

Sakyadhita Australia Newsletter Issue Number 3

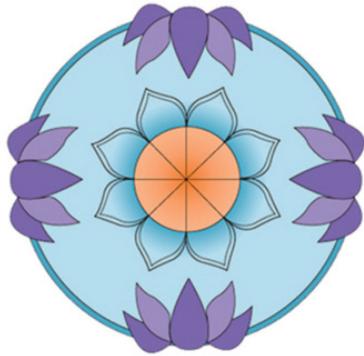
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Sakyadhita
AUSTRALIA

Sakyadhita Australia

Newsletter February 2018

Issue Number 3

A national organisation representing Buddhist women in Australia across all traditions

Editorial

Greetings to all members and to all who are interested in connecting with other women Buddhists, especially in Australia.

We are a branch of Sakyadhita International and were founded in 2015. This year many of us were able to participate in the 15th International Conference held in Hong Kong. We include a brief report about it here (you can see more photos and descriptions on our FaceBook page). We held our first AGM in August in Melbourne where we elected our new committee, held a separate meeting to discuss the possibility of the next International Conference being held in Australia and enjoyed catching up with members. More detail on these events below as well as notices about our next AGM (in May) and the AGM of the Australian Sangha Association (ASA) to be held in March.

We have both a website and a FaceBook page and I encourage everyone to keep an eye on them so that we can build our connections with women Buddhists. And do let us know if you want to add or post your news and ideas.

<https://www.sakyadhitaoz.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Sakyadhita-Australia-Association-of-Buddhist-Women->



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The 15th Sakyadhita International Conference

22-28 June

University of Hong Kong

The conference drew over 800 participants from 31 countries to participate in a week of presentations (papers available at <http://www.sakyadhita.org/conferences/15th-si-con.html>), chanting from many traditions, cultural performances, and workshops on topics from engaged Buddhism to calligraphy to Dharma issues. The theme "Contemporary Buddhist Women: Contemplation, Cultural Exchange & Social Action" led to lively conversations.

The conference concluded with a two-day tour to Lantau Island and other cultural attractions.

Ven Drolkar posted evocative summaries each day on FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Sakyadhita-Australia-Association-of-Buddhist-Women-1473063829641443/>

"The first day of the Conference was beautiful and inspiring! I had the very good fortune to play a small part in the opening ceremony, which started with nuns from the different traditions taking turns to chant. I got goose bumps as we slowly made our way into the Grand Hall. As I held my candle I reflected on the importance of bringing the light of Dharma to the world. Later that day we listened to presenters who spoke about the invaluable, and often unacknowledged, contribution nuns have made to the Dharma in their respective countries, and the amazing efforts of nuns whose kindness, compassion and wisdom compelled them to benefit those in need. Such inspirational role models for me and I'm sure many others in the audience!"

You can view our facebook page to see all her posts as well as the fine many photos, often by Olivier Adam who covered the whole conference.

We would like to give heartfelt thanks to Sonja Webb who contributed so much in the days leading up to the conference and stayed at the registration/administration desk for most of the conference. Ven. Drolkar also assisted with the registrations as well as keeping FB up to date with her great posts.



AGM 2017

The Sakyadhita Australia AGM was held on Sunday 28th in Melbourne. We have a new Committee with members from several states so we meet via Skype as well as face to face. The Committee decided to explore the possibility of holding the next Conference in Australia. We have invited the International Committee chaired by Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo to examine Australian options for the Conference in 2019. Outgoing President Di Cousens recounted our achievements so far. Our guest speaker was Ven Drolkar (who we sponsored to the Hong Kong Conference). Her talk was titled "Meditate or Advocate?" and she explored the question of whether Buddhist women and nuns should keep quiet and practice in order to benefit society, or should they be social activists? Her personal conclusion was to do both, because when it comes to discrimination against women and nuns in Buddhism, the work does not stop with a Conference! Thank you Ven Drolkar!

The new Committee for Sakyadhita Australia (pictured above):

From left, Liv Conquest, Lydia Brown (Secretary), Sirini Kularatne-Samarapathi, Helen Richardson, Sharon Thrupp (Treasurer), Suzanne Franzway (President), Ven Drolkar, Rani Hughes (Vice President) . Absent Meg Adam.

AGM 2018

Our next AGM will be held on 12-13 May in Melbourne at the Quang Minh Temple.

We are planning a 2 day event including talks, meditation and workshops and hope that members will be able to come from beyond Melbourne to participate.

EXCITING NEWS TO SHARE!!

The 16th Sakyadhita International



Ven. Sudharma, Ven. Drolkar and Ven. Dhammachari at the 15th Sakyadhita International Conference

Other News

AUSTRALIAN SANGHA ASSOCIATION

(ASA) 2018 AGM AND CONFERENCE

TUESDAY 13 AND WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH, 8AM TO 4PM

The next ASA AGM will be held at the Jhana Grove Meditation Retreat Centre in Western Australia. As part of the day there will be two guest speakers, Ven. Bom Hyon Sunim and Stephen Mayers.

In addition to the AGM, on Wednesday 14 March Ven. Pasada from Dhammasara Nuns' Monastery will be conducting a Nuns' Vinaya Training day. This (optional) course is open to Australian Buddhist nuns no matter their level of ordination or tradition.

Ordained sangha and lay people are very welcome to attend.

For more information and/or to register for AGM, Conference and/or Nuns' Vinaya Training Day go to www.australiansangha.org

Second Buddhist Convocation in

Queensland

On Saturday, November 18, the Queensland Sangha Association (QSA) held its second Convocation Ceremony at the Wat Thai Temple, Forestdale. It was attended by monastics and lay people from diverse Buddhist traditions. Awards were given to those who had made a significant contribution to Buddhism, and graduates of the QSA Chaplaincy Program. Recipients included the President of BESS (Buddhist Education in State Schools) Mrs Lyna Chen, who is a religious instruction teacher at three schools in Brisbane; and the President and the Secretary of the Buddhist Council of Queensland, Kim Hollow and Maeve Hollow. Temple communities such as the nuns from Chung Tian Temple were also acknowledged.

The 10th Sakyadhita International

Conference to be held in Australia in

2019.

The final details of time, place and

theme to be announced soon by the

International Conference Committee

of Sakyadhita International.

Dharma Sisters on Pilgrimage

A group of women from various parts of the world (Australia, the US, Sweden and the UK) all participated in the inaugural Root Institute's Pilgrimage* to the Buddha's Sites in India in January this year.

Most of the women were Dharma practitioners and were very interested in visiting the major Buddhist sites in Sravasti, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Sarnath and Bodhgaya. The pilgrimage was organized and lead by Sharon Thrupp (Sakyadhita Australia's Treasurer) and assisted by Ven Lozang Drolma, a nun in the Tibetan tradition and ordained in Australia. She is now studying at the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics in Dharamsala, India and hopes to become a Geshema after her studies are completed.

After the Pilgrimage, Ven Drolma said "we came together to set our motivation most mornings and evenings to dedicate our merits of the days visit to the holy sites. We held a peaceful silence on our long journeys to allow personal reflection or needed rest. We came together to learn about the events that occurred as we arrived at each holy site, then as time allowed sat together and spent time either reciting prayers, meditating together or discussing the teaching given there.

I wish for each of us that the merits we've accumulated together through our pilgrimage see us through with no hindrances to our positive activities in the coming years, and with all good conditions, as well as for the quick accomplishment of our spiritual aims, and I hope that the experiences we have shared on our pilgrimage will continue to inspire each of us on our journey to awakening."

Sharon also organizes Buddhist Pilgrimages to other parts of India through her company Ekno Travels.

Sharon Thrupp, Sakyadhita Treasurer and Ekno Travels Travel Director

**Root Institute for Wisdom Culture is a socially engaged Buddhist meditation centre in the Tibetan tradition situated in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India.*

As well as celebrating the achievements of all the award recipients, the Convocation Ceremony was a wonderful opportunity for all present to affirm their commitment to Buddhism. The third Convocation will be held in 2019.



The President and the Secretary of the Buddhist Council of Queensland, Kim Hollow and Maeve Hollow, and Mrs. Lyna Chen, President of BESS with the President of QSA Reverend James Wilson at the Second Buddhist Convocation Ceremony.

On Retreat with Ajahn Brahm

Dharma friends have been telling me to attend one of Ajahn Brahm's popular 10-day silent meditation retreats for years. Just registering for the retreat is a challenge. You have to become a member of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, and then book your place exactly three months in advance, the minute bookings open to secure your spot. Last November, the stars aligned and I finally managed to attend Ajahn's 10 day silent retreat.

The facilities at Jhana Grove (Ajahn Brahm's retreat centre) are fantastic. Each meditator has their own room with an ensuite, the food is delicious and the energy in the hall is powerful. The moment you enter the front gate, the mind start to settle. The grounds hum with kindness and compassion.

Ten days of silence is like taking a beautiful warm bath for the soul. The boundary between inner and outer worlds soften, and rickety fragments of self-doubt and obsession start to melt away.

An intensive meditation retreat reveals subtle layers of suffering that you didn't know you have. A retreat involves cleaning up the old dusty attic of your mind, to reveal the bright, brilliant and illuminated space that is left behind. Ajahn



The women on pilgrimage with Root

Institute and Ekno Travels.

A Day at Newbury

At the recent Open Day at the Newbury Buddhist Monastery (outside Melbourne) it was a joy to see the nuns' community flourishing. Friends and supporters were invited for lunch ('Dana'); to hear an update on developments and to take a tour of the site. There are now three nuns resident with two anagarikas in training. The nuns led tours of their existing accommodation and the proposed site in beautiful rolling hills where they will have separate 'kutis' (huts).

Guests were also shown approved plans for future developments for both the 'Sangha' and lay people. It is only three years since the Monastery was opened and the developments are commendable."



The Newbury nuns : Ayya Sukhi, Ayya

Suvira, Ayya Upekkha and Anagarika

Nikki at the Open Day.

Branm's silly jokes, combined with his earth-shattering compassion give women and men the space and confidence to break old mental habits, and restore their inner freedom.

As a woman, I believe that opportunities to attend meditation retreats will help to empower us. On retreat, we develop clarity, compassion and wisdom. After we emerge from retreat, these qualities become an inner resource that we can draw on to transform our relationship with the world.

Dr Lydia Brown, Sakyadhita Secretary and Clinical Psychologist

To learn about an upcoming silent meditation retreat near Melbourne, organized by the Buddhist Society of Victoria visit:

<http://bsv.net.au/program-event/retreats/>.

To learn about upcoming retreats with Ajahn Brahm in Western Australia visit:

<https://bswa.org/location/jhana-grove-retreat-centre/>.

We invite you to become a member of Sakyadhita Australia. Either complete the membership form online at our website <https://www.sakyadhita.org/>

or fill out the form as below.

Annual membership costs - \$30; \$20 concession; free for ordained Sangha.

Name

Email

Phone

Address

Send to Sakyadhita Australia, PO Box 1003, Daylesford. 3460

Bank Details: Sakyadhita Australia

BSB 633 000

Account number: 157734898

Contact Details: sakyadhita@gmail.com

Facebook page: [facebook.com/Sakyadhita-Australia-Association-of-Buddhist-Women](https://www.facebook.com/Sakyadhita-Australia-Association-of-Buddhist-Women)

sakyadhita.org



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