

Sakyadhita Newsletter Issue Number 5

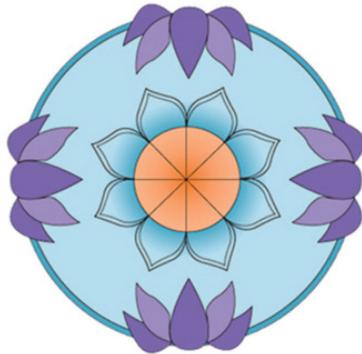
[Campaign Preview](#)

[HTML Source](#)

[Plain-Text Email](#)

[Details](#)

[View this email in your browser](#)



Sakyadhita
AUSTRALIA

Sakyadhita Australia

Newsletter September 2018

Issue Number 5

A national organisation representing Buddhist women in Australia across all traditions

In This Issue

- **Editorial**
- **Building Relationships with Diverse Faith Communities**
- **Buddhist Music by and for Women**
- **The 16th International Conference 2019**
- **Movie Fundraiser**
- **Sanghas Around Australia**
- **Women and Buddhism - An organic reading list**
- **Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies Conference 2018**
- **Brief Interview with an Australian Buddhist**

Editorial

Greetings all,

I have been looking at our terrific webpage at <https://www.sakyadhita.org/> and especially our aims and objectives. Here they are: -

- **To Create:** a network of communication and support for Buddhist nuns and lay women in Australia, regardless of cultural and language background.
- **To Function:** as a noticeboard to promote all Buddhist activity, with particular attention to female participation.
- **To Promote:** harmony and dialogue among the Buddhist traditions.
- **To Work:** for gender equity in Buddhist education, training, institutional structures, and ordination.
- **To Foster:** compassionate social action for the benefit of humanity.
- **To Promote:** awareness of the Sakyadhita conferences and to support attendance at the conferences.
- **To Act:** as advocates for the protection of the natural environment and the protection of the planet from global warming.
- **To Build:** relationships with faith traditions in the wider community.

As you can see, we have a great vision with a mix of principles, values and practical goals. And these are closely aligned with the goals of Sakyadhita International. <http://www.sakyadhita.org/home/ourwork.html>

As members of Daughters of the Buddha/Sakyadhita, I want to take up the aim 'to work for gender equity'. What do we mean by 'gender equity'? How do we work for it in our organisation? Of course, these are very large questions, with no one answer. I want to offer some of my thoughts and hope to encourage others to take up these questions too.

For me, the first thing is to be aware that gender does not just mean women, although it is very often used this way. Perhaps it might be better to say 'genders' to include all the possible identities in our societies. At the same time, I see great inequalities among the genders with a very few kinds of masculinity persistently advantaged over the rest, in almost every society. The hard thing to come to terms with is that this seems to apply to much of the Buddhist teaching, institutional structures and everyday practice as well.

We are familiar with some of the issues around the ordination of women, in most lineages, including for example the Australian experience of the controversy in 2009, when the first full bhikkhuni ordination of women in the sangha of Thailand's Ajahn Chah took place in Perth. In addition, we see that women are less likely to be leaders of temples, centres or Buddhist communities. This is the case among both lay and ordained women. But these conditions are what motivated the founders of Sakyadhita as well as many who are working towards equity for all genders, within Buddhism as well as in the world.

I take heart from writers such as Rita Gross, a frequent contributor to Sakyadhita Conferences. Her classic book *Buddhism after Patriarchy* inspired many others. In her final book *Buddhism beyond Gender* she restates her argument that the Buddha's teachings were clearly aimed at the liberation of all, and called for an androgynous Buddhism, free of the prison of gender roles. In contrast to the prayer: 'may I not be born in a female body', Gross argues that there is a second tradition in Buddhism which has always protested against those who insist that human beings as women cannot become enlightened. She demonstrates that these arguments were made long before the Dharma appeared in the West. In other words, this is not just a recent Western issue. Another compelling writer, Thanissara calls for us to 'stand up' to change the marginalised feminine, recognising the 'many ancient examples of balanced masculine and feminine iconography in Buddhism'.

As members of Sakyadhita we are involved in the question of how to work for gender equity. In this work, we may aim to go beyond increasing the numbers of ordained nuns or of leaders towards developing a deeply felt understanding of equitable liberation (but somehow numbers still matter too.) I find that reading some of the very welcome increase in articles, conference papers and books being produced by Buddhist scholars everywhere both informative and inspiring. Some of these writers are recuperating gendered histories, while others grapple with interpretations and analysis of Buddhist texts and modern Sanghas (both ordained and lay).

In working for these goals, it is really useful to share thoughts, projects, activities and ideas. This newsletter is one such platform, together with our Facebook page and Website. In this edition, we're starting a Reading List. So please send us your best reads so we can build on it.

The 2019 Conference in June will be a very good space for engaging with others to develop our aims and objectives further. There will be time to listen, discuss and reflect on our motivations and commitments. In the meantime, we are also planning to hold two webinars on these topics.

I will only add from the last newsletter:

"In the coming year/s, I am hoping that we can become a place for growth and discussion of issues and ideas that arise from the challenges facing us. This can include finding ways to engage across the country, perhaps with webinars, or seminars or online discussions. All suggestions for topics and means are welcome."

May you be happy.

Suzanne Franzway
President

PS Don't forget to update your membership, which runs for the calendar year. We include a form at the end of this newsletter. Please do update your contact details if they change, especially your email address.

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

Building Relationships with Diverse Faith Communities

Sakyadhita Australia Committee member Ven. Drolkar spent a wonderful afternoon with people from all faiths at the

launch of The Abbey Multi-Faith and Cultural Dialogue Centre in Caboolture, Queensland. Approx. 140 people attended, including religious leaders, two Ministers and high-ranking representatives of the Qld Police Force. The initiative aims to contribute to religious and civic peace and further activities are being planned.



Ven. Drolkar with the Most Reverend George Cuffe and Sister Veronica from the Abbey. They were the driving forces behind the initiative.

Ven. Drolkar with Ven. Wu Chin from the Pure Land Learning College, Toowoomba. Ven. Wu Chin gave a lovely blessing and spoke about how people from all faiths and countries have more similarities than differences and hoped the Centre would result in the spreading of 'metta' (loving kindness).



Buddhist Music by and for Women

The magazine Tricycle recently published an article that nominates several artists and their songs and illustrates their relationship to Buddhism. We will explore this concept, particularly as it relates to women and female artists, in this, and following newsletters. We are aiming to raise some inspiration and Buddhist musical appreciation.

As Dibdin (2018) wrote:

"Music has long served as a bridge between the ordinary and the divine. And while the early vinaya [monastic code] required monks and nuns to abstain from listening to or playing music, the Buddha's teachers were preserved through chanting and oral recitation of the canonical texts. As Buddhism spread across the world, methods of transmission changed, as did the way music was used as a part of the tradition—as mantras, offerings, and celebrations of insight. Today, music is used by various Buddhist schools to help cultivate focus, express devotion, reflect on life, or just to relax".

Here is one of the several examples she cited.

"NAM MYOHO RENGE KYO" – TINA TURNER

<https://youtu.be/isXLBHCD04Y>

The rock queen, Tina Turner converted to Nichiren Buddhism in 1974 after an attempted suicide. She credits chanting

with giving her the strength to leave her troubled marriage with and find peace. She recorded the mantra Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo on her album *Beyond*. The chant, which is central to Nichiren Buddhism, embodies the vow to embrace and manifest one's buddha nature. Directly translated, it means "Glory to the Sutra of the Lotus of the Supreme Law," referring to the Japanese title of the *Lotus Sutra*. Turner brings her trademark soulful, resonant vocals to the monotonic chant, giving it an "urgency and rawness that's deeply moving and inspiring" (Dibdin, 2018).

Credit: Dibdin, C. 2018. Good Vibrations: A Buddhist Music Playlist: A collection of Buddhist inspired songs from both traditional and unexpected sources to help you wake up or just chill out. Tricycle, August 16, 2018.



Pema Chödrön and k.d. lang.

Photo: Christine Alicino.



Chanting. Sakyadhita Conference

Photo: Oliver Adam

The 16th International Conference 2019

New Horizons in Buddhism: Women Rising to the Challenges

Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia

Dates: June 23rd to June 28th, 2019

Extension to 30 September!!

The submission date for Sakyadhita Conference papers, workshops and poster sessions has been extended! If you haven't submitted your proposal yet you still have time.

Proposals (250 words maximum) must include sender's name, institutional affiliation, contact information (email, and phone number), and a short bio of the author in about 5 lines.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent in October. For more information go to www.sakyadhita2019.org.au/

Conference Registration

Registration for the 16th Sakyadhita International Conference for Women in Buddhism opens on the 1st October 2018.

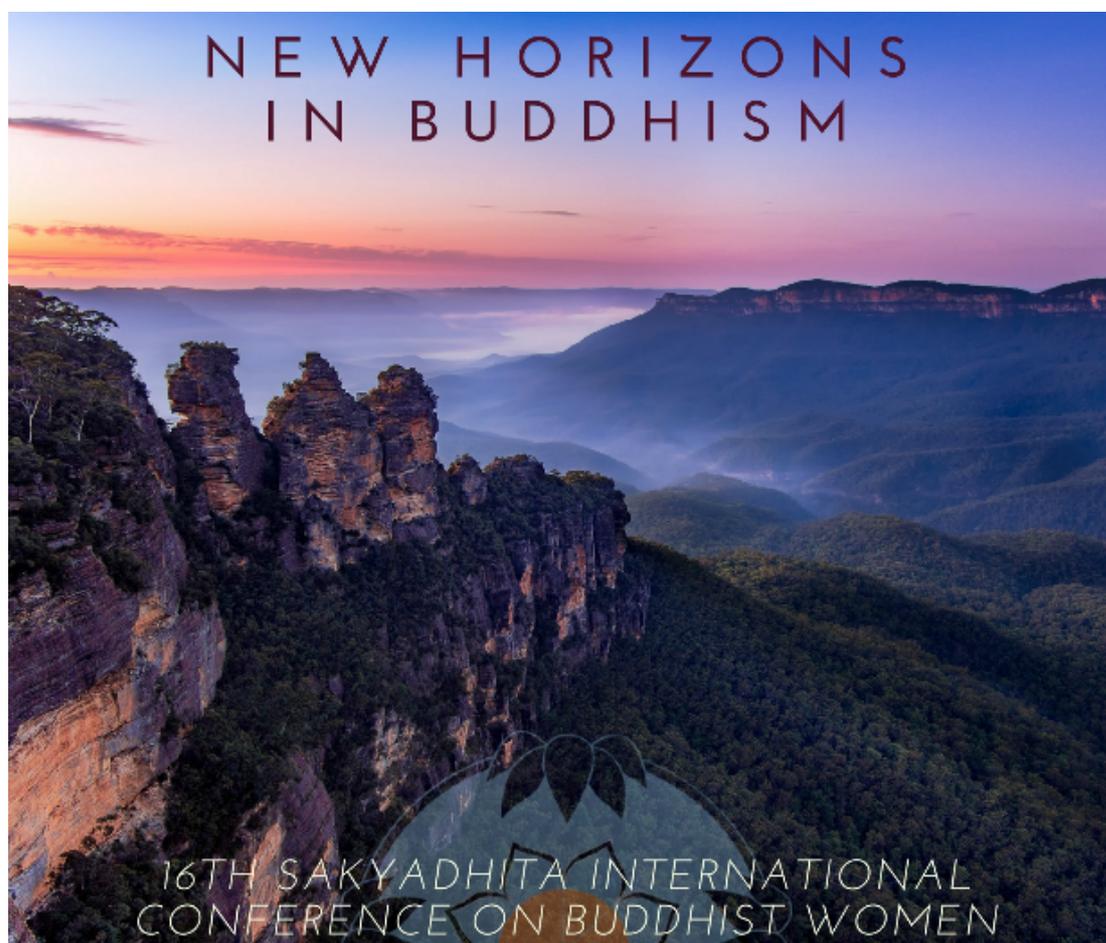
As with previous conferences, we are bringing together a diverse audience – monastic and lay – from across many countries and many traditions to come together and share and learn from each other.

Traditionally, Sakyadhita Conferences has focused on raising sponsorship for nuns and lay women who have no financial means to attend these conferences. If this applies to you, please contact conference organisers via admin@sakyadhita2019.org.au

There will be various packages available for attendees, which will include attendance across the full 5 days of the conference, onsite accommodation in various room types and food & beverage throughout.

There will also be options of attending a 2-day tour directly following the Conference, visiting Nan Tien Temple, a harbour cruise with lunch on the beautiful Sydney Harbour and a sightseeing trip around Sydney city's major attractions including the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. A more extensive 5-day tour will include the above and also a visit to the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, home of the beautiful Jade Buddha, in Bendigo Victoria.

If you wish to stay informed and are not already registered on Sakyadhita International's mailing list, please email info@sakyadhita2019.org.au and you will be added to ensure you are advised of registrations opening.



BLUE MOUNTAINS, AUSTRALIA
JUNE 23rd - JUNE 28th, 2019



Conference website coming soon
Enquiries: admin@sakyadhita2019.org.au

Movie Fundraiser



The money raised will help an Australian Buddhist nun attend the International Sakyadhita Conference in Australia, June 2019.

Please join us to make this possible!



Westwood: Punk, Icon, Activist

Friday 19 October 2018
Cinema Nova

380 Lygon Street Carlton
Approximately 7.00pm*
(*need to check session time on the day).

\$28 employed
\$23 concession

For tickets and enquiries:
Rani Hughes
0409 164 396
ranihughes@hotmail.com

The first film to encompass the remarkable story of one of the true icons of our time - fashion designer Vivienne Westwood - as she fights to maintain her brand's integrity, her principles and her legacy.

Since igniting the punk movement with ex-partner and Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren, Dame Vivienne Westwood has been redefining British fashion for over 40 years and is responsible for creating many of the most distinctive looks of our time. The film blends archive, beautifully crafted reconstruction, and insightful interviews with Vivienne's fascinating network of collaborators, guiding us on her journey from a childhood in post war Derbyshire to the runways of Paris and Milan. This is an intimate and poignant homage to one of the true cultural icons of our time, as she fights to maintain her brand's integrity, her principles and her legacy in a business driven by consumerism, profit and global expansion.

Movie Fundraiser Tickets must be purchased from Rani directly (not at the theatre).

Sanghas Around Australia

Australia has many Sanghas, both large and small, some are well-established with long histories and their own permanent buildings, while others meet in someone's home or a community space. While some are accessible though the net, others depend on informal networks.

One of the aims of Sakyadhita Australia is to support communication and communities of women Buddhists, so we will use this newsletter to share information about the wonderful range of Sanghas.

This issue: Western Australia.

The list below includes a short selection of centres and groups practising in Western Australia, mostly in Perth. Some are based in ethnic Asian communities while others have been established with local or Asian teachers.

Armadale Meditation Group <https://bswa.org/location/armadale-meditation-group/>
Australia Buddhist Bliss Culture Mission <http://www.buddhistbliss.org.au/>
Bodhinyana Forest Monastery <https://bswa.org/location/bodhinyana-monastery/>
Dhammasara Nun's Monastery <https://bswa.org/location/dhammasara-monastery/>
Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre <https://bswa.org/location/dhammaloka-city-centre/>
Fo Guang Shan Temple (Buddha's Light International Association) <https://www.bliawa.org.au/>
Hayagriva Buddhist Centre <https://www.hayagriva.org.au/>
Jhana Grove Retreat Centre <https://bswa.org/our-locations/bswa-retreats-jhana-grove/>
Sri Lankan Buddhist Vihara <http://srilankanvihara.org.au/>
Tibetan Buddhist Society <https://www.tibetanbuddhistsociety.com.au/>
The Zen Group of Western Australia <https://www.zgwa.org.au/>



Women and Buddhism - An organic reading list

Batchelor, Martine (2002) *Women on the Buddhist Path* London: Thorsons

Blackstone, Kathryn R (2013) *Women in the Footsteps of the Buddha: Struggle for the Liberation of Therigatha* Oxon: Routledge

Boorstein, Sylvia (2007) *Happiness is an Inside Job: Practicing for a Joyful Life* New York: Ballantine

Caplow, Zenshin, Moon Susan and Fischer Norman (Eds.) (2013) *The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-five Centuries of Awakened Women* Somerville: Wisdom

- Feldman, Christina (2002/2009) *Woman Awake: Women Practicing Buddhism* London: Rodmell Press
- Friedman, Lenore & Moon, Susan (eds) (1997) *being bodies: Buddhist women on the paradox of embodiment* Boston: Shambhala
- Gross, Rita M. *Buddhism after Patriarchy: Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Gross, Rita (2018) *Buddhism beyond Gender. Liberation from attachment to identity*. Boulder: Shambhala
- Halafoff, Anna, and Emma Tomalin. (2017) Bhikkhuni Ordination and Digital Activism. Paper presented at the 15th Sakyadhita International Conference on *Buddhist Women, Contemporary Buddhist Women: Contemplation, Cultural Exchange & Social Action*, Hong Kong, China, 22–28 June.
- Rocha, Cristina, and Michelle Barker (eds.) (2011) *Buddhism in Australia: Traditions in Change*. New York: Routledge
- McLeod, Anne (2016) *The Summit of her Ambition: The spirited life of Marie Byles Sydney*: Anne McLeod (See also Marie Byles own books e.g.: *Footprints of Guatama Buddha* (1957), *Paths to Inner Calm* (1965)
- Salzberg, Sharon (1995) *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* Boston: Shambhala
- Schireson, Grace (2009) *Zen Women: Beyond Tea Ladies, Iron Maidens and Macho Masters* Somerville: Shambhala
- Sister Chan Khong (1993/2007) *Learning True Love: practising Buddhism in a Time of War* Berkeley: Parallax Press
- Stone, Susan Carol (2012) *The Kosambi Intrigue: A Tale in the Time of the Buddha* Virginia: This Breath Press
- Thanissara (2015) *Time to Stand Up: An Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for our Earth* Berkeley: North Atlantic Books
- Tsomo KL (2006) *Out of the Shadows: Socially Engaged Buddhist Women in the Global Community*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications

Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies Conference 2018

Members of Sakyadhita are involved in organising and presenting at this conference, hosted by the Alfred Deakin Institute and BuddhistStudies@Deakin.

This interdisciplinary conference will provide a forum for scholars and students of Buddhism to explore the rich tapestry of Buddhist cultures, philosophies, and practices in traditional settings and in modern social life. For full details, please visit the [conference website](#) and register through [EventBrite](#).

Registration is now open.

8–9 November 2018

**Deakin Downtown, Level 12, Tower 2
727 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3008**

Keynote speakers

Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida

John Powers, Deakin University

Amber D. Carpenter, Yale-National University of Singapore College

Conference convenors: Leesa Davis, Anna Halafoff and John Powers, Deakin University

The **Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies** (AABS) was inaugurated in October 2005. The Association aims to establish links between scholars and students of Buddhism working in Australasia, between different disciplines working in the field of Buddhist Studies, and between local and overseas scholars. To these ends the AABS organises seminars, conferences, public lectures, and discussion and study groups.



A Brief Interview with an Australian Buddhist

Anna Markey is a lay teacher who lives in Goolwa, South Australia.



1. What experiences brought you to Buddhism?

I actually “recognised” the dharma when I went to India in the early 80s. As a young teenager, I had spent much time in hospital with a life-threatening illness. The inevitability of death became my teacher. Here, I learnt the power and value of kindness, calmness and consideration. Having no future, I lived in the present. I listened deeply to people, and I learnt the value of holding hard and fast to nothing ... neither doctrine, opinion, nor view. In India when I heard teachings from Hindus, from Tibetans and then from the Pali cannon, I thought “I recognise this! I learnt this in hospital!” I lived and worked with Tibetans in India for more than 2 years and took teachings from many Lamas. I then had a teacher from the Theravada tradition, and was able to explore the teachings and practices through the Pali suttas and with less cultural overlay. These teachings really resonated. In Australia, I joined a Zen group for 2 years and explored the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. One of my teachers, in the Western Insight tradition encouraged me to start groups here in Adelaide, as there was no group available to meet my needs. Many other of my teachers and friends have supported me in my teaching role. I now run quite a few groups and retreats each year. The Buddhadharmā to me is a way of being in the world. It’s an articulation of a way of seeing, listening, knowing and living, that brings about flourishing and minimum harm.

2. What do you think are the most fundamental aspects of Buddhism? (or: *In your own words, what lies at the heart of Buddhism?*)

I believe that Dependant Arising, or Emptiness, which is actually The Middle Way, is the heart of the Buddha’s teachings. It’s an orientation of mind which contains all other teachings. If we truly understand conditionality, the middle way, and the absence of an unchanging essence, then the four Noble Truths inevitably unfold. They’re a means to and result of, deep understanding. Through understanding Dependant Arising, kindness and wisdom flourish. All aspects of path seem logical and necessary. The need to hold responsibility for one’s own choices and path becomes obvious. One’s interconnectedness with others and the entire world is clear. Meditation and an ethical life are ways to access and engage with this deep wisdom. If the Buddha’s teachings are a handful of leaves, dependant origination is the tree from which they fall. To me this is the fundamental teaching.

3. Do you have a favourite teaching or story of the Buddha?

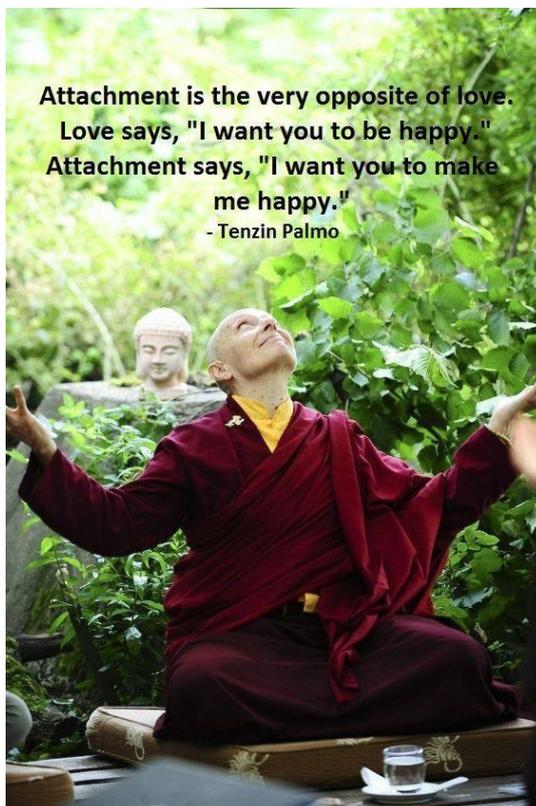
I think my favourite teaching, as it should be, is the teaching that happens to inspire me at the time. Just now I'm exploring The Dhammacakkappavattanan Sutta (Setting the wheel of Dhamma in Motion) is of particular inspiration. Before we are even presented with the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold path, the Buddha reminds us of the liberating importance of seeing the teachings through the lens of Middle Way. No extremes, rigidity, absolutes or dead ends! I love this teaching. The simile of the raft is also an important reminder to not hold too tightly to anything beyond its time of usefulness... including the teachings. I love that too.

4. What is your favourite Buddhist book or movie?

Again, this of course has changed over time. Our dharma group took nearly 3 years to study Thich Nhat Hanh's "The Heart of the Buddhas Teaching". I loved how that affected people. Richard Gombrich's "What the Buddha Thought" left a big impression on me. Now my interest lies with Nagarjuna and I particularly love "Verses from the Centre" a translation by Stephen Batchelor of "Malamadhyamakakarika". This is a delight to read and reflecting on its implications is inspiring.

5. What do you think is the biggest (or most exciting) issue facing contemporary Australian Buddhist nuns?

I'm not a nun, so I'm not sure I can give a valid answer to that. I can imagine though there are many difficulties and many rewards. I think to take robes and strict precepts in today's culture would present many issues and I would hope that these don't prevent nuns from truly exploring and sharing the dharma as they would wish to.



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: sakyadhitaoz@gmail.com

Facebook page: facebook.com/Sakyadhita-Australia-Association-of-Buddhist-Women

sakyadhitaoz.org



Copyright © 2018 Sakyadhita Australia, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

sakyadhitaoz@gmail.com - PO Box 1003, Daylesford, Victoria, 3460

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to << Test Email Address >>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Sakyadhita Australia · PO Box 1003 · Daylesford, VIC 3460 · Australia

MailChimp

