



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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Summer 2009 /

Opening Blessing of New Library & Dhamma School amenity



Children in the Sunday Dhamma class have eagerly awaited the opening of their new shared facility and space in the upstairs library extension. No more crowding under a table in the office! No longer interruptions in the dana sala to the continuity of a lesson while people prepare food for Sangha! We are all grateful for the new space which even allows walking meditation in inclement weather. On Sunday 16th November just before Dana, Bhante Gunaratana swept thru [figuratively] the new upstairs space, chanting a blessing ceremony and sprinkling blessed water from large stalked flowers which pleasantly showered pupils and teachers alike. It behoves us to share the merits of our practice there with Bob Greenfield, the generous benefactor whose bequest paid for a substantial proportion of the new facility.

from Committee Member & Dhamma School teacher Gary Dellora

Ayya Sucinta at the 6th Global Conference on Buddhism in Auckland, New Zealand

The **6th Global Conference on Buddhism** was held at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, in a large auditorium (part of the business department) on December 6th and 7th, last. About 250 to 300 people attended. Australians present were Ajahn Brahm, Ajahn Sujato, Ajahn Brahmali, Lama Choedak, and Ayya Sucinta. Brian White (from the *Buddhist Council of Victoria*) gave an overview of *Buddhism in Multicultural Australia*.

The theme of this year's conference was "*Opening Hearts and Connecting Minds*". Talks, and question and answer periods, were grouped in nine sessions including "*Reflections on Environment and Economics*", "*Buddhism in the Digital Age*", "*A Woman's Place in Buddhism*" and "*Death, Rebirth and Living*". Bhante Gunaratana, who had come all the way from West Virginia, USA, was the most senior member of the Sangha present. He was asked to speak on meditation and guide a meditation session at the end of the first day. The second day of the conference happened to be his 81st birthday.

The Sangha of New Zealand was represented by monks from the Ajahn Chah Forest tradition: Ajahn Thiradhammo from *Bodhinyanarama* near Wellington and Ajahn Chandako from *Vimutti Monastery* near Auckland. Female speakers currently based in New Zealand were Ven. Tenzin Tsapel (originally from Australia), the abbess of the *Fokuangshan Temple* in Auckland, and Ven. Amala Wrightson from the *Auckland Zen Centre*. Since there is no Theravada monastery for women in New Zealand, women were especially grateful for the presence of bhikkhunis from this tradition and for the possibility to ask questions.

After the conference, Ayya Sucinta was invited to stay at *Vimutti Monastery*. She gave a teaching at the centre of the *Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association* in Auckland on the following Sunday after the conference, before returning to Melbourne the next day.

It is not clear yet, where and when the next Global Conference on Buddhism will be held. Two cities were mentioned: Sydney or Bangkok.

Sangha

Ajahn Ariyasilo has been contacted by the Committee regarding his availability to visit the BSV for the *Vassa* (the Rains retreat), and to conduct a teaching program. His response is pending.

Ajahn Khemavaro, Abbot of *Wat Buddhadhamma* in NSW will pay a visit to the BSV between Tuesday 24th March and Tuesday 31st March. He has agreed to conduct a three day "in-house" retreat from Saturday 28th March to Monday 30th March, inclusive. He will also be visiting the Vietnamese community as he is an American monk of Vietnamese background. A dana roster for that period will be organised and on retreat days people are requested to bring their own lunch.

Ajahn Nissarano will be invited to stay at the vihara and to conduct Dhamma teaching for a few months (again) in 2010.

A Permanent Residency visa application has been lodged by the BSV for **Ayya Sucinta**. **Sayadaw U Pandita** was recently notified of the success of his application for Permanent Residency.

Ajahn Sumedho has been invited to stay at the vihara and to conduct Dhamma teaching around the time of the Abbots' Conference in Perth later this year.

Retreats

Gregory Kramer will offer a non-residential Insight Dialogue retreat at Buddhhaloka Centre entitled, *Where are my Keys? And by the way....Are you Awake right Now?* This retreat will take the form of an evening introduction session on Monday 23rd February 6:45 to 9:00 pm and a day retreat 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Tuesday 24th February.

Gregory came to the BSV last year and interested many of us in his approach to meditation and interactions with others. He is also offering a 5 day retreat at **Commonground, Hunger, Freedom and the Path – From Suffering to Peace** February 25th 11:30 am to 3:00 pm March 1st. To find out more information about this, email Insight Dialogue Oceania announcements@metta.org and check the BSV website.

Sally Clough (Armstrong) and her husband will offer a retreat day at the BSV on Saturday March 14th. Many people will remember Sally's visit last year. She and her husband are teachers of vipassana meditation and they both have a wealth of experience from teaching meditation in the USA.

Buddhāloka Centre will be open for silent meditation the 2nd Saturday of the month from 9:30 am commencing with Saturday 14th February.

Fund Raiser for BSV & Sanghamittarama

An international food fair is to be held on the 21st of March 2009. The venue is *All Saints Anglican Church Hall*, 2 Dixon St., Clayton 3168.

For more info contact Padmini Perera on ☎9803 7170.

From the Committee

Vesak will be celebrated this year at the BSV on Sunday 17th May, about one week after the May full moon. Ajahn Brahm will again lead our celebrations. A newsletter will be published early in May providing details of the program and activities. As usual he will arrive on the Saturday evening and be with us for Monday and Tuesday retreat days and public talks.

The Libraryand membership!! - The beautiful new library is now completed and open for borrowing. Please make sure your membership is current as only members can borrow from the library. Membership is now

due and payable for 2009. There are some members who have still not paid their dues for last year so could you please attend to that. We cannot over emphasise the importance of your membership to the BSV as it affects our status and negotiating position in so many ways: applications for government funding and visa applications are just two examples.

Cleaners - Now our premises are cleaned up and looking very attractive but the cleaning roster for the Dhamma hall is empty! We would not like to have to consider making a small facility charge to pay professional cleaners so we hope this matter can be rectified now the holidays are over.

Membership fees for 2009 are to remain unchanged.

Pledges for the Vihara – The very generous benefaction from Bob Greenfield enabled completion of the library extensions, without incurring interest on the bank loan that had been established to fund the extensions. However, it is hoped that the regular (monthly) pledges will continue as the Sangha vihara is in urgent need of repairs and maintenance.

Beginners' Meditation

Shane Brunning, a long term member of the BSV and an experienced meditator will offer a meditation course for beginners and those wishing to consolidate their practice. The course will be on Wednesday evenings in February commencing with February 4th and then 11th, 18th and 25th. We are very grateful to Shane as are newcomers. The program is for one hour, 7:30 to 8:30 pm.

Recollective Awareness

Jason Siff is to deliver a talk on '*Recollective Awareness*' at the Buddhāloka Centre in May 2009 (tentatively scheduled for 30th May).

Pali for Daily Reflection

A Pali Word a Day by the Mahindarama Sunday Pali School is a publication of the Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. It aims to assist new Buddhist students who are unfamiliar

with some of the Pali words often used in Buddhism. An example excerpt follows –

Pañca-Sīla – ... *five precepts – they form the basic Buddhist code of conduct with the objective guarding the sense doors*

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain

1. ... from destroying living beings (**pāṇātipātā**). With the cultivation of loving kindness and compassion, this precept helps in controlling the passion of hate and anger in us.
2. ... from taking what is not given (**adinnādānā**). Avoiding stealing, robbing, swindling or even taking more than what is given, we exercise self control over the desire to possess things belonging to others. In other words, one is practising generosity and sincerity, and is developing trustworthiness.
3. ... from sexual misconduct (**kāmesu-michācārā**). By curbing our lust for excessive sensual pleasures such as adultery, we show respect for the safety and integrity of others and cultivate contentment.
4. ... from false speech (**musāvādā**). Lying or deceiving (by telling less than one should) are the negative values of honesty. One should avoid using cheating, exaggeration and slander to gain wealth, fame and power.
5. ... from drugs and liquor (**surā**). This way is not one of escapism from reality. One should be mindful at all times and be self-controlled.

extracted from A Pali Word a Day – A selection of Pali Words for Daily Reflection pub. Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc, email <bdea@buddhanet.net>

New Members

The following new members are welcomed to the Society –

Felipe Casayayas

Rohan Hetherington

Pynfui Kok

Seela Liyanage

Su Watt

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.

Healesville Retreat

After a few hiccups [we are in Samsara after all!] a very successful retreat was led by Sayadaw U Lakkhana at Healesville's *Candlebark Farm* between 7th and 14th December last. We started a week later than originally planned due to delays in the issuing of Sayadaw's visa. The number of yogis attending may have been down a little on this account, however those attending were very grateful for the lovely venue of gumtrees, kangaroos and kookaburras, and the very clear English translation of the Sayadaw's rewardingly precise and inspiring Dhamma talks.

We are very grateful to Sayadaw for his compassion and wisdom, to the translator Victor for his clarity and to the Kappiya, cook, participants and organizers. Sayadaw was receptive to our invitation for possibly an in-house retreat on his return in late 2009. Thanks should go to Sayadaw U Pandita of *Dhammasukha Meditation Centre* in Springvale for giving us the opportunity to learn from one of his Dhamma mentors, and also the *Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre* who helped sponsor Sayadaw's 41-day visit to Australia.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

from Committee member Gary Delloras

Passing of a Dear Dhamma Friend

Many of us were acquainted with Julia Fratta, a devoted and inspiring Dhamma Practiser, who benefitted from Teachings for a number of years at the BSV while struggling with serious illness which eventually claimed her in mid-December 2008. We send our condolences to family and friends.

Selina and Russell would like to announce that they are planning to start a family in the last half of the year. Selina isn't pregnant yet, but we are hoping for good news before Christmas. We would like to ask if any BSV members have baby clothes, nappies, an unused cot that they might want to sell to us. Or who know where to source these things cheaply. We are haunting Op shops, trash & treasure markets and garage sales, as well as e-bay and the Trading Post but there is always some place we don't know about. We are often at the BSV on Sundays (when we aren't out haunting markets) or you can send us an e-mail at: selinaandrussell@hotmail.com.

Whatever (harm) a foe may do to a foe, or a hater to a hater, yet an ill-directed mind can do oneself far greater harm.

Dhammapada 42

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 5th 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 (altho' borrowing from the library is temporarily unavailable, due to the current renovations). We have also received many boxes of books for free distribution from *The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation* of Taiwan, including copies of the *Dhammapada*. Contact our librarian, Yasmin, if you'd like a copy.

What neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative can do, a well-directed mind does and therefore elevates one.

Dhammapada 43

This edition of *Buddhāloka* was edited by David Cheal (contact via the BSV). The views contained within do not necessarily reflect those of the Buddhist Society of Victoria. Contributions and news are welcome, particularly from members.

Strength for the Journey

When we practise concentration, it's as if we were gathering provisions for a trip. The provisions here are the skillful qualities we develop in the mind. The more provisions we have, the more comfortably we can travel and the further we can go. We can go to the human world, the deva worlds, the brahma worlds, or all the way to nibbana. When we have a lot of provisions, our traveling is easy, for we can afford to go by car or by boat. We can stay in comfortable places and have plenty of food to eat. The trip won't tire us, and we can go far and fast. As for people with meagre provisions, they can't afford the carfare, so they have to go barefoot, walking on gravel and stepping on thorns, exposed to the sun and rain. They can't stay in comfortable places; they're lacking in food; their progress is tiring and slow. By the time they reach their destination they're ready to give up, for they're all out of strength. But whether we travel quickly or slowly, we're all headed to the same destination. For example, suppose we're all going to Bangkok. Those who go by foot will get there in three months; those who go by car, in three days; while those who get on a plane will arrive in three minutes.

For this reason, you shouldn't get discouraged in your efforts to do what's good. Develop as much strength as you can, so that you'll have the provisions and vehicles you'll need to help speed you along to your goal. Once you've arrived, you'll experience nothing but happiness and ease. When you practise the

Dhamma, even if you don't reach the paths, their fruitions, or nibbana in this lifetime, at the very least you're developing the conditions that will help you along the way in the future.

When we meditate, it's as if we were driving a car on a trip. If you have a sense of how to adjust and improve your breath, it's like driving along a smooth, paved road. The car won't run into any obstacles, and even a long trip will seem short. As for people who aren't centered in concentration, whose minds are slipping and slithering around with no sense of how to improve their breathing, they're driving their car along a bumpy, unpaved road full of potholes. In some spots the bridges have collapsed. In others the road is washed out. What this means is that their mindfulness lapses and they let their minds fall into thoughts of the past and future. They don't stay put in the present. If they don't know how to repair their road, they'll keep running into dangers and obstacles. Their car will keep getting bogged down. Sometimes they spend weeks and months stuck in one place, and their short trip turns into a long one. Sometimes they go back to the beginning point and start all over again. Running back and forth like this, around and around in circles, they'll never be able to get to the goal.

from Starting Out Small by Ajahn Lee

Colonel Olcott and the Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka

Right from the time that the first European races landed in Sri Lanka, at the beginning of the 16th century, attempts were made to replace the culture of the Sinhala with that of Europe. In this movement it was the missionaries that played the most prominent part. They were, of course, well intentioned, but, unfortunately for us, they came to Sri Lanka with the deep-rooted idea that the Sinhala were a primitive people and that their religion—which represented the high-water level of their civilisation—was something that should be combated whenever and wherever possible and with every available means. The process of eradication thus started continued for many decades, and the defeatist mentality of the Sinhala, which was the direct consequence of the missionary campaign, became more and more pronounced. It was at the depth of this decline that the people awoke to the sense of the abject humiliation and deep degradation under which they lived. The religion had somehow been kept alive in the recesses of monasteries, and it was from those that there arose men of outstanding ability, of knowledge and wisdom, to kindle into flames the sparks that lay smouldering.

A fighter was needed to supply the dynamic energy; the hour produced the man. He was Ven. Migettuwatte Gunaananda. There is an unauthenticated story that as a layman he had joined a class for the training of catechists held by a Christian clergyman, a well-known Sinhala scholar, the Rev. C. Alwis. Whatever the truth of this story may be, Ven. Migettuwatte seems to have spent several years in a thorough reading of Christian books and also the works of critics of Christianity. He entered the *sangha* at Kotahena temple and started battle with the missionaries. He published numerous pamphlets, leaflets and books in defence of Buddhism, meeting the charges that were being urged against it; but he went further. He also started a counter-campaign, carrying war into the enemies' camp. He was a man of ceaseless activity, he toured the country from end to end in the Sinhala districts, sometimes addressing several meetings a day, and thousands flocked to hear him wherever he went. Olcott described him as the most brilliant polemic orator of the island, the terror of the missionaries, a middle-aged shaven monk of full medium stature, with a very intellectual head, the boldest, most brilliant and powerful champion of Sinhalese Buddhism.

A well-known missionary, Rev. S. Langden, wrote to the *Ceylon Friend* in September 1873, after hearing Migettuwatte speak, "There is that in his manner as he rises to speak which puts one in mind of some orators at home. He showed a consciousness of power with the people. (His) voice . . . is of great

compass and has a clear ring about it. His action is good and the long yellow robe thrown over one shoulder helps to make it impressive. His power of persuasion shows him to be a born orator."

Migettuwatte's activities culminated in the famous Panadura controversy held in August 1873. It was a historic occasion. Rev. David de Silva led the Christian side, supported by a galaxy of very learned clergymen. Migettuwatte had on his side the most eminent *bhikkhus* of the day—Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Bulatgama Dhammaalankara, Potuwila Indajoti, Koggala Sanghatissa and Weligama Sri Sumangala, to mention only a few. The controversy ended in an undoubted victory for the Buddhists, both factual and, what was far more important, moral. The Christians had been challenged and met face to face and had been convincingly defeated. John Capper of the *Ceylon Times* (later *The Times of Ceylon*) published in book form a full account of the historic controversy, with the speeches of the protagonists on either side, translated into English. This book had an unexpectedly wide circulation both in Europe and in America.

A copy fell into the hands of a brilliant American, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott. He became interested in religion, and in 1875 he abandoned his very lucrative practice at the bar. In the same year he founded, with a few friends, the Theosophical Society. In 1878 he and his colleagues came out to India to study the religious systems of the country, and from there to Sri Lanka to study Buddhism and to meet the great fighter who had become the "terror of missionaries". Olcott's fame had preceded him to Sri Lanka, and when his ship was berthed in Galle on the 17th May 1880, a tumultuous welcome awaited him. Earlier, the ship had touched at Colombo and with prophetic vision Olcott had written in his diary, on the day before reaching Colombo, "New and great responsibilities are to be faced: momentous issues hang on the result of this visit".

The days after his arrival with Madame Blavatsky, the pair were admitted to the Buddhist faith, by taking the Five Precepts at Vijayananda Temple in Galle. From Galle, Olcott and his colleagues proceeded to Colombo. It was a real triumphant march. Arriving in Colombo, in addition to the numerous lectures and public meetings, Olcott had several private conferences with the Buddhist leaders, both *bhikkhus* and laymen, and as a result, at a home called Red Cliff in Slave Island, on 17th June 1880, the Colombo branch of the Theosophical Society (called the Buddhist Theosophical Society) was founded with about forty members. Its object was "the promotion of Buddhism by guarding it from the attacks of those who propagate other religions, by strengthening Buddhists in their faith and in the practice of Buddhist morals, and by the spreading and teaching of Buddhist doctrines".

to be continued ...

by M. P. Amarasuriya, Wheel no. 281, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy (1981)

Activities at Sanghamittarama

Dear Friends of Sanghamittarama,

The nuns were residing at the BSV vihara, until January 1st; then the program at Sanghamittarama began with the following changes:

The **first Friday evening** of the month will be focused on **meditation** and questions related to meditation practice; especially those new to meditation are welcome. On **other Friday evenings (2nd, 3rd, 4th of the month)**, we will not only chant and meditate, but also spend time to study "*The Word of the Buddha*", using an outline of the Buddha's teachings by Ven. Nyanatiloka as a guide.

Commencing on January 3rd, we continued the **Sutta discussions** at Sanghamittarama every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 4:00 pm. The first sutta to be discussed was the

Mahaadhammasamaadaana Sutta from the Middle Length Collection (MN 46): “The Greater Discourse on Ways of Undertaking Things”.

Program for January-February in an overview:

At Sanghamittarama, 40 Chesterville Drive, East Bentleigh, Vic. 3165, ☎: 9579 0450

Regular evening program:

Chanting and silent meditation - *Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, 7:30 pm*

Chanting, meditation with guidance - *Every 1st Friday in the month, 7:30pm*

Chanting, meditation and study of “The Word of the Buddha” - *All other Friday evenings, 7:30pm*

Sutta discussion - *Every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 4:00 pm to 5:30pm*

Meditation and Dhamma discussion for Young Adults (age 18 to 35) - *At Sanghamittarama on Sunday, January 4, 18, February 1, 15, from 6:15 pm,*

Dhamma teachings for Children (age 6-12) - *Every last Sunday of the month, at 3:00 pm to 4:30pm, with Samaneri Athapi*

Buddhāloka Centre
71-73 Darling Road, East Malvern 3145
tel: (03) 9571-6409
www.bsv.net.au

REGULAR PROGRAM

(check on the web page for recent updates)

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| Tuesday | 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm | Meditation for beginners & experienced meditators with Ayya Sucinta |
| Thursday | 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm
8:30 pm – 9:00 pm | Meditation for beginners & experienced meditators with Sayadaw U Pandita
Dhamma talk for all by Sayadaw U Pandita |
| Sunday | 8:30 am – 9:30 am
9:30 am- 10:30 am | Silent Meditation.
Dhamma talk by Ayya Sucinta
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. |

The **Dhamma School** is held on Sundays 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 (due to the current renovations, the library is closed until further notice)



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LIGHT OF THE BUDDHA
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