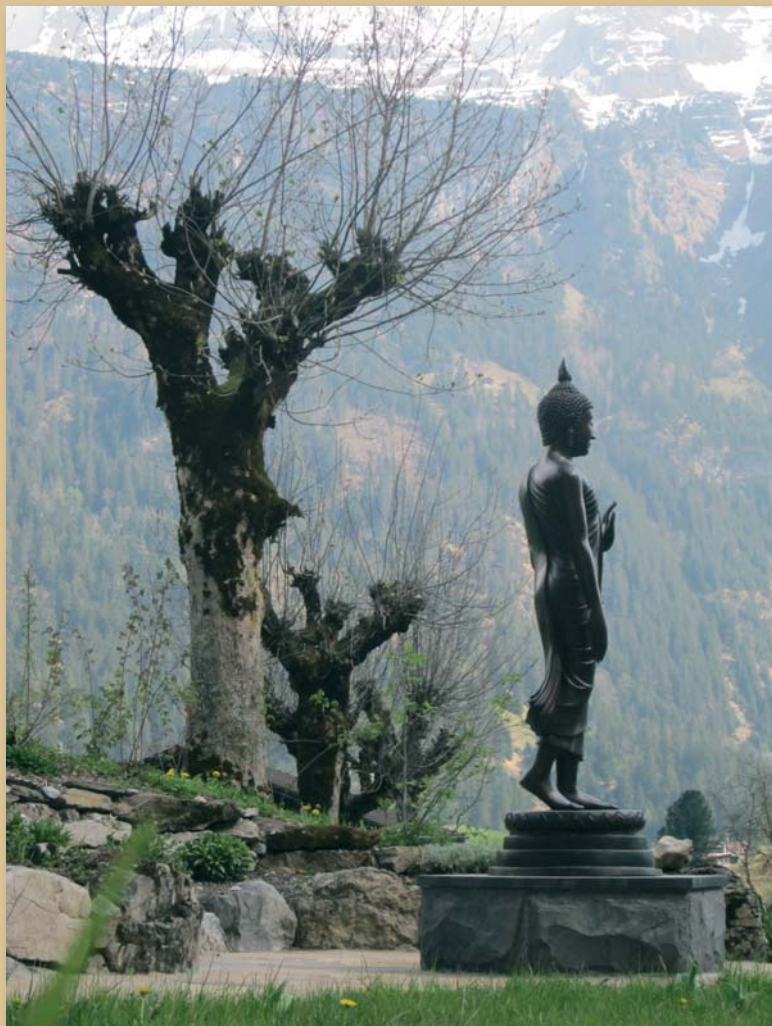




DHAMMAPALA

BUDDHIST MONASTERY



2012

DHAMMAPALA, AM WALDRAND, CH-3718 KANDERSTEG, SWITZERLAND

Dhammadapa Monastery is open to visitors and guests for most of the year. However, during retreats (see retreat program) accommodation is reserved only for registered retreatants and, during January until March 30th, only for the resident community. Guests coming for the first time are normally required to attend one of the scheduled weekend retreats (please contact our secretary).

Prior notification for overnight stays is always necessary and guests are required to follow the monastic (or retreat) schedule and abide by the eight precepts. Our arrival days are now Monday and Friday and guests are requested to stay at the monastery for at least three days.

Tel. +41 (0)33/675 21 00 Fax +41 (0)33/675 22 41



With the exception of January and February our secretary Sabrina will answer the phone Wednesday to Saturday from 9 – 11 a.m.

During other times please send an email to:
info@dhammadapa.ch

Daily routine:

05:30	Communal meditation	08:45	Work period
06:30	Clean-up period	11:15	Main meal
07:00	Breakfast	17:00	Informal Tea
08:15	Morning meeting with Guest Monk	19:30	Communal meditation

Most evenings at 19:30 there is chanting and meditation. On Saturday evenings the meditation starts at 19:00 and is followed by a Dhamma Talk or a Dhamma dialogue.

Participation in the activities of the monastery is free of charge. The monastic community is, however, dependant for its support on freewill donations. These may be made at the monastery or paid into one of the following accounts:

In Switzerland: Spar + Leihkasse, 3714 Frutigen, 30-38188-9
Verein Dhammadapa, IBAN CH65 0878 4016 2208 3700 7

In Germany: Deutsche Bank Lörrach,
Verein Dhammadapa, Acc.-Nr. 065 377 4; BLZ 683 700 34

For electronic transfer (also from other countries) on account of the Deutsche Bank Lörrach: IBAN DE27 6837 0034 0065 3774 00 BIC/SWIFT DEUTDE6F683

Editorial

Reflections from a mountain valley



There are phenomena in nature, which have an almost indescribably invigorating effect on the human body and mind, like a refreshing mountain spring for example. Personally I enjoy stepping out of the monastery door on a clear autumn morning to observe the slow changes within my immediate environment. Because of the typical early morning coolness in the mountains, all the senses get woken up quickly and are very present and ready to take in the slight changes of the morning light and the fresh smell of innocence of the new day. The almost breathless silence during the first walking meditation of the day is so all-pervasive and striking, that I feel invited to listen more deeply and sense more accurately. Even before the day has fully reached its active mode there is a beneficial quietude in the air – and also within me. The silence doesn't mean though a total absence of sounds. There are the background sounds of a constantly streaming waterfall and the repeated rattling of trains passing through the valley, but they don't diminish the impressions of stillness and quiet listening. It is a stillness,

which has always been there and is openly accessible, as soon as I become aware of it. What comes to mind is the contemporary complaint, that in our present world stillness has been lost. But can silence or stillness really be lost, can they really go anywhere? Or is it maybe more the case that we are not present to the stillness?

During early mornings it usually takes a while in our valley, which is surrounded by high towering mountains, until the new light of day spreads out fully and thus dispelling a mysterious, indefinable felt sense within me, which tends to regularly recur around the time of dawn. Even on really clear days the radiation power of the sun remains for an unbearably long time behind the sharp contours of the mountain giants on the Eastern side of the monastery. So the fine clouds of mist, which have arisen over the riverbed, have an extended lifespan and can even spread out along the

fields and slopes, before they capitulate to the first rays of the sun. As a quiet observer I find myself sometimes wanting to speed up the whole process, especially when there is a need for a bit more bodily heat. But in nature everything takes its own time and human impatience seems totally absurd and irrational in the face of this obvious fact. However if I manage to unmask the interventions of my own mind and resist the impulse to follow them – instead staying fully present to what is – then the spectacle of nature can unfold along its own lawful patterns. For me as the silent participant there remains only the task to leave all the sense impressions and thoughts to themselves, without any grasping or warding off. A completely natural form of contemplation has then crystallized, whereby no effort is made to either manipulate or suppress any impressions in consciousness.

Being able to allow all phenomena of heart and mind to be what they are also provides an important access to formal meditation and, beyond that, provides an indispensable base for inner cultivation. If you miss that access, then any later developments are predetermined by this omission. Our general experiences of life are then continuously influenced by hopes, worries, evaluations and even condemnations. Our view is obstructed as to



how the appearances of our inner life really affect us. We do not see and recognize reality based on its natural forms of manifestation, but have instead immediately covered it over with our preferences and aversions. We encounter what is on the basis of distorted perceptions, which are again determined by a strong mental bias. Most people start meditation under the instruction to focus on a certain meditation object – one's own breath or body, visual images or a mantra – in order to eventually reach a certain state of mind. To some degree this is appropriate and suitable, especially if you gather the mind within a specific domain in order to move on with the acquired strength and focus. But meditation directed towards an object is not an end in itself, only a means to an end.

If we are too fixated on methods of meditation – including the observation of mental objects which arise during meditation – we can easily

overlook the fact that all states are by their very nature conditioned, limited and unreliable. We don't see that the fascination with states only leads us more and more into dependence and neediness. How would it be for a change, if we were to loosen up that grip of our attention onto the world of objects? If we could disengage from the habit of mind to lean on external objects and get completely absorbed in a contracted way by them, but instead relate to ourselves with an attitude of inner spaciousness and openness? What would then happen to the normal consequences of this narrowing down i.e. the distorted perceptions, the habitual interpretations and value judgements of our experience and the inevitable suffering they bring along?

Could we maybe, with all our attention and care, relax into a more circumspective form of awareness – similar to the observation of natural phenomena in a mountain valley – whereby the compulsive narrowing down of our attention around objects can come to an end? Is it at this point when those conditions are fully present that alertness, calm and stillness can reveal themselves? Or is there still something missing? And if there is something missing, what would it be and which qualities would it have?

Can we allow such questions to be present within us and, most of all, can we really live them and continue to ponder them, rather than assuming that we know, because we know it all theoretically? Or maybe we just rely on the vague hope that directing our attention again and again on a certain form of meditation will somehow someday bring the desired results. And even more fundamentally: can we admit that in reality we don't yet really know what's what, but still open ourselves towards each new arising moment, with all our vulnerability and insecurity in the face of the uncertainty of one's own existence? Are we able to bear that?

And where does this lead us all, if this is not based merely on an uptight endurance but more on a patient and equanimous resting within the stillness, clarity and presence of one's own awareness? Material things, feelings, memories, thought activity and sense impressions appear in a completely natural manner – and disappear in the same fashion, if we allow it to happen. They are merely natural phenomena, which are impermanent, unreliable and can't be subjected to ownership.

Is there something within all this which doesn't cease? Is there something which is truly reliable?

...continued on page 17



News from Dhammapala Monastery...

It is noticeable that during the year 2011 we haven't really accomplished anything visible on the material plane in our monastery. Normally it is customary that we present a short review of all the renovations and larger repairs which have taken place within the monastery over the course of the past year. But this year there's none of that!

The reasons for this are that during 2011 we were the smallest monastic community in a long time – on average three of us since last April – and that there were simply no projects to draw our attention. So the motto for the year was obvious: only doing what was necessary in terms of repairs and maintenance and otherwise enjoying life in an appropriate way at the edge of the forest and at the foot of a mountain called 'First'.

After the departure of Samanera Suññato and Anagarika Jivan towards the end of March, we were fortunate enough to have the support of four other monastics from England. In April the Swedish Anagarika Seth came to join us for three months and,

just before the start of the annual 'Rainy Season' in July, the Austrian Samanera Moneyyo came for the whole of the 'Rains'. After the 'Rains' in October the Hungarian Anagarika Laszlo became a temporary member of the community until the end of the year. Finally Anagarika Olli from Finland came to support us during the winter retreat. We local monks really do appreciate these gestures of support from our affiliated monasteries in England.

Around early May, we received visitors from a totally different corner of the Buddhist universe. Three Bhikkhunis (fully ordained Buddhist nuns) stayed with us for almost a whole month. One of them, Bhikkhuni Visuddhi, is an old



Bhikkhuni Jian Yun

friend of ours since her time as a lay person. She normally spends the colder part of the year in Sri Lanka under the supervision of Venerable Pemasiri. During the European spring and summer, she takes care of a small Buddhist center in her home country, the Czech Republic. Bhikkhuni Dhammacari is originally from Singapore and has been living in Sri Lanka as a Mahayana nun during the last eight years, mainly studying Pali and the Pali Canon. She is also very involved within the Sakyadhita Training Centre, taking care of the education and training of young nuns. After all by now there are around 1000 Bhikkhunis in Sri Lanka – many of them still under training – this being a small and quiet revolution within the Theravada world. The third nun, Bhikkhuni Jian

Yun, came directly from Taiwan, where she received Bhikkhuni ordination in the Luminary Temple – just like her two friends. She underwent her formal training in Taiwan and later practiced for 12 years under the tuition of the Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw in Myanmar. Since then she has returned to her home country.

Through some fortunate coincidence we also had a large group of monks from Thailand visiting our monastery in May. It was a special privilege for us to host Luang Por Liam – successor of Ajahn Chah in Wat Nong Pah Pong – who was leading the group. He was accompanied by Luang Por Anekh from Wat Sai Ngam, Ajahn Jundee from Chonburi, Ajahn Kevali – the German senior monk of the international monastery Wat Pah Nanachat



Group of Samanas for Vesakh

- the Thai Ajahns Moshe and Juntee, and the Swiss Romand Tan Asoko. As a result, around Vesakh time, Dhammapala was not only hosting literally a house full of Samanas (male and female members of the Buddhist monastic order), but also serving as a direct meeting ground for members of the Southern and Northern tradition of Buddhism. In addition to that and as a particular highlight the Asian monks and nuns enjoyed a visit to one of the first cheese producing alps of the season, just above the Lake of Thun. This visit had been the result of their explicit wish and it turned out to be a very special event for them! Our Thai friends left us precisely on Dhammapala's 20th birthday in Kandersteg – on the 18th of May. They were going to make further visits to other monastic communities during their benevolent tour through Europe.

The month just before the beginning of Vassa (the traditional rainy season retreat) is often a time when many Samanas are on the road. The same applied this year, when we were visited in June by two Swiss nuns – Ven. Ariya Nani and Sister Khema – our friend from Hamburg, Ajahn Abhinando, and the Thai monk Ajahn Thanissaro. Also, during June, our Thai supporter Yom Vandee had again organized another Phapha (almsgiving ceremony). A large number of mainly Thai friends had joined her on this



Luang Por Liam

occasion. In fact the number was so large, that we had to turn the whole thing into an 'Open Air Event' on the meadow in front of the monastery, directly opposite the new Buddha statue in the garden. And just like on the previous year, the weather gods were completely on our side with clear skies and radiant sunshine.

In July Samanera Moneyyo and I had the opportunity to congratulate Luang Por Sumedho on the occasion of his 77th birthday. This came as a complete surprise as we didn't have to fly to Thailand, but simply drove to the southern side of the Alps. Luang Por Sumedho had been invited to spend a month on retreat in a secluded mountain hut at the very end of the Lys valley, a side valley of the well known Valle d'Aosta. On the morning

of his birthday the local lay supporters proceeded to offer the entire hut to the Sangha. It is thanks to Luang Por Sumedho's beneficial activities over three decades in Europe that now the whole Sangha will be able to use this mountain hut as a spiritual refuge – summer and winter alike.

Earlier in July, a new era of conducting acceptance ceremonies of new Bhikkhus into the monastic Sangha began at Cittaviveka Monastery, in Southern England. Luang Por Sumedho had previously been acting as the preceptor during such events for the last 30 years. His successor at Amaravati Monastery – Ajahn Amaro – had been authorized by the Thai Sangha, just a few days before the scheduled ceremony, to act as the new preceptor and – also in this particular area of monastic business – as the successor of Luang Por Sumedho. During his first official act in his new

role Ajahn Amaro and the assembled Sangha had the pleasure to accept five new members into the Bhikkhu community. In addition, Ajahn Chandapalo – the senior monk of Santacittarama Monastery in Italy – has also been given official permission to conduct acceptance ceremonies in Europe.



Margrit and Sabrina

The month of August presented us with the farewell of our long term secretary, Margrit Gertsch. After nine years of devoted service to the monastery within the Dhammapala office, she decided to take a plunge into a completely new phase of her life. On the 24th of August she had her last working day, on which day the community gave her an appropriate

ceremonial send off. After the renewal of her refuge and the five precepts she felt prepared enough to dare move to the USA (Detroit) in order to share her life there with her American friend Eric. Margrit's successor in the monastery office



Italian group who offered the retreat hut

– Sabrina Müller – had already been looking over Margrit's shoulder for almost a month before her departure. Right from her first working day she was so well prepared, that all administrative burdens were completely kept away from the monastic community. Since then Sabrina has taken on the various duties with great competence.



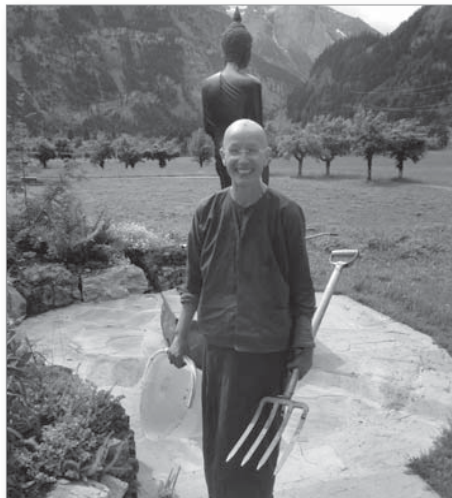
Tan Nandiyo

As 2011 represented already the second year with only one senior teaching monk at Dhammapala, we didn't see any reason to change anything concerning our offering to the wider network of friends and visitors. We kept up with a monthly retreat

offer on the basis of the nine months of the year, when the monastery is open to visitors. Apart from that, very much appreciated was the assistance of Ajahn Thiradhammo who – in the context of his annual visit to Dhammapala – offered a weekend retreat in the Thai language in March, and that of the Siladhara nuns Ajahn Kovida and Ajahn Metta, who offered an English language five day retreat as well as a meditation weekend in German. As per my own commitment, I visited once a month one of the meditation

groups in Geneva, Lausanne, Bern and Zurich. Another source of more local interest consisted in visits of Open University groups from Thun, Münsingen, Spiez and Frutigen. It is not common in Switzerland that people of the neighboring villages just drop in to have a look at the monastery. But the interest expressed via these local organizations showed that in our neighborhood there is an ongoing interest in the Buddhist approach to life and in meditation in particular.

In the midst of all the various activities of a fairly tight monastery context there were, after all, enough opportunities for the monks to retreat within the monastery or at other places. Besides the three months winter retreat and the four 'quiet weeks' we keep up each year, I received an invitation in spring to go on an extended



Sister Kovida



Luang Por Anekh & Luang Por Liam

walk in Scotland. To be precise, it was the St. Cuthbert's pilgrim's way within the hilly Borders area which I walked partly together with Ajahn Puñño and partly alone. We were superbly supported in this venture by our Scottish friends Sukie and Candima, as well as by our Dutch friend Theo, all of them old friends from my time in the Northumbrian monastery, Ratanagiri, in the early 90s. In addition there were two more journeys to England on my agenda: the bi-annual meetings of monastery Elders at Amaravati and Chithurst. Those are always welcome opportunities to take in a big dose of Sangha spirit. Tan Nandiyo followed similar motives when he accepted an invitation to stay at the German monastery Muttodaya, to foster friendship and perform the

Patimokkha ceremony with German speaking monks from Muttodaya Monastery and Metta Vihara.

On the occasion of our Kathina ceremony 2011 we were pleased to host as our special guests Ajahn Sukhacitto – who had been living at Dhammapala from 2001 until 2007 – and the Berlin Bhikkhu Piyadhammo, who has finally returned to his home town after years of absence in various parts of the Buddhist world. Right now he is in the process of setting up a little Vihara and Buddhist centre in the middle of Berlin called Wat Sacca (monastery of truthfulness). We were equally pleased to have three Asian Samanas present at the celebration: The Cambodian monk Ven. Dhammasiri from a small Vihara in Zurich, the Thai monk Ajahn Thanissaro, who spent the Vassa 2011 in Sarnen in central Switzerland and who offered the official Dhamma discourse on this occasion, and the Malaysian nun Yasavati from Frankfurt in Germany.

This year there were two reasons I nearly missed out on this important event in the Buddhist calendar. Early



Sukie and Candima

in October, our village was under the impact of another severe flooding (the most recent one was in 2005). After the first real snowfall of the season the coming together of heavy rains plus the sudden increase of temperatures provided a potent mix for disaster. Roads disappeared, houses were under water and whole landscapes were reshaped. We were cut off from road access for a few days. Just the day before the celebration, the road was open again and we were spared a possible helicopter flight to take us to the venue of the Kathina.

The second reason was that my own mother died, also in early October, after a long and slow process of mental and physical decline. Her final passing away came more as a great relief rather than a shocking loss. During four years prior to her death, she unknowingly gave a powerful teaching to all who knew her closely. During this time period

bodily functions and mental faculties turned off gently and slowly, one after the other. Every time I visited her, I had to say goodbye to another aspect of who she once was. A gradual and gentle letting go of all the perceptions, images and ideas of her took place inside me, offering endless opportunities to ponder this process and my own reactions to it. One recurring question kept coming to my mind as I watched the dissolution of her body and mind and the complete change of almost everything familiar: Who is this person beyond my images, perceptions and labels of her anyway? No answer presented itself – only a quiet, spacious presence after a while, if I allowed my heart-mind to attune to it and disengage from the normal mental chatter. In this way my own mother has truly been a strong reminder of the realities of living and dying and how intimately close they go together.

Ajahn Khemasiri



Monks' walk in the Kander valley



Friends, I do not speak of form as I am, nor do I speak of I am as apart from form. I do not speak of feeling...perception...formations...consciousness as I am, nor do I speak of I am apart from them...even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, still, in relation to the five aggregates subject to clinging, there lingers in him a residual conceit I am, a desire I am, and an underlying tendency I am that has not yet been uprooted. [S.22.89]

The above quote highlights the enigma and potential confusion over realizing Nibbāna and complete Awakening. The point is that they aren't the same thing. One might very well have had such a realization that whole areas of one's self substructure have been released – and yet some remain. In the above incident, Khemaka, the speaker, was astute enough to know that, and honest enough to declare it. This isn't always the case.

I offer an analogy. Say someone is locked up in a prison cell: no windows, no fresh air. And they get the idea that there must be something on the other side of the wall, and then through a process of careful digging and probing, they do break a small hole through the wall, big enough to see the outside world. Imagine their delight: fresh air streaming in and daylight – and a view of a mysterious world far more vivid than that of the dungeon. He or she might well imagine: 'I've made it, I'm free; with this wonderful opening bringing in fresh air and clear light, my suffering is at an end.'

Well this is great, and their intuition, faith, effort and patience are to be commended. But of course, they're not free. Nor is the person in a second example: the one who goes even further and makes a hole big enough to get their head through – although moving even part of one's body out into



Gastertal

the wide open space could indeed be exhilarating. The third prisoner gets their whole body out of the jail, but keeps going back inside to rest, eat and do business. It's only the last type, who perseveres and develops the confidence to get out, walk away and live outside the prison, that is truly free.

It's the same with realizing Nibbāna. The same sense of freedom deepens, in four stages, through successively more fundamental grounds where some sense of self (the prison) pertains. These grounds are: the ground of personality, which is governed by 'how to do it' systems and views; the ground of being affected, which is governed by obvious or subtle pleasure and pain; and the ground of being aware, which is governed by subject/object differentiation (as in 'I am aware of a state of absorption'). A realization of Nibbāna will penetrate all of these, but as the individual reorients, how that is integrated differs: she/he may well assume that they have 'had an Enlightenment experience' and that now 'I am Enlightened'.

The Buddha gently but clearly illustrates the state of the half-in, half-out, semi-realized practitioner thus:



This good samana or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and the future...they regard themselves thus: "I am at peace, I have attained Nibbana, I am without clinging." Certainly this venerable one asserts the way directed to Nibbana. Yet this good samana or brahmin still clings, clinging either to a view about the past or to a view about the future or to a fetter of sensual pleasure or to the rapture of seclusion or to unworldly pleasure or to neutral feeling. And when this venerable one regards themselves thus: "I am at peace, I have attained Nibbana, I am without clinging." That too is declared to be clinging on the part of this good samana or brahmin. All that is conditioned and thus gross, but there is the cessation of formations. Having understood: "There is this, seeing the escape from that, the Tathagata [i.e., the Buddha] has gone beyond that." [M102.24]

What the Buddha is pointing out is that some of those grounds of self remain intact and adhered to. However, the realizations do have validity. So to clarify the path to complete liberation, the Buddha detailed the map of Awakening to show how these grounds are supported by ten 'fettors', and that clusters of these fettors are broken, or substantially weakened, in four stages.



Ajahn Puṇṇo on St. Cuthbert's way

The four stages are called 'stream-entry', 'once-return', 'non-return' and 'arahant'. The stream-enterer gives up the ground of personality; the once-returner weakens their dependency on the ground I've called the ground of being affected, but doesn't completely transcend it; and the non-returner transcends the ground of being affected, but still has a sense of being a pure awareness. However, the map of the fettors serves as a reminder that even a good taste of freedom isn't the end of the story; that realizations need to find integration into a whole way of living; and, that it's as important to focus on the fettors as it is on Nibbāna.

What we're concerned with in this presentation is breaking the first cluster, which is of three fettors: feeling identified with one's personality, uncertainty with regard to Dhamma, and holding on to systems and customs (including religious beliefs and meditation techniques). Release, like ceasing, isn't the destruction of any valid psychological structure, but the non-grasping of it. So, concerning the first fetter: personality is a valid psychological structure. It's the system that develops as an interface between the 'interior' of mind and the 'exterior' of the world; and that's a structure that we need in order to operate with careful speech and actions. We need to be coherent and able to handle the conventional world; we need a relative self. So rather than trying to get rid of our personality (which would be the influx of vibhava), in Dhamma-practice we're handling it with clarity and a

here-and-now purpose. It doesn't have to be the best and we don't have to store it up as an image. In this way, life gets a lot less complicated.

In the case of personality, exercises in self-acceptance are therefore very relevant. Insight builds on that by reviewing the constituents and wrappings of personality; whether we're feeling pleased with ourselves, sunk in some personal bias or feeling inadequate, the activity is underpinned by taking it seriously as 'This is what I am, what I need to be, or what others think I am.' Yet an image and a set of activities that we witness can't be self – because what is it that witnesses it?

Now that question's just an intellectual approach – but it encourages us to look into the compulsion to keep identifying with a structure that is always going to be (you guessed it!)... changeable, unsatisfactory and not-self. Because there can be a huge amount of wrapping around this structure in terms of needing to be seen as good, and in terms of relational dependencies and security issues. Clinging to personality takes some shifting. However, that's what the development of the Factors of Awakening, insight (and good friends) are for. You don't attack the personality, but challenge what causes clinging to it. Basically you keep reviewing what personality holds on to (praise and blame, future and past, success and failure) and also the action of holding (defence, affirmation, security). These are not small matters, so it takes development of inner strength, ease and confidence to bring around a release from that.



Meanwhile, a lack of confidence in the Dhamma remains as a fetter. This means that we speculate over the meaning of the words, or over whether the Buddha's teachings really work, or over aspects of the teaching (how much calm do you need before practising insight?), and so on. Because of this wavering, the mind is hesitant and the Factors of Awakening don't blossom. The root of this uncertainty is the assumption that we can understand Dhamma intellectually, or that the formulation of the words is, rather than points to, the truth. This will always throw one's energy around in doubt. For realization, we have to go beyond the mind's conceptual hold on experience. It's like going to a restaurant, seeing 'pizza' on the menu, and then trying to eat that word. Well, we could debate over what kind of pizza is the best – but never have tasted one. Uncertainty concerning Dhamma is bound up with a hesitancy to go into one's own experience – which is never as clear and straightforward as all those ideas of the Dhamma are.



Naturally, there's also an attachment to the systems and teachings that we've found helpful. Whether it's cooking dinner, playing tennis, matters of cultural etiquette or meditation, systems and customs are also valid. But it's the clinging that 'this is the only way' and 'I'm great because I'm good at this system, and nothing else counts' — that's the dependency. Many of the issues that bind us to personality are found throughout this cluster: in fact, it's said that all these three fetters break at the same time. So they're three aspects of the same thing, which you can summarize as attachment to the structures of the cognitive (thinking and conceiving) mind. That's the system that 'tells us who we are' through measuring our performance against social approval, external systems and our intellectual grasp of the teachings. But being held in the grip of the cognitive mind leads to dogmatism, conformity and ritualism. The Buddha used two similes as a warning against this: that the Dhamma is like a snake, and that it's like a raft. It's like a snake because it has to be grasped properly, just behind the head; grab it by the tail and it will whip round and bite you. It's like a raft because you use it to carry you across a

flood – when you get to the other side, you don't pick it up and carry it around on your head [M.22].

This is pretty clear. But to really relinquish these requires penetrating the mind's love of systems and abstractions. Attachment to the cognitive functions gives rise to a clever self who knows what to do – but then gets dogmatic and needs to control life and others to get them to fit their system and views. Release from this attachment means feeling the attraction of knowing who you are and of having things all sorted out in abstract; but more important, it means knowing how this causes stress. This kind of strength and independence can only happen when awareness is endowed with the Factors of Awakening.

The next four fetters enumerate attachment on the hedonic/pleasure/pain level, both in terms of sensory activity and meditative absorptions. These are: sense-desire, ill-will, fascination with absorption and fascination with absorptions into formless states. The once-returner weakens these, and the non-returner gets free of dependence on obvious or subtle levels of pleasure. The final three fetters (conceiving oneself in any respect, subtle agitation and ignorance) point to the attachment to awareness, to the sense of clarity that direct knowing offers. This is what an arahant has seen through. However, such developments are beyond the range of this book. And the Buddha commented that if you drop the first three fetters, you've done most of the work. Because with those you know for yourself what release really is. You just have to keep alert to any sense of 'I am' that forms.



Fissistöcke above the clouds

To end on a positive note: in the course of elucidating his predicament, Khemaka realized arahantship, along with all those who were listening to him.



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*This text was taken from the newly published free distribution book
"Meditation – a way of awakening".
Copies of the whole book are available at any of our associated monasteries.*

continued from page 3...

Venerable Ajahn Chah could get rather fierce when such questions were put forward to him and bark out: 'There isn't anything and we don't call it anything – that's all there is to it. Be finished with all of it. Finish with all that searching and craving!' On the other hand he pointed out that in order to use conventional reality skilfully one had to rely on concepts for communication. If then we have practiced so far that we don't grasp appearances any longer and are totally convinced that everything is uncertain

and unsure, then we could also say that we have arrived at our 'original mind'. And it's there that all grasping and manipulation come to an end, because the 'original mind' or the true heart does not cease. It knows that everything ceases – but 'that which knows' doesn't cease. If we have gone so far in our investigation of all phenomena and experiences, that we can see them in this way – as they are according to their nature – then the heart lets go of all that, which has brought us so many difficulties and problems in the past.

Ajahn Khemasiri

Dhammapala Calendar 2012

Meditation weekends will take place at the Dhammapala monastery, the group meetings with Ajahn Khemasiri will take place in the corresponding localities. For addresses check page 21.

January

Monastic retreat
January 5th till March 30th

March

31-April 1 Meditation Weekend
with Aj. Thiradhammo (in Thai)

April

25 Bern
27-29 Meditation Weekend
with Ajahn Khemasiri (in German)

May

9 Geneva
20 Vesakha – Festival in
Hinterkappelen near Bern
29-June 4 Quiet week at the monastery*

June

14 Basel
22-24 Meditation Weekend with the
Siladhara nun Ajahn Kovida
(in English)

July

9 Zurich
13-15 Meditation Weekend
with Ajahn Khemasiri (in German)

August

2 Asalha Puja (Full moon)
3 Beginning of Vassa (Rains retreat)
10-12 Meditation Weekend with the
Siladhara nun Ajahn Metta

September

9-23 Quiet fortnight
at the monastery*
26 Geneva

October

12-14 Meditation Weekend
with Ajahn Khemasiri (in German)
24 Bern
30 End of Vassa (Rains retreat)

November

18 Kathina-Festival
23-25 Meditation Weekend
with Ajahn Khemasiri (in German)
26 Zurich
27-December 3
Quiet week at the monastery*

December

19 Geneva

January – March 2013

Monastic 3-month retreat



* During this period of time the community reduces its activity to a minimum and appreciates the support of a limited number of guests.

Meditation Weekends 2012

(G) = German (E) = English (T) = Thai

31 March – 1 April (T) Aj. Thiradhammo

27 – 29 April (G) Aj. Khemasiri

22 – 24 June (E) Siladhara nun Ajahn Kovida

13 – 15 July (G) Aj. Khemasiri

10 – 12 August (G) Siladhara nun Ajahn Metta

12 – 14 October (G) Aj. Khemasiri

23 – 25 November (G) Aj. Khemasiri

The weekends usually start on Friday evening at 19:30h. In order to be appropriately oriented and acclimatised to the monastic environment, we ask participants to arrive at the monastery between 17:00h and 18:00h. It is expected that one considers the eight ethical precepts of the monastery as binding, including the practice of noble silence. The practical instructions and teachings are generally held in German unless otherwise specified. To be admitted as a participant, a fax, e-mail or telephone booking is necessary (Wed. – Sat. / 9:00 – 11:00).

As courses are often fully booked, we ask kindly to only register if one plans to participate for the whole weekend. The monastery is entirely supported by donations (Dana = generosity), and we recommend to make a food contribution towards the four meals of the weekend at the beginning of the course. Also a monetary donation at the end of the course will be appreciated. Please also bring along a sleeping bag plus pillow case or a whole set of bedding.



Our Gratitude



We would like to express our appreciation for the various contributions to create this newsletter. The layout was done by Ron Lumsden with technical support from Tavaro. The proofreading of the texts was done by Patricia Rollier, Jeanne Schut and Ron Lumsden. Photographic material was provided by Bhikkhuni Visuddhi, Adelbert Buffy, Boonjan Chanloun, Margrit Gertsch and Ajahn Khemasiri.

Long & external Retreats 2012

- All retreats are given in **German** unless otherwise specified.
- Registrations for the following retreats are accepted from March 2012 onwards.
- **Voluntary cooks are most welcome for all the retreats.**

- 11–13 May **Weekend Retreat at Le Refuge** – Eguilles, Provence / France
Teachings will be given in English with French translation
Contact: Le Refuge, Tel: +33 (0)4 4292 4528.
- 24–28 May **Samatha-Vipassana** course in noble silence
and Chi Gung exercises with Mawuli Agboli. Open to experienced meditators.
Contact: Dhammapala Monastery.
- 15–19 August **“The grace of uncertainty”** with Ajahn Khemasiri.
Meditation retreat with Ajahn Khemasiri at Buddha-Haus, in Allgäu, Germany.
Contact: +49 (0)8376 502
- 1–8 September **“Mindfulness in stillness and Dhamma dialogue”**
with Ajahn Khemasiri. In this course, quiet meditation shall be enriched by daily contemplative dialogue and Chi Gung exercises led by Mawuli Agboli. Only for people with prior retreat experience.
Contact: Dhammapala Monastery.
- 26 December–01 January 2013 **New Year Retreat** with Ajahn Khemasiri
Course in silence open to experienced meditators.



Meditation groups contacts

Switzerland (+41)

Avegno	Martin Züllig	091 796 27 24
Baden	Maria Sarah Bratschi	056 406 39 59
Basel	Rainer Künzi – www.kalyanamitta.ch	061 331 13 04
Beatenberg	Meditationszentrum – www.karuna.ch	033 841 21 31
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	Irene Bumbacher – www.zentrumfuerbuddhismus.ch	031 331 91 06
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	Patricia Rollier	021 806 22 33
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	Rolf Hafner – www.thravada.ch	079 358 90 77

Germany (+49)

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	Susanne Steinhusen	0761 384 270 52
Hamburg	Axel Wasmann	040 399 069 97
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Hildesheim	Johannes Dombrowski	05121 8090 580; 0151 1703 2799
Karlsruhe	Hans-Peter Fettig	0721 9483 636; 0160 8351 187
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München	BGM Connie Deichstetter	089 129 67 43
Nürnberg	Wolfgang Kaiser	0911 660 42 42
Ulm/Dürmentingen	Dobrina Frank	07371 96 15 05

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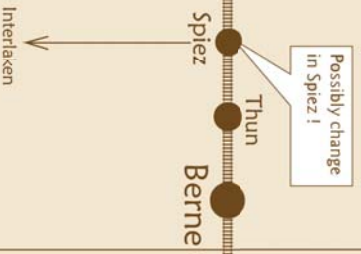
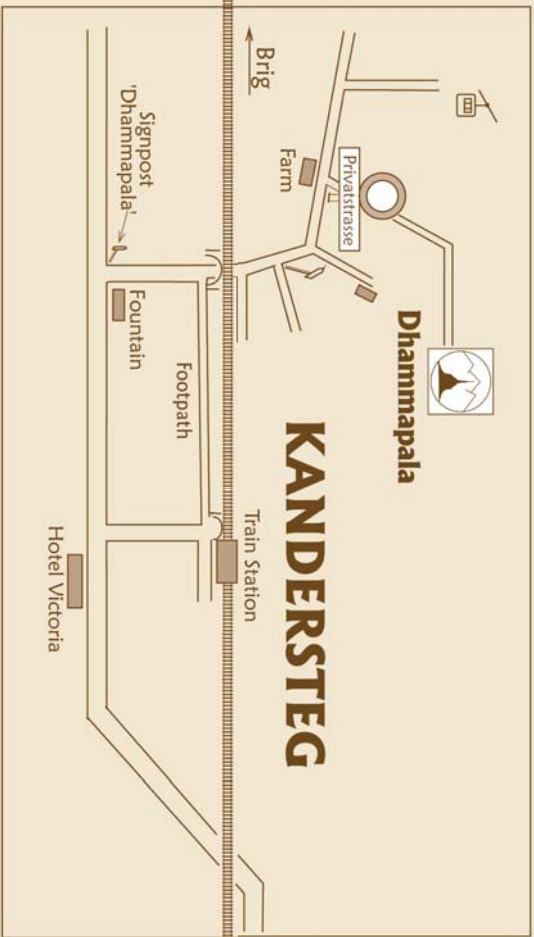
Vihara	Via Delle Prata 22, Localita “Le Brulla”, Santacittarama I-02030 Frasso Sabino RT	
	Fax +39 (0)6233 238 629	0765 87 21 86

France (+33)

Aix-en-Provence	Le Refuge, 370 Ch. Fontaine de Fabrègues, F-13510 Eguilles	04 42 92 45 28
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Austria (+43)

Wien	Christoph Köck, Gfromnergasse 3/1/39, A-1060 Wien	01 595 50 18
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The connection by train:

Trains leave Bern in the direction of Brig at 39 minutes past each hour and arrive in Kandersteg about 1 hour later. For some connections you may have to change in Spiez. From Kandersteg station to Dhammapala it is approximately 15 – 20 minutes on foot.