



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 2nd September

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Vale Jan Grant

Then, in the morning, the bhikkhuni Soma dressed and, taking bowl and robe, entered Savatthi for alms. When she had walked for alms in Savatthi and had returned from her alms round, after her meal she went to the Blind Men's Grove for the day's abiding. Having plunged into the Blind Men's Grove, she sat down at the foot of a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Mara the Evil One, desiring to arouse fear, trepidation, and terror in the bhikkhuni Soma, desiring to make her fall away from concentration, approached her and addressed her in verse:

"That state so hard to achieve
Which is to be attained by the seers,
Can't be attained by a woman
With her two-fingered wisdom."

Then it occurred to the bhikkhuni Soma: "Now who is this that recited the verse -- a human being or a non-human being?" Then it occurred to her: "This is Mara the Evil One,

who has recited the verse desiring to arouse fear, trepidation, and terror in me, desiring to make me fall away from concentration."

Then the bhikkhuni Soma, having understood, "This is Mara the Evil One," replied to him in verses:

"What does womanhood matter at all
When the mind is concentrated well,
When knowledge flows on steadily
As one sees correctly into Dhamma.

One to whom it might occur,
'I'm a woman' or 'I'm a man'
Or 'I'm anything at all' --
Is fit for Mara to address."

Then Mara the Evil One, realizing, "The bhikkhuni Soma knows me," sad and disappointed, disappeared right there.

~ From Soma Sutta *Bhikkhuni-samyutta*
(*Samyutta Nikaya, Book V*)

On Monday 6th of August Jan Grant died peacefully surrounded by her loving family in the St. George hospital at Kogarah NSW. Jan was a long term member & supporter of our association and an extraordinarily kind, generous and loving person. Jan was born on the 27th of December 1946 in a small country

town near Tamworth NSW. She was an unassuming and very humble person who saw herself as very ordinary. Those who were blessed to know her knew that she was an extraordinarily ordinary person with a great good heart. Jan was a little like the bhikkuni Soma in the verse which appears above from the bhikkuni-samyutta. When Mara comes to try to dissuade Soma from her efforts at following the path of the Buddha he tells her that she is just an ordinary woman.

"That state so hard to achieve
Which is to be attained by the seers,
Can't be attained by a woman
With her two-fingered wisdom."

Continued on Page 2...



His words “two-fingered wisdom” means that all she is good for is cooking rice and knowing when it is cooked by squeezing it with her fingers. The reply given by Soma shows that she was anything but a poor simple woman who could cook. She was in fact a great practitioner of meditation and a true disciple of the Buddha. Jan was also a person who thought of herself as very ordinary but showed in the extraordinarily courageous way she lived her life and entered into her dying that she was extraordinary in her ordinariness.

Jan was a tireless and most selfless volunteer worker with many organisations apart from our association. She was a quiet achiever. Jan never bragged or talked much at all about her work for others but rather, just quietly and unassumingly got on with it. Over many many years she gave great help and kindness to others. The messages read at her funeral service and the beautiful eulogy delivered by her sister Cheryl attest to this. Jan was a “very down to earth person”, a wonderful Australian expression which resonates with the Buddha calling upon the earth itself (or ‘herself’ in the context of his story) to be the real witness to his enlightenment. Just as the Buddha is anchored to the earth and has a clear and illuminating understanding of his relationship to it, so Jan was a very practical, straightforward and earthy person. Jan found joy in giving to her family and ever more widely to others. Her Metta (loving-kindness) was by no means restricted to just her family and friends. She was non-judgemental and open handed with all yet she maintained the highest expectations of herself in her observation of the ethical precepts taught by the Buddha.

Jan’s children told me that they thought she could never practise meditation because she loved talking and could not keep quiet. Jan also thought that she was “not a good meditator”, that she just struggled along. In fact Jan attended many retreats and not only observed Noble Silence but made great progress in her practice. Jan had a strong and committed daily practice of meditation at home and she and I practised together at her home in the months before her death. The very strength and power of her great loving-kindness, compassion and generosity is proof of this.

The new Vejjasala project in Wingello was dear to Jan’s heart and she was looking forward to spending more time there. Jan had already worked hard in the gardens and other areas helping to establish that special place to be used by others who are seriously ill or in the last stages of life. She and I were to make another trip there in the very week in which instead we held her funeral. Jan faced death and her own impermanence with the same determination, courage and compassion with which she lived her life. I

think that we could truly say of her that she saw how the things flow along steadily in the stream of anicca (impermanence) and truly saw correctly into Dhamma. May she quickly attain the complete liberation of heart and mind which is Nibbana! The Association and its friends with myself offer our deepest condolences to her family, assure them of our sharing merit with Jan and remind them that she is with them and in the words of Venerable Thich Nhat Hahn:

“My mother, my father,

They are in me.

And when I look,

I see myself in them.

The Buddha, the patriarchs,

They are in me.

And when I look,

I see myself in them.

I am a continuation

Of my mother,

my father,

and my ancestors.

It is my aspiration to preserve

and continue to nourish

Seeds of goodness, skill, and happiness

Which I have inherited.

It is also my desire to recognize

the seeds of fear and suffering I have inherited,

and, bit by bit, to transform them.

I am a continuation

Of the Buddha and my spiritual teachers.

It is my deep aspiration

To preserve, nourish, and develop

The seeds of understanding, love, and freedom

Which they have transmitted to me.

I desire to continue

The career of the Buddha and my spiritual teachers,

And do my best to realize

All that the Buddha and my spiritual teachers

Expect of me.

In my daily life,

I also want to sow

Seeds of love and compassion

In my own consciousness

And in the hearts of other people.

I am determined not to water

Seeds of craving, aversion, and violence

In myself and the other.

I know that if I practice

All this in the right way,

After only seven days,

I shall already have been able

To change the situation.

Establish communication

Smile, and transform some suffering

And increase my happiness.

Please, Lord Buddha,

Be witness to what is in my heart.

With mind and body in perfect unity,

I bow my head and prostrate.

From *WATERING THE SEEDS OF JOY*

With every blessing of the Dhamma and great Metta,

Bhante Tejadhammo





Association News

Food Fair 2012

Thanks to everyone for another very successful Food Fair and especially to our Food Fair Coordinator, Ray Lee and to Saw Gaik Chong for coordinating the food stalls.

With a record crowd the Food Fair grossed \$21,982. Virtually all of this is profit due to the generous donations of ingredients and all of the highly skilled labour of our cooks and stall workers. After we have paid a few remaining expenses such as the hire of the community centre we will clear almost \$21,000. This money is vital to the operations of Sangha Lodge – it enables us to pay the rent and the utility bills, to run the Association's car and it makes possible all the services that Bhante and the Association provide. Without the huge contribution made by the Food Fair we could not pay our way. So well done everyone!

A special thank you to all the behind-the-scenes workers who did the set-up, clean-up, managed the parking, the containers and the money, cleared the tables and sorted the garbage for re-cycling. Our two oldest volunteers, Serge Bodlander and Win Parry were an inspiration to all of us, being among the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Thanks to all the stall holders and volunteers who contributed so much to the success of the Food Fair and to all the customers who came to eat, enjoy the music (thanks Bruce and Jerry!) and catch up with friends.

New Food Fair venue required for 2013

Roselea Community Centre will be closed for renovations for the whole of 2013 so next year we will be looking for a new venue for the Food Fair. 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. 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.

Healing meditation retreat at Vejjasala – 24-26 August

A healing meditation retreat has been scheduled at Vejjasala from Friday evening, 24th August to Sunday afternoon 26th August. There are still some places available but if you plan to come please get your registration in as soon as possible. Details and registration forms are available on our website – www.engagedbuddhists.org.au

The purpose of this weekend retreat is “to explore the experience of sickness, illness and disease and the nature of the suffering inherent within these, in the light of the teaching & life experience of the Buddha. The teaching during the retreat will offer concrete practices and methods aimed at establishing or regaining health, wholeness and healing.

Notes & guidelines of practices will be provided for all participants.

Vejjasala – Oiling of the Kutis

Our three new kutis have been installed and are looking very good. (See pictures of the kutis in the Gallery section of our website – www.engagedbuddhists.org.au) With double insulation they are proving very comfortable despite the cold weather. As soon as the weather becomes warmer we will be seeking volunteers who might like to spend a weekend at Vejjasala, helping to oil the exterior wood and varnish the interior. At present it is too cold to do this (the oil will not penetrate properly in the cold and the varnish will take too long to dry) but once the weather warms up a little, look out for an invitation on the email list.

New chairs for Vejjasala

We have invested in a dozen new chairs for the Shrine Room at Vejjasala. These are sturdy, comfortable (upholstered), offering good back support and stackable. We thought it was important to provide something better than the folding metal chairs that we have been using, particularly for the healing meditation retreats where we expect that retreatants may be unwell or suffering pain. Some of the chairs have already been moved down to Vejjasala and the rest will follow for the August retreat.

Dinner dance

Our next fund raising event will be the dinner dance to be held at Petersham Town Hall on Saturday 6th October. The buffet dinner will include a range of Malaysian favourites and the music will be coordinated by a popular DJ. Many of our supporters are accomplished dancers but if you are not, don't let that stop you attending. Take a table with friends, enjoy dinner and cheer on the dancers. Tickets are \$50 per head – contact Sue Toohey for tickets if you would like to come (0421 973 785 or suetoohey@gmail.com). We are also looking for volunteers to serve and clear dinner.

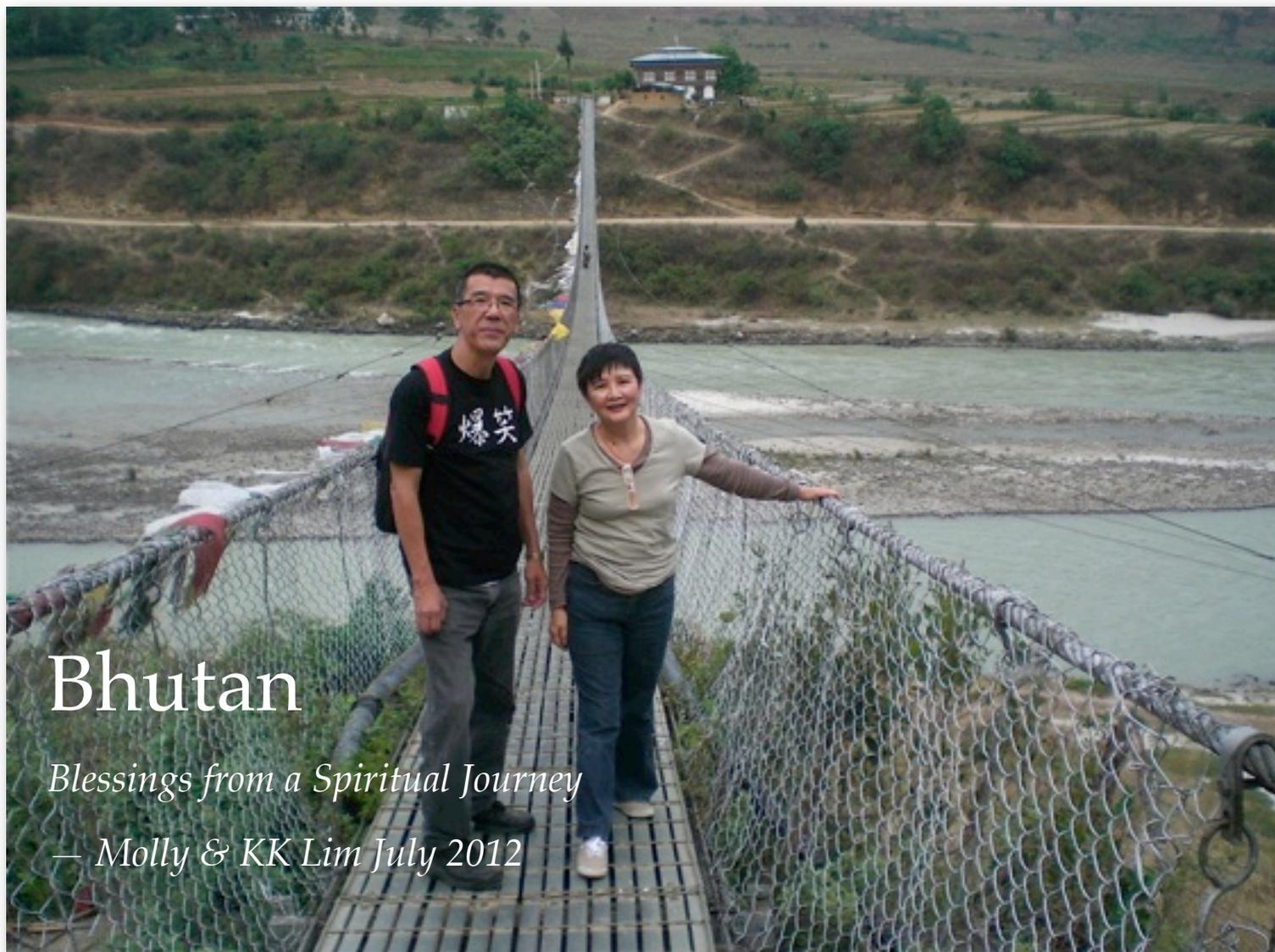
Improvements to website

If you've been on our website lately you must have noticed how good it is looking, with many more features and much more professional design. If you haven't seen it lately please check it out – everything is there – news of all upcoming events, the latest newsletter, visiting teachers. We would like to thank Steve our new webmaster, who has been doing a fantastic job in designing and implementing the website and who has donated all of his time and skills.

With much metta to everyone

Sue Toohey





Bhutan

Blessings from a Spiritual Journey

— Molly & KK Lim July 2012

Bhutan is promoted as an intriguing travel destination for its culture, natural beauty and relative inaccessibility. It is also the last surviving Himalayan Buddhist kingdom.

Molly and I decided to make a second trip in May 2012 after having been there previously 5 years ago. This time around, we planned our journey around the spiritual heart of Bhutan in the province of Bumthang, avoiding the usual tourist circuit that took up our first trip. Our then travel companion was Maria, a close friend from Hong Kong, decided to come along.

We checked-in on the Druk Airline red-eye flight at Bangkok (only flight) at 4.30am together with other intrepid travellers including a number of Thai and Mahayana monks. As we walked in the near-empty terminal to our boarding gate, several well-dressed fellow passengers chatted with us who turned out to be senior government officials returning from a Shanghai conference. Molly & I asked for help to contact a person called Ugyen (Bhutanese use a lot of common names like Dorje, Karma, Pema, Tenzing etc) who had arranged previously for us to assist novice

monks at a monastery. Ugyen had taken us around on our first trip but we lost his contact over the years due to the difficulties of Bhutan's fledging internet and other international communication services. Dorje who is the Director of Human Resources at Bhutan's Labour Ministry said that he knew Ugyen's wife also a senior ministry official and will try to contact him even though our arrival is on a weekend. Maria gave him a local Bhutan mobile number that she had pre-purchased and we gave the name of our hotel.

We arrived at Paro after the usual hair-raising landing between hills into the valley where the airport is sited. After goodbyes to new friends and hello to our local guide, we started for our initial destination of Thimpu, the capital which was two hours or so away. In the 5 years since we were there, Thimpu had undergone some changes including a new huge Buddha statue and monastery on a hill overlooking the town. That night after dinner, Ugyen called to say he was at home in Thimpu! We asked him to come to the hotel immediately as we were leaving the next morning to travel further up country. Ugyen saw us within 15 minutes and in the

catch-up, he also told us of the continued gratitude and improvement in the education of those young monks under our program. He also gave us the location of Talhogang monastery which happened to be on our route to our next destination, Gangtey.

The next morning saw us on the road where it was slow going due to the narrow winding highway and landslides from onset of the monsoon season. Just after crossing a high mountain pass, our driver stopped at a road junction and sign that said Talhogang Monastery. We asked a lone lady vegetable vendor about the new road and was told it would take 2 hours on a jeep. We manage to sight the monastery on a hill side from the road but decided not to trek in due to time constraints. It also let us reflect on Ugyen's efforts in having to walk hours to the monastery before the vehicular road was completed last year.

Tea break at a small village called Trashigang where there were lots of locals dressed in bright Bhutanese clothes with some having group picnics. Further along the highway, the vehicle in front of us suddenly stopped and all passengers rushed out across to stand



at the side. The Chief Abbot of Bhutan, one of the three highest ranked Tibetan Buddhist monks (including Dalai Lama & Panchen Lama), was on his annual move from winter (Punnaka) to summer (Thimpu) residence. Our guide said that it was a unique opportunity to meet and be blessed by him. We quickly left our vehicle to stand on the opposite side of the road while a convoy of cars with monks, officials and police travelling at snail pace moved past. A car with open windows stopped, the pleasant smiling face of the Chief Abbot emerged in front of us to touch our heads, chant some verses and hand each of us a holy string that for us to wear around our necks. It is amazing that he had already travelled more than 8 hours yet able to give the thousands of people standing along his route individual blessings.

Two days later, we arrived at our destination of Bumthang in Central Bhutan which is the country's spiritual heart. We were blessed to:

- Participate in the holy month-long chanting of sutras at the Jakar Jampa Monastery (our trip was in May)

- Meditate at Korje Monastery where Guru Rinpoche (who brought Buddhism to Bhutan) left his body imprint on a rock from his meditation
- See the original painting of the Wheel of Life by Pema Lingpa at Tamshing Monastery
- Have the abbot specially open the main shrine for us to pray at Lodrakarchu Monastery where more than 200 monks are in residence
- Visit Pema Choeling Nunnery with nuns guiding young village girls/novices in the dharma and skills such as sewing.

Our stay in Bumthang was in the tourist off-season with us the only guests at the hotel and the next guest arriving two weeks later. On the night before our departure, the general manager told us that the High Lama of the Eastern Provinces (the second highest ranking in Bhutan) was staying over on his way to meet up with the Chief Abbot in the capital. He alerted us as the convoy arrived at 8pm and we lined up with all the staff to receive his blessings.

The next morning when he left at 5am, our guide was again in line to receive some holy material to share with us.

The rest of our journey covered many more historical as well as spiritual places across Bhutan. We are grateful for the kindness of the Bhutanese people who embraced us to help broaden our practice. In reflecting on the timeless environment of snow-capped mountain peaks, endless forests, people without technology walking long distances existing with the environment facilitated greater appreciation of how we should live every day.



Food Fair 2012

Our Annual Food Fair, the major fund raiser for the Association was held on July 29. Unlike previous years, the weather was kind to us and we had no need to worry about rain spoiling our day.

Very quickly the Community Centre was transformed into a food court. Tables were brought put and set up by our group of volunteers and very soon those preparing food had places to set up their stoves and containers of ingredients. By 10:00 the hall was filled with the smells of spices and the clatter of happy cooks going about their work. Dishes from Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka were busily being created. Outside, the smoke from chilli and garlic oil filled the air along with the aroma of satays on the grill. Within no time patrons began arriving and soon the hall was a buzz with people enjoying tasty meals and good conversation with their friends. The patrons kept coming and so did the food.

As always, the desert stalls were enormously popular and the team selling Kueh had created a Great Wall of China with their prepared boxes of sweet delights. The Ice Kachang stall was also ready with containers waiting to be filled with shaved ice and toppings to be taken by eager customers.

Entertainment again was provided by Jerry on organ and Bruce on accordion. They played a range of popular Malayan and western hits

At the front of the hall a White Elephant stall was set up and patrons who were not eating browsed among the household items and book for bargains. The Association stall also had a range of book on display on Buddhist topics and a video showing the property at Wingello that has recently purchase as the base for its Vejjasala Project.

The Committee would like to thank the friends and supporters who made the day so successful and our patrons who contributed to the work of the Association through their purchases. More photos from the Food Fair are posted on the Association website, so pay a visit and see if you or your friends are there.

Volunteers Needed for Research Project

Michelle Dean is an Honours student in Psychology at Sydney University who is undertaking a research study into mindfulness meditation. Michelle is looking for experienced meditators and she contacted the Association to see if any of our members would be willing to participate in her project. Participation involves completing online questionnaires and would take up to 30 minutes. This is how Michelle describes the project:

Mindfulness meditation has been found to be a beneficial treatment for those with mental and physical illnesses, along with showing improvements in stress, well-being and immune functioning in healthy populations. However, there is still much to learn about how mindfulness practices help to achieve these important benefits. At present a research opportunity exists to examine how mindfulness affects emotion processing.

This research involves testing people who are experienced in meditation to see if regular mindfulness practice makes a difference to emotion processing. The study is an online study and would take no longer than 30 minutes. Participants will be asked to complete some questionnaires on mindfulness and depression, anxiety and stress level, and complete a reaction time task. Your participation in this study may help to answer some of these questions of how mindfulness works. The study is confidential and completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw at any time.

To participate, please email Michelle at mdea5443@uni.sydney.edu.au. She will send you the participant information sheet and the link to complete the study.

Forthcoming Retreats at Vejjasala

Retreat August 24-26.

This will be a weekend Healing Meditation Retreat led by Ven. Tejadhammo. The theme and purpose of this long-weekend retreat is to explore the experience of suffering,

sickness, illness, disease, dis-ease, pain and the nature of the suffering inherent within these in the light of the teaching & life experience of the Buddha. We will attempt to offer a Buddhist path for establishing or regaining health, wholeness and healing through concrete practices and methods which have their origins in the life and teaching of the Buddha. We will seek to overcome our natural fear and aversion to the suffering of illness and disease and to establish instead some spacious ease and courageous vision.

We will work in a slow, gentle and supportive way to introduce and make methods taught by the Buddha and various schools and traditions of Buddhism available to all participants. People will leave the retreat with some solid ways of practise which they can explore, deepen and develop in their own time

Notes & guidelines of practices will be provided for all participants. All are welcome whether experienced or new meditators, and whether practicing Buddhists or not.

Retreat September 28-October 1

Teachers Grahame White and Dhammaruwan will be leading a retreat on "Untangling the Entanglements" from September 28-October 1. Discovering the way to genuine happiness through the practice of Vipassana "Mindfulness" Meditation.

During this weekend course, the basic instructions in insight meditation will be given sequentially, starting with the focus on mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, of emotions, and of thoughts of the mind. We will also explore strategies for successfully bringing the meditation practice into our daily life, helping us to untangle the entanglements. Experienced teacher Sue Toohey will be offering optional gentle yoga sessions at both retreats. For further information and registration, please email sanghalodgeretreat@gmail.com or go to the website www.engagedbuddhists.org.au

Caroline Lurie - Retreat Co-ordinator



Quotable Quotes

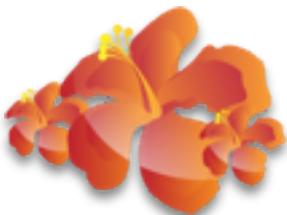
Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.

Albert Einstein

Dhamma Blossoms

As a well trained horse needs no whip, a well trained mind needs no prodding from the world to be good.

Be like a well-trained horse, swift and spirited, and go beyond sorrow through faith, meditation and energetic practice of the dhamma



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.

With the Winter months ahead perhaps our work in the garden will slow down. What a good time to reflect on our gardening and the many meanings that it can have for us. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that each of us is a child of the Earth and that at some time the Earth will take us back again. He points out that when we practice meditation we should be able to see birth and death in every breath.



Gardening

Earth brings us into life and nourishes us.

Earth takes us back again.

Birth and death are present in every moment

Thich Nhat Hanh

Present Moment Wonderful Moment

A Reader Recommends

This month's recommendation comes from Sue Toohey, a long time member of the Association and now our President.

[Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food](#) by Jan Chozen Bays, Shambhala Publications 2009

The publisher says the following about the book:

The art of mindfulness can transform our struggles with food—and renew our sense of pleasure, appreciation, and satisfaction with eating. Drawing on recent research and integrating her experiences as a physician and meditation teacher, Dr. Jan Bays offers a wonderfully clear presentation of what mindfulness is and how it can help with food issues.



Mindful eating is an approach that involves bringing one's full attention to the process of eating—to all the tastes, smells, thoughts, and feelings that arise during a meal. Whether you are overweight, suffer from an eating disorder, or just want to get more out of life, this book offers a simple tool that can make a remarkable difference.

Mindful Eating also includes a 75-minute audio CD containing guided exercises led by the author.

<http://www.shambhala.com/html/catalog/items/isbn/978-1-59030-531-7.cfm>

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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.

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.

