



GAIA HOUSE

INSIGHT MEDITATION IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

autumn 2012  
NEWS



## Introduction...

This newsletter coincides with the publication of the next annual programme of retreats that offer the breadth and depth of enquiry that Gaia House strives to deliver. This year has seen retreats booked months in advance of their start dates, and attendance levels on almost every retreat at or near maximum capacities. In times of uncertainty and questioning, the opportunity for reflection and reconsideration of 'what is' has been much in demand. It is testament to what Gaia House offers that the value and experience of time on retreat outweighs, for many, possible financial constraints or concerns.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Andy Power for the past three years he has worked as Director at Gaia House. His energy and attention to detail and support for everyone who works to keep the house running smoothly has been immense. He has played a key role in getting our new biomass boiler purchased and commissioned, which will reduce our running costs in the coming years and reduce our carbon footprint significantly.

The new boiler, coupled with further work in the house early in the New Year should also contribute to it being warmer. He has supported the Trust, developed frameworks that will improve the management of the house and ensured that it is in good heart to face the change and challenges of the coming years. Andy is moving on to take up a role working with the charity Adoption UK and we wish him well in his new job.

We will be looking to recruit someone to the post of Director in the New Year, but in the meantime we welcome Siggs Streat who will be in the role of Acting Director for the next six months.

Gaia House is a bit like a swan on a river, gliding serenely along in the current whilst paddling energetically below the surface to keep moving forward.

Gaia House flourishes thanks to the time, dedication and work of a broad body of people: co-ordinators, staff, teachers, volunteers, trustees and benefactors. Without any of these it would not be the same. Guiding Gaia House through periods of change can be challenging, even



for an organisation that recognises within its offering that change is a constant. Some of the drivers for change are external, such as changing regulatory or legal frameworks or compliance with health and hygiene rules, and some are internal: reviewing the retreat offering, the organisation of the space in the house or the management structure that governs it. We work closely together to hold a vision of what Gaia House is or should be and this too can be challenging. A diversity of views can result in robust discussions but as an organisation we strive to hear and respect each others views and to arrive at consensus on challenging issues. For me a uniqueness of Gaia House is that there is the capacity and willingness to work with it and endeavour to keep 'paddling'.

Gaia House is on a firm footing financially (in as much as anything is firm in today's world) and it has a strong commitment from all who contribute to supporting what it offers, and as such it is in a strong position to continue to thrive and evolve.

**Michael Jefferies**  
Chair of the Trustees

# Contents

## Regular Articles

Teacher in Focus - John Peacock	pg 8
Teachers' Corner	pg 9
Coordinator Reflection	pg 11
Beyond Gaia House	pg 15
UK One Day Retreat Information	pg 17
Sitting Groups	pg 18

## Features in this edition

Retreat, Daily Life, and a Whole Life Path by Gregory Kramer	pg 4
Outreach by Rachel Davies	pg 9
A Yogi Perspective by Kate Redfern	pg 12
Sponsored All-Night Meditation	pg 14

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# RETREAT, DAILY LIFE, AND A WHOLE LIFE PATH

**Gregory Kramer**

In Buddhism we ask: What is the path?  
What about turning the question around and asking: What is not the path?

Spending time on retreat is an extraordinary experience which contributes powerfully to the totality of life. Immersive practice creates the opportunity to cultivate qualities of the mind, such as awareness and wisdom, which truly penetrate our being. Therefore retreats are an important and helpful part of our practice. But the time spent on retreat only represents a tiny proportion of the entirety of life. In reality, every moment is a moment of building or un-building the prison of our existence. Our intimate relationships, the way we eat, our lifestyle choices are all part of that process. So the path must have equal strength, equal pervasiveness.

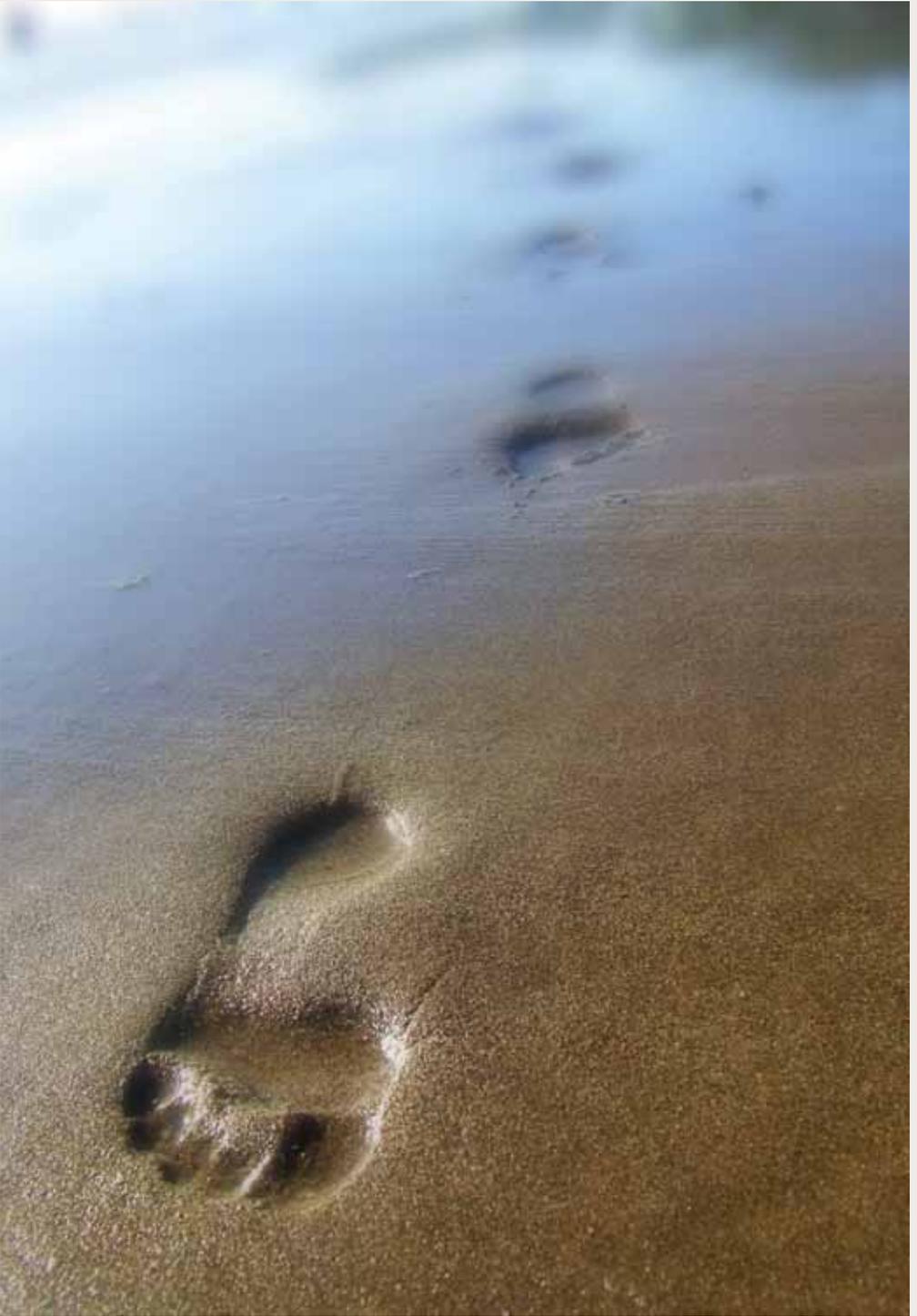
When we bring the seed teachings of the Dharma into the totality of our lives it has a strong influence, like a magnet. Everything is included. We don't have to sit with our legs crossed or go on retreat to learn about and experience the Dharma. In fact, when we are away from daily life we are outside some of the situations with the most power for effacement. Wearing away ignorance, recognising wakefulness, is the work here.

If we are going to take the penetrating wisdom teachings of the Buddha into the totality of our lives, then we have to allow ourselves to be fully challenged by these teachings in every aspect of life. We cannot just pick and choose. It is not sufficient to separate out suffering, for example, and fail to acknowledge that this suffering is directly connected with the hungers that drive it. Can we become alert to the hunger for pleasure,

social and sensual, without judgment or reserve? Or the hunger for escape, for invisibility? Can we welcome into our lives the Buddha's suggestion to contemplate contentment or death? Identification and grasping? Can we do so at the kitchen table, in the bedroom, at the office? We are called to look at the whole picture as much of the time as practicable. In taking on wisdom teachings, nothing is left out.

The Dharma opens the door to a morality practice that will inform how we relate to other human beings through Right Speech and Action. As long as the mind is contorted and confused by lying and rough speech, intoxicants, unwise sexual behaviour, killing or stealing, the prison walls are not only intact, they are growing stronger. We cannot separate how we treat the mind with intoxicants and how we treat others. In our time we're called to include in Right Speech the emails, videos and photos we share.

Or consider Right View. In the Buddha's dispensation, Right View is not just a description of the mind that sees things as they are, but it is a call to a life path of on-going practice. It is not just an arrived-at state; Right View is also a practice and it needs sustained cultivation and attention; it is not just something we pick up when we are on retreat for a week. Life is an inquiry. Mindfulness and concentration, supported by Right Effort, are the supports for this inquiry as much in our mundane lives as on pristine retreat.





***How are we going to remember the qualities that we have been touched by on retreat?***

In daily life, considering Right View affects how we relate and talk to our friends and family. When we are discussing important matters, if we are informed by the seed wisdom of the Dharma then we are practising Right View. But if we are informed by delusion we are practising wrong, unwise view. Right View understands the nature of grasping and pain, the emptying of the self and freeing of the mind, and that our actions have effects. What we read, talk about, think about, are all connected with the practice of Right View. Study, contemplation, observation and discussion weave this practice into the fabric of our lives, investing it with wholesome aliveness and laying the seeds for discernment.

Are we giving enough attention to the development of Right Living, Right Livelihood?

A monastic has an entire set of rules, a whole structure and lifestyle to support how to live wisely, for effacement. But outside of monastic life what have we got? Sometimes it seems there are no boundaries; we can do what we want (if money and time are sufficient and if no one catches you!). When we talk about Right Living, it relates to the resources we use, what we consume and produce. How we live needs to be fully a part of our practice and it demands deep and continual inquiry. We need to maintain the sense of a totality of the Dharma and be informed by the seed wisdom.

Where is this sense of wholeness and ubiquity of the path going to come from? How are we going to remember the mindfulness?

How are we going to remember the qualities that we have been touched by on retreat? Where is the energy to live this life of relinquishment

coming from? It is a serious question because most of our culture goes against what we are learning: acquisition rather than relinquishment; excitement rather than peace; selfishness rather than love and compassion. We find our culture's push in many casual byways, such as when we turn on the TV or surf the internet. We are confronted by a barrage of messages which foster desire and agitation. How do we clean and orientate the mind in the context of the society in which we live?

Unfortunately there is no fixed answer; every life has its particulars and every person has to find their own path. But finding one's path does not happen without commitment and the giving over of the heart.

I offer some practical suggestions to follow to help discover and polish this path:

## **1. Consider what is the Path**

First and foremost, consider the Path itself. How we understand the path will set the direction of the mind: Right View leads to Right Intention. Do you feel clear as to the need and possibility for a whole life path?

## **2. Regular silent meditation practice**

Individual, silent meditation practice is like the diamond in the middle. Its simplicity needs to be guarded and honoured. It is in those places of simplicity and silence that one can touch the relationship of mind and world. Without clarity about that relationship, relationships with other humans cannot possibly be clear. So give a high priority to your daily silent meditation practice.

### 3. Retreat practice

We go to retreat to deepen, to polish, to refine, to learn, to let go, to be incinerated. Traditional and relational Vipassana, and Insight Dialogue free the heart as the mind settles over time into finer layers of mindfulness, concentration, investigation and tranquillity. It may not be easy to free up the time or money, but there is no replacement for extended practice. Each retreat is different; the unfolding and unbinding presenting and deepening anew.

### 4. Tap into wise teachings

Touch the word of the Buddha and see how it feels. It is not as intimidating as it might initially seem.

As you begin, you may find resistance to the language, the religiosity or the forms. Be patient. It might take a little time to move beyond that formidable exterior into something where you feel immediately touched. Some of these teachings are beyond one's understanding, but a lot of it can be intuitively understood and of tremendous benefit here and now. But if the form of the discourses is difficult for you, find other ways of getting into it. For example, the practice of Dharma Contemplation, with its method of moving through the teachings in layers, can be very helpful. If the teachings in other wisdom traditions touch you more than Buddhadharma, tap into these and triangulate them with the Buddha's teachings on impermanence, suffering, and notself; with the teaching on suffering and release. Let me close with some simple ideas that may support your relational meditation practices of Insight Dialogue and Dharma Contemplation. Perhaps these will fit easily enough into your life. Relational meditation practice, such as Insight Dialogue, has the same purpose and basic meditative elements as traditional, individual practice. It harnesses the power of relation to sharpen and steady the mindfulness and concentration. It also helps to bridge meditative qualities and insight to our engaged lives.

### 5. Practice partners

Find an Insight Dialogue practice partner to help motivate and inspire you. It does not need to be someone on your street. Using the telephone or Skype can work very well too, and may bring a regularity to your practice that in-person gatherings don't quite allow. The people you meet on a

retreat could be a good starting point. Also, at [www.metta.org](http://www.metta.org) you'll be able to find practice partners from all over the world with Insight Dialogue or Dharma Contemplation experience.

Alternatively practising with a close friend or spouse can be a beautiful opportunity to share relational practice with a new person and so develop an integrated practise, formal and informal. Perhaps you and your partner can touch something which is right at the boundary of constructed intimacy and the unconstructed intimacy of meeting what is here when there is nothing in the way.

If you do practice with someone close to you, respect the boundaries of the practice. Don't be sloppy. Let it be intentional. Invoke silence to establish it; introduce a contemplation from the Dharma which keeps the practice centred around wisdom. And when the practice session ends, it ends clearly, intentionally. Perhaps then, you'll be able to notice the fragrance of practice as it enters your everyday life with this person.

### 6. Join a local group

Weekly or fortnightly practice reminds us of what is possible in relational awareness, in bringing the Dharma into shared inquiry. There are local sitting groups across the country organised by people who have done several retreats and these are an ideal way of accessing support for your practice. UK Insight Dialogue groups may be found at [www.metta.org](http://www.metta.org) and there is a list of UK-wide sitting groups on the back pages of this newsletter.

### 7. Online resources

Relational practice, relational Dharma, and distance learning opportunities at [www.metta.org](http://www.metta.org) Metta's website are there to support you. The Whole Life programme, Stepping Stone Sangha, and other programmes are joined by forums, practice group listings, meditation partnering opportunities, and teachings in the form of audios, videos, and texts.

I hope your sense of a whole life path, a whole life understanding of the Dharma, has been enhanced or awakened.

**GREGORY KRAMER**

*is a meditation teacher, author, director of the Metta Foundation and a visiting faculty member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies in Massachusetts.*

# TEACHER IN FOCUS

## John Peacock



*John Peacock has been a Buddhist practitioner for nearly forty years and is a Gaia House guiding teacher. He is Associate Director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, teaches on the Master of Studies programme in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) at Oxford University and is one of the MBCT retreat leaders at Gaia House.*

### **How has the mindfulness movement evolved in recent years?**

Mindfulness has become so much more mainstream – I am amazed to find myself teaching at Oxford University! It is really heartening to see the growth of MBCT teaching and the increasing numbers of people coming on retreats and dedicating themselves to mindfulness practice.

The movement is also becoming increasingly global, for example, some of the staff at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre offer training in Taiwan where there is a Buddhist tradition, but no established secular MBCT professional provision or training. In Singapore the Healthcare establishment has become interested in the secular teaching of MBCT but they do not want it mixed with Buddhism so there is a demand for Western clinically trained teachers.

However I do have concerns about how quickly MBCT is growing in popularity and the possible threat to the integrity of the practice. I observe people setting up as practitioners without enough training or proper commitment to the practice. As a result some people may be getting poor mindfulness teaching. There perhaps needs to be specific criteria for becoming an MBCT teacher, as in any other profession, with on-going Continuing Professional Development and regular retreat practice. To meet this challenge good practice guidelines have been developed by some of the principal universities involved in the training.

### **What types of people are you teaching mindfulness to?**

Mindfulness is taught to the general public, particularly people who are seeking ways of coping with stress or of managing clinical depression. I am not involved with this teaching, but teach professionals such as

psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and councillors who use mindfulness as part of their work. I do this as part of the Master of Studies degree that is taught at Oxford University.

One of the defining characteristics and strengths of mindfulness is that it is secular. It is not the job of secular mindfulness practitioners to convert people to Buddhism. This would be unhelpful and unnecessary. However, I don't see this as a dilution of the Buddhist tradition.

### **How would you like to see the mindfulness movement developing?**

I would like to see it influencing the core values in society. Nevertheless mindfulness in the workplace and in schools can be seen as very counter cultural. Our society is very materially orientated and the concepts of status, power and money are highly valued. I would like to see mindfulness in the mainstream, not just in clinical application, but as a vital resource for the general population.

I would like to see a greater emphasis given to retreats and daily practice.

### **Why is it so important for mindfulness teachers to go on retreat?**

Like Dharma teaching, it is important to teach mindfulness from your own experience. It is a critical component of MBCT teaching that teachers speak and guide from direct experience. Teaching in this way, what is said comes from the heart and not just the intellect. To facilitate others you need to have done it yourself, been engaged in the process and have encountered your own difficulties with the practice. Going on regular retreat brings a greater depth to the practice and is vital for anyone who wants their teaching to emerge with the voice of authenticity.

# Outreach

Gaia House has been holding silent retreats for many years, and we are now in the process of discussing what else might emerge outside the realm of Gaia House's usual offerings. Whilst we are aware that what happens at Gaia House is really rather wonderful, we also are aware that there are ways that we could develop what we are doing for a positive benefit. This has loosely been named 'Outreach', and could include many things. Our first consideration is what the purpose of an outreach programme would be. Initially, four potential streams have emerged:

- supporting existing sangha members in their practice outside of coming on retreat to Gaia House
- seeking to overcome barriers for people to learn about Dharma and meditation
- finding pathways to enable people to come on retreat at Gaia House who might otherwise not have
- generally offering alternative ways for practising and engaging with the teachings which are not in the usual Gaia House remit.

We are still in the process of agreeing exactly what 'Outreach' might look like, but feel enthused at the prospect of spreading our wings a little further.

Tasters of what might emerge have included a series of evening meditation courses in our local town Newton Abbot. The response has been excellent, with numbers far exceeding our expectations, and many of those who attended the course were keen to dip their toes further in the water by signing up for day retreats at Gaia House. We have also worked with local sangha members to set up day events in various cities. It will be interesting to see how this initiative unfolds.

If you are part of a sitting group and have enthusiasm or ideas for how Outreach might contribute to your group, or if you are interested in being involved with potential outreach activities in your area, please get in touch with me at Gaia House.

## Rachel Davies

Retreat and Outreach Manager  
retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk

# Teachers' corner

As part of nurturing the wider Gaia House community, and specifically of supporting those involved in hosting Insight Meditation events in Britain, some Gaia House teachers are offering to visit local groups, starting in 2013. This could involve one or more sessions, (tentatively called 'facilitator training') designed in collaboration with the visiting teacher, in order to meet the needs of each group. Sessions would include an element of community-building and some input to help ground the group and its work in basic Dharma principles and practices.

Juha Penttila, co-founder of the Insight Meditation organisation 'Nirodha' in Finland, said, "Facilitator training has provided crucial support and inspiration, enabling the sangha to grow more rapidly. The sessions have helped build a stronger sense of community among the organisers and have empowered individuals to feel more confident in hosting evenings and other events."

Please contact Rachel Davies, Retreat and Outreach manager, at Gaia House for more details at [retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk)

## COMMITTED DHARMA PRACTITIONERS PROGRAMME (CDPP) 2013-14 **PLACES AVAILABLE**

The CDPP is an extended programme of integrated study and practice of the Buddha's teachings of the path to liberation.

It is held in the beautiful setting of Sharpham House with retreats at Gaia House.

### Commencing May 2013

With teachers Christina Feldman, John Peacock, Akincano M. Weber, and Stephen Batchelor.

For more information and an application pack please see the Gaia House or Sharpham Trust websites or contact [sharphamcdpp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sharphamcdpp@yahoo.co.uk)

# HOUSE LIFE

## MEETING MOMENTS



Pictured from left to right: Susanne O'Brien, Ramiro Ortega, Brian Watson, Juha Penttila, Ray Richardson, Jane Knight, Mark Øvland.  
Inset: Trish King

I would like to share a couple of practices that we engage in at Gaia House at the start of meetings, which reflect an intention to integrate Dharma practice into our working lives.

Meetings are often not something that people like; indeed tolerating meetings can be the most that some of us can manage. But, I've found the following practices can really set the tone for a meeting in a way that can even make a meeting quite enjoyable. Yes, enjoyable. At the start of all meetings at Gaia House, we have a few minutes of silence.

This is a time to come into our bodies, reflect on what we might be bringing to the meeting in terms of our own emotions, relax, watch our breath, offer kind wishes. Perhaps to remember the shared care for this place and the people who come here, even if we have different opinions about the particulars of running the house. The other practice is one of sharing a little of how we are doing before tackling the issues of the day.

This helps to create a field of trust as perhaps we share what doesn't feel so good, or perhaps makes us feel vulnerable. We can also celebrate our well-being and generally have a better sense of what might be needed in terms of how we choose to communicate with each other. I don't think I'm alone in thinking that meetings everywhere might benefit from this time taken at the start.

No more Gaia House meetings, however, for two coordinators who hang up their room plans and gardening gloves this year. Tony Mone

has left the Household department to take up work in London. Careful, organised, thorough, Tony and his friendliness will be greatly missed. Emma Burleigh also leaves the Garden department for adventures new this autumn. Always willing to offer her time, and with kindness in abundance, Emma will also be greatly missed. Thank you to both of you for your wonderful service.

I am really pleased to welcome Ramiro Ortega into the Household department and Jane Knight into Garden. Ramiro comes here from Cambridge after working in Mental Health for some time. Jane comes here from London, having worked with community projects, and having also worked with the children during our last two Family Retreats. We look forward to working with such warm and lovely people.

If you have an interest in living and offering service in a Dharma practice-oriented community, we are recruiting for two positions: a Kitchen Co-ordinator to start in spring and a Maintenance Coordinator to start in May. Experience would be an advantage, but full training will be given. Please email [admin@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:admin@gaiahouse.co.uk) or call Sarah Abdy on 01626 335256 to request an application pack.

### **Rachel Davies**

Retreat and Outreach Manager  
[retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk)

# COORDINATOR REFLECTION

## THE GUEST HOUSE

I spend my days in Reception, and I'm delighted to do so. Not all my days of course – sometimes the rota tells me I'm off, and you'll find me doing all sorts of fun and interesting things in and around the Gaia environs.

But if the rota says I'm on, I'm truly happy: I love going about my duties in our little office opposite the front door. Each day the rich and exuberant tapestry of human life unveils itself before me as a scroll unwinding. A knock on the door: "Come in!" I answer. Who will it be this time?

I'm reminded of an oft-cited Rumi poem, from which this article steals its name. In it we find the encouragement to treat all moods and mind states as valued guests, offering each a smile, a laugh, as we invite them in. To show gratitude for every one of these visitors, pleasing or otherwise, is Rumi's counsel – entertain them all, he says, for "each has been sent as a guide from beyond".

As with thoughts, so with people. Of the guests I receive into Reception, some are frequent visitors: I know their tone, their flavour, their background. With these it is my must to treat each encounter as the first, to not be cajoled by familiar stories and mental habits into believing I know the person in front of me. Whilst the past should be allowed to inform the present, room must be left also for the present to speak for itself, else the moment's offering may be irretrievably lost.

And there are those who come upon me as unknowns, with whom I have no shared history or experience. The telephone rings: "Gaia House, Mark speaking.. How can I help?",

and in response to my unchanging prompt so often will come something new, something fresh, something unexpected. Each person, each voice, each concern, each question: another thread in the tapestry, another colour. The patterns swirl around me!

Three years ago, as I settled into my first retreat at Gaia, I remember being struck by the spectrum of practitioners who came here.

What I saw in this silent sanctuary, which touched me greatly, was a space being shared by starry-eyed newcomers and seasoned meditators alike; there were those driven by a desire for liberation and those wishing simply for a little more peace and spaciousness in their lives; some were here to learn from teachers, others to listen to themselves. So many people experiencing so many things – the mind boggles imagining the number of worlds being explored within these walls! And now from behind my desk, in a steady stream I'm party to the briefest of snapshots of so many of these. How wonderful.

So thank you to this unceasing string of guests, this ever unrolling scroll of human diversity that bequeaths itself upon Reception: May you all be well, may you all be peaceful, may you all be free from suffering!

**Mark Øvland**, Reception Coordinator



# A YOGI PERSPECTIVE

## Everyday Dharma

**Kate Redfern**

*Kate Redfern attended her first retreat at Gaia House in May 2012, with Martin Aylward. She works as an Information Architect for a Digital Advertising Agency.*

Meditation is a saviour for me, it provides respite from a whirring mind and I can also see the physical benefits as my shoulders sink and my jaw releases after just ten minutes on the cushion. But the most powerful benefits have come about when I've made a conscious effort to apply the Dharma to my everyday life.

I say 'everyday life' as if my life when I'm not meditating is somehow different to my life when I am meditating. And I don't think I'm alone in this separation.

But I'm beginning to understand that part of Dharma practice is to conceive that life presents different possibilities when we start to see the limiting effects of our mental compartmentalising.

I have a recent example of everyday Dharma to share with you; asking for a pay rise in a recession. Asking for a pay rise is an event that can be testing. But it is also a commonplace event that is no doubt happening around the world a million times over, especially with the current recession.

So, with my appraisal day looming, I saw an opportunity to ask for a pay rise. As I find this tricky I thought I'd see if I could tackle it by applying some Dharma practice. My first application of the Dharma was to ask myself 'What are my intentions here?' The obvious answer is 'to get more money'. 'But why do I need to get more money?' Well, like most people my bills have gone up recently and my salary has not, I haven't had a pay rise in three years, so my 'available cash' has decreased. Then I unpackaged it further; 'Why now?' because my appraisal is coming up and now is a good time to ask.

Then I asked myself 'Why do you think you deserve one?' This I thought was easy, 'Because I've done great work this year'. But what I discovered was this process was totally uninformed by the Dharma.

Appraisal day came - or Black Thursday as I like to call it. With supporting materials and testimonials I put my case forward and was met with, as you may have guessed, a negative response. But it was also a response far more negative than was warranted, because one of the two people assessing me was having a 'bad day' and was mentally, and physically, distracted.

I concluded halfway through that he was no doubt contemplating some other department problem and was, in essence, 'not there'.

This coupled with my 'attitude of dissatisfaction' resulted in a very disappointing afternoon. There were tears. My tears. In the toilets, of course.

So, what can I learn from this? On reflection how could I have applied everyday Dharma to cause less suffering?

Firstly, I acknowledged the unilateral frame of mind I was in when I went into my appraisal. How could I have been more equanimous? How could I have asked for more money and been less attached to the outcome? This is difficult to master, because when we want something it is often coupled with the sense that something is lacking or wrong with what we currently have.

On reflection, the way I was querying myself about my intentions could have been more skilful. I had established that I wanted more money because of the financial squeeze, but it's also because I'm used to my salary increasing as my skills and output increase. But if I look more closely, at the heart of wanting more money was the desire for 'freedom'.

Most significantly, freedom from debt and freedom to do things I want to do. And I wanted recognition for my efforts, work and ideas. Just seeing this loosens the grip on the desired outcome a little because I can see there are other ways to be free that don't rely on a pay rise.

Perhaps I should focus my efforts on debt reduction through wiser spending and look for opportunities to do things that are enjoyable that cost less. As for wanting to be recognised, the work I have done means I have become more skilled, which is more rewarding than being recognised by 'the company'. Also, the work and ideas will be on my CV. It will allow me, when the time is right, to be a freelancer. This will give me freedom to choose projects that I want to do.

Second, I could have framed my reasoning better, taking into account other influencing conditions – like the fact that I work in a team and although my work may have been great that year everyone in the team may have performed equally well, if not better.

This might make it doubly hard for my manager to make a decision as to who he awards a pay rise to, as he will not have enough funds to award one to everyone. Simply acknowledging this releases some grip on my desire for a pay rise, because then I think 'Well Tom deserves one too; just as much as me - we

can't all have one'. This also helps in not believing in the story your mind is weaving as you can see beyond your immediate needs and this brings objectivity to your reasoning.

The final lesson from this experience was recognising aversion and ill will. I was furious with my manager for the lack of attention and courtesy displayed in the appraisal. With hindsight I would have requested to have the appraisal on another day. But I was already in the frame of mind to ask for my pay rise and not to listen to any feedback, however unskillfully it was delivered.

What this shows is that everyday Dharma is everywhere. Most situations can be used to mindfully assess our responses. Hopefully, once we've examined these situations through the eyes of the Dharma we will remember what would be more skilful next time a challenge arises. And I'm not going to give up asking for a pay rise. But I am going to ask with less attachment to the outcome next time.



# SPONSORED ALL-NIGHT MEDITATION

We are planning a sponsored All-Night Sit at Gaia House on Saturday 20th October 2012, with the hope of raising money for the people affected by the serious food crisis in West Africa. With this all-night meditation practice, there is the encouragement to keep our eyes open to the suffering in the world, whilst looking inwardly in meditation.

A compassionate response can include many things – here we hope that, as well as opening our hearts in compassion, we can offer practical help to those who really need it by raising money through sponsorship.

In some Buddhist monastic traditions, monks and nuns regularly do all-night sits. This is a chance to extend ourselves, and open the practice in a way that may be new to many of us.

We will have support from some Gaia House teachers but full meditation instructions will not be given, so people taking part should have experience in meditation.

## **What you can do:**

**Come to the All-Night Sit and raise money through sponsorship.**

To register your interest, receive a sponsorship form and for further details, contact [retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk)

If you cannot come, but would like to support us, please consider sponsoring the event.

**Go to [www.justgiving.com/allnightsit](http://www.justgiving.com/allnightsit)**

All donations are much appreciated and go directly to Oxfam's West Africa Appeal.

## **Organise your own all-night sit!**

Contact [retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:retreatmanager@gaiahouse.co.uk) to let us know about it, and we will do our best to let others know about it. Ask sponsors to make payments to [www.justgiving.com/allnightsit](http://www.justgiving.com/allnightsit), and we'll see how much money we can raise together as a sangha.

With good wishes,  
Rachel Davies,  
Retreat and Outreach Manager



# BEYOND GAIA HOUSE

## Retreats, Teachings and Workshops

### **Sanghaseva Retreats**

#### **The Power of Love**

**Anandwan leprosy community, India**

**4 - 14 December 2012**

**Silent meditation retreat with Ajay Singh and Zohar Lavie**

**15 December 2012- 4 January 2013**

**Work Retreat**

Living and working in a vibrant community of the abled-disabled while exploring our own hearts and what connects us to each other. Facilitated by Nathan Glyde and Zohar Lavie.

Contact [info@sanghaseva.org](mailto:info@sanghaseva.org)

#### **Crisis at Christmas**

**28-30 December 2012, London, UK**

This joint SanghaSeva/London Insight event will be an opportunity to join the volunteer team of Crisis at Christmas doing inspiring, truly life-enhancing work with London's homeless, to meditate together, and to reflect on the experience from a Dharma perspective. Facilitated by Kirsten Kratz.

Please note that at the time of going to print we are still awaiting final confirmation for this retreat. Contact [enquiries@londoninsight.org](mailto:enquiries@londoninsight.org)

#### **Dharmalaya Sustainable Living Retreat**

**Himalayan foothills, India**

**18 - 25 March 2013**

**Silent meditation retreat with Ajay Singh and Zohar Lavie**

**25 March - 4 April 2013**

Participating in the creation of the Dharmalaya Institute for Compassionate Living through green building and organic gardening.

Facilitated by Nathan Glyde and Zohar Lavie.

Contact [info@sanghaseva.org](mailto:info@sanghaseva.org)

### **Dancing Mountains**

#### **Zen Sangha**

**30 November - 8 December 2012**

**Rohatsu Sesshin at Unstone Grange, Derbyshire**

Led by Ingen Breen and assisted by Catherine Gammon

Contact Frances Collins: 07786369682 or [mountaindancing1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mountaindancing1@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.dancingmountains.org.uk](http://www.dancingmountains.org.uk)

### **Dartmoor Walking and Meditation Retreat**

#### **Yanai Postelnik**

**29 March - 3 April 2013**

**Camping at Gidleigh Village hall, Chagford, South Devon**

This silent retreat will offer a special opportunity to cultivate mindfulness and practise the Dharma, while exploring the beauty and wilderness of Dartmoor. Following in the tradition of the Buddha, we will support our hearts to deepen in wisdom and compassion, while walking together in a range of landscapes, sitting in meditation, and spending time around the campfire.

The Gidleigh village hall provides an ideal base, with ample secluded camping space, a spacious hall with heating, toilets, a shower and kitchen. Book early as places are limited.

Contact Faith: 07952157585 or [faithburch@hotmail.com](mailto:faithburch@hotmail.com)

# BEYOND GAIA HOUSE

## London Insight Meditation

3 November 2012	John Peacock – <i>Study Day</i> , St Anne's Church, Soho
5 November 2012 onwards	Caroline Jones – <i>The Practice of Happiness</i> , 6 week evening course - Euston
17-18 November 2012	Christina Feldman, King Alfred School
9 December 2012	Rob Burbea, King Alfred School
28-30 December 2012	Kirsten Kratz - <i>Crisis at Christmas</i> , joint SanghaSeva/London Insight event - TBC
13 January 2013	Kirsten Kratz, King Alfred School
19 January 2013	<i>Sitting Group Coordinators' Day</i> , Jamyang Centre
27 January 2013	Brad Richecoeur – <i>Qi Gong Day</i> , King Alfred School
6 February 2013	Chris Cullen – <i>Beginners' Evening</i> , Bloomsbury
10 February 2013	Martin Aylward, King Alfred School
2-7 March 2013	Martin Aylward – <i>Work Sex Money Dharma</i> , Euston
17 March 2013	Caroline Jones, King Alfred School
13 April 2013	Locana – <i>Nonviolent Communication Workshop</i> , Borough
27-28 April 2013	Sharon Salzberg, King Alfred School
12 May 2013	Catherine McGee, King Alfred School

For further details please see [www.londoninsight.org](http://www.londoninsight.org)

New events are added all the time: please register on our website to receive email updates. Booking for 2013 events will open on our website mid-autumn.

Day retreats mostly take place at King Alfred School, a lovely venue in Golders Green, with grounds for walking meditation as well as a spacious hall for sitting. Days run from 10am to 4.30pm, with registration from 9.30am. Please bring a contribution to a shared vegetarian lunch.

Teachers from Gaia House and elsewhere offer personal interviews in London throughout the year. Register on our website to receive email updates on these and all other events.

There is a network of sitting groups in and around London linked with us, including study groups with particular themes. Please see [www.londoninsight.org/community/sitting-groups](http://www.londoninsight.org/community/sitting-groups).

### Contact details:

[enquiries@londoninsight.org](mailto:enquiries@londoninsight.org) | 07954 472771 | [www.londoninsight.org](http://www.londoninsight.org)  
[www.facebook.com/londoninsight](http://www.facebook.com/londoninsight) | Twitter: @londoninsight

# One Day Retreats

## BRIGHTON

- 8 Dec 2012 Rob Burbea  
16 Feb 2013 Martine Batchelor  
3 Mar 2013 Catherine McGee  
26 May 2013 Bhante Bodhidhamma  
See website for venue, times, booking info  
etc.: [www.bodhigarden.org](http://www.bodhigarden.org)

## BRISTOL

- 3 Nov 2012 Christina Feldman,  
*Contentment*  
1st Dec 2012 Bhante Bodhidhamma,  
*A Mahasi day retreat*  
17 Feb 2013 Martine Batchelor,  
*Topic TBC*  
11th May 2013 Kirsten Kratz,  
*Insight and the Environment*  
See website for venue, times, booking info  
etc.: [www.bristolmeditation.org.uk](http://www.bristolmeditation.org.uk)

## CAMBRIDGE

- 17 Nov 2012 Yanai Postelnik  
2 Mar 2013 Catherine McGee  
15 Jun 2013 Martine Batchelor  
7 Sep 2013 Rob Burbea  
Venue: Friends Meeting House, 12 Jesus Lane,  
Cambridge.  
Time: 10am to 5pm, registration 9.30am  
See website  
[www.cambridgedayretreats.wordpress.com](http://www.cambridgedayretreats.wordpress.com)  
or contact 01223 460 966 for inquiries and  
further information.

## MILTON KEYNES

- 15 Dec 2012 Mat Schencks and  
Helen Stephenson  
Time: 10am – 4.30pm  
Venue: The Well at Willen,  
Newport Road,  
Milton Keynes, MK15 9AA  
See website [www.insightmeditationmk.co.uk](http://www.insightmeditationmk.co.uk) or  
contact 01908 562483 / 07946 818012  
for inquiries and further information.

## OXFORD

- 1 Dec 2012 Yanai Postelnik  
23 Feb 2013 Teacher tbc  
23 Mar 2013 Catherine McGee  
28 Apr 2013 Martine Batchelor  
25 May 2013 Teacher tbc  
Venue: Headington Parish Hall  
Time: 10am – 5pm,  
registration from 9.15am  
Cost: £10 (£5 concessions)  
See website [www.oxfordgaiahousetretreats.co.uk](http://www.oxfordgaiahousetretreats.co.uk)  
or contact Brigid or David on 01608 811940  
for inquiries and further information.

## SHEFFIELD

- 3 Nov 2012 Sangha Day  
9-10 March 2013 - Catherine McGee,  
weekend non-residential retreat  
See website for venue, times, booking info  
etc.: [www.sheffieldinsightmeditation.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldinsightmeditation.org.uk),  
or contact 01433 631350/  
[rwolton@phonecoop.coop](mailto:rwolton@phonecoop.coop) for further inquiries.

# 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](mailto:comms@gaiahouse.co.uk) to inform us of any changes to your group's current information.

## AVON & SOMERSET

**BATH** Bath Buddhist Group  
[www.bathbuddhists.co.uk](http://www.bathbuddhists.co.uk)

**BATH** Karen Smith  
07726 340270 [karenconnect8@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:karenconnect8@yahoo.co.uk)

**BRISTOL** Gordon Adam & Julia Wallond  
0117 908 0494 [gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk)  
0797 704 503 [julia.wallond@yahoo.com](mailto:julia.wallond@yahoo.com)

**BRISTOL** enquires@bristolchan.co.uk

0117 924 8819 Mike Masheder  
0117 977 4683 Pat Simmons

**FROME** Steve Small  
01373 467 519 [vast.luminosity@ntlworld.com](mailto:vast.luminosity@ntlworld.com)

**GLASTONBURY** Devin Ashwood  
01749 813969 [devin@zendesigns.org](mailto:devin@zendesigns.org)

**TAUNTON/BRIDGWATER** Lindy Booth  
01278 455830 [lindy.booth1@virgin.net](mailto:lindy.booth1@virgin.net)

**WELLS** Sally Lever  
01749 674842 [sally@sallylever.co.uk](mailto:sally@sallylever.co.uk)

## BERKSHIRE

**Newbury** Susan Millington  
07958 574524 [millington.susan@gmail.com](mailto:millington.susan@gmail.com)

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

**MILTON KEYNES** Helen Stephenson  
01908 300557 [helenstephensononline@live.co.uk](mailto:helenstephensononline@live.co.uk)  
07548 366601

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

**CAMBRIDGE** John & Jackie Teasdale  
01223 460966 [j@jdtasdale.plus.com](http://j@jdtasdale.plus.com)

**PETERBOROUGH** Barbara Reid  
01733 252322 [peterboroughinsight@gmail.com](mailto:peterboroughinsight@gmail.com)

## CORNWALL

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01626 333613 [info@gaiahouse.co.uk](mailto:info@gaiahouse.co.uk)

**SHARPHAM, TOTNES** Sharpham Trust  
01803 732542 [admin@sharphamtrust.org](mailto:admin@sharphamtrust.org)

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