



# Sanghata

Supporters of the Pacific Hermitage

**January 2012**

## *A year to be remembered*

If someone asked me 17 months ago if the community would be able to provide a permanent residence for 3 monks, purchase two kuti's and support daily alms rounds, I would have said they were dreaming. Yet here we are experiencing the open-hearted generosity of a Dhamma community both near and far excited to help support the establishment of the Pacific Hermitage in White Salmon, Washington.

I have been inspired over the past 10 years by the teachings of the Buddha and the monastics who have committed their lives to learning and teaching the Dhamma. My life has been enriched by the presence of the monastic Sangha and I experience a wonderful sense of gratitude for the rare opportunity to regularly be with the monastics of the Pacific Hermitage. It is with this in mind that I, like many of you, have committed to do what we can to provide the support necessary for the long term presence of the monastics in the Columbia gorge.

Here is a list of what our community has done in the past 17 months:

- Provided a rental residence in July of 2010
- Participated in a half dozen community work days
- Provided daily meals for 3 monastics
- Made many new friends
- Purchased and installed (twice) 2 kuti's
- Participated in weekly and monthly teachings at Yoga Samadhi
- Supported monthly teachings in Portland
- Supported Daily Alms rounds
- Acquired a private loan to purchase a residence
- Purchased the 65 Barnedt Rd. property as a permanent residence
- Monastics take permanent residence in June of 2011

## **Daily alms rounds**

Upon taking residence at the Tunnel Rd. hermitage the monks began daily alms rounds, walking quietly and peacefully through the community with their alms bowls. They hiked down the 1900 vertical foot trail to White Salmon (and back up) four days a week. The other three days they walked a shorter loop in Snowden. Before long the local community began to understand and appreciate what the monks were doing and support began to build for providing adequate food for the monastics. Today, the monks are doing daily alms rounds and receive enough food 3 or 4 days a week for their meal. It is unique in the West for monks to be able to sustain themselves from alms rounds. Thank you White Salmon residents!

## Purchase of a permanent residence

Shelter is one of the four requisites provided to the monastics by the lay community. (The other requisites are food, clothing, and medicine.) In June of this year a suitable property for the long term needs of the hermitage monastics became available. Sanghata was able to secure a \$454,000 loan from a private source for the purchase. Community members interested in the success of the hermitage, some as far away as Thailand, have been very generous in their support of the hermitage. Nearly \$99,000 has been offered so far to pay off the loan!

## Yearly budget

The yearly budget for the hermitage is about \$35,000 including the \$13,800 interest paid on the loan. This very lean budget includes costs for health insurance and medical costs, property insurance, utilities and property maintenance costs.

Although monthly donations (dana) are growing, they do not yet cover the monthly expenses. If you would like to find out more about supporting the hermitage take a look at [Sanghata.net](http://Sanghata.net).

## A pleasure to be in service

There are four Sanghata board members all of whom greatly appreciate the opportunity to be in service to the Pacific Hermitage and the supporting community. If you have any questions please contact us.

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## A Culture of Practice and Caring

Being around the monks one begins to notice the care given to moment to moment practice. An intention not to cause harm is evident. There is a palpable sense of care for the community and an interest in being good stewards of the land. It seems to me that we are being shown an example of how to move closer to living a simpler more skillful life.

The hermitage is "our" land. The community members provide the care and nurturing of the land and by doing so we are caring and nurturing for each other. It is both supportive and useful to the community and monastics for us to take on various tasks on a regular basis. There are a wide range of tasks such as weekly lawn care or taking on the care of a particular part of the forest or offering a meal on a regular basis. Let me know if you would like to talk more about this.

I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to be in service to the Pacific Hermitage. I have to say that the benefits to my practice from this work are very special and greatly appreciated. Thank you.

I encourage everyone to follow [www.pacifichermitage.org](http://www.pacifichermitage.org) for opportunities to enrich your practice and enjoy this wonderful, growing community. For more information about Sanghata, check out our web site [sanghata.net](http://sanghata.net).

With warm regards,

Scott Bengé  
President  
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