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Whisperings from the Seed

from little things...

big things grow!!!

Issue 2 February 2013



Some Plans for 2013

- January -Settling into Myanmar
-Rebuilding from earthquake in Northern Burma
- February -Back to Thailand for more wrap up
-Visiting with friends and family in Mawlamyine, Mon State
- March -Education trainings in Northern Myanmar and Yangon
- April -Holistic Education Training for Kachin, Lisu & Muslim groups
- May -Introductory Permaculture Trainings in Northern Shan State & Yangon

A Time of Transition!!

Dear Friends & Family,

The new year is here and with it come many, many changes here at Whispering Seed. We are in the final stages of a huge transition which started over two and half years ago. As of mid January the children and I will be living in Northern Myanmar. Currently we are in the middle of making the transition! We had a lovely time in Sangklaburi with the turning of the new year, camping on the lake, fires, swimming and some cool weather. Although, packing and preparations for this new journey have been challenging at times.

We are very excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for the children to experience their homeland and slowly become re-acquainted with the people, culture and landscapes of their native country. We are also very excited about the partnerships and work that we are becoming involved with in the country. It is a very exciting time to be work in in Myanmar, but still many challenges lie ahead.

We look forward to sharing many stories of adventure and excitement as we begin this incredible journey. Keep posted and we look forward to seeing some of you visiting here in Myanmar!! ~jim

Friends are currently working to have the new website up and running in the very near future. Please stay tuned for updates! We are excited to share the stories and tales in this new land!!

www.whisperingseed.org





New Roots in Myanmar

Whispering Seed establishes new Home for Children and Community Living & Learning Centre in Myanmar

As many of you know, we have faced challenging times for the last two and half years and during that time we began working towards a new project inside Burma. We are happy to say that we are almost there!!!!.....just a little more!

As of the middle of January we, Jim and five of the children, should be settled in Myanmar and thus... a new chapter of Whispering Seed begins!

We are very excited about all the potential work that we will be involved in as well as the children being able to come back to their own home country and all that entails.

Slowly, WS will begin to establish another home for children who have been orphaned and abused here in Myanmar as well as setting up another Living & Learning Centre working issues in Holistic Education and Sustainability. Our aim is to create another rural site for the home and learning centre as well as an urban site to be used for café/bakery, shop and learning centre. We will have to move slowly, as you can imagine all the challenges beginning this kind of work in a newly “opened” country.

We have found such tremendous support for our transition and intentions to work here in Myanmar. We have been blessed

to find new friends and support us in ways which we have never experienced before. It truly is a special time for us! Already we feel family and friends surrounding us.

We have been warmly invited to begin our work under the support of a very special monk here in Pyin Oo Lwin (POL) in Northern Burma. His name is U Cain Ti Ta from Asia Light Monastery. His monastery is situated about 15 miles outside of this former British hill-station. Cold weather, pine trees and lots of soldiers... we will begin our work here just inside the high mountains of the Shan Plateau in Northern Shan State. Asia Light is

“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” -The fox in The Little Prince

actively involved in many activities of education, health, sustainability and inter-faith support. We are excited to be working with them as well as many, many other friends both here in POL and spread all over the country.

Jim will also be working with SEM, Spirit in Education Movement, which is based in Bangkok but working in

Myanmar for the last 18 years. He will be working with the CPME (Coalition for the Promotion of Monastic Education) program here in Myanmar, running 2 key teacher training centres in Burma and supporting them to establish Learning Hubs in various regions all over the country.



Partnerships & Projects

Supporting Community Based Organizations, local groups and individuals in Myanmar



Our primary work during the first few years will be to support and network with local community based-organizations interested in learning more about holistic education and sustainability. We will continue to focus on Children, Women, Education, Sustainability and Health.

Through trainings, capacity building, consultation, empowerment and other activities we aim to support and strengthen the work already on going in the country. We also aim to support the younger generation to become active in the development of their country and to

support initiatives striving to reach into remote regions of Myanmar which have no or limited access to resources.

Besides our work with SEM and the CPME training centres, we will also be working with other groups providing trainings in holistic education and sustainability. We currently have trainings set up with partner groups starting in February and continuing for the entire year. These trainings will target groups in the conflict regions of Kachin State and Northern Shan state, as well as groups in Mon State and those working in the Ayerwaddy Delta

Region. With the collaboration of local partners we are excited to be able to start work in more of these communities in less accessible regions of Myanmar.

For the last 2 ½ years we have been quietly working to establish networks and support systems in various regions of Myanmar. We have been unable to share much about of the work we have been involved in during this time, but are excited about the possibilities that have been created and the work that is continuing to emerge. We are very excited about all the possibilities and potential here, but also know that it will continue to be a challenging time and a long road ahead both in the future of Whispering Seed and the development of Myanmar re-creating herself.

We look forward to begin to share these stories with you!!!

“Everything comes to us that belongs to us, if we create the capacity to receive it.”

-Rabindranath Tagore

MONASTIC EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

Monastic Education in Myanmar aims to reach the poorest of the poor children throughout the country. Through SEM, and their work with the Coalition of Promotion of Monastic Education, (CPME) Jim will be working directly with these schools and training centres over the next 3 years.

For the last few years, WS has been quietly working with the Monastic communities primarily based in Shan

State, offering support, trainings and exposure study tours in Thailand and India. We are excited to continue in supporting these monks and nuns to open new schools as well as gain more support and skills for the schools already in existence. Focusing on Monastic Education is a way to reach the most underprivileged youth of Myanmar society. The trainings provided not

only focus on education, but include basic knowledge in self-awareness, earthen house building, small-scale organic kitchen gardens and other basic life skills training. We are very excited to be able to work in this sector of society within Myanmar and hope that it can be a model of educational reform throughout the country.

October in Burma & Citizenship!!!!

In October Aye Aung made a 3 day boat journey from Sangklaburi to just outside of Mawlamyine, Mon State in Burma. Jim travelled 8 hours to Bangkok, flew to Yangon, then travelled another 9 hours back out to the border on the Burmese side to meet her. During the month, we spent time between Mawlamyine, Yangon, Mandalay and Pyin Oo Lwin in Northern Burma.

Because of Jim's new position working with SEM we have a great deal of support from the monastic communities



in Burma and in the town where we will first be established.

After just 3 weeks, with the support of many, many people and lots of patience as well as determination, Aye Aung received her Family Registration paper, which led to her receiving her NRC (National Registration Card), now means she is an official citizen of Myanmar!! Following this we were able to travel back to Yangon, and once again with the help and support of many friends, she was able to complete her passport, and apply for and receive a visa for Thailand!

It is a very promising time for her and she has already had invitations extended to her to go to study basic education, as well as Non-Violent Communication (NVC) in the USA, Australia and India.

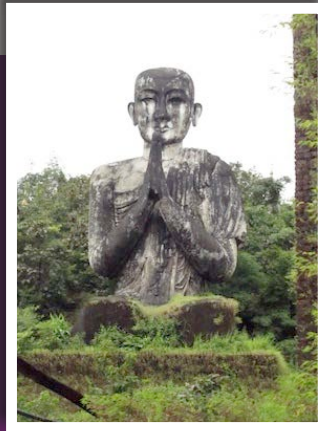
The other children will be able to receive their necessary documents within the next few months and then will also be official citizens of Myanmar. We are grateful for the incredible support that we have found here in Myanmar!



Phyo Eindra becomes an Auntie

A few months ago we learned that Phyo Eindra has an older sister. She arrived in Sangklaburi from Myanmar and gave birth to a little boy not long after. It has been nice for Phyo Eindra to spend time with this sister and get to see the birth of her nephew. We are unsure what her sister's plans are and where she will live with the baby! We wish them the best of luck and are working to support her as best we can!





You can support the new developments of Whispering Seed and our work for the people of Myanmar in many ways.

Here's how you can help:

*Donate to our fundraising campaign on www.wethetrees.com

*Come visit us in Myanmar

*Help from your home country



We are currently looking for Apple computers, iphones, ipads and laptops (all laptops will do!) to share with our staff in Burma. Communication within the country and contact with the outside world is still very difficult due to basic lack of infrastructure throughout most of the country. The ability to have these devices will help us greatly in connecting with each other as well as organizing and getting support both within and outside the country. Please contact us if you can support us with any of these much needed resources.

Earthen Building for Ban Unrak School with support from Dragonfly Community Foundation

The kids have been attending Baan Unrak School here in Sangkhlaburi for the last few months. It has been their first time in school and the results have been interesting. We are grateful for the support that we have received from Didi Anuraga from the Neo-Humanist Foundation here in town helping them get adjusted into the school. In return, we started a project to help the school! We invited our old friends the Dragonfly

Community Foundation to help design and build a new home for Didi and her adoptive family, which includes 2 disabled girls. Here's Dan's (from the DCF) take on things...

After several years of emails and phone calls, it was great to roll back into Sangkhlaburi and into the lives of Jim and the kids. No so little anymore! We learned our mud building skills first and foremost here in Sangkhla so it's fitting to come back and collaborate on a large adobe project. Didi is moving out of her old house right on the school grounds so that it can be used for new classrooms, and into her new adobe dream home.



The project was begun nearly 2 years ago, in small steps and using conventional (non-sustainable materials), but with the switch to mud we're on the right track to provide the family with a comfortable and beautiful home. Volunteers from 8 foreign countries and Thailand worked side by side with classes of students (including the Whispering Seed kids) making over 6000 bricks and building walls. Next up, plastering, sculpture and painting!

It was great to see Maung Maung covered in mud after a few years' hiatus from building – here's wishing the knowledge and love for the natural world that even these young children hold will take root in their new home!



New Roots in Myanmar Fundraising through www.WetheTrees.com

We are excited to share that we have just launched our first fundraising campaign for Whispering Seed's work inside Myanmar!!!!

We are aiming to raise \$5,000 to help with basic start up costs here in Myanmar to make our transition and get things going. Things here in Myanmar are much more expensive for us and living will be quite different from at the farm in Thailand. This is just the initial fundraising to assist us, which will be followed by some proposals and a new fundraising scheme for our work here in Myanmar.

Please support us in whatever way you can and help us to get things started here in Myanmar!!!

Just click in their website and look for New Sprouts campaign!!!



LATEST UPDATE FROM Pyin Oo Lwin (Maymyo) (January 31st, 2013)

Well...just a quick update since starting the newsletter. We have had a long journey...Yangon, Mawlamyine, Mandalay, Pyin Oo Lwin. We spend many wonderful days riding in horse cart visiting family in Mon State and now have arrived here in northern Myanmar...on the Shan Plateau in Shan State and its COLD!!! Wool sweaters, hats, scarves and icy cold baths!!!! We spent several days at Phaung Daw Oo temple and stayed in house and made good friends with children who were affected by Cyclone Nargis. Jim had his first experience in a Myanmar hospital suffering with kidney stones and braving the cold weather! We are here at Asia Light Monastery and enjoying the company of many little monks, mostly Palaung and Palau from northern Shan State, many do not speak Myanmar language. Picking strawberries seems to be our favorite hobby during the days...they are everywhere and the kids are shocked and amazed each time they move a leaf and find a juicy red strawberry perched in the brown straw. Keep posted on our website for more updates!!!!

"This is the most important time for Burma, the moment of our greatest need. And so I would ask that our friends participate and support Burma's efforts towards the establishment of a truly democratic and just society."

~Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

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