



Dharmagiri

Dharmagiri News - March 2010

Dharma Nugget

Extracts from 'Double Vision' by John Welwood

For humanity to move forward in a positive direction we need a guiding vision of all that it means to be human. Even in the best of times, being human is challenging and confusing, for it involves living on different planes of reality at the same time. To be fully human requires cultivating a taste for paradox; an appreciation of how very different truths can be true at the same time. Indeed it is this multi-dimensional quality of our experience that is the source of all human creativity and greatness.

Developing more conscious relationships is an important next frontier in human evolution. It will require a capacity to marry non dual realization -- which dissolves fixation on the separate self --with careful attention to personal relational patterns that block or distort the free flow of loving presence.

If the only two choices we had were to live in the samsaric ego or in our larger buddha nature, then digging into all the messy issues, emotional conflicts, and communication problems that crop up in personal relationships would not have great value. As a distraction from awakening to our larger nature, it would simply be dirtying our hands.

But if we allow for a third truth -- the genuine person -- then working with our relational issues has real importance and value. This is because interpersonal work helps the person to develop and evolve, to become a more transparent vessel through which absolute truth becomes embodied on this earthly plane.

To accord relationship its proper significance then, and welcome its challenges as an integral part of the spiritual path, requires double vision: honouring engagement in the human condition -- and liberation from it -- as coequal, co emergent, co creative truths. In accordance with this recognition, non dual awareness can then serve as the basis for entering more consciously into the human incarnation. This is the uncharted territory still waiting to be explored.

Message from Guiding Teachers

The 'genuine person' is a beautiful vision. John Welwood talks of the integration of the transcendent within the human (and not in spite of the human) as 'uncharted territory still waiting to be explored'. If we were to put such an idea into a Judeo/Christian/Islamic metaphor it would mean that god is within the human and vica versa. It would therefore mean that our relationships themselves are in the very ground through which awakening unfolds. Could this then lead us to a vision of awakening that is not only an individual attainment, as historically framed in the past, but is an evolutionary process that's increasingly being embodiment within the collective relational field?

Such a vision challenges us to look at how we use meditation. Is it just for the purpose of catapulting ourselves beyond this troublesome world or can meditative life enable authenticity within relationship while also maintaining a foothold in inner peace and equanimity? In other words can we both let go of the world and yet embrace the world at the same time? In meditation can we both listen deeply into the material of our lives while maintaining a rootedness in the listening quality itself.

In doing so the sense of self is less defended and, as Welwood points out, is able to be a conduit for 'transcendence' (or whatever word you give to the indefinable) to 'be embodied in this earthly plane'. The structures of self are then less bound by patterns of fear, control and reactivity. To be authentic is defined as 'acting on one's inner authority' which isn't the authority of 'I have to be right' but the ability to be present enough to sense the deeper 'truth' or dharma as it unfolds.

An authentic self is rooted in presence. It has the capacity to 'empty' rather than 'grasp' and is able to manifest as responsive, fearless, fluid, adaptable and loving. It is able to hold appropriate boundaries while still being in connection. When we are rooted in our authenticity as a 'genuine person' we can be both vulnerable and yet strong, trusting and yet discerning.

The 'evolutionary step into authenticity' is an interesting template. We don't have to have to know exactly what that all means right now, we can explore. We hope that Dharmagiri can provide opportunities for your own inquiry through the retreats that are offered. In particular we'd like to bring your attention to the two forth coming retreats.

We are delighted that Kirsten and Chris are returning to lead a Sangha Seva Retreat (seva means service in Sanskrit) which will be based in both Dharmagiri and at the community where Khuphuka Project operates on the border of Lesotho in the Mquatsheni district. It will be a chance to work mindfully together with meditations, contemplations and service work in the community. Currently we have a team coming over from the EU & the US but there are still a couple of places left. If you have some time and wish to roll your sleeves up and 'dig in' then please check out the details of the retreat below.

The other retreat is an exploration into 'presence' or transcendence. What is it and how do we access it? We are also absolutely delighted that Sister Chandasara, a South African nun from the Forest School of Ajahn Chah, will be coming to join Dharmagiri community from mid April onwards. Sister Chandasara is offering a retreat that explores the 'ground of being' encouraging us to be rooted in the 'here and now' realization of the deeper peace. She will be drawing from teachings of The Buddha and Echart Tolle.

If you do both retreats, then you'll have a great opportunity to explore the conundrum of the integration of transcendent peace while planting your feet in the earth!

We look forward to seeing you at Dharmagiri!

Kittisaro & Thanissara

***"The special challenge facing Buddhism in our age
is to stand up as an advocate for justice in the world,
a voice of conscience for those victims of social, economic and political injustice
who cannot stand up for themselves."***

Bhikkhu Bodhi

Dharmagiri News

The end of last year and the first month of the new year was a very full time at Dharmagiri. Kittisaro and Thanissara led 3 retreats throughout January, with great backup help of Loretta and Marlene. Many thanks to you both! Marlene has also been doing a sterling job keeping Dharmagiri's accounts on track while also enabling an accounting system for Khuphuka Project and Dharmagiri Outreach. However after all this activity, by the end of January everyone was feeling a bit stretched so Dharmagiri decided to gather in its energies and close for February and into March.

The arrival of Liam Nkululeko York (December 12th) the new born son of Matt & Jacqueline, is a tremendously joyful addition to our small community. While Jacqueline and Liam are resting up from the birth and finding their rhythm, Matt has courageously ploughed on (regardless of sleepless nights!) with the ongoing work of developing and supporting the growth of the Khuphuka Project.

The end of last year saw funding support come in for building the Khuphuka Community Centre. We are waiting for the legal process regards land ownership to clear before the buildings can start. Meanwhile a container has been ordered as a base for the team to work from. The beginning of this new year has seen the AIDS Foundation of South Africa coming forward with funding support which will go a long way to ensuring Khuphuka's sustainability. Many thanks again to each and everyone who has contributed to Khuphuka; we appreciate your support enormously. To check out the excellent results manifesting within the project go to: www.khuphuka.org

Thanks again to our wonderful web master Siobhan Twomey for launching our new site www.dharmagiri-outreach.org It's truly beautiful - thanks Siobhan. Check it out everyone, we're looking forward to developing Dharmagiri Outreach as the umbrella organization that can help support initiatives that empower and uplift disadvantaged communities.

Kittisaro, Zethembe and Nicholas cleared the pines that were growing up mountain in an effort to support the natural indigenous forest that grows in the gorge. We know Lyndy will be pleased to read this, as she has often done battle with the invasive pines in the Berg! We've all missed JP of course, but are delighted to know that his art work and life back in his beloved Karoo is going really well. We look forward to his return for a month at DG in June when JP offers his wonderfully relaxing and uplifting retreat Dharma and Art.

Kittisaro will be residence at Dharmagiri this coming year and will be facilitating an in depth meditation retreat in June as well as an Easter retreat at the BRC in April. Kittisaro will be joined by Ian Rees and Thanissara to facilitate the Kuan Yin retreat in August. These longer meditation retreats at Dharmagiri have a waiting list. While we are looking into possibilities of nearby accommodation to host extra retreatants, do let us know if you still want to book though as places often open up due to cancellations. We look forward to the arrival of Sister Chandasara, an old friend

from our early meditation days at in Johannesburg -- some of you will remember the lemon squeezer venue! What an amazing journey Sr Chandasara has been on. Do come and join in her retreats. It will be of great value to share understanding, presence and insights together.

Thanissara is in the States, most recently facilitating a 10 day retreat with Kittisaro at Insight Meditation Society Boston and also working with a team at Spirit Rock on the Dharma Leader Program which she hopes she can bring to South Africa at some point. She has is staying with Kittisaro's 93 year old father at the family home in Tennessee while she also explores setting up a US based Non Profit to support the work in South Africa and the ongoing work of Dharmagiri Outreach.

There was a great response to the latest Sacred Mountain Study year long Study/ Practice Program with exactly 100 people signed up from 10 different countries who are following the course on line and who are meeting in small local groups. The residential group are attending 3 five-day retreats at Dharmagiri through the year contributing to the deepening of sangha in the country. It is one of the blessings of our time that the internet facilitates study and discussion of the teachings and practice over such geographical diversity. For those interested in signing up for the next program you can check it out on:

<http://www.dharmagiri.org/13.html>

Forth Coming Retreats - March - June 2010

Dharma & Service

Mindfulness Retreat Focused around Service at the Khuphuka Project

April 3-17th

Chris Cullen & Kirsten Kratz & The Khuphuka Project

Following the successful and heart opening retreat in 2008 with Woza Moya Project, the Sangha Seva team are delighted to return for a second work and service retreat. This time with The Khuphuka Project. This retreat will provide practical support to the project which offers community care and support programmes serving those affected by the HIV/ AIDS pandemic. We will spend 2 weeks with the rural communities who are facing huge difficulties from high HIV infection rates as well as high levels of unemployment. Each day of the work retreat will be framed with meditations and include time to process and discuss our experience.

South African residents: Please book through the Dharmagiri office office@dharmagiri.org

Overseas participants: Please contact Kirsten directly: kirsten.kratz@yahoo.co.uk

For details of The Khuphuka Project - www.khuphuka.org

Kirsten Kratz

Kirsten has been co-leading Dharma events in England and in Europe since 2000. One of her particular areas of interest is the exploration of the nourishing and expression of our Dharma understanding outside of a retreat environment.

Chris Cullen

Chris has been practising Insight Meditation since 1996. He teaches and runs the counselling service at a secondary school in London and is involved in the running of London Insight Meditation and teaches at GaiaHouse, UK. He is co-founder of the Mindfulness in Schools Project, and is a former Buddhist Prison Chaplain

The Island: An exploration of Presence
Drawing from The Buddha & Echart Tolle
April 30th - May 4th
Sister Chandasara

This retreat will combine a modern approach with ancient teachings on nibbana. It will include perspectives from Echart Tolle, Adyashanti and Unmani's teachings with readings from her book 'I am Life Itself'. It will also draw from the book 'The Island', a collection of the Buddha's teachings on nibbana with commentaries by Ajahns Pasanno and Amaro. Sister Chandasara would like to include direct experience exercise for example like drawing or active imagination and writing to get a more direct feel for the borderline between immanent/ transcendent or form/ formless.

Sister Chandasara

Sister Chandasara from Johannesburg, South Africa was a political researcher and analyst at the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg for 14 years before ordaining as a Buddhist nun in 2006. She has a BA (Hons) in African Politics and an MA in Linguistics (Semantics). Her lifelong quest has been, and continues to be, liberation and learning how to love unconditionally.

Mountain Walking & Mindful Work
May 14th-18th
A gathering of Sangha

An opportunity to spend a relaxed time with friends while helping with those odd jobs needed to keep Dharmagiri 'spruced up'. This is also a perfect time to walk in the mountains and meditate together in the cool evening with a wood fire and to share discussion, good food and inquiry into the Dharma.

Dharma & Art
June 4th-9th
JP

This retreat invites you to explore your unique potential and to come to a fresh understanding of what art, talent and creativity is. Over the few days we will do a little of a lot of things. Together we will think, scribble, talk, cut, paste, write, draw and smudge. Periods of meditation will be a great opportunity to get to know and maybe even befriend the inner (art) critic which prohibits your creative expression. I think you will be inspired. Please contact JP at jpjourney@gmail.com for a short list of materials to bring along. p.s. No art or meditation experience necessary.

JP Meyer

JP is an artist and director of Dharmagiri. Shortly after his first meditation retreat in 1994 he swapped the corporate life for that of a full-time art student, graduating with distinction in 1999, since then he has been widely exhibited and travelled. JP spent many months in the ashrams, meditation centres and monasteries of India, Sri Lanka and the U.S. and was Dharmagiri manager for three years.

A Meditation Retreat
Return to Original Brightness, Discovering What Never Dies
June 18th-26th
Kittisaro

The Buddha revealed three supreme sources of inspiration for those interested in the pathway out of suffering. Measureless in their transformative power, the triple refuge offers a trustworthy home. Have we explored where we place our trust? This retreat will investigate these themes, and is suitable for anyone who is willing to work with an intensification of their inner process. Drawing from Buddhist teachings and practices, Kittisaro will encourage skill in mindfulness and insight which enable the realization of the Original Brightness, always here and now. The retreat, held in silence, includes meditation, chanting, instruction, and an early morning bowing practice.

Kittisaro

Kittisaro is from Tennessee and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford before going to Thailand to ordain with Ajahn Chah in 1976. He was a monk for 15 years and during that time helped found Chithurst Monastery and Devon Vihara in the UK. He disrobed in 1991 and since then has taught internationally. He has studied and practised Chan and Pure Land for 20 years informed by the Chinese school of Master Hua. Kittisaro has completed two one year long silent self retreat

The Buddha's Women
Women in Buddhism and Spiritual life
August 13th 15th
Sister Chandasara

Buddhist scripture depicts women as enlightened and as strong practitioners while also undermining the status the Buddha conferred on his female disciples. The consequences of these conflicting messages are still felt today. The ambiguity of women's place in religion has tended to mean that they have been sidelined in most institutional religious forms, trying to fit into masculine conceptions of spirituality. But are women different? What could an appropriate placement of the feminine look like in religious forms and how would that be for both women and men. All genders are invited to participate in this inquiry!

Mysterious Way of the Heart
The Kuan Yin Dharmas
August 20th 28th
Kittisaro, Ian Rees, Thanissara

This silent retreat focuses on an integrated approach of meditation teachings and practices which deepen the embodiment of wisdom and compassion. It includes calm and insight meditation and practices associated with Kwan Yin Bodhisattva generating a strong blessing energy that taps the mysterious connection with the Bodhisattva's heart intention. In this process, as self structures are released from grasping and aversion, the heart recognises the emptiness and peace of its original nature. This recognition facilitates authentic response and intuitive understanding of the non dual nature of emptiness and appearance. The retreat is in silence and includes ceremony, prayerful practice and use of mantra, it also includes the practice of Chan or Zen.

Ian Rees

Ian originally trained in the contemplative tradition of the Kabbalah in 1970 and has been working with Buddhist tradition for the last 15 years. He is a Psychotherapist and founder member of the Isthmus project which is dedicated to working with the healing and creative energies of the imagination. He runs groups in UK and Israel and draws from Shammanic practice and insight.

Thanissara

Thanissara originally from London ordained in 1979 and spent 12 years as a Buddhist nun. Thanissara has an MA in Buddhist Psychotherapy from Middlesex University & the Karuna Institute, UK. She is co-facilitator of the Community Dharma Leader Program at Spirit Rock Meditation Centre CA, USA.

**"We must be the change we want to see in the world."
Gandhi**

For the complete retreat schedule and a full description of retreats and facilitators:

<http://www.dharmagiri.org/7.html>

Self Retreats

At Dharmagiri we support practitioners of all contemplative traditions who wish to do a self retreat. Before accepting long term retreatants we prefer a try out period or if from overseas a reference from a guiding teacher. Please contact the office to apply & to discuss your proposed stay.

We encourage self retreatants to join in the morning and evening meditation, daily puja (chanting of text and mantra) and to contribute to the daily work, other than that self retreatants are free to schedule their own day and are welcome to use the library, taped Dharma talks. Kittisaro, Thanissara or Marlene are available to offer guidance and support to self retreatants.

Visiting Dharmagiri

Dharmagiri welcomes guests outside of retreat times and outside of times when the hermitage is closed for community retreat. However Dharmagiri is unable to host guests who turn up without a booking. To book your stay, please contact the office at: office@dharmagiri.org There is a daily schedule at Dharmagiri which starts with morning meditation at 6.00am and includes chanting, sharing of work chores, meals, discussions and evening meditation. There are taped Dharma talks from a selection of teachers available on request and a library which also houses a selection of Dharma talks.

Daily Work Contribution

At Dharmagiri there are no domestic or garden staff; all practicalities that ensure smooth running of the daily routine are undertaken by those who are resident, including those on self retreat. This usually amounts to offering a few hours work a day in the gardens, kitchen or in maintenance.

Food & Beverages

Dharmagiri provides three simple lacto-vegetarian meals per day. If you have any special dietary needs, kindly bring these items with you. There is a drinks counter which retreatants are welcome to access throughout the day and evening. Any speciality teas and beverages need to be provided by retreatants themselves.

What to bring

The weather patterns at Dharmagiri are varied and dramatic. Summer is wet and with both hot and cool days and the winter is dry, sunny in the day but cold and icy out of the sun. In summer bring a raincoat and umbrella, gumboots are handy and can be brought locally, and clothes for very hot and cold days. In winter bring winter woolies, shawls and thermo jackets. A shawl for meditation all year round will also come in handy. With the mountains at our door, you will need a pair of walking or hiking shoes or boots. Slip on and off sandals or shoes are useful for movement between rooms. Meditation mats, cushions, benches and chairs in the meditation hall are provided. We also provide bedding and towels. For further details of what to bring and directions, please see our web site: www.dharmagiri.org

Opportunity to Serve at Dharmagiri

There are opportunities for those who wish to become a community member at Dharmagiri on a work-retreat basis from 3 - 6 months or a year, with a weeklong 'try out' period. In return for food and lodging and support in your dharma practice, your responsibilities include housekeeping, meal preparation, hosting of retreatants and a sincere willingness to assist with any tasks that support the smooth running of a small meditation centre. For info: office@dharmagiri.org

***I will constantly accord with all living beings,
serving them all equally without discrimination.
I will be a good physician for the sick and suffering.
I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road.
I will be a bright light for those in the dark night
and I will cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures.***

- Bodhisattva Intention as articulated by

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva

New Initiative at The Khuphuka Project

Youth Awareness and Empowerment Programme launches The Khanyisa Project

Our youth co-ordinator Skhumbuzo Mlibeni continues to hold fortnightly HIV and AIDS awareness workshops in both the High School and Primary School of uMqatsheni. The attendance is always high in each workshop. Skhumbuzo also secured a place on a week-long intensive course in Johannesburg with Count on Me, an initiative of Kagisotv, an organization which focuses on men having a key role to play in the fight to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV. This course will greatly inform Skhumbuzo's work with young men in the community.

An exciting new development within the Khuphuka Projects youth programme has been the development of the Khanyisa project (Khanyisa literally means to enlighten in isiZulu). Khanyisa is a project which focuses on the young men within the communities we work in. Traditionally the most difficult group to work with and to achieve lasting behavioural change, young men are often written off by their communities and as a result feel alienated. The Khanyisa Project works from the assumption that young men, given the opportunity, can and will play an active and positive role within their community.

Khanyisa facilitates 3 day wilderness workshops with groups of young men in partnership with KZN Wildlife. Participants camp, sleep in caves and hike in the Drakensberg mountains of KwaZulu-Natal. The focus of the workshops is Ubuntu, the African concept of interdependence- that we can only be human in relation to others, and that through knowing this deeply it becomes natural to care for and be of service to others.

The young men are encouraged to explore Ubuntu and question whether it is present in themselves and/or their community, and also how to rediscover it for themselves and their community. Using Ubuntu as a core theme, the leaders facilitate exercises which explore subjects such as inequality, gender violence and HIV and AIDS. The young men are encouraged to personally and as a group reflect upon what true courage is and what it means to be a man in this rapidly changing world, each man making a commitment to change at the end of the workshop which is then reviewed at a subsequent workshop.

The workshops are having a deep and visible effect upon the young men who are participating. Holding the workshops within the dramatic natural beauty of the Drakensberg mountains leads to sustained energy to undertake the personal work required of the men, and the outdoor activities build strong trust within the group extremely rapidly. For more information on this exciting new work please visit our website at <http://www.khuphuka.org/19.html>

'Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world'

Nelson Mandela

Dharmagiri runs entirely on an Ethos of Dana (free will offering)

Since Dharmagiri's first three month retreat in 2000, the hermitage has run entirely on an ethos of Dana which has subsidized many retreats for hundreds of people. We have encouraged the principle of Dana in accord the ancient tradition of giving has enabled the transmission of Buddhist practice and teachings over thousands of years.

Throughout our time at Dharmagiri we have never charged any fees. This is because we believe this is a beautiful way to run a dharma centre that encourages a shared spirit of offering and service. Your support of Dharmagiri, its retreats and outreach programmes is greatly appreciated. We most sincerely thank all those who support Dharmagiri through financial contributions, your well wishing and your practice at the hermitage.

The Practice of Dana

When you are practicing generosity, you should feel a little pinch when you give something away.

That pinch is your stinginess protesting.

If you give away your old, worn-out coat that you wouldn't be caught dead wearing, that is not generosity. There is no pinch.

You are doing nothing to overcome your stinginess; you're just cleaning out your closet and calling it something else.

Giving away your coat might keep someone warm, but it does not address the problem we face as spiritual practitioners: to free ourselves from self-cherishing and self-grasping.

Gelek Rimpoche

To make an offering:

From South Africa

Standard Bank (Pietermaritzburg Branch)

Name of Account: Dharmagiri

Account Number: 052117391

Branch Code: 05752500

From Overseas

follow the link to Pay Pal on the DG web site.

<http://www.dharmagiri.org/12.html>

To make a Standing Order please follow this link:

[From South Africa](#)

[From the UK](#)

Thank You for support which we value and appreciate.
Standing orders allow us to translate your support into sustainability of
Dharmagiri, its retreats and its Outreach Programmes.

For further details of self retreats, Dharma talks to order and general
information regards Dharmagiri, please go to:

<http://www.dharmagiri.org>

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