

Wednesday, 4 May 2011

Sharing Buddhist Knowledge, Supporting Our Staff and Researching Our Educational Practice : an exciting partnership for Daylesford Dharma School



I would like to introduce you to Dr Zane Ma Rhea and Jeane Freer.

Zane and Jeane have been working with us since 2010 to help give our school a strong foundation as one that supports its staff in being *kalyanamitta*

'Noble Friends' to the students and the wider school community in the first Buddhist School in Australia.

Zane and Jeane have been conducting professional development workshops with us to bring Buddhist principles into the day-to-day life of our school. They will continue to work with us throughout this year.

They are also now involved in conducting research in partnership with the school. The research has been approved by the school and by the Monash University Research Ethics Committee. The aim of this study is to examine the impact of Buddhism on our teaching and learning, exploring the educational philosophy and approach of our school, the daily practice of teaching at our school, and the challenge of bringing together the mainstream Victorian education curriculum with a Buddhist worldview in the first Buddhist school in Australia. What we find out will help us ensure that this is a strong school that gives children an excellent well-rounded education grounded in Buddhist principles.

This project will be the first of what we hope will be many such projects that provide insight into the development of this new form of Buddhist philosophical schooling within Australia and will also contribute to a growing national and international interest in this emergent field of Buddhist mainstream schooling.

As part of this program, our teachers will be attending the 3-day teaching of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Zane and Jeane from Saturday 11th to Monday 13th June as support for our developing understanding of the basic tenets of the Buddhist philosophy. His Holiness will be speaking on *A Bodhisattva's Way of Life by Shantideva*.

Zane was a student of Ven. Ayya Khema Bhikkuni (now deceased). Zane is a recognised dharma teacher in the Theravada tradition, and is also a qualified teacher in the mainstream education system in Australia. She has been thinking about and researching the relationship between Buddhism and education since 1992. Originally trained as a social worker, she worked in Europe through the 1980s. Returning to Australia, she completed her PhD and now works in the Faculty of Education at Monash University.

Jeane has studied with a variety of Buddhist teachers in England, the United States, and France. In 2007, she was given the name of *Dhammavada* 'Teacher of the Dharma' by Ven. Bhante Henepola Gunaratana. She is a spiritual counsellor and was originally trained as a teacher. Over the last 30 years, she has led residential meditation retreats and has also taught both professional and personal development courses.

For more information, you are welcome to contact

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