



# 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 April 2014*

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## The Many Paths to Dhamma Studies

This year the Association is offering a new approach to Dhamma alongside those things which we have been offering for many years. We will still be offering our retreats and teaching at Sangha Lodge and Vejjasala. Visiting teachers are still an important part of our programmes. The visiting teacher programme at Sangha Lodge is a most valuable gift to our members and friends given on a monthly basis. This is a chance to hear the Dhamma/Dharma from a variety of points of view. The support and service offered to the sick and dying will continue as it has for many years now. A number of new

visiting teachers have been invited and have accepted our invitation for this year. I am very excited and happy about this and would hope that you would support them by attending and showing your real interest when they are scheduled. I have just returned from New Zealand where I was teaching at the Buddhist Studies Summer School in Auckland. This is an initiative of the late Most Venerable Traleg Rinpoche and brings together teachers from a range of Buddhist traditions to offer wonderful Dhamma teaching to those attending. This opportunity to hear visiting teachers is such a special and precious thing. Not many years ago in Sydney such a thing would have been almost inconceivable since teachers were so few in number and hard to find. We live in difficult but also rewarding times. We should also recall with great gratitude those teachers in the past who made the Dhamma available to all when the teaching of the Buddha was still very new in Australia (and in the Western world).

The new and exciting offering for this year from the Association will be an opportunity to practise and study Dhamma in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere at Vejjasala our retreat centre in the Southern Highlands. This is not a formal retreat but rather a way to spend time with others in study, exploration, discussion, contemplation, meditation and a spirit of real metta. These weekends will be offered throughout the year in the hope that they will provide a way for those interested to deepen and share their understanding of the teaching of the Buddha. We begin by looking at issues around current social issues. What are the issues involved? We will be exploring questions such as; What are your own views and what are their foundations? What might "Buddhism" (Orthodox/Cultural) have to say? What does the Buddha say? Where do I stand? What do I know? You are invited to attend any of these weekends and indeed wholeheartedly encouraged to do so. So



often over many years people have asked me to explain (usually in a few & often inappropriate minutes!) very important and difficult teachings of the Buddha. Sometimes this questioning is driven by a serious desire to understand and to develop one's practice but sometimes I am sure the answers offered are soon forgotten in the swirl of "information" in which we currently live because no personal effort was made to study the teaching, struggle with it and come to a solid understanding within one's own heart and mind. Perhaps you would consider the following words of Bhikku Bodhi as to why it is so important to make an effort to study the dhamma of the Buddha and not just rely on bits and pieces of teaching, cultural accretions and personal prejudices or views.

"The recent upsurge of interest in Buddhism, both East and West, has been marked by a vigorous practical orientation and a drive to discover the peace and freedom to which the practice of Dhamma leads. This zeal for practice, however, has often been accompanied by another trait which may not be so fruitful, namely, a tendency to neglect or even belittle the methodical study of the Buddha's teachings. The arguments offered in defense of this attitude have already become familiar currency among us. It is said, for example, that study is concerned with words and concepts, not with realities; that it leads only to learning, not to wisdom; that it can change only our ideas but fails to touch us at the deeper levels of our lives. To clinch the case the testimony of the Buddha himself is enlisted, with his famous remarks that to learn much without practicing is like counting the cows of others or like carrying a raft on one's head instead of using it to cross the

stream. This contention, to be sure, has its aspect of truth, but also suffers from a one-sided emphasis which may actually thwart rather than aid our progress on the Buddhist path. It is certainly true that learning without practice is fruitless, but the other side of the issue also should be considered. Should a person gather cows if he knows nothing about how to take care of them? Should he try to cross a rough and dangerous river without knowing how to operate a raft? The Buddha himself insisted that his followers learn and transmit the Dhamma both in the letter and the spirit, but rather than appealing to traditional formulations, let us inquire ourselves into the value and function of Dhamma study.

The point at issue, it must be stressed, is not study as an academic discipline or the accumulation of a wealth of learning, but the acquisition of a sound and solid working knowledge of the basic Buddhist doctrines. Now to see why this is so essential, we must recall that the entire practice of the proper Buddhist path develops out of the act through which we enter the path — the going for refuge to the Triple Gem. If we have taken this step honestly, with correct motivation, it implies that we have acknowledged our need for spiritual guidance and have entrusted ourselves to the Buddha as our guide and to his teaching as our vehicle of guidance. By taking refuge in the Dhamma we accept not merely a technique of meditation that we can use at liberty for our own self-appointed purposes, but a profound and comprehensive teaching on the true nature of the human condition, a teaching designed to awaken in us a perception of this truth as the means for reaching the full and final end of

suffering. The liberation offered by the Dhamma comes, not from simply practicing meditation in the context of our own preconceptions and desires, but from practicing upon the groundwork of the right understanding and right intentions communicated to us by the Buddha.

This cognitive character of the Buddhist path elevates doctrinal study and intellectual inquiry to a position of great importance. Though the knowledge that frees the mind from bondage emerges only from intuitive insight and not from a mass of doctrinal facts, genuine insight always develops on the basis of a preliminary conceptual grasp of the basic principles essential to right understanding, in the absence of which its growth will inevitably be obstructed. The study and systematic reflection through which we arrive at this preparatory right view necessarily involve concepts and ideas. But before we hasten to dismiss Dhamma study as being therefore only a worthless tangle of verbiage, let us consider that concepts and ideas are our indispensable tools of understanding and communication. Concepts, however, can be valid and invalid tools of understanding; ideas can be fruitful or useless, capable of bringing immense benefit or of entailing enormous harm. The object of studying the Dhamma as part of our spiritual quest is to learn to comprehend our experience correctly: to be able to distinguish the valid from the invalid, the true from the false, the wholesome from the unwholesome.

It is only by making a thorough and careful investigation that we will be in a position to reject what is detrimental to our growth and to apply ourselves with confidence to cultivating what is truly





beneficial. Without having reached this preliminary conceptual clarification, without having succeeded in "straightening out our views," there can indeed be the earnest practice of Buddhist meditation techniques, but there will not be the practice of the meditation pertaining to the integral Noble Eightfold Path. And while such free-based meditation may bring its practitioners the mundane benefits of greater calm, awareness and equanimity, lacking the guidance of right view and the driving power of right motivation, it is questionable whether it can lead to the penetrative realization of the Dhamma, or to its final goal, the complete cessation of suffering.

It is almost impossible to give a single word of counsel on the subject of study applicable to all followers of the Dhamma. Needs and interests vary so greatly from one person to another that each will have to strike the balance between study and practice that suits his or her own disposition. But without hesitation it can be said that all who earnestly endeavor to live by the Buddha's teaching will find their practice strengthened by the methodical study of his Dhamma. Such an undertaking, of course, will not be easy, but it is just through facing and surmounting the challenges we meet that our understanding will ripen and mature in the higher wisdom." ~ From *The Case for Study* by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year filled with the blessings of the Dhamma.

With much metta and gratitude

**Bhante Tejadhhammo**

## Nalanda Weekend at Vejjasala

On the 7-9 March a Nalanda weekend led by the Venerable Bhante Tejadhhammo took place at Wingello. Although the event appeared to be like a retreat it was not, but why Nalanda? Venerable Tejadhhammo explained that Nalanda was established in the fifth century AD in Bihar, India Founded in 427 in northeastern India, not far from what is today the southern border of Nepal, it survived until 1197. It was devoted to Buddhist studies, but it also trained students in fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics and the art of war. The center had eight separate compounds, ten temples, meditation halls, classrooms, lakes and parks. It had a nine-story library where monks meticulously copied books and documents so that individual scholars could have their own collections. It had dormitories for students, perhaps a first for an educational institution, housing 10,000 students in the university's heyday and providing accommodation for 2,000 professors. Nalanda University attracted pupils and scholars from Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Persia and Turkey. Unfortunately it was burnt down by Muslims.

Venerable Tejadhhammo explained that this weekend was going to be called Nalanda and it was going to be one of reflexion, meditation, presentation of material for discussion, exchange of ideas, and yoga sessions by Sue Toohey. He expects to have more Nalanda weekends in the future and looks

forward to them being exciting, interesting, valuable, intellectually and spiritually enriching.

During the Nalanda, Venerable Tejadhhammo presented to the group issues about the nature of death, the distinction between body, mind and consciousness and the criteria to determine when a person is really dead, metaphysical issues around death were also covered all in the light of Buddhism. What is suicide and what is euthanasia and how our Lord Buddha saw these were covered, also various Suttas were discussed like the Vol. I Suttavibhanga.

We had very stimulating group discussions and we viewed two movies and one documentary. Both movies were thought provoking and presented very confronting issues. One of the movies was "Maude and Harold" and the other "Amour". The documentary dealt with the use of technology not to make the patient better but to stop death.

One thing that is very clear and that we all must keep in mind is that we are sentient beings and for our Lord Buddha we are very important because we can become enlightened. We need to be clear about euthanasia and leave aside our emotive ideas and remember that the end of suffering does not mean to end a life.

**Beatriz Copello**





# Association News

*Sue Toohey*

## A New Committee Member

At our first committee meeting of the year the Committee welcomed a new member to fill the vacant 7th place. Many of you will know Lalith Gunasinghe as he is a regular at Wednesday night meditation. Lalith brings with him strong connections to the Sri Lankan Buddhist community and in the past has arranged for out retreats to be publicised on the Lankarama website. He will be a very welcome addition to the committee in 2014. Committee meetings are open to all members and we welcome anyone who wants to sit in on a meeting. If you would like to see how the management committee operates please join us at 1pm on the first Sunday in the month, following the Dana day get-together.

## New Year Picnic

Our New Year picnic was held on 23rd February at the beautiful picnic grounds in Cumberland State Forest. Our annual picnic is held as a thank you to all of the workers at our annual food fair - many of whom are not members of the association but who contribute so much on the day simply because they want to do something good for the community. The weather was perfect - no rain, not too cold, not too hot. Satay Lady, Zaidah, cooked her delectable satay sticks and we sizzled some sausages on the BBQ. Jerry and the Band brought their instruments and their song sheets and led a sing-along after lunch, with many enthusiastic participants - the video evidence will no doubt surface on YouTube in due course. Over lunch we were joined by a splendid kookaburra who deigned to share Bhante's sausage.

## New Year Visit from Phuoc Hue Monastery

Bhante has had a long connection with the Vietnamese Buddhist community and the Phuoc Hue Monastery in western Sydney. Every year the Abbot of Phuoc Hue invites Bhante to give a sustained series of teachings to the monks and nuns of Phuoc Hue as part of their intensive practice during the Rains retreat. This year the temple asked us if they could make a new year visit to Sangha Lodge and pay their respects to Bhante in his home temple. We agreed that this would be fine but then discovered that they planned to bring 180 lay members plus all their Sangha members and would be arriving in 4 large buses. Molly Lim, who coordinated the visit, had to explain that there was no way that Sangha Lodge could hold 200 people. We compromised by taking all of the visitors in 4 groups, with the Sangha members remaining present throughout. Bhante gave a new year blessing to each group and then together with the small number of our members who had come to help with the organization, we chanted a little for them and then they chanted (most beautifully) a new year blessing for us. We offered everyone a drink, everyone had their photo taken and it was on to the next group. Passers by in the street looked a bit surprised and one bold small boy wormed his way inside to try and get a look at what was happening - fortunately Lachlan was nearby and lifted him on to his shoulders so that he could see the strange goings on!

## Bhante takes a personal retreat in 2014

In April - May this year Bhante will undertake a personal retreat at Sangha

Retreat, near Limoges, in France.

Sangha Retreat is a relatively new Buddhist retreat centre that has been established by UK Buddhists in the beautiful Limousin region of France. The retreat centre buildings are gradually being converted from old 19th century farm buildings. You can find out more about the centre on the web at <http://sangharetreat.co.uk>.

Bhante will be away for approximately 6 weeks, leaving on 15th April and returning at the end of May. At the request of the Sangha team at Sangha Retreat, Bhante will offer some days of teaching there after completing his personal retreat.

If you would like to make a contribution to the costs of Bhante's retreat, please talk to Sue Toohey at Sangha Lodge or if you would like to make a direct transfer see the account details at the end of the newsletter and make your donation to the general account. Please mark your donation as Bhante - Retreat.

## Coming retreats at Vejjasala

*Healing Meditation Retreat 11-13 April:*  
AEB Healing meditation retreat led by Ven Tejadhammo. These retreats, which are focused on meditation to assist healing for those with serious or chronic illness always fill quickly.

*The Healing Power of Words 9-11 May*  
with Dr Beatriz Copello. This workshop will focus on writing as an aid to healing. Keeping a diary has been shown to have a powerful influence on healing and psychological studies have found that expressive writing reduces stress, decreases symptoms, strengthens immune systems, and shortens recovery periods.

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### *...Coming Retreats at Vejjasala (cont.)*

Writing with others is inspirational, fun and beneficial. During the workshop people will have the chance to meditate, reflect on life issues and learn various techniques to put words onto paper.

Dr Beatriz Copello is a practicing Buddhist and former secretary of the Engaged Buddhist Association. She is a psychologist with many years of experience in counselling, particularly in trauma counselling. Beatriz is also an award-winning writer. Among her works are 4 books of poetry, two novels and a play performed at the Belvoir Street Theatre. Her poetry has been translated in various languages and published overseas.

Registration for this workshop is not yet available but you might like to put the date in your diary and look out for registration details in the near future.

### **Cooks Wanted for Retreats**

We are still looking for Cooks for some of our scheduled retreats this year. For the coming Nalanda Weekend we are experimenting with a system where we have a team of cooks and each individual takes responsibility for one meal. That way food can be prepared on the spot or at home beforehand. If this seems more manageable to you contact us to talk about it ([office@engagedbuddhists.org.au](mailto:office@engagedbuddhists.org.au)). We have recipes and menu plans available. Remember there can be no retreats without food!

### **Updates to Buildings & Grounds at Vejjasala**

While Bruce Chatfield is currently away in India, David Denton has taken on numerous jobs in the buildings and



grounds at Vejjasala. Some of the tasks that Dave has undertaken include:

- dealt with a poplar tree that fell down (signs of termite damage) and sawed up wood. We are also arranging a new termite inspection.
- repaired the umbrella that shades the new deck.
- installed a skylight in the electric kitchen.
- replaced most of the old toilet cisterns. This became necessary after we discovered that some of these old cisterns had slow leaks, which were causing a loss of much of our precious tank water. There are now no leaks.

A big thank you to Dave for all his work. In addition, Lachlan Warner has organized replacements for the foam mattresses which were very worn, so all beds at Vejjasala should now have a good quality innerspring mattress.

### **New Ride-On Mower**

Feast your eyes on this sexy machine! This is our new ride-on mower, delivered yesterday. If you've visited Vejjasala you will be aware that there are large expanses of open grassland. Even though these are planted with native grasses which do not grow as prolifically as many lawn varieties they do need regular mowing. The Chinese Buddhist Association left us a ride on mower but it had been well-used, broke down frequently and was near the end of its life. Constant attention from mechanic and Association member, Dave Denton has kept it going until now but in February the committee decided to take the plunge and purchase a replacement. I am sure Dave would welcome any volunteers who would like to learn how to use it!



### **Healthy Living Festival at Roselea Community Centre**

Roselea Community Centre - the venue for many of our past food fairs was closed all last year for renovations. Hornsby Council is celebrating the re-opening with a Healthy Living Festival. The festival Launch takes place on Sunday 16th March 10am-4.00pm. As a long time user of Roselea Community Centre we have been asked to take a stall so we will have a stall that offers Popiah (Malaysian rice paper rolls) for sale, with information about the Association and its activities & copies of our vegetarian cook book for sale. Lean Lee, Meredith Tan and friends are taking care of the food, Gus Reale & Frank Storey will be looking after information and cookbook sales. Please stop by if you are in the area and support our stall holders. This looks like a really fun event for all – activities include rock climbing, learning circus skills, and powering your own smoothie with cycle power! See details of the festival here

<http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/my-lifestyle/events/healthy-living-festival-taster>

Hornsby Council is providing a free shuttle bus to the festival from Epping Station. Details of the timetable are on the website.

### **Fundraising Lunch at the Marigold**

Tickets and whole tables are selling very well for our planned lunch at the Marigold Restaurant on Saturday 30 August. The majority of these tickets have been sold to members and supporters from other Buddhist groups, so please make sure there is a strong contingent present from Sangha Lodge. Our treasurer, Lean Lee has tickets or you can order through our web-site – [www.engagedbuddhists.org.au](http://www.engagedbuddhists.org.au)

# Quotable Quotes

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

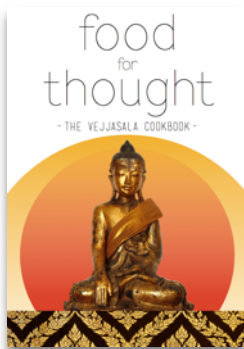
T.S. Eliot: English poet 1888-1965

## 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@primus.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.

## Sangha Lodge Fund Raising Lunch 2014

Hosted by the Association of Engaged Buddhists

Planning to have lunch out with family and friends? Or hosting your clients and associates? Or celebrating a birthday? Or do we need a reason? Get a table or more on the day! Or come along yourself or with friends and enjoy a wonderful lunch in the company of friends and LIVE MUSIC.

Join us at our lunch at THE MARIGOLD RESTAURANT, 683-689, Fifth Floor, George Street, Sydney

On SATURDAY, 30 AUGUST at 11 am

WITH LIVE MUSIC!!!!!!!!!!!!

... all for a good cause. Help us to continue the good work of the Association – our meditation retreats, teachings, counseling, Chaplaincy work, to mention a few. When registering, please indicate whether you prefer Vegetarian or Non Vegetarian lunch

Cost: \$50 per person

Email: [office@engagedbuddhists.org.au](mailto:office@engagedbuddhists.org.au)

"Generosity brings happiness at every stage of its expression. We experience joy in forming the intention to be generous. We experience joy in the actual act of giving something. And we experience joy in remembering the fact that we have given." *Gautama Buddha*

## 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.

### Going to Sleep

Falling asleep at last

I vow with all beings

To enjoy the dark and silence

And rest in the vast unknown

Robert Aitkin

*The Dragon Who Never Sleeps.*





## Dhamma Blossoms

by Geshe Langri Thangpa (1054 - 1123),

By thinking of all sentient beings  
As more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel  
For accomplishing the highest aim,  
I will always hold them dear.

Whenever I'm in the company of others,  
I will regard myself as the lowest among all,  
And from the depths of my heart  
Cherish others as supreme.

In my every action, I will watch my mind,  
And the moment destructive emotions arise,  
I will confront them strongly and avert them,  
Since they will hurt both me and others.

Whenever I see ill-natured beings,  
Or those overwhelmed by heavy misdeeds or  
suffering,  
I will cherish them as something rare,  
As though I'd found a priceless treasure.

Whenever someone out of envy  
Does me wrong by attacking or belittling me,  
I will take defeat upon myself,  
And give the victory to others.

Even when someone I have helped,  
Or in whom I have placed great hopes  
Mistreats me very unjustly,  
I will view that person as a true spiritual teacher.

In brief, directly or indirectly,  
I will offer help and happiness to all my mothers,  
And secretly take upon myself  
All their hurt and suffering.

I will learn to keep all these practices  
Untainted by thoughts of the eight worldly  
concerns.  
May I recognize all things as like illusions,  
And, without attachment, gain freedom from  
bondage.

Rigpa Translations. Revised 2012.

<http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/geshe-langri-thangpa/eight-verses-training-mind>



## 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.

