



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 6th June 2015

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Remember Them

Having just 'celebrated' ANZAC Day which is simultaneously the remembrance and commemoration of a military defeat and a kind of triumph of human courage and bravery we must be reminded of the reality of dukkha and anicca; suffering and unsatisfactoriness and the impermanence of all things. These core insights of the Buddha call us back each day to the facts of our existence and put before us the question of whether or not we can overcome them. The Buddha answers with a definite yes to this question. In his own words he says, "yes, it is possible to overcome Dukkha otherwise I would not encourage you to do so". The Buddha's encouragement comes not from theories or ideologies but arises out of his own experience.

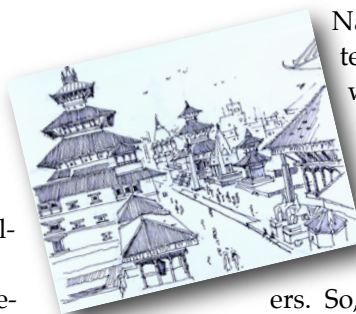
We are preparing to mark and celebrate the Buddha's own triumph by calling to mind his birth, Nibbana and Parinibbana in the festival of Vesakha puja. The

Buddha had to defeat his own "self" in order to attain the triumph of Nibbana but this was a victory attained by letting go, by releasing, not grasping after and by learning the value of the Middle Path in all things.

Marking this festival of the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of the Buddha we must be very aware of the reality of the suffering which is arising in Nepal resulting from the terrible earthquake which has struck the land of the Buddha's birth. The loss of life, the grief of families, the disruption of the whole social order and the terrible destruction of infrastructure all contribute to ongoing suffering and a dreadful sense of impermanence for the people of Nepal and for those whose hearts are moved by compassion and pity.

Nepal is the homeland of the Buddha. Many of you have been to Lumbini and seen the archaeological ruins there

marking the birthplace of the Buddha. As disciples of the Buddha we ought to feel a strong urge to help in whatever way we can in the light of this terrible suffering.



Naturally the Buddha always teaches us that we must start with ourselves in making the move from suffering to freedom but it is also a fact that we must also see, appreciate and realise our relationship and interconnectedness with others. So, what can you do to help the poor suffering people of Nepal? Time to get up off the meditation cushion and do something practical if you possibly can. Maybe you would like to consider one of the regular and reputable charitable organisations and make an offering of dana. Maybe you might think of the organisation set up by the Venerable Bhikku Bodhi: Buddhist Global Relief www.buddhistglobalrelief.org and make an offering through them. Here is their Mission Statement:

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Our Vision

We are inspired by the vision of a world in which debilitating poverty has finally been banished; a world in which all can avail themselves of the basic material supports of a meaningful life—food, clothing, housing, and health care; a world in which everyone can achieve a satisfactory level of education and freely pursue that which gives their life value and purpose; a world in which all people dwell in peace and harmony with one another and with the natural environment.

*“May I be a good doctor for those who suffer from illness,
a guide for those who have gone astray,
a lamp for those who dwell in darkness,
a source of treasure for those in poverty and need.” - Vows of Samantabhadra, Avatamsaka Sutra*

Our Mission

Our mission is to combat chronic hunger and malnutrition. Bearing in mind the Buddha’s statements that “hunger is the worst kind of illness” and “the gift of food is the gift of life,” we sponsor projects that promote hunger relief for poor communities around the world. We pursue our mission by:

- *providing direct food aid to people afflicted by hunger and malnutrition*
- *helping develop better long-term methods of sustainable food production and management appropriate to the cultures and traditions of the beneficiaries*
- *promoting the education of girls and women, so essential in the struggle against poverty and malnutrition*
- *giving women an opportunity to start right livelihood projects to support their families.*

We also seek to raise awareness of global hunger and advocate for an international food system that exemplifies social justice and conduces to ecological sustainability.

One way or another I urge you to help in whatever way you are able. The Buddha teaches that all our efforts at Dhamma should begin with opening the heart with Dana; the Nepal disaster is a chance to do just this.

“Giving is good, dear sir!

Even when one has little, giving is good. An offering given from what little one has is worth a thousand times its value.”

- Samyutta Nikaya 1:33

This Vesakhapuja make your Dhamma practice both a time for deeply personal practice and an opportunity to practise real Dana and recognise your relationship with all other suffering sentient beings.

May all beings be free from Dukkha

May all beings be well

May all beings be happy.

With every blessing of the Dhamma,
Bhante Tejadhammo



April Yoga Retreat

Fifteen participants gathered at Vejjasala for a weekend of yoga, meditation, teaching and relaxation on the April 17-19 weekend. Wild weather was predicted, but although we arrived in the rain, we were fortunate that the real wildness didn’t start until after lunch on Sunday, when we were making our way home.

Sue Toohey pointed out that yoga is itself a method of meditation, allowing the mind to concentrate on the body and thus screen out other, distracting thoughts. She reminded us, as has Bhante many times, that the description of the Eight-Fold Noble path is ill-served by the word ‘right’, and would be better translated as ‘whole’ or ‘wise’. (Wise Intention, Whole View etc.) And during the weekend she expanded on the various stages in this Path, clarifying the ways in which we can follow – or indeed stray from – it. We were offered some useful reminders of what is involved in mindfulness, in wise speech and action, which questions we should ask ourselves in trying to decide whether we are moving in our chosen direction or not. There was a lively discussion on vegetarianism.

The yoga itself was relaxing and accessible to everyone, including at least two participants who had never done yoga before. Thanh Ngyen, one of our two retreat co-ordinators, managed not only to participate, but also to provide the most delicious vegetarian meals and take care of her young son Qué. An enthusiastic yoga practitioner – and of course, a highly flexible one! – he brought much charm and lightness to the whole weekend.

Kangaroos, at least one wombat, and a magnificent pair of lyrebirds were sighted at various times, mainly dawn or dusk. Vejjasala itself is looking wonderful, with Dave Denton’s care much in evidence. A large quantity of splendid pine mushrooms was collected and brought back to Sydney by all who wanted them. And Thanh made a delicious mushrooms tarts for lunch on Sunday, so that all those intimidated by their slightly menacing appearance could feel reassured. *Caroline Lurie*

Kale Chips

Thanh's Recipe - as served at the yoga retreat

Kale is exceptionally nutritious, densely packed with fibre, minerals and vitamins, and deliciousness! It is extremely versatile, with a distinctive flavour that is not diminished by cooking. As you can probably tell, it's one of my favourite foods.

- 1 bunch curly kale (these make light and extra crispy crisps)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Wash kale, then tear off the leaf from the stem (grab the stem with one hand and 'strip' off the leaves with the other). Dry thoroughly with a salad spinner or by shaking well. Tear into palm size pieces, drizzle olive oil on the leaves, then massage until all the leaves are well coated (add a little more oil if absolutely necessary). Don't skimp on the massaging, it's good stress relief, plus your hands will feel beautiful afterwards!

Place leaves in a single layer on wire racks, then bake in a low oven (120-150 max) for half an hour, or until just crisp (they will taste burnt if left for too long).

Put them in a big bowl and eat! Or use as a garnish on soups, stews, etc.



Member Profile

My First Introduction to Buddhism and How I Learnt About Non-Self

My first introduction to Buddhism occurred on my second trip to Thailand when I was in my mid twenties. I had been travelling through Asia, starting in Bali and travelling through Indonesia then up the Malay Peninsula to Thai-

land. I was on my world adventure tour and was a free spirit eager to explore the world and what it had to offer.

While in Bangkok a group of fellow travellers I had befriended invited me to go with them to a monastery in Southern Thailand to do a ten day meditation retreat and to learn about Buddhism. I had some experience in meditation practice with Transcendental Meditation and thought it would be a good idea to learn about Buddhism, which I knew very little about.

So I backtracked to Southern Thailand with my friends to a monastery called Suan Mok. There we met many other travellers of all nationalities all on a similar quest. The monks were very kind and showed us to our sleeping quarters. It was an open timber shed in the jungle with a raised wooden platform for sleeping on. We slept on a mat with a mosquito net strung between two parallel wires. I stuffed a towel and some clothes into a cotton bag and used this as my pillow. The abbot of Suan Mok was Ajahn Buddhadasa who was in ill health at the time. Two western monks (a Frenchman and American) were conducting the course.

The meditation hall was at the end of a big open field surrounded by jungle. As soon as I heard the Dharma it resonated with me and I felt that this teaching was what I had been searching for. The Dharma seemed so clear, relevant and logical that I embraced it easily. One day Ajahn Buddhadasa made an effort to leave his sick bed and give a talk to us in front of his kuti. He spoke in Thai which the American monk translated to English. When the monk translated Ajahn's words that,

"You are not who you think you are. You are not you."

My jaws dropped on hearing this revelation and probably likewise with the other meditators. Ajahn was humoured by our reaction and took delight in repeating the words with a beam in his eye and in his accented English,

"You are not you. You are not you. You....."

I suppose I could say that these were 10 silent days that changed the course of my life. I continued travelling for three

more years going to India, Europe, America then coming back to Suan Mok once more before going home to Australia. By then Ajahn Buddhadasa had passed away.

Robert Ljubicic

Mindfulness in Daily 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. Your editor would be pleased to publish verses members have written in the Newsletter.

As the days get darker earlier, with the coming of Winter, we need to use our lighting more. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that switching on the light is yet another opportunity to be mindful in our every day life.

Turning on the Light

Forgetfulness is the darkness
mindfulness is the light.

I bring awareness
to shine upon all life

Thich Nhat Hanh

Present Moment Wonderful Moment





Association News

Sue Toohey

Work Continues at Vejjasala to Meet New Council Requirements

Our application for 'Change of Use' to Wingecarribee Shire Council has been approved subject to a number of remedial building works being completed. Dave Denton has been staying at Vejjasala almost full time to work on these and considerable progress has been made. Fire safety, disabled access and effective waste water disposal are the Council's main concerns. Dave has also done amazing work in the grounds so that the gardens are looking particularly beautiful. He has installed new seats in many spots and has cleared the path to the waterfall to make it more accessible. He has also measured all the rooms, allowing us to get a quote for re-carpeting those areas of the main house that had not been carpeted for many years. Much of this old carpet is worn and has holes, making it a bit of a safety hazard so I am delighted to tell you that the main house will be re-carpeted in the coming month with a commercial grade carpet.

Working Bee at Sangha Lodge on Saturday 7th March

Alex Lee organised a small working bee at Sangha Lodge on Saturday 7th March which produced amazing results. The existing pavers were lifted and the massive roots of the Bodhi tree were cut right back. You can see these roots sawn up and piled up in a corner of the yard at Sangha Lodge and you will appreciate what a big job this must have been. The pond was filled in and the whole yard repaved, giving us much more space and a more even surface. Many thanks to Alex, Rob, Vince, Chuck, Gus and to anyone I might have forgotten, for their great work.

Preparations Underway for This Year's Food Fair

Alex Lee and Saw Gaik Chong have begun contacting our regular stall holders as preparations get underway for this year's Food Fair to be held at Roselea Community Centre, Carlingford on **Sunday 26th July**. If you have an idea for a food stall or think you may be able to assist on one of the food stalls please let Alex or Saw Gaik know. We really appreciate all offers of assistance.

Retreats at Vejjasala

The Yoga Retreat which I taught at Vejjasala on the weekend of 17-19 April was very relaxed and enjoyable – at least from my point of view! We were blessed with good weather before the deluge which arrived on Sunday afternoon as we were driving home. Thanh Nguyen, our retreat coordinator, cooked exceptional food that was greeted with delight by the participants. You can find a short report from Caroline Lurie, elsewhere in the newsletter. My thanks go to the small but great team that we have behind every retreat.

Registrations for Bhante's week-long meditation retreat will have closed by the time you read this but it is encouraging to know that there are sufficient people already enrolled for the retreat to go ahead. Organising food supplies and cooking meals for a week long retreat is a major job and once again we have to thank Jan and Chris McCarthy for catering.

With much metta to everyone,

Sue Toohey

Poems from Members

Wisdom

Wisdom of knowing
and not knowing, of
not believing, not accepting
realities, which are
only delusions of a present
a present that does not exist.
Attachments which ground
deluded souls in search
of fulfillment. Wants ...
likes and dislikes
temporary dichotomies
that enslave souls.

Beatriz Copello

Previously Owned

I, a Möbius strip of DNA.
Am all my myriad forbears;
Jew and Gentile, Pirate, Judge,
Good-wife, Maid and Saint,
Hero, Harpy, the disposed;
Tender of plants, breaker of hearts.

Threads of all these lives
Breathe to my heart or break to my will,
All that I am was some other's once,
Rough hair and hands, my face, my
skin;
Yet am I an unrepeatable event,
More than mere proof by my presence?

S.M.Minish from Shadow Birds
published with the author's permission

Quotable Quotes

The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

American Poet and Essayist, 1803-1882

Food for Thought

The Association is pleased to have produced Food for Thought, a recipe book written by Jan McCarthy who does the catering for our retreats at Vejjasala. Food for Thought is an A5 (150X 210 cm) spiral bound book of 128 pages, with many photos in full colour. It features 10 chapters and over 100 vegetarian recipes. All proceeds for the sale of the book go to The Association.

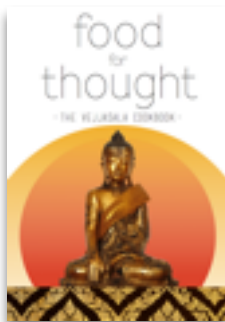
Copies of the book can be bought from Sangha Lodge (see Gus Real) for \$25. You can also purchase copies by mail order. To do this please arrange and electronic funds transfer for \$30 (\$25 for book and \$5 for postage and handling) to the Associations bank account. The details of this are:

**Association of Engaged Buddhists
St George Bank**

BSB: 112 879

**Account number:
131328823**

Please put FFT and your full name in the reference box for the transaction and email a copy of the transaction confirmation along with your full postal address to Jan McCarthy at janmccarthy.1@gmail.com and Cc to kahrenwhite@iprimus.com.au. Alternatively, you can pay by cheque, forwarding this and your full address (printed clearly) to Jan McCarthy, 10 Carysfort St, Blackheath, NSW, 2785.



Dhamma Blossoms

Dhamma is not upheld by talking about it.

Dhamma is upheld by living in harmony with it., even if one is not learned.

Dhammapada, verse 259

Reader Recommends

The recommendation for a helpful and interesting book for this issue comes from Molly Lim.

Molly recommends *What the Buddha Thought* by Richard Gombrich, published by Equinox, 2009

In *What the Buddha Thought*, Richard Gombrich argues that the Buddha was one of the most brilliant and original thinkers of all time.

Intended to serve as an introduction to the Buddha's thought, and hence even to Buddhism itself, the book also has larger aims: it argues that we can know far more about the Buddha than it is fashionable among scholars to admit, and that his thought has a greater coherence than is usually recognised. It contains much new material. Interpreters both ancient and modern have taken little account of the historical context of the Buddha's teachings; but by relating them to early brahminical texts, and also to ancient Jainism, Gombrich gives a much richer picture of the Buddha's meaning, especially when his satire and irony are appreciated. Incidentally, since

many of the Buddha's allusions can only be traced in the Pali versions of surviving texts, the book establishes the importance of the Pali Canon as evidence.

The book contains much new material. The author stresses the Buddha's capacity for abstraction: though he made extensive use of metaphor, he did not found his arguments upon it, as earlier thinkers had done. He ethicized and radically reinterpreted older ideas of karma (human action) and rebirth. Similarly, building on older texts, he argued for the fundamental importance of love and compassion, and analysed fire as a process which could stand as a model for every component of conscious experience. Morally, the Buddha's theory of karma provided a principle of individuation and asserted each individual's responsibility for his own destiny. To make the book completely accessible to the general reader, the author provides an introductory section of 'Background Information,' for easy reference.

Review extracted from
<http://www.equinoxpub.com/home/w>



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 \$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.

