



Newsletter

**DHAMMA SUKHA
MEDITATION CENTRE**
Melbourne VIC Australia

<http://www.dhammasukha.org.au>



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Contact: 03-9512 5333
Email: contact@dhammasukha.org.au

Please contact us if you have any questions about this newsletter or would like to contribute an article for future editions

Message from Sayadaw: Meaning of the Kathina robe-offering

Kathina is a one-month long ceremony, held once a year normally around the last day of the full month after the end of the rainy season (vassa) between the October full moon and the November full month.

The robe-offering ceremony is for lay people to give support to the Sangha or the noble community. The most important being the four requisites: *Su-patiya* (1) robe (*sewara*), (2) dwelling (*civara*), monastery, (3) food or nutrition (*Bhojana*) and (4) medicine (*Bhesajja*) – to maintain our health.

The Buddha's teachings for his followers and disciples refer to this as 'vinaya dana'. These are basic necessities only and not to spend too much money and experience wastage, for the Sangha to be neat, clean and tidy for a well-managed life.

Who is the Sangha? Sangha (Pāli) is known as Reverend or Venerable. The title is Sayadaw (Burmese), Ajahn (Thai) or Bhanṭé (Sri Lankan). This is the noble community who have attained a purified mental state and who show the best example in the world.

The different reverends wear the same robe - signifying a tradition handed down from 2,500 years ago since the Buddha's time – the oldest uniform in the

world!

The Sangha are different from others – day and night, we live a life different from others for the rest of our lives or when we disrobe. The Sangha offer you the abhidhamma way – even if you have gained



Above: DSMC Kathina Robe-offering ceremony by lay people to the Sangha

wealth and success by earning millions in your business and you are now happy. But one day your health will fail – money cannot help you... as you are no longer happy. You seek out the temples to offer alms or robes to make you happy. Offering a set of robes, a scoop of rice into the alms bowl – these images will support you the day when your health fails you.

That is why the uniform, the people who wears it, the one who bears the Decision - the Noble Sangha are very important. We sustain and remind all of the Buddha Teachings. If the Buddha did not introduce this ceremony for the lay

people, they would forget the Sangha over time and cease to support us.

The Sangha would have to buy their own clothes like everyone else. Like you, the Sangha would have to go shopping – and may wear the same jeans as you wear! Over time, you and the Sangha would have to wear the same clothes and be no different.

Being different is important for protection of the two sides: For you—to protect your faith in us. For the Sangha—to protect us the 'vinaya' race. For example, if we wear this robe, we cannot go into the Crown Casino, night clubs or to football matches. This is the difference – The Buddha has wisely thought of this way to protect the Sangha

community against going to unsuitable places and also to protect the lay people so that you are clear in your trust of the faith provided by the Sangha. That is why this robe is meaningful – as much as you, the lay people support the Sangha, we teach the Dhamma and support the lay people by showing you the best system to live your lives. This is the meaning of the Kathina robe-offering explained in simple terms. We hope that every year you will offer the robe to support the Sangha, knowing the meaning of your offering, not only in this Kathina, not only in this

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ Full month Dec-09 Meditation Retreat in Indonesia led by Sayadaw U Pandita.
- ◆ 10 to 16th Dec-09 Meditation Retreat in Healesville VIC led by Sayadaw U Lakkhana.
- ◆ Full month retreat in April 10 in DSMC planned to be led by Sayadaw U Pandita.

temple, everywhere in your heart, you will support the poor, helpless and those less fortunate, so that you can fulfil your three-fold training: generosity (dana), morality (sila) and mental development (bhavana).

On behalf of the Noble Sangha, thank you for every instance that your heart is supporting the Sangha community. May all attain the highest level of inner peace in this life. Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! ■

Lunch Dana Groups

As well as our regular listed lunch donors, DSMC now welcomes anyone interested in joining with the listed day's donor in bringing food and beverages to offer to our DSMC monks, and to participate in this meritorious activity. All Dhamma brothers and



Above: Sayalays mindfully prepare for their dana lunch

sisters are warmly welcome.

We are also seeking kind support from devotees (or ex-yogis) to participate in helping to take care of our practising full-time intensive yogis (meditators) during meal times by volunteering to prepare, serve, and do the washing up in the dining hall and kitchen, on any day.

Anyone wishing to assist in this meritorious work may contact Linel 0417 576 801 or Chris 0412 656 318. ■

DSMC welcomes Ven U Dammar Nanda

DSMC's newly appointed Deputy Abbot, Ven U Dammar Nanda, has settled into residence at 69 Glendale Road, Springvale. He brings with him a wealth of Dhamma experience to assist our Abbot, in propagating the Buddha Sasana. He has over 17 vassas (Rains), speaks reasonable English, and was previously a lead teacher in charge of bhikkus at the famous Vi-jjota rone Pariyatti Monastery, Yangon, which has over 200 student monks.



Above: Deputy Abbot in meditation.

His recent introduction to Melbourne i n c l u d e d

Sayadawlay Visits Sayadawgyi

Sayadawlay (Junior) U Pandita recently paid a visit to his previous preceptor (mentor-instructor) Panditarama Sayadawgyi (Senior) U Pandita, in a trip back to Yangon in October 2009. He brought a foldable reading table to offer as Sayadawgyi prefers to do a lot more reading these days.



Above: Sayadaw Junior presents Sayadaw Senior with a reading table.

To Sayadawlay's delight, Sayadawgyi requested that the table be immediately set up and demonstrated. They happily chatted and reminisced for more than an hour in Sayadawgyi's kuti (residence), before Sayadawlay had to take leave to continue his mercy mission to the Cyclone Nargis disaster victims in the villages. ■

The Dhammapada

Beginning next month, this newsletter will feature an article each month from the Dhammapada.

The Dhammapada (The Words of Truth) consists of 423 verses in Pali uttered by the Buddha on some 305 occasions for the benefit of a wide range of people. These sayings were selected and compiled into one book as being worthy of special note on account of their beauty and relevance for moulding the lives of future generations of Buddhists. They are divided into 26 cantos or chapters called 'vagga' and the stanzas are

taking part in our DSMC 2009 Kathina Ceremony preparations and following Ven U Pandita on a camping trip to Taradale, to understand the Dhamma needs of country Victorians. He is also very adept with the computer.

ranged according to subject matter. The great commentator Buddhaghosa in the 5th century (A.C.) wrote voluminous notes on the traditional interpretations of the Pali verses and technical terms. He also added the stories about the circumstances in which the stanzas were uttered and the effect they had on the listeners. It is generally believed that most of these stories had been handed down orally for generations since the days of the Buddha.

Translations from Pali and Sanskrit into other languages started in 1855, beginning with Danish followed by German, English and later, others.

Those with a mind to understand will gain much from the verses of the Dhammapada and the commentary. Those who are in search of a message of hope through love and wisdom will certainly find it in these ancient but ever-fresh verses of the Dhammapada.

The articles will be extracted from the edition by Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda received by our Ven U Pandita on the same day the revered Ven Dhammananda passed away on 31st August 2006. ■

Acknowledgements & Heartfelt Merits

Special thanks and mention to the following devotees for their donations in effort and funds over the past two months:

- **Felicia Khor and family for sponsoring the Kathina and DSMC maintenance**
- **Andre Ho of AJH Lawyers for concrete works in the courtyard garden**
- **Kyaw Kyaw for courtyard and washing area civil works**
- **Lian Poh-chin for her invaluable kappiya and Kathina contribution**
- **Sayalay Dhamma Cari for relentless bricklaying works**
- **Adam from the Upwey Centre for plumbing works**
- **David Maloney for courtyard and library clearing works**

& countless others not mentioned here. Our grateful thanks for your contributions.

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Long-time DSMC Sangha supporter Daw Tha Nu Aye (Tun Mra Gyaw's grand mother) passed away on 25-Oct-09. Ven U Pandita chanted merits for her. ■