



The Orchard Sangha Newsletter

Welcome to the second issue of the Orchard Sangha newsletter. In the recent questionnaire many wrote that the newsletter was an excellent way of keeping in touch. So, this issue is in response to that feedback. However, the frequency of the newsletter depends entirely on *you*. We need your contributions, please keep them coming.

This issue has been blessed with Christina's wonderful thoughts on gardening at The Orchard and by Sarah's beautifully expressive poem. John has also contributed, writing an informative report on the last Sangha meeting. It is heartening to receive their contributions.

In particular, do please read the news below regarding Maitreya House and let us have your comments. Also, the information on the new bursary fund and the Dates for your Diary. We hope you enjoy!

Maitreya House - important news

The Crystal Group charity who owns Maitreya House has come to a point where they are no longer able to run and take care of Maitreya House due to lack of sufficient manpower.

They are therefore looking for options to run the house in such a way that its integrity and that of the objectives of the Crystal Group can be maintained.

For that purpose they have contacted the Orchard for a discussion to see whether an agreement can be found which will be of mutual benefit for the Crystal Group and the Orchard.

Two options were originally proposed: that of a long-term lease and that of Maitreya House being sold to the Orchard Sangha. Another option that is under review is that of a co-ownership between the Crystal Group and the Orchard Sangha.

The *main question* though is whether the Orchard Sangha will have the commitment and manpower to take on the running and care of Maitreya House.

Before any further steps are taken this has to be addressed and solved, because if this is not the case then Maitreya House will become a burden and we will end up in the same position as the Crystal Group.

We are therefore asking the Sangha members to consider this issue seriously and see whether there are members who are willing to be part of a small committee that takes on the responsibility for Maitreya House. Sonia and Ad will not wish to be part of such a committee but as they have years of experience with Maitreya House, Ad is very happy to be there for any advice, etc. in setting up the required organisation.

Please, give us your view and let us know if you are one of the people who wish to be on the committee for Maitreya House.

To let us know your views please contact Eleri – by post or email c/o The Orchard, Lower Maescoed, Hereford HR2 0HP or at mumblesbodywork@aol.co.uk.

Gill – by telephone on 01981 241315.

Gardening with Christina

Since there is remembering there is a garden:

As a baby in the form of sweet carrot juice; as a child in the form of the miracle of all sorts of insects, sounds, colours, smells ... and the play of light; as a juvenile in the form of resistance against bending, bowing to the earth, weeding, sowing, water ...

There is one satisfying practice during all periods:

Gathering apples in one of those clear autumn days, blue sky, apples all around, red, orange, yellow – reflections in an ocean of green and sweetness, hands lifting them up, cold and clear skin touching the palms, fragrance, water running like streams through the mouth and the very first bite into ... a flash of sour sweetness, satisfaction.

A few weeks ago: gardening after a long period of non-gardening.

Support the garden, free it from old, dead parts, prune the bushes, do weeding! What does that mean? What is the intention? Who is the one who needs support? The garden, the gardener?

It is normal to support beautiful flowering plants more than 'invisible' ones, special plants more than common ones, a lot of fruits more than only a few, strong straight trees and bushes more than weak and crooked ones ... most do balance their garden as the human mind goes.

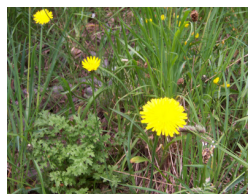


There was a big section of fresh, strong dandelions. A dandelion is digging its root deep into the earth, there is the very first vigorous green, the blossom is like a strong yellow inspiration and then there is this unexpected softness of the seeds, flying over the fields, some of them blown up by streams of outbreath and caught by little children's hands.

What is the intention? Protecting the weaker beings against these strong ones?

Stabbing the shovel deep into the earth, loosening the root, unpleasant moment, out with it! Only part of a strong root appeared .. then a laugh rippled about a very human instinct: eating. Into the mouth with this strong power. Being it.

Dandelion – also called 'taraxacum' is a beautiful herb for cooking, teas and more. The green of the young plant is delicious for salads, you also can cook it together with stinging nettles or add it as a soft bitter taste to honey-mustard sauces – you knit your brows? Do trust and try it! The whole plant – the young one, before blooming, latest in May – is a well-known remedy, supporting kidney, liver and gallbladder, the gold of creativity.



Dry the whole plant after cleansing or, that is easier, only the root very softly in an airy place over days. Cut it in small pieces and pour it over with cold water, heat it to boil and cook it one minute. Wait 5-10 minutes, depending on your habit to bitter taste and then drink it, sip for sip. If you want more sensations add a few slices of fresh apples and after boiling roseblossoms – and enjoy.

Dates for your Diary

The first **Orchard Sangha Gathering** will take place at The Orchard on **2nd and 3rd August 2008**. This promises to be a wonderful event and a marvellous opportunity for everyone to meet in a spirit of joy and celebration. Invitations will shortly be sent out so mark the weekend in your diary now.

The **Autumn Fayre** was a great success last year and with your help we hope to build on that success. This year's Fayre is planned for Saturday **8th November**. Please let us have any good quality items for sale now so we can make it a truly positive and inspiring event. Thank you.

Sangha News

THE ORCHARD SANGHA SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 29TH & 30TH MARCH 2008

“Talking and Thinking together in dialogue” – attended by Eleri, Gill, Sandra, John, Pat & Sarah

Sarah Hill took the responsibility for holding the meeting introducing a new format. Incorporating dialogue techniques we were encouraged to voice our opinions and listen to each other in an atmosphere of trust and respect. This framework provided an interesting and safe environment for the group to share its experiences of being part of the Orchard Sangha.

After the introduction we were each asked to reflect and celebrate the achievements of the Sangha over the last year. Brainstorming enabled us to appreciate the efforts individuals had made. The introduction of information folders, the setting up of a Sangha bank account, the distribution of the first newsletter and the success of the Autumn Fayre raising over £1,000 all demonstrated the way the Sangha could work together in an atmosphere of loving kindness.

We also identified areas where awareness and sensitivity would be needed to ensure that the Sangha taking more responsibility for the running of the Orchard doesn't compromise the atmosphere of silence and refuge. To facilitate this process brief daily Sangha meetings have been introduced to discuss the practical aspects of the day and enable retreatants to clarify and respect each other's needs.

On the second day we explored current issues, needs and problems. This included the discussion of finances, transportation during workshops, clarification on the roles of short and long term volunteers, communication - looking to involve and inform as many people as possible, the development of the newsletter and setting the date for an Annual Sangha Gathering (see below). We also discussed the possibility of the Sangha buying or leasing Maitreya house from the Crystal group.

To end the meeting we looked at the way forward taking time to make sure that the actions and ideas we discussed would be followed through. This included making plans for the next newsletter, drafting a note to inform the Sangha about Maitreya house, distribution of the questionnaire results and planning the introduction of an information booklet for personal retreatants.

At the end of the second day we were all surprised at the ground we were able to cover. The meeting not only provided the opportunity to discuss practical matters but also created the space to share our hopes and fears around the development of the Sangha. Each person present had been able to contribute something different taking us on a journey through different emotions connecting us and taking us to a place of deeper understanding. For more detailed notes of the meeting please email Sarah Hill at sarah.hill1@mac.com.

Sangha Bursary Fund

The new Orchard Sangha bursary fund has been set up to contribute to ensuring that workshops and personal retreats at The Orchard are financially viable for every student.

- a. Bursaries of not more than one third of the workshop fee or personal retreat cost will be provided up to a maximum of £250 per person.
- b. A maximum of one bursary in any year will be given to an individual student.
- c. Bursaries will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

The process for applying for a bursary is as follows:

- Apply directly to the finance group by email to gini_wade@lineone.net
- Assuming funding is available, your offer will be confirmed to you in writing and your teacher will be informed.
- Payment will be made directly to the teacher and once they confirm that you have attended the workshop/retreat, we will send a cheque for the agreed sum directly to them.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Orchard Sangha Finance Group

Woman now: looking into her eyes

Woman now, seated high upon a weathered rock
Brown eyes scan the glittering ocean
Sun and wind-kissed skin shines
Broad luminescent smile settles on her face
Forever captivated by constancy of waves' motion and form
Diverse in nature and power
Trust in this place never falters
Excitement and joy consistently rise
Sweet smells of sea air dance in her nostrils
Concoctions of sound ring in her ears
Here, she is abundant, present and safe
visible in breathing - steady and calm
discernable in posture - open and alive

Shyly, she looks deeper
bearing witness to maturing beauty
With coarse white hairs and profound storylines
Wisdom grown rich from eras and beings past
Dark times and light times
the worst of times and the very best of times
Therein exasperating duality proliferates
as strength and courageousness ascend
surfacing what may set her free
Yet, simultaneously and relentlessly
so drawn to that familiar, fear-filled world within
Moved to exist behind the veil in her eyes
to inhabit such silence and separation

Curious, scared eyes unexpectedly fill with awe
opening to newness and light
Bright smile reappears in an instant
recalling new grown compassion, respect
and love
Deeply felt warmth accompanies her
Tender, profound kindness awakes
Such sweet moments in time
as blue and white light gently enfolds and renews her
Stillness, equanimity and love again rise
Calm, strength and simplicity momentarily appear
Joy and wonder gloriously abound
As she looks into her eyes and 'sees'

Sarah - 2008

Inspirations

Cards

We just had to give you a glimpse of the beautiful cards that are now available, ideal to give or to keep as a reminder of The Orchard and your practice. The cards measure 148mm x 210mm and can be purchased after workshops or by post from Sarah on sarah.hill1@mac.com. Cost is £2.50 each plus p&p where applicable. All monies received from the sale of the cards are used for the benefit of the Sangha. Grateful thanks to Sarah for her creative skills.



Dulas Hut



Shrine



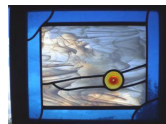
Maple Leaf



Buddha



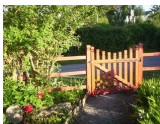
Statue



Window



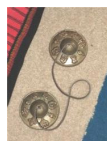
Chenrezig



Gate



Medicine Buddha



Thingsaks

Sitting Times

Christina Haehner and a group of students in Germany have started to meet once a week at 5.30pm for sitting – to coincide with the sitting time in the zendo. Wonderful to know there is connection and participation across the miles.

Comments on the last newsletter

“a great support”

“the poem was beautiful from Amarana”

“sitting times – very good to know and tune in with”

“Amarana’s poem – especially the bit about the mind”

Please keep them coming – feedback, suggestions, ideas. We love to hear from you.

More Humour

Four monks were meditating in a monastery. All of a sudden the prayer flag on the roof started flapping. The younger monk came out of his meditation and said: "Flag is flapping" A more experienced monk said: "Wind is flapping" A third monk who had been there for more than 20 years said: "Mind is flapping." The fourth monk, who was the eldest and was visibly annoyed, said: "Mouths are flapping!"

Thanks ... and Requests

- ❖ After our request for help in the last issue we have two beautiful new handmade cushions in the kitchen courtesy of Monica. Thank you Monica.
- ❖ A further request for help – is there anyone out there who feels capable of constructing a basic **website** for the Sangha? If so, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Tony Austin at tonyaustin35@hotmail.com or by post at 17 Goodwood Mansions, Stockwell Park Walk, London SW9 0XY.
- ❖ The questionnaire also revealed that a large majority of students expressed a preference for helping at The Orchard either just before or just after a workshop. We would like to confirm that anyone who comes along to help does not have to pay for accommodation. Just the usual “bring food to share” basis.

Never Give Up

No matter what is going on, never give up. Develop the heart. Too much energy in your country is spent developing the mind instead of the heart. Develop the heart. Be compassionate. Not just to your friends but to everyone. Be compassionate. Work for peace, in your heart and in the world.



Work for peace and I say again, never give up. No matter what is happening. No matter what is going on around you. Never give up.

H H The XIV Dalai Lama

 [Contact Details](#) 

Offers of assistance - Gill - sangha@gn.apc.org or on 01981 241315

Website – Tony on tonyaustin35@hotmail.com or 17 Goodwood Mansions, Stockwell Park Walk, London SW9 0XY.

Maitreya House

Eleri – by email at mumblesbodywork@aol.co.uk or c/o The Orchard, Lower Maescoed, Hereford HR2 0HP.

Gill – by telephone on 01981 241315.

Cards - Sarah on sarah.hill1@mac.com

Bursary Fund – Gini at gini_wade@lineone.net

Newsletter - Sandra - for comments and contributions – at sygoodfellow@hotmail.com or on 013873 70787 (and if there is anyone out there with DTP skills who would like to offer their services to the newsletter, please do get in touch!)