



Issue 7



# EDITORIAL



## ACCEPTANCE - THE PATH TO PEACE

The focus of acceptance and peace have been at the forefront of my mind over the past few months. I gathered together this issue of **Community** against the backdrop of the Kosovan crisis, a tragedy that has touched us all in different ways. Each day brought a painful opportunity for reflection and enquiry into the root of conflict, the meaning and process of peace and a deeper experience and understanding of suffering. As the weeks progressed my awareness grew of how easy it is to become overwhelmed by outrage, fear, despair and helplessness. How easy to switch off and hope that it will soon be over. How easy it is to “forget in the dark what you know to be true in the light”.

I hope this issue of **Community** will remind us of what it is we know to be true in the light – the goodness, strength and creativity of the human spirit. Jonathon, Jenni and Rajith’s contributions illuminate how a willingness to accept differences in lifestyle, tradition and attitudes can bring not only insight, wisdom and freedom, but also open the heart to the spirit and community we all share. The article on Dhamma and Psychotherapy challenges us to step aside from fixed opinions and resistances to open to what another discipline may offer in the quest for liberation. Openness to and acceptance of diversity not only enriches our lives but brings a deeper understanding of ourselves and others – as Thich Nhat Hanh says, ‘With deep understanding, peace is

possible’. Tony’s adventures in Italy demonstrate the experience that many of us have whilst travelling as well as in our day to day lives – the kindness and compassion in every heart to respond to those in need. Reports from the Temple Opening, other monasteries and the slog of preparing a dana offering, reflect the qualities of persistence, right effort, faith, creativity and the spirit of community which can emerge in difficult circumstances. Finally the Story Page reminds us of our ability to break from old habits and come to live a richer life that is free, wise and compassionate.

If we can allow ourselves and others to ‘be’, if we can cultivate this precious gift of acceptance for ourselves and others, not only will we find our own path to healing and wholeness, but we will be watering the seeds of peace within the world in which we live.

May all beings be safe and free from danger.  
*Chris Blain*

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### Behind the scenes at Community

Four of us are involved in producing Community. Chris Ward and I take turns editing and laying out the copy (two consecutive issues each) whilst Tavaró sweats over a hot computer, typesetting, patiently mailing out drafts and tolerating my changes of mind and long late night phone calls. Nick has done wonderfully in letting go of the reins, yet is always there with his wise advice, ideas and the push to get the edition mailed on time. As I am moving to the North-East this month, I hand over the next 2 issues to Chris W, but remain on the editorial team and re-emerge in the spring to take next summer and winter issues. I would like to thank everyone who has offered donations, articles and feedback, stuffed envelopes and stuck stamps and generally made it possible for Community to arrive through your letter box.

*Chris B.*

සමූහයෙහි ප්‍රධාන අරමුණ වන්නේ සාමාන්‍ය ජනයාගේ ජීවිතයේ පිළිවෙල, සිතීමේ ක්‍රම, සහ සම්බන්ධතා පිළිබඳව විවිධ මතවාද ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කිරීමයි. මෙය සාමාන්‍ය ජනයාගේ ජීවිතයේ පිළිවෙල, සිතීමේ ක්‍රම, සහ සම්බන්ධතා පිළිබඳව විවිධ මතවාද ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කිරීමයි. මෙය සාමාන්‍ය ජනයාගේ ජීවිතයේ පිළිවෙල, සිතීමේ ක්‍රම, සහ සම්බන්ධතා පිළිබඳව විවිධ මතවාද ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කිරීමයි. මෙය සාමාන්‍ය ජනයාගේ ජීවිතයේ පිළිවෙල, සිතීමේ ක්‍රම, සහ සම්බන්ධතා පිළිබඳව විවිධ මතවාද ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කිරීමයි.



# A Winter in the Deathless

by Jonathan Hill



What on Earth am I doing? I thought as, panniers bulging, I cycled through the gates of the deathless into Amaravati. I had made a commitment to be part of the support team for the monastic winter retreat 1999. The palpable sense of peace and calm, formerly so attractive on shorter visits, seemed suddenly threatening. How was I going to cope with 2½ months of noble silence with no television, radio, music or sport? – in fact nothing to distract me from myself? How was I going to cope with enforced contact with a small group of complete strangers for 10 weeks?



The Noble Silence which I had been so concerned about was not a problem. Most people did talk: it was almost impossible to work with others in the kitchen without communicating. A couple of the Anagarikas took it very seriously and did not speak at all for at least a month. Some, myself among them, would speak most of the time but take a few days where we would maintain silence. – not always very successfully. However the mere fact that the concept of Noble Silence was around, even if not strictly applied, made me reflect on how my speech affected others and be more discerning about whether it was necessary to speak. There was some quite lively debate about the issue for the first few weeks of the retreat and again whenever new people arrived. One such new arrival, the most ardent advocate of complete Noble Silence, was discussing the issue with a co-opted sympathiser at the top of his voice whilst doing the washing-up!

It was a good opportunity to cultivate insights. Most were personal but one that I can perhaps profitably share is about food. At face value it is completely absurd to not eat after midday: why make yourself go hungry when it is not necessary. I was really indignant

about this. The situation in a cold English Winter at the end of the twentieth century was completely different from that in Northern India 2500 years ago. Didn't the Buddha himself advocate the middle way, having tried that of self-mortification and found it to be unprofitable? Also the fact that cheese and



chocolate were classed as 'allowables' in the afternoon seemed completely ridiculous. In health terms they are two of the worst foods for you and also a cause of migraines.

Thus I convinced myself that the rule was stupid and irrelevant and so used to smuggle two or three tangerines or clementines, to which I had become partial, out of the Sala after the night. Occasionally they would roll out of the woolly hat in which I was trying to conceal them, much to my embarrassment. I almost made a point of doing this to register my dissent even if I was not particularly hungry.

Towards the end of the retreat however my resistance softened and I decided to adhere strictly to the rule and see what happened. It was a revelation. I found that I was able to bear with the hunger with patience and endurance. This cultivated a lack of fear of hunger and I discovered that my resistance

was around that. It provoked a deep sense of well-being and confidence because I had proved that I could be master of myself and not a mere slave to my desires. That is a different and more profoundly satisfying kind of freedom than that lost by not being able to do exactly as I wanted.

At the monastery the Dhamma seeps into you even while sleeping. If one is at all interested, willing to learn and sensitive, it is impossible not to be affected by that atmosphere and thereby to share some of that specialness.

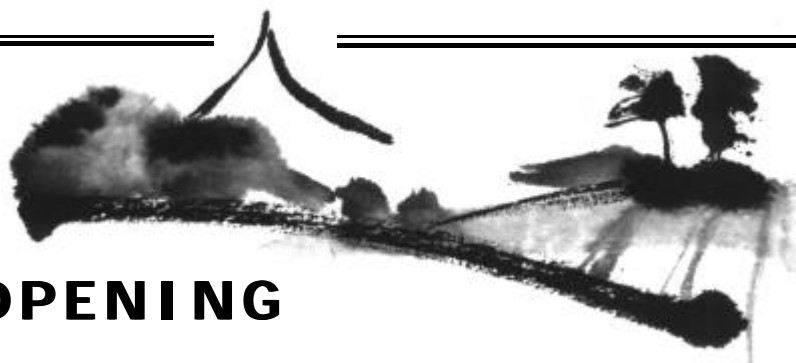


(Continued on page 5)

## When They Sleep

They are all children when they sleep.  
There is no war in them.  
They open their hands and breathe  
in the slow rhythm given to humans by  
heaven.  
Whether soldiers, statesmen, servants or  
masters  
they purse their lips like small children.  
Stars stand watch then and the arch of the  
sky is hazed over  
for a few hours when no one will harm  
another.  
If only we could talk with each other then,  
when hearts are like half-open flowers.  
Words would push their way in  
like golden bees.  
- God, teach me sleep's language.

Rolf Jacobson



# TEMPLE OPENING

## The night before...

rolls of thunder shook the monastery buildings as flashes of lightening pierced the black night, accompanied by long downpours of rain. Well before the monastery wake up bell, the extraordinary thunderstorm hovered over Amaravati and the surrounding countryside heralding the Temple opening weekend. Natures' synchronous blessing of an auspicious event.

Surprisingly, the decorations, flags, streamers as well as the campers' tents survived unscathed - as did the horseshoe of marquees and tents set up in the field during the week. Only a few tired eyes and faces at breakfast indicated an interrupted night. Weeks and months of hard work had transformed the monastery into a beautiful site which was able to absorb over a 160 volunteers as well as a large complement of monks and nuns from monasteries in England, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Cambodia, all ready to greet the anticipated visitors and share the celebration together.

## Saturday... the gates open...

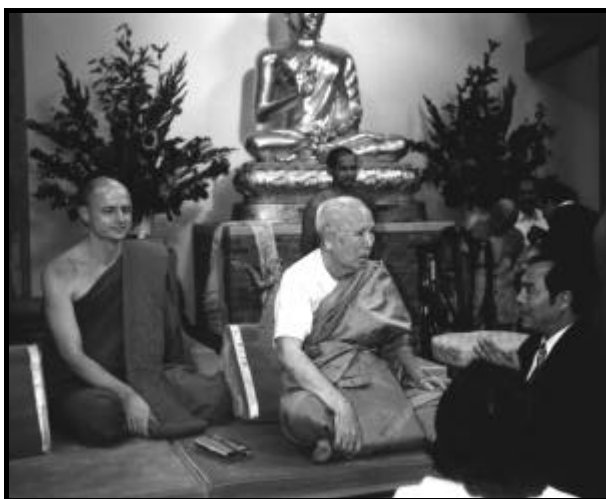
to welcome local dignitaries and residents and all those involved in the construction of the Temple. The talks and presentations in the Temple were preceded by tours around a beautifully presented exhibition illustrating monastic life, followed by an impressive spread in the Tea Tent - a traditional English Tea for which 700 scones had been baked. Meanwhile in the Dhamma Marquee, childrens activities, including circle dancing and face painting had been organised (to the bemusement of some of the visiting monastics from the Far East), as well as a performance by the Brighton Dharma School illustrating scenes from the Buddha's life. In the late afternoon visitors listened to dhamma talks by Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield.

## In the early evening...

a small procession appeared, 14 Sri Lankan monks in ochre robes led by colourfully clad musicians rhythmically banging various types of drums accompanied by the trumpeting of a conch shell. They

made their way into the Temple filled with monastic and lay sangha to commence an all night session of chanting.

The powerful melodic chant, maintaining an unbroken continuity, filled the space and minds of the listeners, giving rise to images of timeless spiritual traditions of the East. Singhalese families, including children, some asleep on their mothers laps, stayed up all night taking occasional breaks for refreshment. The engendered shared commitment and participation was deeply moving for those unfamiliar with this tradition. A climactic fanfare of drums and conch concluded the nights chanting and saw the start of a new day.



Chao Khun Pañānanda at the end of his talk.

photograph by Supanna

## As Sunday dawns...

volunteers snatched breakfast in between briefing meetings and took up their positions, as months of meticulous planning went into action. Local one way traffic systems and parking in neighbours fields ensured the smooth arrival of shuttle buses and coaches, some from as far afield as Belgium, swelling the growing numbers of visitors from all over the world.

By the gates, nuns in brown received 'dana' offerings. The Reception Tent volunteers greeted visitors with programmes for the day. Meanwhile, a team of Thai restaurateurs busily prepared 2000 meals as a free offering for the midday meal. Tea tents offered refreshments and a video in the sala repeatedly screened 'A Day In The Life of a Monastery' to an ever changing audience. Grounds maintenance teams serviced the large number of temporary toilets and refuse points. Teams of stewards assisted visitors and staffed an information point in the field near a St John's Ambulance station. Another team of helpers in the Volunteers Cafe provided refreshments for tired and hungry helpers.

In the centre of all this activity stood the Temple and cloisters. Surrounded by green foliage of nearby trees, an elegant combination of brick walls, sweeping red tiled roof supported on solid oak timbers, its peak capped by a golden pinnacle catching the midday sun, it stood against the background of a blue sky and moving clouds.

## In the Temple...

as 2 o'clock approached, 450 guests sat facing the rows of silent and

motionless monks and nuns on raised platforms either side of the Buddha rupa. In the centre of the 'sima' restrained by a rope, stood poised a large gold leaf patinated marble orb. Outside, in and around the large Dhamma Tent, over 1500 other visitors sat together with monks and nuns watching the proceedings on a large screen. As a shower of summer rain swept over the monastery, Princess Galyani and her entourage arrived and the ceremony began.

Both assemblies, connected by video and sound systems, chanted the refuges and precepts in a collective declaration of commitment. The ceremony reached its climax when the Princess cut the rope holding back the orb releasing it down the ramp and into the hole with a heavy thud. The ensuing Dhamma talk by Chao Khun Paññananda touched us with its direct and simple encouragement to live close to the spirit of the teachings, be tolerant of other spiritual traditions and not become attached to form.

The main proceedings then moved to the Dhamma Tent when Luang Por Sumedho and Princess Galyani came to bless the white stone stupa surrounded by fluttering flags. The afternoons ceremonies came to an end with a talk in which Luang Por shared his reflections and joy about the significance of the days event.

### So what does all this mean?...

Who were all these people? What were they getting out of this? It had nothing to do with accumulating wealth or achieving fame. What we witnessed and shared in was a milestone in the coming of the Dhamma to the West. A symbol of the coming of an inspiring and practical teaching that offers a clear path to freedom from suffering. Long may it flourish in the centuries to come – for the benefit of all.

## Cittaviveka. . . offering dana – a challenge in creativity.

**Clutter; disarray; cups adorned with cold, congealed porridge; tablecloths limp and bedraggled or just plain wet**

*(Continued from page 3)*

I do not want to give the impression that life on the winter retreat was permanent bed of roses. Often it was very difficult. But it provides just the right conditions to cultivate dhamma in lay life – a half way house between a formal retreat and outside life. You'll notice that I use the words 'outside life' in distinguishing the lay from the monastic. I have long abandoned using the word 'real' for the former; it is mostly the life of delusion. There is nothing more real than life at the monastery. Everything is reduced to its raw state and there is very little to distract you from having to deal with the realness of any situation.

I'm sure I will be able to look back on it as a major formative experience in my life and I am very grateful to everyone at Amaravati for giving me the opportunity and to the support team for their friendship and support.

I dedicate this offering to them.

**and sodden; the work surface littered with the flotsam and jetsom left by the ebbing tide of breakfast gruel.**

Fleetingly, eyes meet only to turn away, the merest flicker of a smile indicating a brief, passing acknowledgement of another's presence.

Like early morning mist, the silence seeps in to envelop all those in its path. For some, a familiar scenario, for others the unknown; for all, a challenge in creativity. The menu is largely determined by what's available and the innovative genius of the presiding chef. Sometimes a cornucopia of fresh saladings, a mini-market garden of greens, calabrese, and root vegetables. Less frequently, a few shrinking cabbages and the ubiquitous baked beans...

Approaching the morning's labours arouses a mixture of pleasant anticipation and enthusiasm, rapidly tempered by anxiety and dread as to who will actually be responsible for the meal ("I couldn't possibly do it – wouldn't know where to start").

The mind uncontrollably (as always) cavorts through the trees of possibilities, becoming aroused to fever-pitch by the need to knock up something edible, nutritious and visually presentable in the time available.

For those unused to these stresses, there is an increasing sense of urgency and doubt ("of course they don't mind if the meal is late"), the adrenaline is surging as one seeks to resolve the inevitable question "Will there be enough?" Maybe we

should open a few more tins of tomatoes or sweet corn? Or cook more pasta?

There is a hastily convened conference, an exchange of ideas, a final great plan... Time edges forward. The rice boils over. The buckets of pig-swill fill to overflowing and the eyes fill with tears as the onions shed their skins. Cold coffee is mechanically swallowed in haste and in a last minute panic, wrappings are torn off tins of biscuits. Gradually it all takes shape. Through skillful means, orderliness arises out of chaos. Reality materialises from conjecture. Effort and dedication, persistence and faith win through. Obstacles are overcome, and doubt is replaced by conviction. Sounds familiar?..... what was that about Dhamma in everyday life??

*Barry Durrant winter retreat,  
Chithurst 1999*



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# Hana Maturi

A celebration and sharing between different traditions in Norwich

April 1999 by Jenni Jepson

One bright spring Sunday morning found Chris and I heading home to Norfolk – not to visit my parents, who live there, but to take part in Hana-Maturi, a flower festival to celebrate the Buddha's birth.



I'd been drawn to the event partly out of curiosity. The organisers, Reiyukai, are a Japanese inspired group who had offered us a chance to step outside the familiar Theravadan world to meet like minded folk from other traditions in an area of the country where, until now, I'd had few Buddhist links.

The Reiyukai centre in Norwich is



housed in old factory premises. Two parched and slightly disorientated Upasikas arrived to be greeted by the sight of martial arts students going through their paces and a busy bar. As we made our way to the latter for a welcome cup of tea, I found myself longing for a quiet corner in which to adjust to this unexpected hive of activity before realising that the centre had

been set up to serve the social as well as the spiritual needs of lay people.

More confusion as we moved towards the shrine room – no mats or cushions to sit on, just rows of white plastic garden chairs. – and horror, everyone entered without taking their shoes off! But as the candles were lit, confusion gave way to calm and that special sense of connectedness descended on this sacred space, as the celebration got under way.

Hypnotic Japanese chanting, interspersed with the spine-tingling sound of a bell, set the devotional tone. Sutra readings followed, uttered aloud at breakneck speed – no time to take in the

**“I realised  
too  
how I  
could pray**

meaning of the words even though they were spoken in English. But somehow it didn't matter.

It was a day of surprises. Again and again I was shaken out of my complacency and made to look at things in a different way. My cosy, passive feelings and thoughts were swept away as the UK director of Feiyukai, Mr Hasegawa, spoke directly about the conflict and suffering in Kosovo. The Buddha's teaching, he reminded us, pointed to non-violence in a way that encouraged us to open our hearts to peace. A deepening sense of stillness descended on the gathering as his words sank in. If we could cultivate "is attitude of non-

ourselves, it might start to radiate to others. I realised too how I could pray for peace and for the first time began to understand why people were so passionate about peace – why they joined peace movements and why there were peace walks. It was simply the Buddha's Way.

Chantings, mantras, readings and singing followed, led by members of



each of the different Buddhist groups there – all so different, yet all embracing the Three Treasures, Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. A young nun from Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda spoke movingly of a recent visit to India, bringing to life the events surrounding the Buddha's birth in Lumbini, 2,500 years ago. Her joyful spirit vibrated round the room as the celebration reached its climax. Accompanied by her chanting and drumming, individuals were invited to step forward and pour ceremonial sweet tea (brewed from the Cherry tree bark) over a small standing Buddha rupa. This centrepiece was surrounded by beautiful spring flowers in front of the main shrine and as I bent forward to anoint the golden figure, I was aware of nothing except silence: no drumming, no chanting, just peace.

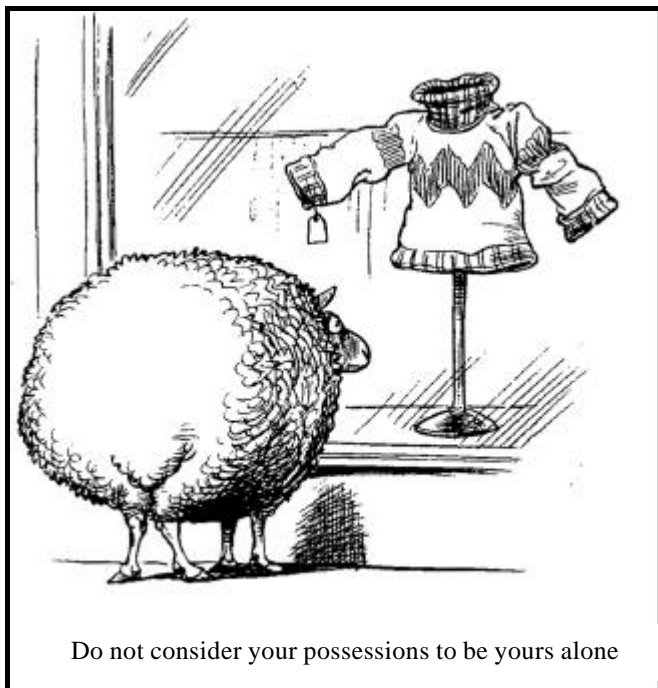
Now as I look back, this coming together of spiritual friends continues to serve as a strong reminder about the



power of peace and has given me a renewed sense that the essence of Dhamma is the same, which ever path we follow.

The only lasting beauty is  
the beauty of the heart

*Rumi*



Cartoon reproduced from: 'Buddhism for Sheep' Published by Ebury Press Illustration by Chris Riddel



# LETTING GO.....A BIT

During the April and May of 1998 I had the opportunity to go on a walking holiday in Italy. To say that the holiday was unplanned would be a great exaggeration. After a booked three days in Rome, all there was, was a sketchy route northwards and the intention to reach Nice in the South of France from where I hoped to fly home. I had suggested to my family and employers that I might be away for about a month. Another element of uncertainty and I'm afraid anxiety to family and friends was the fact that I had suffered quite serious illness the previous year and was not sure how I would cope. With assurances that I would take it easy and would fly straight back from Rome if needs be, I set off.

It did not take me very long on Roman soil to cobble together some fairly unskilful thoughts. Slowly becoming one of an alarmingly diminishing crowd at baggage reclaim, I began to think, "stupid baggage handlers: just my luck; what a start; nobody will speak English; foreign imbeciles etc..." Turning to see who I could point a finger at in my faltering Italian, I spotted my rucksack progressing serenely unobserved around another nearby conveyer belt.

Being treated with kindness and patience will be an abiding memory of my travels. Asking someone on my first bus ride where I got off for the metro to the centre of town a number of people were soon 'on my case'. My two or three efforts to get off the bus at what I thought likely spots were greeted with kindly admonitions of "not here, not here". Throughout my entire trip people were so willing to help, naturally responding to a stranger in need of help. It was so delightful. Sometimes a number of passers-by would be drawn into the directional discussions/interpretations.

It's strange how you try creating an impression in your mind of a new place you are about to visit. Rome, the books told me, was unique, different to the rest of Italy, impossible to take in less than a month. So it was just a matter of getting on with it.

Of all the many wonderful places I visited there, the most special was a fulfilment of a childhood ambition, a visit to the wonderfully preserved catacombs of St Sebastian. In my early religious education, I was captivated by stories of Christians having to hide and worship underground, so great were the dangers of everyday existence during times of persecution. It was not hard to imagine. Danger enough, I thought, of getting lost in those miles of tunnels

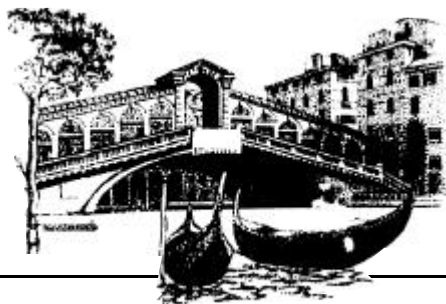
It was in Bolsena, some days after Rome, that I learned the true meaning of the word 'basic' as applied to one of the hotels in my guidebook. I entered the sepulchral foyer of this hotel noting with interest the two bikes chained up at the bottom of the stairwell and the very strong smell of cats. It got brighter as

I mounted the stairs. I was just about to beat a retreat when I was called from above. I enquired if there was a free room - I thought

somehow that there might be. I was shown my room. A chandelier with all but one 20-watt bulb missing dominated the small room. The one skylight window would not open and when I put my bottle of water on a shelf it collapsed with a massive crash. I then found that I could not get out of the room. Trying to unlock the door was marginally less noisy. I eventually peeped out fully expecting to see a moose's head hanging in the hallway [as in *Fawlty Towers*]. I was then ushered in to meet the manager. As I entered there was, to my surprise/shock, a very old lady lying in bed watching television fully equipped with bed socks and night-cap. All I could say was, "good afternoon madam." This was answered with a smile and cheery wave. Again I was reminded of a television series called 'Allo, Allo'. In the end I stayed there three nights. Things are not as awkward as they first seem.

On the plane home there occurred a small incident which summed up much of what had happened hitherto. Desperate for a cup of tea I was thankful I had sufficient francs in my pocket when it was announced that refreshments would soon be served. When the following announcement notified us that unfortunately only sterling was acceptable, the lady next to me insisted that she buy me a cup of tea.

*Tony Spinks*



## 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Buddhist Women

**1st – 7th February 2000: Lumbini, Nepal**  
*"Women as Peacemakers: Self, Family, Community and World"*

Our aim is to explore the role of women from different Buddhist cultures and practices, and exchange ideas and experiences as to how to empower women for a peaceful future. The program will have interactive workshops, panel discussions, discussion groups, meditation, chanting and social events.

Places are limited: Contact:

Sakyadhita (International Association of Buddhist Women)  
1143 Piikoi Place, Honolulu, 96822, USA

**Peace is all around us – in the world,  
nature and within us –  
in our bodies and spirits.**

**Once we learn how to touch this peace,  
we will be healed and transformed.**

*Thich Nhat Hanh*

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# Allies or Enemies?

## The meeting of the Dhamma and Psychotherapy

For many Westerners within the Buddhist world, the question of whether psychotherapy is compatible with a Buddhist approach has become a pertinent one. Since Buddhism and its meditation practices have been taught in the West, a number of people have experienced a sudden and overwhelming eruption of emotion or even of complete breakdown as a consequence of their meditation practice. This has happened particularly in the context of intensive retreat when all our normal support systems are denied us. This phenomenon has worried both prospective practitioners and their teachers.

As a psychotherapist I have treated people who have had just such an experience and as a meditator myself I have known first hand the power of the meditation practice in bringing previously unconscious feelings into awareness. I found the skills I learned as a psychotherapist and as a client were the most useful in helping me deal with those times. Unfortunately, my experience has been that many teachers of meditation are often at a loss to know how to help people in this situation or even to understand such events. Meditators are often left to their own devices in dealing with what can be a very frightening and isolating experience.



Buddhists who have had no personal experience of psychotherapy may feel that the understanding it teaches are incompatible with the Dhamma and so feel that its skills are irrelevant to them. At the core of the difficulty with the question of compatibility of the two approaches, is the question of 'Self' or rather 'no-self'. How can an approach which seeks to strengthen the sense of Self (Psychotherapy) be consistent with an approach that seeks to take us to a realisation of 'no self' (Buddhism)?

There are two aspects to the answer to this question.

One is that these two approaches can be seen as focusing on two ends of the same continuum: the one (Psychotherapy) focuses on the developmental stages of the growth of individuality and the other (Buddhist practice) on the process of developing beyond the limits of individuality to an awareness of the impermanence and

fluidity of that individuality. This means that before we are capable of experiencing the limitations to our concept of selfhood we must first have a strong and stable experience of that selfhood.



Which brings me to the second aspect of the answer which is a crucial one for us here in the West; that psychotherapy is particularly important for people of our culture. I would even go so far as to say that Buddhist practice will find it hard to root itself into our culture without being subverted into yet another versions of monotheistic doctrine without the necessary understanding that psychotherapy affords. This is, the difference between the structures of the Eastern and Western psyche. One of the consequences of the family structures and of prevailing belief systems in the West is that for many people the natural development of a strong, supple and healthy sense of self is prevented or even damaged. Instead of securing of a positive, internal sense of self (i.e. having the ability to tolerate strong emotion without panic or acting out, the ability to trust others and to withstand aloneness as well as a flexible yet sturdy self esteem) there is a sense of hollowness, an inner wounding. Consequently, when someone who has not yet fully achieved these stages of development begins practices which are designed to enable them to go beyond them, then the psyche can be revealed for what it is - a structure built on shaky ground or even no foundations at all.

These foundations to our internal psychic structure are created through relationship. By internalising the qualities of others as children and continuing as adults, we build our 'self'. If we are prematurely encouraged to behave as adults before we have been able to 'grow' the necessary understanding and skills, we will compensate by pretending to be something we are not. We create a 'false self' where no self exists, a fragile structure which requires constant attention to be upheld. This is what has come to be known as the 'ego' in common parlance, that which we strive to overcome or let go of. Consequently, when we begin practices which encourage the deconstruction of the 'self', what we begin to dismantle is a false construction, revealing unresolved tensions and conflicts in the personality that have previously been held at bay by our belief that what we seem to be is who we are.



The experience is often described in terms of fragmentation which speaks as much of the experience as it does of our (Western) ability to understand and accept the reality of the multiplicity within us.



Psychotherapy offers an opportunity to resolve these previously hidden tensions. The relationship between therapist and client or patient is crucial in allowing the development of stages which have been hampered. Without a true understanding of the therapeutic process, it is often mistakenly believed to be simply a process of revisiting the past. It is in reality far more complex than this. Talking about the past is one aspect of an interaction at the heart of which is the development of a relationship of depth between therapist and client. It has as much to do with the internal development of positive emotion as it is to do with the recognition of the experience of suffering.

However, the shortcoming of the psychological approach to the alleviation of suffering is that it stops far short of understanding the existential basis for that suffering, something which is clearly taught within Buddhism. Perhaps, particularly for Westerners, the shortcoming of Buddhism is that it does not set out the prerequisite development stages that are necessary to

practice beneficially.

The dialogue between Psychotherapists and Buddhist practitioners is in its early stages and will, I hope, lead to the sharing of understanding and the refinement of practice for both meditator and therapist. Psychotherapy and meditation will become to be recognised for what they are - mutually supportive and



We are so merciless with  
ourselves.  
Any amount of love in this  
life of forgetfulness and  
violence is a miracle.  
A moment of peace, of loving  
kindness, is a triumph over  
fear and old limitation.

## AMIDA TRUST

The path of compassion in the real world

Amida Trust is a non-denominational Buddhist charity which offers active responses to real situations

\*Amida Trust offers a full training in Buddhist psychotherapy. It also runs retreats, groups, workshops and other events in UK and overseas. These events are grounded in Buddhist psychology and non-denominational approach. Profits from events pay for humanitarian work.

\*Amida Trust is building sangha in the UK and overseas.

\*Amida Trust is involved in humanitarian work in Albania and Zambia as well as in the UK.

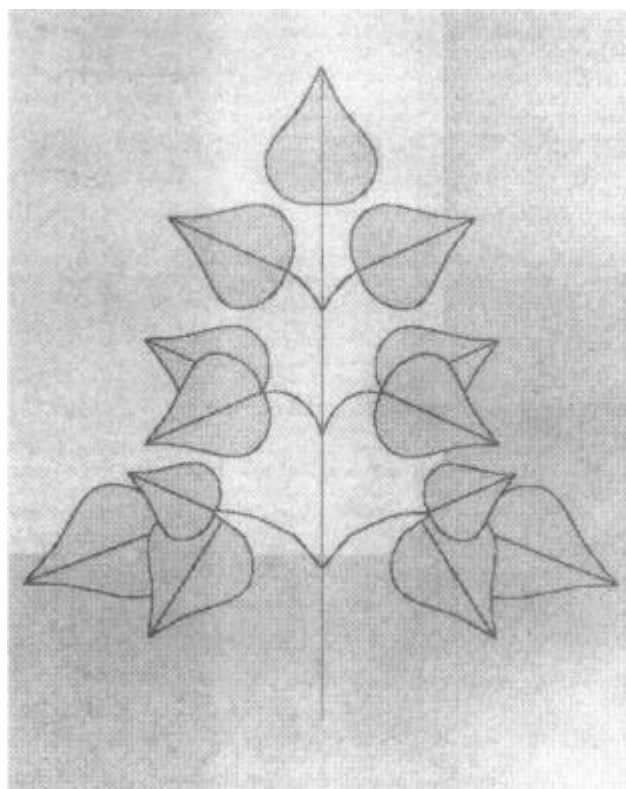
\*Amida Trust has several bases in the UK and a retreat centre in France.

\*Amida Trust has a full time community of people willing to go where they are needed.

\*Amida Trust offers support and development to Buddhists in helping, healing and therapeutic professions.

\*Amida Trust has over 300 members worldwide. You could join today.

To find out more about any of these contact us:  
AMIDA TRUST, 53 GROSVENOR PLACE, JESMOND,  
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE NE2 2RD  
Tel:0191.281.5592 e-mail: amida@amida.demon.co.uk



# Story Page

## Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

### Chapter 1: I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the pavement.

I fall in.

I am lost....I am helpless

It isn't my fault.

It takes forever to find a way out.

### Chapter 2: I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the pavement.

I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I am in the same place –

But it isn't my fault.

It takes a long time to get out.

### Chapter 3: I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the pavement.

I see it is there,

But I still fall in.....it's a habit,

My eyes are open, I know where I am.

It is my fault.

I get out immediately.

### Chapter 4: I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the pavement.

I walk around it.

### Chapter 5: I walk down a different street.

*Portia Nelson*

## SPONSOR A BOOK

*Buddhist Meditation – the foundations:*

*By Ajahn Sucitto*

*We have already raised £200  
but need another £500 to sponsor  
a reprint of 3000 copies.*

**CAN YOU HELP?**

*If so please send donations to:*

AUA Publications Appeal,  
Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, Great  
Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. HP1 3BZ

Cheques made payable to: English Sangha Trust – indicating the  
cheque is to sponsor Ajahn Sucitto's Buddhist Meditation Book



## Book Reviews

**Light on Enlightenment:** *Revolutionary Teaching on the Inner Life (Rider 1998) - Christopher Titmuss*

This is a book about Dhamma rather than Buddhism, written in short sections for individual reflection and group discussion. There are familiar chapter headings such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Triple Gem and the Five Precepts etc as well as chapters covering the range of the Buddha's teachings from the Eight Worldly Conditions or Winds – (profit/loss, success/failure, praise/blame, pleasure/pain) to the Four Absorptions or jhanas. But within this framework, each topic is dealt with in a way which challenges the reader, introducing suggestions for practice and ending with specific questions for reflection and enquiry. Many examples and stories from the author's life and Dharma teaching experience are included.

This is not a book to read in one sitting – there are too many good things to take in. Self-contained chapters allow it to be read in any order and it may be seen as a manual for the spiritual life, to be dipped into again and again. Whether dealing with anger and compulsive behaviour, or developing compassion and equanimity, there is practical advice here for the individual or for group reflection, and encouragement to think of enlightenment as something close at hand in this lifetime. Highly recommended.

*Robert Bluck June 1999*



## Dear Editor,

Well, what can I say. Thank you would be a banal understatement, but rest assured that an abundance of Metta and joy fills me when last weekend floats through the mind. The excellent wealth of experience that the weekend brought forth was a fountain of nourishment - so many blessings in such a brief span of time. My first time at Amaravati was such a pleasant experience, and I really appreciate that fact. It's physically different from Chithurst of course, but people-wise it was reassuringly familiar.

Knowing that you only get to do something once, I'm always a little wary of being apprehensive and not taking it all in, but when I walked into the Temple a rare "something" happened. When I stayed in Chithurst for the first time I felt like I had "arrived" at last; when I walked into the Temple it was like I'd made it home again! Isn't it a truly wonderful thing to know that the spiritual path you are on is unquestioningly the right one for you (who do you thank for that?)

I've been aware for some time now of a very peaceful, calm sense of well-being and a heightened sense of awareness that has evolved as a consequence of my deepening practice - a very tangible result of the Buddha's path. Further to that, because of my regular visits to Chithurst, there is almost no perceptible change in mind-state between being-in-the-world (I like it here, and I like it there). It seems to parallel that marvellous quote of Marcel Proust's you have on the cover of the last Community magazine: it's working with the inner landscape that will further our voyage of liberation, not seeking any "ideal external situations and circumstances."

Thank you again for the contribution to my internal landscape at the last weekend. Would you please be so kind as to pass on my gratitude and Metta to the impressive team for their fine work and support.

Yours in Dhamma,

Brian Friend

*Letter (slightly edited) received after the last Upasika weekend 28.04.99*

## Dear Editor,



### 'Is Buddhism enough?' – reply

As an Asian Buddhist brought up within the Theravadan tradition, Myles Hewitt's article 'Is Buddhism Enough' mentioning apparent inadequacies within this tradition (Community Spring 1999) really made me think.

In one sutta particularly appropriate to lay people (The Mahasuddassana sutta of the Digha Nikaya), a mythical Emperor rules the whole world with Dhamma, possessing 84,000 of all the material luxuries one could desire, including palaces, wives, bales of clothes, chariots etc. His subjects live in peace enjoying music and revelry and the king has a

heightened awareness of sense pleasures and is capable of attaining the four Jhanas, thus understanding the Brahma realms and achieving perfection in balanced concentration.

This Cakkavatin represents an idealised lay person and in our own way, we can be Cakkavatin when we can rule and remain in harmony with our own, perhaps more limited, kingdoms. Unlike monastics, we live under the five precepts which allows music, marriage, dancing, singing and adornments. There is nothing wrong in such things and they can be seen as components of the spiritual path. One only has to admire the array of over 500 Jataka stories. In most of these the Buddha is a layman, who is married. In one he is a musician who composes music fit for the gods. There are a number of other suttas, often with links to the sensual heaven realms, which speak of harmony based on music and even love. Based on my own practice and speaking with my teachers, marriage and the trappings of sense in lay life are apparently vital for development as they are in accordance with Dhamma if the precepts are maintained. Moreover, they help balance and support us in life and lives through samsara.

It is against the background of normal life with its pleasures and perils that the Buddha gave his special teaching which (we are told), when practised, culminate in the arising of powerful mental factors, leading to the abandoning of hindrances and the arising of the path. In the East this is well understood and traditionally lay people visit temples and viharas, do their spiritual thing, make merit and return to a worldly lifestyle. But in the West where Buddhism is more restricted, westerners may identify "Buddhism" with what goes on in monasteries. These, however, represent circumscribed environments where more precepts are maintained to encourage stillness. In fact the Buddha told at least one of his disciples to just keep 3 rules of purity in deed, speech and thought, and rated keeping sila more important than taking refuge (Kutadanta Sutta). The basis of the teaching is simply maturing virtue, concentration and understanding.

For me, Buddhism (which is after all a word invented by Victorians) incorporates most other spiritual forms including animism, polytheism, and monotheism minus such practices as animal sacrifice. It is up to us to explore the richness of the teaching and to find out what Dhamma really is by experience or study, for we can embrace other ways of thinking (I for example am temporarily employed within an Anglican organisation) as there is no question of mixing practices. The efficacy of the Dhamma lies in action within a simple framework which encourages being more open to "the real world", without holding on to a form.

Rajith Dissanayake, Harrow

# The AUA News

## Annual General Meeting 4th September 1999

Part of the Study Day at Amaravati on 4th September will be used for the Amaravati Upasika Association AGM. This is an opportunity for those present to give their feedback on how the AUA and the committee is performing. Do you have any bright ideas for new events or changes to the study days and weekend retreats? Please attend and let us know.

The main business will be to vote on some changes to the constitution which will enable us to formally use the Community Newsletter as an official communication channel for the AUA. We will also vote on the nomination of Santoshni Perrera to fill

## *Q. What does the AUA committee do?*

A. The committee is made up of fifteen men and women. We exist to support the Upasika Training through planning and running study days, retreats and other events. If there is a 'special' event we are involved with (such as Kathina) then this will also need our involvement. We also act as a focal point for the monastic sangha when they wish to inform or involve us in some activity.

## *Q. How often does the committee meet?*

A. We meet around six times per year to review how previous study days and weekend retreats have gone and to decide on future events. Other smaller meetings are run for those who undertake other projects such as editing the newsletter or planning a retreat. Meetings usually last for 2 hours and are held at Amaravati.

## *Q. How are the meetings run?*

A. The meetings are fairly informal, although we have an agenda and do try to get through the business and keep to time. Meetings are minuted with the focus being on decisions taken and actions allocated. The meetings are open to any AUA member, although only committee members may vote (on the rare occasions when this is required in a committee meeting).

## *Q. How does being a member of the AUA Committee help practice?*

A. From a practice and personal perspective, playing an active part in the AUA committee brings many benefits. It provides an opportunity to give one's time and skills towards the spreading of the Dhamma; to work closely (at times) with the monastic sangha; and to meet with other like-minded people. AUA meetings provide an opportunity to use speech appropriately and apply mindfulness and wisdom to practical matters. Working on the committee also naturally fosters the development of a network of friendships and is often good fun.

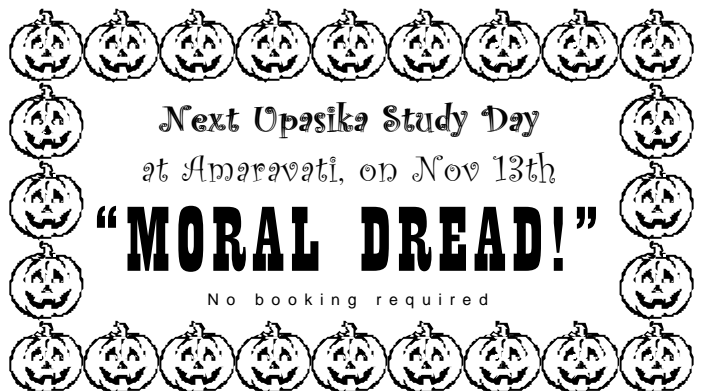
# Brahma Viharas

## Upasika Weekend

1st to 3rd October 1999

at Amaravati Monastery

An opportunity to share in an exploration of the 4 Divine Abodes (Love, Compassion, Joy, Equanimity).  
Leaflet/booking form enclosed with this issue.

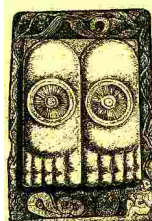


**Next Upasika Study Day**  
at Amaravati, on Nov 13th

# "MORAL DREAD!"

No booking required

The Amaravati  
Upasika Association  
Committee members  
(in alphabetical order) are to the right:



Bandu Amarawardena, Vicky Assling,  
Anna Badar, Nick Carroll, Alex Clingan,  
Jeffrey Craig, Martin Evans, Tony Fisher,  
Radmila Herrmann, Keith Matthews, Colin Rae,  
Tony Spinks, Chris Ward, Gill Williamson.



# Connections

## **HARTRIDGE, Devon**

### **Everything changes, everything stays the same.**

When I first heard in April that Ajahn Siripanya was going to disrobe, I felt sad that I would lose her support and friendship as the Senior Incumbent at the monastery. I realised how much I have appreciated and enjoyed her strong and lively presence for the past 2 years and her warmth and ability to teach the Dhamma in a clear and compassionate way. However, by the time Siripanya left on May 27th, I had looked at my own selfish desires and was able to let go in a more elegant manner! I felt joy for her in this adventure she was embarking upon and have complete confidence in, and respect for, the decision she had made to re-enter lay life. Each Ajahn has brought to Hartridge their own particular way of teaching the Dhamma according to their different personalities and life experiences, but the taste of all the teachings has had the same sweet flavour, and it lingers on long after they leave.

At Wesak, Ajahn Sundara took over as senior nun and I feel that we are very fortunate to have her in Devon. I felt completely reassured by her solid approach to the teaching and traditions and her personal warmth and integrity.

The monastery was absolutely packed with lay supports who were particularly delighted to have Luang Por Sumedho attending the celebrations. He gave a very helpful talk, sharing his own personal feelings about Siripanya's departure and reminded us of the teachings of impermanence.

The changes that take place at the monasteries are just another reflection of this teaching and a wonderful opportunity for lay people like myself to observe attachment, to gain more practice at letting go, being flexible, adaptable and spacious, and to embrace the new. As the Buddha said: "Subject to change are all component things. Strive on with heedfulness".

*Sati Sati June 1999*

*Ajahn Sundara led a retreat at Gaia House 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August and there is a meditation workshop planned for 25<sup>th</sup> September at Hartridge Monastery.*

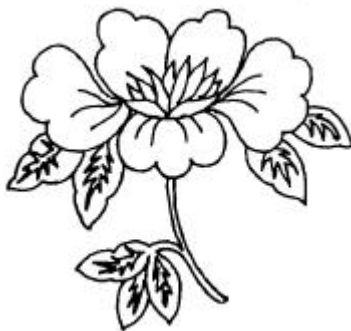
*The annual arms giving ceremony will be held this year in September (12<sup>th</sup>) rather than after the Rains Retreat. Hopefully the weather will be more hospitable for a*

*festive event and enable some of our more geographically distant friends to join us for the day.*

## **CHITHURST, Sussex**

### **Cittaviveka: a continuing evolution**

Over the past 20 years the monastery has risen like a Phoenix from the ashes. With much dedicated care and tender nursing, the original forlorn and derelict, weather-torn hulk has grown and evolved in structure and function into the unpretentious simplicity we see today. As new buildings have been added, a water purification plant and sewage disposal unit installed, the surrounding meadows landscaped including extensive planting of trees and shrubs, the monastery's own individuality, character and purpose has emerged.



Now we can see rising from the foundations, the outline of a new, and long hoped for Dhamma Hall adjacent to the walled garden.

Many friends and long-time supporters were in evidence as the foundation stone was set in place just before 2 o'clock on a sultry sunny Sunday afternoon. This put me in mind of Thailand, but as I was later told it wasn't as hot as it could be in Thailand and as for the humidity - well!

The long awaited event was given an even greater significance as many of the senior sangha member had stayed on from the Amaravati opening just 7 days before. After the official duties many lay people stayed to discuss with the ordained Sangha times gone by and the future over many kinds of refreshment, dispensed from the jolly and well run "coffee shop".

Of course none of these developments, nor the on-going upgrading and maintenance work could have taken place without the dedication, effort and skills of lay people who, through their labours and application have given so much time to support the monastic sangha.

Perhaps we could liken the evolution of a monastery to that of every living being with their own inseparable, interdependent elements of mind and matter, structure and function. The sum total of many individual efforts sustained over a period of time, promotes and ensures a healthy basis upon which further growth and development can proceed.

We look forward to the next manifestation of change.

## AMARAVATI, Hertfordshire

### Opening the Gates of the Deathless...

Such was the title of the official book for the Temple Opening, handed out to over 3,000 people during the weekend of 3/4<sup>th</sup> July. This event has consumed a huge amount of time and effort from both lay and monastic communities over the past nine months - endless meetings and meetings-within-meetings have challenged our patience and skillful speech; mountains of office work; late night pouring over volunteer rotas; planning the exhibition, traffic control, security, etc and weeks of hard labour in the grounds and buildings. Over 160 volunteers acted as stewards, parking attendants, rubbish collectors and drivers and staffed the tents for reception, dharma books, refreshments, food, exhibition, information, first aid and flowers. For the Open Day on Saturday our talents (and patience!) were stretched as we became embroiled in planning activities for children and discussions about scone production techniques, recipes and folk lore, not to mention the differences between English and American sandwich geometry!

Those of you who came will have experienced how brilliantly everything went and it was very satisfying to hear so much positive feedback from visitors.

But as with any event, especially one with the added tension of a royal visit, there were plenty of dramas behind the scenes! Listening in on the 2 way radio conversations was sometimes classic entertainment as base control struggled to keep control of the situation out in the grounds:- the lost key for the ceremony; the coach load of Cambodian visitors inundating the food tent before the VIPs arrived; the frantic search for the disappearing monk at a crucial point; the malfunctioning loos; someone insisting on entrance to the Temple without a ticket and many other moments of ruffling of feathers, lapses of skillful speech, frustration and impatience - just a few of the challenges happening behind the scenes, all dealt with varying degrees of equanimity - sometimes with none

at all!!

Equally varied were the range of emotions and degrees of exhaustion felt by the central core of volunteers by Sunday night. Basically there had not been enough of us for the size of the event. Whilst some felt it had been an uplifting time of inspiration and community spirit, others found it simply days of hard slog or had been disappointed to have seen nothing of the ceremonies nor find time to spend with friends. Others found the continuous and simultaneous demands had detracted from their ability to be fully present for visitors; two or three Upasikas simply 'burnt out' by late Sunday afternoon. It was not easy, but we learnt a lot, about ourselves, about working together, about the relationship between the lay and monastic sanghas and how a greater vision can, with good intention, get us all through



**Your  
Kathina  
STILL  
needs  
YOU!**

*(now that you've recovered from the Temple opening)*  
Amaravati, November 14th  
and the weekend before...

Can you help? Any offers welcome  
Ring Diana: 01442 842455 (Daytime)  
...or 01442 872058 (Evenings)

## 🌍🌍🌍 MOTHER EARTH - OPEN DAY A GREAT SUCCESS!!! Saturday 12 June 🌍🌍🌍

Another early start from Norwich. Five of us all looking forward to a day at Amaravati dedicated to examining the links between mother earth and spiritual practice and to meeting the 'green man' himself, Nick Scott from Chithurst, ecologist and tudong companion extraordinaire.

After the morning meditation session, we gathered with all the other 50 - 60 lay people, some faces familiar, some totally new, in the retreat centre kitchen for another of Tavaros miracle lunches. Sister Thanasanti joined us for the day and chanted the pre-meal blessings before we ate leisurely, catching up on old acquaintances.

The retreat centre shrine room was our gathering place for the afternoon session where again, Sister T led the chanting. The Norwich Five took advantage of her presence to take the precepts

and refuges personally. I found it very moving to watch my friends bowing nervously but resolutely, taking that evolutionary step forward that somehow lifts all humanity closer to the divine. Nick Scott's talk about his work on behalf of the planet and its resources was a treat - riveting and entertaining. At one point he challenged us to think about what 'conservation' meant; at another he inspired and encouraged us to take direct action in a way that came from the heart yet was unattached to the outcome. He then took us on a walk through the woods and fields in the countryside surrounding the monastery. I particularly enjoyed the meditation in the beech wood where everyone seemed to melt into the dappled shadows under the trees. That peaceful blending into the environment seemed to typify what the whole day was about. I emphatically endorse Nick Carroll's summing up of the day as

# NOTICES



## Share your news!!!

### Publicise and Advertise

This is the place to let us all know what is happening in your area and an opportunity to publicise any event you think may interest other Upasikas.

### DONATIONS

We rely totally on your donations to keep Community going and pay for the other mailings you receive each year.

*No amount is too small!!*

Please send donations to Community c/o Amaravati,

### The Bodhinyana Group

**Wednesdays 7.30 – 9.30 in the Bodhinyana Hall**

We meet together to meditate, discuss the topic of the week, plan future meetings and sometimes arrange a social event. The group is collectively run and open to everyone interested in Buddhist practice and newcomers are particularly welcome.

- 15th Sept** – Enjoyment and the Middle Way
- 22th Sept** – Basic Buddhism - Kamma
- 29th Sept** – Raising Children in a Buddhist Context
- 6th Oct** – Intimate relationships and spiritual practice
- 13th Oct** – Basic Buddhism - Introduction to the Suttas
- 20th Oct** – Virtue
- 27th Oct** – The Value of Retreats
- 3rd Nov** – Buddhism and Therapy
- 10th Nov** – Basic Buddhism - Sutta Study - Great Blessings
- 17th Nov** – Coping with Good Fortune
- 24th Nov** – Charisma and Coercion - Spiritual Leaders
- 1st Dec** – Habits, obsessions and compulsions
- 8th Dec** – Basic Buddhism - Lantern Making
- 15th Dec** – Touching the Earth - Relating to the plant and animal world

For further details contact: **Chris Ward 01442 890034**

### UPASIKA WALKS

The Holland Park/Notting Hill/Hampstead and Watford Meditation groups are arranging periodic Sunday walks. Any Upasikas and friends interested in a long country walks, in

### CONTRIBUTIONS DEADLINE: 1st NOVEMBER

**SEND to:** The Editor, Community Newsletter  
c/o Amaravati Monastery, Great Gaddesden,  
Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3BZ (3.5 inch  
floppy disc is best – but typed or hand written is  
fine).

**RING:** Chris Ward, Tel: 01442 890034

### Meditation/study Groups

(additional to those listed in the Forest Sangha Newsletter)

**CAMBRIDGE:** Amaravati Group

Meet fortnightly and arranges visits to Amaravati.

Contact: Dan Jones, 01223 24657

**HEXHAM:** Meditation/discussion Group-with taped talks or readings from dhamma books.

Meets Wednesdays 7.30pm at 10 Tynedale Terrace,

Contact: Robert Bluck, 01434 602759

**LIVERPOOL:** Meditation Group

Meeting every Tuesday night

Contact: Ursula Haeckel or Des McConaghy, 0151 427 6668

**WATFORD:** Meditation/discussion Group

Meets Thursdays 7pm at 26 Lambert Court, Bushey Grove Road.

Contact: Ruth, 01923 462902 or 253650





In the footsteps of the Buddha.....

### **PILGRIMAGE FOR FOREST SANGHA SUPPORTERS to India and Nepal January 2003**

This is a unique opportunity to combine a visit to India with a period of sustained spiritual practice. Visit the places where the Buddha lived and taught in the company of a group of spiritual friends and an experienced local guide. Spend three days at Bodh Gaya, the centre of the Buddhist world. Walk up the path to Vulture Peak and watch the sunset. Take a dawn boat trip on the Ganges.

At each place we will pause to hear stories about the Buddha's life and to reflect on the significance of the sacred site.

This special pilgrimage will be led by Shantam Seth who has been running such trips for over ten years. If you are interested, or if you would like to join one of his other pilgrimages, please ring Robert Bluck on 01434 602759



for  
further details.  
**One Day  
Vipassana  
Retreats;  
LONDON**

## ***The New Millennium in Bodh Gaya India January/ February 2000***

Teachers connected with Gaia House will be offering a cultural event from Dec 29 – Jan 1<sup>st</sup> followed by the annual retreats at the Thai monastery - January 3-13, 13-23 and 24-31<sup>st</sup>. From January 28 Christopher will also be teaching at the Thai monastery in Sarnath

Details: write to Bodh Gaya Retreats, c/o Gaia House, West

Led by teachers from Gaia House, Devon.

September 19 *Christopher Titmuss*

October 17 *Russell Walker*

November 21 *Yanai Postelnik*

December 12 *Christina Feldman*

Contact: Clare Brunt, 0181 755 0353

### **One Day Vipassana Retreats; OXFORD**

September 4 *Christine McGee*

October 23 *Christopher Titmuss*

November 6 *Russell Walker*

Contact: 01865 512279 (after 6pm)

### **Spend the millennium New Year in Switzerland**

I'm going to Dhammapala for the New Year retreat and have up to 4 spaces in my car for fellow dhamma seekers. Costs include a share of the transportation - but do not include the cost of the retreat, though booking forms have been arranged. It is planned to leave from a central point like Amaravati on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> December and return the first week of January, depending on the length of the retreat. Due to the length of the drive, preference will be given to a second or third driver for the trip, who is experienced at driving in Europe.

To book your place or further information contact: Tavaró, 01483 761398 if you are serious about going.

### **Community on the Internet**

This newsletter and other Upasika information can now be found on the internet at:-

## **The Upasika Training Guidelines**

### **Purpose.**

- \* To enhance individual practice and increase self-discipline through making a formal commitment.
- \* To deepen both the intellectual and experiential understanding of the Dhamma.
- \* To encourage more contact with the monastic Sangha and like-minded people.
- \* To be better equipped to communicate the Buddha's Teachings to others.

### **Guidelines**

- \* Undertake to live by the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts.
- \* Attend regular meetings whenever possible with other Upasikas.
- \* Observe the Uposatha days of the full and new moons in a way appropriate to individual living situations
- \* To visit the local monastery or vihara on a regular basis
- \* To cultivate the practice of regular daily meditation.
- \* To go on retreat at least once a year.
- \* To attend at least one festival day or communal gathering each year.
- \* Cultivate a basic knowledge of the Buddha's teachings
- \* To support the monastic Sangha according to one's means
- \* To keep to the guidelines for one year after making the formal commitment