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The Foundations of Virtue and Right View

*A talk given by Ajahn Pasanno, co-abbot of Abhayagiri Monastery,
during a visit to Cittaviveka, October 2001*

I came to England to attend the meetings of the Elders of the community that were held at Amaravati. One of the striking impressions from them was of the first meeting when we were together in the Temple. It was a meeting for the *Theras* and *Therīs* – those of us, monks and nuns, who have been in the robes for over ten years. There were thirty-seven of us; it was quite powerful to have that amount of experience in one place. Just sharing a space with people who have that kind of commitment to the Holy Life was a real treat, to recognise the strength of the commitment and practice that is in the community.

The other day I was asked what we had decided in those meetings. But that wasn't the point of them. I don't think anybody was trying to decide anything, to come out with great new edicts. But the fact that we were able to come together in harmony, talk with each other in harmony and then to disperse in harmony, that was enough, that was extraordinary in itself. Just having people coming from different ends of the globe with different kinds of practice and different ideas of what the training is, and just to delight in each other's company and not to get into arguments was enough. So the time spent at Amaravati was extremely fruitful. I think it's good for everybody to know, to realise that the Sangha does come together from time to time, that there is an underlying harmony and commitment which is really worthy of delighting in.

Whether we're looking at the external form of the

Sangha, the people who are practising, or whether we are looking at ourselves, so often we're measuring, comparing, trying to come up with something, trying to pin down a detail of what we're accomplishing, of what we're gaining. Oftentimes we overlook the fundamentals of our own personal practice or what the fundamentals for a community to practise and dwell in are. Certainly what Ajahn Chah would emphasise over and over again, and this is corroborated in the suttas, is the foundation

of *sīla* (virtue) and *sammā ditṭhi* (Right Understanding). If the practice of either a group or an individual is going to flourish and grow, they need to rely on those fundamentals.

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When we think of *sīla* (virtue), oftentimes we think of taking the precepts. That's one aspect of virtue, having precepts, having rules of conduct which we adhere to, but it's not really the whole picture of what virtue is. It's good to have parameters that you take as standards for conduct, but it's essential to be able to reflect, 'Well, what are those precepts for?' Whether they're the five precepts for lay-people living in the world, whether they're the eight renunciate precepts, whether they're the Siladharā precepts, whether they're the two hundred and twenty seven precepts of the Bhikkhus, what are the principles that underlie them? Certainly the qualities of harmlessness, of honesty, of restraint, of integrity, of composure, of trustworthiness, these are what really underlie them. You can expand on them in terms of precepts and training rules, but those

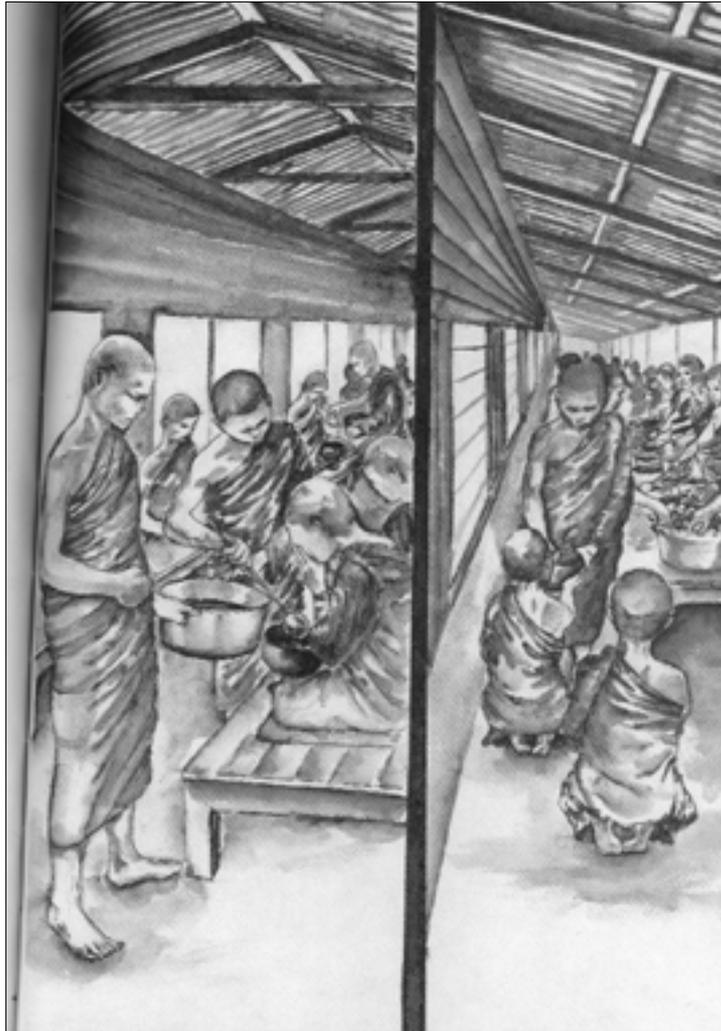
fundamental wholesome qualities are what the precepts are for. One takes precepts on in order to learn and understand how our conduct affects the world around us and how it affects ourselves.

What kind of intention comes up in the mind that impels us towards particular actions? Because the intention, the volition within the mind, within the heart is compelling us to act, to perform in certain ways.

As long as we don't understand that we keep following patterns that are a product of habit or conditioning and are not really grounded in wisdom and clarity. Until we can understand intention we'll be following moods, feelings, habits and conditioning. So precepts and training help us to reflect on what is going on internally so that we can learn. That's exactly what the meaning of the Pāli word which we translate as a 'precept' is. *Sikkhāpada* means a foundation for training or learning; *sikkhā* means learning or training, and *pada* is basis or foundation. This shines light on what a Buddhist precept is for. It's not for forcing us into a particular mould, pattern, or a disciplinary code; it's something that's assisting us in

understanding ourselves and what our actions do, where they come from and what they lead to.

There are other aspects of *sīla* (virtue), which we may not consider very much. Oftentimes when we think of *sīla*, we think of precepts and rules, but from the Buddhist perspective, that's never enough, it has to encompass all of our actions of body and speech – how we engage with the world around us. So another aspect of *sīla* is sense-restraint. When we come into contact with the world around us – sights, sounds, smells, taste, touch – do we get excited? Do we get agitated? Do we follow our impulses of liking and disliking? Or do we have a composure that allows us to reflect upon that sense-contact? That sense of composure is called *indriya-samvara*. It's talked about as having enough composure and restraint so that with the sense-contact, the sensory-impingement that we're experiencing we have enough clarity to not follow the patterns of desire or grief, like



or dislike that would normally arise if we weren't restrained in the senses. The usual story of our lives is of the constant ups-and-downs of our moods, of liking and disliking, being happy or being unhappy because of what we experience around us.

We had a fair amount of meetings at Amaravati, and then outside the meetings we were connecting with people we hadn't seen for quite some time. With one of the monks I was talking about the times living at Wat Pah Pong with Ajahn Chah. He was telling me about an occasion when he was at Wat Pah Pong in the morning time before the meal. That could be a highly charged time, a time when Ajahn Chah said 'you don't admonish anybody – wait until they're full and happy.' Anyway, this monk did not heed Ajahn Chah's advice and got into an argument before the meal over the distribution of food. The passions could arise over it because there would be a few monks who would volunteer to distribute food, they'd go down the line putting the food into the bowls. And there were those who used mindfulness and consideration, and those who just slopped it in. So this monk got into an argument with one of the

other Venerables and was still fuming about it after the meal had finished and he'd washed his bowl. Then he heard a voice behind him say, 'Good morning.' He turned around and it was Ajahn Chah, who never spoke English. He heard this 'Good Morning' and saw Ajahn Chah smiling at him. So he thought, 'Isn't that wonderful!' He was so touched by that and uplifted. The whole mood of being angry and upset blew over completely and he was just feeling joy from Ajahn Chah's friendly contact.

So he had a pleasant day and then that evening he went over to Ajahn Chah's dwelling. There were several other monks there and he asked if he could massage Ajahn Chah's feet. When the bell for evening chanting went Ajahn Chah told all the other monks to go to evening chanting and said to this monk, 'You can stay massaging my feet.' So he was sitting massaging Ajahn Chah's feet, everything was all warm

continued on page 4

EDITORIAL

The Path to Happiness

When we look around us and see the troubles of the world; when we feel the pain that can seem an inevitable part of our own lives, it becomes important to stop and remember that the Buddha said rebirth in this human realm is precious*. This is a fortunate birth because, unlike other creatures, we have the ability to attune to wisdom and compassion and we can aspire to awakening. Since we can get discouraged, we need to affirm our goodness; we do have the skilful roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. With our aspiration to harmlessness – to free ourselves from the causes of suffering, and to not say or do anything that causes suffering for others – we need to take refuge, have faith, in our goodness, in the power of the Dhamma, in the efficacy of the Path.

At times we act in unfortunate ways – speaking harshly or failing to do something – and ‘suffering follows like a wheel follows the hoof of a draught-ox’. So what support is there for connecting to and cultivating the pure mind, and the ‘happiness that follows like a shadow that never leaves’?

What helps us to understand our experience of mind and so free it from unwholesomeness? The *citta* (the affective/effective mind) is essentially pure and radiant. Freedom from suffering is referred to as the unshakable deliverance of the mind/heart. The aptness of this is apparent as we attune to the way the unawakened heart trembles, is affected by what it comes into contact with through the sense-doors. This tremor of desire, aversion or fear is an uncontradictable sign to awaken to; it becomes a place to be attending to, as it can provide a way of knowing directly the deeper causes and results of speech and action. It is the place where intention, *kamma*, can be purified: we can connect to the energy of frustration we were about to speak from, and release it. It is also where we receive the results of what we do or say: our harsh word leaves a tremor of regret that we can connect to, and therefore learn from.

As Ajahn Pasanno makes clear, the foundations of virtue and Right View are the essential requisites for this cultivation of purifying the *citta*, and then freeing it. Keeping the precepts and acting from an understanding

of *kamma* gives us a stable ground from which to reflect on what is happening internally. We do need a sense of our own virtue – that basically we are okay, that we are living in a way where our intentions, at least, are to cultivate goodness – so that we can hold, handle, feel into the textures of our experience. This is what we call the upright mind, the steadiness it takes to offer the ‘deep attention’ that is a requisite of letting go.

As the different articles point out, ‘we need to be able to return to the heart of the matter and see what is actually going on...to let the awareness of all experience take us to the still heart.’ When we sit quietly with ourselves, when we feel this agitated shaking, is it not simply a fearful, defended, wanting pleasant feelings/not wanting pain? Does it not all come down to this? All the rest are strategies, misguided attempts to protect our

experience of vulnerability. The frustration we spoke out of was simply that things were not happening in the way we felt we needed them to be in order for us to feel okay.

The miracle of the Buddha’s teaching, ‘There is suffering’ this sublime medicine

for the heart, is that it opens us to the relief of being with the way things are. We find that when we carefully come into the presence of this trembling we can bring the arms of the heart around it and hold it all. This allays the agitation, freeing us from the compulsions that might otherwise arise. Then we can manifest from the pure mind, and taste the freedom and happiness possible with this human birth.

Sister Ṭhāṇiyā

*(Samyutta 48(8))

‘Mind is the forerunner of all things.

Mind is chief; they are mind created.

When speech or action is from a pure mind

Then happiness follows like a shadow that never leaves.’

Dhammapada v.2

DHAMMA TALKS NOW ON CD-ROM

A number of Sangha members’ talks have been compiled into CD-Rom disks and are available for loan from the library at Amaravati and other monasteries.

continued from page 2... and friendly when the evening chanting started. Normally when you're in the chanting, especially in Thailand where it's usually chanted in Pāli and then translated into Thai, you're sort of bored and wondering when it's going to end. But he said that night, listening to it from outside, it was just an ethereal sound coming from the Dhamma Hall. It was just this wonderful evening, the moon was coming up, the sound of the chanting, sitting there with Ajahn Chah; he was having these waves of joy coming over him, even tears were coming to his eyes he was so happy. Then, all of a sudden, Ajahn Chah took his foot and kicked him in the chest! Hard enough to knock him flat on his back and send him flying. Ajahn Chah rebuked him very strongly, saying, 'You're really a fool. Somebody says something you don't like and you get angry. Somebody walks over to you and says 'Good morning' and you get happy. You hear things that you like and you feel good. That's not the way of a practitioner! You're just going to spend your life going up and down with moods and feelings about the impingements around you. If you want to practise you're going to have to learn to have some sense-restraint and some composure, and not get caught up in things.'

Point taken! A very, very direct admonishment and teaching. And it's true, when we experience the things that we like we enjoy them and we want them to stay, and when we experience the things that we don't like we try to push them away. We get caught into the movement in the mind and heart of going back and forth, pushing 'this' away and trying to get 'that' experience. We don't have an internal foundation, an abiding place of clarity, this fundamental mindfulness and wisdom that comes from sense-restraint and composure with the contact of the senses. Sense-restraint is a fundamental virtue for someone who really wants to experience the fruits of this practice. This is important because if we think virtue is just going to come from keeping rules, getting the system down – and then we'll be all right – that's not it, there's a whole other realm that we need to consider.

Another aspect of virtue that the Buddha talked about is having Right Livelihood – whether one is a monastic or a layperson. To consider how we live in the world, how we maintain ourselves in the world, looking after our needs in a way that is not harming or creating more suffering for others or ourselves. For a monastic, there are the aspects of Right Livelihood which are about establishing the relationship that we have to the lay-community; not manipulating, not being dishonest, not trying to get some kind of gain through praising, giving something or being deceitful. For the lay-community, there are elements of Right Livelihood

around what kind of things there's involvement with, particularly avoiding those kinds of livelihood which are involved with weapons or substances which would harm others, or ways of doing things which are fundamentally dishonest. As human beings we need to have a livelihood of some sort. There has to be a fundamental honesty and integrity otherwise we undermine our aspiration for peace.

Another aspect of virtue that the Buddha talked about is how we relate to the requisites. Again, whether one is a monastic or a layperson, there are our fundamental requisites of clothing, of shelter, of food, and medicines for when we're sick. So, with both the acquiring of those requisites and the use of those requisites, we reflect on, 'what is my need?' Rather than, 'what are the standards of the society?' or, 'what are my desires?' Particularly being in a modern society that is based on consumption, 'what is just enough?' So that takes real reflection and investigation – 'what is it that is just enough?' And not getting caught up into our desires, into constantly seeking security, comfort and gratification. Not trying to pump ourselves up in terms of our material well-being so that we

can have a sense of security and a sense of self that is somehow elevated when one looks at one's fellow human beings. We have to learn how to function in the world, and to relate skilfully to the things that we rely on for living in the world, the basic requisites that we consume and rely on each day.

Considering our food, 'what is just enough for our well-being?' How often do we consume something just because there's nothing else to do? How many times do you just go to the cupboard or the fridge because there's nothing else to do? The Buddha said there's certain fundamental qualities which are developed and need to be developed in terms of the use of the requisites. Wisdom is the dominant quality that needs to come to the forefront of consciousness, in terms of what is enough and what's not enough. When one investigates with wisdom, you start seeing all that food is supporting is just the four elements, the basic elements which make up a sentient being – fire, earth, water and air. When we say there's fire element, it doesn't mean there's fire burning somewhere, but it's that element of heat or cool. Water is the element of cohesion; the element of earth is the element of solidity. Anything that we consume is just those elements also. Just reflecting on the interplay of these elements we see they're not a personal thing.

So wisdom is the quality that is needed in terms of relating to the requisites. The dominant virtue that comes with the relationship to livelihood is the quality of effort or energy, applying effort or energy in the appropriate ways. The quality that is dominant in terms

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of sense-restraint is the quality of mindfulness, awareness, the ability to be attentive to moods, to feelings, to contact, to sensation. The dominant quality or virtue that is cultivated and needs to be relied upon for the keeping of training precepts is faith. So these different elements are cultivated through virtue. With *sīla* as a foundation for practice, we start to expand into something that carries through into all the different aspects of our cultivation.

The other element that Ajahn Chah emphasised was Right View (*sammā ditṭhi*). Right View can be expounded on in many different ways but fundamentally it is understanding the nature of *kamma*, the fact that all actions have some sort of result. That is a fundamental basis for Right View; particularly from the perspective of the mundane, day-to-day level of how we live. It is being able to consider and reflect on how our actions bring results.

I was reading a manuscript by somebody I know in California who was asked to write a book about his life. This person has a very strong practice, but he came to it through a lot of pain and suffering, through confusion, drug-addiction and jail. He talks about what brought him to a spiritual practice; it was really seeing, 'Oh, yeah. What we do has results'. It was interesting reading the point where he decided, 'I've really got to start meditating.' He was in jail for one more time, having to go through withdrawal one more time and thinking, 'I can keep repeating this or I can look for a way out.' Most of us don't go to those extremes, but we still have to come to that point where we really see, 'I don't have to follow the patterns that I have set for myself. What I'm experiencing, whether it's painful or pleasurable, I've had a hand in that. It didn't just drop down from the sky; it wasn't foisted on me by some divine intervention, it was very much about what I chose to do. I chose to incline my mind and actions in that way'. The more clearly we see that, then the more able we are to really take responsibility for our actions.

One of the reflections that the Buddha encouraged us to chant on a daily basis ends on the refrain 'I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related to my actions, all that I do, for good or for ill, of that I will be the heir'. This is a fundamental truth: this is the basis of Right View. There are all sorts of ways we try to duck out of it, duck around it, moan and groan about what we're having to put up with and how miserable things are, but it comes back to what we're putting into the universe. Our actions have results.

There's a very nice story of an American who went to study in a Zen monastery. He wasn't quite sure what he was doing there, but he knew he was supposed to be practising, so he tried to meditate and follow the routine. He was there for many weeks and when he was ready to leave the Abbot of the monastery invited him to have an interview. The person was both a bit nervous and honoured as this was an old, very well known temple in Japan and the Abbot was highly respected.

Fundamentally the Abbot said, 'You've been practising and training here, that's very good, but you have to understand one thing, come with me'. So he took him to the entrance way to the monastery. There was a very old scroll set up there. The Abbot said that the calligraphy was a poem that was written by one of the founding teachers six or seven centuries before. The essence was this – There's nothing really to do. There's nothing really to gain. There's nothing really to become. There's nothing really to achieve. And although this is true, still, when it rains the ground gets wet, and when there's a fire things get hot.

This is what you need to understand. Everything has results. Although on an ultimate level of Buddhist philosophy, there's a concept of emptiness and non-attainment, that isn't how you live. You have to live in a realm of cause and effect. When you go out in the rain, you've got to have an umbrella. When it's hot, you've got to protect yourself. In the same way, our actions have results, and if we act on impulses that are unskillful, then we'll reap the fruits of that. Also, when we act on those intentions and feelings which are wholesome, the fruitful benefits will come from that; well-being, harmony and peace will come from that. It's with the same kind of surety that if you spill water on the carpet, it's going to get wet – it's just that sure.

So, really being attentive to our actions, recognising that we can choose between that which is going to bring benefits into the world around us, creating well-being and happiness for ourselves and others, or those things that are unskillful and will create disharmony, create a sense of dis-ease within our heart or conflict with others. To be really clear because we have to live with the fruits; that's a fundamental Right View.

These two qualities, virtue and Right View, are what Ajahn Chah used to emphasise over and over and over again. These are what we need for laying the foundations for practice. You might ask, 'Well, why didn't he talk about meditation?' Well, he did. But if we don't get those foundations of virtue and Right View, then our meditation is not efficacious.

If you're doing a building (I'm doing a lot of building work these days!), if you're laying the walls out and you're just a little bit off when you're at one end, by the time you get to the other side of the building it can be a foot off. It makes for a wonky building! It's just so important to get those foundations, those bases right, precise and clear, then everything else falls into place. With virtue and Right View as the foundation, then our meditation falls into place. The qualities of reflection and investigation, of wisdom, they fall into place. It's natural. One of the images that the Buddha used was of when the rain falls on the mountain. It then gathers in rivulets, it gathers in streams, it gathers into rivers and it flows out into the sea. It's just natural; it's ordinary. In the same way the cultivation and the looking after of our virtue and Right View leads us into the deep body of wisdom and freedom. ❖



Unity of Dhamma

An extract from Clarity of Insight, a talk by Luang Por Chah, translated by Ajahn Kalyāno.

During the course of practising, it is normal that you experience the different conditions of the mind. You constantly experience desires to do this and that or to go different places, as well as the different moods of mental pain, frustration or else indulgence in pleasure seeking – all of which are the fruits of past *kamma* (actions). All this resultant *kamma* swells up inside the mind and puffs it out. However, it is the product of past actions. Knowing that it is all stuff coming up from the past, you don't allow yourself to make anything new or extra out of it. You observe and reflect on the arising and cessation of conditions. That which has not yet arisen is still unarisen. This word 'arise' refers to *upadāna* or the mind's firm attachment and clinging. Over time your mind has been exposed to and conditioned by craving and defilement and the mental conditions and characteristics you experience reflect that. Having developed insight, your mind no longer follows those old habit patterns that were fashioned by defilement. A separation occurs between the mind and those defiled ways of thinking and reacting. The mind separates from the defilements.

Your ability to experience the world through the senses remains intact, just the same as before you started practising insight, but the mind's reaction to sense impingement is to see it as 'just that much'. The mind doesn't attach to fixed perceptions or make anything out of the experience of sense objects. It lets go. The mind knows that it is letting go. As you gain insight into the true nature of the Dhamma, it naturally results in letting go. There is awareness followed by abandoning of attachment. There is understanding and then letting go. With insight you set things down. Insight knowledge doesn't lead to clinging or attachment; it doesn't increase your suffering. That's not what happens. True insight into the Dhamma brings letting go as the result. You know that it is the cause of suffering, so you abandon attachment. Once you have insight the mind lets go. It puts down what it was formerly holding on to.

Another way to describe this is to say that you are no longer fumbling or groping around in your practice. You are no longer blindly groping and attaching to forms,

sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations or mind objects. The experience of sense objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, no longer stimulates the same old habitual movements of mind where it is seeking to get involved with such sense objects or adding on to the experience through further proliferation. The mind doesn't create things around sense contact. Once contact has occurred you automatically let go. The mind discards the experience. This means that if you are attracted to something, you experience the attraction in the mind but you don't attach or hold on fast to it. If you have a reaction of aversion, there is simply the experience of aversion arising in the mind and nothing more: there isn't any sense of self arising that attaches and gives meaning and importance to the aversion. In other words the mind knows how to let go; it knows how to set things aside. Why is it able to let go and put things down? Because the presence of insight means you can see the harmful results that come from attaching to all those mental states.

When you see forms the mind remains undisturbed; when you hear sounds it remains undisturbed. The mind doesn't take a position for or against any sense objects experienced. This is the same for all sense contact, whether it is through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind. Whatever thoughts arise in the mind can't disturb you. You are able to let go. You may perceive something as desirable, but you don't attach to that perception or give it any special importance—it simply becomes a condition of mind to be observed without attachment. This is what the Buddha described as experiencing sense objects as 'just that much'. The sense bases are still functioning and experiencing sense objects, but without the process of attachment stimulating movements to and fro in the mind. There is no conditioning of the mind occurring in the sense of a self moving from this place to that place or from that place moving to this place. Sense contact occurs between the six sense bases as normal, but the mind doesn't 'take sides' by getting caught into conditions of attraction or aversion. You understand how to let go. There is awareness of sense contact followed by letting go. You

let go with awareness and sustain the awareness after you have let go. This is how the process of insight works. Every angle and every aspect of the mind and its experience naturally becomes part of the practice.

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The investigation and development of insight into the Dhamma gives rise to this profound peace of mind. Having gained such clear and penetrating insight means it is sustained at all times whether you are sitting meditation with your eyes closed, or even if you are doing something with your eyes open. Whatever situation you find yourself in, be it in formal meditation or not, the clarity of insight remains. When you have unwavering mindfulness of the mind within the mind, you don't forget yourself. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, the awareness within makes it impossible to lose mindfulness. It's a state of awareness



that prevents you forgetting yourself. Mindfulness has become so strong that it is self-sustaining to the point where it becomes natural for the mind to be that way. These are the results of training and cultivating the mind and it is here where you go beyond doubt. You have no doubts about the future; you have no doubts about the past and accordingly have no need to doubt about the present either. You still have awareness that there is such

a thing as past, present and future. You are aware of the existence of time. There is the reality of the past, present and future, but you are no longer concerned or worried about it.

The mind completely transcends doubt. You are no longer uncertain or speculating about anything. The lack of doubt means you no longer fumble around or have to feel your way through the practice. As a result you live and act in accordance with nature. You live in the world in the most natural way. That means living in the world peacefully. You are able to find peace even in the midst of that which is unpeaceful. It means you are fully able to live in the world. You are able to live in the world without creating any problems. The Buddha lived in the world and was able to find true peace of mind within the world. As practitioners of the Dhamma, you must learn to do the same. Don't get lost in and attached to perceptions about things being this way or that way. Don't attach or give undue importance to any perceptions that are still deluded. Whenever the mind becomes stirred up, investigate and contemplate the

cause. When you aren't making any suffering for yourself out of things, you are at ease. When there are no issues causing mental agitation, you remain equanimous. That is, you continue to practise normally with a mental equanimity maintained by the presence of mindfulness and an all round awareness. You keep a sense of self-control and equilibrium. If any matter arises and prevails upon the mind, you immediately take hold of it for thorough investigation and contemplation. If there is clear insight at that moment, you penetrate the matter with wisdom

and prevent it creating any suffering in the mind. If there is not yet clear insight, you let the matter go temporarily through the practice of tranquility (*samatha*) meditation and don't allow the mind to attach. At some point in the future, your insight will certainly be strong enough to penetrate it, because sooner or later you will develop insight powerful enough to comprehend everything that still causes attachment and suffering. ❖

Yogi Mind



From a talk given by Ajahn Ṭhānasantī recently published in Freeing the Heart, a collection of nuns' talks

After several days on retreat we can see what the result of the practice is. We can observe the effect of mindfulness, attention, a life style of simplicity, restraint, moral integrity, and hours of meditation with some Dhamma input each day. We can see what our minds and our bodies are like and notice some change from what they were like when we first arrived.

There's a certain pattern noticeable on the retreats I've been on. People come and they're often relieved to be here, but they're still very much carrying the burden and weight of the world they've left behind. The first few days are a combination of frustration, pain, confusion, tiredness, dreariness and dread, mixed with good will, right intention and effort.

Characteristically, faces are long and drawn, and the energy is thick and heavy, and people are doing their best to be good yogis. But the feeling is one of 'me', 'my' pain, 'my' problem, 'my' dilemmas, 'my' poor practice, and 'my' painful knees. It shows in people's faces and is obvious in the quality of the energy in the room. You can feel it.

After some time there's a little bit of perspective. The quality of stillness becomes more tangible. People's faces begin to lighten and brighten. Then the whole 'me/my' universe begins to soften and we begin to wake up to realise there are actually other people in the universe. In fact, they're sitting right next to us. Then, as the mind begins to become more still and more focused we experience what is commonly known as 'yogi mind.'

'Yogi mind' is a focused and concentrated mind which, like a magnifying glass, doesn't only magnify the pretty things it magnifies everything. So the pretty things and the not so pretty things are equally magnified and become more recognisable, more visible, more exposed.

One of the characteristics of 'yogi mind' is the capacity to get obsessed with the minutest detail, to hate – all of a sudden – the person sitting next to you because

of the way they're breathing. Or to be utterly convinced that the entire suffering of the universe is the result of the way this one person is walking in and out of the door. Or various forms of war take place between those who want one particular use of a room and people who want another use of the room. Then, there's the opposite – the 'vipassanā romance.' You've finally found the beloved you've been dreaming of. They're sitting a few seats away from you. You're convinced they have the same feeling about you. It's obvious by the way they're doing their walking meditation.

'Yogi mind' focuses and concentrates emotions, feelings and mental tendencies that are present or latent in conscious awareness. These things just become bigger than they normally would be or different to how we normally experience them. Little things take on grand proportions.

Projection is the important aspect in understanding 'yogi mind.' The intention of mental proliferation is aimed at getting what we want or not getting what we don't want. The problem or the answer is seen to be outside of us.

Meditation and a retreat environment causes increased energy. When there is an ability to use that energy to bring awareness and attention to the nature of desire, aversion and the way fantasies are used to bypass problems or seek the answer outside of ourselves, then 'yogi mind' becomes a useful tool for learning. One uses the process as a way to come to terms with the mind.

I remember once doing a long retreat at IMS in Massachusetts. I had come with three different pairs of shoes – 'Rambo'-type mountain climbing-boots, a pair of wooden clogs, and a pair of shoes that had straw soles. As long as the weather was dry and there wasn't snow on the ground, I used to wear the straw soled shoes all over the place because they would work well inside and they would work well outside.

Then, it started raining. Then, it started snowing. It

*Does the world really need to be different
and give me what I want in order to be
content and feel at ease?*

took the straw-soled shoes three days to dry out once they got wet. I couldn't bear to keep putting on and taking off my 'Rambo' mountain boots with their 25 eyelets, so I would just put on the wooden clogs.

Well, the meditation centre at IMS has wooden floors. Unbeknownst to me, most of those present were convinced I had a sadistic urge to torture everyone; that it was an intentional and completely sadistic thing to be doing using these wooden clogs during the walking meditation. A warfare of notes on the bulletin board took place.

The retreat manager, being skilful, intervened. She saw some of these notes plastered on the bulletin board aimed at this sadistic yogi who was determined to torture everyone.

She removed the notes before I had a chance to see them so that I didn't have to deal with the effect of having to read such things. She came to me to find out what was going on. I explained to her the situation was that I just had these three pairs of shoes and the wooden clogs were the only ones I could use.

I left a little note on the bulletin board asking if anyone had a pair of shoes I could borrow. The next time I went down to check there were no less than ten pairs of shoes that somehow all fitted my feet exactly and would be quiet on the wooden floors.

For me it was an interesting learning. For one it was illuminating to see how insensitive and lacking mindfulness I could be to wear wooden clogs on a wooden floor. Equally illuminating was to see what happens when we become, intentionally or not, the object of someone else's aversion or desire.

Such is the way with 'yogi mind.' Because the mind is concentrated, it takes things and it gets very convinced about the absolute rightness of the perception. But often there isn't a lot of wisdom, discrimination or equanimity. And these qualities of discrimination and equanimity are ones that need to be cultivated. Whatever the experience, there needs to be a reflective awareness able to return to the heart of the matter and see what is actually going on. It's important not to get caught in the appearance of things or carried by the tide of emotion so much so that the capacity to reflect is lost. It can be useful to ask, whatever is going on, 'Where is the suffering? What is the cause? Is it 'out there' or in my relationship with what I am experiencing?' To ask, 'Does the world really need to be different and give me what I want in order to be content and feel at ease?' It is important to wake up to these things and see them as just another view, another thought, another habit of mind that is constantly being enacted without checking if by doing so the desired result is ever produced.

So if you have experienced such things, just rest assured that this is an utterly normal part of meditation and it's nothing to be distressed about. But it is

Upasampadā at Cittaviveka

Sunday 21st July

Venerables Kassapo and Ñāṇadassano

will request admission into the Bhikkhu Sangha.

The ceremony will begin at 1.30pm.

All welcome

something to open up to, to look at closely and not to be fooled by or believe in.

When the passions of the mind are saying, 'This is not just an opinion, this is ABSOLUTELY TRUE' you have your signal, your red flag. Anything that presents itself as absolute truth, is a sign to look at. Check into it. Feel the screaming mind. Take a look at what's going on. There's usually attachment, often a lot of fear. Anger or self-righteousness can be a mask of many things including fear. All of this is very good to notice, to open up to, to look at, and to have a sense of the way the mind operates in its peaceful as well as its non-peaceful moments.

It is important to learn about the movements of mind so that they no longer confuse or deceive us, to let the awareness of all experience take us to the still heart. In that way, regardless of what we are experiencing, pleasant or unpleasant, there is the contentment that comes from abiding in awareness. This contentment is worth cultivating. ❖

Streams of Merit

When one has faith in the Tathagata,
Unshaken and well established,
And good conduct built on virtue,
Dear to the noble ones and praised;
When one has confidence in the Sangha
And view that has been rectified,
They say that one is not impoverished,
That one does not live in vain.

Therefore the person of intelligence,
Remembering the Buddha's Teaching,
Should be devoted to faith and virtue,
To confidence and vision of the Dhamma.

*Anguttara Nikāya IV, 52. Transl.
Venerable Nyanaponika and Bhikkhu Bodhi*

Deep Attention: Connection to Letting-Go

For an on-going collection of articles on meditation by Ajahn Sucitto.

...Lust is slightly blameworthy, but it is slow to change.
 Malice is highly blameworthy, but it is quick to change.
 Delusion is highly blameworthy, and it is slow to change...

For someone who does not attend deeply, delusion arises;
 or if it has already arisen, tends to strengthen and spread.

Āṅguttara Nikaya, Threes, 68.

On-going cultivation is a process, involving our own personal attitudes as they occur in a living context. In life, we all accumulate habits: and our behaviour and lifestyles develop according to our attitudes and sensitivities. These habits are *kamma*. *Kamma* determines both how we are affected and how we respond – the crucial aspect of how we are and how we live, so it's important to come to terms with, purify and be awakened to this process.

We may, for example, be quite sensitive to having our own private space and react quite strongly to what we sense as intrusion: even when the 'intruder' is operating from a helpful motivation. The 'intruder' on the other hand, might be attuned to needing to be useful, or sense our independence as lonely. Or maybe we come across as remote and stand-offish. All kinds of emotional dissonances occur between people whose sensitivities are set at different levels of

sociability, or otherwise read situations in very different ways. The 'setting' of awareness – how we're affected and how we respond – has been brought around through the approval or disapproval of others, or through

our own ease or stress, pleasure or pain. Basically we have learned to interpret and steer through feeling the feed-back from what we do and how we respond. This is *vipaka*, old *kamma*: pleasure and pain form the initial take on things. How we subsequently attend and how we act or react are based on that initial impression. And their aim is to arrive at feeling good. So impression – how something strikes us – attention and aim are all bound up with mental feeling. Action – even thinking – is then the result. So one basis of how we act and lay down new *kamma* is feeling, as it triggers a conditioned emotional process.

The other basis for emotion is perception (*saññā*) – how an event or phenomenon is 'marked.' Like feeling, this varies: a topic that is clear and straightforward to one person is precarious, even threatening, to another; one

person may feel compelled to respond to a situation that another barely perceives or considers to be of minor significance. Furthermore, any resultant activity – willing, dutiful, or marked with aversion – gets based on assumptions: such as 'it's up to me to do this', or 'it's someone else's business.' All these are the markings of perception. Perception is also bound up with personal *kamma*: no two people's take on things, or response is exactly the same; yet we interact and attempt to live harmoniously with others. Further misunderstanding occurs because, no matter how glaring and deliberately motivated our emotional settings may seem to others, we are not fully aware of them ourselves. They have been set by feeling, rather than deliberate design, and so just seem 'normal.'

Meditation helps us to get a profile of the parameters that our awareness operates through. We recognise what happens when we receive an impression: such as feeling overwhelmed, lost, confident, or responsible – these familiar *kammic* patterns give rise to the sense of a self 'in here.' Based on that, our attention reacts in terms of its program – anything from evading or fudging the issue, to

lingering over and feeding on the impression, to letting it go, to blaming ourself or others; or feeling on top of it all. Dependent on this, we then more deliberately respond, in terms of thoughts, or react with further perceptions and emotions. Our awareness is affected by all this and again resonates in terms of its *kammic* parameters. So a meditation period can be pretty active! And yet rather than moving out of our habits, we can wind ourselves up into a contracted and pressurised state. Faced with this, we may try to calm down and curtail the emotional turbulence, but that doesn't bring around a release from the parameters of our sensitivities and perceptions. Fuller liberation requires entering the territory of feeling and perception and freeing up the boundaries that they set.

This takes care and training because the boundaries

*Fuller liberation requires entering
 the territory of feeling and perception
 and freeing up the boundaries that they set.*

that are set on our awareness were useful, even necessary, in their time – our immediate reactions were set to protect us from pain and loss – they can't be dismantled without understanding and carefully allaying that buried pain. So this is not an easy process. Furthermore, feeling is something that we seem to have no control over – it just happens. Perception is also an immediate 'take' on what's going on. These are bound up with our affect/response system, so how can it be overhauled?

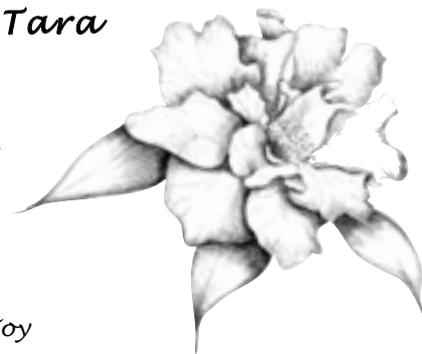
The contemplative answer is not in adjusting the feeling itself, but being able to hold the feeling with mindfulness. The second foundation of mindfulness is mindfulness of feeling. In this, the Buddha's instructions in brief are: to feel the feeling just as a feeling. Curtail the reaction that comes from it; avoid conceptual proliferation and analysis of the perception that accompanies it: feel the feeling just as a feeling. Give it room to move and change. Then, if we accomplish this, we may realise that the perception that is affecting us is from wrong attunement: actually there isn't a threat here, someone is merely inquiring from concern, not attempting to take over and control us. Or, what is presented as exciting and desirable is actually void of lasting benefit. However, it's counter-productive to add more disapproval or approval to our impulses – that just adds more stuff to the mix; no, it's more instructive to feel the affect and contemplate the response. With mindfulness of feeling, fear and desire take us to the object of our meditation. But rather than be guided by them, we learn to feel the feeling that they come from.

Trying to get a sense of where to start with all this requires an overview. Our affect and response patterns go pretty deep. What are the priorities? What are the most fundamental aims? What are the results of our contemplative activities? In Buddhist practice the goal is clear: more fundamental than even understanding or becoming a 'better' person, is the aim to end any suffering and stress. This will come about not by trying to change the way we are, but by being mindful of ourselves as a process that changes dependent on how we attend. And in setting up mindfulness, the Buddha considered a factor called 'deep attention' (*yoniso manasikāra*) to be an invaluable asset.

Attending deeply is a process that uses thought, but in a catalytical way. It doesn't take long to realise that one can't trust discursive thinking, but directed thought and evaluation does train the mind to get to the point rather than wander off. So we may deliberately reflect on a topic of personal concern, the events of the day, or of our aspirations or our practice. However, the deepening comes through witnessing the emotions that hold these perceptions in place. Then, when a pattern is discerned in

Prayer to Tara

white light
white laughter
white flower
white peach
white mother
white circle of joy



carry my yellow prayer
in your white hands' palms
to the rust-brown wound of your birth.

that holding, to sense how awareness is affected right there. So we may be thinking about a relative, the overall 'hold' of the perception is one of regret, and in awareness there is a contracting which we sense as loss, and an unsettled agitation. It feels unpleasant, so there's a tension in the mind to get rid of or fix that feeling. But if we feel the feeling just as a feeling, we don't have to contend with it. We don't have to explain it, or go into the story that accompanies it. It is what it is, it has as much right to be here as anything else. With this, the tension subsides, and there is some stillness. The relief of that stillness feels good. The good feeling releases our awareness from its old settings (of guilt, worry, or whatever) and that makes us feel buoyant and confident. From that place we may decide to visit the relative or write a meaningful letter, and that feels right and genuine. A response has occurred that is fresh and uncontrived.

So we begin with the material of deliberate thought, in which the deliberation is neutral or inquiring. The thought is then cleaned of its *kammic* intention: it becomes a sense object like a sound or a taste; in itself it has no motivation except to sustain attention on the mood, to get a clear overview. To get the overview, we don't attempt to fix, release, calm, or suppress. We go to the very hold of attention, the mood beneath the thought and let the attention generate an aware space around that. The hold will always be contracted in some way: upright, or flat and numb, or excited. It will generally demand action: even if it is the seductive plea to dull out these thoughts in activity or sleep. However, the primary layer of the emotional core of a problem is just what holding itself feels like. It is this very 'stuckness' that must first of all be accommodated.

Deep attention can go wrong if it is not systematic –

we jump in, or push forward into emotional currents with the idea of ‘getting to the root of all this’ – only to find ourselves overwhelmed. The systematic training is to start with just being able to hold the problem mindfully, and then attend to the first, peripheral, level of the tangle. Rather like untying a knot– we first soften the periphery. Let directed thought and evaluation provide a reference – ‘the mood feels tight, hard’ and then inquire into that mood, as to what it needs or where it is. Bodily reference

provides the firm ground. What does it feel like in the body? And where? In the chest, head or belly? What do these places need?

These suggestions induce an open benevolence, rather than a ‘sort this out’ mentality.

Something in us has probably had enough of ‘being sorted out’ and has learnt to shut out those kinds of ploys. So rather than any further drive, can we attend to stuckness with a heart of kindness and compassion? Can we come from a place in ourselves that feels good and stable and attend from there? Can we attend without wanting anything to be different, but allowing full knowing to attune to our welfare in the present moment? Then the simple theme of the practice is to do nothing but attend.

When mindfulness rests on a level beneath our normal patterns of mental behaviour, what can arise is a realisation of an awareness that is receptive but not reactive. Based upon its stability, we might call it presence. There is a spaciousness about this kind of ‘knowing,’ an emotional openness and clarity that impart a sense of trust; moods such as inexplicable joy or compassion may arise, in the midst of circumstances that a moment ago were stultifying. In this shift, we notice that attention is now holding in a very different way: there may be a settling-back (*viveka*) and dispassion (*virāga*) that allows us discernment – and perhaps some humour. We recognise that circumstances are changeable and unstable – and that truth refers also to our own emotional bases. And we may realise that attention can let go by itself if we attend deeply and without agendas. In this way, mindfulness and full knowing realises that an emotional behaviour pattern is not ‘mine.’ We have connected to the space that knows letting go.

So with deep attention and mindfulness we penetrate the emotional patterns; then we can attend to what actually is affected. This is the domain of the third foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of affective awareness, with its un-socialised surges and relaxations: ‘he knows the awareness affected by lust as awareness

affected by lust; and awareness unaffected by lust as awareness unaffected by lust...contracted awareness as contracted awareness...exalted awareness as exalted awareness ...concentrated awareness as concentrated awareness...liberated awareness as liberated awareness.’ If this can be fully penetrated without adding to it, closing it down or moving away, awareness can be released from its parameters. What are they? Whereas affect and response are set by feeling and perception, awareness is set by a

view: that of self-interest. What’s in this experience for me? Can I have this? Do I move away from this or reach out for it? If these parameters can be relaxed, the disturbances in awareness cease.

Deep attention gives us an entry into this level also. It offers an angle, or presents a view, that

we can then take into meditation. It gives us a chance to come out of self-view. This view is the peripheral or ‘background’ assumption that holds the content of greed, aversion – or happiness and peace. Very often this view manifests voices such as ‘the inner critic,’ ‘the escapist dreamer,’ or ‘the idealistic seeker.’ Of course in their way, the endless self-blaming and demanding that we be different or life be different from how things are have their points. And so does the ‘good-time’ voice that says we should just relax and not get so intense. But it’s a matter of taking the compulsive ‘I am,’ ‘I should have,’ ‘you ought to be,’ out of our attention. Who is this? Who’s telling who how things should be? Then we contemplate the very ‘shaping’ and ‘texture’ of awareness as: contracted... expanded... agitated... still. ‘It’s like this.’ This realisation lets go of awareness – it’s not ‘me.’ Then an intuitive wisdom can arise to respond to things specifically as they are.

So we train to contemplate systematically, layer under layer – the restless worry about the uncertainty over how to deal with the aversion – first going to the outer layer which contains it all, which may not have been recognised. Maybe the whole thing is held in aversion, or an unwillingness to deal with the topic; the tightness of trying to close it all down. But rather than attempt to open it all up, create an attentive space around the attempt to close down... get a sense for that. Maybe there’s some fear: is it OK to be with that, just for a while? Remember just to empathise; don’t do. Let any shift happen, and any suggestions come after the shift into intuitive space.

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Establish a supportive bodily presence: a sense of uprightness, an axis that centres around the spine. Connect to the ground beneath and the space above and around the body. Acknowledge sitting within a space, taking all the time and space that you need, and letting the body feel that permission. Open the body sense through feeling the breathing: first in the abdomen, allowing the breath to descend like a stone through the soft tissues... feel the flexing of the breath mirrored by the effortless release and firming of the abdomen in respiration.

Attend to the upper body, consciously dropping the shoulders and opening the connecting tissues between the upper arms and the main trunk... feel the breathing flexing the chest, giving all the space that is needed.

Open the head by relaxing the jaw and settling the tongue in the floor of the mouth. As if you were removing a scarf, or unbuttoning a collar, let the neck feel free and the throat open. Feel the breathing move through the throat from the throat notch, up through the back of the mouth and out through the nose and mouth. Give the quality of attention that allows all that to be evenly felt... Then check where the back of the skull meets the neck, to sense if any attitudes are tightening there. Even good attitudes, like determination... let the purity of attention and sincerity of heart express that while keeping the body soft. Repeat this in terms of checking the eyes, the forehead and the temples. Trust the purity, attune to that rather than will power. Enrich the purity with an attention that is giving rather than holding.

As you establish this body reference, settle into it, checking in with the specific points from time to time. If you feel unsettled – snagging flurries or sags of energy or mood – draw attention down your back to the ground, allowing the front of the body to flex freely with the breathing. Refer to the ‘descending breath’ – down through the abdomen – if you feel bustling or uptight. Attune to the ‘rising breath’ – up through the chest and throat – if you feel buried or flat.

Using these references, gradually step out of your world of functions, events and relationships, and into the space of embodied awareness... all the time in the world to be just this...

Meet an aspect of your daily world. Allow an element of all that to arise into awareness... and contemplate the effect in terms of embodied awareness. The ‘so much to do’; the ‘I really need this’; the ‘nobody listens to me...’ sense how the emotion moves energy in bodily terms. Re-connecting to, or sustaining, the open embodied awareness sense the pull of that emotionally triggered awareness... which area of the body is effected and what the pull represents as an emotional or psychological

response. There may be a familiarity to the sense of that response... tightness or trembling... maybe fear, irritation, or despair. Let the breathing and the giving flex through that. Acknowledge all that arises... let it flow. Feel the feeling as a feeling only, holding it in the body with a giving attention.

Carefully repeat this with that aspect of your world until you feel that something has shifted in your response, or that it has given you a key to deeper understanding. Compassion towards the response may arise, something that relieves you from aggravating, defending or burying it.

Spend such time as you wish allowing different aspects of your world to arise; layering that with times spent out in embodied awareness in itself. There may seem to be no end to your world, but that ‘no end’ is part of the sense of the world to practise with. Allow yourself to park the many topics and issues after a reasonable time, taking leave with the intention to return to these at another time.

Return through the body: the central core, the tissues wrapped around that, the skin around that, the space around all that. Slowly open your eyes, attuning to the space, and the sense of the place that you’re sitting in. ❖



Sunday Afternoon Talks at Amaravati

Sunday afternoon Dhamma talks this year,
as follows:

11th August: **Creator of the Universe** – Ajahn Vajiro

1st September: **Relationship** – Ajahn Vajiro

8th September: **Getting the Most from Life**
– Ajahn Ñāṇarato

15th September: **Freedom** – Ajahn Vajiro

22nd September: **Fearlessness** – Ajahn Candāsiri

29th September: **Responsibility** – Ajahn Candāsiri

13th October: **Ordinary Miracles** – Ajahn Candāsiri
(Gratitude to Parents’ Day)

All talks begin at 2.00pm

and are followed by tea and discussion

All are welcome



AMARAVATI NOTICES

Community Work Weekend at Amaravati Saturday 13th - Sunday 14th July. Can you join us to help with gardening and cleaning on the above dates? If you would like to come for either a day or the whole weekend, *please write enclosing s.a.e. or telephone:* Sister Santacittā at Amaravati.

Please note the change in time for the **Saturday Meditation Workshop**. The new time will be from 2pm to 4pm. Punctuality is greatly appreciated.

Annual Gratitude to Parents Day to be held on Sunday 13th October at Amaravati. All welcome. 11.00am arrival for 11.30 meal offering. *For further details contact,* Amaravati on 01442 842 455 or Mr Chandī Perera 0208 977 7642 (after 6pm).

ARUNA RATANAGIRI NOTICES

Lay Retreat 3rd – 10th August. Meditation Retreat *contact:* Harnham, guest monk.

The Retreat House Building Project is proceeding. The Sanghamitta committee are currently looking for skilled volunteer labour. *Contact:* Bill Fahy c/o Harnham.

Kathina 2002 at Harnham will be held on Sunday 27th October. This year's festival is being sponsored by the Thai community, which can be contacted through the monastery. We will be welcoming many senior monks and nuns from the other monasteries to this year's gathering and are hoping that as many friends of the monastery as possible will join in the occasion. *Anyone wishing to help with the preparations please contact – Committee* E-mail: colin.walker1@ntlworld.com Monastery E-mail: community@ratanagiri.org.uk

CITTAVIVEKA NOTICES

A Buddha-rupa will be created at Cittaviveka, throughout July and most of August of this year. This Buddha will be the presiding image for the new Dhamma Hall. We believe this to be a unique occasion; the first time that a sizeable Buddha-rupa has been crafted in this country. The image will be sculpted by Ajahn Nonti, who is a celebrated artist in Thailand and who has offered his services free of charge as a contribution to the development of Buddhism in Britain. He will create the image in clay and then make a mould into which liquid stone can be injected under pressure to bring a white stone Buddha into being. As this Buddha will be the spiritual focus for the Dhamma Hall, you may wish to be a part of his coming to be. There are several ways that you can

participate: by attending the formal dedication of the Buddha on November 3rd at Cittaviveka; by bringing any **small** votive offerings, such as relics or sacred stones, to the monastery in July or the first half of August; or by making a financial contribution to the cost of modelling materials. (Any surplus funds will go towards the Dhamma Hall) *For details, write to 'Vairocana', c/o Khun Muditā, Cittaviveka, Petersfield GU31 5EU.*

Forest Days:

Saturday 10th August (picnic).

Sunday 8th September.

Saturday 26th October.

These afternoons will be spent helping the Sangha in ongoing work in Hammer Wood. Meet at the monastery at 1.00pm. If you'd like overnight accommodation write to the guest monk/nun.

Garden Day: Sunday 25th August.

Dhamma Hall Work Days:

Saturday 13th July.

Saturday 28th September.

Cittaviveka Forest Work Month will be over three weeks in October and possibly early November. Any men who would like to join the group of monastics doing conservation work in the forest for all or part of it should *contact* Samanera Suddhano at Chithurst.

HARTRIDGE NOTICES

Teaching weekends continue on the last Saturday and Sunday of each month, usually led by visiting Sangha members. For the weekend July 27th to 28th Ajahn Kāruniko will be teaching. As usual the weekend includes a meditation workshop on the Saturday, starting at 1.30pm and a pūjā and Dhamma talk on Sunday at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome to come, offer dāna and meet with the Sangha. For more details telephone Hartridge or Sati satī on 01305 786821.

We would like to thank Paul Walker for his much appreciated service as lay manager, and welcome the new lay manager to the position. We hope that they will enjoy their stay.

FAMILY EVENTS 2002

Summer Camp 16th - 25th August

Young People's Retreat 13th - 15th Dec.

For Young People's Retreat *please contact:* Ray Glover, 36 Ottersfield, Greet, Gloucestershire GL54 5PN Tel: 01242 604129 *All other enquiries please contact:* Emily Tomalin, 147 Whytelady Lane, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire. SL6 9LF Tel: 01628 810083. E-mail: emilytomalin@ukonline.co.uk

RETREATS OUTSIDE THE UK

Eire – Ajahn Sucitto: at the Sunyata Centre July 11 – 14th. Tel: 00 353 6136 70 73.

Dhammadapala – all the retreats are taught in German unless otherwise stated. *Contact:* Dhammadapala Monastery.

July 5 – 7, Meditation Weekend

August 3 – 4, Weekend Retreat

September 7 – 21, 2 week retreat with Ajahn Akiñcano.

October 5 – 6, Weekend Retreat in English

November 30 – Dec 1, Weekend Retreat

December 26 – Jan 2, New Year Retreat

Italy – 27th August 1st September:

Retreat near Rome, Led by Ajahn Chandapālo, in Italian. Organised by the 'A.Me.Co', to be held at Rocca di Papa, near Rome. *Bookings will be accepted from 22 July, by calling* Samira at 06 508 53 73 or 338 439 4444 from 6 – 9 pm, Monday – Thursday.

GENERAL NOTICES

Nuns' Pilgrimage

Ajahn Jitindriyā and Sister Ānandabodhi are planning to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Places in India in December 2002. If you would like to support them in any way, however small, *please contact* Jill Osler at 9B Alpha Road, Southville, Bristol, BS3 1DH. Tel 01179 631610. Alternatively, *contact* the English Sangha Trust secretary stating that it is about the Nuns' Pilgrimage.

FSN on line is now updated, with thanks to Ajahn Kusalo, and we hope to keep the site up to date. Back issues and current issues of the Newsletter can be found at <http://www.fsnews.cjb.net>

Annual Buddhist Fair at the Hamilton Arms, Stedham, Monday August 26th. Proceeds for Cittaviveka Dhamma Hall & Buddharupa. *Contact* Khun Muditā, Tel: 01730 812555.

Knit-a-thon at the festival. If you would like to sponsor, contribute or take part, *contact* Rocanā 01483 761398

Sunyata Retreat Centre, Co. Clare Ireland Volunteers required over the summer (late May to mid-September) for periods of 3 weeks or longer to help with gardening, cleaning, light building work. 30 hours a week work in return for board and keep. Sunyata is a family-run Buddhist retreat centre in a beautiful rural location with a strong connection with the Forest Sangha. *Please contact* Stan or Clare de Freitas, Sunyata Retreat Centre, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare, Ireland. Tel. (+353)(0) 61 367073; email: info@sunyatacentre.com; website: www.sunyatacentre.com

We try to bring out the Newsletter quarterly, depending upon funds and written material. In the spirit of our relationship with lay people, we naturally depend upon donations: any contributions towards printing/distribution costs can be made to: 'The English Sangha Trust', Amaravati. In that same spirit, we ask you to let us know if you wish to be put on (or removed from) the mailing list, or if you have moved. Write to Newsletter, Amaravati. Back issues of the newsletter are available on the internet from: <http://www.fsnews.cjb.net>.

Data Protection Act: The mailing list used for Forest Sangha Newsletter is maintained on computer. If you object to your record being kept on our computer file, please write to Newsletter, Amaravati, and we will remove it. This Newsletter is printed by: Ashford Printers, Harrow. Telephone – (020) 8427-5097

Teaching and Practice Venues



Amaravati Retreats

June	7-9	Weekend	Ajahn Vajiro
June	14-18	5 Day	Ajahn Kāruṅiko
June	28-30	Weekend	Ajahn Jutindharo
July	26-Aug 4	10 day	Ajahn Candasiri - (FULL)
Sept.	13-17	5 day	
Sept.	27-29	Weekend	Ajahn Ñāṇarato
Oct.	4-6	Weekend	
Oct.	25-29	5 day	Ajahn Khantiko
Nov.	15-24	10 day	Ajahn Sucitto - (FULL)
Dec.	27-Jan. 1	5 day	

In 2002 Luang Por Sumedho will be taking a sabbatical and so is not committing himself to teaching engagements for this forthcoming year.

Retreat Centre Work Weekends 2002

Aug 30-Sept 1 · Oct 11-13

All weekend retreats are suitable for beginners. It is advisable to do a weekend retreat before doing any of the 5 or 10 day retreats.

Please note that bookings are only accepted on receipt of a completed booking form and booking deposit. The deposit is refundable on request, up to one month before the retreat starts. To obtain a booking form, please write to the Retreat Centre, stating which retreat you would like to do.

AMARAVATI CASSETTES

Cassette tapes of Dhamma talks given by Ajahn Sumedho and other Sangha members, plus tapes of chanting and meditation instruction are available for sale at cost price. For catalogue and information send SAE to:

Amaravati Cassettes, Ty'r Ysgol Maenan,
Llanrwst, Gwynedd, LL26 OYD U.K.

INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION-AMARAVATI Saturday Afternoon Classes 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

Meditation instruction for beginners;
with an opportunity for questions
to be answered.

Classes are in the Bodhinyāna Meditation Hall.

Feel free to come along - no booking is necessary.

MEDITATION GROUPS	
These are visited regularly by Sangha members.	
BATH Catherine Hewitt, (01225) 405-235	HAMPSTEAD Caroline Randall, (020) 8348-0537
EDINBURGH Muriel Nevin, (0131) 337-0901	LONDON BUDDHIST SOCIETY 58 Eccleston Square, SW1 (Victoria) Tel: (020) 7834 5858 Meditation Sundays: led by a monk or nun, every 2nd month. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thursday classes - 6.00pm
GLASGOW James Scott, (0141) 637-9731	SOUTHAMPTON Ros Dean, (02380) 422430
LEEDS AREA Daniela Loeb, (0113) 2791-375 Anne Grimshaw, (01274) 691-447	
MEDITATION GROUPS	
These meet regularly & receive occasional visits from Sangha.	
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DUBLIN Rupert Westrup, (01) 280-2832 (Dial: 00441 - from the UK)	PORTSMOUTH Dave Beal, (02392) 732-280
ESSEX (Billericay) Rob Howell, (01702) 482-134 or (Harlow) Pamutto, (01279) 724-330	REDRUTH Daniel Davide (01736) 753-175
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD Bodhinyāna Group Chris Ward (01442) 890-034	SHEFFIELD Greg Bradshaw (0114) 262-0265
KENDAL Fellside Centre, Low Fellside Jayasili, 01539 740-996	SOUTH DORSET Barbara Cohen (Sati-sati), (01305) 786-821
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(in Italian)

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Santacittarama Association.

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Fax: (707) 485-7948

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Web site: www.abhayagiri.org

Stewards: *Sanghapala Foundation.*

◆ Boston Area:
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Stewards:

Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association.

◆ Auckland Buddhist Vihara
29 Harris Road,
Mount Wellington,
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KATHINA & ALMSGIVING CEREMONIES

*All welcome – for further information
please contact the monasteries;*

**Aruna Ratanagiri (Harnham),
Sunday 27th October**

Contact by email: colin.walker1@ntlworld.com

**Santacittarama (Italy), Sunday 27th October
Cittaviveka (Chithurst), Sunday 3rd November**

Contact: Khun Mudita, Tel: 01730 812555

Amaravati, Sunday 10th November

Please use the contact person detailed if you would like
to offer any help with any of the arrangements.

OBSERVANCE DAYS

On these days the community devotes itself to quiet reflection and meditation. Visitors are welcome to join in the evening meditation vigils, and on the Full and New moon, there is an opportunity to determine the Eight Precepts for the night.

Moon Phase	☾ HALF	● NEW	☽ HALF	☉ FULL
JULY	2 nd (Thurs)	9 th (Tue)	17 th (Wed)	☾24 (Wed)
AUGUST	1 st & 31 st	8 th (Thurs)	16 th (Fri)	23 rd (Fri)
SEPTEMBER	29 th (Sun)	6 th (Fri)	14 th (Sat)	21 st (Sat)
OCTOBER	29 th (Tues)	6 th (Sun)	14 th (Mon)	☽21 (Mon)
☾ Āsālha Pūjā (vassa begins next day) ☽ Pavāranā Day (Vassa ends)				

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173

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Closing date for submission to the next issue is 20th August 2002