

Dharmagiri News - November 2009

Dharma Nugget

'Giving Something of yourself is giving something to yourself' Ajahn Santacitta

When we choose to go through a transformation process by actively staying with unpleasant feeling rather than by reacting to things, we give something of ourselves and at the same time we are giving a lot *to* ourselves. We give up habitual ways, which is painful at first, but what we receive in terms of freedom is just so much better.

If you have been fortunate enough to see the result of being able to withhold reacting, then increasingly, the faith that this is the right path will become stronger and stronger. Then we can take on more and more difficult patterns by holding still and bearing with the pain of transformation 'the fire of transformation' which is sometimes really hot and wild. But once the material which is up for transformation has all been burned away, the spaciousness and freedom which result from that is very much worth the pain of standing your ground and not believing in the conceptual mind. Spaciousness and freedom arise from embracing insecurity and the 'not-knowing'.

The Buddha did just the same. When he was sitting under the bodhi tree, he was assaulted from all sides. He just kept on sitting, not believing that he couldn't bear it and suddenly the arrows of Mara turned into flowers. That's a very beautiful image to reflect on, if that which we fear the most turns out to actually be a blessing, because it's the cause for wisdom to arise.

Ajahn Santacitta is a senior nun at Amaravati.

To connect with the Forest Sangha Nuns of the Ajahn Chah tradition go to:

[Saranaloka](#)

Message from Guiding Teachers

'Buddhism is a religion of the heart. Only this. One who practices to develop the heart is one who practices Buddhism' **Ajahn Chah**

As many of you now know Jack, our little four-legged friend, died on September 25th. From the multitude of messages we received it's amazing to see how much love Jack evoked for so many who met him. It is not until someone close to you dies you really get the impact of their life. Jack has been a huge part of the offering at Dharmagiri and very simply it was an honour to be with him and a great loss to see him pass on.

Some will say 'he was just a dog', but the dharma moves in mysterious ways. There is a story about the great Indian saint Maharaji Neem Karoli Baba. He had a disciple who always pestered him to attend one of his banquets (it's always considered a great honour and good karma to feed a saint). This disciple hosted a huge feast in the hope Maharaji would come by. During the evening a dog came into the gathering only to be beaten away by that disciple. When this disciple next saw Maharaji he lamented that Maharaji hadn't come to take food at his banquet. Maharaji replied; 'I came but you beat me away!'

Jack was a Dharma protector; he was by our side through all the struggles and joys of starting Dharmagiri. Now he is gone he has left us with a powerful teaching. At the end of the day this teaching is about cultivating the heart - as Ajahn Chah pointed out. But also when death stabs that same heart, then we glimpse its deeper nature. Within the bitter - sweet of grief, the tenderness and beauty of love is revealed.

May all those who experience the pain of loss take courage in the confirmation which death brings: that the deepest nature of the heart, which is love, is indestructible.

Kittisaro & Thanissara

Jack Numzaan Vajrapani

December 15th 1995 - September 25th 2009



Thanks to: Tod Collins & the great team at Underberg Vets, Jane Fraser - Durban based homeopathic vet, Brett the Vet (JP's friend) and Dr Zambelli.

From Tod.....What a dog he was! I see we (Jack & I) first met on 19th March 1997. Twelve and a half GOOD YEARS....All of us here at "the vets" extend our sincerest sympathies to you on Jack's moving on. He certainly did enrich our lives and will be one of a handful of dogs that I shall never forget. Thank you for entrusting us with his care, and thank you again for giving him such a wonderful, loved life in the shadow of that magical mystical mountain.

In memory of Jack, support animal welfare:

[S.African Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - Durban](#)

[Compassion in World Farming](#)

[People for Ethical Treatment of Animals](#)

Many thanks to all who sent notes to us and Dharmagiri, we received nearly 100 messages with anecdotes, drawings and stories of Jack. We'll make a web page for him, dedicated to animal welfare on our www.dharmagiri.org site.

FYI - Numzaan, meaning Mr, sir, gentleman, the man - was a name given to Jack by the local Zulu's and Vajrapani was the name given by Ajahn Sucitto!

News from Dharmagiri

From JP

With the firebreaks in place we were ready for the dry season and just when our water reserves were running low, the rain dragon emerged from hibernation and blessed Dharmagiri Hermitage.

On the 20th July Dharmagiri welcomed 20 members from the Khuphuka Project for a recording session with Lydia van Vuuren. A CD of their fantastic music will be available in the near future to raise funds for the project.

On 4th August senior council members from mQuatsheni, the mayor Mr Mdu Banda and other officials from the Kwa Sani Municipality were invited by Matt and Jacqueline for lunch. It is important for the Khuphuka Project to have a good working relationship with the local Municipality.

From Marlene

The latter part of August and the beginning of September proved to be a very busy but fruitful time in the office. We upgraded our accounting software, to more efficiently cope with the very inspiring growth of the Khuphuka Project, and also adjusted and 'tweaked' our systems and structures to accommodate our Section 21 and now Section 18A status.

It was a welcome relief to put everything down and change gears for Kittisaro's retreat 'True Refuge' towards the end of September. I was visited by a couple of 'Heavenly Messengers' during the retreat in the guise of a very irritable puff adder (who had emerged from hibernation) and a couple of days later a scorpion (which are very rare to see). These were very powerful reminders and teachers as to the value of mindfulness!

The retreat also offered a wonderful holding space to process the loss of our beloved four footed friend Jack 'Numzaan Weinberg'. Jack touched the heart of all who visited Dharmagiri and I still find myself looking out for him during the day. And then I remember.....

Dharmagiri Retreats 2009/ 2010

We are delighted to welcome Chandasara home to South Africa after her 7 years as a Buddhist nun in the UK monasteries of the Forest Sangha. Chandasara will be offering some innovative retreats and will be resident at Dharmagiri. Welcome home sister!

We are also delighted Natthiko will be returning to S.Africa early next year and we look forward to welcoming back Kirsten and Chris Cullen who will be facilitating the Sangha Seva retreat with Khuphuka Project. We also welcome new teachers at Dharmagiri; Trish Bartley from Wales who will be offering a perspective from MBSR & MBCT training and Moyra Keane will be exploring the inter-face between Buddhism and Life Coaching.

Our schedule next year offers some wonderful depth meditation retreats. Ian Rees returns to join Kittisaro, Thanissara in an exploration of Heart drawing from the Kuan Yin dharmas. We also look forward to Ajahn Sucitto's teachings which bring tremendous depth and insight to dharma practice. Rev Peter Woods returns to co-facilitate a retreat with Chandasara which will draw from Christian and Buddhist contemplative practice. We've missed you Peter, a big welcome back also! Many thanks to JP who will be returning to DG to offer his very popular retreat on Art & Dharma and thanks to Marlene for offering to host two weekends exploring the integration of meditation practice in everyday life, Marlene's retreats will be particularly suitable for beginners.

There are still places on JP's retreat in December. This exploration of the Buddha's life will be inspired by the work of innovative and inspiring western teachers Stephen Batchelor, John Peacock and Guy Armstrong.

Book early as we have limited space. If we are full, there's an opportunity to stay off site at local accommodation also. Contact the office for details.

2009

October 30-Nov 1 Calm, Insight and Chi Kung - JP & Marlene

December 15-20 Exploring the Life and Times of the Buddha - JP

December 24- Jan 2 True Refuge - Kittisaro & Thanissara (waiting list only)

2010

January 5-10 SMS2 Study Program Module1

January 22-24 The Authentic Self - Thanissara

January 29-31 Life and Self as One - Thanissara

February 12-25 Hermitage practice

March 5-7 Cultivating a Steady Heart - Marlene

March 17-21 The Alive Stillness - Natthiko

April 3-17 Dharma & Service - Chris Cullen & Kirsten Kratz & all at The Khuphuka Project

April 30-May 4 The Island - Chandasara

May 8-9 Gently Being with the Difficult - Trish Bartley

May 14-18 Sangha Gathering - Mountain Walking & Mindful Work

May 25-30 SMS2 Study Program Module2

June 4-9 Dharma & Art - JP

June 18-26 Return to Original Brightness: - Kittisaro

July closed

August 12-14 The Buddhas' Women - Chandasara & Thanissara

August 20-28 The Way of the Heart - Kittisaro, Ian Rees, Thanissara

September 3- 8 SMS3 Study- Program Module3

Sept 26 - October 3 The Road Home: - Chandasara & Rev Peter Woods

October 15-17 Cultivating a Steady Heart - Marlene

October 30-Nov 1 Coaching from a Buddhist Perspective - Moyra Keane

November closed

December 16-19 Meditation Retreat - Ajahn Sucitto

December 23- Jan 15 Meditation Retreat - Kittisaro & Thanissara

[Click here for full retreat descriptions](#)

Kittisaro & Thanissara teaching Schedule 2010

April 2 -7 Kittisaro [Buddhist Retreat Centre](#)

June 21-27 Thanissara [Vancouver Insight](#)

Nov 18-27 K & T [Tovana Israel](#)

And at IMS - USA

December 11-16 2009 Wings of Awakening: The Five Spiritual Faculties

March 5-14 2010 The Mysterious Way of the Heart

For IMS retreat info, & to access an interview with Kittisaro & Thanissara that appeared in a US based magazine The Sun called [The Mindful Marriage](#)

Year Long Study-Practice Programme

January 2010 is the start of the Sacred Mountain Sangha year-long study practice programme (SMS2) which is designed to support practice in daily life and the increase of Dharma knowledge. The curriculum, divided into 3 terms, follows the core tenets of both Theravada and Mahayana teachings and practice.

The course can be undertaken as a Home Study Course or participants can be Residential, which means attending 3 five day retreats in April, June and September (dates above). The course is facilitated by Kittisaro and Thanissara and will also draw from forest monastic teachers, vipassana teachers and the scholastic work of Bhikkhu Bodhi and Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

It is highly recommended that participants join or create a group for mutual support while undertaking the course. Groups hosted by graduates of SMS1 are available in the following geographical locations: Underberg, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban, South Devon UK, Tel Aviv Israel, Bay Area & Sanoma County US and Cologne area, West Germany.

[For further details and to apply](#)

Opportunity to Serve at Dharmagiri

In 2010 we are looking for those who wish to undertake an opportunity to become a community member at Dharmagiri on a work-retreat basis from 3 - 6 months, 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 more info: office@dharmagiri.org

Dharmagiri Outreach

The Khuphuka Project

London Insight Meditation raises £15,000 + for Khuphuka Project!

Report from Jaya

'Support London Insight Meditation's Walk for Khuphuka' was a great success. Many dharma friends gathered and brought their friends along as well for a beautiful sunny walk around Hampstead Heath, enjoying spectacular views of London and the autumn leaves as well as the company of other sangha. It was great to have Matt (Khuphuka's co-director) walk with us and tell us all more about the project.

One sangha member kindly offered a talk on the paintings in Kenwood House, where we stopped to picnic, while another provided some wonderful homemade cakes for a celebratory tea at the finish. It was a fun and inspiring day for all of us and we were pleased to exceed our fund raising target: we are all really excited about what is happening at Khuphuka and look forward to staying involved.

[Khuphuka Project August - Sept E-Bulletin](#)

The Woza Moya Project

[For an update from Gavin Harrison](#)
[Woza Moya Annual Report 2009](#)

Prison Project

JP is continuing to coordinate the support of meditation groups in Baviaanspoort and Kutama prisons and JHB Correctional Centre in Roodepoort through correspondence and provision of Dharma materials. Please contact JP if you would like to help or donate to the provision of materials: prison.project@dharmagiri.org

News from the Prison Project is that one of the inmates who we correspond with will be released at the end of next year and has informed us that he is preparing to be ordained in the New Kadampa Tradition.

In September, while in San Francisco, Thanissara spoke with Jacques Verduin from the Bay Area, USA of Insight Prison Project who plans to visit South Africa next year.

[Click here to check out Jacques amazing work in American prisons.](#)

**Purchase a meditation bench & note book
& support South African crafts, DG Outreach & your meditation practice!**

Support Khuphuka Project & Woza Moya Project by ordering beautiful meditation benches & cushions, a 'Bodhi Bench' and 'Blue Turtle Recycled Journals'.

[For further details click here.](#)

Meditation Classes in Cape Town facilitated by Judy Tobler

- For beginners or those wishing to refresh their practice
- Eight weekly sessions on Tues 6 -7pm or Weds 10.30-11.30am
- These classes will run until the 10th or 11th November in Claremont (pls note: a new course will start in the new year)
- Individual sessions are also available by arrangement
- Enquires: Judy 021-671-6194 or 072-638-6835 / jtobler@xsinet.co.za

Core Buddhist meditation teachings of cultivating mindfulness, calm and insight, which transcend religious denomination and can be integrated into daily life of any spiritual or religious observance, form the basis of this course. Judy has attended many retreats at Dharmagiri over the last 7 years and has completed Dharmagiri's yearlong study, practice programme facilitated by Kittisaro & Thanissara. In keeping with the Buddhist tradition, the courses and classes are run on a Dana (free will offering) basis. Teachings are given freely and participants offer a donation in accordance with their own resources.

The Ten Paramitas by Ajahn Sucitto

At present approx R15,000 has been gathered for Ajahn Sucitto's book. If you would also like to contribute to this collection of Ajahn's talks please contact Dharmagiri office. Meanwhile Kittisaro is patiently working on bringing the book together after initial edits from Judy Tobler and Chantel Erasmus. While our time line to have the book ready for Ajahn's 60th birthday in November now seems unlikely, we are positive it will be published during his 60th year!

Dana & all things Money Wise!

Good News -- 18A Approval -- Tax Deductibility for Donations to Dharmagiri Outreach

Dharmagiri is officially recognized as a welfare organization that can issue tax deductible receipts for donations to its eligible Outreach programmes.

Realizing that Public Benefit Organizations are dependent on the generosity of the public, the South African government crafted legislation (Section 18A of the Tax Act) for the tax deductibility of donations to encourage support of certain approved Public Benefit Activities.

In September of this year Dharmagiri was finally granted 18A approval, and now donations to Dharmagiri for its Outreach activities -- Khuphuka, Woza Moya and The Nkululeko Foundation -- are tax deductible for the donors. A tax payer making this sort of donation is entitled to a deduction of up to 10% of their taxable income. If you make a Dharmagiri donation dedicated to our Outreach work and would like a tax deductible receipt, please contact us.

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

Since the first retreat in 2000, Dharmagiri 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.

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>

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

<http://www.dharmagiri.org>

**Dharmagiri, PO Box 270, Underberg, 3257, KZN, South Africa
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[Link](#)

Dharmagiri (Association Incorporated under Section 21) is a Non Profit Organisation 028 378 and Public Benefit Organisation 18/11/13/1926 within South Africa.

Patrons: Ajahn Sucitto, Ven Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ajahn Munindo

Directors: H.R Weinberg, L.M. Weinberg, JP Meyer, M.Matheson

