



# FOREST SANGHA

## newsletter

April 2004

2547

Number 68

## Rounding Out the Practice

*A talk given by Ajahn Thiradhammo at Cittaviveka, October 2003*

Tahn Natthiko invited me to say a few words tonight, saying he wanted to draw on my experience of thirty years of monastic life. So this was a good theme for me to reflect upon. What have I been doing for the last thirty years?

Over the years I've seen many phases in my practice, beginning in Thailand. To start with, I had a very simplistic view of practice. Having just finished university, my first idea was to spend six months in a cave in Thailand to sit in silence, and that's it, that's enlightenment. That was my initial fantasy. 'Just give me six months and it's all over, I can go home again.' Enlightenment and *then* go home. Well that was thirty years ago, so you see how much of a fantasy it was. I think most people are like this though. Most of us start meditation practice with concepts, ideas, expectations and even such fantasies. In the actual *experience* of practice, we put these ideas and concepts to the test. We find out for ourselves. I could say that for me my efforts of the last thirty years have been to do with rounding out or balancing the practice.

I remember my early years in northern Thailand, sitting in my little hut, trying to keep my practice very simple. I would just sit there and watch the breath. I'd watch it for hours and hours and hours every day. I was in a meditation monastery so there weren't a lot of distractions. There was nothing to do but sitting and walking meditation. It was not a forest monastery, so there was no routine: no evening meditation, no morning meditation. One was left to get on, on one's own. I was

quite serious at that time, or maybe just deluded – I don't know which – and I really put myself into the practice. I recognised that I had a great opportunity, because in those days there were few such opportunities in the West. So here I was in Thailand, a Buddhist country, and they were very generously offering me this place to practise in. So I practised for sixteen hours a day just walking and sitting, walking and sitting. There was nothing else to do.



Of course, with no distractions for hours and hours a day, for months at a time, the mind got reasonably peaceful. But because the monastery was on the tourist map of Chiang Mai, quite a few Westerners would come. One time, I remember sitting there meditating and I heard footsteps coming up the steps. The door opened and this tourist walked in. He saw me sitting there, so he came walking over and said 'Hello, I'm Joe Smith.' I looked up and said 'Hello, I'm ... errr ... I'm ...' I couldn't remember who I was! 'I'm breathing,' that's all I could think of. Of course it wasn't exactly a joyful experience; it was a little bit frightening. You know, I had to consult my passport to figure out who I was.

Those days of tranquillity were numbered because I practised so diligently that eventually even eating became a distraction, a disturbance to concentration. One can't live very long without eating, so after a while I fell sick. It was a bit of a shock being sick, because I couldn't keep up my meditation exercises, so all my confusion returned. Concentration or calmness of mind is a conditioned state; if one does concentration exercises for long periods of time

one can experience concentration, but that concentration is conditional on the exercises. When I couldn't keep up the exercises, all the confusion, all the worries, all the thoughts came back, and it was even worse than before. Not only did I have my usual confusion, but it was confusion in the context of having known tranquillity, so it seemed much worse. It was the usual confusion against the background of previous calm. So of course my first reaction was 'Buddhism doesn't work. It couldn't be my fault. It must be the fault of Buddhism.'

Fortunately something inside me, some kind of intuition or some degree of faith, gave me a second thought: 'Maybe I'm missing something here.' So I looked in one of the Buddhist books and saw that it said '*sīla, samādhi and paññā*.' Oh yes, *paññā*, what's that? What's this element called wisdom? Maybe I'm missing something here. Then I realised, 'I'm going to have to go back and round out my idea of practice.'

In those days, my understanding of wisdom was that it was basically knowledge. So wisdom for me meant studying the Buddhist scriptures. This was what I understood the Buddha meant by 'wisdom'. In fact, contemplating the scriptures gave me quite a bit of wisdom in one sense. There are different kinds of wisdom mentioned in the scriptures. There's *suta-mayā-paññā*, which is the wisdom that comes from the discourses, from what we've read or heard. That's the first kind of wisdom, a lower kind of wisdom. The second kind is *cinta-mayā-paññā*, which is what we think about and contemplate. The third kind, the highest form of wisdom is *bhāvanā-mayā-paññā*, which is wisdom that comes from meditation and contemplation. Not having much experience of meditation, I thought wisdom was about studying the scriptures. But after studying the scriptures and meditating for a few more years, something seemed to not work any more. Fortunately, I came across the teachings of Ajahn Chah which were by then available in translation in Thailand.

Ajahn Chah's teaching seemed very balanced. Of course, he encouraged concentration, but not overdoing it. From what I understood, he was pointing at the wisdom faculty as coming not from reading the scriptures, but from knowing oneself. For example one person asked him, 'How long should I sit every day?' His reply was, 'I don't know, look at yourself. What do you think you need? What works for you?' He would joke that for some people sitting a long time is like a chicken sitting on its nest. Not really useful. You might hatch a few eggs, I suppose. Of course, some people might need to do more sitting, but the point was: look for yourself.

When I realised that Ajahn Chah had a real foundation in wisdom, and that he knew how to develop and cultivate

it, I went to see him, and ended up staying in his monasteries in Thailand for the next six years. Even though his teachings were very simple, it often took some time before they really 'entered the heart.' In the Thai language the words that mean 'understanding' are 'kow jai,' literally 'enter the heart.' Ajahn Chah's teachings could enter the brain all right, I could hear what he was saying, but they didn't really enter the heart. I didn't really understand them yet.

I remember one of his teachings was about maintaining mindfulness and collectedness whatever we're doing, not only in the meditation hall but also in every activity. I must have heard this a dozen times. On one afternoon however, I was sitting in my little hut in the forest and trying to get quiet and calm. Then at three o'clock the bell rang for water hauling. With the heat, three o'clock is not the most cheerful time of day. But if I was to live in the monastery, I realised that I had to be co-operative. So I came out of my little hut to help with the water-hauling. I was grumbling away, 'This is disturbing my meditation. I could have got good concentration if the bell hadn't rung.' Then I stopped and thought, 'Hey, Ajahn Chah told us to be collected and mindful whatever we're doing. Well, since I live in this monastery, maybe I should try it.' So I tried to be collected and mindful when walking to the well, when helping haul the water, when distributing the water around the monastery, when sweeping out the meditation hall. After forty five minutes of this I went back to my hut and sat down for meditation, and surprise – I found my mind was really quiet. Before it would have taken half an hour to stop the grumbling. But when I sat down, I found, 'Gee, it actually works!' Even though I'd often heard Ajahn Chah's encouragement to be mindful, it took this particular incident to really understand what he meant.

Of all the teachings I heard from Ajahn Chah, the one which I reflect upon most is a very simple one. I still don't really understand it, so I contemplate it even now. He said, 'Everything is teaching us.' Later on I added my own personal interpretation: 'Everything is teaching us if we're open to it.' More recently I say: 'Everything is teaching us whether we know it or not.' For me this means that teachings come to us at different levels, even though at our ordinary level of perception it may not seem like we're actually learning. Sometimes it's a gut feeling, sometimes it's just a vague intuition. And that's why I said that my practice has been like trying to balance out, rather than just receive the teachings at one level, the brain or the heart or wherever. It's a matter of trying to receive at all different levels. To me this fits in with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, being mindful of the body, the feelings, the states of mind and *dhammas*.

Sometimes the teachings are coming at a bodily level. Balancing the practice means not only being aware of

walking around and getting dressed, for example, as it says in the scriptures, but actually learning the inner language of body. For example, to understand the Thai language, I need to learn Thai. To learn the body's inner language requires a different learning. There are certain exercises in the scriptures which help us develop awareness of the body. But what I am pointing to is a bit deeper. At times there are experiences going on, and I can't understand them here or here [pointing at the head and heart]. To understand what the body is saying is not merely about the brain's interpretation of the body. It is about being open to receive the body, at its own level of reality, its own level of expression.

To me, learning the language of the body is like learning a foreign language. The body speaks a foreign language. It doesn't speak 'rationality.' It doesn't speak 'emotionality.' I guess you would have to say it speaks 'physicality.' To understand this language, we can make a start by developing awareness with regard to the body; tune in at the bodily level. We listen to the body itself speak, not trying to interpret it through the brain, but just let the body speak for itself.

At other times we need to be aware of feeling. 'Feeling' is the usual translation for the Pāli word, *vedanā*. In the Buddhist teaching, feeling or *vedanā* has to do with the feeling *tone*. It's not to do with emotion. Although this might seem simple, it can be hard to pick up. I remember once in England I led a meditation retreat on the subject of feeling, you know, pleasant, unpleasant, neutral; pleasant, unpleasant, neutral. After three days this man came up to me and said 'I have a question: What *is* feeling?' After three days! I replied, 'Pleasant, unpleasant, neutral.' So simple, and yet he didn't get it.

I realise it's part of a translation problem. You know, people say 'How are you feeling?' You don't answer, 'Well, pleasant, unpleasant, neutral.' You say, 'I'm feeling fine' or 'I'm feeling great' or 'I'm feeling lousy' or something. You usually answer in terms of emotions. But feeling or *vedanā* is the basic tone of it, the general tone of those emotions, whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. To put that template on experience gives a different perspective. When it's already gone into emotion, you know, 'I'm feeling great', 'I'm feeling happy,' there's already a certain amount of personality, my own particular form of happiness or sadness or whatever. But pleasant, unpleasant, neutral; who could they belong to? This way of looking makes experience more objective. So it gives us a different way of looking at emotions, which for most of us are otherwise pretty personally charged. To put it in terms of



pleasant, unpleasant, neutral gives it an objectivity. It's not denying our happiness, but you see it as pleasant feeling rather than 'me being personally happy,' with all the personal investment in that happiness. It divides personal reality into categories.

When Ajahn Chah explained Dhamma, he would often give examples from nature, about the ants and the leaves in the forest and things like that. Although I myself grew up in the country, it would never have occurred to me to look at ants. What's that got to do with Buddhism? Ants and leaves? This is where Ajahn Chah's saying that 'all things are teaching us' has been so helpful to me. You know when I first heard it I thought, 'What does he mean, "All things are teaching us"?' He surely didn't mean that all the *talks* were teaching us, he must indeed have meant all *things*.

Ajahn Chah used to emphasise the importance, for example, of trusting in one's own intuitive wisdom. And of course I had no idea what this meant. I mean, wisdom teachings come to us from a teacher, we're disciples of the Buddha, so what's wisdom got to do with *me*? In my search for wisdom, I would often recognise a need to be confirmed, or affirmed in what I knew or thought I knew. I found Ajahn Chah's response to this need rather difficult at the beginning, but I much appreciated it later on. He was the master of never giving a straight answer. When one went to him and tried to get a straight answer, he'd always take a different approach. At first I thought he was being a little bit, what do you say, not devious, ... but ... maybe he didn't know ... or maybe he was trying to have fun with us, because he also had a sense of humour.

I realised later on that he was trying to point us back to ourselves, to that which is asking the question or seeking an



answer. If we sought an answer out there in him, he would always point us away. So eventually if you followed him long enough, you'd come back to yourself. It is fundamental for Dhamma practice to be able to question our basic assumptions. We start off asking questions, but it's perhaps more important to find out who is asking. Many times I would find out that my questions were coming from my ego. I would ask Ajahn Chah a question, but I then wanted him to give me *my* answer, or at least an answer that pleased me. I wanted my views to be confirmed. I wanted his answers to please me, to make me happy and to comfort me, and affirm my sense of self.

Answering in the way he did was his way of pointing us back to our own intuitive wisdom. We had to learn to bring up questions and just let them float for a while, not seeking an answer. It took me a while to realise that in the Buddha's teaching, wisdom was not just about reading the scriptures but about understanding oneself, understanding the nature of oneself, the body, the feelings, the states of mind, mentality and physicality, *nāma-rūpa*. When the Buddha was trying to discover Truth, he sat and investigated himself. We never see a Buddha statue with the Buddha reading a book, do we? He was meditating, and what he had to meditate with was just his own body and mind. He didn't even have anybody else's body and mind. Just his own. That's where he found enlightenment. It wasn't in a book, it wasn't outside himself, it was right here in his own body and mind.

Having spent so many years, fifteen years sitting in a classroom looking at a blackboard, having a teacher tell me the truth, truth for me was always 'out there'. It took me a

while to turn this attitude around. I remember one time in Thailand we had these students visiting the monastery. Ajahn Chah told them very simply, 'Put away your books, and read your minds.' It sounds simple, but how do you do it? We have all learned how to read books since we were very young, but few of us are taught how to read our minds?

*What* mind, *who's* reading *whose* mind? Is *my* mind reading *me*, perhaps? But this is what meditation is about. Being able to read one's mind or read *the* mind.

So, my effort over the years has been to round out or balance out many of my ideas about practice. This means putting them to the test. Of course, putting them to the test means that sometimes we fail. That's what tests are about. Sometimes you succeed, sometimes you fail. I must admit that in thirty years – I hope this is inspiring – in thirty years I realise that I've learned some of my most important lessons from the failures, not from the successes. The successes are secondary; you get a charge from them for a while, but learning from mistakes or failures ... these are really, really important lessons. Of course, who wants to learn from failure? Who wants to even recognise failure, which so threatens our sense of self, our pride and our conceit. But to me, the failures show us our dark side. That's where we don't look, we don't see. To me, enlightenment is not about enlightening the light. The light is already enlightened. Enlightenment is about enlightening the dark, where we don't look, where we haven't seen, what we've been ignoring. It's about enlightening our ignorance.

It may seem paradoxical, though I hope not disappointing, to say that we can learn most from our mistakes. That's where we don't want to look, at our pride and conceit, the foundations of our sense of self – these all become visible in our failures. But success to my mind is possibly even dangerous, because it leads to more conceit and pride. So, the turning round and transformation of the dark side, the losing side, is to me what practice is really

about, to learn from all things, especially the things we don't want to look at, especially the things we don't think are useful or valuable. This was confirmed for me on this year's winter retreat.

In winter we have three months of monastic retreat. It's a good time for practice and usually it's a peaceful and quiet time. But about a month into the retreat this year, I had this little encounter with somebody. Afterwards, I was left with a discomfort; maybe you could call it anger. It wasn't somebody in the monastery. If it had been somebody in the monastery I could have talked to them and we could have worked it out. It was somebody in a chance encounter I had on a walk, and then they were gone. I couldn't even chase after them and sort it out. So there I was in the middle of a monastic retreat, no distractions, and there was this thing. I called it 'anger' as a way to deal with it, and this 'anger' just wouldn't go away. I found it troublesome in the peaceful monastic setting to have this anger nagging at me. But I finally gave in: I realised, 'This is a good chance to learn.'

I began to contemplate this irritation, to examine what was going on. It was an unpleasant physical sensation around my heart. As I looked at it, this 'anger' suddenly turned out to be something else: resentment. It surprised me, because the person I was resenting wasn't even there! It was just a memory, imagination. So I contemplated this resentment for the next two or three days. I found it was resentment at being misunderstood. It went back to something that happened decades ago. I began to look at it, to be open to it, to *receive* it non-judgementally. As I did so, it began to unravel. It looked almost like it was unpacking itself. What I had thought was anger turned out to have a complex mechanism. It turned out to be a series of things.

After resentment, fear came up, fear of letting this resentment out, of it exploding, and fearing what the other person would do if I let it out. The fear lasted three or four days. Below fear was frustration. I spent three or four days with that one. Each day was an unravelling of this feeling I had called 'anger.' It began to unravel in an almost mechanical way. As it unravelled, it opened up. As it opened up, it got more scary, because it didn't have a shape any more. It became more nebulous, and it became bigger. It became bigger than me. But as it unravelled it became less solid and more spacious, and there was more flexibility with it. When it reached frustration, it seemed less personal. It seemed more universal. This unravelling went on for a few weeks. Then one day I noticed it was just this colourless energy. It had neither colour nor texture nor emotion. I couldn't say it was either resentment or frustration; it was just this pulsating energy, a colourless

energy, though it wasn't pleasant. I could see that it was not me, and there was a fear with that. At least with anger I could say, 'Well, OK, that's me'. But as it got more and more unpacked, it got down to sort of an archetypal level. It was a basic fundamental emotion. Then there was just this energy there, pulsating. A powerful energy without colour or direction. I couldn't say it was mine. I could only say it was life-force. And this was a revelation to me, to find that anger is part of our being. It is an expression of life-force. Of course it's been polluted by negative influences, in this case by my own stuff, my frustration and resentment and fear. But at its source it is just the life-force. This was frightening to discover, because I had no control over it. With anger I had a certain degree of control: I could keep my mouth shut, or let it out; but this stuff, what is it?

It is important therefore, that we work *with* anger, not against it, because it is part of our life-force. If we try to work against it, it is like trying to kill ourselves. This is what many people do, they try to strangle their anger. They try to stop it and then they get depressed and resentful and frustrated, because they're stopping their life-force. To work *with* anger doesn't mean to let it out, but to work *with* it, to be able to tune into it at a level where it's at this life-force level. Once we can see in a different way it has a different meaning for us.

I realised that when I thought it was simply 'anger', certain scolding thoughts arose in me, 'Oh, you shouldn't be angry. Thirty years of meditation and you're still angry.' But when it became this energy, a pulsating energy, then all these voices stopped, because there was no history with it. There was no history, no colouration and no personal investment in it, because it is just natural life-force. That's surely what the Buddha was telling us, not to take the things we're aware of as an expression of ourselves, but to be aware of what their real implications are, what is their real depth. Many times we're just looking at the surface, we aren't really seeing what the source is. If we cultivate mindfulness, awareness, it can begin to penetrate through; it can unpack emotions like anger.

Anger is not something to be throttled and strangled, but something to be explored and opened to and discovered. It is to be transformed into something which is enlightened. Practice is about enlightening that quality, not about pushing it away, or trying to strangle it or ignore it. Anger is telling us something about ourselves whether we want to hear it or not. We should remember the teaching of Ajahn Chah, that 'all things are teaching us', and remember that the things we don't like are probably the things that are teaching us most of all. ❖

# Reflections from Retreat

*Excerpts from talks given by Thānissarā on retreats at Amaravati in 1997 and 2003*

## Attention and Listening

I first met Ajahn Chah in 1977. He gave a memorable talk to some students at a meditation centre just outside of Oxford. It was the first time I had heard live Dhamma. There was something very authentic and immediate in his expression, and throughout the talk I kept thinking ‘This is amazing; it’s so profound.’ When he got to the end of the talk there was a pause, then he said ‘If you’ve been sitting here thinking “This is good” or “This is bad,” then you haven’t been listening properly.’ And I thought ‘That’s really amazing!’

There is something about the way that we listen, not only to talks, but the way we listen generally. There is a tendency to listen from a particular viewpoint, with preconceived ideas as to what or who we are listening to. This is natural enough. It is the way that our habits have been conditioned, the way we perceive and interpret, perceptions about ourselves, about each other and about the world around us. Maybe there’s some truth in the perceptions we have formed, but even if they’re ‘right’ perceptions, ‘right’ assumptions, they still block the immediacy of our direct experience and a possible new understanding.

So although that may have sounded like an off-hand comment from Ajahn Chah, in fact he was touching on something profound. We’ve highlighted this way of listening during this retreat, cultivating the ability to be with our experience, without needing to find a conclusion about it, to decide, ‘This is good’ or ‘This isn’t good.’ Rather we allow for the uncertainty of life; we use meditation to keep listening to ‘how it is’ without necessarily coming to any fixed conclusion.

Life is actually much more dynamic, mysterious and complex than our conclusions give credit for. To truly listen is a way of honouring that. We can easily fall into creating fixed assumptions, ‘She’s like that, he’s like that, and I’m like this.’ This is the tendency we’ve been contemplating, the proliferation of thought, stimulated

by perception and feeling, which generates realities we are then compelled to live within. Of course, sometimes it is necessary to name how it is or how we are. But we should do so very tentatively, touching very lightly, with spaciousness, leaving ourselves room to move. If we develop this quality of listening, it allows for a continual opening and receptivity. It allows us to be adept at living with uncertainty. It’s not comfortable, but it gives us a toe-hold on the way life really is.

What blocks us, of course, is ignorance, *avijjā*, which is an ancient shadow that falls across the mind. Because of *avijjā*, we see in distorted ways. We interpret thought and feeling as emerging from a continuous and permanent ‘me’ that’s ‘inside’ which then needs gratifying and sustaining. When there’s a sense of ‘me,’ there’s a sense of ‘other,’ and a relationship between them. The relationship between them gives rise to the daily dramas of attraction and aversion. The skill of sustained attention challenges the assumptions we make based on the view of ‘self’, and based on the ways we don’t really listen; this allows us to see that in actuality the sense of self and the world around are not quite as reliable as they appear to be. We see that everything is moving and changing in a dynamic flow. Through seeing this we begin to understand the difficulty in actually grasping and owning anything.

## Dealing with the Structures of Self

In this way of awakening, a process of purification takes place; a lot is released. Looking through the layers needs patience. We need to allow habitual tendencies the time they need for transformation within the light of attention and listening – the fears, the fear of letting go, the fear of loss, the longing, desire, confusion, and disorientation that emerges. Sometimes we can experience a real heaviness where there is no light and no clarity. With all this we need to be very patient.

We should remember that although meditation is a powerful process, it is also very delicate because of the established structures of self. We can’t undo those through an act of will. So we start to apply this medicine of attention and investigation gently, with care. The teachings on non-attachment and transcendence are not there to reinforce immature behavioural patterns, to consolidate our inability to deal with relationships and life. The practice is not one of smashing everything out of the way, or pretending that we don’t have an ego with needs, anxieties and longings. Rather, it is important to respect our inner obstructions, and to do this with

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attention and patience.

In the early days of my own practice I had many confrontations in monastic life. Although I had a very idealistic view of what I should be, I had to face the fact that I experienced huge waves of anger. This was not pretty. The experience of conflict between what I was and what I wanted to be opened my practice into a more challenging and

deeper engagement. I needed to sit with these feelings and claim back the blame I tended to project. As I did that I realised that the pain was not just mine, it belonged to the group, and it belonged to the world around me. I found I couldn't smother the pain with beautiful spiritual thoughts or rosy clouds. I had to go through all the layers, to open it up and see its universal aspect. The accepting of anger gradually allowed the pain to melt. I found that dukkha, when approached with wisdom, has the power to transform the heart, to energetically soften and open it up.

### On Becoming and Nibbidā

One of the challenges of retreats is that we can't really become very much here. We can't become an interesting personality, we can't express ourselves because we are in silence. We can't get absorbed in a role or activity to give us a sense of confidence or purpose. This tends to be a bit bewildering and one feels at a loss; but it is a rare opportunity to notice the energy of becoming, of wanting to go somewhere, to do something. This is something I notice in myself, because my mind is actually very creative. I can sit here, and if there is a problem or something needed, I can create a whole project out of it. I can create several projects in a day and then carry them out as well. When I get exhausted Kittisāro says to me, 'Well, Thānissarā, you do too many things,' and I say 'Well, I know.' But in the heat of the moment when a new idea is emerging it is so convincing to me that if I'm not mindful, I readily fall



into it. Not long afterwards I will often catch myself thinking 'How did I get into this? How can I get out of it?' So I'm very familiar with this paradigm.

In a retreat one can see several wonderful projects and ideas emerge, and then see them dissolve. It's then a great relief to feel 'Oh, I didn't need to pick that one up, that's good, I can just allow the world to sort itself out. It's great to give myself permission to simply watch. Although it is not necessarily comfortable to sit with this constant sense of becoming without being able to do much about it, it is very important. For me it has enormous value. In investigating this, we may even begin to feel a sense of *nibbidā*, a weariness experience that Ajahn Chah used to point to when he first met people; 'Are you weary? Are you bored? Have you had enough yet?' was usually his first question. He would ask it in such a meaningful way, so that when he said it to me I actually had a flash of having been 3 billion eons in this cycle of *samsāra* and then having someone surface into my field of consciousness and saying 'Have you had enough yet?' He happened to say it at a particularly anguishing moment, so there was considerable receptiveness to the question.

### After the Retreat

So as we leave this retreat, we return to the life of becoming and doing. Can we do that with a heart that is rooted in the present moment, in inner listening? Can we move into whatever is next while also letting go of this experience. We might find it a little bumpy, shifting



from a controlled, refined environment and getting back onto the M25. It's not something one looks forward to. In leaving, there can be a slight deflation or depression as one moves from one energy field into another, and some resistance.

Although sometimes we sit here wanting to leave, when we actually do – that's our madness really – when we do leave, we miss it. We miss what we've been sharing together, the space, the silence, the reflectiveness. But in any moment, if we remember to ask ourselves 'How is it?', we automatically connect with our mindfulness and this skill of inner listening.

The field of everyday life is the test, isn't it? We go back to the phone calls, emails, friends to meet, conflicts to deal with, our work, the families we have and the shopping queues in the supermarket – that's one of my pet hates, where I get really impatient, lining up in the supermarket with my shopping basket. Dealing with finances, relationships, time pressures and all the things that tend to fill up our lives, we can feel an oppressive lack of space. I felt this strongly in my transition to lay life, the lack of space and depth that lay life affords.

In the environments and situations we return to, we can't expect people to respect our wishes for quiet or for moments of silence. We go to families and work places where there are demands, pressures and needs. Of course, meditation practice would be very limited if it could only be practised in retreat. In the activities of daily life all aspects of our being are drawn into awareness, into our contemplation and inner listening.

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#### Meeting the World

It is very natural on retreat, as the mind calms down, to feel well-being as we become more present. It's very natural then to favour the happiness of retreat over the turbulence of activity and contact. This is the meditator's disease, to which I think we are all susceptible. We can feel averse to the things that come and disturb us. This indicates that we haven't got *Sammā-samādhī*, we haven't got a completely unshakeable heart. The heart is still able to be shaken, or even totally uprooted and pulled around. So there is still work to do. If the Path that the Buddha laid out only involved developing calm, then we would probably all have to live in eternal meditation retreat. Although an important aspect of the Path involves putting things down, gathering, and stabilizing the mind, the Path doesn't stop there. This is something that Ajahn Chah often emphasised. He would say 'Peace doesn't really come from calm, peace comes from wisdom.' Wisdom allows us to be with life without being disturbed or overwhelmed. Through wisdom we understand how to meet the world without grasping, and how to adjust our relationship to it in a careful way.

The practice is not about sitting and judging the world as bad, but to see it for what it is. In doing so uncertainty is revealed. Uncertainty is the underlying reality for all of us. If we see and make peace with this, then when we meet the world, we do so not demanding that it be more stable or more under control; rather, we meet it with an increasing trust in our ability to just be with it, without fixed views and aversion, without grasping, but with a reflective, fluid and sensitive enquiry. We can ask ourselves, 'How is it now?' 'How can I be with it?' 'How can I be with life as it is unfolding in its wonderful, disturbing, chaotic dynamic?' 'How can I engage it with the skills and gifts I have? Can I do so without getting overwhelmed or negative, depressed or despairing?'

In engaging the world around us, we can expect to suffer, there's no doubt. If we are sensitive we will feel suffering. But can we learn to suffer without suffering? There's a difference between conscious suffering – which allows us to mature our wisdom and nurture our human roots of compassion – and blind suffering which takes us into constriction and pain. So for me practice in daily life, with its feeling tone of uncertainty, its lack of structure and support, involves finding balance in the heart. But finding balance isn't one movement. There isn't one formula, or one secret that we can apply, like a computer disk that we can put in. It is a constant adjustment. It takes a lot of vigilance, a lot of mindfulness.



### Finding One's Place in the World

One thing I have found helpful in my life has been the opportunity to serve. I have found it has given me a sense of placement and belonging. But service to me doesn't mean becoming a doormat. Compassion doesn't mean allowing people to run over you – as Kittisāro and I have learned in South Africa, a country with some rough edges. We have definitely had to cultivate the ability to say 'No.' For instance, we have established a hermitage there which may in future become a monastery. Soon after we arrived, the neighbour trebled his water supply while we were away, drawing it from our weir, without informing us. When we came back, his workers were out there busily covering over a 500 metre pipe he had put across our land. We didn't know what to do about it. We thought, 'Well it's everyone's land, and we should all share everything.' But actually this neighbour was taking advantage of us. He hadn't negotiated, he hadn't discussed anything. Then one night Kittisāro suddenly woke with a big 'NO' welling up inside him. He went to see the neighbour the next day who said, 'You're angry. You are a Buddhist, so you shouldn't be angry.' And Kittisāro said, 'Yes, correct, I'm angry. And what's more, I want you to take this pipe out!' It nearly went to court, but the neighbour conceded and removed the pipe. This was a lesson in saying 'No,' in protecting what we wanted to protect which in this case was the hermitage.

If we feel we always have to say 'Yes,' we will find ourselves getting resentful and overwhelmed and be incapable of taking care of our own needs. This is one of the lessons I have learned in my own practice of service. Those of us who try this, will find that meditation isn't merely a practice of pushing the world away, and that we can embrace the world in a more forgiving and kindly way. We can be less aloof and averse towards it, and more realistic about its nature.

### Cultivating Space

Monastics and laypeople often ask me, 'What's it like on the other side?' (depending on which side they are on). I think that lay life is more complex; the depth of presence and spaciousness that one feels within the contained monastic environment is not so obvious. In lay life there is so much crammed into our space; and if we feel that there is no space, we can feel overwhelmed, and then we stop listening. So it is important to give a priority to creating space, like coming on a retreat. But if we don't have the opportunity to find such physical space, we must learn to find inner space.

At first, finding space can feel scary, to let go of the sense of continuity that busyness brings. We want space,

but then we avoid it. When it presents itself, we switch on the TV or pick up a magazine. So finding space has to be a conscious cultivation. It is something that we can encourage in ourselves, with friendliness. We can allow ourselves space – even just a little more – both inwardly and outwardly. It is the space that we give ourselves that allows life to be manageable, creative and joyful, and allows for some kind of resolution or new perspective.

So I think this is a skill we can develop in lay life, this conscious noticing of space, and cultivating it. To allow space, we have to just listen; we listen to the clutter. We cannot make space by trying to push everything out. If we do sitting practice at home after a busy day, we might notice how full we are, and then we might struggle with that. But we only need to give it time to settle, to just listen, just listen to all the turbulence, listen with patience, and not rush in there in a forceful way. We gently hear the voices of the day, the concerns, the pains of the heart, the plans for the future.

When we pause, we rediscover what we take with us wherever we are, this innate gift of the heart, the gift of space, the gift of silence, the gift of listening, the gift of emptiness and non-ownership. ❖

### Amaravati Lay Events – 2004

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 prefer. *All are welcome.*

**Days of Practice – 9.45a.m. for 10a.m. – 5p.m.** No need to book. Please bring some food to share

**Retreats** – Advanced booking essential.

**Registration** from 5.30p.m. Retreats end at 4.00p.m. on last day.

**April 8 – 12** 5-day retreat 'The Factors of Enlightenment'

**May 15** Day of Practice 'Generosity and Gratitude' – 10th Anniversary of AUA

**June 18 – 20** Weekend Retreat 'Dukkha, Illness and Death in the Dhamma'

**July 17** Day of Practice \*

**July 30 – August 1** Weekend Retreat for women

**September 18** Day of Practice \*

**October 8 – 10** Weekend Retreat \*

**Nov 13 (prov)** Day of Practice \* (*date to be confirmed*)

**December 4** Day of Practice \*

\* Themes to be confirmed

**For more information please contact:**

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

**Booking forms can be downloaded from [www.Buddhacommunity.org](http://www.Buddhacommunity.org) or write to address below with S.A.E.**

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



## AMARAVATI NOTICES

**Nun's Ordination**

A Siladhāra Pabbajā will take place at Amaravati on 25 July 2004 at 1.30pm. *Everyone is welcome.*

**Wesak**

The Wesak celebration at Amaravati will be held on Sunday 30th May.

## CITTAVIVEKA NOTICES

**Garden Days:** Sat. 10th April and Sun. 11th July. If you'd like overnight accommodation write to the guest monk/nun.

**Forest Days:** Sat. 24th April, Sun. 23rd May and Sun. 27th June. These afternoons will be spent helping the Sangha in ongoing work in Hammer Wood. Meet at the monastery at 1.00pm. If you'd like overnight accommodation write to the guest monk/nun.

**Lay Forums**

Sunday 18th April:  
Sunday 30th May:  
Sunday 4th July:

**Wesak**

The Wesak celebration at Cittaviveka will be on the 6th June.

## RATANAGIRI NOTICES

**Retreat House Building Project**

A friendly building contractor has undertaken to finish the exterior building work. Meanwhile we are still looking for volunteers to help with interior work. If you would like to help, short or long term, perhaps by joining us on one of the volunteer days, please contact Tom Pickering on 0191 419 4463 or the monastery on 01661 881 612 for more information. We are particularly interested in finding people with plumbing, carpentry, plastering or general building skills.

**Wesak**

The Wesak celebration at Aruna Ratanagiri will be held on the 30th of May, starting at 10:30.

**Summer Retreat**

The annual Summer Lay Retreat at Harnham will be led as usual by Ajahn Munindo, starting on Sat 7th and ending on Sun 15th August 2004. The retreat is always well attended, so book early. Please contact Ross Mackay, 302 Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, G11 6TD or send an email

to: summerretreat@ratanagiri.org.uk. This retreat is not suitable for those new to meditation.

## HARTRIDGE NOTICES

**Kitchen renovation**

From mid-April to the end of May, the kitchen will be undergoing renovation. Visitors to the monastery are requested to phone beforehand if they wish to know where the temporary kitchen can be found.

## DHAMMAPALA NOTICES

**Wesak Celebration**

Our Wesak Celebration will be on 16th May at Schlossgut Muensingen

**Meditation Retreats in German**

22 – 30th May in Dhammapala with Ajahn Khemasiri  
23 – 27th June near Berlin with Ajahn Khemasiri. For details telephone 0049-(0)3305 52 27 44

18 – 22nd August in Buddha Haus, Bavaria/Allgaeu with Ajahn Khemasiri. For details telephone 0049-(0)8 37 65 02

14 – 18th September in Dhammapala with Ajahn Akiñcano

## RETREATS OUTSIDE UK

**Retreat in Slovenia**

Ajahn Munindo and Ajahn Chandapālo will lead a retreat in Slovenia from July 3rd to July 10th. Further information can be found at [www.slo-thera.cjb.net](http://www.slo-thera.cjb.net) or email [budho@volja.net](mailto:budho@volja.net)

## GENERAL NOTICES

**Lay residential opportunities at Amaravati.**

Over the coming months we may be looking for 2 people who would be interested in joining our team of lay residents who offer long term support to the monastic community: one in the monastery front office and the other in the retreat centre. To register an interest and for further information, please write giving some information about yourself, to either the Amaravati Secretary re the front office role, or to the Retreat Centre Manager.

**Nun's Pilgrimage**

Sister Mettā sends us happy reports from her pilgrimage in India. She will return on 22nd May. Jen and I would like to thank all

those people who supported her with such generosity and goodwill.

*Jill Osler*

**Pilgrimage to Mount Kailash**

In June 2004, we will offer Ajahn Sucitto and Ajahn Akiñcano the opportunity to undertake a pilgrimage to China, Tibet and Mount Kailash. Also attending the pilgrimage will be ourselves, Kittisaro, Thanissara and Moyra Keane (from the Johannesburg group), who will gather in any prayers that you would like to send. These prayers will be written into a scroll and carried to the mountain and offered there, to all the benevolent forces. The pilgrimage will also carry small packages of earth from the monasteries and Dhamma centres connected with the Forest Sangha. This earth will be left on the mountain to create a connection with Kailash.

If you would like to offer your prayers, contact Thanissara or Kittisaro via email at [dragonmtn@xsinet.co.za](mailto:dragonmtn@xsinet.co.za). In the UK contact Nimmala (01273 723-378). In Switzerland, contact Dhammapala Monastery.

**Dhamma Books in Tamil**

On my trip to India with Ajahn Sumedho, we met some of Dr Ambedkar's Buddhist converts at the Sri Ramana Ashram. They have translated into Tamil *Mindfulness: The Path to the Deathless*. They would like to print further Dhamma books. The cost of printing 1000 copies is £327, i.e. 33 pence each. If anyone would like to support this and/or further projects, please contact me at 81 Gwithian Towans, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 5BU. Telephone: 01736 753175. Email: [danieldavide@onetel.net.uk](mailto:danieldavide@onetel.net.uk)

Cheques should be made payable to Daniel Davide.

## NEWSLETTER

**Forest Sangha Newsletter Online**

The current and many previous issues of the Forest Sangha Newsletter are now available to view or download from the internet at; <http://www.fsnewsletter.net> or by following the link from <http://www.amaravati.org>.

**Subscription and Address Changes**

Subscription and address changes for hard copies and electronic copies of the newsletter can be made online at the same websites.

The Forest Sangha Newsletter is published quarterly. Back issues are available from: [www.fsnewsletter.net](http://www.fsnewsletter.net).

Current newsletters are also available on this website. They can be read, downloaded, or electronically posted from this site.

Hard copies can also be requested from this address. Subscription and address changes can also be made by contacting: Newsletter, c/o Amaravati. Contributions to printing and distribution costs can be made to The English Sangha Trust, c/o Amaravati.

**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.

BATH – Thursday/Weekly	Catherine Hewitt, (01225) 405-235
EDINBURGH	Neil Howell, 0131-226 5044
GLASGOW – 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday/Monthly	James Scott, (0141) 637-9731
LEEDS AREA – Friday/Weekly	Daniela Loeb, (0113) 2791-375 Anne Grimshaw, (01274) 691-447
HAMPSTEAD – 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday/monthly	1 Hillside (Room 6), London NW5 Caroline Randall, (020) 8348-0537 Entrance in Highgate Road. Ann Booth (020) 7485-0505
LONDON BUDDHIST SOCIETY	Tel: (020) 7834 5858
58 Eccleston Square, London SW1(Victoria) Meditation Sundays: led by a monk or nun, every 2nd month. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Thursday classes – 6.00pm	
SOUTHAMPTON –	Ros Dean, (02380) 422430

### MEDITATION GROUPS

These meet regularly & receive occasional visits from Sangha.

BEDFORD	David Stubbs, (01234) 720-892
BELFAST – Sunday/Weekly	Paddy Boyle, (02890) 427-720
BERKSHIRE – 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed/Monthly	Penny Henrion (01189) 662-646
BRIGHTON – Wednesday/Weekly	Nimmala, (01273) 723-378
CAMBRIDGE – Sunday/Fortnightly	Dan Jones, (01223) 246 257
CANTERBURY	Charles Watters, (01227) 463342
CO. CLARE, IRELAND – Wednesday/Weekly	Stan de Freitas, (00 353) 61 367-073
DUBLIN	Rupert Westrup, (01) 280-2832, (Dial: 00441 – from the UK)
HARLOW – Monday/Weekly	Pamutto, (01279) 724-330
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	Bodhinyāna Group – Wednesday/Weekly in school term times Chris Ward (01442) 890-034
KENDAL – Sunday/Monthly	Fellside Centre, Low Fellside, Jayasīli, (01539) 740-996
LIVERPOOL – Wednesday/Every two weeks	Ursula Haeckel, (0151) 427 6668
LONDON/NOTTING HILL – Tuesday/Weekly	Jeffery Craig, (0207) 221 9330
LEIGH-ON-SEA	Rob Howell (01702) 482 134
MACHYNLLETH/MID. WALES – Monday/Weekly	Angela Llewellyn, (01650) 511-350
MIDHURST – 2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Wed/Monthly	Barry Durrant, (01730) 821-479
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE – Wed/Weekly	Andy Hunt, (0191) 478-2726
NEWENT, GLOUCS – Friday/Every 3 weeks	John Teire, (01531) 821-902, john.teire@virgin.net
NORWICH – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday/Monthly	Elaine Tattersall (01603) 260-717
PEMBROKESHIRE/S. WALES – Weekly meeting and other events	Peter and Barbara (Subhadrā) Jackson, (01239) 820-790
PERTH – Saturday/Every 2 weeks	Neil Abbot, (07765) 667-499
PORTSMOUTH – 1 <sup>st</sup> Mon/Monthly	Dave Beal, (02392) 732-280
REDRUTH – Mon & Wed/Weekly	Daniel Davide, (01736) 753-175
SHEFFIELD	Greg Bradshaw, (0114) 262-0265
SOUTH DORSET – Thursday/Weekly	Barbara Cohen (Sati-sati), (01305) 786-821
STEYNING / SUSSEX	Jayanti (01903) 812-130
STROUD	John Groves, (07967) 777-742
SURREY/WOKING – Wed/Weekly	Rocanā, (01483) 761-398
TEESIDE THERAVADA BUDDHIST GROUP – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday/Monthly and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	David Williams, (01642) 603-481
TOTNES – Wednesday/Weekly	Jerry, (01803) 840-199

### 2004 – Retreats

April 2 – 4 (Weekend)	Ajahn Natthiko <i>FULL</i>
April 16 – 18 (Weekend)	Sister Ānandabodhī & Sister Santacittā <i>FULL</i>
April 23 – 25 (Weekend)	Ajahn Ñānarato
April 30 – May 9 (10 day)	Ajahn Amaro <i>FULL</i>
May 21 – 23 (Weekend)	Sister Ānandabodhī <i>FULL</i>
June 5 – 12 (8 day)	Ajahn Jitindriyā and Ajahn Thāniyā <sup>#</sup> *
July 2 – 11 (10 day)	Ajahn Vimalo <sup>*</sup>
July 23 – 25 (Weekend)	
Aug. 6 – 15 (10 day)	Ajahn Vajiro
Sept. 3 – 12 (10 day)	Ajahn Sumedho <i>FULL</i>
Sept. 24 – 26 (Weekend)	Sister Mettā
Oct. 15 – 17 (Weekend)	Ajahn Vimalo
Oct. 29 – Nov. 2 (5 day)	Ajahn Natthiko
Nov. 19 – 21 (Weekend)	
Nov. 26 – 30 (5 day)	
Dec. 10 – 12 (Weekend)	
Dec. 17 – 19 (Weekend)	
Dec. 27 – Jan. 1 2005 (6 day)	Ajahn Khantiko

<sup>#</sup> Exceptionally this retreat begins and ends on a Saturday, with registration on the first day at 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

\* Male places left only

**Availability of retreat places will be displayed on our website**

Retreats in 2004 will operate on a donation basis

*No booking fees are required*

- Bookings are only accepted on receipt of a completed booking form. Note that bookings cannot be made by telephone or by e-mail messages. Booking forms are available from the website, by e-mailing or writing to the Retreat Centre.
- Unless specified otherwise, retreats begin in the evening of the first day. Registration on the first day is at 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Orientation talk is at 7.15 p.m. Weekend retreats end at 4p.m. Other retreats end at lunch time.
- All weekend retreats are suitable for beginners. Generally it is advisable to do a weekend retreat before doing any of the longer retreats.
- Applicants requiring confirmation – either that they have a place on the retreat or that they are on the waiting list – are asked to supply a stamped addressed envelope or an e-mail address.

### Retreat Centre Work Weekend 2004

Friday 1st – Sunday 3rd October

Participants gather on Friday evening. Work begins on Saturday morning. Part-time attendance is also welcomed. Please e-mail or write in for an application form.

**Telephone: 01442 843-239 e-mail: retreats@amaravati.org  
website: <http://www.amaravati.org>**

# V I H A R A S

**BRITAIN**

◆ **Amaravati Monastery**  
Great Gaddesden,  
Hemel Hempstead,  
Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ  
Tel: (01442) 842-455 (Office)  
84-3239 (Retreat Info.)  
Fax: (01442) 843-721  
Web site: [www.amaravati.org](http://www.amaravati.org)  
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust, Amaravati.*

◆ **Aruna Ratanagiri**  
Harnham Buddhist Monastery  
Harnham, Belsay,  
Northumberland  
NE20 0HF  
Tel: (01661) 881-612  
Fax: (01661) 881-019  
Web site: [www.ratanagiri.org.uk](http://www.ratanagiri.org.uk)  
E-mail: [community@ratanagiri.org.uk](mailto:community@ratanagiri.org.uk)  
Stewards: *Magga Bhavaka Trust.*

◆ **Cittaviveka: Chithurst**  
Buddhist Monastery  
Chithurst, Petersfield,  
Hampshire GU31 5EU  
Tel: (01730) 814-986  
Fax: (01730) 817-334  
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust, Cittaviveka.*

◆ **Hartridge Buddhist**  
Monastery  
Upottery, Honiton,  
Devon EX14 9QE  
Tel: (01404) 891-251  
Fax: (01404) 890-023  
Stewards: *Devon Vihara Trust.*

**THAILAND**  
◆ **Wat Pah Nanachat**  
Bahn Bung Wai,  
Amper Warin,  
Ubon Rajathani 34310  
Mailing for Thailand:  
To be placed on newsletter  
mailing list please write to  
Amaravati.

**NEW ZEALAND**  
◆ **Bodhinyanarama**  
17 Rakau Grove,  
Stokes Valley,  
Wellington 6008  
Tel: (+64) 45 637-193  
Fax: (+64) 45 635-125  
e-mail: [sangha@actrix.gen.nz](mailto:sangha@actrix.gen.nz)  
Stewards: *Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association.*

◆ **Auckland Buddhist Vihara**  
29 Harris Road,  
Mount Wellington,  
Auckland  
Tel: (+ + 64) 957 955-443

**ITALY**  
◆ **Santacittarama**  
Località Brulla,  
02030 Frasso Sabino (Rieti)  
Tel: (++39) 0 765 872-186  
Fax: (++39) 06 233 238-629  
Website: [www.santacittarama.org](http://www.santacittarama.org)  
Stewards: *Santacittarama Association.*

**SWITZERLAND**  
◆ **Dhammapala**  
Buddhistisches Kloster  
Am Waldrand,  
CH 3718 Kandersteg  
Tel: 033 / 6 752-100  
Fax: 033 / 6 752-241  
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 all  
USA newsletters are  
distributed from here.)  
Web site: [www.abhayagiri.org](http://www.abhayagiri.org)  
Stewards: *Sanghapala Foundation.*

◆ **Boston Area:**  
Buddhaparisa, Boston,  
Mass. Tel: (781) 8 616-837

**AUSTRALIA**  
◆ **Bodhinyana Monastery**  
Lot 1, Kingsbury Drive,  
Serpentine 6125 WA  
Tel: (08) 95 252-420  
Fax: (08) 95 253-420

◆ **Bodhivana Monastery**  
780 Woods Point Road  
East Warburton  
Victoria 3799  
Tel: +61 (0) 359 665-999  
Fax: +61 (0) 359 665-998

◆ **Dharmaloka Buddhist**  
Centre (Perth)  
18-20 Nanson Way,  
Nollamara 6061 WA  
Tel: (08) 93 451-711  
Fax: (08) 93 444-220  
Web site: [www.bswa.org.au](http://www.bswa.org.au)  
Stewards: *Buddhist Society of Western Australia.*



**OBSERVANCE DAYS**

On these days some monasteries are given over to quiet reflection and meditation. Visitors are welcome to participate in the evening meditation vigils. On Amaravati on the Full and New moons, there is an opportunity to determine the Eight Precepts for the night.

Moon Phase	○ FULL	◐ HALF	● NEW	◑ HALF
APRIL	4 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	12 <sup>th</sup> (Mon)	18 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	26 <sup>th</sup> (Mon)
MAY	3 <sup>rd</sup> (Mon)	11 <sup>th</sup> (Tues)	18 <sup>th</sup> (Tues)	26 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)
JUNE	☽ 2 <sup>nd</sup> (Wed)	10 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	16 <sup>th</sup> (Wed)	24 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)
JULY	1 (Thu)31 (Sat)	9 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)	16 <sup>th</sup> (Fri)	24 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)

☽ Vesākha Pūjā                      ✽ Āsālha Pūjā (Vassa begins next day)

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

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**Closing date for submission to the next issue is 20th May 2004.**