



The Uganda Buddhist Center

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UBC Newsletter

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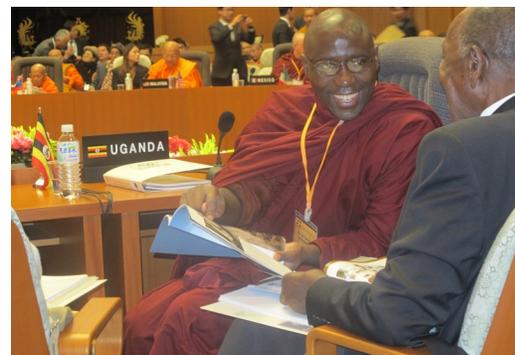
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The Sixth World Buddhist Summit

After flying to Uganda from Boston, Bhante Buddharakkhita spent 36 hours visiting with his family and making a short visit to the UBC before heading to the airport once again. This time his destination was the Sixth Buddhist Summit of the World Buddhist Supreme Conference in Kobe and several other locations in Japan. He was accompanied by a delegation of nine Ugandans, including H.R.H. Apollo Sansa Ka-

bumbuli, King of Kooki (Obwakamuswaga Bwa Kooki) and H.E. Hajji Idd Ahmed Kiwanuka, Prime Minister of the Kooki Kingdom. According to the Prime Minister, “Many times I have stopped to wonder who Am I! We believe in the Dharma all is possible, here we come.”

Bhante Buddharakkhita was one of only seven Buddhist leaders selected



Ven. Buddharakkhita at the World Buddhist Summit, Japan.

to speak to the full body of Summit delegates. He now an the title of Office Bearer and Executive Member on the Board of the World Buddhist Supreme Conference, representing the African continent.

The theme of the conference was “Serenity and World Peace.” A strong focus of the Summit was reverting to the original teachings of the Buddha. In the words of keynote speaker Dr. Kyuse Enshinjoh: “Every one of us in the world has to overcome the barriers of religions and nationalities and bring together our wisdom in order to solve the problems for the benefit of all living things.”



Ven. Buddharakkhita, H.R.H. Apollo Sansa Kabumbuli, and Delegates at Sixth World Buddhist Summit, Japan.

Royal Visitors



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*Above: Ven. Buddharakkhita,
H.R.H. Apollo Sansa
Kabumbuli at UBC.*

*We wish to send our
Dhamma greetings to all
of you who have supported
us through the year 2014.
we hope you can support
us once again.*

*Thank you for your kind
support in 2015!*

With Metta



Gautama Buddha was once Prince Siddhartha, son of the King of the Sakyas. After becoming the Buddha, he received welcomes and dana from many kings in northern India, and spent many vassa rainy seasons in parks donated by royal families.

Uganda's kings played important roles in creating a modern Uganda during the 20th century. Even when the country was a British protectorate, they retained considerable autonomy. Kingdoms were abolished in the 1960s and 70s, but many of them were reestablished in 1993.

The UBC received two royal visitors in December: H.R.H. Apollo Sansa Kabumbuli, King of Kooki (Obwakamuswaga Bwa Kooki), and Queen Omugo Tuli Tuuka.

King Kabumbuli was a member of the Uganda delegation to the Sixth Buddhist Summit of the World Buddhist Supreme Conference in Kobe, Japan. In his message of congratulations to the Summit organizers, His Royal Highness wrote, "The Kingdom of Kooki is ready to work together in partnership with you by providing land for development and construct a Buddhist centre, Education and convert centers in the Kingdom." We thank the King for

his visit on December 30, and for his great generosity to Buddhism in Uganda. He helped plant a tree to mark the occasion of his visit.

Another tree was planted by Queen Omugo Tuli Tuuka in honor of her visit to the UBC Peace School on December 21. She spent much of the afternoon here, with her three children participating in Peace School activities. At the end of her visit she commented, "We appreciate the good work you do for our society."

Thank you, Your Highness, we hope you will be a regular visitor to the Center.



*H.R.H. Apollo Sansa Kabumbuli,
King of Kooki, planting a tree at
UBC.*



Queen Omugo Tuli Tuuka, planting a tree at UBC.

New Volunteer at UBC

Hello to all supporters of the UBC—my name is Jon, you can call me Lindy if you like. I'm the new volunteer here at the Center, trying to make myself useful in any way possible. I have a master's degree in Teaching ESL,

but most of my working life has been spent doing technical editing. I have an online business that will allow me to spend several months here.

I discovered the Dhamma in the mid-1990s. Typical of Western Buddhists, especially in the U.S.,

I have moved among different sanghas, taking advantage of as many visiting teachers as possible. For the past 10 years, I've mostly practiced with Seattle Insight Meditation, the Pacific Northwest chapter of Insight Meditation, based in Barre Massachusetts.

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Bhante Buddharakkhita has taught at several retreats in Barre.

The past two years have been an especially fruitful period of practice for me. Through one of my American teachers and fellow bhikkus I learned about a meditation center in Yangon, Myanmar. I flew there at the end of February 2013, and spent the next month in retreat with a sayadaw named U Tejaniya. The causes and conditions were right for longer practice, and to my surprise I ended up spending 9 of my 20 months in Southeast Asia in retreat!

Toward the end of my time in Asia I spent several weeks searching for the right volunteer opportunity in Africa, and when I came across ugandabuddhistcenter.org, I

immediately knew that I had found the right one. The UBC is letting me act on my combined interests in Dhamma, volunteer teaching, and spending time learning about a part of the world that I have always dreamed of visiting.

Are you motivated to give service in some way? Please consider joining me or following me when I leave in the late spring. There's plenty to do, and a meditation hall filled with cushions for you to do your formal practice. Bhante and the UBC sangha have a clear vision for the future of Dhamma in Uganda, and the energy and enthusiasm to act on it. You can be part of the beginning of Buddhism in East Africa, and the merit of your work will be felt for many lifetimes to come, likely in other parts of the continent also.



Jon teaching yoga to the UBC Peace School.

Peace School Starts Up Again

With the arrival of a new volunteer, the UBC Peace School held class on December 21 in the meditation hall and under the large tent that was a generous gift from a Thai sayadaw.

What a day! The whole month of December had been busy with construction of a new wall, re-roofing the main meditation hall, and fixing a pump so that local villagers could have access to clean water. Bhante was busy moving back and forth between supervising the work, welcoming special guests, and meeting with visitors curious to find out more about Buddhism.

In the midst of all this activity, nine children between the ages of 6 and 13 arrived in the early afternoon to take part in Peace School. We started out with fifteen minutes of yoga—never

before have so many giggles been heard in a yoga class, especially when we all stood on one foot!

This was followed by a spirited game of Concentration, using vocabulary words that are central to Dhamma: meditation, dana, loving-kindness, mindfulness, and so on. Here's a word in Luganda for you to learn: wegendereze—"g" as in "go," accent on the second syllable. It means "be mindful."

The boisterous energy at the end of the game called for some calm-abiding and watching the breath. Our new volunteer teacher has many years of experience showing students how to use English nouns and verbs correctly, but he had never before taught meditation to a group of children under the age of 13!

To his surprise, the children turned out to be experienced at

sitting on their cushions—they had seen their "Uncle Bhante" and their parents doing their own practice. The teacher led them through a brief guided meditation, reminded them to breathe slowly and mindfully—wegendereze!—and the hall fell silent for a few minutes.



Peace School Children practicing mindfulness of yoga.

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Future classes will be based on a book written by the Vietnamese master Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community: *Planting Seeds—Practicing Mindfulness with Children*. In the author's words:

"I very much count on young people to learn things that are not taught at school, such as mindful breathing, mindful walking, learning how to look deeply, and learning how to take care of anger."

In the afternoon, Peace School for parents and other grownups consisted of sharing food as a community, including the workers doing construction at the center. We also had visitors—Queen Omugo Tuli Tuuka of the Ugandan Kingdom of Kooki and her children. A tree was planted in honor of her visit.

Future plans for the Peace School include weekly guided meditations, listening to live Dhamma talks from Bhante Buddhakkhita, and to recorded talks by teachers such as Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein. These talks will be followed by group discussions so that sangha members can share their experiences with their practice and provide support for each other as we learn about Dhamma.

Peace School will be held at the UBC every Sunday—come join us!



Queen Omugo Tuli Tuuka Rebbeca sharing food with Peace School Children.

UBC Construction

The last three weeks of December have been hectic with several building and rebuilding projects. Bhante Buddhakkhita returned from an extended period of teaching overseas and attending the Sixth Buddhist Summit in Japan, and immediately set to work on multiple tasks.

Top priority went to the humane removal of bats from the crawl space above the main meditation hall. This required removing the existing metal roofing material, cleaning out the bat droppings, putting down a layer of chicken wire to keep the bats from returning, and putting the roofing material back on. The project was purposefully set aside for what is traditionally the dry season in Uganda, but the rains showed up early this year, causing a setback to the project, and making it necessary to add a layer of paint to one interior wall.

Last year Bhante made a generous contribution to the community living around the Center by digging a well and installing a pump so that villagers could have access to clean water. Unfortunately some playful children caused damage to the pump, requiring repair and the building of an external frame to protect it. Since the pump now sits within the newly constructed walls surrounding the Center, Bhante has made a commitment to dig a new well outside the walls so that residents can access it at all times.

Building those walls was another one of the December projects. With future plans to build a dormitory so that the UBC can sponsor retreats, this project was required to ensure the safety and solitude of retreatants and volunteers. A number of local residents were

hired to assist with the construction, thereby injecting some funds into the community.

In addition to those major projects, workers were hired for a number of minor tasks, including maintaining the batteries and replacing some wiring for the center's solar-powered electrical system, adding a lightning rod to the roof of the main meditation hall, cleaning and re-varnishing the wood inside and outside the building, and clearing the land next to the hall to make space for a larger vegetable garden and the eventual construction of a dormitory and kitchen.

Finally, the day before Bhante left to travel to Brazil and Chile for two months of leading retreats and giving Dhamma talks, he hired some workers to dig a trench and install a concrete culvert at the intersection of the main Garuga Village road and the turnoff that leads to the UBC. The intersection is one that needs constant repair after heavy rains. The culvert will make it easier for vehicles to make their way to the Center, and for local residents to access several brick-making businesses nearby.

These periodic spurts of growth are exciting reminders of how the UBC is expanding and creating causes and conditions for the spread of Buddhism in the region. Of course, they also make large dents in the Center's budget, requiring periods of fundraising in-between. The Center welcomes your generosity toward achieving these goals, and encourages you to visit to see how your contributions are being put to good use—not only in helping the Center grow, but also by benefitting local village residents!

Would you like to submit an article for the UBC Newsletter? Anything that would be of interest to the general Buddhist community is welcome. Personal experiences, questions that you would like to ask the UBC team, poetry, short stories, letters to the editor. Send your article by email as a Word or WordPerfect document, or as a text document to:

ugandabuddhistcentre@gmail.com or
buddhistcenteruganda898@gmail.com

We wish to thank our new Volunteer, Jon, for his effort in composing all the stories featured in this edition and all the great work you are doing at UBC.

Our Address and Contact Info

Uganda Buddhist Centre
Off-Entebbe Road, Bulega, Garuga, Entebbe
P.O. Box 898, Entebbe Uganda

Phone: +256(0)7750-19180,
+256(0)776-159985

E-mail: ugandabuddhistcentre@gmail.com
buddhistcenteruganda898@gmail.com

Website: www.ugandabuddhistcenter.org

Visit us at: www.ugandabuddhistcenter.org
