

The Newsletter of Edinburgh's Buddhist Community

Planning ahead Inter-Sangha Gatherings

Spring Inter-Sangha Retreat 25-27 April

The 4th annual all-Edinburgh Buddhist retreat will once again be held at Wiston Lodge near Biggar. This year's retreat, to be held April 25-27, is being organised this year by the Soto Zen group. The theme will be Impermanence. Late bookings (after 31 March) will be on a space-available basis.

The cost of the weekend is £80, including lodging and all meals. For more information, visit www.mysangha.org.uk and go to the "Groups & Events" page.

Wesak Celebration 18 May (Sunday)

The annual inter-sangha Wesak celebration will be held on Sunday 18 May at the Salisbury Centre.

All are welcome to come together in celebration of Buddha Day.

Please arrive at 6:15 for a 6:30 pm start, and bring a vegetarian dish to share. The evening will include an opportunity to practice together as well as to share a meal in the familiar and welcoming environment of the Salisbury Centre. The evening will close around 9 pm.

The event will be held by donation.

Below is the address Jody had prepared for her address for the Scottish Parliament's Time for Reflection. Just three days after her death, these words were read on Jody's behalf by Suzanne Dance.

Time for Reflection

**An address to Scottish Parliament
by Jody Higgs from the
Edinburgh Theravada Buddhist Group**
Delivered by Suzanne Dance

In the teachings of the Buddha, the emphasis is on the cultivation of wholesome states of heart and mind. The Pali Canon lists ten of these wholesome states to be cultivated by the wise ruler, ten rājadharmā. Today I'd like to discuss a few of them with you, just some of the Buddha's guidance to good governance.

The first of these, perhaps not surprisingly, is morality. People don't trust rulers who lack moral integrity. But perhaps even more importantly, without integrity you can't trust yourself. By cultivating effort in the sphere of morality you give yourself freedom from fear about the consequences of your actions. Instead you feel a sense of pride and self-esteem.

The second wholesome mind state to be cultivated is generosity. True giving is a thoroughly joyful thing to do. We experience happiness when we form the intention to give, again in the actual act of giving and yet again in the recollection of the fact that we've given.

However, I suspect that many of you here often feel that you have to give too much; not of material goods but of yourself, your time, your energy. If this is so then perhaps

(Time for Reflection, continued on page 3)

Remembering Jody Higgs

On 3rd February, we lost our dear friend Jody, a central figure in the Edinburgh Forest Sangha group, in the development of Buddhism in Edinburgh, in the development of Harnham Monastery, and of the interfaith dialogue between all religions in Edinburgh. She was a well-known and well-loved figure amongst the Forest Sangha monastic and lay communities, as well as amongst a huge number of other people in her adopted city.

Central to Jody's practice was her relationship to the 'three messengers', old age, sickness and death. In the mid-eighties, arthritis in her hip-joints, leading to years of pain, was the first time that she had to recognise that the body was not a refuge; this was followed, in 1993, by her diagnosis of lymphoma.

Jody talked about how living with a terminal illness can be a great gift. Of course, we are all living with a terminal illness in a very real way, it's the nature of human life. However, living with this on a day to day basis is a different matter. Jody called it 'conscious dying'; and it's territory that we all tend to avoid. It is, however, a gift, and it's one I sense Jody accepted and made great use of. It's what made her the warm, compassionate and loving person that so many people will miss dearly. In the way she warmly and kindly looked after members of the group, in the way she quietly and simply helped many other people in her life, Jody has left a gap that will not be easily filled.

- offered by James Sutherland

News from the Sanghas

Theravadan Forest Sangha

Over the last months our thoughts have been turning largely to Jody Higgs, our dear friend and sangha member who passed away on 3 Feb. She was a central figure in our group since our beginning, and her presence is deeply missed. We are greatly appreciative of Ajahn Munindo and other monastics traveling to Edinburgh during their usual time of retreat to lead the services at Jody's funeral.

At the time of this writing, we are planning a 6 Apr visit to the monastery in Harnham, when Jody's ashes will be scattered. Many of us will be traveling again to Harnham for the Wesak celebration on 18 May.

In other news from Harnham, there are dates set for several upcoming retreats in 2008. Long under construction, the retreat house (Kusala house) is now basically completed, and retreats will be offered starting in May.

- offered by Claralynn

Portobello Buddhist Priory

All is well at the priory, and we are carrying on with our usual schedule into the spring.

One of our sangha members, Bill Grieve, has offered some thoughts on our Wiston retreat theme of impermanence (see page 5). We look forward to seeing many of you at Wiston and also at Wesak.

In Gassho,

Kimberley

- offered by Kimberley Cadden

FWBO

The biggest news at present from the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order is that Kalyanavaca has decided to step back from being Chair and Centre Director.

Kalyanavaca is widely known for her long-standing and deeply-held commitment to fostering connections amongst sanghas. I'm sure these will continue to have their place in her heart as she makes the transition from a life largely devoted to sangha and Centre to the next phase of her path. So much more could be said, I hope there will be an opportunity in future.

Happily, there are arrangements in place to hand on the responsibilities. Vajrahridaya is appointed as Centre Director with effect from 6 April, and he will become our Chairman in late June with a ceremony to mark Kalyanavaca's retirement.

In other news: a very happy occasion is imminent as I write. Tracy McLoughlin has been invited on the 3-month ordination retreat at Akasavana (a dedicated women's ordination retreat centre in the Spanish mountains). She sets out in early April with a send-off at the Buddhist Centre 25 March. As well as rejoicing in her merits, we will meditate together and take part in a short puja.

In addition, we'll have a Kalyana Mitra ceremony. ("Kalyana" - "beautiful", "mitrata" - "friendship" in Sanskrit). This I think is currently unique to the FWBO, an expression of the emphasis placed on spiritual friendship within our movement. Within the mandala of a person's friendships two become formally acknowledged as Kalyana Mitras.

- offered by Kamalajoti

Community of Interbeing

Morning meditations, Sunday evenings and Days of Mindfulness

Ani hosts viewings of DVDs of Thich Nhat Hanh's Dharma talks at The Mews Centre, 13A Inverleith Place Lane, Edinburgh on Sunday evenings from 5pm for 5.30pm start. Please phone 0131 552 4261 to check on any particular week. Ani also hosts morning meditations at the same venue on Monday to Friday for one hour from 7.15am.

In addition, Ani will be having informal days of mindfulness at the Mews on the following Sundays from 10.00am until 5 pm:

- 30 March
- 25 May
- 29 June

The morning will be practice-based, and the afternoon is likely to be a DVD showing and discussion.

Wednesday evening sessions

Bryan Bain is starting fortnightly Dharma sessions at 27/5 Royal Park Terrace from 7.00 for 7.30 pm start. The format will be meditation for about half an hour followed by practice-based sharing around particular themes. Please check with Bryan for dates. Bryan's mobile is 07736 889 165.

Sangha meeting every Thursday - St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace, 7:30 pm.

Mindfulness@Lunchtime —

Every Tuesday between 12.15pm and 2.00pm at St Mark's Unitarian Church.

- offered by Pete Smith

(Time for Reflection, continued from page 1) you need to cultivate the practice of generosity towards yourself. For example, can you generously give yourself the gift of self acceptance?

Finally, the wise ruler out of respect for all life will cultivate the path of non-violence. Fortunately for us we have on the planet just now a world leader who exemplifies this virtue of non-violence: Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. Her non-violence and her patient abiding with difficult conditions clearly stem from a deep understanding of the true nature of things. She serves as an inspiration to good people everywhere.

To conclude... I've been describing some of the wholesome states that the Buddha listed as those to be cultivated by the wise ruler: morality, generosity and non-violence. It is not of course a coincidence that the Buddha's guidance to good governance is similar to that of other great teachers. This is because the wisdom being

pointed to is not Buddhist wisdom but universal wisdom.

For the first time in history we can benefit from the wisdom teachings of all major human civilisations. I want to underline this to celebrate this Parliament's openness to these teachings! I believe that this Time for Reflection with its inclusive policy honouring diversity provides a fine example to the rest of our fragmented world.

Let's end by celebrating and honouring the core goodness in ourselves and others! Let's reflect on the good things we've done, recollect the times when we've been generous, or when we've been caring, times when we've chosen the hard non-violent way... This doesn't mean ignoring our bad qualities or our unskillful actions. We can fully acknowledge these difficulties while at the same time choosing to focus on our collective goodness. This practice best serves the well-being of ourselves and the people of Scotland who have honoured you with their trust.

Calendar

- 25-27 Apr** **Inter-Sangha Annual Retreat**
Wiston Lodge
details forthcoming
- 18 May** **Buddha Day Celebration**
6:15 pm *all are invited*
Salisbury Centre
details forthcoming
- 18-21 May** **Ringu Tulku Rinpoche visit**
Edinburgh Samye Dzong
pete.baynes@virgin.net
- 25 May** **Mindfulness Sunday at Ani's**
Inverleith Place Lane
0131 552 4261
- 5 Jun** **Monk's visit**
7:30 pm *Forest Sangha*
Christ Church
Neil, 0131 226 5044
- 29 Jun** **Mindfulness Sunday at Ani's**
Inverleith Place Lane
0131 552 4261
- 22-29 Aug** **Thich Nhat Hahn visits UK**



To list your event or activity, please send details to info@mysangha.org.uk.. We ask that events listed be of general interest and open to all.

CALENDAR OF WEEKLY MEDITATIONS AND PUJAS IN EDINBURGH

*Lunchtime Meditations, FWBO
Edinburgh Buddhist Centre
Wed & Fri 12:30 - 1:30 pm, £3/£2*

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
6 am & 6 pm Thai Buddhist Monastery Daily puja, 199 Slateford Road	6 am & 6 pm Thai Buddhist Monastery Daily puja 7:30 pm Kagyü Samye Dzong, Theosophical Society, 28 Great King St.	6 am & 6 pm Thai Monastery, daily puja 7-8 am & 7:30-8:30 pm Soto Zen Meditation, Portobello Priory 12:15 — 2:00 pm Community of Interbeing, Mindfulness@lunchtime St. Mark's Unitarian Church	6 am & 6 pm Thai Monastery, daily puja 7:00-8:00 am Soto Zen Meditation, Portobello Priory 7:30 pm Soto Zen Service, meditation, discussion, Portobello Priory	6 am & 6 pm Thai Monastery, daily puja 7-8 am & 7:30-8:30 pm Soto Zen Meditation, Portobello Priory 7:30 pm Forest Sangha meditation and discussion, Christ Church Morningside 7:30 pm, Community of Interbeing, Meditation & sharing, St Mark's	6 am & 6 pm Thai Monastery, daily puja 7-8 am & 7:30-8:30 pm Soto Zen Meditation, Portobello Priory Every 2nd Fri., Soto Zen Introductory evening, Portobello Priory	6 am & 6 pm Thai Monastery, daily puja 7-8 am & 7:30-8:30 pm Soto Zen Meditation, Portobello Priory

*Please visit us at
www.mysangha.org.uk*

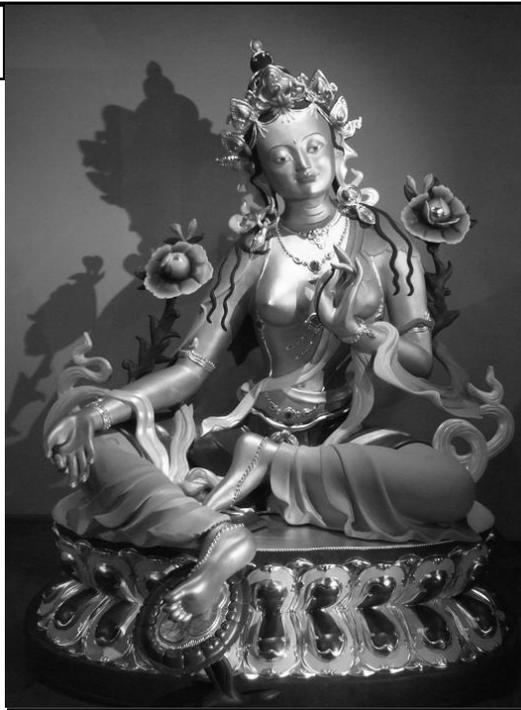
Offerings

A Buddhist Holiday

It was with surprise and delight that, whilst searching the Internet for cheap flights and accommodation for a holiday somewhere warm, that my partner, Kate, found a Buddhist hotel near Malaga. "Hotel Kadampa" is a NKT-owned enterprise, situated west of Malaga. The blurb offered "all the comforts of a modern hotel ... swimming pool... gardens ... orchards... vegetarian, alcohol-free, non smoking and...an authentic meditation room". How could we resist?

After a fairly relaxed flight and bus-ride, we were welcomed by Tania, one of the permanent six-strong community who run the hotel. We were given one of their chalet-style rooms. There was a pool, a large orchard, and an abundant and fascinating array of other flora. The many colourful birds provided marvelous harmonies. Our roof terrace looked over the neighbouring olive groves towards the distant hills. And walking around the country lanes revealed all sorts of floral delights.

The 'authentic meditation room' turned out to be a complete Tibetan Shrine Room ('Gompa' as they refer to it) with magnificent rupas, including the most beautiful Tara-rupa I have ever seen (picture here). It is not as lavishly coloured as the Shrine Room at Samye Ling. Instead it has an unpainted wood finish, similar to



Tara-rupa at Hotel Kadampa. Photo by Paul Rees.

the internal finish of the Samye Ling Stupa. The Gompa is available most of the day for anyone to use, unless it happens to be in use for classes, etc..

We met Wangden, the ordained name of this Spanish and most senior monastic there. He is also manager of the hotel. Such a patient, joyful and helpful man, and clearly an accomplished practitioner in the Dharma. He wears the monastic robes for the Puja in the mornings, but is in "civvies" for the domestic duties around the hotel.

At seven each morning, I joined the community in the Gompa for the 50-minute Puja which included a quiet spell for meditation. Unusually (in my

experience) the very melodious chanting was a recording. It was in Spanish, not Tibetan, using just two very harmonious voices. I managed to pick out some familiar words in the chanting such as "compassion," and I loved the phrase "Buddha-sigñor" - delightful.

Beginners' classes are regularly held. In fact, Wednesday night was beginners' night in English, and I met someone who originally comes from Newtongrange! Small world.

The "Café de la Paz" provides a limited but lovingly prepared menu. When eating out, we found the closest most promising option for vegetarian food was Alhaurin de la Torre,

reached by the (sometimes) reliable bus service.

This is one of two hotels in Europe (the other is in Italy - Montecatini Terme, Tuscany). They have been bought specifically to provide a practice centre.

A very relaxing and rewarding time, friendly, with a supportive space for daily practice. A very definite thumbs up recommendation. And as for the heavenly tasting oranges in the orchard - mmmm.

- offered by Paul Rees

Paul is happy to provide photos in living colour of the beautiful Tara-rupa pictured here, as well as other photos taken on his and Kate's holiday.

Offerings for this newsletter

Please consider supporting Edinburgh's Buddhist Community with your subscription to *Sangha Without Boundaries*. Help keep our sanghas interlinked while keeping yourself informed.

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Claralynn Nunamaker, Inter-Sangha Newsletter
10 Inz. Courtyard, Inzievar Woods
By Oakley KY12 8HB

A Bodhisattva from the Skies

On arrival at Plum Village for the Winter Retreat this year, someone caught my attention. She was a joyful lady in her fifties, from Belgium.

Before speaking with her I observed that she was very aware of what was needed in the Here and the Now: be it changing the water in the basin for washing the tea cups, taking rubbish to the big containers, displaying the benches to the dinning tables when we had more people for a meal, etc. None of these were part of her assigned job, cleaning the toilets and corridors in the living quarters, which she performed in the morning working period. Though the other "jobs" she did were someone else's duty, she did them in such a joyous spontaneous way that people were grateful and she did not clash with anyone.

She also seemed to have a very natural equanimity: no one was preferred over others in the way she treated them. Sometimes she would come to discuss with me the best way of helping someone who seemed to be having difficulties, either in themselves or with the other guests.

We finally sat down for a chat. She told me she had visited other spiritual centres as she was looking for her path. She certainly was ready for the teachings and she profited greatly from them and from the practice in the Sangha.

I asked her what she did as work in the world and she answered that after 35 years she had retired from being an air-hostess. I had never thought much of this job other than having always a smile when offering if the passenger wanted tea or coffee, or bring a blanket if they asked for it. I had, at times, thought how they must feel about the plane coming down. Do they react as the passenger would? So she gave me a brief explanation on what was their

The Glasgow Effect

I recently watched a documentary about long-lived communities in different parts of the world. The contrast chosen by the programme makers to these healthy communities was Glasgow, often described as the UK's unhealthiest city, where in some areas male life expectancy is 57.

As soon as the name is mentioned, assumptions spring to mind: unhealthy fat and sugar-laden diets, smoking, high alcohol consumption. However, the programme revealed that these assumptions were built on shaky foundations, because in terms of lifestyle, diet and addictive behaviours, Glasgow is no worse than a number of other cities in the UK.

So what is it about Glasgow that leads to such high rates of ill-health if it's not just lifestyle? What is 'the Glasgow effect' that health researchers refer to?

In the days when poverty, overcrowding and childhood infections such as scarlet fever and typhoid were rife in Glasgow, those with heightened immune defences, were able to combat infection. They were much more likely to survive to child-bearing age and therefore passed on their immune defence. However, this heightened immune defence is an inflammatory re-

sponse, and it can end up attacking the body it's meant to protect. Those with an over-active immune system have a higher propensity for diseases like diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. This is the legacy with which Glasgow now has to cope.

What struck me about this was the sense of a complex web of cause and effect. In day to day life, there seems an automatic tendency to see self and others as individual, unique entities, steering our own course, making our own decisions. I am here, you are there. But this programme left me with the sense of us being composed of different layers, almost like geological strata. On the surface there is indeed a visibly independent and separate being which makes its own way in the world. But as soon as we dig below that, we see patterns of cause and effect which shape and communalise our lives, making it no longer possible to see ourselves as just individuals.

While there can be an increasing sense that at root all is indeed well, a programme such as this can bring a sharpened sense of compassion. Not only for those struggling, in this instance, with the effects of what in effect is early ageing. But for all of us caught in the myriad entanglements of cause and effect, the origins of which are often lost in the mists of time and inaccessible to us.

*- offered by Bill Grieve
Soto Zen group*

training. In fact there can be several emergencies other than the plane going down. Someone can have a heart attack, a stroke or other sudden life-threatening incident, which can go unnoticed.

So the hostess's training is to observe, to look deeply at what could be the real needs of the passengers. And to offer assistance in an inconspicuous manner. After so many years in this daily practice observing the needs of others and procuring solutions, it had become her way of being. It was effortless and a source of joy.

It never occurred to me in the past that one could efficiently train the bodhisattva path in a very worldly job.

- offered by Ani Mavericka

Sangha Without Boundaries



10 Inz. Courtyard
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By Oakley KY12 8HB

Spring 2008

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www.MySangha.org.uk

Sangha Contacts & Weekly Meeting Info

Samye Dzong

Pete Baynes
pete.baynes@virgin.net
www.edinburgh.samye.org
Mondays, 7:30 pm
Many activities—visit website for more info
Theosophical Society, 28 Great King St.

Community of Interbeing

Gill Mathews 0131 336 2480
angel14_75@hotmail.com
www.interbeing.org.uk
Thursdays, 7:30 pm
Tuesdays, 12:15 pm
St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace

Forest Sangha

Neil Howell 0131 226 5044
www.theravadanbuddhists.org.uk
Thursdays, 7:30 pm
Christ Church, Holy Corner
Morningside

FWBO

Kalyanavaca 0131 662 6699
30 Melville Terrace
Edinburgh EH9 1LP
ebudc@supanet.com
www.edinburghbuddhistcentre.org.uk
Tuesdays (sangha night)
Many activities—visit website for more info
Edinburgh Buddhist Centre, 30 Melville Ter.

Rigpa

Mary Deans 0131 663 7564
2 Eldindean Place, Bonnyrigg
ripga@rigpaedinburgh.com
www.rigpa.org.uk
Mondays, 7:30 pm
The Salisbury Centre

Thai Tradition

Prmahar Wisit (Head Monk)
199 Slateford Road
Edinburgh EH14 1LA
0131 443 1010
Dhammapadipa@hotmail.com

Soto Zen

Kimberley Cadden
kimberleycadden@yahoo.co.uk
Wed., 7:30 pm
Portobello Buddhist Priory

New Kadampa Tradition

Devi 0141 946 1027
info@meditateinglasgow.org
www.Meditateinglasgow.org
7:30 pm drop-in meditation class,
St. George's West Church, Shandwick Pl.

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