



FEBRUARY 2012

Sangha Lodge:

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Please note: Friday is a day of silence at Sangha Lodge, please call or visit at another time.

Meditation and Dhamma Teaching

7.30pm every Monday night.
Join with others in sitting practice.

7.30pm every Wed night.

Meditation evenings include a Dhamma talk followed by around half an hour of guided sitting practice. Beginners or more experienced meditators are equally welcome. There is no charge for the teachings although donations are welcome as this is Sangha Lodge's only means of support..

Dana Days

Dana Days are held on the first Sunday of each month. Attendees bring food to offer to the Sangha and to share with each other. This is a great way to show respect for the Sangha and enjoy a delicious meal with others in the lay community.

Please note that we must start promptly at 10:30am in order for the Sangha to finish eating by noon.

**The next Dana Day will be
Sunday 4th April**

ONE HEART-ONE MIND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

WALKING: AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM?

Dear Dhamma Friends,

I would like to offer you at the start of this year of the Dragon some thoughts from Venerable Bhikku Bodhi on being an active Buddhist, his Buddhist Global Relief project and walking.

The Association of Engaged Buddhists has had held "Walk for Life" in the past and will begin again this year with a walk at our new special place of healing, Vejjasala at Wingello. Vejjasala is such a special place and our Walk for Life through beautiful bush tracks and country lanes will be a really special one, perhaps accompanied by wombats, wallabies, kangaroos, cockatoos and other wildlife friends!

More information on this year's Walk for Life will be forthcoming in newsletters and on the website in the meantime please read, enjoy and consider Bhikku Bodhi's words. I need many people who can help to organise and become really involved in our walk this year so please get in touch with me or a committee member if you wish to really activate your Dhamma!

I wish all of you a very Happy New Year and every blessing of the Dhamma now and always.

With metta, *Bhante Tejadhammo*

Spiritual Activism: A Walk Can Be More Than A Walk by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

Walking can be viewed in bare physical terms as an intricate interplay of nerve impulses, muscles, and bones resulting in a change of location. Viewed pragmatically, walking is a means for getting us from one place to another, from our starting point to our goal. But the process of walking can bear significance greater than bodily mechanics; it can play a wider role than satisfying our everyday needs. Walking can be an act of conscience by which we project our values and ideals from the inner recess of the heart out into the world. The process of walking can move minds and motivate

action. It can even change the course of history, causing empires to tumble and unjust systems to bend.

Walks have taken on this role numerous times in the past century. Gandhi's walks along the dusty roads of India were part of his peaceful strategy for freeing his country from the grip of the British Raj. Martin Luther King's walks in the cities of the South helped win civil rights for millions of disenfranchised African Americans. Maha Ghosananda's "Dharma Yatras" in

Cambodia attempted to heal the wounds left by two decades of brutal conflict. Mass walks in Washington have protested our country's wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Over the past year, the long walk has become a method for Buddhist Global Relief to raise funds to sponsor our projects helping poor people escape the ravages of poverty. The seed of the BGR walk was a dream I had several years ago in which I walked the length of Manhattan. I acted on this dream in May 2010, accompanied by Evan, a young man

staying at my monastery, and Sylvie Sun, a BGR board member. We started from Sylvie's home in Fort Lee, New Jersey, walked across the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan, and continued walking until we reached Chinatown, a distance of about fourteen miles, which we covered in six hours.

When word of this walk spread among my students, one suggested organizing a long walk to raise funds for BGR. Thus last October we held our first walk, "10,000 Steps Against Hunger," at South Mountain Reservation in New Jersey. This year, over the weekend of Sept. 10th and 11th, BGR walks took place in three locations: New York, Michigan, and the South Bay of California. Accounts of these walks will be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Next year we plan to add walks in Los Angeles and Seattle.

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Welcome to the New Year at Sangha Lodge

Things have been very quiet at Sangha Lodge over the holiday break with many members away. Wednesday night meditation started again on 18th January and a special dana was held on Monday 23rd January to mark Chinese New Year – the Year of the Dragon. We would like to wish a happy, prosperous and peaceful new year to all our members and hope to see you soon at Sangha Lodge.

Building and Maintenance Activities continue at Vejjasala

Over the holiday break Lachlan Warner carried out some building maintenance and has organized a plumber and an electrician for some remaining work which needed qualified tradesmen. We also had to employ a roofer to carry out some repairs to the roof that were beyond the capacities of our volunteers and this work has been completed just before Christmas. All of the roof gutters have now been fitted with metal gutter guards to reduce fire risk in the bushfire season.

Our new 100,000 litre rainwater tank has been installed and is already half full after good rain in the Southern Highlands. The tank collects water from the roof of the main building, which previously had no water tank. One of the two other existing water tanks will now be reserved for fighting bushfires as required by the Rural Fire Service. Water from the other existing tank has been re-directed to provide water to the separate cottage, which is up the slope from the main building. 100,000 litres is a very large tank and should supply sufficient water when all accommodation is at full capacity.

Fund Raising Lunch

As you can imagine all of the necessary repairs at Vejjasala are fast eating up our funds so Saw Gaik Chong, Bunny Tan and Janet Chuah are organising a fund raising lunch on Saturday March 31 at the Crystal Seafood Restaurant in Strathfield. (Details are elsewhere in the newsletter.) This could be a very pleasant way to catch up with friends who you might not have seen over the holidays so why not think about getting a group together and supporting the Association at the same time.

Separate Bank Account for Building Fund

To make our accounting simpler and more transparent, towards the end of last year we set up a separate bank account to receive donations to the Building Fund (which is our tax deductible fund). We are very grateful for all donations and if you choose to make a donation by direct transfer here are the details you will need:

For donations to our Operating Fund (This fund is used for all the day to day expenses in running Sangha Lodge and Vejjasala – such things as electricity, phone, heating, furnishings and travel expenses. Donations to the operating fund are not tax deductible.)

- * **Bank:** St George
- * **BSB#:** 112 879
- * **Account Number:** 131328823
- * **Account Name:** Association of Engaged Buddhists.

For tax deductible donations to the Building Fund (This fund can only be used for building work at Vejjasala. Donations to the building fund are tax deductible.

- * **Bank:** St George
- * **BSB#:** 112-879
- * **Account Number:** 430589986
- * **Account Name:** Association of Engaged Buddhists

Many thanks to all of the generous supporters who have made donations to both funds and who enable us to offer the blessings and support of the Dhamma to all.

Buddhist Groups Start the Year with Retreats at Vejjasala

We are already receiving requests from other Buddhist Groups who ask if they can use Vejjasala for retreats when the Association is not using it. It is becoming more and more difficult to find retreat accommodation near Sydney so we are happy to do this when we can. Although we are still trying to fix minor maintenance issues and furnish the separate cottage we already have bookings from a Buddhist group for retreats. Tibetan group, Sakya Tharpa Ling will hold a retreat on the weekend 11th & 12th February. Details of Association retreats are elsewhere in the newsletter.

With much metta to everyone

Sue Toohey

Visiting Teachers

March: Our guest teacher for March 28 will be Meran Dawson. Meran tells us a few words about herself as follows:

When I was a teenager, I sometimes visited the stone Buddha at the Art Gallery and he would always bring tears to my eyes. I didn't know who to ask about him. When I got jobs teaching in high schools, and then training teachers, I gave full rein to my creativity and loved every moment. When I held my newborn children in my arms, I caught a glimpse of the great continuity and my own impermanence. When I was promoted to developing policy and inspiring change I was proud to be part of a quiet revolution in teaching. When another revolution came, and most of my co-workers were made redundant, I burned with the hurt and regret of the directionless survivor.

When I met my life-long teacher, Susan Murphy Roshi, I thought I had found the person to ask about the Buddha – but she invited me to ask myself instead. When I accepted the roles of managing staff in the public service, and then a university, I also began working with my perpetual challenges: greed, hatred and ignorance. When I began my business as a consultant I found autonomy and a good living, and I wrestled with my commitment to right livelihood, right there in the market place.

When I abandoned the pursuit of money and offered myself as a hospital and mental health chaplain, it seemed as natural as my tears for the stone Buddha. Now, when I sit with a patient I sit with the living Buddha. Who could have known that he would be in so many places?

...continued from Page 1.

While the ostensible purpose of this walk has been simply to raise funds, the act of walking in unison for several miles has a more profound spiritual meaning, serving as a means by which we lay bare our fundamental moral convictions. On reflection I can discern in our "Walk to Feed the Hungry" three layers of significance. While these might be distinguished in thought, in reality they are inseparable, the three blending and reinforcing each other with every step that we take.

At the most obvious level, the walk is an expression of generosity and compassion. By walking together, we raise funds. By walking together, we manifest concern for the poor and hungry. Our steps are acts of compassion intended to alleviate suffering. Through collective action we express our belief that all human beings are essentially alike, that we all merit the resources essential to a decent life. We also make a commitment — a bold and unstinting commitment — to extend a helping hand. We reach out across oceans, continents, and cultures to lift up those cast down by life's circumstances. Or, even better, we equip them with the means to uplift themselves: with education, training, tools, food, and seeds.

At a second level, our walk encapsulates our sense of conscience; it affirms our awareness of an impersonal imperative pointing us towards social justice. By walking we express the recognition that something is fundamentally skewed with a global social and economic system that treats human beings as disposal. We resist a system that pushes a billion people into the pits of poverty and crushes them beneath the weight of incessant hunger. We express moral revulsion at the cruel miscarriage of social justice that occurs when, amidst an abundance of food, ten million people — over half of them children — die each year from malnutrition and hunger-related illnesses. With our silent steps we proclaim that the global food system must ensure that no one goes hungry, that we must guarantee everyone a sufficient quantity of healthy nutritious food. More broadly, we advocate for a new world order founded on the pillars of social justice and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being.

At a third level, walking becomes a way of expressing our own real nature, of manifesting the deep potentials for generosity and goodness inherent in the human heart. By walking in the company of spiritual teachers and kind-hearted friends, we blow open the narrow walls of self-concern in which our personal dramas normally unfold. Instead, we rise to a new perspective — a universal per-

spective — that takes the good of all as our guiding ideal. By walking in solidarity with the world's poor, we repudiate the rampant cynicism of the dominant culture which regards human nature as corrupted by incurable selfishness and greed. Rather than yielding to the dictates of blind self-interest, we show that, as individuals, we flourish best when we nurture our innate impulses to generosity, love, care, and concern. Even more pointedly, we express the hope, trust, and conviction that humanity as a whole flourishes best when we all flourish together. We walk because we look upon one another as lost brothers and sisters. We walk to share the burden of suffering with the weakest in our midst, and we rejoice in discovering our power to uplift those who urgently need our help.

By walking to feed the hungry, we recover what we have almost lost — our own souls, our hidden potentials for generosity and compassion and selfless love. Despite the propaganda of politicians and policy analysts, it is not economic competition that is going to redeem our world. It is not strategies of aggression, domination, and repression that are going to make us safe. The secret to transforming the world, the key to security and safety, lies in cooperation and collaboration. It lies in respect for all human beings, and in compassion for all beings in the wider web of life. The key to our redemption from the brink of self-destruction is exactly what the enlightened spiritual teachers of humanity have always emphasized: helpfulness, generosity, and love, channelled into selfless action on behalf of all sentient beings, including people we will never know or see. As we travel through this journey of life and death, we walk together as a way of demonstrating our primal unity. We walk together to embody in action our intrinsic and inseparable solidarity in the quest for well-being, happiness, and security.



VISITING TEACHER—APRIL

Our guest teacher on April 11 with be Sri Rama Ramanuja

Prior to his initiation into Sri Vaisnavism, Sri Rama Ramanuja Acarya spent 8 years in the Middle East studying Hebrew, Arabic, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Sri Rama Ramanuja Acarya was instructed by his guru, Sri Varada Yatiraja Jeeyar to establish an independent Sri Vaisnava Math in Australia. Sri Ramanuja Matham was conceptualised in Sydney, Australia in early 1998.



Following his guru's instruction, Sri Rama Ramanuja Acarya, with his savings, purchased a house from which to conduct classes and establish a centre for the propagation of Vedanta. He studied Sanskrit in Varanasi and then spent some time in South India studying Tamil, Vaisnava philosophy and Pancha-ratra Agama.

Gathas are a rich and beautiful aid to help us remain mindful during the course of a busy day. Why not try writing your own as to help with your mindfulness practice. If you have written a gatha, why not share with friends to assist them. We would be pleased to publish verses members have written in the Newsletter.

Raw or cooked, vegetables of various kinds are an integral part of the food we eat each day. What perfect time engage in mindfulness when we handle the vegetables we will make into a meal. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that the sun is responsible for the growth of all vegetables through the presence of chlorophyll. His mention of the green sun in the following gatha is a reference to this. He also reminds us that growth is the coming together of many, many factors; soil, water, air each depending on the other to make its contribution to growth.

Washing vegetables:

In these fresh vegetables
I see a green sun.
All dharmas join together
To make life possible

Thich Nhat Hanh



VEJASALLA GARDENS & GROUND REPORT

The first glade in the ring walk was completed last weekend (21st January), and two small areas at the front of the house have recently been planted out, with protective netting to stop kangaroos from nibbling at them till they get established.

There's been a setback in the ground preparation at the front of the house, but another contractor has been organised to repair the damage. Tree stumps from the front of the house have been removed, the drainage ditch filled, and the dry crossing is now in place. The ride on mower has been partly fixed and we are waiting on parts to complete repairs, and the small hand mower has now been fully repaired.

A lovely display of Tiger lilies (*Lilium lancifolium*) and Kniphofia (commonly known as Red hot poker or torch lily) are in full bloom at the moment, and a number of native plants are in flower includ-

ing *Leptospermums*, *Viola hederacea*, ground orchids and *Dillwynia*, and the *Persoonias* will soon be in bloom.

I will need as many volunteers as possible on Saturday 10th March to plant the Daffodil and Jonquil bulbs that were lifted late last year. Even though thought is divided on whether they derive their botanical name "Narcissus" from the classical youth in Greek mythology, or from the plants' narcotic properties (lycorine), they will make a beautiful display in the front garden by the fir tree.

If you are able to help on either Friday the 9th or Saturday 10th of March, please contact me on 0411 043 621 or raghnall@westnet.com.au in the week before so I know how many people are coming. The next volunteer weekend will be 13th and 14th April

Fran Poulton

READERS RECOMMEND

The recommended book for this issue stems from Bhante's piece which draws on the writing of Bhikku Bodhi. Many of you would know that Bhikku Bhodi is one of Bhante's favourite teachers and commentators, Bhikku Bhodi has edited many books on the suttas and has written his own thoughts on the eight fold noble path. This book *The Eight Fold Noble Path: Way to the End of Suffering* is available from a number of publishers. Here is what one reviewer has to say:

A clear and concise account presenting each path factor and its components in terms of both theory and practice. The Buddha's teachings centre around two basic principles. One is the Four Noble Truths, in which the Buddha diagnoses the problem of suffering and indicates the treatment necessary to remedy this problem. The other is the Noble Eightfold Path, the practical discipline he prescribes to uproot and eliminate the deep underlying causes of

suffering. This work offers, in clear and simple language, a concise yet thorough explanation of the Eightfold Path. Bhikkhu Bodhi examines each factor of the path to determine exactly what it implies in the way of practical training. Finally, in the concluding chapter, he shows how all factors of the path function in unison to bring about the realization of the Buddhist goal of enlightenment and liberation.

<http://www.wisdom-books.com/ProductDetail.asp?CatNumber=1390>

For those who read material on the net, there is a copy of *The Eight Fold Noble Path: Way to the End of Suffering* on the Access to Insight website at <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html>

FUND-RAISING LUNCH IN MARCH

5.

Join us in the celebrative lunch and help raise funds for Vejjasala. Vejjasala is now pretty well ready for activities. And we would like to ensure its growth and improvements. For that to happen, so that you can all come and enjoy the retreat centre, we need your help. We need funds to run the place. Would you like to take this opportunity to demonstrate your generosity and support?

(To find out more about Vejjasala, go to www.engagedbuddhists.org.au)

Come along and help us give this first Fund Raising event a big bang.

Venue: Crystal Seafood Restaurant
Shop 29 Strathfield Plaza, 14 Churchill Avenue, Strathfield.

Date: 31 March, Saturday

Time: 12.30 pm

Cost: \$35 pp. (Vegetarian option is available, please indicate your choice when registering.)

Why don't you form a table with your friends and family, or your work associates – we have plenty of room.

To express your interest in joining this lunch please email us on: office@engagedbuddhists.org.au

Ph: 9590 3617 (if you leave a message, please indicate it is for Fund Raising Lunch)



ANOTHER LOOK AT GENEROSITY

Many of us think about the different acts of generosity we can do in our day to day life, whether this be thought donating money to charities or volunteering our time to worthy causes. But have you thought of making a gift after your time on this earth has passed through organ donation. At the moment about 1700 people are registered as waiting for an organ transplant that will save or improve their life. While organ donations rose to a record level last year, many more donors are still needed. In fact Australia is well behind other countries in the developed world in terms of people making that life changing decision to become an organ donor.

This year February 19 - 26 has been identified as Donate Life week and will feature a number of public awareness campaigns

to encourage Australians to think about making the gift of life and registering as an organ donor. Look out for this publicity and take the opportunity to start a discussion with your family about making that gift that can change someone's life.

For more information on becoming an organ donor visit the website for the official government website for DonateLife at <http://www.donatelife.gov.au/>



QUOTABLE QUOTES & DHAMMA BLOSSOMS

For this issue of the Newsletter our Quotable Quote comes from Michael Harding. Michael, one of our members who helps with production of the Newsletter says that he has found it really helpful advice.

Let everything happen to you
Beauty and terror
Just keep going
No feeling is final.

Rainer Maria Rilke



Do not give your attention to what others do or fail to do; give it to what you do or fail to do

Like a lovely flower, full of colour but lacking
In fragrance, are the words of those who do
Not practice what they preach.

Like a lovely flower full of colour and fragrance are the
words of those who practice what they preach.

Dhammapada
verses 50-52



FOR THOSE IN NEED

Please keep our brothers and sisters who are ill or struggling with some other distress in your thoughts during the day. This short prayer for freedom from suffering may help you be mindful of their needs.

We ask this month that you keep in your thoughts Mrs Derby Pandhitha Gunawardene the Mother of Mrs. Mohini Gunasekera, passed away very recently. Mohini has been a very long time supporter of the Association and Sangha Lodge

Prayer for Freedom from Suffering

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.

May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free.

May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another.

May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wilderness--the children, the aged, the unprotected--be guarded by beneficent celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood

If you know of someone who would like to be remembered by our community, let Bhante know and we can mention them in future issues of the Newsletter. Even when there are no particular friends to remember, we ask you to send thoughts of good will in general to those who are experiencing hardship or pain.

Donations

You may or may not realise that Sangha Lodge is **solely funded** from your donations.

Following the teaching of the Buddha, we do not charge for teachings or meditation evenings, preferring instead to rely on our members' generosity. Unfortunately, this often means a shortfall when it comes to meeting our weekly expenses from the donation box on a Wednesday night.

It would be much easier for the Centre to function if we were able to rely on regular donations from more members and guests of the centre.

One easy way to arrange for funds to be regularly transferred is via Internet Banking. Most Banks now offer a 'pay anyone' service whereby you are able to set up a regular monthly transfer to any nominated account. If you would like to set up this kind of regular donation to Sangha Lodge you will need the following account information: **Bank:** St George **BSB#:** 112 879 **Account#:** 131328823
Account Name: Association of Engaged Buddhists.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the Building Fund please make your direct transfer to the following account:

Bank: St George **BSB:** 112-879 **Account Number:** 430589986

Account Name: Association of Engaged Buddhists

In order that we can budget our funds effectively and where appropriate supply you with a receipt for tax purposes we would appreciate it if you would email office@engagedbuddhists.org.au with the details of your regular transfer or tax deductible donation.

Your Dana (generosity) is greatly appreciated by the many people who come to the centre or are served by it in the wider community (hospitals, hospices and private visits by the Sangha).

Please help, **even a small monthly donation can make a big difference to Sangha Lodge.**

Association Membership: If you would like to become a member of the Association and thus receive this newsletter (if you don't already!), please fill in a membership form and leave it with a Committee member. You can pick one up from Sangha Lodge the next time you visit, or ring our office and get one posted to you. **Membership is due for renewal each September and costs \$30/year.**

The next issue of One Heart-One Mind will be published in April 2012.

Sender:

The Association of Engaged Buddhists

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20 Victoria St

LEWISHAM NSW 2049

