



Highlights:

- Creation of national body to represent Buddhists Australia wide – see page 4.
- Bringing Buddhist education to schools – see page 2.

The Buddhist Council of Victoria is the umbrella organisation for Buddhist temples, dharma centres and groups in Victoria. It promotes understanding of Buddhism within the wider Australian community. The BCV Newsletter is issued annually.

Caring for the Dying – Booklet Launch

Our big news is that the long anticipated booklet on caring for the dying is nearly finished. The booklet is planned to be of assistance to those most likely to come into contact with the dying, and will be distributed free to hospitals, nursing homes and the medical teaching profession

Appropriate Care for the Dying in a Buddhist Context has guidance from Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and Theravada monks and practitioners, and translations are underway for the Chinese and Vietnamese portions.

Buddhist Council Chair, Brian Ashen,

and Committee member, Di Cousens, who devised the booklet and put it together, met with the Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Mr George Lekakis, in late October to request his assistance in its promotion and distribution.

We are delighted to inform you that the booklet will be launched and distributed by the Victorian Multicultural Commission early next year and they will also assist with printing costs.

A very big thank you to George for his assistance in this important project and to the Yun Yang Temple for their sponsorship. May all beings benefit.

Update on Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy

In early 2002, the Buddhist Council of Victoria was approached by CORE, the public correctional organization to provide, through the member organizations of the BCV, a chaplaincy service to Buddhist prisoners.

Prisoners from the Buddhist faith constitute only a small percentage of the total prison population, approximately 2%: or, in numerical terms, around 200 prisoners as at May 2003. A small sub-committee was set up to deal with this issue and interested persons and Sangha were approached to assist.

There are now five Sangha from several different Buddhist communities and traditions visiting prisoners on a regular basis and a number of other Sangha who have visited prisoners on an as needs basis.

Our thanks to Ven Thich Nguyen, Ven Chris McGlone, Ven. Coral Hill, Ven Santhindriya and Rev. Hai for their assistance. Aside from individual visits, BCV have continued to work with CORE and the Chaplains Advisory Committee to promote the interests and needs of Buddhist prisoners. (Cont. on page 4)

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Buddhist Education Project

by Judith Macdonald

Buddhist values and philosophy have much to contribute to the future of the world, and there is no better way than through the education of our young people. By making Buddhist teachings available in primary schools not only are we contributing to the future world, but Buddhist children can feel that their religious and cultural backgrounds are being recognized and respected in the mainstream Australian culture. The Buddhist Council of Victoria is working to create a program which would provide parents and children with the choice of

Buddhist religious education classes in government primary schools. This has never been done before in Victoria. For the past twelve months a dedicated group of people with interest and expertise in this area have been working together to make this possible.

At the moment, several people are undergoing training to become volunteer teachers and an exciting curriculum is being drawn up. The emphasis would be on harmony and tolerance and would not adhere to any one particular tradition. We hope to begin classes in a school before the end of 2003

The Buddhist Council - In service to the Buddhist Communities of Victoria

Supporting the Dharma for the next generation

What we need now are **resources** so that our Buddhist classes can be interesting and useful! Can you help us? Informative and colourful books, worksheets, videos, art and craft materials and suitable games are just a few of the resources we require. These can be costly items but the future of our children and the world is surely worth this investment. If you would like to support Buddhism amongst the next generation, you may like to make a

contribution towards the resources and the running costs of this project.

Please make donations of suitable resources to:

The Buddhist Council of Victoria

P.O. Box 6104

Footscray West 3012

Or contact your local dharma centre or temple and they can get in touch with us.

Buddhist Mala for the Catholic Archbishop

Buddhist Mala for the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne His Grace Rev. Denis Hart.

The Buddhist Council of Victoria, recognizing the importance of interfaith dialogue, will soon meet with Archbishop Hart to discuss issues common to both faiths and to foster goodwill between our rich traditions. The Rev Hart wrote in his annual Vesak greeting to the Buddhist communities about the common use of the 'Rosary or Mala' in our daily spiritual practices. In response to this the BCV had a recent

visitor to India purchase a very special mala for Rev. Hart. Whilst this pilgrim was visiting India and Nepal the mala was blessed by many high Vajrayana holy teachers and to many holy site in Nepal. The mala was blessed by H.H. 14th Dalai Lama, H.H. 17th Karmapa, the Nechung Oracle Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, and the sites were Boudhanath Stupa, Swyambunath Stupa, Padmasambava caves and many other sites. The BCV hope to gain blessings from many Theravada monks and Mahayana monks to complete the offering.



Working with the Lord Mayor of Melbourne

An edited extract of a letter from John So JP, Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund All Faiths Community Appeal (AFCA)

Dear Members of the Buddhist Council of Victoria (BCV),
Following the Ecumenical Breakfast held in the Melbourne Town Hall on 3rd July an **AFCA Committee** has been established with representation from all major faiths and denominations.

We are grateful for your representation and look forward to your continuing support as we seek to give witness to our collective caring and compassion

for our society, and specifically the role of the faith communities in servicing that society.

Midst the noise, distractions and challenges within which we operate, we have, in this wonderful ecumenical appeal, the potential to build a personal, tangible, effective event that reinforces a unity of spirit, community connectedness and a bridge across misunderstanding, to greater good of the whole community.

Thank you for your involvement.
John So
Lord Mayor Melbourne.

The Buddhist Council is still operating from volunteers' homes. We are looking for an office and office equipment.

If you are able to assist in this, or with a regular contribution towards the rent of premises, please call the Chair, Brian Ashen, on 5427 3300.

Commonwealth Games 2006 Melbourne Interfaith Centre at Athletes Village and Buddhist Chaplaincy

The Buddhist Council of Victoria has a long standing commitment to chaplaincy. The Council started the process for consultation between the faiths of Melbourne and the organisers of the 2006 Commonwealth Games in regard to the Interfaith Centre and chaplaincy services.

After many weeks of phone calls and lobbying the BCV was able to track down the tender for the construction of the Athletes Village. The BCV saw the importance of having all faiths in

the formative stages of planning for a centre that will cater to all faiths without prejudice.

The BCV work has resulted in convening of a long overdue meeting of the 'Heads of Faith' forum to meet with the Program Manager for Games Family Services to discuss all aspects of the Interfaith Centre. The BCV looks forward to making a positive contribution to the experience of the athletes at the Games.



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*Representing
Buddhism in Victoria*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.buddhistcouncil.org

Zen Poem by Ryokan

The number of days since I left the world
and entrusted myself to Heaven is long
forgotten.

Yesterday, sitting peacefully in the green
mountains;

This morning, playing with the village
children.

My robe is full of patches and I cannot
remember how long I have had the same
bowl for begging.

On clear nights I walk with my staff and
chant poems;

During the day I spread out a straw mat
and nap.

Who says many cannot lead such a life?

Just follow my example.

*Translated by John Stevens, 1996,
Weatherhill, New York & Tokyo*

Prison Chaplaincy – continued from page 1

We have produced a small document on
Buddhist religious practices which will
allow correctional staff to be more
sympathetic to the needs of Buddhist
prisoners and have assisted in two
training sessions for correctional staff.

However much remains to be done.
Funds are needed to purchase Buddha
statues and other religious items for the

prisons, for books and copies of sutras
and to cover other ancillary expenses.
We are really only beginning this work
but at least we have made a start.

Michael Wells
Co-ordinator

Buddhist Chaplaincy Project

Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils Commences!

Buddhism is now the largest non-Christian religion but we have not yet attained government recognition as a religious denomination. This means that up until now we have not had an organising body at a Federal level, spokespeople able to act as national representatives and comment on national issues, or even our own Buddhist celebrants for marriages.

It is expected that this will now change, as representatives from the Buddhist Councils of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales have met together and created the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils. Over an intense weekend in May, 10 of us thrashed out a new constitution and a marriage ceremony. The constitution of the new Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils has since been incorporated and the marriage ceremony has been put forward to the Federal Attorney General for approval.

We need to put in place structures that will assist the anticipated future growth of Buddhism in Australia, which should top half a million people in the next 10 to 20 years. Buddhist Councils of other states are invited to join the FABC.

The membership of the interim Committee of the FABC is as follows:

President: Mohini Gunsekere (BCNSW) Vice President: Graeme Lyall AO (BCNSW)

Treasurer: Terry O'Connor (BCQ) Secretary: Brian Ashen (BCV)

Ordinary Members: Di Cousens (BCV) Lynn O'Connor (BCQ)