

DECEMBER 2011

Sangha Lodge:

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Lewisham NSW 2049

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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 5th February**

ONE HEART-ONE MIND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

KEEPING THINGS IN BALANCE

Dear Friends,

Christmas is almost upon us, this will be followed by the New Year of 2012 and then in January we will celebrate the Chinese New Year of the Dragon. There is much to enjoy in these special times and a great deal of opportunity to spend time with our families and friends. We are often reminded that Christmas is a time for giving and for those following the path of practise as taught by the Buddha "giving or dana" is the beginning of all our practise. So this Christmas let us celebrate the real joy, happiness and blessing which comes when we give of ourselves to others. Let this Christmas season be one of real letting go of unwholesome attachment to self. The New Year marks a time when we traditionally make resolutions for the year arising before us. Let us make good resolutions with regard to the path of Dhamma and how we relate to other suffering beings. Don't make big and preposterous resolutions which you know you will have abandoned in no time, but try for something worthwhile and attainable with perseverance and viriya. The coming Chinese New Year is that of the Dragon so perhaps we can take some of the spirit of the dragon and apply it to our lives and practise. celebration which involves a heightened awareness of the well-being and happiness of others is a great thing and we benefit greatly ourselves by our support and participation in such celebrations.

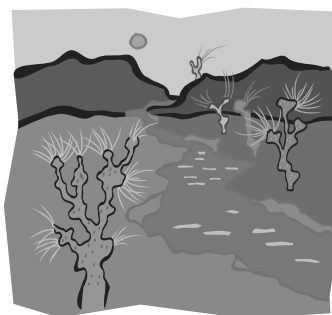
In the midst of all this celebration it is still good to recall the way in which we can be side-tracked by unmindful and self-centred things. Mindfulness means both being mindful of what we are doing and experiencing but also carries with it the idea of a mind filled with what is good, wholesome, skilful and beneficial to us and others. With this in mind it is good to recall the Buddha's words of advice about what prevents this wholesome activity of body, heart and mind; the hindrances or Nivarana. Maybe the following small teaching from the Buddha will be helpful to you at this time of year, not to spoil your celebration but to keep things in balance.

Sensual desire is a hindrance and obstruction that overcomes awareness and weakens discernment. Ill will, sloth and drowsiness, restlessness and anxiety, uncertainty is a hindrance and obstruction that overcomes awareness and weakens discernment. Suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it. If a person were to open watercourses leading off from both sides, the current in the middle of the river would be interrupted, diverted and dispersed. The river would not go far, its current would not be swift, and it would not carry everything with it. In the same way, if practitioners have not rid themselves of these five hindrances... there is no possibility that they can know what is for their own benefit, or the benefit of others, or both, or that he should come to realize a superior human attainment, a truly noble knowledge and vision. But suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it: If a person were to close off the watercourses leading off from both sides, the current in the middle of the river would not be interrupted, diverted, or dispersed. The river would go far, its current swift, carrying everything with it. In the same way, if practitioners have rid themselves of these five hindrances... there is the possibility that they can know what is for their own benefit, or the benefit of others, or both, and that he should come to realize a superior human attainment, a truly noble knowledge and vision.

Anguttara Nikaya 5.51

These hindrances or things which hold us back in our efforts at becoming more and more free from greed, hatred and delusion and living full, happy, productive and beneficial human lives can be overcome and let go off so that

we ourselves can in the words of the teaching, "know what is for their own benefit, or the benefit of others, or both, and that he should come to realize a superior human attainment, a truly noble knowledge and vision."



Continued on Page 3...

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

This year we tried a different format for the Annual General Meeting – integrating the meeting, with the presentation of the Annual Report, Financial Statements and election of a new committee into the Dana Day activities. This idea was borrowed from the Indonesian Buddhist society and it seemed to work well. We had a much bigger attendance than in previous years. With eight nominees for the seven positions on the Management Committee we ran a secret ballot for the Committee election with Caroline Lurie and Vincent Loh counting the votes. At the time of the AGM we had 70 financial members of the Association and 21 votes were cast. The newly elected committee is listed below and positions will be discussed and announced following the next Committee Meeting on December 4.

Retiring Committee Members

Three of our committee members for 2011 will be retiring following the AGM. On behalf of all Association members I would like to express our thanks to Elke Kaulmann, who has been a committee member for a number of years and who has made great contributions to the office and household organisation; to Vincent Loh our outstandingly successful Food Fair Coordinator and Treasurer for the past year; and to Serge Bodlander, our longest serving Treasurer who has kept us in the black ever since he took over the Treasurer's role and ensured that we complied with government regulations for incorporated associations. Our gratitude and thanks to you all for your great contributions.

New Committee for 2012

Four members of the 2011 committee were re-elected at the AGM - Sue Toohey (2011 president), KK Lim (2011 Deputy President), Beatriz Costello (2011 Secretary), and John Wagner (Newsletter Editor).

Three new members were also elected – Lachlan Warner (Co-team leader for Building Maintenance at Vejjasala), Kahren White (our current book-keeper) and Lily Koo. Both Kahren and Lily have had previous experience on the committee. We are looking forward to a productive and cooperative year as we look to bringing the Vejjasala Project into reality while maintaining the regular activities at Sangha Lodge.

Successful Garden Working Bee at Vejjasala on October 8.

Fran Poulton, Team Leader, Gardens at Vejjasala welcomed 6 volunteers at Wingello on Saturday 8th October. They cleared away ground fuel round the cottage, and weeded the enclosed vegetable garden, ready for planting. A pathway to the first meditation grove has been cleared and new planting undertaken at the grove itself. Additional planting (a grevillea & 3 banksia) was carried out at the Vejjasala sign, and more planting undertaken between the machinery shed and the main entrance. All planting is subtle so that the new plants blend with the existing bush. Fran has organized (at her own expense) two enterprising local children who wanted to help and earn a little pocket money.

Regular working weekends are planned for gardening at Vejjasala and these will usually be on the second Friday and Saturday of each month. There will not be a gardening date in January owing

to the holidays and the heat but gardening days will be held on February 10-11 and March 9-10.

Please put these dates in your diary if you are interested and able to help. You can contact Fran at raghnall@westnet.com.au or by phone on 0411 043 621. We can arrange for you to stay overnight if that works best for you but we need to know in advance so please let Fran know if you can come and whether you want to stay.

New Water Tank for Vejjasala

Work has begun on the installation of a new 100,000 litre rainwater tank for Vejjasala. The tank will collect water from the roof of the main building, which currently has no water tank. One of the two existing water tanks will be reserved for fighting bushfires as required by the Rural Fire Service. Water from the other existing tank will be 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 secure our water supply and be able to supply sufficient water when all accommodation is at full capacity.

With much metta to everyone

Sue Toohey

Visiting Teachers 2012

Wed, Feb 1 —Patricia Austin

March — Merran Dawson - date to be confirmed.

Please check our website www.engagedbuddhists.org.au for updated information.

Sangha Lodge Closes for the Holidays

- ◆ Last meditation for the year will be Wednesday 14th December, 2011.
- ◆ First meditation for the new year will be Wednesday 18th January 2012.

Enjoy the holidays and we look forward to seeing you next year.

...continued from Page 1.

The New Year ahead brings many challenges and the promise of great and good things to our small Association and its members, friends, benefactors and those who avail themselves of our services. The purchase of Vejjasala at Wingello in the beautiful Southern Highlands of New South Wales this year makes possible a long held dream of the Association to be able to offer to those who are ill the chance to experience the teachings of the Buddha and their benefits in a residential setting within a supportive community. Much has been planned already for this coming year of 2012 but none of it can happen without your active support, participation and encouragement. Maybe you could make one of your resolutions for the New Year to take a more active part in the activities of the Association at Vejjasala. So, call on your inner "dragon" and let us do this together!

I thank all of you for your kindness and great contributions throughout the year and look forward to seeing you all again in the Year of The Dragon! May you be well and happy!

With metta and gratitude,

Bhante Tejadhammo

For those who might benefit from a list here are the hindrances for your fridge door!!!

The Five Hindrances: The Weakeners of Wisdom (Nivarana)

1. Sensual desire (kamacchanda),
2. Ill-will (byapada),
3. Sloth and torpor (thina-middha),
4. Restlessness and worry (uddhacca-kukkucca),
5. Skeptical doubt (vicikiccha).



END-OF-YEAR PICNIC

On November 13 the Association hosted a picnic to express our thanks to the many friends who have given their support and time during the year. We particularly wanted show our appreciation to those who contributed to our Food Fair earlier in the year, helping to make it such a success.

We chose as the venue for our picnic the lovely Cumberland State Forrest, the only national Park situated in the metropolitan Sydney. It was a picturesque location and many commented that you would hardly believe we were in the midst of suburbia. The day was kind to us with blue skies and we had the company of kookaburras and minah birds. We were able to have a pavilion to ourselves and enjoyed a large range of cold and hot foods. Typical of the generosity of those we were there to thank was their bringing food themselves, so there was more than enough food for all.

After our lunch some people went off to explore the native plant nursery that is part of the complex while others say and relaxed, enjoying good conversation.

Thank you again to those who cooked and prepared other items at our Food Fair.



4. ACCOMMODATION AT VEJJASALA

Dear Friends,

We have established a special fund to try to purchase and construct one or two kutis (little accommodation cabins) for our visiting teachers and Sangha at Vejjasala. These are simple in design as befits a Buddhist centre and will be a little removed from the main buildings so that teachers might have some space for practise, privacy and preparation whilst at Vejjasala. These are not a luxury but a real necessity.

They will be made from plantation timber and we would like to get them started as soon as possible. Ms. Lily Koo (known to many of you) is looking after this project. If you would like to help with a donation and can please contact Lily or one of the committee members or even Bhante Tejadhammo.

The old pig-stye on the property is also going to undergo (slowly) a transformation into a kuti for Bhante to use through the kindness, work and generosity of supporters but this will take much longer than the construction of a kit kuti.

Some people have asked about offering a whole kuti or a part of one and both of these options are possible. Traditionally names of donors or their loved ones are placed on the kuti so that those who are blessed to use it remember to be mindful of them and their kindness and generosity. This is of course optional as some people prefer anonymity. Tax deductibility is available for donations made to this fund.

Please consider this very important act of dana in your list of things to do for the New Year.

Below are some photos of possible designs available.



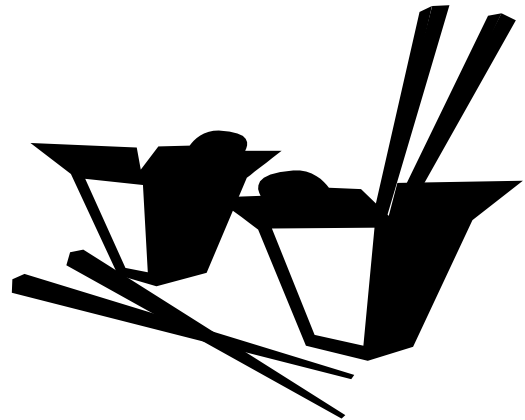
We are happy to announce that plans are in place for our first fund raising effort for 2012. It will be a lunch on 31 March, Saturday at Crystal Palace in Strathfield. Please mark the date in your diary.

The funds raised from the lunch will be used to help in the maintenance of Vejjasala such as building maintenance, expansion and construction work and a million other things that a retreat place needs.

Come along and join us and bring along your family and friends. Your support is greatly needed to help us raise the fund for Vejjasala.

More information regarding the cost and time will be sent out once we have confirmed the menu. Stay tuned for the details in our emails and on the website.

Meantime if you have any questions regarding the lunch, drop us an email at office@engagedbuddhists.org.au



HAPPINESS

Often people believe that happiness is something out of reach and only can be obtained when all aspects of life fall into place. Most people think that they'll be happy when they achieve a particular goal like searching for money, gaining power, achieving success or even losing weight. While there is nothing wrong with wanting to achieve healthy goals, people don't need to postpone their desire to be happy.

Happiness is often confused with pleasure. For example pleasurable experiences such as having sex and eating have a lot going for them but there are momentary feel good events.

Happiness encompasses a wide range of emotions from joy and excitement to satisfaction and contentment. Happiness includes pleasurable aspects but goes much deeper than mere hedonistic pursuits.

The following are a few suggestions on how to achieve happiness. Why not give it a go and find true happiness?

♦ Have a life purpose

It is very important to have a sense of purpose that will guide you and give you reasons to live.

♦ Look after your health

Aim to eat healthy food, exercise regularly, get quality sleep, have fun activities and leisure time, enjoy the company of people.

♦ Be optimistic and positive

See the glass half full. Accept challenges as a positive experience. Don't dwell on failures or disappointments.

♦ Appreciate others

Be generous. Try to develop good quality relationships with those around you. Be prepared to forgive for your own sake. Don't hold grudges.

♦ Value your strengths

Recognise your strengths and use them in all aspects of your life. Trust yourself and your instincts.

♦ Enjoy

Enjoy every moment, even the simplest one. It is the life journey what is valuable not the end.

♦ Meditate

Take time out, give your mind a breather, achieve this through meditation. If you want to learn how to meditate make an appointment to see me.

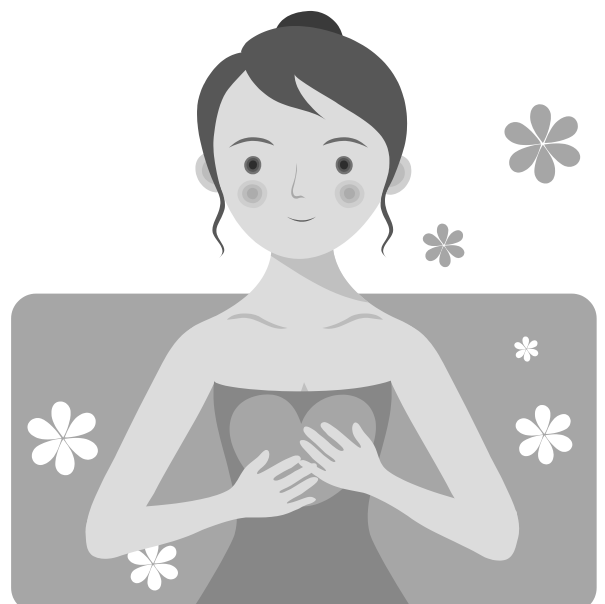
♦ Have clear goals

Set yourself clear and achievable goals and set yourself a plan on how to achieve them.

♦ Don't live in the past

Dwelling in the past is not conducive to happiness. Live today. Live now.

Beatriz Copello



Fran Poulton our Coordinator for grounds maintenance at Vejjesa-la is interested to hear from volunteers who want to help with the work at the property.

She writes: *Volunteers need to let me know they are coming, so if they would phone me 3 days ahead that will let me plan. They can phone or send an SMS on 0411 043 621*

When it is hot they should wear light coloured clothing and a hat with a brim. Whenever they come they should also need to bring something to eat and drink as we are not able to provide these at the moment.

Work will include picking up rubbish, digging holes for plants, weeding, mowing and edging, preparing pathways, clearing ground fuel, preparing firebreak to the Telecom line, and of course blackberry suppression.

There should be a booklet on top of the shoe shelf unit at Sangha Lodge which has the 2012 maintenance program in it. This will give some idea of the work to be done over the coming months.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Our inspirational quote for this issue is offered by our Secretary Beatriz Copello

May I be the lamp for those in darkness, a home for the homeless and a servant to the world.

Santideva



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.

Many of us give thanks at the start of the meal, perhaps recognising our good fortune to have a food that is nutritious and appealing, or appreciating the work that has gone into growing and preparing the things that are before us. But what about at the end of the meal? Thich Nhat Hanh encourages to be mindful there too.

Finishing your meal

The plate is empty

My hunger I satisfied.

I vow to live

for the benefit of all beings.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Present Moment Wonderful Moment



Let us live in joy, never hating those who hate us.

Let us live in freedom, without hatred even among those who hate us

Let us live in joy never falling sick like those who are sick.

Let us live in freedom without disease, even among those who are ill.

Let us live in joy, never attached among those who are selfishly attached.

Let us live in freedom, even among those who are bound by selfish attachment.

Let us live in joy, never hoarding things among those who hoard.

Let us live in growing joy like the bright gods.

Dhammapada verses 197-200



READER RECOMMENDATION

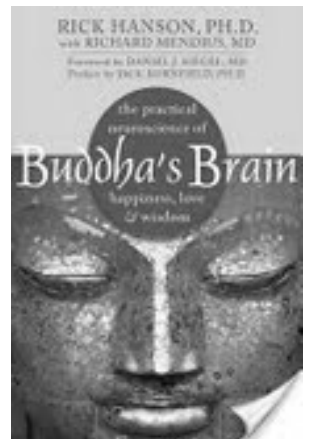
For this issue our reader recommendation comes from Lachlan Werner. Lachlan recommends: ***Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*** by Rick Hanson, New Harbinger Publications 2009

and greater peace of mind.

<http://www.rickhanson.net/writings/buddhas-brain>

Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and other great teachers were all born with brains essentially like anyone else's. They used their minds to change their brains in ways that changed history.

With the new breakthroughs in neuroscience, combined with insights from thousands of years of contemplative practice, you, too, can shape your own brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom. Written with neurologist Richard Mendius, M.D., and with a Foreword by Daniel Siegel, M.D. and a Preface by Jack Kornfield, Ph.D., *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom* joins modern science with ancient teachings to show you how to have greater emotional balance in turbulent times, as well as healthier relationships, more effective actions,



INAUGURAL VEJJASALA RETREAT

On October 29 Lynne Bousefield, Grahame White and Steven Smith led the first half-day retreat at Wingello. The afternoon was filled with teachings, sitting and walking meditation, followed by a delicious afternoon tea, mainly provided by Lynne. Around 40 people attended, many of them new to Sangha Lodge. It was great to see so many new as well as familiar faces, and everyone agreed that the atmosphere was thoroughly conducive to peace and tranquility.

At the end of the afternoon Lynne gave talk on the subtle as well as obvious pleasure we can all take in generosity. Then she, Steven and Graham demonstrated the teaching by offering all the dana they had been given for the afternoon for the upkeep and improvement of Vejjasala.

As the last helpers cleared up, we were graced with the presence of some half-dozen large kangaroos indulging in their evening passagiata very close to the house. One had a large, adolescent joey comically determined to return to the pouch he had clearly outgrown. They, and the tireless parenting of a couple of nearby magpies, made an unwitting but very special finale to the retreat. A program of retreats is being planned for 2012, and there will be further news of these in forthcoming newsletters.

Caroline Lurie

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.

May they free themselves from suffering and the cause of suffering.

May they attain the superior, continuous joy which is beyond suffering.

May they remain in great equanimity, beyond attachment or aversion for anything.



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 March 2011.

Sender:

The Association of Engaged Buddhists

Sangha Lodge

20 Victoria St

LEWISHAM NSW 2049

