



Vipassana Hawaii

Summer/Fall 2009

IN THIS ISSUE...

HAWAII INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER UPDATE

At Last! The HIMC Inaugural Retreat
Touching Earth with Bare Attention: One
Yogi's Retreat

HIMC: Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow VH ASIA UPDATE

The MettaDana Project 2009
Cyclone Nargis Survivors in Thailand:
Struggling to Remake Their Lives
Medical Update on Sayadaw U Lakkhana

HONOLULU SANGHA NEWS

Summer Abhidhamma Lecture Series
Success
Annual Vipassana Hawaii Retreat:
Affirming Our Tradition & Teachers
Women's Sitting Group: A Yogi's Perspective
Upcoming in October: "Mind Your Life"
Retreat with Andrea Fella

DONOR APPRECIATION

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WE ARE REDESIGNING OUR WEBSITE

this fall to make it easier to navigate and more informative. The upgraded site will keep you current on organizational news, retreats, and project status and allow you to easily register for retreats, pay fees, and donate online. We will be managing content from our Kapa'au office, a new process that should facilitate posting "breaking news" and updating retreat schedules. The redesigned website will be ideal for keeping you informed about HIMC.

HAWAII INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER UPDATE

At Last! THE HIMC INAUGURAL RETREAT

An early summer rainy spell gave way to glorious sunny weather as 31 yogis from the US mainland, Canada, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawaii gathered in North Kohala for the long-anticipated inaugural retreat on the Hawaii Insight Meditation Center land. With our founders and guiding teachers Steven Smith and Michele McDonald leading, the retreat began Sunday evening, June 28, and finished the following Sunday, July 5, after lunch. Nineteen yogis attended the full 7 days, and another 12 joined in for the final weekend.

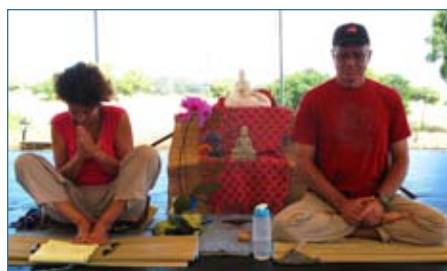
VH staff began advertising the retreat mid-spring and had inquiries and registrants right up to the start date. In an intense effort during June, ED Jack Hoyt and a dedicated crew of staff and volunteers put together a fully functional rustic facility on mowed pastureland with a panoramic view: a field kitchen, bath house, meditation hall (tent), dining hall (tent), and campground. To celebrate construction success and bless the space, the Kohala Sangha held a pre-retreat potluck dinner Saturday evening, June 27, with Steven and Michele, other Board members, and a few early-arriving yogis in attendance along with Kohala Sangha members. As this was our first retreat, there were some rough edges as we knew there would be. Yet those also presented opportunities for deeper practice.

At the close, everyone expressed gratitude for the place, teachers, teachings, staff, and volunteers — for the potent experience of sitting Vipassana in Kohala. A half dozen yogis stayed on to camp a few more days, further explore the area, and share their experiences with one another. Though the facility is empty till the next retreat (see box below), the community remains. — Carol Perry



Camping on the land

PHOTO: CAROL PERRY



Michele & Steven in appreciation

PHOTO: KATE DRESHER



Group interview with Steven

PHOTO: CAROL PERRY



Meditation "hall"

PHOTO: CAROL PERRY



Group appreciation at retreat's end

PHOTO: KATE DRESHER

UPCOMING HIMC RETREATS

Winter	Dec 10-13 2009
Spring	2010 / stay tuned; event may be scheduled
Summer	Jul 2-11 2010



TOUCHING EARTH WITH BARE ATTENTION: ONE YOGI'S RETREAT

During the height of summer, we gathered for the Hawai'i Insight Meditation Center inaugural silent retreat on Vipassana Hawai'i's 200-some acres of shoreline situated in North Kohala, an isolated peninsula on the Island of Hawai'i. About a million years ago, spores, seeds, birds, and other creatures came to this volcanic mountain by wind, waves, and wings to eke out a living on lava rock. A softly rolling, verdant, fertile, and rich landscape evolved on which a warrior King was raised. Eventually, immigrant laborers from far-away Asia hoed, cut, and hauled sugar cane. Now, this living earth offered to carry our practice, moving forward while rooted in its powerful knowledge of the elements.

This was an outdoor retreat. Our lifestyle so spare, with most of us camping in little tents and showering in a simple bath house. We meditated under a large canopy, took our meals under another one. I inhaled the dizzying scent of fermenting guavas, discovered a wild tomato patch and passionfruit vines, walked through tall ironwood groves and along a glittering bay under a cerulean sky spiced with cotton clouds. At night the moon waxing to fullness cheered by a choir of crickets; during the day, the changing tide of time in sync with my breath. A moment would come when my skin lost its perception of cellular boundaries. I found not much more to worry about than a continuous but friendly parade of bugs, a single hard rain shower in the dark.

Of course, the worries and obsessions that I have dragged along throughout my life tagged along to the retreat as well, thrilled to tramp around as my mind made space for soft noticing. But the land brought a deep quieting; I became aware of the spirit of adventure and the deep sense of trust that had sustained hundreds of other sentient beings before me in this place. I live in North Kohala. Yet seldom before had I felt the land's own call to mindfulness.

The Kohala community, which tangibly yet invisibly surrounded the retreat, carried our practice as well. For days on end, my own husband and others scrubbed clean the yards of canopy canvas under which we meditated and ate. During evening Dhamma talks and for the last three practice days, people from the community joined us. Our meals were cooked by a friend of mine; others from the community pitched in. Much of the food itself came from nearby gardens and farms, delicious local flavors testing the limits of mindful savoring, stirring a nascent wanting for more. Fresh papayas, sun-ripened bananas, watermelon gazpacho, buttery mango salsa, a creamy muesli not otherwise found this side of Switzerland (my friend, the cook, is Swiss). Gratitude wove an arc that stretched past the lighthouse into town.

The retreat became a necklace of moments packed with the vibrancy of my body when my mind stayed nearby, of footsteps on soundless grassy trails, of the safety and support and stillness of the Sangha. Steven and Michele's powerful, loving teachings amplified the ten thousand ways that earth makes itself known: ten thousand ways to feel the breeze, sense the ocean, drink the song of birds.

There is a quote by Wendell Berry: "You can't know who you are until you know where you are." Touching earth with bare attention, the retreat brought this home.

— Sophia V. Schweitzer



Late-afternoon meditation at the HIMC retreat

HIMC: YESTERDAY, TODAY, & TOMORROW

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Ten years ago, our founders Steven Smith and Michele McDonald took the first big step in realizing their dream for a Vipassana (Insight) meditation retreat center in Hawai'i when they reached an agreement with a large landholder to purchase approximately 250 acres of a former sugar plantation holding in North Kohala on the Island of Hawai'i. Vipassana Hawai'i (VH) also secured a County Special Permit that allowed us to site the Center on 15 of those acres formerly zoned for agriculture. It took almost 8 years for the land transaction to work its way through the Land Court approval process, and VH took title to the land in mid-2007.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

VH began a pre-construction planning stage in preparation for our first phase of building just as the economy began to falter. Nevertheless, we have secured two planning grants, brought temporary County water to the site for our camping retreats, and installed a 300-foot-deep well for our long-term irrigation and fire-fighting needs. We have also constructed temporary facilities for cooking and bathing during retreats. Soon we will have electricity.

We held an inaugural week-long camping retreat on the land in early July led by Steven and Michele and now hold weekly sittings under our meditation "hall" tent every Sunday.

We plan to introduce a quarterly weekend work party on the land this fall. Trail building will be one of the first projects, a prototype tent platform another. Our next camping retreat is in December.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

The Special Permit we acquired allows us to build a Center large enough to accommodate 100 retreatants. However, it was never Steven or Michele's vision to begin at that scale. We simply sought approval for the very long term (future generations) and have always intended a much more modest start — a Center for 30-40 retreatants on a small campus centered on one 80-acre agriculturally zoned parcel. To remain flexible and responsive to the times, VH will build HIMC in phases.

PHASE I OF CONSTRUCTION, as proposed, includes a visitor's center which will house administrative offices and a Dhamma hall, plus the first teacher cottage. Retreats will remain rustic tent style. The climate is close to perfect for camping, and we hope to improve tent accommodations with platforms and wind breaks.

PHASE II OF CONSTRUCTION, as proposed, includes plans for the kitchen/dining hall and housing for approximately 35 people, including on-site staff. Our Special Permit allows a variety of housing types, and the specifics will be determined by what we learn during the first year of operation.

PHASE III OF CONSTRUCTION, as proposed, includes the signature meditation hall and any additional housing deemed necessary. This phase will develop organically in response to our experiences operating the Center during Phases I and II.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

TIME: For those of you interested in working on the land, we hope to establish orchards and gardens ASAP now that we have a well for irrigation. We are also considering agro-forestry, bamboo, medicinal herbs, and cacao.

For those of you who are construction oriented, we plan to improve the camping experience by building tent platforms, followed by "bus stop" style shelters on the platforms (easier to stand up in, wind and rain less of a factor).

We invite anyone young at heart enough to camp for a while to get involved and, in the process, enjoy our little piece of paradise. A temporary field kitchen and bath house with hot showers are available for use by campers. If you can contribute time on projects like these, please contact me through our website.

MONEY: Our total pre-construction planning phase requires \$75,000 and we have met \$35,000 of that through grants and \$17,000 through donations. Help us meet the rest — \$23,000 — by giving as generously as you can before the end of the year. You can donate now through our website, www.vipassanahawaii.org, or mail us a check payable to VIPASSANA HAWAII'.

— ED Jack Hoyt

THE METTADANA PROJECT 2009

This past January Michele McDonald, Rebecca Bradshaw, and I made our annual pilgrimage to the Sagaing Hills of upper Burma (Myanmar). Along with holding the annual retreat at Kyaswa Monastery, this trip allows us to bring in and distribute the funds so generously donated over the past year for the MettaDana Project (MDP).

As many of you know, the MettaDana Project is run under the direction of Venerable Sayadaw U Lakkhana, Abbott of Kyaswa Monastery. MDP's efforts in the Sagaing Hills — the Wachuset Village School, the Wachuset Jivitadana Sangha Hospital, and support of the Thit Seint, Susitarama, and Shwebo Nunneries — would not be possible without Sayadaw's participation and guidance.

WACHET SCHOOL

MDP covered the cost of tuition, school uniforms, and school supplies for all students. Without this aid, many village children would be unable to attend school because the related costs would be prohibitively high. Additionally, we gave funds for new uniforms and a small "Thank You" stipend to the teachers, who do a great job for a minimal wage.

Our annual post-retreat visit to the school is always a real treat for the children and fun for us all. We three, Sayadaw, and the yogis from the retreat took part in a ritual offering of the new school uniforms; MDP also funded a meal for the children. Sayadaw's presence this year was an unexpected delight: he had been struggling with his health and we did not expect him at the school ceremony. As always, our liaison to the school, U Than Htun, did a wonderful job of coordinating the school donation and keeping meticulous financial records.



PHOTO: GREG SCHARF

Sayadaw U Lakkhana & Michele offering student a uniform

We spoke to Sayadaw about plans for the future of the school and, at his suggestion, initiated the application process for obtaining government permission to add the next grade level (8). This will require building two new classrooms. We also spoke about Sayadaw's dream of eventually purchasing the parcel of land directly behind the existing school property, with the idea of building a high

school there. Currently, many students do not go on to high school because of the expense and the significant commute to Sagaing Town (nearest high school). A generous donation from the Foundation for The People of Burma has given us the seed money for these projects.

WACHET JIVITADANA HOSPITAL

The hospital provides free medical care for ordained Sangha and subsidized care for village residents, who would not have access to medical care if the hospital did not exist. A tour of the hospital revealed a number of new programs, including an AIDS education office and an upgraded surgery.

MDP's annual donation funds not only a portion of the annual hospital operating costs but also our Acupuncture-Training Program, which is an unqualified success by all accounts. Acupuncturists Cody Burch and Kirsten Germann returned for yet another stint as volunteer trainers for the program; their dedication has been invaluable. The acupuncture team, all graduates of the MDP training program, visits the hospital weekly and treats 2,000-3,000 people annually. Kirsten has proposed an acupuncture



PHOTO: KATE RUSSELL

Cody guiding acupuncture trainees

outreach program for 2010, which would train practitioners to treat patients in remote areas as well. With the help of Dr. U Pe Toe, who at nearly 90 is still hard at work translating, the team has printed what we believe to be the first practical acupuncture training manual in Burmese! Our donations have funded the printing costs for Volume 1 and a portion of this year's donation will be used to print an initial run of Volume 2.



PHOTOS: GREG SCHARF

Nuns...of all ages!

THE NUNNERIES

My favorite part of helping distribute the annual MDP funds is visiting the three nunneries, where about 100 nuns, ranging in age from 5 or 6 to 90, reside. There is something special about being able to so directly touch the lives of these wonderful beings! The residents of Thit Seint Nunnery, the largest of the three, always insist on serving us a Mohinga breakfast (the national dish of Burma), and they are very good cooks! Before breakfast we have a ritual in which all the nuns file by to receive their individual donation, after which they offer the Metta Sutta and other Paritta (blessing/protection) chants. The simple purity of the nuns' commitment to the Dhamma is an inspiration, and helping support their practice and study is an honor.

I want to personally express my gratitude to all those who have supported the MettaDana Project in diverse ways. I feel fortunate to be a part of this program. Our grass-roots approach and the consistency of our efforts over many years have made a notable difference in the lives of many people in this small village in one of the poorest countries in the world.

— Greg Scharf



CYCLONE NARGIS SURVIVORS IN THAILAND: STRUGGLING TO REMAKE THEIR LIVES

Cyclone Nargis hit the Irrawaddy delta in Burma on May 2-3, 2008, causing over 140,000 deaths and 2.4 million people to be displaced. As you may recall, the MettaDana Project responded with an appeal for donations to help provide survivors with food, clothing, housing, and medicine. Three weeks after the cyclone, the Foundation for Education and Development (FED), an organization working to help Burmese migrants in Thailand, sent teams of volunteers into Burma to assess the situation and distribute aid. This is one of the projects that MettaDana continues to support.

Two yogis closely associated with Vipassana Hawai'i, Samantha Tavares and Allison Urowitz, also have contributed to the Foundation's programs through MettaDana. Samantha has been involved with Hearts to Angels, a project in Honolulu helping orphans with disabilities learn to recognize and use their inherent talents; last year she did a workshop for FED staff in Asia and visited Hearts to Angels children there. In early September 2009, Allison gave a 5-day workshop for Burmese migrants at FED's office, training local women in marketing, business strategies, and small business skills.

MEDICAL UPDATE ON SAYADAW U LAKKHANA

Dear Friends,

It has been difficult to get much in the way of details on the state of Sayadaw's health. Those of you who have traveled to that part of the world will appreciate how challenging it can be to communicate between the US and Burma. But here is what I've learned.

I recently received an email from Sayadaw's attendant, Kyaw Htoo Aung, informing me that Sayadaw has been examined and treated by a heart specialist from the US. Luckily, major heart surgery has thus far not been indicated. Sayadaw has been resting in the cool weather of Pyin Oo Lwin (Maymyo) on the Shan Plateau, and is feeling well enough to proceed with his Australian teaching tour this fall. It has not been necessary to spend the entire emergency medical fund created through your loving donations, which leaves money for follow-up examinations and treatment. A huge THANK YOU to those of you who have given so generously in support of this wonderful teacher!

— Greg Scharf

Greg catalyzed the campaign to raise funds for medical assistance for master teacher Sayadaw U Lakkhana. Greg has practiced extensively since 1992 in India, Thailand, and Burma, and has long been involved with the MettaDana Project.

Following are a personal story about our connection to the Foundation for Education and Development and the larger post-cyclone situation as well as an FED report excerpt (box on right) recounting how some Nargis survivors are piecing together their shattered lives.

I met Htoo Chit, Executive Director of the Foundation for Education and Development, after the December 26, 2004, SE Asian tsunami. Massive waves had swept large coastal swaths of the Indian Ocean from an earthquake in Sumatra, including the Andaman coast along southern Thailand. I was on my way to Golden Buddha Island where I had been teaching vipassana and metta retreats with yoga teacher Sarah Hegarty Davis. Soon after the disaster, it was apparent that many thousands of victims and refugees were not receiving proper aid. Burmese migrant workers were among them.

Htoo Chit came south from a Burmese refugee camp where he lived along the Thai/Burma border. As a seasoned organizer for refugees, he quickly set up an aid organization to meet the immediate needs of 30,000 Burmese migrant workers, providing water, food, clothes, and shelter. Soon after, he set up a learning center for children in the coastal village of Kuraburi.

When we met near his office in Takuapa an hour's drive south of Kuraburi, Sarah and I were struck by his powerful, yet kind demeanor and his clear, focused determination to help his people in the face of overwhelming odds. Here began the MettaDana Project's relationship with Htoo Chit's organization — and a long friendship.

Htoo Chit's work has continued with tsunami victims and the children's learning centers. It also has evolved to include aid for migrant Burmese refugees fleeing not only the cyclone aftermath but also the Saffron Revolution led by Buddhist monks. Trafficking in women and young children has swelled to crisis proportions precipitated by natural disasters and dire poverty levels. Add to these conditions the desperate situation of the Rohingya, a marginalized ethnic group living thousands of years sandwiched between Bangladesh and Burma and claimed by neither. They risk their lives, frequently losing them, as they would rather drown trying to escape by boat or die trying to get into Thailand or Malaysia to find work. Despite all these difficulties, Htoo Chit and other Burmese NGO workers I've come to know show an unwavering commitment and resilience, even a trademark quick wit and spontaneous humor.

I've asked how they feel about facing what sometimes are overwhelming conditions with little light at the end of the tunnel. Their answer is always the same. They live their lives trying to make a difference for their people in Thailand and back home in Burma. They cannot imagine living with only self-interest. In their hearts they long to go home to the better Burma they imagine and are dedicated to creating.

It may seem unusual given the grave consequences of a tsunami, a cyclone, and a revolution, but working to raise funds for Htoo Chit's and other organizations to aid the Burmese people brings not only a feeling of caring about others, but a deep joy arising in my heart.

— Steven Smith

Many desperate refugees, finding difficulty after losing family and land for cultivation, decided to come to Thailand where their lives continue to be challenging. They live in small huts without electricity and water; the huts are built of old wood and roofed with cut grass, tree leaves, or old tin. Some live in small, crowded rented rooms. The refugees work at limited, low paying jobs in farming and fishing; those skilled in trades with no experience as laborers cannot find work at all.

Burmese refugees in Thailand work to survive and support family back in Burma. They hope to return home when they have saved enough to create a new life — none want to resettle permanently in Thailand. They miss their country and community.

Ma Khiang, her husband, and their three children find themselves in a situation typical of many Nargis survivors. They now live in a small wood shelter that had no walls until the rainy season began in June and they cut bamboo to create walls. The tree-leaf roof leaks when it rains. The shelter is on empty land near the corn field Ma Khiang and her husband worked in when they first arrived. The corn has been harvested but they are still living there, fortunate that the land owner allows them to stay. Nearby are a creek as well as banana, mango, and other fruit trees. The family agrees it is a good area with good soil.

"I feel that this is much better than being in our home in Burma now. We would have had to rebuild our house in Burma, but there is no work there, we lost everything. Here, although we don't have work every day, when there is work we earn more than what we can in Burma," Ma Khiang said, full of hope. Earning \$2 to \$3 a day when work is available, Ma Khiang insists she can survive. "Luckily, we can grow some vegetables, eat simply, and buy food when we have work."

Wa To's situation is similar to Ma Khaing's. Her family also built a rough shelter on their employer's land. Only her husband has a job now, working in a sugar cane field for \$3 per day. Every day after their 6-year-old son goes to an NGO learning center, she collects morning glory growing in a nearby field to sell in the market, adding about fifty cents a day to her husband's income. Their life is difficult. However as a person who fled from death, she feels they are better off living on the Thai side of the border now because they have some income, shelter, and food. Still, they dream of Burma.

Currently, 30 vulnerable child survivors of Cyclone Nargis study at NGO-run Burmese learning centers in Mae Sot. But they require long-term assistance as parents cannot provide all that is needed for their children's education. We strongly believe education is the best road to the future for our children.

— Based on a report by Htoo Chit, Executive Director, Foundation for Education and Development

HONOLULU SANGHA NEWS

This year has been one of diverse practice for Honolulu Sangha members. Though we missed the usual presence of Sayadaw U Lakkhana during the yearly Spring retreat, Grahame White led a spirited, fulfilling program nonetheless. We also enjoyed time during the year with our guiding teachers Steven Smith and Michele McDonald as they passed through Hawai'i while traveling internationally to teach retreats.

Overall, the practice programs have proven successful for both personal development and financial sustainability. Donations in support of teachers and scholarships have allowed us to offer financial assistance to a dozen yogis. We've also had a tremendous volunteer effort this year and would like to thank in particular Robert Cuthrell, Cathy Davenport, Steve Diamond, Thanh Huynh, Xuan Huynh, Niki Miller, Harry Palmer, Domenica Sattler, and Gloria Staackman.

Our gratitude to all the teachers, helpers, and yogis. May you be happy, healthy, and safe.

— Joe Bright, Chair, Honolulu Sangha Coordinating Committee

SUMMER ABHIDHAMMA LECTURE SERIES SUCCESS

This summer VH regulars and newcomers alike were treated to a unique experience with Daw Agganyāni, who led a 7-day session introducing Abhidhamma studies in support of Vipassana practice. VH teacher Grahame White was on hand from Australia to add further insights into the Vipassana portion.

For those unfamiliar with Abhidhamma: When the Buddha expounded on the Dhamma over the course of many decades, he offered insights through codes of conduct, stories and analogies, and detailed analysis of the workings of the mind. His teachings have been passed on through what we call the Pali Canon, the Tipitaka, which comprises three parts: Vinaya, the guidelines of conduct for the Sangha to follow; Suttas, the discourses outlining the Dhamma in various ways for the masses of followers; and Abhidhamma, the "mental map" detailing how consciousness arises and the intricate interactions between mind and body. Abhidhamma was said to have been taught to the heavenly realms. But when the Buddha was back on Earth to rest, he also recited it to Sariputta, thus allowing it to be disseminated to the Sangha.

Sāmaneri Daw Agganyāni is an experienced Abhidhamma teacher and meditation practitioner. A German Theravada nun and student of Sayadaw Dr. U Nandamāla, founder of the Dhammavijjālaya Centre for Buddhist Studies in Burma, Daw Agganyāni teaches Abhidhamma studies in Europe in a practical but traditional way. She utilizes charts and translations in German and English for easy understanding by students in the West and direct application in daily life and Vipassana meditation.

Though many of the students have had prior exposure to the Abhidhamma teachings, there were dimensions to the details that allowed interest to deepen. For beginners it was a big topic to ingest in such a short time, but most found the concepts stimulating and were sparked to apply what was learned. By the end of the 7th day, and after 14 hours of lectures, the students had been thoroughly challenged! We all look forward to diving in again next year.

ANNUAL VIPASSANA HAWAII RETREAT: AFFIRMING OUR TRADITION & TEACHERS

The annual Vipassana Hawai'i Retreat, led by VH founders Michele and Steven, was held once again at St. Anthony's in Kalihi Valley on September 4-12. Since last year's gathering, the renovation and construction of the upper parking lot near the Bishop's Hall and Mother Superior's Dining Room have been completed, which allowed for excellent walking meditation practice as did the covered, tiled walkways lined with a gorgeous array of color: anthurium, lilac ferns, impatiens, mondo grass, and garden stones. To be in the heavenly valley amidst the sound of the stream, the morning and evening rains sifting through the eucalyptus, and the soft clouds passing effortlessly overhead could not but remind the 28 yogis in attendance of the myriad ways wisdom and compassion always surround us, always support us.

The Honolulu Sangha Planning Committee paid tender attention to the well-being and comfort of the yogis. Heartfelt appreciation goes especially to Xuan Huynh, Joe Bright, and Harry Palmer.

The guiding lights belonged to Michele and Steven. Whether a yogi is new to the practice, an "oldy moldy," or somewhere in between, the impact of these two teachers cannot be overstated. From Steven's cool, classical approach and a precision of language that continues to find new ways of transmitting the Dhamma to Michele's warm, therapeutic insights into how the Dhamma manifests in daily life, together the two bring years of experience and dedication.

In the closing circle as we broke silence on the last day, long-time practitioner William Bennington said it best, reminding us how fortunate we are to receive the distillation of the life's work of these teachers who have brought the Dhamma from another country and maintained its purity while making it relevant to us here and now. William made a powerful affirmation to do whatever was necessary to support our teachers in whatever way he could and called for us to join him in this expression of gratitude and service to help end suffering in this world.

— Cathy Song Davenport

WOMEN'S SITTING GROUP: A YOGI'S PERSPECTIVE

The idea to begin a women's sitting group was suggested by Grahame White, inspired by such goings-on "Down Under." My initial response was one of skepticism and, to be completely honest, aversion. I've always shied away from such gatherings, with my preconceived notions of what went on there. Group therapy? Whining? Complaints about husbands and boyfriends? Yikes. Not my thing. However, something in me softened and I found myself nodding at Grahame's suggestion and, to my surprise, organizing its launch in August.

The experience has been a delight. Having a time set aside every week to slow down and sit with other women committed to the practice has been comforting, nourishing, and inspiring. Lingering afterward for a delicious soup prepared lovingly by Xuan, fruit picked from a backyard and brought to share, and homemade cookies has deepened the feeling of nourishment.

I'd like to invite all the women to the women's sitting. We meet every Tuesday at 7 pm at Xuan's house. A different woman opens the session each week; we sit for 45 minutes and then share a light meal. Come for all or just a portion of the evening and bring something to add to the table if you wish. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 265-0866 or Xuan at 227-8081.

We also have chosen the 3rd Tuesday of each month as Dharma movie night, sitting first and gathering in the den for a screening and light meal after. Our first movie was "Enlightenment Guaranteed," a hilarious and honest take on practice and life. Next month we will show "Cherry Blossoms." Please join us when you can. — Cristal Mortensen

UPCOMING IN OCTOBER: "MIND YOUR LIFE" RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

VH is pleased to sponsor guest teacher Andrea Fella in Honolulu this October for the "Mind Your Life" retreat. This retreat will integrate formal meditation practice with daily life as follows: There will be full-day sessions book-ending the week on Sunday, October 25 (9 am–5 pm), and Saturday, October 31 (9 am–5 pm); during the intervening week, we will meet mornings (7–8:30 am) and evenings (7:30–9:00 pm) to inspire, encourage, and support our daily practice. Sessions will be held at a private residence in Honolulu. For further information and to register, contact Mark Nokes at mark@vipassanahawaii.org.

Andrea Fella has been practicing Vipassana meditation since 1996. She has taught residential retreats at Insight Meditation Center (IMC, Redwood City, CA), Cloud Mountain Meditation Center (SW Washington State), and Spirit Rock Meditation Center (Marin County, CA) since 2006; she also teaches classes and non-residential retreats at IMC. Her teachings emphasize clarity and practicality.

In the process of gathering material for the Vipassana Hawai'i newsletter, I have the pleasure of looking through contributors' photos. This issue I was struck by the children — not only their outside beauty but their inside beauty, both of which merged in my perception.

The children shown in the accompanying photo are from Asia but, to me, represent children everywhere. Though the details of their lives may differ, all have the same basic needs and all have the same potential to blossom with awareness.

The light these young beings carry reminds us how important it is for VIPASSANA HAWAII and other like-minded organizations to continue to create and foster programs that benefit children. VH/Asia and HIMC both are intended to perpetuate our teachers' lineage and traditions, mentor the upcoming generations, support well-being on all levels, and bring greater consciousness to daily living at every age. — Carol Perry



PHOTO: GREG SCHARF

Two young students at Wachat School, Burma

UPCOMING VH ASIA RETREATS

KHLONG LONG LAKE RETREAT, SOUTHERN THAILAND
with Steven Smith & Lynne Bousfield
Traditional Vipassana retreat & yoga
December 29 2009 – January 7 2010

13TH ANNUAL RETREAT AT KYASWA MONASTERY, CENTRAL BURMA
with Sayadaw U Lakkhana,
Carol Wilson, & Greg Scharf
For experienced yogis
January 8-28 2010

For detailed information and registration, visit our website, www.vipassanahawaii.org

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DONOR APPRECIATION

We could not do what we do without you, our supporters. Some of you are new to us, and others are long-time friends. We thank you all!

Please keep your contact information current and tell us your mailing preference: postal or electronic. We have new software that allows us to tailor communications. Email me at cperry@vipassanahawaii.org with updates and corrections. — CP

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We are grateful for your support during 2009 and hope you will continue to generously meet VH funding needs.

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