

# UGANDA BUDDHIST CENTRE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2017

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## RECENT WORK AND ACTIVITIES AT UBC

In today's world, any approach to peace within and peace without must be a continuous evolution. Standing to diligently strive is not an option but a necessity to success. At UBC, initiating various projects is essential to our main goals and our commitment to inspire Dhamma and sustainable growth. This has compelled us to continuously adapt to our community needs, requiring our abilities to anticipate challenges early to prompt corrective measures and action that compels a real difference in our communities. We would like to thank all of you for your continued support to UBC—and to share with you some of the projects we have been able to accomplish in the last month, March 2017 and events we have conducted at UBC.

### 1. UBC Donates Borehole to St. Paul Primary School

In the past issue of our newsletter, we recorded the various stages of the borehole (Upekkha) UBC is dedicating to St. Paul primary School, a Christian church and the nearby communities to access safe and pure water. We once again share the wonderful news that the borehole was completed, with clean water running. The borehole is expected to supply the school, church and neighboring villages of Bulega. The depth is 76ft, and 16ft deeper than initially expected. The team was forced to further drill in order to reach water in abundance.



We are so grateful to those who made the drilling of this borehole possible...your support was truly immeasurable and the reward is much merits for you all. The water project is one of our ongoing projects through which we strive to build self-reliant communities with sustainable water supply.

The borehole was officially opened on April 23rd at St. Paul Primary School with the blessings of the Most Ven. Dr. Sitagu Sayadaw and 10 other senior monks from Myanmar.



## 2. UBC Buys Up Land For Expansion

UBC is on a trail to expand. We bought the land (100ft x 83ft in size) near and in front of our gate to cope with expansion. It has increased our land to 3 acres. The purchase of this property has always been a priority of UBC for a long time, success has finally come through the continued and concerted efforts of Bhante Buddharakkhita, Andrew Mukomazi who worked hard to convince the property owner for a fee of 18m UGX. Andrew remarked that “the acquisition of this land will give us more options to expand the UBC master plan.”

We are drawing up plans for development of this property and architectural plan is underway.

Although exact plans have yet to be established, we anticipate that offices and residential quarters for future monastics and retreats will stand on this land.

Since I joined UBC in 2012, I have witnessed a remarkably continued achievement...and this land purchase is a visible sign of continued growth and success. We are indebted to all our supporters who



***Bhante Buddharakkhita and the international guests suited up to clear the newly acquired property for further development.***

have always helped us to strive and thrive in all ways, and thanks to Bhante Buddharakkhita for all of his efforts to see UBC grow and expand.

We are making progress in preparing the land for our new projects. As some portion of the land had logs and bushy, volunteers are hard at work removing the logs and flattening it to enable us build.

## 3. Completion Of Temporary Kitchen Construction

We are thrilled to announce the completion of our new temporary kitchen. It is incredible, with unique designs and space unlike the former congested kitchen. Our dear chef, Annet is now enjoying the magic view of Lake Victoria. It is designed with wire mesh bringing in fresh breeze from the Lake Victoria. Thanks to all our supporters for making this happen.



***Our International volunteers and supporters enjoying cooking with Annet.***



## 4. April 8<sup>th</sup> IBD celebrations at UBC

April 8th is an International Buddhist Day (IBD) adopted by the world supreme Buddhist leaders to celebrate three elite events in the life of the Buddha; the birth, enlightenment and his great passing away.

At UBC, this prestigious event was celebrated by people from different faiths, cultural leaders and people of all backgrounds. The day was graced with a series of dhamma talks, speeches from cultural and community leaders.

One of the local leaders known as Kalema Silva, appreciated Bhante's efforts to support the community. Kalema donated 1 acre of land to help UBC expand its projects to the local communities. Kalema further, invited the UBC to establish a tertiary institution to train and equip people from the village with hand skills for job creation which will improve their lifestyle.

Further steps to develop and implement projects on this property are underway. We invite all our stakeholders for your support, and advice on how we can best serve our own people.



## 5. International Peace, Mindfulness meditation and Yoga Retreat

In our past newsletters, we announced about the above retreat. We are very happy that it has been finally and successfully conducted. 26 people including those who came from Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Italy, Rwanda, and local participants most of whom were Christian nuns and priests attended this retreat.

Such mindfulness retreats with the best yogic positions, Tai chi movements and opportunities to develop a piece of peace are very rare in Uganda—perhaps it's the reason it pulled people from different backgrounds. For those of us not familiar with the

word "Mindfulness", it is not a religion, but a form of mental training to develop a strong sense of presence in the here and now; the ability to be alive in life in its fullness. Mindfulness is to be fully aware of every action of the body, speech and mind with non-judgement of any experience. This is what participants developed in 7-days.

Thanks to our organizing team, and the people at the rented venue, we did not encounter any distractions. It was silent, calm and relaxing. Some of the cooks were fascinated, and decided to join the evening mindfulness yoga practice in which they appreciated them-

selves. We are so fortunate to have this experience, and to be able to learn a wonderful piece of mindfulness. Any moment of mindfulness, is a moment of awakening.

International participants carried a number of gifts including meditation cushions, books for children and other valuable gifts. After the retreat, international participants were engaged in a number of activities such as beads making, painting of sima building, digging around the temple, tour around Uganda. Sriyuth is still with us, helping to upgrade of our solar system to boost sustainable power supply at UBC.

Srijuth narrates his experiences in Uganda and what he will carry back to Australia:

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At UBC, this prestigious event was celebrated by people from different faiths, cultural leaders and people of all backgrounds. The day was graced with a series of dhamma talks, speeches from cultural and community leaders. The silence broke at 11 am on Sunday April 17 and the retreat had ended. We were brought back to the UBC and all shared our experiences of why we came to Uganda and what we will be taking away. While there are many things that I will take away from the retreat, the one that is the simplest for us all to comprehend is to never underestimate the significance of Sila (morality). Whilst I had taken these 5 precepts plus an additional 3 before, it had not seen the impact of it through the safety it provides to all beings - I had previously only seen it through the eyes of my own morality, for my own benefit and justification.

We thought we could have a lot of quiet time and spend the next few days relaxing, but Bhante had other plans for us. After a working bee to finish the Sima off prior to the upcoming ordination, there was a tour of Kampala organized and we finally got to experience the traffic in Uganda with the frequently stopping taxis (mini-vans) collating potential passengers as they walked on the street along with the Boda-Bodas (motor-bikes) used to carry passengers and just about everything else and still weave their way through the traffic.

On Wednesday, we headed off at 6am for

an overnight stay at Ssesse Island. We travelled overland for 5 hours and went past many remote villages and farmland and got to see another side of Uganda. When we got to the port, our vehicles were delayed because the ferry was carrying a fuel truck (classed as dangerous cargo) so we took a small wooden boat which resembled a refugee boat and was powered by a small outboard engine across to the island.

Once we arrived on the Island we called for the shuttle bus to come and pick us up. About 45min and having consumed several baked bananas, two small cars came roaring down the road and stopped at the pier. The ladies jumped into one car and the guys into the other. Bhante sat in the front, three of us were in the back and we had one in boot (it was a hatch back). As 12 noon approached it was clear that we would not reach the resort in time for Bhante to have lunch so we offered him whatever we had in our bags and in our pockets as he provided a rolling commentary about the island and his love for it.

After lunch and settling into our rooms we departed to view the location of a future meditation retreat centre on some land donated by the owner of the Governors Club located on Bukasa Island. We went on 50min boat trip where the navigator got lost twice and we ended up getting there after 2hrs. But the view was breathtaking and would be an ideal location for a retreat in the future. After about 45min on the island we boarded the speed boat and got back into the resort around 7pm. I got off the boat and waited for some of the other participants to come off and one of them looked at me and said 'That was EPIC' and I just fell over laughing as he was referring to the 6am - 7pm day of travelling.

After returning back to the UBC in the

afternoon, we went to two local schools armed with stationary packs to hand out to the students. As the students lined up, I gave them each a math set to their hands and they popped it into their little bag. The sense of joy of giving without wanting anything in return washed over me over and over again as each student came up to me. It was one of moments in life that pass by rarely and I will never forget it.

Our last day of touring was to Jinja to the source of the Nile. It too was an early start as we made our way through Kampala and onto Jinja where we took a small boat with a guide to show us the native wildlife, try out some of the local seafood and do some shopping for those in our home countries.

On the Sunday morning I arrived as the ordination was under way. The ceremony was quite moving and I was present to the fact that I was watching history in making as three African born novice monks were being ordained for the first time on the African continent. It was a day full of ceremony and celebrations with ministers, monastics, people from the village, tourists, heavily armed police and even a queen of the kingdom. But the most memorable moment was when Ven. Sitagu Sayadaw from Burma spoke about the problems that the world is facing and what the driver of them are. He went on to say that the world is in thirsty for peace and a way out of our current predicament and here in the desert lies an oasis and that oasis is the Uganda Buddhist Centre where everyone can come to learn to cultivate peace and harmony..... And that is the message I will take back to Australia."





International participants donated meditation cushions



Supporting the women beads groups



Ratanavali offering a gift to Ven. Dhammakami



Damian offering gifts



Supporting the Peace School







**Participants clearing newly acquired land for building.**



**Painting of the sima building**



**Ven. Sangharakkhita leading Mindfulness movements**



**Participants posing in a photo.**

## Sima Construction

We are excited to bring you updates about the construction of our first Sima building. The work has been gradually progressing... builders are working hard. We are thankful to the great and kind support of the family of Ko Tin Myo Kyaw and Thida Htwe and all our donors...this is becoming a reality.

The building now stands as the first and only sima building in Africa, where monks receive ordination. On Sunday April 23, 2017 three Africans received their ordination during the visit of the Most Ven. Dr. Ashi Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadaw), a Burmese renowned Buddhist monk.

However, there is still some work going on at sima. We are still installing in windows and electricity. For sustainable power supply to this building, we are installing an independent solar system. We expect the work to be completed within the next two or three weeks.



**Ordination in sima building**



The external view of sima building.

### **Our Address and Contact Info**

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## **Gratitude to All Our Supporters**

UBC activities are made possible by many supporters from around the world. Therefore, we are eternally grateful for your kind and generous donations.

### **UBC still needs your support:**

- To maintain resident teachers/monastics
- To maintain the Temple
- To establish the African Buddhist School/College
- To run Buddhist activities
- To build accommodation facilities

### **How to donate:**

#### **1. By paypal:**

Please follow the link below to make a secure donation online:

<http://ugandabuddhistcentre.com/site/donate/>

#### **2. wire transfer**

#### **Beneficiary's Bank Details:**

**Bank Name:** Bank of Africa Uganda Limited

**Bank Account #** 01178230007

**Account Name:** Uganda Buddhist Centre

**Swift address:** AFRI UG KA

#### **Address:**

Main Branch, Plot 45, Jinja Road.

P.O. Box 2750, Kampala, Uganda.

## **THE INTERMEDIARY / CORRESPONDENT BANK DETAILS**

FOR U.S DOLLAR TRANSFERS:

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