



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, October 8, 2017

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Generosity - Giving and Receiving by Jill Shepherd

Jill Shepherd is a lay Dhamma teacher who regularly teaches meditation and leads retreats in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. We always invite Jill to teach at Sangha Lodge when she is in Australia as her teaching is very highly regarded by our members and friends. In this teaching, given in 2013, Jill explores the receiving side of the giving and receiving equation.

Right now, I'm assisting my friend Greg Scharf teach a two week retreat at the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre in New South Wales, Australia. And right about now, the annual three-month retreat at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, has just got under

way. So I've been appreciating the synchronicity of these two events, knowing that as we meditate together in the hall here in Australia, on the other side of the world another hundred or so people are joining us in the "psychosphere," if that's a word!

I also realised that it's now ten years since I sat my first three-month retreat at IMS. When I arrived at IMS for the first time in September 2003, walked under the portico inscribed with the word Metta, and pushed open the heavy old front door, I had no idea what I was stepping into. But those three months of intensive meditation practice have been the single most transformative event of my life to date, and now, ten years on, as I remember that time I'm filled with deep gratitude.

There's something very poignant for me about being back at the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Cen-

tre, too, because it was the community here in the Blue Mountains that made it possible to attend the IMS three-month retreat. So today, I feel moved to acknowledge that connection by sharing the story of how that opportunity came to be.

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I used to be one of the managers here at BMIMC, from 2000 – 2003, then I continued part time for a couple of years after that. Prior to taking on the manager's position, I had been working as an architect in Melbourne, Victoria, and I gave up my job to come and live here at the centre. Back then, the role was part-time and it offered only a small stipend, so I suddenly had a lot less money than I was used to. I didn't own a car, and I didn't know anybody in New South Wales. But from the moment I arrived, people from the community whom I hardly knew were very generous. They brought me warm clothes. They took me out for meals. They drove me to town to do the shopping. They offered me free dental treatment. And they let me stay in their holiday cottage by the beach, to name just a very few examples.

In one way it was beautiful to be on the receiving end of so much generosity, but it also showed up a lot of my conditioning about being self-reliant and independent. I saw how I felt much more comfortable being the one offering generosity, than the one receiving it, because I had an unconscious belief that receiving things from others made me somehow inferior to them.

As I explored the Buddha's teachings in more depth though, I started to recognise all of these beliefs as forms of Wrong View. I saw my attachment to being strong and self-reliant, and my fear of being dependent on or beholden to other people. Gradually, through bringing awareness to them, these views started to dissolve and I was able to accept what people offered me with genuine appreciation for their generosity.

But then, towards the end of my tenure as manager, it felt as if they really "upped the ante," as they say, and my capacity to receive kindness got an even bigger workout. After three years of being the manager, I felt ready to do some longer-term meditation practice. Although I'd spent some time practising in Thailand, I didn't feel ready to do a long retreat in Asia, and the only other place I knew of that offered longer retreats was the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts. I looked on-line at their three-month retreat and it seemed very expensive by Australian standards. Back then, the Australian dollar was worth a lot less too, so by the time I'd added in the cost of the airfare and dana for the teachers, it just seemed financially impossible.

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Enjoying the generosity of our retreat cooks at Vejjasala

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A few days later, I was having a cup of tea with someone from the BMIMC Management Committee and we started talking about the benefits of longer-term retreat practice. I mentioned my interest in doing the three-month retreat to him, but that it seemed impossible because of the cost. He thought for a moment, then suggested that we put something in the BMIMC newsletter to "see what might happen." I felt a bit guilty about putting myself out there like that, but reluctantly agreed, because I didn't really think anything would come of it.

I was wrong though. After the newsletter went out, donations started to arrive from people from the Blue Mountains, from Sydney, and beyond – including people I hadn't even met. One woman from New Zealand sent a cheque with a note enclosed, saying that she had done the three-month retreat at IMS many years ago, and she wanted me to have the same opportunity.

It was quite overwhelming, and at first I noticed a sense of cringe whenever a donation came in. I'd think: "I'm not worthy. Those people need their money more than I do. I'm not good enough to practice at IMS anyway. What if I don't

make it through the retreat? I'll have to give them their money back." It was painful, but finally I recognised that meeting people's generosity with that kind of cringing response was in some ways, quite disrespectful. It wasn't acknowledging or honouring their generosity, and it felt wrong to meet their kindness with such inner stinginess. So I made the choice to NOT do that. If I was going to accept their donations, I decided to do it as consciously and graciously as possible. And to cut a long story short, eventually I was able to go to the United States and sit the three-month retreat at IMS in 2003.

But that wasn't the end of my learning about generosity. While I was on retreat, I would think about how many people had sent money in for me to be there, and it was a huge motivation to keep practising. I thought about members of the Burmese community in Sydney, for example, who I knew were not wealthy, but had sent donations to help me do the retreat. Then at those times when I didn't feel like getting up to do the first sitting in the morning, I'd go anyway, because it would have felt mean-spirited to not make the extra effort.

So the material generosity that they gave me translated into a different

kind of support, a sort of spiritual support, that was perhaps even more powerful than the money they offered. At the end of each day on retreat, I wrote a thank-you card to one of the people on my donor list, and offered them whatever benefit might have come from that day of practice. Even now, I still feel like crying when I remember what it was like to receive all of their dana, on so many levels.

I wanted to share this story because it shows how generosity might start with offering money or gifts to someone, but it's the openness of heart and openness of mind that makes it a truly transformative experience. And being able to appreciate what one receives is another facet of generosity which is often overlooked. The Buddha recognised this in one of his teachings from the Anguttara Nikaya, where he talked about what a rare quality appreciation is. He said: "These two people are hard to find in the world. Which two? The one who is first to do a kindness, and the one who is grateful and thankful for a kindness done."

May we all experience the benefits of giving and receiving generosity ...

Jill Shepherd

"Techno Dukkha / Techno Mara"

My device is better than yours
7 techno men like 7 heads
one for each day of the week
it makes me weep
love so deep for the screen
light beams and buzz
from Lord Google or Apple up
above .

Oh , my dear Android Self
I need a little help
I can't turn it off
or I will miss out
on all the twitter and tears .
Blessed Instagram and Facebook joy
smart phone beloved toy .
Help I cannot stop
the turn and churn
info overload mother's milk
doctored with the fake.

It all seems so real or
am I mesmerised with U Tube ?
is it big brother creep , static in the
void ,
Mara laughing , Dharma blues ?
How can I resist the pleasure and
pain
the infatuating refrain ?

Gus Reale



Association News

K K Lim

Bhante's Health

Bhante Tejadhammo has been able to return to teach on Wednesday night and Dana Day. He also spent most of the day at the Food Fair meeting with people who attended as well as chatting with stallholders and volunteers.

Since the end of last year, Bhante had been battling a number of afflictions that caused him continuing pain and rendered it impossible for him to be present at the events that he usually attends. The medications and treatments that were prescribed at times added to the physiological difficulties.

The AEB community and supporters responded speedily over the period with generous financial and messages of support. Whilst some of the symptoms continue, Bhante is able to regain better mobility and is looking forward to greater interaction with the community again.

Bhante Pandit's Visit

Bhante Pandit left Sydney on 5 June after two months stay at Sangha Lodge returning to his work in Bangkok. During his stay, he kept his normal busy schedule with teaching and meditation almost daily at Sangha Lodge, the Buddhist Library and other Buddhist centres. In addition, his two retreats at Vejjasala were fully attended with great enthusiasm followed up by a film show and discussion on the last Saturday of his stay.

His style of teaching in working with the community has generated further interest in the learning of the Dhamma. He has said that he hopes to be able to come again next year, possibly for a longer period.

We thank him with much gratitude!

Sister Ani Pema

We have recently had a new guest at Sangha Lodge, Ani Pema, an Australian nun who is staying for a short period. She was ordained in Bhutan almost 17 years ago in the Tibetan tradition. Later, she ordained in the Chinese tradition as a bhikuni in Taiwan. Prior to relocating back to Sydney, she lived and practiced meditation at a monastery in Thailand and worked with young people in a retreat centre which helped those recovering from addictions. She has now left Sangha Lodge to take up residence with another nun from the Tibetan tradition at Lawson in the Blue Mountains.

Kindness for Friends

We are aware of several members of our community who have been unwell or have had medical procedures. Please send kind thoughts to them – “may they be well, may they be healthy, may they be happy”.

Guest Teachers on Wednesdays

The range of teachers who delivered teachings on Wednesday nights was wonderful as usual. They included David O’Rose, Eng Kong Tan,

Chand Sirimani, Sue Toohey, K K Lim, Tina Ng, Venerable Bom Hyon Sunim, Lynne Bousfield, Gawaine Powell, Jill Shepherd and Bhante Tejadhammo.

The Association is blessed to have the support of so many good dharma teachers to share their experiences with the community.

Sadhu sadhu sadhu!

Annual Food Fair 2017

Our annual Food Fair was held on 30 July this year. It was the fantastic event that has been in many people’s calendars with great food, music and lots of other stuff from the white elephant stall. The volunteers and stallholders with Alex Lee’s coordination, put in another tremendous effort that provided a fabulous day. Entertainment by Jerry Tan and his band rounded up a joyful outing for everyone capped by a bright sunny day!

Monday Night Meditation

You may not be aware that we have meditation evenings on Mondays at 7.30pm. The evening starts with some chanting followed by 45 minutes of silent sitting.

It is a wonderful way to enhance your practice. No booking needed. Those interested please turn up by commencement time or phone 02-80217944.

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Association News (cont.)

KK Lim

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Volunteering Opportunities

In keeping with one of its mission, the Association can facilitate various programmes for members and supporters to volunteer for:

- Helping out at Sangha Lodge or Vejjasala for maintenance, cleaning, administration and other support duties
- Teaching English to student and adult refugees/migrants
- Visiting elderly people to help with daily chores or keep company
- Teaching Buddhism or ethics to children in primary schools

Anyone interested can seek further details by writing to office@engagedbuddhists.org.au

Getting The News!

Do you know that the best way to keep updated on what the AEB does is to:

- put your name on our email list
- check the website regularly
- follow us on Facebook and Meet-up.

KK Lim

September 2017

Annual General Meeting of the Association of Engaged Buddhists

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 11am on Sunday 5th November 2017 (within the Dana day). The business for this meeting includes:

- Presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statements
- Election of a new Management Committee for 2018

All are welcome to attend. Voting is limited to paid-up members. Members who have been members of the Association for more than

one year are entitled to stand for committee. There are 7 positions on the Management Committee and the Immediate Past President is also included as an ex officio member. If there are more nominations for the Committee than there are positions, an election will be held at the AGM.

Please consider making a contribution to the Association by joining the Committee. The Association is always in need of new people and new ideas.





Vejjasala's Former Pine Forest

Louise Egerton

The commercial pine forest on the southern side of the Vejjasala property was logged last year, together with a neighbour's property. Our hope and intention is to re-establish the cleared area as native forest. Louise Egerton has enlisted us in a Shire Council scheme that supports the regeneration of native forest and she reports here on progress in keeping the cleared land free of pine seedlings so that native plants have a chance to re-grow.

I thought I'd give all of those who are interested a rundown of activity in the logged forest over the winter.

I discovered that Caroline Lurie, Sue & Lean (from the committee) had been in touch with another local Buddhist, Meg. Through a mutual friend, Patrika, I discovered that Meg had been pulling out pine wildlings in the plot, just as I had but we hadn't known about each other. So... in the last month Meg, Patrika and I have been pulling out little pine trees all over the area and we think we've made an impact.

By Patrika's reckoning she pulled out at least 400 little devils in a single session. Doing a few sums we reckon at least 6,800 pines have been lifted. We've been reasonably systematic, working the area to the left of Zac's plot so it should be relatively free and more recently, the triangular area where the tree ferns are. The main area straight out from the

retreat centre has been worked but is a large area and could definitely benefit from further pine-pulling should anyone be so inclined.

The two annual weeds, Fleabane and Scotch Thistle, are showing signs of life and I'm going to contact the Council's weed officer for advice about how best to deal with these plants but the good news is that the natural regeneration is looking very encouraging. There seems to be considerable diversity everywhere.

The 3 of us are all off to various places for the next few weeks but

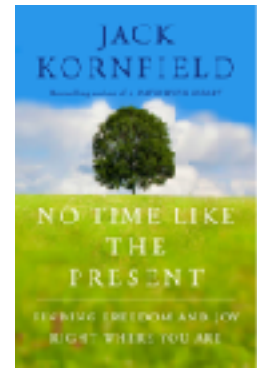
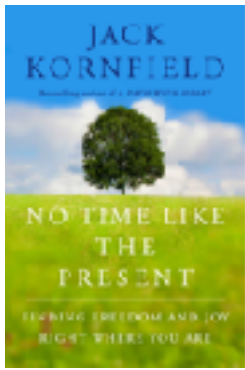
plan to re-group soon. When visitors return in the Spring perhaps we can join another working bee if you think anybody would be interested.

Cheers

Louise

Well done Louise, Meg and Patrika! 6,800 pine seedlings is an enormous number to have removed – we hope your backs haven't suffered too much in the process. We will keep everyone posted on future working bees.





Book Review

No Time Like the Present by Jack Kornfield

Many of our members have enjoyed and recommended the writings of Jack Kornfield. In his latest work, *No Time Like the Present: Finding Freedom, Love, and Joy Right Where You Are*, Jack presents a timely—and timeless—message: we can be happy and free at any moment, no matter what our circumstances, even in periods of great change, whether chaotic or peaceful. In fact, when times are difficult, full of upheaval, it is the perfect moment to open your mind and heart and to draw upon the inner power of courage, mindfulness and compassion. And there is no time like the present.

In the current climate of uncertainty and fear, with rising incivility and violence, Jack's teachings are critical. His stories, practices and meditations bring an uplifting perspective and clarity of vision. He shows us how to inhabit inner peace, freedom, and joy and then respond meaningfully to the times with loving kindness and confident action. These teachings inspire us to transform ourselves and bring our awakened heart to the world. They show that with compassion we can stand against hate, and stand for respect and for the protection of the vulnerable. With wisdom, in place of greed, fear, and ignorance, we can choose generosity, dignity, and respect.

Increase in the Annual Membership Fee

It's that time again – time to renew your Association membership. Membership numbers is one thing that the government (both the Department of Fair Trading and the relatively new Charities Commission) is interested in when collecting information on Australian charities. The greater the number of paid up members, the more likely it is that the registered charity can carry out it's mission and therefore the more likely it is to deserve government support in the form of tax deductible status. So please consider renewing your membership or joining for the first time in this coming month. Anyone who has been a member for a year or more is welcome to join in the running of the Association.

This year there is an increase in the membership fee from \$50 per annum to \$60. This is the first increase for several years and the extra income will go towards meeting our increasing costs for rent and utilities.

You can renew your membership via our website.

Gus Reale sat through the committee discussions on the need to increase the membership fee and came up with this reflection -

Open Secret Generosity.

The song remains the same, the record is scratchy, as it croons, rent rises, gas and electricity rise, rates and all over-heads increase, one on

one. From the roof top the Choir of Devas harmonises, charity grows in our home.

Don't you remember the poor old lady in Buddha's time buying a candle for the Temple on the feast day? She went without food for days to get the candle and placed it on the shrine with gratitude. The candle shone brilliantly and could not be extinguished! Remember too the story of the old, poor Greek couple who were visited by two gods disguised as men. The old couple welcomed them into the house warmly. They had nothing to give the men but their loving attention. So, the gods granted the old couple whatever wish they desired. They bowed their heads and said they needed nothing for they were content with their simple, difficult life. At this the gods smiled, flapped their enormous wings and left, leaving the cottage filled with a brilliant light.

Perhaps, we too can embrace the membership rise of \$10 per year, hoping that our old song to keep our heart giving to the Association, may also leave behind this brilliant light. Thank you.

P. S. The candle story is adapted - I believe it's origin is in the Pali Canon.

The story of the old Greek couple is adapted from a poem by Mary Oliver called *Blackbirds*.



Regular Donations

You may not realise that Sangha Lodge is solely funded from your donations. Following the wishes of the Buddha we do not charge for teachings or meditation evenings, preferring to rely on our members' generosity. Unfortunately this often means a shortfall when it comes to meeting our regular expenses from the donation box. We greatly appreciate regular donations from members and friends as these help us to meet our regular commitments.

One easy way you can make a regular payment is by setting up a monthly transfer from your nominated account. To do this you will need the following account information.

Bank: St George **BSB:** 112-879

Account Number: 131328823

Account Name: Association of Engaged Buddhists.

Donations to this account which covers our on-going expenses, are not tax-deductible.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to our 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@engaged-buddhists.org.au with the details of your regular transfer or tax deductible donation.

Donate for a Specific Expense

You may like to make a donation to cover a specific expense. Some of our regular expenses include:

	Per Week	Annually
Rent	\$400	\$20,800
Sangha Lodge Power, Light and Heating		\$1,500
Insurance (including property and public liability)		\$3,000
Car expenses		\$3,000
Xero Accounting Application Subscription	\$38/month	\$456

You can cover any of these expenses by making a deposit to our general-purpose account:

Bank: St George **BSB:** 112-879

Account Number: 131328823

Account Name: Association of Engaged Buddhists.

Please follow up any donation with a brief email to office@engagedbuddhists.org.au telling us what you have done so that we can acknowledge your generosity. Your Dana is greatly appreciated by the many people who come to our centre or who are served by it in the wider community – such as hospitals, hospices and private visits by the Sangha. Please help – even a small monthly donation can make a big difference to Sangha Lodge.

Quotable Quote

"The world is getting too small for both an Us and Them . Us and Them have become co dependent, intertwined, fixed to one another . We have no separate fates, but are bound together in one . And our fear of one another is the only thing capable of our undoing "

Sam Killermann

Orion magazine Nov/Dec 2016





METTA SUTTA

(The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness)

This is what should be done
 By one who is skilled in goodness,
 And who knows the path of peace:
 Let them be able and upright,
 Straightforward and gentle in speech.
 Humble and not conceited,
 Contented and easily satisfied.
 Unburdened with duties and living in simple ways.
 Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful,
 Not proud and demanding in nature.
 Let them not do the slightest thing,
 That the wise would later reprove.
 Wishing: In gladness and in safety,
 May all beings be happy.

Whatever living beings there may be;
 Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
 The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
 The seen and the unseen,
 Those living near and far away,
 Those born and to-be-born,
 May all beings be happy.

Let none deceive another
 Or despise any being in any state.
 Let none through anger or ill-will,
 Wish harm upon another.
 Even as a mother protects with her life
 Her child, her only child,
 So with a boundless heart
 Should one cherish all living beings;
 Radiating kindness over the entire world
 Spreading upwards to the skies,
 And downwards to the depths;
 Outwards and unbounded,
 Freed from hatred and ill-will.
 Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down
 Free from drowsiness,
 One should stand firm in this mindfulness.
 This is said to be the divine abiding.
 By not holding to false views,
 The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
 Being freed from all sense desires,
 Is not born again into suffering.

Association Membership

You will find the Membership Application and Renewal Form on our website. Go to engagedbuddhists.org.au and look under 'About Us' – click on Join AEB.

If you are joining the Association for the first time, we welcome you to join as a Friend of the Association.

Friend of the Association

As a Friend of the Association of Engaged Buddhists, you will receive our newsletter every quarter by post or email, receive our weekly email, receive a discount on the cost of retreats at Vejjasala and have all the same rights as other members of the Association do, but you cannot vote at the Association's general meetings, nor be on the committee of the Association. After being a Friend of the Association for a year, if you renew your annual subscription you will automatically become a full member of the Association.

Member of the Association

As a Member of the Association of Engaged Buddhists, you are entitled to:

- Elect members of the organising committee;
- Vote on any significant matters affecting the Association at the Annual General Meeting;
- Stand for election to the organising committee;
- Receive a discount on the cost of retreats at Vejjasala
- Receive the newsletter every quarter and the weekly email.

Subscription

The annual subscription fee is \$60.00 (for both Friends and Members)

Payment can be made by cheque to:

Association of Engaged Buddhists

and mailed to:

Association of Engaged Buddhists
20 Victoria Street, Lewisham 2049.

Or a direct deposit to the bank account:

Account name: Association of Engaged Buddhists

Bank: St George

BSB: 112-879

Account No. 131 328 823

Please include some shorthand text identifying yourself and the payment reason in the online banking transaction comments field, such as: 'JSmith Membership'.

Also, email office@engagedbuddhists.org.au to advise us when the transfer has been made, or note in comments field in the form below if already done.

We hope you are keen to join or renew because we really appreciate your involvement and support.

Thank you.