



# One Heart- One Mind

*The Newsletter of the  
Association of Engaged Buddhists*

SANGHA LODGE: 20 Victoria St Lewisham NSW 2049

Ph/Fax: (02) 9590 3617 E: office@engagedbuddhists.org.au W: www.engagedbuddhists.org.au

## **Meditation & 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 November*

## **Association News**

*Healing meditation retreats at Vejjasala*

*Vejjasala – Oiling of the Kutis*

*Committee Membership*

**Page 3**

## **Bhante on retreat**

*Retreat centre in Perigeux*

**Page 2**



## Craving

*When thinking about craving or grasping we can often be mistaken in looking for major incidents or what one might call "big grasping" and miss the many opportunities to explore and discover the many tiny moments when craving and grasping arise in our day to day lives. Since craving or "Tanha" is so important in the teaching of the Buddha and is seen as the central or pivotal point for the arising of "dukkha" or suffering and unsatisfactoriness and therefore the ending or overcoming of tanha is the ending of suffering, we must do all we can to investigate this phenomena. Buddhists would all agree about this but this is just theory unless we actually put it into practice and look for opportunities to really witness tanha in our own lives and experience and not just in theory or doctrine.*

You would think that being on retreat is an ideal opportunity to have some real peace of heart and mind and to be free from tanha. People are often disappointed that when they make an effort to practice they encounter more tanha, more dukkha, more suffering and disappointment. This is in fact a good thing. The more we see and encounter the more our eyes are actually open. The Dhamma lets us look into the

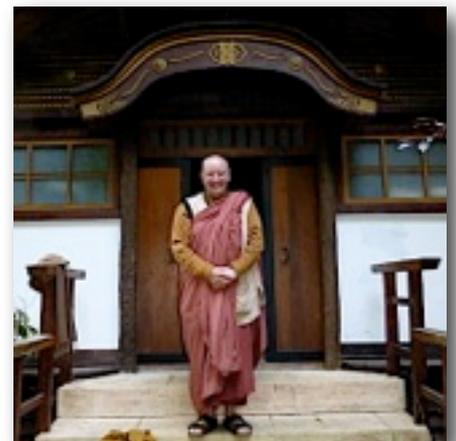
arising and ceasing of things in each moment and the time of retreat provides the slow and steady space/time to do just this. Romantic or fanciful notions about being on retreat are just that, romantic and fanciful. Retreat time is time in which we can really come face to face with our own clinging and craving. This is a painful experience but a vital one. The Buddha likens it to the probing performed by a doctor on a wound before he applies the treatment.

Tanha is as you all know a word which is derived from the root of "thirst" or a real sense of lack or want in our lives. We experience dissatisfaction. Initially of course we assume or think that it is the world or other beings which are the root of this problem or unsatisfactoriness and that if only they would or could be changed we would experience happiness or fullness. A small amount of time spent on retreat or indeed engaged in real meditative practice shows us this is not the case. The real problem is ours, is "mine".

The Buddha points out that we experience real dukkha precisely because of our attachment to ideas about "self" or "I". This experience of craving is likened to a net in the suttas and in the Theragatha we hear that for one who has broken through or torn this net of craving our citta (heart/mind) is like a

stainless moon on a perfectly clear night. Being caught in a net is a good way to think of craving because rarely is it just one simple thing that we crave but more usually a whole web of things, ideas, forms, people, objects, feelings and so on. The Buddha also points out that craving is like someone sewing things together, "tanha sibbani", that we sew together our past, present and future, at least in our own minds. We all know of course that we cannot actually do this since the past is gone, the future not yet arisen and the present ceaselessly arising in this very moment (in the words of the Buddha).

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# Bhante with the residents of the Moulin Retreat centre outside Perigeux

*...Continued from Page 1.*

Even on retreat we can feel all of these aspects of craving as well as its “sticky” quality which the Buddha also talks about in the suttas. The stickiness or “tanha visattika” is what draws us further and further into things and helps to hold us there. This can even be a part of what draws us toward our next birth let alone the way it draws us on in this life and holds us like the rabbit caught in sticky tar.

If you don’t like the idea of stickiness then perhaps you might consider another image for craving found in the suttas which is that of the ceaselessly flowing stream.....drawing us on and on, carrying us further and further from where we might wish to really be. This image is a great favourite of the Buddha. He speaks often of those caught in the stream of becoming. This stream of craving can produce in us a desire for things we do not even need! Think about how often, in simple ways you have purchased something you did not really need or perhaps even understand why you wanted it. This is the arrow of tanha, the dart of craving. The Buddha points out that the whole world is

afflicted with this arrow. It is good for us to reflect and remember that here the Buddha is using the word “world” to mean this world our our body, heart / mind and not just the external world.

Being on retreat or engaged in meditative practice in a fairly continuous way allows us to really begin to see these aspects of tanha and to face them courageously and to try to overcome them or begin to let them go. Even the effort to simply stay with these feelings of dissatisfaction patiently and humbly can be powerfully beneficial. Some of you will recall the beautiful poem by the great Ch’an master Han-Shan which begins, “ All day long I sat before the cliff, sat until the clear stream ran cold....” and which concludes with the beautiful lines about the arising of compassion out of this experience of patient practice.

You have all helped me to have some precious time to be on retreat for which I am deeply grateful. May my suffering & struggling with tanha be fruitful and beneficial. May you share in any good which arises from this time and may your own efforts at overcoming or releasing the noose

of tanha, cutting the threads, swimming upstream, removing the dart, getting the monkey out of the trees (whichever images helps or appeals to you) be fruitful and be a blessing to yourself and others.

With much metta, gratitude and blessings,

**Bhante Tejadhammo**

**October 2012**





## Association News

*Please Consider Joining the Management Committee*

Our Annual General meeting is coming up on Sunday 4 November and we will be electing a new management committee. At least 2 members of this year's committee will be stepping down so we very much need new committee members. The committee meets monthly, usually after Dana Day, and between meetings, members take on the various tasks associated with running Sangha Lodge and Vejjasala, according to their skills and interests.

With the establishment of Vejjasala, work is expanding and we need your active support more than ever. This work is a profound gift – it supports our teacher, Ven. Tejjadhammo; it helps to make the teachings of the Dhamma available to a much wider group of people than would be otherwise possible; it creates a centre for Buddhist teaching and community that is widely known and easily accessible. If you have found the Dhamma has changed your life for the better, then please consider whether you can give something back to support the spread of the Dhamma by working on the committee.

Contact Sue Toohey ([suetoohy@gmail.com](mailto:suetoohy@gmail.com)) if you would like to nominate yourself or just discuss what might be involved.

### *Retreats at Vejjasala*

Since the last newsletter we have held 2 successful retreats at Vejjasala.

From Friday evening, 24th November to Sunday afternoon 26th November Ven Tejjadhammo led a retreat focused on healing meditation for those dealing with illness. The teaching during the retreat offered concrete practices aimed at establishing or regaining health, wholeness and healing. Sixteen people attended the retreat and the feedback from those who attended was very positive.

Then at the end of September (28 September – 1 October) Grahame White and Dhammaruwan led a Vipassana retreat called 'Untangling the Entanglements'. Grahame White, one of the founders of the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre at

Blackheath and formerly ordained as a monk in Burma is well known to Association members as he has taught on a number of occasions at Sangha Lodge. Dhammaruwan is a very well known Dhamma teacher from Sri Lanka and the founder of the Nirodha Meditation Centre in Sri Lanka.

The three new kutis at Vejjasala enabled us to accommodate 20 people at this retreat. Unfortunately, on the first day of the three day retreat, Dhammaruwan was called back to Sri Lanka urgently and left that afternoon. Grahame took over and led a very successful retreat for a mixed group of meditators, including those who had never meditated before and those who had previously undertaken long retreats. Meditators were very happy with the quality of the accommodation and the beautiful vegetarian food created with loving care by our volunteer cooks, Jan & Chris McCarthy. The weather was warm on the first day but after that a sudden cold change gave us the chance to try out the new heating (safer and more energy efficient) which has just been installed in the shrine room and the dormitory.

### *Vejjasala – Preparing the Kutis*

On Saturday 15 September, nine of our members gathered at Vejjasala to oil the exterior wood of the newly installed kutis. It took the whole day to give each of the three kutis a coat of oil, so we will plan another working day in the near future to apply a second coat. Steve Nguyen installed small solar powered lights in each kuti and Lily Koo installed the curtains she had made. The interior woodwork has been varnished and carpet installed on the floors so the kutis were ready for occupation at the retreat two weeks later. For that retreat meditators used air beds on the floor but soon we will install real beds, thanks to the generosity of Jan Grant and her family. Jan's son has offered us any of the furniture that we can use from his mother's house.

### *Dinner Dance*

You can read an account of the dinner dance held on Saturday 6th October at Petersham Town Hall elsewhere in the newsletter. But I wanted to let you know that thanks to the huge efforts made by the organisers (Amy &

John Wan, with the assistance of Saw Gaik Chong and Molly Lim), the ticket sellers (particularly Amy, Janet Chuah and Jim Chew) and the volunteers who prepared desserts, and helped to set up the hall and clear up after the event was over, the event netted a total of \$10,110 after costs. This is such an outstanding result and will support the many operating costs for Vejjasala which cannot be paid for from our tax-deductible building fund. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the function, including our generous guests.

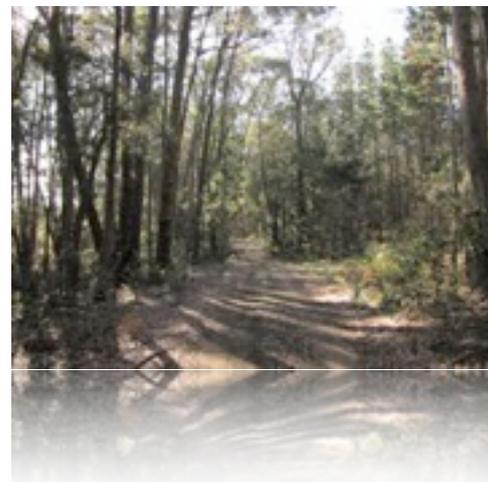
### *New Food Fair venue required for 2013*

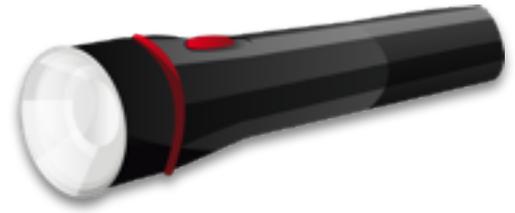
We are still seeking suggestions for a new venue for next year's Food Fair. As Roselea Community Centre will be closed for renovations for the whole of 2013. If you know of other centres which might be suitable please let one of the committee know – we need somewhere that has kitchen facilities, allows cooking, has good access and parking – not easy things to find.

The Hills District has proved to be a great location for us over the past years so we would like to stay in the area if possible but suggestions in other areas are welcome.

### **With much metta to everyone**

**Sue Toohey**





## Invitation to the End-of-Year Picnic

As a way of thanking everyone who contributed to the Food Fair we would like to invite you to an end-of-year picnic. Once again we'll be having our picnic in the Cumberland state forest – the same spot as last year. The Cumberland state forest is a beautiful location for our picnic, offering well marked walking tracks, an educational display, a nursery where you can purchase native plants and a café for those who can't do without an espresso!

**Date:** Sunday November 18

**Time:** 11:00am till 3:00pm

**Place:** Bellamy Picnic Area,

Cumberland State Forest

5 Castle Hill Rd, West Pennant Hills

The Association will be providing satays , a sausage sizzle on the BBQ, some salads and fried noodles. Please bring drinks and any other foods you'd like to share.

Maps and directions are available on the website

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests/locations/cumberland-state-forest>

## Dinner Dance at Petersham Town Hall

Thanks to our wonderful ticket sellers our dinner dance looked all set to be a wonderful success – more than 230 tickets had been sold, which meant that the Town Hall would be filled to capacity. The planning had been meticulous (thanks especially to Amy & John Wan, assisted by Saw Gaik Chong and Molly Lim) and it seemed as though every eventuality had been thought of. The first intimation that things might not go exactly as planned was when the organisers arrived to begin the set-up at 5pm to find that the lunch-time function was still in full swing – a concert of eastern European folk dance and a

hall full of spectators! We farewelled the last of them just before 6pm and it was all hands on deck for a lightening fast set-up.

Around 6.45pm while others worked in the kitchen, preparing desserts, a few of us were setting the tables and lighting the candles on each table – as the last candle was lit - the power suddenly failed! The only light available was that from the exit signs and the candles. Fortunately we had brought an extra box of candles and we spread them around as much as we could. While those preparing for dinner struggled to find the plates and cutlery they had brought in the semi-dark, the caterers arrived with the food, to find that the warming ovens were out of action.

Meanwhile, the organisers, convinced that we had somehow blown a fuse, searched frantically for fuse boxes, circuit breakers, and emergency phone numbers. As guests began to arrive with tales of traffic chaos, the realisation seeped in that it was not only the Town Hall that was without power but the whole district. Late arrivals told us that all power was out, including street lights and traffic signals, from Balmain to Tempe. Consulting our smart phones told us that power was unlikely to be restored before 9pm and could be as late as midnight.

Of course with no power there was no sound system for the music, so dancing was out of the question. The best alternative seemed to be to eat dinner while it was still warm. Guests continued to flow in, mightily relieved to have made it through the blacked-out intersections alive, and cheerfully fell upon the chicken curry and spring rolls in the romantic glow of the candlelight.

Meanwhile John Wan was making his own nightmare journey across town, driving DJ, Bobby Tan, home to collect a back-up battery power pack. They arrived back as dessert was being served, and by 8pm had the emergency power for the sound system up and running. With music restored, the dancers swung into action.

Dancing was in full swing at 9.00pm when miraculously the power came back on and light was restored. We took a small break from dancing while we drew the prizes for the raffle and got the main sound system up

and running and then the dancers continued enthusiastically till 11pm.

Many thanks to our generous organisers, supporters and volunteer workers who all remained so good humoured, tolerant and flexible despite all the difficulties resulting from the power failure.

## Raffle Winners

Prize 1 - the Flavorwave Turbo Oven donated by Danoz Direct through Sonya Sheng - is Lyn Chang

Prize 2 - Mother of pearl wall panels donated by Leong and Lily Tho is Amy Wan

Prize 3 - Royal Albert plate - is Romy Saer

Prize 4 - Hair styled and cut by HairVolution, donated by Jisoo is Ginny Costin

Prize 5 - Mimco evening bag - is Eddie Cheung

Prize 6 - Massage/acupuncture donated by Raymond is Anthony Ng

Prize 7 - 10 sessions of yoga donated by Sue Toohey is Chuck Lee

Prize 8 - potted house plants donated by Jim Teoh is Vincent Loh.

## Annual General Meeting: All Welcome to Attend

The Association of Engaged Buddhists will hold it Annual General Meeting following Dana Dan on Sunday November 4.

Members and friends are most welcome to attend hear about progress we have made with range of projects and activities undertaken during 2011-2012.

# Quotable Quotes

*What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal. Albert Pike*

## Dhamma Blossoms

There is no gift better than the gift of the Dhamma, no gift more sweet, no gift more joyful. It puts an end to cravings and the sorrow they bring.

Wealth harms the greedy, but not those who seek nirvana. Of little understanding, the greedy harm themselves and those around them.

Greed ruins the mind as weeds ruin fields. Therefore honor those who are free from greed.

*Dhammapada Verses 354-356*



## Mindfulness in Everyday Life

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.

Spring is a time for enjoying the flowers that have been waiting for warmer days to burst into bloom and also to plant the things we look forward to seeing over Summer. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that "to plant a seed is to entrust it to the Earth. The plant takes refuge in the Earth... (and) when we entrust ourselves to the Buddha, we take refuge in the essence of nourishment, the soil of enlightened understanding"



*I entrust myself to the Earth;*

*Earth entrusts herself to me.*

*I entrust myself to the Buddha;*

*Buddha entrusts herself to me.*

Thich Nhat Hanh

*Present Moment Wonderful Moment*

## The Bodhi Tree and Gratitude: A Personal Story

My Buddhist name is Malini, (which was given by the late Rev. Sri Dhamannada). This year, I see many images of the Bodhi Tree. The Bodhi Tree reminds me to undertake my trip to Bodhgaya again as I had made that aspiration in 1994 to go there again.

The first time I saw The Bodhi Tree was with Rev. Mahinda, Sister Sumitra and other pilgrims, to name a few friends, Auntie May, Auntie Janet, Amy and John Wan in Bodhgaya. I was amazed with its beautiful canopy of green heart shaped leaves. With the knowledge that The Buddha gained his enlightenment under the "Mother" Bodhi Tree, I felt good and a sense of achievement.

The pilgrimage was inspiring and empowering. If one has the opportunity to go on a Buddhist pilgrimage, why not do it? Then I had devastating news that I had cancer of my stomach. That was in June 1995. I had total gastrectomy, i.e. total removal of my stomach, despite what my Chinese Dr said - not necessary to remove my stomach.

A few days before the operation, my good husband took me to see Rev. Rev Mahinda and Sister Sumitra. They gave me spiritual support. Rev. Tejadhammo was beside me while I was lying on the hospital bed just before the big operation and chanted Medicine Buddha healing suttas for me. Bhante gave me a small statue of Kuan Yin Pusa and I treasure Kuan Yin Pusa very much. There was an very elderly Thai Monk who gave me blessings too before the operation. There are other Reverends who

have given me Dharma teachings and blessings too.

With the pilgrimage behind me, armed with blessings from the Sangha and tremendous support from many respectful friends and my loved ones, my journey to recovery was a less painful one. I am sure it would have been very painful otherwise.

The 1st post operative night was long, my heart was racing higher and hit 154 beats a minute, remembered to meditate, I meditated and my heart rate went back to a normal rhythm. With many Bhantes' blessings, meditation and good wishes from friends and loved ones, I survived the night and many nights. I am grateful to be still alive.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Buddha, Sangha, Devas, Friends and loved ones who have given me tremendous support in my journey to recovery, the opportunity to live and do some good and not least to see my two sons grown up and completed their university degrees. I am thankful to my husband and sons who did noviceship programme when I was recovering from my operation. The spiritual activities which I have undertaken at the Sangha Lodge were very healing, listening to Bhante Rev Thejhadammo's teachings, doing meditation, participating in dana and fundraising activities. Supporting child sponsorship of World Vision, Medicines without Borders, and Tzu Chi Foundation do me good too...

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...Continued from Page 5

### Why the Bodhi Tree?

The Buddha gained enlightenment under The Bodhi tree. There is a Bodhi Tree at the backyard of Sangha Lodge and this Bodhi Tree was a gift from the Monks at MahaiBodhi Temple in Bhodhgaya when it was a sapling.

Life is precious and Master Yen advised to make use of our bodies to contribute to society. Sister Sumitra used to say often, "Purify the Mind, Do Good and avoid evil.

May all beings be well and happy.

## 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](mailto: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 \$50/year.

## 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.

### 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.

