



BUDDHALOKA

The newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria

**VOLUME 15, NUMBER 4
SPRING 2011 / 2555**

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.

AJAHN BRAHM SUGGESTS ACTION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

One of the issues raised by **AJAHN BRAHMAVAMSO** on his visit in late May to lead the Wesak celebrations was the compulsory nature of religious education in Victoria's government schools. By compulsory he was referring at least in part to the fact that pupils had to opt out from RE classes rather than opt in. He made the points that our government schools are meant to be secular and that the existing provisions advantage the Christian religions. These matters were discussed at a committee meeting and with our BCV [*Buddhist Council of Victoria*] representative, Helen Richardson. We are aware, of course, of the fine job being undertaken by our Religious Education in Schools program to bring Buddhism to students in primary schools, but there are important principles at stake that need recognition and reviewing. Another matter that has concerned some of us is the proselytizing vision put forward by some members of Access Ministries, the Christian group responsible for RE in government Schools.

These matters are of concern to the BCV and are under discussion. The other good news is that a group called REENA [*Religions, Ethics and Education Network of Australia*] has been established by interfaith groups to undertake the task to look at RE in government schools and evaluate its role and position according to agreed interfaith guidelines. Thank you Ajahn Brahm for your concern. We do need students to learn ways of managing their lives effectively within an ethical structure but Ajahn Brahm and many of us would suggest that the current model for RE in government schools in Victoria is not the best way to achieve these goals.

Cora Thomas

Members and non-members alike are encouraged to write to the society and comment on this important subject. Please use the 'contact us' details on the Society's webpage for sending in contributions. The Society's home page is: <http://www.bsv.net.au>

VENERABLE JAGANATHA IN RESIDENCE FOR VASSA

Venerable Jag (Venerable Jaganatha) is an Australian Monk who ordained in Burma within the Pa-Auk forest tradition in 2007. He first started living in monasteries in 2005. The Rains-Residence period (July-Oct) of 2011 marks his 5th year as a fully-ordained Monk.

In lay life, he worked for government and non-government organisations in both administrative and managerial capacities. During this time he decided to branch out and extend his knowledge by studying at the University of Queensland part-time whilst working.

After a few years, he obtained a bachelor degree in Mass Communications from the University of Southern Queensland, and it was during this time that he first encountered the Buddha's teachings in a compulsory foundation unit called "Australia, Asia and the Pacific". This unit prompted him to further explore the Buddha's teachings.

Having had the good fortune to meet with various teachers within Mahayana and Theravaden schools, he decided to pursue his Dhamma practice within the forest tradition of Theravaden Buddhism.

Venerable Jag started off his Buddhist education in earnest at Santi Forest Monastery in NSW with Bhante Sujato in July of 2005. Whilst at Santi, he developed a keen interest in the study of Suttas (the Buddha's discourses) and Vinaya (monastic discipline given by the Buddha). After spending some time there he travelled to Burma to practice within the Pa-Auk forest tradition starting off with a three month retreat with Sayalay Dipankara, a 10-precept nun within the Pa-Auk tradition. After finishing her retreat he went on to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in the south of Burma to pursue his interest in meditation, and to take full ordination.

After Burma, and the return to Australia to recover from illness, Venerable Jag took the opportunity to practice in Sri-Lanka at Na-Uyana forest monastery with Ven Ariyadhamma in 2009.

On return from Sri-Lanka, Venerable Jag spent some time within the Thai Forest tradition of Ajahn Chah in Perth with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana monastery during the 2010 Rains Residence. He has also recently stayed in another Ajahn Chah branch monastery called Bodhinyanarama near Wellington on the North Island of New Zealand with Ajahn Tiradhammo. A part of the N.Z. trip included staying on the South Island by himself in a house that was ready to be removed. Here he practiced the time honoured way of living for monks by collecting alms by walking through the town.

Having had the opportunity to see how monks practiced overseas in various traditions allowed Venerable Jag to get a broad perspective of what aspects of monastic practice were cultural, and what were commonly held as the Buddha's teachings.

A focus on Sutta and Vinaya, rather than a focus on traditions, guides Venerable Jag these days in his quest for Nibbana.



THE VASSA PROGRAM

VENERABLE JAGANATHA

The programs offered over the next three months are aimed at helping both beginner meditators and more experienced meditators with their practice. A necessary part of this practice involves understanding why we practice, and to encourage an understanding of the Buddhas' teachings. A Sutta class is included on Saturday afternoons to facilitate the understanding of the theory which underlies all meditative practice within a Buddhist context, and allows us to see things as they really are with wisdom.

Some meditators come for instruction so that they can just learn to relax, but others will come with a more holistic view in mind...one that takes us from meditation to the understanding of why we actually have problems in life. The aim of Buddhist practice is to understand why we have problems by drilling down to the bottom of things, and to alleviate the causes of problems. This means we need a clear head (which is what meditation does), so that when we are looking for clues into this complex called "Life", we can start to get some answers, and hopefully apply some medicine to relive us permanently of the problems associated with old age, sickness, death and birth which keeps on cycling over and over, unless we apply a cure.

Unfortunately, some take a view that the ending of life is a solution to the problems faced in the here and now. But this strategy unfortunately involves a certain type of ignorance as to how things really are. If you knew from direct experience that there was no life after death in any way, shape or form, then you may be in a position to make a clear decision about life, and how to fix one's problems.

It's usually not the case though, that people see clearly what happened before this life, and what happens after this life. Hence they roll the dice, guessing that there are no consequences to their actions of taking their own life, and sometimes the lives of others. It's like a blind man running towards a cliff face somehow with the delusion in his mind that there will always be a solid thing to run upon. Eventually, he runs out of ground, and finds the air beneath him whilst falling.

Then there may be the reflection "I didn't think it would be like this", but of course by that stage, it's too late. He is falling down into what will probably be a not so pleasant experience. In a similar way, people who wander through life without asking themselves those big questions like "Why do I exist?" or "Why is life like this?", generally will be like the blind person running towards the cliff.

Most people however do ask these questions in their lives at some point, but may not find answers which satisfy, or really deal with the issue. Some take confidence in some "power" beyond the grave that will deal with these issues for them like some kind of autopilot on a plane. This is still like the blind person running towards the cliff. With no direct experience of this other power, they run in hope...they run in Blind Faith of there being some other "Thing" that will somehow rescue them after death. Surely this is not the path of one who enquires. Surely this is not the path of one who wants to understand how things really are by putting aside direct experience and relying on stories and ideas without personal knowledge!

So, when I was in my teenage years I asked myself these questions, and in the context of my faith at that time (Catholic) did not find any satisfactory answers to those questions. I was a curious child. I used to pull things like toasters apart to see how they worked. In a similar way, I looked at the idea of creation by a superior being as somewhat beyond the realm of human comprehension and direct experience. Of those things beyond my capacity of direct experience, what point will they serve me? If I cannot have any experience of these other beings, and if they don't bother to come and make their presence felt in a tangible way, then what point is there in "Hoping" that these beings are really going to make a difference in my life? Have I any guarantees made in person to me by these other beings that I will indeed be saved after death? Do I rely solely upon books and the stories within?

With this kind of background, I went through my early years feeling like an alien on this planet. It felt as if I was dropped off, and was in some kind of weird dream. Everyone around me was really getting into life. They were getting careers, partners, children, mortgages and the other things in life that seem to indicate happiness in modern society. It seemed the path to happiness was all about getting stuff. I however as a teenager, started to question these ideals. I wondered then if this kind of life would amount to much, for we all die at some stage, and can't take any of our trophies, toys and relations with us.

It wasn't until I was at university at the rather late age of 26, that I encountered the most important aspect of my university degree. It was the reading of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. As soon as I had read the four Noble truths and the Eightfold Path, it was like a light-bulb that was always there was switched on in my mind. What was dark became bright.

I had "Stumbled" upon the brightest gem of any treasure chest, it was a map intact with the clear directions to the ending of suffering, and the promise of happiness born of non-identification with anything or anyone. A profound happiness which cannot be gained through the usual 5 senses (Tastes, Sights, Sounds, Smells and Touches) and even the sixth sense (in Buddhism we have six) of the Mind is also put to the side as ultimately dissatisfying. For too long have I been led around by the nose (excuse the pun).

Now, I tender more attention to what the senses are up to, and how the mind takes sense contact and warps them into something that seems pleasurable, neutral or painful. Of course, nothing lasts forever if there are conditions to support that thing (which is everything you can think of in the universe). So in seeking the unconditioned, we find ourselves the only possible route for happiness. When there are no conditions to change and no means by which change can be experienced, how can one suffer? This is Nibbana...true happiness.

The only way to achieve this however is by following a map, which has distinct signposts that you can see for yourself (no, you don't have to die first to see if you were right, or following the right map). Unlike the blind man above running towards the cliff, the Dhamma (the teachings left behind by the Buddha which is our "map") requires "eyes" to see. These eyes are made open with the practice of the Eightfold Path (like wearing glasses). Glasses are a vital tool for those of us with poor vision to help us arrive at our destination, and without it and the map, we can get easily confused and lost.

The Eightfold Path is the prescription given by the Buddha for the ending of suffering, and the beginning of true happiness and relief of not carrying around any more mental or physical baggage. Once one has experienced Nibbana, then there are no more problems with other people, places or things. The mind does not get fixated upon the problems that normal people get fixated on. There is no more conflict with others, as anger cannot touch a mind that is free. There is no more craving for the experiences that can be had through the six senses any more. They are seen as a distraction, as not yielding anything of real substance. The senses are the doorways to delusion when not attended to wisely. If however one looks carefully over one's senses, then one can see some very interesting things. One can see how the senses simply supply information, but it is the craving or desire attributed to the sense stimulus which causes us the real headaches.

One who is free knows that feelings of the body may be pleasant or neutral or unpleasant, and in any case, is not something to adhere to. Not something that would give rise to fear or worry or even joy. For the mind of a truly happy person does not rely on external contact with the world for its joy or satisfaction. Having broken free from greed, anger and delusion, one no longer seeks out the pleasures born of the six senses.

When one meditates, one can start to appreciate straight away how there can be peace in the absence of sense-stimulation. This is what I meant by not being blind in the above simile of the blind man running towards the cliff. Peace is a tangible thing, you can know these states of peace. With more and more practice, there are opportunities for increasingly deeper states of calm and happiness. These things are not created from something outside, but are rather the product of the mind. Your mind.

Over time, one may get very deep meditation, and may possibly come out of such meditations with a mind that is very bright. This brightness allows us to see things in very different ways to how we normally see. This is like putting on the correct prescription glasses and cleaning them. What results is much clearer than before with the glasses being dirty, and of the wrong magnification for our eyes. Deep meditation allows us to be more aware of the world around us, and inside of us. In time, insights will arise to inform you of what this world is really like, and how things are constantly changing. In a constantly changing universe, can there be space for a constant thing like a soul, self or God? Is there a need for these concepts which you have no direct experience of? For how do you experience this illusory "Soul" or "Self" in terms apart from feelings or thoughts?

So for those who wish to have "Eyes to see clearly with", I welcome you to come to meditation and Sutta classes and learn how to understand happiness, and the proximate cause of happiness which is clear-seeing.

With Love and Kindness

Venerable Jaganatha

BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA – PLANTING DHAMMA SEEDS

Members of the society may already know that Bhante has written a fascinating account of his life's journey (on both the physical and spiritual planes) in a small book titled "Planting Dhamma seeds: the emergence of Buddhism in Africa." But for those who have not yet read this interesting tale, here is a small excerpt, describing his eventual return to Africa with a Buddha-statue which had been given to him during his stay in Sri Lanka . . .

Travelling with the Buddha Statue in Kenya

After answering seemingly hundreds of questions about the Buddha statue in Mumbai (Bombay), India on a nearly five-hour layover, then on board the plane and again at Kenyan immigration, I felt exhausted. Even worse, I felt terrible because the statue, which I had vowed to protect, had broken from its base due to constant handling. I wanted to keep it with me, and in order to protect it during our travels, I had wrapped the statue in a monk's robe. But this was not good enough.

The immigration officials asked so many questions.

"Is that a baby you are carrying? Where is its boarding pass?"

"No!" I insisted, "It is just a statue."

Another official asked, "Is this your mungu (God)?"

"No! In Buddhism, the statue is not a God."

"Why do you cover it? You do not want other people to see it?"

"No, I cover it because it is fragile and to avoid it getting scratched," I explained.

When I placed the statue on the counter of the immigration desk in order to hand over my travel documents the immigration official asked, "What is this? It is scaring people! Please remove it!"

"It is a statue of the Buddha," I replied. I was in a dilemma. I could not both hold the statue and show my travel documents at the same time. When I left the statue sitting alone, the authorities threatened to destroy it, but when I rested it on the counter, people were scared to come near it.

The officials continued, "It looks like African magic, weird things of witchcraft. Why are you carrying this statue? Open it! Can I see it? Are you carrying things inside it? Possibly drugs?"

"No! It is simply a Buddha statue," I answered and unwrapped it.

"Do not sell it in Nairobi!"

"It is not for sale," I humbly replied.

Lastly he commented, "It is beautiful!"

I thanked him and walked away.



Venerable Buddharakkhita receiving the Buddha image from Upasaka Dhammaruwan in Sri Lanka.

INTERVIEW WITH AJAHN ACHALO

Abbot of the new Anandagiri Mountain Hermitage in Petchabun, Thailand

We were very fortunate to be blessed with a visit by Ajahn Achalo who stayed at the BSV for a few months, giving us valuable teachings and leading meditation sessions.

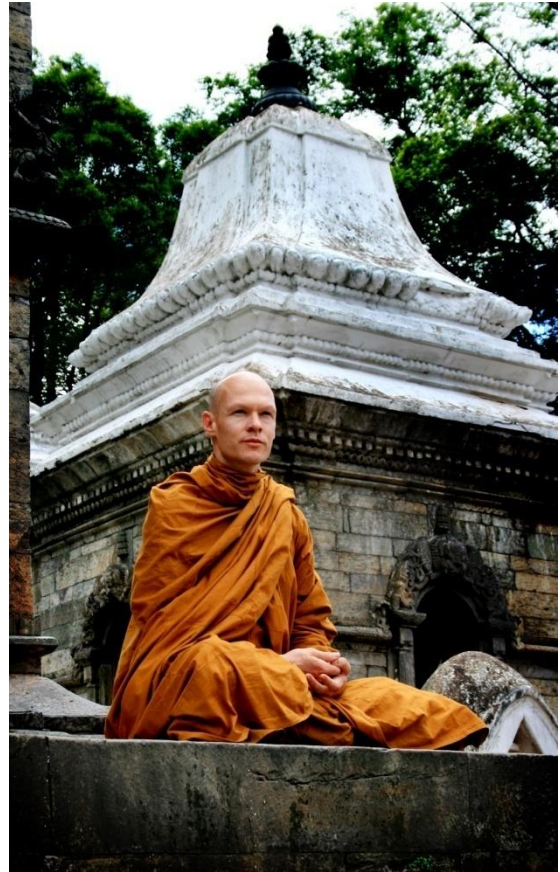
Ajahn Achalo (Brett Hansen) was born in Brisbane Australia in 1972 and was ordained a Bhikku in July 1997 at Wat Nong Pah Pong, the monastery established by Ajahn Chah in Thailand. As well as living in Forest Monasteries, Ajahn Achalo has also spent regular periods of time practicing in isolated forests in Thailand and has been on several extended periods of pilgrimage in the Buddhist Holy Sites in India.

He has also lived for periods of time in Abhayagiri Monastery in California, Amravati Monastery in the UK and the Buddha Bodhivana Monastery in Warburton Australia. Currently, he is the Abbot of a new Hermitage being established in the beautiful mountain province of Petchabun in Thailand.

Ajahn Achalo very kindly agreed to talk to Buddhaloka about his impressions of Dhamma here in Australia and his stay at the BSV - teaching meditation, as well as his experiences with the Dalai Lama:

As an Australian Buddhist monk back in his country of birth after a long time in Asia, what are your impressions of the practice of Buddha Dhamma in Australia and also here at the BSV?

It is difficult to gauge how much or how fast Buddhism is really growing in Australia, but what I have been able to observe during my time here is perhaps a deepening of maturity and commitment from those who are practising, which is wonderful. I have noticed the same people coming over and over again to the talks and meditation at the BSV, demonstrating sincerity and consistency, which is admirable. Also from private discussions with people, I get the impression that many people coming to practice here, also meditate on a daily basis at home. This includes the newer Australian Buddhists and those who are born Buddhists. In order for the practice to deepen this is important. Similarly when I attended the teachings of HH Dalai Lama recently, it was wonderful to see that so many people, around 4000, were committed and interested enough to sit through the long teaching sessions, morning and afternoon, day after day. It was also noteworthy to see that a large percentage of people attending were white Australians. Certainly this would seem to suggest both a deepening and a broadening of Buddhist practice within the Australian society. This is reflected in the broad spectrum of attendees from many different backgrounds coming to the BSV as well.



From my side it has been a pleasure to be able to offer some information and encouragement to people who are sincerely interested in meditation and the practice which supports it. Although I have lived in Thailand for a while, it is still easier for me to teach in English than in Thai. So it has been rewarding and refreshing to share some of my experiences with a group of people in my mother tongue over an extended period, introducing complementing themes of contemplation and meditation and building upon them over time. My teachers have been kind and generous towards me and after all these years naturally there are some interesting stories to share. It is a pleasure and an honour to share these with people who are receptive and appreciative. It was heartening to see that the number of attendees increased steadily over time. There seems to be a natural magnetism or resonance between many of us: westerners who spend many years in Asia become more 'Asian'. I am now an 'Australian Asian' and most of you here are 'Asian Australians'! So we have a lot in common.

So, what would you say about your time at BSV?

Staying here at the BSV has been a rewarding experience for me. It has given me the opportunity to give generously (teachings) as well as the opportunity to practice, as there is a lot of time here for quiet contemplation and meditation. I have been very touched by the kindness, care and generosity which has been shown to me. And it has been nice to see some old friends too. Some of you may remember, that around 13 years ago as a young monk I accompanied my teacher Ajahn Anan when he visited Australia and stayed at the BSV. Tan Ajahn Anan was pleased when he heard recently that many people have been coming along to listen, contemplate and meditate in the ways that he has taught me.

Recently, you spent some time with the Dalai Lama during his Australian visit. Can you share with us your experiences with this great teacher and the message that he imparts

Lots of people have asked me about my impressions of the Dalai Lama, because for quite a few of those who come from the Theravada tradition, he can seem quite 'different.' But personally I don't think he is so 'different'. I see him as a dedicated monk who has taken on a lot of extra duties because of his extraordinary kindness. Even at the age of 76, the Dalai Lama still gets up at 3am to do four hours of meditation before breakfast!. We have to look beyond the way media portrays him and look at the way he leads his life. His holiness demonstrates many qualities that I truly admire. For me, recollecting the life and examples of the Dalai Lama is a part of my practice of 'Sanghanusati', the meditation practice of recollecting those who have practiced well. Just as I constantly recollect the teachings and examples of my primary teacher Ajahn Anan and his teacher Ajahn Chah. When we recollect the virtuous qualities of highly developed beings, it brightens the mind; imbuing it with lightness, confidence and faith.

I do think that His Holiness is one of the wisest and compassionate beings alive on the planet today, so naturally I would like the opportunity to listen to him. I first met the Dalai Lama 12 years ago in Los Angeles and since then I have attended his teachings a number of times. Personally, I make it a point to pay my respects to him every time he visits Australia to teach, because as someone who was born in this country it seems appropriate to offer him my support in whatever way that I can. I also visit my teachers in Thailand several times a year. Paying respects to elders is important; it helps to feel connected with the living refuge of the Sangha. I have been both humbled and honoured by His Holiness's request to chant the 'Managala Sutta' along with others at the commencement of his teaching sessions in Australia. Though we come from different traditions, I feel a strong respect for him. The

Dalai Lama has great ability in explaining the sophisticated teachings on 'Emptiness' with precision, humour and clarity. These 'wisdom' teachings are complimentary to our reflections on impermanence and non-self. It can be nourishing spiritually to look at these themes from different angles and by doing so we can deepen our own understanding. Perhaps this isn't necessary for everyone, but for some it can be helpful.

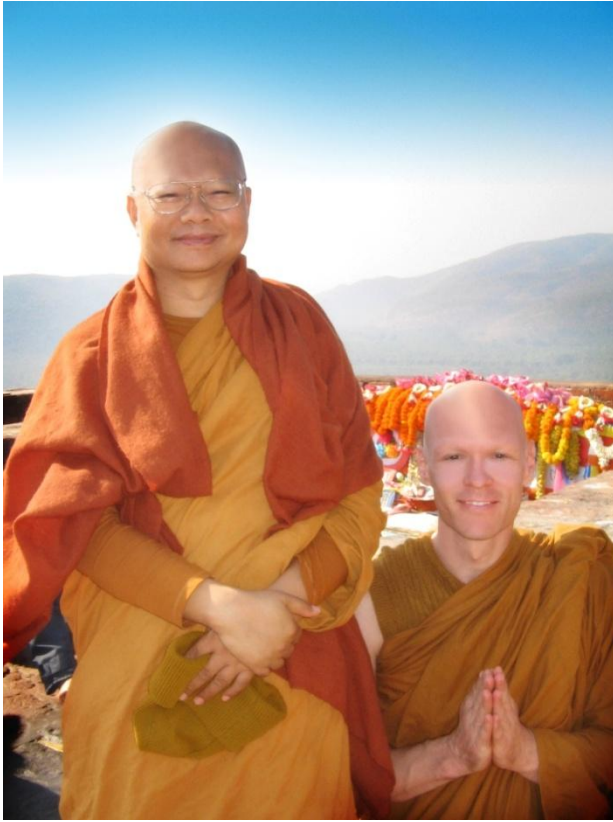
As a monk from a meditation tradition, I try to look beyond the external differences of various Buddhist lineages and look at them instead in terms of the teachings and practices that they are preserving and handing down. Which of these practices are conducive to calming the mind (Samatha)? and which help develop insight (Vipassana)? When we look with interest and appreciation like this, the external differences become much less important. But of course at the end of the day, I am happy to be living the life of a forest monk in Thailand. The simplicity and clarity of this tradition, the wisdom embodied in the living example of its elders, the integrity of the virtue of my fellow monastics, combined with the support and opportunities for solitude and quiet meditation is truly a blessing for which I am immensely grateful.

Ajahn, we have benefitted greatly from your meditation teachings and words of wisdom. Can you give us some parting advice on how we could carry forward our practice of mindfulness from the meditation cushion to the activities of our daily life?

Well putting it most simply... if one wishes to be mindful throughout the day, it is actually necessary to begin each day with some sincere practice of meditation. Further to this, towards the end of the session we must set the clear intention to carry some of the mindfulness which we have been cultivating and generating, into our daily activities. In order to be truly mindful, we have to sincerely want to be mindful. If we set this intention clearly in the mind, then there will be a pronounced result. We need to have enough mindfulness throughout the day: to know when we are walking – that we are walking; that while driving – we are driving; while talking we know that we are talking and we are also aware of what we are talking about! Further to this, even on a more subtle level, we need to be able to recognise that which is wholesome and that which is unwholesome in our minds. That which should be acted upon and that which should let go of or avoided. In order to be mindful of all of these things it can also be really helpful to do another meditation session at some time during the day, even if that session is only quite short – about 15 minutes, to bring the mind back into the centre of experience, and recharge or revitalise a sense of clarity. If we let the mind get too busy and crazy it becomes much harder to calm it down. So the best approach is to maintain a fair effort with consistency. This way we can bring some patience and acceptance to the reactive habits of our minds without making more kamma by acting these things out.

When we practice like this we will be able to see a big increase in the quality of moment to moment 'presence' actually functioning in the mind. There will be greater sense of ease and more patience, less reactivity as well. And of course if possible it is best to end the day with another sincere session of meditation. I know that people will be thinking..."No! .. That's too much!... It's too hard!" But in truth it is entirely possible. It is a matter of prioritising and then maintaining the focus. If we are honest we will admit that we all waste a lot of time in various ways. As we become more mindful we learn how to offer some of this time to our practice. This is an offering to ourselves and to those around us as well, because on a certain level we all understand that we are happier and more content when we are meditating.

I try to encourage people to come from an attitude of Loving Kindness (Metta). Don't judge yourself whenever the practice seems to fall apart. Simply start again and keep starting again because you truly wish yourself well. Cultivating Metta is very important in our daily practice too, because without it we might find that we are constantly judging the quality



and/or contents of our minds instead of simply knowing these things as they are. We might even start to avoid meditation because of the painful judgements that we can come up with while we sit. We need to have more compassion and more Metta for ourselves because when these qualities are present we will definitely be making an effort to meditate.

Mindfulness of impermanence is also very helpful. We don't know when the time of death will come - it could even be today!

Skilful mediation is the kindest thing that you can offer yourself along the path to realising 'non self'. So please... while you still have the opportunity... Be kind to yourselves.

Ajahn Achalo wih his teacher Ajahn Anan

AGM 2011 – RREPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

In 2010 and 2011, BSV continued to provide excellent facilities for learning and practice of Buddha's teachings for our members and to those who regularly visit the centre. Our regular program consists of guided meditation on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday morning program of meditation and a Dhamma talk by resident Bikkhu, followed by a communal lunch.

THE SANGHA

Ajahn Ariyasilo was in residence at BSV until January 2011 and provided regular teachings. His compassion, humility and wisdom have been the centre of his practice which we have all benefited from. His Sunday morning talks were based on his practice and reflection and the Tuesday evening mediation program has been most popular, particularly with the beginners of meditation.

Ajahn observed Vassa at the BSV and also conducted meditation retreats during his stay. Ajahn Ariyasilo is currently residing at Amaravati monastery in the UK and we are fortunate that he has accepted our invitation to return to BSV in December 2011.

Ajahn Brahm and the Wesak program. Ajahn Brahm once again led our Wesak program from 15th to 18th May. He conducted the Sunday Sil program at the BSV and delivered two public talks on Sunday and Monday evening at the Monash Religious Centre to a large gathering of his enthusiastic followers. He held a youth program on Saturday and the in-house retreats on Monday and Tuesday were well attended.

Ajahn is our spiritual adviser and he has provided helpful advice to the committee on spiritual and other important matters. He is celebrating his 60th Birthday this year and we wish him the Blessings of the Noble Triple Gem.

Bhante Buddharakkhita arrived at BSV on the 28th of February 2011 for a 2 month stay. He was born and raised in Uganda and ordained in 2001 in the USA. He practiced under the guidance of Bhante Gunaratna for 8 years at the Bhavana society, in West Virginia. Bhante has travelled widely in Asia and the Americas and this was his first visit to Australia. He has written two books on Buddhism in Africa and has established the first Theravada Buddhist Temple in Uganda, which he is enthusiastically developing into a major teaching centre of the African continent. During his stay, in addition to the regular teachings, he conducted a meditation retreat during Easter and also presented two documentaries for our Sunday forum sessions.

Sayadaw U Pandita very kindly continued the Thursday mediation program at the BSV, when he is not away on retreat or overseas visits.

RETREATS AND VISITING TEACHERS

BSV conducted a number of in-house and residential retreats during this year.

1. A two day in-house retreat by Ajahn Brahm during the Wesak celebrations.
2. Bhante Khippapanno, a Vietnamese born Bhikkhu living in the USA, conducted day retreat on the 17th of July. The Vietnamese Buddhist also attended this retreat.
3. A workshop and retreat with Bhikkhu Buddhagavesi, held on the 24th of April 2010, was well attended. He also visited BSV on a few other occasions for Dhamma talks and discussions.
4. The Healesville retreat with Ajahn Ariyasilo between 11th and 16th of December 2010. Ajahn conducted the retreat that was originally arranged for Sayadaw U Lakkhana who was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances in Burma. It was Ajahn's first residential retreat in Melbourne and it was well attended.
5. During the Christmas and New Year period, Ajahn Ariyasilo conducted an in-house retreat at the BSV. This was followed by chanting of blessings and sharing of merits from 8:30pm until midnight on 31st December.

6. Bhante Buddharakkhita's in-house retreat during the Easter holidays from Friday to Sunday was a success.
7. Bhante Kovida, a Jamaican-born monk residing in Canada, visited the temple for meditation instructions and Dhamma talk.
8. Jason Siff, an experienced teacher of meditation gave a public talk on the 15th of April and conducted a workshop on 16th April.
9. Dhamma talk was given by Chi Kwang Sunim on the 13th of February. This Australian nun ordained in the Korean tradition and has been a Bikkuni for 30 years and she is the current president of the Australian Sangha Association.

VASSA AND KATINA CELEBRATIONS

Once again Ajahn Ariyasilo observed Vassa at the Vihara. The Katina was celebrated on the 7th of November with the offering of robe to Ajahn, followed by Dhamma talk, chanting of blessings and communal lunch.

SANGHAMITTARAMA BHIKKHUNI VIHARA

Sanghamittarama project was initiated by the BSV and it is now continuing as a Bhikkuni resident monastery. It is functions independent of the BSV, with the help of friends of Sanghamittarama and some BSV members. As this project is of immense benefit to the Victorian Buddhist community, the Buddhist Society of Victoria must continue to provide support in every way, until it can be fully independent with its own constitution and managing committee.

OTHER BSV MATTERS

Newsletter I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Cheal who has edited the newsletter since 2004. He retired from this position after the winter publication of 2010. The new editorial committee of David Rutherford (editor), Gary Dellora, Cora Thomas, Rohan Jayasinghe and Roderick McDonald is extremely enthusiastic to continue and expand the Newsletter and I wish them success. Members are encouraged to contribute articles about their practices, their visits to Buddhist cultural sites and any other relevant topics of interest.

Library Yasmin Moore, our librarian, is doing an excellent job with the library. She has expanded the library with new shelves, books and CD's for borrowing and reference. The library is open to our members on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Dhamma School Our Dhamma School is very popular. It gives an opportunity for parents to bring their children once a week to the Vihara while they partake in the Sunday program. We thank the teachers, Susan Palmer-Holton, Trevor Holton and Gary Dellora for their commitment. Dhamma school students performed "The Story of the Buddha" at the annual Wesak Play on the 29th of May.

Buddhist Council of Victoria (BCV) BSV is represented in the Buddhist Council by Helen Richardson. The council meetings are held at the BSV and some of our members have volunteered to teach Buddhism in primary schools, which is a project coordinated by the BCV.

Buildings and Grounds We have made arrangements to resurface the car park before Wesak celebrations. Our buildings need constant maintenance, particularly the Vihara. Recently, a new ducted heating system and blinds were installed in the Vihara. I thank all the members that attend the Working Bee sessions to keep the buildings and grounds clean and attractive.

FINAL THANK YOU

I thank the committee for giving so generously their time and commitment, which enables the BSV to provide teachings throughout the year.

Once again I urge those who attend regularly to maintain their financial membership and also to contribute in whatever way possible to maintain and develop this excellent facility and the services. **DHANAJAYA JAYASEKERA, PRESIDENT, BSV**

REPORT ON WESAK CELEBRATIONS

At Wesak at the BSV this year we were once again privileged to be offered Dhamma Talks by Ajahn Brahm, as well as an in-house meditation retreat over two days. On Saturday evening prior to Wesak, Ajahn again offered a special session on the Dhamma to young people which was much appreciated.

As usual kept all entertained as he interspersed opportunities to ask questions between our silent sittings answers (and plenty of questions were asked!) and Ajahn often provided a humorous twist while expounding Dhamma. Overflowing numbers of people could watch the live talks in the new library facility on the big-screen and there was a large turn-out to offer Dana on the Sunday.

There seemed to be a particularly large number of followers at the BSV on Wesak day this year as the dana queue wound its way through the grounds and car park in a seemingly endless fashion. The public talks were also very well attended, both at Monash University and at the BSV. Topics included Death and Grief and the Role of Ritual and Tradition in Buddhist Practice. These will be available on DVD in the BSV library.

Many thanks to our spiritual advisor for bring such energy and inspiration to the BSV, and to all involved in organising the happy and successful occasion.

REMEMBRANCES On Sunday July 17th Chi Kwang Sunim offered a special Dhamma talk to mark the occasion of the 3 month anniversary of the passing of Lasantha Perera, Padmini's husband and Dilky's father. The following morning Dana was offered to the Sangha at Padmini's house by Padmini's family and friends. Both occasions brought some peace and closure and we continue to offer our support and condolences to the family.

CONDOLENCES Condolences to Mrs Janaki Kuruppu and family upon the death of Janakie's father Mr Sarath Wijeyakoon who passed away on Sunday 7th August. Sarath has been a devoted supporter of Sanghamittarama and the BSV. Many of us have very warm memories of Sarath and his kindness, generosity, and devotion to his practice. After a retreat day he would bring a tray into the Dhamma hall with a thermos filled with hot tea and serve us one by one in a mindful and kindly way. He and Janakie were also largely responsible for a visit some years ago of Ajahn Medhinandi to the BSV, a visit we will always remember and cherish.

CONDOLENCES The members and friends of the BSV wish to offer condolences to Sarath Weerakoon (our Society secretary) and to his family, upon the death of his father on May 26th. Sarath returned to Sri Lanka for a period of some weeks after his father's passing and we are very happy to welcome him back.

BSV COMMITTEE – 2011

Name & position	Subcommittee	Contact details
Prem Nawaratne President	Computer Systems	9532 4414 & 0418 360 692 nawarat@bigpond.net.au
Cora Thomas Vice President	Sangha communication; newsletter & Dana roster	9572 1157 corak@bigpond.com
Sarath Weerakoon Secretary	Communications & Transport of Sangha	9515 9909 & 0431 779 662 weera336@gmail.com
Alice Chin Treasurer	Administration of Accounts	9289 9417 & 0402 321 983 alice@oxfam.org.au
Dhananjaya Jayasekara Committee Member	Garden upkeep & Working Bees	9807 9113 (H) & 9558 0722 (W) dcjaya@hotmail.com
Gary Dellora Committee Member	Maintenance, retreats, Sunday School & newsletter	9570 4854 g.b.dellora@bigpond.com
Adrian Tee Committee Member	Audio, Video & assisting Working Bees	9859 7086 & 0433 533 678 adriantee19@hotmail.com
Jinanie De Silva Committee Member	Membership Register	9806 0625 desilva41@optusnet.com.au
Rod McDonald Committee Member	<i>Note: Rod McDonald has resigned for family reasons. The BSV is in the process of filling this position.</i>	

BSV generosity towards the temple in UGANDA

More than \$13,000 was remitted by BSV members and friends to Bhante Buddharakkhita's account in Uganda to help in the construction of the temple near Kampala. Bhante Buddharakkhita has informed us of the completion already of the bathroom within the women's kuti and of the verandah and porch on the temple building itself. We were reminded of the dangers inherent in his efforts to bring Buddhism into this part of Africa when we heard of the attempt on his life by one of his security guards. He is presently in the USA and we look forward to keeping in touch with the developments in Uganda and hope for a return visit to Melbourne one day.

SANGHAMITTARAMA PROGRAM

40 Chesterville Drive, East Bentleigh, VIC 3165

☎ (03) 9579 0450 www.Sanghamittarama.org.au

Dāna	Everyday from 10:45 am – 1:00 pm
Chanting and silent meditation	Wed. & Thursday from 7:30 pm to 9 pm
Chanting, meditation, guidance & Dhamma teaching	Friday, 7: 30 pm to 9.30 pm
Every Saturday afternoon	Meditation group from 1pm to 5pm; guided meditation for beginners from 1- 1:30 pm; Dhamma discussion 5–6 pm.
Every day	From 1pm-5pm we prefer not to be disturbed either by phone calls or visitors. The telephone will be answered between 9 and 10:30 in the morning every day and between 6 and 7 in the evening. Otherwise, the answering machine will take your message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

BUDDHALOKA PROGRAM

71-73 Darling Road, East Malvern, VIC 3145

☎ (03) 9571 6409 www.bsv.net.au

Sundays	8.30-9.30am Silent meditation 9.30-10.30am Dhamma talk (audio or DVD) followed by communal lunch Dhamma School for children is held from 9.30 - 10.30 am during school term The Library is open from 10.30am-12.30pm
Tuesdays	7.30pm-9pm Meditation instruction for experienced meditators by Venerable Jag (an experienced meditator can sit comfortably for 45 minutes or longer) Course 1: Breath And Loving Kindness Meditation: a four week course on 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd August The Library is open from 7 - 9pm
Wednesdays	7.30-8.15pm Guided Meditation instruction for beginner meditators by Venerable Jag 8.00pm-8.15pm Question and discussion time for those who seek personal meditation advice, or have questions about mediation & Dhamma practice. This time is optional and flexible as people are free to leave at 8pm if they wish
Thursdays	7.30 - 9.00pm Guided meditation for beginners and experienced meditators with Sayadaw U Pandita The Library is open from 7-9.00pm

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