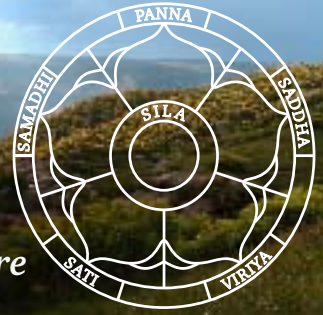


# BUDDHA SĀSANA

Newsletter of the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre



## Burmese food dāna day

Our centre now has some of the best facilities dedicated to intensive Buddhist meditation practice in Australia, largely provided through the generous donations and service of our supporters.

This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to the many people who have supported the centre in 2008. We want to thank you all and wish you peace and happiness for the coming Christmas season and the New Year. There are too many people to name individually so we focus in this newsletter on two recent events where volunteers have played a central role.

The photos on the front page were taken during one of Sayādaw U Lakkhaṇa's two retreats, when the Burmese Welfare Group once again offered a sumptuous Burmese lunch to Sayādaw and the yogis on Sunday November 9th. We extend our thanks to Dr. Thann Naing and the Welfare Group for their generosity. We would also like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of long-term supporter Aunty Pyone who, apart from two special dāna lunch days, cooked throughout Sayādaw's two retreats this year.

Heartfelt thanks go to all our other supporters who have made donations, cooked, cleaned, worked in the garden and done other various chores around the centre this year—on the next page we highlight this year's Dhamma Service weekend, held every September.



*With this issue of Buddha Sasana, we have reduced the newsletter to four pages stapled together with a compact schedule and application form.*

*This change recognises that many more people are relying on the website for up-to-date information about the Centre's activities.*

*More than 350 people have their newsletter delivered via an email message which points to a download link to the website. This saves us about \$1.50 per newsletter in postage and printing charges, a significant saving.*

*You may wish to continue receiving a printed black and white copy of the newsletter, but if you would like to change to the e-mail version (a colour Acrobat file), please email the editor at [webmaster@meditation.asn.au](mailto:webmaster@meditation.asn.au) so we can update the database.*

In this issue:

Burmese food dāna day

From the manager

Dhamma service weekend

Working at BMIMC



# FROM THE MANAGER

*Tara MacLachlan*

Since the last newsletter we have continued to keep a busy pace with the retreat schedule, although we did have a bit of down time immediately after the three month retreat. This gave Pixy space to organize her move and for us to spend some time together with family. So it was in August that I came back to lead a weekend retreat and for Sayādaw U Paññāthami to teach his regular seven day retreat during his time in Australia for the Vassa.

At this retreat we had Aunty Pyone and her daughter, Thida Moe, and grandson, Daniel here. Daniel, aged 12, took robes as a samanera while his grandmother and mother cooked for him, Sayādaw and the yogis. This made it a very special retreat for the family and for the centre.

In September Patrick Kearney led his nine day retreat followed by the Dhamma service weekend (see opposite page). October's long weekend was led by Michael Dash, who will also be teaching his first Easter retreat here in 2009. Later in October Steven Smith was here for nine days. Then Sayādaw U Lakkhaṇa led his two retreats in November, one for Burmese speakers and the other with Victor Aung as translator.

In November, Michael Dash and Graham Wheeler led the very popular Day of Mindfulness in Sydney, the second for the year. This is a great opportunity for those who are new to the practice to develop a basic knowledge of the Mahāsi technique before committing to a residential retreat, as well as a refresher for experienced meditators. The final retreat of the year will be Lesley Lebkowicz' weekend.

The centre will then be in recess while I take some time out for my own practice. A few kind people will

take on some of the responsibilities of the centre when I am away.

Unless you are attending Patrick's January retreat and need to check in regarding your retreat plans, please wait until the third week in January to call or email the centre with general enquiries or bookings for the 2009 program.

When the centre is closed in December major landscaping works will be undertaken as well as some general maintenance. So to start the 2009 program we will have new steps from the bottom car-park to the accommodation blocks and some more landscaping work completed around the top car-park.

I look forward to seeing you here at BMIMC in 2009 and wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas season and New Year.

With metta  
Tara

## The Management Committee

An important part of the Centre's life is the management committee, which takes responsibility for the overall well-being and direction of the organisation. It meets four times a year.

All members bring their particular strengths to the Committee, with some taking a specific 'custodian' role or portfolio responsibility. We are fortunate in having a breadth of expertise, and a good balance in age, gender and experience.

Its current members are Graham Wheeler (Public Officer), Danny Taylor (Financial), Tara MacLachlan (Manager), Peter Douglas, Gabrielle Cusack, John McIntyre (Publicity and Fundraising), Theresa Baw, Marc Allas and Robyn Howell. Selina Blair has joined replacing Ian Baird as Landscape and Gardening custodian.



It is fair to say that, over the years, a strong culture has developed of approaching issues in a principled way based on Dhamma, and in learning from our experiences to continuously improve the ways we operate as an organisation.

## Working at BMIMC

Fundamental to the effectiveness of all that we do at BMIMC are the people who give their time to work at the Centre.

We are always looking ahead and anticipating our need for staff—so we are interested in hearing from people who might wish to work on staff in 2009 and beyond.

Applicants generally need to be experienced meditators with a strong commitment to dhamma service, an ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds, familiarity with computers and common office software and strong communication skills.

Staff live and work in a small community of two or three people, supported by the Centre's management committee and volunteers, receive a small stipend (if they can legally work in Australia), full board and accommodation and a car allowance in some cases.

For further information, see our website pages regarding working and volunteering at BMIMC. To discuss an application, please ring the Centre manager after mid-January.

## AROUND THE CENTRE

### Dhamma service weekend

The last weekend of September is traditionally the time of year for the annual spring-cleaning of the Centre, when supporters near and far give some time to the many tasks involved.

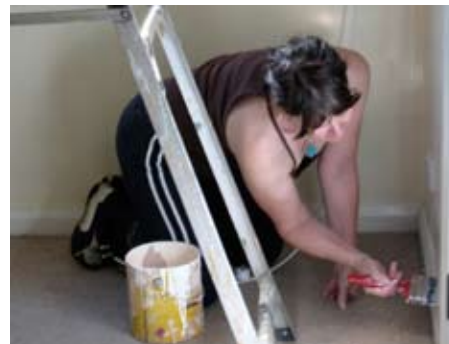
It is the time to make a concerted effort with the grounds and gardens. Though there are extensive

plantings of now well-established, low maintenance native plants, dealing with encroaching weeds is always a priority. Then there is pruning and mulching to be done.

It was also an opportunity to give the kitchen a thorough cleaning, including refrigerator doors and shelves. The windows of the student

accommodation were made to shine again, while the tireless manager spent the entire weekend painting the small verandah rooms.

Thank you to all who came from Sydney and locally (and interstate) to labour with such effect that weekend! Sādhu!



### Sydney and Canberra groups

The **Sydney** meditation group meets at the Life & Balance Centre, 132 St John's Road, Glebe from 7 – 9 pm each Friday except long weekends. Three BMIMC teachers (Graham Wheeler, Danny Taylor, Michael Dash) take it in turns to

lead the group and will give practice instructions. The last session for 2008 will be on 5 December with a social event on 12 December. The group will start again in February 2009. The **Canberra** Insight Meditation Group meets from 6.30 p.m.

until 8.30 p.m. on Sunday evenings at the Sākyamuni Buddhist Centre, 32 Archibald Street, Lyneham. The group is led by Lesley Lebkowicz (formerly Fowler). Contact Lesley on [lesleyf@netspeed.com.au](mailto:lesleyf@netspeed.com.au) or just turn up on the night.

# INFORMATION REQUEST AND DONATION FORM

If you would like to receive the newsletter or make a donation to the Centre, complete this form and send to BMIMC, 25 Rutland Road, Medlow Bath, NSW 2780.

Name .....

Address .....

I would like to make a donation of \$ ..... to the Building Fund  General fund   
*Donations to the Building Fund are tax deductible*

Authorisation to debit my credit card:

Bankcard  Visa  M'card  Card No .....

Cardholder Name ..... Expiry date /

Signature .....

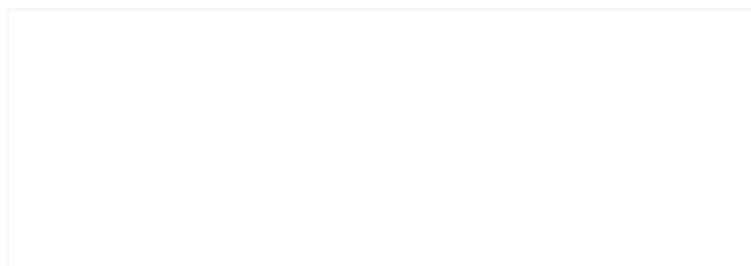
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