

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Chair **I**

The BCV Strategic Planning Process 2010 **2**

PRISON CHAPLAINCY

Reach out and lend a hand! **3**

MELBOURNE BUDDHIST FILM FESTIVAL 2010

Glowing Dharma **5**

BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

From the Education Convener **6**

End of year teachers' lunch **6**

Eulogy – Devika Rupasinghe **7**

From the Education Officer **8**

Religions for Peace and the Role they play with the Buddhist Education program **10**

Westpac Community Treasurers' Awards **10**

BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY

Congratulations **11**

BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY

Buddhism Today: One Founder, Many Paths **12**

BCV extends its education to adults **12**

Meditation Forum 2011 **13**

The spread of Buddhism **14**

BCV Website has new look and address **16**

Events in 2011 **16**

We like to hear from you **16**

More Information **16**

Other Activities **16**

From the Chair

Slipping away quietly, 2010 was my third term as Chair of The Buddhist Council of Victoria (BCV). The Council was very active in 2010 with its committee attending as many of the interfaith events as we can, committee members assisting in the **United Wesak** day celebrations, organising a **Forum – Buddhism Today – One Teacher, Many Paths**, the **Melbourne Buddhist Film Festival** and an **Interfaith lunch** celebrating the DongZhi or Winter Solstice festival to be held on 4 December. Our website is being given a new facelift to bring it more inline with the new functions and looks of websites. The **Strategic Planning Days** allowed BCV to relook its mission and goals and allows the BCV members to plan and organise events and activities according to our mission and to meet the needs of our members. Members of the committee participated for many days in the strategic planning for the Council. A big thank you goes to Venerable Bom Hyon for facilitating the sessions.

The **Chaplaincy Program** is now under the care of Venerable Bom Hyon. The BCV of would like to assist where it can to send chaplains to the prisons. The Education Program is progressing as planned with new teachers being trained and new schools coming on board. We would like to see more schools providing the program to children. Parents of primary

continued to page 2



Back row from left: Petr Svoboda (secretary), Laura Chan (Chair), Peggy Page (Education Convener), Helen Richardson (representative from Buddhist Society of Victoria), Ranjith Soysa (Vice Chair), Albert Chang (representative from Yun Yang Temple) Anna Halafoff (representative from Tara Institute)
Front row from left: Hugo Svoboda (possible future Chair), Sunim Bom Hyon (Chaplaincy Convener), Ayya Atapi (representative from Sanghamittarama Nunnery), Maureen French (Treasurer)
Absent: Linda Marett (Special event/Film festival coordinator), Nga Dam (representative from Hoa Nghiêm Buddhist Temple)

continued from page 1

school children please take the opportunity to have **Buddhist Religious** instructions in schools by approaching the principal of the school and requesting for the classes. BCV has started a **Honorary Patron** program for people wishing to donate money to help the education program. We are very grateful to **Mr. Allan Chan** and **Mrs. Alice Lam** for becoming our first two Honorary Patrons. I would also like to thank all the generous donors to the program as without their help the program would not have been able to accomplish what it has achieved.

I would like to see more of our members participating in our events and for those who are not members to consider joining us as members.

I would like to conclude by thanking all my committee members, all members of the education program, the chaplaincy program, the organising committee of the Buddhist Film Festival, the organising committee of the Forum, the organising committee of the DongZhi or Winter Solstice festival for their dedication and contribution of their time to BCV. Without their generosity of giving their time to volunteer for BCV, BCV would not be able to assist in helping others to gain an understanding of the Teachings of the Buddha. As my Master Sheng Yen said *"The meaning of life lies in serving; the value of life in giving"*

I will take this opportunity to wish you a very a Happy and Enjoyable Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year full of Love and Joy.

Laura Chan, Chair

The BCV Strategic Planning Process 2010

This year the BCV Committee has been working on a strategic business plan and we will soon be asking members to tell us what you think is important so we can better serve you. In a few weeks we will email a copy of the Draft Plan so you can directly contribute your ideas. Our hope is that we can go forward from the AGM in 2011 with a clear and united vision about what we see as important for the future of our members and for all Buddhists throughout Victoria, over the next 3 to 5 years.

As part of our planning process we looked at the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. Among these, we identified things we already do well, such as the *Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools* program and multicultural and interfaith representation. We also talked a lot about what we think we need to do better so that the BCV becomes a stronger organisation supported by mature leadership and clear ethical standards. The only body of its kind in Victoria, the BCV is in a unique position to serve as a guide among our Buddhist communities and to have the respect of governments, leaders and the Victorian community at large.

The BCV's primary aims

- To serve as the representative organisation for Buddhist temples, groups and organisations in Victoria.
- To ensure members' needs and views are represented at all levels of government decision making and policy development.
- To foster good relationships between the Buddhist communities and the wider community in Victoria.

Up until now, the main work of the BCV has been done by a handful of committee members with assistance from general members from a few dedicated temples. With more than a hundred member organisations, we know there is a great deal of skill, talent and wisdom among our member Buddhist communities, and we need to call on your help so that the BCV can grow in maturity and better serve its

members' needs. Currently, the BCV is looked on favourably by government and other respected community organisations; the Victorian Multicultural Commission has even promised us some funding if we can demonstrate a more substantial and accountable vision for our future.

Ongoing Obstacles

Among the obstacles identified in our planning process were:

- Lack of material resources, including our own premises and paid staff to manage the Council's core business,
- Small committee valiantly endeavouring to carry out the BCV's Aims and Objectives,
- Lack of broad involvement of general members in BCV business,
- Inability to raise substantial funds from within the Buddhist community and government sources.

As a result of the planning process, the committee's initial recommendation to members is that we prioritise the goal of developing a more active membership in order to strengthen our foundation.

Hand-in-hand with this priority is to establish our own premises and acquire funding so we can pay an office manager to attend to core BCV business in a timely and professional manner and employ a part-time project officer.

Many like-minds makes light work

We often hear that Buddhists are the second largest faith-based population among Australians. Yet, here in Victoria we seem to congregate in our own small communities and know little of each other.

The BCV has a responsibility to encourage and promote greater intra-Buddhist fellowship which in turn must surely have a significant impact on improving quality of life for all Victorians. But we need your help. How can members of your community assist the BCV to build capacity so that the compassionate voice of Buddhism is alive among our own members and in the day-to-day affairs of all Victorians?

In 2010 this is perhaps our greatest challenge, but with a purity of faith and a sprinkle of optimism we most assuredly can meet it.

Sunim Bom Hyon, *Strategic Planning Group*

Reach out and lend a hand!

Since 2002 the BCV has offered a chaplaincy service for Buddhist prisoners in Victoria. It's always a challenge to find people who are willing to give of their time to take the Dharma into prisons but it's a real opportunity to practice our Buddhist compassion. Right now we need your help. Chaplains generally provide religious ministry to prisoners. They can also offer counselling, pastoral care and welfare support depending on chaplain's personal skills and experience. Buddhist prisoners are mainly Vietnamese, and there are smaller numbers of Chinese, Cambodian, Singaporeans, Thai, Lao, Sri Lankan, and others of ethnic backgrounds not traditionally associated with Buddhism.

We need chaplains

Our greatest challenge is to recruit and retain chaplains. We minister to prisoners from all Buddhist traditions and who have major cultural and language differences. So our chaplains also need to reflect this diversity of traditions, culture and language. Unlike Christians who have a common religious text in the Bible, Buddhists have a plethora of texts, worship forms and cultural beliefs which are not easily understood by people who have had no direct contact with them.

Are you interested to be a 'companion' chaplain?

Some of those interested and willing to help with prison chaplaincy may still be new to Australian culture and language and need a 'companion' who can chauffeur them and help with prison administration. For instance, Vietnamese prisoners want visits from Vietnamese-speakers (preferably monks or nuns) who can also perform devotional rituals, Thai prisoners want to hear the wisdom of the Theravada teachings, whereas western Buddhists often prefer just to meditate or learn about Buddhist 'psychology'.

continued to page 4

continued from page 3

We will offer training and support

Prisons can be scary places so it's recommended that people go in pairs and have a more experienced person to talk to after their visits. In the New Year we hope to offer training to people before they enter the prison system, as well as regular meetings to share experiences and get ongoing support. The BCV is currently discussing how we might be able to do this in the future.

Can you offer a donation to help with our work?

Victoria has a total of 13 prisons including two women's facilities. Many of the prisons are located in rural areas, anywhere between 2-6 hours return trip. Significant travel time and petrol costs can be a barrier for many volunteers. Other faith communities generally offer donations to cover chaplains' 'out of pocket' expenses; sadly this is not always possible in our Buddhist communities.

The Buddha calls us to:
"Go forth for the benefit of the many, for the joy of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and welfare of humankind."

Shakyamuni Buddha
 Vinaya I, 21

We're determined to overcome the challenges...

While there are many challenges for us in trying to provide a comprehensive program of religious support for prisoners throughout Victoria, the rewards for our efforts are great. When we remind prisoners of the Buddha's unsurpassed Compassion and Wisdom, and see the cloak of ignorance and delusion fall away from them – this is a bodhisattva's true reward!

Please consider!

May you go forth out of compassion and enjoy the fruits of the Buddha's teachings.

For donations please make cheques payable to Buddhist Council of Victoria and mailed to The Treasurer, Buddhist Council of Victoria P. O. Box 6104, Footscray West Vic 3012.

For further information and to volunteer, please contact:

Ven. Bom Hyon, Chaplain Coordinator
 beomhyon@mail.com
 Ph. 0435 612 667

Wish to help?

We need:

REGULAR CHAPLAINS

For as little as 3-4 hours a month, more is greatly appreciated!

COMPANIONS

Help with English and cultural orientation

DRIVERS

DONATIONS

For Chaplains' 'out of pocket' expenses such as travel, petrol etc

PROMOTE

Circulate this among your community members and encourage them to help us share our Dharma merit with those less fortunate.

Glowing Dharma

The third Melbourne Buddhist Film Festival brought several Australian premiere screenings within a program that represented diverse aspects of Buddhism – from the life of the historical Buddha to a whimsical Zen comedy from Germany.

The festival screened from Wednesday 13 to Sunday 17 October at Cinema Nova in Carlton. It was organised on behalf of the Buddhist Council of Victoria by a volunteer committee that included Linda Marrett, Rachael Wass, Diane Cook, John Fleming, Siladasa and Rosemary Moore. Invaluable publications and design support was again provided by Carey Rohrlach. Sponsors included the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Lam Brothers, who have kindly supported the festival over the past three years.

Speakers helped to shed light on themes and issues raised by some of the films. Speakers included Ven. Chih Kwang Sunim, Michael Wells, Di Cousens and Siladasa.

Highlights included two features that have been acclaimed hits at other Buddhist film festivals around the world. Diego Rafecas's 2005 film *Un Buda* delineated the rift between two very different brothers after their parents were killed by the military during Argentina's 'Dirty Wars' of the 1970s, and their divergent paths to reconciliation via Zen Buddhism.

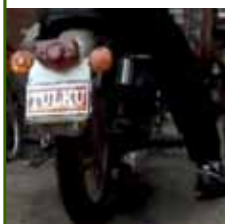
A very different angle on Zen (and brotherly love) came via Dorris Dorrie's wry comedy *Enlightenment Guaranteed*, which followed two German brothers to a Zen retreat in Japan, where both men's expectations were turned upside down by monastic life, bringing profound changes to their lives.

The festival's documentary component included a premiere screening of

Emmy Award winning producer-director David Grubin's two-hour biography *The Buddha* (nominated for a 2010 Emmy for Outstanding Writing for Nonfiction Programming). With commentary from leading Buddhist practitioners and teachers, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and US Pulitzer Prize winner and Poet Laureate MS Merwin, and featuring Buddhist artwork spanning more than two millennia, *The Buddha* offered contemporary insights into a remarkable ancient narrative.

Other premiere documentaries included *Tulku*, Gesar Mukpo's exploration of the lives of young tulkus – reincarnated Tibetan Buddhist masters – living in the West. A tulku himself, and son of one of the most prominent Tibetan Buddhist teachers to live in the West, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Mukpo pulled no punches as he offered

insights into the challenges facing Westerners identified as tulkus. As well as discussing his own life, he interviewed four other young tulkus, and Khyentse Norbu, Buddhist teacher and film director (*The Cup, Travellers and Magicians*), as well as His Holiness, Orgyen Trinley Dorje.



In *Blessings*, Buddhist practitioner and

filmmaker Victress Hitchcock travelled with Tibetan Buddhist teacher Tsoknyi Rinpoche and a group of other Western women to a remote province of China to visit the nuns of Nangchen and to talk with them about their lives and spiritual practice. The documentary featured interviews with prominent female Buddhist teachers Tenzin Palmo (*Cave in the Snow*) and Tsultrim Allione.

Although attendance figures at the festival were below previous years' festivals, organising committee members were pleased with the extremely high quality of the films that were presented and their enthusiastic reception by audiences.

Organisers would love to hear your feedback about the 2010 festival and tell you more about another initiative, called the "Bodhiwood Film Club" ...please visit www.melbournebff.com/2010survey.htm.

By Melbourne Buddhist Film Festival 2010



From the Education Convenor

The future is not known. Conditions are such that I had to be out of Melbourne for 3 months. I am very grateful and also would like to say a big "thank you" to the rest of the education committee especially Man-Yau and Eileen who looked after the program during my absence. In the time that I was in Melbourne I attended a training session for new teachers, school sessions with Aya Atapi and went on a trip to Daylesford with Helen and Laura. Attending these sessions gave me a first hand look at what our education program brings to the children of Victoria. It is just so beautiful to see children sitting in silence doing the meditation.

The education program had a successful year with two training sessions held for teachers. I attended one of the sessions and this gave me a very good insight into what is expected of the teachers.

Thank you to Laila Najjar who put in a submission for a volunteers grant to the Australian Government – Department of Families, Housing, Community services and Indigenous Affairs. The grant allowed us

to purchase trolley bags for the teachers, a camera, laminator, printer and accessories needed by the program. Our Chair Mrs. Laura Chan and husband very generously started the Honorary Patron program that sees the Education program having sufficient funds to run the program for another year. A big thank you goes to our loyal supporters who continued to donate generously to the program since it started.

I feel that the committee of this program are quiet achievers. From the articles in the newsletter we see the work members of the committee put in that contributes to the success of the program. Without their contribution and dedication, the program would not be able to achieve its goal.

I wish all you a very Happy New Year that is full of joy and love.

May you be well and happy.

Peggy Page, Education Convenor

"A man long absent and returned safe from afar, his kinsman, friends, and well-wishers welcome on his arrival.

Likewise, his good deeds will receive the well-doer who has gone from this world to the next, as kinsmen will receive a dear one on his return".

Dhammapada
Verse XVI: 9



End of year teachers' lunch

Laura Chan hosted a lunch for teachers and the education committee at the Di Mattina's Restaurant in Lygon Street. A big thank you to Friends of Sanghamittarama who donated a beautiful cake to celebrate the occasion and birthdays of Laura Chan and Helen Ponder. Teachers and committee members had a good time getting to know each other better. A Big Clap and Thank You to Laura Chan. We would like to encourage all teacher and BCV committee members to save a day in 2011 for the occasion.



Starting from back: Laila Najjar (committee)

2nd row from the back left to right: Cilla Brady (teacher), Adeline Teng (teacher), Eileen Sheridan (committee), Peggy Page (committee), Man-Yau Leung (committee)

Front row left to right: Sue Smith (teacher), Helen Ponder (education officer), Dhammika Fernando (committee), Laura Chan (Chair BCV). **Absent:** Kathy Ching (committee)

Eulogy – Devika Rupasinghe



Devika (centre) receiving certificate of thanks from Peggy (left) and Laura (right) at 2009 End of Year Teacher's lunch

It is with sadness and feeling of loss that we recollect the passing away of **Devika Rupasinghe** at the beginning of the year. This is the eulogy delivered by Serena Seah our former Southeastern Hub co-coordinator at Devika's funeral

"Firstly, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the family of Devika for their loss. My name is Serena and I was the Southeastern Hub co-coordinator for Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools Programme. I would like to share a little about yet another area of Devika's contribution to the Buddhist community.

I met Devika in 2005 when we attended the same batch to be trained as Buddhist Education teachers. As part of the Southeastern group of Buddhist Education teachers, we used to meet once a term to talk about teaching and to do some professional development. Despite her vast experiences in teaching, Devika was humble, respectful of other teachers and always keen to learn and try out new ideas. She would always bring good lessons and food to share and was supportive of all professional development initiatives. Many of her ideas contributed to the development of the teaching manual for Buddhist Education teachers, "Discovering Buddha". She was a great colleague to have in the team.

Devika was posted to Essex Heights for a few years and did a wonderful job with her group of students. I had the opportunity to visit her class and I observed students listening attentively to her tell a story about Buddha's life. Then she came to join me at Mount View Primary School and became the pillar of Buddhist Education there after I left the programme. The children in both schools who had gone through the Buddhist Education programme with her had their lives enriched. The children learnt about the life of Buddha, his teachings and started their cultivation through meditation in the classrooms.

Devika's devotion to her class and dedication to the programme these 5 years have inspired all of us who had the privilege to work with her. The Buddhist Education programmes both at Essex Heights and Mount View Primary School have also gained from this volunteer teacher who made her way every week to the school and for which the school management, parents and students are grateful.

I have grown as a person and as a Buddhist through my contact with Devika. Her unassuming support, her willingness to give to the children and the Buddhist Education Community and the loving kindness she practiced were wonderful examples of what Buddhists want to be.

I will miss you, my dear friend and colleague but your work and inspiration in the Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools Programme will carry on.

I would like to show the appreciation of the Buddhist Council of Victoria, the Education Committee, Buddhist Education teachers, Mount View Primary School Community for Devika's contribution. Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu."

Serena Seah, former Southeastern Hub co-coordinator at Devika's funeral

From the Education Officer

A big THANKYOU to all the teachers who turned up each week to take their Buddhist class.

205 students in **13** schools across the state had the opportunity to learn about the Buddha and his teachings, and how to practise meditation. They like it!

To support and bring teachers together a **Professional Development Day** was held in February at Tara Institute. Teachers presented lessons and a 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges, Opportunities' analysis of the program was conducted. Teachers decided they would like more information about '**Classroom Management**.' The 'Religions for Peace' seminar held at the Multicultural Hub in Elizabeth Street, for ALL teachers of smaller religious groups, presented speakers on this topic in August.

On Monday 31 May, I attended **Sue Smith's** Graduation Ceremony for her Doctor of Philosophy. Sue presently teaches at Princes



Top: Professional Development Day at Tara insitute with Stuart Amoore, Kerrin Hosking, Dhammika Fernando, Ven. Atapi, Charin Naksook and Laila Najjar

Left: Sue Smith and Helen Ponder at Sue's Graduation

Right: Ven. Phuoc Tan teaching years 3-6 at Footscray P.S.

Hill Primary School (P.S.) and was the first Education Officer for the BCV Buddhism in Victorian Schools Program. Her thesis '*To be wise and kind: a Buddhist community engagement with Victorian state primary schools*' gives a history of the development of the program, experiences shared by teachers and students within the program, and places it within the wider context of the Victorian Education Learning Standards.

We sincerely congratulate Dr. Sue Smith on her magnificent and important thesis.

Stuart Amoore began teaching his delightfully small class at Seabrook P.S., **Maree Fowler** had to split her class into two to accommodate the numbers at Mentone P.S. and new teacher **Cilla Brady** very competently took over the years 5/6 class from **Charin Naksook** at Princes Hill.

Sue Smith trained new teachers and taught her 3/4 students at Princes Hill to exercise and get their meditation technique sound.

Ven. Santhindriya and **Shanika Jayasingha** shared the responsibility of teaching their class at Willmott Park P.S. and **Ven. Atapi** taught her delightful class at Clayton Nth. We

thank the drivers **Indira, Gracie, Cilla** and **Cora** for driving Ven. Atapi there, waiting, and driving her home again each week.

Shamana Kivinen did the amazing job of teaching at 3 schools during the year AND finding a replacement teacher during her time in hospital. The program thanks **Wendy Bones** for stepping into Shamana's shoes when she was out of action. We are sorry to lose **Judith McKinlay** who will be leaving us at the end of the year. Judith has been a long time teacher at Daylesford P.S. She has taught a full 3/4 class since 2004. The school and her students will miss her. We are very glad Judith has offered to support the program by being an emergency teacher in the Daylesford area. A Big Thankyou!

New teacher **Sudharma Gamage** began teaching at Mt. View P.S. taking over from Charin and Devika Rupasinghe. The program is very glad to have found another teacher for this school. Next year new teacher **Adeline Teng** plans to begin a class for the younger students.

Gladly, **Shirani Warnakulasuriya** our stalwart teacher who has trained others, and taught at Essex Heights and Mt. Waverley P.S. since 2004 will continue

her teaching at Mt. Waverley P.S. and **Laila Najjar** at Footscray P.S. New teacher **Punya Paddukage** has agreed to teach at Essex Heights P.S. in 2011, the two classes at Essex Heights have been missing a teacher since **Kerrin Hosking** left the program.

Training New Teachers

This year our teachers have been asked to supervise the Practical Training of our new teacher trainees.

They have been asked to have a trainee in the classroom to observe them teaching, and to guide and supervise the lesson preparation and teaching of their class by a trainee.

The effort teachers have made in the area has been truly wonderful. I have received only positive feedback on this development by both teachers and trainees.

Thankyou to teachers: Sudharma, Maree, Cilla, Sue, Shirani, Laila and our secretary Eileen Sheridan.

This is the best kind of Professional Development.

Best wishes and a Safe Holiday Period,
Helen Ponder, *Education Officer*



Left: Laura Chan, Peggy Page, Judith McKinlay, visiting Ven. from Atisha Centre, Shamana Kivinen at Daylesford P.S.
Right: Laila Najjar, Ven. Tich Tanh Thien and Ven. Tam Hoa after class at Footscray P.S.
Bottom: Shanika Jayasingha and her class learning the *Wounded Swan* at Willmott Park P.S.





Religions for Peace and the Role they play with the Buddhist Education program

"Special religious instruction in government schools is authorised by section 2.2.11 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

"School principals should make provision for special religious instruction where an accredited and approved instructor is available.

"Special religious instruction may only be delivered by accredited instructors who are approved by the Minister for Education. Those instructors from recognised religious groups such Buddhist, Bahai, Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Sikh etc are accredited through the World Conference on Religions for Peace."

Department of Education and Early Childhood Education website.

Buddhist Education program runs two to three training programs a year for volunteers interested to teach Buddhism in Victorian Primary schools. Our volunteers are given 15 hours of training. This is made up of two days attendance at our training program (10 hours) plus classroom observations and supervised practical teaching. Only after the satisfactory completion of all of these components have the applicants completed their *Volunteer Training Certificate*. At the training each teacher is issued with a copy of our teaching resources manual *Discovering Buddha* which contains lesson plans for all areas of the curriculum.

Each applicant completes an *Application to Religions for Peace* (our auspicing body) to be accepted as a volunteer teacher and also must apply for a Victorian Government *Working with Children Check*. Once an applicant has satisfactorily completed all components of their training, the Buddhist Education Committee recommends them to the Minister of Education via Religions for Peace Australia. This is done by sending all of the necessary paper work to Religions for Peace and recommending that they are accepted as a volunteer teacher. The applicant's completed application form to Religions for Peace is submitted together with a copy of the certificate from Buddhist Education which shows

they have satisfactorily completed their volunteer teacher training. Photographs of the applicant are also submitted.

Religions for Peace then check that all of the paper work is completed and in order and that the applicant's Working with Children's Check has been approved. They then make the recommendation to the Minister. Volunteer teachers are then issued with a registration card which is valid for 5 years from date of issue. Religions for Peace keep details of all teachers registered with them.

Religions for Peace conduct two to three meetings a year with representatives from the various faith groups. This is to bring programs up to date with any program changes or additional requirements. These meetings are chaired by the head of Religions for Peace in Australia, Dr Des Cahill from RMIT.

Religions for Peace also conduct two training sessions a year for the volunteer teachers from the various groups under their auspice. These days provide training in classroom management, teaching techniques and opportunities for the teachers to share their experiences with others who are doing similar work.

Eileen Sheridan, BCV representative on RfP committee

Westpac Community Treasurers' Awards

The education program nominated Kathy Ching for Westpac Community Treasurers' Awards. Kathy was presented



with a Certificate of Nomination, recognising her significant contribution to the Australian community sector.

Kathy with her Certificate of Nomination

DONATIONS

Gifts & donations made to the **BCV Religious Instruction** fund above \$2 are tax deductible. If you or your organization wish to make a donation, please make cheques/ money orders payable to: *BCV RI Fund* and mail to *BCV Buddhist Education in Primary Schools, PO Box 606, North Carlton Vic 3054*

MORE INFORMATION



THE BUDDHIST COUNCIL OF VICTORIA, INC

A Program of:
Buddhist Council of Victoria
PO Box 606,
North Carlton Vic 3054
Web www.bcv.org.au

Education Officer:
Helen Ponder on email:
educationinfo@bcv.org.au
Mobile: 0425 794 023

Education Newsletter
Editor: Peggy Page
on email:
peggy.page@bcv.org.au
Mobile: 0412 590 624

Congratulations

Congratulations to Sue Smith and Di Cousens on being granted their PhDs. Sue was our former education officer and was a major contributor to the development of our curriculum manual *Discovering Buddha*. Di Cousens served on the committee for many years and was instrumental in the production of the booklet *Buddhist Care for the Dying* that is available for download on our website.

Sue Erica Smith

Victoria University

"I wrote my thesis '*To be Wise and Kind: a Buddhist community engagement with Victorian state primary schools*' about the Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools Program because, like many of us, I have confidence that the Dharma has much to contribute to the education of young people. As Buddhists we are Australia's second largest religious demographic, yet unlike other religions, we do not openly contribute to education dialogues. Little has been said about Buddhist education worldwide, although applications and borrowings from Buddhism, such as mindfulness and meditation are becoming mainstream. The dual position between religious and secular is a unique position held by this demographic and my study sought to explain this alongside current Australian democratic and secular education practices. This included values education, thinking processes, and the principles of interconnection and cause and effect.



Data from the study revealed that the teaching of meditation and values through Jataka stories and activities the children in the study considered that they felt brighter, more calm, better able to make considered choices and feel happier having meditated and considered the ethics of wisdom and kindness.

There is a need and a place for these activities in schools, the study of the BEVSP showed that they can be applied effectively, and understandings from the long experiential tradition of Buddhism has much to offer existing education practices."

Diana Cousens

Monash University

"Having the opportunity to undertake a PhD is a rare and special thing and I was fortunate to have met Professor Marika Vicziany at the Monash Asia Institute as a result of programs that she ran which involved my old friend, David Templeman. David was also doing a PhD on Tibetan history. Marika suggested that it would be good to do a PhD and I immediately provided a topic which I knew no one else had done – a study of self arising sacred objects in Buddhism. These are things like formations in stone that have mantras or



the images of deities but which are attributed as appearing by themselves without a human manufacturer. So how did they get there? This requires a study of ideas of blessings and the interventions

of bodhisattvas. I had to focus on one particular object, so I chose the white marble statue of Avalokiteshvara (Kuan Yin) in a temple in north India, on the border of Tibet. I spent six months in India in 2006 staying at the temple and at holy places near by and living in very simple conditions. I talked to the local people, pilgrims and lamas about the particular temple and about the idea of self arising sacred objects and graduated with a PhD in 2009.

I was most grateful to Laura Chan who sent things like Women's Weeklys to me on my Himalayan mountain top, where there were no English language materials to read except what you brought in and what was written on the back of the toothpaste tube. I now am the world's only specialist on Buddhist materials of this type, and I have some very rare and unusual knowledge of this remote tribal region."

BCV extends its education to adults

Six years ago, BCV started offering Religious Instruction to Primary Schools. The time has come for BCV to extend its teachings to the greater community of Victoria. Conditions came together to allow us to proceed with holding a forum for all the interfaith groups and the public.

Buddhism Today: One Founder, Many Paths

On 27 June 2010, the Buddhist Council of Victoria, in partnership with the Monash Asia Institute and UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific, Monash University, hosted a forum *Buddhism Today: One Founder, Many Paths*, sponsored by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

The forum brought together monastics, academics and lay practitioners to discuss the different practices, traditions and social engagement of Victorian Buddhists.

Professor Emeritus Gary Bouma, the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific, Monash University, delivered the *Welcoming Address* which was followed by the first panel on *Buddhist Lineages in Victoria*, chaired by David Templeman, Adjunct Research Fellow, Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. This panel included: Venerable Naotunne Vijitha Thero, chief incumbent of the Dhamma Sarana Buddhist Temple; Venerable

Jue Yao, of Fo Guang Shan; and Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche, founder of the E-Vam Buddhist Institute in Melbourne Kagyu E-Vam Buddhist Institute.

Dr. Anna Halafoff, a Lecturer in Sociology at Monash University, chaired the second panel on *Temples, Ceremonies and Festivities*. This panel included: Dr. Thel Thong, founder of Vat Buddhangersi; Ven Thich Phuoc Tan, Abbot of Quang Minh Temple; and His Eminence 6th Zimwock Tulku Rinpoche, resident teacher and spiritual director of Jamchen Buddhist Centre.

Dr Sue Smith, a Lecturer at Victoria University, chaired the third panel on *Serving the Community*. This panel included: Rev. Chi Kwang Sunim, Founder and Abbess of The Seon Centre; Mr Tuong Quang Luu, Former Director of SBS Radio; Freeman Trebilcock, Chair of InterAction: multifaith youth network; and Jill Jameson, founding member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.



The final panel on *Happiness, Health and Wellbeing* was chaired by Dr Di Cousens, Monash University. This panel included: Professor Padmasiri de Silva, Research Fellow, Centre for Studies in Religion, Monash University; Seikan Āech, founder and director of the Melbourne Zen Hospice; and Dr. Philip Greenway, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Monash University.

Professor Marika Vicziany, Director of the Monash Asia Institute at Monash University, delivered the closing address.

The event was very well attended, with over 120 participants. It was a great success for BCV and Monash University.

Anna Halafoff, *Organising Committee, Buddhism Today – One Founder Many Paths*

Meditation Forum 2011

Victorian Multicultural Commission has awarded BCV with a grant to hold a *Meditative Practices of Different Faiths* forum in 2011.

While the forum format will be developed further, an initial description of the project follows:

“Leaders of the different faith groups are invited to present information of their meditative practices at a one day forum.

The format of the forum would include a presentation by different faith leaders. The answers to some questions as listed below would provide a better understanding of the meditative practices among the different faith groups.

- What is the basis for the meditative practice within the faith? Eg. in Buddhism the Buddha laid down the 8 Fold Noble Path where the 6th path – Right Effort, 7th path – Right Mindfulness and 8th path Right Concentration twines like a rope to form Right Meditation.
- What are the different meditative practices within a faith? Eg. chanting, silent sitting
- What are the reasons for meditative practices? Eg. to understand the nature of life, for relaxations...
- How do followers of the faith adopt the meditative practices? Eg. Do people in the faith practice?
- What are the beneficial effects of meditative practices? Relaxation, calm.

What would the project achieve?

- The opportunity for members of communities to understand the meditative practices of the different faiths
- The opportunity for members of the community to experience the different forms of meditative practices
- The opportunity to hear from learned and experienced meditation teachers
- The opportunity for members of the community to gain knowledge of meditation and to commence meditation as part of their daily routine.”

We are looking for volunteers to form the project team. If you would like to contribute to educating Victorians please send an email to peggy.page@bcv.org.au

Peggy Page, *Education Convenor*



The spread of Buddhism

An edited article that first appeared in the *Asian Tribune* giving a Sri Lankan view of the flow of Buddhism to parts of Asia and the rest of the world.

"How did Buddhism survive in Sri Lanka?"

This issue came up at a public lecture Dr. Ananda Guruge, Vice President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists gave at the auditorium of Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo under the title '*Sri Lanka's role in the Spread of Buddhism in the World.*' It is the first in a series of lectures under RASSL auspices to mark the 2600th Sambuddhatva Jayanthi.

The question which a member of the audience posed drew attention to a matter which historians seldom discuss. Although several Sri Lankan kings and princes had fought tooth and nail to protect the country's Buddhist heritage for over 20 centuries, at the time of the advent of European colonialism Sinhala Buddhists were in a vulnerable position.

The discussion revealed that it is the conflicts among non-Buddhists that greatly helped Buddhism to survive during colonial rule. The Portuguese encounter indirectly served to prevent Islam gradually replacing Buddhism in Sri Lanka as it happened in the Maldives, Malaysia and Indonesia. No doubt the Portuguese were hell-bent on converting the Sinhals to the Roman Catholic religion but (1) their violent anti-Muslim stance – a leftover from the Crusades in Europe – and (2) the Protestants persecuting the Catholics during the Dutch occupation were largely favourable to the Buddhists. In fact the Catholics were eventually compelled to seek refuge in the Kandyan Kingdom to escape from Dutch rulers.

The speaker Dr. Guruge posited that without Sri Lanka's many initiatives the Mahayanists' Amitabha Buddha, Medicine Buddha, Dhyana Buddhas and many other Buddhas would have overshadowed the historic Sakyamuni Buddha and his authentic teachings would have vanished into thin air.

He said that in no other country has Buddhism had an unbroken presence extending to over twenty-three centuries.

Engaging with the World

According to him evidence comes from Chinese records about Sri Lanka's relations with China from the first century of the Current Era to the 15th Century. Sri Lankan kings had sent no less than 24 embassies to the Imperial Court of China.

Although the Chinese historians refer to them as missions carrying tribute to the Chinese Emperor, they could have been multi-purpose. Some of them were related to the promotion of Buddhism. Since the Northern Wei dynasty declared Buddhism to be the state religion of its territory, there had been some significant contributions that Sri Lanka had made to Chinese Buddhism. It was the monastic reformer Tao-An who was keen to ensure that Buddhism developed with the four segments of the population, namely bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, upasakas and upasikas. He also recognized the absence of authentic Vinaya of the Buddha in China.

Fa-xian came to India in search of Vinaya books and discovered that all he could find there was the orally transmitted Vinaya of the Mahasanghika school. There were no books. It was then that he decided to come to Sri Lanka. Residing at Abhayagiri Monastery for two years, he found a copy of the Vinaya according to the Mahisasaka School. A Sri Lankan monk named Sanghavami is said to have followed him to China to translate it into Chinese. As a group that broke away from this school came to be known as Dharmaguptikas, the Vinaya thus taken from Sri Lanka is recognized as the Dharmaguptika Vinaya. It is this Vinaya that is valid up to date in all East Asian Buddhist Sangha.

It is within two decades of Fa-Xian's visit that a mission of bhikkhunis led by Devasara, as described in the Chinese treatise Pichuni-chuang, sailed to China to establish the Bhikkhuni Sasana (the order of Buddhist nuns). As the quorum was inadequate, the ship captained by Nandi had to come back to Sri Lanka and take more bhikkhunis. Thus it was ten years later in 439 CE that the Sri Lankan bhikkhunis ultimately founded the order of nuns in China. It is this Order of Bhikkhunis which had spread to Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

"A steady contact with Buddhists of Southeast Asia even during Sri Lanka's dark age of Portuguese and Dutch occupation of the maritime regions is proved by the fact that Welivita Saranankara Sangharaja knew even in his early days that the quorum to restore higher ordination could be obtained

from Thailand. By 1753, following the Buddhist and literary renaissance that he ushered in, Sri Lanka's relations with the region continued to develop".

Dr. Guruge noted the most significant landmark of the national and Buddhist revival of Sri Lanka in the mid-19th Century was the Buddhist-Christian Debate of 1873 at Panadura. Eight articles on it by a visiting American journalist, J. M. Peebles, were subsequently published in book form in the USA. Among its readers were Colonel Henry S. Olcott and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founders of the Theosophical Society. The interest in Buddhism that was generated in them by this book was further nourished by a stream of ready correspondence with Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Migettuwatte Gunananda and Dodanduwe Piyaratnatissa Theras to the point that Olcott and Blavatsky came to Sri Lanka in 1880 and embraced Buddhism as their personal religion.

These bhikkhus were also in communication with others in the world scene. Weligama Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera had befriended Sir Edwin Arnold who was an influential journalist in India representing the Daily Telegraph of London. Sir Edwin's interests at the beginning were in the Indian literary and spiritual heritage of Hinduism. Later, his contacts with Sri Lankan Buddhist scholars and activists won him over to Buddhism. His admiration of the Buddha resulted in the magnificent poem *The Light Of Asia*, which in 1879 brought the Buddha and his teachings to the attention of the wider world.

The credit goes to Anagarika Dharmapala for establishing the first ever international Buddhist forum in the form of the Maha Bodhi Society and its Journal. He was able to involve in the Maha Bodhi Society all important Buddhist leaders of the world from the Mikado of Japan to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Its office-bearers came from all Buddhist countries of Asia and several countries of other continents. Its Journal impressed the organizers of the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago in 1893. Invited to serve on the organizing committee and to participate as a delegate, Dharmapala delivered his historic address on the '*World's Debt to the Buddha*'.

Not only did Anagarika Dharmapala succeed in restituting the Buddhist shrines of India to Buddhists but also enlisted the participation of a significant

number of devoted Sri Lankan bhikkhus to service these shrines and also function as Buddhist missionaries in the subcontinent.

"It suffices me to say that it was a Sri Lankan monk, Dr. Hammalawa Saddhatissa Nayaka Thera, who in 1956 administered the Five Precepts to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to embrace Buddhism. The Buddhist revival which he had led has raised the population of Buddhists in the birthplace of Buddhism from a mere 200,000 in the 1950s to well nigh 15 million" observed Dr. Guruge.

The second was the Anagarika's mission to London. As far-reaching as his service in India and the USA was his effort to set up in 1925 the London Buddhist Vihara which had become a focal point in Sri Lanka's involvement in the spread of Buddhism in the West. Still administered and maintained by the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust, it enlisted the services of an illustrious array of scholar-monks of Sri Lanka.

Bhikkhus from neighbouring countries as well as from Europe came for training in Sri Lankan temples. Vajirarama in Bambalapitiya under the leadership of Pelenay Vajirajana Nayaka Thera assumed an active missionary role. Narada Mahathera led a series of successful missions to Nepal and Vietnam to introduce Pali Buddhism. The Island Hermitage of Dodanduwa where such Western bhikkhus as Nyanasatta, Nyanaponika and Nyanamoli under the leadership of the German bhikku Nyanatiloka turned out to be erudite and innovative interpreters of Buddhism. It became a focal point for the spread of Buddhism to the West. Their learned treatises are among the most sought after in the world. Access to quality English education as well as facilities for publication has enabled Sri Lanka to be a productive centre of Buddhist publications. The Kandy Buddhist Publication Centre has been for over six decades an active supplier of high level books, brochures and papers to an ever widening readership all over the world.

The All Ceylon Buddhist Congress under the leadership of Gunapala Malalasekera planned to mobilize the international Buddhist community. Its representatives gathering in Sri Lanka in 1950 decided to form themselves into the World Fellowship of Buddhism. Urged by the active Buddhist organizations of the country, the government

continued to page 16

DONATIONS

Make a donation to support the activities of the Council. Cheques can be made out to *Buddhist Council of Victoria* and mailed to The Treasurer, Buddhist Council of Victoria, P.O. Box 6104, Footscray West Vic 3012

MEMBERSHIP

Council Membership is open to Buddhist temples, groups and organisations operating in Victoria and costs \$55. Friend's membership is open to individual Buddhists who support the aims of the Council and costs \$27.50.

MORE INFORMATION



THE BUDDHIST COUNCIL OF VICTORIA, INC

A Newsletter of:
Buddhist Council of Victoria
P.O. Box 6104 Footscray
West VIC 3012
AUSTRALIA
Web www.bcv.org.au
Email chair@bcv.org.au

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Volunteer Teaching
Email educationinfo@bcv.org.au
- Volunteer Prison Chaplaincy
Email secretary@bcv.org.au

continued from page 15

stepped in to celebrate Buddha Jayanti as a national event. Its program was ambitious as can be seen that some of the activities like the translation of the Tripitaka into Sinhala and the Encyclopedia of Buddhism took half a century to be completed.

Among the non-governmental initiatives, the most important was the Theravada Buddhist Mission to Germany, which established the Berlin Vihara in 1957 under the ownership and management of the German Dharmadutha Society (GDS).

Engagement Today

Today, a network of Sri Lankan Buddhist temples has sprung up in practically every major county including some in Africa and Latin America. Supplemented by scholars and publishing enterprises, this network has the capacity to enhance substantially Sri Lanka's role in the spread of Buddhism in the world.

Said Dr. Guruge: "Nepal is the birth place of the Buddha, India is the birth place of Buddhism and Sri Lanka is the home of Buddhism"

He expressed the hope that the 2600 Sambuddhatva Jayanti due to be observed in May 2011 would further galvanize Sri Lanka to continue its magnificent historical position as a radiating centre of the teachings of the Buddha.

"If for whatever reason, Sri Lanka failed even to retain its Mahayana affiliations, it could have been another Pakistan, Malaysia or Philippines. What is more, the International Buddhist community would not be gathering in Colombo today to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the World Fellowship of Buddhists founded in Sri Lanka by Gunapala Malasekera in May 1950. And we will not be preparing to celebrate with utmost dedication the 2600 Sambuddhatva Jayanti – the 2600th anniversary of the attainment of Buddhahood by Prince Siddhartha Gautama or, in other words, the 2600th Birthday of Buddhism."

By **Janaka Perera**, *Asian Tribune*

BCV Website has new look and address

In late 2009, Man-Yau Leung from the education committee initiated the redesign of the BCV website to bring it up to date with new Web Designs. We engaged Jonathan Chang to help with the redesign and the technical aspects of the Website. Petr was assigned Web administrator and he had to learn the technical details including programming from Jonathan. Many hours were spent by Petr and Man-Yau – even meeting in a bar – to come up with the Website as it is today.

Man Yau says "It is much more user friendly and contains a whole raft of current information about what we are doing. We have not finished our work yet. Stay tuned. You will see more changes – changes for good."

The new address is www.bcv.org.au.

PS: Web design and maintenance are second nature to the young generation. BCV would welcome anyone who would be able to help us maintain and keep the website up to date. If you can help please email secretary@bcv.org.au

Events in 2011

At time of printing this newsletter, these are some events planned for 2011:

Saturday 19 March 2011 – this date has been set aside for BCV's AGM. We would encourage you to attend as this would give BCV the opportunity to know you and to listen to your suggestions and ideas of what BCV can do for you. We would send letters of invitations to temples / Buddhist organisations closer to the date of the AGM.

June 2011 – A forum on meditation. Information would be available on our website www.bcv.org.au. If you would like to help in the organisation of the event we would like to hear from you. Please send an email to peggy.page@bcv.org.au.

We like to hear from you

If there are any suggestions or comments that you would like to be brought to the attention of the BCV please send an email to secretary@bcv.org.au or write to the BCV News Editor at 1/38 McDowall Street, Mitcham Vic 3132.

May you be well and happy