

The London Buddhist Centre

Magazine and Programme

January–April



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Beyond Reason

We (the human race) seem to be characterised by an intense interest in the world. We are even fascinated by it, avidly curious about its workings. Why is it the way it is? How does it work? What does it mean?

Modern science most obviously exemplifies this interest, and now takes us beyond reasoned understanding into a reality that confounds common sense. In a lively new essay, *Jnanavaca* explicates one branch of science's search for truth and shows how its findings shade into the insights reached by the Buddha over 2,500 years ago.

But it is not just knowledge and understanding that we seek. We also care. There is an urge within us to help, to move beyond our individual wishes and act for the benefit of others. It is this pull that took *Ambaravajri* and a friend to Calais recently to offer practical help to some of those who needed it.

If these drives for knowledge and connection are not alive in us, not activated, we will gravitate back into narrow self-interest and fall prey to the modern norm of individualism, which is only really a refined dissatisfaction.

Thus, Aloka fills out the picture as he talks to *Barry Copping* about his life as an artist, and how he works with these pulls in the wider context of the Sangha, or spiritual community.

It is friends in the Sangha that *Shubha* has depicted in her collages, elegantly bookending this latest edition of the *London Buddhist*.

What then is Sangha? It is not simply a group or a club, but a shared responsiveness to the highest and most positive ideals, and the willingness to make the effort to move towards them using common practices. In doing so the search for knowledge eventually manifests as wisdom (*prajna*): a direct non-conceptual experience of reality. Our desire to help the apparently material world eventually becomes compassion (*maitri*) – acting in ways that are of real benefit – once the last traces of our egotistical tendencies have been overcome.

It is possible for us to realise Wisdom and Compassion fully – but to do that we need the challenging and supportive context of a spiritual community, or Sangha. I hope this new edition of our magazine and programme give you a taste of how the Sangha might express itself, as we launch into another year at the LBC.

– *Vidyadaka*

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What's the Matter?

The physical 'stuff' of the universe is not what we take it to be. By *Jnanavaca*

'A human being is part of a whole, called by us "Universe", a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to the affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.' – Albert Einstein

Conventional Western science tends to assume that if we were removed from the universe, the sun would still shine, the earth would still go round the sun and the galaxy would continue revolving. The view is that we've entered the universe like we might enter a room. We're perceiving what's going on around us, but we're not essentially changing it. It was going on in the room without us before we walked through the door. This is an assumption classical physics makes about the nature of reality: that there is something 'out there' that can be discovered and talked about and understood – an objective universe. It says that not only can we assume there's an objective reality independent of us, but that there are laws that govern that objective universe too – gravity, thermodynamics and so on. For some reason there seems to be something out there *and* there seems to be order.

But all that started to all unravel in the 20th century, with Einstein's Theories of Relativity and the birth of quantum physics. The former overturned common-sense notions of space and time, while the latter explored

the fundamental building blocks of matter. It led to a questioning of the very notion of an objective universe. Before looking at this more closely, it's worth trying to imagine how small these building blocks are. For instance, if you laid atoms in a line a millimetre long, you would have as many of them as the number of sheets of paper you would have to stack up to reach the height of the Empire State Building. What's more, most of the atom is empty space: almost all of the mass is contained within a tiny nucleus around which electrons orbit. If the atom were blown up to the size of a football stadium, the nucleus would be the size of a small marble in the centre of it. Just in case this gives the impression that quantum physics is irrelevant at an everyday level, it's important to know that without it, we wouldn't have developed semiconductors, which make up computer chips; we wouldn't even have got as far as the transistor radio. We wouldn't have a theory of how electricity flows through metals, or be able to explain why the sun shines. Quantum physics is the most accurate and powerful theory of matter ever conceived. It is a sort of triumph of human thought.

Until quantum physics was developed, physicists had been happy to explain all phenomena as either particles or waves (particles being indivisible lumps of matter that have a particular location and move through space like a rock or ball, while waves are a sort of undulating motion of energy usually within some sort of medium that spread out over space). All physical phenomena were seen as either one or the other. Electrons, for example, were thought to be particles, and light was thought to be a wave – although this had been an ongoing controversy. In 1803 a physicist called Thomas Young had shown that light was a wave by producing patterns of interference between light waves hitting a screen passing through two slits. This famous ‘Double-Slit Experiment’ of Young’s was held as proof of light being a wave because only waves would be able to interfere with each other and produce an effect of either cancelling each other out or intensifying one another other – producing an ‘interference pattern’ (figure 1).

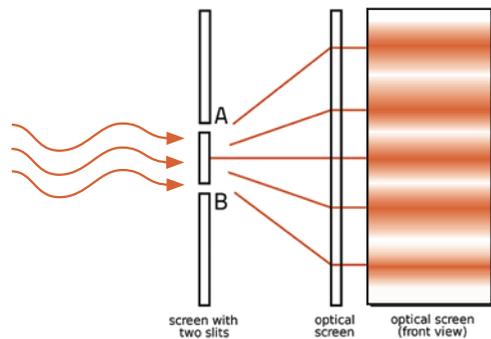


Fig 1: Light waves passing through two slits and producing an ‘interference pattern’

But the really confusing thing was, when the same experiment with two slits was done with electrons, for example, the particles also landed in formations typical of a wave interference pattern; there seemed to be no real difference. This was counterintuitive, because it meant that some electrons had landed directly behind part of the screen, rather than in line with one of the slits, suggesting they hadn’t travelled in

a straight line. At first it was thought that the particles might have collided with each other, so the particle generator was slowed down until it fired only one electron at a time. That ought to mean it had nothing else to interact with, to interfere with. But left over a number of hours, sure enough it produced the same interference pattern, just like a wave would (figure 2). How could single particles be behaving like that? It was as though the electron were mysteriously splitting itself in two and landing on the screen in a way that would only be possible if it had gone through both slits and interfered with itself. So they decided to see which of the two slits it was going through, or whether it was going through both, which you can do by putting detectors in the way.

The extraordinary thing is that as soon as you’ve got the detector in the way you lose the interference pattern and the electrons appear as well-behaved, normal particles. So they would either go through slit A or slit B, behaving just as rocks or marbles would – and as particles *should*. But if you *don’t* look, you get the interference pattern. As soon as you have knowledge of which slit the particle goes through, it behaves as a particle and only goes through one of them. If you don’t have knowledge of which slit it passed through, it behaves as a wave, goes through both slits and interferes with itself just as a wave would, then resumes its particle identity when it hits the screen; but because it has behaved as a wave in the meantime, it lands in places that only a wave could land. So it has this tell-tale sign of a wave and yet behaves as a particle.

Here we’re getting towards the heart of the conundrum: quantum physics has shown us that we don’t know what an electron is; we don’t now know whether it’s a wave or a particle, or both, or neither, because it seems to behave as either depending on what we choose to measure. If we want to measure a particle, it will behave as a particle; if we want to measure a wave, it will

behave as a wave. And remember, waves and particles are very different things. Waves can interfere with each other, whereas particles just bounce off each other. And an electron seems to be capable of either.

And it turns out that not only does an electron behave like this – all particles have this dual nature, depending on what you look for. Even worse, physicists discovered that this also applied to light (remember light was said to be a wave). The wave and particle models ought to be mutually exclusive, but these experiments don’t bear that out. So what you’ve got is this mysterious world where now we can’t picture any fundamental particle, and its nature and behaviour seem to depend on whether or not we’re looking.

One of the main models for understanding this paradox is called the Copenhagen Interpretation, after the Danish physicist Niels Bohr. Bohr embraced the ambiguity proved by experiments such as the Double-Slit Experiment. Bohr said that when you’re not looking at the electron it’s meaningless to say anything about it; it’s meaningless to say, ‘Is it really a wave or is it really a particle when you’re not looking?’ When you’re not looking all that ‘exists’ is a ghostly world of probabilities, one of which becomes an actuality upon observation. It only makes sense to talk of an electron in the context of you looking.

Bohr was a contemporary of Einstein’s, and the pair had a long-running dispute about quantum physics. Einstein was never reconciled to quantum physics, he could never accept this weirdness, this ambiguity in the nature of reality. Bohr maintained that when you’re not looking it’s impossible to say whether or not an electron is there, or, assuming it is there, what exactly it is. So it’s as if you’re part of the whole apparatus, and neither you nor the object of the experiment can be separated out from it. Einstein said,

‘Rubbish!’ He said that’s tantamount to asking whether or not the moon exists when you’re not looking at it – it challenges the whole notion of an objective reality. And Bohr said, ‘Well, yes it does. He shrugged, as it were, and left it at that.’ The Copenhagen Interpretation doesn’t tell you what’s out there, or even that there *is* something out there – in fact it only says that what you see depends in certain ways on how you measure it, and that we’ll never know what’s out there when we aren’t looking.

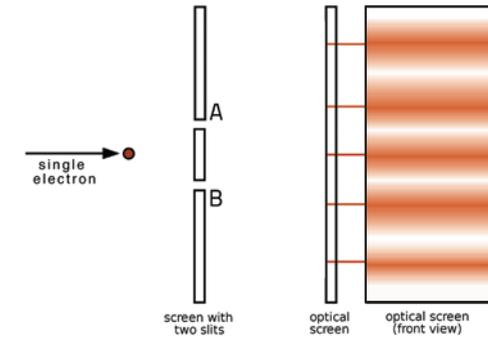
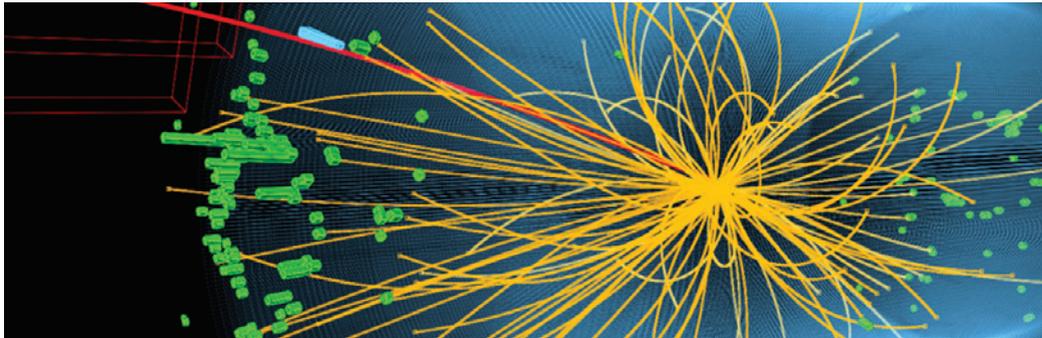


Fig 2: Particles fired one at a time still produce an interference pattern when not observed

This led some physicists to ask, What is it about the act of observation that changes reality? Traditionally we have assumed that the observer is passive, i.e. doesn’t affect reality, but actually what this experiment starts to show is that the observer, far from being a neutral, passive recorder of reality is more like an active participant in *forming* it. So quantum physics, at least in some interpretations says, that it’s not obvious that there is a real ‘object’ out there independent of a ‘subject’ observing it. It’s reaching some sort of border where it can’t now ignore consciousness and the inner nature of things.

One of the reasons I’m discussing this is that in our culture there’s a strong undercurrent of scientific materialism. This view says that matter is all there is, that we are just our bodies. Consciousness is then just a by-product of brain

function, and biology, life, the mind itself, can all be reduced to the movements of atoms – which means that when the body dies, that’s it, the lights go out. One of the implications of that nihilist worldview can be a feeling that you might as well just have as much pleasure as you can while you’ve got your life – and that then supports our excessive consumerism, our lack of concern for the environment, for the well-being of the planet and for each other. We become more self-centred, more present-tense



A particle collision in the Large Hadron Collider

orientated: we just go for instant gratification, whatever gives us more pleasure now. That chain of reasoning may not always follow, but it’s prevalent in our culture to a degree that is dangerous. I think that if we’re going to be materialists, we ought at least to know what quantum physics says about matter: physicists have been saying for a hundred years that we don’t really know what’s going on – that matter is much more mysterious than common sense implies – and Relativity has overturned the notions of objectively existing space and time. And the sense of wonder that that can encourage in us is a positive thing in itself.

The Buddhist worldview is that there is no objective world independent of an experiencing subject, and nor is there a subject existing independently of experience. That’s a very difficult thing to grasp, even for Buddhists. The fundamental teaching of the Buddha –

that things arise in dependence on conditions and cease when those conditions fall away – is usually called conditioned co-production. But it’s also talked about as the middle way between existence and non-existence. The truth is that there’s something more mysterious going on, which is this constant arising and ceasing in the moment, in every moment. And that constant arising and ceasing, from a Buddhist perspective, isn’t just happening ‘out there’, it’s happening inside us as well. Consciousness is also constantly

arising and ceasing in every moment. And the distinction between ‘out there’ and ‘in here’ is false too. So this notion that somehow we’re apart from the objective world, passive observers of it, isn’t the Buddhist position.

The Buddhist view of the nature of reality is also characterised by the notion of all things being insubstantial – they have no essential substance to them, no ‘true nature’ behind them. Nevertheless, there is experience, and even order: it’s not that there is nothing at all going on. It is interesting to reflect, then, that Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity led him to the notion of the equivalence of matter and energy. Particles are not solid entities; they are better seen as temporary condensations of energy. They can arise, be created, out of energy, and they can disintegrate back into energy. This was borne out in the awful example of the atomic bomb, which Einstein regretted having

inadvertently contributed to for the rest of his life. He apparently said, ‘If only I had known, I should have been a watchmaker.’ So solidity is an illusion. Not only are atoms mostly made up of empty space, their constituent particles are insubstantial as well – and as we’ve seen, perhaps they do not even exist in and of themselves at all.

So particles can materialise seemingly out of nothing. Quantum theory says that that’s happening all the time. Some particles are materialising and then dematerialising so quickly that you can’t see them, but they do leave an effect, and mathematical models of the atom rely on these ‘virtual particles’. A vacuum is not empty in the way that we think it is – it is actually a ‘sea’ of energy which particles can bubble up out of, and then return to, all the time. So it may be that all the matter in the universe is somehow just a surface manifestation of this vast potential.

Modern physics has overturned common sense and is producing many insights, that are in line with Buddhist thought. There is an overarching model for understanding conditioned reality, which Sangharakshita has brought out from the Buddhist tradition, that can incorporate the deepest insights of physics and go further. This is the teaching of the five *niyamas*. A *niyama* is a category of natural laws that govern conditioned existence. The laws of physics primarily address the nature and behaviour of inorganic matter; they would be classed as the *utu niyama*. Then there are natural laws governing the properties of what we call life – laws that are perhaps better described by the sciences of biology and botany (*bija niyama*). With the development of animal consciousness, further laws of conditionality come into play – those governing instinctive behaviour such as ‘fight-or-flight’ responses, reproduction and so on, known as the *mano niyama*. With the emergence of human self-

consciousness, a further category of natural law, one that is crucial for leading the Dharma life, comes into play. This is the law of karma, the *karma niyama*, which governs willed action and its consequences. Actions motivated by love, generosity and awareness lead to beneficial consequences for the person performing those acts and for others; the converse is true for actions based in greed, hatred and delusion. By using the *karma niyama*, we can develop a consciousness that is more positive, more creative, more expansive and more integrated.

On the basis of this sort of mind, reflections on the nature of reality can lead to Insight – a direct seeing of the way things truly are. At this point, a final category of natural law becomes dominant: the *Dharma niyama*, sometimes called the law of self-transcendence. Under its momentum, we are led to ever more fulfilling states, eventually culminating in Enlightenment. At this point, we have gone beyond all delusions and all self-clinging. The notions of subject, object, space and time no longer apply. Appearances continue to arise, but they are no longer taken literally, no longer mistaken for real objects experienced by real subjects on a canvas of objectively existing space and time. This is the liberation from all suffering. Furthermore it is a state of boundless love and compassion. It is the pinnacle of evolving consciousness as described by the *niyamas*, although that is not to suggest that it is an end point. It is more like the furthest point on a horizon beyond which we cannot presently see, where none of our concepts or categories apply. We need concepts to root out delusion, but they are not ends in themselves. Scientific progress has been remarkable in helping alleviate some material suffering, and quantum physics has even blown open our most instinctive notions of subject and object. But complete transcendence in actual experience – not just theory – is the goal of Buddhism, and, I believe, the purpose of our human existence. ■

Building a Longer Table

Ambaravajri was one of many citizens who stepped out of their comfort zones last summer to go and help refugees in Calais.

Our mission started on a Wednesday, with Amisauri offering to help out some friends who had more donations for the refugee camp in Calais than they could fit in their van. She appealed for a companion, I said yes and by Thursday morning we were discussing strategies. By then it was clear that it wasn't going to happen unless we collected donations ourselves, so we had a 24-hour donation drive in Manchester and London. By Friday afternoon we had a load of the most needed items (tents, sleeping bags, warm and waterproof clothing and shoes) and Amisauri was on her way from Manchester to London.

I surprised myself and my friends by offering to accompany Amisauri to Calais. I don't think of myself as a particularly outgoing, practical or even generous person. My life in London is busy and I frequently crave solitude and space. But when I look back I know it's exactly what I needed to do. Almost everyone who donated to us thanked us for the opportunity to do something practical, and I knew exactly what they meant.

In many ways we had not thought this through, but that too was probably just what was needed. Too much time to think about it, for me, might have been a chance to think my way out of it. Having said that, Amisauri had done her research: we had a contact in Calais ready to receive our donations, and we were very clear what items were most needed. We just didn't know what we were going to do once we'd dropped off the stuff.

Early on the Saturday evening, having driven that morning through the tunnel and spent the afternoon with our contact at the Secours Catholique in Calais, Amisauri and I found ourselves on the road near the camp. We'd spent the afternoon learning about the needs of the 'jungle' and how donations are distributed, as well as taking photos and videos to share. We were relieved and happy, but also a little overwhelmed at the extent of the help that was so clearly needed. We were trying to get hold of another contact in Calais whom we hoped to meet that evening, and Amisauri was having some problems with her phone. As the light began to fade, we pulled in at the side of the road while streams of men poured past us, most on foot wearing sandals or flip-flops, a few on bikes, many weighed down with bags of food and clothing as they returned from the town to the camp.

At this point I think we were both anxious: as I've said, we hadn't thought this through. We were happy to have dropped off our donations, grateful in fact, but we couldn't get in touch with our friends, we didn't know where we were going to sleep, and we were two women alone in an unfamiliar place. At the same time I was aware that for new refugees arriving in the camp, men or women, the experience would be the same, only a lot more frightening.

I imagine we were giving out confused signals. I've said we were anxious, and we probably looked it. Amisauri was frustrated with her phone not connecting. Then a group of young



men banged on the driver's-side window asking for the bananas that they could see in the back of the van. Neither of us wanted to open the window or door and give them the bananas. I'm not sure why – it wasn't about the bananas. Still they kept asking, and pushing, and banging harder on the car trying to get in, while we held our ground. I felt deeply uncomfortable at the separation between us – them outside wanting something from us, us inside not wanting to give it – especially in light of what we had come there to do.

While this was happening on the driver's side of the car, I became aware of a group of three older men on my side, gesturing to us, offering tea. At that point I just wanted to say yes! To get out of the car, not to be separate, to let go of my fear and connect.

Buddhist teaching says that, fundamentally, we are not the fixed, separate 'selves' that we think we are. We are in fact profoundly interconnected. I find this beautiful and true. It keeps me human in ways I am deeply grateful for, and helps me navigate those situations when I don't know what to do. This was one of those moments. I didn't open the door, the men moved on, and the evening drew to a close.

But to experience that tension has had a lasting effect. A few days after we got back, I read a post on Facebook: 'If you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a bigger fence.' The weekend was a life-changing experience for me, and those few words have helped me to realise why.

Next morning in Calais. Having met with our friends, shared our experience of the previous night, and eaten and slept, Amisauri and I parked the van and walked into the camp. We were deeply moved by the friendliness and welcome that we received. We learned many people's stories that day, from many parts of the world: the ten-year-old Egyptian boy whose memory of the boat trip was that he'd be thrown overboard if he didn't sit still; one Syrian man who is the last surviving member of his family apart from his sister and yet is not able to join her in the UK; another who showed us pictures of his beautiful city, now rubble. It was a warm sunny day, and at one point Amisauri remarked to me how different it felt to the night before. She was right. It was how I imagine it might feel, when faced with hundreds or even thousands of desperate, cold or hungry people, to build a longer table instead of a bigger fence. ■

The Artist and the Sangha

Aloka reflects on life as an artist in the Triratna Buddhist Order, creativity and individuality.

Interview by *Barry Copping*

Barry: *As a Buddhist artist, you're presumably communicating Buddhist values through your work?*

Aloka: I do two distinct types of work. Firstly, there are commissions for 'Buddhist iconography', for want of a better term. I don't regard that as really *my* work – I've got certain skills and use them to help people out. The paintings are essentially theirs. People give me a whole variety of material, whether it's text, bits of fabric, colour samples or photographs of other works, so that I can tailor the image to help them connect better with a particular Buddhist figure, rather than just taking a reproduction out of a book.

In discussing a commission, I say 'Whatever you do, don't tidy it up to make it make sense. You may say things that are completely contradictory – don't worry about that, because I just feed it all in.' Trying to get inside someone else's imagination is a really interesting discipline. Of course, the public commissions (say for Buddhist centres) are a bit different.

What about the work you do regard as your own?

That's different in that it's more about finding things out. I'm not actually trying to communicate anything. I mean obviously you do communicate stuff, but I just start with a completely blank canvas and hopefully a

completely blank mind, and I want to discover something new. So it's going into a similar space to concentration in meditation. This often takes time, but it's just an indirect route. Sometimes people think 'indirect' means 'less effective'. But I think indirect methods can actually be more effective, especially at the beginning of one's practice. Dealing directly with your mind is a bit like trying to find the soap in the bath – it's not that easy!

Sangharakshita, the founder of the Triratna Buddhist Order, of which you are a member, has said that artists are essentially alone, on account of their greater awareness, their greater individuality and even their greater creativity. What's your take on that?

A problem I found when I was younger, in being dedicated to working and hence alone, was that I became more and more isolated. That's potentially very dangerous. I wasn't coming up with the answers I expected just by dedicating my time to working. I had this idea – I don't know from where – that if you gave yourself completely to work, as your work improved you'd sort of improve as a person; that there was some ethical or moral dimension to working. I couldn't have articulated it at the time, but I expected to become a better person almost by osmosis. After college and a few years chugging along on my own, I realised that wasn't necessarily the case. There was no



The central Buddha panel of the triptych at the LBC, by Aloka

longer anyone around I looked up to – a very important lack. The people I did look up to were all dead artists – again, quite isolating. Having begun to doubt that work was the answer to everything, then everything else started falling apart.

That was probably one of the things that induced me to look for something else, and eventually to find Bhante Sangharakshita. I was seeking a context where people dealt with some of the big questions, such as what we're here for.

So you've found the Sangha an appropriate place to explore the big issues, and I expect your art is fruitful in that context?

It's hard work actually, because for years I couldn't quite work out how the two fitted together. I helped out at Padmaloka on Going for Refuge [ordination training] retreats for eleven years. That was the only thing I ever found almost as demanding as art. In a way the brief was simple – helping people who want to contribute to creating a spiritual community under the umbrella of Bhante's teachings. I wanted people to have an easier time discovering what it is to be an Order member than I'd had. Everything has moved on so far, and this Buddhist movement is now a much friendlier place than when I got involved.

What was your experience of school and art college?

Even at infant school, I was always the odd one out. I don't really know why – probably just a sort of vibe that you give off. I was a very quiet child. In the British school system of the 1950s, quietness was equated with good behaviour. Being well-behaved was seen as being intelligent, so I'd be in the A-stream rather than the C-stream where the naughty kids were. The naughty kids may well have been far more intelligent than I was. Really, I could have missed school entirely and it would have had no adverse effect.



Aloka at his studio in Norwich

I was fortunate in that I could go to art school when I was 13, which was the norm then. I'd known right from the word go that I wanted to spend my life drawing. There was enormous resistance to full-time art training from mainstream schools, where you were told 'You'll never make a living'.

I was at art school in the 1960s, through till age 21. Of course there was a lot going on in art schools then – they seemed to be the melting pot for all sorts of cultural developments. I was so lucky to be in the right place at the right time. The first art school I attended was quite old-fashioned in that they taught you very thoroughly. There was no mention of 'art' as such; it was more about learning skills in a variety of disciplines. You had to do everything. Even if the girls wanted to do fashion, they still had to learn welding. If you wanted to learn welding for sculpture, you still had to do embroidery.

So you value that rigorous technical training?

My goodness, yes! There's not a day goes by without my being immensely grateful to my tutors. Bhante says that when given something that you need, the normal, healthy human response is to feel gratitude. Otherwise there's definitely something wrong!

What do you make of Sangharakshita's comment that 'Artists have long been notorious for flouting convention, rocking the boat, refusing to conform'?

People will insist on seeing you as refusing to conform – I've spent most of my life trying to fit in! I'm just really bad at it. I wanted a quiet life, just wanting to be left alone to get on and work.

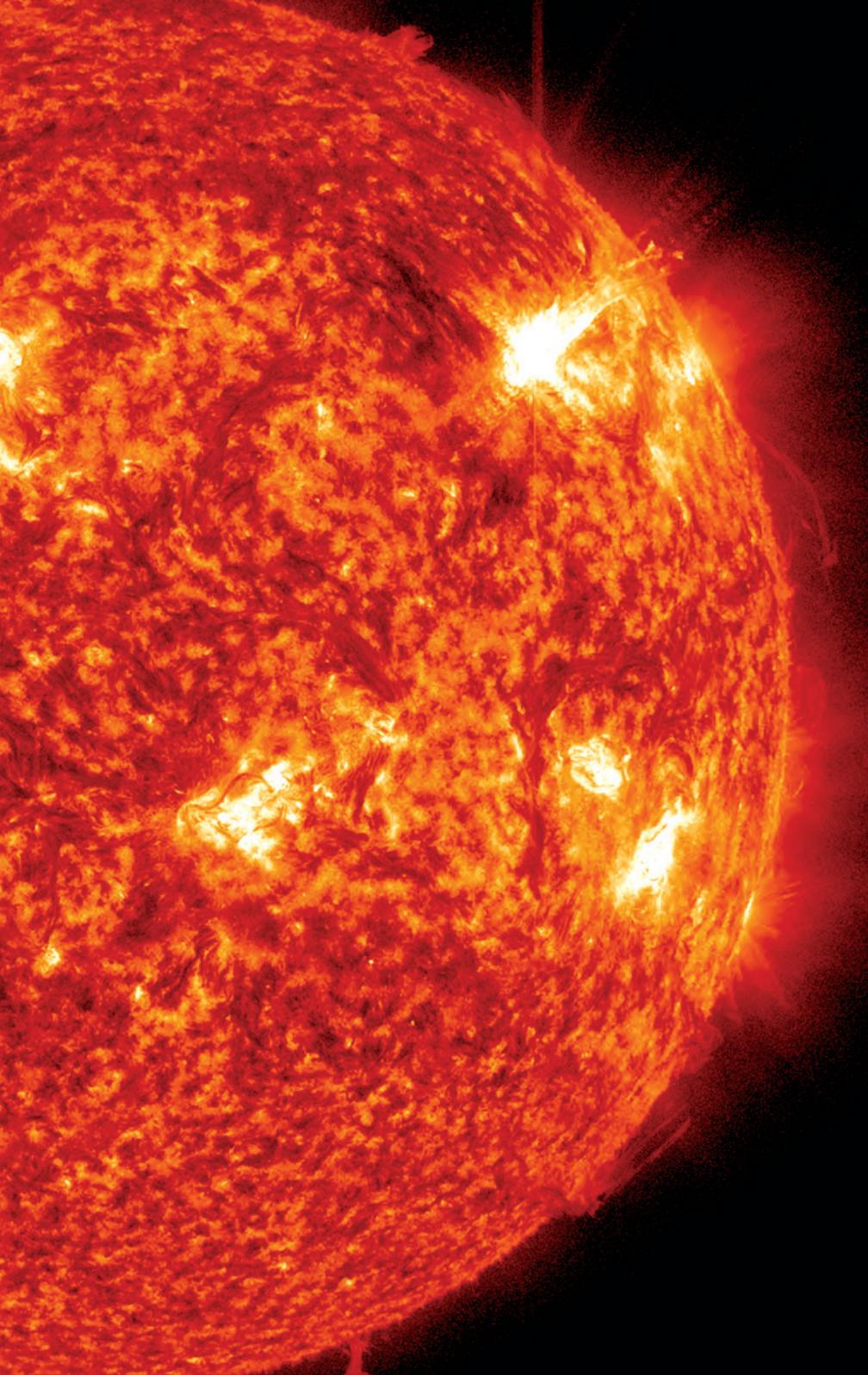
Sangharakshita encourages us to create a community of people where everyone's standing on their own two feet, is at least aspiring to be a true individual – maintaining, building and developing their own integrity. The Order isn't something that you join as such; it's not something established; it must constantly be recreated afresh, so that the Sangha, the spiritual community, is continuously reinvented through people being as effective in their commitment as possible.

People say to me, 'How do you fit in?' I say, 'Don't fit in – whatever you do, don't fit in!' I mean, don't not fit in just for the sake of it; don't be silly, but I mean, if you've got something to say, then say it! If there's something you don't understand, or like, or agree with, then for heaven's sake, speak out! At least get things clear, because you may just have the wrong end of the stick. Always ask questions first. It's no good wading in, criticising people or situations unless you've actually ascertained whether or not you've got your facts straight. It's very easy to get the wrong end of the stick. ■



Friends
Collage images
by Shubha





Programme

One aim of the London Buddhist Centre is to help people achieve their highest potential by introducing them to Buddhism and meditation. The centre runs on generosity: all teachers and class teams offer their time, skills and experience voluntarily. We are keen to develop this culture of generosity ('dana'), so you will see that many of our events are free of charge, but with an invitation to give what you can (of course you do not need to give anything if you do not want to or cannot afford to).

This culture of generosity extends to all levels of the centre. For example, everyone employed by the LBC is paid a 'support' package which covers their basic financial needs (food, rent etc), with a little extra for spending and travel. On this basis, people give what they can and take what they need. It is therefore generosity that is the principal motivation for a deepening commitment, rather than status or the accumulation of wealth. Generosity is a virtue that is highly regarded in Buddhism and we hope that this quality is brought to the fore at the LBC. In particular we hope that, if attending one of our free events, you will feel able to contribute appropriately to the running costs of the centre.

Alongside our programme at the LBC, we run drop-in classes and courses in meditation at St Martin's Lane in Central London.

We also run retreats throughout the year which offer excellent conditions in which to explore and deepen your awareness of yourself, of other people and of the world around you, away from the habits and restrictions of your daily routine.

Booking Info

You can book online at lbc.org.uk
drop in to reception 10am-5pm Mon-Sat
or call 020 8981 1225

Twitter @LDNBuddhist

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Getting started

For anyone interested in getting a taste of Buddhist meditation and those new to the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana meditation practices

Spring Retreat

The Way of Freedom

Mindfulness was at the heart of the Buddha's rediscovery of an ancient path of practice leading to Enlightenment. He likened what he found to 'an ancient city ... with parks, groves, ponds and ramparts, a delightful place.' Join us for a springtime journey in his footsteps, towards wisdom and contentment, through meditation, reflection and a deepening awareness of our own true nature.

Led by Manjusiha and Vandana Jayoti
26 Mar–3 Apr at Kench Hill. £385/£285. Booking essential.

Intro Courses

Life with Full Attention

Mindfulness is about living fully and vividly, without rumination or distraction. A systematic approach to mindfulness and authentic happiness, starting with applying mindfulness in everyday life and culminating in mindfulness of the nature of reality. The book *Life with Full Attention* will be our guide to daily practice.

Led by Manjusiha and Akashadevi
8 weeks from Tue 12 Jan–Tue 1 Mar. 7.15–9.45pm. £140/£110 (price inc. book).
Booking essential.

Introduction to Buddhism & Meditation

An essential overview of Buddhist principles, introducing two meditation practices which offer a means to self-awareness, change and spiritual insight. These courses are a step-by-step guide to Buddhism that can transform your perspective on the world and provide you with tools you can use for a lifetime.

6 weeks from Mon 11 Jan or Mon 29 Feb, 7.15–9.45pm. £100/£80. Booking essential.

The Heart of the Mind: Introduction to Puja

This five-week course introduces Buddhist devotional practice and takes us through the stages that help us glimpse, move towards and realise our limitless potential. Newcomers are welcome, as are those with some experience.

Led by Nandaraja and Svadhi
5 weeks from Fri 12 Feb. 7.15–9.45pm. Cost £80/£60 Booking essential.

Classes

Lunchtime Meditation

Monday to Saturday
Drop in and learn the basics of two crucial meditation practices in a lunch-hour.

1–2pm. All welcome. Donation/dana.

Evening Meditation

Tuesday and Wednesday
Ideal for newcomers. Drop in any week to learn two fundamental practices that cultivate clear awareness, peace of mind and emotional positivity.

7.15–9.45pm. Free.
Suggested donation £11/£6.

Open Mind Club

Tuesday afternoons (except during half term and the first and last week of each term)
After school club for young people aged 11–17.

Led by Srivati
4.30–5.30pm. Free. Suggested donation 10p–£1.

Daytime Class

Wednesday Daytimes
Meditation and the Buddha's teachings can have great benefits in our lives: more clarity, self-awareness, open-heartedness and peace of mind. Our focus this term is on the Bodhisattva Ideal, which lays special emphasis on compassion. With stories from the Buddhist tradition, personal experience and the archetypal realm.

10.35am–12.30pm. Creche facilities for under 5s, supported by experienced staff. Donation/dana.

Yoga, Chi Kung & Meditation

Thursday Evenings

A meditative evening starting with yoga or chi kung, followed by sitting meditation, to bring harmony to the mind and body. Suitable for beginners. Wear warm, comfortable clothing. 7.15–9.30pm.

Free. Suggested donation £11/£6.

First Friday

Sub35 Class

The alternative Friday night! Meditation, discussion and friendship. An evening of practice with time for hanging out after the class. Everyone welcome, especially newcomers. 7.15–9.45pm (tea bar till 11pm). Free. Suggested donation £7.

Weekday Yoga

Drop-in sessions of yoga for meditation. These yoga classes encourage flexibility, strength and awareness of bodily sensations, to improve our ability to sit in meditation and to encourage concentration. Suitable for all levels.

Weekday lunchtimes 12–12.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £6.
Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri evenings 5.45–6.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £8.
No need to book, just drop in.

Saturday Morning Yoga

Class One: 10–11.15am.
Class Two: 11.30am–12.30pm.
Free. Suggested donation £10 per class.
No need to book, just drop in.

Complete yoga listings page 29

Days and Retreats

Open Day

Come and discover the LBC and what it can offer you. Find out about Buddhism, learn to

meditate and try a taster session in Breathing Space, our project offering mindfulness for well-being.

Sun 24 Jan, 10am–5pm. Refreshments are provided and all events are free. No need to book.

Introductory Days

One Sunday a month. Learn how to keep both your mind and heart in steady focus, with meditation practices that help cultivate openness, clarity and courage.

Sun 17 Jan, 7 Feb, 13 Mar, 3 Apr. 10am–5pm. Lunch provided. £40/£30. Booking essential.

Introductory Retreats

A weekend of meditation. Learn two fundamental, far-reaching meditation practices, while living communally with diverse but like-minded people. Explore the Buddhist vision of reality.

19–21 Feb and 8–10 Apr. At Kench Hill. £165/£125. Booking essential.

Outreach: Courses & classes at St Martin's Lane, London, WC2

Newcomers' Classes

Introduction to meditation every Saturday 1–2.15pm and 2.45–4pm. £8/£6. No need to book.

Four-week Foundation courses in Buddhist Meditation

Four Saturdays starting 9 Jan, 6 Feb, 5 Mar, 9 Apr. 10am–12.30pm. £90/£70. Booking essential.

Weekly drop-in classes and courses are also happening in **Hornchurch**, Essex hornchurchbuddhistgroup.org.uk and also in **Mid Essex**:

mid-essex-buddhist-centre.org.uk
The Mid-Essex Buddhist Centre will be launching on 23 Jan, so check the website for more details.

Going Further

If you know both meditation practices or you are a Mitra or Order member, all these events are for you

Seminar

What is the Sangha?

'A group is united by its lowest common denominator, a spiritual community by its highest common factor.' – Sangharakshita. Being a Buddhist and joining the Sangha is not like joining a group, but a radically new way of living and relating to others. With shared practices and ideals we not only become more of an individual, but form the nucleus of a new society; one that is beneficial for ourselves and the world. Come and find out more.

With Jnanavaca and Subhadramati
4 Jan–22 Feb, as part of the Monday Class.
7.15–9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £7.

Mandala Evening

The spiritual community, the Sangha, is the ideal context in which we can practice the Dharma. It is also a force for good in the world and an Ideal in its own right. Over the next four years we will look at how a Sangha is built, using the framework of 'The Four Sangharavastus' (the Means of Unification of the Sangha). In launching the year at the LBC, Jnanavaca will give a keynote talk on the 'The Four Sangharavastus', focussing particularly on the first of these – 'Dana', or generosity.

With Jnanavaca
Mon 18 Jan. 7.15–9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £7.

Course

Mastering the Mind

On this six week drop-in course, we will be exploring how to move from ordinary, divided consciousness into a fuller, richer and more expansive consciousness (called 'Samadhi') and from there to reflecting on 'how things really are'. This course is being run alongside three intensive meditation mornings where we can apply what we have learnt more fully. For those all have learnt both meditations.

Led by Maitreyabandhu and Shraddhasiddhi
Starting 13 Jan. 7.15–9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £11/£6.

Regulars' Retreat

Gateways to Wisdom

On this silent, intensive weekend we will be using the dharma to arrive at an understanding and conviction about the nature of experience and the wisdom of the Buddha. For those familiar with both meditations and puja.

Led by Suryagupta and Vidyadaka
11–13 Mar. At Kench Hill. £165/£125. Booking essential.

Classes

Lunchtime Meditation

Monday to Saturday
Drop-in meditation for regulars.
1–2pm. Donation/dana.

Dharma Night

Monday Evenings
Explore Buddhism through lively seminars and talks, meditation and puja. Whether you have undertaken one of our introductory courses and want to learn more, or you have learned to meditate with us and are wondering what being a Buddhist is all about, you can drop in and participate any Monday evening.
7.15–9.45pm.
See lbc.org.uk/DharmaClass.htm for full listings.
Free. Suggested donation £7.

Evening Meditation

Tuesday and Wednesday
Meditation is more than just a technique. After learning two fundamental practices, explore how to work with your mind more deeply and thoroughly. With led meditation, further teaching and guidance.
7.15–9.45pm.
Free. Suggested donation £11/£6.

Daytime Class

Wednesday Daytimes
This term we will be exploring the Bodhisattva Ideal, which lays special emphasis on compassion as an essential quality on the Buddhist path. We'll look at texts and stories from the tradition, share personal experience and delve into the rich world of the archetypal Buddhas. The first class of every month is a practice morning, devoted to meditation and ritual practices – a wonderful way to start the month!
10.35am–12.30pm. Creche facilities for under 5s, supported by experienced staff. Donation/dana.

Yoga, Chi Kung & Meditation

Thursday Evenings
A meditative evening starting with yoga or chi kung, followed by sitting meditation, to bring harmony to the mind and body. Wear warm comfortable clothing. All welcome.
7.15–9.30pm.
Free. Suggested donation £11/£6.

Meditation and Puja

Friday Evenings
Bring the week to a contemplative close with meditation and ritual. Devotional practice helps us to engage with the Sangha and strengthen confidence in the Dharma.
7–9.45pm.
Free. Suggested donation £7.

Women's Class

Monthly Saturdays
A meditation and Buddhism class for women who know the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana meditations.
Led by Mahamani, Sudurjaya and Tareshvari.
3–5.30pm. 16 Jan, 20 Feb, 19 Mar, 16 Apr. Free. Suggested donation £8/£5.

Days & Evenings

Meditation Days

For Regulars
It is easy to fall into a 'maintenance' meditation practice, and to stop deepening your connection. Why not come and renew your inspiration? For meditators who know both the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana.
Sundays 31 Jan, 21 Feb, 20 Mar, 24 Apr. 10am–5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.
Free. Suggested donation £30.

Full Moon Pujas

These monthly rituals give a regular point of devotional focus and the chance to explore Buddhist ritual.
Sun 24 Jan, Mon 22 Feb, Wed 23 Mar, Fri 22 Apr. Times to be announced.
Donation/dana.

Buddhist Sunday School

Encouraging and developing our children's mindfulness and kindness through Buddhist practice and storytelling. Includes meditation, chanting and craft activities. For 3–10 year olds, parents/carers welcome.
Led by Jyotismati and team
10.30am–12.30pm
Last Sunday of every month: 31 Jan, 28 Feb, 27 Mar, 24 Apr.

Buddhism and 12-Step Recovery

These days are for people who are in 12-Step Recovery Groups and are also interested in Buddhism and meditation. Come and join us for a day of sangha, fellowship and practice. For those familiar with the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana.
Led by Sanghasiha & Shraddhasiddhi
Sun 10 Jan, 10am–5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.
Free. Suggested donation £25.
No need to book.

Compassionate Communication

An exploration of how the qualities of awareness and kindness developed in meditation can be brought into our everyday communication, particularly focussing on how we can deal with feelings of anger and frustration.
Led by Vajraghanta
Sun 21 Feb, 10am–5pm.
Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.
£40/30. Booking essential.

Going Further

Continued

Teachers' Day

Lighting the Flame

On this day for teachers we will explore how we can most effectively and courageously communicate the Dharma for the benefit of all. For Order members teaching at our centres, Mitra Study leaders and Mitras teaching at St Martin's Lane or with under 35 groups. Led by Subhadramati and Vidyadaka Sat 27 Feb, 10am–5pm. Free.

Women's Mitra Day

The *Dhammapada* is probably the best known Buddhist text. In a few very short verses, Chapter One contains some of The Buddha's most profound teachings. If we really reflected on them and allowed them to pervade our whole being, we could be well on the way to Enlightenment. We will be looking at this chapter of the *Dhammapada* in detail, exploring what it means, and seeing how we can use the teachings to transform our lives. Led by Sujhayini and Dharmasakhya Sun 28 Feb, 10am–5pm. Free. Suggested donation £30. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. No need to book.

Book Launch

Confessions of a Transvestite Buddhist – A Quest for Manhood To launch his book, Devamitra will be interviewed by Maitreyabandhu during a special event for men. 'This remarkable and original thesis is revealed through his very frank exploration of his own journey into cross dressing

and beyond and it is done in a beautifully written and deeply insightful enquiry.' - Subhuti. An evening for men. With Devamitra and Maitreyabandhu Fri 18 Mar, 7.15–9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £7.

Entering the path of Imagination

Explore the Imagination from the perspective of traditional Buddhist practice. Through meditation, reflection and simple painting exercises, learn ways of accessing it and experience how it can lead us into a deeper and more enriched experience of the present moment, and therein function as both 'teacher and guide'. Suitable for those unfamiliar with painting/ imagination, as well as those with experience. Led by Amitajyoti Sat 2 Apr. 10am–5pm at the London Buddhist Arts Centre. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. £40/£30. Booking essential.

Virya: The Heroic Perfection

A day seminar on the place of virya (energy) in Buddhist teaching and practice. Led by Devamitra Sun 3 Apr, 10am–5pm. Free. Suggested donation £30. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. No need to book.

Deep Ecology Day

"Deep Ecology begins and ends with wonder – profound wonder. On that account we ought to consider life, indeed our very existence, as a flowing current." Arne Naess. A day exploring our relationship with the natural world as Buddhists through

poetry, music, meditation and ritual.

Led by Sanghasiha and friends Sun 17 Apr, 10am–5pm. Bring a vegetarian lunch to share. Free. Suggested donation £30. No need to book.

Total Immersion Day

A completely silent day of meditation practice that provides intensive conditions for you to deepen into experience and see the subtle patterns of your mind. Led by Kalyanavaca Sun 27 Mar, 10am–5pm. Donation/dana. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Free. Suggested donation £30.

Courses

Mastering the Mind Meditation Mornings

These three drop-in intensive meditation mornings are aimed at deepening our understanding of meditation and how to move beyond ordinary, divided consciousness into Samadhi. For those who know both meditations. Led by Maitreyabandhu 30 Jan, 6 Feb, 13 Feb. 9am–12.30pm. (Doors open at 8.45am and close at 9.15am – no entry after this time). Free. Suggested donation £15/£8

Lunchtime Course Meditation Toolkit:

Freeing the Mind Six teachings on consecutive lunchtimes about working with your mind in meditation. Led by Vidyadaka Mon 22 Feb–Sat 27 Feb. 1–2pm. Donation/dana. As part of the lunchtime drop-in meditation class.

If they can do it, so can I

Enlightenment can seem like it's too hard or too far off, but by spending time with images and figures from the Buddhist tradition we can see how qualities like friendship, ethics, energy and love – qualities we already have – can help us transform and grow. Using images from throughout the Buddhist world, as well as mantras, meditation and discussion, we will explore the path of Buddhism, and discover how to travel it, from just where we are right now. With Maitripushpa (and the basement shrine room triptych) 9 Mar–13 Apr, 7.15–9.45pm. £100/£80. Booking essential.

Retreats

Buddhism and 12-Step Recovery

A weekend retreat for people in 12-Step recovery groups who are also interested in Buddhism and meditation. There will be periods of meditation, talks about recovery and Buddhism, free time to explore the beautiful countryside and plenty of time to talk about the 12-Step recovery principles and our practice of Buddhism and meditation. For those familiar with the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana. Led by Sanghasiha and Shraddhasiddhi 26–28 Feb. At Kench Hill. £165/£125. Booking essential.

Men's Event

The Buddha's Noble Quest One of the oldest versions of the life of the Buddha, given by the Buddha himself, is a discourse called The Noble Quest – the Ariyapariyesana Sutta. We will

be exploring the Buddha's Noble Quest from his Going Forth, through his Enlightenment, to his first communication of the Truth and asking how we might live the Noble Quest now. For men familiar with the Mindfulness of Breathing, the Metta Bhavana and puja. Led by Aryabandhu and Padmavajra 18–20 Mar at Padmaloka Book at www.padmalo.org.uk

Women's Retreat

Introduction to The Heart Sutra and Prajnaparamita. On this weekend we will explore some key aspects of the Heart Sutra and Prajnaparamita, Mother of all the Buddhas, through meditation and puja. For women familiar with the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana. Led by Sudurjaya, Mahamani and Tarashvari 15–17 April. At Kench Hill. £165/£125. Booking essential.

Re-Wilding the Mind

Rewilding the Mind is a working retreat in the Scottish Highlands with re-wilding charity Trees for Life. Mornings and evenings will include meditation, ritual and short talks on the Dharma and re-wilding. During the day we will be out in the spectacular Glen Moriston – home to wild boar and pine marten – planting trees, clearing non-native species or tending seedlings in the nursery. We will be living communally. For people familiar with both meditation practices. Led by Satyadasa 16–23 Apr, in Inverness. £325/£250. Limited places. Booking essential.

Volunteering

There are many opportunities for volunteering and it can be a satisfying and energetic way of offering support. To see more visit lbc.org.uk/volunteers.htm

Monday and Thursday afternoons

2.30pm. Straight after the lunchtime class join in with the work period, cleaning the centre and looking after the shrines.

If you would like more information or would like to chat with someone about this, please contact Vajrabandhu at vajrabandhu@lbc.org.uk or drop in at one of these times.

Vajrasana

The newly rebuilt Vajrasana Retreat Centre is due to open in May. Full programme listings will be publicized in February. Solitary retreat bookings at Vajrasana are now available from July 2016 onwards. Once the Vajrasana Retreat Centre opening date is confirmed it may be possible to book for May and June also. To book a solitary retreat go to lbc.org.uk/retreat.asp#hut

Festivals & Special Events

Open to all

These special events are celebratory, and focus on the primary qualities of the Buddha and the principles of the Dharma – all in the context of the Sangha.

Mandala Evening

The spiritual community, the Sangha, is the ideal context in which we can practice the Dharma. It is also a force for good in the world and an Ideal in its own right. Over the next four years we will look at how a Sangha is built, using the framework of ‘The Four Sangharavastus’ (the Means of Unification of the Sangha). In launching the year at the LBC, Jnanavaca will give a keynote talk on the ‘The Four Sangharavastus’, focussing particularly on the first of these – ‘Dana’, or generosity. With Jnanavaca
Mon 18 Jan. 7.15-9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £7.

Parinirvana Day Festival

Parinirvana day is the celebration of the final passing of the Buddha, which gives us an opportunity not just to reflect upon impermanence, and the serene dignity of that remarkable event, but also to rejoice in his life. Even today, almost 6,000 miles from his birthplace, we still feel the benefit of his peerless example and his unparalleled gift: 45 years of tireless teaching. So join us as we honour the greatest hero of all time.

Led by Devamitra
Sun 14 Feb, 10am-10pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.
Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

Akshobhya Day

Akshobhya is the deep blue archetypal Buddha of the eastern realm and is associated with the Enlightened qualities of unshakeable confidence and mirror-like wisdom. On this day we will be exploring the significance of this deeply mysterious figure, and seeing how we can cultivate those qualities in ourselves. All proceeds from the day will go to the new Akshobhya Garden at Vajrasana.

Led by Dayabhadra
Sun 13 Mar, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.
Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

Sub35 & Sub25 Events

Sub35

First Friday

Sub35 Class
The alternative Friday night! Meditation, discussion and connection. An evening of practice with time to hang out after the class. Everyone welcome.
7.15-9.45pm (tea bar till 11pm).
Free. Suggested donation £7.

Second Saturday

Meditation Morning
A chance to meditate together, for longer; cultivating stillness and friendship.
10am-12.45pm.
Meditation experience recommended.
Donation/Dana.

Final Friday

Young Women’s Night
Join us to explore meditation and Buddhism in a friendly, relaxed and intimate environment. An opportunity to make friends with other young women at the centre and support each other’s spiritual practice. With meditation, discussion and tea.
7.15-9.45pm.
Free. Suggested donation £7.
Experience of both meditation practices required.

Weekend Retreat

Pleasure in Practice
Although we know meditation will make us happier, thinking we ought to do it and feeling reluctant can cause tension.

Finding pleasure in our practice can resolve this tension. When we are mindful it is possible to see the beauty, contentment and wisdom that are always present and experience the pleasure that can arise when our mind is quiet and our heart is open.
Led by Tara and Joe
29-31 Jan, at Kench Hill. £165/£125.
Booking essential.

Young Men’s

Study Mornings
Exploring the Dharma
An opportunity to explore the principles and ideas of Buddhism with Devamitra, who has over 40 years’ experience of Buddhist practice.
Led by Devamitra
Starts Sat 20 Feb. 10am-12.30pm.
Free. Suggested donation £11/£6. No need to book, just drop in.

Young Women’s Mitra Retreat

Going for Refuge and the Thunderous Silence
“Going for Refuge is an experience – a spiritual experience – that is deepening and growing more multi-dimensional all the time.” – Sangharakshita. On this retreat we aim to explore going for refuge, and how it can lead us into a more direct, unmediated experience of the truth.
Led by Shraddhasiddhi, Kusalasara, Sukhasiddhi, Sraddhasara, and Sujayini
18-20 Mar, at Kench Hill.
£165/125. Booking essential.

Sub35 run a programme of events for men including Dharma study and socials. For an invitation email nextgeneration@lbc.org.uk

Sub25

Third Friday

Sub25 Class
A chance for those aged between 16-25 to come together to explore Buddhism and meditation.
7.15-9.30pm. All those under 25 welcome, especially if it is your first time. By donation.

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Not all events are listed in this calendar
 Our daily, weekly, daytime and evening classes can be found in the *Getting Started* and *Going Further* sections, near the start of this programme. Retreats are also listed there.

Jan

4 What is the Sangha? 8 week seminar starts. 7.15-9.45pm	5	6	7	8	9	10 Buddhism and 12 Steps 10am-5pm
11 Intro to Buddhism & Meditation 6 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	12 Life with Full Attention 8 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	13 Mastering the Mind 6 week drop-in course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	14	15	16	17 Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm
18 Mandala Evening Launching the year. 7.15-9.45pm	19	20	21	22	23	24 Open Day Free talks, meditation, yoga and more. Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual
25	26	27	28	29 Sub35 Weekend Starts at Kench Hill	30 Mastering the Mind morning 9am-12.30pm	31 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm Yoga Day Newcomers 10am-5pm Sunday School 10.30am-12.30pm

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Intro to Puja 5 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	13 Mastering the Mind morning 9am-12.30pm East Lucy Kirkwood 7.30pm	14 Paniravana Day Festival 10am-10pm
15	16	17	18	19 Intro Weekend Retreat starts	20 Young Men's Study Morning 6 week drop-in. 10am-12.30pm	21 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm Compassionate Com. 10am-5pm
22 Meditation Toolkit until 27 Feb. 1-2pm. Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	23	24	25	26 Buddhism and 12-Step retreat starts. At Kench Hill until 28 Feb.	27 Teachers' Day 10am-5pm	28 Mitra Day For women. 10am-5pm
29 Intro to Buddhism & Meditation 6 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm						29 Sunday School 10.30am-12.30pm

Feb

Intro to Buddhism & Meditation
6 week course starts.
7.15-9.45pm

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 If they can do it, so can I 6 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	10	11 Regulars' Retreat at Kench Hill. Until 13 Mar.	12	13 Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm Akshobhya Day 10am-5pm
14	15	16	17	18 Book Launch For men. 7.15-9.45pm Young Women's Mitra Weekend starts at Kench Hill	19 East Rowan Williams 7.30pm	20 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm Yoga Day For regulars. 10am-5pm
21	22	23 Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	24	25	26 Spring Retreat starts at Kench Hill Until 3 Apr.	27 Total Immersion Day For regulars 10am-5pm Sunday School 10.30am-12.30pm
28	29	30	31			

Mar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2 Entering the Path of Imagination 10am-5pm at the Arts Centre	3 Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm Heroic Perfection Seminar. 10am-5pm
4	5	6	7	8 Intro Weekend Retreat starts	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Women's Weekend Retreat starts. At Kench Hill until 17 Apr.	16 Re-Wilding the Mind Retreat starts. In Scotland until 23 Apr.	17 Deep Ecology 10am-5pm
18	19	20	21	22 Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	23	24 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm Sunday School 10.30am-12.30pm
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Apr

Not all events are listed in this calendar
Our daily, weekly, daytime and evening classes can be found in the *Getting Started* and *Going Further* sections, near the start of this programme. Retreats are also listed there.

Yoga for Meditation

These yoga classes encourage flexibility, strength and awareness of physical sensations. Loosening up the body and deepening our awareness can be a great way into sitting meditation. Yoga and meditation are complementary practices.

Weekday Lunchtime and Early Evening

Drop-in sessions of yoga for meditation. All levels.
Weekday lunchtimes 12-12.45pm.
Free. Suggested donation £6. No need to book.
Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri evenings 5.45-6.45pm.
Free. Suggested donation £8. No need to book.

Yoga, Chi Kung & Meditation

Thursday Evenings

A meditative evening starting with yoga or chi kung, followed by sitting meditation, to bring harmony to the mind and body. Suitable for beginners. Wear warm, comfortable clothing.
7.15-9.30pm. Free. Suggested donation £11/6.

Saturday Mornings

Drop-in sessions of yoga for meditation. All levels.
10am-11.15am. Drop-in Yoga and Meditation. This class will start with yoga and finish with sitting meditation practice.
11.30am-12.30pm. Drop-in Yoga.
Free. Suggested donation £10. No need to book, just drop in.

Sundays

Yoga and Meditation Day for Beginners

This day will combine meditation teaching with yoga. Meditation teaching will be from first principles and will be suitable for beginners. The supportive atmosphere of the day retreat allows us to understand how the two practices augment each other.

Led by Sraddhasara and SuYen

31 Jan. 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. £40/£30. Booking essential.

Yoga and Meditation Days for Regulars

Day retreats focusing on the integration of meditation and yoga. We develop and deepen both practices, learning to work with movement and stillness, activity and receptivity. For those who know both meditation practices and meditate regularly, though no experience of yoga required.

7 Feb, Led by Sukhasiddhi + Holly

20 Mar, Led by Sraddhagita + SuYen

10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. £40/£30. Booking essential.

East

East is an ongoing series of cultural events at the LBC, hosted by Maitreyabandhu, exploring the meaning and value of the arts. Each event focusses on the life and work of a single guest artist, by way of an interview and a reading. Previous guests have included Sasha Dugdale, Michael Frayn, Don Paterson and Colm Tóibín. Our two featured writers this spring conclude a series of evenings in association with the *London Review of Books*. Booking for these events is essential: go to poetryeast.net

TheatreEast

Lucy Kirkwood

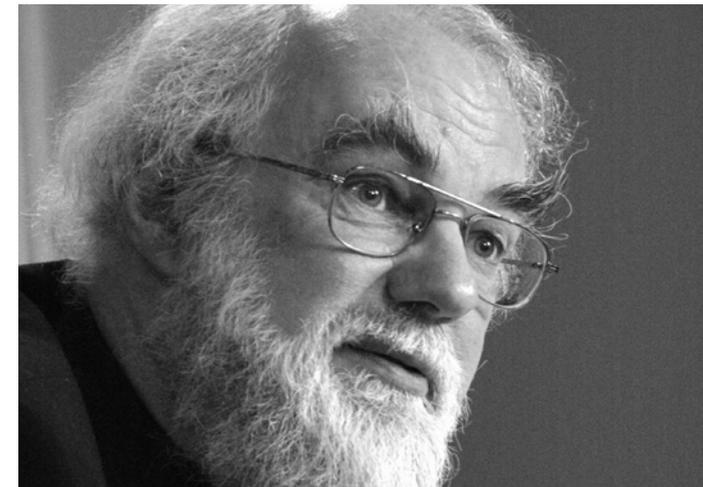
Lucy Kirkwood's play *It Felt Empty When the Heart Went at First but it is Alright Now* was nominated for an Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer. Her recent stage success, *Chimerica*, premiered at the Almeida Theatre in 2013 and subsequently transferred to the West End, winning Best New Play at the 2014 Olivier and Evening Standard Awards. Michael Billington in the *Guardian* called it 'gloriously rich, mind-expanding'. Her drama series *The Smoke* was aired on Sky 1.
Sat 6 Feb. 7.30pm. £10.



PoetryEast

Dr Rowan Williams

Rowan Williams served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002 to 2012, is acknowledged internationally as an outstanding theological writer, scholar and teacher and 'manages to appeal to a wide range of people with his thoughtful cultural commentary' (*Glasgow Review of Books*). His two collections of poems, *The Other Mountain* and *The Poems and Rowan Williams* (Carcenet), explore the search for meaning, man's relationship to nature, and the paradoxes of poetry itself.





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