



UGANDA BUDDHIST CENTRE

**JUNE NEWSLETTER
2023**

IN THIS ISSUE



**MENTAL WELLNESS
RETREAT WITH
BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA**

01



**BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA
RETURNS FROM HIS
DHAMMA TOUR**

04



MERITS IN BUDDHISM

06



**HOW TO SUPPORT
UGANDA BUDDHIST CENTRE**

08



MENTAL WELLNESS RETREAT WITH BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA

Uganda Buddhist Centre (UBC), in collaboration with Soota Foundation and Ebenezer, hosted a transformative Mental Wellness Retreat at the serene premises of UBC. This series of retreats, led by the Most Venerable Bhante Buddharakkhita unfolded on Saturday, June 17, inviting participants to explore the profound Buddhist teachings and practice. This Saturday, the practice was centered on metta (loving-kindness) meditation and its remarkable impact on our lives.

Metta, or loving-kindness, is one of the Four Divine Abodes (Brahma Viharas). It is a practice that enables us to cultivate a compassionate and benevolent attitude towards ourselves and others. Recognizing the importance of metta in achieving inner peace and fostering harmonious relationships, Bhante Buddharakkhita centered his talk on this vital aspect of dhamma during

the retreat, and will explore the other three in the upcoming retreats (including compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity).

Participants gathered with open hearts and minds, ready to receive metta and embark on a journey of self-discovery and transformation. The collaboration between the Uganda Buddhist Centre, Soota Foundation, and Ebenezer brought together a diverse group of individuals, including the Deputy Principal Private Secretary (DPPS) to the Vice President of Uganda, all seeking relief and wisdom through the teachings of the Buddha.

During the retreat, Bhante emphasized the transformative power of metta, highlighting how this practice can profoundly influence our meditation practice and enhance our overall well-being. He elucidated the benefits of metta in fostering self-acceptance, reducing stress, and cultivating harmony in our relationship with other beings.

Moreover, participants were actively engaged in Bhante's teachings, leading to intriguing discussions and thought-provoking questions. One such question was how to apply metta in challenging situations such as being attacked by a tiger or facing commands to kill in war zones. Bhante skillfully addressed these concerns, shedding light on the essence of metta and its application in difficult circumstances. The practice of metta can offer a profound shift in mindset and guide us towards more compassionate responses. Metta is not a passive state of mind but rather an active force that can transform our perceptions and actions.

In the face of danger, the immediate priority is often self-preservation. We need to cultivate a deep sense of metta towards ourselves in such situations. This involves recognizing the value of our own life and well-being, and responding with wisdom and mindfulness to ensure personal safety without intentionally causing harm to others.

Bhante highlighted that metta extends beyond oneself to include all beings, including the tiger or any perceived enemy. While it may not be feasible or appropriate to express metta directly towards an attacking tiger, the practice can involve developing a mindset of non-hatred and non-harming. This means refraining from generating ill-will, anger, or vengeful thoughts towards the tiger, even in the face of danger. This mindset can help



prevent the escalation of violence and allow for a more compassionate response.

Regarding the challenging scenario of receiving commands to kill in war zones or similar circumstances, Bhante acknowledged the complexity of such situations. He stressed the importance of individual discernment and ethical considerations. While metta encourages the cultivation of compassion, it does not imply blind obedience to commands that contradict one's moral values. It is crucial to reflect on the ethical implications and consequences of one's actions. Engaging in deep introspection can help us navigate these difficult situations while striving to minimize harm to oneself and others. He offered phrases

that one can reflect on while practicing metta (loving-kindness):

May I be well, happy and peaceful

May I be safe

May I be healthy

May I live at ease with all beings

The Mental Wellness Retreat at the Uganda Buddhist Centre not only provided participants with a deeper understanding of metta but also encouraged them to reflect on its practical application in various life situations. It served as a reminder that metta is a powerful tool that can guide us even in the most challenging circumstances, enabling us to respond with compassion, wisdom, and an unwavering commitment to non-harming.

The Uganda Buddhist Centre is hosting these events every Saturday from 9am to 11am, providing participants with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of dhamma, cultivate inner peace, and discover the boundless potential of each one of us.

For more information about upcoming events and activities at the Uganda Buddhist Centre, please visit our website (www.ugandabuddhistcenter.org) or contact us directly at ugandabuddhistcentre@gmail.com or call/WhatsApp +256 775 019 180.





BHANTE BUDDHARAKKHITA RETURNS FROM HIS DHAMMA TOUR

On June 12, our esteemed teacher, Bhante Buddharakkhita returned from his Dhamma tour in Singapore and Taiwan. His presence was eagerly awaited by the members of the Uganda Buddhist Centre (UBC) who had missed his guidance during his absence.

Bhante's tour was filled with significant engagements, including leading Vesak celebrations (the commemoration of the birth, awakening and passing of the Buddha) at the Buddhist Fellowship of Singapore. In addition to his participation in the Vesak celebration, Bhante delivered a series of enlightening Dhamma talks on various themes, sharing his profound wisdom with the eager audience. The President of Singapore also graced these events with her presence, acknowledging the significance of Buddha's teachings especially in our times.

While in Singapore, Bhante had the opportunity to congregate with Ajahn Brahm, a renowned Buddhist monk from Perth, Australia. Their encounter served as an exchange of insights and experiences, fostering connections and enhancing the mutual understanding of the Dhamma, harmony and collaboration within the Buddhist community.

Following his engagements in Singapore, Bhante embarked on a journey to Taiwan accompanied by his friends. The purpose of their visit was to meet potential donors, including

members of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Charity Foundation. Tzu Chi, a global Buddhist relief and charity organization based in Taiwan, is actively involved in humanitarian work worldwide. Bhante's meeting with Tzu Chi members aimed to strengthen the connection for future collaborative efforts in promoting peace and alleviating suffering.

Upon Bhante's return to the UBC, the community members were delighted to welcome him back. In a heartwarming display of compassion and spiritual guidance, Bhante led a blessing and merit sharing ceremony for a Vietnamese friend who recently lost her mother. This ceremony served as a powerful learning experience for the local people, providing them with an opportunity to observe and understand the Buddhist way of expressing support and sharing merits for the deceased. The merit sharing and blessing ceremony demonstrates the core principles of Buddhism, emphasizing compassion, empathy, and the interconnectedness of all beings. Bhante's guidance allowed the community to come together, offering their prayers and support for the grieving friend. The ceremony also highlighted the significance of accumulating merits through selfless acts, ultimately leading to positive transformation and spiritual growth.



Venerable Bhante Buddharakkhita(R), exchanging greetings with Her Excellency Halimah Yacob (C), the President of Singapore as Most Venerable Ajahn Brahm (extreme left) looks on during an event at Buddhist Fellowship

MERITS IN BUDDHISM

The concept of merits serves as seeds of transformation and spiritual growth. Just as seeds have the potential to sprout, grow, and bear fruits, merits hold the power to shape our destiny and lead us towards enlightenment. By cultivating virtues and engaging in wholesome actions, we sow the seeds of positive states of mind that will ultimately bear the fruits of spiritual transformation.

Generosity, one of the foundational virtues in Buddhism, is a key aspect of merit cultivation. When we engage in acts of giving without expectations or attachment, we plant the seed of generosity. Consider a person who selflessly donates their time, energy, money, or skills to helping those in need. By doing so, they generate positive karmic potential and cultivate the seed of generosity, which manifest as abundance, gratitude, and a compassionate heart.

Ethical conduct forms another vital aspect of merit cultivation. By observing the precepts and living in accordance with moral values, we nurture the seed of ethical conduct. Imagine an individual who refrains from harming others, speaks truthfully, and practices loving-kindness and compassion in their interactions. Such a person cultivates

the seed of ethical conduct, which will grow into integrity, harmonious relationships, and a peaceful mind.

Mental development, through practices such as mindfulness meditation, is crucial for nurturing the seed of wisdom. By training the mind to be present, cultivating mindfulness, and gaining insight into the nature of reality, we nourish the seed of wisdom within us. Just as a seed needs nourishment and care to grow into a strong and healthy plant, the seed of wisdom requires diligent practice and reflection. Over time, this seed of wisdom blossoms into a deeper understanding of the impermanence of phenomena, the interconnectedness of all beings, and the nature of suffering and liberation.

The interplay of intention, action, and consequence is central to the concept of merits. When we perform virtuous actions with wholesome intentions, we create positive karma that shape our future experiences. Think of a person who selflessly volunteers at a homeless shelter, driven by a genuine desire to alleviate suffering. Their intention to help others, coupled with their compassionate actions, generates abundant merits. These merits not only bring happiness and blessings into their own life but also contribute to the collective welfare of all sentient beings.

As we cultivate merits through generosity, ethical conduct, and mental development, the seeds of transformation take root within us. With time and dedicated practice, these seeds grow into flourishing qualities such as compassion, wisdom, equanimity, and loving-kindness. Our actions become increasingly aligned with the Dhamma, and our spiritual path unfolds naturally. Through the power of merits, we not only shape our own destiny but also contribute to the well-being and liberation of all beings, sowing seeds of transformation that transcend time and space.

Merit Sharing: A Selfless Act of Compassion

Merit sharing is another key aspect of Buddhist practice, embodying the essence of selflessness and compassion. It is the practice of dedicating one's accumulated merits for the benefit and welfare of others. Through the transformative power of merit sharing, individuals not only cultivate a deep sense of interconnectedness but also uplift those in need, foster a sense of community, and generate a ripple effect of positivity and compassion.

Consider a humble monastery nestled in a rural village. The resident monks diligently observe the precepts, practice meditation, and engage in acts of generosity. Their accumulated merits become a reservoir of positive energy, ready to be shared for the welfare of others. In a nearby town, a devastating flood displaces countless families, leaving them without shelter, food, or basic necessities. Recognizing the opportunity to extend compassion and alleviate suffering, the monks organize a relief effort. They use their collective merits to sup-

port the affected families, providing temporary shelter, food supplies, and medical assistance. This act of merit sharing not only offers immediate relief but also ignites hope and resilience within the hearts of those affected. Moreover, the monks inspire others in the community to share their merits and resources to support the relief effort. What begins as a small act of compassion ripples outward, creating a network of support and nurturing a culture of giving and kindness within the community.

In another example, imagine an individual who has dedicated their life to practicing mindfulness and cultivating virtues. Through years of sincere effort, they have accumulated a wealth of merits. Moved by the plight of orphaned children in their village, they decide to establish an educational center to provide these children with a safe haven, education, and the tools to build a brighter future. Drawing from their accumulated merits, they offer financial resources, time, and expertise to create a nurturing environment for the children. The act of merit sharing not only offers these children a chance for a better life but also serves as an inspiration for others to engage in acts of kindness and generosity. Witnessing the impact of merit sharing, the community rallies together, extending their support in various forms, whether through volunteering, mentorship, or financial contributions. It serves as a powerful reminder that the welfare and happiness of others are deeply intertwined with our own spiritual growth and well-being.

SUPPORTING UGANDA BUDDHIST CENTRE

UBC activities are made possible by many supporters from around the world. Therefore, we are eternally grateful Buddhist Global Relief of USA, Huong Tu Lovingkindness Foundation USA, Buddhist Fellowship of Singapore, Tan Teo Charitable Foundation, and all our beloved donors from around the world.

UBC still needs your support:

To maintain resident teachers/monastics

To maintain the Temple

To build monks accommodation facilities

To construct and operation of Buddhist Secondary School

How to Donate

1. For donors in the USA

1. Please write out the Check/Cheque to:

Universal Virtue Buddhist Charities

2. Please Write in the Memo of the Check:

Dana for Uganda Buddhist Centre or Bhante Buddharakkhita

3. Please take a photocopy of the check and send it via email:

ugandabuddhistcentre@gmail.com

4. Please Mail the check to the physical address below:

Universal Virtue Buddhist Charities

C/O Hung Pham

10222 Larson Ave.

Garden Grove, CA 92843

Donate Online

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

<https://ugandabuddhistcenter.org/donate-now/>

<https://dashboard.flutterwave.com/donate/hd1cwapst9gc>

Please note that this payment gateway accepts 3D secure transactions only.

This means that only cards that are Verified by Visa, and Mastercard secure code will be accepted. If your donation doesn't go through, kindly contact your bank to ensure you are secured. Thank you!

HOW TO DONATE. wire transfer

Beneficiary's Bank Details:

Bank Name : Orient Bank Limited

Bank Account Number: 41261302010523

Bank Account Name: Uganda Buddhist Centre

Swift Address: ORINUGKA

Bank Address: Orient Plaza, 6/6A, Kampala Road.

