

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

Christopher



In seeing -
What utter joy!
The small mind
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Dear Friends in the Dharma,

Welcome to the 20th **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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One page of A4 paper is about 500 words.

[My International Teaching Schedule](#) from January 2009 to December 2010 is on my websites. See Schedule in top right corner,

[Teaching Schedule. January to November, 2010.](#)

as well as available at the end of this **Dharma eNews**.

In the Dharma

Three Bows
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1.

A Storm and Feelings of Division in Theravada Buddhism in the West

Four Ordinations and an Expulsion

Christopher Titmuss

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7714 WORDS

On October 22, 2009, a small Buddhist ordination ceremony took place in Western Australia. In normal circumstances, it would hardly create much interest in the Buddhist world - except for one significant point. Ajahn Brahmavamso (known as Ajahn Brahm), a senior abbot and teacher originally from England, had sanctioned the full ordination of four women as *bhikkhunis*. It was therefore an occasion of historical significance for the Buddha-Dharma.

Senior Theravada abbots in the Ajahn Chah forest tradition of north-east Thailand promptly expelled Ajahn Brahm, a monk for 36 years, and his monastery from their lineage. Following a three-day meeting in Thailand in December 2009, the 28 Elders, mostly senior Buddhist abbots from the West of the Ajahn Chah lineage of the Theravada tradition, issued last month a 3700 word statement on the crisis following the bhikkhuni ordination. The Elders described recent events as an "unprecedented storm" and acknowledged "feelings of division have run high throughout the wider Buddhist world."

The lineage with its roots in Wat Pah Pong forest monastery currently consists of well over 300 monasteries, with perhaps 2200 Thai monks and nuns and some 170 of various other nationalities, 40 of whom reside in Thailand with the remainder living in branch monasteries throughout the world. The branch monastery in Perth found itself cut off from the rest of the tree of the lineage.

The ordination of four bhikkhunis has triggered an intense debate about the development of the Theravada tradition in the West. Websites, emails, public statements, and blogs by Buddhists East and West, the

Buddhist Channel (www.buddhistchannel.tv), and television, radio and newspapers in Theravada countries, especially Thailand, have expressed countless points of view. At one point, the Buddhist Channel refused for several days to receive any more responses to the crisis. In addition to its contemporary narrative, this issue has potential to impact upon the Buddhist world for generations ahead.

The senior Ajahns (abbots and teachers, both Western and Asian), connected with the Wat Pah Pong monastery, issued a lengthy statement in December 2009 rejecting the bhikkhuni ordination and explaining why they have expelled Ajahn Brahm and his monastery from the Ajahn Chah lineage. The Perth monastery has argued its corner especially through the blog of Ajahn Sujato (Australia, ordained 1994), who does not hesitate to emphasise his and Ajahn Brahm's unwavering support for the ordination.

Dharma teachers, post-monastic men and women, devotees of the Ajahn Chah lineage and experienced Dharma practitioners East and West, have offered a profusion of concerns on the issue. At the time of writing (second week of January 2010), the matter remains far from being resolved. One has to remember in all of this that the Theravada bhikkhu sangha is probably the world's longest surviving organisation employing its original by-laws, the Vinaya (monastic code) and that Theravada literally means "teachings of the elders." The past matters in this tradition.

In total, 2565 signatures (received in 19 days) giving support to bhikkhuni ordination were on the petition submitted to the meeting of Western abbots in Thailand in early December and 2902 signatures by the time the petition closed. People from 72 countries signed the petition as well as numerous letters of concern. The petition stated:

"This petition is a means for members of the four-fold sangha to express our deep concerns to the Forest Sangha of the late Ven. Ajahn Chah about the events surrounding and challenging the Bhikkhuni ordination in Perth, Australia, in October 2009, and the placement of women in the tradition.

The Forest Sangha has roots in the Wat Pah Pong (WPP) community in Thailand and includes its branch monasteries in the West, among which are: Amaravati (UK), Cittaviveka (UK), Abhayagiri (USA), Bodhinyanarama (NZ), and all its associated monasteries around the world.

- We who have signed this petition are disheartened by and disagree with the expulsion of Ven. Ajahn Brahmavamso and Bodhinyana Monastery (AUS) from the Ajahn Chah community as a consequence of his participation in a recent Bhikkhuni ordination in Australia.*
- We are disheartened by and disagree with the Sangha's lack of acknowledgement regarding the legitimacy of Bhikkhuni ordination in this tradition.*
- We are disheartened by and disagree with the recent legislation of 5 points created at Amaravati (UK) and Cittaviveka (UK) by Ven. Ajahn Sumedho and the monks of the Elders' Council, which imposes on nuns a two-tier discriminatory power structure favouring monks over nuns in these and associated monasteries.*
- We are disheartened by and disagree with the continued gender inequity played out in the monastic form, particularly in Western cultures where this is a direct affront to prevailing social and legal standards of equality and mutual respect between men and women.*
- We request that the WPP community, particularly those members in leadership positions in the Western monasteries, consider their position and responsibility to the four-fold sangha and initiate dialogue to mend the split that has been caused in the fabric of this larger community.*
- We request that the Elders of the Forest Sangha of the Ven. Ajahn Chah make efforts to address the issues of Bhikkhuni ordination, recognising that there are many well informed members of the four-fold sangha who see this as a real possibility and wish to see it happen. We particularly urge the Western Elders of the Forest Sangha to work openly and honestly within its own cultural context, inviting and listening to feedback from the four-fold sangha, as the Buddha modelled.*
- We request that the new legislation imposed upon the nuns of Amaravati and Cittaviveka be revoked and a new dialogue be initiated to discuss what would mutually support the monks' and nuns' orders to thrive in their Western communities.*

- *We request that a dialogue be initiated, including representatives of all four components of the four-fold sangha in the West, which directly addresses gender inequity within the monastic form and how it impacts on people in this tradition, ordained or lay, with the aim of finding a way to move forward in mutual respect as members of this sangha in a Western context.*

We hereby express our dissent and make these requests in the spirit of the Dhamma — that the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha may find a healthy ground to grow and flourish in the world for the benefit of all beings.”

The Buddha and Women’s Ordination

This is not a new issue of course. If you read through the Vinaya texts, Cullavagga, written around 300 years after the Buddha, you will see the Buddha, himself, had much resistance to the ordination of women. He was staying at the monastery in Kapilavatthu. His former foster-mother, Pajapati the great, due to her dedicated practice, appealed to the Buddha three times to allow women to become bhikkhunis and “go forth in the Dharma and Discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder” and three times the Buddha refused.

Crying and with tears running down her face, Pajapati walked away. The Buddha then set off walking to Vesali. Fearlessly, Pajapati then shaved her head, put on the same robes as the monks, and with several other women, waited outside Dharma hall where the Buddha was teaching.

Ananda, the Buddha’s personal attendant, spotted her crying. She told him the Buddha had rejected bhikkhuni ordination. Ananda advised her to stay in the same spot and he would appeal to the Buddha. The Buddha dug his heels in. He said to Ananda three times. “The Buddha does not allow the going forth of women from home into homelessness in the Dharma and Discipline.”

Not put off, Ananda responded with the jackpot question.

“Are women who have gone forth into homelessness able to realise the full fruits of the Dharma?”

The Buddha acknowledged that women do indeed have equal potential as men to realise the full fruit of the Dharma and dropped his opposition to the ordinations. However, he then added more precepts to the 227 rules of the monks. Pajapati agreed to this decision... The first extra precept would appeal to conservatives. “A nun who has been ordained for 100 years would pay homage to a monk who has been ordained for a day (though in practice, monks, nuns and householders could treat this precept as a momentary nominal gesture.) Despite the extra rules, the Buddha had taken a very bold step to launch the world’s first ordained sangha for women. From then on, he encouraged women to leave the tight constraints of caste and gender restrictions and live the homeless life of the mendicant. Today in India, you still rarely see women out on the streets in small towns and villages. Many women continue to spend their lives chatting only on their doorsteps, at the well, or behind closed doors.

The Buddha predicted: “The true Dharma would have lasted for 1000 years with the bhikkhus but due to women going forth the true Dharma would endure for only 500 years.” He does not explain a rather odd view that proved to be worthless and unfounded. To be fair to him, the view seems very much out of character since he firmly rejected speculation about the future. Did a Buddhist scholar some 2000 years ago, opposed to bhikkhuni ordination, add these lines to the ancient text?

Examining the rules for fully ordained nuns, Ajahn Thanissaro explains on his website www.accesstoinight.org “The Bhikkhuni Pā•imokkha contains 311 rules. Of these, 181 are shared with the Bhikkhu Thus the Bhikkhuni Pā•imokkha contains 85 rules for which there are no direct correspondences in the rules for the bhikkhus. More than one third of these extra rules were formulated to protect bhikkhunis from being the direct recipients of the abusive or careless behaviour of other bhikkhunis; two of the extra rules prevent bhikkhunis from putting themselves in a position of servitude to bhikkhus or lay people. All but three of

the extra rules were formulated only after bhikkhunīs complained to the bhikkhus about an errant bhikkhuni's behavior."

Ajahn Thanissaro has questioned the validity of the bhikkhuni ordination based on his interpretation of a specific technical points. Ajahn Brahm said he authorised the ordination based directly on the Pali text and the words of the Buddha. Ajahn Sujato wrote on his blog, "Ajahn Thanissaro's reasoning, on the other hand, is based on commentaries and the late *Parivara*, which are certainly not the Buddha's words." Readers can get a sense of the wide differences of view about what the Buddha said, the Vinaya, other Buddhist texts and the Thai hierarchy on the authority to ordain fully monks and nuns

I should point out here that the Buddha did not promote, nor even believe in, the ideology of equality. He supported a four fold Sangha. He took the view that I am above, below or equal are forms of conceit due to clinging self and other. Men have their Dharma Vinaya to observe and apply in wise and skilful ways. Women have their Dharma Vinaya to observe and apply in wise and skilful ways. It is important that bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, understand this clearly, otherwise the ideology of equality will torment everybody in the fourfold sangha.

First Major Restoration of the Bhikkhuni Order

The first major restoration of the bhikkhuni order took place in February 1998 in Bodh Gaya. A small number of Buddhist abbots in Sri Lanka and Thailand agree to authorise the full ordination of women. There were a few bhikkhunis left in the Mahayana tradition living quietly in Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Buddhist patrons in Sri Lanka invited the senior bhikkhunis from these countries to go to Bodh Gaya to officiate at the ordination of women who had undergone the necessary training for bhikkhuni ordination. Through this major initiative, bhikkhuni ordination returned to the Theravada tradition after 700 years. Respected Buddhists from different parts of the Buddhist world and different traditions had cooperated to renew and revitalise a long and beautiful tradition for women. We were thrilled that the event took place in Bodh Gaya, the place of the Buddha's awakening.

At that historical event, around 135 women from more than 20 countries received full ordination there. The Sinhalese women received their ordination by nuns in the Mahayana traditions where the Bhikkhuni lineage had not died out. Nuns came from Taiwan, Korea and the USA in the presence of monks of the Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition. A number of Theravada nuns took the ordination again in Sarnath with a handful of Theravada abbots present, mostly from Thailand and Sri Lanka to prevent any later reaction from orthodox Theravadins claiming the Bodh Gaya ordination was an invalid ordination due to the presence of the Mahayana tradition. I remember this time well due to my annual visit to Bodh Gaya to serve the Dharma in January/ February period. I had been corresponding with the senior organiser in Sri Lanka for the restoration of the bhikkhuni tradition who had written to me asking for support from Western Buddhists. We gladly offered it. There was much excitement in Bodh Gaya in the preparation for the ordination. The Sri Lankan nuns ordained returned to Dambulla, Sri Lanka, the same month. Not all Sinhalese monks have accepted their ordination. There are now more than 600 bhikkhunis in Sri Lanka. One newly ordained bhikkhuni returned to Burma where the military regime forced her to disrobe and punished her for taking ordination.

In the January 1990 newsletter for Urban Dharma, USA, Ajahn Brahm contributed an article on the "Ordination of Women: " He wrote: "Whatever the technicalities, one should always keep in mind the old English proverb: "Where there is a will, there is a way". I am often amazed to see how far rules can be bent under the weight of compassion. All it needs is the motive for doing the bending, and that motive will increase as do the numbers of women who show by their example a willingness to surrender to a renunciant's life."Ajahn Brahm may not have predicted that 20 years later, he would have become the one who had the will to find the way."

In the tradition of Ajahn Chah of Wat Pah Pong, women could take "siladhara" (One who upholds Virtue) ordination, namely to take ten precepts, wear brown robes and follow a number of bhikkhuni rules. But

this is a far step from full bhikkhuni ordination and a number of nuns in the monasteries of this lineage had expressed a deep interest and aspiration to take full ordination at some point. It has become an unresolved issue for 30 years. Ordained in 1967 by Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Sumedho, aged 75, from the USA, is the senior Western monk in this tradition. Since he arrived to set up the Forest Sangha in England in May 1977, he has been in regular discussion with women wishing to take further major steps towards a life of full renunciation. To his credit, he initiated *sildhara* ordination as a significant step forward for nuns (previously with eight precepts) in his monasteries. The Thai religious authorities approved of this form of ordination. Matters came to a head last August when the senior Ajahns of the Wat Pah Pong tradition, including Ajahn Sumedho, issued a five-point statement. These are the five points.

- 1. the most junior bhikkhu is senior to the most senior siladhara. This structural relationship is defined by the Vinaya and cannot change over time.*
- 2. In public situations such as giving a blessing, leading the chanting, or giving a talk, leadership always rests with the most senior bhikkhu present. He may, if he chooses, invite a siladhara to lead, but this in no way establishes a new standard of shared leadership.*
- 3. The Bhikkhu Sangha will be responsible for the ordination and guidance of the siladharas, rather than Ajahn Sumedho. Candidates should receive approval from the Siladhara Sangha, and acceptance from the Bhikkhu Sangha, as represented by the members of the Elder's Council.*
- 4. The Siladhara Sangha should invite (pavarana) the Bhikkhu Sangha at the end of the Rains Retreat, in accordance with the Vinaya.*
- 5. The siladhara training is considered to be a vehicle respected in our tradition as suitable for the realization of liberation. It is complete as it stands, and is not an evolution towards a different form such as bhikkhuni ordination.*

In other words, the senior abbots have finally decreed against bhikkhuni ordination. The senior Ajahns told Ajahn Brahm after he sanctioned the ordination of the four women that if he would state in the midst of the Sangha that the four women were not Bhikkhunis then there would be no penalty, otherwise Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery would be removed from the list of branch monasteries of Wat Pah Pong.

Ajahn Brahm wrote: *"I paused for a minute to reflect and, considering that I could not go against the Vinaya and state the Bhikkhunis were not properly ordained, nor could I go against the wishes of the Sangha of Bodhinyana and the thousands of lay Buddhists that support the Bhikkhuni Ordination, I refused to recant.*

"As a result, Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery was removed as a branch monastery of Wat Pah Pong. I emphasise that this decision had nothing to do with the process, secretive or otherwise, through which the ordination took place. The decision to excommunicate Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery rested solely on my refusal to state that the Bhikkhuni Ordination was invalid.

"After the meeting formally concluded I paid my respects to many of the senior monks who reminded me of their continued friendship."

Word about the full ordination on October 22, 2009, of the bhikkhunis at Wat Bodhinyana Monastery, in Perth, Western Australia spread very, very quickly. I arrived in Australia in early November. It had become a significant talking/email issue among Australian Buddhists with immense support for the decision to ordain the women. Several Dharma teachers and I talked about the matter at our one-day teacher meeting and further at our Dharma Gathering. I took notes from the thoughtful concerns that the teachers expressed. I then prepared a statement reflecting our collective concerns. We agree to issue it as a joint statement. We made it available for several Australian Dharma teachers to sign as we were teaching together at the Dharma Gathering at Yarrahappini, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales.

We then sent a copy of to Wat Bodhinyana Monastery in Perth, to Ajahn Brahm, Ajahn Sujato and asked for our statement be presented to the senior Ajahns of Ajahn Chah's tradition at their meeting the following month in Thailand. The senior monks at this meeting received more than 100 appeals to support

full ordination of bhikkhunis as well as the petition with a detailed request (see above) with more than 2500 signatures. Our statement read:

**A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM INSIGHT MEDITATION TEACHERS
IN AUSTRALIA FOR THE FULL ORDINATION
OF FOUR BHIKKHUNIS IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

We wish to express our support and appreciation for the first Theravada bhikkhuni ordination to take place in Australia on October 22, 2009. We rejoice with the four new bhikkhunis, Venerable Sisters Vayama (Australia), Nirodha (Germany/Australia), Seri (Malaysia/Australia) and Hassapanna (Malaysia/Australia).

We wish to thank Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso, along with the monks, nuns and laypeople connected with Bodhinyana Monastery and Dhammasara Monastery for Nuns, for creating the conditions that allowed the Sangha of nuns to become confident and strong enough to be able to take such a progressive step, despite criticism from senior teachers in their own lineage. We also wish to thank the eight senior bhikkhunis who travelled to Perth to ordain the new bhikkhunis, including Venerable Tathaloka, preceptor, and Venerables Sucinta and Sobhana, reciters of the formal act of full admission.

These new bhikkhunis have embraced the highest level of the Buddha's Dharma-Vinaya (teaching and training). We know they will need the daily kindness and support of the ordained and lay sangha for such a difficult life. We trust that they will deepen their commitment to and love for the bhikkhuni way of life and become an inspiration for other women to follow in their footsteps.

We regard this revival of the Theravada Bhikkhuni order as a sign of the coming of age of Western Buddhism. It is now possible for women to undertake the discipline of the Vinaya equally with men, (at least insofar as the Bhikkhuni Vinaya allows) shouldering an equal responsibility to share the Dharma. The co-operation of fully ordained men and women will contribute greatly to the welfare, happiness and benefit of many. This was the original vision of the Buddha 2500 years ago, in far less enlightened times than today.

We understand that the ordination of the bhikkhunis has generated considerable disquiet among senior ajahns and bhikkhus at Wat Pah Pong and Wat Pah Nanachat in Thailand, Wat Amaravati in Britain, and among various branch monasteries of Wat Pah Pong in Western countries. These monasteries have raised objections that Ajahn Brahmavamso and Ajahn Sujato failed to consult adequately with the elders of the tradition or with Thai Buddhist authorities. We regret that senior bhikkhus in the Ajahn Chah tradition took the view that the current level of training in Thailand and elsewhere for ordained women could not be "a step in the evolution towards a different form such as bhikkhuni ordination," We also regret the decision to expel Bodhinyana Monastery from their lineage.

We continue to respect the role of the ordained Sangha of Wat Pah Pong and its branch monasteries in ensuring a high standard of Vinaya training for monks, the opportunity for women to take robes as siladhara (holders of the precepts) and offering of teachings to householders.

We support the decision of Bodhinyana Monastery to embark on a vision of shared responsibility of the Dharma Vinaya between monks and nuns. The fourfold assembly of fully ordained Buddhist monks and Buddhist nuns, laywomen and laymen has been restored, honouring the original spirit of the Buddha's teachings and making accessible the Dharma to one and all.

SADHU! SADHU! SADHU!

Signed by Insight Meditation Teachers, Australia.

Anna Markey, Adelaide

Anton Eastick (Canberra)
Bobbi Allan, The Channon,
Carol Perry, The Channon, NSW
Christopher Titmuss, Totnes, UK (visiting teacher)
Ellen Davison, The Channon, NSW
Jess Huon, Melbourne
Patrick Kearney, Woodford (Blue Mountains)
Radha Nicholson, Byron Bay, NSW.
Sexton Burke, Bellingen, NSW
Subhana, Sydney
Will James, Bellingen, NSW.

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It is important to acknowledge again the extraordinary Dharma service of the Ajahn Chah lineage, of Ajahn Sumedho, for monks and nuns in the West. It is no easy undertaking to stay true to the Dharma Vinaya (Dharma and Discipline), stay faithful to the rules, offer teachings, run monasteries, as well as attend to the endless amount of inter-personal issues that arise in monastic life. It requires huge dedication. There are a growing number of us who were ordained as Buddhist monks who were neither ready nor willing to stay as monks in the West due to the endless demands of such a way of life. I knew it was beyond my capacity to maintain the 227 rules of the bhikkhu. Others reported the same. Instead, we started relationships and family, lived in communities or homes and found ways to serve the Dharma. I took ordination for a mere six years. Other monks and nuns ordained 10, 20 or 30 years before disrobing. All the post monastics that I know remain grateful for our monastic years. It is one of the reasons that I believe the vast majority of post monastics remain very supportive for full ordination for women.

It would be a tragedy if, as I hear, there are some Western Buddhists who have taken the moral high ground to the extreme of refusing to give any more support to the Ajahn Chah lineage because of the refusal to give full ordination to women and the expulsion of Ajahn Brahm and his branch monastery. I have seen messages about taking the Wat Pah Pong abbots to the International Court of Human Rights for denying religious freedom to women as if a secular court could be expected to rule on the arcane workings of the Vinaya). Others have declared they will never attend a retreat with a monks or nun who rejects bhikkhuni ordination. There are differences of view but those differences should not overshadow the wealth of wisdom and practices that the Ajahn Chah lineage offers in many areas of daily life. It is important that we continue to offer our support, *dana* and gratitude to all men and women connected with the Ajahn Chah tradition. They have an important voice in this greedy and mentally/materially mad world. On the issue of bhikkhuni ordination, we simply profoundly disagree.

Like myself, some of us disrobed in the East immediately before returning to the West. We did not have the motivation nor inner resources for lifelong ordination. Other Western monks ordained in the East or West and disrobed after years. Around 15 Western abbots of the Ajahn Chah tradition have disrobed in the past 30 years. Our life as a monk has served us all well, enabling us to offer countless forms of Dharma service to others in the lay life.

I take the common view that there is equal opportunity to practice for householders. For example, we can give deep emphasis to every link in the Noble Eightfold Path, develop our inner life, create time for retreats, travel to India and Theravada monasteries in the East, practice under Western monks, nuns and lay teachers and come to profound realisations. It is not a commonly held view in Asian Buddhism. In a newspaper interview last year, Ajahn Brahm referred to a meeting that I had with Ajahn Chan in Wat Pah Pong in Ubon, Thailand in May 1976, just a few days before I disrobed.

In an interview with Ajahn Brahm on April 4, 2009, a Bangkok Post reporter asked the Ajahn's view about *ordination of women*. "*Women are commonly told by many monks and even other laywomen that 'it's not necessary to ordain to practice'. You can ordain in your heart ['buad thi jai'] and practise wherever you*

are. What is your view?"

"If monks say [to women] that it's not necessary to ordain to practice well, then they should disrobe and practise as laypersons. Then at least they'll be true to their word. The reason why they are monks is because it is easier to practise as a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni.

Ajahn Brahm went on: "I was there with Ajahn Chah one evening when Christopher Titmuss [a lay teacher in the UK], who was then a monk, went to tell Ajahn Chah he was about to disrobe. Ajahn Chah said, "Why?" And he said, "Because I want to teach the Dharma in the West, and it's easier to teach as a layperson than a monk".

And Ajahn Chah responded, "Then why did the Buddha establish the sangha?" He made a very strong point, that the Buddha established it because it is the best vehicle for a person to practise to reach enlightenment, and also the best vehicle for teaching the Dharma."

I remember this exchange with Ajahn Chah when I visited Wat Pah Pong as a monk in 1976 shortly before I disrobed. He and I agreed to disagree. I had a similar exchange with my teacher, Ajahn Dhammadhara in southern Thailand. He shared the same view as Ajahn Chah. In line with the early Buddhist tradition, I regard the Sangha as fourfold – monks, fully ordained nuns, male and female householders – all with a great opportunity for total awakening.

In a statement , Ajahn Brahm wrote: "The matter of Bhikkhuni Ordination had been discussed in Wat Pah Pong about two years ago and, as I recall, they resolved to follow the lead of the Mahatherasamakom (the supreme Monks' Council of Thailand). I was and remain under the impression that the ordination of Bhikkhunis outside of Thailand was not contravening the rulings of the Mahatherasamakom. This is because I had consulted with the acting Sangharaja, Somdej Phra Pootajarn, well beforehand to ask him precisely his opinion on the ordination of Bhikkhunis outside of Thailand. His response, which I have circulated amongst the Western Sangha for a long time now, was "Thai Sangha law does not extend outside of Thailand". He repeated this another two times to make his intention clear."

Signed by present and past Presidents of the Society, the Buddhist Society of Western Australia gave an official response to statements from Wat Pah Pong. The statement strongly contests the view that the Perth Monastery belongs to the Thais.

Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhuni ordination

Bhikkhu Bodhi stands as one of the important voices in terms of authority on meaning in the Pali texts. The Wat Pah Pong tradition and Ajahn Brahm have referred to the authority of the Vinaya as the Theravada tradition has such deep roots in history. Bhikkhu Bodhi had written an article giving support to full ordination for women but after the ordination had revised his view. On November 6, 2009, he wrote a comprehensive response to the ordination. Below is an edited version: "

Dear Ven. Sujato,

In the light of my recent insights into the way this tradition (Wat Pah Pong) functions, I have been compelled to revise the opinion I expressed in the letter I sent you last week and which I approved being posted on your website. I first want to make it absolutely clear that in principle I fully support bhikkhuni ordination. I regard the women who have taken this ordination, whether from lineages based in the so-called "Mahayana countries" or from the recently emergent Theravada bhikkhunis, as legitimately ordained bhikkhunis, fully entitled to participate in the Sangha acts prescribed for them in the Vinaya.

I also believe that a full-scale revival of the Bhikkhuni Sangha and its unqualified acceptance by the Bhikkhu Sangha is an imperative for the Theravāda tradition in our time. At the same time, however, in

view of the intimate communal structure of the WPP Sangha and the close bonds between the abbots of the monasteries belonging to this tradition, I have been regretfully forced to the conclusion that Ajahn Brahm and yourself were at fault for proceeding in the hasty and secretive way in which you conducted the ordination.

Please be assured that, while I express these reservations about the way Ajahn Brahm proceeded in this affair, I still lend him my moral support just as much as I support the revival of bhikkhuni ordination in the Theravāda tradition."

Ajahn Brahm takes the view that he sanctioned full ordination because his lineage had no intention to provide the opportunity for women to become bhikkhunis. The Western Ajahns have spoken about the matter of full ordination for women for many years. He had spoken with Ajahn Sumedho and communicated with others on the requests from women practitioners.

One of the significant divides in this whole painful issue is the relationship to the Vinaya and the relationship to the Maha Thera Samakok (the Thai's Sangha governing body). Wat Pah Pong tradition considers itself bound to the commitments of the governing body and the Thai state. The governing body rejects bhikkhuni ordination because the lineage of bhikkhunis died out 700 years ago and therefore, they claim, it cannot be revived.

In part of a statement on November 4, 2009, senior Western Ajahns in the Wat Pah Pong tradition wrote from Wat Pa Nanachat:

For most of the Wat Pah Pong theras, the intellectual argument over the validity of bhikkhuni ordination is not the point. Their lack of knowledge of the latest studies on the subject is, in their eyes, irrelevant. To them the issue is that Ajahn Brahmavamsa reneged on commitments implicit in his ownership of a Thai monastic passport, his role as abbot of a Wat Pah Pong branch monastery, his position as an officially sanctioned preceptor, and his acceptance of the Jow Khun title (formalizing his membership in the elite strata of the Thai monastic order).

In the meeting of the 1st November, it was the perception that Ajahn Brahmavamsa had acted disrespectfully to his teachers and lineage, that aroused emotions, not his wish to elevate the status of women.

Time only will tell if the bhikkhuni ordination at Bodhinyana monastery in October 2009 will be seen as a key breakthrough in the acceptance of a Theravada bhikkhuni order, or as an overly hasty and confrontational move that alienated many of those it was intended to persuade.

Wat Pa Nanachat

Meeting of Ajahn Chah tradition's senior teachers from December 7-9, 2009.

Here is an edited version of their statement issued after the meeting:

The gathering of Western elders of the Ajahn Chah Sangha (referred to informally as WAM) took place from the 7-9th December 2009 at Wat Pah Nanachat, in Ubon, Northeast Thailand. The gathering was attended by some twenty-eight elders, including Ven. Ajahn Sumedho, abbot of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England, the senior Western disciple of Ajahn Chah, and Luang Por Liem, the abbot of Wat Pah Pong. In part, their statement said:

"The gathering this year was dominated by discussion of the unfortunate events surrounding the delisting of Bodhinyana Monastery in Perth, Western Australia from the Ajahn Chah Sangha, and the estrangement of an old friend and erstwhile member of the group, Ajahn Brahmavamsa.

The events of the last two months have caused an unprecedented storm in our communities, both monastic and lay, and feelings of division have run high throughout the wider Buddhist world. Evidence of this was clear in a petition and various letters presented to the gathering. Several elders noted how many familiar names appeared in the documents. Sympathy with the feelings expressed in them was mixed with a regret that they were often based on an interpretation of events that differed markedly from our own.

It might be worthwhile at this point to give a brief overview of the nature of our Sangha. The first thing is that the Ajahn Chah Sangha in Thailand operates within constraints overseen by the Thai Sangha governing council (Maha-thera Samakom) and, through respecting those, is able to maintain its own distinct character.

For the Ajahn Chah Sangha the crux of the problems leading up to Ajahn Brahmavamso's delisting was his determination to follow his own highly controversial agenda, without consultation and contrary to the wishes of the elders. The particular topic on his agenda – the ceremony performed in Perth on the 22nd of October – was an important but not the crucial element.

The delisting of Bodhinyana monastery by the Ajahn Chah Sangha has been presented on the web as a patriarchal knee-jerk. The situation of the siladharas in England has been cited as a proof of our unwillingness to give the appropriate respect to women's spiritual aspirations. We do not see things in this way.

In mid-October Ajahn Brahmavamso informed Ven. Ajahn Sumedho that he would conduct a bhikkhuni ordination in Perth before the end of the month. When the news reached the larger Sangha the reaction was one of surprise and a deep dismay. The source of these feelings was not outright opposition to bhikkhuni ordination as such (in fact a number of our Western elders consider the arguments supporting its legitimacy to be well-founded), but the sense that the way the ordination had been arranged constituted a serious betrayal of trust.

In June 2009 the Ajahn Chah Sangha at Wat Pa Pong reaffirmed its willingness to conform with the Thai Sangha governing council's current position: that bhikkhuni ordination has ceased to exist and cannot be legitimately revived. It was taken as given that continued membership of the group would be contingent on upholding that resolution. In our monastic culture, the disrespect perceived in Ajahn Brahmavamso's actions is, in other words, profound. It is comparable to a slap in the face.

Since our lineage does not, at least at present, formally accept the legitimacy of Theravada bhikkhuni ordination, we do not have the authority to carry it out on our own initiative, without breaking that connection with our roots. This view is not just restricted to the Ajahn Chah Sangha. For example, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at the conference he called on bhikshuni ordination in 2007, said he could not go ahead with reinstating the bhikshuni order without the full consent of the Tibetan Sangha, despite the unanimous agreement of the conference that it should be.

The Sangha is an ancient institution; it is the longest surviving organization that still operates under its original bylaws. The Theravada tradition is like a gnarled and deeply rooted oak, yet one that still bears abundant and fertile seeds. The depth of its roots and the thickness of its branches are some of the reasons why it has lasted for so long. In the case of the Siladhara and the 'five points' our sense is that there has been a miscommunication regarding the overall perspective of how the established Bhikkhu Sangha seeks to support a modern nuns' order, as well as misinformation regarding the 'five points.' However we do feel that we share the concerns of the petition in that we are aware of the limited opportunities that there are for women to train in Dhamma-Vinaya, and also have a wish to support women's aspirations towards liberation.

In 1983, Ven. Ajahn Sumedho, having received the permission of the Thai Sangha that had

authorised him as Preceptor, gave the Ten Precepts to a small group of women who had already trained under the Eight Precepts for more than three years at Cittaviveka Monastery in England. Ajahn Sumedho's aim was to provide an opportunity for women to train as alms-mendicants within the conventions that were held by the Bhikkhu Sangha. Subsequently, he asked that a training be developed that would flesh out the basic moral structure that the Ten Precepts represent with details that could support the nuns as an autonomous Order.

So a training was developed that drew from the Bhikkhuni-Vinaya in order to cover issues that might occur for women, as well as protocols that would enable them to manage their own affairs. Through the ensuing years the training evolved through discussions with the nuns, consultations with Ven. Ajahn Sumedho and the elders of his community, and presentations to Thai and Sri Lankan elders.

There was no intention or authorisation however to establish a Bhikkhuni Order, or any new independent Sangha.

We wish that all of us who have concern in this area take steps to avoid the danger of polarization in the Buddhist world. Meanwhile, we hope that this preceding article has helped to generate the kind of understanding that can be a step in the right direction."

The Buddhist Channel reported on December 30, 2009. *"The forest monks of Wat Pah Pong want the Council of Elders and the Office of National Buddhism (in Thailand) to impose stricter controls on Western monks to stop them from ordaining women.*

"They also want the properties of Thai temples in the West to come under the ownership of the Thai Sangha to ensure complete control.

The council says it "wants the temple back". It claims Bodhinyana Temple was built primarily with money donated by the Thai disciples of the late Luang Por Chah.

A Personal Reflection sent to Thailand in late November, 2009

In November before the December 7-9, 2009, meeting of the senior Ajahns in Thailand, I wrote a reflection that I asked to be made available at the meeting.

Greetings from the forest at Yarrahappani in NSW, Australia where I have been following developments of the flow on from the bhikkhuni ordination in October. (See earlier posting in November).

I have seen the PDF file (from November 2009) of the senior Ajahns of the Ajahn Chah tradition "Where we are now" – sadly, I would venture to respond with – currently, wedged between a rock and a hard place

There is surely a middle way in this issue.

I carefully read the Ajahns' 7400 word article in the above PDF file. There is an expression of a particular range of views of the Vinaya and well worth reading. As far as I understand from my days as a Thai monk in the Theravada tradition, the traditional Vinaya makes clear that the samanera and samaneri (male and female novices) act as the stepping stone for the full bhikkhu and bhikkhuni ordination. The Vinaya has never regarded the samaneri role as an end in itself.

I believe there is a middle way between strict adherence to a view of the Vinaya as advocated in the article and expulsion of Ajahn Brahm, Ajahn Sujato and their branch monasteries. The senior

Ajahns could recommend the siladhara ordinations while allowing siladharas ready and wishing to take up bhikkhuni ordination, to go to the monastery in Perth for full ordination.

All the other monasteries in the Ajahn Chah tradition could keep to the adoption of the siladhara model – conceived within the Theravada tradition. Each monastery takes responsibility for its direction. I believe the Thai religious authorities need to be approached to see whether they would accept such a view to meet the needs and the aspirations of different women and different monasteries. I believe they would treat this conciliatory course as a satisfactory understanding.

Perhaps this approach could be mentioned to Ajahn Sumedho when seniors in the Dharma present the petition, the statement of around 12 Australian teachers and myself of Insight Meditation on the bhikkhuni ordination and other statements. There is a genuine need for some reconciliation to find a meeting point between traditional and contemporary wisdom, ancient forms and progressive forms. Sabbe sankhara anicca.

I believe the fourfold assembly of senior monks, nuns, laywomen and laymen share in many respects a common vision. We trust that seniors in the Western tradition neither hold to a hierarchy of roles or wisdom nor reduce everyone to sameness.

This is an important time for the Western tradition of Dharma and one of its important expressions through the ongoing dedication of Theravada monks and nuns. There are plenty of us dedicated to the Dharma who are following developments with much interest.

We look forward to the response of the senior Ajahns who are meeting in Thailand from December 7 – 9, 2009, to discuss various matters including the Australian ordination of bhikkhunis in October. We trust they will bring their considerable wisdom to the situation for the welfare of one and all."

Nick Scott, a senior supporter of the Forest Sangha in England, wrote from Thailand last month about the issue. Here is an edited version: *"I think it is very important that we, as lay practitioners and dhamma teachers, speak out in support of the full ordination of women.*

"The incredible fuss made by Western lay folk about the position of women within the monastic order seems to have resulted in some movement in the attitude to this issue amongst the senior monks. It has been an 'eye opener' for monks based in Thailand and Thai monks. There is now much more sympathy for the position of the other senior monks that one day there should be a full Bhikkuni order. It has also resulted in the Deputy Senior monk for all of Thailand saying that the siladhara order of dark brown nuns that has been developing in the Western Ajahn Cha monasteries is now something suitable for Thailand, but a full Bhikkuni order would not yet be possible in Thailand.

There was also some remorse about the hard time that has been given to the Western nuns in recent years and some of the senior monks are to address this with them.

To my mind, much that is positive has come out of the 'crisis'. My great sadness has been to see other lay folk disillusioned with this tradition because of this crisis. I understand that it is because of their heartfelt ideals but for myself I am not with this tradition because of ideals but because, with all its faults, it is still a viable vehicle to get me to the other side."

Thai journalist Sanitsuda Ekachai wrote last month in the Bangkok Post ":

"The time of monks' monopoly on Buddhist teachings is over. The emergence of lay dharma teachers in

greater numbers. The reinstatement of the Bhikkhuni order despite the elders' frowns. The growing interest in Buddhist spirituality among householders. The message is clear: the monk-centric mentality is crumbling."

It has been noted that some of the major Western Buddhist centres, significantly connected with the Thai Theravada tradition, have remained noticeably silent on the issue of the four ordinations and an expulsion.

For the future:

I received this thoughtful response from supporters of full ordination for women. There is the wish to encourage all members of the international four-fold assembly to:

- *find ways to carry this momentum for responsible change and gender equity into your own Dhamma communities*
- *invite Bhikkhuni Dhamma teachers into your lay communities to teach and give retreats*
- *donate time and dana to organizations that work to enable Bhikkhunis to attend monastic conferences, teachings, retreats, or to undertake teaching tours*
- *support Bhikkhuni monasteries that are already in existence, and donate for the development and construction of new Bhikkhuni monasteries*
- *support four-fold assembly monasteries that are already in existence, and donate for the development and construction of new four-fold monasteries*
- *donate time and dana to the Alliance for Bhikkhunis, an organization purpose-built to support the establishment and protection of a thriving worldwide Theravadan Bhikkhuni sangha*
- *study the Nikayas and the Vinaya. Be willing to ask questions about interpretations of the Buddha's teachings that lead to harm and do not accord with your own direct experience*
- *read monastic scholarly research on Bhikkhuni ordination*
- *actively support all those who support Bhikkhunis.*

MAY ALL BEINGS LEAVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY

Useful websites, blogs and articles

<http://sujato.wordpress.com/> plus links to other websites on the issue

http://sujato.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/where_we_are_now.pdf

http://www.forestsangha.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=385&Itemid=8 (for statements of Wat Pah Pong lineage)

www.bhikkhuni.net

<http://www.tipitaka.net/community/news.php?page=070224e4>

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/leisure/leisurescoop/15800/the-bhikkhuni-question>

<http://forestsangha.org/index.php?>

[Time for monks to let go](#) Bangkok Post article.

["Buddhism and women: calling for Bhikkhuni ordination and gender equality in the Forest Sangha"](#).

fourfoldsangha.org/petition-text/.

selected comments made on public fora about gender equity in Theravadan Buddhism (read at [fourfoldsangha.org references](http://fourfoldsangha.org/references) and Alliance for Bhikkhunis at www.bhikkhuni.net)

- letters written in support of Bhikkhuni ordination (read at www.SupportBhikkhunis.org)
- scholarly articles outlining the legitimacy of Bhikkhuni ordination (seen as a necessary response to Ajahn Thanissaro's refutation of the validity of the Bhikkhuni ordinations in October in Perth, Australia) (read at [fourfoldsangha.org references](http://fourfoldsangha.org/references) and Alliance for Bhikkhunis at www.bhikkhuni.net).

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhuni-pati.html>

Ajahn Sujato (Australian on bhikkhuni ordination. 1hr 24 mins. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5ELoCMrjEs>

http://www.dhammadownload.com/vinaya/ThanissaroBhikkhu_13-11-09.htm

2.

Upcoming Teachings, DFP and Yatra

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The following consists of Christopher's teaching programme between January and July 2010. See also DFP in mid-March in Germany and our 10th French Yatra in late July. Do join.

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 for Sarnath.

See also www.insightmeditation.org

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

Families welcome.

England

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

Germany

Anyone with Dharma/inner work experience can join the DFP in Germany in either March or October. Please remember to register with Pauenhof, the Dharma centre, near Dusseldorf. In the DFDP (Dharma Facilitators Programme), we share together our understanding of the Dharma, go deeper into specific issues – in small groups, inquiry, texts and develop skills in communication and facilitation. Also available in Australia, Israel and New Zealand.

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

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.

www.dharmafacilitators.org

Israel

Passover retreat for new and experienced meditators

March 31- April 6

Kibbutz Ein dor

Christopher Titmuss, Eran Harpaz and Sandiya (rakefet) Bar-kama

Retreat for Experienced Practitioners

April 6-13

Kibbutz Ein dor

Led by Christopher Titmuss and Lila Kimhi

Open Dharma gathering with Christopher Titmuss

April 18-19

Dharma Faciliators Programme (DFP)

April 14-17

Kibbutz Ein dor

Christopher Titmuss and Lila Kimhi

the link for the home-page of Tovana's site is:

<http://tovana.org.il>

the hebrew info page for the course in tovana's site is:

http://tovana.org.il/newsite/magazine_details.asp?id=1188

registration will start a month and a half before the retreat at :

tovana.rishum@gmail.com

mail for general questions:

tovana@tovana.org.il

phone number:

972-(0)54-5695931

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 Einzelgespraechen 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

FRANCE

July 22 to August 1. 2010

Come to the 10th annual French Yatra. **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.. For 2010 we are not setting a limit on the numbers.** In 2009, we had a total of 95 adults and children 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.

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.

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 the Yatra. It is a wonderful event.

3.

4

Yatras in Oz

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Dharma pilgrimages in the Australian Wilderness

Victor von der Heyde

The forest means goannas (big 1.5 metre lizards that can think you're a tree to be climbed if you stand still (not a good idea)), catbirds (they sounds like cats but they're birds), strangler figs, snakes (poisonous snakes and more friendly snakes that just bite and crush things), ticks which can burrow into you and can be tricky to get out, and leeches (our dark-skinned friends waiting patiently by the track for a drink of blood). But the good news is that most of the snakes go away (sometimes with a bit of encouragement), most people don't get a tick and the wildness and life of the forest makes up for small discomforts.

Given the choice between walking through farmland and walking through bush, we started with a mix but we've ended up staying largely in forests and wild country. Being in forests means there's not so much space for tents so our groups have been limited in size: we usually have between 20 and 40 people. The good side of this is that it becomes quite a close group and we can have minimal impact on the country we walk though. We've also found that many people like walking at their own pace and so we try to cater for that. The first yatra here was inspired by one of the yatras in France but since then it seems each yatra brings with it the interest in doing another.

For our standard yatra we have all the gear loaded onto a support vehicle each day so people only need to take day-packs. There's a daily rhythm that we get into: yoga first up, sitting before breakfast often with birdsong in the background, then breakfast with talking, pack-up and back to silence for the day's walk. And in the evening we quieten with a sit and a dharma talk, or some chants.

We had one yatra in more desert country in Central Australia: remote, dry, very little tree cover, but such a wide open and expansive feel compared to the busyness and life in the rainforest. It was a tougher yatra with two days carrying all our gear including water. Six litres of water minimum but the most of us opted to lighten loads by leaving tents behind and sleeping out. Somehow the stark landscapes and red rocks of the desert ranges ended up doing something to our psyches and we came back with way more than just an appreciation of where we'd been.

One of the things that has struck us about the yatras is that the mix of silence, meditation, yoga, dharma

talks and the hours of walking leads to a quietness and reflection that is very similar to what happens on regular retreats. When we come to the retreat schedule day in the forest, the atmosphere is like we've been on retreat for days already. We've also been mindful of the aboriginal history of some of the areas we go and the sacred sites.

It was Ronny Hickel and his partner Emma who started the yatras here in Australia and Ronny has been one of the teachers (yoga) in all of them as well as an organiser.

Fourth Annual Rainforest Yatra

Nightcap National Park, NSW Australia

Carol Perry

A long low cloud hangs over the hills. Its resemblance to a nightcap gives the surrounding national park its name. In early October a group of 28 people tread the soft moist earth of the subtropical rainforest. Many of them are newcomers to the dharma and many are long-term practitioners. All love the mix of dharma, sangha and walking meditation in a wild and natural environment. All find that placing one foot after the other day after day for seven days opens the heart and opens the mind.

A day of silence midway through the walk, at the Forest Meditation Centre at "Dharmananda" community; a basic hall, kitchen and kuti or tent accommodation in the simple tradition of the forest monks of Thailand; offers the joy of the only hot shower in days, and a deepening of the silence reaped over the days of just walking.

It is a sense of community that touches people as for one week we are a small tribal sangha exploring the landscape of the forest and our minds. The ancient rainforest trees with buttress roots like elegant skirts are similar to the trees that the Buddha under in the forests of northern India. We swim at a waterfall; someone lays spread across the rocks under the falling water. It is hard to see where the body and the rocks begin and end. Out in the elements with the frogs, lizards, birds, vines, mosses, escarpments, gullies and ponds as well as the ticks and leeches, no one complains. It seems like an epic journey of Tolkien proportions in distance, challenge and taking our greed, hatred and delusion into the fire of awareness.

The days are in silence except for meal times. Each morning we do yoga and sit before breakfast, then we pack our lunches, de-camp and set off with a leader who knows the way in the forest. The tracks have been well researched by Ronny Hickel, instigator of the first Australian yatra, along with his partner, Emma, yatra manager, yoga teacher and owner of "Cloud Mountain Homeland" where the walk begins. There are two cooks and three crew who pack the bags and tents into the truck and take it around to the next camp site where they erect the kitchen tent. Hot chai always awaits the tired and exhilarated walkers. After dinner there is a dharma talk or dharma activity lead on alternate nights by Carol Perry and Victor von der Hyde. On days when the distance is not so great and we have more time, we have small group meetings for practice questions or dharma enquiry.

On the final night we celebrate at the Doon Doon saddle flanked by the towering escarpment of the Jerusalem rocks and overlooking Mount Warning; clouds sit low in the valley forming a white lake below pierced by the volcanic core of Mt Doughboy. The next morning we walk down to where we started at "Cloud Mountain Homeland".

The Walking Man" –

a Dharma Yatra for Men

Ronny Hickel, Ken Golding

In March 2009 twenty men walked the initial "*Walking Man - Yatra*" for seven days through the rainforests of the Nightcap National Park in Northern NSW. During these seven days we walked in silence, made and broke camps, talked around campfires, meditated, did yoga together and ate tasty cooked food from a mobile kitchen. The experience we had on this journey was rather profound. There was a true opening of the heart; a deep connection with each other as well as with the magnificent wilderness of the Australian bush. Collectively we created a trusting environment where we could speak our truth and be listened to; where we could let go, sit with our feelings and be vulnerable. Out of some tears emerged great joy and gratitude which was expressed in ritual and celebration.

"*The Walking Man - Yatra*" is a pilgrimage especially for men. It aims to investigate our role as men in these present times as we travel together through a variety of inner and outer landscapes in the company of other men. Our mindfulness provides a container for this journey and supports a deepening of our experience and understanding. Our individual and collective enquiry consists of a respectful combination of meditation, reflection, discussion and movement.

In each generation there is the opportunity to question the values and attitudes that are passed on from the previous generation. While some are still useful there are some that are not. The traditional male role can narrowly determine our roles as partner, father, worker, friend and lover. We live in times where the question "how am I to live?" has serious implications for the future of not only our children and grandchildren but the planet we collectively depend upon. How we relate to nature and how nature shapes the way we think and feel is a crucial and determining factor of our existence.

*Majestic trees arch to a sparkling canopy
A line of men silently wind through ancient forests
Stiff bodies bend and stretch in the first light of morning
Fire glow reflects on a circle of listening faces
The smells of cooking as weary legs haul in to camp
Memories surface and recede
Hard truths shared, tears allowed to fall
Rain rattles on plastic poncho mud underfoot
Sitting in silent meditation as the morning sun warms our bodies
Invisible Lyre Bird amuses with versatile calls
Deep green moss softens our perceptions
Heartfelt laughter as imagined loads get lighter
This foot now this foot
Dappled light
Edges blurring
Heart welling
Familiar joy*

Reflections on "The Walking Man 2009" by Ken Golding

From the 12th to the 18th of March 2010 another group of men will walk together on a different route for seven days through the World Heritage listed rainforest and past the outstanding escarpments of the Lamington and Springbrook National Parks.

Carol Perry and Victor von Heyde are the teachers for the annual Australian Yatras.

For Carol Perry see: www.insightmeditationaustralia.org

For Victor von Heyde, details of those open for bookings the Australian Yatras and photos of some of the

past ones are at www.dharma.org.au/yatras.

For more information on please contact Ronny on innerunion@st.net.au

5.

Fifty Recommended Youtube Clips.

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The Sangha of Dharma friends worldwide have sent me, via email or Facebook, over the past year or so, many various *Youtube* clips to watch. Here is a comprehensive selection of what you sent. I have also found a few *Youtube* clips that I appreciated. You will see below 50 recommended Youtube clips, plus two to more to bring a smile to your face.

These You tube clips give a comment on the diversity of life – animals, film, global issues, nature, poetry, politics, music, social, nature and the eccentric. I have given the website address along with the main theme of the clip, and length of clip. Enjoy whether you currently abide in the freezing winter or the heat of the summer or somewhere in between. The clips are not in any particular order. Click on bottom right hand corner of clip to watch with full screen. The clips have the potential to provide inspiration and insight, not another dose of entertain through a screen.

1. <http://www.flixxy.com/bear-animal-nature-film.htm?r=0>

The Bear by Jean Jacques Annaud. . Lion hunts baby bear and protective power of love.3mins 55.

2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAaQNACwaLw>

The Obama Deception. Documentary.. Who does President Obama really represent? 1 hour 53 min

3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzWeN-bVDUc&feature=related>

Leonard Cohen singing Halleluja in concert. 4mins 27 secs

4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO6XEQIsCoM>

The Paradox of Choice. Why "choice" deceives us. Barry Schwarz. 20 min.

5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLZgNy46aTQ>

First hand accounts from Palestinians of Israel's war in January 2009 on people of Gaza. 20 mins

6. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYs9AyVkhFO>

Palestinian song (in English) with photos from Palestine. 3.55.

7. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYXJfuBONZO>

Do not call me a stranger. Text and photos of life on Earth.

8. <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/video/video.php?v=226228461984&ref=mf>

Views from Climate Change conference. Copenhagen. December 2009.

9. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ_HsQkBkJA

Subject versus Object. Ken Wilbur gives his perception on true reality.

10. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfZUxPF7AMI>

Snow Patrol sing Chasing Cars. Voted Top UK song of the Noughties. 4 mins 7 secs.

11. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2nYZSolMY8>

Rumi poem. Words, nature and music. 5 mins

12. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-ybGM2gW3s>

The Buddha Comes to Sussex, England. BBC documentary of Theravada monks. 1979. 8 min.14.

13. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q90_phxAOk&NR=1

Matt Harvey, Totnes and new age comedian, on Transition Towns. 14 mins.

14. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU>

Jill Bolte Taylor on the transcendent experience of a stroke. 20 mins.

15. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESVoQzOhZNO>

Adyashanti, the Advaita teacher. An interview. 24 mins

16. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVnNJwQbscs&feature=player_embedded

Everything is OK 8 minutes.

17. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zxa6P73Awcg>

Facing a predator under the ice. 1 min 48 sec.

18. http://ie.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=thomasariddle&p=r

Short Dharma Films by Tom Riddle. Bodh Gaya. Le Moulin, Beatenburg etc.

19. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZEy3Liz3ks>

Jon Kabat-Zinn on Mindfulness and Stress Reduction. 1 hour 14 min

20. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qu7mtlbVBOA&feature=player_embedded

Ajahn Chah on the mindful way. 6 min 40 secs

21. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLyJbt6wvs>

Secrets of Shangri-la. Buddhist texts found in ancient caves. 4 min. 8 second.

22. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lwmk-SSluNg>

William Jenner on his book "American Guru "(Andrew Cohen).

23. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8-YMpYbRqY>

Geoffrey Gurrumul . Geoffrey is a blind Aborigine singer. 6 mins.

24. <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/video/video.php?v=227268674672&ref=nf>

The Struggle. Powerful short film starting in Israel 1962. 15 mins.(On Facebook)

25. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNzYA5TUaG8&feature=related>

Traditional Thai song in English on value of monk's life. 5 mins.

26. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvIhN0frdY>

Film and photos of Sri Ramana Maharshi. 8 mins.

27. <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=628934553342>

Family dinner and a girl's perceptions. Ethics of eating meat. 3 mins.

28. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2NLOGrbf5U>

Life of Buddha. Documentary on Buddhism. Interviews. Dalai Lama. Bodh Gaya. 1 hr. 9 mins.

29. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmS1-eSIJeA>

Nothing but a Sri Thang. A non-dual, New Age rap song. 4 minutes 25 seconds.

30. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D2CoVcvPvM>

David Byrne. People Tree. Art as protest. 4 mins.

31. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUCXI2BIUOQ>

Nina Simone singing one of the greatest songs. "I've Got Life" – 4 mins 20 secs.

32. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr__EgM3c9U

Interview with Maya Shaman on the New Dawn. 4 mins. 20s

33. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgw97YTOriw>

Ajahn Buddhass biography. 10 minutes.

34. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0uyz0VuXWA>

French Dharma Yatra. 2 mins 22 seconds.

35. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EpZ43Yjk-k&feature=rec-LGOUT-exp_rev-rn-2r-2-HM

Eckhart Tolle interview. 18 minutes.

36. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeGo9SQxOwg>

BBC interview with Alain Badiou, French philosopher. 7 mins.

37. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psMgFuXV4D0>

Bhante Bodhidhamma, English monk. Talk. 9 mins 22.

38. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD7QYL1u848>

Ayahuasca and Shamans. Ayahuasca is a healing plant for transforming consciousness. 11 mins.

39. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owq_ougaikU

Ajahn Brahm's. Buddhism and Sects. 1 hr. 3 mins.

40. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU>

HOME. Life on Earth. A documentary. 1hr. 33 mins

41. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzhmktSOPOw>

Meditation for Beginners with Jack Kornfield. 4 mins 6 seconds.

42. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tqK5zQICDQ&feature=related>

The Wasteland recited by T.S. Elliot. 5 mins 6 secs.

43. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ktb8EiLc2WI>

Four Quarters of T.S. Elliot read by William Defoe. 4 mins 9 seconds.

44. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpYeekQkAdc>

Black Eyed Peas. Where is the Love. 4min 13 seconds

45. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6NvCoNmbLs&feature=related>

Bob Dylan Gates of Eden 1988. Song devoted to ultimate and relative truth. 7 mins. 20secs

46. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vd38yrWx2o0>

Come Together. The Beatles. With lyrics. 4 mins 15 secs

47. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lp0IWv8QZY>

Susan Boyle from Scotland. Audition as singer on Britain's Got Talent TV show. World's most watched *Youtube* clip with 125 millions people viewing between two similar clips

48. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upQPmWCJo1g>

Mooji , an Advaita teacher. You can be free today. 7 mins 29 secs.

49. http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=krishnamurti+jiddu&search_type=&aq=0&oq=krishnamurti

Krishnamurti. 1981. Who am I? 7 mins 45 seconds.

50. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CUDg3NPEXY>

Nick Vujicic. A giant of a man. The power to overcome. 7 mins.

Two more clips to bring a smile to your face.

Two Englishmen reunite with a lion.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvCjyWp3rEk&feature=related>

One man starts to giggle on the underground train in Moscow.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQ5boOTyz_4&feature=player_embedded

6.

A Journey to the Copenhagen Climate Summit

Acting for the Sake of Love:

Rachel Davies

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On December 11th, a small group of us started a 24- train journey to Copenhagen, part of a longer journey exploring how to respond to a world in crisis as Buddhist practitioners.

Some months ago, we had decided that we would like to go to the Danish capital during the UN climate summit in December, a meeting of world leaders billed by some as 'perhaps the most important meeting ever held'.

At first we talked about being part of the demonstration taking place on Saturday December 12th; we wanted to walk in peace and ask world leaders for a fair climate deal that would be far-reaching and binding. But as we talked about travelling to Copenhagen we realised that what we wanted to do was much larger. We wanted to call out to other dharma practitioners and encourage a movement of the heart which meant engaging in an issue that has implications for the entire planet. Engaging in this issue could mean many things, and for us we felt that engaging included being in Copenhagen and showing that we wanted our voices to be heard. But we also felt that going to Copenhagen was a type of prayer, and an alignment of values that was not necessarily dependant on an outcome. It was a movement borne out of love and compassion, a movement that is never futile and is inseparable from that which happens sitting on the cushion.

We sent out emails and flyers inviting practitioners to join together as a dharma presence and waited to see who would meet us at the station in Copenhagen. On Saturday morning a group of around twenty of us assembled – practitioners from Tibetan, Theravada and Zen traditions - and we decided to start by sitting in meditation for fifteen minutes in the station under a beautiful banner made by a sangha member in London with a message of interdependence: 'What we do to the planet we do to ourselves'.

It felt good to sit quietly but also to be seen, to carry a message – a visible merging of both a response to one's inner world and to the outer world. We then joined the main demonstration in Copenhagen. Despite what was widely reported in the press about arrests at the march, what we saw of it was both peaceful and uplifting. An estimated 100, 000 people walked from the centre of Copenhagen to the Bella Centre where the UN conference was taking place and we were amongst them. The following day, some of our group attended the Klimaforum, the 'people's conference'. This was a chance to hear lectures and to engage in issues surrounding climate change in seminars and small groups. Importantly, it was also an opportunity to show support for those working at grassroots level within the field of climate change.

Following the conference at Copenhagen, we have seen emerge the Copenhagen Accord, which includes an agreement between 192 countries that temperatures should not be allowed to rise above two degrees. Some say that the Accord is a failure on the part of the world's leaders to agree to something that is legally binding and sufficiently far-reaching; the Accord will have little chance of impacting the climate crisis we now face. Others are hopeful – world leaders have sat down together and agreed to something for the benefit of all who live on this earth: an agreement between more world leaders than ever seen before in global politics.

Whether concerned people feel disconsolate or hopeful about the Accord, our small group left with a sense of having achieved what we came to Copenhagen for. The journey was a pilgrimage and it confirmed our commitment to respond to the climate crisis out of a place of love rather than fear, seeing the time ahead as one of opportunity to connect more deeply with the world around us and our brothers and sisters across the planet.

Speaking truthfully, at times I experience disconnection with relation to climate change but I know that my deep desire is always to reconnect. More and more I see this issue as one of reconnection with myself and with the world. The beauty is that what we do in the world for the sake of love reconnects us, just as what we do on the cushion reconnects us. In seeing this I think that, as Dharma practitioners, our actions

of service in the world cannot be separated from what we do on the cushion in terms of importance. And acting for the sake of love speaks to all faiths. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke in Copenhagen Cathedral on Sunday 13th December and his message was strong and clear: "Love casts out fear...We reaffirm our conviction and commitment in the name of love; and we say 'don't be afraid' to all who stand uncertain on the edge of decision. Don't be afraid; act for the sake of love".

We live in uncertainty about climate change. We do not know if we have passed a 'tipping point', we cannot know if the process that began in Copenhagen will be sufficient to save the lives that will otherwise be lost, and we do not know how this story will end. Uncertainty invites us to look deeply at here and now, it can energize us and it calls for creativity, commitment and responsiveness. The doors are open to beautiful movements of the heart in these uncertain times.

Rachel Davies currently works as the retreat manager at Gaia House, Devon, England, which involves overseeing the running of retreats and supporting the volunteer co-ordinator group.

7.

A Peace Walk in Nuremburg, Germany

To Remember the Violence is not Enough

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Daniel Sieben

629 words

Reflection on Peace Walk on September 11, 2009

Eight years ago the responsibility for the act of violence on September 11, 2001 in New York was given to a person called "Osama Bin Laden. " More than 60 years back the responsibility for the holocaust was given to a person called "Adolf Hitler". We are progressing in the sense that we are moving from persons to groups which is a step closer to ourselves.

Deeply understanding spirituality or modern science we can't escape the fact that there is no other to blame beyond the projection of the mind. Separation in consciousness creates me and the other, man and nature, the inner and outer life. As an unavoidable consequence of the separation the feeling of fear arises, fear of the other. On top of this mental confusion, the self regards oneself as the victim of external events, actions and circumstances.

It requires the support of the collective to enable single persons or groups of persons to commit massive acts of violence. Being aware of the collective responsibility as a German and passing old Nazi constructions during the Peacewalk in Nuremberg, a deep wish for healing and forgiveness has arisen, the question came up: "How can we collectively create a different world, a peaceful world?"

Merely to remember the violence is not enough. That doesn't change the collective pattern of living on the cost of the other. Fighting our own fear of the other, we try to defeat the other, to sacrifice them and to avoid being the victims ourselves.

There is definitely a need for a positive collective cooperation. We really have a challenging task. The collective pattern of fighting and exploiting each other has gained such a force that it is turning our planet into a desert and graveyard. Can we forgive the past instead of repeating patterns of blame, guilt and

destruction? Can we allow old wounds to heal that still affect actual conflicts? Can we overcome the separation and begin to cooperate and to collaborate for the preservation of life on our planet? The current mass destruction through the collective consciousness and lifestyle of our civilization is another act of brutal violence. Simultaneously this is our present chance to grow as human beings in consciousness, to start living together.

Looking at ourselves and the planet, growth and consumption seem to fail as means for happiness. Power, possession, position and wealth don't make people happier, in spite of the entire economic effort to prove that it should. Obviously we are just experiencing the constant dissatisfaction of the material pursuit of happiness. The exploitation of human life and natural resources by living on the cost of others, the sacrifice of freedom and independence by power and control has caused a miserable state of being for both parties, the exploiter as well as the exploited.

I would be delighted if particularly Germans and Jewish created a healing partnership in the uplift of the collective consciousness. The most effective remedy for healing is love – love as our own relationship to every thought, every feeling and every action. Let there be love - love for oneself, love for the other, love for the human beings, love for the nature, love for the spirit, love for the matter, love for the inner life and love for the outer life!

Maybe in this spirit we can start another Peacewalk next September 11th: Germans and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, Christians and Muslims, Men and Women of Mother Earth, Sons and Daughters of the One Life.

I would be glad to receive your response, especially from Israel.

Daniel Sieben was an organiser of the peace walk.

He is an independent economist

and meditation teacher, Germany

Email: info@danielsieben.de

8.

Dharma Blog, Facebook, Flickr

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Facebook. About a year ago, a friend joined me up to Facebook. Last month, Nshorna, my daughter, gave me a tutorial on Facebook. So I am making a small contribution to friends and short replies.

<http://christophertitmuss.org/blog/>

Christopher's Dharma Blog is up to date. Items in November, December, 2009 and January 2010 include:

- *Welcome to Stalinist Britain.*
- *Should the White House be called the Glass House?*
- *Do you believe in Father Christmas?*
- *Man meditated while in coma for 23 years*
- *Do I have any friends on Facebook?*

- *When one good deed deserves a fall.*
- *Are we going to allow the Earth to go to Hell?*

Flicker. My Flickr contains photographs in folders for Bodh Gaya and Sarnath 2009 and French Yatra 2009 French Yatra.

Songs of Six Realms

Contemporary Buddhist Cabaret by Bronwyn Calcutt of Australia

A provocative, entertaining fundraising event for your Dharma group or organization.

"Gods, Hell, Jealousy, Ghosts, Animals and Humans in a tango, techno, gypsy circus."

Since the profound philosophy and practice of Buddhism has taken root in the West, it has inspired many artists, writers and musicians. The latest offering from this source -Songs of Six Realms - is a feisty performance by Melbourne musician Bronwyn Calcutt. Launched to enthusiastic audiences in Melbourne and northern NSW in November 2009, this performance is now being offered as a fundraising event.

Enquiries and offers are welcomed by the artist. **CD available on request.**

For more information please contact Bronwyn Calcutt

bronnyalice@optusnet.com.au

Creative. Insightful. Humorous. Recommended. **Christopher.**

9..

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING SCHEDULE

January 2010 – December 2010
of Christopher Titmuss

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Dharma Retreats, Dharma Gatherings, Yatras (Pilgrimages), Dharma Talks and Inquiry

See www.dharmafacilitators.org for DFP dates for DFP residential programmes in Germany, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

Christopher's websites are:

www.insightmeditation.org (teachings, articles, practices)

www.livingdharma.info (do you need a Dharma Mentor?)

www.dharmafacilitators.org (programme for experienced meditators)

www.christophertitmuss.org (to order CD's of teachings, inquiry as well as many free downloads etc)
www.christophertitmuss.org/blog (Christopher's Dharma blog)
www.bodhgayaretreats.org (information about Bodh Gaya /Sarnath programme in India)
www.dharmayatra.org (annual French pilgrimage. July 22 to August 1, 2010 in Limoux region of southern France)

Dharma Retreats, Dharma Gatherings, Yatras (Pilgrimages), Dharma Facilitators Programme, Dharma Talks and Inquiry

INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

See below for dates, places, website addresses and e-mail contacts of centres organising the international schedule.

For comprehensive flight information, times and costs between two cities check out www.farechase.yahoo.com

For current exchange rates between two currencies, check out www.xe.com/ucc

JANUARY and FEBRUARY 2010 INDIA

MARCH 2010 GERMANY

APRIL 2010 ISRAEL

MAY 2010 GERMANY

JULY 2010 ENGLAND and FRANCE

AUGUST 2010 GERMANY

October 2010 GERMANY

November 2010 Australia

INDIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our India programme will probably run through from November, 2009 until May 2010

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 BY E-MAIL. Bodh Gaya manager is Dominika Zwyrtek. You are also guaranteed a place if you simply arrive in Bodh Gaya for the start of a retreat.

No need to register for Sarnath.

January 6 starting evening 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 (register in afternoon and retreat finishing at noon)

BODH GAYA RETREATS

Radha Nicholson

Thai Monastery

Bodh Gaya, near Gaya, India

www.bodhgayaretreats.org,
bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

January 27 - February 6, 2010 (register in afternoon and finishing at noon)

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 for Sarnath.

See also www.insightmeditation.org

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

Families welcome.

England

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

Germany

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.

Israel

Passover retreat for new and experienced meditators

March 31- April 6

Kibbutz Ein dor

Christopher Titmuss, Eran Harpaz and Sandiya (rakefet) Bar-kama

Retreat for Experienced Practitioners

April 6-13

Kibbutz Ein dor

Led by Christopher Titmuss and Lila Kimhi

Open Dharma gathering with Christopher Titmuss

April 18-19

Dharma Faciliators Programme (DFP)

April 14-17

Kibbutz Ein dor

Christopher Titmuss and Lila Kimhi

the link for the home-page of Tovana's site is:

<http://tovana.org.il>

the hebrew info page for the course in tovana's site is:

http://tovana.org.il/newsite/magazine_details.asp?id=1188

registration will start a month and a half before the retreat at :

tovana.rishum@gmail.com

mail for general questions:

tovana@tovana.org.il

phone number:

972-(0)54-5695931

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 Einzelgespraechen 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 14to Sunday July 18 2010

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.buddhafiield.com

FRANCE

July 22 to August 1. 2010

Come to 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 the Yatra. 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. 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

GERMANY

Tuesday evening October 12, 2010 to Saturday Oct 16, 2010

Dharma Facilitators Programme (DFP).

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 Waldaus.

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

Saturday evening October 16 2010 to Thursday lunchtime October 21, 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.

Australia

Friday November 12 at 6.00 p.m. until lunch time Wednesday, November 17, 2009

DHARMA YOGA RETREAT

retreat will consist of dharma teachings, insight meditation, two yoga classes per day with yoga teachers, silent periods

reading of Patanjali Sutra, and dialogue of practical application of Dharma and Yoga in daily life. All are welcome.

Gunundi Centre, Ballina, norther NSW, Australia

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

Organisers: Judy Baderle jbaderle@bigpond.net.au

Dharma Teachers Meeting

November 18 14.30 to November 19. 14.00.

Buddha by the Sea

6th Dharma Gathering

November 19 to November 26, 2010 at noon.

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

Yarrahapinni Rainforest,
near Coffs Harbour,
NSW, Australia

Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest and five minutes walk from ocean Coffs Harbour is the nearest major airport and Macksville the nearest major town. Families welcome.

Contact: Will James wvjames@yahoo.com.au

www.insightmeditationaustralia.org

[Dharma Facilitators Programme \(DFP\)](#)

November 26 – 30. 2010

Christopher and [Radha](#)

Yarrahapinni Rainforest,
near Coffs Harbour,
NSW, Australia

Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest.

jbaderle@bigpond.net.au

www.insightmeditationaustralia.org

www.dharmafacilitators.org

Friday December 3, 2010

Stress, Mindfulness and Liberation

Christopher Titmuss

Evening Talk. 7 pm to 9pm

Dharma Talk Cloudroom
147 Richmond Road
Morningside
Brisbane
Australia

Stress arises through desire for results, fear of not finishing and excessing thinking. Mindfulness is the antidote. In this workshop, we will inquire into stress, mindfulness and its liberating function.

www.insightmeditationaustralia.org

www.insightmeditation.org

MAY ALL BEINGS LIVE WITH WISDOM AND COMPASSION

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 flickr 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.

112 Frequently used Pāli Words

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112 Frequently used Pāli Words

with diacritical marks

Christopher Titmuss

1. Ākāsa - space
2. Akiñcana – not somebody, not something, nothing
3. Akoda – non blame, non harm, non anger
4. Akusala - unwholesome
5. Ānāpana-sati – mindfulness of Breathing
6. Anattā – not-self, impersonal
7. Anicca – impermanent, not permanent
8. Anusaya – tendencies towards
9. Anussati – recollection
10. Ariya - noble
11. Arupa -Formless
12. Āsava – Influxes, taints
13. Asubha – not beautiful
14. Asura – Ghosts, inhabitants of lower realms, demons
15. Bhāva – Becoming
16. Bhāvanā – Mental development
17. Bhikkhu – observes Vinaya for men. A full renunciate. Lit. beggar - has nothing.
18. Bhikkhuni –observes Vinaya for women. Full renunciate. Lit. beggar - has nothing
19. Bodhi – Awakening
20. Brahma Vihāra – Divine abiding
21. Cetanā – Volition
22. Citta – Mental state
23. Dāna - Generosity, act of giving, donation
24. Deva - Heavenly beings, happy, radiant beings, angels
25. Dhamma (Sanskrit: Dharma) teachings, truth, nature of things
26. Dhamma-Cakka – wheel of the Dhamma
27. Dhātu – Elements
28. Diṭṭhi – Views
29. Dosa – Anger, hatred, blame
30. Dukkha – unsatisfactoriness, suffering
31. Hetu – Cause
32. Hiri – Shame, regret
33. Iddhi – Power
34. Indriya – Faculties
35. Jarā – Old age, decay
36. Jāti – Birth
37. Javana - Impulsion
38. Jhāna – Meditative absorptions
39. Jīva – Life
40. Kamma (Sanskrit: Karma) wholesome/unwholesome action leading to results
41. Kāma - Sensuality, desire for sense objects
42. Karuṇā - Compassion

43. Kāya – Body
44. Khandā – Aggregates
45. Kilesa – Defilements
46. Kusala – Wholesome
47. Loka – World
48. Magga – Path
49. Majjhimā-Paṭipadā – Middle path
50. Māna – conceit, pride
51. Māra – the tempter, tempting desire, caught in the spell of
52. Māraṇa – Death
53. Mettā - Loving kindness, deep friendship
54. Moha – delusion
55. Muditā – Appreciative joy
56. Nāma – Mind, name
57. Nāma-rūpa - Name and form, mind and body
58. Ñāṇa – (insightful) knowledge
59. Nibbāna (Sanskrit: Nirvana) – Nirvana
60. Nimitta – Mark, sign
61. Niraya - hell
62. Nīvaraṇa – Five hindrances
63. Ottapa – Dread, apprehension
64. Paccaya – Condition
65. Pañña – Wisdom, understanding
66. Papañca – Proliferation of thought, projections
67. Paramattha – ultimate
68. Pāramī – Perfection (completion, fulfilment)
69. Paṭicca samuppāda – Dependent Arising
70. Pīti – Bliss, happiness
71. Puggala – Person
72. Pūjā – Devotional offering, worship, homage
73. Rāga – Lust
74. Rūpa -Form
75. Sacca – Truth
76. Sacca-Ñāṇa – Knowledge (knowing of) Truth
77. Saddhā – Trust, confidence, faith
78. Samādhi – (Meditative) concentration, unification of mind
79. Samatha – Calmness
80. Samatha-Vipassanā – calm and insight
81. Sammā – Right (i.e. to bring to fulfilment)
82. Saṃsāra – Wandering (from one thing, experience to another), repeated cycles,
83. Sankhāra – Formation, such as thought
84. Saññā – Perception (recognition of)
85. Sāsana – Teachings (literally message)
86. Sati – Mindfulness
87. Satipaṭṭhāna – Foundations (or Applications) of Mindfulness
88. Sekha – Learner (of the Dharma)
89. Sikkhā – Training (of sila, samadhi, panna)
90. Sila – Virtue, ethics

91. Sotāpanna – Stream enterer – first of noble ones
92. Sukha – Happy, joy
93. Suññatā – Emptiness (of self or own existence)
94. Tanhā – Desire, craving, wanting
95. Tathāgata – (the Buddha) One who has thus gone beyond
96. Theravāda – Teaching of the Elders
97. Ti-lakkhaṇa – Three characteristics (of existence)
98. Ti-ratana – Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha)
99. Upādāna – Clinging
100. Upekkhā – equanimity (even minded in the face of polarity)
101. Vedanā – feelings, sensations in mind and body, worldly and spiritual
102. Vicāra – reflection
103. Vimokkha – deliverance, liberation
104. Vimutti – freedom, deliverance
105. Vinaya - discipline
106. Viññāṇa – consciousness
107. Vipāka – result of karma
108. Vipassanā – insight
109. Virāga – without lust, dispassion
110. Visuddhi – purification
111. Vitakka – applied thought
112. Viveka –detachment, solitude

Below are the Pali Diacritics

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Some info on downloading diacritic fonts is available from the PTS: www.palitext.com (under Pali Studies),

Special thanks to Dipa for Pali diacritics.

Also thanks to Jenny Wilks and Asaf Federman for regular advice on meaning of Pali terms.