friendly, and meaningful way. Students explore values like kindness, honesty, respect, and mindfulness through stories, activities, discussions, and meditation. The goal of Dhamma School is to help children understand how to bring compassion and wisdom into their daily lives, while also learning about Buddhist traditions, culture, and practices in a supportive community.



NEW YEARS DAY KIRI PINDU POOJA



Kiri Pindu Pooja is a Buddhist ritual where milk rice is offered to the Buddha statue, Bodhi tree, or pagoda, rooted in the story of Sujata, who offered milk rice to Prince Siddhartha Gauthama during his meditation and unknowingly helped him gain the strength to reach enlightenment. Today, this offering usually done in the morning to symbolize giving the first and best meal to the Triple Gem is prepared by cooking rice with coconut milk and shaping it on a plate, with variations like using white or red rice or adding raisins and cashews. Above all, Kiri Pindu Pooja is a meaningful act of gratitude, merit-making, and fulfilling vows, which holds greater importance than the specific method of preparation.

We invite you all to join us on January 1st, 2025, at the temple with your kiri pindu. More information is yet to be decided.

UNDUWAP POYA

BY: BHANTE NANDA

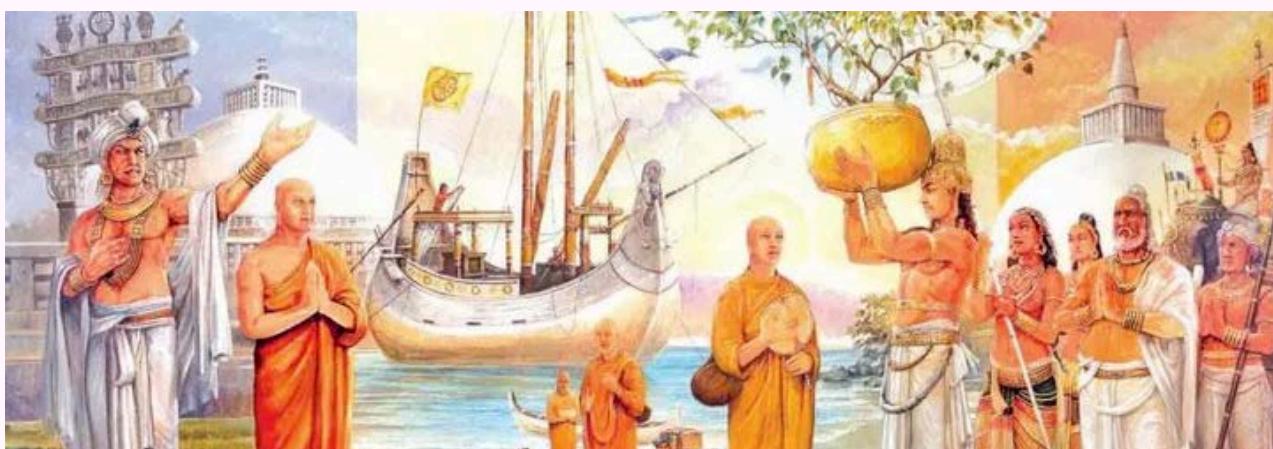
According to the Sinhala calendar, the month of December is known as Unduwap. This period carries deep significance for Sri Lankans because it marks one of the most sacred moments in our island's Buddhist heritage. During this month, the southern branch of the original Sri Maha Bodhi tree—the very tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment—was brought to Sri Lanka by Arahant Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā. Her arrival was a turning point in our history. Along with the Bodhi sapling, she also introduced the Bhikkhunī Ordination Lineage, establishing the full monastic order for women in our country.

Sri Lankans take great pride in the fact that we have protected and cared for this sacred Bodhi tree for more than twenty-two centuries, even though the original tree in Bodhgaya suffered destruction over time. The devotion, dedication, and collective effort of generations have allowed this living symbol of the Buddha's awakening to flourish on our soil without interruption.

When we examine historical records, inscriptions, archaeology, and classical literature, we see clearly how Buddhist civilization has shaped every layer of Sri Lankan life. Literature, art, architecture, engineering, statecraft, education, agriculture, and economic systems—all were deeply refined and elevated by the values and worldview rooted in the Dhamma. The compassionate leadership of ancient kings, the irrigation marvels, the monastic universities, and the artistic traditions all reflect a culture molded by Buddhist principles.

However, one truth must be understood clearly: a great religion cannot endure in isolation from its culture. Culture is the outer vessel that protects and expresses the inner teaching. Without culture, a tradition loses its supportive environment; without the true practice of the Dhamma, culture becomes hollow. Therefore, while we may safeguard rituals, customs, and symbols, we must never forget that the living heart of the Buddha's teaching survives only through sincere practice, understanding, and ethical conduct.

In honoring Unduwap, we remember this balance. We celebrate our heritage, we protect our culture, and we commit ourselves to living the Dhamma so that the teaching continues to thrive for generations to come.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Throughout this year, our incredible community has gathered to attend a wide range of wonderful events honouring our temple and culture. Many attended Dhamma retreats led by our Venerable monks to deepen their spirituality and understanding of the Dhamma. In April, a Sri Lankan New Year celebration was held including children's dancing, food, traditions such as kiri ithirima, and games, allowing our community to continue respecting our roots. In June, the annual Poson Bhakthi Geetha was held at the temple, commemorating the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka by Venerable Mahinda Thero. The event was marked by a dansala as well as the talented singers who performed throughout the evening. The community also participated in the robe preparation (Pandu Peweema) in June. The event included the dying and offering of robes to the monks, an invitation for them during the rains retreat. In July, the fantastic children of the temple's Dhamma School program took part in a gardening day with parents, teachers, and friends, together cleaning the temple's yard and filling it with gorgeous greenery. Thanks to our amazing community's support and participation, these events have continuously succeeded and brought peace and joy to us.



KIDS STORYTIME

PRINCESS YASHODARA

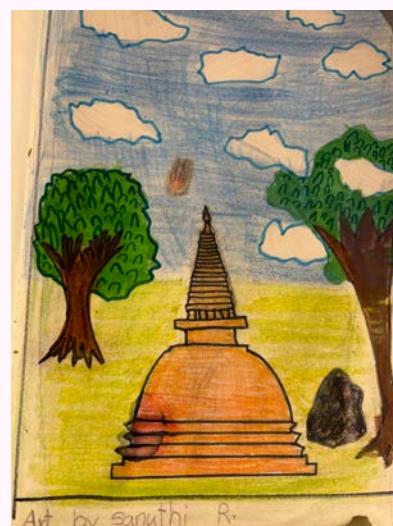
This month's storytime is going to feature Yasodhara Deviya who was the wife of prince Siddhartha. When Prince Siddhartha left the palace to seek an end to our sansarik cycle, Yasodhara Deviya supported his decision with courage even though she felt sorrow. King Suddhothana and Queen Mahapajapati Gotami insisted that Yasodhara Deviya should start a new life but Yasodhara Deviya faced the situation with dignity and showed her loyalty and support to Prince Siddhartha by dressing in simple, plain clothes without any accessories. In addition, Yasodhara Deviya also raised their son, Prince Rahula, in a very loving manner. She taught Prince Rahula important values like kindness, patience, humility and took immense pride in teaching Prince Rahula the reason as to why his father left the palace and the path he was finding. Once Prince Siddhartha attained enlightenment, Yashodhara Deviya was extremely happy and welcomed his teachings warmly. However after the Buddha had his first sermon in the palace and started to head back, Prince Rahula followed the Buddha and was ordained. Witnessing this sight Yashodara Deviya felt a deep tug in her heart and realised she had nothing left to lose. She too chose the path of spiritual practice, and is still known for her wisdom and inner peace. Her story reminds us that courage can be silent and during some situations we have to let go for a greater purpose.

FEATURED ARTWORK

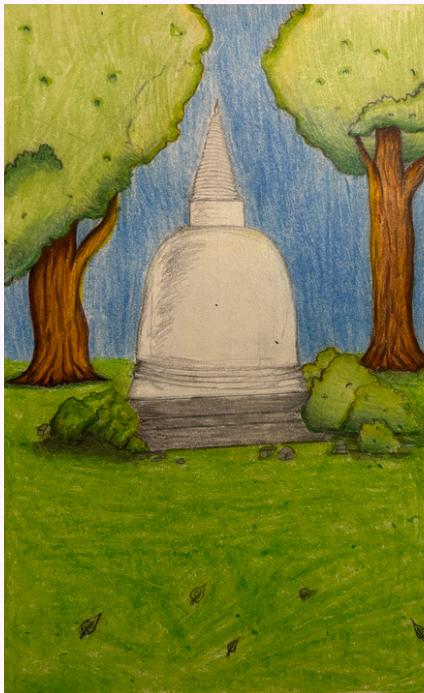
Send in your children's art submissions to editor@abva.org to be featured in the upcoming features!



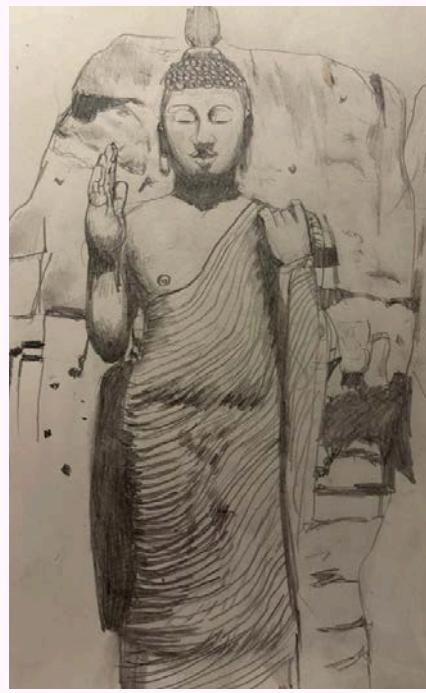
Esandi Weerasinghe
Metta Class
Age- 7 years



Sanuthi Ranatunga
Metta Class
Age- 7 years



Akindu Ranatunga
Dhamma Class
Age - 14 years



Tharusha Ranatunga
Dhamma Class
Age- 15 years

INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERSHIPS

There are multiple ways to become a member and support the meditation centre. You may contribute through one time donations to assist the centre, or through monthly donations, which represent the most effective means of providing ongoing support in any amount that aligns with your budget.

Alternatively, you may choose to become a sponsor, thereby helping to fund hall rentals, transportation for monks, and other expenses associated with special events. Sponsorship opportunities are available for the Kathina Ceremony, Vesak, Poson, and/or New Year programs, and as well as for meditation centre services. We are deeply grateful for your generosity, which enables the continuation of the meritorious work conducted at the temple. For more information visit: <https://www.abva.org/donate>



FURTHER READING

EXPLORING THE MIND-BRAIN RELATIONSHIP TO ADVANCE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND PRACTICE ARTICLE:

The following is an academic article titled "Exploring the mind-brain relationship to advance mental health research and practice" written by Nandini Karunamuni a Buddhist Chaplain at the University of Alberta, appointed through the ABVA. Drawing on both Buddhist insights and scientific evidence, the article invites the reader to carefully explore how the mind and the brain relate to each other. These insights show us that first-person and third-person (scientific) perspectives are two distinct but equally valid ways of understanding our experiences in the world. The article explains how these insights can advance mental health research and practice. It also notes that Buddhist teachings systematically investigate first-person experiences and the nature of consciousness, guiding practitioners toward enlightenment.

Article Link: <https://rdcu.be/eLG21>



NEWSLETTER TEAM

Our newsletter team is made up of dedicated volunteers who work together to keep our community informed and connected. Each member contributes their unique strengths to ensure every issue is meaningful and engaging. With a shared commitment to supporting our temple and community, the team strives to provide updates, insights, and stories that reflect our shared values and activities.

Newsletter Team

Spiritual Director:

Ven. Makola Nanda

Editorial Team:

Thilara Fernando

Sehandu Ratnayaka

Sonali Ranaweera

Ganguli Jasinghe

Tharusha Ranatunga

Akindu Ranatunga

Misal Sapukotana

Senul Kodikara

Chenaya Dissanayake

Sanuka Herath



Not photographed: Sehandu Ratnayaka, Ganguli Jasinghe, Tharusha Ranatunga, Akindu Ranatunga

NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

Thank you to everyone for reading this far. We truly appreciate your feedback, as it helps us improve the newsletter and better represent the interests of our community. Whether you have suggestions for topics or ideas on how we can enhance the newsletter, your input is very important to us. By sharing your thoughts through the newsletter feedback form, you help us create a more informative and meaningful publication. Every comment will be valued and carefully considered. Your voice plays a key role in shaping the newsletter, highlighting important temple events, and celebrating our Sri Lankan culture.

Feedback Form:

<https://forms.gle/MQcAo9GKRbqM5ACH9>

