

DHARMA E-NEWS

Christopher Titmuss

In seeing -
What utter joy!
The small mind becomes
transparent, empty,
without foundation.

Christopher



DHARMA E-NEWS ISSUE 19 - October 2009 & INTERNATIONAL SCHEDULE

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Welcome to the 19th **Dharma e-News**, and to our new subscribers. **Dharma e-News** goes out to more than 3500 people in some 30 countries, including many centres, dharma teachers, dharma networks, and groups.

Dharma e-News endeavours to bring a fresh Dharma perspective to contemporary issues and encourage us to keep questioning. The newsletter will be kept to a maximum of 12 items per issue.

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[Critical Analysis Of Theravada Buddhism.](#) Book review. 1079 words

(control-S) then delete spaces between sections. Make narrow margins to use less paper. It will make about 25 pages in total. Or simply highlight particular sections of interest and print out.

• [A Dharma Presence to Climate Change. December 11 – 13, 2009. Copenhagen.](#) Rob Burbea

One page of A4 paper is about 500 words.

• [Christopher’s International Teaching Schedule: October 2009 to August 2010](#)

[My International Teaching Schedule](#) from October 2009 to August 2010 is on my websites, as well as available at the end of this **Dharma eNews**.

In the Dharma

Three Bows
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Fifty Questions to Christopher Titmuss

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9337 words

On Earth Day, 2009, Christopher Titmuss noted his 65th birthday. Participants in his programmes regularly ask him a whole range of questions on personal and impersonal matters. Questions may arise over a café latte in various cities, one to one sessions, small groups, question and answer sessions in public talks, e-mails, letters and from information available on his websites. Here are 50 Questions. Some of them arise rather regularly.

1. What defines the Dharma for you?

Dharma deals with the truth of human experience. We are profoundly concerned with the

truth that the noble ones share namely the truth of suffering, the causes and conditions for its arising, the total resolution and the way to resolve. The seeing and knowing of truth is insightful and liberation. It is truth when accompanied with some depth of realisation; otherwise it is views, opinions and interpretations. Truth (or Dharma) makes an impact upon our perceptions and changes the way we see what is arising, staying or passing. Truth has the function of dissolving blindness, desire and clinging, releases love and frees up the whole being. Take a simple example. I smoke. It will eventually lead me towards a long, lingering and painful death, and anguish for all my loved ones. I stop smoking. This is realisation. I have put an end to the blindness, desire and attachment to smoking. If I know I should stop smoking and carry on smoking, this is non-realisation. It is a merely a view.

2. Why did you ordain and why did you disrobe?

I took ordination in Thailand in 1970 after more than three years on the road between England and Australia. I loved the freedom of spirit travelling across Europe, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, south east Asia and hitching the length of Australia. Always new places to go. New people to see. The Earth is an amazing realm of happiness and sadness, pleasure and pain, the beautiful and the ugly. There is also an inner journey to make. I needed a teacher, a monastery and the tools to embark on the inner exploration. I disrobed six years later. I don't wish to sound conceited but when the fruit is ripe it has to leave the tree. Of course, the fruit might splatter on the ground. I needed new challenges with new horizons. Freedom to explore is one the greatest freedoms that life makes available to us. There is no security in life. We delude ourselves if we think there is.

3. Who are your main teachers? Why did they appeal to you?

I have five main teachers, three from history and I stay in the monasteries of two of the teachers in southern Thailand. My foremost is The Buddha, as revealed in the Pali Suttas. I have regarded him as my guru since 1967. I met the Buddha in Sarnath in the form of a small booklet on his teachings. He is my guru, master and role model. He addressed in depth many of the issues in life that interest me. Next comes Jesus. He is the teacher of love. Jesus made love the vehicle for liberation. He walked his talk. Third is Nargarjuna, the 2nd century Buddhist monk-sage, and his text *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, I have spent more time reading the Buddha, Jesus and Nagarjuna than anyone else on earth. Fourth teacher is Ajahn Dhammdharo, my insight meditation (*vipassana*) teacher. He had little time for study, such as Abhidamma. He had a single mantra – practice, practice, practice. I spent three years in his monastery *in Wat Chai Na*, Nakornsridhammaraj, southern Thailand. My fifth teacher is Ajahn Buddhadasa of *Wat Suanmoke* (Monastery of the Garden of Liberation). I had many dialogues with him in the forest that started me on the process of understanding the emptiness of "I" and "mine", emptiness of self, dependent arising, specific conditionality and that "not made up of anything." Some people claim their teachers are life, relationships, nature and so on. I am not sure what they mean. I have not met anybody with wisdom who did not have a teacher (s) whether living or revealed in a book. Life does not teach ethics, meditation or liberation. If nature revealed it, then it

would reveal to all equally. All beings would know liberation. It is not the fact.

4. You have said consistently over the years that you are not a Buddhist. Why not? Weren't you a Buddhist when you were a Buddhist monk? You are sometimes referred to as a senior Western Buddhist teacher? Do you appreciate being referred to in this way?

I have no appetite for labels. religious or political. The label "a man" is questionable, let alone all the other labels. The Buddha is not the founder of a religion. If he founded a religion, I would not join it. There is only the vaguest connection between Buddhism and the Buddha. The Buddha teaches non-self, the emptiness of identity and the constructions around "I." Not being a Buddhist gives a lot of inner space. I have no interest to perpetuate the religion. I don't have to protect Buddhism, defend it nor have to endure a faith crisis. I prefer to travel as lightly as possible. Many friends are Buddhists. Most hold the label very lightly. Not all. I don't mind being called a Buddhist teacher. It's the common parlance. People must feel free to call another person what they wish. In my home, I have statues of the Buddha or paintings in every room, hallway and one in the back garden. I love the Buddha. I walk with the Buddha as much as possible. I am Dharma wallahs down from the top of my head down to my toenails. There are Buddhists but, so far, no "Dharmists." Mercifully.

5. You like to create new forms for teaching. Why are different approaches important?

I love the expanse of the Dharma in as a vehicle to explore truth and realisation. Actually, I have developed a small number of forms but with variety within the forms. Different kinds of retreats employing *samatha* (depth of calm and concentration) and *vipassana*, various workshops, pilgrimage (yatra), mentor programmes and Dharma facilitators programme, plus the websites and written and audio recordings. It is not a lot actually. Different people have different needs. We explore the Dharma through forms and formlessness. .Nobody has the truth, as if it were a prize. There are no limits to truth and its expression, no limits for forms and the formless. The great sin restricts Dharma practice to a form with years of unquestioning repetition of the form.

6. Why didn't you become the founder of an organisation to promote the Dharma? For example, you could have put everything under the single umbrella concept "Dharma Network" or something similar.

I have reflected on this a lot over the years. Is it skilful or could it become an imprisoning form? In the end, I kept faith with the Buddha's approach and keeping faith with the Triple Gem. It is terribly easy to slip into empire building if I started an organisation. There would have been people who are committed, unsure or pulling out. It can create a minefield of them and us. I have no wish to be the spider in the web, either. Liberation includes grasping after name and form and the consciousness bound up with name and form. Mind you, It is easier to be a guru than a Dharma teacher. Gurus can act like enlightened dictators setting up a spiritual empire. Their wish is your command. People

devote themselves to their master. Much gets done. It is impressive. Gurus and masters have their disciples and become founders of an organisation that the guru and disciples propagate. Ultimately, there is no spider in the web. There is only the web of dependent arising. I have declined to set up a single name organisation though more might have been achieved. I am concerned with setting people free, not to entrap them into a religious or spiritual organisation. I am glad that I have kept faith this decision.

7. Why is India so important to you?

India functions as an archetype. There is the India of poverty, sickness, overpopulation and appalling levels of pollution. Incidentally, people often cite how well democracy can work in a country of about 1.2 billion people. To me, it is proof that democracy does not work. If democracy worked in India, it would put an end to the desperate poverty and terrible suffering in the cities and villages for people and animals. So-called "emerging economic India" serves perhaps 20% at most of the population while the rest suffers more and more. I love Mother India – religious diversity, the Gandhian tradition, the Gods and Goddesses, the villages, trains, chai shops, ashrams and temples, music, the arts and a rich and eccentric culture. There is the chaos of it all. There is aliveness in Mother India. It is an immensely valuable experience for Westerners. Goa is barely India. Many Westerners need to break out of the oppressive and suffocating West where freedom has been reduced to rhetoric and enslavement to consumerism has become the norm. I encourage Dharma practitioners to go to India as having the potential to make a real contribution to the process of awakening. I regularly ask groups in the West how many in the group have been to India. To those who say they haven't been to India, I will ask "Why not?" We have some wonderful programmes in India with Jaya Ashmore, Gemma, Ajay, Sangha Seva, and other teachers plus our precious inter-faith school in Bodh Gaya for 550 very poor children. See the wonderful short film and photographs on our websites that film maker, Tom Riddle has made about the school.

8. Do you think loyalty to a teacher is an important quality?

I regard loyalty as an unhealthy state of mind. A powerful emotion is exploited. There is loyalty to the nation state, loyalty to one's religion, a guru, Dharma teacher or form. Loyalty can become the positive emotional language to hide fear of change, of letting go, of moving on. Love is healthy. We often have to take risks with our lives not restrict the power of exploration to the finite, namely a single teacher. Ultimately, human beings can release themselves from identity with the nation state, a religion, authority and form to release love and wisdom of the four truths that matter. Nobody can live for us. Nobody can die for us. We have to sustain our determination to inquire into truth and a fearless way of life. Loyalty can inhibit all of that. If the Buddha had stayed loyal to his family, the history of humanity would be different.

9. How do you see the role of a teacher? Do you have any disciples?

The second question is very easy to answer. The answer is NO. I regard disciples as an outdated Christian concept referring to people who have submitted to an authority figure

with unquestioning obedience. Dharma engages in an exploration of non-self, not in the reinforcement, if not worship, of the self. I regard being a disciple as a polite word for spiritual slavery, the deprivation of opportunity to see, know and inquire for oneself. The Buddha endeavoured to break free from submission to the spiritual authority and instead introduced into India the radical concept of the *kalyana mitta* (good friend). The Dharma teacher serves the Dharma to anyone with ears to hear. The Dharma teacher does not concern himself or herself with building a spiritual empire, generating followers or becoming a major public figure. If a teacher has something worthwhile to share, to communicate, people will come. We go too far trying to persuade a practitioner to stay with us and not go elsewhere. Of course, I see many Dharma yogis, practitioners and Dharma students very regularly, year after year. I believe they come consistently because they find my teachings valuable and challenging – not because they regard themselves as a disciple.

10. Do you feel you have stayed true to the Buddha's teachings?

It is not my priority, nor interest. It is not my intention to take hold of the past and impose it on the present. In that respect, there is no past. I read a discourse of the Buddha in the present to see if there are any statements in it to apply to the present for my welfare or the welfare of both. There is plenty in the suttas irrelevant, outdated and it would be irresponsible to preserve. Western society has developed in some ways in the past 2500 years. For example, the Buddha made sharp distinctions between householders and monks and nuns. The strictly defined forms of the householder in the Sakyan Kingdom at that time meant there had to be a radical break into a voluntary homeless way of life. The caste system imprisoned society. That division matters much less now. Dharma practitioners today go on retreats, short and long term, go the East. India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Such yogis move between householder's life and voluntary homeless way of life for weeks, months and years. If I may say, my life, as with many others, reflects both. Since 1975, the longest I have been at home is eight weeks. At that time, I am a householder. At other times, I am teaching in centres and other environments that become transformed into a kind of monastic setting. This separation of householders and homeless no longer applies in any rigid sense as it did at the time of the Buddha.

11. What do you mean by practice? How important is a daily meditation practice? Do you sit daily?

Practice includes every single link in the eightfold path, as well as the supportive factors, and depths of meanings found in every link. Not one link takes priority over the others. We may need to apply interest to one area more than another at a particular time. Practice does not necessarily mean regular sitting in meditation. It is the purposeful and conscientious application of the Dharma to daily life. It is a totally dedicated way of life affecting everything action of body, speech and mind. What we watch, read. Listen to and touch upon matter. We take the necessary steps for a full engagement with the Dharma in its countless expressions. Some have the quiet and invaluable discipline of sitting daily. I live alone. I have much opportunity for formless quiet periods, reflection and the lovely Devon nature is nearby. These are all resources for calm, insight and fresh realisations. I

sit when it is important to sit. It has never been a routine.

12. I have heard you call yourself a traditionalist but others say you are radical.

Obviously, the construction of the self is neither traditional nor radical. How could it be? The view that the self is traditional or radical arises due to the formulation of language. There is nothing to self here or there. It is truly an empty concept. The Pali suttas are full of jewels, precious, shining and give wealth to the inner life. There are about 11,000 discourses ranging from a few pages of a discourse to a few lines. It is enough to explore for one lifetime. So my tradition is 2500 years old. You can refer to me as a traditionalist. I belong to the tradition that makes full us of the words of the Buddha. If I find a greater teacher in the history of the human species, then I will drop the Buddha like dropping a hot coal. The word "radical" has the same root as "radish" – to get to the root. Is it radical to focus so much on dependent arising, love, emptiness and liberation? There is surely the middle way between being a traditionalist and being a radical.

13. Do you think there is a real future on Earth for your grandchildren and subsequent generations?

I am never far away from this thought. I find the political/economic/capitalist system we live under insults intelligence. The obsession with short term self interest of governments, banks and the corporate world conspires to sustain economic growth while ravaging our capital, namely our natural resources. Capitalism pours scorn over the world's poor and the marginalised. These three institutions support the ongoing desire, greed and ambition of each other. We need to support NGOs (non-government organisations) who offer a radically different perspective, agenda and analysis. The powerful economic nations signed an agreement this year to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2050. They refused to show the signposts of progress between now and then. That enables them to avoid all responsibility to show markers for such a dramatic reduction in 2010, 2020, 2030 and 2040, In 2050, they will be long dead. Our current crop of political masters will not be worthy of even a footnote in history.

14. What do you think of Mr. Barack Obama?

Along with many others worldwide, I welcomed the departure of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice and before that Powell from the White House. I do believe they should be arrested and put on trial for possible sanctioning of Crimes against Humanity. I was pleased, no more than that, with the election of Barack Obama. He is mixed race and so are my three grandchildren. A natural empathy arises. Mr Obama believes in hope. I do not pin much hope on the new Man in the White House. Mr. Obama needs to demolish what Wall Street and the Wall of Separation on Palestinian land represents. He has been in office since January. That means nearly 20% of his time in office is over. Much of the year or two will be spent in campaigning. We are still waiting for real change for the Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghans, Pakistanis and Somalians. Iran is the latest object of hate for the West. We have no idea whether Iran is developing weapons of mass destruction. We are still waiting for real change to hold the corporate world accountable. We are still

waiting for real global policies for future generations. We are still waiting for the President to make a real difference to the desperate circumstances of American's poor in health, education, social welfare and opportunity. The radical implementation of visionary policies matter. The signature on the document to implant change counts. So far, his fine words uphold the status quo. We nod with approval at the fine deliverance of a speech. We have not yet seen real change. Legislation is change. Not words. Every politicians, banker and multinational knows this. Does the US president have the metal for change? I regard it as naive to look for change from the top. That shows an unsubstantiated reliance on patriarchy, of governance from above. We look to grass roots for change. Hierarchy, whether political, religious, spiritual, oppresses those below in the pecking order. Ask the remaining people in Afghani villages who have lost their loved ones following American/UK air and ground war against them that the US president authorised against them. The colour of his skin did nothing for them. The foundation for compassion belongs to grass root networks, to a loving matriarchy, to the anima and the active action of the language of the heart and real pressure for change to those on top of the pile.

15. You have a reasonably extensive network of practitioners to teach with you in the course of a year but you always make sure you give the Dharma talk at least every other evening. Why?

I have probably worked with 60 – 100 teachers on retreats and similar programmes in the past three decades. I teach with around 20 -35 teachers in a year – France, Israel, India, Germany and Australia. As confidence grows for new teachers grow, self-doubt fades. I can also offer feedback, advice as well as participate with other teachers at meetings together regularly while totally immersed in the ocean of Dharma, if not drama, of a programme at the time. There are some senior teachers who share the evening talk with all the other teachers About 25 years ago, I tried the full rotation method. Several beloved yogis gave me a hard time for only giving two talks in a nine day from a Friday evening to a week on Sunday at noon. We had four teachers, two senior, two new, on that retreat. Some teachers give opportunity to new teachers but do not share any dana with them. I keep to the principle of offering a Dharma talk every other evening. New teachers know beforehand.

16. You do not seem to have joined any courses or retreats of other schools or traditions since you disrobed. Other Western Dharma teachers sit with other teachers from Asia and the West or have joined a school or programme. Why haven't you? Will you ask one of your teachers to take over from you when you die?

I must confess I have never been on a retreat, workshop or programme with another teacher or tradition since disrobing in 1976. I have met many teachers. I have two books of interviews I made with distinguished teachers and mentors. I have attended various talks of other teacher or watched a DVD. When I have a dream, perhaps four to six a year, I visit Julian David, a respected Jungian, for analysis, who lives in the Totnes area... The Buddha only makes one reference to his dreams, prior to his awakening. I have learnt much about the animus, anima, transference, archetypes and positive and negative

shadows from Jungian analysis that has proved to be insightful. I am open to new forms and learning from other teachers. I have listened on tape to some of the teachers other teachers go to, read their books and watched them on YouTube. I keep faith with the endeavour to be creative. I learn immensely from the Sangha I work with. I tend to attract plenty of feedback in and out of programmes. I also receive ideas from the sangha for practices and forms that practitioners have developed elsewhere.

Will I ask one of my teachers to take over from me when I die? Over my dead body. No. There is nothing to take over, nothing to go from one person to another. There is no big difference between life and death – about as much as the blink of eye. What can be passed over from one to another in the blink of an eye? I am rather fond of Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986), a very articulate Indian speaker on matters of truth. I had lunch with him a couple of times. During his teaching time, he filled theatres, had large open-air groups while his books sold hundreds of thousands of copies. His recorded teachings are still as applicable today as they were 20 or 50 years ago. Today, his name is rarely mentioned. Many of the younger generation of yogis in a Dharma hall will not have heard of him. He was a rather big fish in the ocean of Dharma. I am a small fish. Birth and death is in the blink of an eye. There is only dependent arising.

17. What is your view about people who listen to your teachings and then spend time with other teachers? Does going to other teachers open their mind or is it window-shopping?

I am happy when yogis who listen to me go elsewhere. I point to freedom, to a life of exploration, a creative life. I cannot see any special virtue with staying exclusively with a single teacher or organisation, nor any virtue either in visiting various teachers. Insight and realisation matter. Yogis, practitioners, students from other teachers, schools of thought and traditions come and participate in my events. They are very welcome. They are welcome to come, to stay and to go. Dharma teaches liberation through non clinging after all. There is the spiritual supermarket. I know people go to an event and rave about it – sometimes before they have even arrived! It may indicate the person has paid out a lot of money in travel, cost of the programme and donations and extra expenses. There is a strong view in the West that you have to pay a lot for what is valuable. Enthusiasm does not indicate depth. Practitioners must stay very clear about their intentionality whether exploring different approaches or staying primarily with one.

18. What is important for Western Dharma teachers?

It is important that we keep attending to our every area of our life. We need to keep exploring the Dharma. Part of our practice is to keep our teachings as fresh as possible with new talks, interviews and meetings. We are servants of the Dharma. It is a huge privilege.

19. You were away from England between April 1967 and May 1977. You spent years hitchhiking, six years as a Buddhist monk, and time in Australia and couple of months in the USA before returning home. Have you spent your time well as a

Dharma teacher?

Is there a meeting point between foresight and hindsight where vision and fact meet together as a unison? That would be a blessing. I could write a list of what has flowed really well over the years. I could write an equally long list about what changes I would make based on hindsight. For example, I have kept faith with single pointed concentration on serving the Dharma. Despite various challenges over the years, this concentration developed certain resilience around approval and disapproval. I am, to the best of what little ability I have, a servant of The Buddha. With hindsight, I would make two changes. I spent far too much time in committee meetings, often involving the running of retreat centres, teachers meetings, fund raising, etc. In hindsight, I would have preferred to let others use their skills for these tasks so I can employ the time for reflection and more teaching. I have kept away from all of this in the new millennium. I have had an adventurous love life that generated some ill will, and more meetings some years ago to attend for purposes of accountability. I learnt about the practice of the start, middle and end of a relationship through love and through misunderstandings and I believe my partner of the time would say the same.

20. I know you write a Dharma book a year for 14 years until 2003. Why did you stop writing books?

Yes, I wrote a book a year between 1989 and 2003. I also wrote a couple of others books in those years that publishers summarily rejected. I didn't stop writing. I wrote articles for the ~Dharma eNews that comes out three or four times a year. I wrote endless amount of Dharma items for the six websites and kept countless notes. Between 2006 and 2008, I wrote about 65,000 words of a planned 150,000 words of my years as a monk in Thailand and three years prior to that of being on the road. In the last year, I have written a 300-page book that embraces a critical analysis of the Dharma in the West. We are self-publishing some 150 of my poems, verse written between 1993 and 2009. If I may, add, there were 2800 emails in my Sent box of my Outlook – emailed between January 1, 2008 and December 31st, 2008. I would not describe that as a break from writing. I love writing. Several years ago, I got an idea to write a novel. Firstly, I dictated the entire story onto 90 minutes cassettes. I have used this method to write some of my books. There were about 22 cassettes – one for each chapter. I wrote the first four chapters while listening to the details of story on the cassette – about a guru and the triple gem of power, money and sex. I looked carefully at these chapters of my first novel that I worked on for weeks. "Rubbish," I thought. I took the four chapters and the 22 cassettes to the recycling dump on the industrial estate in Totnes.

21. Some of those who practiced with you for years seem to teach very differently. Some offer a kind of mystical approach. Some never refer to the Buddha. Some are very eclectic. Some never refer to ultimate truth. Some rarely refer to relative truth. What is your view on these differences in teaching?

I do smile at times. I listen to my co-teachers in the course of a year. I have been a primary teacher for many of them. Some of them are as different from my style of giving

a teaching as chalk from cheese. I quote the Buddha to give a bit of extra weight of authority to what I am saying. Some are Buddhists and love the tradition and some are not Buddhists and have no interest in the tradition. Some speak primarily about mindfulness and meditation while some question it. You would think some Dharma teachers have never looked into the suttas to find out what he said. Some teachers speak a lot about themselves, a little or never. Some teachers refer to different religions and spiritual teachers. Some rarely or never. Some only speak about the path. Some only speak about a mystical awareness. Some speak about path and goal. Some only wish to speak about the goal. I know I work with all these kind of teachers. It is amusing since all of these teachers have attended numerous retreats with me and listened to my views over the years. I invited most of them to teach. The strength is the diversity. I don't seem to be able to create a clone. Thank God, some will say. Other senior teachers seem to create a clone of themselves. How do they do it? I wish I knew.

22. Your loving kindness meditation seem to consist of a five minutes add on at the end of your retreats. What do you have against loving kindness (*metta*) meditation?

Five minutes? Is it that long? The Buddha made a statement on *metta* but never offered any method or technique. It is not my cup of tea. That may be due to a personal shortage of metta in my heart or identification with the Buddha's approach or looking in a different way. Obviously, I prefer the latter view. I translate metta as love (including romantic love), deep friendship, loving kindness and fearless service. As a divine abiding, it is the outcome of profound realisations. It is the highest level of consciousness. You cannot practice the divine abidings. It is a divine realm realised through a great depth in the heart, awareness and action. The West is obsessed with the feel-good factor. Superficially, metta practice in the West can feed the feel good factor. Having said that, *metta* practice has transformed some people's inner life. People's first hand experience matters most.

23. You speak about love a lot, including romantic love. Did you have a turning point that made you realise the importance of this expression of love?

I have beautifully framed photographs of paintings of the Indian gods, Krishna and Radha, Siva and Parvati, Rama and Sita hanging up at home in my kitchen, living room and one in my bedroom. Romantic love and the history of poetry, the arts, music and depth express the best of the Tantric tradition revealing the importance of romantic love. It is a pity that Tantra has either been hijacked for sex workshops or exclusively viewed as secret inner practices without a partner. You have to take risks for love. Consciousness has to go regularly to its edge to see if there are limits to love. One has to weather the varying views and yet still remain true to love. At times, love will go against the norm. We have to make mistakes for love. We have to experience regret and sincerely apologise. We must not give up on the exploration of love, nor settle for approval and security. I have spent around 20 years in relationships, whether very short or some years. During the middle of the 1990's, I had a some realisation that romantic love constituted one of the most spiritual of all experiences known to our species. I began engaging in much reflection on past relationships, took a very fresh interest in the nature of relationships, had numerous

conversations, read lots of biographies and novels about intimate love, read much poetry (Rumi, Rilke, Shakespeare and so on) listened to Bob Dylan and held numerous deep conversations with women, and some men. The exploration of romantic love is the weakest link in the Buddha's teachings. For the past 12 years, I have been very much committed to this area. It has been a very fruitful period.

24. You don't make much reference to *Going for Refuge*. Do you think the *Triple Gem* is important?

Of utmost importance. I have little enthusiasm for the formal ritualistic approach to Going for Refuge. The Buddhist tradition has made a form out of it. I believe that Going for Refuge in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha must come naturally through dedicated practice. I live my life for the Triple Gem. I would like to die with the Triple Gem on my lips. I am a small servant of the Triple Gem which matters more to me than anything else. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem comes organically as we practice and realise the power of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

25. You do not make much reference to *Sila* Five Precepts. Aren't they important?

They are all equally important although the precept around sexual contact generates the talk, meetings and gossip. *Sila* means virtue. We explore a virtuous way of being. The ultimate virtue is the dedication to a liberated way of life. That is the primary ethic in the Dharma. The Buddha has never used the language of "Five Precepts." This is the interpretation of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. If we remain dedicated to the discovery of truth on a daily basis, we will have no intention to cause harm to others. Clinging to five precepts as a code of morality generates moralising. *Sila* belongs to practice as much as any other interest or activity. There are many levels, gross and subtle, in the exploration of *sila*. It is a foolish person who claims "I always keep the Five Precepts." *Sila* is a liberating force.

26. Why don't you train teachers?

I don't know how to train dedicated Dharma wallahs in the communication of wisdom. You can't learn that. Some teachers offer a two or three year training programme plus study. Essentially, it usually consists of about four weekends a year, plus study, for a small number of trainee teachers. I have adopted the approach of my teacher, Ajahn Dhammadharo. He invited me to give talks, lead groups and one to ones. I learnt as I went along knowing he was accessible for advice I have contact with new teachers inside and outside of the programmes. They learn to handle the event. We meet regularly. People develop at different speeds. Some new teachers are very ripe and find their authority to teach alone rather quickly and others take some years. It is an organic process, not to be fixed in a specific period. I have a wealth of important information about teaching, texts, leadership roles, spiritual emergencies and practices. One of my books *Light on Enlightenment* examines the essential groups, Four Truths of the Noble Ones, Triple Gem, Four Applications of Mindfulness and so on. New teachers in the Dharma Facilitators Programme develop skills in communication, facilitation and one to one inquiry,

as well as giving talks and taking questions and answers. I offer a process that runs over years. We also have a team of mentors. I am like a football scout. I keep an eye open for Dharma talent with the x-factor. Dharma yogis have mentioned to me certain individuals. "You know, Christopher, she (or he) would make a wonderful Dharma teacher." Some go on to become well-established teachers and some do not. We offer what we can to the best of our ability.

27. About two years ago, you started writing your memoir of your 10 years in the East. What happened to it? A German documentary film company also filmed you in different parts of the world. What happened to it?

I wrote about 65,000 words of the memoir. I promised my mother in 1977 I would write it before she died. She was 57 at the time. About three years ago, I felt I had better start work on it. My mother is now in her 90th year. She had kept every letter and aerogramme I sent over between 1967 and 1977 in my father's wartime suitcase. She also kept my diaries I shipped home over those years. A Dharma friend, Rachel, kindly edited the first section of the memoir. Last year, I started work on another book. I address a variety of Dharma issues that have concerned me over the years. It runs to about 300 pages and is going into the hands of the publisher this month. Three years ago, Dieter and Georg, who run a documentary film company, began the filming project. The film covered Thailand, Burmese border, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, New York, San Francisco, Israel, Palestine, France, Germany and England. Total filming came to more than 110 hours. They completed filming in March this year. I have seen the edited version cut down to two hours. It has been shown to some focus groups. Dieter said he expected to have the final version (it has gone through several edits) ready around this time of writing.

28. Do you think Western practitioners are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to realise a liberating wisdom?

This question hangs around in my consciousness. Fortunately, I go to India. The last time I spent a full winter in England was 1966. In January, it will be my 36th year teaching in Bodh Gaya and 12th year teaching in Sarnath. I get an annual injection of the renewal of trust in renunciation while in India. I first arrived in India in 1967. Travellers today arrive with the same spirit of spiritual exploration as in the 1960's, 70's, 80's and 90's with an austerity of lifestyle, a willingness to put up with minimal living conditions, the willingness to spend time in monasteries, ashrams, spiritual centres, a cave, a hut in the mountains or time in an extended retreat. This is a powerful expression of renunciation. Some practitioners return home and stay true to the values of living with a certain austerity in daily life. We mustn't allow the middle classes in the West to hijack the Dharma and convert it into a psychology or religion. There are people in the West who live wisely and prudently in every aspect of their lifestyle. These practitioners are an inspiration. Such people. East and West, make teaching worthwhile. Without them, I would stop.

29. Your form of inquiry is a strong feature of your teachings. How did that begin?

There is neither beginning to it nor end to it. I like people. I love asking questions. I was a

reporter in past life. Inquiry changes people's lives. I genuinely believe that a single 10 to 15 minute inquiry with a person in a one to one, small group or sitting up front with me in a hall full of people can become a transformative event, either right at the time or the change comes to the person in the day subsequent to the exchange. www.christophertitmuss.org website has numerous inquiry sessions of a yogi and myself available. All participants involved gave permission at the time for me to put the inquiry on the Internet.

30. You constantly advocate critical analysis as a tool of the Dharma. Couldn't that be an excuse to be judgemental?

Admittedly, it is a thin line between critical analysis and sounding judgemental whether spoken or written. There is a shortage of critical analysis in the Buddhist tradition. The outcome is a form of censorship. There is strong disapproval of writing in a critical mode. The Buddhist culture often confuses metta with a passive response to situations. Avoidance of critical analysis brews inside and becomes inhibition and fear or moral self-righteousness in due course. Some Buddhist countries have an appalling human rights record such as the regime in Burma, the recently concluded civil War in Sri Lanka, the violence and corruption in Thailand, centuries of a feudal society run by a mediaeval religious patriarchy in Tibet. Metta is not a culture of niceness. I regard critical analysis as wise use of the mind to point to necessary changes. It is an intelligent application of the four truths of the noble ones. If we ignore problems by trying to be nice and accepting, they will not go away – personally, socially and internationally. Niceness generates systemic and unresolved problems. It is not a substitute for clarity. Hope for change becomes avoidance of change, of critical inquiry. These problems will gradually build up until they become destructive. There is very little in the way of inspiration in the Buddhist tradition in the Buddhist tradition or publications. I believe my new book is a small contribution in this direction. I read several months ago, *The Broken Buddha* by Venerable S. Dhammika. He makes a plea for a new Buddhism. He shoots from the hip. He offers a very critical analysis. See review in this Dharma eNews.

31. You are now a pensioner. You are 65 years of age. Are you noticing any drop in any energy?

I am not collecting any pension. Dana from the sangha continues to support me. I can collect a lump sum of three years of my state in three years. So far, I am blessed with much the same levels of energy as thirty years ago. I took penicillin for an infected gall bladder with gallstones about two years ago. It would have been many years since I had been on medication. I have cut down by eight weeks my annual travel for overseas. I am really appreciating more time at home to write, to read, reflect and spend time with my three grandchildren. I have become stricter with the diet (very rarely buy cheese, eggs, yogurt), avoid junk food and drink. Nevertheless, this body is 65 years old. Its condition can change rapidly. So far, energy is much the same as 30 years ago. I can't speak for tomorrow. I had a vegetarian breakfast last month in the beloved Barrel coffee shop in Totnes. By mistake they gave me two meat sausages instead of two quorn sausages. I knew the difference after eating third of a sausage. I said to the staff "Don't worry. It's the

first time I have tasted meat since the 1970s." A little later that day, I had a cup of tea with Ursula, a friend in Totnes. Out of the blue, she asked me how long I had been a vegetarian. I said "About two hours."

32. You have had various personal relationships. The last three were with women more than two or three decades younger than yourself. Some people have trouble with this. Are you currently in a relationship?

No, I am not in a relationship. Do we listen to our heart or do we listen to the voices of disapproval? I prefer the former to the latter. I have had three relationships in the past 12 years. Those who have trouble with age differences show little respect to the woman in the relationship. In my case, I have had the privilege of being in a relationship with independent minded, emotionally integrated and confident women, whether aged 30, 34 or 35. We are not talking about 18 year old teenagers. Who would want to be in a committed relationship with someone, who is immature, needy and impressionable? It seems to be married, divorced or single people with grey or greying hair that seem to find most difficulty with age difference. Two of these former partners have become mothers. People used to have problem with two people being in a relationship of different Churches or different faiths, or two people getting together of a different class, different culture, different race or two people of the same gender being in a relationship. Society changes. Perceptions change. Hostility towards age differences will also change so ageism becomes an issue of the past. Do the two people love each other? That is the only question. Can they remain good friends if the relationship comes to an end? Only *metta* (love, friendship, loving kindness) matters. Not date of birth.

33. You were a primary founder of Gaia House, gave it the name, and kept a Buddha image out of the meditation hall for nearly 20 years and instead had tropical plants in pots. Now you no longer teach there? Why is that?

It is the prerogative of a centre to invite a teacher. It is irrelevant whether a teacher is a founder of the centre. The trustees must make their decisions based on their perceptions and views of what is in the best interests of the centre. There are those who will agree with the decision making process and those who disagree. You could always contact Gaia House for more information. I had 20 years of sustained involvement with Gaia House. To be honest, it was a bit of a relief not to have to attend countless trustee and committee meetings. A weight of responsibility dropped away and it released fresh visions – yatra, Dharma facilitator programme, living Dharma programme, one-day workshops, Dharma gatherings, and greater support to generate new teachers. I did not need a car anymore. It was a blessing in disguise – heavily disguised for a while, of course. Gaia House had its 25th anniversary in September 2008. Gaia House kindly invited me to come. It was a lovely day. The centre is beautifully looked after inside and outside. There are numerous fine teachers there. I thoroughly recommend the centre for practice, and of course, some of the systemic problems there did not end with my departure.

34. You seem to have a reputation in the Buddhist world as being controversial. There are those who love you and give you much support over many years. While

others are very critical of you. Some say you are a very caring and open-hearted person and others say you are intellectual and arrogant. How do you feel about these views yourself?

The Buddha taught freedom of mind. It is a compliment to be an intellectual in the Dharma. I have two ears. One for praise and one for blame. One for approval and one for disapproval. I endeavour to stay steady between the two ears. Fortunately, there is space between the two ears. Occasionally, I use ear buds.

35. Do you feel celibacy has a place for Western Dharma?

Yes. A celibate way of life means time out from a relationship, either short or long term. We can channel the available energy into a creative approach to Dharma and daily life. It is a huge blessing not to be a relationship and all that goes with it. Does a sexual relationship support Dharma in the West? Yes, equally. Love and sexual intimacy provide a wonderful opportunity to share the depth with another, work on matters of the heart, joyful and painful, and to develop trust, respect and mutual realisation. Two people equally and fully committed to the Dharma together act as a powerful force for each other as well as support for others. There are some fine role models of singles and couples in the Dharma. We can learn much from them.

36. How important are the suttas of the Buddha?

Vitally important. I would encourage any serious practitioner to read slowly and reflect on the discourses starting with Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha. The discourses are not an easy read. Once the doors of perception have opened, then readers have many years ahead of the best guide to the path and goal available in written literature. Bhikkhu Bodhi has made the suttas accessible in English to all of us. I cannot express enough appreciation.

37. How do you want the Buddhist world to remember you?

As little as possible.

38. You speak and write about politics, religion, society and global issues. Don't these issues take us away from Dharma practice?

Dharma practice revolves in and around the Four Truths of the Noble Ones. We apply the four truths to ourselves, others and institutions, whether political, religious, social or global. The separation, so to speak, of Church from State, is irresponsible. We need to try to ensure that Dharma addresses political science and its application as much as psychology, philosophy or religion. Politics and economics have an enormous impact on human behaviour. The Dharma offers the tools to address these areas.

39. Do you believe in rebirth?

I believe in rebecoming. There are four possibilities after death

- eternal heaven or eternal,
- reincarnation (the soul moves on according to karma)
- one life and extinction, death and
- rebirth or rebecoming.

I regard the first three as requiring a strong element of belief – either religious or materialistic. The common belief in the self-existence of an individual life with a single birth and death seems to me to be in conflict with dependent arising. Dependent arising shows a lack of self-existence of anything. “I exist once” is a conceited and bizarre view.

Rebecoming refers to specific conditionality that triggers arising, staying and passing. Rebecoming is the natural process of events. I do not believe in a single self-existence. All that matters is realizing the deathless. It is the only resolution of the issues around death and what happens after we die.

40. What do you see as the greatest vulnerability in Western teachings?

Neglect and exploration of the goal that is infinite in nature. Those who settle for something less than the fulfilment of all human endeavours have wasted much of their life.

41. Why do so many people coming out of retreats find it so difficult in daily life?

Because they sincerely believe they are coming from somewhere and are going somewhere. It is difficult if we set heaven and earth apart. The idea we can carry something from a retreat into daily life will weigh heavily on consciousness. If we assume the peculiar idea, there is coming out of and going back to, then, as soon as a retreat finishes, yogis must start implementing changes in their lives, seek out like-minded people and welcome the difficulties rather than complain about them. Life is not a holiday camp. A single mindful breath is the difference for some between heaven and earth, nirvana and samsara.

42. Why do people go once or twice on a retreat never to be seen again?

I have no idea. I don't see them to ask them. I don't miss them. Perhaps they have better things to do.

43. Some spiritual teachers, modern and traditional, get disillusioned with teaching when they get older in life. They feel nobody really understands them. Do you feel your efforts have been worthwhile?

I made an agreement with myself decades ago that if I became disillusioned with the Dharma practitioners, or felt not up to the task, then I would drop the role and do something else. I would become a postman. Early start. Outdoors. Alone. A public service.

I have the privilege of still teaching. A kind of postman. Early start. Indoors mostly. with others. A public service. Never had a sabbatical, even for a week. I have an undying enthusiasm for serving the Dharma. Some friends tell me I was born to be a teacher. Not true. It was long before that.

44. You have said that you have not spent more than eight weeks in once place since 1975 when you were teaching in Dalhousie, India for five months. Don't you get tired of travelling?

I have cut back on travelling. Only three continents a year, not four. Actually, travelling is an idea. Where can I travel to? There are simply different impressions taking place on the senses and a handful of concepts - bus, train, plane, Bonn, Brighton, Bodh Gaya, Brisbane and so on. The world seems like my back garden.

45. What does it feel like to be a grandfather with your daughter and her three children only 20 minutes on the bus away? Some of us know your family history because you have related various incidents about your family in talks over the years.

My grandson, Kye, 8, and I have a mountain bike each with matching helmets. We bike along the tracks to Sharpham and to Dartington in the other direction here in Totnes. We go fast on the downhill run with the wind in our face. Heaven on earth. The two little ones D'nae, aged two and Milan and one are happy children. All three children express that easygoing attitude found in the Caribbean culture. Lots of photos (see www.christophertitmuss.org and go to My photos in menu and then More, and click on family album and slideshow). Nshorna is an amazing single mother to three children. She also works three days a week. I am blessed they live 20 minutes away on the local bus - door to door. Grandfather role is the only patriarchal role I endorse.

46. Will you retire from teaching at some point in the future?

Nature will retire me. Death is retirement. Actually, truth offers early retirement.

47. Do you have any major disappointments? Do you suffer much?

To both questions, I would say "not so far in life." I have my school reports from the age of 5 to 14. Teachers report said that I was a happy child but did not work hard enough in class. Work is no substitute for happiness. Work fragments the day. It is better not to work and simply find the love with whatever you engage throughout the totality of the day. Then life is not fragmented into work and time not having to work. Truth is indivisible.

48. Are you liberated?

The "I" is a mere friction arising in body/mind. So I am not worth asking..

49. Do people realise liberation meditating with you or listening to you teaching?

Liberation cannot be found alone or with another. Yet, I love to hear the yogis voice of liberation, of realisation, that makes teaching worthwhile. I hear such voices very regularly. Such people know who they are. They share some of the depths of the truths of the noble ones. Realised practitioners love the Dharma. Just love what it offers while the Dharma is empty of itself – just as the practitioner is.

50. What is your attitude to ageing, sickness and death?

First, we concentrate our interest on that not subjected to ageing, sickness and death. If we take a lifelong interest in that, even if there is barely a glimpse, let alone full realisation, it will put our modest and temporary existence into a perspective. If we have engaged in a life of letting go of clinging, then we can have some trust that wisdom will be accessible when ageing, pain and approaching death becomes more apparent. The news regularly informs us of the latest breakthrough in health treatments whether it is cancer, heart disease, diabetes and so on. Science and the media should give all viewers, listeners and readers a corresponding health warning. If we do not die from one thing because a cure has been found, then it only means we will die from something else. I gave my doctor a note in 1982 that I did not want the hospital to waste any electricity on keeping me alive through a life support machine. A few years ago, my doctor got the note out of my file in the clinic and asked me if I still wanted him to keep the note in the file. Yes. Absolutely, I replied. We can't prepare for death. We can only prepare for the Unborn.

Any final words?

Meditate. Meditate. Meditate.

2.Upcoming Teachings and Website News

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On Flickr, there are 134 photos of the French Yatra, 2009 on my website. To see photos of French Yatra go to www.christophertitmuss.org. Then click on *Photos* in *Menu* on home page. Then click on More at foot of page. Then click on Dharma Yatra 2009 and Perigeau folder, and then click on "Slideshow." Numerous other photo folders as well.

www.dharmayatra.org

Benoit has kindly uploaded information onto website for 2010 French Yatra

www.christophertitmuss.org contains numerous dharma teachings and inquiry sessions with yogis for free download. It has become a much appreciated service. Nadamo is the guardian angel and can provide and send CDs at a modest price with around five talks per CD on a variety of dharma themes – love, emptiness, truth, the suttas etc. DVD's of Christopher's filmed talks are also available.

Christopher's Dharma Blog runs into this month.

Items for July, August and September include value of car boot sales, two items on postmodern Brighton, a short reflection on French Yatra, 2009, progressive Totnes and a quote from Leonard Cohen at his concert. If you go to www.christophertitmuss.org and then click on Christopher's Dharma blog on home page.

Nadamo has kindly organised a set of photos of myself ageing from babyhood to 65 years on You Tube. It doesn't carry a healthy warning. There are also other clips of several minutes on various themes.

I have about 300 friends on Facebook. The number grows every month. Thank you for suggesting that we become a friend. Thank you for all the messages. I haven't yet sent out any message from Facebook . I get the impression that messages are very short and chatty. Is this the form? I cannot see much reference on Facebook to our *Original Face* before we were born.

[3. Contemplating the Four True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled](#)

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Peter Harvey

1062 words

What are usually called the our 'Noble Truths' about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path to this, can often sound like a set of things to believe in. But they are not presented like this in the Buddha's discourses. What in Pali are the *ariya-saccas* are not 'noble truths', but key or basic true realities as identified and understood by the Buddha and other 'noble' ones: those who have been spiritually ennobled by deep, transformative insight into the *Dhamma* and the nature of experience. For the rest of us, the important things is, based on calm and clarity of mind, to tune into these realities, to contemplate and get the measure of them.

In the *sacca-samyutta* (SN.56), it is repeatedly said that one should make an effort to understand:

- *"This is pain/painful (dukkha)", i.e. some aspect of experience that is itself mentally or physically painful, or which often entails, involves, these.*
- *"This is the origin of pain"*
- *"This is the cessation of pain"*
- *"This is the way going to the cessation of pain".*

It is said that these are things that one should think about, reflect about, and talk about, when one does think, reflect and talk (SN 56.7–10). One should also seek to become clear about these and understand the true identity of what is *dukkha*, and its origin, etc.

The 'true realities for the spiritually ennobled ' (in short form: realities for the noble ones) are what the above identifying reflections or insights are about: pain, what originates it, what brings its ending, and the way to this. The first sermon of the Buddha, the *Dhammacakka-ppavattana Sutta* (SN.56.11- SN.Vol.V, pp.420–24) explains the first true reality, *dukkha*, thus:

- *'being born is painful, ageing is painful, illness is painful, death is painful': aspects of life which entail physical and some mental pain;*
- *'sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, unhappiness and distress are painful': typical examples of actual pain, mental or physical.*
- *'union with what is disliked is painful; separation from what is liked is painful; not to get what one wants is painful': perhaps the most commonly occurring occasions for everyday pains, in their milder forms, though they can also be intense.*
- *'in brief, the five bundles of grasping-fuel are painful': the five aspects of one's make-up – bodily form, feeling, perceptions, volitional activities and consciousness – that are fuel for one's grasping as 'I/me/mine'.*

The second true reality, the origin of pain, is explained as:

this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and attachment, seeking delight now here now there; that is, craving for sense-pleasures, craving for existence, craving for (something's) non-existence.

This suggests that at the root of any mental pain – including the mental pain that we add to physical pain – is some kind of demanding 'I want', or 'I don't want'. The pain is sustained by some thoughts centred on I/me/mine and what this wants, or should have, or should not have to put up with. Of course, this keeps shifting its focus, 'now here, now there.... So, whenever there is a painful experience of some kind, it is good to mindfully note it, and also note that which is its key internal originating source, irrespective of its external prompt.

The third true reality is:

the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up (*cāgo*) and relinquishing (*patinissaggo*) of it, freedom (*mutti*) from it, non-reliance (*anālayo*) on it.

That is: giving up the thirst for the 'next thing', and giving oneself fully to what is here, now (*cāga*); abandoning attachments (*patinissagga*); freedom that comes from contentment (*mutti*); not relying on craving so that the mind does not settle down in anything, sticking to it, roosting there (*anālaya*). If there is sufficient mindfulness of pain and particularly its origin, the mind will naturally incline to letting go of this origin, and so experiencing the peace that this brings. This should also be noted and understood, when it happens.

The fourth true reality is:

this noble Eight-factored Path, that is to say, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right mental unification.

That is, it is the various aspects of *Dhamma*-practice, associated with meditation etc. Again, one needs to note how application of some aspect of this is what undermines and allays particular pains.

Once one has got the four realities in one's sights, as the key basic aspects of experience to watch out for and be calmly mindful of, then one can further see that: the painful aspect of life needs to be more fully understood; the origin of this painful aspect needs to be abandoned; the cessation of this painful aspect needs to be personally experienced, and the path to this needs to be cultivated, developed, practised.

The *Dasuttara Sutta* (DN III.272–93) also lists various things relating to each of the four true realities, that thus need to be fully understood, etc.:

- things 'to be fully understood' include: sensory experiences associated with grasping; pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feeling; the senses and mind; the eight worldly conditions – gain and loss, fame and shame, blame and praise, pleasure and pain.
- things 'to be abandoned' include: the "I am" conceit, or self-importance, self-centredness; misperceiving things as e.g. permanent, when they are not; the five hindrances; the seven latent tendencies – to sense-desire, ill-will, views, wavering, conceit, attachment to existence, and ignorance; the nine things rooted in craving, such as seeking out and quarrelling over possessions, and deceptions relating to this.
- things 'to be personally experienced' include: spiritual knowledge and freedom; the five *dhamma*-groups – of moral virtue, mental unification, wisdom, freedom, and knowledge and vision of freedom; *jhānas* as states in which unskillful and unsubtle states cease.
- things 'to be developed' include: mindfulness regarding the body, accompanied by pleasure; calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*); the four presencings of

mindfulness; the fivefold right *samādhī* – (which involve) suffusion of joy, of happiness, of mind, of light, and the *nimitta*; recollection of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, *Sangha*, moral virtue, liberality, and *devas*; the seven factors of awakening; the noble Eight-factored Path.

Peter Harvey, Professor of Buddhist Studies, University of Sunderland, where he teaches an online postgraduate course in Buddhist Studies, and a teacher of Samatha meditation in the Samatha Trust tradition.

4. Krishna On A Scooter – An interview with Ajay Singh

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Sandya Rakefet Bar-Kama

4460 words

There's a story about an old and wise woman, who lived to be a hundred. For her birthday, a respectful magazine sent reporters to interview her and inquire how she reached such an old age. "Very simple," she answered, "I never argue with anyone".

"How can that be?" argued the interviewers, "You have lived in such stormy times of wars and rifts among the people, the whole kingdom raged around you, splits in tribes, neighbors, families... Impossible!"

The old lady replied: "Right".

According to this story, Ajay Singh is supposed to live to be a hundred and twenty, or more. Very rarely have I seen him argue with anyone – when he thinks he needs to drive the point home, or shake the person's strong hold on a concept. He tends to give you the feeling as if he agrees with you, but then to say a word or two that make you stop and re-think your position, see the situation from a new angle, or get a wider and more whole perspective. Those whose ears are open – can hear.

Evasive But Very Tangible

Ajay Singh is a mystery. On the one hand, a family man and a city clerk who leads a standard and normal life. On the other hand, the people around him are convinced that he is self-realized, enlightened. On the one hand, he has academic degrees in Sanskrit, Law, Economics and Social Work. On the other hand, until the age of 12 he knew that he was Krishna. Ajay is hard to define. It's hard to give him a little, or to put him in any familiar box that will enable us a point of reference, or an understanding about who he is. It seems that the Sanskrit idiom "Neti neti" – not this, not this – fits him perfectly.

Though he is a senior teacher [in Open Dharma](#) retreats, and taught a retreat with [Tovana](#) (Insight Society) in Israel, it's hard to define what exactly he teaches. Although many regard him as their guru, he teaches in a very unique way, entirely devoid of any manners that characterize

an Indian guru. Ajay does not refer to himself as a teacher, but as a spiritual friend (Kalyan Mitra, in Sanskrit).

He holds daily meetings in the guest house for about an hour and a half, to which he arrives on his scooter. In the meetings (he calls them "classes") he reads from various Indian scriptures (these days it's the [Bhagavad Gita](#)), and interprets them from his own personal experience. The classes are open to all. Ajay teaches from his own personal experience only; he responds very personally to the person before him, closes his eyes, listens inward, and then answers with very few words, sometimes not entirely comprehensible, often surprising.

While being in his presence, it seems that something is going on in another dimension, something very evasive but very tangible as well. After meeting with him, there's a feeling that all the questions were answered and all the problems found their solutions, though it's kind of hard to recall what exactly was said. People report an experience of deep silence, relaxation and inner quiet in his presence, of letting go of words and concepts; the mind becomes still like a lake. His presence gives a feeling of connection to a place deep inside us where there are stillness and answers.

It's not easy to interview Ajay. He's not much of a talker, and doesn't tend to philosophize or conceptualize. For the sake of this interview, I asked him to make an exception and give more general answers that are not only for me personally.

We are sitting in a little guest house in Lucknow in India, where he lives with his family. Zohar and Nathan, dear friends on the path and the founder of [Sangaseva](#) joined the conversation.

I begin with the question that intrigues me most:

Dear Ajay, who are you?

He smiles his Cheshire-cat smile: "Right now, I'm Sandya's friend."

I urge him to give more of a general answer. He closes his eyes for a moment.

"Probably Ajay having realized that it's not only Ajay."

And what is it?

Realizing that I cannot finish in only Ajay. Ajay has a limited connectivity, and I'm connectivity beyond Ajay's limited possibility.

Please describe yourself.

Very alive, and without an idea about myself. And this is also not an idea.

Are you without an ego?

23.60 Karat.

- Do you control your thoughts?

I make use of thoughts when they are useful.

So how is life without thoughts?

Very free. I can rest. Life without any trouble. Thinking brings trouble.

What do you teach? Are you a vipassana teacher? An Advaita teacher?

I have gone through this teaching aspects, looking for what will be helpful to people. And from this search I recognized that there cannot be one way for all people. So the practice of the Path is love. Each one on this path finds the love, practices of their love. I somehow trained myself to be a friend who can refer – when you're trying to find your love I can help. So really I don't have any way I teach: I can teach all the ways, either or no way at all. My way of teaching is really more like clapping behind; when your eyes are on the right object – I find myself clapping. So this you can say is my way.

Nathan: What do you relate to in a person?

The love. Then it's very helpful. If I relate to other parts, then it's difficult, it becomes psychological, and that takes more time to be friend with. And love is... in a short time we become friends very easily, and once you are my friend – I can really enter in you.

Nathan: Are the psychological aspects of the person important as well?

Yes, they have some importance, so I don't neglect them, but the first thing is making a relation, contact and love.

Samadhi at the age of six

When he was six, Ajay experienced a week of Samadhi [Savikalpa](#), and until he was 12 he

"knew" he was Krishna. At the age of 12 he had a very intense experience of a different consciousness, and from that moment on he forgot that he was Krishna, and devoted his time to his studies "in order to make money", he says.

In 1985 he experienced a very deep consciousness change, that brought him to an intense practice that lasted about four years, until, in 1989, he says, "The practice left me". Since then he is in a "different place". From this place he teaches.

When he says that he has never experienced suffering, I interrupt him: "You've never experienced suffering? How is that possible?"

He smiles and shrugs his shoulders.

Didn't you suffer when your mother died?

No.

- I don't believe you. I know how much you loved her.

He closes his eyes, checking inside. His mother died in his arms when he rushed her to the hospital. "There was a moment of sorrow, of disappointment in myself for not saving her, and immediately after came acceptance," he says.

How can a person who has never known suffering relate to the suffering in the world?

Probably by empathy. When you speak, I really can feel your feelings, so although suffering is not my direct experience – I really can feel through your feelings, I can enter in your feelings. At that time, you and me is me.

- What's the difference between what you teach and Buddhism?

Perhaps the difference is this: in the Four Noble Truths, the first truth is about suffering. So the crack for the spiritual happens through realizing the suffering. And with [Kabir](#) and Hindu teachings, the crack is Life itself; through recognizing Life itself – the quest happens. In this path, recognition of Life itself becomes important because crack is there.

So maybe this is the basic difference: There pain has an importance, and in this path the Quest has importance. Quest from the Life. And the pain is not that important. So maybe the Noble Truth on this path would be: Life is a mystery. Really recognizing this, not only saying; really falling in the mystery, bursting with Quest from there.

Of course, also the approach is different, because there you give importance to pain, so things like renouncing etc are important, because pain is important. Here, Life is

important, so acknowledging all parts of life becomes important, not much renouncing and pain.

[Krishnamurti](#) said: "The truth is a pathless land". Isn't meditation an attempt to create a path to that which is pathless? How can we reach the formless through form?

Through path we are reaching the pathless truth. Through the form we are reaching the formless. It is a jump. Before jumping we have to reduce our baggage – the path is for reducing our baggage so jumping is possible.

How does this jump happen?

For this jump there's no "how". When baggage is being reduced, there will be ways showing themselves.

This is Nirvana. When Life Lives Through You

- According to the Buddhist approach, the goal of meditation is to free the mind from clinging, because where there is clinging there is suffering. Even beautiful states like [Nirvikalpa](#) are still in the conditioned, begin and end according to the changing conditions, and to the extent we cling to them – we are bound and not free. Freedom is not to be found in any state. Last night I heard you say that Nirvikalpa is something to aspire to, so are you saying that if one gets there one achieves the goal of mediation?

The goal of mediation - but not the goal of life. Life has to be lived. Nirvikalpa is a meditative state but one cannot live in this state, one cannot go out and function in the world in this state. There is another state, [Sahaj](#), where we allow life to live through us. This is not a state anymore.

- Would you say that that is what is called in Buddhism Nirvana?

Yes. This is Nirvana. When the life is lived through you.

- Are "meditative experiences" hindrances to the goal of meditation?

If we just stop there, they could be hindrances, but if we can make a step of them – they can be very useful. Before any states happen, mind is not there. The mind is "out of the system". Without the mind, these states cannot happen. The goal of meditation is removing any systematic understanding, and reaching wider understanding, which is not through any system.

Systematic understanding is very relative, it depends on me and on what I want from it.

On the relative place, Aliveness is felt because of system. But Aliveness does not depend on any system. If I have a system in me and I like something – I will be very alive because of my liking. To be alive inspite of my likes and dislikes, in spite of my system – that's the goal of meditation.

You use the term 'Aliveness' very often. What do you mean?

In Aliveness I mean that we may find ourselves with something inspite of us. Most of my recognizing parts were created to recognize in a certain way – my parents, society, school – they help me to build a reception foundation, and this reception happens through the point of views of my parents, my teachers, my school, my society etc. But there is something beyond that: Aliveness is, even without these point of views, even without these foundations of reception. Aliveness means life without any layers, without any foundations.

A few days after I arrived in Lucknow, Ajay invited me to dinner in his house. He picked me up from the guest house and we went together on his scooter. His wife Kusum greeted me joyfully, their newest grandchild in her arms. During dinner, while I struggled with the chili and Kusum struggled with the English, Ajay sat on the sofa in tank-top and Dhoti, an Indian handkerchief wrapped around his head, and cradled the grandchild in his lap while at the same time bounced the four-year-old nephew on his knees. In all my time in India I didn't regret not having a camera as in that moment.

Ajay is not a typical teacher or guru. It seems to me that the words of [Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj](#) from the book "[I Am That](#)" (*downloadable PDF document*) fit him the most:

"The Guru is basically without desire. He sees what happens, and feels no urge to interfere. He makes no choices, takes no decisions. As pure awareness, he watches what is going on and remains unaffected..."

He knows that if disciples do not learn from his words, they will learn from their own mistakes. Inwardly he remains quiet and silent. He has no sense of being a separate person. The entire universe is his own, including his disciples with their petty plans. Nothing in particular affects him, or, which comes to the same, the entire universe affects him in equal measure."

Zohar and Nathan, dear friends on the path and the founder of [Sangaseva](#) joined the conversation with Ajay, that took place a few days later.

We talked about meditation and its wider aspects.

Dropping In, Into Life

Sometimes we use meditation in the service of the personality structure. But the role of meditation is not to strengthen this structure, but to deconstruct it, to see

through it and not to let it run our life.

The goal of meditation is removing any systematic understanding, and reaching wider understanding, which is not through any system. Prior to meditation there can be various techniques for connectedness, but mediation is more dropping, being in touch with the essence of who we are. It is both a technique and a place of resting.

There are different techniques for meditation. What, to your understanding, is meditation?

Meditation as a practice helps us see that our minds are very busy in several areas. Many different priorities are flushing in our minds at the same time, and we are in a state of indecisiveness: which one to follow. So there is conflict, since we have a body and hands that can follow only one thing at a time, and our mind has multiple directions. That creates difficulty as to which act to take. So one aspect of practicing meditation is really reducing priorities, which makes us clearer in our life.

Another aspect of meditation is concentration. Concentration can be very useful in achieving worldly things, in getting on and performing. We can also be charged and empowered by concentration, as we don't spend unnecessary energy, so it helps with charging and recharging.

Concentration is basically control of the mind. I actually don't call mediation that, but it's generally thought of that way, so I accept that.

But this is for worldly use of meditation, a very useful tool for worldly achievements. There's another aspect of meditation which is to dive in, really dive in into life. Life as we know it is probably only around 1/9th percent; this is the part that we call 'human intelligence', and through it we know life. The other 8/9th percents of life are under it all, or covered, and meditation can be used to dive into this part. A whole different realm of life appears through that. What we see, the 1/9th layer, is only the upper layer, like the skin, and bellow the skin, as we know, is the whole full body aliveness. So similarly, bellow this is the whole area of life which is very much unknown.

- Is there a way to give to others this experience?

The whole thing is based on collective agreement. And because for these 8/9th of life there is no collective agreement – we have no collective language for them. So it's frightening. It's knowing this place and yet saying: "I don't know it", because there's no way to communicate about that.

And through meditation we can access this place?

Yes, we can access it, we can really dive in.

Meditation opens the door for this 8/9th of life, and then several kinds of experiences may come, and we have to be careful about them. I may have one experience and then speak from the memory of this experience, without really going into the experience again. Memory has this fading quality, so the more I will keep on talking about it, the less affective I will be. It will be more effective and helpful if I can go to the experience again, and speak from there. These experiences, which arise in meditation, also pass, because experience is two activities in the same realm. For instance, if my hand is in this position and is doing something, this will create an experience...

So it takes two? We need duality to experience anything?

Without duality experience is not possible. The whole realm of experiencing is dual. And then, when experience ends, duality rejoins (really it was already one but had become dual). And then we say that we've become one, or found oneness. Very fresh life is always available in this place, and you don't have to look for this freshness through experience. Meditation can greet us at the door of the 8/9th, and the whole process can really find us one, where Aliveness is lighting all the time, and you don't need experiences anymore to be alive.

Experience gives us a very alive feeling, so this duality is useful: the Aliveness comes. But it also goes away. That's why experiences are good – but not enough. We know Aliveness through experience. Many times we say, "Inner knowing happened" – how did it happen? Because of this Aliveness. But then when experience disappears – Aliveness also disappears. In meditation we dig and dig and then Aliveness appears, without experience. We dig beyond the experience, where Aliveness is in spite of experience. There's a place which is Aliveness, but it's beyond the experience; then it's neither going nor coming.

It's All Experiences. Even This Or That Kind of Samadhi

Zohar: In the Buddhist tradition and in many other traditions, there are stages. Are these stages experiences or...?

All the stages are experiences.

Zohar: So this kind of Samadhi or that kind of Samadhi, they are all experiences...

Yes. The no-experience-realm appears, or is available, is there – but we don't always recognize or know the ways to it. All these experiences enable us to more subtle recognizing-facilities, to more subtle connectivity.

Are these stages, these experiences, essential? Do we have to go through them?

Yes, this part cannot be missed. They can take different forms: maybe your nose is different and you can smell things that generally people don't smell, so your smelling becomes a way of recognition.

- Rabbi Hillel The Elder said: "Where my heart goes – there go my legs". Is effort and determination important, or shall we just "follow our hearts", as they say these days?

We need a balance between effort and non-effort; between practice and non-practice. Sometimes you can do a 1,000 Japa Malas [Indian prayer beads], and not have one second of quiet. Find balance between doing and not-doing. It's important to practice, but while practicing, look for something else, look for no-practice. That just happens.

- Sri Ramana Maharshi said: "Earnest effort never fails. Success is bound to result."

For me, the whole path is a matter of effort. There comes a time when effortlessness is there, when effort becomes intention. So for a while it's: effort, effort, effort, and then it becomes intention, and the intention carries you. And maybe later there comes a time when even intention is not needed. Because it's a very wide range of spirituality, it's not like you make a jump and that's it – there are many jumps. There are jumps that can be made only by effort, and there are jumps which only intention can make.

You are describing something linear, and in my experience it's not linear: sometimes I need effort and other times...

We can say it's not linear, but there's a general direction, and each time connection will be more subtle, so it's connected to the first time because each time it becomes more subtle.

So you say that for most of us, until we get to the part where intention carries us through, it's good to put some effort.

Yes, without effort I haven't seen intention growing. So as long as intention has not come – it will be really helpful to really keep on.

What is the relationship between effort and forcefulness?

For me, forcefulness is not good, because when you are collecting force, there's also against-force, and this can make the whole structure collapse one day. So I'd really like if we can somehow convince ourselves without forcing, and make use of love, so that love is there to convince us, not force. Maybe in the beginning a little bit force is needed, but slowly if love can take over, that will be more fruitful.

Zohar: So it's a learning process: which effort is needed and how to apply it is part of our path in itself.

Yes.

Nathan: What can be helpful for people in terms of what you offer, and what would you recommend for starting on the spiritual path?

In general maybe meditation is helpful, so you can offer meditation. Meditation in general has very wide range, many levels, from concentration to the Samadhi to the end of Samadhi. But I don't see anything in particular; one thing for every-one cannot be. So if I had to say something general to Vipassana practitioners, I would say: 'Just keep on', and then in the middle I would enter, so that Vipassana is still Vipassana, but not totally Vipassana. And as your understanding grows, I keep on entering and interrupting.

Actually, the Buddha acted similarly: to every person who came to him he gave a different practice, according to what he saw with his special eye what that person needed...

Inside the Here and Now

Nathan: How does activity on the 1/9th part of life that we know impact the rest of the parts that we don't know, in difficult situations like war or pain... Seeing all 9/9th parts, is it worth acting on the 1/9th level?

If situation allows, it is very helpful to act upon and give some kind of confidence, a hand behind people's back; that can be very supportive. Like when somebody loves you, you feel grounded, you don't feel alone or frightened. It's very helpful to put a hand on the back...

So you're saying that activity in this level (the 1/9th) is penetrating and affecting that level...

Yes, if I don't trust in you, I will not be able to hear you, but when I trust in you and your love, I really can be rooted, and that rooting really helps.

Nathan: Does it help toward something? Is life moving towards something in this way?

The whole connection happens, and from the connected place any activity is helping the whole. If I don't feel connection to you, my decisions will be pro to me, and when I'm connected to you, my decisions cannot be for me only, you have to included it that. So similarly, when a connected life happens, whatever activity comes, the whole will be included in that. From the connected place, any activity will be for the whole.

Because of connectivity our decisions and our activities become different, and love becomes the decisive factor. When I'm separate, when I'm not in love, love is not the decisive factor: I decide for me. It's very different from the place of connectivity.

Nathan: Is there any common life experience that indicates that 8/9th?

Maybe the feeling of being very expansive, when you don't feel you. Many people experience expanding experiences. We don't have words for these experiences, words come later, not at the time.

You mean that because it's a place of no concepts, we can't use concepts to describe it?

We have to make concepts. Somehow we have to develop a language, there has to be a communication. Some people who have known these experiences, have tried to make common agreements to make a concept for them. I think many cultures have done that. These days we have lost the track of this common understanding.

The Buddha also spoke of this place only in the negative terms, in what it is not: it's not this, it's not that. He said one cannot describe it.

Nathan: In terms of freedom as the goal of the spiritual life, it is said that freedom is here and now, readily available to us; so why is it that we're not free here and now?

Freedom is **in** the Here and Now, not here and now. They missed one word: **IN**... It is the here and now that is not available to us. So we have to dig.

Meaning that the here and now is the doorway, the gate?

Yes.

And what stands between us and being in the here and now?

Our attributes, concepts, opinions, conditionings, our views. Actually – **US**.

Is life leading somewhere?

I feel that life **IS**. And I think for life that is enough.

- So what is the purpose for us being here?

I think life **IS**... So the word 'purpose' is a very small word... For our mental realm it seems very useful and big, but for life – neither useful nor big.

We all laugh.

- I experience with you what's called "unconditional love". It is a very freeing experience, and yet – it feels very impersonal. What is the difference for you

between how you loved before and how you love now?

Before when I loved, I was making use of people. Now probably I love.

- What about your children, how do you love them differently?

Before, I loved them in a conditioned way; not fully honest (to the children). Now there's no difference. I may act in a different way with different people, according to what each of them needs, but the love is the same.

I'm remembering that in one of the retreats, I told Ajay I felt like a beggar sitting in the palace's gate, waiting to see the face of the Queen showing from time to time in the window. But, I added, I was willing to sit like this forever, for the chance of seeing her face. Ajay nodded agreeingly. As always. Then he smiled with kind eyes:

"The face of the Queen is always in the window", he said.

5. Twelve Favourite Dharma Books

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1462 words

Dharma practitioners I regularly ask me about useful Dharma books to read. I love reading. I hope you do, too. Reading can act as a resource for inspiration, insight and application. Here are my 12 favourite Dharma books. I have placed two Buddhist dictionaries together. One dictionary of Pali words and one dictionary in two volumes of Pali Proper Names and Places.

Here is a list of my 12 favourite Dharma books, outside of the Pali Suttas of the Buddha. They should all be available at Amazon.com

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

1. Ask the Awakened

Brief statements on the relative and ultimate)

Wei Wu Wei

Sentient Publications, USA. Reprinted 2002. 204 pages.

Wei Wu Wei is the master of the cut to the bone Dharma statements on the nature of things. He writes a few lines, a handful of paragraphs or even a couple of pages that challenge our assumptions. We spend far too much time meditating on the relative notion of practice and path. We need to take as much interest in liberating perceptions on the non-relative truth. This is the book for that.

2. Buddhadhamma

Natural Law and Values for Life (on dependent arising and eightfold path)

Phra Payutto

State University of New York Press. 1995. 302 pages

Phra Payutto, a foremost Thai scholar-monk, has explained in detail the process of causation in the Buddha's teachings. He explains that dependent arising or dependent origination (to use an old translation) literally means a "condition based on certain causal factors." He then draws upon an extensive number of statements of the Buddha on dependent arising. Perhaps the best book available on the theme.

3. Buddhist Dictionary

Venerable Nyanatiloka

Freewin and Company, Sri Lanka 1972. 218 pages

This dictionary provides the reader with the English equivalent of all the important Pali words, references to the Suttas and regular quotes from the commentaries, such as Visuddhi Magga. It is certainly worthwhile for the dedicated yogi to familiarise himself or herself with the suttas, and know familiar the use, and the frequency of use, of what the Buddha actually said. This manual serves as an excellent companion to explore the discourses of the Buddha. Nyanatiloka wrote the preface to the dictionary in a British internment camp in India in 1946.

3 b. Dictionary of Proper Pali Names

Description of suttas, people and places in Pali texts.

G.P.Malalasekera.

Summary of all suttas, places and persons mentioned etc.

Munishiram Publishers. India. Two Volumes. 1230 Pages (expensive)

Completed in 1937, this two-volume dictionary gives the background to every proper name in the Pali.

The arrangement of the proper names is alphabetical for the first letter and according to the Pali alphabet. The dictionary gives a brief summary of every discourse of the Buddha, the roles, positions and locations of everybody mentioned in the suttas and a line or two of their personal story.

4. Concept and Reality in Earth Buddhist Thought

Examining the important concept Papanca – proliferation of thought and projection

Bhikkhu Nanananda

Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. 1971. 158 pages.

Western Buddhist monks in Thailand appreciated immensely this book when it first came out in the early 1970.'s . It is a very clear exposition of the inner processes and the various streams of thoughts and views that arise. Proliferation of thought affects ethics, concentration, calmness and wisdom. Nanandanda has drawn extensively on the sutras to show deep insights and understanding into the psyche.

5. Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way. Commentary on Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika

A translation and thoughtful commentary on the much-loved inquiry into emptiness.

Jay Garfield

Oxford University Press. 1995. 372 pages

I have in my small library at home a dozen translations from Sanskrit to English of Nagarjuna's classic text. Garfield offers a studied accuracy of translation of the 27 chapters with up to 30 verses in each chapter. His commentary shows a depth of understanding of Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna teaches the emptiness of clinging, of self and views. It takes years of meditative attention to comprehend his teachings that serve as the finest commentary on the words of the Buddha. I regard Garfield's translation and commentary as the best so far available.

6. Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree

Buddha's teachings on emptiness of "I" and "mine."

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Wisdom Publications. 1994. 150 pages

The original translator, Dhammavicayo and editor, Bhikkhu Santikaro, have put together the very heart of Ajahn Buddhadasa's teachings. I can the Ajahn's voice when I read this book showing how closely the book represents the original. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu inquires into "I" and "mine," egoism, clinging and the nature of emptiness (he prefers the word "voidness"). The book also serves as a fine introduction to Nagarjuna. Both masters share a similar voice.

7. Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization

(a detailed exposition on the Four Applications of Mindfulness discourse)

Analayo

Windhorse Publications, UK. 2003. 319 pages.

Satipatthana, the Four Applications of Mindfulness, holds a special place in the heart of all Dharma yogis and dedicated practitioners of mindfulness. The meditative inquiry into body, feelings, states of mind and Dharma point to a liberating wisdom. Analayo has gone through this discourse examining every phrase, every nuance to draw out the depth of meaning and significance. On the back jacket of the book, I wrote "An indispensable guide...surely destined to become the classic commentary on the Satipatthana." I meant it.

8. The Buddha's Teachings on Prosperity

Examining the Buddha's skilful approach to wealth, home and work.

Bhikkhu Rasnagoda RAhula

Wisdom Publications, Boston, USA. 2008. 227 pages

The ideal book for the Western mind. Bhikkhu Basnagoda examines the Buddha's view on prosperity, wealth, relationships, parenting, conflict and happiness. There is often a view that Buddha takes a far too austere view about life. The Buddha is clearly interested in intention. For example. How do we make our money? What do we do with it? Are we willing to share with others? A long overdue book. Simple, clear, readable and with excellent references from the Buddha.

9. The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism

The book concentrates on examining the approach of the Buddha to psychological processes.

Rune Johansson

Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies 1979.236 pages

The Swedish psychologist, Rune Johansson, has written an invaluable approach to the Buddha's teachings on the inner life. He has steered away from comparing Buddha's teachings with the countless Western approach to the psyche. Johansson keeps totally focussed on the Buddha's analysis. This book has become a classic. New books on Buddhist psychology come out every year but far too many Western authors lack an intimate understanding of the Buddha Dharma. It is not easy to get hold of this book. It is something of a collector's item.

10. The Historical Buddha

Life of the Buddha amidst social, religious and political conditions

H.W. Schumann

Motilal Banarsidas. 1982. India 274 pages

There are numerous biographies about the life of the Buddha. This is my favourite by a long way. Dr. Schumann, a German Indologist, spent many years in India including teaching at the Hindu University in Varanasi. In this biography, he examines the social, religious and political conditions at the time of the Buddha. There is a sense of meticulous research to communicate the mind of the Buddha and the world he lived in. Buddha lived in an era in India of deep inquiry. What would he have made of the pathology of Western ego of "I" and "mine." I suspect the Buddha would have found it far more challenging to teach the Dharma in the West where work, making and maximising pleasure matter above all else.

11. What the Buddha Taught

A classic text on the life and teachings of the Buddha in very readable English.

Walpole Rahula

Grove Press, New York, USA. 1959.151 pages.

This book is probably the best introduction to the Buddha's teachings. It is on most Dharma teacher's book list. The Sri Lankan monk, Walpole Rahula, has written an accurate and sober account of the Buddha's message. The book has inspired numerous readers to develop an interest in practice. Walpole has divided the book into an exploration of the Four Noble Truths, non self, development and the Dharma in today's world. It is certainly a worthy classic. A book to recommend to friend and family showing some interest in practice.

12. Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics

A rich current of quotes and commentary of Zen, Dharma and English literature and poetry. R.H. Blyth

Hokuseido Press, Japan. 1942. 446 pages.

For those who love Dharma and literature, this is the magnum opus of all books where East meets West.

It is a masterpiece revealing that the depth of Zen and the best of English literature share more in common than what we realise. Essayist, philosopher and translator, R.H. Blyth, a Japanese prisoner of war, has meticulously researched English literature for gems that shed light on Zen. This book is beautifully written in an illuminating and lucid style in compact English. A genuinely inspiring book to read and rather beautifully printed.

6.A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THERAVADA BUDDHISM

A book review of The Broken Buddha

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Christopher Titmuss

1079 words

The Broken Buddha

Venerable S. Dhammika

Published by the Nimmala Group . 2006. 177 pages

Printed in Singapore

ISBN 981-05-6656-5

You have to search long and hard to find books which offer a thought-provoking analysis of the state of contemporary Buddhism. Buddhist publishers prefer to publish primarily three kinds of Buddhist books, namely translations from the four main Buddhist languages of Chinese, Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan, commentaries on the Buddha's teachings and other

major teachers over the past 2500 years and a large and invaluable range of books about practice. We have much to be thankful for in terms of the publication of Dharma books. No previous generation has had such access to such a wealth of Buddhist literature. However, you will be hard pressed to find hard-core analysis of the condition of the Buddhist tradition, East or West, either as a general overview or concerns about a particular tradition or lineage or within a particular tradition. Buddhist magazines rarely publish articles that examine the weird beliefs, some bizarre Vinaya rules, pervasive ritualism, naive deference to authority, dogma and sectarianism within Buddhism.

The golden rule is "do not criticise." If you offer criticism, others will view you as narrow minded and judgemental. Buddhist magazines offer occasional analysis, perhaps a letter or two expressing concern about certain naïve Buddhist views, but rarely a thorough treatise, no direct challenge to the status quo. Many of us have long since given up reading Buddhist magazines because we have no interest in the feel good factor and the lightweight approach offered about the Dharma.

There is a determination to ensure that everything is "reader friendly." If it is not reader friendly, then orthodox Buddhists tend to treat such views as a polemic, lacking balance or revealing a negative attitude. You only have to look through Buddhist publishers list of books over the past 30 years to see the desperate shortage of real analysis of some weird Buddhist beliefs around karma and rebirth, guru devotion, blind adherence to techniques, power of monks and mind numbing rituals. Westerners often lack the confidence to challenge the considerable shortcomings of Buddhism. There is a depth of conformity to Buddhist beliefs and ideology around morality, meditation and various practices. Many thoughtful people will keep an arm's length from Buddhism because Buddhism seems to have little real interest in truth or reality, despite all the rhetoric. The traditions largely ignore social issues preferring instead to cling to and preserve the past rather than employ the Dharma to face up to the present and apply the Triple Gem and the Four Truths of the Noble Ones to the suffering on this Earth. The number of writers willing to question the priorities in Buddhism are few. Stephen Batchelor, David Brazier, Richard P. Hayes and David Loy have made thoughtful contributions to the analysis of Buddhism. Who else?

There is an alarming degree of deference to the traditions of Theravada, Tibetan Buddhism and Zen. It is hardly in keep with the teachings of the Buddha who described his teachings as pleasing for some and displeasing for others. There are some signals for change. Buddhist publishers are beginning to show more interest in the value of the critical analysis, articles are appearing on the Internet and university lecturers and students are writing important thesis on Buddhist issues.

It takes courage and determination for a senior Theravada monk from Sri Lanka to take a down to earth and honest look at the condition of contemporary Theravada Buddhism. Ordained since 1976, Venerable Bhikkhu S. Dhammika has drawn upon his wealth of experience as a monk to offer a severely critical analysis of the Theravada tradition.

The jacket of his new book says "*The Broken Buddha. Sub-title: Critical reflections on Theravada Buddhism and a Plea for a New Buddhism*"

He means what he says in the title. That is evident from the first page. He does not hold back in naming his concerns. Yet, there is nothing especially new in this critique. The significance of the book shows itself in putting so many alarming facts together page after page. He writes: "Asian Theravadins expect you to follow their traditions and not question them." He said that when he went to Europe he expected Theravada Buddhism to be able to separate the "gift from the wrapping" but to his "astonishment and despair" he found that this was not so. (Page X1).

"Most groups, centres and monasteries I visited adhered to such practices (not found in the Suttas) with even more tenacity than in Asia."

Author of A Guide to Buddhism, A Guide to Bodh Gaya and other Buddhist books, Ven. Dhammika writes: *"The massive problems that beset Theravada are ignored, denied, sidestepped, or more usually just passed over in silence."*

In his preface, he wrote that he hesitated to publish the book. He added that an unauthorised version appeared on the Internet that forced him to publish the finished work. He wrote that Western monks and former monks encouraged him to make the book available as many of the things he said needed saying. *"I am fully aware that I am risking my reputation, the friendship of some people and perhaps a lot more by writing what I have and I expect to become the target of some very angry comments."* He concluded that he hoped his book would provoke realistic discussion among Western Buddhist about the future of the Triple Gem in the West.

The Broken Buddha examines such themes as the Vinaya, rituals, boredom, a woman's place, excess and the loss of love. He writes (page 142): "Theravada is committed to mindless formalism, indifferent to social issues and accommodating to the worst kinds of superstition." It takes courage for a highly respected Theravada monk to shoot from the hip. It is a groundbreaking book and deserves the attention of every caring practitioner of the Dharma, whether ordained or householder. It is far more forthright than any book of critical analysis written by a well informed Westerner. We may not agree with everything he writes and know of exceptions to some of his generalities. In the Introduction, he quotes Luis O. Gomez, the Buddhist writer: *"There is no law in history that guarantees that Buddhism will grow roots in the West or advance beyond its present infantile stage."*

They are the opening lines. I thoroughly recommend a careful read of *The Broken Buddha*. After all, the Buddha's teachings tell us to wake up.

7. A Dharma Presence at the Climate talks in Copenhagen

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A Time to Engage?

In December, the UN Climate Change Conference takes place in Copenhagen. Climate scientists are increasingly of the opinion that we are imminently reaching a 'tipping point' before which we must introduce strong measures to drastically reduce CO2 emissions in order to avert a global tragedy. **This is a vitally important international meeting.**

On the weekend of December 11th-13th 2009, we are travelling by train to Copenhagen to be part of a Dharma presence on the streets there while the climate conference is taking place. We hope that as many practitioners from as many different Buddhist traditions as possible will join together on **Saturday 12th December 2009** to be a **visible and peaceful** prayer of care for the planet, for wakefulness, and for world-wide environmental justice, as part of the other demonstrations in Copenhagen that weekend. We will be there to ask world leaders to see and choose with foresight, wisdom and true compassion, and to encourage them to agree on a truly far-reaching, ambitious and binding global climate deal. A deal that really responds adequately to the scale of the emergency now facing not just our human civilisation, but the earth and all the life it supports.

Our Responsibility

Change will not come unless we take the responsibility and the lead, and it is this personal responsibility and care that would be demonstrated by standing up in Copenhagen; an acknowledgement that only through each and every one of us walking the walk will the necessary global changes become a reality. We believe that at this time we have a responsibility as practitioners to bear witness to, and actively engage with, such issues of global significance. We invite those who feel the same to join us.

The Practicalities

The journey by train can be quite easily done in a weekend. It is possible to leave London on Friday afternoon and be back in London on Sunday afternoon (if you take two sleeper trains), and there are other options too. **Booking travel** is pretty straightforward. Go to the Seat61.com website for clear instructions on how to travel from London to Copenhagen by train or ferry. <http://www.seat61.com/Denmark.htm> takes you straight to the page you need: It has links to the booking websites, suggested times and information about cost.

We will meet at Copenhagen Central train station, in front of the dsb rejsecenter (the main ticket office and waiting lounge), between 11:30am and 12 noon on Saturday 12th December 2009, the Global Day of Action. You are invited to bring a candle to carry, representing our intention to act from a place of peacefulness and clear-seeing, an intention we are asking the world's leaders to share, although we will feel into what seems appropriate on the day. If you can't find us or are delayed please call 0044 (0)7976 730712 or 0044 (0)7595 500173.

Can't come to Copenhagen?

- There will also be a demonstration in London on Saturday December 5th. See http://www.campaigncc.org/climate_march2009 for details. For info on meeting up with other Dharma folk that day, e-mail enquiries@londoninsight.org.uk, marking your e-mail for the attention of Chris. Or alternatively check www.sanghaseva.org nearer the time.
- Please consider sponsoring someone else to travel to Copenhagen so that as many people as possible can be there to make a difference. If you would like to sponsor someone, or **if you need sponsorship**, please contact Chris Cullen on cullen@hamptonschool.org.uk, telephone 07906 131916.

Thank you for your care and support.

In the Dharma,

Rob Burbea, Rachel Davies, Chris Cullen, Kirsten Kratz, Gavin Milne, Hannah Gower, Robert Brodrick

“The Copenhagen Climate Talks are the world's last chance to secure an emissions reductions agreement that will replace the Kyoto Protocol before it expires. There is a growing consensus among scientists that we have as little as ten years to stop and reverse the global growth in greenhouse gas emissions before 'runaway' climate change becomes uncontrollable. That means the international talks being held in Copenhagen in December 2009 could be our last chance to avert a global catastrophe of unimaginable proportions - perhaps the most important international meeting ever held. We feel therefore that there is an overwhelming need to demonstrate a global will for urgent and effective action at this time.”

www.globalclimatecampaign.org

Bhikkhu Bodhi, David Loy and John Stanley, a British micro biologist, have worked together to compose a Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change. Please also pass it on to your own Buddhist friends and colleagues. Those involved with organizations should feel at liberty to post the declaration, or a link to it, on their websites.

<http://www.ecobuddhism.org/buddhist-declaration.php>

<http://www.buddhistglobalrelief.org/main.html>

8.Christopher's International Teaching Schedule

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October 2009 to August 2010

Saturday October 3, 2009 10 am to 5pm

Bodhi Garden. Brighton

TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK?

When we speak we express not only our views and opinions but reveal our attitudes, expectations, tone of voice and needs. We need to listen equally to ourselves as to another or others. What are supportive conditions if we have something important to say to another? Do we get lost in the story of the situation? Do we want to be heard by another? Wise communication is a skill and a practice. In this workshop, we will share our experiences, learn skilful tools and apply in two's and three's. We will examine the construct of language, of words, including the spoken and the written, and the importance of silence and space in and out of communication.

Please try to register before.

Bodhi Garden

7a Ship Street Gardens (three minutes walk from the beach)

Brighton BN1 1AJ

Sussex,

England

+44 07796 331167

info@bodhigarden.org

www.bodhigarden.org

Sunday October 4, 2009 10 am to 5 pm

Bodhi Garden, Brighton.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS? WHAT IS SEEING?

The Buddha has made a clear distinction between the practices of mindfulness, meditation, concentration and the nature of 'seeing.' The practices all belong to the path of awakening. Seeing and knowing is a different order and dimension altogether. How do we distinguish mindfulness from seeing? In this workshop we will explore through our experience these important features of consciousness. The intention is to come to deepen our insights into our processes.

Please try to register before.

Bodhi Garden

7a Ship Street Gardens (three minutes walk from the beach)
Brighton BN1 1AJ
Sussex,
England
+44 07796 331167
info@bodhigarden.org
www.bodhigarden.org

Saturday October 10, 2009. 10 am to 5 pm

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

In this one day workshop, we will look at some Pali texts of the Buddha's teachings. The day will consist of pointing out some of the main discourses of the Buddha and how to squeeze the honey out of the texts. We will examine some of the key themes that the Buddha addressed. Participants will leave with some valuable tools to dig deeper into these ancient texts much loved for more than 2000 years. The Buddha's teachings address both relative and ultimate. Open to all.

Bogan House, Totnes

Workshop is at Bogan House, opposite Civic Square, High Street, next door to Harlequin Bookshop. Totnes, Devon, England. NON-RESIDENTIAL.

Sunday October 11, 2009 10 am to 5 pm

WHAT AM I WILLING TO GIVE UP?

Life is given to us. In course of time, life will give us up. Yet we live as though life is made for us to take what we want from it. Human desire is having a destructive impact on the individual level since never experience a deep, inner contentment and at the global level. If the technological fix is not the answer, then what is? What are we willing to give up to live wisely, sanely, happily and freely? We will look into these important issues, share our concerns and perhaps be ready to make some real commitments at the end of the day. Open to all.

Bogan House, Totnes

Workshop is at Bogan House, opposite Civic Square, High Street, next door to Harlequin Bookshop. Totnes, Devon, England.

NON-RESIDENTIAL.

Totnes is exactly three hours on the train from Paddington station, London. Bogan House

is a few minutes walk from the station.

Friday evening 19.00 October 16, 2009 to lunchtime Tuesday, October 20, 2009.

Dharma Facilitators Programme (DFP).

christopher@insightmeditation.org

Zentrum for Buddhismus
Waldhaus am Lachersee
D 56643, Nickenich, Germany
0049 2636 3344

budwest@t-online.de

www.buddhismus-im-westen.de

www.dharmafacilitators.org

This residential DFP will be followed up with a silent retreat – open to all - until Sunday lunchtime.

Tuesday evening October 20 2009 to Sunday lunchtime October 25, 2009.

A SILENT RETREAT

with Christopher

This classical Vipassana retreat will include comprehensive meditation instructions in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, a daily talk and regular one to one meetings with Christopher. The retreat offers the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves in a supportive and caring atmosphere. The retreat points to inner renewal, a deep sense of presence and the emptying of the mind for fresh perceptions and insights. Suitable for new and experienced meditators. No groups. Suitable for new and experienced meditators.

Do pass the word onto others who might be interested to attend the residential DFP in Germany, Australia, Israel and New Zealand. For DFP in Germany, contact myself christopher@insightmeditation.org

See also website DFP website. www.dharmafacilitators.org

Australia

Friday November 6 at 6.00 p.m. until lunch time Wednesday, November 11, 2009

A RETREAT IN NSW, OZ ON MINDFULNESS, INSIGHT MEDITATION AND AWAKENING

Christopher and [Radha Nicholson](#) at Gunundi, Ballina, NSW

Organisers: Judy Baderle jbaderle@bigpond.net.au

Tuesday November 17. Evening Talk. 7 pm to 9pm

Dharma Talk

Cloudroom
147 Richmond Road
Morningside
Brisbane
Australia
www.Dharma.org.au

Thursday, Friday November 20

ONE DAY WORKSHOP

For Australian Council of Insight Meditation Teachers
with Christopher at Yarrhapinni Rainforest, NSW

Saturday November 21– 28, at 2 pm. 2009

DHARMA GATHERING

Christopher, Subhana, Radha, Patrick Kearney and several other Dharma teachers

Yarrhapinni Rainforest,
near Coffs Harbour,
NSW, Australia

Yarrhapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest.
Coffs Harbour is the nearest major airport and Macksville the nearest major town.
Families welcome.

Contact: Will James wvjames@yahoo.com.au
www.Dharma.org.au

Saturday evening November 28 – Wednesday 2 December, 2009 until 2.00 p.m.

[Dharma Facilitators Programme](#)

Christopher and [Radha](#)

Yarrahapinni Rainforest,
near Coffs Harbour,
NSW, Australia

Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest.

jbaderle@bigpond.net.au

www.Dharma.org.au

INDIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our India programme will probably run through from November, 2008 until May 2009

Every month during this time, there are teachings and practices in very different environments all over India including **Jaya, Gemma, Ajay, Sanghaseva** and others.

See also www.openDharma.org

email openDharmainfo@yahoo.com

www.sanghaseva.org

email: sangha_seva@yahoo.co.uk

Do come to India to join all or part of this extraordinary and truly unique six month programme, much of it run entirely on your donations (*dana*).

Our retreats in Bodh Gaya (started 1975) and the Dharma Gathering in Sarnath (started 1999) are run entirely on dana (donations) from participants.

TO REGISTER FOR BODH GAYA RETREATS

See www.bodhgayaretreats.org for more information on our programme for Bodh Gaya
bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR NAME FOR BODH GAYA AND SARNATH BY E-MAIL.

January 6 18.00 to January 12 2010 12.00

2nd DHARMA GATHERING IN TIRUVANNAMALAI

Five minutes walk from Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram

Mountain Breeze Guest House

Tiruvannamalai

Tamil Nadu.

Radha Nicholson

Radha Nicholson teaches the cultivation of wisdom and compassion through insight. Her teachings focus on inquiry and non-duality. Radha first met Christopher in India in 1975 where she participated in extended retreats. She was one of the founding members of the Australian community, Bodhi Farm, where she lived for 13 years. She is a Registered Psychologist with a private practice in Bangalow near Byron Bay, NSW. She has been co-teacher of the Bodh Gaya retreat with Christopher for five years.

For further information, please contact Radha

radhanicholson@ozemail.com.au

INDIA JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2010

36TH ANNUAL DHARMA RETREAT IN BODH GAYA

January 17 - 27, 2010

BODH GAYA RETREATS

Radha Nicholson

Thai Monastery

Bodh Gaya, near Gaya, India

www.bodhgayaretreats.org,

bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

January 27 - February 6, 2010

BODH GAYA RETREATS

Christopher Titmuss, Radha Nicholson,

Thai Monastery

Bodh Gaya, near Gaya, India

www.bodhgayaretreats.org,

bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

February 9 - 19, 2010

12th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DHARMA GATHERING

Christopher, Jaya, Radha, Zohar and Jess

Sarnath, near Varanasi, India

Come any day, leave any day. Dharma Gathering offered on donation.

www.bodhgayaretreats.org

No need to register. See also www.insightmeditation.org

We have printed a beautiful flyer with colour pix to promote Bodh Gaya and Sarnath.

Families welcome.

Saturday March 6, 2010, 10 am to 5 pm

Beginnings, Sustaining and Ending

Christopher Titmuss

The Buddha referred to living in a world where we experience what starts, what stays and what finishes.

Each of these three characteristics challenge us in a variety of ways. These three areas can act as a blessing or be an enormous to deal with. We are perhaps slow to start something or struggle at the beginning or find it difficult to sustain something or find it hard to cope when something ends. In this workshop, we will look into our relationship into beginnings, sustaining and ending. We will also inquire into that free such characteristics.

Please try to register before.

Bodhi Garden

7a Ship Street Gardens (three minutes walk from the beach)

Brighton BN1 1AJ

Sussex,

England

+44 07796 331167

info@bodhigarden.org

www.bodhigarden.org

Thursday morning 9 am March 11 to noon Sunday March 14, 2010

Dharma Facilitators Programme (DFP).

Pauenhof e.V.

Pauendyck 1

D - 47665 Sonsbeck Hamb (40 minutes from Düsseldorf)

Germany

Tel. +49-(0)2835 / 44133

www.pauenhof.de

christopher@insightmeditation.org

Anyone with Dharma/inner work experience can join the DFP at any time. We meet twice a year.

There are places for 35 people to look into and share the depths of the Dharma. Please register with Pauenhof to stay. There is no need to register with myself.

April 1- 6, 2010

Dharma Retreat for new practitioners and experienced meditators

Christopher and Israeli teachers

(City Dharma in Tel Aviv from April 8 -10).

April 6 – 12, 2010

Dharma Retreat for experienced practitioners

tovana@tovana.org.il

Mail: P.O. Box 40532,

Tel-Aviv 61234
Israel.

Dharma Facilitators Programme

April 14 – 17, 2010

tovana@tovana.org.il

Mail: P.O. Box 40532,
Tel-Aviv 61234
Israel.

GERMANY

Friday April 30 - Friday May 7, 2010

A DEEP SENSE OF PRESENCE

A SILENT RETREAT

with Christopher and [Nicole Stern](#)

translated into German

This classical Vipassana retreat will include comprehensive meditation instructions in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, a daily talk and regular one to one meetings with the teachers. The retreat offers the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves in a supportive and caring atmosphere. The retreat points to inner renewal, a deep sense of presence and the emptying of the mind for fresh perceptions and insights. Suitable for new and experienced meditators. The retreat will include regular one to one meetings with the teachers. Suitable for new and experienced meditators.

EINE TIEFE ERFAHRUNG VON PRÄSENZ

Schweigekurs

Englisch mit deutscher Uebersetzung

Dieses klassische Vipassana Retreat beinhaltet umfassende Meditationsanleitungen der Vipassana (Einsichts-) Meditation, einem taeglichen Vortrag und Einzelgesprachen mit den Lehrern. Das Retreat gibt die Moeglichkeit tief in eine unterstuetzende und fuersorgliche Atmosphaere einzutauchen. Es geht um innere Erneuerung, einem tiefen Gefuehl von Gegenwaertigkeit und dem "Entleeren" des Geistes fuer frische Sichtweisen und Einsichten. Geeignet fuer neue und erfahrene Praktizierende.

Zentrum for Buddhismus

Waldhaus am Lachersee
D 56643, Nickenich, Germany
0049 2636 3344
budwest@t-online.de
www.buddhismus-im-western.de

ENGLAND, DEVON

Wednesday July 14 to Sunday July 18 2009

DHARMA DOME, BUDDHAFIELD FESTIVAL

DHARMA TEACHINGS, INQUIRY AND WORKSHOPS

Christopher Titmuss (Thursday, Friday, Saturday speaking)

The site address is:

The Gallops, Clayhidon, Nr Wellington, North Devon, England (roughly six miles south of Taunton and three miles from Wellington)

Around 3000 adults and children go to this festival with numerous workshops, one to one sessions for mind, body, spirit, plus music and dancing.

Must book in advance.

www.buddhfield.com

FRANCE

We are preparing for the 10th annual French Yatra. It will start on late afternoon of Thursday, July 22 to **Sunday, 12 noon on August 1, 2010** .

It will be held in the lovely region of Limoux in southern part of France. Limoux is situated south of Carcassonne and Toulouse – easily accessible by air, train and coach.

Teachers: Christopher Titmuss, Christelle and others.

In 2009, we had a total of 95 adults and children. For 2010 we are not setting a limit on the numbers. We would like to encourage all those who have been on a past yatra to join

with us in our celebration of the 10th Yatra.

A Yatra is a pilgrimage. Men, women and children have gone on walking pilgrimages for thousands of years. Our Yatra is run entirely on donations (dana) to cover all the running costs, and donations for teachers etc.

If you require further information about the Dharma Yatra, and you cannot locate it in this website, then send an e-mail to the address below. Please keep your e-mail with any questions rather precise. Thank you.

Do join. It is a wonderful event.

Please ensure you register so we have knowledge of numbers. Retreat will begin from near Le Moulin de Chaves Meditation Centre

To register, please send €50 or £35 or more to support initial costs or pay upon arrival.

For further information contact Muriel in France murielbansard@laposte.net

www.dharmayatra.org

info@dharmayatra.org

Do join. It is a wonderful event.

GERMANY

Thursday 18.00 August 26 to Sunday 13.00 August 29, 2010

A SILENT RETREAT - INSIGHT MEDITATION (Vipassana)

Christopher and Tineke Osterloh

with Christopher

This classical Vipassana retreat will include comprehensive meditation instructions in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, a daily talk and regular one to one meetings with Christopher. The retreat offers the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves in a supportive and caring atmosphere. The retreat points to inner renewal, a deep sense of presence and the emptying of the mind for fresh perceptions and insights. Suitable for new and experienced meditators. No groups. Suitable for new and experienced meditators.

Totnes DFP dates and themes for June 2009 and October 2009 not yet fixed.

There will be opportunity for one to one meetings with the teachers. The retreat will be taught in English/German.

*Pauenhof e. V.
Pauendyck 1
D - 47665 Sonsbeck Hamb (40 minutes from Düsseldorf)
Germany
Tel. +49-(0)2835 / 44133
www.pauenhof.de*

Three Bows

In the Dharma

Christopher

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Dear One and All,

E-mails are checked very irregularly when teaching overseas. See teaching schedule on websites. Websites regularly updated. Control and click on website name below. Christopher's dharma blog is www.christophertitmuss.org/blog. Type in name in flkr for photos of Sangha worldwide.

See www.youtube.com for five minute Dharma clips of Christopher.

- 1. www.insightmeditation.org International teaching schedule of Christopher Titmuss, to subscribe to freely distributed quarterly Dharma e-News, Dharma teachings, guided meditations, Dharma reflections, articles, social-political-analysis, 150 linked sites* 2. www.christophertitmuss.org Audio library of world-wide talks and inquiries. Listen to audio guided meditations, poems, extracts from books and see more than 1500 photos of Sangha around the world on flickr. Listen to teachings and opportunity to download or order on CD.
- 3. www.dharmafacilitators.org Meet for four days twice a year to explore the depths of the Dharma and develop facilitation skills - DFP held in Australia, England, Germany, Israel and New Zealand. Limited to 35 people in a session.*
- 4. www.livingdharma.info Twice a month personal e-mail contact with a Dharma mentor. To develop your meditation, practice and wisdom in daily life. Around 28 mentors from 12 countries. See photos, bio, article of mentors and how to join. Donation based with modest registration cost.*
- 5. www.bodhgayaretreats.org How to register for the two annual 10 day Bodh Gaya retreats in Bihar, India, dates and information. 35th annual retreat in January 2009. Join*

also the 11th annual 10 day Dharma Gathering in Sarnath, near Varanasi in February 2009. All run on donations

6. www.dharmayatra.org Join the Dharma Yatra (pilgrimage) in France starting one hour from Bergerac in southern France on July 30 afternoon and finishing at lunch on August 9, 2009, Places for 120 adults and children. Run on donations with modest registration cost.

