

The Orchard Sangha Newsletter

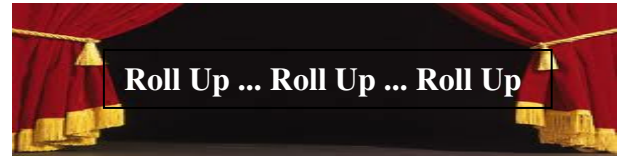
After the invitation in the last newsletter for inspiring contributions it has been brilliant to receive poems, thoughts and observations from many first-time contributors. A big thank you to you all.

It caused me to reflect on how fortunate we are to have The Orchard and the Sangha. We may visit just occasionally, participate in a workshop or simply wish to keep in touch via the newsletter, but The Orchard is the thread that connects us all. The thread that weaves the workshops, the place, the meetings, the events, the people, into a meaningful whole. A bringing together of the teachings and the experience. A retreat, a sanctuary from life's hustle and bustle, where it is possible to rest in the still, silent places that nourish us.

Like me, though, you may not realise how slender are the strands to that thread. The task of maintaining The Orchard falls to just a few. Do please read Jane's humorous but sincere plea on this page. Perhaps meditate on it for a while. Then, if you feel you would to help, contact Amarana or Jane on janesethi@yahoo.co.uk. You will be assured of a warm welcome!

In metta
Sandra

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This is the chance of a lifetime.....do you want to put your deepest aspirations into practice, be free from suffering, reduce ego clinging, practise dana, let go of self-cherishing, open your heart, free your mind, live life to the full, contact true, deep-lasting happiness.....

Well, we think we have found just what you've been looking for.....

All you have to do is choose your dream job from the list below, and if you're the first to get in touch, it's yours. It couldn't be simpler - no interviews, no CVs, no references, and you can start straight away.....

Seasonal jobs:

Kitchen – deep clean at the beginning and end of the season

Zendo and shower – deep clean at the beginning and end of the season

Kutis – deep clean at the beginning and end of the season

Ongoing jobs:

Water feature – once a month

Zendo and toilet and lobby area – once a week

Gardening – 2 days a week

Please send your requests to Amarana and Jane via janesethi@yahoo.co.uk

Book early to avoid disappointment

(Not so) Small print: all work is on a voluntary basis

Sangha News

Dialogue – an invitation

As you may or may not know, we have been meeting in dialogue at the Orchard over the past two years. This opportunity for a space to dialogue was created by the sangha for the sangha in order to explore mindful communication.

It is an agenda free space, and sometimes, within that, we look at questions or issues that may arise for the sangha.

The emphasis is on dialogue rather than outcome or solutions, and actions may or may not arise from it. The dialogue space is a container that we place our questions or concerns into. From thereon the process is more organic than linear and we have come to see the benefit of bringing something to the pot and letting it simmer.

We would like to open this space up to the whole sangha, wherever you are. If you have a question or concern that you feel would benefit from being placed into the dialogue space, we invite you to join us if you can, or send them to us via sarah.hill1@mac.com. The next dialogue days are on 25th October and 13th December from 11.00 until 4.00. There is no cost but please bring lunch to share.

We look forward to hearing from you,

From the sangha in dialogue.

Jane Sethi

An open letter from Amarana

Nearly one year is over since I came last October to the Orchard. I remember very well the feelings in me when I was asked by Sonia if I would like to spend the next year at the Orchard and that there would be support from the Sangha for me.

And now I would like to say to all of you who make this possible warmly, thank you! I feel really at home at the Orchard and well supported by Sonia and Ad and the Sangha friends.

My wish is, that all the gifts I'm receiving here can flow through my heart and that I will be giving back through my offering.

A deep bow,
Amarana

One of my favourite moments was seeing Jane fishing in our new water feature!



Speaking is often used unmindfully, compulsively and so-called spontaneously. It then gets in the way of understanding and serves neither speaker nor listener.

Compare that with the quality of communication coming from the centre of the being which can exist in silence, quietness or in mindful speaking. If that quality existed more frequently the amount of misunderstanding, confusion, paranoia, suspicion, doubt and suffering caused in the world through communication, would be substantially reduced.

John Garrie Roshi

PROGRAMME AND TEACHINGS

For this autumn programme *Sonia* is offering two practice retreats: *Vajrasattva*, a meditation for the purification and transformation of the unwholesome states and of union with the Diamond state of Mind; and the *Medicine Buddha*, a practice to strengthen the wholesome states in us to enable us to support others facing challenging times.

These two retreats can be attended as an introduction into those powerful and effective practices or as a consolidation of the work covered earlier in the year during the longer retreats.

The Four Roads that lead to the Golden City retreat is an in-depth study and practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, that is the cultivation of *choice-less awareness* of the body and its activities and of the mind and its movements.

Vajrasattva practice retreat

30th (eve) Sept. – 3rd (4pm) Oct.

Cost: £ 130

Medicine Buddha practice retreat

18th (eve) – 21st (4pm) November

Cost: £ 130

The Four Roads that lead to the Golden City

2nd (eve) – 6th (2pm)/11th (2pm) December

Cost: £ 160/£ 360

Students can attend for a minimum of 4 or up to 9 days.

During the retreat there will be the opportunity to study the Satipatthana Sutta, the discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, with Ad.

Ad is offering a retreat on:

Dependent origination, or Dependent Co-arising

21st (eve) – 24th October Cost: £ 130

A study retreat equally relevant for beginners and advanced practitioners.

From: "A Collection of Teachings" by Sonia

The following issues are now available:

Loving Kindness teachings 2004 – 2009
Cost £12 plus postage

Purification teachings 2004 - 2010
Cost: £10 plus postage

To order your copy, contact The Orchard
email: sonia.moriceau@ukonline.co.uk
Telephone: 01873 860207

After deduction of the cost for printing and binding, 50% of the profit will go towards supporting The Orchard Sangha.



I was privileged to attend Ad's course in June. These are some of the things that I remember:-

Vivid orange poppies – I helped some of them off with their pointy caps.

Circular patches of lettuces looking comfortable and at ease.

Deep purple lupins jutting out over the path to lunch.

A goldfinch drinking from the pool in the early morning.

The extraordinarily powerful scent from a single bruised lavender leaf.

White. The white of orchid and chrysanthemum flowers and the white of compassion which flowed around and to and from all present.

Jennifer Levitt

KUSALA AND INSTANT PRESENCE
A WONDERFUL INSIGHT RETREAT WITH SONIA
IN GERMANY

From June 15th to 20th 2010 Sonia taught a group of German students (including one Swiss ☺) at the Pegasus Hof in the north of Germany (<http://www.hof-pegasus.de/>):



It was a wonderful opportunity to practice with Sonia, to be lead by her into deep meditation and to experience and share moving insights. Thank you very much, dear Sonia!!!

Over the five days Sonia looked with us at:

- the four vital qualities which allow us to train the mind (mindfulness of impermanence, having care & respect for oneself and others, cultivating unbroken attention and having the Sangha as a conducive environment for our practice)
- the three types of responding to the world (greed, desire, acquisitive (pali: lobha); hatred, aversion (pali: dosa), delusion, confusion (pali: moha)) and how to transform them into compassion, clarity and spacious equanimity
- the main obstacles for not staying in the present (scattered mind, tiredness, being too lax, having exciting fantasies)

- and the cycle of the five hindrances, starting with wanting something (Kamacchanda: sensual desire), not getting it and being frustrated about it (Vyapada: ill will), exhausting ourselves by moving forth and back between Thina-Middha (sloth and terror) and Uddhacca-Kukkucca (restlessness and worry) - until finally giving up and becoming doubtful of ourselves, our teacher or other people (Vicikiccha:doubt).

Sonia also reminded us of the importance of keeping the gap between the formal practice and the informal practice as small as possible, thus integrating the dharma more and more into our daily lives. She gave us a wonderful poem on simplicity, the art of just doing one thing at a time, and invited us to write our own version during the week.

On the following two pages are a few of the poems that were written and received during our stay at the Pegasus Hof. May they remind everyone of their own seeds of mindfulness and simplicity and thus bring peace and happiness into everyone's life.



Weinen hat seine Zeit.
Lieben und Lachen hat seine Zeit.
Teilen hat seine Zeit.
Erstarren hat seine Zeit.
Sich versöhnen hat seine Zeit.
Für sich sein und zusammen sein hat seine
Zeit.
Still werden hat seine Zeit.

*There is a time for crying.
There is a time for being in love and a time
for laughing.
There is a time for sharing what you possess.
There is a time for being paralyzed.
There is a time for reconciliation.
There is a time for being on your own and a
time to be with others.
There is a time for becoming quiet.*

(Myriam)

୧ ୩ ୫ ୭ ୯ ୧୧ ୧୩

A school with one thousand students
Two hundred of these are mine
To be looked after, to be cared for.
Simplicity here means:
one grade level at a time
one class at a time
one student at a time.
And with this one student:
one look at a time
one word at a time
one moment of contact –
Two hearts opening
One heart beat at a time.

(Marion)

INNEHALTEN-
GEWAHRSEIN-
EINS- ZUR ZEIT

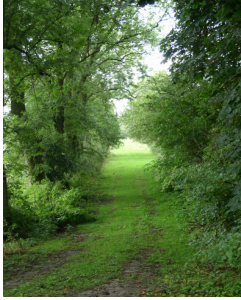
EINATMEM- AUSATMEN

HOLUNDERDUFT
BERAUSCHST DIE SINNE
DRINGST IN DIE TIEFE MEINER SEELE
ERFÜLLST MICH GANZ
BIS IN DIE WURZEL
SO TRÖSTEND
SO WARM
SO BERUHIGEND
SO ALLDA
OH HOLLERBUSCH- HOLLE- DU HOLDE
ERINNERE MICH
ALLES IST GUT
WERDEN
BLÜHEN
FRÜCHTE TRAGEN
VERGEHEN
UM WIEDER NEU ZU WERDEN



*Pausing
Being aware
Being one with time
Breathing in – breathing out
Scent of the elder
intoxicating my senses
Penetrating deeply my soul
Filling me up completely
Reaching deep down into my roots
So comforting
So warm
So calming
So ever-present
Oh black elder – you beautiful one
You remind me:
Everything is fine
Becoming
Blossoming
Yielding fruit
Decaying
Becoming new again*

(Elisa)*



Did you ever listen to a song of a blackbird?

He is never repeating one melody.
I would like to sing like a blackbird.
So bright, so easy, so simple.

(Christiane)



At a time ...

watching the belly
at a time
finding interesting ideas ;-)
at a time
following the thoughts
at a time
finding the way back
at a time
flying seeds in front of the day moon
at a time
i sva su su sva i
at a time
listening to you (Sonia)
at a time
sitting in silence
at a time
thank you for your teaching
at a time
(usch)



Simplicity



On the beach: one grain of sand at a time.
In the meadow: one blade of grass at a time.
By the sea: one drop of water at a time.

(Thomas)

And to emphasise the thread that connects us all, from the UK:

One thing at a time

One thing at a time.
First the intention.
Then the lifting of the heel
And the light unpeeling of the sole from the earth.
The trajectory is fluid for an instant,
But it's not sustainable.
The brush of grass stems, the cooler air on the skin.
In movement. For a small moment.
How different in texture
From the inevitable setting down of the spreading foot,
Where another world waits.
But the being is getting ahead of herself.
One thing at a time.
With one open heart.

Sue Felgate

The Orchard, March 2010

Ad's Summer Retreat: The Tale of the Shrew

A completely unexpected commotion occurred during Ad's Summer Retreat, which led to a whole new challenge in applying the practice.

As the early morning session of bodywork drew to a close and as we settled to sit, I noticed something moving to my left down by the shrine table. A tiny shrew had appeared and seemed intent on exploring every inch of the Zendo. As soon as I spotted it scurrying about, I gave a loud gasp and my heart started racing. Everyone else stirred and Pete offered to help by removing this tiny being but as soon as he moved the shrew ran back behind the shrine.

My fear of all things small and furry that dash about would normally have resulted in my running screaming from the Zendo immediately. However we were receiving teachings from Ad on the Foundations of Mindfulness, taken directly from the Discourses of the Buddha and were deeply engaged in contemplating feelings as feelings, as taught in the Mahasatipatthana Sutta. Our practice was focused on what happens when a sense organ and an object meet or have contact, the instantaneous sensations that arise, how perception comes in and we mark the object as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral and how this is where the stories begin and where the cravings arise. In other words, if the object is pleasant, we want more of it so we crave and cling onto it but if we perceive the object as unpleasant, we don't want it, so we crave for it to go away.

Even in the moment I was acutely aware that each of us were experiencing different reactions to the tiny shrew and marking it in distinctive ways as it danced about. As for all of us, mine was based on past conditioning and experience, but this meant that I very definitely wanted it to go away and my immediate instinct was to get out of there as quickly as possible. This is exactly what happens in my kitchen at home every time our cat, Jess, brings voles, shrews and the occasional blackbird into the house. However, as I said earlier, we were contemplating feelings as feelings and practicing mindfulness, so I stayed.

During the nine breathings, the riot of sensations [quickly marked as unpleasant] that were going on internally slowly began to quieten. Of course the little shrew might well have stayed behind the shrine, or this is what I hoped for but no, as we began chanting, it came out and resumed its exploration. My attention was somewhat diverted from chanting although I did continue to stay put! Gradually, as we continued and as I practiced mindfulness, bringing attention to the breathing and noting, 'just this, just this', slowly, slowly the riot inside abated and the breathing settled. As the silence fell, there was quiet in the space for a short while but each time the shrew made a sound or hurried between us, this internal uprising began once again. I continued with naming, 'heat in the body', 'body making water' even though the palms of my hands were drenched and I was almost on the verge of hyperventilating!

However, I managed to note the changes whilst they were happening, remembering and connecting with impermanence and working hard with '*this too will pass*', when all of a sudden, Liz, who was sitting beside me startled, her whole body jumped and she let out a loud breath [later she told us that the shrew had nibbled her toe]. As I opened my eyes, there was the shrew running straight towards me! To my horror it scurried into the blanket that was covering my lap, ran down my leg and then shot out from between my ankles. Well this was 'too much', flight took over and I shot out of the Zendo at top speed, to complete the meditation sitting by the water feature, far away from what, in that moment, I definitely had marked as a 'terrifying beast'.

Apparently, when the sitting was completed a few short minutes later, Pete caught up with the tiny shrew. It was found sitting quietly on Ad's cushion!!

This is dedicated to that small being in gratitude for the live opportunity it presented to appreciate and apply the practice, even though there is clearly a whole lot more for this being to do. Thanks also to Liz, Pete, John and Annie for your patience, good humour and understanding.

Sarah



Haiku poetry – according to internet myth, in some offices in Japan the following Haiku poems replace the usual error messages from Windows.

Whether true or not, anyone who has ever struggled with a recalcitrant computer will easily identify with the sentiments expressed.

The Web site you seek
Cannot be located, but
Countless more exist.

You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on.
This page is not here.

Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.

Out of memory.
We wish to hold the whole sky,
But we never will.

Program aborting:
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask far too much.

Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be retyped.

Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.

Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

Your file was so big.
It might be very useful.
But now it is gone.

A crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.

Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.

Three things are certain:
Death, taxes and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

 [Contact Details](#) 

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

Healing Requests to Blue Healer Minds - Sarah on sarah.hill1@mac.com

Bursary Fund - Gini at gini_wade@lineone.net

Finance - Jo on jolechandy@googlemail.com or on 01432 890312

Newsletter - Sandra - for comments and contributions – at sygoodfellow@hotmail.com or on 013873 70787

Orchard Sangha Website – www.orchardsangha.com