

The Buddha Way



Religions are Prescriptive Belief Systems

which **create and sustain Communities**/cultures.

They are communicated through:



RELIGION overlaps with IDEOLOGY

Is the Buddha Way

- RELIGION
- PHILOSOPHY
- THERAPY

• A LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Outline of Sidhattha Gautama's Life story:

- He was born a member of the noble *shatriya* warrior ruling caste in Lumbini in Nepal and brought up in Kapilavatthu. This was a small state which his father ruled. The traditional date given for his birth is 543 BCE. Some scholars estimate he was born around 368 BCE. Many others prefer 483 BCE. There is no archaeological evidence for these dates but the pillars erected by Ashoka, first Emperor of India and himself a Buddhist, have been dated as erected around 268 BCE. These show the Way of the Buddha was well established by then. Some of these pillars can be seen today in the British Museum, others still stand in India.
- The story as traditionally told certainly contains symbolic and mythical elements. Predictions about his future, his conception, birth and the immediate death of his mother have this quality. This also applies to elements in the story of his marriage to the princess Yasodara when sixteen and his fathering of a son, Rahula.

DISEASE, OLD AGE AND DEATH

There is then the powerfully dramatic story of how the young prince, provided with every luxury of wealth, family support and pleasure, is confronted by the inescapable realities of disease, old age and death when travelling around his father's domain. As a result he decides he must renounce his privileges, leaves his wife and child in the care of his family, and sets off with nothing but the ragged robe of a religious mendicant (a *samana*, such world renouncing spiritual seekers were then common in India) to seek enlightenment as to how to deal with what he thinks of as this unsatisfactory human condition.

After years exploring the philosophical teachings and meditation practices of several leading Indian holy men, he so over-does the fasting and ascetic practice that he is reduced to a skeleton and is about to collapse and die of starvation. Five other ascetics with him are very impressed by his dedication and prepare to see him realise enlightenment as a result of such exemplary mortification, but he recognises that what he has done has got him nowhere.

When a passing girl offers him some food, he accepts. The others, disgusted at what they see as his weakness, leave him and go off to Benares, but he remains and when he has regained his health, he resolves to sit beneath a fig tree, the bodhi tree. There he has an overwhelming experience which he describes as his Enlightenment. He is 35.

2. FROM THE DEER PARK TO HIS DEATH AT 80

He then sets off for the Deer Park in Benares where he again meets the five who rejected him. As he approaches they recognise he is transformed, ask him to address them, which he does, preaching his first sermon. Immediately they become his disciples.

With their support he then sets about organising these *samanas* (renunciate spiritual seekers, something that was quite common in India then as now) into a disciplined community who are supported by lay followers or householders. This Order becomes known as the **Bhikkhu** (one who lives on alms, the free will giving of others) **Sangha** (community).

Over the next 45 years the Buddha travels around the country building up his disciples and fine-tuning their training rules known as the **Vinaya** until the Sangha become a very carefully organised self-disciplining community with hundreds of monks who wander across the country and settle down together during the monsoon on land given to them by their lay supporters.

The Sangha is not however exclusive for he declares his teaching is open and for everyone and that any man, regardless of rank, caste or background may enter to train and work towards liberation/awakening. As a result the Order and the circle of its lay supporters grows steadily. He calls his teaching and training **The Middle Way** for he sees it as neither self-indulgently lax nor guiltily self-punishing, but calm, joyful and balanced. He also visits his father and his court, and accepts his son Rahula into the Sangha.

He also acts as a spiritual guide to a wide range of very different people, kings and rulers, the followers of other religious teachers, rich merchants and poor peasants, men and women. He sees them regardless of caste or rank and they include a well-known courtesan and a notorious murderer.

After initial reluctance he succumbs to pressure from his aunt Mahapajapati, sister of his mother who had brought him up who wishes to enter the Sangha along with several other women from the court. For them he founds a special order, the **Bhikkhuni Sangha**.

He also resists attempts by some to take over control of the Sangha and to get him to appoint a successor. Instead he makes sure his teaching and the Vinaya is well understood and **the Sangha set up to be self-regulating** without an overall leader. Finally he **dies at the age of eighty** with the rules governing the *Sangha* clearly defined and in operation and his teachings widely disseminated across India, memorised by his disciples, and recited communally.

3. The Growth of the Buddhist Sphere of Influence. Northern Tibetan and Mahayana and Southern Theravada

After his death wandering bhikkhus and merchants carried his teaching and system of training, across India, North into Afghanistan and Tibet, then to Mongolia and China, (East along the Silk Road and West perhaps to Syria). It then spread from China to Korea and from Korea to Japan, and from China to Vietnam. Over time variations and schools developed and this Northern tradition became known as the Mahayana (The Broad Way).

The Buddhist community also expanded south, going from India to Sri Lanka, to Thailand and Burma, Cambodia, Laos and again Vietnam. Priding themselves on keeping as close as they could to what they had originally learnt, this tradition is seen as more conservative and is known as the Way of the Elders, the Theravada. Most scholars consider that in its practice and in its preservation of the Pali scriptures it has remained pretty close to what the Buddha originally taught. *For this reason I have been inclined to stick with this tradition.*

Hartridge Buddhist Monastery. Theravada in Devon

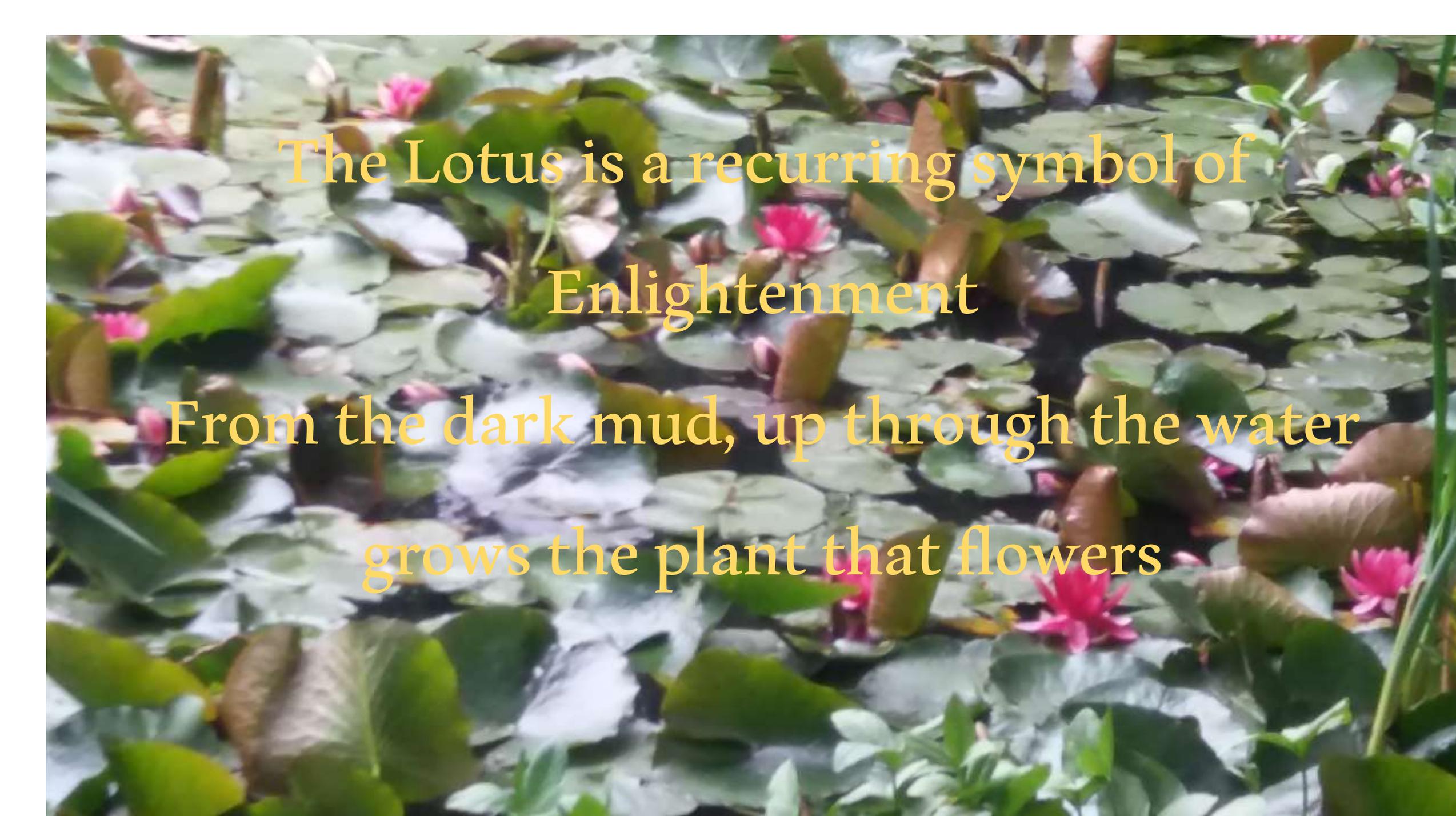
Upottery Devon. Opened 1986. This beautiful new Shrine Room and adjoining accommodation for lay residents has largely been built by bhikkhus and completed in 2021. The Statue (Buddha Rupa) was specially caste in Thailand and is a gift from Thai Buddhists. Hand gestures express different aspects of the teaching.





A photograph of a dirt path winding through a lush, green forest. The path is made of reddish-brown earth and is flanked by dense green foliage and trees. The trees have thick trunks and full canopies of green leaves. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and ferns. The overall scene is a well-maintained natural area.

The grounds of several acres are carefully maintained with indigenous trees, plants and a lily pond.



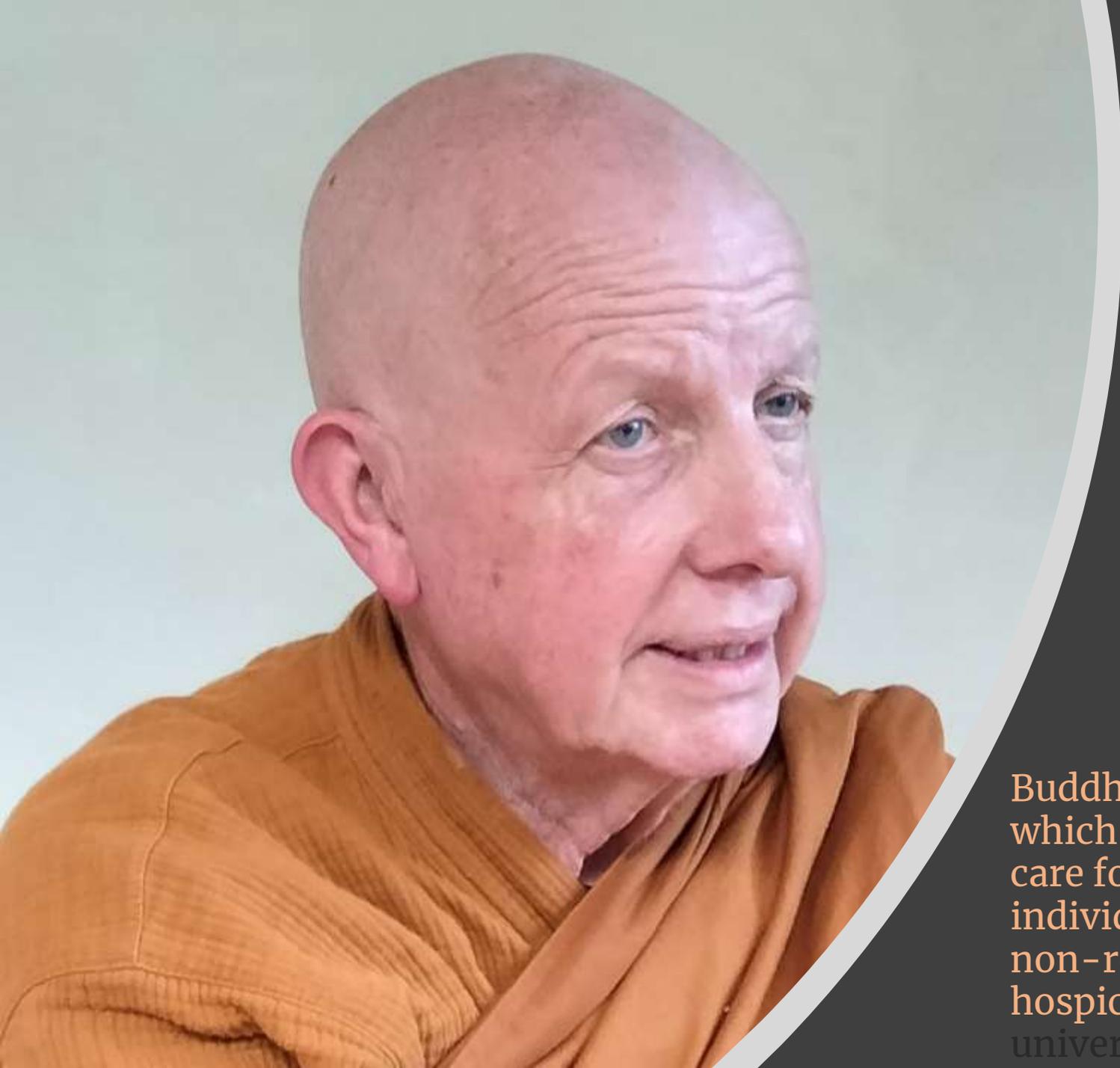
The Lotus is a recurring symbol of
Enlightenment

From the dark mud, up through the water
grows the plant that flowers



Ajahn Jutindharo, seen here with the monastery cat, has been Abbot of Hartridge for over 20 years and has seen it grow steadily as a place for a small community of renunciates (bhikkhus and on occasion siladhara) to live and practice monastic training supported by some lay helpers and visitors who come to stay or attend a meditation workshop or an evening service (puja) with meditation, chanting and an address.

Monastics and lay Buddhists form a symbiotic community for all food and expenses are covered by free will lay giving.



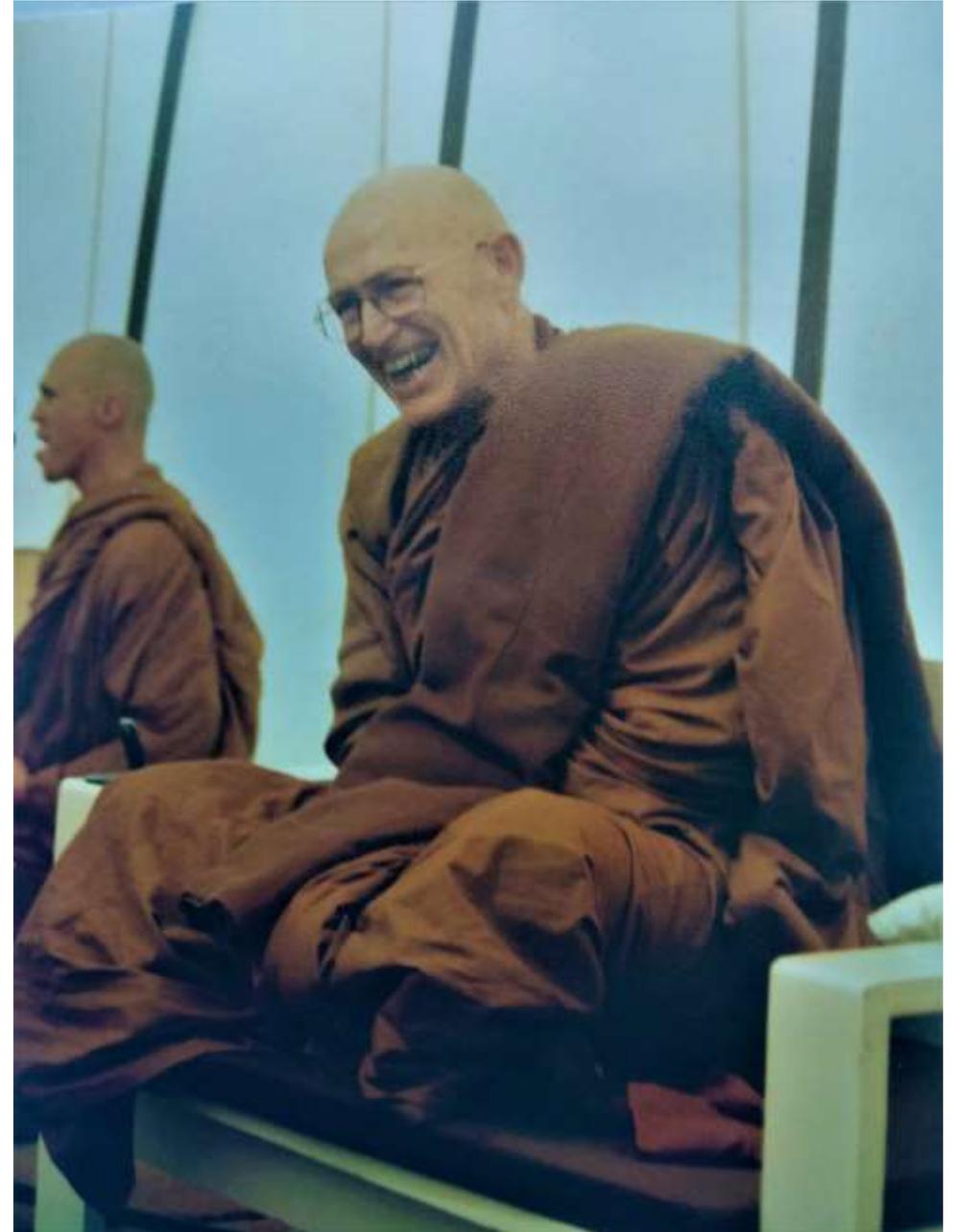
Subido who gave the evening address in July 2020. at Hartridge. He is a long time professional Buddhist Prison Chaplain.

He had chosen and was accepted to take temporary ordination and undertake the renunciate samana training for three months before returning to his wife and family.

He gave an exceptionally good, amusing and challenging talk about his work and said that three months had been quite a challenge, but inspiring.

Buddhist chaplaincy is a profession in which Buddhists with specialized training care for the spiritual needs of suffering individuals (careseekers), typically within non-religious settings such as hospitals, hospices, military, workplaces, or prisons universities.

- **Ajahn Sumedho** (born **Robert Karr Jackman**, July 27, 1934) is one of the senior Western representatives of the Thai forest tradition of Theravada Buddhism. He was abbot of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, UK, from its consecration in 1984 until his retirement in 2010. .
- A bhikkhu since 1967, Ajahn Sumedho is considered a seminal figure in the transmission of the Buddha's teachings to the West
- Ajahn Sumedho's influence both east and West has been immense. Photo shows him in his 50's. He is now 86.





Ajahn Amaro was born 1956 **J. C. J.**

Horner^[2] in [Kent](#). He was educated at [Bedford College of the University of London](#).^[4]

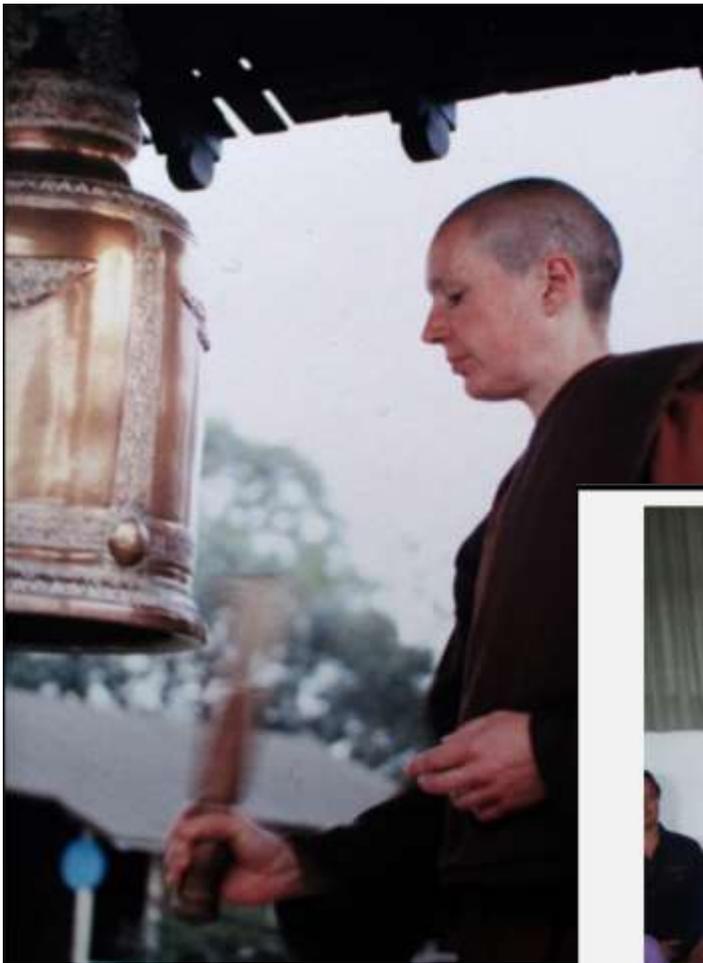
Ajahn Amaro's principal enthusiasms on leaving university were, by his own admission, pretty much those standard-issue among sceptical students of the day. Having completed his honours degree in [psychology](#) and [physiology](#),^[2] in 1977 he went to [Malaysia](#), [Indonesia](#) and [Thailand](#) on an undefined "open-ended" spiritual search.

He somehow found himself in northeast Thailand, at the forest monastery of [Wat Pah Nanachat](#). Ajahn Chah's charismatic impact and the encouragement of the senior American monk [Ajahn Pabhakaro](#) were decisive. It changed his life. In 1979 he took profession as a Theravadin [bhikkhu](#).^[1] He stayed in Thailand for two years. Amaro then went back to England to help [Ajahn Sumedho](#) establish [Chithurst Monastery](#) in West [Sussex](#).^[1] With his blessing in 1983 he moved to [Harnham Vihara](#) in Northumberland. He made the entire 830-mile journey on foot, Subsequently he co-founded a now thriving **Abhayagiri Monastery** in California, before returning to Amaravati as abbot in 2010.

Ajahn Chah

- Born 1918 into a peasant subsistence farmer family. . At 9 joins local monastery. Becomes literate. Leaves to work on family farm.
- In 39 becomes a bhikkhu
- Trains to adopt Ajahn Mun's strict Forest Monastery Tradition. Strict observance of the Vinaya, monastic rule and MEDITATION
- Lives as an ascetic solitary in caves, forests, and funeral sites in danger of tigers.
- 54 founds Wat Pah Pong monastery and branches.
- 250 branch monasteries. 15 associated, 10 lay centres.
- 77 visits England with Ajahn Sumedho.
- 79 Chithurst founded
- 80s Increasingly ill with chronic diabetes
- 92 Dies aged 72
- Over one million attend his funeral. Widely considered to be an arahant or liberated and enlightened being.





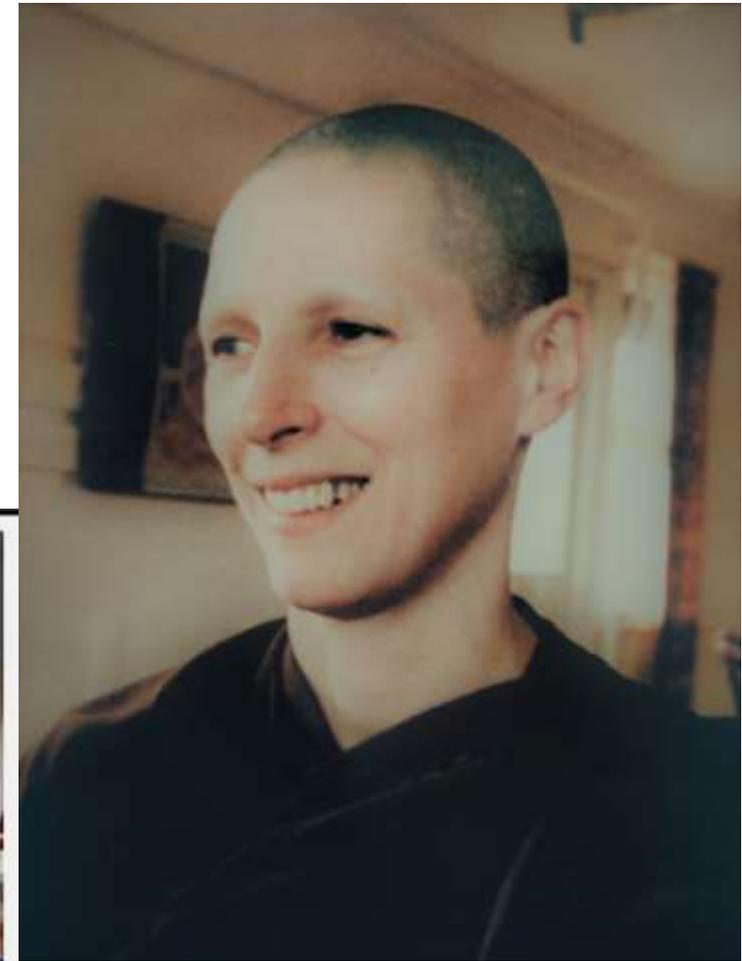
Ajahn Candasiri
teaching a week long
meditation retreat at
Amaravati

Soon after Ajahn Sumedho came to England
a group of women told him they wanted to
become Buddhist nuns and the result has
been the setting up of a women's order

THE SILADHARA



Ajahn Candasiri surrounded by a group of sixty who have just completed a week-long silent retreat under her guidance. Amaravati runs a full programme of retreats which are very well supported and appreciated by lay Buddhists. Places need to be booked well in advance to avoid disappointment.



Ajahn Sundara

- The Stupa. The Temple at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery opened in 1984

- In 85 opening ceremony with Theravadin monastics from around the world.

- The buildings were a WW2 camp for evacuees. Later a school for those with learning difficulties.

- New TEMPLE and currently Nun's centre just built .

- Big building development plans ongoing for the library, kitchen and hall, and retreat centre.

- Acts as a home and training centre for bhikkhus and siladhara from all over the world, and a retreat centre for lay people.









Amaravati Buddhist Temple. Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead.



BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

- **The Pali Canon Tipitika**
- **Viniya Pitika** Rules of the Sangha
- **Sutta Pitika** The Buddha's Sermons (Largest division)
- **Abhidhamma Pitika** Philosophical "A scholastic analysis of mind"



Ajahn Karuniko and meditators at Chithurst Buddhist Monastery



The Buddha Way

Self training (magga) for a happier, freer,
more liberated life. How? Practice

dana Generosity

sila Morality

bhavana Meditation

I Teach only
the cause and cure of Dukkha
for the healing and well-being of
humanity and the world.

Dukkha is

SUFFERING ANGUISH ALIENATION

Pain, mental and physical and **the**
relentless sense that all pleasures
become unsatisfactory. (evolutionary
psychology)

- **The cause of DUKKHA is CRAVING (tanha)**

- **CRAVING**

- **GREED**

- **HATRED**

- **DELUSION or IGNORANCE**

Negative, positive and addictive patterns of behaviour

.

•TURNING FOR REFUGE

•I turn for refuge to **the Buddha** (the mind that knows in me, Gautama and other enlightened beings.)

•I turn for refuge to **the Dhamma**
Truth. The teaching that shows Reality, The Way Things Are.

I turn for refuge to **the Sangha**, The renunciates and those in tune with the Path who live by its values.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. All beings experience anguish/suffering/ pain (dukkha) :

“Birth is pain, old age is pain, sickness is pain, death is pain; sorrow, grief, and anxiety is pain. Contact with the unpleasant is pain. Separating from the pleasant is pain. Not getting what one wants is pain.

2. The origin (samudaya) of pain and misery is due to craving: tanya negative, positive and misplaced. (hatreds, greeds, delusions)

3. Nirodha Dukkha anguish, can be cured by getting rid of craving.

4. The training to be followed to get rid of dukkha/anguish is to follow the [Noble Eightfold Path](#).

- **Dukkha “Suffering”**

Dukkha - a sense of unsatisfactoriness, incompleteness, alienation and unhappiness can be and is experienced by all of us in all areas of life. **No sense experience however exciting, gives us lasting happiness.** (Eating drinking, sex, possessions, accomplishments) It is also particularly acute in the experience of physical pain, old age, disease and the process of dying. This reality needs to be recognised and reflected on. It should not be evaded, or turned away from. It needs to be faced.

- **Tanha Craving**

Craving is the cause of Dukkha. When it is not faced, or faced unskillfully we can see unhappiness is made much more acute by the adoption of unbalanced, unrealistic, addictive patterns of negative and positive craving. (greed/desire, hatred/aversion , and delusion – refusing to see or being blind to what is happening to us and how we are behaving. (Alcohol and drug addiction, wealth addiction, addiction to our work, sex addiction, food addiction, self-hatred addiction, hatred of others addiction, All these patterns of unreflective craving can lead us into ever darker places.

- **Nibbana** Enlightenment Happiness, peace, fulfilment is possible in so far as we are able to break the power of these unbalanced, unrealistic, addictive patterns by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

Not commandments the precepts denote areas of life and patterns of behaviour that misused cause pain and suffering to oneself and to others. 1-4 already used in India, the Buddha added a 5th. Note all 5 are compatible with Jewish, Christian and Islamic moral teachings.

SILA MORALITY The 5 Precepts “for each wise person for themselves”

1. RESPECT FOR LIFE To undertake the training rule of turning away from destroying sentient creatures.
2. RESPECT FOR PROPERTY AND THE WORK OF OTHERS Turning away from taking what is not given.
3. RESPONSIBLE AND FAITHFUL RELATIONSHIPS Turning away from the irresponsible misuse of the senses and sexuality. (In particular infidelity)
4. HONESTY AND SENSITIVITY IN SPEECH turning away from lying and abusive speech.
5. MINDFUL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR Turning away from drink and drugs that cloud the mind and ignores consequences.

The Noble Eightfold Path. The Middle Way

- **1 Right understanding.** A deep, engaged understanding of the teaching.
- **2. Right Habits of Thinking.** Develop Wisdom **Metta**, Lovingkindness **Karuna** Compassion , **Mudita** Sympathetic Joy, **Upekkha**, Equanimity.
- **3 Right Speaking.** Truthful, Peaceful, avoiding Anger, dissention.
- **4 Right Action.** Harmlessness and generosity.
- **5. Right Livelihood.** Non exploitive, non-harming, honest, avoiding violence.
- **6 Right Effort.** Disciplined, systematic, persistent.
- **7 Right Mindfulness.** Samadhi. Reflective meditation.
- **8 Right Concentration.** Systematic, stable quality of mind.

**There are only 3 things we
can be certain about.**

1 DEATH

2 CHANGE

3 KAMMA All Actions and

Thoughts have Consequences

Five Subjects for Frequent Recollection (Pali to English)

I am of the nature to age, I have not gone beyond aging.

I am of the nature to sicken, I have not gone beyond sickness.

I am of the nature to die, I have not gone beyond dying.

All that is mine, beloved and pleasing, will become otherwise, will become separated from me.

I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions.

Whatever actions I shall do, for good or for ill, of that I will be the heir.

kamma – intended thoughts and actions.

Traditional Goal is **Nibbana** ENLIGHTENMENT

- Is this a. Open to all?
b. Only open to very experienced renunciates/practitioners
c. Is it an

- **ASYMTOTE**

Something you can get closer and closer to, but never quite reach?

(To become a more enlightened, happier more insightful, wise and balanced person is a process which requires self training and support. Always room for improvement!)

ANNATA Not Self or No Self

- A person consists of 5 Heaps, aggregates or Skandas
 - 1 Bodily Form, our physical nature
 - 2. Basic feelings – our physical sensations
 - 3 Perceptions . What comes to us through sight, sounds, touch, smell taste.
 - 4 Mental Formations. Habits of thought, subtle moods , emotions.
 - 5 Consciousness. Our awareness of the other 4 aggregates
-
- *The key point (as I see it) of this analysis of the psyche is that every element that makes up our apparent self is constantly changing so leaving no place for a stand alone self or soul. The meaning of this teaching remains controversial. Who am I? The sum total of all who have interacted with and influenced me?*

ANNATA the idea we have a sharply bounded self, spirit or soul is rejected

- Walpola Rahula: WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT
The idea of the self is an imaginary false belief which has no corresponding reality and it produces harmful thoughts of me and mine, selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism and other defilements, impurities and problems.
- It is the source of all the problems in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short to this false view can be traced all the evil in the world.
- Robert Wright. Why Buddhism is true.
Susan Blakemore . A short Guide to Consciousness.



MINDFULNESS TRAINING ROOM OXFORD

Buddhist
insight meditation
has been adopted as
therapy to tackle
depression, suicide,
chronic pain and
simply for living a happier
more balanced life



The Oxford Mindfulness Centre has promoted courses around the world

MINDFULNESS AS THERAPY

free from any mention of Buddhism or overt use of the 5 Precepts

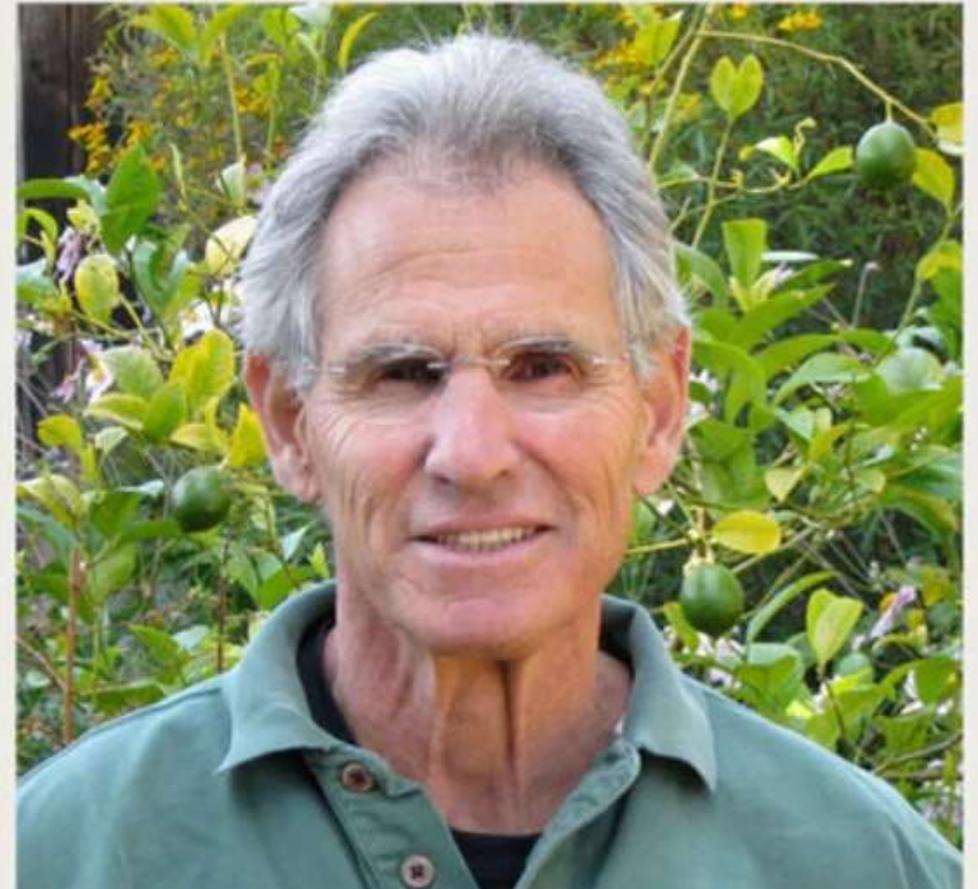


- The **Insight Meditation Society (IMS)** is a [non-profit organization](#) for study of Buddhism located in [Barre, Massachusetts](#).^[1] It was founded in 1975, by [Sharon Salzberg](#), [Jack Kornfield](#), and [Joseph Goldstein](#) and is rooted in the [Theravada](#) tradition
Jack Kornfield (born 1945) is an American author and teacher in the [Vipassanamovement](#) in American [Theravada Buddhism](#).^[1] He trained as a Buddhist [monk](#) in [Thailand](#), [Burma](#) and [India](#),^[2] first as a student of the Thai forest master [Ajahn Chah](#) and [Mahasi Sayadaw](#) of Burma. He has taught [meditation](#) worldwide since 1974 and is one of the key teachers to introduce Buddhist mindfulness practices to the West.
- **Westerners who have undergone monastic training in Ajahn Chah's Forest Monasteries have brought back Buddhist mindfulness meditation practice to the West where it has now become accepted in health, schools, management training, prisons, even the military, as well as inspiring the setting up of monasteries. A huge amount of scientific research has been done and continues on the effects of insight meditation**

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Jon's books and guided meditation programs describe meditation practice in such commonsensical, relevant, and compelling terms that mindfulness meditation practice has become a way of life for thousands of people. His work has contributed to a growing movement of mindfulness into mainstream institutions in our society such as medicine, health care and hospitals, schools, higher education, corporations, prisons, the legal profession, and professional sports.

Speaking Schedule



Dr Kabat-Zin applied Vipassana Insight Meditation to help those suffering chronic pain, Mark Williams learnt from him and took it to England and Oxford.

- He removed the Buddhist framework and any connection between mindfulness and Buddhism, instead putting MBSR in a scientific context.^[7] He subsequently also founded the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. His secular technique of [Mindful Yoga](#), which combines meditation and [yoga as exercise](#), has since spread worldwide.^[7] The course aims to help patients cope with stress, pain, and illness by using what is called "moment-to-moment awareness"



Mindfulness & Feeling Tone: Recent Psychological Insights & their Implications for Mindfulness Practice

Prof Mark Williams

Co-developer of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy,
University of Oxford

He is also an Anglican priest and
Canon of Christ Church, Oxford
MBCT does not refer to the 5 moral
precepts but treats them as implicit
for regulated teachers

Professor Mark Williams MBCT

- From the Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness

- Whatever living beings there may be
May all beings be at ease
Let none deceive another
Or despise any being in any state
Let none through anger or ill will
Wish harm upon another
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings
Radiating kindness over the entire world.

- *This PDF is a TASTER FOR A NON-BUDDHIST AUDIENCE John Baxter
johnbaxter119@gmail.com*

- *This was first given as a n illustrated talk to Martock U3A 13/7/2022 It was intended as a taster for a non-Buddhist audience and attracted some 50 people. My starting point was that the Buddha Way may be seen as a religion, a philosophy or a therapy as you wish. I also handed out summary pages on the Buddha's life and a description of the difference between Christian Prayer and Mindfulness Meditation and my own experience of it. This PDF does not explore the renunciate training of the Theravada monasteries which I see is so important.*

- *TO READ*

Mindfulness, The Path to the Deathless. Ajahn Sumedho. 1985. (Started me. Life changing.) Amaravati Publications.

For main Theravada Monastery visit www.Amaravati Buddhist Monastery. Talks and videos. Ajahn Sumedho, founding abbot,

Ajahn Amaro present abbot. *Finding the Missing Peace. A Primer of Buddhist Meditation.* Ajahn Amaro 2012. Amaravati Publications.

Wherever You Go, There You Are. Jon Kabat Zin. Top American Physician. Launched "non-Buddhist" Mindfulness training in a medical context. University of Massachusetts.

Why Buddhism is True. Robert Wright. University of Pennsylvania and Princeton.

Mindfulness, Exploring Peace in a Frantic World. Mark Williams and Danny Penman. 2011. Basic text for the Oxford Mindfulness Course.

Local Contacts University trained Mindfulness teachers. Eva and Dan Lupton, tel 01373 464564 5 Riverside Terrace, Willow Vale, Frome BA11 1BQ be@everydaymindfulness.com

Hartridge Buddhist Monastery. Upottery, Devon. Senior Bhikkhu Ajahn Jutindharo. Visit website. Runs monthly Meditation Workshops on Saturdays. No charge.

Gaia House Devon. See website for its extensive retreats programme.

To see my personal take on Buddhism visit www.johnbaxter.org and visit Religion The Buddha Way and the Buddhist World View.

Latest: Radio 4 Dr Michael Mosley. Just One Thing. Meditate. Pain, Stress, Memory, aging, immune system, etc. You cannot get a better summary of why research shows one should consider taking up mindful meditation.

Wikipedia and Youtube.

- Almost everyone featured in this Power Point can be found on Youtube or in the Wikipedia where you can find much more about them.
- The Theravada tradition is that the dhamma is beyond price and so cannot be bought and sold so books by monastics are only published for free distribution where they are available at the monasteries. Sadly not on Amazon!

For my paper contrasting prayer with meditation: See paper.

I am happy for this PDF to be circulated and I can be contacted.

Email johnbaxter119@gmail.com