

Buddha House News

Buddha House, 1 Fisher St, Tusmore. Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9.30am – 2.30pm

Sept-Oct 2008

Phone: 8333 2824 Email: info@buddhahouse.org Website: www.buddhahouse.org

Affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT)

CELEBRATING THE SANGHA

We celebrated FPMT's Sixth International Sangha Day a few days early, by taking Geshe-la and Jampa Gendun out to lunch on Sunday August 3. In wonderful company we enjoyed lively conversations, mountains of food, and many cups of tea. Other diners looked on with great interest as Geshe-la was presented with khatags and little offerings, including a very cheerful and quirky addition for his garden - a potted cactus growing out of a fire-engine red teapot covered in sequins!

Thank you to all those who came and made the lunch such a friendly affair, and thanks most of all to Geshe-la, Venerable Jamyang and Jampa for their



Centre Director Lindsay Holmes presents an offering to Geshe-la

immeasurable kindness. International Sangha Day is a precious opportunity to celebrate the importance of Sangha in our centre and our lives. We hope to

make these informal community get-togethers more frequent, and if you didn't come to this one, we hope you can join us next time...

MAITREYA PROJECT – another amazing project of Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Lama Yeshe, founder of the FPMT, always felt very close to the Maitreya, the Buddha of loving kindness and the Buddha to come. He had the wish to build a statue of Maitreya, initially in Bodh Gaya, the place in India where Buddha Shakyamuni achieved enlightenment. As Lama Yeshe's disciple, Lama Zopa Rinpoche works tirelessly to fulfill Lama Yeshe's wishes, and has taken on the job of building a Maitreya statue. However, the construction of the statue is not his goal – it is the method for achieving the goal. The goal is to benefit as many people as possible, for as long as possible – spiritually, in education, in health care, and economically.

Maitreya, the Buddha of Loving-Kindness

As part of the Maitreya Project that includes schools and a health care network, the statue is designed to stand for at least 1,000 years, supporting the Project's spiritual and social work for that same period of time.



The vision of the Maitreya Project is to effect peace at every level of society through the practice of loving-kindness: peace within the family, the community and the world, as well as inner peace for the individual.

The Maitreya Buddha statue and its throne will provide the public with temples, exhibition halls, a museum, library, audio-visual theatre and hospitality services, all set in beautiful parks with an inspiring collection of sacred art. The international-standard public hospital will provide health care services, particularly for the poor and underprivileged. The schools focus on ethical and spiritual development, as well as academic achievement, and they already provide free education to around 500 students.

If you would like to know more about this amazing project of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and how you can support it, go to: www.maitreyaproject.org

"World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not the absence of violence. Peace is the manifestation of human compassion."

— His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Buddha House

FOUNDER (1981)

Lama Thubten Yeshe

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

TEACHERS

Venerable Geshe Pema Tsering

Venerable Jamyang

Jampa Gendun

DIRECTOR

Lindsay Holmes

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

George Manos

BOARD

Cathy Davis, Becky Geisler, Lindsay Holmes, Ven. Jamyang, Rainer Jozeps, George Manos, Katrin Rehder, India Wallace

TRANSLATOR

Rodrigo Sanches

GESHE-LA'S ATTENDANT

Anthony Sweeney

SPIRITUAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Ven. Jamyang

CENTRE/OFFICE MANAGER

Jen Watkins

OFFICE & BOOKSHOP

Hilary Marshall, Lesley Palmer, Malgosia Plejewska, Katrin Rehder, Judi Smissen, Natalie Kagan, Henry Yap

HUMAN RESOURCES

Christèle Kervin

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Sue Johanson, Rainer Jozeps, George Manos, Henry Yap

BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE

George Manos, Richard Bradshaw

BUDDHA'S BOWL ORGANISOR

Vacant

LIBRARIAN

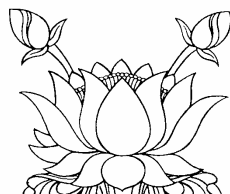
Sally Shipway

NEWSLETTER & PROGRAM

Ven. Jamyang

Program – Anthony Hall, Becky Geisler, Lisa

Newsletter – Luke Mosley & Jen Watkins



NOTICE OF BUDDHA HOUSE AGM

The **Buddha House AGM** will be held at Buddha House on **Sunday 23rd November at 2:00 pm**. Formal business includes the acceptance of reports of the last year's activities and finances and the election of board members. Even if you are new to Buddha House, come for lunch at 12:30, stay for the celebration of last year's successes and hear about and contribute to the plans for the coming years.

The meeting will end by 3:45, but stay for afternoon tea if you can. Bring some lunch to share as well as a poster or any item that celebrates something that you love about Buddha House.

What does a Buddha House board member do?

If you'd like to learn about the roles and responsibilities of being on a board, or if you are considering offering yourself as a Buddha House board member, come along to Buddha House's **Governance Training Workshop** on Sunday October 26th. The workshop begins with a 12:30 shared lunch and will finish by 4:30. All welcome. Register by contacting Buddha House Office or by email to info@BuddhaHouse.org

DOES BUDDHIST PRACTICE WORK?

The following were some comments from students in one of Ven. Jamyang's classes.....

A student said, "I was doing some reiki on my son tonight. While doing that I was also doing the taking and giving practice in my mind. After a while I asked him how he was feeling and he replied: 'I feel... happy, I feel... love and feel like loving everybody. If somebody is cold I want to give him my slippers. I am ...happy'."

Isn't that beautiful? It brought tears to our eyes!

Another student sent this note after a class: "When we feel safe we can afford to take the risk of being open to new ways of being. When we feel really safe we can encourage ourselves [and each other] and the journey becomes more possible; self-hate and hopelessness have little place to grow. Rejoicing is a powerful change to make. Thank you for your teaching tonight."



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The coming year, like all coming years, holds many challenges for Buddha House, including continuing our search for a new Buddha House, program growth to meet a wider range of people's needs, and the continued shaping of our organisation to meet legal and occupational health and safety requirements.

At the time of writing this, we are waiting to see if our bid for a new Buddha House property has been successful. If it is, we will be presented with the challenges of organising our finances to be able to pay the mortgage and arranging a physical and organisational shift to establish ourselves in our new location. Although demanding, these tasks will bring long lasting benefit to our own, and the wider community.

In the last 18 months we have grown enormously as an organisation. Buddha House is the legal employer of three teachers, a translator and a part-time centre manager. In addition to this, we have a wonderful band of volunteers who assist in the management and care of our centre, the development of our policies and procedures, doing our book keeping, monitoring our finances, delivering our program and designing, preparing, publishing, printing and distributing our newsletter, our website and our promotional materials. Buddha House only exists because we have volunteers and dedicated staff who so selflessly contribute their energies and their

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SAVE TREES (and stamps, fuel, greenhouse gases....)

Are you a member of Buddha House, or newsletter subscriber, who receives your newsletter in your letterbox via the good old postie or by pick up at Buddha House? Would you like to have your newsletter and programme emailed to help us reduce our environmental footprint? If so, please get your name on the list by sending an email to the office: info@buddhahouse.org

LINDSAY'S UK EXPERIENCE

Our Director, Lindsay, has just returned from his first true holiday in many years. He kindly agreed to share a little of his experience.

Reflections on Travel and Culture

One of the Dalai Lama's suggestions for a good life is: "Every year, go somewhere you've never been before". I took that advice in a big way and after 8 weeks sightseeing and visiting friends in the UK, I've discovered some new perspectives on Australian culture. Our Buddhist teachers tell us that all that we see and all that we experience is a construction of our own minds. This was brought home to me so many times during my holiday.



The UK is made up of a myriad of cultural regions and sub regions. The East End of London has a different culture than the West End, and than Golders Green, which is only 30 minutes away on the tube. People in Yorkshire hate to be mistaken for those from Lancashire, and Scots and Irish consider themselves to be from different ends of the earth, each stridently defensive of their language, immensely proud of their history and totally convinced that their football code is the only one worth watching. All of them are absolutely certain that Australian Rules is not even football and all of them complain about petrol prices (\$2.20 a litre during our stay).

Coming back to Australia, after being surrounded by these different cultural experiences, I saw our own language and our own attitudes in a somewhat different way. I saw that we are firmly mistrusting of those in authority, that

we applaud the larrikin attitude as long as it doesn't get out of hand, and when it does we are quickly forgiving. We believe that everyone should get a fair go, readily support the underdog and are fiercely proud of our football. If something difficult happens we generally think just dig in and get on with it, 'No worries, she'll be right, have a go ya mug!'



After seeing the cultural complexity and diversity across the British nation, I wonder why it is that we don't have Britain's same wide degree of cultural differences across our country, which is so much larger in size. I must admit that I don't know the reason. However, I do know that our personal and national culture is very important in the way that we view the world, is created by circumstances, can be shaped by single events, and that people claim their culture as a mighty important part of their individual identity, which is both the cause for strong community feelings and the cause for conflict



between communities.

Buddha House is part of the FPMT, The Foundation for The Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition. Tradition is an inseparable part of culture. It carries



out the function of passing on a community's culture to those who follow. So, what is the Mahayana tradition and why is it important to preserve it and, now that I have returned to Buddha house after 8 weeks of not being part of its culture, do I still want to a dedicate myself to the preservation of the Mahayana tradition?

My answer has got to be "yes". For me, this tradition has added something important to my Australian culture. It has added the notion of patience to my Australian eagerness to 'just get on with it'. It has provided me with the idea that I need to practise to increase my compassion if I truly want to give someone a 'fair go'. It has contributed a willingness to see that my view of the world is my own construction (influenced by others) and that others, including those in authority, may be motivated by similar concerns to me, but have a different way of acting on those concerns. The Mahayana tradition sets us both the goal and the means to shape our personal and group culture into one that benefits all sentient beings while, in the process, increasing our own happiness.

As part of the Buddha House community, I look forward to our continual working together to grow our culture in the way that responds to individual and world needs for happiness, by our conscious nurturing of generosity, by skilfully practising patience and by embodying compassion in all that we do. If we do just that, then I have no doubt that 'She'll be right', in the end.

Lindsay Holmes

IT'S TIME: NEW MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

After a lengthy review, we can finally announce our new membership benefits and fees.

New membership categories are; Friend, Member and Benefactor. Eligibility for full membership requires 12 months as a 'Friend'.

Friends benefits include library membership, a mailed newsletter and the opportunity to become part of the Buddha House community before gaining the voting rights and further benefits that accompany membership. 'Benefactors' replace our former Gold Membership and receive additional benefits over members. Members and Benefactors both receive reductions on teachings, workshops and courses as well as complimentary tickets to weekend workshops. For full details of costs and benefits, see our new Membership Brochure.

As well as gaining personal benefits, all Friends and Members assist us meet Buddha House's essential costs of supporting our teachers, paying our rent and defraying our running costs. Please contact the office soon to renew, or sign up for the first time.

WHEEL OF LIFE

Have you ever wondered whether bacteria have consciousness? What about viruses? On Friday nights we are exploring 'Contemporary Glimpses of Traditional Buddhist Ideas' with a series of guest presenters. We have just had the pleasure of ten weeks exploring the 'Wheel of Life' with Pamela Lyon. Pamela, author of an award-winning PhD thesis, brought together what we now know about the mind, from biology and Western psychology perspectives, alongside the 12 Links of Dependent Origination. Her style was spontaneous and entertaining, and described as a "breath of fresh air"...



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time to benefit others. So, as an organisation, we must take seriously our moral and our legal requirements to care for the occupational health and safety of all these people, by fulfilling our responsibilities to implement formal policies and procedures. Unfortunately, this means creating some bureaucracy to ensure that we have clear lines of responsibility.

I'm keen to ensure that we do this successfully and in a way that the bureaucracy doesn't dominate the sense of community that is so important. The work, the finances and the rules must not obsess us to a point where we lose sight of the more important actions of personally listening, sharing, caring and supporting each other. To this end, I invite you to let Jen Watkins, or me, know if you would be willing to help in organising some community 'get-togethers', group discussions, fun events or informal gatherings to help us all to get to know each other better.

And, of course, we can achieve community connections by changing the way that we run our current programs, including that way that we run our Annual General Meeting. Put Sunday November 23rd in your diary now. On the day, bring some lunch to share as well as a poster or any item that celebrates something that you love about Buddha House. Let's mix business with pleasure and use this AGM to celebrate and contribute to our life as a community at the same time as we carry out our legal responsibilities as an incorporated organisation.

In the meantime, take every visit to Buddha House as an opportunity to say hello to people that you haven't yet met. I'll guarantee that it will make both your own and their day just that little bit happier. Much love, *Lindsay Holmes, Centre Director.*

Buddha House News

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Print Post Approved: PP 533632-00014

PRAYERS FOR

Aleca's 16 year old cat, Meru, missing since June, and for Aleca who misses her dearly



Katrin Rehder kindly offered some reflections on the course...

"Pamela's teachings on the 'Wheel of Life' have been a great combination of traditional and contemporary Buddhism. While helping us to understand the reason for our existence in terms of causality, she gave fascinating examples from the latest research- primarily from biology. By the end of the ten week course we all agreed that we had only just scratched the surface. We hope to hear more on this subject in the future!"

Join us for the next Contemporary Glimpses topic - 'Compassion in Action' - beginning August 15.

Thank You!

- **Many, many thanks and safe travels to Heather Conte**, a dedicated student of Geshe-la who has worked so hard behind the scenes for Buddha House over several years. Heather is off on an adventure, first to our sister centre in London, The Jamyang Centre, and then to assist Venerable Tenzin Palmo at her nunnery in India. We look forward to email updates, and to seeing her again before too long.
- ALL volunteers, those seen and those unseen... chai and soup-makers, those who cook for Geshe-la, meditation leaders, those who have done extra jobs while Venerable Jamyang was away.
- George Manos for supplying photos
- Gordon Russell of Unit Care (www.unitcare.com.au) for the colour printing of this newsletter.