



# CLEAR MIND



The Newsletter of Madison Vipassana, Inc. Madison, WI

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*Let there be nothing  
grasped or rejected  
by you.*

*Burn up what's  
before, and have  
nothing for after.*

*If you don't grasp at  
what's in between,  
you will go about,  
calm.*

Samyutta Nikaya 1098

## Annie Nugent Non-Residential Retreat, July 11-July 13

We welcome Annie Nugent to Madison to lead a non-residential retreat. The retreat schedule will be as follows:

Friday, July 11, 8:15 am—5 pm

Saturday, July 12, 9 am—5 pm

Sunday, July 13, 9 am—3 pm

The retreat will be suitable for beginning or experienced meditators. It will be held at the Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Road in Madison, WI.

There will be tea available throughout the day, and a catered vegetarian lunch will be served each day. The retreat fee of \$115 pays for the facilities and meals. It

is traditional for retreatants to also offer *dana*, generosity, to the teacher to express gratitude and appreciation for sharing the teachings. (See article on page 4.) There will be an opportunity to offer *dana* to Annie at the end of the retreat.

To register, complete the form on the insert and mail it as instructed on the form. To discuss special needs or registration, contact [juliemeyer@tds.net](mailto:juliemeyer@tds.net). We have limited scholarship funds available. Please contact Laura at 608-238-7376 for details about the scholarship fund and to discuss your situation. We encourage you to register early to be certain of a spot.



See the article by Annie on page 3 of this newsletter. The registration form for the retreat is an insert in this newsletter or available on our website at [www.vipassana.net/retreats](http://www.vipassana.net/retreats)

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### Dhamma Talk, July 13

Annie Nugent has agreed to lead meditation and give the Dhamma talk at our Sunday night sitting on July 13, 900 University Bay Drive, 7-9 pm.

Whenever possible, we ask our invited teachers to attend a Sunday night sitting so more of our community can benefit from the teaching of those coming to town to lead retreats. So, even if you are unable to attend the non-residential retreat, you can hear from Annie when she is in Madison. Mark your calendar now.

### Places to Stay While Attending the Annie Nugent Retreat:

1. Camping: Lake Farm Park (next door to the retreat center). Call Dane County Parks at 608-246-3896 to check if reservations are needed. (At a prior retreat, one yogi found this a very pleasant and quiet place to stay.)
2. Super 8 Motel, 1602 W. Beltline Hwy (Todd Drive exit). Call 608-258-8882 for reservations.
3. Days Inn, 4402 E. Broadway (Stoughton Rd. exit). Call 608-223-1800 for reservations.
4. Sheraton Madison Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive. Call 608-251-2300 for reservations.

## Madison Vipassana, Inc., Announces Introductory Meditation Classes

Madison Vipassana is pleased to announce it will offer regularly scheduled introductory meditation classes, beginning this spring. (Madison Insight Meditation Group will continue to offer a brief introduction on the 2nd Sunday of each month from 7 to 8:30 pm at 900 University Bay Drive.)

The decision to offer these classes was made because we frequently get calls and requests to do so. It seemed that the level of interest and need was sufficient for our group to establish an ongoing means for interested individuals to learn the skill of meditation.

*Training the Mind: The Skill of Meditation* will offer an introduction to the practice in a series of four, two-hour classes. We plan to offer the four-week series a number of times each year. The dates for subsequent series will be posted on our website at [www.vipassana.net/classes](http://www.vipassana.net/classes)

The class will be practical and experiential. Students will be expected to attend all sessions and practice during the week in order to benefit and apply the new strategies and skills presented during the prior class. The teaching and content of the class will be cumulative, so attending the entire series will be of most benefit.

The practical skills and strategies of meditation will be presented in the context of the foundational teachings of the Buddha on the four noble truths, the eightfold path, and the three characteristics.

No prior experience or knowledge is necessary to enroll. The class is offered on a 'dana' basis (see article on page 4 for an explanation of dana and its purpose and intention).

The first series of classes will be held from **April 26-May 17, at 9-11 am** each week. The classes will be co-led by Jan Sheppard and Lori Creswell. They will be held at 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, the same location as the regular Tues-

day night sitting. Directions are at [www.vipassana.net/](http://www.vipassana.net/) weekly at the entry for the Tuesday night sitting.

To register for the class, send an email indicating your interest, your full name, email, phone number and address, to: [uppekha@yahoo.com](mailto:uppekha@yahoo.com) You will receive a reply confirming your participation.

Questions about the class can be directed to Jan at 608-829-0944 (after 6pm if a weekday), or Lori at 608-238-1234.



## Wisconsin Friends of the Sasana



You are invited to a meeting on **Saturday, May 3, 3-5 pm**, to investigate if there is sufficient interest to begin an organization *Wisconsin Friends of the Sasana*. This organization would be intended to deepen our understanding of *Buddhasasana* through strengthening our connection with one another and with the monastic communities in the Theravada lineage, especially those of Ajahn Chah and

his disciples, and specifically Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery in Redwood Valley, CA.

After introductions, we'll begin by viewing the video *Fearless Mountain*, a documentary about Abhayagiri Monastery. This is the monastery led by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasanno.

*Buddhasasana*, often just shortened to *Sasana*, means the dispensation of the Buddha, which includes everything that he taught and all of the structures he put in place for the perpetuation of the teachings.

Wisconsin Friends of the Sasana would be for individuals who want to deepen their understanding and practice of the Buddha's teachings and support and be connected to the monastic communities that have sustained those teachings for the last 2,550 years.

After viewing the video, we will talk as a group about how and if we would like to use an organization such as the one proposed to deepen our practice and support the Ajahn Chah (or other) Theravada monasteries.

Jan Sheppard received four years of training from Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasanno to become a Community of Abhayagiri Lay Minister (CALM). She will share some examples of ways other distant communities develop and sustain a mutually supportive relationship with the monastery.

We will then brainstorm ways that may strengthen our practice and also connect us with the monastery. Some options may be using the monthly chanting night as a regular opportunity to attend a 'puja', setting up an upasika program for our-

selves (see <http://www.abhayagiri.org/index.php/main/content/C59> as one possible model), working with [www.saranaloka.org](http://www.saranaloka.org) as they investigate establishing a nuns community in the United States, and/or knitting cloths to clean the monks bowls or knee socks for the monks or nuns, [knitters/crocheters are welcome to bring brown cottonyarn and make dish-cloths while we talk!]. What ideas might you offer?

There is a wealth of information at the monastery website at [www.abhayagiri.org](http://www.abhayagiri.org). You might visit it to get familiar with the many activities occurring already.

Those already having a connection and interest, as well as those just curious, are welcome to view the video and contribute to the conversation. See you then.

## The Dharma in a Few Words

by Annie Nugent

We might think that the Dharma is only to be found in long hours of sitting on our meditation cushion...but not so. It incorporates all areas of our lives if we are prepared to look at life with eyes of mindfulness — and what better place to begin than with our speech?

The Buddha spoke about the importance of speaking wisely. It is one of the steps of the eightfold path and an immediately rich area of practice for us in the busy, interactive world we live in. Each time we open our mouth to speak we have the opportunity to cultivate either wholesome or unwholesome qualities: we can perpetuate the habitual responses borne out of delusion that we have blindly acted out for many lifetimes or we can learn to pause momentarily before we speak, take note of what is happening in the mind — and then speak from a place of growing awareness of

what our motivation is in our choice of words, because motivation or attitude of mind, is the key to wholesome speech. Are our words motivated by kindness or anger, greed or generosity?

For example, take the simple sentence: “Hello, how are you today?” What is our motivation in saying these words that are used so often in our daily lives? We might say them to our neighbors, the check-out clerk at the supermarket, our friends, our children, partners and people in the street. But are we aware of all of the qualities that might be present within the heart/mind as we are speaking them?

In just these few words we can find the dharma: when the heart is open and connected to the other person, we can touch our common bond, our humanity. We are not threatening the other person or wanting anything from them;

rather, we are giving in a very simple, aware way. We are letting go of thoughts about ourselves and what we want, and including someone else into our world with kind awareness, transforming what might have been a mere formality — a polite, empty sentence if said without awareness — into a small gesture of kindness and inclusion borne out of awareness. In these moments we are also not trying to make any special feeling arise. Instead, through being genuinely open and truly present, we can feel a quiet connectedness come to life within the heart, free of expectation of any particular result.

It takes so little of our time, yet has far reaching consequences in terms of our practice because each drop of wholesome motivation in our speech — coming from a place of generosity and kindness of heart, rather than from a place of grasping or unkindness — is a

step in the direction of letting go of our deeply ingrained habitual tendency of unawareness in the world.

If we are sincerely interested in developing in our practice, then we can resolve to pay attention when we speak. As we begin to include speech in our practice we will notice how difficult it is because our habits run so deep. Don't let this dishearten you...and watch the judging mind.... we are all working towards purifying our unskillful habits...and of course, it is going to take time. The important thing to remember is to be patient with ourselves and never to give up... each moment we are willing to make the effort towards strengthening awareness in our speech brings wholesome results....a drop at a time.

## Help Needed for the Dalai Lama's Visit

Members of the Deer Park Buddhist community have contacted Madison Insight Meditation Group, Snowflower Sangha and Madison Shambhala about helping out with HHDL's week of teachings from July 19-25th at the Dane County Coliseum. His visit seems an ideal time for practitioners from all of the different traditions in the Madison Buddhist Community to pull together for this auspicious opportunity right here at home.

They have asked us to jointly coordinate staffing an Information Booth at the coliseum during the five days of events. If you have already, or plan to purchase tickets for any of the events, this volunteer job would not interfere with your ability to attend. The

booth will be staffed only before and after the teachings, and during the breaks. If you have not yet, or do not plan to purchase tickets for the lecture or teachings, that is also fine. You can still staff the Info Booth and be of enormous help to those who are attending. (Volunteers will not be able to go in to hear the Dalai Lama without a ticket.)

I am looking for volunteers to staff the booth for one or more sessions. The likely times (subject to change) will be

- Public Talk: Sat. July 19, 2-3 pm & 4:30-5:30 pm
- Teachings: Sun. July 20-Wed. July 23, 8:30-9:30 am, 11:30-1:30 pm, 3:30-4:30 pm
- Long Life Ceremony, Thurs. July 24, 8-9:30 am

If you are interested in offering *dana* to our Dhamma community through this volunteer opportunity, please email Jan at [uppekha@yahoo.com](mailto:uppekha@yahoo.com) **by May 11**. Please indicate possible days or times that you might like to work (or those you know you couldn't work). Jan will be in touch with you directly to provide more information, and answer any questions you have.

Previous volunteers during the Dalai Lama's visit always report that it is a wonderful and joyous experience to be among thousands of people practicing kindness and compassion and to be of assistance to those who have come, some from great distances, to hear the teachings. Please consider helping make their visit to Madison wonderful!

## Half-Day Sit

On May 3 and June 7 we will have our regular half-day sitting from 9 to noon, followed by a potluck lunch. Both will be held at the home of Claire Box, 911 Western Rd. Directions: From University Ave. turn north onto Shorewood Dr. Take a left on Locust (just in back of the shopping center), and a right on Western Rd.

There will not be half-day sittings over the summer, but they will resume in the fall. Watch the website at [www.vipassana.net/weekly](http://www.vipassana.net/weekly) for details and for information about when and where they will resume in the fall. For questions contact Dave at 608-238-1234.

This newsletter is published periodically to inform our meditation community of activities and events of interest. This newsletter and other information is also published on our website at: <http://www.vipassana.net>

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To receive the newsletter electronically, join our listserv by sending a message with no subject or content to: [mimig-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mimig-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



## The Meaning of Dana – Generosity

<http://www.sravastiabbey.org/danameaning.html>

Dana is a Sanskrit and Pali word that means "generosity" or "giving." It refers specifically to taking delight in giving—that is, getting in touch with the natural generosity and wish to share inside of us. The mind of generosity is a joyful mind; it does not suffer from regret or a feeling of poverty. Rather, the act of giving itself is pleasurable and seeing others' using our offering is an extra bonus.

... In accordance with the Buddhist tradition, Dharma teachings should be given free of charge, thus making them available to anyone who wishes. Making it known at the end of Dharma teachings that dana will be happily received is not a clever way of charging for teachings while looking like we're not. The donations people give should be a gift freely and joyfully given. Dana is not given out of obligation or in order to avoid looking cheap. It is an

expression of our love and compassion for all beings and of our eagerness to put the Buddha's teachings into practice. It shows that we want the teachers and practitioners who benefit us to have the four requisites of life—food, shelter, clothing, and medicines. We want these people to have what they need—which nowadays includes computers and email!—so that they can continue to share the Dharma with us and all others.

As the Buddha taught, generosity is an essential part of our practice. The first of the six far-reaching attitudes of the bodhisattvas, generosity frees us from attachment and miserliness. It also directly benefits others. Thus, in the Buddhist tradition, practitioners happily support Buddhist abbeys, temples, centers, teachers, monastics, practitioners, and activities that benefit the society.

by Ven. Thubten Chodron

... Some people may wonder, "I am a lay practitioner. Why should I support monastics (or lay teachers) when they can work to support themselves?"

... Having access to Buddhist monasteries, centers, teachers, and teachings depends on our having created the causes. As students, it is important for us personally to create these causes, not to expect others to work or supply the material resources. We must create the karma in order to experience the results we wish. Whenever we offer our time, energy and financial help in ways that enable others to receive teachings and practice, we create the cause to receive teachings and to practice ourselves. This cause brings results quickly—there are monasteries and Dharma centers for us to visit now—and in the future, by creating the karma cause to meet the Dharma again.