

Turning Leaf

The Newsletter of the Red Maple Sangha

WINTER SEASON 2009

Winter - a time of retreat and preparation. As it has been for our Sangha. At this midway point, we practice past, present and future.

AKASHALOKA



Our practice space has contracted and grown with the rising and falling of snowbanks. Yet even in the whiteness a new Buddha has presented himself at the end of the walkway into Akashaloka. And, as if to echo that new outdoor Buddha-figure, a new Kwan Yin has become the indoor greeting within the formal practice space.

DHARMA PRACTICE

We have held three sequenced MahaSangha Saturdays (Nov-Jan), leading us through a period of thanks to those who have preceded us, a period of reflection on our efforts in the past year, and a period of vision, where we considered where and what we might become over the coming months and years. We begin a new year with exciting new ideas and energy. We have a full calendar of events planned for the year, with Mahasanghas themed around the tension between solitary practice and social engagement. With everyone receiving a binder at New Year, we will share monthly readings and study materials. A new formal chanting guide and a smaller “home” version are in preparation. After encouragement from those making the long drive

from Petawawa and Pembroke, we have decided to extend our practice schedule to a new bi-monthly Sunday morning session. Starting on March 15, we will hold sittings on the Sundays following the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in the Meditation Room at the Marguerite Centre in Pembroke. The format will mirror sessions at Akashaloka, with sitting, walking and dharma study. The bi-monthly format will encourage everyone to keep coming to Akashaloka for the MahaSangha Saturdays.

PEACEFUL MIND

Our weekly secular mindfulness group has continued at Akashaloka, while Kim is applying her efforts and energies with a new group on Monday evenings in Pembroke. Ray has added a third group, Tuesday afternoons, in Beachburg. Sites and times are available online. Another Day of Mindfulness will take place in late February at the Marguerite Centre.

REFLECTION AND RESOURCES

Following on the year of Reflections on the Bodhisattva Precepts, we are sharing monthly readings (available on MahaSangha days) with guide questions. All are invited to share their thoughts so they can be posted on the Keys Blog.

We have added many new books over the past months, too many



to list here. Topics cover retreat, flower arranging, mantra, mandala and biographies of Saicho and Kukai, to name a few.

COMING PROGRAMS

Over the next few months we are planning a new workshop in vegetarian cooking (April) for which our Tenzo, Judy, is already testing recipes. (Mahasangha breakfast-goers will be the testers). We will hold an *Entering the Dharma Path* workshop in the Pembroke area. Ray has been invited to speak at two separate church programs. In April he will talk about *Buddhist Pilgrimage* at a Unitarian service in Ottawa, and in May, he will present an *Introduction to Buddhism* at the United Church in Almonte



image that would encourage financial support for future growth.

A second dimension of future possibility comes through Ray's association with the Tendai community. As he becomes more personally involved and trained in that tradition, there will likely be ways that association can benefit Red Maple. He has been praised and encouraged by the head of the Tendai community for his work with Red Maple and has established a supportive, respectful and fraternal relationship between our respective communities.

Over this coming year we will be exploring these ideas and considering ways to fulfill our purpose in the most skillful ways possible.

WE OFFER THANKS:

To our new practice associates: Roger, Sarah and Paul
To David for the breakfast beans;
To Kim for taking on a Peaceful Mind group;
To Joyce for helping promote our programs;
To Don for maintaining our *oryoki* sets;
To Judy, our 'tenzo' for her efforts in feeding us at our breakfast gatherings;
To everyone for their Food Bank donations and generous financial *dana*;
To Ray for spotting a collection of Kwan Yins in town, many of which have found new homes with sangha and to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for keeping our practices both energized and light-hearted.
Our condolences to Elizabeth for her mother's passing in late December.

May all beings benefit from our practice

Snowy Buddha

*Blown snow, brushed away.
Could it ever obscure
The Buddha presence ?*

LOOKING AHEAD

This year we enter our fifth year, the Year of the Ox, as a practice community. Like the ox, we have brought our determination to explore some possible organizational changes to support us as we continue to grow in membership and depth of practice. Ray introduced the idea of establishing a parallel non-profit group, *The Renfrew Buddhist Circle*, which would take on more of the administrative side of the Sangha. It would allow us to offer tax receipts, could relieve Ray and Judy of most of the liabilities associated with hosting a public program and provide Red Maple with a broader public

RMS ONLINE

Our Website ~ www.realperson.com

Our Blog ~

<http://redmaplekeys.blogspot.com>

