

# Hwa Tsang Monastery Website

[hwatsangmonastery.org.au](http://hwatsangmonastery.org.au) 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005

## Listing of picture annotations

### Home Page

#### Homepage

- Picture of students, girls talking, boys playing football. No annotation.
- Just as Sydney's *Acacia parramattensis* puts on its best flowers in the cold of winter, we too, should try to remain bright and cheerful, even when exposed to difficult situations, or cold words.

#### Terms Of Use

- The stalk of Sydney's *Xanthorrhoea resinosa* (Grass Tree) provides a reproductive function for the plant. Sometimes another species, the native bee, uses the stalk as its home. Just as the bees' actions do not destroy the function of the stalk, so our own actions should avoid destroying the harmony or the environment we live in.
- Sydney's beautiful *Xanthorrhoea resinosa* (Grass Tree) grows in sand, with little "sustenance and nutrients" according to the Northern Hemisphere attitude to agriculture. Yet it is edible, and provides food and a home to a variety of birds and small creatures. Regardless of our situation, like the *Xanthorrhoea*, we too, should try to encourage those around us, with good words and good actions.

#### Privacy

- Not in the sky, not in the oceans, not in the mountain valleys, is there a private place where we may hide from our evil deeds. *Cheilanthes sieberi* (Mulga Fern) has no reason to hide. This delicate fern growing to 25 cm, does good deeds commonly on clay soils, and grows well in diffuse sunlight, all around Sydney. [Dh 127]

#### Contact Us

- View of the monastery's main hall.
- An act performed carelessly, a vow not kept, a code of chastity not strictly observed. These things bring little reward. If anything is worth doing, it is worth doing well. A half-hearted mendicant covers themselves with more and more dust. [Dh 312, 313]
- Where should our Buddhist practice start ? Should it start from high mountains, from tall trees, or from visiting famous monasteries ? Just as *Themeda australis*, - Kangaroo Grass, pictured here at Strathfield's Mason Park Wetlands, grows from a single seed, so our Buddhist practice should begin with a single pure thought towards others.

### Buddha's Teachings (Home Page)

#### Dharma and Meditation

- Picture of two girls with caption; If you find a friend who is good, wise, and loving, walk with them all the way, and overcome all dangers. [Dh 328]
- Just as an archer points his arrow, the wise focus their restless thoughts, which are hard to aim, and hard to restrain. *Eucalyptus amplifolia* is found in swampy flats, on low-lying areas of western Sydney. Yet for almost 25 metres, it aims for the sky. It knows, that more than those who hate you, more than all your enemies, an undisciplined mind does greater harm.
- Picture of two people watching the sunset with caption, Is it because the sunset is truly tranquil, or is it because we allow our minds to settle, that we all enjoy watching the sunset ?
- Picture of a sleeping girl with caption, "Let us live in joy, never hating those who hate us. Let us live in freedom, without hatred even among those who hate. Then both our sleep, and our waking mind will be at peace."

- He who says what is not true, and he who denies what he has done, choose the downward course. Sydney's Wombat vine, *Eustrephus latifolius* does not follow the downward path. It creeps on the upward path, around bushes and trees. It gives honest sustenance and encouragement to wombats and other creatures of the ground, creatures of the sky, and the creatures that practise breathing meditation, with its small edible orange berries in winter. [Dh 306]
- Friends sitting together watching TV. But how much can they share ? When you are watching TV, is your mind concentrating on the TV program, or is it retaining awareness of your feelings, and bodily posture ? If you eat something while watching TV, does your mind sense the body's response to ingesting the food, or does it ignore all feelings ? Is your mind living in the present while watching TV, or is it dreaming of some future cathode-ray tube utopia ?
- The immature lose their vigilance, but the wise guard it as their greatest treasure. Do not fall into the way of sloth and lust. *Doryanthes excelsa*, (Gymea Lily) is a colossal leafy herb with a stiff flowering stem to 4 metres. *Doryanthes* lives in the present. It always stands to attention, and never droops or loses its vigilance. It produces a dense cluster of large red flowers and is common around Sydney in rocky woodland. The flowering stems and roots are edible, and were commonly roasted and eaten by aborigines. [ Dh 81]
- "My friend phoned me, to thank me for the help I gave them today..."

### **The Four Noble Truths**

- Picture of a mother with her baby. Our mother carried us, nurtured us, and has spent her life caring for us. We have much to be grateful for.
- Picture of people running for some ice-cream with caption, "Our desire, craving, and attachments are the causes of our suffering. These often blanket our appreciation of our own good health, and the kind words of others."
- Picture of an old sick man in bed, surrounded by his loving family. Neither children nor parents can rescue one whom death has seized. Know this, and follow the path to Nirvana without delay. [Dh 288]
- We see death around us and we avert our eyes. Yet look closely, the dead trunk of this *Acacia* tree provides food and life for the next generation of borers and insects. Don't we humans survive and prosper on the deaths of freshly killed chickens, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, fish, prawns, crabs, abalone, sharks, whales, and many other creatures ? Can you escape death's sting ?

### **The Noble Eightfold Path**

- Picture of a girl on a swing with caption :- Sitting alone, swinging alone, sleeping alone, going about alone. Vanquish the ego by yourself alone. Abiding joy will be yours, when all selfish desires end. [Dh 305]
- The scent of flowers cannot travel against the wind, but the fragrance of the good spreads everywhere. *Dodonaea triquetra* with unisexual flowers follows the Noble Eightfold Path with eight stamens and no petals. Such is the good practice of this medicinal plant, that aborigines all around Sydney chewed the leaves to relieve toothaches. The leaves were also used as a poultice to relieve fever, and to treat sting-ray wounds. [Dh 54]
- Picture of an idea in a face with annotation, " Guard your thoughts, words and deeds. These three disciplines will speed you along the path to pure wisdom." [Dh 281]
- Picture of a family at home. Home is where we should begin our practice of kind words and actions, with people whom we love and depend upon.
- Picture of ruffians in the city. - If hoping to be happy, you strike at others who also seek happiness, you will be happy neither here, nor hereafter. [Dh131]
- Picture of people in a line linking hands with annotation, "Do not fail to do what ought to be done, and do not do, what ought not to be done. Otherwise your burden of suffering will grow heavier." [Dh 292]
- People driving a car and a motorbike to work. Is the car and the motorbike the fruit of good actions, or a career dependent upon the suffering of others ?

- We sit and read a book under a tree, or perhaps watch a rainbow appear. Are we mindful of our thoughts at this time ? Is it easier to rid ourselves of bad thoughts and ideas while we are relaxing ? Can we maintain ideas of unselfish actions, rather than exploitation, while our bodies are less active ?
- A mother fishes in a quiet pond. What will she catch ? Will she catch the time to control and protect her mind against greed, and anger ? Will she catch the joy of being able to help feed her family ? Or will she just catch the suffering and death of the fish ?
- We concentrate on getting the ball through the ring while playing basketball. We need to apply the same concentration to our meditation practice.
- A mother loves and cares for her baby. She looks after it in every waking moment, while it grows to an adult. Similarly, we should make the same effort in trying to make our minds pure.

### **Karma and Rebirth**

- Picture of a boy whistling a tune while walking with caption :- If you want to reach the shore of Nirvana, give up what is before, behind, and in between. Set your mind free, and go beyond birth and death. [Dh 348]
- Picture of people rushing around, immersed in accumulating material possessions with annotation,“I will make this my winter home, have another holiday house for spring, and dwell in a third house during the summer.” Lost in such fancies, people forget their final destination.” [Dh 286]
- There are four adults, one with a baby in this picture. Can you tell which ones are performing certain wholesome actions, and which ones may be performing certain unwholesome actions ?
- All created things are impermanent. Those who realise this are freed from suffering. This is the path to wisdom. Observe Sydney’s burnt Banksia cone. Its life is spent. But the passing fire has caused it to open and eject its seed pods, for the next generation of Banksias.
- Like the back tyre of our bicycle, our past karma follows us around. The karma we create for ourselves, depends exactly where we steer our lives, and our bicycle !
- A picture of four babies with happy, unsure, sad, and greedy faces with caption:- Our lives are rushing past. What will be our rebirth ? Look at these young faces. A baby smiles, it has what it wants. The next baby is pensive, it sees changes coming. The next baby cries in frustration for something. The last baby has the greedy look of material accumulation. We have all had such emotions. Where have our emotions led us in our lives ? Will our craving and attachment for life, cause us to seek a new existence, and remain in Samsara ?

### **Youth Group**

- You are your own master. Who else could you be ? If you value yourself, then do what is right. The evil done by the selfish, crushes them as a diamond breaks a hard gem.[Dh 160 & 161]
- Not seeing what is pleasant brings pain. Experiencing what is unpleasant brings pain. Therefore go beyond pleasure and pain. [Dh 210]
- My mum expects so much of me. My dad expects so much of me. It is so hard to please them.

### **Library**

- Picture of the monastery library.
- Just as a candle may provide illumination for the eyes, the Buddha’s teachings provide illumination for the mind.
- Picture of Venerable considering all his books.
- Pictures on the wall of the early library.
- A young girl studies her loaned library items. Meanwhile, an owl comes to give her encouragement.
- Small picture reflecting different architectural styles and landscapes over the centuries.

## **Buddha’s Teachings**

### **Who was the Buddha?**

- The Buddha was not a god. He was born an Indian Prince.

- After experiencing a life of luxury in his youth, the Buddha realised there were far more worthwhile things to pursue.
- Free from every selfish desire. Free from every impurity. Wanting nothing at all. Doubting nothing at all. Master of his body. Master of his mind. The Buddha went beyond time and death. His Enlightenment shone far brighter than even the winter beauty of Sydney's *Styphelia tubiflora*. [Dh 410]

### **Three Universal Characteristics**

- A young boy in this picture, but soon to become a man. Who can stay forever young ?
- The lovely, delicate, flowers of *Leptospermum trinervium*, Sydney's Paperbark Tea-tree, are so pretty, yet they only bloom between October and December.
- A young girl thinks about whether her friends will like her new fringe.
- Do politicians reflect the popular mood of the people, or do the people follow the political leader's dreams ? Either way, the popular mood eventually changes, the leader falls out of favour or simply grows old, and is replaced.
- Young girls talking together, dreaming together, and comparing impermanence with everything together. - "Did you dye your hair last night ? Can you show me your (new) nail polish ? Where did you get that (new) bracelet ?"
- A plant flowers, then withers. Can our lives be any different ?
- School children playing soccer. But as time goes by, the school children are no longer at school, and no longer children ! Their ideas and habits are also impermanent. As they get older, what once may have been their favourite sport, gives way to totally new preoccupations.
- In this picture I am a young girl, but before this, I was a baby. Soon I may be a mother. But hopefully after that, I will be a loving grandmother, to my own children's children.

### **Cause and Conditions**

- Action, and reaction, one boy hitting another.
- Example of causes and conditions with plants.
- Look carefully, we see eucalypts, ironbarks, acacias, melaleucas, bursaria, juncus, kangaroo grass and others growing here. Is their placement random, or is it because the soil type, the rainfall pattern, the sun and the shade, provide causes for their existence ?
- A girl offering help to another.
- The animal food chain. An eagle swoops for its next meal, while the snake misses its last meal ...
- *Commelina cyanea*, Sydney's Scurvy Weed creeper, does neither bad deeds nor ignorant deeds. Growing strongly in the summer sun, it dies back during winter time. Its young shoots may be cooked as a green vegetable, or eaten raw as a salad. It was reputedly a source of vitamin C for early settlers to Botany Bay, and helped convicts avoid scurvy, from whence it got its common name.
- What is the next destination for this old man, - Samsara or Nirvana ?
- How many people have walked on this land in the past thousands of years, each one hoping their lives would never end ? Where are their bodies ? Where is the substance of their egos ? Are they hiding behind this *Lepidosperma laterale* leafy sedge ? Can our life be any different ? Will you continue on in Samsara ?

### **Five Aggregates**

- Thought processes of a girl. - A new dress will see the piggy-bank savings fly away !
- Aggregate of Matter - Mason Park Wetlands heath combines the aggregates of clay, water, heath, bushes, sedges, and rushes.
- "Daddy, there are some cats for sale. Can we get a tangible cat that purrs and really licks me ? Please could you make my dream come true ?!"
- We have doubts and may frown when an unknown situation presents itself. But we may happily smile, when the situation is understandable and recognisable.
- Picture of happy girl and angry girl thinking. - No comment

- Dillwynia sieberi, the Prickly Parrot Pea shrub, has three sorts of Mental Formations. (1) To grow to about 2 metres high on Sydney's dry heath or woodland. (2) To bear rigid, needle-like leaves, with fine pungent points. (3) To have beautiful yellow flowers with red centres between April and November !
- Auditory consciousness arises as the girl hears a bird twittering.
- Visual consciousness arises as a girl sees a swooping bird.
- Many people come to the driest continent in the world, Australia, thinking "the grass must be greener here !" But the colours of indigenous Australian grasses in late summer are red, brown, orange, white, and grey. Echinopogon caespitosus, Sydney's slender Tufted Hedgehog Grass featured here for example, and growing to 100 cm, is brown and white, but not green ! But it has become a habit for Sydney people in the past 50 years, to plant foreign grasses, which require extra water, and regular mowing, just so we can say that the grass in Sydney, is definitely greener ! Let us give you an example. We walk outside and see green. We know the green is "just grass," so we do not pay it any attention. Yet if the grass dies off in the heat of summer, or drought, and becomes non-green, we become highly agitated ! Our attachments drive us to have the grass rejuvenated as soon as possible to our preferred colour ! In other words; The Aggregate of Matter (grass) is sensed through our Aggregate of Sensations. Our Aggregate of Perception registers the grass. Our Aggregate of Mental Formations responds with a negative feeling towards the non-green grass. Finally, our Aggregate of Consciousness makes us aware of our displeasure at the sight of the non-green, dying grass, and we think about getting a watering can or sprinkler....
- Auditory consciousness finally results in a verbal response from the girl to her mother.
- Picture of melaleuca bushland with comment; -Where have we come from in this world ? Where are we going to ?

### **Foundations of Mindfulness**

- A student mindfully considers that her body needs to lie down.
- Growing without recognition, in a Primary Schools near Strathfield, it is estimated that this (male) Casuarina glauca has been mindfully observing the same spot for about 200 years ! Initially it focused its mind on the many possums, but nowadays, it is mindful of the many little feet that jump around its roots, and the mower-man who cuts grass underneath its thick branches.
- Taking an afternoon walk with our neighbours, and breathing in a long breath, we should know,"We are breathing in a long breath."
- Danthonia linkii, always maintains full attention. With erect seed-heads, this "Wallaby Grass" grows to about 0.5 metres around Sydney, allowing its seed to be spread by summer winds.
- Brother and sister standing together mindfully.
- Our bodies are full of impure repulsive components. Our bodies also continually produce repulsive waste products, and deteriorate. Although our doctor is able to see such repulsiveness every day in a detached manner, we like to deny any such suggestions !
- When the time comes, our bodies will be disposed of, or burnt. Our bodies will be reduced to disconnected bones, scattered in all directions, then reduced to bleached bones of conchlike colour, and then to dust. In the meantime, those left behind may grieve deeply ...
- A lady experiencing a pleasant feeling.
- Banksia ericifolia grows, observing feelings. When it experiences a pleasant feeling, it is aware,"I am experiencing a pleasant feeling." When experiencing a painful feeling, it knows,"I am experiencing a painful feeling."
- Young children in the park are normally very aware and quick to report pleasant feelings, neutral feelings, and painful feelings.
- A student overtaken by the hindrance of physical in-activity.
- The female Casuarina glauca lives contemplating the six internal and the six external sense-bases as mental objects. Growing to 20 metres in brackish marshes around Sydney, it knows how fetters arise dependent on forms, how non-arisen fetters arise, how arisen fetters disappear, and how the non-arising of abandoned fetters comes to be.
- A student practising the Seven Factors of Enlightenment; (1) Mindfulness (2) Investigation of mental objects (3) Energy (4) Joy (5) Relaxation of body and mind (6) Concentration and (7) Equanimity.

- The mistletoe *Amyema gaudichaudii*, knows the Four Noble Truths well ! It likes to explain to young Australians how suffering arises. Firstly, the little Aussie mistletoe bird eats the fruit of *Amyema gaudichaudii*. The mistletoe bird then flies to another *Melaleuca decora* (paper-bark) tree, and excretes the seed in the branches of the trees. If the tree is stressed or damaged, and rain comes, the *Amyema gaudichaudii* seed will grow and become a parasite on the host melaleuca tree. *Amyema gaudichaudii* then grows its own distinctive branches, using the sap from the host. This is suffering for the host tree ! In summer time, *Amyema gaudichaudii* produces delicious edible fruit, as pictured here, and this is the end of suffering for hungry young Australian children ! But don't forget to leave some fruits for our little mistletoe bird, as he has a very beautiful song.

## Education

### University Lectures

- Good friends co-operate and share. Best friends co-operate and share, and follow the Noble Eightfold Path.
- All states are without self. Those who realize this are freed from suffering. This is the path to pure wisdom. *Pimelea linifolia*, Sydney's Rice flower is without self. This wise herb has studied hard, and stays up late at night It is thought that its white tubular flowers are pollinated by night-flying moths, just as modern university students seem to be pollinated at night by pizza and hamburgers ! [Dh 279]
- NSW University Buddhist Society (UNIBUDS) members posing for a picture.
- Tennis partners striving together.
- Not seeing what is pleasant brings pain. Seeing what is unpleasant brings pain. Therefore go beyond pleasure and pain. *Acacia binervia* has gone beyond pleasure and pain. Its resolution is so strong, and its wood so hard, aborigines preferred it for making boomerangs. Its practice is so good, its wood continues to exude a delicious perfume, rather like violets, for many years after being made into furniture. One old *Acacia binervia*, has remained a champion climbing tree for little children in Centennial Park, in contrast to the profusion of plastic playground equipment sprouting around it. [Dh 210]
- Best friends, helping and supporting each other.
- *Lepidosperma laterale*, a leafy sedge growing on sandstone soils, but educated in woodland. Do your university lectures teach you how to end your suffering ?
- Picture of a monk giving a Dharma talk.
- Before trying to guide others, be your own guide first. *Hardenbergia violacea*, Sydney's False Sarsaparilla has learned to be its own guide. It climbs its way carefully over eucalyptus leaves, and other bushes and shrubs. It has rich purple pea flowers, which guides other insects to pollenate it. Its leaves may be boiled to make a slightly sweet tea, for those who are guided to make special drinks for their friends ! [Dh159]
- Friends together on a motor-bike.
- Picture of the Buddhist flag with University Society names.

### Religious Studies and SRE

- The national flag is hoisted and flown either weekly, or at special assemblies in all three levels of Australian educational institutions. – Primary Schools for Years 1 to 6, High Schools for Years 7 to 12, and post high-school institutions such as TAFE or Universities.
- We cannot depend on others for our happiness. We cannot depend on others to do good actions on our behalf. Let no one think lightly of doing good, and say to themselves, "Joy will not come to me." Little by little, a person becomes good, as a water pot is filled by drops of water. Sydney's *Melaleuca thymifolia* does not depend on others for its happiness. It shines brightly in October in Sydney's damp places, open forests, swamp margins, and on clay. [Dh 122]
- Students talking in front of their class.
- Give up anger, give up pride, and free yourself from worldly attachments. No sorrow can befall those who never try to possess people and things as their own. *Ozothamnus diosmifolium*, Sydney's Everlasting Paper daisy has given up anger and pride. Not one to covet all sunlight, this gentle, open,

delicate, shrub grows to two metres, in the shade of those trees with large egos and dominant tempers – the mighty Eucalypts and Ironbarks. [Dh 221]

## Publications

- Cover design of the book Zucchini and Tofu - By Venerable Tsang Hui and others.
- Cover design of the Selected Translations of Miao Yun - Venerable Yin Shun volumes.
- Cover of the Dharma and Daily Life - Venerable Tsang Hui
- Cover of Handbook of a Kindergarten Bodhisattva - Dr Y K Saw.
- Cover of A Sound Compassion - Dr Y K Saw.
- Picture of the Buddha in the suffering world, as depicted in the Dharma and Daily Life - Venerable Tsang Hui

## Talks by Monks

- The disciples of the Buddha are wide awake and vigilant, absorbed in the dharma day and night. [Dh 296]
- Venerable Tsang Hui picture.
- The red tip of the leaves of Sydney's *Acacia falcata* in autumn, are like the embarrassment we might feel, when being found to be insincere.
- Like the seeds for the next generation of *Melaleuca decoras*, these articles may help grow your good practice.

## References and FAQ

- Now is the time to wake up, when you are young and strong. Those who wait and waiver, with a weak will, and a divided mind, will never find the path to pure wisdom. [Dhammapada 279]
- Those who are good and pure in conduct, are honoured wherever they go. The good shine like Mt Kosciusko, whose peaks glisten above the rest of the Australian Alps, even when seen from a distance ! [Dh 304]
- *Eucalyptus punctata*, Sydney's Grey Gum. Look between the trees to find your information.
- The disciples of the Buddha are wide-awake and vigilant, absorbed in the Dharma day and night. Similarly Sydney's *Goodenia ovata* an erect bush shrub is wide-awake and vigilant, in sheltered gullies and edges of rainforests. It shows short yellow flowers in spring and summer. Early Irish settlers figured this bush was so wide-awake, that they claimed you would get a good appetite, just walking through it ! [Dh 297]
- Don't get selfishly attached to anything, for trying to hold onto it, will bring you pain. When you have neither likes, nor dislikes, you will be free. Sydney's *Breynia oblongifolia* has neither likes nor dislikes, and can avoid pain. It permits all types of ants to climb up, and enjoy its small pendant apple-shaped fruits in summer. [Dh 211]

## Board of Education

### Tuition Class Program

- A student asking the teacher to check their work.
- There are many fruits of good education. *Leucopogon ericoides*, one of Sydney's "Bearded Heath" species has many fruits too. With beautiful flowers in winter, its summer fruits are sweet, succulent, and edible.
- There are no barriers to self-improvement, when we have good intention. *Cymbopogon refractus*, Sydney's Barbed-wire Grass, with tall wiry stems presents no barriers either. It is always trying to improve itself on sandstone on Sydney's Cumberland Plain.
- Teacher in front of a class full of students.
- *Imperata cylindrica*, Blady Grass is very good at tests and reports. Abundant throughout Sydney, it is a hardy species with tough fibrous leaves. It is often tested by fire, but regenerates rapidly due to its long rhizomes. The strong broad leaves were often used in thatching by European settlers. The underground shoots are reported as fibrous, but pleasant to chew. They contain both starch and sugar, and are something like a poor man's sugarcane.

- A good student, Sydney's *Brachycome angustifolia* always likes studying with friends, as shown here.
- Student doing a maths calculation.

## **Chairman's Report**

- Chong Jin Chew
- Students on a picnic at Centennial Park.
- Student picnic at the beach.
- Students in tug-of-war game.
- Students helping in bushcare activities around Strathfield.

## **Calendar**

- *Thysanotus tuberosus* is a very special Fringe Lily that follows the calendar obediently. Growing to 40 cm from an edible tuber, its flowers open on sunny spring days, but last only one day.
- *Angophora floribunda*, (Sydney's Rough Barked Apple) has its own calendar. Like many young teenagers, this handsome, medium-size tree, is always trying to get a place on Australian Idol. It believes that with a lovely brown fibrous-bark trunk, and sinuously contorted upper limbs, it is performing the plant equivalent of break-dancing ! Sorry we didn't get a picture of its branches, but here is a picture of its flowers in early summer. Mmmmmmm, they smell like great honey !

## **Teacher's Area**

- The disciples of the Buddha are wide awake and vigilant, with their thoughts focused on sense-training, day and night. [Dh 299]

## **Student Stuff**

- Even the lowly spider, sitting on his web within his favourite Blady grass hunting ground, knows suffering.

## **Adult Classes**

- You look at your face and skin, and think how smooth and beautiful it is ! *Eucalyptus molucana*, Sydney's Grey Box, looks at its skin, and is very proud too. Yet like the tree, our bodies age, and will become lifeless logs in the ground.

## **Youth Fellowship**

- Our YF Exco Representatives at a picnic.
- Our students contributed many creative stories, poems, and sketches, for the 2004 Youth Fellowship Annual Magazine.
- Students bush-regenerating at Strathfield's Mason Park Wetlands.
- *Persoonia linearis*, Sydney's narrow-leaved Geebung grows to about 3 metres, and has yellow flowers. This was a favourite bush of aborigines and early settler children. The springtime fruit is delicious, but you need to wait until the grape turns purple. The best fruit is usually found lying on the ground. Can you be quick enough to beat the ants, the birds, the possums, and the bats, to enjoy it ?
- Wetlands are significant ecological areas that provide food and habitat for a large range of species. *Persicaria lapathifolium* is one of these wetland, semi-aquatic species. It is commonly known as a "water pepper", as its leaves contain an irritant oil with a strong peppery flavour. Sydney aborigines were observed to use the leaves as a fish poison, while South Australian aborigines are recorded as grinding the nuts of one species into a paste, then cooking and eating it.
- The *Juncus usitatus* sedge at Mason Park Wetlands. This plant plays an important role in helping absorb pollutants from brackish water, while at the same time, providing food for insects. The insects feeding on the sedge's flower, in turn, attract small birds and other animals further up the food chain.

## **Old Students**

- When compulsive urges drive us, sorrow spreads like wild grass. Conquer these fierce cravings, and sorrow will fall away from your life, like the drops of water from Sydney's *Angophora floribunda* leaves. [Dh 335, 336]

## **Committees**

### **Dharma Committee**

- The disciples of the Buddha are wide-awake and vigilant, rejoicing in meditation day and night. [Dh 301]
- Someone is not wise because they talk a great deal. Those who are patient, and free from hatred and fear, like *Calotis lappulacea* (Woolly-headed yellow burr daisy) are wise. You can see these *Calotis* growing to about 30 cm high in grasslands or open forest in the west of Sydney, but you never hear them gossiping....
- The disciples of the Buddha are wide-awake and vigilant, rejoicing in compassion day and night. [Dh 300]

### **Social Welfare**

- Let us live in joy, never attached or hoarding things, amongst those who are selfishly attached, and those who hoard things. [Dh 199, 200]
- Health is the best gift. Contentment is the best wealth. Trust is the best kinsman. Nirvana is the greatest joy. *Hibbertia diffusa*, a small sprawling shrub, with stems rarely over 50 cm, growing on dry clay soils, has such health and contentment. Growing beneath towering eucalypts, *Hibbertia* trusts them to shade it from the fires of greed, and and the detritus of craving (eucalyptus leaves). [Dh204]

### **Young Bodhisattva Society**

- “Will I be accepted by others ?” is a common worry for people joining a new group.
- Raymond cooking vegetarian sausages during a retreat at the monastery.
- The girls planning the next activity for the Children's Retreat.
- Sydney's *Brachycome angustifolia* likes to join in on YBS Youth Group activities as well...
- After meditation practice, the boys sometimes play team sports together.

### **Bi-Monthly Bulletin**

- Bi-monthly bulletin cover
- Picture of a hand with a flower, representing the beauty and purity of the Buddha's teachings.
- There never was, and never will be, anyone who receives all praise, or all blame. But who can blame those who are pure, wise, good and meditative ? They shine far brighter than *Wahlenbergia communis*, Sydney's slender Tufted Bluebells growing to 40 cm. [Dh 228, 229]

### **Kitchen Committee**

- Picture of Guatama meditating under a tree, prior to his Enlightenment.
- Picture of Sujata offering Guatama a bowl of milk-rice.
- Look outside. The plants around us offer us life, offer us oxygen, offer us support, and offer us their delicious fruits. Our farmers sow the seed, wait for rain, and harvest the crops. Truck and train drivers bring the food to the cities. The sticky red edible winter seeds of Sydney's sweet *Pittosporum undulatum* are being offered here. Nature looks after us. The farmers look after us. Are we doing the same ?
- Picture of our Kitchen Committee volunteer cooks gathered around the table.

### **Maintenance Committee**

- Maintain your good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. These three disciplines will speed you along the path to pure wisdom.
- There is no path in the sky, there is no refuge in the world, for those driven by their desires. All things are impermanent. But the disciples of the Buddha are never shaken. *Melaleuca nodosa* has only one desire. It hopes that the pollen in its honey-ball flowers, will be eaten and appreciated by the many Sydney insects and bees during spring ! [Dh 255]
- Working bee volunteers within the monastery.

## **Activities**

### **Religious Services**

- Listening to a talk about the Buddha's Teachings.
- The mantram is weak when not repeated. A house falls into ruin when not repaired. The body loses health, when not exercised. The watchman fails when vigilance is lost. *Bursaria spinosa* (Blackthorn) is always vigilant and keeping watch. It upholds the Buddha's Teachings by protecting small birds from larger ones. It has light foliage with side branches ending in thorns. Growing on both Sydney sandstone and clay, it repeats its mantram in late Summer, with a beautiful display of delicate flowers, as seen here. Are you keeping vigilant ? [Dh 241 ]
- Picture of a "Bathing the Buddha" service. This event celebrates the idea of cleansing ourselves of our moral impurities, (such as greed, hatred and delusion), while pouring water over a Buddha image.
- Just as participating in religious services provides us with a good environment for our practise, *Einadia hastata*, a small spreading saltbush growing to 50 cm, provides a good environment for our small Sydney wildlife.
- A Buddhist religious service, with females on one side, and males on the other.

### Special Activities

- Celebrating at the monastery
- If you long to know what is hard to know, and can resist the temptations of this world, you will cross the river of life. *Dillwynia sieberi* knows what is hard to know. It resists the temptations of this world with its Parrot Pea prickles. Growing to around 1.5 metres in Sydney's dry heath and woodland, it flowers even during the darkest hours of winter.
- Wooden statue of Guan Yin Bodhisattva outside the main hall.

### Triple Gem

- As your family and friends receive you with joy, when you return from a long journey, so will your good deeds receive you when you go from one life to the next. They will be waiting for you with joy like your kinsmen. [Dh 219, 220]
- Those who have character and discrimination, who are honest and good, and follow the Dharma with devotion, win the respect of all the world. *Acacia longifolia* has character and discrimination. After bushfires have scorched Sydney's earth with anger and hatred, *Acacia longifolia* is one of the first to grow again from seeds in the ground as a "pioneer" plant. Even in the cold of winter, it has the good character to shine for all, as shown here. [Dh 217]
- Statue of Guan Yin Bodhisattva outside the main hall surrounded by flowers and fruit. Flowers are used to convey the meaning of impermanence. We know that flowers won't last very long, and after a few days they will wilt and die. The fruits also convey this meaning. There is usually only four plates, or types of fruits that are placed on the altar tables. The four fruits represent the four stages of fruition of the Arahats. ( Arahats have no more desire, illwill, or ignorance.) The first fruition (Srotapanna) is the Stream Winner. The second fruition (Sakradagami) is the Once-Returner. The third fruition (Anagami) is the Non-Returner. The fourth fruition (Arahat) attains the state of a Noble One

### Five Precepts

- Those who recite many scriptures, but fail to practise their teachings, are like cowherds, counting another's cows. They do not share in the joys of spiritual life. But those who know few scriptures, yet practise their teachings, overcome all lust, hatred, and delusion, and live with a pure mind in the highest wisdom. [Dh 20]
- Long is the night to those who are awake. Long is the road to those who are weary. Long is the cycle of birth and death to those who do not practise the Dharma. [Dh 60]
- Be vigilant. Observe the precepts. Guard your mind against negative thoughts, which will lead to bad words, and unwholesome actions. Pull yourself out of the bad ways, just as *Eucalyptus fibrosa*, (Broad-leaved Ironbark) rises 35 metres, from fractured, Wianamatta, clay soils in Western Sydney in search of Enlightenment. [Dh 327]

### Becoming a Buddhist

- Picture of people around Australia with annotation; “What philosophies guide your life ?”
- Just as Sydney’s beautiful delicate *Drosera peltata* (Pale Sundew) growing to 20 cm, eats insects, so our hate and intolerance may eat the happiness from our lives.
- Picture of man with material assets saying, “I want all these things and more !!!”
- Pictured in Strathfield Park, *Syncarpia glomulifera* grows without desire, without attachment, and without clinging to the earth. These noble Turpentine trees will live for 200 + years, and grow over 40 metres to reach the sky if allowed. Early settlers harvested huge amounts of this valuable construction timber in the 1800s, but its good name lives on.
- Buddhists around the world.

### **Becoming a Monk or Nun**

- A girl in thought at the cross-roads between Nirvana and Samsara (Rebirth).
- Children love to tear strips off *Melaleuca decora*, Sydney’s fine paper-bark tree. But when we strip away our own bark of greed, hatred, and delusion, what is underneath ?
- Picture of a young boy thinking about becoming a monk.
- Teenagers practising chanting.
- If there is any trace of lust in your mind, you are bound to be reborn in Samsara, like a young, suckling platypus to its mother. Pull out every selfish desire, as you would pick off the delicious edible fruits of *Dianella caerulea*, Sydney’s Blue Flax lily in early summer. [Dh 284, 285]
- Picture of a young monk, and how he might have seen himself, two years previously.
- A young novice meditating.
- What is this condition of no suffering ? What is Enlightenment ? It is the bright light of understanding the true nature of the world. It is fully understanding the Four Noble Truths, the Law of Cause and Effect, Impermanence, and Non-self, and being able to practice perfectly. Like this beautiful carving of Guan Yin Bodhisattva, Enlightenment is clarity of vision with no ignorance.

### **Children’s Area**

- Weeeeeee... I love going for a swing in the park ! Sometimes my brother pushes me. That’s him behind me. After a while, I hop off and let him have a turn too !
- Sydney’s beautiful grass trees, *Xanthorrhoea resinosa* growing on sandy heath.
- I love looking at flowers. This is a close-up picture of the grass tree’s (*Xanthorrhoea resinosa*) flowering stalk. The flowers are white and very delicate. I wish the flowers would last all year. They have a very sweet scent. My mum says everything just keeps changing. After winter, the flowers are gone. The whole stalk seems to go brown. In summertime, black seeds stick out everywhere on the stalk. Once, I put some of the seeds in the ground. About two months later, a single blade of grass popped out. It was fantastic ! But the grass tree grows much slower than me. By the time I am 10, mummy says it will still be less than my knee height !

### **YBS – Youth Group**

- No pictures

### **Environment Activities**

- Volunteer girl with a Clean-Up Australia rubbish bag.
- Despite being endangered and surviving primarily in one last reserve, *Acacia pubescens*, Sydney’s Downy Wattle still puts on a beautiful display in winter.
- Picture of a young boy volunteer behind a "Don't Litter" sign.
- Puddles of muddy water after rain in bushland.
- A spider hangs tenuously to its web, just as Sydney people hang on tenuously to their water supplies. Australian CSIRO scientists know global warming is likely to adversely affect Sydney’s rainfall and finite water resources in the future. Despite this, some people suggest Sydney should increase its population significantly. What do you think ?
- Now extinct from the area, *Diuris maculata*, Strathfield’s former beautiful Leopard Orchid is unlikely to come back, without the enthusiasm of locals, and good horticulturalists. Normally found in open woodland on clay soils, it grows to about 30 cm from a tuber. It sends up a shoot to the surface in

autumn. The leaves grow rapidly in late autumn and early winter as the rains set in. It flowers beautifully as shown here for about two weeks, and is pollinated by native bees. It dies back in summer. The orchid seed is like fine dust and has no stored food source to aid germination and early growth. It depends on the help of a micorrhizal fungus for seedling development. The presence of this fungus relies on other suitable plants, soil, and water conditions. (Transplanting an orchid from the bush will kill it. It is also illegal to take plants out of parks and reserves in Australia.) The Leopard Orchid pictured here, was one of the few remaining specimens in Auburn, and was photographed in September 2003. The orchid tuber is edible, and was part of the aboriginal diet. It was a popular snack with (European) settler children in the 1870s. They were known as boyams, and taste rather sweet, with a slight taste of raw potato.

- Native grasses of the Sydney area.
- Things that creep and crawl ...
- The wombat's favourite plant, *Lomandra longifolia* is pictured here. Known as Mat Rush, it is often used in regenerating environmentally degraded areas, and requires no water once established. The flowers were eaten by aborigines, and the white succulent leaf bases are also pleasant to eat. The stong fibrous leaves were also used to make net bags by aborigines.
- Sketch of a *Eucalyptus viminalis* tree by our Year 8 student.

## About Us

### Aims

- Train your eyes and ears. Train your nose and tongue. The senses are good friends when trained. Train your body in deeds. Train your tongue in words. Train your mind in thoughts. This training will take you beyond sorrow. The highest reward for your work is not what you get from it, but what you become from it. [Dh 360, 361]
- Don't follow the wrong laws. Don't be thoughtless. Look on the world as a mirage, then the King of Death cannot even see you. [Dh 167, 170]
- Like a spider caught in its own web, is a person driven by fierce cravings. Break out of the web, and turn away from the world of sensory pleasure and sorrow. *Indigofera australis* has broken out of the web. With pinnate leaves, this well-disciplined shrub, keeps its growth to 1.5 m in forests on Sydney's clay soils. Producing indigo dye is another sign, that it has left behind the blackness of sorrow...
- Wake up ! Don't be lazy. Follow the right path and avoid suffering. You will be happy here, as well as hereafter. [Dh 168, 169]
- Picture of a Bi-Monthly bulletin cover.
- Better than ruling this world, better than attaining the realm of the gods, better than being lord of all worlds, is one step taken on the path to Nirvana. [Dh 178]
- It is hard to leave the world, and hard to live in it. It is painful to live with worldly (materialist) people, and it is painful to be a wanderer. *Acacia ulicifolia* is a good example of this. Suffering on Sydney's drier woodlands, it can only grow to 1.5 m. Despised by materialists and wanderers alike, Sydney's "Prickly Moses" is often in a bad mood ! But despite the cold of autumn and winter, this prickly acacia will give you a beautiful smile. [Dh 302]
- When a foolish man becomes wise, he gives light to the world, like the moon breaking from behind clouds. [Dh 172]
- Human beings are subject to attachment and thirst for pleasure. Driven by desire and craving, we run about like frightened, hunted kangaroos, trying to control everybody and everything. Yet we cannot even control ourselves. Overcome this craving and be free. Let us give you a test. Look at the small red edible herb, *sarcocornia quinqueflora* quietly growing at Strathfield's Mason Park Wetlands. Some people look, and quickly avert their eyes to Nature's perceived wild disorder. Others look, and clamour for humans to demonstrate control of this area by reordering it with a modern, symmetric, non-bio-diverse, exotic, garden design. Others view it and think only of the dollars that might be made in constructing or selling some new property development here. But what do you think ? How do you feel ? Can you accept and enjoy these wetlands in the heart of Sydney, as a small natural sanctuary for

many local, and migratory birds from Russia and China ? Can you be happy that species other than humans, are allowed to make their homes here ? [Dh 341,342]

## Our Abbott

- Venerable Tsang Hui
- All the effort must be made by you. Buddhas only show the way. Follow this path and practise meditation. Go beyond the power of Mara. (Mara is greed, anger, and delusion) Isopogon anemonifolius's has made all the effort. Its yellow, one-metre high beauty, forms behind a dense globular mass of furry protective bracts, keeping Mara at a distance in Sydney's heath shrublands. [Dh 276 ]
- Concept sketch of Yuan Jue monastery
- Military uniform
- Scholastic equipment
- Students at university. – Which faculty teaches us about suffering ? Which faculty cultivates our patience to attain Nirvana ? Which faculty teaches that our passions are impermanent, and bring pain in their wake ? [Dh 186]
- Neither age, nor grey hair makes us an elder. We can grow old and still be immature. A true elder is truthful, virtuous, gentle, self-controlled, and pure in mind. Sydney's Pteridium esculentum (Bracken) is a truly virtuous elder. Ferns pre-date the existence of the younger, angiosperms (trees). They have had the wisdom to survive many angry upheavals in the earth's climatic conditions over the past millions of years. [Dh 260 ]
- Entrance to the monastery.
- Dharma is within the world, not somewhere else. Meditate. Do not run after sense pleasures. Do not swallow a red hot iron-ball and then complain, "I am in pain! Someone else save me !" Look at Omalanthus stillingifolius here. Do not replicate his example. Although you cannot see it at the moment, he did swallow the red hot iron-ball of lusting after sense pleasures. He is commonly known around Sydney as a "Bleeding Heart." He grows to about 2m in rainforest margins and gullies. Each leaf is on a long reddish stalk, with a prominent network of veins. Just as more suffering and trouble face those unable to control their sense pleasures in this life, Omalanthus' large heart shaped leaves age, and turn an ominous rich blood-red before falling. [Dh371]
- Neither pleasant words, nor a pretty face can make a person beautiful, when that person is filled with jealousy, selfishness, or deceit. Only those who have uprooted such impurities from their mind, are fit to be called beautiful. Sydney's own rose, the truly beautiful Lambertia formosa has no such impurities. It grows happily on sandstone, and provides much honey for those birds who know its generous nature.

## Visit Us

- The monastery entrance.
- Map of the monastery in relation to the nearest railway stations.
- Monastery location in relation to Parramatta and Sydney

## Become a Member

- The compassionate image of Guan Yin Bodhisattva, outside the main hall.
- Not by rituals and resolutions, nor by much learning, nor by celibacy, nor even by meditation, can you find the supreme, immortal joy of Nirvana, until you have extinguished your self-will. What is self-will ? It is the belief that we are permanent, and unchanging. Kunzea ambigua, a beautiful spreading shrub to 2 metres, has extinguished its self-will. It exploits impermanence, and happily colonises newly cleared ground around Sydney. Without ritual or resolution, it selflessly provides nectar to honey-eaters through its delicate, early-summer, white flowers.