



# Buddhāloka

L I G H T O F T H E B U D D H A

Newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria

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Volume 14 No. 10

Summer 2006 / 2548

## Setting up a monastery for nuns in Victoria



Ayya Sucinta

The interest among some members of the BSV in supporting a nuns' community here in Melbourne resulted in setting up a working group at the end of last year. A meeting of this working group was called in January. But before we could even have the first meeting of this group, we had very good news from our president of the BSV (Cora Thomas) regarding a bhikkhuni with full ordination who has accepted Coras's invitation to take residency here in Melbourne. Ayya Sucinta is of German origin and has completed 16 rains. Ajahn Brahmavamsa has given his approval for us to go ahead with our plans. We expect her to be here in Melbourne in January 2007. More information about her will appear in the news letter in the near future.

The working group (see report below) has now been invited to become a Society sub-committee and will be set up as such by the next meeting. At the meeting held in January 2006 we looked at the importance of educating the group and then the wider community of the rules and regulations of the order, respect for bhikkunis in the same manner as for a bhikkhu to be

promoted, the suitability of places for residency in order to meet some of the requirements specified by her and most importantly our policy in supporting and encouraging other women to join the community who are in or new to ordination. The importance of our serving the bhikkuni and accepting any gift of teaching from her was accepted unanimously.

*from Committee member Padmini Perera*

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## Meeting of the Working Group for a Nuns' Monastery

Approximately 20 members and friends of the Society met at the temple on 27 November last year to discuss potential support for a community of nuns in Victoria or other facets of female Sangha. Many issues and possibilities were discussed, from a residence for lay retreats (led by senior lay members and/or ordained nuns) to support for a nuns' monastery, perhaps with some association with Bodhivana Monastery at East Warburton or some other established Theravadin monastery. As a result of the commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated at the meeting, a working group was established to further develop and focus the initiative. The Working Group consists of Diana Wadasinghe (as chair), and Ray Anthony, Catherine Lavars, Margaret O'Riordan and Padmini Perera. Catherine Lavars recorded minutes for this meeting, and copies are available from the Committee (ask Prem) or Catherine.

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## Gratitude to our Teachers

The members and friends of the BSV have been blessed by the generosity of visiting Teachers during and prior to the Rains in 2005. But before more is said, it is a great privilege and joy to pay tribute to Sayadaw U Pandita who gives of his time each Thursday evening to come to the BSV and offer the Dhamma. He recently held a four-day residential retreat for members and friends of the BSV as well as the members of his Springvale temple, *Dhamma Sukha*. He has also been very generous with his time in so many ways, including offering teachings to the secondary schools that request us to introduce their students to Buddhist practice, and visiting the aged, the sick and the dying. It is difficult to find appropriate words to thank him, but our thanks are heartfelt.

Mother Mahaviro has visited the BSV frequently for some months and has offered profound teachings on the Noble Eightfold Path. Venerable Wimalananda has visited twice from Berwick as has Venerable Sathindriya from the Campbellfield Temple, offering on each occasion both meditation and a Dhamma talk. Venerable Vijitha Thera from Keysborough visited recently and offered us a very compassionate and wise talk on the subject of Death. We are very grateful for their Dhamma teaching and were happy to make a small but substantial donation to the establishment of a new library at the Campbellfield temple.

Janie Macleay spent a week in Melbourne in early August, offering a Metta in-house retreat at the BSV and intensive meditation interviews. Janie was a Theravadan nun, Sister Candima, and she now runs a small hermitage in South Australia. People have mentioned how they benefited from the variation of method in her teaching.

Janie's retreat at the Buddhāloka Centre →

Then later in August, Sayalay Dipankara from Myanmar conducted a ten day residential retreat at Anglesea which was a true inspiration for our practice.

Again, we must thank Greg Kleiman for his hard work in organizing the retreat in every detail, including bringing Sayalay to Melbourne. Indeed, Greg should never be forgotten in our hearts as he makes a wonderful contribution to the BSV in conducting a weekly meditation session.

An additional recent visitor was Ayya Medhanandi, a Canadian nun from Wellington, New Zealand. She came for a ten day visit immediately at the end of the Rains. She was a great blessing to the BSV and in the short time she was with us she was teaching almost every evening and also offered us a weekend retreat. The depth and clarity of her teaching, and of her compassion, are bringing us great joy. I have just found an extra piece of biographical information which tells us that not only has she deepened her



Sayadaw at the BSV – teaching meditation to students from Wangaratta Secondary College.



practice while in New Zealand, but that she is 'active in counselling, interfaith dialogue and she works with the disabled and with children.' She is indeed a shining light and we feel great gratitude to her.

*from President Cora Thomas*

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## Noted lay teacher to visit the Society for 2 months

Noted lay teacher Visu Teoh (formerly the bhikkhu Visuddhacara) will visit the Society for two months, giving his first talk on Sunday 12 February at the temple at 9:30 am. He will also lead a meditation session at 7:30 pm that evening.



Visu & wife Barbara, Sri Lanka

He was born in Penang, Malaysia, in 1953 and became a journalist early in life. He was later a Buddhist monk (bhikkhu) for 17 years, but returned to lay life in January 2003/2545. He is married to Barbara and they presently reside at the *Paramita Meditation Centre* in Kadugannawa in Sri Lanka. Visu has been practising meditation since 1982 and has studied with various teachers including the Myanmar meditation master Sayadaw U Pandita (author of *In This Very Life; The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha*) and Venerable Sujiva of Malaysia (author of *Essential of Insight Meditation* and other books). Her is the author of several books

including *Curbing Anger Spreading Love, Loving and Dying, Hello with Love and Other Meditations* and *Metta – the Practice of Loving-Kindness for a Happier Life*. Presently Visu teaches at Paramita and frequently travels to lead retreats abroad. He has led retreats in Australia, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

*from President Cora Thomas and Secretary Prem Nawaratne*

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## 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Buddhism

The 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Buddhism will be hosted by the Buddhist Society of Western Australia in Perth on Saturday and Sunday 10 and 11 June this year. The theme of the conference is *Confronting the Controversies* and the aim is to hold a major public forum on issues of relevance and interest in the Buddhist world today. Speakers include Ajahn Brahmavamso (the Society's Spiritual Director), Venerable Professor Dhammavihari (a former visiting teacher at the Society), Venerable Dhammananda (the first Thai woman to be fully ordained in the Theravada tradition) and Dr Phillip Nitschke (a well-known campaigner for voluntary euthanasia). Pamphlets are available at the temple in East Malvern, or the web page [www.globalconferenceonbuddhism.org](http://www.globalconferenceonbuddhism.org) can be consulted, for those who would like further information. The conference is open to all interested people, but it is advisable to make early bookings as it is expected to be fully subscribed soon.

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## Dhamma Hall Renovation

During the relatively quiet period in mid-January a group of volunteer members repainted the inside walls of the Dhamma Hall (a delightful, warm pale pinkish sand colour). This was done during weekdays and Saturdays. Committee member Gary Dellora oversaw the efforts and sourced the materials. The formerly evident cracks and the stains from the heaters have disappeared after sustained effort by volunteer members and friends on some very hot days (over 35°C at times). Further works will roll out

over the ensuing weeks, for a new 'sparkling' meditation hall.

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## Fund-raising Dinner

The Society owes a solid debt to the Friends of the BSV, who raised \$4818 via the Fund-raising dinner held on 5 November last. This money has been lodged with the Society's School building Fund. The generosity of the donors and the efforts of the organizers, helpers and participants to make this event a success are all appreciated.



Our particular thanks go to Meththa and James for their efforts in organizing the evening.

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## Melbourne Cup Day Retreat

The retreat over the Melbourne Cup Day extended weekend was decidedly beneficial. Special thanks to Sayadaw U Pandita for conducting this retreat, to Greg Kleiman who organized it and to Yong, the cook/chef. The 30 or so who attended included several from Sayadaw's *Dhammasukha Meditation Centre* in Springvale. One lasting memory is when Sayadaw commented that when we first sat down to eat we all ate so quickly and noisily that ... No, it will not be repeated here – suffice to say, it took us some effort to disconnect from life's usual frenetic activity, especially at Melbourne Cup. Not all of us cared who won that horse race ...

Ven. U Pandita and 2 samaneras, at the retreat

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## A heartfelt thank you

It was a fine, clear morning on the last day of Sayadaw's retreat at Anglesea, a precursor to a hot, windless day. I had just been informed that my two week old grandson had been diagnosed with meningitis and he and his mother, my daughter, were together in hospital. Helped by retreatants, I packed my bags ready to return to Melbourne. Just prior to leaving I passed to Greg a photograph of tiny Samuel and asked that Sayadaw lead a meditation to radiate metta to the sick baby. Sayadaw asked me for his name and other details as I was leaving the retreat to commence the two hour drive to Melbourne.

The calm of the retreat stayed with me as I drove. I had no feeling of dread or panic but felt totally equanimous in the knowledge that Samuel would make a complete recovery. Upon speaking to my daughter and visiting the hospital later this feeling was confirmed. Naomi told me that the only time her baby had seemed really distressed was early that morning and that his temperature had dropped since then.

I subsequently heard of the beautiful metta that so many people had radiated to Sam. As each retreatant examined the photograph and imagined cradling the tiny baby in their arms, its healing power evolved and strengthened. Thank you dear friends for such a blessing. Naomi tells me that Sam is a very calm and happy baby at

three months old. I can see this quality too and I am not at all surprised.

*from President Cora Thomas*

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## Visit to Bob Greenfield

In late July, Saydaw U Pandita, Gary Dellora and I paid a visit to a very generous benefactor of the BSV, Bob Greenfield. Bob has donated substantial funds to the BSV over the past two years. Though currently confined to a Morwell nursing home, where he is wheelchair bound, his mind showed great clarity and he was very appreciative of our visit, especially of the presence of Venerable U Pandita. Undoubtedly his alertness and mindfulness is in part attributable to the meditation on the breath he has practised daily for decades. It is many years since he has had any contact at all with Sangha so he was very grateful for Sayadaw's chanting and guided meditation, as well as his advice on questions concerning his personal meditation progress.

We heard a short account of Bob's life, and gave him some small gifts. It was a "feel-good" time where we could offer the presents of Dhamma and presence of Sangha to a layperson, who, being incapacitated, would not normally have the opportunity to meet a monk. Thank you Sayadaw.

*from President Cora Thomas*

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## Buddhist Council – 10 years

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Buddhist Council of Victoria will be hosted by the Society on Saturday 25 February at Buddhāloka Temple in East Malvern. The Council represents Buddhism in Victoria to organizations such as governments and the news media. Representatives from a number of major religious traditions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, will also participate in the AGM of the Council. Attendance is by invitation.

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## *Sangha*

**Ajahn Brahmavamso**, the Society's Spiritual Director will visit us at Vesak (in May) and stay on for a few days afterwards.

**Ajahn Chandako**, Abbot of the Vimutti Forest Monastery near Auckland, is once again the recipient of the Society's gratitude. He paid his second visit to the Society in mid-November when many people once again appreciated his fine teachings. He conducted a generous interview program as part of the in-



house retreat and gave careful and compassionate attention to our individual problems as meditators. We thank him for his Dhamma offerings and look forward to a return visit in November of this year. His talks are available on MP3 at the temple in East Malvern.

**Ajahn Dhammanando** is presently staying in New Zealand at the Wellington Monastery. He has accepted our invitation to be in residence for the Vas (the Rains retreat) this year. Many members will remember his short visit in November of the previous year and the one-day retreat he offered.

**Ayya Medhanandi** visited the Society immediately after last year's Rains retreat. It was her first visit to Buddhāloka sponsored by the Society, but not her first visit to East Malvern, as she has offered us the Dhamma on a previous occasion. This time, she stayed at the vihara for 10 days and conducted a generous teaching program, which included a 3-day in-house meditation retreat. Her inspiring Dhamma offerings were nevertheless very practical and helpful. We could feel the depth of her understanding and living of the Dhamma in the clarity with which she explained the most profound and complex teachings. Her talks are available on MP3 at the temple in East Malvern.

**Venerable Nissarano** will come to Melbourne after Visu leaves and will stay at the vihara for approximately two months, leaving some time in June. He has been at Bodhinyana Monastery near Perth and more recently in Thailand, where he will be returning for the Vas (the Rains retreat) this year. Many members knew him well as the former librarian at the Society.

**Sayadaw U Pandita** is away until the 15 February, leading a meditation retreat in Malaysia. The Thursday evening meditations continue in his absence. Those present when

Sayadaw U Pandita translated a Dhamma talk from Sayadaw U Metteya (Sayadaw Pandita's pariyatti [theoretical Dhamma] teacher) were twice-blessed – a double benefit. On a recent trip to Lakes Entrance, Sayadaw managed to drop in and visit with Bob Greenfield (one of our benefactors) at his nursing home in Morwell.

**Venerable Pasadika** will be staying at the vihara in East Malvern from 7 to 11 February coming. Bhante was a former member of the Society and is now at Bodhinyana Monastery in Western Australia. Dana will be required from 8 to 11 February. Please contact Cora for details.

### Redesigned Web Page

The BSV's web page has been improved and redesigned. It can be found at <http://www.bsv.net.au>. In the future we hope to incorporate online membership renewal and electronic funds transfers (eg. for meditation retreats). Using the **Contact Us** (sub-)page you may send a message to the Society.

Many thanks to Jonni Gani and the Secretary Prem Nawaratne for their efforts in keeping the Society and its members in frequent contact via the Society's web page.

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### New Members

The following new members are welcomed to the Society –

Roshini Balapatabendi  
Meghan Butterfield  
Kathy Yin Leng Cheah  
Ji Young Kim  
Nicolas Lee Kolotos  
Jagan Kommineni  
Lak Tan  
Ann Lam  
Ekpunyaskul Rujjiraporn  
Manel Thalagaspitiya

We hope they find that the Society is of real assistance in aiding their understanding of the Dhamma and of the value in permitting the Dhamma to guide our daily lives.

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### From the Committee

**AGM** The Society's Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 12 noon at the temple in East Malvern on Sunday 26 March. All members and

friends are invited to attend and hear the achievements over the last year and the plans and hopes for the coming year. The Society's Committee will also be elected by the membership at this meeting. Eligible members are encouraged to stand for Committee. Nomination forms will be available at the temple.

**Lay Teacher** A short stay Business visa application has been lodged on behalf of the lay teacher Visu. Accommodation and expenses have yet to be arranged. He should be with the Society from 12 February to 12 April.

**Costs share for teachers** The Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Retreat Centre in New South Wales frequently brings Sangha teachers to Australia from overseas for their retreats. The Committee has been investigating a cost share arrangement with the Centre in NSW, which will enable the Society to also invite these teachers for activities, including retreats, associated with the Society.

**Donation Box** .The donation box was forced open – again. The perpetrator(s) could have gained access to the meditation hall after hours via the emergency exit door, as this was found unbolted. Before finally locking up each day, everyone is advised to check the emergency exit door to make sure it is bolted at both the top and the bottom of the door. The door-closer should not be disconnected.

**Forthcoming Retreats** (i) Visu is planning to lead an 8-day meditation retreat at the Maitripa Contemplative Centre at Healesville from Saturday 1 April to Sunday 9 April this year.

(ii) Greg Kleiman is planning a retreat with Sayalay Dipankara for November this year, possibly around the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12th.

Watch the Society's notice board, the newsletter and the web page for further details of these retreats.

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## Membership Subscriptions 2006

A warm thank you to those who have renewed their membership of the Society for this year, or who have recently joined. Your commitment is important as it permits us to invite, who offer their Dhamma teachings free of charge. This year, and next, it is likely that the Society will have many teachers coming to Buddhāloka, so we are going to need many helpers for such activities as bringing dana, transport, cleaning the temple and vihara and looking after the garden.

For those who haven't yet renewed their membership, or may not even have joined, the opportunity is still available.

Clause 9 (i) of the BSV Constitution, states: "... The amount of that payment (known as the "Annual Subscription") shall be determined by the committee no later than October of the preceding year.

The Committee at its October 2005 meeting concluded that the Annual Subscription for the year 2006 will be held unchanged. The subscriptions for the Year 2006 will therefore be:

- Ordinary / Associate:  
Single - \$60.00  
Family: - \$80.00  
Concession: -\$40.00

In accordance with BSV practice, all persons joining the Society as new members subsequent to 1 October 2005 and on paying the 2006 subscriptions as above are entitled to membership until the end of 2006.

## Renewal of Subscriptions

Clause 9 (vi) of the BSV Constitution, states: "Subscriptions shall be due and owing on the first day of January in each year. Any member whose subscription has not been paid prior to the Annual General Meeting shall be deemed to be no longer a member,..." Accordingly, members are requested to ensure that their subscription renewals are paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> January or soon after. When renewing the subscription, all Members are requested to submit a renewal form giving the contact details and including their e-mail address, if available. A membership form is included in this newsletter.

In future, online membership renewals will be possible, but this facility has not yet been established. In the meantime, please use the attached form or print it from our web page ([www.bsv.net.au](http://www.bsv.net.au)).

*from Secretary Prem Nawaratne*

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**Email Bulletins** can be sent to members and friends if they indicate their interest in receiving updates and news of forthcoming activities by email. To be placed on the circulation list, please send a message to the Buddhist Society of Victoria <[bsvmelb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bsvmelb@bigpond.net.au)>, marked for the Secretary (Prem Nawaratne). Members who join or renew and indicate an email address are automatically included in this circulation list.

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***Here he grieves, hereafter he grieves. In both states the evil-doer grieves. He grieves, he is afflicted, perceiving the impurity of his own deeds.***

Dhammapada 15

The *Dhammapada* ('Words of Truth') is a collection of 423 verses in Pali, uttered by the Buddha on some 305 occasions for the benefit of all. The stories about the circumstances in which the verses were uttered were added by the commentator Buddhagosa in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE. It is generally believed that most of these stories associated with each *Dhammapada* verse have been handed down orally for generations since the days of the Buddha. The Buddha's teachings were not committed to writing until more than 400 years after his *Mahā Parinibbāna* (passing away).

Copies of the *Dhammapada* are available for loan or purchase from the library.

***Here he rejoices, hereafter he rejoices. In both states the well-doer rejoices. He rejoices, exceedingly rejoices, perceiving the purity of his own deeds.***

Dhammapada 16

## **A Buddhist Newspaper?**

The online Buddhist newspaper *The Buddhist Channel* has recently expanded its operations to include a chapter from Oceania (Australia and the south-west Pacific). This newspaper, based

in Malaysia, is one of the best sources of news on topics of interest to Buddhists. Like all good newspapers, it does not shy away from controversial topics. For example, the latest editions include a discussion of the actual dates of the Buddha's life, suggesting he was born in 1887 BCE and attained Nibbana in 1807 BCE – some 12 centuries or so earlier than currently-accepted dates. The newspaper also includes a variety of Buddhist e-cards. It may be found at [www.buddhistchannel.tv](http://www.buddhistchannel.tv).

## **Dalai Lama to visit Australia**

The spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is planning to visit Australia next year, after accepting an invitation from the Australia Tibet Council. It will be the Dalai Lama's fifth visit to Australia. "I would like to assure my Australian and New Zealand friends that despite having reached the age of 70, I will continue to work for a more peaceful world, for the preservation of Tibet's unique culture and religion, and for a peaceful and just settlement to the Tibetan situation", the Dalai Lama said.

from *The Buddhist Channel*, July 2005

## **New Monastic Retreat Home for Buddhist Women**

A new Bhikkhuni vihara and retreat home has opened in Fremont, California, USA (near San Francisco). The new house is named *Dhammadarini* ('upholder of the Dhamma for women'). Bhikkhuni Sister Tahtaloka is one of two fully ordained bhikkhunis in residence at the centre, which aims to eventually offer Theravadin ordinations for other women. The establishment of the new centre took just over five years.

from [www.insidebayarea.com/trivalleyherald](http://www.insidebayarea.com/trivalleyherald)

This edition of *Buddhāloka* was edited by David Cheal (contact via the BSV or at [rorippa@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rorippa@bigpond.net.au)). The views contained within do not necessarily reflect those of the Buddhist Society of Victoria. Contributions and news are welcome, particularly from members.

## **WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW**

A few months ago, the movie *What the Bleep Do We Know* created much public interest in Melbourne. I found the film both intriguing and absorbing, and of some relevance to Buddhist notions. However, I thought that the animation parts were somewhat distracting and overdone!

Lots of people who saw the film recorded their experience on the internet sites *Amazon.com* and *rottentomatoes.com*. A sample of not-so-favourable impressions included: 'a cult hit'; 'vaguely convincing'; 'subversive'; 'a confusing jumble of New-Age ideas'; 'the most damaging aspect of the movie is, especially for Christians, the idea that we have a great deal of control over our physical and

mental illness'; 'pretends to be a documentary'; 'cheap psychology in scientific clothes'; 'weirdly entertaining'.

Favourable comments included: 'mind blowing'; 'quantum fable'; 'convergence of science and spirituality'; about 'habitual emotions, emotional addiction'; 'a pebble thrown into water'; 'thought provoking'; 'a terrific way to spend 109 minutes'; ' a highly enjoyable, brain teasing elucidation of quantum physics and theory'; 'challenging, cryptic, mystical.'

Many members of the BSV also made a point of seeing the film. Some were happy to share their impressions. For instance, Padmini Perera said that she was impressed with how leading scientists were brought together to reflect on 'the magnificent possibilities of the mind', to discuss 'the basic questions of life such as the nature of reality, consciousness and individuality', and to show how emotions can influence our perception of reality. Dr Mervyn Mendes confessed that he rarely goes to the movies, but did attend the fund-raising event. While appreciating the philosophical concepts portrayed in the film, he 'found it difficult to understand the subtleties and sophistications of the producer.' Cora Thomas thought it was one of the best films she had seen, and found it 'entertaining' despite the film's serious theme. In particular, she appreciated the effective contrasting of the serious interview of scientists/experts with 'very humorous scenes, brilliant graphics, and a credible and sympathetic story-line.'



Months before the film was screened in Melbourne, the producer Mark Vicente was interviewed on ABC Radio by Rachael Kohn on the program *The Spirit of Things*. Mark Vicente highlighted the key ideas and purpose that inspired him to make the film. This is what he explained:

- When you look at matter, it's 99 % empty, and the 1 % that is there isn't matter either, it's possibilities, it's maybes. The most solid thing you can say about all this insubstantial matter is that it's more like a thought. It's like a concentrated bit of information.
- The material world only manifests when we are looking at it. The paradox is that I'm affecting my reality, but I (also) think that certain other things may exist whether I believe in them or not. So we have some responsibility for what happens to us.
- So I want people to, after they see the film, to go out and say, 'you know what? This stuff's pretty cool. I want to go check this out.' That's what we're suggesting, not that you should worship somebody or something. I do think that you know, the divine can be found in all kinds of places. If we can't seem to find it in the mirror, then perhaps go spend some time in nature.

All of this clearly resonates with some of the core teachings in Buddhism. The first statement appears similar to the notion of *emptiness*; the second, suggests how we are responsible for our own *kamma*, *that we exercise choice every moment of our lives* and the third statement is much like the Buddha urging people not simply to believe him but to *test out for themselves the truth of his teachings*.

*from Committee member Bala Mudaly*

## Pictures from the retreat (last August) at Anglesea

led by Sayalay Dipankara



Pictures from the retreat (last November) at Anglesea

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led by Sayadaw U Pandita

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*Farewell to a Palace Lady Entering the Way* by Chang Chi

*In the old Han Emperor's Chao-yang Palace,  
a woman most rare sought to make Immortal.*

*Her name originally stood out in palace records;  
she was not yet familiar with robes of coloured clouds.*

*But she stopped singing and dancing (both much praised)  
and long followed the flight of the crane.*

*Officials of the Court stood by as she entered a mountain cave;  
then drove the jade-wheeled car home empty.*

*from the BCV Newsletter of October 2004*

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*The I in Me* by member Ray Anthony

*Struggle on no more alone and weary  
your slow and heavy footsteps in the dark,  
Life has raced ahead of friends and lovers,  
Let us share our combined wisdom,  
I'll take you in a warm tender embrace'  
soothe that aching heart with love unconditional,  
we shall be as one happy loved and needed,  
no more lonely footsteps in the dark,*

*'I AM' WHAT I HAVE BEFORE  
TO 'BE' THAT WHICH I HAVE NEVER BEEN  
IS 'TO BE' YET 'BE' NO MORE.*

**Book Review**

***Forest Recollections* by Kamala Tiyavanich**

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*Forest Recollections* is not only a companion book to *The Buddha in the Jungle*, it is also a seriously intelligent exploration of the history of the Thai Forest Tradition. Her starting point is the late 1850s with Ajahn Mun and his teachers. I suspect there are at least two reasons for this. Firstly this is the start of reliable biographies of forest monks; secondly, it marks the beginning of the Bangkok government's effort to standardize, codify & reform the Sangha into something it could control. Her end point is about ten years ago.

For me, *Forest Recollections* operates on two levels. Firstly, there is a straight up academic exploration of the forest tradition, which is thorough enough to engage me intellectually. Secondly, I found there is a lot of Dhamma in the biographies of these famous Ajahn. Kamala provides us with biographical information on every major Forest Ajahn, Ajahns Mun, Maha Boowa, Tate, Lee, Chah- they are all there, where they came from, what their ethnicity was, where they ordained, who their Ajahn was & often why they became forest monks. The book is peppered with anecdotes from the lives of these remarkable monks. This engages me emotionally.

Perhaps because *Forest Recollections* wasn't written by a Thai, there is a "warts & all" approach to it. This increases the book's usefulness to me. So we see the Ajahn making mistakes, being afraid, being overcome by self pity. We also see the staggering disrespect and at times violence to which the Bangkok government subjected them. In the course of this book the forest Ajahn go from pariah to patron saints in the eyes of the Sangha bureaucrats. We get a sense of a very turbulent time. Though interestingly from a Western standpoint, of World War 2 & the Vietnam War, it is the Vietnam War that affects the Forest Ajahn the greatest. With the Vietnam War and the accompanying Cold War, there was greater paranoia and suspicion, from both sides, of these monks who were often wandering in and out of government controlled areas. With WW2 the Japanese simply occupied the country and then went elsewhere, they were too busy to deal with these monks who weren't giving them any trouble.

So it is that I recommend this book to you. It isn't cheap...about \$45, but it is worth it. As usual I sourced mine from *Amazon.com*.

*from member Russell Dunne*

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**BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF VICTORIA**  
 71 - 73 Darling Rd, East Malvern Vic 3145.  
 E-mail: [bsvmelb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bsvmelb@bigpond.net.au)  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM**

*Please fill in **all details** requested below. (Print)*

**Date** ...../...../2006

**Title:**.....**First Name(s):**.....  
**Family Name:**.....  
**Address:**.....  
 .....**Postcode:**.....  
**E-mail** (Please print):.....  
**Phone:.(Home)**.....**Mobile**.....  
 (Work) .....

**Tick Renewal or New Application**

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Renewal - Year: 2006</b> | <b>New Application</b> ↓ |
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| <p><b>I agree with the conditions of BSV membership</b><br/> <b>Signature:</b>.....<br/> <b>Please note: New applicants need to have a sponsor sign this application.</b><br/> <b>Sponsor's Name (Print):</b>.....<br/> <b>Sponsor Signature:</b>.....<br/> <b>Committee Approval Date:</b> .....</p> |
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**Tick Membership Type**  
**Ordinary**                      **Associate**

|                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Tick Membership fee</b> | <b>Year 2006 (Inc. GST)</b> |
| <b>Single \$60</b>         | <b>Family \$80</b>          |
|                            | <b>Concession \$40</b>      |

**Donation (If any)** \$..... **Total Enclosed** \$.....  
**Tick if payment is for Building fund.**  
**(Donations to building fund are tax deductible.)**  
**If payment is by cheque, tick if a receipt is required.**  
**(A receipt will be provided for all cash payments)**

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| <p><b>Cheques should be made payable to: "Buddhist Society of Victoria"</b><br/> <b>All payments should be forwarded to: The Treasurer, BSV.</b><br/> <b>71-73 Darling Road East Malvern Victoria 3145.</b></p> |
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**Reasons For Becoming A Member Of The Buddhist Society Of Victoria**

1. To support the Buddhist Society Of Victoria's free teaching programme by contributing to the costs of:
  - Upkeep of the Buddhhaloka Centre;
  - Bringing visiting teachers to the centre and their ongoing support.
  
2. To formalise a commitment to support a Centre for the Buddhist Community.
  
3. To receive the following tangible benefits:
  - The right to borrow from the BSV library;
  - Discounts for meditation retreats,



- Receive a copy of the Society's regular newsletter per E-mail or Post.

### Notes On Membership

**1. Sponsorship:** New members are required to have a sponsor sign their application form. A sponsor can be any member of the Society who is both financial and eligible to vote at the Society's Annual General meeting. Anyone seeking to join the Society can approach a member of the Committee for assistance on this matter if they do not know of anyone who can sponsor them.

**2. Approval process.** An applicant does not become a member of the Society until the Committee formally approve the applicant's nomination.

**3. Voting rights** Only financial Ordinary members of not less than two years standing may vote, stand for election to the Committee of the Society or nominate members who wish to stand for election.

#### 4. Main Classes of Membership

- **Ordinary Membership** is for those prepared to commit themselves as Buddhists (i.e. go for refuge to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha).
- **Associate Membership** for those wishing to have the benefits of membership without making that particular commitment.

Both classes of membership have the same privileges but Associate Members may not vote at Annual or Special General Meetings.

#### 5. Sub Classes of Membership

- **Family membership.** Entitles members of ones immediate family to borrow from the library and enjoy discounts on meditation retreats. For voting purposes is regarded as being a single membership.
- **Concession Membership** This is provided for members who are retired or otherwise not in a position to afford the full ordinary membership subscription.

#### 6. Membership Renewal

Except for those who have joined as new members since October of the previous year, Membership of the Buddhist Society of Victoria falls due on January 1 & must be paid by the AGM date of the year.

Please note: Full details of membership rights and responsibilities are laid out in the constitution of the Society available for browsing in the library.

# Buddhist Society of Victoria

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**Buddhāloka Centre**  
**71-73 Darling Road, East Malvern 3145**  
**tel: (03) 9571-6409**  
**bsvmelb@bigpond.net.au or bsvlibr@bigpond.net.au**  
***www.bsv.net.au***

## REGULAR PROGRAM

- Tuesday 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm Introduction to Buddhist meditation  
(Library open 7:00 to 9:00 pm)
- Thursday 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm Meditation for all comers, led by Sayadaw U Pandita  
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm or so Dhamma talk by Sayadaw U Pandita  
(Library open 7:00 to 9:00 pm)
- Saturday Full moon days (Sil) observance with meditation (see notice board for dates)
- Sunday 8:30 am – 9:30 am Silent Meditation.  
9:30 am- 10:30 am Dhamma talk  
11.00 am Offering of dana to the Sangha followed by a shared meal. All are welcome to enjoy the food brought by members and friends. You may bring some food, as you wish.  
(Library open 8:30 to 11:00 am)

**Dhamma School** is held on Sunday from 9.30 am – 10.30 am during the school term.  
For enquiries contact Suzanne Palmer –Holton on 9776 4425.

All regular activities of the Buddhist Society are free and open to the general public. Non-members may not borrow from the library and do not have voting rights.



**Buddhāloka**  
LIGHT OF THE BUDDHA  
Newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria

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