



# One Heart- One Mind

*The Newsletter of the  
Association of Engaged Buddhists*

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### **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 3rd March*

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## The Year of the Snake...

*May it be a year filled with good things and especially good health for you and your family, friends and all sentient beings. This year the Association is offering our regular programmes and many new things as well as the possibility of retreats at our centre for wholeness & healing, Vejjasala at Wingello.*

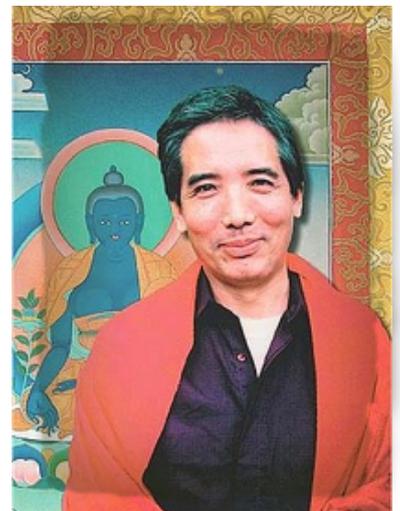
This year we are making an effort to re-enliven our Dhamma Exploration programme by holding a special form of Dhamma exploration called "Dhamma Bites" which will be held every two months on a Saturday from 1pm until 3pm and features a shared lunch. So please look out for the notices for these events. The year has begun in a very busy fashion already with many hospice / hospital patients being supported through the work of the

Association. Sadly there have also been a number of deaths and funerals early in the year. We will be having a special Vesak celebration at Vejjasala this year with the possibility of staying over if you wish. Keep an eye on the newsletter and e mail notices sent by the lovely Molly.

I would like to pay heartfelt tribute to a dear Dhamma teacher who passed away last year and who has had an association with Sangha Lodge and myself for many many years. The Most Venerable Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche died at 12.10am on 24th July 2012 in Melbourne. I offer this wonderful piece of Rinpoche's teaching for your contemplation first:

*Mysticism is about finding oneself in such a way that one is not only not alienated from oneself, but one does not feel alienated from others and from the world at large. A mystic is someone who feels at home. This imagery is used by all kinds of mystics both in the East and in the West. Finding ones home. This means the feeling that, I know who I*

*am and I know where I belong. A sense of belongingness, a sense of finding oneself, not in terms of ego identity in the usual sense of finding oneself, but in a different way. One begins to realize there is so much in there, within oneself. So many resources, talents, creativity, richness - it is all in there, but unexplored. So the mystic says I can own up to everything that I am. And that is where the peace of the mystic originates from, Knowing that he or she is not a self divided being...continued Pg. 3*




 A portrait of Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX, a Buddhist teacher, wearing glasses and a dark maroon robe. He is seated on a red and gold patterned cushion. The background is dark and slightly out of focus.
 

# Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX

...Continued from Page 1

*Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX in Ordinary Mind magazine, "The meaning of mysticism", Summer 1997.*

This passage so beautifully addresses the difficulty that so many people in the West struggle with; that of avoiding making my spiritual life one in which I am splendidly isolated from others, solely about myself and utterly self-absorbed. It bears re-reading and deep reflection.

Rinpoche was a very special being who had a most lively and generous understanding of Dhamma and was tireless in his efforts at offering and explaining the teaching of the Buddha to people in Australia and around the world.

Gabrielle Lafitte has written a beautiful obituary which follows:

*Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche drew thousands of Australians to the considered life of contemplation on the nature of mind. A pioneer of "integrated Buddhism", he exemplified the tradition that meditation is a path not only to calming the mind but to inner transformation of the self.*

*He was born in 1955 in a remote pastoral region of Tibet, at a time when China's People's Liberation Army was violently consolidating its power. At an early age he was recognised as the ninth in the lineage of the Traleg Kyabgons, and was installed as abbot of Thrangu monastery in Qinghai province.*

*Aerial bombardment of monasteries forced him to trek across Tibet, to distant Lhasa, for safety at the monastery of the Karmapa, head of the Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism. This too became exposed to the political violence of the times, leaving him no choice but to flee south, leading a large group*

*through the Himalayan mountains to seek refuge in another country.*

*Life in exile, in Bhutan, India and Sikkim, was tough. In an overcrowded camp, exposed to unfamiliar food and climate, his mother died.*

*For a young reincarnate lama, the expectations of an entire civilisation fell upon his shoulders. He fulfilled all expectations and trained rigorously in Buddhist philosophy and meditative techniques.*

*There were 20 years of intensive study and practice at Rumtek monastery, Darjeeling, and the Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi. Later, in Bhutan, under the guidance of a Jesuit priest, Father William Mackey, he learnt English. In the 1970s, as Australians began exploring Buddhism, he translated for His Holiness Karmapa, in exile in Sikkim.*

*In 1980 he migrated to Australia, where for the next 32 years he encouraged Buddhist practice to take root. He was a monk until he was 25 and after that retained his position as lineage holder. In 1986, he married Felicity Lodro.*

*Rinpoche was keenly interested in contemporary psychology, philosophy, comparative religion, interfaith dialogue and the hopes and fears of Australians. Within a year of his arrival he had presented at an international transpersonal psychology conference for health professionals in Victoria.*

*As a postgraduate in the religious studies department of La Trobe University and in what became an enormous personal library, he studied all religious traditions in depth; early Buddhism in the original Sanskrit and Pali; and the Hindu doctrines critiqued by early Buddhism.*

*He taught in centres throughout Australia and made North Carlton the base of Kagyu E-Vam Buddhist Institute (E-Vam Institute). In more recent years he established the Yeshe Nyima Centre in Parramatta. His non-sectarian approach is reflected in his centres showcasing the full spectrum of Buddhist approaches to the mind, art, therapy, healing and yoga, and he committed himself to creating opportunities for interfaith and interdisciplinary dialogue.*

*He taught a wide range of texts, drawn from the array of approaches and entry points that have evolved in Buddhism for people of differing dispositions. These translations, often the first English versions of key texts, were accompanied by spontaneous commentaries in his precise English, often stretching the vocabulary of his listeners.*

*Despite the diversity of teachings, and visiting teachers he hosted, he emphasised a unified approach that he called "integrated Buddhism". His books include *The Benevolent Mind: A Manual in Mind Training*, *Luminous Bliss: Self-Realisation Through Meditation*, *Mind at Ease and Essence of Buddhism*, each of which went through many editions and translations.*

*A recent initiative was setting up a multimedia platform, Shogam Publications, whose most recent publication *Ri-Me: Buddhism Without Prejudice*, was released just months ago.*

*Many invitations to teach worldwide were accepted by Rinpoche but more were declined. By choice he always spent most of each year in Australia, concerned more with the quality of his students' meditative practice and philosophical understanding than with quantity of followers.*

*As the body of practitioners grew, it became possible to establish a contemplative retreat centre in bushland above Healesville, Victoria, for more intensive practice.*

*He also established centres in Auckland and at Chatham in upstate New York.*

*Rinpoche is survived by Felicity, students Kal Kingi and Ani Jangchub, and a community dedicated to continuing his work.*

### **Gabriel Lafitte**

Rinpoche's passing reminds us to be really grateful to our teachers and what they offer us.

Last year also marked the passing of Dr. Don Wijeratne a most wonderful, skilful and humble human being who was my doctor for years and years. Dr. Don passed away on September 27, 2012

Dr. Don, as he was so fondly known by his patients had practised in Balmain since the 1970's. He was the beloved husband of Lena. Loving father and father-in-law of Kamani and Ruwan, Chanaka and Sharmila. Seeya to Ramesh, Sashini, Sachin and Anjali.

Dr. Don was a great example of a follower of the Dhamma in very practical ways without being caught up in all sorts of rites and rituals. Whenever I went to see him professionally we always had wonderful talks about Dhamma, suffering and meditation practice. He was such a kind and gentle man with great humility and a gentle sense of fun. All his patients would testify to his care, skill and generosity. Over many years as his patient I saw in him a man who truly embodied the Dhamma of the Buddha in the way that he practised medicine, healing and great metta. Dr. Don had great loyalty to his patients and a heartfelt concern for their well-being. He was an old fashioned but timeless gentleman.

He was generous to a fault with his time and resources. He was also a great reader and was constantly exploring the spiritual life in his reading. Dr. Don was a man with a lively intellect and a really thoughtful human being. He also loved to listen to classical music and had his sound equipment in a special space in his home so he might truly enter the joy and spiritual benefits of music. I shall miss him greatly and offer him a deep bow of gratitude.

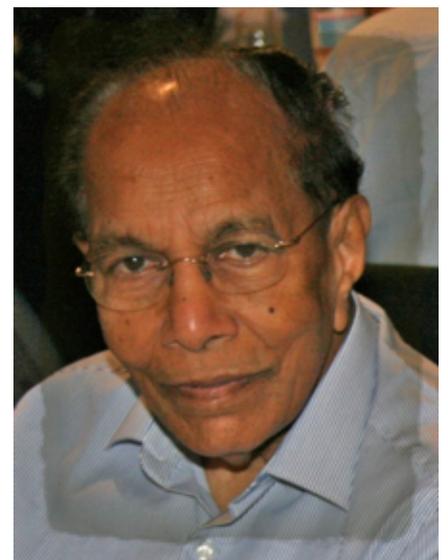
Dr. Don's loving wife Lena will miss him deeply after so many years of marriage. We send her and the whole family our condolences and great loving kindness and compassion. May they take great comfort and joy in knowing how loved Dr. Don was by all who knew him. My he come quickly to the complete freedom of heart and mind which is Nibbana!!!

Sadhu to Dr. Don and Venereable Traleg Rinpopche for their great example, love and life.

May you all receive the blessing of the Dhamma.

With gratitude and much metta,

Bhante Tejadhammo





## Association News

### *New(ish) Management Committee for 2013*

At the Annual General Meeting on 4th November we had seven nominations for the Management Committee – exactly enough to fill the seven committee positions so all those who nominated were elected unopposed.

Five of our 2012 committee offered to continue in 2013 but two had to step down. The meeting offered a big vote of thanks to our 2012 Secretary, Beatriz Costello and to Lily Koo for all the work that they did for the Association through their long contributions to the committee.

Newly elected were Caroline Lurie, who many of you will have met in her role as Retreat Coordinator and who will continue in that role, and Bronwyn Sweeney who will take over the job of Secretary. Sue Toohey will continue as President, with KK Lim as Deputy, Kahren White continues as Treasurer, Lachlan Warner as our Coordinator of Building & Maintenance at Vejjasala (with Noel Pearson) and John Wagner as Newsletter Editor. Aside from the Committee there are a number of other important positions that help keep the Association functioning: Steve Nguyen our Web Master and Molly Lim, editor of our email newsletter, will both continue this year and Lean Lee will take over the vital role of Book-keeper.

I would like to tell all of our members and friends how much I appreciate the work that all of these people do to keep the Association functioning and particularly what a friendly and cooperative group they are to work with.

The committee meets monthly, usually immediately 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. We welcome any members who would like to attend and who want to know more about the way the Association is run and who might like to become more involved.

### *Planning Meeting*

The new Management Committee met on Australia Day to plan activities for 2013. A number of retreats have been planned for Vejjasala during 2013 with details yet to be confirmed for some, so more information will follow. Bhante plans to be in residence at Vejjasala between 7th – 20th July, hopefully working with a small group of people suffering from serious illness. And a new series of occasional lunches with Dhamma discussion, called Dhamma Bites is planned at Sangha Lodge during 2013.

### *Zen Open Circle Comes to Sangha Lodge*

Sangha Lodge has opened its doors to the Zen Open Circle Dhamma group. Zen Open Circle, whose guiding teacher is Susan Murphy, Roshi, has been meeting at the Buddhist Library but needed to find a new home. From 1st February they will meet at Sangha Lodge on Friday evenings between 6pm – 8pm. Sangha Lodge members are welcome to attend.

### *Innovations at Vejjasala*

A number of small and large improvements are being put in place at Vejjasala.

A new insulated compost bin has been purchased after much discussion.

Vejjasala is too cold in winter to allow compost to decompose properly and open compost bins just attract all the resident field mice. Chris and Jan McCarthy (our favourite cooks) recommended the Aerobin, which they use in Blackheath and have found to be very effective in cold climates and low maintenance. Thanks to the small group of donors who funded this purchase.

The kitchen at Vejjasala previously boasted a small oven and a gas cooktop that was in need of replacement for safety reasons. Jan & Chris McCarthy together with Bhante recently selected a new large stove for the kitchen. It has a gas cooktop and electric oven that will take 2 large baking dishes side by side. Roland, from Bing Lee, Marrickville offered us a great discount as he has for other appliances we have purchased there. Hopefully the stove will be installed in time for our first retreat this year.

Modifications for wheelchair access are also underway. We have been approached by two people who use wheelchairs who wish to attend retreats at Vejjasala but at present this is not feasible. As a result, Kahren White has planned 2 small ramps to deal with changes in floor levels and these are being constructed. Changes to bathrooms will take more time as these require considerable planning and council approval.

Goulburn Yurt Works who supplied our kutis has advised us that a large second hand yurt has become available for sale. It is large enough to accommodate sleeping space, a bathroom and a space for the teacher to interview students. The committee has agreed to purchase it for teacher's accommodation.



### A Generous Gift

A patient at the hospice, whom Bhante has been working with, has made a generous gift of a car to the Association. The car is a Toyota Echo, 2002 model, in very good condition with low mileage. Ultimately we hope to buy a utility vehicle which will be most useful for transporting things to and from Vejjasala and at that time we would probably sell both this car and Bhante's present car to help fund the purchase. In the meantime it will provide a very useful back-up for Bhante's present car.

### New Food Fair venue booked for 2013

A new venue has been booked for the 2013 Food Fair – our major fund-raiser for the year. This year the Food Fair will be held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks which is also sometimes known by locals as North Rocks Recreation Centre. It is quite close to our previous venue at Roselea Community Centre. This year the Food Fair will be held on a Saturday for the first time - Saturday 27 July. Please put the date in your diaries.

With much metta to everyone  
Sue Toohey

## Visiting Teachers

We are fortunate to have two guest teachers for March:

On **March 20** our teacher will be Ven Robina Courtin who spoke at Sangha Lodge last year.

Ven. Robina Courtin has been ordained since the late 1970s. She has worked full time since then for Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.

Over the years she has served as Editorial Director of Wisdom Publications. Editor of Mandala Magazine, Executive Director of the Liberation Prison Project, and as a touring teacher of Buddhism. Her life and work with prisoners have been featured in the documentary films *Chasing Buddha* and *Keys to Freedom*.

On **27 March** - Tina Ng will be our teacher

Tina is the Principal Solicitor of Metta Legal, a role which encourages her to bring Buddhist ethical principles into her practice of law. She has actively participated in the UNSW Buddhist Society (Unibuds), and is an active member of the Buddhist community generally. She is interested in sharing the Buddha's teachings in all kinds of forums and media. Some of these projects include writing for print and online publications, editing Buddhist books, organising Buddhist community events and also appearing briefly on television.

Tina will be talking about the habitual tendencies of the mind.

## End of Year Function

The Association receives a great deal of support from members and from friends in other Buddhist groups for our annual Food Fair. The Food Fair is our major source of funds and the income from it helps keep the association running. As an expression of our thanks to those who helped make the 2012 event such a success we invited these supporters a picnic at the Cumberland State Forest. On November 24 about forty friends gathered for a BBQ lunch in the shade of mighty gumtrees. Ever

generous, several who were there as guests brought food of their own to share. But in addition we had many dishes provided by association members and we had our always popular satay cook Ms. Zaidah.

The day was kind to us with plenty of sun and a gentle breeze so everyone there had a lovely time.

(See photos above)

## Celebrating a Special Birthday

On Sunday January 13, about fifty friends and supporters, gathered at the Crystal Seafood Restaurant in Strathfield to celebrate Bhante's 60th birthday. Everyone enjoyed a tasty Yum Cha lunch and good conversation over their meal. At the end of the lunch, with typical generosity of spirit Bhante gave a blessing.

We hope that Bhante enjoyed celebrating the event with friends and trust that the year ahead will be one of good health and great satisfaction for him.

Our thanks to Chuck Lee and Alex Lee for organising the lunch.



# A Visit to Chuckseosa Temple

*Michael Harding*



Last December I was lucky enough to visit Chukseosa temple near Bonghwa in South Korea (with much gratitude to Bhante for his help in putting me in touch with Ki Hu Sunim in Belfield, who arranged everything). Chukseosa is a temple of the Jogye Order of Seon (Zen) Buddhism, the largest Zen School in Korea.

Chukseosa lies halfway up Munsusan Mountain, 1206 meters above sea level. Three hours south east of Seoul, it dates to 673 AD, though much of it was rebuilt after the war and is now considerably smaller. A Buddha statue housed in the temple grounds is one of the oldest in Korea and is listed as a national treasure. Interestingly, this Buddha has a thin moustache and looks Korean. It is a famous temple in Korea but pretty much unknown to non-Koreans and indeed I am one of the few foreigners to have stayed there. It is home to Master Muyeoo; 71 years old and, having been a monk for over 50 years, is said to be enlightened.

When I arrive at Yeongju bus station it is snowing heavily. Hyesan Sunim, a student of Master Muyeoo who lives in a hermitage on the other side of the mountain, meets me in downtown Yeongju and we head up the mountain towards the temple. He tells me he was



a pilot at Bankstown airport for ten years before ordaining with Master Muyeoo. Eventually we abandon Sunim's jeep and walk the last kilometre or so in what is now approaching a blizzard.

After lunch in the dining hall we go to meet Master Muyeoo. Sunim Says Master Muyeoo is formidable and sharper than any blade around. He asks me what I'm doing here. He asks about my practice and my life in general and after I tell him (Sunim translates), he says forget it. Forget it all! He gives me a Hwadu. Literally meaning headword it's the punch line of a Gonggan (Koan) and is used in Korean meditation practice almost exclusively. It is used to bring about great doubt, without which one cannot truly practice Seon (the other necessary factors being cold, hunger and confidence in the Buddha's teachings and the method). The master explains the power of Hwadu and that it leads directly to awakening. But you have to practice hard. Sunim then tells me that any questions you have, to see the master directly. Even though he can't speak a word of English, just use your eyes he says. He understands everything. I'm already having doubts. Is this a good start?

The day in a Korean temple begins at 3am. The sharp thwack of the moktak (wooden fish) slices through the night



air followed by the sound of a gatha - the Doryongsok - for cleansing the temple. As the massive sound of the enormous temple bell rings out in the freezing air, 28 times, everyone heads up the stairs to the great dharma hall for the dawn chanting. The hall is not heated, so it's unpleasantly cold (-15°C) but it's part of the practice. The Master is very clear that everything is the practice and the Hwadu must not be dropped - even for a moment. To be sporadic is to walk a very thorny path. You must be lion-hearted to succeed, he says.

After Master Muyeoo arrives at 3:25 incense is offered, along with homage to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas in the 10 directions. Sutras are chanted then all the monks except for The Master leave. A recording of a stentorian voice intones dharma reflections in Korean over meditative music and birdsong. A full bow is performed 108 times. The reason for 108 bows is that there are 6 bodily pathways that lead to suffering: eyes, ears, skin, nose, tongue, mind. There are 6 objects that lead to suffering: seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting or thinking. There are 3 time periods in which suffering arises: past, present, and future.  $6 \times 6 \times 3 = 108$ . So there are 108 bows to purify the 108 defilements. It takes a while and is physically

punishing but, like everything in Seon that one does, it is practice. It is also very good exercise and warms up the body.

After this it is time for individual practice, in the hall or the small, inspiring, meditation hut next door (Bo Guang Jeon), or in one's room (on the heated floor). Breakfast is at 6:20 then more individual practice (monks are separate from lay people and are on intensive retreat so we don't sit with them) and work period, or the morning chanting in the hall at 9 am. At this time of the year work is shoveling snow. I work with a young guy named Ung-Gong and we get on well. Some Sunims come down to help us; there is a lot of snow and ice around. Lunch is at 12:00 and I can smell the Doenjang Jjigae in the air. A fermented soybean paste stew, it smells bad but tastes OK. Kimchi is ubiquitous and everything is very spicy or sour. Here, if you are not used to this kind of food, are good lessons in greed or aversion, depending on your food preferences. This too is practice and there are a couple of times the aversion is so great I go without. Hungry and cold, now I'm practising Seon!

After lunch there is more practise until the afternoon chanting. Only one nun and a few laywomen go to this. I go to the hut nearby and brave the cold as long as I can. The bell rings for dinner at 5.30 and then from 7 there is evening chanting. It's much the same as the afternoons so most days I stay in the hut or, when it's too cold, in my room with the heated floor, where I hear the chanting drifting under the door; it's good for concentration.

I start to struggle with physical pain a bit after a few days and find it is harder and harder to sit for extended periods so I decide to do walking meditation. In Korea, walking is mostly done for short intervals to break up the long sessions of sitting but I end up doing a lot and enjoy it especially in such a beautiful environment.

Later I go to see Master Muyeon. In Seon, you go to see the master when you have any questions or problems. I describe my experiences and I tell the master about how much I've been cold, hungry, in physical pain and about the pungent

food. He reminds me about Siddhartha. Remember, he says, when he left home and was determined to become free. Cold and starving, he almost died from hunger. He had to go through this to become the Buddha, for nine years. We all have to go through this suffering in one way or another, in order to become a Buddha. It is only through seeing and knowing suffering that we can awaken, through ceaseless self-examination and hwadu contemplation. I have to go further, go deeper into the Hwadu. Seon will be easy for me, but not too easy. I can become a Buddha, if I want it. Hyesan Sunim says the Master never praises anyone so I should feel very encouraged. Then Master Muyeon asks if I would like to be his student. Ok, I say and leave feeling motivated and so glad to be here, determined to put as much effort into the practice as I can. Outside the Master's room, Sunim and I sit down and share a coffee with a young monk and Sunim says we are all now officially Dharma Brothers. We all bow to each other and smile and have a laugh. Seon is really about letting go of all that serious stuff, they say.

I also meet Mr Lee. He is in his sixties and speaks perfect English. He shows me some meditation stools he made for himself and asks if I'd like to try one. This is good timing because now I'm starting to find sitting a bit difficult and have been breaking it with lots of walking. We talk a lot about Seon and the differences between the Korean way and the Theravada, in which he's also expert. Afterwards, I walk back up the Bo Guang Jeon determined to sit as long as I can in the cold little hut but I soon find myself in the same situation. My mind is scattered now, the pain is too strong and I give in and go outside. I walk and walk around Bo Guang Jeon, trying to loosen my legs up a bit. Every step what. Is. This. A million ideas of what this is leap out at me, but none of them are what this is, is. I begin to wonder if it's anything. Maybe it is nothing... but it's not some Bam! Flash of liberation so it's not that. Just be patient and keep asking, keep reflecting. The master says a little effort will lead to a little awakening, a big effort a big awakening. So I keep walking and

everything becomes quiet and spacious. But still... what is this? Mr Lee says you must ask at every moment and when you have gone deeply into your hwadu, go deeper. It's like holding a cloud. That is Seon, holding a cloud.

On the morning of my last day, after chanting and bowing, I stand out in the cold night and watch the stars move. It is a calm morning and my mind is as cool and clear as the air around me. I can hear the running stream nearby and the soft whistle of the wind through the pines. The sun starts to peep over the mountains. The breakfast bell rings out in the distance. I walk slowly to the hall, turning the hwadu over and over in my mind.

At Chukseosa I learned more about the world and myself than I could have ever imagined. Everyone there showed an extraordinary kindness to each other that reflected their deep commitment to the Dharma and to their unstinting efforts to awaken. I am grateful to all of my Dharma brothers and sisters at Chukseosa and for the precious opportunity to practice there.



# Dhamma Blossoms

*Better than ruling this world, better than attaining the realm of the gods,  
better than being lord of all the worlds is one step taken on the path to nirvana*

## A Reader Recommends

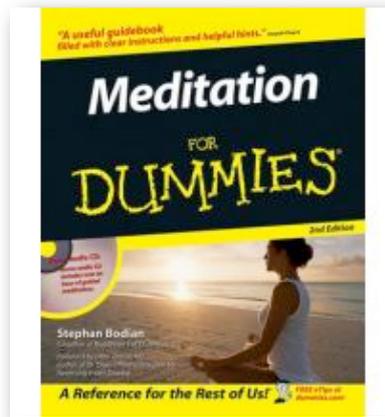
For this issue we print a recommendation that long time member and friend Bruce Smith has made. Many of you will know Bruce from his accordion performances at our annual Food Fairs. He says *Meditation for Dummies* is a real help. He encourages readers not to be put off by the title because, like so many others in the series, the book contains a lot of very helpful information. Full details are:

[\*Meditation for Dummies\*](#) by Stephan Bodian, Publisher: John Wiley & Sons Inc. February 2006.

One bookseller gives the following review:

This fun and easy guide has long been a favorite with meditation newcomers. And now it's even better. For this new edition, author Stephan Bodian has added an audio CD with more than 70 minutes of guided meditations that are keyed to topics in the book, from tuning in to one's body, transforming suffering, and replacing negative patterns to grounding oneself, consulting the guru within, and finding a peaceful place. The book also discusses the latest research on the health benefits of meditation, along with new advice on how to get the most out of meditation in today's fast-paced world. Stephan Bodian (Fairfax, CA and Sedona, AZ) is a licensed psychotherapist and the former editor-in-chief of *Yoga Journal*. He has written for *Fitness*, *Alternative*

*Medicine*, *Cooking Light*, and *Tricycle* and is the coauthor of *Buddhism For Dummies*. is no gift better than the gift of the Dhamma, no gift more sweet, no gift more joyful. It puts and end to cravings and the sorrow they bring.



## Dhamma Bites

Come along and enjoy a light meal together and listen to some Dhamma and share your thoughts, hopes and feelings about Dhamma and your spiritual life with like-minded friends and explorers.

This is a new offering by the Association which will take place every two months at Sangha Lodge on a Saturday afternoon from 1 pm until 3 pm.

We shall begin on **Saturday 9th of March.**

Bring some food to share and an open heart and mind to explore the Dhamma together!

Please keep the food simple and your thoughts spacious.

The topic for our first day is "WHAT IS DHAMMA?"

If you know already what Dhamma is then perhaps you should definitely come and enlighten us if you are not sure then come and share your curiosity with the rest of us

Surprise yourself with what you know and what you may discover.

We will work with a few Sutta texts and other material which will be provided.

Please make an effort to come along, support others and yourself.

Any suggestions for further topics to be explored will be gratefully received... just send us an e mail.

## 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 that members have written in the Newsletter so please send them in.

The ordinary things that we do time and time each day are often the ones that we are least mindful about. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that "practicing with a



gatha can help us return to ourselves and to what is going on in the present moment” and he gives us wonderful help with these words for washing our hands...

**Washing Your Hands**

Water flows over these hands.

May I use them skillfully

to preserve our precious planet.

Thich Nhat Hanh

*Present Moment, Wonderful Moment*



**Vejjasala**

Our beautiful retreat centre in the Southern Highlands is available to members for personal retreats or just a short period of quietness.

Several groups will be using Vejjasala during 2013 for retreats, so in order to ensure that there is no clash between engagements, please contact Bhante at Sangha Lodge or Caroline Lurie, Retreat Co-ordinator, on 9692-9540 or carolurie@iprimus.com.au if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity. This offer is open specifically to members and friends of the Association.

**Monday Evening Silent Meditation Opportunity**

Did you realise that every Monday evening (apart from Public Holidays) there is the opportunity to come along and enjoy silent meditation practice with others at Sangha Lodge in Lewisham.

Silent sitting is at the heart of the Dhamma of the Buddha and is the touchstone for our spiritual lives. We commence at 7.30 pm and sit for only 45 minutes.

You have everything to lose...so come along and find out what a taste of real freedom of heart and mind is like. This is a great opportunity to be supported and to offer the support of your presence to others. Meditating together is a very powerful and beneficial experience.

What is holding you back?

Please try to come just a few minutes before 7.30 and give yourself time to get settled.



**Vejjasala Gatha**

As I ring the bell

The echoing sound could be heard miles away

The kangaroos and the wombat are on the run

The sun is shimmering upon the greens

I am so happy to be in the open space

Looking up at the blue sky

Life is such bliss and yet it is impermanent

Like the fading sound of the bell

Lily Koo

Gatha at Vejjasala, Wingello



## 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.

