

**Amitabha Buddhist Retreat Centre**  
**Newsletter:**  
**Australia**



Spring Edition 2012 - 3

ABRC's Motto: "Do not be Far-sighted; Do not be Short-sighted"

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## From the Editor-in-chief

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Welcome Friends,

Spring is round the corner and already half the year is gone. Time flies so fast and life is just as changeable from one moment to the next. It wasn't that long when it was only yesterday where most of us, standing at the threshold of New Year Eve making New Year resolutions to better ourselves and our lives. But how far have we achieved?

Only a few days ago did I realised I haven't gone far at all especially when faced with an emergency and it hit home that we are way off the mark; and that if we were to pass over right there and then, no way are we ready to leave this Samsara world?!. I have thought that I would be ready when the time comes for us to leave this Samsara world, and that we may have the good fortune to rebirth into the Western Pure Land; to be one with Buddha Amitabha and our Buddha nature; but in reality, we were not ready. If it was so, we would have been calm; and wouldn't have felt the panic and the fear in an emergency!!!. Sharing this personal experience here I hope others realise too that it doesn't pay to be complacent and how truly important it is to cultivate..

In a touch and go situation most of us would tend to react negatively and out of fear when we have to face the possibility of having our life snuffed out much sooner than we have envisaged (which may result also from not having enough good fortune). At that precise moment and having kicked that panic button, we would be unable to move forward, to conduct ourselves with inward calm and inner faith; and our belief system as Pure Land practitioners might

fly out the window; and all because we are not ready for finale. Instead, the agitation and stress in that dire situation would have us in a state of panic as we face the unknown. All clear indications that we are still attached, not ready to accept new changes and we haven't really let go. And not having cultivated diligently enough to even have the good fortune to face the ordeal in a more peaceful manner?!

As I dialled the triple zero at 11 PM that night I thought Charles was having a minor stroke or heart attack (or blood clot) and was beside myself. I was not prepared to lose Charles and what if; things were to worsen before the ambulance could arrive? I guess Charles himself was also not prepared to go; he was very concerned, having to go through the sudden spasms of pain in both legs in which his left leg seized up without warning; calf muscles numbed and cold as ice; and unable to wiggle his toes.

When the medics came and checked him thoroughly, Charles' blood pressure was 179 over 101. They thought it was more of pinched nerves, and also affirmed that Charles has irregular heartbeats (which we had known for some time). They confirmed that Charles had a bad chest infection too. When the pain subsided and Charles' leg eased up where he could wiggle his toes, the medics were still wondering whether or not to bring Charles to Kingaroy hospital (which is the next town up) as there is no doctor in Nanango hospital for the night shift. Charles decide to stay put and we assured the medics that Charles will be in first thing in the morning to see our family doctor to have a thorough check up and medication for his chest infection.

On that note, the medics left with the advice to ring them again should Charles' condition deteriorate further in the night.

Five hours later, the same situation repeated itself but I did not call the ambulance as I was much prepared and in more control the second time round; also relieved that it wasn't a stroke or heart attack. Instead, I applied more of some deep heat cream and then made a cup of tea for both of us. I then turned up the chanting machine and encouraged Charles to chant, and we both spent some time chanting. It may have taken Charles' leg much longer than the first time to soften again, but this time round we were calm and we coped better. Next morning Charles was back to his normal self and it was as if the incidences did not happen. Doctor did affirmed that Charles' legs was flooded with fluid and thus suffered due to the lack of blood circulation. Charles has constant fluid retention since his cancer operation few years ago and had to be on the medication for that. Three week ago Charles decided on his own to go off the medication.

This episode is a good indication that even as Pure Land Practitioners, we will never know when how we would fare at that crucial time; we may think we have cultivate diligently enough to be ready fro rebirth but it may not be necessary so at the final analysis; for the ability to be able to pass over in a peaceful and calm manner require unbelievable great good fortune, and even greater good fortune to be rebirth into Amitabha Western Pure Land when passing over. And that would require us to truly cultivate sincerely and deeply. Thank you Pusas, for awaken us with this experience.

Amitufo. Celine (June 2011)

## From the Editor

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Welcome to the Spring Edition,

I was overjoyed with serenity, peacefulness and mind blissfulness in my recent retreat in Nanango. I have also met with other keen practitioners who shared the same value and purpose in this retreat.

Even though, it was only a short retreat, I did feel the difference when I had decided to put in 100% effort. I tried to be speak less and just chanted “Amitufo” in my mind when I had the eagerness to speak. When we finished our formal chanting and dharma talk session; I tried to stay back to continue my meditation.

I could feel the difference in my mind and my body which I was not able to say or to describe in words. All I felt was the blissfulness and peacefulness. I wished that I could just stay like that and stop time.

When I went for a family trip in Phuket, Thailand in April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012; I felt and benefited from the advantages of my practice during my retreats in Nanango. On that day, we had to be evacuated in tsunami’s camp after we have just checked in the hotel several hours ago. The tsunami’s alert had been activated due to the Earthquake in Indonesia which was up to 8.9 richter scale. All guests and employees were in shock, fearful and confused, which included us as well. I could not blame the dilemma and the fear which showed on our face at that time. I guessed everyone was

thinking about the consequences caused by Tsunami back in 2004 and the most recent one in Japan. We were told to get into any bus or car that had been provided by the hotel in order to take us to the camp. In the bus, I was able to pull myself together, and get my mind and body working together again.

I tried to comfort my brothers and my sister in-law and asked them to chant “Amitufo”; and we just concentrated on this practice. I kept chanting “Amitufo” until we arrived at the camp and continued doing so for next several hours.

Strangely, but it was true; I did recover from the whole hectic situation. At this time, I tried to help others especially the family with children, to whom I played and talked with them. I felt so ‘overcome’ when the parents said “Thank You” to me. It was just a simple kind gesture but it meant so much for me.

It was one of my memorable holiday experiences and I believe that if we always put our mind and determination of what we had decided to do, we will surely succeed to overcome the obstacles.

Amitufo  
Imelda Liu



*“This world is blind. Here there are few who clearly see. As birds escaping from a net, few go to a blissfull state”. Taken from:  
Dhammpada Chapter VI, Verse: 174*

## Buddhist Teachings:

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### **Five Guidelines Lecture** (Venerable Master Chin Kung) Part One (The First Condition)

The Buddha used innumerable methods to correspond with the level of attainment of his listeners. However, regardless of the particular method, he never deviated from the Great Perfection. In other words, all his teachings arose from the true nature. Consequently, all methods are equal.

In *Visualization Sutra*. Buddha Shakymuni taught Queen Vaidehi to practice the Three Conditions explaining that they were the fundamental causes of attaining Buddhahood for the Buddhas of the past, present and future. Therefore, they are a crucial part and foundation of our practice. The Three Conditions are the basis of Buddhism and crucial in our attainment of Buddhahood.

To be a virtuous person, it is necessary to first follow the Three Conditions. In sutras, we often see the phrase “good men and good women.” What are the requirements for being good? Meeting each of the eleven principles contained in the three Conditions. Thus, we will see that the requirements are stringent.

Good men and good women in the heaven and human realms need only meet the First Condition.

Theravada practitioners are required to fulfill the First and Second Conditions. But for Mahayana practitioners, good men and good women must meet all three.

As we see in Mahayana sutras such as the *Ksitigarbha Sutra* and the *Infinite Life Sutra*, it is to live our lives in accordance with the eleven principles.

Regardless of what the Buddha taught the methods of learning and cultivation or the true reality of life and the universe, all accord with the Great Perfection. The eleven principles of the Three Conditions are likewise perfect in every word.

**The First Condition:** The Good Fortune required to be a Human or Heavenly Being

The First Condition includes to:

- 1) Be filial to our parents,
- 2) Be respectful to our teachers and elders,
- 3) Be compassionate and not killing any living beings, and
- 4) Cultivate the Ten Virtuous Conducts.

### **Filial Piety:**

Who can practice the principle of filial piety to perfection? Only a Buddha can do so. Without having attained Buddhahood, we cannot achieve the Great Perfection in practicing filial piety.

Filial piety has profound meanings in Buddhism. It means to take care of parents physically, mentally and to fulfill their wishes. To further extend and enhance our respect and care for our parents, we have compassion for all beings in this world.

As stated in the *Brahma Net Sutra*, “All men are my father; all women are my mother.”

This is the broadening of our mind of filial piety so that it encompasses all beings in the universe, in the past, present and future. Mahayana teachings are based on the principle of filial piety for without it there would be no principle of

respecting teachers. Filial piety and respect go together. At the same time that we are filial to our parents, we also elevate that filial piety to being respectful to our teachers. Only when we realize this truth will we truly appreciate the value of the principle of filial piety.

Being filial toward our parents is a virtue of our true nature. Only virtuous acts can uncover our true nature. It is the first and most fundamental principle of the Three Conditions. When we are filial toward our parents, it naturally follows that we will respect our teachers.

### **Respectful:**

When we pay respect to an image of the Buddha, we are not worshipping him. We respect the image as a representation of our original teacher and therefore we pay our debt of gratitude to him. This is why the followers of the Buddha respect the Buddha's images as well as memorial plaques of ancestors. This practice has a far-reaching and widespread educational significance, for at the sight of them, we remember our obligation of caring for and respecting our parents, teachers, and elders.

The *Ksitigarbha Sutra* tells us about compassion after explaining the Great Perfection. Compassion is the third principle of the First Condition. Compassion is also a virtue of true nature and crucial to our practice. When the virtue of filial piety and respect for parents and teachers is expanded, it becomes compassion.

Compassion includes not killing any living being. This statement has profound meanings. Without a thorough comprehension of the *Ksitigarbha Sutra*, we cannot understand the true meaning behind not killing any living being.

## **Compassion:**

Compassion is the third principle of the First Condition. Compassion is also a virtue of true nature and crucial to our practice. When the virtue of filial piety and respect for parents and teachers is expanded, it becomes compassion. Compassion includes not killing any living being.

Of all bad karmas, that resulting from killing is most serious. Why? All living beings have the natural instinct of fearing and evading death. The present victim does not know or understand that he was the killer in a previous lifetime. He or she would not think: “I killed this person so now it is my turn to be killed.” Instead, the present victim will think only of revenge. This vengeance will be repeated in the endless cycle of birth and death and the mutual hatred will grow stronger and stronger.

This is the most terrible of all the bad offenses and is why we need so urgently to practice compassion for all beings. There are infinite ways to practice compassion, but in the Three Conditions, the Buddha particularly stressed not killing any living being.

The Buddha taught the basic Five Precepts and the first of these is the first of the Ten Good Conducts—do not kill. Continuing to kill is to completely disregard his teachings and is an ultimate act of disrespect. This disrespect is tantamount to being unfilial to our parents. Consequently, if we ignore these instructions and kill, we are neither compassionate nor filial.

## **Ten Good Conducts:**

The fourth principle is “Following the Ten Good Conducts” which are criteria for good behavior and are to be found in many cultures and religions throughout the world. Buddha Shakyamuni told us that if we practice these good conducts, we would not fall into the Three Bad Realms.

Instead, we would likely to be born into the heaven realms if we practice these good conducts diligently.

If we achieve the deep concentration along with the Four Immeasurable Minds of loving-kindness [giving happiness to others], compassion [taking away bitterness of others], joy [liberating others from suffering and feeling happy for them] and letting go [of the first three minds], we will rise to an even higher level of the heavens, the Heaven of Form and the Heaven of Formless.

The Buddha groups the Ten Good Conducts into three major categories: physical, verbal, and mental. Physically, we are prohibited from killing, stealing and committing sexual misconduct. Regardless of their good deeds or their ability in deep concentration, those who have sexual desires can only rise as far as the Heaven of Desire. This heaven has six levels; the higher we rise, the lighter these desires.

A person who sincerely cultivates and has thus attained even the lowest level of deep concentration would be able to suppress sexual desires. At this level the Five Desires of wealth, lust, fame, food or drink and sleep would not arise. Although the desires are not completely eradicated, they can be suppressed by deep concentration.

Only the one, who can resist temptations of desire, can attain this state and thus be born into the heavens above the First Level Meditation Heaven. Understanding this explains why attainment throughout this process is so difficult. When we are attempting to practice, we can first ask ourselves, “Can I resist the Five Desires of wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep”? If we yield to temptation, we will not be able to rise to this level of heaven.

The second good conduct is to not steal. For instance, some people like to evade paying their income taxes. This is equivalent to stealing money from the country and the retribution from this is much serious than that from stealing private property. When we steal one person's property, we only have a debt to that one person. But if we steal property of the country, we will have a hopelessly insurmountable debt because then we will have stolen from and thus owe every taxpayer.

Therefore, a sincere practitioner must be a law-abiding person devoted to meeting public responsibilities. One who does not violate the good deeds of no killing; stealing or sexual misconduct conducts themselves properly.

There are four verbal good conducts; no lying, abusive speech, divisive speech, or enticing speech.

First, do not lie. To lie is to cheat deliberately; it is dishonesty.

Second, do not make harsh or abusive remarks. Those who have this bad habit speak with no sense of propriety; their words can be irritating or very harmful.

Third, do not talk about others behind their back for this sows discord among people. A person says to Sam, "Tom has said something bad about you." And then this person says to Tom, "Sam has said something bad about you." Whether this person does so deliberately or unintentionally, he is bearing tales and gossiping. In our society, many people do this unintentionally. At times, so many people participate in this that the subject becomes distorted beyond recognition. A well-meant message or remark may become just the opposite after everyone who passes it adds or omits something. This can cause serious consequences ranging from discord among individuals to war among nations.

Fourth, do not use enticing words. These can sound very sweet and attractive but often conceal bad intentions. Just look at many of today's movies, singers, and performers. They sound beautiful and look good but what are they teaching people to do? To lie, steal, or kill.

Fifth, do not commit sexual misconduct.

Finally, there are three mental good conducts; no greed, anger or ignorance. Greed includes being miserly, reluctant to give of our belongings, our knowledge to help others. This can become the greatest obstacle to overcome in our practice. The Buddha taught giving as a way to eradicate our greed. Some practitioners are able to resist any worldly temptations; however, they cannot resist the desire to learn many methods of practice. So, they have not truly rid themselves of their greed.

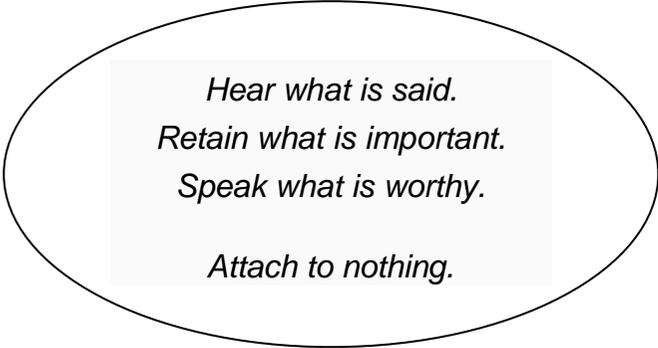
The Buddha has taught us to let go of all desires and greed. He did not ask us to turn to new objects for our greed. In the past, we sought worldly joys, now we seek and attach to Buddhist knowledge. The mind of greed is still there. Therefore, whether for worldly life or for Buddhist knowledge, we would do well not to be greedy.

Greed is the source of all misdeeds and wrongdoing. Greed leads to resentment and anger. Why? We become resentful and angry when our greed is not satisfied and this brings about immense worries and afflictions. Greed is the cause of the karma that results in us being born into the hungry ghost realm. By failing to rid ourselves of the resentment and anger caused by greed, we can be born into the hell realm. Ignorance, having no wisdom, results in us being born into the animal realm.

In both worldly teachings and in Buddhism there is truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, right and wrong, good and bad. An ignorant person cannot tell the difference between them. Intentional or unintentional, he or she often confuses false and truth, bad and good. The Three Poisons are the biggest obstacles to our attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism, especially the Zen school, advocates starting our practice from the root, the mind.

To start from this root, we need to sever our greed, anger, and ignorance. These three physical, four verbal and three mental deeds comprise the Ten Good Conducts. If we are filial to and care for our parents, respect and serve our teachers and elders, and are compassionate without any killing and practice the Ten Good Conducts, we will be regarded as good people by society. However, we still cannot be called “good men and good women” in the Buddhist sense because the criterion for this are higher than just these four principles. Thus, it is not easy for us to achieve even the basic standards.

[\(Excerpts from the book: 'Buddhism of Awakening & Compassion'\) To be continued...](#)



*Hear what is said.  
Retain what is important.  
Speak what is worthy.  
Attach to nothing.*

*To end attachments is to end rebirth in in Samsara.*

## Non-attachment in Meditative Concentration

In the *Essentials*, Master Ouyi's commentary on the *Amitabha Sutra*, we read, "One does not give rise to attachments or wandering thoughts in various states of meditative concentration."

We need to understand this statement to be able to progress toward our goal of enlightenment. One experiences joy when in meditative concentration, as the saying goes, "feeding on the joy one experiences in meditation." Those who achieve meditative concentration often cannot advance to the next level because they are attached to the state of meditative concentration they are in.

Those who achieve the four dhyanas and the eight concentrations cannot transcend the Six Paths because they are attached to the state of meditative concentration they are in and will not let go of it. Attachment leads to greed, which is still a wandering thought.

This is to remind us to exercise wisdom. We can enjoy the state of meditative concentration but should not be attached to it. If we can achieve this non-attachment, there will be no adverse effects.

It is the same with our present situation. We can enjoy whatever we are experiencing but we should not attach to it.

If discriminations and attachments arise in us, then we are wrong and will have trouble.

~ Based on Ven. Master Chin Kung's 2003 lecture series on the *Amitabha Sutra* ([www.abrc.org.au](http://www.abrc.org.au))

“Happiness is a mental state.

Whether or not something makes us happy  
depends on what we tell ourselves.”

~ Venerable Wuling ~



**Reminder to Editorial team and also Committee Members:**

*Our annual meetings for both of the above are scheduled in November (both of which to be held one just before & the other after that retreat). For those involved with the above, please strive to attend if possible. Sincere thanks.*

*November seems to be turning out to be a good annual retreat; and already it has a good response, with 7 bookings from out of town (2 ladies from Brisbane, one from Sydney and 4 from Rockies); and including our local sangha members it should be a nice turnout. Maybe we could have November and May as the two main annual retreats to strictly observe the Noble Silence? ☺  
Thank you all and Amitufo. (centre coordinator)*

## Neither too Kind Nor too Harsh

Master Kuang-ch'in said: "Treat other neither overly kind nor too harsh." Yesterday, I wrote of according with – not seeking – affinities. The master advice shows some ways we can do this. He's talking about balance, about the middle way.

If we are either too kind or too harsh, we push the extremes in our relationships with others. On the one hand, if we are too kind, although our kindness may well be sincerely, we may stifle others and keep them from growing. If we are too kind while our kindness is not sincere, we are acting falsely and thus misleading others. When the individual learns of our insincerity, it is most likely that he or she will feel negatively towards us.

On the other hand, if we are too harsh we run the serious risk of fostering an enmity. While firmness is necessary at times, we need to temper it with wisdom, not with anger or negative emotions. Without wisdom, we can force the other person in a corner. He or she might come out fighting and we will have an enmity. Or the individual may simply give up and we will have stifled the other person and hindered their growth.

So acting too kind or too harshly runs the risk of not helping the other person and fostering an enmity. No good karmic consequences. No helping others. No middle way.

~Venerable Wuling~

"Delusion is mistaking  
wrong ideas for the truth."

~ Ven Wuling ~

## Winds of Change

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### The monk who specialized in the Buddha Name chanting

In the beginning of this century, Master Dixian had a student who became a monk at the age of forty; so, the student was almost the same age as the master.

The two had been childhood friends. Master Dixian, who was from a well-off family, had received a good education. However, his childhood friend was from a poor family and had received little education. When the friend grew up, he could only do manual labor and had a very difficult life.

One time, he went to visit Master Dixian. After staying at the temple for a few days, he told the master that he too wanted to become a monk. "Why?" asked the Master. His friend replied, "Because life is too hard and I want to be a monk." The master initially denied this request because he felt the rigorous training and sutra memorization would prove too much for someone who was illiterate and much older than novice monks usually are. The other monks would look down upon his friend. Feeling everything would prove too much for his friend, the master denied the request.

But when the friend persisted, the master gave in and said, "I will accept you as a monk. But I don't think you need to take the vows of abiding by the precepts because you may not stand the rigor of the fifty-three day training. There are many deserted temples in the countryside; I will find you one to stay in." The master arranged for some practitioners to provide meals for the new monk. He then taught his friend to chant "Namo Amitufofo."

"Just recite this phrase over and over. When you are tired, take a rest. When rested, resume your chanting. I am sure that you will greatly benefit from this."

And so, the new monk isolated himself in the small temple and concentrated solely on his chanting. Three years later, he went to visit friends and relatives. He came back and told the woman who had been cooking for him, "There is no need to prepare food for me tomorrow."

The woman thought the monk, who had not left the temple for three years, had decided to re-visit his friends again the following day. The next day, she went by the temple to see if he had returned. She went to the temple and called out. Receiving no reply, she went into the temple and found him standing, with his chanting beads in his hand. She greeted him. The monk did not reply.

When she moved closer to him, she realized that he was dead but still standing! Never having seen anything like this before in her life, she rushed off to ask the others who were looking after the monk; what to do. They sent a message to the master's temple to inform him of the strange occurrence and asked what to do.

Due to difficulties in traveling, it took Master Dixian three days to arrive at his friend's temple. He understood that his old friend had been born into the Western Pure Land. He looked at the still standing dead friend and said admiringly to him, "You have proved that your decision three years ago to become a monk was a fruitful one. Not one of the Dharma masters or abbots at all the famous temples can match your achievement."

For three years, the uneducated monk had done nothing but recite "Namo Amitufo."  
His single-minded, ceaseless chanting had resulted in his achievement of being freed from the cycle of birth and death, and of being born into the Western Pure Land.

“No one can escape death and unhappiness.  
If people expect only happiness in life,  
they will be disappointed.”

~Buddha~



‘The wise man is at peace with himself &  
others; is always even-tempered, peaceful  
and calm regardless of circumstances.’

~ Master Yin Guang ~



“The learned man who does not practice the Dharma  
is like a colourful flower without scent.”

~The Buddha~

## Personal Anecdotes

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I was born a roman- catholic citizen in Austria, and was first drawn to Buddhism at the age of 16.

My mother was attending regular meditation sessions at a Buddhist Center in Vienna back then, and I was eager to go along with her. I was fascinated by the Buddhist Philosophy and Teachings immediately. While other teenagers at my age were mainly focused on parties, drinking, smoking and trying out various drugs, I found it most profound to enter into a deep stage of meditation.

I realized that by focusing on my breath and simply being in the moment, and looking inside of me rather than outside, I was able to connect to an endless, peaceful universe. It seemed as if theirs was a magical door present in my own consciousness. The only way to walk through that magical door was by being in the moment, and letting any uprising thoughts flow on without attempting to pick them up and getting drifted away with them. Once I walked through my own inner magical door, I realized that I was connected to everything else; there was no more separateness between me and other sentient beings or divine beings

Buddhism continued to play an important role in my life after those teenage years. When I was a student at a university in London, I also went to meditation classes there.

I remember feeling a sense of belonging and serenity there. This was comforting to me, since I had been through some rough patches in my life (divorce of my parents, difficulties

with the new partners of my parents, feeling a lack of love especially from my mother who also suffered from depression, getting an eating disorder, and feelings of hopelessness, utter loneliness and depression).

When, during the beginning stages of my professional life as a doctor, I travelled to New Zealand and Australia, I was very lucky to meet Celine Richardson who runs the Amithaba Buddhist Center in Nanango, Australia. This was a god-sent to me. I had travelled a lot at that time; actually because I was searching for something...I was not even sure what exactly. I knew that my life in Austria back then was hardly fulfilling me.

The routine of going to a challenging workplace, the hospital, and feeling overwhelmed by the expectations of other people, yet at the same time feeling empty and depleted inside of me, filled me with the desire to break away....wherever to, really. The main thing was that I could not endure the circumstances any longer. I felt that I was giving, giving and giving to others...without having anything left to nourish myself and stay healthy. I also didn't have a boyfriend; I was yearning for some love & support in my life.

Spending time at Celine's house had a very healing effect on me. I enjoyed the regular walking meditation sessions in the center. Celine taught me a lot about Buddhism, and one of the things that she told me was that I was able to change my destiny. She reminded me of the importance of doing good deeds and meditating regularly. She was not only a teacher; however, she was a very loving teacher. She taught by example. She helped me a lot by letting me stay at her house; giving me healthy food and making me feel

welcome like an old friend. Also she spent a lot of time talking to me, even though, theoretically, I had been a stranger - a traveller passing through Australia.

Celine's husband, Charles; was a living example of goodness to me. Even though he didn't spend as much time as Celine reading about Buddhism and meditating, it seemed like he was living Buddhism naturally anyway. He was usually smiling when I saw him and he was always kind.

He was content, humble & peaceful. The beautiful nature around the Buddhist Center in Nanango also gave me new positive energy. I went for runs or long walks pretty much every day. I saw many animals, like wallabies, which was great for me, because I really love animals & nature.

After staying with Celine and Charles I was filled with new hope, ideas and intentions for my life. I felt stronger and recharged mentally, physically and spiritually.

I am very lucky. When I was a teenager, I was introduced to a more theoretical kind of Buddhism. By getting to know Celine, Charles (& her family and friends) and the Buddhist Center in Nanango however, I was able to really feel and experience Buddhism by the living example of their kindness. I still meditate regularly. I also practice some yoga exercises, which I find helpful too. My life has generally improved very much in the last 7 years. I don't feel empty and hopeless anymore. I have made some very positive changes to my personal and professional life.

I feel very grateful for the blessings in my life. I am healthy and I live in abundance. I enjoy sharing with others.

Thank you! :-) Johanna

“Expect and embrace obstacles!  
For without them, we cannot make  
progress in our practice.”  
Master Kuang-Ch'in



“Only when we are capable of  
enduring everything, can our hearts  
can be pure and unaffected by  
external influences.”  
~Ven Master Chin Kung~



“We are what we think.  
All that we are arises with our thoughts.  
With our thoughts, we make the world.”  
~Ven Wuling~

## Readers' Comments

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*Hello Celine*

*I always look forward to receiving the newsletter, and think that you all do a marvellous job of putting it together. I wish to return to you the books that you kindly sent me some time ago. They played a very important part in developing my practice. I am always very mindful of how and where to place Buddhist material.*

*Really appreciate you sharing your experiences, and passing on the words from Venerable Wuling. I very much wish to continue receiving your newsletter.*

*Thank you Celine.*

*Warwick*

Hi Celine

We are just back after 6 week caravanning. I loved the latest newsletter; it sure is becoming big! I saw this cartoon in a FPMT publication, (Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition) and wondered if you could use it for the next newsletter...if not, just enjoy -) Amitufo Judy x



Do you have one that doesn't come with attachments? I'm Buddhist.

## Messages and Announcements:

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Our Editor Imelda has recently tendered her resignation as she has enrolled for her Uni studies last month, to major in accounting for business bachelor degree whilst still keeping her full time job. Imelda wanted to concentrate her time towards her studies. 'Thank you Imelda, for your contribution the past two years and we wish you the very best to you with your studies'. ☺

We also take this opportunity to welcome Lynette Davies from Western Australia who will be joining the editorial team, taking over from Imelda. Lyn is a Pure Land practitioner for almost ten years ago and she was one of our core sangha members when she and her husband Lloyd were then living in Nanango. Welcome aboard Lyn. ☺

Retreat Schedules: Sept: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> and Nov: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>

We are contemplating whether to go for a new secondary website where we can update on line; share & store our newsletters on site, and hopefully to reach out to more readers. Maybe could include different sections, including a social network to link readers and an online support section like a chat room or something?. We would appreciate any advice/comments/ideas from readers if this idea is viable?!.

Lastly, please put Charles on your dedication of merits if you can. Recently received prognosis of his medical results: Tumour in the pancreas, and he is waiting to go Toowomba hospital for his specialist to check whether it's benign or not. Thank you friends and Amitufo. (22/7/2011)

### **Editorial Staff:**

Imelda Liu  
Beverley Bettridge  
Belinda Burman  
Nicole O'Brien

Editor in Chief – Celine Richardson

### **Web Links:**

[www.abrc.org.au](http://www.abrc.org.au)

[www.abuddhistperspective.org](http://www.abuddhistperspective.org)

[www.howwillibehavetoday.org](http://www.howwillibehavetoday.org)

<http://facebook.com/Claireceline>

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