



GAIA HOUSE

INSIGHT MEDITATION IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

2018

NEWS



WELCOME

Welcome to our 2018 newsletter!

This has been a particularly busy year so far for those working behind the scenes at Gaia House. Here you will read about new developments and how we are working diligently to continue providing the silent retreat space rooted in the Dharma, that so many of us love, while also responding to the changing demands of our times. It is indeed a skilful dance of balancing needs and priorities.

And at the heart of what we do is our intention to become a truly inclusive organisation where power is shared, collaboration is paramount and all individuals and groups are encouraged to fully participate. We want to ensure that people of all identities feel welcomed, supported and valued. May this newsletter be an expression of our intention.

Your comments, feedback and proposals for contributions next year are always welcome at comms@gaiahouse.co.uk.



There is nothing quite like Gaia House in the summer, the majestic trees are at their fullest this time of year and I'm minded of how they form such a vital part of the container Gaia House offers.

Watching the year turn here reflects the larger

and smaller circles we move within; individual retreats at Gaia House have their own cycle and are part of the wider cycle of the annual retreat programme. But while there are familiar patterns here, there is also an evolution. We live in a changing world that seems more and more to be calling for the qualities of peace, insight and compassion cultivated at Gaia House.

Every year increasing numbers of people reach out to us requesting to attend our retreats, and it is with some sadness that we must turn people away. Some retreats have waiting lists twice as long as the already filled retreat places. This could be seen as a wonderful reflection of the changing values in our society, and we are in a privileged position as a charity for our services to be in such demand. However, we must also question whether we are doing everything we can to meet those who seek to join us.

Clearly Gaia House has limitations, the building and grounds will only support so many people at any one time, so if we are to extend our offering, we must look outward and to the future. As you may know, we have for some time been exploring what we can do to make more of our building, and our plans to convert our old workshop and garages into a new wing and extend the garden

wing to improve facilities are still very much an opportunity to be realised.

More recently however, a property across the road, Oak House has come up for sale, and we are currently negotiating with the sellers, local planning authority and potential funders to see if this is an avenue which might allow us to serve more people. If it was realised, either through a bank loan, or private loans from our wider community, we could increase the number of people coming on group retreats and significantly increase the number of single rooms available.

Also, looking to the future, for the first time Gaia House has recruited a new staff member with specialist skills and experience to support us in taking a sensitive, yet more strategic approach to fundraising. This is to ensure we have the resources necessary to take every appropriate opportunity to make the Gaia House's unique approach to Dharma practice more widely available.

We would dearly like to remove any barriers that may prevent people from benefitting from the teaching and practice that Gaia House maintains, be they financial, geographical, cultural, social or psychological. This will not only require money and time, but also a fearless commitment to mindful reflection, investigation and enquiry; a practice we are all devoted to. I hope you share my deep confidence in this practice and continue to visit and support the work of Gaia House to play its part in building a more compassionate world.

Devin Ashwood
Director

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AN UPDATE FROM THE TRUST



Kate Malleon & Sue Wood

There are Dharma lessons everywhere – including being reminded that it's time to write the Trustee news once again! It brought to mind how quickly time passes and how much has changed within our interdependent and impermanent Gaia House community over the past year.

From a trustee perspective this has been a busy time. The Trustee group offered thanks and appreciation as we sadly said goodbye to Walter Young, who contributed his valuable expertise for a number of years, and we have welcomed both Andrew Lacey and Tim Blanch who have recently joined us as trustees, bringing a range of experience and skills. There have been ongoing discussions about how best to ensure that which is precious about Gaia House is nurtured, secured and supported. This feels especially important as we weigh up the various options to improve the building, and/or possibly to purchase Oak House, as well as reflecting on possible outreach opportunities.



The Trust would once again like to pass on grateful appreciation and thanks to everyone who contributes in any way to making Gaia House what it is, whether through their teachings or their work, their time or volunteer labour, or through donations and gifts. Many thanks to you all. Particular thanks are due to those who have contributed so generously to our appeals for donations and to those who have offered to lend funds to enable us to contemplate the real possibility that we could buy Oak House. A special mention must also go to all who enabled us to improve the look and layout of the dining room, to all those volunteers who contribute their time and skills in so many different ways, and to Stephen Batchelor for donating all the proceeds from the sale of his most recent book 'What is This?' towards our building fund. Do order your copy now if you haven't already done so – it's a hugely helpful and fascinating book.

The Trust has often talked about our wish to extend access to teachings and retreats more widely, and we were delighted to join with other trustees, teachers, coordinators and staff, to spend a day together a few months ago to focus on the issue of diversity. As well as a valuable and rare opportunity to meet and talk with so many members of the community, it was a precious chance to share ideas and thoughts about possible next steps towards a more

inclusive approach. These discussions continue, and when time allows, we hope to invite local sangha groups to contribute their ideas for possible developments. Watch this space.

As trustees we take our responsibilities very seriously, and as well as paying ongoing attention to our overall direction and our financial stability, we were reminded by national and international events a few months ago to revisit our approach to safeguarding. Worrying abuses within some major charities as well as a number of incidents within other Buddhist groups has led us to bring together a working group (including teachers, staff and others as well as trustees) to review our policies and working practices, and to learn what we can from good practice in other similar settings. We are determined to do whatever we can to promote and uphold a culture of respect, openness and safety for all in our community.

Being a trustee at Gaia House has been, and continues to be, a wonderful opportunity to support the work of Gaia House and to contribute towards maintaining and developing access to the Dharma. To be part of and to work with a community of people who have these precious teachings at their heart has been a wonderfully positive experience. You may notice below an invitation to join the Trustee group – do follow the link to find out more if you would like to join us.

As we approach the coming year we all look forward to seeing some of these potential developments taking place. We will continue to do our best to navigate the tension between keeping Gaia House the same as it has always been, while also bringing facilities up to date and ensuring we increase access for all who want to experience what Gaia House has to offer. Many thanks to you all for your ongoing support.



Would you like to become a Gaia House trustee?

This is an excellent opportunity to join a committed team of Dharma practitioners who work together to share their personal and professional skills in the development of the Dharma.

We are currently looking to strengthen and diversify the composition of the Gaia House Trust. Having recently reviewed our existing trustees' diversity, skills and experience, we are particularly keen to encourage applications from Black, Asian or minority ethnic background people and those who identify as LGBT.

Our current strategic plan is to increase the number of single rooms and improve the accessibility of our Dharma offerings. In order

to support this, our future strategy will be to make fundraising an integral part of our work. At the moment we lack skills and experience of this at Board level so we would particularly welcome applications from those with charity fundraising experience.

Would you like to join us, or do you know someone who may be interested? Full details including a role description and person specification are available from Sarah Abdy at admin@gaiahouse.co.uk.



INSIGHT MEDITATION PRACTICE

Some reflections on the practice of Dana

Jaya Karen Rudgard

As most Insight Meditation practitioners will know, Dana means “giving” in Pali, and is usually translated in English as generosity. I like this word “generosity” as its root alludes to the dynamic and creative abundance of nature. The gardens at Gaia House at this time of year are a wonderful illustration of this. Just wandering in them gladdens my mind, and it’s the same when we step into the field of generosity.

That’s why the Buddha made dana the first part of the threefold training of generosity, ethics and mental development. However confused or unenlightened we might feel, we can always practice generosity. But it’s not just a preliminary practise – a warm-up for meditators - but the ethos which underlies and sustains the whole journey of opening the heart, the whole of our spiritual path. One of my favourite succinct expressions of the Buddha’s teaching comes from the great Thai teacher Ajahn Buddhadasa. He calls it (I’m paraphrasing) “giving back to nature everything that we have misappropriated – everything that we have mistakenly clung to as I, me or mine.” I love this sense of practice as a giving back.

Dana culture creates an ambience of goodwill which is very fertile soil for the awakening and releasing of the heart. I was fortunate to spend some years as a nun in the Thai Forest tradition and be supported to live and practise by the generosity of people who valued that. It was encouraging and humbling at the same time. It taught me about accountability, about gratefulness and about receiving – which felt strange after growing up in a society that

strongly values self-reliance and self-sufficiency. These qualities have their place, but can sometimes become isolating. Dana culture is a gift economy – a culture of enjoying the sharing of whatever resources are available, which helps break down that sense of separation. In the dana economy we are all both givers and receivers. It’s why the Buddha insisted that his monks and nuns live as alms mendicants and not accept money or accumulate resources, so that they would continually interact with the society around them. It’s also always appealed to me as a way of challenging the paradigm of the capitalist growth economy that has so entrapped us.

One of the things I love about Gaia House and the other retreat centres where I teach is their commitment to keeping alive this aspect of the tradition, and that I can continue to be part of it. It’s an extraordinary and beautiful thing about the way that the Buddha’s wisdom is spreading in the West that it’s not been through conquest and proselytising but by people searching and then being willing to offer their resources and energy to create and sustain the centres we have today. Recently I’ve spent a lot of time

in America where a quite lively culture of philanthropy has created some thriving dharma centres. There’s an energy to that which I find very inspiring.

Regarding material resources, I do think many of us have a complicated relationship with both the presence and absence of money in our lives. It’s something that can create a lot of shame or self-consciousness, as well as anxiety. People often admit that talking about money is harder than talking about sex. This is one of the reasons that the topic of dana can feel challenging, but I think that it’s good that our practice also invites us to explore the uncomfortable edges of our experience. A book that really helped me was “The Soul of Money” by an activist and fundraiser called Lynne Twist. She talks of money as being really a form of stored energy, a current and a conduit for expressing our intentions. “No matter how much or how little money you have flowing through your life,” she says, “when you direct that flow with soulful purpose you feel wealthy. You feel vibrant and alive when you use your money in a way that represents you.... When you let your money move to things you care about, your life lights up. That’s really what money is for.”



I’ve noticed many of my friendships have begun through acts of generosity. It’s natural for the opening of our hands to create an opening of the heart. And the giving can be of all sorts of things as well as material resources - time, energy, attention, gestures of kindness, or even things like giving up of the need to be right.

Khalil Gibran put it beautifully when he said:

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

A suggestion I heard from a colleague rather shocked me the first time I heard it: “If it doesn’t hurt, it’s not really generosity”. I think that’s a slight exaggeration, but have found it to be true that the acts of giving that have brought me most satisfaction have been when I’ve extended myself beyond my usual comfort zone. When the heart opens there is a feeling of stretching, and sometimes it hurts in the way that a stretch of a muscle also hurts. That’s true too of the deeper sorts of letting go that Ajahn Buddhadasa is referring to. But after we stretch open, there can be a real taste of freedom, and a lot of joy. Looking back I can’t think of any regrets I have over acting on a generous impulse, even if the results didn’t turn out as I expected. My regrets only relate to times when I felt a movement of the heart into generosity or connection but, out of fear, or mere laziness, failed to respond.

Every time we opt to practice dana rather than fear or grasping or inertia, we are liberating the heart. We learn to trust emergence, value what we have and empower the goodness and kindness in one another, unleashing creativity in all sorts of unexpected ways. This operates at both the personal and the collective level. The more that we practise dana, the more we are gradually moving society in wholesome directions. If we wish our spiritual practice to make a real difference in the world, then the practice of dana is an excellent opportunity to be the change we wish to see.



BUILDING APPEAL JOURNEY

By the time this newsletter is printed it will be one year since the launch of our Building appeal and we are happy to announce that we have had the most successful fundraising campaign in Gaia House's history, a grand total raised to date of £160,000!

This has been a rich and long journey, and as any journey it has had its surprises, gifts and challenges. It all started three years ago when the Trust and directors saw clearly that it was time to dedicate efforts to improve our accommodation and make our building more accessible to all. For three years we prepared and planned and came up with an ambitious building development plan to achieve all our aims.

We launched our Building Appeal last autumn and six months later, although we were not close to all the money we would need to do everything we wanted, we were in a position to start planning for some building work to start in 2019.

In an opportune and unexpected turn of events, as we were starting to work more intensely on the plans for a garage conversion at the back of Gaia House (an affordable aspect of our bigger building plans), a neighbouring house across the road came up for sale.

This large 5 bedroom house, with an annex, garages and 2 acres of land presented such a rare opportunity...

What if buying this property could answer our need for an improved space for retreatants, teachers and staff? We looked at our business plan, planning permission, resources etc. and the more we considered our options, the more it became clear that this was indeed a realistic and preferable way forward as it opened up a number of extra advantages over starting building work on the garages at the back of the house.

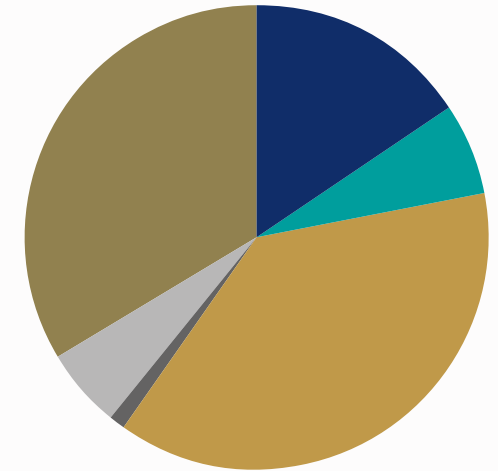
The house purchase would allow money to be invested in a safe way and open up the possibility of a mortgage, it would immediately offer more suitable accommodation for a resident teacher, we could move offices without having to wait for a new building and increase the number of single rooms over the previous plans.

After consulting the Teacher Council and other groups within Gaia House, our Trust decided to go ahead and approved the purchase. Plans to convert the garages, add bathrooms to the garden wing along with more accessible bathroom and bedroom space and an outdoor walking area are still on the cards for the future, but this immediate opportunity was too good to be missed.

Gaia House's offer was accepted on 1st August, and there will now be some months to complete the purchase of the property, along with planning and discussions as we slowly find best use for the space to take care that everyone's needs are considered.

THANK YOU

We feel very grateful for all the support we have received up to date and want to say, truly, without you this would not have been possible. Through our fundraising journey we have seen the strength and commitment of our community and we have been reminded of the importance of honouring our interdependence: without everyone's contributions this place wouldn't be what it is. Gaia House is home and refuge for many, and may it continue to be so for many more into the future!



HOW WE HAVE RAISED £160,000

Online	£25,395.00
Gift Aid	£9,987.92
Trusts	£61,000.00
Stephen's book	£1,724.59
Crowdfunding	£9,037.00
Cheques and In house donations	£53,853.09
TOTAL	£160,997.60



UPDATE FROM THE DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

In April this year we were delighted to welcome Lama Rod Owens to teach at Gaia House for the first time. Lama Rod Owens weaves his skilful dharma teachings with explicit exploration of the inclusion of marginalised identities, and in the outer realm we hear a powerful call to understand the implications of marginalisation of people at dharma centres and elsewhere, and to respond appropriately.

The task of making Gaia House a truly safe space continues to be an area that we need to reflect on and work at. It's important to consider that, for those who occupy positions of non-marginalisation, Gaia House is a safe and inclusive space, because it was mostly created by folk in that position. However, feedback given at the end of this retreat was sobering as people spoke to the reality that, for many, it is very hard to feel safe and included if you are going to a space where you do not feel fully represented either by the teachers or staff, where you are knowingly going to be in a minority, and where you cannot be sure that the way that things are organised will take into account your needs. And, what's more, where the sort of conversation, forethought and action that promote inclusivity have only relatively recently started to happen. It's important to acknowledge this, and the pain of it. By acknowledging the pain of this there also emerges the possibility for appropriate response.

Moving forward, it's good also to reflect on the recent things that have been done to develop inclusivity. Dialogue about inclusion is now happening regularly – the Diversity Working

Group is meeting regularly, and recently there was a training day for all people involved with Gaia House (coordinators, trustees, teachers and staff) to explore privilege, unconscious bias, and cultural competence. This has followed on from training specifically for the Diversity Working Group on the general theme of diversity. Additionally, there has been ongoing reflection on, and updating of, Gaia House communications and processes to ensure that diverse needs can be welcomed and diverse peoples reflected. There is an induction training being developed that will invite all new coordinators/staff to reflect on issues of diversity and inclusion and help undermine unconscious assumptions that might be barriers to inclusivity, and we are also developing an information pack for teachers on this issue. There is ongoing consideration being given by the Teacher Council to how teachers of more diverse identities can be represented at Gaia House. It is clear that the programme needs diversity and attention is being paid to how to make this happen in an ongoing way.

Email: inclusion@gaiahouse.co.uk



THE DHARMA OF BELONGING

Lama Rod Owens

In the beginning of my practice, I was on an intensive retreat with my sangha, where I also happened to be the only person of colour. In a public discussion, I opened up to my teacher explaining how vulnerable I was feeling being in the world as a Black man. I spoke about my distrust of white people and my paranoia being in public spaces where there were not many people of colour.

I went on to explain how I felt alone in the sangha and how in the retreat these feelings were being amplified. After my sharing he considered for a moment and told me that I needed to watch and practise with my mind more. I felt angry, embarrassed, and ashamed.

Though my teacher was right in suggesting I watch my mind, it was not an appropriate response to the real issue of me being the only person of colour in a white sangha. What I was experiencing was a sense of not truly being seen, heard, or respected. Before that retreat, I had suggested to the leadership of my sangha ways they could be more inclusive, which was met with mild interest. I felt that they didn't care about me feeling at home in the sangha.

There were real issues of emotional violence for me in my sangha that presented themselves in the form of micro-aggressions, which are defined as subtle expressions of disrespect experienced as comments, tone of voice, disregards, and assumptions based on one's membership of a particular group. However, what I was also experiencing was a macro-aggression of being one of a few people of colour in a sangha that did not care about disrupting the intense experience of white supremacy that we were experiencing that

was not created to support my unique experience as a marginalised person.

Inclusivity means that a group or organisation decenters dominant ideas, behaviours, and beliefs while inviting those with other ways of being to co-create a space that is expansive and sensitive to the needs of a wider group of people. Inclusivity is very different than diversity. Diversity efforts are only concerned with getting different people into a space but not making people feel as if they belong in the space. Inclusivity helps people develop the feeling of belonging in a space and not simply just allowed to be in a space.

My retreat next April at Gaia House will be an attempt to decenter dominant ideas, behaviours, and beliefs in the space to make it a welcoming space for a wider and more diverse group of people. In order for people to deepen their practice, they must feel safe enough to do so. I have reflected on the experience with my first teacher in retreat and being a dharma teacher now, part of my commitment to freeing all beings is making sure that as many people as possible feel safe and seen in spaces that I teach in. I know that this is how we will see a more enlightened community.



A RETREATANT PERSPECTIVE

Getting free by going through
Jilna Shah

Seeing Rod sitting in front of the Buddha statue in the meditation hall made me teary on the first night. I've been practising Buddhism for ten years and this was the first time that I've sat on an extended retreat with a non-white teacher.

Looking around in the meditation hall to see that I was not the only person of colour on the retreat also felt big. I have become so used to being so hypervisible when on retreat.

Reflecting on Rod's retreat, I recall the bodhisattva vow: touching enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. Rod and his articulation of the teachings affirmed that individual change and social change are not separate. I grew up in a culture that has a strong focus on community and the collective and my social activism also underpins this. Yet, my experience of much dharma teaching is that it is very focused on the individual; the interconnectedness of the individual and society is given just cursory attention. Angela Davis, the African-American activist, academic and author defines 'radical' as grasping something 'at root'. Rod's teaching then, is radical. He made the overlooked realities of oppression, marginalisation and discrimination an undeniable focus of the retreat and also constantly placed our practice in its wider political/social context, including that of black and brown, queer and trans lives being under siege by the state and society.

Rod also broke the silence often experienced by people from marginalised backgrounds in dharma settings. He did this in part by subverting the usual 'subject' of the retreat – that is the white, middle-class and heterosexual retreatant. This was a huge relief. I've so often felt my identity submerged by this underlying assumption of 'sameness' on retreat. What's more is that I've experienced the teaching

of 'non-self' being used in dharma settings to bypass addressing the experiences of people from marginalised backgrounds and wider issues of structural inequality. When the non-self question came up during this retreat, Rod responded not with Buddhist jargon but in his characteristically simple, clear and unequivocal way:

"the only way to get free is through' - we need to 'go through' the self to get to non-self."

The Buddha taught to 'test' his teachings - to question fixed views. In this vein, Rod introduced a refreshing complexity that I've rarely experienced on retreats. One example was his interrogation of the condition of silence at Gaia House. Rod highlighted histories and contemporary instances illustrating the 'violence of silence' and cautioned that the dharma hall is a microcosm of dynamics of domination and subjugation in the 'world outside'. We need to work to bring awareness to our conscious and unconscious complicity - particularly those who are so accustomed to enjoying unquestioned power and privilege in dharma settings whose very setup maintains their safety and comfort.

For once, I didn't feel like the 'other'. I felt a deep sense of affirmation, integration and nourishment that enabled me to lean back into my experience, to breathe more deeply, and to be myself more fully than on any other retreat.



TEACHER COUNCIL REFLECTIONS

Yanai Postelnik

As a group of teachers committed to supporting Gaia House, the Teacher Council meets regularly to give input to the organisation in its wish to keep the values and perspectives of the Buddha-dharma at the heart of all that we do.

As teachers we recognise the importance of deepening our awareness of how we relate to difference and diversity, and a number of us were grateful to be able to participate in the recent diversity awareness training day at Gaia House.

We have an ongoing commitment to reflecting on how to appropriately offer the teachings in a way that is accessible, representative and supportive to all people, and exploring how we can ensure that the teaching at Gaia House affirms and communicates our appreciation and valuing of diversity within our human family.

We are also very aware of the need to support the training and development of new teachers to carry the dharma teachings forward into the future to serve coming generations. As such we are glad to report that there are currently a number of new teachers already in training, some of whom are assisting on retreats, with more scheduled to begin soon.

At a more local level, we are very happy that 11 of the approximately 40 participants in our Community Dharma Leaders training programme have graduated, and their names are now posted on the Gaia House website, while the rest continue in their training, which has included another inspiring and fruitful residential training week, at Gaia House in the spring.

We have been reflecting on non-sectarianism as one of the core values that we share, and which we are committed to upholding at Gaia House. In accordance with this core value, we recently discussed and affirmed our sense of the value of offering and respecting a plurality of approaches to understanding, practising and teaching the Buddha-dharma in the contemporary world. Inevitably as independent teachers we have a range of different approaches and perspectives in our understanding and teaching of the Buddha-dharma, while sharing a commitment to serving the highest welfare of our students and our world, through each seeking to communicate our particular understanding of these teachings.

And all this in the service of our shared wish and aspiration at Gaia House to make the Buddha's teachings of wisdom, compassion and meditation practice available to everyone: for the welfare of all beings, and the well-being of all of life.





A VIEW OF THE KITCHEN...

Bill Ball, Kitchen Coordinator

The day starts at 5am by making a cup of tea, the house occupies the dormant presence of darkness, as it clings to the final hour of sleep. Nudging the kitchen door open signals the first entrance and exit of countless hundreds of times it will facilitate today in service of the complex routines and demands. Whatever upheavals and transformations take place here, all will be left in order and clean in readiness for the next, 365 days of the year. The darkness of winter when the empty space is unforgiving like a chilly cave is transformed by early summer with soft early morning light and the blast of birdsong.

However many times I've entered the kitchen to cook, I admit to having never dispelled the internal resistance of disbelief or disconnection that within a few short hours a meal which exists as an intention in my head will actually be delivered into the dining room to satisfy the daily sustenance of retreatants and staff.

The first small habitual steps to something more concrete tugs me out of my cocoon of procrastination; the routine of slipping on an apron, washing hands, taking down the day-book diary to reassure myself of what I've signed up for, noting down numbers for the main meal; who wants what, how many simples and the specific dietary requirements that must be woven in.

Equipped with weighing scales, a tower of large plastic bowls, menu/lists, pen, my now cooling cup of tea, all are transferred down the corridor, turn left into the cool mausoleum of the veg store. In the stillness, I may pass the tender presence of a retreatant in transition between sleep and wakefulness, in search of a cup of

tea. We pass by on our separate missions, our magnified shadows eclipse momentarily.

Gradually, the physicality of my hands loading up bowls of kilos worth of produce starts to reconnect me more meaningfully. The carrots are different this time, as I handle them my mind shifts that maybe steaming them wouldn't be best after all and by baking them slowly with orange they would sweeten and soften. As I work through the requirements, which started as volition in my mind, to a list on paper, the reality of roughly hewn piles on the floor have presence. By the time I've carried it all back to the kitchen and pushed it through the aperture of the hatch, the meal is emerging with final decisions made.

Around this time the kitchen yogi arrives, the first of many who form an inter-dependent workforce which includes veggie choppers, wash-up teams, cleaners, soup warmers plus the rota of K2's and four cooks, each hour of the daily 15 hour cycle is choreographed and accounted for. Of all roles, the kitchen yogi is

the one we depend on for everything else, they are the glue that holds us together, often found alone at the end of the day quietly preparing fruit bowls and refilling cereal containers for the morning.

Like any physical process of dealing with raw material, the final meaningful stage of scrubbing root veg in the sink is when I become properly engaged and responsive. With chopping boards laid out order is restored, it's now a comparatively simple process of working around to show how each should be prepared; how this detail shapes what we eat, just like this. At the end of the veggie chop, all will have been converted lovingly by the diligence of hand and eye, to wait patiently in stainless steel bowls, ready for the next stage of cooking with varying degrees of success.

In the first few weeks of starting life as a coordinator at Gaia House, I discovered a walk via Newton Abbot to Teignmouth along

the Teign estuary (which is most visible from the train between Teignmouth and Newton Abbot). The walk (known as the Templar Way) follows the high-water mark on the opposite side to the railway and is only accessible at low tide, with access dependent on the time and state of the tide and moon cycles. Over time the walk has become important, even necessary as respite and solace to balance the relational demands and meanings of community life. Through repetition, it has carried the familiarity of practice within an ever-changing internal and external landscape of weather, season, tide, anger, doubt, body, rhythm, surprise, openness, solitariness, renewal, and profane beauty. Each time the person who arrived in Teignmouth to catch the train back to Newton Abbot was quite different to the person who had left his bicycle at Newton Abbot earlier in the day. Over my 2 years here, I've repeated this walk over a hundred times, the experience has always been different however subtle or revealing.



Teign estuary, March 2017. Photo by Bill Ball



A VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVE

Robert Stange

Each Monday morning I get up at 5am and have a quiet cup of tea at my kitchen table before leaving my home in the small village of Abbotskerswell for the ten minute drive to Gaia House.

It is invigorating whether on cold dark mornings in winter or on bright spring and summer mornings when the sun is rising. I'm usually the first person in the kitchen, though I may glimpse retreatants moving silently in and out of the dining room with cups of tea before the first sit in the meditation hall at 6.45am. The palpable atmosphere of quiet, calm, and readiness to meditate delights me as I start to prepare breakfast for meditators ranging in numbers from as few as 25 to 80+ on busier days.

Gaia House is a very special place for me. Since my first group retreat in 2000, each time I drive through West Ogwell I feel I am approaching holy ground: the house itself, a former convent, and the beautiful gardens inviting contemplation of nature's abundant colours and sounds. Since then, I have enjoyed many group and personal retreats which have deeply enriched my life: in knowledge, in emotional balance and in ways of seeing the world. In 2007 I took early retirement from my job at Plymouth University and did my first volunteering during the coordinators' retreat that November. I must have performed reasonably well because I was soon invited to do a regular slot on Mondays; with brief gaps here and there I've been in the kitchen most Mondays since.

After breakfast, I help to prepare lunch with the cook of the day. Preparing food for others is a great delight. Cooking vegetarian meals for retreatants, taking care over simple diets as well as the main dishes, is particularly special. Three hours are spent with the cook who works hard and creatively to provide nutritious meals that are a pleasure to eat mindfully. I'm pretty sure that yogis look forward to lunch at least as much as the evening dharma talk! Cooking has long been a keen interest of mine and I have learned a few new tricks in the Gaia House kitchen. It was also a privilege to help create the long-awaited Gaia House Cookbook in 2015.

The greatest reward of all in volunteering at Gaia House is the interaction with the coordinators, the paid staff, and the kitchen yogis. Over the years I've encountered close to a hundred or so coordinators and managers. Discussions in the staff dining room are heartfelt and the sharing of experiences and ideas is deeply nourishing.

Love is not too strong a word for what I experience among my dharma friends on Mondays.

VIGIL FOR PALESTINE

Please join us at Gaia House on 1st December 2018 for a very special all-night vigil. This year we will be sitting in solidarity with Palestine until the morning, using this precious time to support each other in turning toward the unfolding complexities and challenges of the modern world. The vigil will be a powerful and beautiful way of cultivating courage, compassion, wisdom and spiritual friendship.

This will be the seventh all-night vigil at Gaia House. As in previous years we hope groups of practitioners will hold parallel vigils in the UK and beyond. If you would like to organise a local vigil we can offer suggestions on how to create this opportunity for practice, contemplation and inspiration.

We will be raising funds (from the autumn) for Spring Up Foundation, a charity that is helping to support further education in Palestine. There are many young Palestinians who would like to develop their skills or study for a profession. As a result of the political situation in Israel/Palestine young people struggle to pay for a place at University.

For more information about Spring Up Foundation please visit www.springupfoundation.org and please also check out Gaia House's e-newsletter in the autumn for info on how you can offer fundraising support. To register for the Gaia House Vigil, express an interest in organising a vigil in your own area, or to ask any questions please email vigilforpalestine@gmail.com

Taking part in a vigil can be a powerful experience. Following is a reflection from Andrea Hosfeld who came along to last year's vigil in support of 350.org, a grassroots climate action organisation.

With Love and Peace,
Nic, Andrea and Jane

I arrived at Gaia House carrying the earth's predicament in my body - a heaviness of destroyed habitats and lost species threaded with the anxiety of rising global temperatures. I had been fighting off a strong sense of overwhelm for months and months, unable to take in even a fraction of the unfolding suffering. I knew, deep in my being, that attending this vigil was important, a starting point in a life-journey of taking meaningful action and turning toward suffering - my own and the world's.

There were about 30 people who gathered in the hall and made space for each other in a wide circle. I wondered, as I sat there, if I'd actually have the stamina to stay up. What is it that passes through the heart and animates this body? What is it that makes one stay when tiredness and the desire for comfort come calling and ask us to go to sleep? At the centre of our circle there were five white candles of varying heights representing the refuges of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and the generations that came before us as well as those that will come after. One couldn't help but feel the walking of this path as an endless prayer, and the opportunity to sit through the night with friends as a sacred blessing.

GAIA HOUSE IN 2017

- **37** in-house residential group retreats attended by **1,721** people for a total of **7,433** nights.



- **598** people visited Gaia House as a personal retreatant - in total for **4,296** nights.

- **37%** of the people that came on retreat had never been to Gaia House before



We served

20,077

lunches in 2017

Our garden

produced enough salad for **7,900** people (65% of all salad served)



In excess of

1,660

volunteer hours were contributed

Website Statistics

- **502,769** visits to our website - up from 186,059 in 2016
- on average **1,377** per day



- Financial Assistance and Bursaries Fund has made grants of **£59,215** to **437** retreatants.
- This includes **£8,681** to **50** young people.
- And **£6,409** to help **155** people to pay our lower supported rates.
- Seven people have taken bursary places for three-month personal retreats in 2017

INCOME	2016	2017
Retreat bookings	511502	521190
Donations (FAB, building & General fund, and Building Fund)	107637	209425
other	29060	23111
Total Income	648199	753726

EXPENDITURE	2016	2017
Programme delivery costs	626203	624430
Governance	10109	6450
Total Expenditure	636312	630880

SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)	2016	2017
	11887	122846



SHARING THE GIFT OF THE DHARMA WITH OTHERS

One of Gaia House's deepest aspirations is to share the Buddha's teachings with all who are interested. We created the Financial Assistance and Bursaries Fund (FAB) with the aim that all who wish to participate in our programme can do so, regardless of personal and financial circumstances.

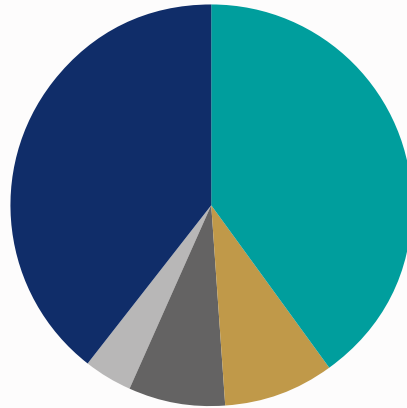
We would like to thank all who generously give to the FAB Fund. In 2017 we received more funds than ever, 489 donations totalled £23,007. This has meant that everyone that has applied to the FAB fund has been supported in some way to come on retreat at Gaia House and no one has been turned down.

The FAB currently offers support for:

- Group retreats
- Personal retreats
- Young people (16-26 year old discount available)
- 3 month long bursaries

A retreatant who recently applied for the FAB funding says:

"Attending the 10-Day retreat at Gaia House was transformative! Literally opening up an unknown inner landscape and way of being. It's strange because at times I mainly felt fear and doubt! In my background it's not common or possible to be able to go to the countryside for a meditation retreat so I am very, very grateful to all those who have made the FAB Fund possible and helped change my life. Thank you!" Rishi.



FAB Income received	%	£ Total
■ Cancellations	39%	£22,654
■ Donations	40%	£23,007
■ Sponsor Rate	9%	£5,075
■ Gift Aid	8%	£4,448
■ Cookbook sales	4%	£2,211

HOW CAN THE FAB FUND HELP YOU?

If you would like to come on retreat and find that our standard and supported rates are too high, we invite you to contact our Reception coordinators to discuss how we can best support you. We welcome applications from all sections of the community and the process is held in confidentiality.

For more information please call our Reception team on 01626 333613.



DHARMA IN QUEER WORLD

A playful, imaginary exploration of gender, sexuality and BuddhaDharma

River Wolton

Imagine...

a world where heterosexuality and gender binarism are not the norm.

Imagine...

you are arriving at your first week-long Buddhist retreat. You've been inspired to come here by taking an introductory meditation course that gave you a taste of peace and made you want to explore further. The taxi drives up to the front door, you step out, unload your bag, pay the driver, take a deep breath.

Many questions have preoccupied you on the journey. You live in a world where the way you are embodied, the very ways you live and love are not considered normal or ordinary. You are one of a minority, estimated to be ten percent of the population, known as heterosexuals, straights or hets. You are also part of a smaller minority who identify as either male or female, and who remain the gender to which they were assigned at birth: cisgendered, cissies, binaries or binos.

You recognise that you have been fortunate. You grew up parented by two loving dads; when you came out to them as a teenager, they responded:

'No matter who you are or who you love, we will always support you.'

They had guessed you were binary from an early age, and although they were shocked to find out you were also straight, they covered it well.

Now more than a decade later you recently introduced them to your new partner, who is also straight and binary. It's your first serious relationship, you are in love, have good friends,

and are beginning to feel part of a strong, proud community. Although you're still wary about holding hands or showing affection in public, some social attitudes are changing. In the country of your birth you are allowed to marry, to adopt children, and you are protected in law from discrimination. But straights and binos still face abuse, prejudice, threats and violent attacks, and in other countries heterophobia is enshrined in law, and supported by state-sanctioned violence. Politicians and religious leaders blame straight and cis people for climate catastrophes such as hurricanes and floods, as well as earthquakes, terrorism and epidemics, claiming these are divine punishment for a decline in morality. In 72 countries heterosexuality is a criminal offence and in ten it carries the death penalty. Even in your own relatively liberal country the state religion does not recognise heterosexual marriage, and you are prevented from being a minister unless you vow to be celibate.

But all this is barely in your consciousness as you push open the retreat centre's front door, and enter this unfamiliar environment.

The corridor is busy with new arrivals, suitcases, people chatting. You follow signs for 'Registration' and join a queue.

As you wait you realise that your 'straidar' is on alert. Is there anyone here like you? Should you have worn a badge, an earring? You look for signals, clothing, body language. You clock the person next to you making a cup of tea. They seem friendly. You take the plunge.

'Hi. Is this your first time?'
'Yes, yours?'
'Mmm. Wondering what to expect, whether I'll cope with the silence.'
'My partner says I won't last two days without texting them.'

You pause. You could agree. You've had the same conversation with your partner. Should you disguise the pronouns so you don't come out? Or should you take the risk and see how they react? It's a familiar dilemma.

You find the dorm room you've been allocated. You requested a single room, but none are available. You open the door: four beds. Which one affords most privacy? You feel shy about others seeing your body, with its explicitly binary-gendered appearance. A surge of rage washes through you. You are fed up of hiding, of holding yourself in check. But if you are completely open, or even simply friendly, what will happen? Will you be dismissed as a predatory het? A narcissistic bino? Another one of those 'over the top' straights?

Walking into the meditation hall your eyes are drawn to the Buddha statue, and you remember the traditional story of their life. How they grew up in relative affluence with their mothers, how the one to whom they were closest died when they were young, and how their remaining parent sought to protect them from suffering, illness and death. You gaze at the trans physical features. Could you ever look so serene, wise and kind? You are grateful for the smaller statue of the binary Kwan Yin, said to embody compassion for the world. Silently you appeal to him, 'Do you hear my cries too?'

After the evening meal, the retreatants assemble in the hall. A few minutes of shuffling as people settle, then a palpable stillness as the teachers enter, walk quietly to the front, bow to the statues and take their seats. You gaze at their faces, you look at their bodies with curiosity. Who are they? Are they like you? Are they queer or straight? How do they identify, how gendered are they? Are they enlightened?

'Welcome,' they say, in a warm, calm tone. 'Please know that you are deeply welcome here, whoever you are, however you find yourself in this moment.'

Their words make you want to weep, but also bring waves of scepticism. In the introductory talks, meditation instructions and reflections, you tune in to any hint of their identities. From their personal disclosures and comments you begin to realise that they are apparently queer and non-binary. They are the majority. Does this approach, this 'religion' (if it can be called that) share the views of other religious institutions - that you are sick and abnormal? How will these spiritual teachers react to you, your struggles, desires, questions? Can they be trusted?



In the first days, you often feel agitated and distracted. One afternoon you find yourself in the library, pulling out book after book, fascinated by the translations of obscure languages, the discourses apparently given by the Buddha himself. Over and over you encounter certain principles: sensual desire leads to suffering; only those who embrace renunciation and celibacy find true happiness. You can't help taking this as a veiled attack on those who don't fit the norm, on those who are labelled 'deviant' and defined by their identities and desires as if this is all they can amount to.

In the meditation sessions the teachers emphasise 'mindfulness of body'. Over and over they invite you:

'Make contact with the ground, find refuge there, feel the contact of your limbs with the earth.'

This is a huge challenge. You become aware of numbness and shame; it is hard to have a felt sense of your body from the neck down. You look at your chest, abdomen, limbs. Insults seem to be scribbled across your skin. Wierdo. Paedo. Breeder. Cissie. Bino.

The practice deepens. You wake early to sit in the meditation hall, to eat porridge, wash dishes, walk slowly in the garden. From moment to moment you begin to see how fear runs through your life, controlling your decisions and habits. You realise that this fear both is and isn't to be taken personally; as someone with a human mind, body and heart you are simply susceptible to its currents. You can't tell how much it comes from a deep belief that something is wrong with you - the nagging, insidious voice that you've felt for as long as you can remember. Can you articulate this to yourself, to the teachers, to those sitting quietly beside you?

One evening the teachers speak about the Buddhist understanding of self and not-self. This sets off a torrent of questions in you. Where can the self be located? How much freedom might be possible if humans loosened attachment to thinking of themselves as a done deal. You contemplate the freedom you gain by being true to your sexuality and gender, and you contemplate the

freedom gained by holding these identities in a wider perspective. You are longing to find others who share your concerns, to ask your fellow retreatants: 'What might happen if you explored the binary side of your being, the heterosexual edge of your desires? How might this shake up your views of self?'

At the same time, you sense the strength that becomes available as you find release from identifying as a victim. You relive the times when you feared for your life and sanity. Cornered by a drunk who grabbed at your genitals; chased by teenagers on the street where you live; paint and bricks thrown at your door; insults yelled as you walked on city pavements; the stares, the double-takes.

In the deepening silence it's a relief to find places of safety, to recognise the mind state that picks up a train of thought and spins you off into past or future danger. To find that you're able to disentangle yourself. You sense a growing compassion for yourself, for your companions here, and those in the wider world, even those who have harmed you. You realise how much fear underlies their actions, and how threatening it seems to accept that human desire and embodiment is richly varied, that love is simply love. Perhaps these dilemmas lie in every soul: Can I accept and honour this body just as it is? Can I open my heart to possibility? Do I dare to love without conditions?

The days and nights move on. Hours of sitting and walking, eating slowly, sipping a cup of tea as you sit in the sun. Soon it's time to leave. You sense how open you have become; despite the bodily pain and turbulent thoughts, the stillness has given you ground to walk on, air to breathe, space to expand. You anticipate the transition to 'ordinary' life and feel yourself shrinking. The outside world is not like this quiet place, surrounded by trees and fields, sustained by lentils, bells, the soft shuffle of slippers. Doubt begins to take root, but you recognise the spiral of despair for what it is. In truth, you do not know what the future holds. You long to lie in your lover's arms. You long for freedom and peace in this life, in the world. All you can do is set your compass, take the next step, and for now, continue.



SUMMER'S LUNCH

Annika Wattne Rodriguez,
Kitchen Coordinator

There are many vegetarian burger recipes, this one is one of my favourites for the summer. It's deliciously crunchy and light but packed with the goodness of garden peas and seeds and an excellent way to use a glut of courgettes! You can adapt to your taste and add different spices and herbs. The burgers go really well with any summer salad and with roasted vegetables or potatoes.

Courgette burgers

Serves 4 persons (2 burgers each)

Ingredients:

400 g courgettes

70 g frozen green peas

70 g red onion (one medium onion),
chopped finely

3 cloves garlic, chopped finely

60 ml (4 tbsp) olive oil

90 g chickpea flour (gram flour)

1 tbsp + 1 tsp ground flax/linseeds
and 3 tbsp water

3 tbsp sunflower seeds

1 tbsp + 1 tsp fenugreek seeds (also known as
Methi), crushed (ground fenugreek can be used)

1 heaped tsp salt

(Buckwheat or millet flakes to stabilise the dough)

Method:

Heat the oil in a pan on medium heat and fry the onions until they are soft and start to change colour. Add garlic and continue frying for a minute or two. Then add the sunflower seeds and fry until all is lightly browned but not

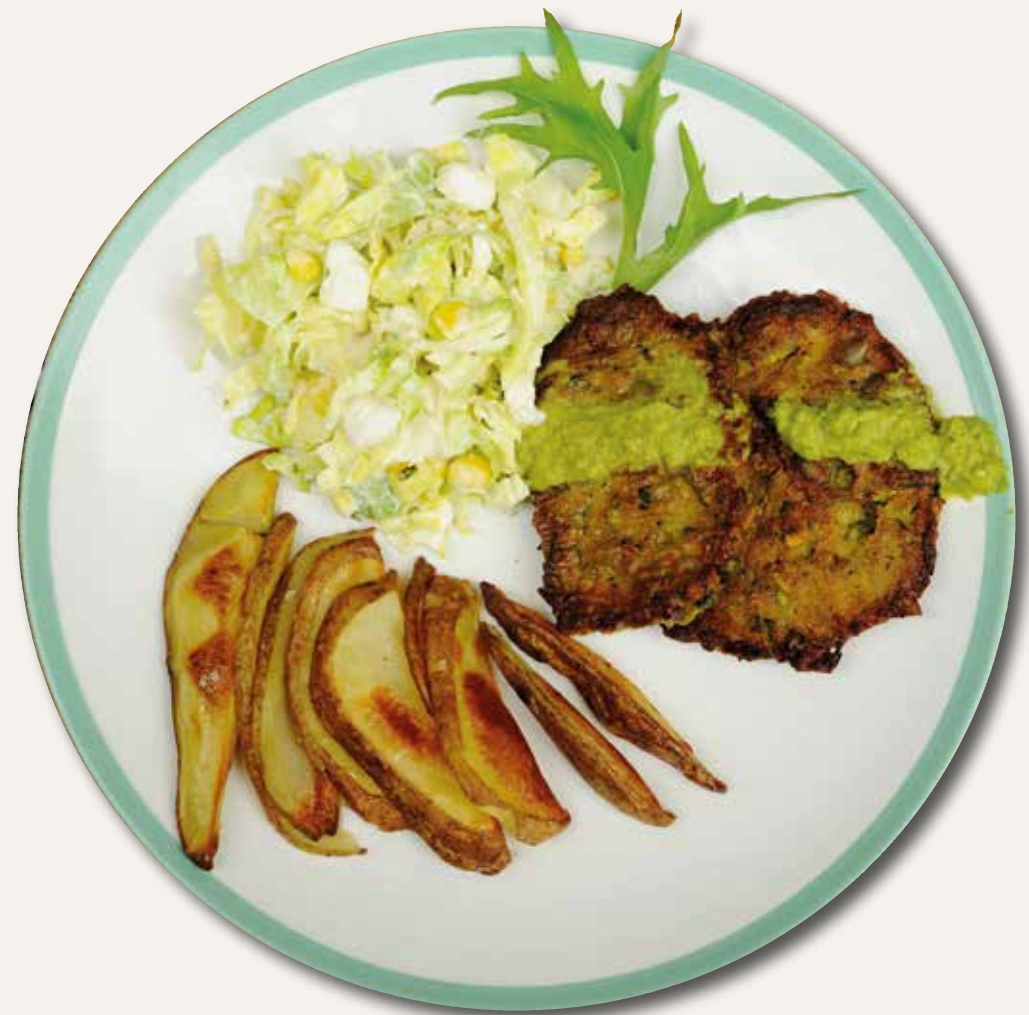
burnt. Pour into a bowl. Stir in the frozen peas and set aside, the peas will thaw and cool the mixture in the process.

Grate the courgettes – 2/3 coarsely and 1/3 finely. Mix with the salt, massage it in and let it rest for ½ - 1 hour in a sieve over a bowl (the salt will draw the water out.) When you are ready, squeeze the mass of grated courgettes, to get the water out, and add the courgette pulp to the bowl of onions and peas (save water to use later).

Grind the flax seeds (or buy ready ground seeds), and mix with the 3 tbsp of water to make a slimy liquid. Crush the fenugreek seeds in a mortar. Add all this and the gram flour to the bowl, using your hands to knead it together, making sure everything is thoroughly mixed.

The dough should be neither runny nor solid. If it is too runny (a spoonful placed on a plate oozes outward), add some buckwheat or millet flakes. If it is a bit too solid, add some of the saved courgette water.

Form burgers using two spoons, placing them on an oven tray lined with baking paper. You should have 8 burgers from this dough. Put in the oven at 180C and bake for 15-20 min, then turn them and bake 5-10 min more.



This will give the burgers a thin baked layer that makes them easy to handle and it will also transform the taste of chickpea flour from bitter to nutty. The burgers can now be put aside to cook the next day or freeze for use later (if you are cooking for many, this is useful!) The last step is to fry them in a pan with frying oil on medium heat till they are golden brown on both sides.

If you want to, you can make a decorative pea sauce:

Boil a pot of lightly salted water and pour in some frozen garden peas. Bring back to the boil, then drain water (saving a little), and blend peas to a soft consistency (adjust with saved water). Add Coleman's mint sauce to taste. To serve, drizzle sauce over the burgers – the contrasting colours will look very inviting!

Summer cabbage salad

Serves 4

Ingredients:

4-600 g of early summer cabbage

100 g frozen sweet corn

70 g feta cheese

Juice from ½ lemon

100 ml yogurt natural (full fat)

100 ml sour cream or crème fraîche

Pinch sugar

Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Remove any wilted outer leaves of the cabbage. Divide it in half and cut out the central stem. Slice the rest as fine as you have patience for. Boil the sweet corn and let it cool. Cut feta cheese into small 1cm cubes. Combine yogurt and sour cream in a bowl, add lemon juice and sugar (check flavour, you may want more or less juice and sugar). Carefully mix cabbage, corn and cheese with the dressing. Add salt and pepper to taste. This salad is even better if left overnight in the refrigerator, but it can also be served right away.

Vegan alternative:

For the sauce, use good quality soy yogurt. If you want it thicker, you can pour it into a coffee filter and strain off some water. Then add lemon and a pinch of sugar as above.

Instead of feta cheese, use roasted nuts, for example walnuts.

If you eat goat and sheep milk products you can use goat milk yogurt (strain as above) and the feta (just make sure it is real feta, not the cow's milk type).

Chips

Serves 4 persons

Ingredients:

0.8-1 kg potatoes

Oil/margarine/butter (50 ml/ 45 g)

Salt

Method:

Set your oven to 200-220C. Lightly oil one or two oven pans. Use oil that you like, or margarine/butter if you prefer. You don't need much, just a coating. Put on a large pot of salted water to boil. (Use plenty of water, so that it will not cool down too much when adding the potatoes, and use more salt than you normally would – the salted water will provide all the salt required.) While the water is heating, scrub the potatoes clean of dirt. Cut each in half (lengthwise) and then into thin wedges. When the water is boiling, add the potato wedges and leave the stove on high heat. As soon as the water comes to the boil again, drain into a colander and let the potato wedges steam off. Tip wedges into roasting tray(s) and spread evenly (not on top of each other). Use more than one tray if needed. Bake for 20-30 minutes, rotating the trays to ensure potatoes cook evenly, until the thinnest wedges are getting brown, the others golden. Turn once or twice.

These chips taste (and look) lovely, even though very little fat is used; they provide a healthy alternative to deep fried chips. You can make varieties by adding herbs and spices.



BODHI COLLEGE UPDATE

Bodhi College courses have been popular this year, taking place in retreat centres and venues across Europe – in Switzerland, Holland, Germany, and the UK as well as online.

In December, we are excited to begin our first Teacher Training, supporting the development of 30 participants from diverse backgrounds across the world. The programme, lasting a minimum of three years, aims to equip participants to teach in a range of contexts for the contemporary mindfulness community. We are also running our Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness 5 day study retreats throughout 2018 -19 aimed at MBI professionals and experienced meditators, as well as our two-year Secular Dharma and Committed

Practitioners Programme – both of which help broaden meditation practitioners' understanding and experience through an exploration of early Buddhist doctrine, philosophy, psychology and ethics.

The autumn sees the start of our second six-week online course in collaboration with *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. Featuring four of our core teachers, this is an essential programme for anyone with an interest in mindfulness, its Buddhist roots, and its role in the contemporary world.

Upcoming courses and retreats:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 21-28 September 2018 | Holland: Dependent Origination - 7 day residential retreat with Christina Feldman & John Peacock |
| 24 September 2018 | 6 weeks, online: Mindfulness: Its Origins, Purpose and Transformational Power with Stephen Batchelor, Christina Feldman, John Peacock & Akincano Weber |
| 1-5 October 2018 | UK: Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness: The Existential Challenge - 5 day residential retreat with Christina Feldman & Chris Cullen |
| 18-23 February 2019 | Switzerland: Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness: The Big Picture - 5 day residential retreat with John Peacock, Akincano Weber & Yuka Nakamura |

To join our mailing list, contact one of our staff, and find further details on our forthcoming events, go to: www.bodhi-college.org

BRIGHTON

Please check the website for upcoming events: www.bodhitreebrighton.org.uk

Contact: btbsecretary@gmail.com

BRISTOL

13 Oct Catherine McGee
A day of soulful practice

8th Dec Zohar Lavie
Cultivating care and wisdom

Venue: St Michaels on the Mount Parish Hall, St Michaels on the Mount School, Old Park Hill, off Perry Road, Bristol BS2 8BE.

Time: Please arrive after 9.15am and be settled in the venue by 9.45am. The retreat ends at 5pm.

Costs: £15.00 for waged and £7.50 for low or unwaged. Some concessions may be available. Please contact the Day Retreats team by email to discuss.

Contact: bristoldayretreats@gmail.com

BRISTOL cont.

6 Oct Self-led Retreat
3 Nov Saturdays
1 Dec

These popular, well-supported day retreats are based on sitting and walking meditation. The retreats are not led by a teacher and no meditation guidance is given, so they suit participants who are comfortable with a basic meditation practice. Participants are welcome to book their place in advance or turn up on the day.

Venue: Horfield Quaker Meeting House, 300 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8PD

Time: 10am – 5pm (please arrive promptly, to be settled to begin by 10.15am)

Cost: £17 per participant (£8.00 concessions) payable on the day

Contact: Max on 07581 127734 or David Ringsell on david@talk-it.biz

OXFORD

22 Sep Mark Ovland
20 Oct Bhante Bodhidharma
1 Dec Catherine McGee

Venue: Old Headington Village Hall

Time: 10am-5pm, registration from 9.15am

Cost: £10 (£5 concession) plus teacher dana

Contact: www.oxfordgaiahousetretreats.co.uk (for booking, what to bring and other information)

General enquiries:
Brigid or David
01608 811 940

SHEFFIELD

15-16 Sep Yanai Postelnik,
27-28 Oct Catherine McGee

Venue: Whirlow Spirituality Centre

Contact: River Wolton
07748 271 470
sghsg2009@gmail.com

www.sheffieldinsightmeditation.org.uk

FROME

11 Nov Yanai Postelnik
9 Dec Zohar Lavie

Venue: Frome Steiner Academy, Park Road, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1EU.

Cost: £10 standard, £15 sponsor, £5 supported plus teacher dana.

Contact: fromeinsight.weebly.com/



London Insight Meditation – 2018 schedule

14 Oct 2018

Meditation Day

Catherine McGee

A day of soulfulness practice (for experienced practitioners)

King Alfred School

21 Oct 2018

Meditation Day

Bhante Bodhidharma

Insight meditation in the Mahasi tradition

King Alfred School

11 Nov 2018

Meditation Day

Zohar Lavie

Awakening wisdom, peace and joy

Jamyang Buddhist Centre

17 Nov 2018

Meditation Day

Christina Feldman

Breaking the chain of reactivity

King Alfred School

18 Nov 2018

Meditation Day

Christina Feldman

Identity and non-self

(for experienced practitioners)

King Alfred School

9 Dec 2018

Meditation Day

John Peacock

The unity of insight and compassion

King Alfred School

Contact details:

enquiries@londoninsight.org

07954 472 771

www.londoninsight.org

facebook/londoninsight

Twitter: @londoninsight

SanghaSeva

Meditation in Action Retreats led by
Zohar Lavie and Nathan Glyde

14 - 25 Oct Being Peace Retreat

Being the change we wish to see in Israel
and Palestine

26 - 27 October, 2018 Being Peace Weekend Retreat

in Israel and Palestine

31 December, 2018 - 29 January, 2019 The Way of Compassion

at Anandwan; a leprosy-affected
community in India

18 March - 6 April, 2019 Sustainable Living Work Retreat

at Dharmalaya; institute for compassionate
living in India

23 - 26 May, 2019 Humanity in Action: Supporting a Safe Haven with Help Refugees

Calais, France followed by

Sangha Volunteer Period

26 - 29 May, 2019

For more information visit
www.sanghaseva.org

Retreat to Gayles

Eastbourne, East Sussex

Awakening Inner Peace and Freedom: an Insight Meditation Retreat with Yanai Postelnik

30th Nov – 2nd Dec, 2018

Insight Meditation connects us with our capacity to be present in each moment, with an open-hearted attention to every experience. From this quality of being present, kindness and clarity begin to naturally deepen in the heart. Wisdom born of seeing the truth of our experience reveals a natural peace and freedom in the heart, together with a genuine love and compassion for oneself, for others, and for all of life. Through understanding that we are not separate, we can come to know what it means to awaken in the midst of our life, to be deeply connected to our experience, and yet not bound by it.

Cost: £155 plus teacher dana.

Contact: info@retreattogayles.co.uk
07721 023 845

<http://www.retreattogayles.co.uk>

Please register on the London Insight Meditation website to receive email updates about these and all other events. New events are added regularly.

There is a network of sitting groups in and around London informally linked with London Insight Meditation, including study groups with particular themes. See the website for details.

Teachers offer personal interviews in London throughout the year. Join the mailing list to receive email notifications of forthcoming interview opportunities.

Sitting groups

A network of meditation groups has developed throughout the UK and beyond, often set up by people who have spent time at Gaia House and wish to remain connected with this retreat centre and their experiences here.

If you run a sitting-meditation group and your name and details are not featured here, please let us know and we can add you to this list and our website. Please also email comms@gaiahouse.co.uk to inform us of any changes to your group's current information.

AVON & SOMERSET

BATH
Bath Buddhist Group
suehawkey@googlemail.com

BRIDGWATER/TAUNTON
Roy Cramer
roy.cramer1@virgin.net

BRISTOL INSIGHT
Mannie Burn
mannieburn@aol.com

BRISTOL CHAN
Gordon Adam
gordonadam@blueyonder.com

BRISTOL
Jiva Masheder
enquiries@bristolchan.co.uk

FROME
Dan Lupton
dan.lupton@hotmail.co.uk

WELLS
Diana Stewart
diana.m.stewart@hotmail.com

BERKSHIRE

Newbury
Susan Millington
millington.susan@gmail.com

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

MILTON KEYNES
Helen Stephenson
info@mindfulnessmk.com

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

CAMBRIDGE
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cambridgeinsight@gmail.com

PETERBOROUGH
Barbara Reid
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CORNWALL

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01326 372 419

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IKON

A poem by
Rob Burbea, Gaia House teacher

In blue in crimson blessing hummingbirds
surround me they flicker they kiss

with all their delicate wings
my skin my soul its sickness pour

their honey
on the blooded wounds of an exile

on my faith their ministry
and anoint here

in the broken crucible of their eyes
the orchard in the Buddha's first bow

in his first light
the dream of my body of a brief summer rain

NEW DHARMA RESOURCES

What is this?

by **Stephen Batchelor**

In the spring of 2018 Gaia House published a new book by Stephen Batchelor, which had been offered by the teacher as a fundraising aid for our Building Appeal.

What is This? is an edited transcript of six discourses Stephen gave during a week-long Sön Buddhist retreat at Gaia House from 9-16 April, 2016, which he co-led with his wife Martine. These include three evening talks and three morning instructions as well as his opening welcome to the retreatants and his concluding remarks before they departed.

The book introduces us to the practice of radical questioning as taught in the Korean Sön Buddhist tradition. 'Sön' means 'meditation.' It is the Korean equivalent of the Chinese 'Chan' and Japanese 'Zen'. The talks explore how a practice that originated in China more than a thousand years ago can be enriched by ideas from the natural sciences, ancient and modern Western philosophy, Romantic poetry and the early Buddhism of the Pali Canon.

All the proceedings of the book sales are going to the Gaia House Building Appeal. We are delighted to say that so far it has raised £1,724.59.

If you want to read sample pages and buy the book please visit our website:



GIFT VOUCHERS

For a special occasion or just for the love of it, a gift voucher is a wonderful way to support someone else to come on retreat at Gaia House.

You can choose the amount you want to gift and the receiver will be able to apply it towards any group or personal retreat.

If you wish to purchase a gift voucher contact reception on 01626 333613.





GAIA HOUSE
INSIGHT MEDITATION IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

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