



Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd.

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Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University
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NAMO TASSA BHAGAVTO ARAHATO SAMMASAMBUDDHASSA

A Brief History of the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd

Chapter 3

9 September 1998 to 8 September 2008

One of the great aspects of the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia is that all activities, all situations are seen as opportunities for us to practice. Everything is a teaching. This skillful method has been used by Members of our Centre over the generations. Arriving at the Centre is seen as the beginning of our practice day, taking refuge in Buddha Dhamma Sangha, taking our precepts and keeping our 'mind inside' are the basic instructions that all students hear again and again.

All events and programs share this goal, which is to provide opportunities for Members and Students to practice while performing meritorious activities. That is, doing good things, lending a helping hand, and so on. Working bees in the garden, making cups of tea, taking out the rubbish, cleaning altars, writing the Buddhist Hour radio script and program, rapporteuring for the World Fellowship of Buddhists; are all seen as opportunities to practice, make merit, dedicate the merits to our progress and share the merits with others.

1998 was the start of the Buddhist Hour on our local FM radio station. It started on a Sunday morning, at Bayswater with our first broadcast called "Anthems and Fanfares You May Be Looking For" written by John Hughes. It was the only program that John Hughes attended in person. Radio broadcasting was a strategy to realise one of the goals of our Centre, which is to disseminate the Buddha Dhamma to ordinary people.

The requirements of the team were well documented in the Conceptual Solution for the Buddhist Hour. The Conceptual Solution documented that to be a Buddhist Hour broadcaster, the person must be dedicated to being present and broadcasting the Teachings in a way that others could hear the information clearly, concisely, with friendliness and love. So began a great tradition of training members in public speaking and clear communication by attending the weekly radio broadcast.

From the Conceptual Solution:

“all members of the radio team must train in how to produce good speech. Keeping the 6 precepts on maintaining good speech; that is to practice no lying, no idle chatter, no divisive speech, no slander, no flattery, no harsh speech. Speak on the radio like you are speaking to your loved one. Being generous in your speech by being present and acknowledging the listener...”

During 1998, our Centre experienced great change. It was the culture at our Centre to regularly change the furniture, the projects, use of areas and so on, in order for us to learn to accept that you cannot depend on anything in this world. All phenomena in this world have an impermanent nature. Students learnt to only rely on the causes that they are making. This style of learning was present in everything we did, not just for listening to the Dhamma. Students learnt that learning was experiential.

Change was also experienced in how the Centre was run. The idea was to change our management style. The Centre’s management changed from being a “cottage style industry’ to a corporate management style. Our management team was divided into four task units, Corporate Governance & Reporting, Knowledge Management, Local Area & Asset Management and International Dhamma Activities. These teams were very efficient in completing their tasks and used an S5 Management style.

We introduced the various styles of management that could be used and learnt how to operate at these various levels. The goal here was to ensure harmony existed between all Members of our Centre.

The Buddha taught that for long life of a group of people, the people must look after their aged and young, sick and dying, they must gather in large numbers, gather in harmony, meet in harmony and disperse in harmony. These are the basic causes that are required for the long life of our organisation.

Our method of operating our management is linked closely to the Buddha’s advice. In conjunction with the five styles of friendliness, professionalism, scholarship, practicality and cultural adaptability that were already being

used, an S5 management style was added to increase our professionalism in how we did things around here.

The styles of management identified were:

S1 : there is a designated leader and members of the team that are formed at that time. Only the leader is aware of the goal;

S2 : there is a designated leader and written goal and instructions that are handed out to members of the team that are not defined. The team forms for a specified duration;

S3 : there is a designated leader and a designated team with written goals, written instructions that all members of the team are aware of.

S4 : there is a designated leader and a designated team with written goals, written instructions that all members of the team are aware of. The team forms for a short time until the project is completed.

S5 : All members of the team have equal responsibility and authority. All members of the team are leaders and have access to the written goals and written instructions. The team forms for the duration of the project and dissolves after the project is completed.

Each style of management depends on the nature of the situation that is present. Harmony between Members is developed through this understanding of what style of management was being used.

When all five management styles were used together, the outcome was very beneficial for all involved. One example of this is seen in our rapporteuring team performance at the World Fellowship of Buddhists conferences. It is a clear display of these five styles in action.

Our Centre first started rapporteuring assistance to the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) at their 1998 conference in Australia, Wollongong at the Nan Tien Temple. We offered our Centre's help to the WFB Secretariat. Our offer was accepted and we started planning to send a delegation of 12 members to assist with the rapporteuring duties at the Wollongong conference.

John Hughes prepared a discussion paper for the Conference on 'Buddha Dhamma and Challenges in the 21st Century', also published in Chinese, and presented a gift of calligraphy to Grand Master Hsing Yun, Founder of Fo Guang Shan, at the Conference. Fo Guang Shan Taiwan is the organisation that founded Nan Tien Temple, Wollongong.

In order to ensure that we would provide the best possible team, a rigorous training program was set up. Members attending the conference learnt about the World Fellowship of Buddhist's organisation, their structure, their constitution, their current members and how they operate in the world. We

designed running sheets for each Member to follow during the conference and for the running of the Centre while we were away.

At the Conference, the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd was approved by the WFB delegates to operate as an Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University in the role of an approved Associated Centre for Spiritual Training of the World Buddhist University. Also at the conference John Hughes was elected as the first Australian Vice-President of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

In 2002 at the World Buddhist University (WBU) International Conference on Buddhism and World Peace in Thailand, the third council meeting of the WBU was held and our Centre was formally admitted as an Associated Institution.

That the Buddha Dhamma be taught, practice, preserved and realised is the heart of our Centre, it is why we exist. Hence the importance of keeping our Centre safe is a high priority. Our Centre specifically generates protection for the physical, mental and spiritual environments to ensure safety in each of these areas is maintained.

The CGR task unit worked to ensure we kept the identity of the Centre as a legal company, meeting all our goals and requirements at the local, state, national and international levels. The LAPAM task unit maintained the physical environment with a robust system of maintenance of the premises, keeping the place clean and safe and investigating resources that were continually needed.

While the Knowledge Management Task unit ensured that the mental and spiritual protection was strong. This was achieved by ensuring the Students kept five precepts, maintained their offerings and Refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha for all activities they worked on at the Centre.

One of our professional goals is to ensure the maintenance of clear and correct records that meet our moral, legal and financial obligations. Occupational Health and Safety, First Aid, Member Orientation were all introduced during this time and continue to this day.

Parittas, in the form of suttas and protection mantras given by the Buddha Sakyamuni were chanted regularly to keep protection on a spiritual level. During the Summer for example, The Quails Protection was chanted regularly to protect our Centre against fire.

In January 2000 the Dragon King protection was increased and links to the Dragon King made stronger. The Dragon Kings are seen in Buddhist Philosophy as protectors of the Dhamma. The Dragon King Sutra was a sermon given by the Buddha Sakyamuni to an assembly of Dragon Kings. To

show their respect to the Buddha, the Dragon Kings and their Families promised to protect the Buddha's Teachings and protect those who practice the Buddha's Teachings.

The Dragon King Sutra is chanted annually at our Centre and paintings of the Nobbies, a home of one of the Dragon Kings are painted as offerings to the Dragon King. Protection of the Buddha Dhamma at our Centre is seen as vital.

Our involvement in the Buddhist community has always been a strong presence with our Centre supporting other temples and their events, and helping new Buddhist organisations to establish and strengthen. We continue to see this as an important activity. We are all here to work for the Buddha's Sasena. If we can, we must help.

During 2000, Members attended the opening of the Sanghaloka Forest Hermitage in Kallista. Eminent visitors to the Centre included Gyuto Monks Tsawang, Sonam, Thubten Yeshe, Yeshe Konchok and Tashi, and Sister M. Uppalawanna from Sri Lanka, a student of Venerable Ayya Kema.

Sister Uppalawanna's new translation of the Satipatthana Sutta was published in our Buddha Dhyana Dana Review. Sangha attending our 19 May Vesak celebrations included Venerable Master Ru Sun, Venerable Thich Nguyen Tang, Venerable Hara and Venerable Leuw Suk Wanara.

On Sunday 6 January, 2000 two of our Centre's Members were ordained as Samaneras (novice Monks) for two weeks, at Wat Dhammaram in Springvale, under the guidance of Venerable Dhammadaro. Also, Members attended a teaching and empowerment by His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche. Gifts were given and blessings were received from this great being who is a teacher to some of the greatest Tibetan spiritual leaders of our time, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Holiness Sakya Trizin.

The International Conference on Religious Cooperation was held in Taiwan and was attended by our Founder. Several of our Members were present as representatives of our Centre at temple openings for the Dhamma Sarana Vihara in Keysborough, the Quang Duc Temple in Fawkner and of Sakyamuni Sambuddha Vihara in Berwick.

Also during 2000, not long after the construction of a new pavilion was completed, on 2 March, the Phra Chaiyaporn Pasurt Buddha Rupa (the Golden Buddha) was installed on the Golden Pavilion in our garden.

Other constructions completed around that time included our 2nd Southern Gate finished on 19 October and our stupa housing 3 bone relics and some hair relics of the Buddha was built in the garden.

John Hughes and Students assisted with the Australasian Buddhist Convention which was the first event of its kind to be held in Australia. Buddhist teachers from all traditions gathered, some from as far away as the U.S and Sri Lanka.

The Chan teaching program was strengthened in 2001 with Chan classes taught by John Hughes and Sumi-e classes by Andre Sollier at the Chan Academy. The theme for Sumi-e paintings for the year was 'The Buddha'. Andre painted a series of eight Buddhas for these classes.

During February 2002, the great Phra Ajarn Plien Panyapatipo from Thailand visited Melbourne and many Members went to Warburton to offer dana and pay respects. The first Abhidhamma class of a 9 year program was held on the 25th June. Construction of a New Kitchen and Dining Room as a private extension was commenced in July. Planning for this new building had started in June 2001.

John's health had been unstable over a period of years however one of several heart attacks resulted in him being in hospital for a period of three months. Anita, Julie O'Donnell and Rodney Johnson in particular, supported John 24 hours per day during this period and, eventually, he was able to return home to Upwey, despite still having a tracheostomy.

In July 2003 Master Ru Sun of the Yun Yang Temple visited. As a very close friend of our Founder, Master Ru Sun offered to conduct a Puja for John's health. The Earth Store Bodhisattva (Ksitigarbha) Puja was held at the Yun Yang temple on the 31st August 2003.

Whilst his health had been gradually improving after the long illness and protracted period of treatment, it suddenly deteriorated and our Founder John D. Hughes passed away at 5.50pm on Saturday the 29th of November 2003. His funeral was held on the 6th of December and was attended by Master Ru Sun and many monks, nuns, and past and present students and friends.

A few days following his death on the 3rd of December, Melbourne experienced a weather event referred to as a "once in 100-year storm" by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

2004 started a new era for the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia. What were we going to do with our Founder gone? Many Students left because of this uncertainty and because the person they were most connected to was no longer at our Centre. Anita Hughes, the widow of John Hughes, was requested by Members and Students to take over as the next Abbot.

On the 4th of May 2004, Anita agreed and vowed to continue the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia for the next 500 years as per its objectives.

All projects of the Buddhist Discussion Centre were reviewed and many maintained, as long as the principles of the project could still be met. Members continued their attendance to events within the Buddhist Community.

The Australian Buddhist General Conference was held from 20 to 22 February 2004 at Victoria University and entitled 'Engaging Buddhism in Australia'. Our Centre Members contributed and supported the event as a Regional Centre of the WFB.

After the passing away of John Hughes, the Chan Academy continued with monthly classes given by Melba Nielsen (formerly Fitzallen) and Abbot Anita. Few Students attended, however the tradition of the Way of The Brush was kept alive and well. Students were taught about the four friends, ink, ink stone, paper and brush and the traditional brush strokes were shown, learnt and developed by painting the four treasures; bamboo, plum blossom, orchid and chrysanthemum.

New Students continued to visit the Centre to learn the Buddha Dhamma whilst some of the Centre's most senior Members wished to continue their Dhamma practice in other ways. On Sunday 18 April 2004, Life Member Rodney Johnson was ordained as a Novice Monk by Master Ru Sun at the Yun Yang Temple in Narre Warren. Also, long time Member Julie O'Donnell wished to support Lama Khentrul Rinpoche establish a Tibetan style Dhamma Centre, which continues today in the nearby suburb of Belgrave.

On the 23rd of October 2005 Anita married long time Member of the Centre Frank Carter and remained as the Abbot.

In some ways, although the Buddhist Discussion Centre was continuing on, it was also having to start again. The role that John Hughes had fulfilled could not be replicated. Both Anita and Frank had fulltime jobs and also Anita's family of three children were living with her at 33 Brooking Street.

A new way had to be developed that was suitable for the changed conditions and capacity of the current leaders and Membership.

Anita decided it was no longer appropriate for the activities of her family and the Centre to share the same physical space. It was most important that a private home was established and a separate area was created for the Buddhist Centre.

Much to everyone's surprise Anita announced that the Centre would construct a new Dhamma Hall in the Centre's garden behind the main house. It was unexpected because, in difficult times when our resources seemed to be much reduced, embarking on our Centre's largest self-

constructed building project to date, put us a long way out of our comfort zone.

Alongside planning for the new hall in 2005, we increased our community engagement with weekly Dhamma teaching classes being conducted for our local community at the nearby Dandenong Ranges Cultural Community Centre in Upwey. Scripts for each class were written and the classes were taught by Anita Hughes and Frank Carter. Each class commenced with a Dhamma talk which was followed by guided meditation kindly led by Venerable Monks including Venerable Vimilananda from Sakyamuni Sambuddha Vihara, Venerable Upatissa, Venerable Awloka, Venerable Liv Peo from Wat Dhammaram, special guests and other members of the Sangha.

After a considerable period of consultation with the local council and our neighbours a planning permit for the new hall was issued by the Shire of Yarra Ranges Council in 2005.

Regular Pujas and the Five-Day Bhavana Courses were done as part of the yearly Dhamma practice. Vesak and Founders Day were also celebrated with Members offering of dana to venerable monks, chanting and meditation.

World Buddhist Radio, a concept created by our Founder, was developed and implemented by a new Student, Alec Sloman. The World Buddhist Radio was launched with the goal of bringing 24hour Dhamma broadcasting from many Buddhist Teachers and traditions via the World Wide Web.

In February 2006 we began construction of our new hall, the Dhamma Cetiya – Meditation Hall and Library. The tradition of Saturday as Members' Day was begun with many members lending a helping hand to build the meditation hall. Funds for the hall came in part from guests at Anita and Frank's wedding as they had requested that guests wedding presents all be donations towards the cost of building materials, or actual building materials!

Finally, in March and April 2007 many people were involved in the grand task of moving into the new hall. The library, main altar, Tibetan altar, Chan painting altar and calligraphy and other paintings were moved from the old hall and library to their new location.

The journey to build a mediation hall and library had originally began in 1985 with our first application to council. We finally arrived at our destination when the hall was opened on the 9th of September 2007. We most graciously thank all involved in that journey, in particular George Costas and Life Member Jeffrey Radford.

Our meditation hall and library are called the “Buddhist Discussion Centre Dhamma Cetiya”, meaning a monument to the Dhamma. As in the sutta given by the Buddha Sakyamuni, the name Dhammacetiya was chosen to reflect the actions of the beings within the hall. The kindness, consideration, friendliness, and so on, that is shown to each other being who comes there are the true monuments of the Dhamma.

The opening was celebrated with the presence of the Most Venerable Members of the Buddha’s Sangha, Honourable members of parliament, local Councillor Noel Cliff, Members and friends. It was a truly grand occasion with blessings generated for the long life of the Centre, for the dissemination of the Buddha Dhamma and for the good health and long life of all.

This Meditation Hall and Library represents to us the main reason for teaching the Dhamma – to increase the Buddha Dhamma in the hearts of beings.

Alongside the hall construction the Centre had also to attend to the regular activities of our Dhamma Centre.

Ongoing fundraisers conducted during that year and for many past years included Christmas, Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day Flower stalls, four Chan Academy raffles, the 1000 Buddha images Sponsorships and our ongoing weekly Camberwell Market stall run from 6.00am to 12 noon every Sunday.

During the month of April, we farewelled three great masters; Members performed Puja Blessings and transference of merit ceremonies for all.

Calligraphy Master Shigyoko Kitaoji had taught over many years calligraphy to many of our Members. Master Andre Sollier taught Sumie classes for 20 years at our Centre. Master Lin was great friend of our Teacher and gave many teachings to Members and Students.

We also performed Puja blessing and transference of merit for Sherab Dolme, the mother of Kentrul Rinpoche. Members attended memoriam services for Master Sollier and Master Lin. Master Shigyoko's family had a private service. May we meet with great Dhamma Masters again and again to learn the Dhamma.

As the 2007 year came to an end, the Centre’s transformation that occurred as a result of the passing of our Founder was nearly complete. The project to construct the new hall had given great purpose to our community as many Students and friends had contributed much to the challenge. Our Dhamma Teaching program benefitted from having a much improved meeting and Teaching facility, and Anita could support her family in a more suitable family home environment.

The building work didn't actually stop at this point because the family home still needed three bedrooms to be constructed and its old bathroom to be completely renovated.

In 2008 our Centre celebrated the 30th year of continuous operation from the same location at 33 Brooking Street, Upwey.

The New Year brought much activity for us welcoming Venerable Masters and over 1,000 of our Buddhist Brothers and Sisters in February from Hoa Nghiem, Quang Duc and Phat Quang Vietnamese Buddhist Temples as part of their annual lunar New Year (Tet) pilgrimage.

Other Members of the Venerable Sangha to visit our centre and share our new hall were our great friend and Centre's Patron Bhante Kassapa, former student Master Yi Si Fu, Lama Dondrup Dorje and importantly Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita from Dhamma Sukha Meditation Centre, who kindly visited us regularly on Saturday evenings to give Dhamma Teachings and to guide meditation.

This year also saw the start of an annual tradition for the Victorian Buddhist community with the first United Nations Day of Vesak being held on the 19th of May at Springvale Town Hall. Our Centre's first involvement had begun the year before with the visit to our Centre of our good friend, Venerable Thich Tien Tam from Hoa Nghiem Temple in Springvale.

Venerable Tam invited our Centre to join a small committee to help create an event that all our Victorian Buddhist Community could participate in. The event would be non-sectarian, and celebrate Vesak under the banner of the United Nations recognition of our Buddhist Holy day of Vesak in 1999.

The first meeting was held at Hoa Nghiem Temple in 2007 and consisted of around 15 participants representing various temples and communities. It was the beginning of a great journey to realise the aim of having an occasion which our entire Victorian Buddhist community could engage in together as one Buddhist family.

Planning for the first Victorian United Nations Day of Vesak was fairly straight forward as the committee chose to host the event at Springvale Town Hall which was local to the South Eastern region where many Buddhist communities reside. Also it was inexpensive as the actual full moon day we selected to conduct the Vesak commemoration was in the evening, on a week day.

It was a wonderful event with around 100 Sangha chanting each in their own tradition, and the large hall and balcony were full to capacity for the start. Our temple was responsible for the logistics and cultural

performances. The cultural performances consisted of a musical arrangement with Chinese musicians playing traditional Chinese instruments and traditional dancing by Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian and Sri Lankan girls.

There were many unexpected moments at that first UN Vesak event as our plans, which were very relaxed, did not all come to fruition in quite the manner we had hoped. Our audience were left slightly bewildered at times with what was happening and not happening on stage.

Yet the reverence and sense of occasion shown by the audience at this first UN Vesak celebration was very evident and it subsequently became one of our Centre's most important commitments, to support and contribute to the annual United Nations Day of Vesak event.

Another first for the year was our Centre's Chan Academy Painting Exhibition titled "The Four Seasons, The Four Friends" held on the 10th of August at the local Burrinja Community Arts and Cultural Centre. Burrinja is located in the next street from our centre and the exhibition was a great success with nearly half the paintings on display being sold.

Our Founder's Day celebration on the 9th of September 2008 celebrated the 30th year of our Centre's activity since it was founded by John Hughes in 1978.

Chapter 4

9 September 2008 to 9 September 2018

Towards the end of 2007, the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia had stabilised and moved into the next phase of its evolution. Anita Carter had been the Abbot for four years, overseeing the construction of the new meditation hall and library. She had married Frank Carter who provided integral support for running the Centre. A new group of Members who had never met John Hughes started to make up the fellowship of regular attendees at 33 Brooking Street in Upwey.

The main day of practice was Saturday, as Anita and many of the Members worked full time. It commenced with a Buddha Dhamma class at 11am, then lunch provided by the Students, and merit making activities in the afternoon. Member's Day would conclude with a meditation class at 8pm, conducted by either a monastic or Anita herself.

In order to attract new members, Abbot Anita Carter and Frank Carter continued their public teaching program. It involved writing a series of scripts that covered the basic tenets of Buddhist practice. The process encouraged the teachers to explore the essence of how the Buddha Dhamma needed to be delivered to a new generation of Members that would never meet John Hughes.

They had to think about what students needed to know about Buddhism, show them how to access the path, and make it applicable to their lives so they could make use of the information.

Each script was based around a particular aspect of Buddhist practice. The subjects included were generosity, morality, patience, joy, concentration, mindfulness, wisdom, letting go, Buddha Refuge and truthfulness.

The teachings were for an Australian audience to introduce people to Buddhism and help them use their lives to make significant progress on the Buddha Dhamma Path. The themes explored were familiar to modern living such as how to deal with difficult people without becoming resentful, how to reduce stress, how to deal with irritation and boredom at work and how to increase mindfulness of the present. The teachings were an engaging read and made the Buddha Dhamma highly accessible for new students through concepts such as the 'Happiness Map', and the reason 'why we get things in the first place'.

The new scripts were part of an important drive to take the Dhamma to the people in keeping with the Buddhist Discussion Centre's mission that the Dhamma be taught, practiced realised and preserved now and for the next 500 years. They were written using the five styles of friendliness, practicality, scholarship, cultural adaptability, professionalism.

In 2009 the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd was taking a larger role supporting the Victorian observance of the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations. Experienced members had to call upon the skills that had been learned under John Hughes in running large and complex events with various groups.

The UN Vesak allowed the Buddhist Discussion Centre to work closely with other members of the Buddhist community to create an event for lay persons and Sangha to celebrate the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha. It strengthened links of friendship between all Buddhist traditions, diverse international cultures and the wider community.

Riding the wave of good will and enthusiasm from the first Vesak celebration in 2008, the organising committee took the UN Vesak a step further in 2009 by moving it to the Melbourne Town Hall, a prominent central location that was designed to raise the events awareness and presence. It has been conducted there ever since. For this occasion, Anita and Frank were both joint event managers of the organising committee.

In 2010, Anita and Frank clarified the purpose and vision for the event – for all participants to experience the Buddha Good Heart and Mind. The broad view was to work with representatives of many Victorian Buddhist communities to achieve the ideals of harmony, cooperation and friendship, within the Buddhist principles of morality, generosity and wisdom.

This was supported by each Buddhist tradition being visibly reflected in the celebration, encouraging all members to contribute to the planning of the event, providing mentoring for younger, less experienced persons to help them develop new skills, seeking the counsel of the Venerable Sangha, and helping to build the good heart of our own BDC Team Members and voluntary helpers.

In November of 2008, the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd sent a delegation of members to the 24th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Tokyo, Japan. Our five-person team was there to complete rapporteuring services for all the plenary sessions and meetings held by the WFB.

Attending these conferences gave Anita and Frank the opportunity to introduce the newer students to the standards of performance and behaviour appropriate for this meeting of Buddhist leaders and representatives from around the globe.

In order to be able to operate effectively in that environment, Team Members had to learn to relinquish their own agenda entirely to the team agenda. This can be challenging for person accustomed to listening to his own views and feelings. A gradual relinquishment of a person's inner workings is an aspect of letting go which is part of training on the Buddha Dhamma path.

At the subsequent 2010 World Fellowship of Buddhist's 16th General Conference held in Colombo Sri Lanka, Frank Carter was appointed Honorary Assistant Secretary-General of the WFB in recognition of the contribution our Centre had made to the running of the bi-annual WFB conferences.

On the 4th of March 2011 Anita Carter, Abbot of the Buddhist Discussion Centre received an Outstanding Woman in Buddhism Award. Anita was a joint recipient of the award as chosen by an international committee of scholars and Buddhist monastics. Anita was given the award at the United Nations International Women's Day presentation at Mahidol University in Bangkok organised by the World Buddhist University.

Also in 2011 the Centre hosted the visit of the World Fellowship of Buddhists Secretary-General, Mr Phallop Thaiarry and Mrs Thaiarry to our centre. During the Secretary-Generals visit to Melbourne he and his wife also attended the United Nations Day of Vesak event on the 21st of May at which a full musical based on the Enlightenment of The Buddha was performed live on stage.

Victoria's Buddhist community includes many people who have skills in singing, dancing, acting, composing music, designing sets and directing performances. The proposition was put to the UN Vesak organising committee by committee member Linda Marett (Dharma Drum Mountain Melbourne) that the Vesak event may be a suitable occasion for people who were interested in the performing arts to collaborate to produce a musical based on the Buddha's life.

The resulting musical, The Birth of The Buddha, was presented at the 2010 Vesak celebration at Melbourne Town Hall and then, a second musical followed in 2011 based on The Buddha's Enlightenment. The music was composed and recorded by Andrew Williams and the live musical was directed by BDC Member Simon Kearney. Reflecting one of the events key objectives, this challenging initiative brought together

many performers and contributors for two truly remarkable and memorable performances.

CD's of the musical were also produced and given away to many of the guests at the Vesak Day event.

In 2012 Anita changed the way the Centre had operated. Generally the entire house and property was made available to the Buddhist Discussion Centre Members and Students for their practice, teachings and learning. However with a young family it was necessary to think about their needs as well as that of maintaining a learning environment. For that reason the use of the property was divided into Family use and use by the Centre. The Centre continues to be a place where members and students can meet friends, chat, relax and learn for the purpose of training one's mind.

In the same year the Directors of the Centre developed a 35-year plan for the future of our Centre. A long-term vision was considered. The following areas were explored:

1. The loading capacity of the centre for our scheduled operating times with reference to carparking, the need to respect the private areas of Anita's family home, and in relation to our capacity to look after and teach students and guests skilfully and appropriately.
2. Publicity and Recruitment Plan
3. Funding
4. Processes for new students
5. Member roles responsibilities
6. Increasing the number of teachers
7. Anita's retirement so she can be at the Centre full time.
8. Succession Plan
9. Dhamma Teaching Plan

Each area of consideration identified problems yet to come which called for planned solutions and strategies so that the centre would be prepared for the changes and challenges ahead.

It also clarified our view of where to focus our energies so that priority would be given to the things that would provide appropriate risk management and sustain our Centre's current and future growth.

In 2013 our Centre was contacted by the World Buddhist University who proposed that they would send a delegation to Australia to introduce themselves to local Buddhist scholars and educators possibly leading to ongoing networking and collaboration.

The World Buddhist University, based in Thailand, was established by the World Fellowship of Buddhists in 1998 and operates in many

different countries serving as an international community of Buddhist scholars engaged in research, post-graduate training, spiritual practice, and Buddhist studies, through the academic networking systems of the University. The Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd is one of twenty-one Associated Institutions of the World Buddhist University worldwide.

On the 8th of December 2013 a Buddhist Scholars Symposium was convened in Ferntree Gully Victoria by our Centre and included the Vice Rector of the World Buddhist University, prominent Buddhist scholars from Melbourne's academic community and several Members of the Sangha who were invited to attend.

The program commenced with a dana offering to the invited Sangha followed by a presentation from the WBU and an open dialogue between WBU and Australian Buddhist Scholars.

The Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd first starting raising funds for the Dharmarajika Orphanage in Bangladesh during the 1980's. In the late 1990's a Member approached the owner of a small group of Asian handicrafts stores named Ishka. The owner was agreeable to our centre creating some small coin donation boxes and placing one on the counter of each of their stores. At that time the company had around four stores in Melbourne and the little coin boxes started their work collecting coins for orphaned children in Bangladesh.

During 2014 after a conversation with Ishka's owner, the company offered to place our coin donation boxes in all their stores. Over that time Ishka had grown considerably and opened many stores in high turn-over shopping environments such as Knox City and Chadstone shopping centre. Also a number country Victoria stores were opened bring the total number of Ishka stores to 28.

Bringing all these stores online increased the funds raised by more than 600% per annum ensuring a sizable donation to Dharmarajika Orphanage each year.

Buddhist Teachers who offered Teachings at the Buddhist Discussion Centre during 2014 included Venerable Vijitha Wansa from Mahamevnawa Meditation Centre, Mt Evelyn, senior Korean Monk Venerable Myung Seon Kun Sunim, and Shang Rinpoche from Taiwan.

In July 2014, Anita and Frank travelled to Hawaii to participate in a three-week retreat under Korean Supreme Master Ji Kwang Dae Poep Sa Nim. John Hughes had recommended to Anita many years before that it would be very beneficial to meet with this great master and receive teachings from her.

The organisation Master Dae Poep Sa Nim founded is called the Yun Hwa Sangha and it is based at the Lotus Buddhist Monastery on The Big Island in Hawaii. The organisation has 41 branch temples in Europe and 2 others in Mexico and Turkey. The main monastery where Master Dae Poep Sa Nim resides is located on a large area of previously un-cultivated land and has resident monks and nuns and a lay community.

The most recent period of our Centre's history leading up to our 40th Anniversary on the 9th of September 2018 saw the centre continuing in its current direction. Some of our Dhamma activities during that time have included:

- In January 2015 we installed two large solid white marble images that had been donated to our Centre. One image was of Sakyamuni Buddha and the other of Kwan Yin.
- In March 2015 Members went on a friendship visit to ten Buddhist Temples in one day, by bus. This follows the tradition of many local Vietnamese Buddhist Temples who have visited our Centre over many years.
- In October 2016 we conducted a Chan Painting Exhibition at the Nobbies Centre on Phillip Island, Victoria. The Nobbies Centre is one of Victoria's most popular tourist attractions and a number of paintings were sold. Paintings exhibited were painted by Melba Nielsen and Anita Carter and those that sold all featured penguins!
- On the 19th of July 2016 our Centre's long-time friend and Patron Bhante Kassapa passed away at his temple, Rockhill Hermitage located near Kandy, Sri Lanka. Abbot Anita Carter and several BDC Members were joined by Rani Hughes and Wendy Clancy to perform a Puja in commemoration of his passing.
- In 2017 as a result of our Centre's Directors considerations of what was needed to further our Centres program of Dhamma dissemination we launched our Centre's new website, www.bdcu.org.au.

Our new website was joined by a You Tube channel and Podbean podcast channel both named "Lifetimes of Learning". The Centre also uploads regular information about our activities to our Facebook page.

- Our Centre was most fortunate that Master Yi, a Buddhist Monk in the Ch'an tradition, kindly accepted our invitation to visit our Centre and give teachings. Master Yi had been a senior student of John Hughes leading to his ordination in 2004 after John passed

away. Master Yi is fully aware of our Centre's tradition and style and graciously offered Dhamma Teachings to our Centre's current generation of Students during several Bhavana Courses and two-day practice weekends.

The most recent chapter in the history of our Buddhist centre is to take the opportunity provided by our 40th Anniversary in September 2018 to acknowledge our rich heritage, our debt of gratitude to our Centre's Founder John Hughes, and to express deep gratitude for the contributions and participation over these 40 years of so many persons from Australia and around the world, in the story of one small Buddhist Temple located in Upwey, Victoria.

The projects we have recently planned which will achieve this intention include; creating an oral filmed history of our centre through the eyes and voices of the people who were Members here at various times, writing this 40 year historic record, publishing our Centre's first book titled "Bringing Wisdom To Life" and through conducting an official 40 Year Anniversary event at a time when all generations of our Centre 's past can attend and join with our current Members and Friends in acknowledgment and celebration.

May the merit of this article help all beings know the Path realise the Path, follow the Path. May the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd fulfil its objective that the Buddha Dhamma be taught here, realised here, practiced here and preserved here now and for the next 500 years.

MAY YOU BE WELL AND HAPPY

The authors and editors of this written record of the Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd and Chan Academy Australia are Anita Carter, Frank Carter, Julian Bamford and Simon Kearney.



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