

May–Aug 2015

london
buddhist
centre

Magazine
& Programme



Contents

MAGAZINE

- 2 Editorial**
- 3 Coming Up for Air** Does war bring us together? *Sāgaramati* reflects
- 9 Letter from a Retreat Centre** *Vajratara* sends word from the Brecon Beacons
- 11 Photo spread** A look inside community life with *Abhayanandi*
- 13 Book Review** *Ollie Brock* on responses to the ineffable
- 15 Brighter than the Sun** An interview with *Jnanavaca* on films that have inspired him
- 16 Diary** Soup kitchens and skeletons. *Singhamanas's* week

PROGRAMME

- 19** Programme May–Aug
- 21** Getting Started
- 23** Going Further
- 27** Festivals and Special Events
- 28** Sub35 Events
- 29** Calendar May–Aug
- 33** Yoga for Meditation
- 34** Films, Fairs and Fundraising

Contributors

Abhayanandi, Ollie Brock, Barry Copping, Lesley Lindsey, Jnanavaca, Maitreyaraja, Sāgaramati, Singhamanas, Vajratara, Vidyadaka

Community of the Spirit

I've not invited articles according to a specific theme for this new magazine, so it has been satisfying to see patterns emerging nonetheless. This third edition of *The London Buddhist* has been no exception: the importance of community seems to run through all of it.

The bonds that exist between us are an inherent part of who we are, how we live and what we do. Never the less, the games of separation that we play, through force of habit, produce aversion and conflict, polarization and difference in our lives and the world. Individually and globally this is a cause of great suffering.

How is it possible to live in such a way that we can love our fellow man without becoming exclusive with our love, reserving it for those within our group, our nation, our race? If we simply go along with the group our passivity will not bring solutions. If we react to the group then society will be made up of individualists who live only for themselves. Only a spiritual community can allow each of us to associate freely with others, while living up to the highest ideals in which love has both an individual and universal dimension. Only a spiritual community will help individuals grow towards their fullest potential.

Even in war there is love, and Sāgaramati explores the strong bonds of brotherhood that form in times of life and death, being forged deep beneath the ocean. Later he rejects the goal of war but finds a similar brotherhood in a spiritual community, which has the highest and most positive ideals.

In what we hope will be an occasional series, Vajratara writes to us from the spiritual community (Tiratanaloka) that she is living

within and talks of the transforming power of nature and communication. We also get a glimpse into another spiritual community, and Abhayanandi's world, having 'gone forth' onto the Buddhist Path.

Other contributors have approached the idea of community through the arts. In his column on books, Ollie Brock turns his attention this time to spiritual experiences which can have a frightening effect outside of a supportive context, and also how the poetic imagination can influence how we receive such experiences. Maitreyaraja's interview this time is with Jnanavaca. With the end of the world imminent in Danny Boyle's *Sunshine*, he tells us, the tension brings people together under a common goal, and as Jnanavaca recounts the journey to the sun, we find the community being drawn deeper and deeper into beauty.

Finally, Singhamanas gives us a few glimpses into his life and the lives of others as he takes the spirit of community to a soup kitchen, exploring the questions that come from his encounters.

Perhaps it is the presence of a shared, positive ideal and a living spiritual community that is missing in today's world. With increasing secularisation and individualisation, what is going to bring us together for the growth and benefit of everyone? I hope that some of these articles stimulate your vision for what a new society might look like.

– Vidyadaka

The London Buddhist online

For commenting, following and sharing.
The London Buddhist is now available as a blog.
 Visit thelondonbuddhist.org

Coming Up for Air

War provokes men's most aggressive energies, but it also brings them together. How do we harness these energies for the better?

Sāgaramati reflects

After prowling around under the Mediterranean for a few weeks, we surface to head back to Gibraltar. I'm on lookout duty. The early morning sun tints the sea-mist, transforming it into a canopy of golden light. As we plough through the glass-like sea, dolphins leap over our bow wave, bodies glittering in the light. All is still, and it would be: nuclear submarines don't make any noise. For a moment I'm expecting Poseidon to emerge from the depths to greet us. Another time I'm look-out in the North Sea in a storm force 10 in the early hours of the morning, strapped in with a safety harness. Out of the blackness a monstrous,

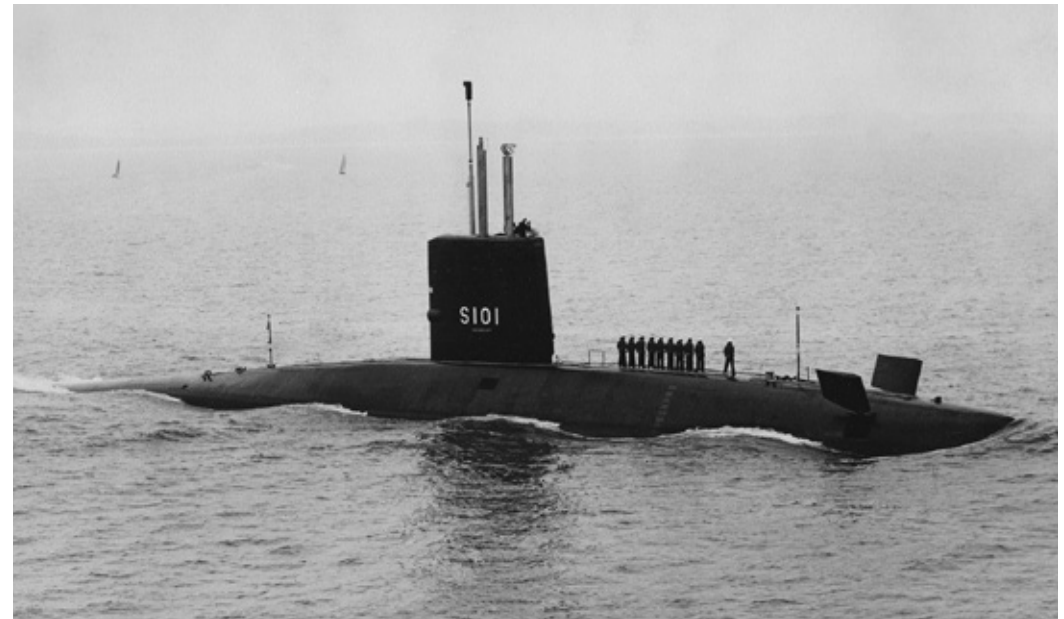
glowing, phosphorescent wave appears towering above us. I've never experienced this before and my heart's in my mouth. Being a nuclear submarine we don't ride the waves as a ship would do – we just burrow straight through them. For a couple of seconds we're literally under water and we're drenched. That first wave was terrifying but the next was just exhilarating. I still recall these things: the fresh and rich sea air of those days, the vivid light and colours of nature flooding the senses, such a contrast after weeks below the waves. I used to think to myself, 'Civilians never get this.'

But later, when I was on a Polaris submarine, an issue arose for me. Okay, we were said to be carrying a nuclear deterrent, but if that deterrence failed, it would follow that we had failed. What's the point of helping to bring about Armageddon? In a nuclear war there are no winners. So two of us, after quite a few beers, decided that if the 'launch' signal came through when we were on watch in the Radio Room, we would shred it. We couldn't see the point in using our sixteen missiles, each with multi-nuclear war heads, to kill millions of people once the war had already started.

This was one reason I left the Royal Navy after just one patrol on Polaris. I moved on from being a potential agent of death to being a hippie, a peace-and-love 'pinko'. But when I started to meditate, after a while I realized that I wasn't at ease with being a pinko. Bits of my psyche were still drawn to the image of war, or – more accurately – men at war. I recently watched a documentary about Tim Hetherington, a leading British photojournalist. Hetherington covered the conflicts in Liberia and Afghanistan, then Libya, where he was killed in 2011. The moment from the documentary that struck me most was when he, together with the American journalist Sebastian Junger, spent a year with an American marine platoon in a remote outpost in the Korengal Valley, eastern Afghanistan – a place he described as a 'male Eden'. He said the biggest fear the guys out there had was not of being killed, but of letting their buddies down. They were rough with one another, sure, but he'd never seen bonding like it. These guys really cared for each other, loved each other. Junger says, 'Tim had been in a lot of combat in Liberia, and I think one of the things he was looking for after that experience wasn't the truth about combat as a form of conflict, but the truth about combat as a form of bonding. What he saw with his camera, in this environment of killing and fear and hardness, was connection.'

Hetherington's description resonated with my memories of life as a submariner. We knew that if the submarine went down, we'd all go down together. You live and die together. I had never experienced that in civilian life: whether you liked someone or not, that fact that you were dependent on each other made for a different, less petty relationship. One of the main emphases in Buddhism is the ideal of Sangha, or spiritual community. It is a reminder that what brings Buddhists together is not personal likes and dislikes, or a special idea of who we are. It is not some crutch for a sense of identity. What creates a Sangha is the feeling that life has a purpose beyond what society can offer; and that this 'purpose' is, in a way, just an aspect of what life itself is. It does not come from 'above', some realm of the Absolute that sits outside of life. Sangha also reminds us that following the teachings of the Buddha is not an easy undertaking: we need others to keep our purpose to the fore, and to encourage and support us to that end. The Buddha-to-be may have been on his own under the Bodhi tree. But he got there in dependence on his previous teachers.

Looking back, I've realised that this has always been the attractive aspect of the symbol of war for me. Submarines in particular appealed because there you have a small unit of men who have to work as a team. In war every decision can be a matter of life or death, and that takes you to the essentials of living. War is only possible because men do it with others. In a war you feel you're part of something, and there's a purpose to what you are doing – even though, as many recent interviews with soldiers in Afghanistan have shown, that purpose is often simply to help one another survive, not serve the country as politicians like to tell to us. Is this not why young men are going to fight for Isis? As Nietzsche says, young men's energy 'needs to explode', and they don't care who lights their fuse.¹ The question is, how do we channel that unregenerate energy into



The submarine HMS/M Dreadnought in 1965. Sāgaramati is pictured third from left

something that enhances life rather than, as in the extreme case of Isis, seeks to destroy it? It's as if men need something akin to 'war' to motivate them and bring them together – normal society does not offer this. I put this to my teacher, Sangharakshita, when I was walking with him in King's Heath Park back in Birmingham a few years ago. Sangharakshita agreed, saying that it is indeed as if men need something like a war or an inspiring project – something 'outside' themselves – to bring them together.

I think a spiritual community, at its best, can offer this. I experienced this to some degree, albeit crudely, when I was on submarines; and I also experienced it in the 1970s when I came across the Triratna Buddhist movement – then known as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order – in North London. At that time most of us lived in the same street, in squats, with the Buddhist centre at the end of the street. We lived together, ate together, worked together, meditated together, went on retreat together and at times argued quite fiercely together. We felt we were an alternative society in the making. This spirit also continued during the building

phase of the LBC in the late 1970s; and I've seen it flourish since then in a few other places within the movement. But how to sustain that spirit? The spiritual life can be very difficult, especially if you are not involved in a project with others. Men need a shared goal. In a sense, we need our equivalent of a war.

The psychologist James Hillman has said that war is an 'archetypal impulse'. So 'war' can also be understood as having a mythical dimension that resonates in our psyches. It can also be understood metaphorically as an aspect of the spiritual quest.

So the myth of war can take on spiritual significance: as we make progress on the path we realise sooner or later that, as Nietzsche says, man is a war. But this is not a war with some external enemy. Rather it is 'a war against oneself', a war between the natural but crude and unregenerate forces within our own nature and those whose aim is to develop and manifest a more aware, kinder, less self-centered and wiser form of life. Nietzsche calls this 'Self-Overcoming'.

The Buddha himself used the metaphor of war. He is recording as saying, for instance, ‘Better than the conquest of a thousand men in battle is the conquest of one’s own self.’ And on occasion he used images of battle to illustrate the Buddhist life. In another passage the Buddha is asked,

Having slain what does one sleep soundly?
Having slain what does one not sorrow?
What is the one thing,
Whose killing you approve?

The Buddha replies:

Having slain wrath, one sleeps soundly;
Having slain wrath, one does not sorrow;
The killing of wrath,
With its poisoned root and honeyed tip,
This is the killing the noble ones praise;
For having slain that, one does not sorrow.



Sāgaramati at 17

Here the enemy is ‘wrath’, but it is also the forces of greed, hatred and delusion, our conceit – our need for status, our dear possessions, our confused views. These are the ‘enemy’. However, although this is a

war within oneself, as Herr Nietzsche would have it, here there can be no violence against oneself. The ‘slaying’, for example, consists in not giving expression to certain feelings and emotions rooted in greed, hatred and so on. In a sense there is nothing unethical about feeling like murdering someone; this is just our past conditioning recycling itself. The ethical concern is whether or not you give expression to the feeling. But even this is only half the battle: the other half is about bringing into being and expressing the opposites of greed, hatred and delusion, such as kindness, generosity,

independence of mind and self-awareness. This is the real battleground of the spiritual life, the place where we can re-create ourselves as something more fully human, more aware. And we can’t enter into battle without protection. That protection is mindfulness: being attentive to what we are feeling, to what thoughts are arising and why. Back to Nietzsche, who summarizes this task:

Yet let us reflect: where does the animal cease, where does man begin? ... As long as anyone desires life as he desires happiness he has not yet raised his eyes above the horizon of the animal, for he only desires more consciously what the animal seeks through blind impulse. But that is what we all do for the greater part of our lives: usually we fail to emerge out of animality, we ourselves are the animals whose suffering seems to be senseless.²

So here we have an idea of who the enemy is in this new kind of war, and how we fight it. But we need to ask ourselves, what is the aim of this battle? We need some goal that is beyond what we are now, but one that is not imposed upon us from the outside. It has to be something we can respond to, something that gives a more far-reaching, higher meaning to our human existence. But this is not a battle we can wage all on our own. To that end we also need connection with others who share our goal; in other words we need a Sangha. And so Hillman’s ‘archetype of war’ finds a higher expression. No one is killed, but many aspects of our undeveloped selves simply die away or are transformed. This in turn gives birth to something new: a new life that embodies the deepest and most positive values, a way of being that in the past was beyond even one’s imagination. This is the real victory – which is why the Buddha is also known as a Jina, or ‘conquerer’. ■

1. *The Gay Science*, originally published in 1872 as *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*

2. *Untimely Meditations*, originally published as *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* in 1876



Letter from a Retreat Centre

Vajratara lives at Tiratanaloka, a retreat centre in Wales that specialises in running retreats for women who are training for Ordination. She gives us a flavour of a remote — but busy — life

The wind has finally died down and the sun is shining. When I went for my run this morning, the waves on the reservoir were spraying over the dam as the wind howled and crashed down the valley. The new and tender crocuses and snow drops were battered and lying flat against the grass. Now, in the calm of the afternoon, they have risen again, stretching their frail necks to the sun. They have their rhythms, just as the seasons do — just as we do.

Retreats, too, have their rhythm. Today is the first day of a retreat on ethics. We will spend the next two weeks exploring in detail each of the ten ethical precepts that are taken at Ordination — studying the precepts themselves as well as working out what they mean for us personally. The retreatants arrived last night and all of us, the team included, were apprehensive, feeling the distance and strangeness of new company. But even in a day we have started to relax, to open up. The conditions of retreat life are enough to bring people into contact with themselves, and that brings them into more contact with each other. In the mornings we

have time for meditation and silent reflection. We meet in discussion groups to work out our relationship to the material we are focussing on. In the afternoons some choose to walk in the shadows of the mountains while others cook or rest. There's more meditation and silence until supper, and after that a ritual or a talk. We live together as one large community, even if it is just for a couple of weeks.

I used to think I had to do something extraordinary to give the women coming here a special and profound experience. Now I think it is enough if we all give ourselves fully to the retreat and to the people on it. That alone seems to produce a sort of magic — something is created in each person who comes here.

When a retreat finishes, a different kind of change happens. This moment of transition is the hardest. The days are no longer planned and the team are thrown back on their own resources. There is correspondence to catch up on, work to be done in the retreat centre, laundry, food ordering, bookings, maintenance.



Talybont Reservoir, Brecon Beacons National Park

So much is shared during a retreat, and it can feel as if I have poured out all I have into my communication. And then it is over, the retreatants leave and go back to their lives. Sometimes I wander around the empty building feeling lost.

I use the gaps between retreats to see my friends and family, to go on retreat myself or to visit Buddhist centres in cities. Sometimes I simply stay at home with the community. It is our friendships with each other after all, that are at the heart of Tiratanaloka.

And I go running. Despite living in a national park it is all too easy to get stuck in day-to-day concerns. I go running not so much

for the exercise as to communicate with the environment around me. I like to follow the same route to observe the daily changes: the new buds, the activity of the birds, the path of the river. When you live closely to nature, the trees, rocks and rivers take on a personality of their own. You get to know them as friends. I go to the old oak tree and all year round I swim in the river as a simple gesture of intimacy. In summer I float on my back in the cold water and watch as the trees touch the sky. Every day there is something new waiting for me: a bumble bee sleeping in split bark; dark moss covering black branches and glistening after the rain; a piece of pottery worn smooth by the tumbling of pebbles in the river. ■



Community Life

Abhayanandi was ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order in 2014. She lives in a community with eleven other women in East London. The white *kesa* that Abhayanandi wears symbolises the robe of someone who has 'gone forth' – committed to living out the teachings of the Buddha. Abhayanandi first came to the London Buddhist Centre in 2003, when she also went on the yearly Winter Retreat. She currently works in Lama's Pyjamas, a cooperative-run charity shop that supports the LBC's work. ■

Research Bias

Two very different responses to psychological – or spiritual – crises show to what extent our mind conditions our experience. Review by *Ollie Brock*

The American writer Barbara Ehrenreich suffered what she calls a ‘spectacular breakdown’ in her teens. She is resistant to specific labels for what happened: she tries for size theories of psychiatric disorders and accounts of religious experience, perhaps rightly never feeling entirely satisfied by any of them. Now an activist and science writer in her sixties with some nineteen books to her name, Ehrenreich has only recently unearthed the journals from her adolescence that record the time of these frightening ‘dissociative’ episodes – the psychiatric label – that she felt unable to talk about at the time. In fact she felt unable to talk about them for most of her life until now. ‘Because one thing you learn early in this line of work is that you can’t go round telling people, “I’m on a mission to discover the purpose of life.”’ She doesn’t mention which of the two lines of work she has pursued – scientific research and journalism – she means, but we can assume her warning applies to both. And she may be right that, while there would seem to be nothing wrong with a philosophical enquiry in itself, stated so boldly in the milieus of those professions it might still be greeted as naive. She immersed herself in communities that did not support a deep longing in her. Why?

The short answer, related in this new memoir, *Living with a Wild God* (272pp, £9.67), is that analytical thought became a refuge.

Intellectually, her family life was staunchly rationalistic and atheist; emotionally it was chaotic. Her father was an alcoholic and she was verbally abused by both parents. The pair would return late from a bout of drunk-driving, once with cuts and bruises having crashed the car and got off lightly. Taking to heart an injunction of her father’s, Ehrenreich made a shelter in her mind: “‘Think in complete sentences.’ No giving way to inner screams or sobs...’ This protected her, temporarily, ‘when the waters were rising’ at home. This habit of smothering the emotions makes for moving reading at times. And it probably didn’t serve Ehrenreich well when, in her early adolescence, her mind developed an alarming habit of dropping most of its usual activity without warning: ‘Something peeled off the visible world, taking with it all meaning, inference, association, labels, and words.’ These experiences became more frequent and alarming, culminating in a climactic episode on a road trip with friends, which precipitated the breakdown. She has wrestled ever since – using a mind rigorously trained in the sciences – with whether or not these episodes could have featured aspects of something ‘mystical’.

In mainstream discourse, at least, the word ‘mystical’ now almost seems to contain its own dismissal. And ‘mystical’ may not be the word, but to a Buddhist, if the right conditions are present, Ehrenreich’s description of these

episodes has the seeds of something positive. Meaning, inference, association and so forth are not inherent in the things we perceive. Supposedly, the more we see this, the closer we come to reality. But later we will lapse back into our subjectivity, and our lives and experience up to that point will condition the conclusions we then draw from the experience. This could be thought of as a panoramic version of what scientists call ‘research bias’: you find what you are expecting to find, in life as well as in isolated experiments. And Ehrenreich, after years of mental experiments in questioning immediate perceptible reality, can only cleave back to the old theological polarity: ‘Do I believe that there exist beings capable of making mental contact with us to produce what humans call mystical experiences? No, I *believe* nothing. Belief is intellectual surrender; “faith” a state of willed self-delusion.’ One sad corollary of this constricted view of the imagination is a similar take on the arts – one that relegates them to mere escapism. The job of poets, according to Ehrenreich, is ‘to keep applying coat upon coat of human passion and grandiosity to the world around us, trying to cover up whatever it is that lies underneath.’

Being a consummate poet himself, the Romanian writer Max Blecher responded quite differently to crises that bear striking similarities to Ehrenreich’s. After ten years confined to his bed, Blecher died of spinal tuberculosis in 1938. He was just twenty-eight – a year younger than I am now – but had produced essays, poems, translations and several novels by the time of his death. During his adolescence, before becoming ill, he would often fall into a ‘sweet but terrible swoon.’

These swoons are the jumping-off point for *Adventures in Immediate Irreality* (128pp, £10.14). The book is a fictionalised memoir originally published in 1936, now released in a

new lyrical, witty translation by Michael Henry Heim. Blecher’s episodes involved similar losses of subjective meaning and interpretation: ‘I would peer around me wide-eyed, but things had lost their usual meaning [...] It was as if someone had removed the fine, transparent paper they had been wrapped in till then...’

The principal difference between the two is that Blecher receives these experiences with the imagination of a poet (he almost seems to cherish the episodes, calling them ‘my secret and intimate afflictions’). This means that, unlike Ehrenreich, he is alive to symbol. Both writers are on the lookout for resonances in the world, but while Ehrenreich was most likely to spot ‘anagrams, number sequences, clusters and coincidences’, Blecher sees a direct mirroring between life and art. On his wanderings around the small town of his youth, he would often go to the cinema. One day it caught fire:

The film tore and immediately went up in flames, which for several seconds raged on the screen like a filmed warning that the place was on fire as well as a logical continuation of the medium’s mission to give the news, which mission it was now carrying out to perfection by reporting the latest and most exciting event in town: its own combustion.

Both members of this unlikely pair fall down in the end. Ehrenreich into pat explication and proto-theory, even positing at one point an ‘Other’ that may be more like a parasite. She zips the wild, wide-eyed teenager firmly back into the adult’s thick overcoat. Blecher meanwhile lapses into lazily unconnected anecdote and what seems an eventual loss of interest in the urgent sense of unreality that lit his initial inspiration. But both, at least, whatever their responses, go some way to showing that our world of certainties is divided from a more mysterious reality only by what Blecher calls ‘the flimsiest of membranes’. ■

Brighter than the Sun

Jnanavaca, the Chair of the London Buddhist Centre, often draws inspiration from films. Here he tells *Maitreyaraja* about some films that have particularly influenced him – and his practice

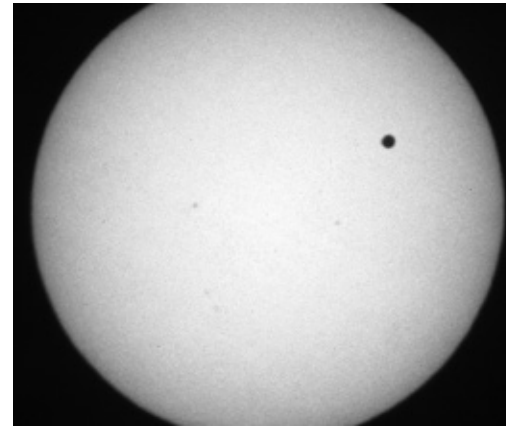
Maitreyaraja: *What was the first film that you really enjoyed?*

Jnanavaca: I remember being taken to see *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. I think it was a half animated, half live-action film about magic and magicians and witches. I can just remember a football match between some animals. I don't remember much else but I know I was thrilled by the sheer magic of it all. And I remember being convinced that Katie, who lived across the street and who was a little bit older than me, was a witch, because they had a broomstick in their house...

Can you tell me about a film which you feel has changed you in some way and why?

A film that has recently changed me in some way is *Sunshine*, Danny Boyle's science fiction film about a group of astronauts. It's set fifty years in the future; the premise is that the sun is slowly dying and this group of eight astronauts has been sent to reignite it. They've got a massive nuclear bomb attached to their spaceship and the idea

is that they'll fire that into the sun and reignite it. And of course one thing after another goes wrong and it even turns into a bit of a horror film towards the end. But I was very affected by it. I don't think it's a brilliant film, but visually it's very beautiful. In the film you see some really beautiful images of the sun of the kind I guess you'd see from the Hubble space telescope. There's even a sense of something more than beautiful – of something sublime. There's this scene in the film where you see the transit of Mercury, a tiny black dot just crossing the sun. And the effect on all the astronauts is a sense of wonder at the hugeness, the vastness, the beauty of the sun. After seeing that film, the sun kept appearing in my meditations, and I realised that it had become a symbol for me. A symbol of the transcendental, I suppose. And of course it makes sense: the sun as the source of all life. But also the sun as something incredibly beautiful and attractive which you can't stare at, and which if you approach it directly and get too close it'll burn you. So it's a symbol of spiritual death for me: to approach the sun, you have to die.



All sorts of things happen to the astronauts. Some of them die heroically and some of them are more cowardly. But there is this sense that the sun is mystifying, beautiful and entrancing, a sense that they had to approach it; it was a kind of inexorable movement towards something that they knew could kill them. So there was something very beautiful and moving about that. I read the film as an allegory of the spiritual life, but most people I've met haven't seen the spiritual dimension of the film. I don't think it's just me making it up! So for me all of that spoke very deeply about the Dharma life, the spiritual life – not on a particularly conscious level, but afterwards I realised that some of these archetypes had been sparked in my mind. So for example, there's a character who goes mad and tries to murder the others. Critics have said that the film loses its way in that last act, but for me even that can be read allegorically: if you approach the light, shadows will be cast, just as if you practise the Dharma and move towards the goal of Enlightenment you will have to deal with the darker aspects of the psyche.

Any other recent favourites? Perhaps you could pick out just one or two for us.

The first I'll mention is a documentary called *Nostalgia for the Light*. It's a Chilean film. It's set in the Atacama Desert, in Chile, the highest

desert in the world and also the driest place on the planet, with zero humidity. Because of its climatic conditions it's a world centre for astronomy. One strand of the film is about astronomers looking for meaning through exploring the universe: the further out into the universe you look, the earlier you're looking in time, so you could say that they're looking for the origins of the universe, and through that a sense of who we are. Another strand of the film, a very powerful one, concerns the fact that, because there's so little moisture in that environment, things are preserved, so you've got archaeologists looking at remains from some of the earliest human civilisations. Thus you've got this other journey, backwards into time, into early human history, and a question about who we are from that perspective. And then the third, even more powerful strand, is from more recent history, going back to Pinochet's dictatorship. During his time in power, many people were 'disappeared' victims of his regime, and many of them were buried in mass graves in the desert. It's said that there are still bodies preserved there. The film focuses on the women who scour the desert digging for the bodies of their loved ones – sons, fathers, husbands – and it's very moving because these bodies do turn up. There's an interview with some of these women, some of these relatives who lost their loved ones to Pinochet's regime – so the film becomes a meditation on what it is to be mortal, on the human condition, on human cruelty and human suffering and the fragility and the pain of that. And the film weaves these three strands together beautifully. I was moved to tears by it. ■

Film Nights at the LBC

Exploring the wonders of great film, and raising money for the new Vajrasana Retreat centre.

Sat 2 May: [Black Swan](#)

Sat 23 May: [The White Balloon](#)

Sat 18 Jul: [Film to be decided](#)

See page 34

Diary of a London Buddhist

A week in the metropolis in this strange third millennium. By *Singhamanas*

Tuesday night back at the soup kitchen. They've put me on laundry and showers, and give me the special turtle-skin gloves to protect my fingers from hypodermic needles. I hate needles.

Youssef comes in keen and chirpy. He's Syrian and we speak some French. Normally a laundry load (wash & dry) costs a pound but Youssef doesn't have anything save a can of Carling, which he wants to trade instead. From his smile he clearly thinks I'll do well out of the swap. I don't really drink any more and Carling was never my choice when I did, but I'm won over by the smile and we easily make the deal. He wants to get clean as he has a day's work lined up for tomorrow and if he does good they'll keep him on. I say we'll fix him up no problem. So he hands me a bag of clothes, I pass him some soap and he hops in the shower. An hour later his load is clean and dry. I bag it up for him ready to take home when he bursts back in through the front doors covered in blood. I ask him what's happened but he's so upset all he can do is vent an Old Testament rant about an eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth. He's missing a tooth too. What a mess.

I keep waking up at the moment wondering who I am. It's Wednesday. At the foot of my bed is a large head of the Parisian poet Charles Baudelaire sketched by his friend Manet. Apparently it's the only portrait Baudelaire approved of. He's in profile wearing his

customary top hat propped over watchful eyes, which look out of my bedroom window and over Regent's Canal. Baudelaire reckoned he was married – 'in glorious hymen' – to his beloved Paris, and that he felt the shocks of metropolitan life much like a lover feels the shock of sex. George the ex-demo skeleton hangs by the door. (My sister's a doctor: perks of the trade.) His frame faces forwards but the skull lolls to the left. Charles looks out the window, and George looks at me.

The next week at the soup kitchen the cooker's out, so all we have is Pret sandwiches to give away. There is something ironic about watching a host of homeless beggars dining on Wild Crayfish & Rocket Wraps. When we run out of wraps I'm left with Pret Pots (granola and honey desserts) and soon have to weather the wrath of a hungry Russian man shaking his fistful of Pret Pot at me and shouting: "It's not fair, it's not fair!" I couldn't agree more.

The shifts are late so I'm up late the next day. In any case I've decided there is no inherent virtue in rising early, despite what many meditators say. The only time in my adult life I have systematically got up early was when I worked for Sangharakshita in Birmingham. I used to make him his breakfast: rooibos tea and porridge; then, for the main, one veggie frankfurter, green salad, Ryvita with marmite, one tomato and plenty of water cress. Every day the same thing, and every day he thanked me.

When I get to the LBC for work on Thursday I find she's left me a gift after months of quiet. Why? There are chatty, follow-up texts. I don't know how or even whether to respond and find it all painfully confusing. In fact, I find confusion itself one of the most painful states. The Buddha called it a 'fetter', one of the things that binds us to mundane existence. The original word is *vicikitsa*, which mostly gets translated as 'doubt'. But in this (pseudo-)sceptical age, 'doubt' sounds rather too dignified. 'Confusion' gets at it better.

Friday I'm at home as I'll be in the office on Saturday. So I'm in when Victoria Sinclair comes round. She's our cleaner from Romania. Is it all right to have a cleaner? I live on minimum wage, so does she I assume, and at £25 a fortnight it seems worth it to me and my flatmate. Growing up in West Africa our house was always full of cleaners and maids and gardeners and the like. I had two nannies. I don't think we really needed it but my father had a policy of employing as many people as possible, mainly for their sake. This morning Victoria asks me to play the piano

for her while she goes to work on the oven. I say sure, what would you like – 'Mozart, Mozart!' she replies. I spend the next hour playing sonatas. At the end of each one she hoots with glee, and throws down her mop, or brush, or spray, or towel, and claps her hands like fun-snaps. I play better than I have in ages.

I wonder if I'll see Youssef again next week, or ever. Then I remember being in Syria with Safiem. I met Safiem on a night train travelling from Turkey – a train flaking with French imperial grandeur. Safiem was French and a Muslim convert. He took me to the old *sook* and the great mosque of Aleppo. He taught me how to wash my hands and how to bow in prayer. I taught him how to sit cross-legged and how to follow the breath. On odd days we bought each other food, smoked and argued about ethics. We agreed on most things, but not about women and how they should be treated. He thought I was weak, I thought he was weak. I saw the old *sook* again today – in the Sunday papers. At least the caption said 'Sook', but now it's just another pile of rubble. ■



Booking Info

For many of our events, booking is essential.
You can book online at lbc.org.uk
drop in to reception 10am-5pm Mon-Sat
or call 020 8981 1225

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, 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.

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

Summer Retreat

Peace is a Fire

In an increasingly fractured, violent and complex world, how do we learn to respond in a positive, creative way to all external and internal difficulties? Mind and world are intimately linked and affect one another in many ways. The Buddha's teaching gives us a practical approach that anyone can practise so that we can find a vibrant and responsive peace that can shape our experience and transform the world. Peace, like fire, can spread. This retreat is ideal for anyone new to meditation and Buddhism, or in their first year of practice.

Led by Silapiya and Padmalila

21 – 28 Aug, at Cardfields. £365/£265. 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 May or 22 Jun, 7.15-9.45pm. £90/£70. Booking essential.

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 Vidyadaka and Dayabhadra

8 weeks from 26 May – 14 Jul. 7.15-9.45pm. £130/£100 (price inc. book). Booking essential.

Outreach: Courses & classes at St Martins Lane, London, WC2

Newcomers' Classes

Every Saturday 1-2.15pm: Introduction to Meditation One. 2.45-4pm: Introduction to Meditation Two. £7/£5

Four-week Foundation courses in Buddhist Meditation

Four Saturdays starting 9 May, 6 Jun, 4 Jul, 1 Aug. 10am-12.30pm. £75/£55. Booking essential.

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

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 £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 until 23 Jun, 10.30am-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 teachings on Wisdom, with meditation, talks, workshops and discussion.

Please note that the first Wednesday of every month is a 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.

Body-Mind Meditation

Thursday Evenings
A meditative evening starting with yoga and 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 £10.

First Friday

Sub35 Class
The alternative Friday night! Meditation, discussion and connection. 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 £6.

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. All levels. Weekday lunchtimes 12-12.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £5. No need to book, just drop in Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri evenings 5.45-6.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £7. No need to book, just drop in.

Saturday Morning Yoga

Saturdays 10am-11.15am.
Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm. Free. Suggested donation £10 per class. No need to book, just drop in.

Complete yoga listings page 33

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 17 May, 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. Sundays 24 May, 7 Jun, 12 Jul, 9 Aug. 10am-5pm. Lunch provided. £45/£35. 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. 8-10 May, 26-28 Jun. At Kench Hill. £160/£120. Booking essential.

Going Further

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

Course

Consciousness Unfolds

Meditation is a way of using the mind to work directly on the mind; but what is mind? By developing awareness of the nature of consciousness we can start to see clearly how mind creates the world and understand the forces in the mind that shape all sentient life and behaviour. In this practical meditation course you will learn how to use meditation as a means of transformation — both inner and outer.

Led by Jnanavaca

6 May – 3 Jun, 7.15-9.45pm. £80/£60. Booking essential.

Men's Intensive Meditation Retreat

Looking Directly at Mind

On this intensive meditation retreat for men, we'll be exploring the five great stages of the spiritual life - integration, positive emotion, spiritual death, spiritual rebirth and receptivity. This will allow us to focus on the aim of Buddhist meditation: to see through self-clinging and be reborn into the stream of the Dharma. This retreat is especially for those men who want to deepen their meditation practice and engage directly with the fundamental issues of life. The retreat will be mostly in silence with regular one-to-one meditation reviews.

Led by Jnanavaca, Jayaka and Vidyadaka

19-28 Jun, at Padmaloka. £425/£315. Booking essential.

Women's Intensive Meditation Retreat

The Doorway to Joy

How can we be creative in our meditation practice and make it come alive for us? What do we do when we get stuck, bored, scared or overwhelmed? When we have the tools to make meditation engaging, it leads to faith in our practice and faith in the Dharma. An effective practice is a doorway to Joy. Come and join us to explore ways of working in meditation.

The retreat will be mostly in silence. To attend, you need to have been meditating for at least six months and to have been on a residential retreat.

Led by Shubha, Srivati, Vishvantara, Maitrivajri and Prajnadevi
7-16 Aug, at Kench Hill. £425/£315. 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 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 for full listings.

Free. Suggested donation £6.

Mantra Meditation

Tuesday Early Morning

Open chanting group for regulars, followed by breakfast in Breathing Space 7.30-8.30am then breakfast.

Arrive between 7.15-7.25am. No late admittance - please do not ring the bell after 7.25am

Donation/dana, no need to book.

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 until 23 Jun, 10.30am-

12.30pm. All men welcome.

Donation/dana.

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 £10/£5.

Daytime Class

Wednesday Daytimes

A story can give us new perspectives on our lives and our understanding of reality. Starting in May, we have a rich, enjoyable and inspiring programme of stories from the Buddha's life and from the Buddhist tradition. This is preceded in April by a series of four talks by local Order members on the subject of 'My Life as a Buddhist'. 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.

Body-Mind Meditation

Thursday Evenings

A meditative evening starting with yoga and 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 £10.

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.

Free. Suggested donation £6.

Women's Class

Monthly Saturdays

A meditation and Buddhism class for women who know the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana meditations.

3-5.30pm. Last Saturday of each month 30 May, 27 Jun, 25 Jul, 29 Aug. Led by Mahamani, Sudurjaya and Svadhi

Free. Suggested donation £7/4.

Going Further

Continued

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 May, 21 Jun, 19 Jul, 16 Aug. 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Free. Suggested donation £25.

Full Moon Pujas

This monthly ritual gives a regular point of devotional focus and the chance to explore the expansive scope of Buddhist ritual. Mon 4 May, Tue 2 Jun, Thu 2 Jul, Fri 31 July, Sat 29 Aug. Times to be announced. Donation/dana.

Book Launch

'The Buddha on Wall Street: What's Wrong with Capitalism and What We Can Do about It' Can Buddhism help us build something better than our current economic system, to reduce suffering and help the individual to freedom? Join Vaddhaka to launch his important new book. 'An original, insightful, and provocative evaluation of our economic situation today. If

you wonder about the social implications of Buddhist teachings, this is an essential book.' – David Loy, author 'Money, Sex, War, Karma' With Vaddhaka and Manjusiha
Fri 29 May, 7.15-9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation £6. No need to book.

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
Sun 7 Jun, 10am-1pm or 2-5pm. Free. Suggested donation £15. Very limited places so booking essential.

Tara Day

Shattering the Mirror Join us as we journey with the figure of Tara, exploring what she reveals about the mystery of our minds. A day of meditation, ritual, talks and reflection for people who know both meditation practices. Led by Sraddhagita and Shradhdhasiddhi
Sun 14 Jun, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian lunch to share. Suggested donation £25. No need to book.

Compassionate Communication

When we choose to hold on to a grievance, the problem never ends. Grievances give us tacit permission never to experience joy. Forgiveness on the other hand, the letting go of resentment, affirms our essential human and spiritual dignity. On this day we will look at how we can choose forgiveness. Led by Vajraghanta
Sun 12 Jul, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. £40/£30. Booking essential.

Buddhism and 12 Step Recovery

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 & Shradhdhasiddhi
Sun 19 Jul, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Free. Suggested donation £25. No need to book.

Heart of Mantra Day

Mantra & Meditation Mantras are sound symbols and they can point towards the mystery and beauty of Enlightenment. The day will be an exploration of this mystery through mantra and will include chanting, discussion and meditation. Suitable for those who know both meditations. Led by Dayabhadra
Sun 26 Jul, 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share. Free. Suggested donation £25. No need to book.

Men's GFR Mitra Day

A day for Men who have requested Ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order. We will come together to study the four Vows taken at Ordination, meditate and perform a puja. Led by Paramabandhu and Jayaka
Sat 1 Aug, 10am-5pm. Suggested donation £25. No need to book.

Deep Ecology Day

A day of meditation and contemplation, exploring our relationship with the natural world as Buddhists. 'Know that if you authentically inherit one phrase, you authentically inherit one dharma. If you inherit one phrase, you inherit mountains and you inherit waters. You

cannot be separated from this very place' - Dogen. Led by Sanghasiha
Sun 2 Aug, 10am-5pm. Free. Suggested donation £25. No need to book.

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. 31 May, 28 Jun, 26 Jul. No Sunday School in August.

Volunteering

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

Volunteers Day

A day of practice and play for Jambala, Lamas Pyjamas and LBC volunteers. The day begins at the LBC and ends in the great outdoors! Picnic lunch provided.

With Ambaranta, Maitrivajri, Padmalila, Singhamanas and Vajrabandhu
Sat 16 May, 10am-5pm. Free, but booking essential so we know numbers to cater for.

Looking ahead

A few highlight's coming up in the autumn session. These events are bookable.

Urban Retreat

5-13 Sept. Free, but booking essential.

Meditation Toolkit

21-26 Sept. Lunchtime. No need to book, just drop in.

New Course

The Journey and the Guide Starts 14 Oct. 8 weeks. Booking essential.

Festivals & Special Events

Open to all

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

Buddha Day Festival

A festival day exploring the Buddha's spiritual quest and illuminating the qualities of the Enlightened Mind. We will examine our own relationship with the Buddha's Awakening through talks, stories, led reflections, puja and devotion.

Led by Manjusiha

Sun 10 May, 10am-10pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.

Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

Dharma Day Festival

2500 years ago in the Deer Park in Sarnath the Buddha communicated the profound truth of his Enlightenment to a handful of disciples for the very first time. This 'Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma' set in motion what we call Buddhism – the transformation of the hearts and minds of countless men and women. On this festival day we will be meditating, reflecting and exploring how his insight and teaching can transform our own lives today.

Led by Silapiya and Dayabhadra

Sun 28 Jun, 10am-10pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.

Check the programme for the day nearer the time. No need to book.

Welcome Back Evening

Ordination is a highly significant aspect of the Dharma life which has the potential to radically transform the lives of many dedicated practitioners. This evening will be celebratory and devotional, welcoming back Jo Baily, Sylvia Wingens and Su Akbar-Khan who, all being well, will have recently returned from the 3 month Ordination retreat at Akashavana.

Mon 20 Jul, 7.15-9.45pm. Suggested donation £6

108 Year Puja for Bhante

The 13th of 108 pujas at the LBC celebrating Bhante Sangharakshita, who founded the Triratna Buddhist Order, on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Wed 26 Aug, 7.15-9.45pm. Suggested donation £6

Sub35 Events

First Friday

Sub35 Class

The alternative Friday night! Meditation, discussion and connection. An evening of practice with time for hanging out after the class. Everyone welcome.

7.15-9.45pm (tea bar till 11pm)

Free. Suggested donation £6.

Second Saturday

Sub35 Practice Morning

A chance to practice together, explore meditation more deeply and cultivate 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 Buddhist Centre and support each other's spiritual practice. With meditation, discussion and tea.

7.15-9.45pm. Free. Suggested donation

£6. Experience of both meditation practices required.

Sub35 men run a programme of events, for those who want go deeper in their practice. For an invitation email

nextgeneration@lbc.org.uk

Sub35 Retreat

The Perfection of Energy The Buddha's Path to Freedom: Buddhism offers us the way to attain a state of perfect psychological and spiritual equilibrium. We will be exploring this in reference to the early Buddhist ideals of energy (*viriyā*), mindfulness (*smṛiti*) and concentration (*samadhi*), helping us cultivate more vigour, interest and positivity in our lives. Suitable for newcomers and regulars.

Led by Adam and Gaelle

5-7 Jun, at Kench Hill. £140/110.

Booking essential.

Sub35 Yoga & Meditation Retreat

'The human body, at peace with itself, is more precious than the rarest gem.' Tsongkhapa. Join us for this non-residential retreat where we'll be exploring and deepening our connection to our bodies and minds through yoga, meditation, reflections, talks, ritual and shared meals. Suitable for beginners.

Led by Joe, Holly and SuYen

Fri 21 Aug, 7.15-9.45pm. Sat 22 Aug,

10am-8.30pm. Sun 23 Aug, 10am-

4pm. £140/110. Booking essential. All

meals provided.

May

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4 Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	5	6 Consciousness Unfolds Course starts until 3 June. 7.15-9.45pm	7	8 Intro Weekend Retreat	9 2nd Saturday For under 35s 10am-12.45pm Lamas Pyjamas 5th Birthday 50% sale	10 Buddha Day Festival 10am-10pm
11 Intro to Buddhism & Meditation 6 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	12	13	14	15	16 Volunteers Day For Lamas, jambhala and LBC volunteers. 10am-5pm	17 Open Day Free talks, meditation, yoga and more. All welcome. 10am-5pm
18	19	20	21	22	23 Film Night 7.15pm	24 Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm Yoga Day 10am-5pm
25	26 Life with Full Attention 8 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	27	28	29 Final Friday Sub35 women Book Launch With Vaddhaka. 7.15-9.45pm	30 Women's Class Drop-in. 3-5.30pm	31 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 Full Moon Puja Buddhist ritual	3	4	5 First Friday For under 35s 7.15-11pm Sub 35 Retreat Weekend	6	7 Intro Day Learn to meditate 10am-5pm Art of Tea Day 10am-1pm or 2-5pm
8	9	10	11	12	13 2nd Saturday For under 35s 10am-12.45pm	14 Tara Day 10am-5pm
15	16	17	18	19 Mens Intensive Meditation Retreat starts, until 28 June	20	21 Meditation Day For regulars 10am-5pm Yoga Day 10am-5pm
22 Intro to Buddhism & Meditation 6 week course starts. 7.15-9.45pm	23	24	25	26 Intro Weekend Retreat Final Friday Sub35 women	27 Women's Class Drop-in. 3-5.30pm	28 Dharma Day Festival 10am-10pm
29	30					

June

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 Further* section, near the start of this programme. Retreats are also listed there.

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

July



2 Full Moon Puja
Buddhist ritual

3 First Friday
Meditate, discuss, connect. For under 35s 7.15-11pm

4 2nd Saturday
For under 35s 10am-12.45pm

5 Intro Day
Learn to meditate 10am-5pm
Compassionate Com. Day
10am-5pm



11 2nd Saturday
For under 35s 10am-12.45pm

12 Intro Day
Learn to meditate 10am-5pm
Compassionate Com. Day
10am-5pm



18 Film Night
7.15pm

19 Meditation Day
For regulars 10am-5pm
Buddhism and 12 Steps Day
10am-5pm

20 Welcome Back
the new Order members 7.15-9.45pm



25 Women's Class
Drop-in: 3-5.30pm

26 Heart of Mantara Day
10am-5pm
Yoga Day
10am-5pm



31 Final Friday
Sub35 women
Full Moon Puja
Buddhist ritual

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 Further* section, near the start of this programme. Retreats are also listed there.

August

1 Mitra GFRR Day
For men. 10am-5pm

2 Deep Ecology Day
10am-5pm



7 Women's Intensive
Meditation Retreat starts, until 16 August
First Friday 7.15

8 2nd Saturday
For under 35s 10am-12.45pm

9 Intro Day
Learn to meditate 10am-5pm



15 Yoga & Med Retreat
Sub 35, non-residential 10am-8.30pm

16 Meditation Day
For regulars 10am-5pm



21 Summer Retreat
Meditation Retreat starts, until 28 August
Yoga & Med Retreat 7.15-9.45pm

22 Yoga & Med Retreat
Sub 35, non-residential 10am-8.30pm

23 Yoga & Med Retreat
Sub 35, non-residential 10am-4pm



26 108 Bhante Puja
7.15-9.45pm



28 Final Friday
Sub35 women

29 Summer Fair & Full Moon Puja
Buddhist ritual
Women's Class
Drop-in: 3-5.30pm



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.

Weekday Lunchtime and Early Evening

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

Weekday lunchtimes 12-12.45pm.

Free. Suggested donation £5. No need to book.

Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri evenings 5.45-6.45pm.

Free. Suggested donation £7. No need to book.

Body Mind Meditation

Thursday Evenings

A meditative evening starting with yoga and 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 £10. No need to book.

Saturday Mornings

Saturdays 10am-11.15am. Drop-in Yoga and Meditation. This class will start with yoga and finish with sitting meditation practice.

Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm. Drop-in Yoga.

Free. Suggested donation £10. No need to book, just drop in.

Sundays

A whole day of yoga and meditation suitable for all levels including beginners.

24 May, 21 Jun, 26 Jul. 10am-5pm. Bring vegetarian/vegan lunch to share.

£40/£30. Booking essential.

Sub35 Yoga & Meditation Retreat

The human body, at peace with itself, is more precious than the rarest gem. *Tsongkhapa*. Join us for this non-residential retreat where we'll be exploring and deepening our connection to our bodies and minds through yoga, meditation, reflections, talks, ritual and shared meals. Suitable for beginners.

Led by Joe, Holly and SuYen

Fri 21 Aug, 7.15-9.45pm. Sat 22 Aug, 10am-8.30pm. Sun 23 Aug, 10am-4pm.

£140/110. Booking essential. All meals provided.

Films, Fairs & Fundraising

Explore the wonders of great film, enjoy the creativity and talent of the Sangha and pick up some bargains all raising money for the new Vajrasana Retreat Centre.

Black Swan

Dir: Darren Aronofsky. 108 mins.

Jayaka will introduce us to 'Black Swan', a film about a ballet dancer striving for perfection. Highlighting the conflicting aspects that arise in the process, it has archetypal significance for all of us. Who is the Black Swan and what does she represent?

Hosted by Jayaka

Sat 2 May, 7.15pm.

Suggested donation £6

The White Balloon

Dir: Jafar Panahi. 85 mins

A little girl determines to buy a goldfish for New Year.

As she pursues her quest, a number of tiny and utterly tense dramas take place on the streets of Tehran. This film builds up like a poem, very simply, very carefully with a perspective-changing final line that stays with us for a long time after.

Hosted by Kusalasara

Sat 23 May, 7.15pm.

Suggested donation £6

Film to be decided

Check publicity nearer the time.

Hosted by Kusalasara

Sat 18 Jul, 7.15pm.

Suggested donation £6

Summer Fair

Join us for all the fun of the fair. With live music throughout the day in the courtyard, freshly baked cakes, vegan savoury delights, Chai tea, homemade lemonade, arts and crafts, face painting, book stalls, yoga, meditation, and lashings of community spirit. We'll mark the end of the day with a Buddhist Ritual, a Full Moon Puja. All funds raised go towards Vajrasana, our new retreat centre, project. Sat 29 Aug, 11.30am-6pm. All welcome.

Sangha's Got Talent

Live and for one night only at a Buddhist Arts Centre near you. What better way to spend an evening than building Sangha, the lifeblood of our spiritual community, through fun, playfulness and light-hearted delight, celebrating the wealth of performance talent we have in our very own LBC Sangha.

Sat 13 Jun, 7pm at the London

Buddhist Arts Centre. All welcome.

There will be a suggested donation and tickets will go on sale nearer the time.

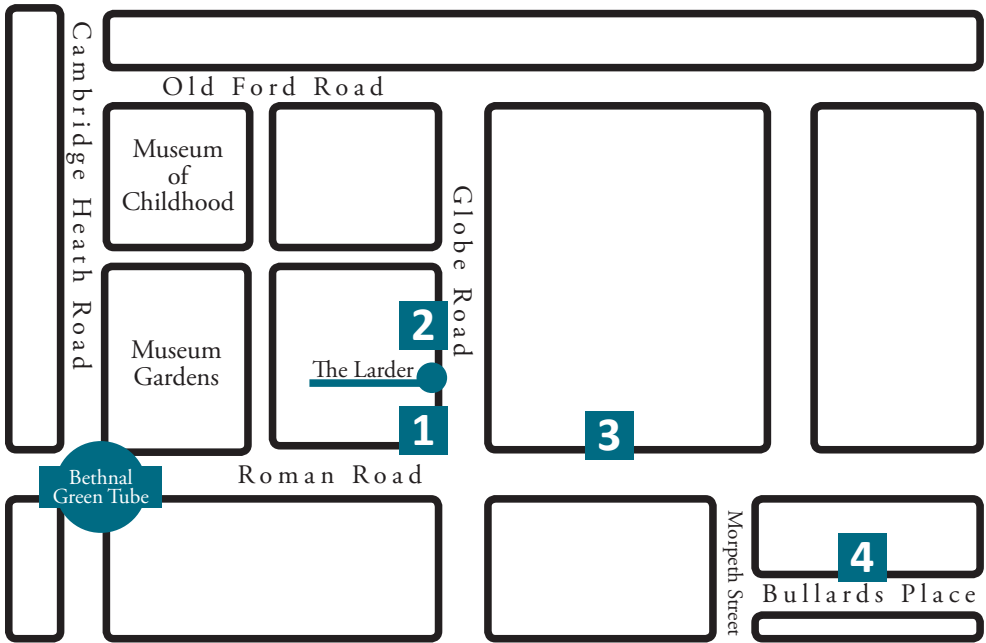
Half-Price Sale

at Lama's Pyjamas
Lama's Pyjamas, the LBC's charity shop, opened its doors 5 years ago. The shop hit record sales this past year and is celebrating its 5th birthday success with a one day only, 50% off everything, sale. The Lamas team will be giving approximately £50,000 to the LBC - dana generated in the past year - during the Buddha Day Festival.

Sat 9 May, 10.30am-6pm. Half-price sale at Lamas Pyjamas, 83 Roman Rd, London E2 OQN

Around the Buddhist Centre

in Bethnal Green, London E2



1 London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road E2

020 8981 1225 / 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

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

020 8983 6134 / 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

Open
Mon-Fri 8am-7pm
Sat 9am-5pm
Sun 10am-5pm