



Dharmic

Receptivity

london  
buddhist  
centre  
Magazine &  
Programme

Sept – Dec 2014

# Introduction

## Dharmic Receptivity

by Jnanavaca, Chairman of the LBC

Each year for the past five years, we've focussed our practice at the LBC around one of the five stages of the Path – Integration, Positive Emotion, Spiritual Death, Spiritual Rebirth, and this year Dharmic Receptivity.

We can think of Dharmic Receptivity as our innate responsiveness to Value – to Truth, Goodness and Beauty, however they manifest. These values are of course not merely external to us, but are potentials in human consciousness. They unfold for us to the degree that we learn to respond to them. This kind of receptivity isn't passivity. Responsiveness means responding to the needs of the world around us – in particular to people around us.

Buddhism – or the Dharma – could be seen as a path that cultivates responsiveness to Value at higher and higher levels. And in that cultivation

lies the possibility of true fulfilment and freedom – as symbolised by the Buddha.

All the activities on offer at the LBC are aimed at this cultivation of consciousness. This cultivation isn't just an individual affair. It is only through our relationships with others and the world around us that we find true meaning. The LBC is at the heart of a thriving Sangha – a community of people striving to transform themselves and the world around them.

I am very pleased to see the centre continuing to thrive as more and more people discover the relevance of the Dharma in their lives. I hope that the programme for the coming months will offer you something of benefit – whether you are new to the LBC or have been part of the Sangha for decades.



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# A new magazine from the LBC

by Vidyadaka

What you think, what you believe, shapes the way in which you live and the way in which you understand the very meaning of life. And of course understanding, meaning and life are all aspects of consciousness. The Buddha's primary message was that consciousness can be restructured - we can grow. Transformation is possible, but how this happens is, of course, more mysterious. Primarily though, what affects our thinking, and the understandings we have, is what influences us.

Most of what you read in these pages are the voices of Buddhists who are committed to bringing the teachings of the Buddha to life in life, so whether they are talking about a book, poetry, the environment or remembering a friend they bring you reflections on consciousness, on mind, on life.

So, the magazine starts with the poet Michael Symmons Roberts talking about the sacred nature of things and what we are drawn towards. Subhadramati offers one of her own poems which gives a glimpse into her world. Continuing the literature theme, Ollie Brock has reviewed the book *The Science Delusion* which explores the nature of belief and sciences role in that. On another subject, Satyadasa launches into the relationship between the inner mind and the outer world and explores the area of the environment and the mind, shedding light into a highly complex and relevant area of thought and action. I interviewed Nagarakshita just before she headed off on a 9 month solitary retreat and asked her how this helped the world, amongst other things. She goes on to explore how mind

affects the world and talks of the simple life. To conclude, Maitreyaraja has written an obituary of Sangharatna, which, in a sense, offers a final teaching on the fleeting, transient nature of life. I would very much like to thank all of the contributors.

I hope that these articles are stimulating and lead to a deeper reflection into what the nature of mind is, and how it shapes the world.

Then there is the Sept-Dec programme. Everything at the LBC is orientated to this exploration of mind and the teachings of the Buddha. Have a look at the events that are coming up - there is such a range and diversity, encompassing the arts, the body, friendship, study, money, tea and death! We are also starting a whole range of yoga for meditation classes and days with a focus on the body as a way into deeper states of consciousness. This includes a new Thursday evening drop-in class, as well as many other classes.

I hope this range of activities gives you plenty of opportunity to use meditation and Buddhism to explore your life and mind and understand fully how letting go of what limits you allows something from beyond to transform you.

# Glimpses of the Sacred

Michael Symmons Roberts, whose latest collection *Drysalter* won both a Costa Book Award and the Forward Prize for Poetry, visited the LBC as part of Maitreyabandhu's Poetry East series. In this excerpt from the evening's interview he talks about the 'loss' of his atheism, the relationship between his faith and his poetry, and what poetry itself might be for...

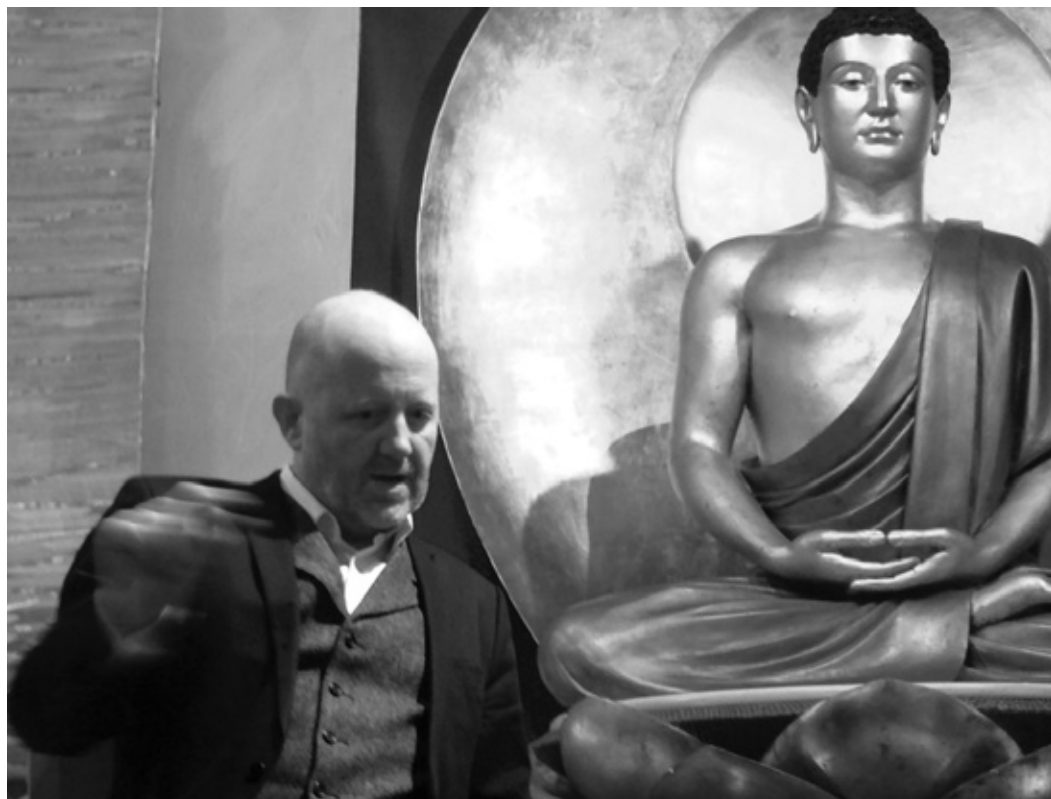
**Maitreyabandhu:** *You're on record as calling yourself a 'struggling believer'. Your poems seem to have at their heart a doubting search for redemption. Wallace Stevens said that 'After one has abandoned a belief in God, poetry is the essence which takes its place as life's redemption.' It's interesting that you haven't abandoned that belief, but poetry is still part of life's redemption for you. I wondered if you could say more about faith as an animating force for you in the poems?*

**Michael Symmons Roberts:** I love Wallace Stevens but I've always slightly struggled with that notion – I don't think that art takes the place of religious belief. And I don't think that art has in the truer sense redemptive power. But for me it's part of the exploration and celebration of the possibility of truth – glimpses of truth and ultimate reality. When I realised I was losing my atheism I had a real panic that my poems would somehow become blandly devotional. And of course that was incredibly naïve. When you look at poets who were working from profound faith – in the twentieth century, John Berryman's *Dream Songs*; Robert Lowell wrestling with his Catholicism; W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot – there are countless examples. The struggle never goes away. And the idea that you ever reach a plateau where all the poems do is shine a light on the

beauty of the belief – it just doesn't happen. And once I stopped worrying about it, the relationship between my faith and my poetry seemed irrelevant, because I neither avoided those themes and ideas nor courted them. It was just part of me.

*Reading Drysalter, George Steiner's book Real Presences came strongly to mind. At the end of it he says that 'What I affirm as the intuition is that where God's presence is no longer a tenable supposition, and when His absence is no longer felt – indeed, an overwhelming weight of that absence – certain dimensions of thought and creativity are no longer available.' I wonder whether that's something you would agree with.*

It's a key quotation for me. It connected with me on a profound level because as an atheist I was obsessed with the absence, and then became obsessed with trying to find out what the presence might be, and then with glimpses of it. And all the poems and the poets that I admired the most were aware of that – that going out on to that edge where the presence or the absence is felt, was where the finest art seemed to come from.



*This is one of those questions we always finish with – what is poetry for? Why do it? Is it religion now? Is it, as Stevens says, a place for the sacred now, the only place left?*

The sacred is slightly different. I don't think it's a surrogate God... I think it can approach sacredness. I'm not claiming any of that for my own work. Some of the poems I've most admired from the past, poems by John Donne for instance, can be and often are used by people in their own devotion and prayer and so on. Seamus Heaney talked about poetry as an art form that had never fully been secularised. And that's why you don't hear extracts from novels read out at funerals very much! At moments of great love, or loss, people tend to reach for the particular language of poetry. So I do think it has an odd and not quite secular role in the culture, which is interesting. Where I suppose I'm wary of poetry, indeed any of the arts, is where people

talk about it as a great 'civilising force'. Partly because I think that's a huge burden to put on a poet or a poem – that it's going to actually change someone or somehow broaden their mind or make them a better person – but also because history rather dramatically suggests that that's not the case. Some of the most sublimely 'civilised' people in the twentieth century did the most horrendous things. But I think I read poetry because it connects me with, and gives me glimpses of, the sacred, the metaphysical, the real. And the best poems surprise you in the way that they do that.

### Visiting Poetry East in this session:

**John Fuller**

Sat 11 Oct, 7.30pm. £9.

**Mimi Khalvati**

Sat 25 Oct, 7.30pm. £9.

Full details in the programme section.  
Book at [www.poetryeast.net](http://www.poetryeast.net)

# Inner World/Outer World

## Does our Buddhist practice ‘help the environment’, or are we closing our eyes and hoping for the best?

by Satyadasa

I'm writing this at a friend's house in Snowdonia. He got a grant a few years back to plant 5,000 trees and put up a fence to stop the sheep nibbling any that self-seed. Some are now fifteen feet high and alive with blackbirds, pipits and even cuckoos. He points out some spots on the hill behind the house where I might go and meditate.

He has done something I would like to do: plant trees to join up some of the small patches of woodland that remain in our grassy landscape. It seems a very practical response to the environmental crisis. But I live in the East End and I doubt the groundsman at Victoria Park would appreciate my digging in saplings across the cricket pitch.

I live in Bethnal Green to be near the London Buddhist Centre and its community. But by the standards of some environmental activists, what goes on at the LBC might seem like a navel-gazing indulgence – watching with a peaceful smile while the world burns around us. Do the LBC's meditation classes, retreats and dharma talks have anything to do with the ecological issues we face, locally or globally?

Unless I can answer this question, there is a danger that the heart will go out of my Buddhist practice. A danger that I will tacitly agree with people who think that Buddhism, aimed at the narrow goal of ‘inner peace’, is an inconsequential hobby for well-meaning

people – an escape from the world, and certainly no threat to the forces of environmental degradation.

So, can we be confident that sincere and well-aimed Dharma practice is a fitting response to the ecological crisis? If we can make this link, we will be less prey to despair in the face of a daily diet of destruction; less unhelpfully guilty about the negative impact of our high-carbon lifestyles, while also keen to look at ways of modifying them; and much more empowered to think we can make a difference.

This article is not a list of ways of engaging with environmental issues. It's about how the Dharma, properly understood and practised, can bring about transformation at levels which in the long run are pivotal to any truly positive change in our collective relationship with nature.

Below I explore how the Dharma reframes the debate by providing a bigger vision; how it encourages more earth-centred perspectives; and how it leads us out of unhelpful abstraction into a more embodied life.

## Loosening our visionary belts

I was born into a culture with a humanist worldview, which although positive in many ways, is rooted in a materialistic vision of reality which lends itself nicely to the creed of consumption. We won't move beyond





consumerism until we are free from the confines of that materialistic vision.

We need a bigger perspective, which welcomes the insights of science without cramping the mystery of life, or reducing us to biology, or even psychology. The view that everything is matter subtly erodes our ability to communicate and understand higher emotions and values. We need a perspective that doesn't see cause and effect in exclusively materialistic terms and which accounts for the ethical dimension of life in a way we can verify in our own experience. Buddhism offers all this, and addresses itself to our deepest sufferings and our highest yearnings.

In my twenties I came upon the visionary writings of the 'eco-theologian' Thomas Berry, who had an affinity for Buddhism and who continues to be an inspiring figure for many modern nature writers. In his book *The Dream of the Earth*, Berry characterises the industrial age as 'a period of technological entrancement, an altered state of consciousness, a mental fixation that alone can explain how we came to ruin our air and water and soil and to severely damage

all our basic life systems under the illusion of "progress". He goes on to say that '...during this period the human mind has been placed in the narrowest confines it has experienced since consciousness emerged from its Paleolithic phase.'<sup>1</sup>

As well as a bigger vision, the Buddhist path teaches a simpler way of life – one that is more alive to beauty, nature and other people, and more aware of how our desire for materialistic salvation makes us vulnerable to the advertiser's craft. When we're happier, our credit cards have a softer run of it. We are more aware that what we have is body, breath, life and each other. On retreat and at classes it's a relief to return to this very human common ground.

## Bringing earth-centred views back to life

But what sorts of views in particular would change if we lived by the Buddhist vision? I want to touch on some basic perspectives in Buddhism which lead us into deeper connection with a living world.

Firstly – and Berry’s views reflect this – our mind matters. Every experience we have is preceded by the mind. What we call ‘world’ and what we call ‘mind’ arise in dependence on each other and are inseparable in our experience. The two always go together. This is the principle of dependent arising, which is at the core of Buddhist teaching. The upshot for the environmental debate is that whenever we change our consciousness, we change the earth too.

In environmental debate the human mind is often left out of the picture. This is understandable in an urgent situation. But from a Buddhist point of view, the distinction is fundamental: a certain type of consciousness was a necessary condition in the command to drop napalm on the forests and villages of Vietnam. A certain type of consciousness continues to allow scallop dredgers to wipe out huge areas of marine life in Cardigan Bay for profit.

In other words, no action which degrades the earth, or is fruitful for the earth, comes out of nowhere. Of course many of the conditions which bring about observable effects on the earth have nothing to do with any human volition. A certain type of consciousness is not required for a volcano to erupt or the earth to be hit by an asteroid.

Secondly, it is not only human beings that are conscious subjects. The attitude that everything non-human, maybe with the exception of a few larger mammals, is an only an object, is narrow and destructive. Thomas Berry again:

‘The earth community is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects.’<sup>2</sup>

This insight is a premise of ‘deep ecology’: everything exists from its own side and expresses consciousness in its own unique way. We need to see through the dangerous delusion that

the earth is structured around our needs and desires. Objectifying someone or something is a convenient basis on which to harm or kill them. It is harder to abuse something you are aware of as a feeling subject – if you are aware, for instance, of tuna fish in their non-canned format.

Sangharakshita, the founder of the Triratna Buddhist Community, once said that unless we see the universe as basically alive, our Buddhist practice is impossible. Even in Buddhist circles it is arguable we have hardly begun our journey towards re-animating the world in this way. Animism is seen as primitive and long gone. But unless we re-discover a nature ‘alive with many voices’<sup>3</sup>, we carry on what Berry calls the ‘technological wonderland’ experiment to its ironic endgame: a wasteland.

Thirdly, nothing is private or sealed off. Have we developed a bizarre belief, perhaps due to the dominance of brain science, that our minds, or we ourselves, are separate from the world around us, ghosts in a machine body?

Dharma practice is not something I can do in the privacy of ‘my mind’ for inner peace, even if I would like to. As the Buddhist environmentalist Akuppa says: ‘human society is as complex and chaotic as any ecosystem. We may think that our behaviour, conversations and transactions are our own private business, but in aggregate they are constantly bringing about changes in ways we don’t even suspect.’<sup>4</sup>

Buddhist practice develops our feel for interconnection by encouraging us to notice how our actions have consequences for us and others, and by helping us beyond limiting self-views – ‘I’m no good,’ or ‘It’s always going to be like this’ – and habits of meanness or ill-will which keep our circles small. We can’t think our way to interconnectedness. It’s what happens when

energy is freed and our vision of life expands.

Eventually we might feel the damming of a river as the damming of something in us. I believe we half-feel like this already, but we have lost our sensitivity to it. I may feel disconnected from nature, but on reflection this is surely a strange idea. I am fully connected to nature all the time. As Carl Jung says: ‘The psyche is not any more inside us, than the sea is inside the fish.’

## If in doubt, plant a tree

We don't of course need to perfect our views or become a Buddha before following through on our inspiration to plant a tree, or join a campaign or start composting. Our motives and views can be changed through the positive action we take. Certainly, we should be wary of armchair Buddhism. But it inspires me if I can recognise that when we bring any good quality into our lives, we are bringing it into the world. The best type of environmental action (and the best type of meditation) will include this perspective, which is founded on the inseparability of what we think of as the inner and outer worlds.

By starting to live from all these perspectives, by building them into our institutions, and teaching them; by living more communally and on a basis of non-acquisitive values; and by planning our environmental activism on the basis of an understanding of how our states of mind affect our actions and their results, we add a lot to the wider debate. It may even be that some forms of activism become untenable for us when we notice they express and entrench unhelpful views. We will need to devise new ways of connecting with overt environmental issues.

If we are deeply receptive to the Dharma we will realise that even the words ‘environment’ and ‘ecology’ are a bit alienating. Ecology is a branch

of science, like biology, and not something we experience. Similarly, ‘the environment’ is suggestive of something which is ‘over there’ or around us, but quite separate from me ‘in here’. The discourse of modern environmentalism risks perpetuating the very abstraction of us from nature that lies at the root of the problem.

**B**uddhist teaching always points us back to our direct experience. The body is key to this direct awareness because it is a natural condition, not created by us, and through body awareness in particular the mind is coaxed away from proliferation and fantasy towards its natural state: the place of feeling, imagination and beauty. When we are self-obsessing, stressed out, or dealing in abstractions, how can we have a positive impact on the wider life around us?

Of course no-one can say for sure if mankind will succeed in averting the worst predicted outcomes of climate change – hunger, war, displacement, ecosystem collapse and species extinction. Speculating too much on that question won't help. As Buddhists we should be ready to develop positive mental states, including fearlessness, even if things look very bad indeed. But I believe that if we are sincerely engaged in Buddhist practice, we are sincerely engaged in life. Our practice, especially in its collective aspect, will have benefits beyond what we can conceive.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*. Sierra Club Books, 1988

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*. Bell Tower/Random House, 1999

<sup>3</sup> *The Essential Sangharakshita*. Wisdom Publications, 2009

<sup>4</sup> Akuppa, *Touching The Earth*. Windhorse, 2002. I recommend this little book to anyone interested in the Buddhist response to environmental issues.

# Knitting for Neil Armstrong

*Gwen Matthewman, an 86-year-old knitter who once held two world records, has died, according to reports from the Pontefract and Castleford Express. She was born in 1927 and took up knitting at a young age.*

The fastest knitter in the world has died –  
at least according to the Pontefract  
and Castleford Express who sanctified

her memory with mention of the packed-  
out audience on Japanese TV  
when her technique was studied live. Her act

was hard to top. The virtuosity  
that catapulted her to prominence  
around the world in 1963

gave her the status of omniscience  
on knitting Mr Armstrong's cardigan  
before his moon-bound rocket trip. Nonsense

to call her 'dead' then when she's just passed on  
to her own starry realms. Where she now travels  
the pattern books instruct *cast on, cast on*  
*but never off* and no life's work unravels.

Subhadramati

# Powerful Defenders

## Review: THE SCIENCE DELUSION by Curtis White

Melville House, 198pp. £12.99

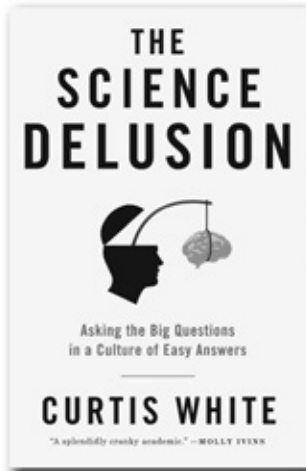
by Ollie Brock

A raft of new books has appeared over the last five years in an attempt to curb some of the loftier claims of neuroscience. Titles like *Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience* or *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity* – among many others – suggest the urgency of the fightback. Rapid advances in brain science had produced a series of nascent disciplines with names like ‘neuroeconomics’, ‘neuropolitics’, ‘neuromarketing’ and even ‘neurotheology’. In the opposite camp, an impression has been building that the scientific-materialist view of reality that supports these developments is getting dangerously out of hand. More evidence of this was provided last year when the biologist Rupert Sheldrake gave a TED talk in London on some of the ‘dogmas’ starting to dominate modern science – such as that consciousness is seated in the brain, or that the laws of nature are fixed – and then saw his talk removed by the online publisher for propagating what they called ‘pseudo-science’.

Over the Atlantic, meanwhile, another heavyweight opponent of materialism-as-ideology is Curtis White. His book *The Science Delusion*, now out in paperback, is a furious broadside against what he calls ‘the empiricist victory’: the powerful grip of the idea that we are nothing but our brain cells; that our experience is no more than ‘the percolating of leptons and

bosons’ and that everything else is ‘the weak-minded religion of the poets.’ His title is an obvious reference to Richard Dawkins’s *The God Delusion*, which needless to say he decries. Other public intellectuals under attack include the late journalist provocateur Christopher Hitchens. White is not in disagreement with the atheism of these writers. The problem, as he sees it, is more that they feel permitted to marvel at the ‘beautiful’ laws of nature without stopping to ask what it really means to have a sense of wonderment or beauty. Stephen Hawking, White argues, in employing words like ‘miracle’ and ‘amazing’ in his book *The Grand Design*, ‘uses an aesthetic terminology without feeling any need to provide an actual aesthetic.’ Dawkins, meanwhile, in awe at images from the Hubble telescope, is guilty of a ‘lack of curiosity about what this feeling of awe means.’ This awe and wonder is, White argues, starting to be taken for granted by scientists, who are using it as a passport out of the ‘hard problem’ of why we have consciousness, and closing down our understanding, not increasing it.

So far so disagreeable – but where all this becomes really dangerous, argues White, is when a materialistic view starts to dominate social systems and politics. White is particularly indignant about scientists who feel under threat from religious discourse. The conflict between the two worldviews is less like a ‘war’, he says,



than 'a sixth grader smashing a kindergartner's face into the mud at recess,' given that science has 'powerful defenders in the world of applied science and technology, and beyond that the federal, corporate and military authorities that both depend on and fund the giant budgets of the sciences.' This strong social conscience is at the core of the book. The shame is that it is also where White becomes just as tribal and blunt as his adversaries, the neuro-empiricists. He would be on a more even playing field with them if he resisted his more sarcastic impulses.

But *The Science Delusion* is stronger on philosophy and art than on politics, and White's main point is sound: you cannot escape beliefs. You belong to a belief system if you find the DNA double helix 'a marvel' just as you do

if you think God is great. A lot of modern scientific rhetoric would nonetheless have it that we will eventually explain our beliefs, our very experience, all by the movements of particles through neural networks. But this ignores 'neuroscience's dependence on narrative and metaphor', argues White. When we say our brain 'encodes' thoughts, or 'stores' memories, we are describing it according to a symbolic world of our own making. The supposed 'war' between faith-based and reason-based worldviews misses the fact that both are rooted in, and making use of, a metaphor-based view of reality which admits that we both observe and create the world. In any case, more 'explanation' will only find us in a hall of mirrors. To put it another way: even if it were possible to 'explain' what it is to be dazzled, what if that explanation itself turned out to be really dazzling? Where would we turn then?

# Letting it All Go

Nagarakshita, a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, is reducing her possessions and moving out of a residential community in preparation for a nine-month solitary retreat in Australia. She will be in occasional email contact with two fellow Order members who will advise her as her retreat progresses, but otherwise she will be in total seclusion. Here she talks to Vidyadaka about why she is doing this, what she fears, and what she hopes it will bring to the world.

**Vidyadaka:** *Why not start by saying a little bit about your name?*

**Nagarakshita:** Sure. The name I was given at ordination is Nagarakshita, and that means ‘she who is protected and guarded by serpents or dragons who live deep in the ocean, or lake’. So when my preceptor witnessed my ordination and gave me that name, she explained that she had given it to me to encourage me to go deep into my practice, to really plumb the depths, and to have confidence that I could do that safely because those mythical dragons who live in the deep – which you could also see as your subconscious – will protect me, will guide me. So it’s a very precious name and one that should help me in this next phase of my life.

*It certainly should. Do you feel like you’ve gained reliance on that on previous retreats?*

Yes certainly, and actually through my Dharma life. I’ve been ordained for just about seven years now, and I have experienced a reaching deeper into myself. I really value being able to go deeply into my practice and explore the myths.

I’m delighted that I’ve got such a mythological name. I’m somebody that has a tendency to be very literal so my name just doesn’t allow that at all. You can’t really grasp it, so that is also very precious. I’ve done several solitary retreats, the longest was six weeks, and it’s been very good to know that.

*What have you learned from those experiences?*

I really, really value the opportunity to go on solitary retreat in a secluded place. One rather amusing incident which I think does illustrate what can happen on a solitary retreat was that I’d been in this very secluded little house in the middle of a field for several days when I noticed that my jacket was not hanging where I’d put it. I went round the house saying, “Who has moved my jacket, who has moved my jacket?!” It really pointed out the kind of habit I can get into: it must be somebody else that’s done this if I can’t find something, or if something goes wrong. But of course there was no one else. So that can happen with something like misplacing one’s jacket, but also with one’s mental states. If for example I’m on solitary retreat and I’m

feeling really down or angry or upset, actually there's no external person who has caused that. It really makes you stand back and take full responsibility for your actions and your own mental states.

*You've decided to go on a nine-month solitary retreat. That sounds like an extremely long time to be on your own. Why are you doing this?*

Well, I have yearned to go on a long solitary for a very long time, probably more than twenty years. Since before I came along to this movement. I had a possibly romantic view that I would go off into a cave in the mountains for three years, three months and three days – which is the traditional Tibetan way of doing things – without thinking about the consequences, and the kind of training that people who take that retreat have. But then last summer it suddenly dawned on me that I'm not getting any younger. I'm nearly 67, and if I don't do it now, while I've got my health and strength, while I don't have responsibilities as a parent anymore, then when are the conditions going to be right? I can't be certain I'll have health and strength in two or three years' time, not even in six months. So if I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it now.

*So currently you live in a community, and you're going to move out. You've got to let go of an awful lot in order to be able to do that. What's that like, is it unnerving? What does that bring up?*

It's very interesting. I mean I shall be very sad to leave my friends because I'm leaving the community completely. I'm shedding an awful lot. I only have a roomful anyway—I've downsized from a big house, to a smaller



house, and then the smaller house to this one room. And bit by bit I'm whittling it all down. I suppose it's a kind of spiritual death because I am systematically stripping away all the familiar kinds of things. And I'm making sure at the moment that I visit people who it's really important to spend time with, like my aunt who is 99, my children and grandchildren, and various friends both within London in the Sangha and further afield. I'm taking them with me in my heart, as it were, by making sure I spend good time with them.

*It feels like that's a really good thing. Just at some point in life to attend to everything – relationships, all your belongings – and make sure that your life is in order so that you can leave well.*

Absolutely, I mean earlier this year as I began the process, it really felt as if somebody had said, well you've got six months to live. So I've been



making sure that I put everything in order and that I take leave properly of people, in a very real way. And it's interesting how very little one needs. All these things; and some of the things, when I pick them up I think Ooh, I'm not quite sure if I want to get rid of that... And then I think, well, if I was actually going to die, I would have to let go of it.

*Real renunciation.*

It is real renunciation.

*Have you got any concerns? Are you thinking, What an opportunity, or rather, Oh gosh, what have I taken on?!*

*(Laughs)* Both of those plus more. Deep down I am just so happy and delighted that I'm going. I'm longing for it with every fibre of my being. And I am apprehensive, because I have no idea what I will meet. Well I know who I will meet, I will meet myself, and it will just be me, and I can tell you that's not a pretty sight! Because on solitary you really do come up against yourself and all the irritating habits of the mind.

*Someone who has never been on solitary retreat might be thinking: a person going away for a year, how is that going to help the world? What would you say to that?*

What helps is that I truly believe the way to help the world is by practising the Dharma as fully as I can, by exploring the Buddha's teaching with the aim of gaining enlightenment for the sake of all beings. There are many, many people doing wonderful practical things to help individuals in the world and to alleviate suffering. The cause of suffering, according to the Buddha,

is our craving and our delusion, so by going off like this I'm hoping that I shall refine, as in a fire, as much of myself as I can and take a few more steps along the path towards that realisation. So I do dedicate to it to the release of suffering of all beings. I recently heard of an Order Member who lives in America who had been hoping to retire and devote more of his life to teaching and practising the Dharma, and unfortunately there was a financial situation that meant he has to go on working for several years. His response has been to put all of himself fully into his work, and more intensively in his practice. And when I read that in *Shabda*, our Order newsletter, I was so moved and inspired that I've been in correspondence with him. And I feel quite strongly, from that correspondence, that I'm doing this on behalf of those people who can't. Maybe I'll have something to share and offer when I come back, in which case I will be delighted to do so. Maybe I'll have just perfumed the world a bit more through practice, I don't know.

*Have you got anything else you'd like to say?*

Well I would like to mention something about the place I'm going, which is called Naganaga. In the Buddhist tradition a 'naga' is a water snake or a dragon, as in my name. And Naga in the Aboriginal language means a ridge or a hill. Now the ridge above the Vihara where the little hut that I'm going to be staying in sits, that ridge is known by the local tribes as the ridge of the water snake, hence Naganaga. So I feel I'm really going to a place that echoes the mythology of my name and that will continue to be my protection, because I shall need protection. I shall need it on lots of different levels, not least from my own mind.

# Remembering Sangharatna

1936–2014

by Maitreyaraja

For an hour one Thursday in June this year, a dead man lay in a long wooden box in the main shrine room at the London Buddhist Centre. Sangharatna's face was pale and gaunt. He was shrouded in white, with a brand-new, white kesa placed over his heart area, symbolic of his Ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order. Order Members came and went to sit with the body – to meditate, reflect and pay their last respects to Sangharatna. People were slowly gathering for a Buddhist ritual that would see many tell stories, share anecdotes, reminisce, rejoice in and celebrate Sangharatna.

Sangharatna had been born and lived in Stirling, Scotland. One of his nieces and her daughter came down to the LBC for the funeral. We found out that Sangharatna had been a good pianist in his younger days and could learn tunes by ear. He had done his National Service some time after the Second World War and then decided to train as a physiotherapist. And so he left Scotland for London. After his training he not only practised as a physiotherapist but also started exploring Buddhism. He went to lectures at the Buddhist Society in Ecclestone Square, which hosted a whole range of speakers in the early seventies, including two members of the Western Buddhist Order, Subhuti and Devamitra. His connection with Subhuti in particular developed, and soon Robert Campbell, as he was then known, found himself getting more and more involved with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Eventually he decided to commit fully to his practice, and give Buddhism a central place in his life.



In 1975, after much searching for a suitable property, a location for a new London Buddhist Centre had been found – the derelict, burnt-out Victorian fire station in Bethnal Green. Many, many people were drawn to the building and conversion project, and contributed in myriad ways. Sangharatna was one of them, and before long he made the decision to leave his job and his prospective career to help out. He used to work in the office – or what passed for one! – and order materials that were needed, although materials were re-used where possible. Chintamani told us that one day the task at hand was to sort out all the nails and screws – to save the ones that could be used and discard any that couldn't. Sangharatna had a painful back which he suffered uncomplainingly for most of his life – but he wasn't going to let it stop him mucking in. In conversation with a friend he came up with the idea of lying face-down on ironing board, adjusting the height so that he could gaze down on the big pile of nails and screws and sort them.

These were the early days at the LBC, before my time – I was only eleven the year the fire station was bought. I got to

know Sangharatna much later in his life, when he was in his sixties and seventies. He cut a distinctive figure around the Buddhist village in Bethnal Green in the 1990s: tall, lean, slightly stooped with his baseball cap on and a day pack over his shoulders. Walking, stick in hand, he would go about the place at quite a clip. He would help out on reception at the LBC, teach a lunchtime class and meet up with people who were attending the centre. Sangharatna and I started having lunch together regularly. I was getting to know him gradually. I discovered that he loved listening to the radio, particularly science programmes, and enjoyed trips to art galleries. He had a fondness for language, and was a stickler for correct usage.

When we met up I could see that Sangharatna was not that comfortable in his body, but I didn't know about his bad back, which caused him a lot of pain. Some time after the building project, he had been knocked off his bike, which only made things worse. Subhadramati interviewed him about it once for an LBC newsletter. She was struck by Sangharatna's insistence that she not report it as a bad thing that had happened to him. What he seemed to take from it most was how kind people had been to him after it had happened. When I was getting to know him, I couldn't understand why he was so particular. He would seem to take forever to set himself up in a chair when we sat down for lunch. And we couldn't just sit any table in the café – oh no – we had to sit a particular table and he had to sit in a particular chair. His particularity used to drive me up the wall! Little did I know that he was just trying to set himself up comfortably and get in the position where he could hear me well while we were together. There was one aspect of his particularity I did like though. I would be touched, when I said that I was going off on retreat, to see him get out his diary and write down when I would be going and when I would be coming back. He liked to bear people in mind.

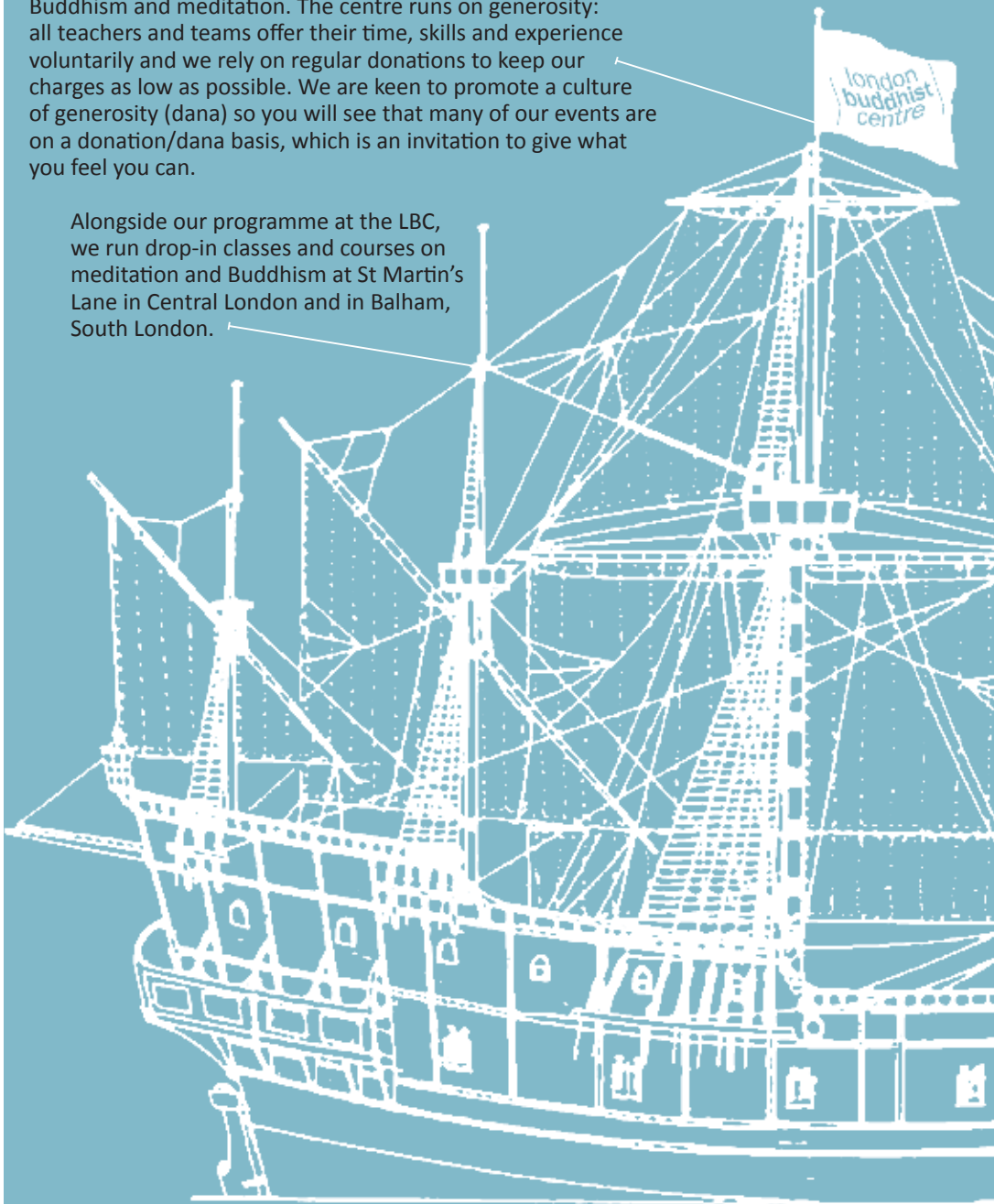
In the early noughties some friends and I were hatching a plan to go on pilgrimage to India and visit the Buddhist holy sites. At one point I heard that Sangharatna wanted to go too. I had my doubts as to whether this was a good idea – to me he seemed too elderly and frail. I had been to India when I was twenty-three and I had found it a fascinating country to travel in but not an easy one. But Sangharatna was clear that he did want to come, and sure enough he set out with about ten of us on our Indian adventure. My fondest memory of Sangharatna from that journey was the day that we climbed Vulture's Peak, the hilltop looking over the Indian plains where the Buddha was reported to have given many teachings. It was a beautifully warm day. Sangharatna kept walking up the hill, taking it very steady, talking to his Dharma friends as he went. Another friend carried a chair in case he needed to sit down at any point. There was certainly a tough, determined side to Sangharatna's character. In the end it was some of us younger men who had bouts of illness, and suffered more than Sangharatna did on that India trip.

One other memory stands out for me. One day I met Sangharatna in the old cloakroom at the LBC. He had just come back from an Order Gathering. He used to be a very regular attendee of these gatherings and valued them highly. On this day he looked particularly well and happy. He was telling me that he had decided to go and speak to a few Order Members that he had had communication difficulties with in the past. He had wanted to talk through what had happened and to get back into harmony with them. It was an ordinary day, in an ordinary place, but there seemed to be something different about Sangharatna – he was glowing. He had obviously been meditating, he had been with his Order once again, and he had managed to talk through things with a few people. His blue eyes were shining.

# 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 teams offer their time, skills and experience voluntarily and we rely on regular donations to keep our charges as low as possible. We are keen to promote a culture of generosity (dana) so you will see that many of our events are on a donation/dana basis, which is an invitation to give what you feel you can.

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

For many of our events, booking is essential.

You can book online at [lbc.org.uk](http://lbc.org.uk)

You can drop in to reception 10am-5pm Mon-Sat

Or you can call 020 8981 1225



The London Buddhist Centre  
51 Roman Road, E2 OHU  
[info@lbc.org.uk](mailto:info@lbc.org.uk)  
[www.lbc.org.uk](http://www.lbc.org.uk)  
020 8981 1225

Facebook [facebook.com/LondonBuddhistCentre](https://facebook.com/LondonBuddhistCentre)  
Twitter [@LDNBuddhist](https://twitter.com/LDNBuddhist)

# 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

Where you see two prices, it indicates a full rate or concessionary rate

## Winter Retreat

### Vision and Transformation

Experiencing the World of Enlightenment: human life is so often driven by consuming what we want, avoiding what we don't like, and doing our best to ignore the rest. If this is what motivates us then our world will never be satisfying. How can we live in a better world? Changing our mind changes the world, and the teachings of the Buddha lead to a deepening of our lives. This retreat will explore freedom from our mundane consciousness and help us experience the enlightened world more vividly.

Led by Vidyadaka and Shraddhasiddhi

22 Dec – 1 Jan (10 nights) at Adhithana. £490/390

22 Dec – 27 Dec or 27 Dec – 1 Jan (5 nights) at Adhithana. £290/240

## Urban Retreat

On the Urban Retreat you carry on living your normal day-to-day life whilst finding ways to intensify your practice of meditation and Buddhism. We will support you with three day-long retreats, morning meditations, special classes, yoga and body work, daily text messages and emails, and a Buddhist Festival. The retreat is for suitable for all levels of experience including complete newcomers. On the initial day retreat we will split into two groups: 'introductory' for those new to the urban retreat; and 'going deeper' for those who have done one before.

Led by Subhadramati, Singhamanas, Vidyadaka and Shraddhasiddhi

Sat 6 Sept – Sun 14 Sept. Full programme info to follow. Free, booking essential.

## Classes

### Lunchtime Meditation

Monday–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. £10/£5 suggested donation.

### Drop-in Class for Men

Tuesday Daytimes

Drop in for a friendly, informal exploration of the Buddha's teachings, starting with a short period of meditation.

Tuesdays from 9 Sept – 16 Dec, 11am-12.30pm. All men welcome. Donation/dana.

### 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 Buddhist practice, with meditation, talks, workshops and discussion.

Please note that the first Wednesday of every month is Practice morning with meditation and puja, especially suited

to more experienced meditators. 10.35am-12.30pm. Creche facilities for under 5s, supported by experienced staff. Donation/dana.

### New Drop-in Class

Thursday Evenings

### Yoga and Meditation

An evening of practising yoga and meditation—energising the body and concentrating the mind. Suitable for complete beginners in either or both yoga and meditation. Wear comfortable, warm clothes.

Starting on 18 Sept, 7.15-9.45pm. Suggested donation £10/£5.

### First Friday

Sub35 Class

The alternative Friday night! Meditation, discussion and friendship with time to drink tea and chat after the class. Everyone welcome, especially newcomers.

7.15-9.45pm (tea bar till 11pm)  
Suggested donation £6.

### Lunchtime and Early Evening 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. All levels.

Lunchtimes start on 15 Sept: Every Weekday 12-12.45pm. £5/£3 suggested donation. No need to book, just drop in  
Evenings start on 8 Sept: Mon/

Tues/Wed/Fri 5.45-6.45pm. £7/£5 suggested donation. No need to book, just drop in

For more yoga events, including Saturday mornings and Sundays, see the 'Going Deeper' section

## Courses

### Not About Being Good

Buddhist ethics are not about conforming to a set of conventions. Instead, they are about coming into greater harmony with all that lives.

A systematic approach to cultivating love, clarity and contentment. Using the book *Not About Being Good* as our guide to daily practice.

Led by Subhadramati (author)  
6 weeks from Wed 17 Sept – 22 Oct.  
£100/£80 (price inc. book)

### 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 22 Sept or 10 Nov, 7.15-9.45pm. £90/£70. Booking essential.

# Getting started

continued

## 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 course is led by Maitreyabandhu, the author of the book 'Life with Full Attention', which will be our guide to daily practice.

Led by Maitreyabandhu and Shradhasiddhi

Wed evenings 29 Oct – 17 Dec. 7.15-9.45pm.

£130/£100 (price inc. book). Booking essential.

## Days and Retreats

### Open Day, Open House

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. Also, take part in a tour of the centre, as part of Open House weekend.

Sun 21 Sept, 11am-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.

Sundays 19 Oct, 16 Nov, 7 Dec.  
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 Sept, 24-26 Oct, 14-16 Nov,  
at Kench Hill. £150/£110. Booking essential.

## Sub35 Retreat

Fearless Love

Explore how our busy lives stand in the way of our true potential for tranquility, mindfulness, wisdom and love. Based on the Buddha's teachings, we will be cultivating the courage to meditate on the depths of our experience, whilst connecting with like-minded people. Suitable for anyone under 35. 12-14 Sept, at Kench Hill. £150/£110. Booking essential.

## Outreach

More meditation courses & classes around London:

### Central London

Newcomers' Class

Sat 1-2pm. No need to book. £5/£3

Four-week Foundation

courses in Buddhist

Meditation

Four Saturdays starting 6 Sept, 4 Oct, 1, 29 Nov. 10am-12.30pm. £75/£55.  
Booking essential.

At St Martins Lane, WC2

Weekly drop-in classes and courses are also happening in Balham, [South](#)

[London](#). For more details visit [lbc.org.uk/SouthLondon.htm](http://lbc.org.uk/SouthLondon.htm)

Or in [Hornchurch](#), Essex check [hornchurchbuddhistgroup.org.uk](http://hornchurchbuddhistgroup.org.uk)



# Going Deeper

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

## Presidential Visit

### Rambles Around Reality

As part of his Presidential visit, Subhuti will be giving a series of informal 'rambles' or digressive talks on the Dharma. Subhuti has been ordained for over forty years and is known for communicating the Dharma with great skill, clarity and insight. Tues 28, Wed 29 & Thurs 30 Oct, 5.30pm-7pm. Doors briefly open for latecomers just before 6pm. Donation/dana. Subhuti will also be involved with other events during this time (27 Oct-3 Nov), so keep an eye out for publicity.

## New Year Mandala Retreat

### The Direct Path

The four foundations of mindfulness (the satipatthanas) are a central aspect of the Buddha's rediscovery of an ancient path of practice leading to Enlightenment. Any single meditation practice from the sattipathanas is capable of leading to insight – the Buddha taught this as the direct path to Awakening. Join us on this retreat for regular meditators as we draw inspiration from the life of the historical Buddha and put his teachings more and more fully into practice.

Led by Manjusihā

27 Dec – 2 Jan, at Kench Hill. £350/£300. Booking essential

## Course

### Who Hates the Metta Bhavana?

In this six-week drop-in course, Jnanavaca explores how to creatively and effectively transform hatred into love.

16 Sept – 21 Oct, as part of the Tuesday Class.

7.15-9.45pm. £10/£5 Suggested donation.

## Meditation Toolkit

### The Pleasure Principle

Six teachings on consecutive lunchtimes about discovering pleasure in meditation and working with your mind.

Led by Maitreyabandhu

Mon 29 Sept – Sat 4 Oct. As part of the lunchtime drop-in meditation class. Donation/dana.

# Going Deeper...

Continued

## 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 with 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.

Mon 7.15-9.45pm.

See [lbc.org.uk/DharmaClass.htm](http://lbc.org.uk/DharmaClass.htm) for full listings. Suggested donation £6.

### 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. Suggested donation £10/£5.

### Drop-in Class for Men

Tuesday Daytimes

Drop in for a friendly, informal exploration of the Buddha's teachings, starting with a short period of meditation.

Tuesdays from 9 Sept – 16 Dec, 11am-12.30pm. All men welcome. Donation/dana.

### Sangha Meditation

Wednesday Mornings

An open, un-led meditation for regulars. Stay around for tea and cereal afterwards.

Every Wed 7-8am. Donation/dana.

NB: enter only through Breathing Space entrance 6.45-6.55am. No late admittance possible.

### Daytime Class

Wednesday Daytimes

The Buddhist three-fold path leads beyond suffering, towards greater, open-hearted awareness and freedom. This term we are focusing on practice, with meditation, talks, workshops and discussion. The term will also include exploration of devotional practice, with three sessions on the 'Magic of Mantra.' (see separate listing for more details).

The first Wednesday of every month is 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.

New Drop-in Class  
Thursday Evenings

### Yoga and meditation

An evening of practising yoga and meditation – energising the body and concentrating the mind. Wear comfortable, warm clothes. All welcome.

Starting 18 Sept, 7.15-9.45pm.

Suggested donation £10/£5.

### 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.

7.15-9.45pm. Suggested donation £6.

## Sub35 Events

### First Friday

Regular Class

The alternative Friday Night! Meditation, discussion and friendship with time to drink tea and chat after the class.

Everyone under 35 welcome.

7.15-9.45pm (tea bar till 11pm)

Suggested donation £6.

### Final Friday

Men's & Women's Nights

An evening to explore Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels more deeply and an opportunity to develop spiritual friendships within a single-sex context. With meditation training, Dharma

discussion, practice reviews and teaching from Order members.

7.15-9.45pm. Suggested donation £6. Experience of Triratna Buddhism and both meditation practices required.

## October Seminar Series

In October, the Sub35 Kula hosts a popular series of weekly Friday events exploring the themes of Lifestyle and Going Forth, Work and Money, Family and Children, and Sex and Relationships. Join us to meet Triratna Order Members who do not usually teach at the centre, sharing their lifestyle, living situations and paths of progression. This will be along with the usual meditation (suitable for beginners), lounging and late night hang out, including of course the now, famous late night T-bar. This promises to be a meaningful and engaging month – and all you have to do is turn up!

Look out for the programme nearer the time for more details.

## Yoga for Meditation

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

complementary practices – through yoga we can develop a language to speak to our bodies; with meditation we learn to attend to our bodies and to each other with kindness.

## Lunchtime and Early Evening

Drop-in sessions of yoga for meditation. All levels.

Lunchtimes start on 15 Sept: Every Weekday 12-12.45pm. £5/3 suggested donation. No need to book  
Evenings start on 8 Sept: Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri 5.45-6.45pm. £7/£5 suggested donation. No need to book

## Saturday Mornings

These classes will start with yoga and finish with sitting meditation practice. Wear comfortable, warm clothes  
Every Saturday starts on 20 Sept: 10.30am-12pm. Suggested donation £10/£5. No need to book, just drop in

## Sundays

A whole day suitable for beginners in either or both yoga and meditation.  
12 Oct, 7 Dec, 10am-5pm. £35/£25. Booking essential.

## Yoga Day

This is a special day with visiting teachers who will lead through bodily posture and breathing work. This day will be suitable for anyone who is already practising yoga and who wishes to explore

how yoga can be used and integrated into Dharma practice.

Led by Sadhita, Sudaka and Holly.  
Sat 8 Nov, 10am-5pm. £35/£25. Booking essential.

## 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 28 Sept, 26 Oct, 30 Nov, 14 Dec.

10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Suggested donation £25.

### 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. This day is also part of the Urban Retreat programme.

Led by Subhadramati and Vidyadaka  
Sun 7 Sept, 10am-5pm.  
Donation/dana.

# Going Deeper...

Continued

## Full Moon Pujas

This monthly ritual gives a regular point of devotional focus and the chance to explore the expansive scope of Buddhist ritual.

Tues 9 Sept, Wed 8 Oct, Thurs 6 Nov, Sat 6 Dec. Times to be announced.  
Donation/dana.

## The Magic of Mantra

A mantra is a sound symbol of the Buddha. At these three sessions we will be exploring how, through chanting mantras, we can come into a deeper relationship with the qualities of the Buddha – kindness, courage, generosity, faithfulness and wisdom. All welcome.

10, 17 & 24 Sept. 10.35am-12.30pm.  
As part of the Wednesday Daytime Class. Creche facilities for under 5s, supported by experienced staff.  
Donation/dana. No need to book.

## Women's Mitra Morning

What do I need to do to get ordained?

A morning for all women mitras.

With Subhadramati and Shradhdhasiddhi

Sat 20 Sept, 9.45 for a prompt 10am start, till 12.45pm. Donation/dana.

## Beauty and the Transformation of Consciousness

An opportunity to explore your inner vision through colour and painting techniques. We will also explore how painting (like meditation) can connect us to something greater, as

well as directly transform the mind. Suitable for all levels of experience in painting including those terrified of drawing and painting! Minimum 6 months meditation experience.

Led by Amitajyoti  
Sat 20 Sept, 10-5pm at the London Buddhist Arts Centre. Materials provided. Please bring old clothes to paint in and any images that stimulate your imagination.  
£35/£25. Booking essential.

## The Art of Tea

Tea harvested from ancient trees, is a medicine that can restore the balance in our life. Done in a mindful and ritual way, this simple act can help to connect with ourselves and others. It is also an aesthetic experience of simplicity and beauty. The day will be in two halves so you can come to the whole day or just for the morning or afternoon.

Led by Prabhasvara  
Sat 11 Oct, 10am-12.45pm and 2.30-5pm. Suggested donation £10 per session. Very limited places so booking essential

## Men's Mitra Day

Three Gateways to Liberation

How can beauty, joy and delight lead us to Liberation? We will explore the theme using the Three Vimoksha Mukhas through experience in meditation, reflection and discussion.

Led by Jayaka  
Sun 5 Oct, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.  
Donation/dana.

## A Day with Death

Woody Allen said 'I'm not afraid of death; I just don't want to be there when it happens.' But Sangharakshita's view is that 'Only those who experience death in life can experience life in death.' This is a day of meditation with readings, contemplations and reflections on the themes of death and impermanence.

Led by Priyavajra  
Sun 19 Oct, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.  
Suggested donation £25.

## A Journey in Receptivity

Through listening to music we enter into a deeper connection with the meaning and significance of the 7-fold Puja. This day will emphasise aesthetic awareness and the transformative power of music. An opportunity for regular meditators to practise meditation and puja together, and to refresh sources of inspiration through experiencing beauty.

Led by Vandanjyoti  
Sat 25 Oct, 10am-5pm. Suggested donation £25.

## The Body Sings Out

A day for young women  
Young women's bodies are objectified in popular culture and demonised in some religious traditions. Join us to explore how we can be free to come into a loving relationship with the body. With meditation, reflection

and mindful movement.

Suitable for all women under 35 who know both meditation practices.

Sun 26 Oct, 10am-5.30pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Suggested donation £25.

## Compassionate Communication

An exploration of how the qualities of awareness and kindness developed in meditation can be brought into our everyday communication, particularly focusing on how to deal with feelings of anger and frustration.

Led by Vajraghanta

Sun 2 Nov, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. £35/£25. Booking essential.

## Your Money or Your Life

Money makes for wonderful means but terrible ends. If we focus our life on a mere symbol of relative value then we risk alienating ourselves from the very things we seek – love, meaning and rich experience. Could money instead be a road not just to a better world, but to Enlightenment itself? Amalavajra, an ex-City broker turned fundraiser, will lead us in a practical and experiential workshop, so please bring recent bank statements (which you needn't share!).

Led by Amalavajra

Sun 16 Nov, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Suggested donation £25.

## Buddhism and 12 Steps

How can you practise the Dharma and work your programme at the same time? A day of exploration with talks, discussion and meditation for those in 12 Step programmes who know both the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana practices. We will be investigating the Buddhist path and integrating it with the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions. A day of deepening friendship and Sangha.

Led by Sanghasiha & Shraddhasiddhi

Sun 23 Nov, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Suggested donation £25.

## 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 on the last Sunday of every month.  
28 Sept, 26 Oct, 30 Nov, 28 Dec.

## Christmas and New Year Day Retreats

Over the Christmas and New Year, there will be several day retreats to spend in meditation and reflection, for those who know both practices.

Thurs 25 Dec, Fri 26 Dec, Thurs 1 Jan, 10am-5pm. Suggested donation £25. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. No need to book.

## New Year's Eve

An evening of meditation, reflection and ritual – a way to enter the New Year with a mind that is clear and positive. For those who know both practices.

Wed 31 Dec, 7.15pm-12.15am.

Donation/Dana. No need to book.

## Retreats

### Sub35 Retreat

#### Fearless Love

Explore how our busy lives stand in the way of our true potential for tranquility, mindfulness, wisdom and love. Based on the Buddha's teachings, we will be cultivating the courage to meditate on the depths of our experience, whilst connecting with like-minded people. Suitable for anyone under 35. 12-14 Sept, at Kench Hill. £150/£110. Booking essential.

### Eros and Beauty Retreat

How can we work with the force of desire and enter the gateway called 'The Beautiful'? A weekend retreat for anyone who knows the two practices, exploring spiritual death and rebirth through seminars, meditation and ritual.

Led by Maitreyabandhu

21-23 Nov, at Kench Hill. £150/£110. Booking essential.

Monday Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

# Oct

1	2	3 <b>First Friday</b> Meditate, discuss, connect. For under 35's 7.15-11pm	4 <b>Film Night</b> Dr Ambedkar 6-9.45pm	5 <b>Men's Mitra Day</b> Gateways to Liberation 10am-5pm
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6	7	8 <b>Full Moon Puja</b> Buddhist ritual	9	10	11 <b>Art of Tea</b> Morning and afternoon sessions <b>Poetry East</b> 7.30pm	12 <b>Dharma Revolution Day</b> 10am-5pm <b>Yoga Day</b> 10am-5pm
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13	14	15	16	17	18 <b>Film Night</b> Galvay 7.15-9.45pm	19 <b>Intro Day</b> Learn to meditate 10am-5pm <b>Day with Death</b> 10am-5pm
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20	21	22	23	24 <b>Introductory Retreat</b> Meditation weekend	25 <b>Journey in Receptivity Day</b> 10am-5pm <b>Poetry East</b> 7.30pm	26 <b>Sun School</b> 10.30am-12.30pm <b>Meditation Day &amp; Body Sings Out</b> both 10am-5pm
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27	28 <b>1st Ramble around Reality</b> With Subhuti 5.30-7pm	29 <b>2nd Ramble</b> 5.30-7pm <b>Life with Full Attention</b> 8 week course starts 7.15-9.45pm	30 <b>3rd Ramble</b> 5.30-7pm	31 <b>Final Friday</b> For sub35s. 7.15-11pm
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Yoga for Meditation</i> Drop-in starts Mon-Fri 12-12.45pm	2 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Full Moon Puja</i> Buddhist Ritual	3 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Magic of Mantra</i> 3 week drop-in course 10.35am-12.30pm	4 <b>Urban Retreat</b>	5 <b>First Friday</b> Meditate, discuss, connect. For under 35s 7.15-11pm	6 <b>Urban Retreat</b> Starts, until 14 Sept., Events every day	7 <b>Urban Retreat</b> Total Immersion Day
8 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Yoga for Meditation</i> Drop-in starts Mon-Fri 12-12.45pm	9 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Full Moon Puja</i> Buddhist Ritual	10 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Magic of Mantra</i> 3 week drop-in course 10.35am-12.30pm	11 <b>Urban Retreat</b>	12 <b>Urban Retreat</b> <i>Sub35 Retreat</i> Fearless Love weekend	13 <b>Urban Retreat</b>	14 <b>Padmasambhava Day Festival</b> 10am-10pm
15 <b>Yoga for Meditation</b> Drop-in starts Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri 5.45-6.45pm	16 <b>Who Hates the Metta Bhavana?</b> 6 week drop-in course starts: 7.15-9.45pm	17 <b>Not About Being Good</b> 6 week course starts 7.15-9.45pm	18 <b>New Class: Yoga and Meditation</b> Weekly drop-in 7.15-9.45pm	19 <b>Introductory Retreat</b> Meditation weekend	20 <b>Women's Mitra Morning</b> 10am-12.45pm <b>Beauty ..... Day</b> 10am-5pm at Arts Centre	21 <b>Open Day</b> Free talks, meditation and more. All welcome. 11am-5pm
22 <b>Intro to Buddhism and Meditation</b> 6 week course starts 7.15-9.45pm	23	24	25	26 <b>Final Friday</b> For sub35s. 7.15-11pm	27	28 <b>Sunday School</b> 10.30am-12.30pm <b>Meditation Day</b> For regulars 10am-5pm
29 <b>Meditation Toolkit</b> Lunchtime Course 6 lunchtimes Mon-Sat. 1-2pm	30					

# Sept

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5 <b>First Friday</b> Meditate, discuss, connect. For under 35s 7.15-11pm	6 <b>Full Moon Puja</b> Buddhist ritual	7 <b>Intro Day</b> Learn to meditate 10am-5pm <b>Yoga Day</b> 10am-5pm
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 <b>Meditation Day</b> For regulars 10am-5pm
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 <b>Winter Retreat</b> Vision & Transformation Until 27 Dec or 1 Jan	23	24	25 <b>Day Retreat</b> 10am-5pm	26 <b>Day Retreat</b> 10am-5pm <b>Final Friday</b> For sub35s. 7.15-11pm	27 <b>New Year Mandala Retreat</b> The Direct Path Until 2 Jan	28 <b>Sunday School</b> 10.30am-12.30pm
29	30	31 <b>New Year's Eve</b> 7.15pm-12.15am	1 January <b>Day Retreat</b> 10am-5pm			

# Dec



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

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

# NOV

							<b>1</b>		
								<b>2</b> Compassionate Communication Day 10am-5pm	
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	<b>7</b> First Friday Meditate, discuss, connect. For under 35s 7.15-11pm	<b>8</b> Yoga Day 10am-5pm	<b>9</b> Sangha Day Festival 10am-10pm			
<b>10</b> Intro to Buddhism and Meditation 6 week course starts 7.15-9.45pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Introductory Retreat Meditation weekend	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm			
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Regulars' Weekend Retreat Eros & Beauty	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Buddhism and 12 Steps 10am-5pm			
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Final Friday For sub35s. 7.15-11pm	<b>29</b> Winter Fair & Skills Auction 11am-9pm	<b>30</b> Sunday School 10.30am-12.30pm			
						<b>Meditation Day</b> For regulars 10am-5pm			

# Festivals

Open to all

Buddhist festivals at the LBC are celebratory days that focus on the primary qualities of the Buddha and his teaching.

## Padmasambhava Day Festival

Padmasambhava is a historical figure, a fully enlightened being who has legendary and mythical status in the Buddhist tradition. His teachings are associated with a clear seeing into and through the nature of mind itself. On this day we will use ritual and myth, poetry and practice, teachings and offerings, mantras and music, to create an atmosphere that encourages us to boldly transcend the limits of our own minds. The journey is before us and he is the guide. Join us for a day of celebration, practice and devotion.

Led by Shraddhasiddhi and Singhamanas

Sun 14 Sept, 10am-10pm. This day is also part of the Urban Retreat programme. Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

## Dhamma Revolution Day

A profound, peaceful revolution is taking place in India, inspired by the great Indian social reformer Dr Ambedkar. Join us for a celebration of his heroic life and work. Bring a vegan or vegetarian Indian-inspired lunch to share.

Led by Akashadevi and Manjusih

Sun 12 Oct, 10am-5pm. Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

## Sangha Day Festival

Coming together as a community we can experience more than the sum of our individual parts. On Sangha Day we can celebrate our collective commitment. The day will include Mitra re-affirmation ceremonies. All welcome

Led by Subhadramati and Jayaka

Sun 9 Nov, 10am-10pm. Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

## Poetry East

Showcasing the work of well-known contemporary poets and the relationship between poetry and spiritual life.

### John Fuller

Emeritus Fellow at Magdalen College, Oxford, John Fuller is a poet, novelist and critic. He has published 19 collections of poetry and has won the Forward Prize and the Whitbread First Novel Award. 'A significant presence in British letters' – Michael Hofmann, *The Times*.

Sat 11 Oct, 7.30pm. £9.

Book at [www.poetryeast.net](http://www.poetryeast.net)

### Mimi Khalvati

Mimi Khalvati returns to Poetry East to launch her new collection *The Weather Wheel*. Her collection *The Meanest Flower* was a Financial Times Book of the Year and was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. 'Work of great delicacy and poise, intimate and brave, subtle and honest' – Michael Symmons Roberts.

Sat 25 Oct, 7.30pm. £9.

Book at [www.poetryeast.net](http://www.poetryeast.net)

## Film Nights

Film screenings that have Buddhist resonances.

### The Peaceful Dhamma Revolution

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Join us for an epic Bollywood-style biopic of the life and work of the great Dhamma revolutionary Dr Ambedkar. The film blends an all-singing and dancing dramatic extravaganza with real depth, including some historical footage of the 1956 mass conversions to Buddhism. Chai and snacks will be provided.

With Manjusiha and Akashadevi  
Sat 4 Oct, 6-9.45pm. £6 suggested donation

### Calvary

A priest threatened with murder must continue his daily work as before, bringing the same fearlessness to whatever arises. Although wickedly humorous at times, this is a powerful allegorical drama that hinges on universal ethical struggles.

With Jnanavaca

Sat 18 Oct, 7.15-9.45pm. £6 suggested donation

## Fundraising

Some of the events that are raising funds and fun for the upgrading of the LBC's retreat centre in Suffolk, Vajrasana.

Visit [vajrasanafuture.wordpress.com](http://vajrasanafuture.wordpress.com)

### Winter Fair and Skills Auction

Join us for our annual fair and auction, where you can bid for and offer skills with others in the Sangha. In the daytime there will be live music, stalls, a raffle, home-made cakes and lashings of community spirit. Dinner and main auction in the evening.

All proceeds go to Vajrasana.  
Sat 29 Nov, 11am-9pm

Look out for more events during the session which will be advertised separately.

## Volunteering

There are many opportunities for volunteering at the centre and it can be a satisfying and energetic way of supporting its work.

Follow the link to see more  
[www.lbc.org.uk/volunteers.htm](http://www.lbc.org.uk/volunteers.htm)

### Monday and Thursday afternoons

2.30pm. Straight after the lunch class join in with the work period, cleaning the centre and looking after the shrines. Afterwards, if you would like, there will also be a Dharma discussion group with meditation.

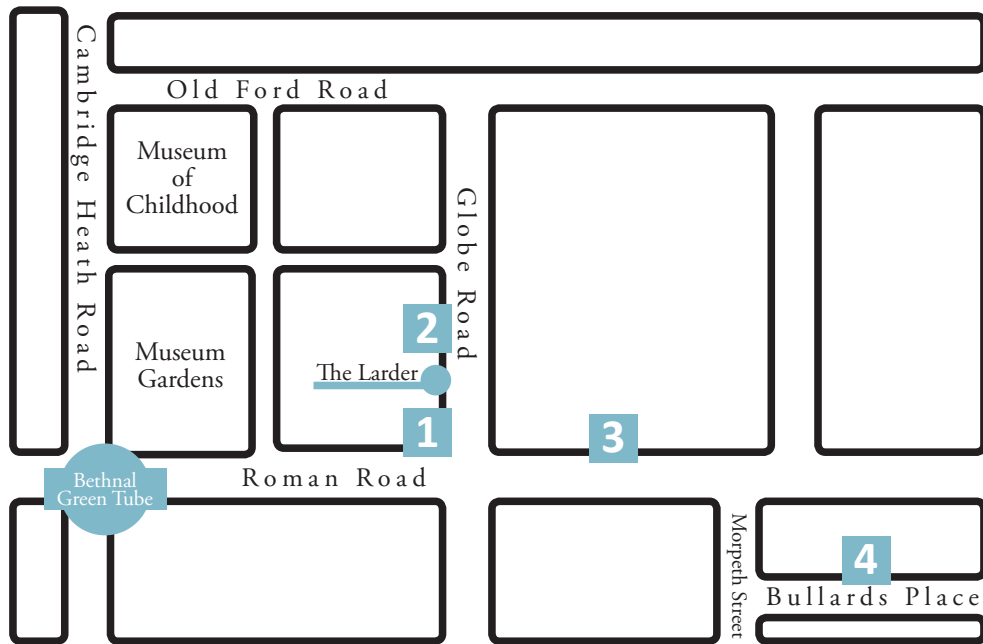
If you would like more information or would like to chat with someone about this, please contact Vajrabandhu [vajrabandhu@lbc.org.uk](mailto:vajrabandhu@lbc.org.uk) or drop in at one of these times.

Other areas where you can help include reception, administration and IT support, creche and shrine keeping.

If interested please contact  
[volunteers@lbc.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@lbc.org.uk)

# Around the Buddhist Centre

in Bethnal Green, London E2



## 1 London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road E2

020 8981 1225 / [www.lbc.org.uk](http://www.lbc.org.uk)

## 2 Jambala Charity Bookshop, 247 Globe Road E2

020 8709 9976

## 3 Lama's Pyjamas Charity Shop, 83 Roman Road E2

020 8980 1843 / [www.lamaspyjamas.com](http://www.lamaspyjamas.com)

## 4 London Buddhist Arts Centre, Eastbourne House, Bullards Place E2

020 8983 6134 / [www.londonbuddhistartscentre.co.uk](http://www.londonbuddhistartscentre.co.uk)

### LBC Reception & Bookshop

Book a retreat or a course. We also sell books, incense, greetings cards, art reproductions, meditation cushions and Buddha rupas.

Open  
Mon-Sat  
10am-5pm

### Jambala

Used books, vinyl records cd's, dvd's and jewellery

Open  
Mon-Sat  
10am-6pm

### Lama's Pyjamas

Vintage clothing, bric-a-brac and more

Open  
Mon-Fri 12-6pm  
Sat 10.30am-6pm

### The Larder

Coffee, pastries and vegetarian food  
241-243 Globe Road, E2  
020 3490 1404

[www.worldslarder.co.uk](http://www.worldslarder.co.uk)  
Open  
Mon-Fri 8am-7pm  
Sat 9am-5pm  
Sun 10am-5pm