



# FOREST SANGHA

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## Relinquishing ‘Me’ and ‘Mine’

*A talk given by Ajahn Jitindriyā  
at Cittaviveka Monastery in February 2002.*

We’re coming to the end of our winter retreat. Over these past months we have experienced all kinds of conditions passing through the mind – perhaps the whole spectrum, from anger and rage to peace and serenity, from grief and despair to joy and happiness, from desire and longing to contentment and equanimity. This is an aspect of the mind’s nature; it can go from one extreme to the other. It goes up and down, goes round and round, turns from black to blue, to white, to red; it can go all over the place. And in my experience, the benefit of being able to have the space and time to practise and

contemplate over a longer period such as this, is just to see that much – that this is what the mind does. And when we want to get in there and sort it all out, fix it all up, and make it

into what we think it should be, there’s a lot of becoming energy in that. There’s a lot of desire, hatred, and delusion involved in that kind of activity.

Being able to see this clearly can lead to relinquishment and letting go. This is the reflection that has come up for me most in this retreat, and which has been the most consistently useful, this reflection around relinquishment and renunciation. Even needing to relinquish the desire to ‘fix it all up,’ the very desire that carried me for so long in this practice. I didn’t realise that I was holding on to a very deep-seated idea of perfection, an idea of ‘the way it should be’ or the way ‘I’ should be (and along with that, the way ‘it’ or ‘I’ *shouldn’t* be!). There’s a lot of judgement, views and hatred rooted in the mind; in ‘not-wanting’ things or an inability to open up to the painful or negative

experiences. In contemplating what relinquishment is really about we can come to a place of peace and contentment with the mind just as it is. It’s basically about relinquishing ownership; seeing that these things are not ‘mine’ in the first place, not ‘mine’ to fix, not ‘mine’ to make into something else. When we contemplate and see things in this way then things settle down of their own accord; more clarity arises to actually see the true nature of the conditions as they’re passing through the mind. When there’s a lot of desire to ‘fix things up’, that very movement of desire, hatred and

views just keeps stirring up the water.

Much of monastic life is geared towards relinquishment; we practise on many levels of body, speech and mind, giving-up, letting-go, renouncing. But

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*... see that things are not ‘mine’ in  
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to make into something else.*

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relinquishment has to happen in the mind by relinquishing ownership of the conditions that are passing through. Not in an irresponsible way, but actually finding a space within that’s a little lighter and more spacious around all the conditions we experience. So whatever arises can come, be what it is, and pass through. This is the nature of all conditions – ‘whatever arises is of the nature to cease.’ It’s such a simple truth and yet so hard to see clearly in a mind that is infected with self-view; that is still working on the delusion that ‘this is me’ and ‘this is mine’ and grasping at whatever arises in consciousness, and creating all sorts of issues and strategies. It all circles around the unquestioned sense of self. ‘Whose stuff is this anyway?’ We just assume it to be ‘me’ and ‘mine.’

The mind is a weird and wonderful thing and having

the space and tools to investigate it can reveal quite a lot. There's a lot of becoming energy; which if it's still based on self-view and ideals, is taking us out of the moment, taking us out of the place where enlightenment is actually possible. The suffering is here and now, the origin of suffering is here and now, the cessation of suffering is here and now and the path is here and now, they're nowhere else.

We get caught up in a lot of picking and choosing, what the Buddha calls 'favouring and opposing', based on feelings of pleasure and pain, whether they be subtle or gross feelings. When there's contact at any of the sense doors there's always a feeling associated with that, a feeling of pleasure or pain. It's right at that point that craving arises, that suffering arises. There's a claiming of whatever's passing through to be 'mine', then 'I want' or 'I don't want' arises, and then that proliferates.

If we're not awake to that process we get caught into the spin, caught into the becoming energy which is taking us away from the possibility of enlightenment here and now. If that process goes unquestioned we're missing the opportunity to see the natural cessation of phenomena; we're just getting caught up in the craving, clinging and becoming, into the strategizing and proliferating. This happens over and over again. It's the stuff of our practice, the field of our investigation where we can begin to wake up. Contemplating Dependent Origination, the Four Noble Truths, the three characteristics, these are the primary paradigms that can help us to wake up and come back to the Dhamma of relinquishment.

What does it take to relinquish clinging to a feeling, to relinquish the desire for it to be other than the way it is? It takes a lot of coming into presence; being willing to come into full presence with the way it is. Just that much allows relinquishing to happen. Then, as you contemplate the results of that shift on the body-mind, you see that it brings about more of a sense of ease, contentment, and clarity. For some of us some fear or uncertainty may arise right there, 'I can't be nothing, I have to be something. I have to hold onto something!'

In these moments, when there's agitation in the mind, we can see that we're just blindly grasping at anything, anything that's stirred up and running through the mind, grasping at it no matter how painful it is. We're still claiming it to be 'me' and 'mine' because we want some kind of support. So at those times one needs to be contemplating how suffering is arising, where it is felt, and also where and how it ceases. It's always here and now. It is here where suffering arises and where suffering ceases.



There's a famous teaching of the Buddha in which he talks of the radiant mind, first describing a mind affected by defilement, and then a mind free of defilement. He says, 'This mind is naturally radiant and pure, it's only defiled by transitory defilements that come from without.' The mind of an enlightened person is no longer stirred up by influences that come from without. I find this a very important teaching because it establishes a slightly different notion of the mind and defilements than the one we tend to have. We tend to isolate the mind in a very personal way, connecting it, if not to this body, at least to some sense of a limited self – thinking that defilements are something we create. We think, 'Through *my* ignorance I created them. It's my fault and I'm wrong for having them.' So then

we've got to do all this stuff to be free of them.

Yet the mind is *originally* pure you don't have to fix it. Ajahn Chah says, 'It's already peaceful by itself, inherently peaceful, it only moves and shakes when it's contacted by sense impressions.' Or, as the Buddha described it, the mind shakes when defilements enter into the picture. And we take those *sankhāras* (conditioned formations) that are arising in the mind to be self, to be 'me and my problem' or 'me and my stuff'.

Ajahn Mun gave an analogy of this, 'This pure, radiant mind is like the sun, and the defilements are like the clouds that come over and obscure the sun'. It's just clouds floating over obscuring the sun; it's not that the sun isn't there or it's not radiant and pure, or that it's not shining, it's obscured by passing clouds. He also said, 'Don't go thinking that the sun goes and grabs at

the clouds, it's rather the clouds that come and obscure the sun.' To me this is a really important difference in the way of contemplating the mind and defilements.

The mind gets caught up because we don't actually understand that all conditions arise and pass away and are not self. If we could understand just that much about everything that arose we'd be free. What arises, ceases, and is not self. How can it be self if it can be discerned to arise and cease? It's not that the stuff we deal with is not 'real' stuff but it is conditioned, it comes into being through causes and then passes away.

Another delusion of self-view is when we have a wrong grasp of *kamma* – 'I must have caused this in the past' – taking the teaching on *kamma* and thinking of it as a kind of *kammic* retribution, so taking it all very personally. That's the nature of self-view, it takes these things very personally. Yes, there are causes and effects, actions and results, but can we see them as just that much without turning them into another cause for self-view and suffering to take root.

Coming back to this word 'relinquishment', in the teachings it often comes after the experiences of detachment, disenchantment, dispassion and cessation. Experiencing these things is a result of contemplating impermanence, seeing and experiencing the impermanence of conditions with insight – coming to understand conditions as not-self; not me; not belonging to me. There are actually two Pali words relating to relinquishment: *paṭinissagga* and *vossagga*. They both appear in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* and they're often both translated as relinquishment. *Paṭinissagga* is a giving up, a renouncing, a full letting go, abandonment. *Vossagga* comes at the very end of that sutta and it is said to imply not only full abandoning and relinquishing but also an entering into *Nibbāna*; a complete letting go of all attachments, and experiencing the peace and freedom of *Nibbāna*. It seems more complete. It is a lovely concept to contemplate because relinquishment is actually about coming into a space of completion and of peace, by letting go of the burden of self-view and resting into *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is described as liberation of mind through not clinging. The mind is liberated by not clinging or holding on to anything. It realises the fullness of its nature; it's a letting go of clinging to those clouds and realising the fullness of its own radiance and purity. It doesn't have to cling; it

doesn't have to become anything.

Naturally, when we're not fully awakened we have to work with the habits of the mind. There might be moments of peace, recognition and relinquishment but we tend to get pulled back into habitual ways and states of mind. The practice is just continually waking up to the way things are, continually remembering the truth of impermanence, seeing that suffering arises when we claim things to be 'me' and 'mine.' The Buddha said that we delight in feelings. Whether they're pleasant or painful there's an element of delight there. It's actually the mind just habitually wanting to engage, to get a sense of existing or having some purpose, even though it might be painful.

I see in myself a great desire to understand. This desire has a lot of 'becoming' energy in it – *bhavatanha* – because on an intellectual level there's a real hit about 'Ah, now I understand!

Now I've got it.' But on an

intellectual level it doesn't last long at all. True liberating understanding has to be at the level of seeing the nature of the mind that gets pulled this way and that, and of knowing what it is that pulls it and relinquishing that. If we use the model of Ajahn Mun's, the mind doesn't go out, rather conditions float through it. The *bhavatanha* is that which, like a hand, grabs at the mental object, and then consciousness becomes established there. That's why it feels so personal; we've just been born into it and created conditions for future birth in the very same place and conditions.

After we have grabbed onto something what is relinquishment? At that point we have to contemplate the Four Noble Truths – 'this is suffering' – and become aware of the suffering of holding on, of consciousness becoming established in a limited form.

Be it pleasant or painful it's limited, it's death-bound. Letting go is waking up to that, waking up to the fact of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. Seeing where it's happening is really important; it seems to be the key. If we don't see craving that arises upon feeling we can just be stuck in the holding. The metaphor for this is of clinging onto a red-hot iron ball that's burning like hell, we can complain all we like about it, but if we don't see where we're holding on we won't be able to let go. Once you know where it's happening the instinct operates to just drop it, to let go, because it's hot and it hurts!

Although that sounds very simple, the craving and




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## Pabbajja – 8th June

Anagārikā Mariette Lattion

will request the Going Forth and acceptance  
into the Order of Siladharā.

*All welcome.*

The ceremony will begin at 1.30pm at Amaravati.

clinging happening around a painful or pleasant feeling arising upon sense contact is very hard to see. The nature of delusion is that it clouds our vision and our understanding. We get caught in habitual reactions and responses. We get caught in views that block us from seeing what's happening. Remembering images such as the radiant mind or the passing clouds is helpful. Also we can remember Ajahn Chah's image of the mind being inherently peaceful, that it only shakes when touched by sense impressions, just as leaves shake when they're blown by the wind. It's the wind that blows the leaves; it's not in the nature of the leaves. So, if we have no argument with sense contact, with the mind experiencing things, then there'll be the clarity to understand the nature of all this.

Another familiar metaphor of Ajahn Chah's is that of the still forest pool, which is a metaphor for the still mind where there's a degree of *samādhi*. Sitting by a still forest pool we can see many different creatures coming to drink there, all sorts of weird and wonderful creatures; this is likened to the stillness of the mind which can clearly see all the different conditions that come. You don't have to get out there and chase away the ones you don't like, or order them all according to the way you want them to be, just see their nature and leave them be. There are all sorts of different creatures, they come and go, they have their own relationships with each other; just come to know that and be aware of that.

If we're harassed by particular neurotic tendencies that have obsessed us for a long time, then we can get to know them as we would a particular kind of creature that we're really interested in. We're out there hiding behind a tree, really wanting to understand this peculiar, strange creature we're watching. We watch it carefully, so we don't do anything that's going to scare it away; we just watch its nature, watch its behaviour and get to know it. It can take a lot to open up to stuff within



ourselves, to have that kind of attitude towards certain things that we've had a lot of fear or judgement about. Can we check out our attitude towards those things when they arise and say, 'Well, how can I understand this? How does it arise? How does it pass away?' We might also find that there are other things we need to meet before we can look at that, like the fear or guilt about it. They're also creatures of their own. 'How does that come into being? How is it maintained? How am I relating to it?' We can just get very frightened of fear. It is very hard to be still with fear and look at it, but we have to cultivate the attitude that allows it to come out so we can see it for what it is. We trust in the stability of awareness.

The aim of this life devoted to *Dhamma*, is to practise virtue, to cultivate this mind in a good way. So, it's okay to look at this more ugly, difficult stuff that arises and trust in your own intentions to see clearly in order to let go and be free of it. Trusting is another essential aspect of the practice. Just remember to trust in your capacity of awareness, which is really the root refuge in Buddha – the one who is awake. Trust in your own capacity to be aware: awareness can always embrace whatever's going on.

Before I finish, another one of Ajahn Chah's pearls of wisdom comes to mind. He said, 'When the mind is peaceful it is just like still flowing water.' It's a bit of a conundrum. He said, 'Have you ever seen still water? Have you ever seen flowing water? When the mind is peaceful it is just like still flowing water.' Conditions are what flow through the mind. The mind doesn't have to be moved by that flow but it can embrace and be with it while not being pulled in. The stillness maintains its own integrity. This is detachment, *viveka*, a quality of being in the world yet not of the world, not drawn into worldliness. In that level of detachment there is peace and yet there is flow. Relinquishment is not cutting off from the world's conditions but realising their true nature and the true nature of the radiant mind. The metaphor for this is that of the bead of water that just rolls off the lotus leaf, it doesn't get absorbed into the leaf. It's like the world and the enlightened mind, they can be together but the enlightened mind, or that peace and stillness, is not affected or distorted by the flow. There's a full knowing, a full capacity for

understanding, but not a joining to it. Not being swept along, not joining to the realm of birth and death any more, that's the quality of the awakened mind, of 'still flowing water'.

So, relinquishment isn't about getting rid of anything, of getting rid of one's old self and getting a better self, or of getting rid of the nasty things. It's about relinquishing the tenacious grasping on to any thing, whether good or bad.

Relinquishing the 'I' – making, 'mine' – making, 'me' – making mechanism through seeing it as it truly is. ❖

# Like a River Flowing

*This is another extract from the account by Ajahn Sucitto and Nick Scott of their pilgrimage on foot around the Buddhist holy places in India.*

— — AJAHN SUCITTO — —

It was about this time that Nick started suggesting that I should write up an account that could be published. It would be a way of offering our pilgrimage back to all those people who had helped us. His nature is to want to spread his experience to a wider circle: I on the other hand had my doubts that anybody would be interested. But ... perhaps that's just my opinion, clumsy and plodding compared with Nick's enthusiasm. So here I am writing it, looking into the Little Red Diary, and occasionally consulting an old letter that people kept and gave back to me. Memory has distorted it, but worse than that, the insecure open-endedness of the moment is gone, and that's all that it was really about. Writing this down places it all safely in the past as something that is over now; and a pattern gets discerned, traced and underlined.

However, the written perspective is not any more distorted than the one that consciousness had at the time, it's just different. Even at the time, that openness was being shunted into patterns to describe the actual and proclaim the possible. Perception is *māyā* herself, flowing like one of those Indian rivers: a mingling of so many currents and meanders, so much sparkle, ripple and wave that the attention gets dazzled. Only in the moment when the mind steps back in recognition, is there a more knowing contemplation. Then there is only one pattern for all of it. All flows on, all is changing, all patterns are void, and yet there is the creation of them. Don't hold on; but you can only experience that lucid emptiness through recognising the current that you're in.

## *January 25th.*

We were going through a river. My right leg throbbed with every step, so clambering along the uneven rocky bed of the Auranga, sandals off to protect the leather, soon aggravated that. My energy went flat about midway through the afternoon. I was trailing along, feeling like a donkey behind its master; attending to the inner whimper that was becoming a loyal companion on this journey. 'I didn't want to come this way. Why can't we walk along a nice simple road? Why don't I have any say in where I'm going? Now we're stuck in this. We have to go on, we can't stop here, we can't turn back. Every step forward is painful. There are an indefinite number of steps forwards that have to be taken. This, or something like this, will continue for another three months. And, as a Buddhist monk, you're not supposed to mind.'

Every now and then we'd stop and sit on a rock. It was quite a nice day, sunny and warm; the water was

flowing sweetly with the hushed forest wrapped around it. A happy feeling came bubbling up. The rocks were like some natural sculpture, smooth striated forms folded like strudel. I could feel gratitude and wonder peering through the fatigue at me; I could almost touch them, but not quite. Nick was making apologetic and comforting gestures, but I couldn't pick them up. I didn't quite have the space to be grand about it all, or the energy to fake a polite response.

— — NICK — —

The way the river twisted along the valley overhung by the occasional gnarled tree, reminded me of the rivers of the Cheviot hills near my home. The problem was that, although it started as easy walking, the river was spilling over a series of rock outcrops, each creating the slightest of waterfalls and, as a result, it was slowly dropping into a gorge. As we went on and the gorge became more pronounced we had to cross the river back and forth. I did not mind; it was the kind of wilderness walking I enjoyed, but I could tell that Ajahn Sucitto was getting irritated; this was not the kind of terrain in which he could get into a steady absorbed rhythm. With each crossing my responsibility for us being there began to weigh more heavily, and my heart would sink as we had to struggle through the water again. So I stopped enjoying the walking and I began to wish I'd chosen the small road to Kechki. Eventually I even tried climbing the side of the valley but that did no good, as the rolling dry landscape was covered in thorny scrub. The animal trail we found winding through it only led back to the river.

I peered ahead as we rounded each bend of the river hoping for a sight of the railway bridge that crossed just before Kechki. When at last it appeared I pointed it out with relief to Ajahn Sucitto. His mood lightened and for the last part of the walk we were both able to appreciate the river again. After the bridge the walking got easier and we reached the village, and its forest rest house just before sunset.

Two nights later we got to sleep outside for the first time since the robbery, under a lonely tree on the slope of a hill rising to a crag. It was a beautiful but desolate landscape with the nearest houses far enough away that I could light a fire and brew tea for the first time. We also stopped early enough to be able to sit watching the light fade from the sky and the night begin. We chatted over cups of tea in that relaxed end-of-the-day way that I had so missed earlier in the pilgrimage.

From then on we got to sit by a fire every night, letting the day unwind with wood-smoke flavoured tea and talking over various things, many of them from our past. Ajahn Sucitto spoke of his relationship with his father and about memories of him when he was a boy. The times he enjoyed being with his father were when they went fishing together. Then they were alone on the river bank surrounded by the beauty of the countryside. But then he began to feel bad about harming the fish. His father told him that if they put them back it was all right, but even when he accepted that, he still had problems with the worms – surely they couldn't be indifferent to being speared on a hook. So he began fishing without them, and then, after a while of still being unhappy about the occasional fish he still caught, he gave up using a hook too. From then on he was sitting there with a rod and line with nothing on the end and no chance of catching anything. Perfectly happy, just enjoying being with his father by the river. I was really charmed by that tale. It was good to be able to sit and chat like that. Later we finished the evening in meditation under the stars. Then we each found a spot under the shelter of the tree to avoid the morning's dew, and lay down to sleep. During the night we heard wild hogs passing on their way down to raid the fields of the nearby village.

Even though it was now February it was still a cold night and we were only just warm enough in our thin sleeping bags, even with all our clothes on. So it was good next morning to stop at dawn for hot tea at a chai stall next to Meralgram railway station, a one platform and small shed affair just along the railway line we had been following. The *chai wallah* had just lit his fire and we sat round it warming our hands as he brought the water to the boil. As we were his first customers of the day he honoured the gods with my proffered bank note, holding it in añjali and then waving it through the fire.

We spent the morning walking by the railway. Then we left to take the Panchadomar road onto slightly higher ground covered in scrub where we camped. The next day as we came over the bleak grey hills, the Son valley was laid out before us. It was far wider than the previous ones and surprisingly empty. The river Son in the distance was much larger than I had expected but what was the greatest surprise was the enormous cliffs on its far side. They ran east and west to the horizon with the river at their base and they were at least a thousand feet high. We could see Panchadomar down by the river; it was hardly bigger than a village and was dwarfed by the mighty landscape.

Behind me, a postman dismounted from his old black bicycle to walk beside Ajahn Sucitto. He carried the daily post from the Daltonganj train in a flat canvas bag over his shoulder. It was a journey he made every day and he was pleased to have a companion. In Panchadomar he bought us tea in a small chai shop, which in no time was surrounded by so many curious locals that we lost sight of the sky. A few of them then accompanied us as far as the path to the ferry and then we were alone tramping across an expanse of sand to the river.

I reflected on the significance of our crossing of the River Son. To the west the river was the Bihar state boundary and in crossing it and then turning left we would be leaving India's poorest and most lawless state for the orderly Uttar Pradesh. The significance of the crossing seemed more than that though. The following night was the full moon and that was precisely half way through our six months of pilgrimage. We had actually managed to get half way, despite all the difficulties. Not only that, but we had learnt from it, and now the pilgrimage seemed to be flowing more like the river. We were taking things in our stride and perhaps the next three months were going to be easier than the last three.

The ferry was a large rowing boat with two men at the oars, waiting at the shore. We crossed for a rupee each, with three local passengers. The two of us sat in the back: me with my hand trailing in the water, taking it all in – the wide river, the woodland on the further shore with the vast cliffs rising behind, which got higher the nearer we got – and Ajahn Sucitto murmuring a mantra, looking down at the light playing on the water as it flowed by.

— — AJAHN SUCITTO — —

These were the days when, long before dawn, the hard earth and damp was getting us up to shudder around a fire with eyes streaming from the smoke, and be warmed back to flexibility. The sunrise was very welcome; and as light came up on that last morning in Bihar I felt good. My head hurt and my body ached; my right leg was painful (but at least no worse) and the side of the right foot had split open – I'd stuck it together with plasters but what the sand, grit and river Son had done to that wasn't worth looking at. But none of this seemed to be a problem; the simplicity of life in the wilds put the mind into a very accepting state. And the next day would be easy: we had decided to walk only as far as the road that led to the north through the scarp of the Mur hills, maybe ten kilometres all in all. Then we'd be fresh for the all-night sitting. It was January 30th, full moon night, and there would probably be a good spot on a hill for meditation. In this area it looked like it would be easy to find places to stop: villages were few, there was no sign of agriculture on the narrow terrace of land under the scarp, and our path was a silent dirt track leading out of Bihar.

Everything seems possible on a fresh sunny morning. The morning was radiant: a cobalt sky shone down on dry forest, sun-bleached grasses with long feathery seed heads, and stands of pale yellow bamboo. The Son river on our left was brown and brawny like Gandak, pouring down to the Ganges with vigour. It carried so much silt in its purposeful stride that it was like molten chocolate. 'You are in U.P. now,' said a man on a motorbike an hour or so's walk due west. 'U.P. is a rich state, there will be no problem getting food; just ask anybody.' (But a good bhikkhu shouldn't ask for anything!) Soon there was a settlement: a large single-storeyed house with a

yard, and a few men sitting round in it. Just outside was a smooth rock with a swatch of red paint on it which a tall bamboo shoot stood over bearing a scrap of cloth like a flag. 'That's the house shrine,' I told Nick. We sat nearby and one of the men came out to greet us in an indistinct dialect. He asked what he could do for us and I asked for water. He returned with two beakers and some jaggery sugar and invited us to sit. I explained that we were pilgrims and he nodded... that I was a disciple of the Lord Buddha, that we were walking on foot and had walked 900 kilometres from Nepal. He made friendly noises and went back to the house. Things were moving slowly, but we heard them talking about rice; then a couple of plates came out. As the sun moved they beckoned us into the shade and brought out a little dish of curd. But as an hour went by, nothing more seemed to be happening.

Of all patterns, the one that we read into human actions is the most deceptive. We chanted the *Mettā Sutta* anyway. Finally one of the men came up and started talking about food...

I listened carefully... what was he saying? But at the mention of food, Nick burst in, nodding vigorously: 'Ahchaa! Ahchaa! Yes! Yes!' I grimaced; that was the wrong answer. What the man had just said was: 'Have you eaten already? Do you have your meal with you?'

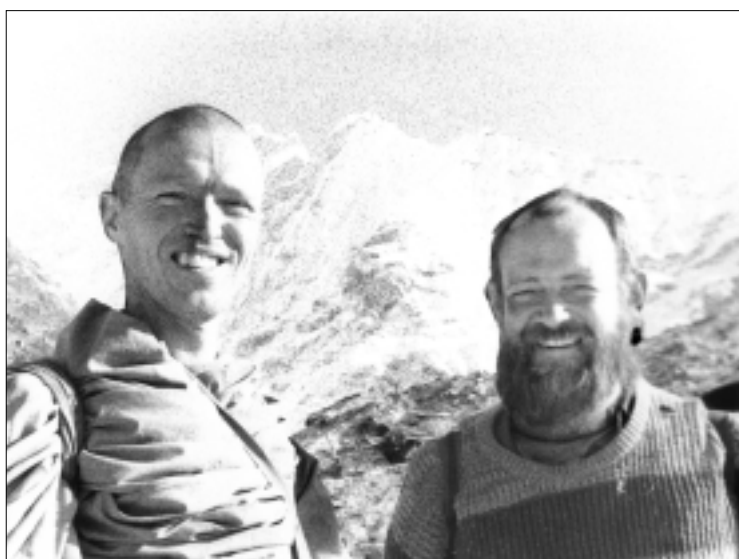
'Remind me to keep my mouth shut in the future, bhante,' said Nick as we munched some biscuits in a forest glade ten minutes' walk away from the house where he'd just refused a meal. He'd purchased a few provisions as a stand-by in Bhaunathpur a couple of days previously. It wasn't great fare, but it filled a hole. Although we were a bit low on nourishment, it was not far to Chandni, where the map showed a broad road cutting through the scarp. We'd find a nice place to camp in the middle of the afternoon.

But (we should have known by now) there's nothing more uncertain than an Indian map; at least one of an uninhabited area. We walked around the little hamlet of Chandni, went past it, and then retraced our steps along the river bank: no road. The scarp rose up like a wall over 1,000 feet high. Although we felt washed out, it would be better to scale it today rather than after an all-night vigil. We found a young man herding a few cows laden with packs up a drovers' trail. He said it went

towards Soman on the other side of the scarp. So we set to it. I was gasping within minutes, but the pain in my legs, feet and chest told me that I'd better not stop. This was no time to start being reasonable. We soon left the slow tinkling of the cattle behind. Towards the crest of the scarp, we scrambled off the trail and up a crag to the right. We heard them clinking past minutes later. Then we were alone.

We were on a rocky summit 1,300 feet above the plateau. The black rock was strewn with yellow leaves from a scattering of thorny trees. Their gnarled silvery trunks reached into the deepening blue sky. Bleached bamboo and tall whitened grasses stuck up through scraps of soil, and it was all very quiet. I had enough momentum left to unroll my mat and sleeping bag and flake out on a level of rock. It was probably far enough from an edge if I rolled over, but at the time I was past caring.

When I woke up, it was dark, but pale smoke and a nearby glow indicated that Nick was making tea. He was at his best in the wilds in the



evenings. Out would come the round-bottomed pot that he'd bought in Chatra; then he'd silently build a ring of stones and gather twigs and leaves, get a fire going and put the water on. I'd start searching for fallen branches – wood wasn't plentiful, but what there was was dry as a bone, and I'd set a good supply near him. Then I'd build a shrine out of rocks – overlooking a view and near enough to the fire to allow us to stay warm. Generally we'd talk together over tea before offering candles and incense. It was a good rhythm and felt like a natural prologue to the silent sitting; the big space and slow unfolding of the simple activity of a camp helped unwind the tensions of the day.

That night opened into vast simplicity. The forested hills dissolved to darkness and merged into the sky; Son snaked below us, glowing in its own power and garlanded with pale sandbanks. I could see it issuing from the misty curve of the horizon and steadily carving its way through the hill mass. In all those hundreds of square kilometres of land only three tiny pricks of light spoke up and they soon ceased. Then there was only our candle to echo the blazing moon. Such aloneness is calming; it's so vast that you're part of it and the mind rests in humility.

## — — NICK — —

The bird I recall from this part of the journey is the barbet, although I never got to see it. We were climbing through a desolate scrubland. We were getting lost and when we heard the distant droning of a diesel pump to the right we went that way in the hope of finding a village and directions. We didn't find anyone and the pump seemed to stop. There was another in the distance, though, and so we headed for that, but then that stopped too. We never, in fact, found anyone; the pumps always kept stopping before we got to them. It was only later that I realised that the diesel pumps must be barbets. The barbet is a chunky green bird related to the woodpeckers which sits in the clefts of tree branches and drones for much of the day. It was a call we were to hear over and over again for the next few days, a strange reminder of human activity in that empty landscape of scrub through which the pack horse trails meandered and braided like a river.

Between the dry lands were two wide valleys irrigated by dams and canals like the one we slept beside. Water was very important in this landscape. Where they had it, in the valleys, the land was turned into fertile flat oases of fresh green wheat, chequered with coloured flowering patches of blue flax, yellow rape and white chickpeas. The fields were dotted with small thatched shelters and scarecrows made from a cross of wood, an old shirt and a hat; and every so often there were villages of orange clay houses. The landscape looked so beautiful after the dry hills: the speckled colours gave it the look of an impressionist painting of Provence at the turn of the century.

The dry land had its own beauty, though, a haunting and desolate emptiness in which just a few poor peasants eked out a living. I remember one old couple sitting by a house. Ajahn Sucitto asked for water for our bottles. The old man was proud to be able to offer it but the old woman looked peeved. It occurred to me that it would have been her that had carried it from the distant well we could see at the bottom of the hill.

Two days later we came down out of the hills on to the crowded Ganges plain again and there was another river. We had been for alms in a winding village called Amra and were walking on along a small road which led to Varanasi. I had spotted the river on the map and thought it might make a good place to bathe. It might even be deep enough to swim. When we came to this river it could not have been more ideal. It was not wide but it was deep, clear, slow-moving and overhung by



trees. There were steps leading down to a gap in the reeds where the locals must have regularly bathed. It was mid-afternoon and the perfect time to take a dip. We were tired, dusty and hot and, incredibly, there was absolutely no-one about. There was not a doubt in my mind, I had suggested we take a bath and was down the steps before Ajahn Sucitto had taken in what was happening. I stripped off to my underpants and swam out into the centre of the river and called to Ajahn Sucitto that it was lovely. He was not interested. Instead he moved off and sat under a tree to wait for me to finish. I could not leave it at that, though, and after swimming a few lengths I tried getting him to come in again – ‘it was great, why didn't he come in?’ – but, he

remained sitting upright under his tree and from the way he said no I got a strong impression of disapproval.

The whole incident must have taken only fifteen minutes but I learnt a lot from it. That was because as we went on we discussed it – just the fact that we did that was a change from the earlier part of the pilgrimage. To him my bathing had seemed irresponsible. We had agreed that morning that

we were going to walk to Varanasi and try to get there by the next day. To one with his dogged character an impromptu swim, even if it was our first opportunity for three months, was a frivolous deviation from our purpose. Talking it over I discovered that if I had told him in the morning that we may have the opportunity for a swim later it might have been different. It was the unexpectedness as much as anything which had really been the problem. That, in fact, had been deliberate, I had been saving it for a surprise! He later told me that my scamper down the steps and plunge into the water reminded him of the actions of one of those goofy red setters which their owners despair of.

## — — AJAHN SUCITTO — —

A few miles down the road we had a talk. In its remembered and written form, this tale can't bring across the fact that for a lot of the time, we just didn't have the energy or the one-pointedness really to know what was going on, let alone communicate it.... But, praise be to sugar-jaggery, great brown crumbly chunks of it chomped around a campfire at night with black tea: it gave a surge of energy, as well as the child-like abandon that broke boundaries.

That day, the day before we were to arrive at Ramnagar, a man hollered at us the familiar ‘*Kaha ja ra*



hai?’ as we lumbered along. He was the proprietor of a sugar mill, and an example of the energies that his product was capable of. As pilgrims to Varanasi we must stop for a while and drink his sugar-cane juice, freshly-pressed; and here were fist-size balls of jaggery still warm from the pan where the juice was simmering. He couldn’t stop talking and pressing samples on us – ‘Liking? Liking?’ – until we were nearly reeling from eating and drinking the stuff. Even then, pressing lumps of jaggery onto Nick and filling our canteens with litres of the juice he followed us, ripping hard stalks of sugar cane with his teeth to give us chunks of the sweet sappy core. So we could hardly stop chatting (and next morning too) and the flow deposited some of our conflict. And things felt better afterwards. There was no need to feel bad or to figure out what to do, but some of the mud had got dumped, and there was some clarity and recognition of where our journey needed to go.

We suddenly understood that we were living in different worlds. The actuality of his walk was made up of all kinds of details, of what games the children were playing, of how the crops were cultivated or the method of making pots, that I hadn’t seen. And I was astounded that he hadn’t noticed things like an incredible Hanuman shrine built into a telegraph pole: we had walked right past it. Everything gets measured in terms of oneself. The mother, conduit and reservoir of all the conflict was, *why can’t he be normal, like me?* I could learn a handful of Hindi words and phrases every day while walking along, without even pushing it. But Nick would interrupt me in a conversation with mispronunciations of Hindi words that I’d corrected him on a dozen times. He couldn’t even repeat a foreign word after me as I said it. Then again: how could he chant so badly? For me to read a line of *Pali* three times is to know it, and anybody can chant in tune, can’t they? But after fifteen years he was still having problems with reciting the Refuges and Precepts. My immediate reading was that he thought it was a waste of time and was putting no effort into it; so that was off-putting. Then I noticed how much effort he really was putting into it. The fact was that the glue of his mind, wonderfully effective when it came to reading landscapes and maps, could not stick words, no matter how much hammering and heat were applied.

And when I realised what we all should know, think we know, but don’t know, that *‘This is another person,’* something was crossed over, and the perceptions changed. My feeling for the man, and for whatever he had to carry deepened. India... the vagaries of life on the road... supporting a monk – what was he working his way through? Couldn’t I help him along? I could try... and forget again. And in the course of that, empty a little more of my self into the Way It Is.

‘When you write about this, bhante, make sure you mention all my faults...’ Actually it seems I have described my own even more accurately. But that’s the

## Certainty

So when the angel of absence  
seizes you again with the desire  
to find the right formula for truth,  
stay with the desire,  
let it burn you inside out.  
Let it roll with no resistance  
down your scorched slope,  
spitting gravel, shifting boulders,  
gathering momentum,  
until it takes the whole  
of your realities down  
in one grand landslide.  
For your knowledge in the end  
will prove to be the greater ignorance,  
lay it down,  
and hear the stern master in your heart  
ring her bell again,  
sending you back to hug your skeleton  
a little more.

Venerable Abhinando

humbling fact of this journey: we fare on in our own current, a stream that floods and saturates the world. And it is not always so grand. But the pilgrimage is not about aiming to arrive at a new world; any appearance or possibility is based on our repetitive personal biases. The journey is to let go of all possible worlds. So it is not onwards we go, but on, as if in a torrent which cuts down through the bedrock of habits, personal assumptions, opinions and wishes. But somehow flowing on. ❖

*There is a possibility of producing the entire account of the pilgrimage as a book for free distribution. If you would like to help sponsor this please contact Christina at the Amaravati office. As we are still only exploring this possibility, do not send fund at this time.*



## AMARAVATI NOTICE

**Community Work Weekend** at Amaravati Saturday 26th – Sunday 27th 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: the work nun/monk at Amaravati.

## CITTAVIVEKA NOTICES

**Lay Forums** – The venue of these discussions is the monastery's Reception Room, commencing at 2:00pm.

April 13th, May 4th and June 1st.

**Garden Afternoon** – Saturday 12th April. Meet at the monastery at 1.30pm. If you'd like overnight accommodation write to the guest monk/nun.

## HARNHAM NOTICES

We are holding two residential lay retreats at Aruna Ratanagiri this year. **The Easter Men's Retreat** will be led by Tan Abhinando from 18th – 26th April 2003. For bookings and information please write to: Ashley Menzies, No.5 Falkes Lodge, 5 Langley Lane, London SW8 1TJ, or email ashleymenzies@onetel.net.uk

## Amaravati Lay Events – 2003

These events provide an opportunity to practise together and explore themes relevant to practice and lay life. They include silent and guided meditation, sutta study groups, yoga, discussion groups and other workshops. All groups are optional so you can participate in silence if you wish. All are welcome.

**Days of Practice** – No need to book (please bring food to share) 9.45am for 10am-5pm.

**Retreats** – Advance booking essential  
Fri 5.30pm - 4.00pm on last day.

April 11 – 13	Weekend Retreat - Devotion and Ritual
May 17 *	Wesak Preparations
May 18	Wesak at Amaravati - <i>all welcome</i>
May 23 – 26	3 day Retreat - Samatha/Vipassana
June 28	Day of Practice - Are you a Buddhist?
July 18 – 20	Weekend Retreat - Karma
Sept. 12 – 14	Weekend Retreat - Creativity
Oct. 4	Day of Practice - Buddhist Cosmology
Nov. 8	Day of Practice - A Simple Life?
Dec. 6	Day of Practice - Monastic and lay life

\* Helping the community with Wesak (18th May) preparations

**For more information please contact:**

Nick Carroll, 020 8740 9748 or  
Chris Ward, 01442 890034  
Please write to AUA for booking form (see address below)

Organised by the Amaravati Upāsaka/Upāsikā Association (AUA)  
Amaravati Monastery, Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3BZ

**The annual Summer Lay Retreat** will be led by Ajahn Munindo from the 1st – 9th August. For bookings and information please write to: Ross Mackay, 302 Dumbarton Road, Glasgow G11 6TD, or email summer.retreat@ntlworld.com We are also looking for cooks on the Summer Retreat so if you are interested please contact either the monastery or Ross Mackay.

We are currently looking for long term or short term volunteers to help on the building of our retreat house. We are particularly interested in people with plumbing skills. Please contact the monastery in March if you are interested.

## DHAMMAPĀLA NOTICES

**Wesak Festival** May 11 in Münsingen near Berne. Contact Dhammapāla Monastery for details.

## SANTACITTARAMA NOTICES

**Wesak Celebration** at Santacittarama 10:30 am – 3:30 pm. Celebrating the Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbāna of the Buddha. Everyone welcome. Please bring contribution for shared meal at 11am.

## RETREATS OUTSIDE THE UK

**Dhammapāla** - All the retreats are taught in German unless otherwise stated.

**Contact:** Dhammapāla monastery unless otherwise indicated.

17 – 21 April, 5 day Easter Retreat with Ajahn Akiñcano.

3 – 4 May, Weekend Retreat.

7 – 8 June, Weekend Retreat in English or French.

13 – 15 June, Weekend Retreat in Berlin with Ajahn Khemasiri.

**Contact:** Ulrike Schmidt, Eichenweg 14, D-16766 Amalienfelde, Germany.

20 – 22 June, Weekend retreat in Prague in English with Ajahn Khemasiri

**Contact:** Jitka Haskova, Churanovska 5, 15 000 Praha 5, Czech Republic.  
Tel. 00420 2 5721 0585

12 – 13 July, Weekend Retreat in English or French.

**Santacittarama** – Italy

25th April – 1st May: Residential retreat with Ajahn Sucitto.

Organized by the "A.Me.Co" at Casaprota (Rieti) near Santacittarama. Bookings will be

accepted from 1 month before at: 06-6865148 from 6 – 9 pm, Tuesday or Wednesday or 3 – 8 pm Thursday. In English with Italian translation.

9th – 11th May: Retreat near Piacenza. Led by Ajahn Khantiko, residential retreat at "Pian dei Ciliegi", Ponte dell'Olio. Contact Gianni: 0523/878948, pidici@libero.it. In English with Italian translation.

## GENERAL NOTICES

**Nuns' pilgrimage**

Sister Mettā is planning to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Places of India in December 2003. If you would like to support her in any way, please contact Jen Thomas, 46 Maesingli, Trefdreath, Pembs, SA42 OTE Tel: 01239 820138 or Jill Osler, 9B Alpha Road, Southville, Bristol, BS3 1DH. Tel: 01179 631610. Alternatively, contact the English Sangha Trust secretary stating that it is concerning the Nuns' Pilgrimage.

**Sunyata Retreat Centre.** Co. Clare, Ireland seeks helper for the summer (May-Sept. or part thereof) to assist with general running of centre, cleaning, gardening and paperwork. 30 hours a week work in return for board, lodging and small stipend. Please contact Stan and Clare de Freitas; Tel. 00-353-61-367073, email: info@sunyatacentre.com; website: www.sunyatacentre.com

**Forest Sangha Newsletter Back Issues**

Many previous issues of the Forest Sangha Newsletter are now available to view or download from the internet at; <http://www.fsnews.cjb.net>

## FAMILY EVENTS 2003

Rainbow Weekend 2nd – 5th May

Family Weekend 13th – 15th June

Summer Camp 16th – 24th August

Young People's Retreat 28th – 30th Nov.

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 Whyteladies Lane, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 9LF, Tel: 01628 810083, E-mail: emilytomalin@ukonline.co.uk

The camps can be oversubscribed, so to be considered for a place on the waiting list, please send me your details as last minute cancellations do occur, and I can keep your details for next year.

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> We are working on improving the site and hope to be able to post latest issues in the near future.

**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



MEDITATION GROUPS	
These are visited regularly by Sangha members.	
<b>BATH</b> Catherine Hewitt, (01225) 405-235	<b>HAMPSTEAD</b> Caroline Randall, (020) 8348-0537
<b>EDINBURGH</b> Neil Howell, 0131-226 5044	<b>LONDON BUDDHIST SOCIETY</b> 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
<b>GLASGOW</b> James Scott, (0141) 637-9731	
<b>LEEDS AREA</b> Daniela Loeb, (0113) 2791-375 Anne Grimshaw, (01274) 691-447	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Ros Dean, (02380) 422430
MEDITATION GROUPS	
These meet regularly & receive occasional visits from Sangha.	
<b>BEDFORD</b> David Stubbs, (01234) 720-892	<b>MACHYNLLETH/MID. WALES</b> Angela Llewellyn, (01650) 511-350
<b>BELFAST</b> Paddy Boyle, (02890) 427-720	<b>MIDDLESBOROUGH</b> Colin Walker, (01642) 643-071
<b>BERKSHIRE</b> Penny Henrion (01189) 662-646	<b>MIDHURST</b> Barry Durrant, (01730) 821-479
<b>BRIGHTON</b> Nimmala, (01273) 723-378	<b>NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE</b> Andy Hunt, (0191) 478-2726
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b> Dan Jones, (01223) 246 257	<b>NEWENT, GLOUCS</b> John Teire (01531) 821-902 john.teire@virgin.net
<b>CANTERBURY</b> Charles Watters, (01227) 463342	<b>NORWICH</b> Elaine Tattersall (01603) 260-717
<b>CO. CLARE, IRELAND</b> Stan de Freitas, (061) 367-073	<b>PEMBROKESHIRE/S. WALES</b> Peter and Barbara (Subhadrā) Jackson, (01239) 820-790
<b>DUBLIN</b> Rupert Westrup, (01) 280-2832 (Dial: 00441 - from the UK)	<b>PERTH</b> Neil Abbot, (07765) 667-499
<b>ESSEX</b> (Billericay) Rob Howell, (01702) 482-134 or (Harlow) Pamutto, (01279) 724-330	<b>PORTSMOUTH</b> Dave Beal, (02392) 732-280
<b>HEMEL HEMPSTEAD</b> Bodhinyāna Group Chris Ward (01442) 890-034	<b>REDRUTH</b> Daniel Davide, (01736) 753-175
<b>KENDAL</b> Fellside Centre, Low Fellside Jayasili, (01539) 740-996	<b>SHEFFIELD</b> Greg Bradshaw, (0114) 262-0265
<b>LIVERPOOL</b> Ursula Haeckel, (0151) 427 6668	<b>SOUTH DORSET</b> Barbara Cohen (Sati-satī), (01305) 786-821
<b>LONDON/NOTTING HILL</b> Jeffery Craig, (0207) 221 9330	<b>STEYNING / SUSSEX</b> Jayanti (01903) 812-130
<b>LEIGH-ON-SEA</b> Gool Deboo, (01702) 553-211	<b>STROUD</b> John Groves, (07967) 777-742
	<b>SURREY/WOKING</b> Rocanā, (01483) 761-398
	<b>TAUNTON</b> Martin Sinclair, (01823) 321-059
	<b>TOTNES</b> Jerry, (01803) 840-199

### 2003 – Retreats

April	4 – 6	* Weekend, Ajahn Khantiko
April	18 – 27	10 day, Ajahn Ariyasilo
May	9 – 11	Weekend
May	30 – June 3	5 day, Ajahn Vimalo
June	20 – 22	Weekend, Ajahn Thāniyā (Death & Dying theme)
July	4 – 11	* 8 day, Kittisāro & Thānissarā (Lay Teachers)
Aug.	1 – 10	10 day, Ajahn Candasiri
Sept.	5 – 7	Weekend, Ajahn Vajiro
Sept.	26 – 30	5 day
Oct.	17 – 19	Weekend
Oct.	31 – Nov 2	Weekend, Ajahn Natthiko
Nov.	14 – 23	# 10 day, Ajahn Sucitto @
Dec.	12 – 14	Weekend, Ajahn Sundarā
Dec. 27 – Jan 1 2004		6 day, Ajahn Sundarā

\* Retreat full – Waiting list in operation.

# Retreat full – Waiting list closed.

@ Experienced – Must have done at least one 10 day retreat.

### Retreat Centre Work Weekends 2003

June 6 – 8 • Aug 29 – 31 • Oct 10 – 12

All retreats & work weekends begin in the *evening of the first day*.

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 of £5 per day (i.e. weekends – £15, 10 days – £50, etc). Bookings are not accepted by phone or e-mail. To obtain a booking form, either write to the Retreat Centre or download from the website  
[www.amaravati.org](http://www.amaravati.org)

N.B. Availability of places and retreat schedules are also shown on the website.

Applicants requiring **confirmation** – either that they have been given a place on the retreat or that they are on the waiting list – are requested to supply either an **e-mail address** or a **stamped addressed envelope**.

### 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.

# V I H A R A S

## BRITAIN

Amaravati Monastery  
Great Gaddesden,  
Hemel Hempstead,  
Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ  
Tel: (01442) 84-2455 (Office)  
84-3239 (Retreat Info.)  
Fax: (01442) 84-3721  
web site: www.amaravati.org  
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust,*  
*Amaravati.*

Aruna Ratanagiri  
Harnham Buddhist Monastery  
Harnham, Belsay,  
Northumberland  
NE20 0HF  
Tel: (01661) 88-1612  
Fax: (01661) 88-1019  
web site: www.ratanagiri.org.uk  
e-mail: community@ratanagiri.org.uk  
Stewards: *Magga Bhavaka Trust.*

Cittaviveka: Chithurst  
Buddhist Monastery  
Chithurst, Petersfield,  
Hampshire GU31 5EU  
Tel: (01730) 81-4986  
Fax: (01730) 81-7334  
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust,*  
*Cittaviveka.*

Hartridge Buddhist  
Monastery  
Upottery, Honiton,  
Devon EX14 9QE  
Tel: (01404) 89-1251  
Fax: (01404) 89-0023  
Stewards: *Devon Vihara Trust.*

## THAILAND

Wat Pah Nanachat  
Bahn Bung Wai,  
Amper Warin,  
Ubun Rajathani 34310

## AUSTRALIA

Bodhinyana Monastery  
Lot 1, Kingsbury Drive,  
Serpentine 6125 WA  
Tel: (08) 952-52420  
Fax: (08) 952-53420

Bodhivana Monastery  
780 Woods Point Road  
East Warburton  
Victoria 3799  
Tel: +61 (0) 3 5966 5999  
Fax: +61 (0) 3 5966 5998

Dhammaloka Buddhist  
Centre (Perth)  
18-20 Nanson Way,  
Nollamara 6061 WA  
Tel: (08) 934-51711  
Fax: (08) 934-44220  
Web site: www.dhammaloka.org.au  
Stewards: *Buddhist Society of*  
*Western Australia.*

## ITALY

Santacittarama  
Località Brulla,  
02030 Frasso Sabino (Rieti)  
Tel: (+39) 0765 872 186  
Fax: (+39) 06 233 238 629  
Website: www.santacittarama.org  
Stewards: *Santacittarama*  
*Association.*

## SWITZERLAND

Dhammapala  
Buddhistisches Kloster  
Am Waldrand,  
CH 3718 Kandersteg  
Tel: 033 / 675-2100  
Fax: 033 / 675-2241  
Stewards:  
*Dhammapala 31921-201-5.*

## NORTH AMERICA

Abhayagiri Monastery  
16201 Tomki Road,  
Redwood Valley,  
CA 95470  
Tel: (707) 485-1630  
Fax: (707) 485-7948  
(Sangha literature and  
West Coast newsletters are  
distributed from here.)  
Web site: www.abhayagiri.org  
Stewards: *Sanghapala Foundation.*

Boston Area:  
Buddhaparisa, Boston,  
Mass. Tel: (781) 861-6837  
Mailing for E. Coast USA  
& Thailand: to be placed on  
the mailing list, please write  
directly to Amaravati.

## NEW ZEALAND

Bodhinyanarama  
17 Rakau Grove,  
Stokes Valley,  
Wellington 6008  
Tel: (+ + 64) 4 563-7193  
Fax: (+ + 64) 4 563-5125  
e-mail: sangha@actrix.gen.nz  
Stewards:  
*Wellington Theravada Buddhist*  
*Association.*

Auckland Buddhist Vihara  
29 Harris Road,  
Mount Wellington,  
Auckland  
Tel: (+ + 64) 9 579-55443

# WESAK

A Celebration of  
the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment  
& Parinibbāna  
will take place at the following  
monasteries on the following dates:

*Amaravati* ..... **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May**  
*Cittaviveka* ..... **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May**  
*Dhammapāla* ..... **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**  
*Santacittarama*..... **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May**  
*Aruna Ratanagiri (Harnham)*..... **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

*All welcome.*

Please contact the relevant monastery for  
specific details of time, programme etc.

## 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	◯ FULL	☽ HALF	● NEW
APRIL	9 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)	16 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)	24 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	1 <sup>st</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup>
MAY	8 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	☉15 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	23 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)	30 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)
JUNE	7 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	14 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	22 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	28 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)
JULY	6 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	☼ 13 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	21 <sup>th</sup> (Mon)	28 <sup>th</sup> (Mon)

☉ Vesākha Pūjā                      ☼ Āsālha Pūjā (Vassa begins next day)

If undelivered, please return to: AMARAVATI MONASTERY  
 Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead  
 Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ, England

ROYAL MAIL      POSTAGE PAID  
**2**  
 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD  
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**Closing date for submission to the next issue is 20th May 2003**