



# FOREST SANGHA

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## Silence and Space

*From a Sunday talk at Amaravati,  
given by Luang Por Sumedho, summer 1994*

In the ordinary way of life in the world, silence is something that's not worth bothering with. It's more important to think, to create, and to do things: to fill the silence with sound. Usually we think of listening to sound, to music, to someone talking; with silence we think there is nothing to listen to. And in those times when we meet and neither party quite knows what to say to the other, we feel embarrassed or ill-at-ease; the silence between us feels uncomfortable.

However concepts such as silence and emptiness are beginning to indicate a direction to develop, something to pay attention to because one thing about

modern life is that we've managed to blast out silence and demolish space. We've created a society where we are endlessly

busy; we don't know how to rest or relax or to just be. Our lives have a driven quality in which our clever minds spend so much time developing a technology to make life easy – and yet we find ourselves stressed out by it. 'Time-saving devices' they were called, which would enable us to just push buttons and whatever we wanted would manifest. Tedious tasks would be turned over to robots and machinery. But what do we do with the time that we have saved?

Somehow we need to have something to do, to keep busy; always having to fill up silence with sound or space with forms. The emphasis is on really being a personality, somebody who can prove their worth. This is the rat race, the endless

cycle that we feel stressed by. When we're young and have a lot of energy we can enjoy the pleasures of youth, such as good health and romance and adventures and all that. But yet, those kind of experiences can be suddenly stopped: maybe through a disability; or perhaps when we lose somebody that we are very attached to. What happens to us can shake us so that the pleasures of the sense-realm, good health and vigour, good looks and personality, and the praise of the world no longer provide us with happiness. Or we can feel embittered because somehow we've not been able to achieve the level of pleasure and success

that we imagine we should have as our right. So we're always having to prove ourselves or be somebody, and we get intimidated by

the demands of our personalities.

The personality is conditioned into the mind. We're not born with a personality. To become a personality we have to think, to conceive of ourself as somebody. It can be good or bad; or a mixture of all kinds of things. The personality depends on being able to remember, having a history; having views or assumptions about ourself – whether we're attractive or unattractive, loveable or not, clever or stupid – and these can vary according to situations. But when we develop the contemplative mind we see through this. We begin to experience the original mind: the consciousness before it's conditioned by perception.

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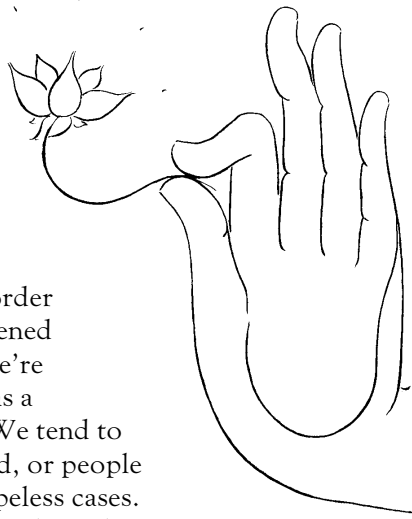
*To see the formed world always as a threat,  
as an attack on emptiness:  
that's not it.*

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Now if we try to think about this original mind, we get caught up in our analytical faculties, so we have to watch and listen-rather than trying to figure out how to become somebody who's enlightened. To meditate in order to become somebody who's enlightened doesn't work – because as long as we're trying to do that we create our self as a person that is unenlightened now. We tend to think of ourselves as not enlightened, or people with a lot of problems – or even hopeless cases. Sometimes we imagine that the worst thing that we can think about ourselves is the truth. There's a kind of perversity that assumes real honesty lies in admitting the worst possible things about oneself!

I'm not making judgements against personality but suggesting that you get to know what it is, so that you're not operating from the delusion you create and the assumptions you have of yourself as a person. And in order to do that one learns to sit still and listen to the silence. Not that this is going to make you enlightened, but it's going against the momentum of habit; against restless energies of the body and emotions. So you listen to the silence. You can hear my voice; you can hear the sounds of things that happen, but behind all that is a kind of high-pitch, almost electronic buzz. That's what I call 'the sound of silence.' I find that a very helpful way of concentrating the mind because when one begins to notice that – without regarding it as any kind of attainment or achievement – it becomes a convenient method for contemplation, in order to hear yourself think. Thinking itself is a kind of sound, isn't it? When you're thinking you can hear yourself thinking. So when I listen to myself thinking it's the same as listening to somebody else talking. And so I listen to the thinking of the mind and the sound of silence: when I'm with the sound of silence, then I notice that I'm not thinking. There's a stillness there, so I note, consciously note the stillness and that helps in recognising the emptiness. The emptiness isn't a shutting off or a denial of anything but a letting go of the habitual tendencies of restless activity or obsessive thought.

You can actually stop the momentum of your habits and desires by listening. And in that, with the sound of silence, there's attentiveness. You don't have to close your eyes; you don't have to plug up your ears or ask somebody to leave the room; you don't have to do it in a special place – wherever you are it seems to work. It can be very helpful in a communal or family situation where life gets habitual. That is, in these situations, we get used to each other and then tend to operate through



assumptions and habits that we don't even know about. Now the silence of the mind allows all these conditions to be what they are. But the ability to reflect on them in terms of arising and ceasing allows us to see that all the perceptions and ideas we have about ourselves are conditions of the mind, and not what we really are. What you think you are is not what you are.

So you say, 'What am I then?' But do you need to know what you are? You just need to know what you're not, that's enough. The problem is that we think we're all kinds of things that we're not and that's where we suffer. We don't suffer from not-self, *anattā*, from not being anybody; we suffer from being somebody all the time. That's where the suffering is. So when we're not anybody it's not suffering, it's a relief, it's like putting down a heavy burden of, self-consciousness, and fears of what other people think. The whole lot that's connected to the sense of our self, we can drop. We can just let it go. What a relief to not be anybody! Or to not feel we're somebody that has got all kinds of problems and 'I should practise more meditation'; 'I should come to Amaravati more often'; 'I've got to get rid of all this and I can't do it!' All this is thought, isn't it? It's making all kinds of assumptions about yourself. It's the critical mind. It's the discriminative mind that's always saying you're not good enough or you've got to be better.

So we can listen; this listening is available to us all the time. At first maybe it's helpful to go to meditation retreats or situations where you have reminders around you, where you're supported, where a teacher is there to keep prodding you along, helping you to remember – because it's easy to fall right back into the old habits. This is especially the case with mental habits because they're subtle; and the sound of silence doesn't seem like anything worth listening to. But even if you listen to music, you can listen to the silence behind the music. This doesn't destroy the music, but puts it in a perspective where you're not carried away by the music or addicted to sound. You can appreciate the sound and also the silence.

So the Middle Way that the Buddha talks about isn't an extreme of annihilation. It's not saying 'Silence, emptiness, no self, this is what we've all got to do. We've got to get rid of our desires, our personalities, all the sense realm is an attack on silence. We've got to destroy all the conditions; all music, all forms, we shouldn't have any forms in this room, just have white walls.' To see the formed world always as a threat, as an attack on emptiness; that's not it. It's not taking sides

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# EDITORIAL

## Form

It is the vassa, the three months in which the saṃgha determine a fixed residence. Traditionally this is the time when we pick up, consider, and brighten the Vinaya, the precepts and community conventions that we have undertaken as a framework for our lives. It sharpens the sense that, although the goal of the Buddha's teaching is freedom, the path to release is grounded in conventions, in forms, in restraint. Recently at a gathering at Amaravati for Luang Por Sumedho's birthday, amongst the reflections he offered was something he said Luang Por Chah had challenged him with when he was a young monk, 'Sumedho, the Dhamma is about letting go: the Vinaya is about holding on.' On the surface there sounds to be a conflict between these two, yet in our direct experience is this the case? What is the result for each of us of keeping the precepts? The possibility the Buddha pointed to was a growing sense of ease and lightness in ourselves (and his teaching gives us tools to understand what may be getting in the way of that for us).

For the Awakened Ones the Eightfold Path, rather than a path to something, is the natural expression of their understanding. The precepts, which are embedded in the Path, are a way for us to both express and deepen our own understanding. They support us in letting go of unskillful things that occlude awareness, and in cultivating skillful factors which support its shining forth; not as an identity but as a way of understanding our *kammic* predicament and freeing ourselves from it. It does matter how we live; we see, when we refrain from harming others that we don't have the residual fear and guilt that otherwise might have hindered us, and we contact that in us which wishes well-being for others – this intrinsic quality of the human heart.

Dhamma practice is a coming more fully into presence. The Buddha would refer to himself as the Tathāgata – 'the One Thus Come.' He was an exemplar of someone who was actually here and now with

whatever specific thing was going on; responding to people's particular questions, sorting out difficulties... Recollecting his life reminds us that silence, stillness, emptiness are no more to be held onto than 'views, tradition, morality and conventions;' they are all to be used for abandonment. The Buddha's encouragement is not to adhere to anything (or not-thing), but to use it for understanding and relinquishing self view. This takes a profound degree of willingness to receive all that is here; and wisdom, because, as Luang Por points out, we tend to grasp after what we think we are, and don't open to what we are not.

Life energy is obviously flowing in you and me; Vinaya, in its guidance on conventions and behaviour, gives us a skilful way of expressing this. Our life energy can then be a celebration of Dhamma: not taking sides with formedness, self, or some absence of these – out of views, fear or desire – we allow the essential flow. We can allow things to form, and to disband back into the ground out of which they arose; and take refuge in the quality of 'Buddho' – that which knows. Then in neither the presence of things nor in their absence – forms or space – is where our hearts place

their allegiance, but in the Knowing and in what supports that.

In this play of ours with forms and the unformed, it seems we have what we need to come out from under the bedcovers and dare to be manifest. With all its struggles and tragedies this human birth is a precious one. We can come out and pick up conventions that support our attunement with what we are and what we are not. And celebrate: we celebrate the Dhamma, our connectedness, the Path and the awesome possibility it gives of fully coming into presence. At the end of Luang Por's birthday reflections the community chanted him a blessing. I found it moving – the giving voice to our gratitude for his life, and the purity of aspiration which is both our offering and our true meeting place.

Sister Thānīyā

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*'I do not say that you can attain purity by views, tradition, insights, morality or conventions; nor will you attain purity without them.  
But by using them for abandonment, rather than as positions to hold on to, you will come to be at peace without the need to be anything.'*

Sutta Nipāta v. 848  
Translation: Ven. Saddhātissa

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for the conditioned or the unconditioned but rather recognising their relationship – which is an on-going practice.

That's where mindfulness is the way because in the state we're in on Planet Earth and with these human bodies, we have a very strong conditioning to bear with. For the whole of our lifetime we have to live within the limits and problems and difficulties of the human body. And we have emotions. We feel everything and we remember all kinds of things. We're in this state of pleasure and pain for our lifetime. But we can see it in the right way – and this is the point the Buddha is making too: to understand things as they really are, to be able to let things be what they really are rather than create delusions around things.

Out of ignorance we can create endless delusions around the things of our life, around our own bodies, around our memories, around language, around perceptions, views, opinions, the culture, the religious conventions, so it becomes complicated, difficult and separative. The alienation that modern people feel is this alienation that results from self-obsession – where our sense of our self is of absolute importance. It's been held up to us that this is what life is all about, so we can become full of our own self-importance. Even the fact that we might think we're a hopeless case: we still give that tremendous importance. We can spend years going to psychiatrists to discuss the reasons for our own hopelessness – because we are very important to ourselves. And that is also quite a natural thing for us because we've got to be with ourselves all the time. We can escape from other people but we are always stuck with this.

So *anattā* or non-self: many people misinterpret that and say it's a denial of self, a kind of put-down of the self as something we shouldn't have. That's not how *anattā* works. *Anattā* or non-self is a suggestion to the mind; it's a tool to begin to reflect on what we really are. And in the long-run we don't have to see ourselves in any way as being anything. If we take this reflection to its ultimate, then the body, the emotions, the memories, the whole lot that seems so definitely, so insistently ourselves, can be seen in terms of 'they arise, they cease.' And when we're aware of the cessation of things, that appears more real to us than the ephemeral conditions that we tend to grasp or be obsessed with. It takes a while to be able to get over the hump of this self-obsession, but you can do it. It's not something one can't do but it does take a while because the habit tendencies are so strong.

Some psychologists and psychiatrists have commented that we need a self. This is an important thing to consider, that a self is not something that we shouldn't have but something we need to put in its proper place. And that this self be based on the goodness of our lives rather than a self that we create

out of dwelling on the flaws and faults and negative tendencies of the mind.

It's so easy to see oneself in very critical ways, particularly when one compares oneself to other people or to images or to great figures in history. But when we always compare ourselves with ideals, we can only be critical with the way we are because life is like this; it's a flow, it's change, it's feeling tired, it's having to deal with emotional problems, with anger, jealousy, fears, all kinds of desires, all kinds of strange things that we don't want to admit even to ourselves. But that's a part of the process, and we have to recognise conditions and observe their nature whether they're good or bad, perfect or imperfect: they are impermanent, they arise, they cease. In this way we keep learning and we find strength working through our own *kammic* conditioning. Maybe we didn't get a very good deal at all in life. Maybe we've got all kinds of physical problems, health problems and emotional problems. But in terms of Dhamma, these are not obstacles because many times it's these flaws and difficulties that force us to awaken to life. And some part of us realises that trying to straighten up everything and make everything nice, with everything ordered and life pleasant is not the answer; we recognise that there is something more to life than just controlling it and trying to get the best of the conditions.

And so as a way of letting go of our own position, the sense of our self, our own convention, there is this recognition of silence. We can be in the silence where there is unity. Like the space in this room, it's the same for all of us. I can't say this space is mine. But space is just that, it's space, it's where the forms come and go: but it's also something we can notice, and we can contemplate. And what happens? As we develop awareness of space then we begin to have a sense of spaciousness, or of infinity – because space has no beginning or end. We can build rooms and look at space as it exists in a room like this, but we know that actually the building is in the space. So space is like infinity, it has no boundaries. But within the limitations of our own visual consciousness, boundaries help us see the space in a room because space as infinity is too much. The space in a room is enough so we can contemplate the relationship of the forms to the space. Then in your own thoughts as you listen, the sound of silence has the same effect.

I used to deliberately think thoughts, neutral thoughts like, 'I am a human being' – which is neutral, it doesn't arouse any emotional feelings. And while listening to myself thinking that thought, the intention would be to listen to the thought as thought and the silence that it's in. This way I'm contemplating and recognising the relationship of the thinking faculty to the silence, the natural silence of the mind. And in that I'm establishing mindfulness, the ability as an individual

being to be a witness, to be the listener, to be that which is awake. Now emotionally this can be very difficult. We can get very negative about it sometimes, because we haven't resolved a lot of our desires to have things, to feel things, to get high or to get rid of things. So this is where we listen to our emotional reactions. Just begin to notice when there is this silence, what happens emotionally. It may be negativity: 'I don't know what I'm doing,' or: 'This is a waste of time.' Doubting states will arise around this practice. But listen also to those emotions: they're just habits of the mind. And by admitting them and accepting them, then they cease also. The emotional reactions will fall away more and more and you'll feel confident in just being that which is aware.

Then you can establish your life with the intention to do good and refrain from doing evil. Paradoxically we need that self-respect. Meditation doesn't come from the idea that if we're just mindful we can do anything we feel like, but it involves a respect for conditions: to respect the body we have, our humanity, our intelligence and our ability to do things. It doesn't mean to be attached or identified, but meditation does allow

us to recognise what we have: this is the way it is, these conditions are this way. Even to respect our disabilities. Self-respect or respect for the conditions means respect for whatever state they're in. It doesn't mean liking that state, but it does mean accepting it and learning to work with the limitations of it.

So for the enlightened mind it's not a matter of having the best, is it? It's not that you need to have the best health and the best conditions, the best of everything in order to really make it – because that feeds a sense of yourself as being somebody who can only operate from having the very best of everything. But when we begin to realise that the disabilities, the flaws and the strange things that we each have are not obstructions then we're seeing them in the right way. We can respect them and be willing to accept and use them in order to get beyond our attachment to them. If we practise like this, we can be free from identifying and from being attached to those perceptions of ourselves as being this or that. And this is the marvellous thing that we can do as human beings: it allows us to use the whole of our lives, and it's an on-going process. ❖

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## News From the Trusts

### **The English Sangha Trust**

Good progress has been made in the building of the Dhamma Hall at Chithurst. Work on tiling the main roof will be well in hand by the time you read this newsletter. Thai supporters organised a Pah Pa in July which raised the princely sum of £118,000. This will pay for the next stage of the works, which will include the flooring. At Amaravati, a generous donation from a supporter has helped towards the costs of the renovation of part of the bhikkhu vihara to form a disabled unit which will be called the Chao Khun Suite. There are also some substantial works going on improving the roofing in the bhikkhu vihara. This is being paid for out of existing funds accumulated from donations from many supporters. The Trust would like to bring to the attention of supporters, a very helpful way of giving at the moment. This is Give As You Earn, where you can request your employer to deduct charitable donations from your salary. Your employer pays the donation over to an agency charity, which is then responsible for distributing the money to the charities of each employee's choice. There are two reasons why this is a good way to donate. One is that the employer deducts the donation from

your salary before applying PAYE, thus giving you tax relief. Secondly, the Government is giving a 10% supplement on all such donations until 5th April 2003. The English Sangha Trust's Give As You Earn number is GYE4761. If you would like any more information please contact the Trust's secretary at Amaravati. If you are a supporter of Harnham or Devon, please contact those monasteries for their Trusts' details.

### **The trustees for Aruna Ratanagiri**

Monastery in Harnham, extend a warm welcome to anyone able to commit themselves for a minimum of two months as manager of the monastery's kitchen. The position would entail cooking 4-5 vegetarian meals per week for 5-9 people. At this stage it would be best if the person filling the post was male and over 24 years old, ideally possessing a valid UK driver's license (but not essential). Private accommodation and food would be provided. If you are interested in finding out more, please telephone Jody Higgs on 0131 3327987 or Email [trustees@ratanagiri.org.uk](mailto:trustees@ratanagiri.org.uk)

### **The Devon Vihara Trust,**

We are pleased to report that Hartridge

is now up and running as a retreat place for monks and nuns. There is a steady and positive energy around the monastery and what is happening there. We are fortunate to have Paul Walker as our resident manager who facilitates the retreats and also liaises with the lay supporters. The monks (no nuns yet!) who have been on retreat have been extremely appreciative of the opportunity for solitude in the Devon countryside. We feel this is a very valuable offering to make to the Sangha. The visits from the Sangha to give teaching and hold workshops have been much appreciated by the lay community. The Lay Support Group is growing; there were twelve people at the last meeting. There are regular evening sittings in the Shrine Room, a Saturday afternoon communal practice time, and Sunday walks are being organised. Our donations have fallen with the change in use of the monastery. The Trust are very keen to support the monastics who come here for retreat. We would welcome more regular financial support, so please, if anyone would like to contribute to this facility with a donation or a regular commitment, however small, contact Nick Ray: tel. 01373 471 687 or [nick\\_ray@lineone.net](mailto:nick_ray@lineone.net)

# CLARITY OF INSIGHT

by Venerable Ajahn Chah

Extracts from a talk given by Luang Por to lay meditators in Bangkok in April 1979;  
translated by Ajahn Kalyāno.

Meditate reciting ‘Buddho’, ‘Buddho’ until it penetrates deep into the heart of your consciousness (*citta*). The word ‘Buddho’ represents the awareness and wisdom of the Buddha. In practice, you must depend on this word more than anything else. The awareness it brings will lead you to understand the truth about your own mind. It’s a true refuge, which means that there is both mindfulness and insight present. Wild animals can have awareness of a sort. They have mindfulness as they stalk their prey and prepare to attack. Even the predator needs firm mindfulness to keep hold of the captured prey however defiantly it struggles to escape death. That is one kind of mindfulness. For this reason you must be able to distinguish between different kinds of mindfulness. The Buddha taught to meditate reciting ‘Buddho’ as a way to apply the mind. When you consciously apply the mind to an object, it wakes up. The awareness wakes it up. Once this knowing has arisen through meditation, you can see the mind clearly. As long as the mind remains without the awareness of ‘Buddho’, even if there is ordinary worldly mindfulness present, it is as if unawakened and without insight. It will not lead you to what is truly beneficial. *Sati* or mindfulness depends on the presence of ‘Buddho’ – the knowing. It must be a clear knowing, which leads to the mind becoming brighter and more radiant. The illuminating effect that this clear knowing has on the mind is similar to the brightening of a light in a darkened room. As long as the room is pitch black, any objects placed inside remain difficult to distinguish or else completely obscured from view because of the lack of light. But as you begin intensifying the brightness of the light inside, it will penetrate throughout the whole room, enabling you to see more clearly from moment to moment, thus allowing you to know more and more the details of any object inside there. When you have the awareness of ‘Buddho’, the mind is wiser and has a more refined level of knowing than normal. This awareness allows you to see the conditions of the mind and to see the mind itself; you can see the state of mind in the midst of all phenomena. This being so, you are naturally able to employ skilful techniques for training the mind. Whether you are caught into doubt or any other of the defilements, you see it as a mental phenomenon that arises in the mind and must be investigated and dealt with in the mind.

Ultimately, the mind has to make a great effort to struggle with and overcome the reactions stimulated by every kind of sense object and mental state that you experience. It must work hard with every single object that contacts it. All the six internal sense bases and their external objects converge on the mind. By focusing

awareness on the mind alone, you gain understanding and insight into the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind and all their objects. The mind is there already, so the important thing is to investigate right at the centre of the mind. The further you go investigating the mind itself, the clearer and more profound the insight that emerges. This is something I emphasise when teaching, because understanding this point is crucial to the practice. Normally, when you experience sense contact and receive impingement from different objects, the mind is just waiting to react with attraction or aversion. That is what happens with the unenlightened mind. It’s ready to get caught into good moods because of one kind of stimulation or bad moods because of another kind.

Here you examine the mind with firm and unwavering attention. As you experience different objects through the senses, you don’t let it feed mental proliferation. You don’t get caught into a lot of defiled thinking – you are already practising *vipassanā* and depending on insight wisdom to investigate all sense objects. The mode of *vipassanā* meditation is what develops wisdom. Training with the different objects of *samatha* meditation – whether it is the recitation of a word such as Buddho, Dhammo, Sangho or the practice of mindfulness with the breathing – results in the mind experiencing the calm and firmness of *samādhi*. In *samatha* meditation you focus awareness on a single object and let go of all others temporarily.

*Vipassanā* meditation is similar because you use the reflection ‘don’t believe it’ as you make contact with sense objects. Practising *vipassanā*, you don’t let any sense object delude you. You are aware of each object as soon as it converges in on the mind, whether it is experienced with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind and you use this reflection ‘don’t believe it’ almost like a verbal meditation object to be repeated over and over again. Every object immediately becomes a source of insight. You use the mind that is firm in *samādhi* to investigate each object’s impermanent nature. At each moment of sense contact you bring up the reflection: ‘It’s not certain’ or ‘This is impermanent.’ If you are caught in delusion and believe in the object experienced you suffer, because all these *dhammas* (phenomena) are non-self (*anattā*). If you attach to anything that is non-self and misperceive it as self, it automatically becomes a cause for pain and distress. This is because you attach to mistaken perceptions.

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As you use insight meditation to investigate the three characteristics and penetrate the true nature of phenomena, it’s not necessary to do anything special. There’s no need to go to extremes. Don’t make it difficult

for yourself. Focus your awareness directly, as if you are sitting down receiving guests who are entering into a reception room. In your reception room there is only one chair, so the different guests that come into the room to meet you, are unable to sit down because you are already sitting in the only chair available. If a visitor enters the room, you know who they are straight away. Even if two, three or many visitors come into the room together, you instantly know who they are because they have nowhere to sit down. You occupy the only seat available, so every single visitor who comes in is quite obvious to you and unable to stay for very long. You can observe all the visitors at your ease because they don't have anywhere to sit down. You fix awareness on investigating the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self and hold your attention on this contemplation not sending it anywhere else. Insight into the transient, unsatisfactory and selfless nature of all phenomena steadily grows clearer and more comprehensive. Your understanding grows more profound. Such clarity of insight leads to a peace that penetrates deeper into your heart than any you might experience from the practice of tranquillity (*samatha*) meditation. It is the clarity and completeness of this insight into the way things are that has a purifying effect on the mind. Wisdom arising as a result of deep and crystal clear insight acts as the agent of purification. Through repeated examination and contemplation of the truth over time, your views change and what you once mistakenly perceived as attractive gradually loses its appeal as the truth of its unattractive nature becomes apparent. You investigate phenomena to see if they are really permanent or of a transient nature. At first you simply recite to yourself the teaching that all conditions are impermanent, but after time you actually see the truth clearly from your investigation. The truth is waiting to be found right at the point of investigation. This is the seat where you wait to receive visitors. There is nowhere else you could go to develop insight. You must remain seated on this one spot – the only chair in the room. As visitors enter your reception room, it is easy to observe their appearance and the way they behave, because they are unable to sit down; inevitably you get to know all about them. In other words you arrive at a clear and distinct understanding of the impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless nature of all these phenomena and this insight has become so indisputable and firm in your mind, that it puts an end to any remaining uncertainty about the true nature of things. You know for certain that there is no other possible way of viewing experience. This is realisation of the Dhamma at the most profound level.



Ultimately, your meditation involves sustaining the knowing, followed by continuous letting go as you experience sense objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. It involves just this much and there is no need to make anything more out of it.

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When you first start meditating, it seems like all you know how to do is to doubt and speculate about things. The mind is always wavering and vacillating. You spend the whole time caught in agitated thinking and proliferating about things. You have doubts about every last thing. Why? It stems from impatience. You want to know all the answers and fast. You want to have insight quickly, without having to do anything. You want to know the truth of the way things are, but that wanting is so strong in the mind that it is more powerful than the insight you desire. For that reason the practice has to develop in stages. You must go one step at a time. In the first place you need to put forth persistent effort. You also need the continuous support of your past good actions and development of the ten spiritual perfections (*pāramī*\*). Keep summoning up effort in training the mind. Don't get caught into desiring quick results; that just leads you to disappointment and frustration when the insights are slow to come. Thinking like that won't help you. Is it correct to expect to suddenly experience some kind of permanent state where you are experiencing no pleasure or pain at all? It doesn't matter what the mind throws up at you. At that time when you do get overwhelmed by pleasure and pain stimulated by contact between the mind and different sense objects, you don't have any idea what level your practice has reached. But within a short space of time such moods lose power over the mind. Actually, such impingement can be of benefit, because it reminds you to

examine your own experience. You get to know what reactions all the sense objects, thoughts and perceptions you experience, bring up in the mind. You know, both in the cases when they lead the mind towards agitation and suffering, and when they hardly stir the mind at all. Some meditators just want to have insight into the way the mind is affected by pleasant objects; they only want to investigate the good moods. But that way they never gain true insight. They don't become very smart. Really, you must also examine what happens when you experience unpleasant sense impingement. You have to know what that does to the mind. In the end, that's the way you have to train yourself. ❖

\* *Pāramī*: The ten spiritual perfections include: giving, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truthfulness, resolution, loving-kindness and equanimity.

# ENERGY

*Ajahn Sucitto's response to a few questions from the teachers and students  
of the Deep Spring Centre in Michigan, December 2000.*

**QUESTION:** Could you share with us what you came to teach in the workshop about energy at the Centre for Buddhist Studies in Barre, Massachusetts?

**AJAHN SUCITTO:** Yes. My motivation for it was a recognition that sometimes people mistake energy for effort. They try to make an effort, but the energy is not there. So they are pumping the gas pedal but there is no fuel in the tank. Then they think, 'There is something wrong with this car or maybe I am not pumping hard enough.' My interest was to try to create a greater sense of how to arouse energy, how to sustain energy, how to modulate energy when there is too much or it is going the wrong way, how to enjoy it, and then the results of it in terms of mindfulness and *samādhi*, the *brahmavihāras* and so forth.

I see energy as having three avenues that we can approach it through: body energy; heart energy, which is our aspiration, our inspiration, our emotional base; and the energy of intelligence, our ability to think, to decide, to know. I was trying to present ways in which all three of those could be properly activated. We did particular forms of standing and movement for body energy. We did various devotional practices, to enhance the sense of the group. I was trying to encourage that not as, 'There are fourteen other people here who will probably bother me,' but, 'I am in a safe place, I have fourteen friends.' We did things like serving each other food rather than just going and getting our own. Then chanting together. Or, first of all, just making sounds together so not starting from the awkwardness of 'I cannot chant.' That was very nice because one is working on an empathetic basis and also dealing with a subtle resonance. Voice, I think, is very significant because it always has an emotional tone to it.

We made a lot out of offering to the shrine, using water and various things. The idea being that we did it with a thought in mind, 'This is for the welfare of beings,' and connected that to a mood of the heart. We also did a fair amount of meditation. Then we had a couple of hours of study in the morning where I would present some texts and we would have a debate – our grey matter got a little bit of massage there! A certain intellectual interest is also energising.

**QUESTION:** Many people are studying what I would call a psychological path. A lot of these have to do with healing of personality through the ego, the super-ego. How does this work in with *vipassanā* practice and the Dhamma?

**AJAHN SUCITTO:** I would say that Dhamma practice is about healing and about liberation. The two are not opposites. Liberation comes out of healing; healing is the first step. Actually healing is a kind of liberation from the grosser effects of greed, hatred, delusion, and also from the grosser activations of those things in oneself. The Buddha would often use the word 'liberation', not as an ultimate state, but to say things like, 'When your mind is focused on benevolence for that time you are liberated from the taint of ill will.' So one should regard liberation as something that can refer to something temporary and relative as well as an ultimate goal.

It seems that the quality of *citta* – which is often translated as 'mind' or 'heart' – is an awareness that is affective, and has a physical expression, an emotional expression and an intellectual expression. The very here-and-now sense of what we are is *citta*; the sense of 'who I am.' I can feel my body, I can feel moods, am aware of thoughts, aware of subtle energies, aware of all those things yet I am none of those, but I am not other than them either. *Citta* is the receptivity that can respond to all that. Now that has to be healed because very often that process is marginalized or constricted. We can feel, 'It is not completely safe to be here.' People can be held in their bodies or held emotionally, then there is only a certain narrow band of emotional stuff that is allowed to happen. The rest of it is not allowed, it is buried – it is there but it is not there. Then *citta* has shut down cells in it, closed passages. They are there but they are closed, or rarely visited, or not ventilated, in terms of body, emotion, and even our agility of mind. The mind has only a certain wave band of experience that can be conceived of and articulated.

The first of the four foundations of mindfulness is, 'body in the body.' Not just the body as we normally conceive it; but the totality of embodiment, which is full of all sorts of subtle energies, warmth, and vibrations. So feeling the 'body in the body' is not purely our ideas about body, the visual description of it or whether it is male or female; feeling the quality of embodiment means getting in touch with energetic patterns. Energetic patterns in the body are very much associated with emotional patterns and mental patterns. When you come to experiencing the energetic basis of awareness, you come across the boundaries between body, heart and mind. I guess most of us would recognise that when we're depressed, our body does sag; when we're upright, our shoulders do reach our ears and our jaw locks – this is



not done consciously. So I think a lot of healing work is done to make much more flow and openness between the embodiment experience, the feeling resonance, emotional experience and the understanding, noetic awareness.

The standard practices of mindfulness, *samādhī* (concentration), *mettā* (loving kindness) are enormous enhancements in terms of health, they make awareness healthy. *Citta* becomes whole. Referring to the healthy mind, the Buddha said, 'This *citta* is bright and luminous.' And also, 'This I call the supreme abiding place, the pleasant abiding in the here and now.' This is the healed mind. Then liberation from that is the recognition that this experience is not self; this very experience does not belong to anybody, there is no need to keep inflecting the notion of 'I am' onto it. The first aspect of practice has to do with the area that we might call basically '*samatha*', settling, or healing. The second aspect of the practice is *vipassanā* or insight. The two should help and support each other. I think that where a lot of current therapies are working is in dealing with issues that previously would have been dealt with in terms of Right View, and precepts and virtue. These are sources of tremendous self-valuing. If you look in the scriptures, it is apparent so many times, the Buddha would say, 'If you have Right View, then you recognise the power of your own actions.' It is basically seeing cause and effect. 'I am the captain of my ship. I am potent. I can steer out of this storm. I am not stuck in this.' Virtue means I have value in myself that I do not want to tarnish or lose.

As we all know, the nitty-gritty of it is when we come to the hindrances. This is where the sense of self-value is really put to the test because on many occasions we will think, 'I am the hindrance.' But the way the Buddha expressed it is: when someone has a beautiful face, and sees something ugly around their neck, it is not the person who is ugly. The whole attitude is, fundamentally we are in a blessed situation. We are beings of virtue, and confusion has happened. Rather than, 'I am finding out about the truth of myself now... I really am a frantic, crazy, control freak.' This can happen if you find yourself caught in a hindrance and there is not good health. I think psychotherapists are making worthy attempts to free up that area.

**QUESTION:** When you are talking about embodiment, how would you help people to experience energy in the body?

**AJAHN SUCITTO:** I think primarily it has to do with dissolving tension. The sense of solidity that we have is actually an energetic experience. The base state of energy is the sense of massiveness, solidity – the earth element. By working with tension alone and letting go

of what is unnecessary in terms of effort, in terms of holding, there is a softening and there is energy. Energy is released because energy is used up in these negative unnecessary patterns of tension, holding, strain. So the first way would be to learn how to relax or open up what is solid and make it more dynamic.

The second way has to do with attuning to the dynamics of energy. So when one breathes in and breathes out there is an energy experience. To my mind it is quite crucial in terms of *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness of breathing) because it is said in the teaching on it, almost hypnotically, over and over again, 'In-breathing, out-breathing.' It does not say 'breathing' or even 'watching the breath'. It says, 'In-breathing, out-breathing.' How do you know the difference between an in-breath and an out-breath? It is not through sensation, it is through energy. When you breathe in you brighten: when you breathe out you calm. When you breathe in you sharpen: when you breathe out you soften. These are energetic experiences. You can recognise the whole rhythmic process, which is the very thing that is keeping you alive. It flows fully and pleasantly. Then you are experiencing energy as a dynamic and as a sign in meditation. You can feel it moving and be aware of the track of energy. You can start to experience it radiating through the body when you breathe.

Not to go on too long about it, but hindrances also have an energetic expression. Every hindrance tends to tighten and contract, with the sense of loss of pliancy, loss of vibrancy; vitality is captured. Restlessness is tense. Dullness is contracted in a deflated way; you feel the mind lose its flexibility, its ability to scan or be agile. It is a staleness of mind and a loss of body tone. Dullness is amazing because you can know that all you have to do is walk up and down, but the mind is so stupid that you can still sit there and think, 'I'll just work with it. I need to calm down.'

Ideally, if one can register a skilful, energetic tone, one that is not hyper nor flat, nor pushing forward nor dragging back – a balanced tone – then you can detect hindrance when it comes up because you start to feel the pressure. You get a little bit of speed here, a little bit of stiffening there. I liken it to a stream in which you get vortex patterns; these vortex patterns are like the hindrances. If the stream is going well and it flows past the vortex it will gradually pull that vortex out into itself; and similarly we can capture the energy of a hindrance. Of course, it happens the other way around sometimes. But even with that, in retrospect, one can recognise what has happened – mostly you were up in your head. Energy is not good or bad, but with hindrances you get dissociation up into your head, then the story starts, and we're somewhere else. And very often we try to deal with the story, and maybe tidy up the plot, instead of just going to the energy and diverting the flow. ❖



### KATHINA & ALMSGIVING CEREMONIES

All welcome – for further information please contact the monasteries;

**Aruna Ratanagiri (Harnham)**, 7th October  
Contact Khun Wanjai Poonum  
Tel. 01483 536092/ 857575

or Namtip Milligan Tel/fax. 0191 240 3522

**Cittaviveka**, 21st October  
Contact: Khun Chatabut Lancaster  
Tel. 020 8668 6909

**Santacittarama (Italy)**, 14th October

**Amaravati**, 28th October  
10.00am arrival for 10.30 pindapat.  
Contact Khun Chatabut Lancaster for Dāna offerings Tel. 020 8668 6909, or Diana Jones to volunteer help Tel. 01442 872058

**Dhammapala (Switzerland)**, 4th Nov.  
Please use the contact person detailed if you would like to offer any help with any of the arrangements.

### AMARAVATI NOTICES

**Annual Gratitude to Parents day** Sunday 14th October at Amaravati. *All welcome.* 11.00am arrival for meal offering at 11.30am. *For further details please contact Amaravati or Mr Chandī Perera on 0208 977 7642 (after 6pm).*

**Winter Retreat** January-March. As in previous years we are looking to have a small group of lay people staying at the monastery to help with the kitchen etc. We will only accept people who have stayed before, and ask for a minimum stay of a month. Please write to the secretary before the end of October.

**Community Work Weekend at Amaravati** Saturday 1st - Sunday 2nd December. We would appreciate your support with the upkeep of the grounds and gardens. 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.

### ARUNA RATANAGIRI NOTICES

#### Winter Retreat

As usual at this time of year there will be an opportunity for lay folk to support the monastic Sangha during our winter retreat of January and February by taking over the running of our kitchen. It would entail preparing 5-6 vegetarian meals per week for about 7 people. As we are booking up the weeks it would be helpful to know of your interest soon. *Please contact the monastery directly on:* Tel. 01661 881 612 or e-mail: [community@ratanagiri.org.uk](mailto:community@ratanagiri.org.uk)

### CITTAVIVEKA NOTICES

#### Lay forums

The venue of these discussions is the monastery's Reception Room, the time 2:00pm

Saturday, November 3rd  
Sunday, December 2nd

#### Forest Work Volunteer Days

Sat. 6th Oct, Sat. 17th Nov, Sun. 16th Dec. These afternoons will be spent helping the Sangha in ongoing work in Hammer Woods.

Meet at the monastery at 1.00pm. If you'd like overnight accommodation *write to* the guest monk/nun in advance.

**Renewal and Resolution** January 2nd  
There will be the opportunity to take the Refuges and Five Precepts at 3pm. The formal going for Refuge and Precept Resolution will be followed by a discussion. *Telephone for details.*

#### Cittaviveka Winter Retreat

January, February and March 2002. Applications are welcome from experienced self-supporting men (we have sufficient women) to be part of the support team. Preferred length of stay is one month or more. *Write to the guest monk.*

### HARTRIDGE NOTICES

Teaching weekends – these include a meditation workshop on the Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday at 7.30pm Pūjā and Dhamma talk:

24th to 25th November (Ajahn Khantiko)  
30th December to 1st Jan. (Aj Candasiri)

Visitors are welcome to come, offer dāna, and meet with the Sangha.

There are also other events not advertised well in advance. *For up to date information contact the monastery or Sati satī on 01305 786821.* Any local people who would like to help with the upkeep of the buildings and grounds, or to offer a lift or a meal to the Sangha, please contact Paul, Tel. 01404891251 or email to: [hartridge@onetel.net.uk](mailto:hartridge@onetel.net.uk)

### RETREATS OUTSIDE THE UK

**Santacittarama (Italy)** 31st Oct – 4th November, Ajahn Candasiri. Teaching in English with Italian translation. Morlupo near Rome. *Info and bookings* Tel: 00 39 06 6865148, 6-8pm Mon, 6-9pm Tues/Wed, 3-7pm Thurs.

#### Dhammapala (Switzerland)

Retreats will be held at Dhammapala on the following dates. All these retreats will be taught in German. *Contact the monastery.*  
Weekend Retreats:

10th -11th November, 1st-2nd December  
Longer Retreats:

9th -11th November 3-day study retreat (Ajahn Akincano),

26th December-2nd January New Year meditation retreat (Ajahn Khemasiri)  
Also, 23rd-25th November Nyanaponika Centre, near Vienna (Ajahn Khemasiri)  
Tel: 00 43 (0) 1 865 3491

**Ajahn Sucitto** will be teaching the following retreats: in South Africa: Buddhist Retreat Centre, Ixopo, 2-10 November, *e-mail:* [brcxipoxo@futurenet.co.za](mailto:brcxipoxo@futurenet.co.za) in America: Detroit 12-15 April, Contact: Richard Smith, Tel: (248) 641-7620. *e-mail:* [mithras1@earthlink.net](mailto:mithras1@earthlink.net) IMS, Barre. 19-28 April, Tel: (978)355-4378. New York 10-12 May, *Contact:* New York Insight, *e-mail:* [nyinsight@earthlink.net](mailto:nyinsight@earthlink.net)

### GENERAL NOTICES

#### Bodhivana monastery

Ajahn Anan, a senior monk who trained with Ajahn Chah, was offered land for the purpose of establishing a monastery within the Ajahn Chah tradition in Melbourne, Australia. Ajahn Kalyāno, his senior Western disciple, has taken up the position as abbot. Currently Ajahn Kalyāno and Venerable Ānando are living near the land: there are plans for building, with the intention to spend the vassa of 2002 on the land itself.

**Ajahn Assaji** after spending 8 years at Amaravati will be leaving there. From 1st December he will be resident at the following address: 69, Pix Road, Letchworth, HERTS SG6 1PZ. Tel: 01462 64132.

E-mail [asagie@totalise.co.uk](mailto:asagie@totalise.co.uk)

#### A note from Ven. Dhammaratana

In 1994 I went to Wat Pah Nanachat in Thailand to learn Buddhist meditation. After spending two years learning from various Thai teachers I came to Amaravati, intending to stay for a period. Having helped here for a few years, at the end of October I will now take leave from the community to begin a two-year "wandering" time. Initially I hope to help my mother in Sri Lanka, then go to a vihara in Berlin to teach, and following that spend time at different monasteries, meditation centres and groups. In the future I would like to start a meditation centre in England. I would like to thank everybody who has helped me during my time with the Sangha here, particularly Ajahn Sumedho, community members and lay supporters. May all attain Nibbāna in this very life!

Ven. Wilpita Dhammaratana Thera

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. The newsletter is also 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.

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# Teaching and Practice Venues

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) (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	
LEEDS AREA Daniela Loeb, (0113) 2791-375	
Anne Erimshaw, (01274) 691-447	SOUTHAMPTON Ros Dean (02380) 422430
MEDITATION GROUPS	
These meet regularly & receive occasional visits from Sangha.	
BEDFORD David Stubbs, (01234) 720-892	MAIDSTONE Tony Millett, (01634) 375-728
BELFAST Paddy Boyle, (02890) 427-720	MIDDLESBOROUGH Colin Walker, (01642) 643-071
BERKSHIRE Penny Henrion (01189) 662-646	MIDHURST Barry Durrant, (01730) 821-479
BRIGHTON Nimmala, (01273) 723-378	NEWCASTLE ON TYNE Andy Hunt, (0191) 478-2726
CAMBRIDGE Gillian Wills, (01954) 780-551	NORWICH Elaine Tattersall (01603) 260-717
CANTERBURY Charles Watters, (01227) 463342	PEMBROKESHIRE/S. WALES Peter and Barbara (Subhdra) Jackson, (01239) 820-790
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
LIVERPOOL Ursula Haeckel, (0151) 427 6668	SOUTH DORSET Barbara Cohen (Sati-sati), (01305) 786-821
LONDON/NOTTING HILL Jeffery Craig, (020) 7221 9330	STEYNING / SUSSEX Jayanti (01903) 812-130
LEIGH-ON-SEA Gool Deboo, (01702) 553-211	STROUD John Groves, 0796 7777-742
MACHYNLLETH/MID. WALES Angela Llewellyn, 01650-511350	SURREY/WOKING Rocanā, (01483) 761-398
	TAUNTON Martin Sinclair, (01823) 321-059

## 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.

## Amaravati Retreats



### 2001 Retreats at Amaravati

Oct.	5 – 14	10 Day	Ajahn Sucitto* – FULLY BOOKED
Oct.	19 – 21	Weekend	— CANCELLED
Nov.	9 – 11	Weekend	Ajahn Khantiko – FULLY BOOKED
Nov.	23 – 26	3 Day	Buddhist/Christian with Ajahn Candasiri & Elizabeth West – FULLY BOOKED
Dec.	27 – Jan. 1	5 Day	Ajahn Ariyasilo

### 2002 Retreats at Amaravati

April	5 – 7	Weekend	
April	19 – 21	Weekend	
May	10 – 19	10 day	Ajahn Ariyasilo
June	7 – 9	Weekend	
June	14 – 18	5 day	
June	28 – 30	Weekend	
July	26 – 4 Aug	10 day	Ajahn Candasiri
Sept.	13 – 17	5 day	
Sept.	27 – 29	Weekend	
Oct.	4 – 6	Weekend	
Oct.	25 – 29	5 day	
Nov. 15th – Nov 24th		10 day	Ajahn Sucitto
Dec.	27 – Jan. 1	5 day	

\*Experienced: (i.e. must have done at least one 10 day retreat)

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 2001 & 2002

November 2nd - 4th, 2001 • April 26-29, 2002  
Aug 30-Sept 1, 2002 • Oct 11-13, 2002

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.

### INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION—AMARAVATI Saturday Afternoon Classes 1.30 – 3.30 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

<p><b>BRITAIN</b></p> <p>◆ Amaravati Monastery Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ Tel: (01442) 84-2455 (Office) 84-3411 (Guest Info.) 84-3239 (Retreat Info.) Fax: (01442) 84-3721 <i>Stewards: English Sangha Trust, Amaravati.</i></p> <p>◆ 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 <i>Stewards: Magga Bhavaka Trust.</i></p> <p>◆ Cittaviveka: Chithurst Buddhist Monastery Chithurst, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5EU Tel: (01730) 81-4986 Fax: (01730) 81-7334 <i>Stewards: English Sangha Trust, Cittaviveka.</i></p> <p>◆ Hartridge Buddhist Monastery, Upton, Honiton, Devon EX14 9QE Tel: (01404) 89-1251 Fax: (01404) 89-0023 <i>Stewards: Devon Vihara Trust.</i></p> <p><b>THAILAND</b></p> <p>◆ Wat Pah Nanachat Bahn Bung Wai, Amper Warin, Ubun Rajathani 34310</p> <p><b>AUSTRALIA</b></p> <p>◆ Bodhinyana Monastery Lot 1, Kingsbury Drive, Serpentine 6125 WA Tel: (08) 952-52420 Fax: (08) 952-53420</p> <p>◆ Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre (Perth) 18-20 Nanson Way, Nollamara 6061 WA Tel: (08) 934-51711 Fax: (08) 934-44220 <i>Stewards: Buddhist Society of Western Australia.</i></p>	<p><b>ITALY</b></p> <p>◆ Santacittarama Località Brulla, 02030 Frasso Sabino (Rieti) Tel: (+39) 0765 872 186 Fax: (+39) 06 233 238 629 Website: www.santacittarama.org (in Italian)</p> <p><i>Stewards: Santacittarama No 20163/38.</i></p> <p><b>SWITZERLAND</b></p> <p>◆ Dhammapala Buddhistisches Kloster Am Waldrand, CH 3718 Kandersteg Tel: 033 / 675-2100 Fax: 033 / 675-2241 <i>Stewards: Dhammapala 31921-201-5.</i></p> <p><b>NORTH AMERICA</b></p> <p>◆ 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 <i>Stewards: Sanghapala Foundation.</i></p> <p>◆ Boston Area: Buddhaparisa, Boston, Mass. Tel: (781) 861-6837 Mailing for E. Coast USA &amp; Thailand: to be placed on the mailing list, please write directly to Amaravati.</p> <p><b>NEW ZEALAND</b></p> <p>◆ Bodhinyanarama 17 Rakau Grove, Stokes Valley, Wellington 6008 Tel: (+ + 64) 4 563-7193 Fax: (+ + 64) 4 563-5125 e-mail: sangha@actrix.gen.nz <i>Stewards: Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association.</i></p> <p>◆ Auckland Buddhist Vihara 29 Harris Road, Mount Wellington, Auckland Tel: (+ + 64) 9 579-55443</p>
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## Lay Events at Amaravati 2001

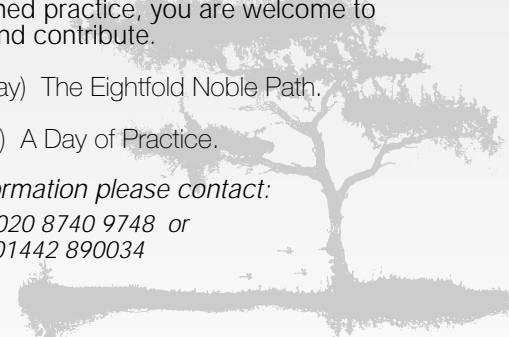
The one day and weekend events provide an opportunity to spend time together, in silence and in exploring themes relevant to practice and daily life. Whether you are just starting, or whether you have a well established practice, you are welcome to participate and contribute.

**Oct. 27\*** (Day) The Eightfold Noble Path.

**Dec. 1** (Day) A Day of Practice.

for more information please contact:

Nick Carroll, 020 8740 9748 or  
Chris Ward, 01442 890034



\* Change of date/theme from original announcement.

## 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	○ FULL	◐ HALF	● NEW	◑ HALF
OCTOBER	☉2 <sup>nd</sup> / 31 <sup>st</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)	16 <sup>th</sup> (Tues)	24 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)
NOVEMBER	30 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)	8 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	15 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	23 <sup>rd</sup> (Fri)
DECEMBER	29 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	8 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	14 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)	22 <sup>nd</sup> (Sat)
JANUARY	28 <sup>th</sup> (Mon)	6 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	13 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	21 <sup>st</sup> (Mon)
☉ Pavāranā Day (Vassa ends)				
The Buddhist New Year (2545) starts: 24th November				

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

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HEMEL HEMPSTEAD  
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Closing date for submission to the next issue is 20th November 2001