

# BUDDHALOKA

*The newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria*

**VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3  
WESAK 2011 / 2553**

---

The Buddhist Society of Victoria (BSV) is a centre for the learning and practice of Buddhism in Victoria, Australia. The BSV conducts regular meditation classes and retreats, and facilitates talks given by monks, nuns and respected lay teachers.

**ALL TEACHINGS AT THE BSV ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.**

---

## WESAK 2011

**AJAHN BRAHMAVAMSO** will lead the Wesak celebrations at the BSV. He will arrive on Saturday 21st May and will return to Perth on Wednesday 25th May. The following is the program while he is at the BSV:

**Saturday 21st May**

8.00 pm Dhamma talk at Buddhaloka Centre for adults under 35

**Sunday 22nd May**

8.00 am – 5.00 pm Wesak celebrations at Buddhaloka Centre

8.00 pm Dhamma talk at Monash Religious Centre Clayton Campus

**Monday 23rd May**

8.00 am - 5.00 pm First day of retreat at Buddhaloka Centre

8.00 pm Dhamma talk at Monash Religious Centre Clayton Campus

**Tuesday 24th May**

8.00 am - 5.00 pm Second day of retreat at Buddhaloka Centre

8.00 pm Dhamma talk at Buddhaloka Centre

The Buddhaloka Centre is situated at the BSV. All are very welcome to attend. Comprehensive program details available from the BSV website: [WWW.BSV.NET.AU](http://WWW.BSV.NET.AU)

*The Buddhist Society of Victoria, Buddhaloka Centre, 73 Darling Road, East Malvern*

**WESAK CELEBRATIONS TO COMMEMORATE  
THE BIRTH, ENLIGHTENMENT AND DEATH OF THE BUDDHA**

**Program – Sunday 22nd May 2011**

8.00 am	Taking of Precepts (five or eight)
8.30 am	Meditation
9.30 am	Dhamma talk by Ajahn Brahm
10.15 am	Buddha Puja (offering of flowers and incense)
11.00 am	Offering of Dana to the Sangha
11.30 am	Community lunch in the dining area. Eight preceptors served first.
12.30 pm	Meditation
2.00 pm	Dhamma discussion and meditation with Ajahn Brahm
3.30 pm	Afternoon tea
4 pm – 5 pm	Dhamma discussion with Ajahn Brahm
8.00 pm	Dhamma talk by Ajahn Brahm at the Monash Religious Centre

**IN-HOUSE DAY RETREATS CONDUCTED BY AJAHN BRAHMAVAMSO**

**Program – Monday 23rd May / Tuesday 24th May**

8.00 am	Meditation
	<i>Meditation Instructions</i>
	<i>Short Break</i>
	<i>Questions – Discussion</i>
11.00 am	Break for offering of Dana
	<i>Lunch for participants</i>
12.30 pm	Meditation
	<i>Meditation instructions</i>
	<i>Short Break</i>
	<i>Questions – Discussion</i>
3.00 pm	Tea
3.30 pm	Meditation
	<i>Meditation Instructions</i>
	<i>Short Break</i>
	<i>Questions – Discussion</i>
8.00 pm	Dhamma talks by Ajahn Brahm
	<i>23rd May      Monash Religious Centre</i>
	<i>24th May      Buddhaloka Centre, Darling Road</i>

## **DONATIONS TO THE UGANDAN BUDDHIST CENTRE**

During his time with us Bhante Buddharakkhita has been very generous indeed in his offering of the Buddha's teachings.

Those who would like to express gratitude by sending a donation to his centre in Uganda through the auspices of the BSV can:

- Place a cash donation in a clearly marked envelope and post in the donation box; or,
- Make out a cheque to the BSV and mark the back of the cheque "Ugandan temple" and place in the box.

Please note that all money will be paid into the Buddhist Centre bank account in Kampala.

## **COMMITTEE WORKS – ONGOING AND COMPLETED**

New blinds have been purchased and fitted in the dana sala at the back of the house and replace the old mismatched and torn Holland blinds. They are translucent, insulating roller blinds and cost \$859 in total.

The committee received a quote of \$29,000 to reconcrete the carpark and that quote was accepted at the Sunday meeting. Work will commence May 3rd and be finished by Wesak. The sewer from the back of the house to the main line has recently been replaced for a total cost of \$3000. This should obviate the necessity to clear the sewer during our Wesak celebrations!

## **AJAHN ARIYASILO**

A donation of \$3000 from the BSV members and friends has been sent to the English Sangha Trust for the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery. This money was raised from BSV members and friends in gratitude to Ajahn Ariyasilo before his departure in January

## **CONDOLENCES**

The members and friends of the BSV would like to express their sympathy to Padmini and the Perera family upon the passing of Lasantha after a long illness. Padmini and Dilky work tirelessly for the BSV and Sanghamittarama and our thoughts are with them at this time.

## **SANGHAMITTARAMA – SRI LANKAN NEW YEAR**

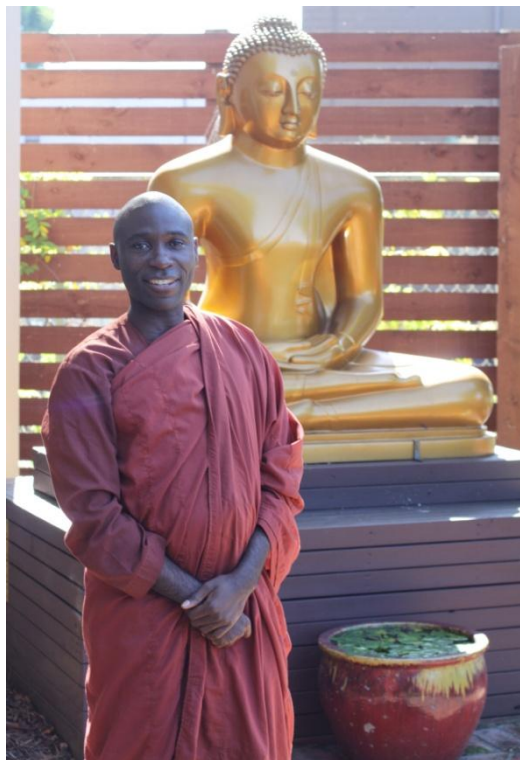
Congratulations to the BSV and Sanghamittarama Young Adults Group for their fundraising on 10th April at the Sri Lankan New Year. Their stall raised over \$1,000 for vihara expenses. Ayya Dhammananda, who was in residence at Sanghamittarama earlier this year, is presently in Vietnam and will return to Sanghamittarama in early June.

## **SANGHAMITTARAMA REQUIRES ON-GOING SUPPORT**

Sanghamittarama has been operating successfully for nearly 4 years. However, the organizing group is now inviting supporters of the monastery to donate regularly to the Operating Account, preferably by direct debit (only because it is simpler at the receiving end!), in order to cover current operating costs of about \$2000 per month. Of course cash or cheque donations are also very welcome. Cheques should be made payable to the Sanghamittarama Operating Account. If you would like to make a direct debit donation the Commonwealth Bank account name is BSV Sanghamittarama, BSB number 063014, account number 10183005. There are no charges if payments are arranged on-line. Forms are available at Sanghamittarama and the BSV. If you have any enquiries or would like further information about other ways of donating, you could telephone Kanthi on 9579 6056.

## INTERVIEW WITH BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA

FOUNDER OF THE UGANDAN BUDDHIST CENTRE AND SPIRITUAL HEAD OF THE  
FLOWERING LOTUS MEDITATION CENTRE, MAGNOLIA, MISSISSIPPI, USA



*We had the great good fortune of having Bhante Buddharakkhita, (Founder of the Ugandan Buddhist Centre and Spiritual Head of Flowering Lotus Meditation Centre, Magnolia , Missississippi, USA ) with us at the BSV for about 2 months. During his stay Bhante conducted meditation classes on Tuesdays and gave us teachings on Sundays. He also conducted a 3 day meditation retreat over the Easter long week end which was very well attended. Bhante's words of wisdom and his relaxed style of teaching has been a great source of inspiration to all of us at BSV.*

*We farewelled him after Dhana on Wednesday 27th April , as he left to return to Uganda. His warmth, humility and generosity will be missed by us all and we take heart in the fact that he has plans to return in the not so distant future. Buddhhaloka was able to catch up with him for a short interview before his departure:*

**Bhante can you tell us a little about your life as a lay person in Uganda, and the experiences in your life that influenced you to first become a Buddhist and then a Buddhist monk?**

I was born and raised as a Christian and I was sent to a Christian boarding school, where we were compelled to go to Church every morning. And then there was Sunday School as well where we were taught many stories and did a lot of singing of hymns. I enjoyed the stories and the singing but did not particularly like going to Church every morning. I began to question some of the teachings, like “ If you don't do any good in this life you would go to hell and burn indefinitely”. This actually caused a lot of fear in my young mind. I also did not like the concept of “someone up there watching over you.” Now in Uganda and especially in my family, impious Christians were often considered “black sheep” or “friends of Satan” and I began to wonder, whether going to Church was for the purpose of pleasing others or for spiritual upliftment. However, my mother who was, open minded, moderate and gentle did not try to force things on me. She had her own natural wisdom: She often told me; “Strive hard to be a good person; If you have nothing to say keep quiet, If you have nothing to do , go to sleep”. I tried to follow her advice and found out that I was comfortable with silence and space, observing the ever changing things around me. It would have been so beneficial if, at that time, if there had been someone to teach me how to practice insight meditation!

My first encounter with Buddhism was when I was in Chandigarh (Punjab, India), in 1990, where I was studying business in the university there, as an exchange student from Uganda.

Among a small group of foreign students there, I met two Thai monks and I was so very taken up by them. Particularly one of the monks, Venerable Samsidi always had a smile on his face and he looked so shiny, happy, contented and peaceful. I began to spend a lot of my free time with these monks and practically considered them as my only friends. The monks felt the same way towards me. They gradually introduced me to Buddhism. They were also very kind and generous and kindly took me to the local markets and offered me food. Actually, at the time, I did not know the correct etiquette about Buddhist monks — I should have been the one to offer them food!

Meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in northern India was another turning point in my life. During one of my many visits there, I had the good fortune of being near his Holiness for the first time and to shake hands with him. He gave me blessings and I felt that his personality radiated a gentle and boundless loving-kindness that brought freshness and calmness to my heart. I was inspired when I listened to his Dhamma talks.

There were many spiritual traditions at the time in India: Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Sufism, Christianity, Buddhism and a multitude of others. The spiritual aspirations that lay deep in my personality and that was awakened by my first exposure to Buddhism, continued to push me to search for “something” but, at that time, this “something” was still unclear to me. So I continued to look for this “something” in other religious traditions. I happily joined the Baha’i Faith Centre in Chandigarh. It was inspiring for me to visit some of the Indian *gurus* and *swamis*. I studied spiritual teachings and meditation with Vimala Thakar, an indescribably special person. She radiated loving-kindness, which instantly made me admire and respect her. Vimalaji was not a Buddhist but she had a great respect for the Buddha.

The definite opportunity finally came. In 1994, the Tusita Monastery in Dharamsala organized a 12-day meditation retreat, which was guided by an American Buddhist meditation teacher named Dr. Alex Berzin. During the retreat, I learned that observing one’s intentions is actually being mindful of the mind. This was really a journey to self-discovery. Following that retreat I have never been the same. Definitely, the meditation practice helped me to have faith in the precious Buddha’s Teachings. I abandoned the academic path and embarked on the spiritual path.

Over the next 5 years I travelled far and wide: from Tibet to Nepal, Thailand, Burma, back to Uganda and then to South America, alternating between the temporary pleasures and gratifications of a lay person’s life and spiritual practices. All this is documented in detail in my book “Planting the Dhamma Seeds”.

In 1999 I reached USA, and there I attended a three-month retreat at the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, Massachusetts, which became the final turning point in my journey. By the end of the three months’ insight meditation retreat at IMS, I realized even more clearly that true happiness comes from within and not from without.

Despite my initial plans to return to South America after the retreat, I joined the staff of IMS and stayed there until 2000. During that time I worked, studied with the various teachers, participated in retreats and practiced meditation. And I met Bhante Gunaratana when he had come to conduct a retreat. He took daily walks during the retreat. At the end of a walk together, Bhante Gunaratana told me that I should visit him at the Bhavana Society in West Virginia. Bhante Gunaratana’s abode, the Bavana Society, would become my resident monastery — my “home for the homeless,” after my ordination later. I made my decision. I would “escape” from worldly concerns. I had become dissatisfied with material wealth through my experiences in Thailand. I had found happiness in my study of Buddhism. I wanted to devote my life to its study and practice. I would renounce a lesser happiness (worldly happiness) for what, to me, was a greater happiness — my spiritual development.

**As a monk you have to endure long periods of solitude. How important is solitude and quiet contemplation for a lay people to develop their practice?**

Yes, periods of solitude, to practice meditation without distractions are important. But there are three kinds of seclusion. Physical Seclusion, Seclusion from Defilements: Greed, Hatred and Delusion and the Ultimate Seclusion: the seclusion of Nibbhana. If you are secluded physically, but have Greed as your silent companion, you are not going to get too far in your practice. Therefore for a lay person, practicing the second form of solitude is the best; where you are with people but you are on your guard not to be tormented by defilements. In fact the following the Noble Eight Fold Path will help them to practice that seclusion. This may be difficult thing to do, but for a lay person, it is also difficult to get away from it all for weeks and months because of family commitments. In fact why we do physical seclusion is to get rid of defilements. So I would encourage a lay person to focus more on practicing seclusion from mental defilements of Greed, Hatred and Delusion, along with meditation practices on a daily basis, which is more important than going on a 4 week meditation retreat .

For me personally, from time to time, I try to find a bit of time to practice in solitude for at least a month. And then I come back and teach. This way, I strike a balance between solitude and interaction with other monks and people. I am a people person and for me, it's easy to switch from the solitude mode to the interaction mode.

**What are your impressions of Melbourne and staying at BSV? How different has it been to similar experiences in other Western countries?**

I think BSV is unique because, here it is a melting pot of cultures. There are Sri Lankans, Koreans, Vietnamese, Chinese and of course Westerners. And they all want to practice meditation. Whereas in other places I have taught such as USA and Sweden, people are more focused on the rituals. BSV is also a very special place , because it gives the chance to the monk who comes here to be by himself. If there were two three other monks it would have been different dynamics here in regards to protocols to be followed etc. But instead it gives the residing monk the space and time to go about doing things and lot of freedom to carry out his practice and also teachings. In some ways I feel it is like my temple in Uganda, as I am the only resident monk here. There are also specific times allocated for lay people to visit, and when people come here they are very respectful and abide by the rules: Dhana times every day, meditation time on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Dhamma talks on Sunday mornings. The rest of the time is for the monk and this gives him the solitude needed to carry out his practices. This seclusion is very important to a monk, particularly a monk who comes from a meditation tradition. Another thing I have to mention is that the people here are very supportive; they always ask about my welfare and volunteer to take me sightseeing etc. I have visited many places; Buddhist temples like Warburton and Keysborough, Healesville Animal Sanctuary where I saw a Kangaroo for the first time, and the Eureka Tower, from where I saw Melbourne from another viewpoint – like the Vipassana point of view.

This has been a short visit and I would like to come back some day to stay a little longer and perhaps go out and plant the Dhamma Seeds among the Indigenous Australians, because I hear the native people here are facing many difficulties lost between two cultures. I feel they may relate to me better, same as the Afro Brazilians in Eastern Brazil and African Americans in Mississippi. So I am looking forward to that during my next visit.

It has been an amazing experience here. I had a very rewarding time here and I leave Melbourne with very good memories and with many Dhamma friends I met here close to my heart.

## QIGONG

**What is Qigong?** It is a series of exercises, movements and postures regulating breathing and mind to cultivate vital energy to assist in maintaining good health. It has a long history in China. There are different methods of practice.

**Where can you learn Qigong?** We are fortunate to have a group that practises in East Malvern lead by Jeff and Irene. The group commenced more than six years ago. I started attending the Saturday morning sessions from the outset as I realised that I needed to do something to regain and maintain my fitness. Jeff and Irene are very generous teachers who helped both myself and many others gain a foothold in the practice of a version of Qigong that they brought from Malaysia.

**How long does it take to learn? How difficult is it?** While there are always new things that can be learnt even after years of practice, the structure of sessions is such that the basic moves are practised in a group with individual guidance given to new starters during the course of the sessions. So from day one you can start practising. It is not a competitive activity and practitioners are always reminded to undertake the exercises in a manner that is consistent with their current state of health and fitness. So we have practitioners who are in their twenties to others who are into their seventies.

**What are the benefits?** Qigong develops breathing and mindfulness of each movement as it happens, so one is in the moment. Visiting Sangha to the BSV have shown an interest in this practice. We have had in the past Sister Thanasanti join the sessions. Most recently Venerable Buddharakitta also participated. The feedback from both of these members of the Sangha was very positive. Speaking from personal experience I found that the exercises were beneficial in developing and maintaining strength, coordination and general fitness. You do not require any equipment and only need two or three square metres space to practise. It is best performed outdoors in clean air such as at the start of day.

**Time** Saturday mornings from 8:00am – 10am. [The two hours goes very quickly!]

**Location** Hedgeley Dene Gardens, Malvern East via Glenbrook Avenue Melway H 11 (or if wet, sessions are conducted at the back of the BSV house 71-73 Darling Road.)

**Cost** Free

*Frank Moore*



## AJAHN ACHALO AT THE BSV

Achalo Bhikkhu, (Brett Hansen) was born in Brisbane Australia in 1972. He developed a sincere interest in Buddhist meditation at the age of twenty, and so at the age of 21 traveled to Thailand to study the Buddhist religion and practice tradition more deeply. Ajahn Achalo ordained as a novice monk in February 1996 and as a Bhikkhu in July 1997, at Wat Nong Pah Pong, the monastery established by Venerable Ajahn Chah in Ubon Rachathani province, Thailand. Luang Por Liam, the abbot of Wat Nong Pah Pong is his Venerable preceptor.

For the past sixteen years Ajahn Achalo has lived and practiced in the branch monasteries associated within the lineage of Venerable Ajahn Chah, spending most of this time at Wat Pah Nanachat in Ubon and at Wat Marp Chan, in Rayong. He has also lived for periods of time at Abhayagiri monastery in California, USA, Amaravati monastery in Hertfordshire, UK, and Buddhobdhivana monastery in Victoria, Australia. His main teachers have been Luang Por Liam, Luang Por Sumedho, Tan Ajahn Passano, Tan Ajahn Anan, Tan Ajahn Jayasaro and Tan Ajahn Kalyano.

As well as living in Forest Monasteries, Ajahn Achalo has also spent regular periods of time practicing in isolated forests in Thailand, and has been on several extended periods of pilgrimage in the Buddhist holy sites of India. Currently he is the abbot of a new monastery being established in the beautiful mountainous province of Petchabun, Thailand.

Ajahn Achalo is arriving at the BSV on 25th May and is expected to stay with us for about one month.

## THE DHAMMA SCHOOL IN 2010

30 Dhamma lessons were given in 2010, not including the extra time which was devoted to rehearsing the Wesak play. In total, 48 students attended Dhamma school during the year, representing a decrease against last year's record number of 63. We generally find that weather markedly affects attendance so perhaps this year's heavy rain was a contributory factor in the lower numbers seen in the School.

The school continues to be divided according to the school grades of the children, and at present, we have three classes: one at secondary school level and two at primary school level.

This year, the children presented the play *Wesak* (authored by one of the school teachers and written especially for children). The performance was held at Erasmus School, an intimate venue with good lighting, good sound control and also with good supper facilities! The evening was enjoyed by all and a review appeared in the *Buddhaloka* newsletter. We wish to thank everyone who helped with production, including costume making, scenery, transport and also those who gave advice in so many different ways.

For this year's Wesak, we plan to do card-making, with drama being planned for later in the year in order to spread the activities more evenly across the whole year (we have a couple of small plays planned and are working with the children to develop them over the next two terms.)


Term one has already concluded and so far, we have given 7 lessons and 30 students have attended.

*Suzanne Palmer-Holton*



# **SANGHAMITTARAMA**

40 Chesterville Drive, East Bentleigh, VIC 3165

 (03) 9579 0450

[www.Sanghamittarama.org.au](http://www.Sanghamittarama.org.au)

## **Program – May/June**

(check the web page for recent updates)

### **Chanting and silent meditation**

Every Thursday and Saturday, from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

### **Chanting, meditation with guidance and Dhamma teaching**

Every Friday, 7: 30 pm

### **Meditation day**

Every last Saturday of the month, from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm

8:00am	Possibility to take the Eight Precepts; Paritta chanting
9:00 am	Guided meditation
10:00am	Walking meditation
11:00 am	Dana (almsgiving to the bhikkhuni Sangha and sharing food with everyone)
12:30pm	Dhamma Reflections followed by walking meditation
1:30pm	Sitting meditation
2:30pm	Walking meditation
3:30pm	Tea Break
4:00pm	Dhamma discussion
5:00pm	Sharing of merits and closing

### **BSV and Sanghamittarama Young Adults Group (Dana and Guided meditation)**


Every first Saturday of the month, at 10:30 am

### **Meditation and Dhamma teachings for the Young (age over 18)**

Every second and fourth Sunday of the month, at 6:15 pm

# BUDDHALOKA CENTRE

71-73 Darling Road, East Malvern, VIC 3145

 (03) 9571 6409

[www.bsv.net.au](http://www.bsv.net.au)

## Regular Program – May/June

(check the web page for recent updates)

---

Tuesday	7:30pm-9:00pm	Meditation for beginners and experienced meditators followed by a short talk. Recorded meditation by Ajahn Ariyasilo early May Ajahn Achalo from 31 <sup>st</sup> May to end of June
Thursday	7:30pm-9:00pm	Meditation for beginners and experienced meditators followed by a short talk. Hall will be open for silent meditation if there is no monk present. Sayadaw U Pandita
Sunday	8:30am-9:30am	Silent meditation
	9:30am-10:30am	Dhamma talk followed by communal lunch <i>Children's Dhamma School 9.30-10.30am during school term.</i>

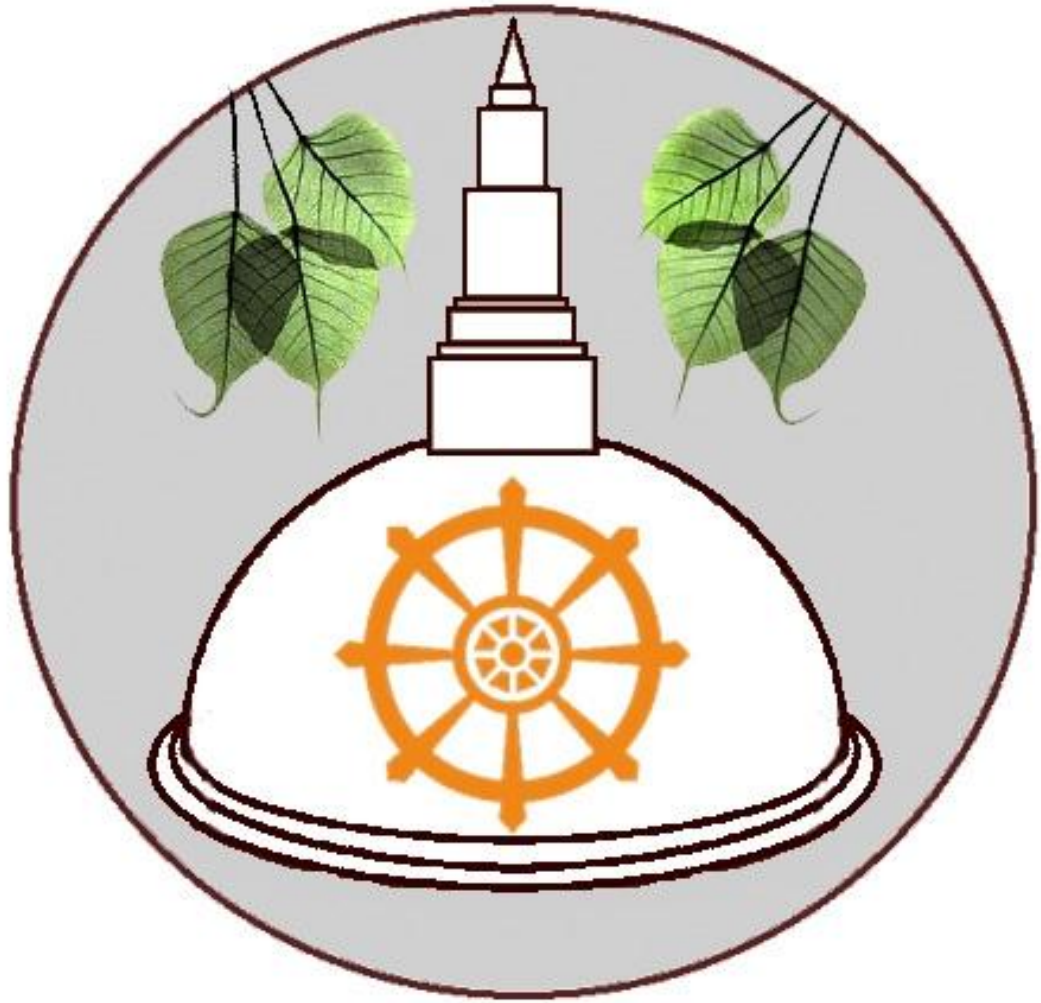
---

## Forthcoming Events

---

To be advised

---



# Buddhaloka

*The newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria*



---

The Buddhist Society of Victoria (BSV) is a centre for the learning and practice of Buddhism in Victoria, Australia. The BSV conducts regular meditation classes and retreats, and facilitates talks given by monks, nuns and respected lay teachers.

**ALL TEACHINGS AT THE BSV ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.**

---



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

POSTAGE PAID  
AUSTRALIA

Buddhist Society of Victoria, Inc, A0023538B