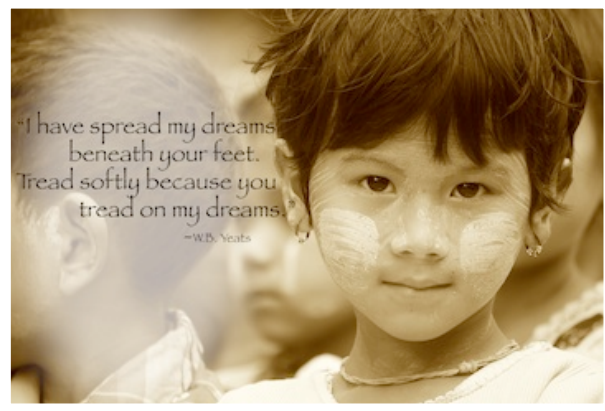




# Whisperings from the Seed

From little things...  
big things grow!!!!

Issue 3  
October  
2013



Your Support is needed for  
Our fundraising campaign with  
**GLOBAL GIVING**

[www.globlagiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/](http://www.globlagiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/)

Dear Friends and Family!

Now more than ever we need your support. We have been accepted to participate in Global Giving's Open Challenge period for 2013. OUR GOAL: To raise \$5,000 in 4 WEEKS. Once we achieve this, we will be able to permanently join Global Giving and benefit from all the support they offer. The Open Challenge will begin NOVEMBER 25<sup>th</sup> and run for one month.

Updates will be posted on facebook ([www.facebook.com/whisperingseed](http://www.facebook.com/whisperingseed)), our website and via emails.

Please support our work by contributing towards our campaign. For donations and more information about the program, please follow the following link.

[www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/)



## Thoughts from Jim...

Greeting All!!!

The heavy rains have ended and the COLD weather has arrived here in the town of Pyin Oo Lwin (Maymyo), a former British hill-station in northern Myanmar just at the edge of the Shan Plateau.

Everything still feels new to us as we slowly begin to adjust to the cold weather, pine trees, strawberries, and driving styles which are uniquely Myanmar!!

We hope you enjoy hearing some of our news over the past few months and look forward to your support to help us reach our fundraising goal through Global Giving!

Warmest regards,

Jim



[WWW.WHISPERINGSEED.ORG](http://WWW.WHISPERINGSEED.ORG)  
[WHISPERINGSEED@gmail.com](mailto:WHISPERINGSEED@gmail.com)  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WHISPERINGSEED](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WHISPERINGSEED)

**Working with Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) for Monastic Education in Myanmar**

As some of you may know and may have read in our last newsletter, when we moved Myanmar back in January, I began working with Spirit in Education Movement and their Monastic Education Teacher Training program in Myanmar. Much of the work that is happening right now for Whispering Seed is in connection with the work through the monastic schools and through a larger network of groups engaged in education reform here in Myanmar.

**NOVEMBER with Brighten Foundation**

During the month of November, we will be working with our friend from Italy, guiseppe Martinegi...and the Brighten Foundation.

Together we will make our first pilot project here in Myanmar for Brighten Foundation & Whispering Seed. We will have two projects which will keep us busy during the month.

**Mandalay Monastic Schools Teacher Training & Football (soccer) Coaches Training with Brighten Foundation**

Together we will run a one week Holistic Education Teacher Training for over 60 teachers and 30-40 football coaches who are working in Buddhist monastic schools in the Mandalay area.

**Pa-O Youth Empowerment Training with Brighten Foundation**

We will also run a Teacher Training and Youth Empowerment for over 60 teachers at e Naung Taung Monastery outside of the town of Hopone, near to Taunggyi in a Pa-O community.

upcoming projects

**Blind Monastery in Pyin Oo Lwin**

Together we will provide Youth Empowerment to over 60 blind youth at the monastery in POL. The first chance for them to work with foreigners.

Please see [www.facebook.com/whisperingseed](http://www.facebook.com/whisperingseed)

**DECEMBER & JANUARY 2013**

December and January will bring more work around the country in teacher training and another SEM Exposure Visit with senior abbots to Thailand and Laos.

**Supporting Network of Kachin Schools in Northern Shan State**

During October after returning from the US, I was able to meet with members from Hope International (based in yangon) to discuss their projects to start schools for the Kachin groups in Northern Shan State. They will be starting with 8 schools in Northern Shan State and Whispering Seed has been asked to assist in some design work and building of extra classrooms and schools using earthen building and a design process in which the students, teachers and community will be helping to design and build the schools.



Naung Taung Monastery in Pa-O area near Taunggyi

whispering seed's new sprouts

We have now been in Myanmar for almost 8 months. It is still extremely challenging working here in Myanmar in the capacity that we hope to. We have many different opportunities open to us and we are waiting to see which will be the best option for the children and our project.

Our plans to secure a large piece of land and continue to provide care for children coming from abusive and vulnerable situations is our primary goal, but this may take some time. In the meantime, we are looking to support other projects with the skills and knowledge that we bring around Holistic Education & Sustainability.

We have friends who have secured a large piece of land outside the town of Pyin Oo Lwin and are looking for help in starting a school and learning project. We also are looking to pursue our long term goal of opening a small cafe-bakery & small green shop which will serve as a skills training centre for our children and other local children. For the time being, we are busy traveling all over the country and the kids adjusting to a very different life here in Myanmar. As we move forward with our plans, your support is greatly appreciated and we are slowly becoming ready to receive volunteers to help us in our aims!!



# projects from the last few months

## St. Matthew's Orphanage Center (SMOC) Teacher Training Workshop

In early May, I was able to work with our dear friends at the Kachin Orphanage Center here in town. With a group of recently graduated Kachin youth, we explored Holistic Education and looked at new visions for teaching and learning. Following the training, the teachers then all went back to



more remote regions of Kachin and Northern Shan State to work in schools.

SMOC works to train young teachers from the border region each year, sending them back out help in the communities in which the teachers originally came from.

## Kachin Education Initiative Teacher Training (Myitkyina, Kachin State)

In late April, during my ordination, I had the opportunity to travel to the most northern region of Myanmar, Kachin State. As some of you may be aware, Kachin State is still suffering from conflict throughout the entire state. There I was able to work with a group of educators, teachers, previous government ministers and others interested to learn about Holistic Education. We spent several days in the provincial capitol of Myitkyina exploring what is holistic education and how to begin to incorporate more principles of participatory teaching and learning into their teaching and programs.



The training was very exciting with the group extremely engaged in the topic and ready to push their learning to new boundaries.

While there, I was also able to travel around Myitkyina and visit some of the IDP camps (Internally Displaced People- those who have been caught in the struggles with the ethnic resistance armies and the Burmese military).

## our new house

We just rented a small house in the former British hill-station of Pyin Oo Lwin in Northern Burma. We are settling into strawberries and wool sweaters



# past projects continued...

## SEMS Abbot Exposure Laos & Thailand

In May, I travelled with a group of senior abbots from monastic schools from all over Myanmar to visit schools and community development projects in Laos & Thailand as part of my work with Spirit in Education Movement.



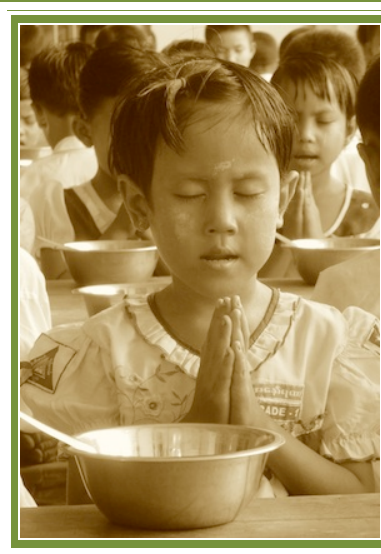
Vientiane, Laos



Dhamma talk to youth in Rehab treatment center, Laos



Morning Greetings!!



Giving thanks for donation

## Monastic School Monitoring Visits

In August, as part of my work with SEM, I was able to travel to see several of the schools as part of the monastic education network. Along with a colleague from Laos, we travelled from the city streets of Yangon, to Pa-O mountainous area of Southern Shan State to the heat of Mandalay to the wetlands of the Delta.

It was a unique opportunity to not only see the vast variety of landscapes and peoples of Myanmar, but also to visit some very unique and exciting projects working



### **Computers Needed in Myanmar!!**

We are looking for donations of Apple laptops, iphones & ipads for our work here in Myanmar.

Telecommunications within the country are challenging & trying to reach the outside world can be even more difficult. All donations are tax exempt and greatly support our work here in myanmar

### **Whispering Seed in Philadelphia Inquirer Newspaper**

Please check out our article in the US newspaper while Jim visiting:

[http://articles.philly.com/2013-09-22/news/42294600\\_1\\_aung-san-suu-kyi-thailand-myanmar-burma](http://articles.philly.com/2013-09-22/news/42294600_1_aung-san-suu-kyi-thailand-myanmar-burma)





## Ordination at Asia Light Monastery

Several years ago as we began to think about our transition to Myanmar, we discussed that it would be a nice time for the boys to ordain as novice monks for a short time upon entering the country. Just after arriving back in January, we met a young couple with a little girl who lived near the temple. As we got to know them, they asked if they could support Maung Maung and Win Myant Han to ordain as novices. As they had only one little girl, it was good merit for them to support 2 young boys. As we discussed it, the boys asked me if I would join them in the ordination.

This too was a plan of mine, to spend some time taking robes and deepening my learning of Buddhism. It seemed a perfect time.

And so, in March, Maung Maung, Win Myant Han and I joined many other young men from around the Asia Light monastery community and went through the ordination process. The boys and I took robes and stayed in the monastery practicing and learning about the life of the Buddha and the life of monks in Burma. After one month, we moved out of the monastery to live in town and needed turned in our robes and headed back to a lay persons life. We are excited in the near future to take robes once again.





# New Sprouts in Myanmar: Whispering Seed's Fundraising Campaign with GLOBAL GIVING's Open Challenge 2013

Now is the time when we greatly need your support. Whispering Seed has been accepted into Global Giving's Open Challenge 2013. Starting on NOVEMBER 25<sup>th</sup>, we will have 4 weeks to raise \$5,000 from over 40 different donors.

Upon reaching our goal, we will be awarded a permanent placement on Global Giving's website, ([www.globalgiving.org](http://www.globalgiving.org)) and the opportunity to raise funds through their website and receive all the support and benefits they offer.

Please support our campaign at:

[www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-establish-whispering-seed-in-myanmar/)

There will be a few "special" days to donate. We will let you know via email and facebook for those dates. We greatly appreciate all your support for the work of Whispering Seed and ultimately supporting the people and children of Myanmar!!!!

With Mettha!!! -Jim + all the kids!!!!



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