

UPĀSIKĀ - plural form of Upāsakā (masc.) Upāsikā (fem.)

UPĀSAKA (masc.) / UPĀSIKĀ (fem.) lit. 'sitting close by', i.e. 'Lay Adherent; is any follower who is filled with faith and has taken refuge in the Buddha, his doctrine and his community of disciples. (A.VIII, 25) His/her virtue is regarded as pure if s/he observes the 5 precepts (*pañca sila: s. sikkhapada*). S/he should avoid the following wrong ways of livelihood: trading in arms, in living beings, meat, alcohol and poison. (A.V. 177)

## Buddhist Aerobics

THE UPĀSIKĀ STUDY DAY at Amaravati on 21st January proved a memorable occasion. Not only for the session of 'Buddhist aerobics' in the middle of the afternoon to alleviate stiff knees and backs, but principally for the rare opportunity to share experience of the five hindrances with other lay-Buddhists.

For about an hour seven small groups discussed their practice and the five hindrances. This had been preceded by a stimulating Dhamma discourse by Sister Sundara which provided much food for reflection as well as some light-hearted observations.

The texts which Ajahn Viradhammo had kindly selected, copied and distributed at the previous Upāsikā meeting in November had provided a focus for practice and reflection prior to the day and also served to focus discussion in the groups.

At the end of the small group sessions, the seven facilitators presented a summary of the main themes back to the full assembly. Some of these are described below.

The biological ancestry of the five hindrances was identified - they must have survival value otherwise we would not be experiencing them now. The hindrances are primitive, biological mechanisms without a self. All of the hindrances have a positive usefulness - doubt was mentioned as part of the inquiring and reflective mind - whereas sceptical doubt could lead to loss of energy and motivation.

Buddhist practice is to understand the hindrances as basic biological drives with no-self, part of the conditioned world, and to avoid making them a problem by indulging or repressing them. Both of these approaches arise from (and reinforce) a sense of self. Knowing the hindrances as they really are, allows us to use their energy wisely.

Since there are many institutions in modern western consumer culture which depend upon the encouragement of desire, anger, restlessness, torpor and doubt, Buddhist

practice was considered to run against the stream and for some, to give rise to difficulties in presenting a 'normal' face to colleagues and friends.

The bitter taste of anger, and the hollow sensation of doubt were some of the descriptions given by the assembly. Sloth and torpor seemed to affect people at different times of the day - clearly in some cases this was simply physical tiredness and if so, it was appropriate to sleep. At other times

sleepiness may be experienced after eating - especially a large meal - or from loss of inspiration or energy. Metta, loving-kindness - towards oneself and others was recommended as a good antidote to aversion.

The interrelated nature of the hindrances was discussed - they are all closely connected and it is easy for the mind to move between them. Nourishing the hindrances by giving 'frequent unwise attention' to them was highlighted in discussion. Does giving nourishment to one hindrance nourish them all?

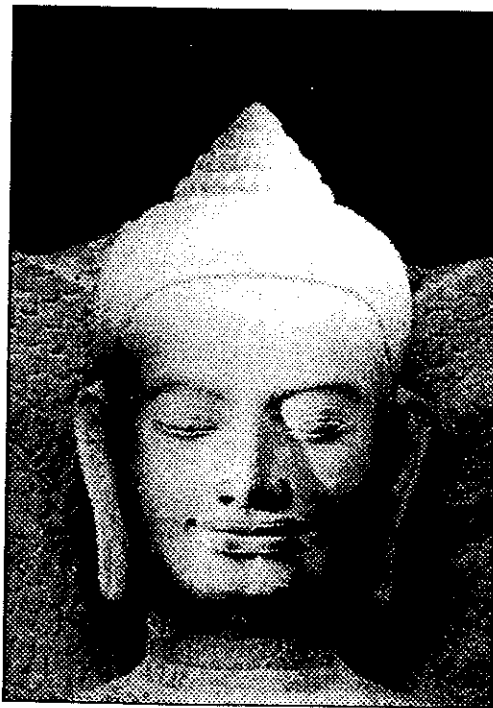
The importance of knowing when the hindrances have not-arisen - when we are free from them - is emphasised in the texts and is closely linked with gaining a perspective on them.

The value of bodily awareness was also a common theme. We often

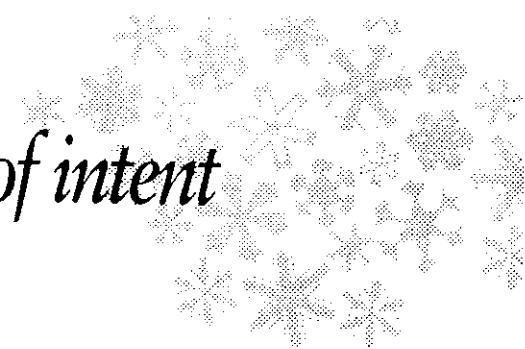
spend much of our waking existence in our thoughts and ignore the various feelings and sensations from our bodies. Sister Sundara suggested that although the conditioned mind is totally untrustworthy, the body could be relied upon to let us know our current state. 'Being intimate with all that lives' - was a memorable description offered by one of the Upāsikās.

There was some discussion around the differing constraints provided by monastic and lay life and the suggestion that although the constraints are clearly different, the process of skilfully using the situation we find ourselves within to support practice was the same for all.

Chris Ward



# SNOWFLAKES - *a declaration of intent*



**O**UR LIVES ARE an individual experience. Like snowflakes, each with its unique crystalline structure, we come into being with our personal history, volitional tendencies, habits and attachments.

In our human complexity with its capacity for reflective thought, the experience of life can be perplexing. It is especially so when we suffer. We then search for an escape, a solution or, perhaps as a last resort, some meaning. This desire to make sense of our experience, to be at peace with the world and our ourselves is what, in one way or another, has attracted us to the Buddha Dhamma. In our case it has brought us, with varying degrees of commitment to the Forest Sangha tradition and its network of monastic communities.

The Monastic Sangha lifestyle has a structure, a framework of discipline and practice that has a powerful transforming effect, not only on its practitioners, but also on those it comes into contact with. The dynamics of this practice and the resulting interactions with lay supporters are a frequent source of wonder and inspiration, often to all parties. They always have some effect - if only to make one pause and consider.

Lay supporters live in a different social framework and with differing responsibilities to that of the Monastic Sangha, often struggling to survive in a society whose value systems are primarily concerned with accumulation of possessions and indulgence in sense pleasures. They also find themselves involved in a variety of relationships with employers, employees, colleagues, friends, partners or children. Rarely is it an environment that is conducive to regular opportunities for quiet reflection or simply being mindful.

The Upāsikā training\* is in the process of evolving. Some prefer to call it practice, others like the word 'training'. Each word has different connotations for different people. There are differing ideas about the level of commitment required of individuals. Whatever ones views may be, to have any significance or even effect, the practice will impinge in some way on ones life. Any commitment that goes beyond satisfying immediate needs always does. It will be up to each one of us to reflect and resolve any dilemmas this may give rise to. Quite what its final form will be is not known.

Requesting the Refuges and Precepts formally can have a powerful effect on one, especially if done in the supportive

company of fellow practitioners on a special occasion. Going on retreat, making a commitment to daily practice and attending a weekly meditation group, helps break the repetitive patterns of unmindful living that are so easy to slip into.

The Upāsikā training can be seen as a way of providing a reminder, a support to ones personal practice whatever ones individual circumstances.

The intention of the Upāsikā Newsletter is that it becomes another support for our practice. Here are some of the themes we hope to cover in future issues.

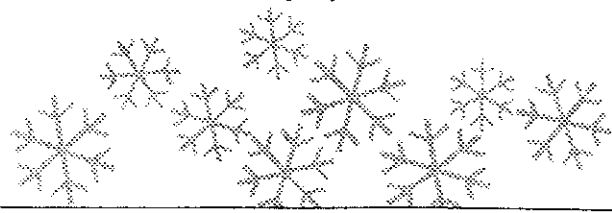
1. News of other Upāsikā groups and support groups.
2. Existing local meditation groups - how they started, how often they meet, their format and personal experiences of them. Guidelines on how to start one.
3. Retreats and their significance.
4. The relationship between monastic and lay sangha.
5. Personal practice and the workplace.
6. Personal practice within a family/relationship.
7. How individuals came across the Dhamma.

## **In summary - Dhamma, News and Views.**

Embarking into the unknown as a publication and dependent on voluntary contributions, each issue will be something of a surprise. We trust our readers will be understanding as we find our way.

Hopefully, in the 'busyness' of our daily lives, the Upāsikā Newsletter will help remind us that we are not alone on the path. That there are others whose experiences, difficulties and achievements are not always that different from our own. That we can learn from and perhaps be inspired by others.

And just as snowflakes melt away, so may our fears and attachments dissolve in deeper practice, for the benefit of all.



**Contributions, letters, suggestions**

Contributions preferably on disk (MS DOS or Mac)  
 Otherwise typed if at all possible  
 To reach us by: 1st June for the next issue



\* Upāsikā training - see page 7 for purpose and suggested guidelines of commitment.

**T**HE VERY FIT young lady instructor approached me and asked whether she could ask me a personal question. A bit taken aback, I answered "Yes". She then queried, "Are you over forty?". I said "Yes I am forty-three".

She then gave me a form, asked me to fill it in, and get my doctor to sign it.

I was in the gym of Durham University in October 1998, learning how to land, from a parachute jump. I was a mature student and as I lived close by, only came to the college for lectures. This was my second year and I was determined that I was going to become involved in some social activity.

Parachuting seemed the answer. I had always been afraid of heights, and this could be the ideal way to overcome it, and make new friends. Until the form appeared...

It started by asking if I had suffered from various illnesses, including alcoholism. I looked at the list and thought, "I've had practically all of them". I considered forging my doctor's signature, but in my new, non-drinking lifestyle (sober 3 years), decided against it. Parachuting was out.

Looking for some other activity, I considered mountaineering, skiing, and gliding, but couldn't seem to work up much enthusiasm. Meanwhile, everywhere I went to in the college, I seemed to be bumping into notices, announcing the commencement of meditation classes. This was not my cup of tea at all, and yet something about it attracted. Eventually I went. Some time afterwards I asked the meditation teacher, how many notices he had put up, and strangely enough it was only fifteen, in the whole city of Durham.

My first class was a disaster. My body was pretty set in its ways and my knees stuck up in the air. After about five minutes in great pain I fell over, disturbing everybody. But next day at home I decided to try again, and sitting on an upturned blue plastic dish, with a cushion on top tried once more.

**JACKPOT** - Anybody who has experienced it knows what I am talking about. Any meditator who hasn't, has a treat in store.

The practice I follow is Samatha, which along with Vipassana, form the two basic styles, within the Theravada tradition. I have used other forms of meditation since then, including Soto Zen, Dzogchen, and various types of insight practices, but usually begin with Samatha, whatever else is to follow, and often Samatha-straight is all I need.

It came to Britain in the early 1960's, when two Thai monks were studying at Cambridge. Some students became interested and formed a group. When these graduated they

formed other groups around the country, and so it has spread. There are now many groups, a centre in Manchester\*, and a beautiful farm in Wales.

I became a born again Christian after becoming sober. I knew I believed in something as my craving to drink had been removed. I had been hospitalised many times through alcohol, and lost everything many times. I was even supposed to have died briefly during an alcoholic fit.

Yet here I was, happily sober. All it had taken was to have admitted at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, that I was powerless over alcohol, that my life was unmanageable, and that I believed I could be helped by a power greater than myself. I say "All it had taken", but it was twenty-five years of horror to reach that point.

My Mother and my three sisters are very mature Christians, with about one-hundred and fifty years of real service between them. It was natural to follow them.

After all, I was sober and I certainly had not done this. In fact I could not do this. So it must have been God.

I went through all the motions, the shouting, the speaking in tongues, and the hallelujahs. I was even baptised in a river in Yorkshire. But I was still not really satisfied. We say in AA, "Take it until you can make it", this is what I was doing. I am not knocking Christianity. My middle sister has been a Pentecostal since the age of twelve. She is now fifty-two, and has served with "Save The Children" charity, an eight hour walk from the nearest road in the Himalayas, as well as war torn Yemen and Sudan. I am glad my family has their religion. All I am saying is that it did not quite satisfy me, yet at the same time I was deeply grateful for the new life I had been given.

Now here I was. Failed parachutist and failed everything else, sitting on an upside down blue plastic bowl, with energy surging through my body, and all my senses greatly sharpened. Meditation obviously worked. Yet where did it leave me? Who was responsible for this? It seemed there was more to it than met the eye.

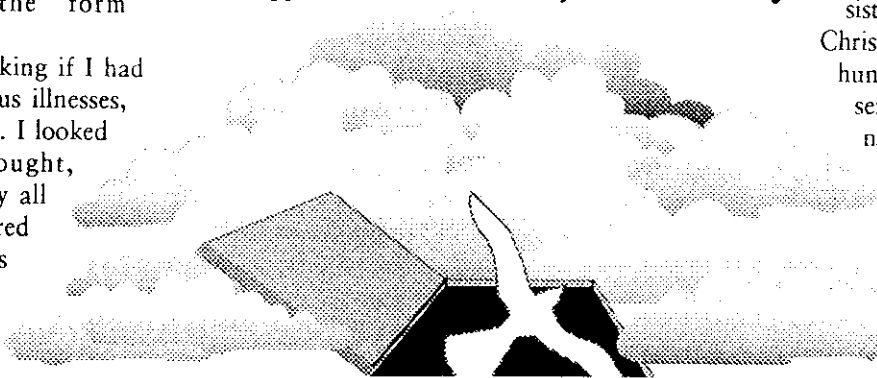
It was a bit of a struggle for a while, but eventually I bowed before the Triple Gem and conceded, I am a Buddhist.

I wish I could say that it's all been plain sailing since then, but it hasn't. That is another story. I am satisfied and grateful to be at Chithurst, where I am currently helping with the Winter Retreat. -

It has been painful writing this but worthwhile.

*Name withheld at author's request*

# THE POTENTIAL PARACHUTIST - a personal journey



\*Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation Ed.



## Study Day— another perspective

EXCEPT FOR THE STRONG Chiltern-ridge wind the monastery was unusually quiet as lay people began arriving. The winter retreat had been underway almost three weeks and there was a definitive absence of activity. The first event of the day was a shared meal which took shape with each arrival of carrier bag and container. Savoury aromas mingled with conversation, all woven in with setting up the retreat centre kitchen. The result was good company and such delicious fare that it challenged the guideline of moderation in eating.

After lunch some rehearsed their chanting while others helped with the clearing-up. There followed a ceremony where about eight or more people formally requested the three Refuges and Five Precepts from sister Sundara. As rain began to join the steady winds Sister Sundara gave a talk on the five hindrances, the study topic for the day. Using clear examples from experience Sister proved a kind and wise guide, giving suggestions for looking lightly and with humour at what can seem heavy obstacles.

Small groups of six or seven were formed to explore our own relationships to doubt, ill will, restlessness, sense desire and sloth. During the hour we used excerpts from the suttas as a road map, weaving in questions and experiences from life. A facilitator kept things moving and gave a summary when the large group reconvened.

It was a rich day of asking questions together, a chance for sharing aspiration and receiving inspiration. The next Study Day will be in May when the topic will be Right Speech. There was much appreciation of time well spent in "noble friendship, noble companionship, noble association. . . and suitable conversation. . . to aid in cultivating and practising the Noble Eightfold Path."

*Jeannie Bendik*

*"There is one  
essential point that all good  
practice must come to  
— not clinging.  
In the end, all meditation  
systems must be let go of"*

Ajahn Chah

## ● LOCAL MEDITATION GROUPS ●

### LONDON NOTTING HILL GATE GROUP

ABOUT TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO I asked Ajahn Sumedho how to continue to practice in lay life. Much to my amazement he suggested the possibility of setting up a local Sangha. An announcement appeared in the Forest Sangha Newsletter and miraculously a new group was born, which regularly now meets on Tuesday evenings and averages around 7 or 8 people, sometimes less and often more.

The venue is a spacious flat within a beautiful period house with a dedicated Shrine Room. The main inspiration is the Theravada Forest Tradition, as inspired by Amaravati, although Tibetan teachings and those of Thich Nhat Hanh as well as other spiritual paths and teachers have a respected place within the group.

We come together around 7.00 p.m. for an evening puja which commences at 7.30 p.m. with chanting and then a period of sitting meditation followed by walking meditation for about 10 minutes after which we return to the shrine room for a second sitting and then close with a reading/prayer, the chanting of a reflection and finally the Closing Homage.

We seem to leave the shrine room around 9.00 p.m. and then sit together in another room. There is a noticeable quietness about us all – very different from when we first arrived.

We sometimes sit in silence, but normally discuss our various never ending dhamma questions and observations. The atmosphere can be quiet, sometimes inspiring and sometimes moving because of heartfelt and personal sharing.

The evening normally ends around 9.30/9.45 p.m. when one of us sounds a bell and we again have the opportunity to sit quietly for a few minutes and take rest in the space and silence which surrounds everything. There is often a reluctance to leave the warm sense of closeness which provides nourishment and encouragement for our individual journeys, whether forward or stationery within the context of our sometimes incomprehensible and painful urban lives.

Occasionally we enjoy a tea ceremony as well as meals together and sometimes social gatherings when our partners and close friends are invited to meet the members of this strange Sangha which they have heard much about and to whom Tuesday evenings seem to be sacrosanct!

Thank you to all those who attend the group, to Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Chah, and all that has made this possible.

*Jeffrey Craig*

If you are looking for other like minded people in your area to meet with on a weekly basis to share some quiet time with - send us your name and telephone no. You might find them through this space

## AMARAVATI

### Up and running

In October 1994, 40 individuals took the Three Refugees and 5 Precepts in the Main Sala. For the participants and observers it was quite an occasion.

In front of and in the company of friends and fellow practitioners, offerings of incense, flowers and candles were made to Luang Por Sumedho. One by one each individual approached the shrine and assembled monastic Sangha, announced their name and expressed their wish, in English, to take the Refugees and Precepts, the chanting of the Precepts and concluding "Sharing of Blessings" united all in the silence that followed. The next month witnessed the first Study Day led by our new Abbott, Ajahn Viradhammo, recently arrived from New Zealand. Despite all the challenges facing him at this time of change, Ajahn Viradhammo's support for the training was evident in the thorough preparation of suitable texts on the Five Niravanas and a Dhamma Talk so rich with ideas and pointers that many regretted it had not been taped for further reflection.

Continuing the same theme, a second Study day was held in January and led by Sister Sundara, (described elsewhere in this issue. Ed.) Both the Study Days saw more individuals make their commitment, making a total of around 60 from a mailing list of over 130.

The next gathering of Upāsikās is the Lay Supporters Day concluding the Sangha's Magha Puja in March, whilst the 20 May has been confirmed as the next Study Day - the topic being Right Speech.

In discussions with the Sangha on the organisation of events and the development of training, there is a feeling that we are participating in a dialogue where lay practitioners' views and needs are deeply listened to and then acted on. This gives rise to feelings of gratitude and appreciation. The approach towards the Upāsikā Training seems to be one of "Let us do what feels right, one step at a time, and see where it takes us."

In practice this means that the overall purpose and guiding principles as outlined in Ajahn Amaro's exploratory and explanatory letters give a certain degree of flexibility. They can be seen as declarations of intent and not strict vows. This gives it a different emphasis than the monastic Vinaya, making it an act of trust in the sincerity of individuals whose personal circumstances differ greatly. As an encouragement to practice, the pressure to do so comes from *within* and not *without*.

The Amaravati Training co-ordinating committee is keen to take responsibility for its own organisation and management, and become fully self reliant financially, so as not to be an additional burden on the monastic Sangha. This, combined and interacting with the development of the ASN

(Amaravati Support Network) will help in the coming busy years at the monastery. It will also provide an opportunity for individuals to express their talents and skills in ways both beneficial to themselves and others.

So perhaps the emerging Upāsikā Training will develop into a vehicle that strengthens our practice and which will reflect our involvement in the inter-dependent relationship with the monastic Sangha.

Nick Carroll

## CITTAVIVEKA.

### Lay Practice and Spiritual Commitment. Upāsaka/Upāsikā Training;

AT PRESENT, NO FORMAL PROGRAMME of 'training' has been established.

In the later months of 1994, three discussion groups or Forums, were arranged at monthly intervals.

At each Forum, a given topic was presented, first by a member of the Sangha, then a lay follower, (each speaking for about ten-minutes) after which the Chairperson invited all participants to join in an informal discussion on the issues raised. This particular format will be repeated in the early part of the New year and extended later if the interest is sustained. A Sutta discussion group is also planned, the first meeting being provisionally arranged for late May, the date to be announced in the latest Sangha Newsletter.

On January 1st. 1995, at a ceremony, 'Renewal and Resolution', some 30-40 lay practitioners, presenting gifts of candles, incense and flowers, formally took the Three Refugees and Five Precepts before the Abbot and assembled Sangha.

With such interest being so spontaneously expressed, there is to be a follow-up meeting on April 8th, so that those wishing to make a more formal commitment to their practice, can meet and discuss the matter further, particularly in relation to the guide-lines for 'Upāsakā/Upāsikā training' already suggested by the Sangha at Amaravati.

Barry Durrant

*"Let us do what feels right,  
one step at a time, and see  
where it takes us"*

**A good read for a friend in need (even if it's yourself!)**

*Random Acts of Kindness*  
Conari Press, Berkeley US  
Available in most bookshops £6.99

## RATANAGIRI Upāsikā Practice in the North

It is just a year now since the idea of developing a modern-day Four-Fold Assembly, in which monks, nuns, laywomen and laymen could draw closer together and so better nourish each other's lives, emerged from the Magha Puja at Amaravati. The response from the lay community in the North, as well as from the monastic Sangha at Ratanagiri, has been positive. Although Ratanagiri, at Harnham in Northumberland, is our spiritual home (and an increasingly beautiful and valued one), it is perhaps helpful to those less familiar with northern geography to point out that some of us are as much as 300 miles apart, with groups in Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Hexham, Keswick, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perthshire, as well as many individuals too far flung for frequent meetings with others.

At Wesak in May, 16 people sat down together to discuss the idea and possible form of a lay order. After paying homage to the Triple Gem and a short meditation, we introduced ourselves to each other and acknowledged the need for listening, openness and uncertainty when approaching a discussion of this kind. No members of the monastic community were present, and this, strongly encouraged by our Abbott, has been a feature of most of the meetings. Using our agenda and Ajahn Amaro's letter, in which he set out tentative suggestions for the purpose and form of a lay order, the following points arose from our discussion:

1. There was a warm welcome for the concept of a lay order, its value at this stage being seen primarily as a support for personal practice through spiritual friendship, while in the longer term it could result in some people being more qualified to teach about Buddhism.
2. The risk of elitism and exclusivism was recognised, and we made clear that we did not wish to form a distinct group, nor did we see regular gatherings as necessary. The essential point was a strengthened commitment to personal practice.
3. The original eight undertakings put forward in Ajahn Amaro's letter (living by the Five Precepts, regular gatherings, taking the Precepts quarterly, marking observance days, daily meditation, an annual retreat, attending festivals, commitment for at least one year) were debated. It was felt that these should be seen as a working framework from which a more definite form can gradually unfold, bearing in mind the living situation and commitments of each individual. For example, parents of young children are unlikely to be able to commit themselves to retreats. It was suggested that individuals might like to discuss, either with members of the monastic Sangha, or with lay friends, the ways most appropriate to their situation for trying to regularise their practice, and so to formulate their own intentions.
4. It was agreed that the formal requesting of the Three

Refuges and Five Precepts would be our only condition defining Upāsikā Practice at this stage.

Two weeks after this meeting, a small group of us met with the Abbot to share the results of our discussions. He expressed his delight at the lay people's response, and at the idea of a formal ceremony to request the Three Refuges and Precepts. He feels that it may take several years for the Upāsikā concept to unfold into a defined form. He welcomes the gradual involvement of lay people in some of the monastic community's teaching and counselling opportunities, whether for groups or individuals. He also introduced the new possibility that Upāsikās might also serve as a reference group for the monastic Sangha, so that the lay community has a more effective opportunity to voice doubts about any aspect of Sangha practice.

Subsequently, formal Precept ceremonies were held in July and September. Individual offerings of flowers, incense and candles were made to the Abbott, and the Refuges and Precepts requested as a group in Pali chant. These ceremonies took place as part of a Friday evening Puja, and desanas were given. Similar ceremonies are planned to be offered every few months, for those who have not yet made a formal commitment, as well as for those who wish to renew their commitment.

As a next stage in the unfolding of the Upāsikā idea, all those interested are invited to spend a day at the monastery on Saturday, 8 April. This will mainly be an opportunity to spend time together, including some meditation, and some discussion about our practice experiences and about what structures if any we would like to develop for further communication or meetings. As April is a 'work month' at the monastery, we may also be able to offer some help with building during the day. We will start with offering the meal, and hope that as many as possible may be able to stay on for evening Puja, when there will be another opportunity to request the Refuges and Precepts.

For further information or your ideas about Upāsikā Practice in the North, or if you would like to come to Harnham on 8 April, please contact:

*Mike Downham*  
Rowelton, Carlisle CA6 6JU  
Tel: 016977 48214

## DEVON This coming Spring...?

MANY READERS may not yet have had the opportunity of visiting The Devon Vihara so a brief description may be appreciated. Just off the A303 on the southern edge of the Blackdown Hills the Devon Vihara overlooks a long sweeping valley stretching down towards Honiton and beyond. The countryside is typical of Devon with lush green gently rolling hills. Approaching the Vihara the roads narrow to single track lanes, grass growing in the middle of the road. There is a long climb up the hill towards the Vihara until the tarmacadam

runs out to be continued by an unmade track. The winter rains have produced a number of large pot-holes allowing the opportunity to approach the Vihara slowly and mindfully and to leave the same way. When the track itself runs out, one has arrived.

The Vihara building is an old cottage with a small and peaceful meditation room. Outside, over the past four years many trees have been planted, the foundation of a new forest. Pick axes had to be used by supporters to plant trees, the ground being rather rocky. Also there is a small lake with red and white water lilies and dragon and damsel flies in abundance. The atmosphere around the Vihara is one of peace and stillness, and this is frequently commented upon by visitors. There are days though, when the microlights seem to have a vindictive streak and do their best to destroy this quiet.

What of Upāsikā Training in Devon? There are a significant number of supporters in the West Country who are interested in or wish to commit themselves to the Training. Supporters come from a wide area, from Cornwall to Dorset to Avon and even further afield. To date nothing

has been organised but it is hoped it can be arranged in the spring, following the work period at Amaravati and when things settle down a bit.

For a few years supporters have gathered regularly to discuss Vihara activity and to get to know each other better. We gather at someone's house for a shared lunch, following which we talk about things that may need arranging. Who, for example, will take charge of car parking at the next public event, or to find volunteers to put up and decorate the marquee for Wesak or Tort Pa Bah?. We continually try to tighten the agenda, to allow more time for chat ... sorry, interacting mindfully - and there is always enough cake and other goodies left over to enjoy for tea.

The Devon Vihara supporters' meetings are a real opportunity to come together to share our support of the Vihara and the Sangha, to get to know each other better and to develop an environment of mutual support.

We hope that in future newsletters there will be news of Upāsikā Training in the West Country.

*David Austin*

## U P A S I K A T R A I N I N G

### Purpose

- ☞ To enhance individual practice and increase self-discipline through making a formal commitment to spiritual training.
- ☞ To deepen both the intellectual and experiential understanding of Dhamma.
- ☞ To have more supportive contact with like-minded people and the ordained Sangha.
- ☞ To be better equipped to communicate the Teachings to others.

### Guidelines

- ☞ undertake to live by the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts, with the Theravada Forest Tradition as the focus of one's Buddhist practice.
- ☞ attend regular gatherings with other Upāsikās, either at the Vihara or in our own home.
- ☞ visit the Vihara and formally take the Refuges and Precepts at least quarterly.
- ☞ observe the Uposatha days of the full and new moons in some fashion appropriate to our living situation.
- ☞ practice meditation daily.
- ☞ find some time each year to go on retreat.
- ☞ attend at least one festival day or communal gathering at the monastery each year.
- ☞ cultivate a basic working knowledge of the Teachings.
- ☞ support the Sangha according to our means and abilities
- ☞ keep to the training for at least one year after having made the formal commitment.

# Services/Skills Register

We would like to start a register of services/skills offered by lay Buddhists associated with the Upāsikā and Support groups

This register will be sent out on receipt of a S.A.E.

If you wish to be on it please send details of your service/skill, the area which you work in, and name and telephone no to:

**Services/Skills Register, Amaravati Buddhist Monastery,  
Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3B2**

NB When registering please indicate which group you are associated with.

**Important** Upāsikā Newsletter regrets it is unable to guarantee the quality of the service registered. We can only ensure that the provider is known to or part of an Upāsikā/Support Group.

The Editor wishes to thank all those whose help and assistance make this issue possible.

## Data Protection Act

The Upāsikā Newsletter uses the Upasika Training Mailing databases. If you do not wish to be on them please advise us.

Distribution and mailing help for Upāsikā Newsletter would be much appreciated.

Cartoons and illustrations are always welcomed for the Newsletter. Please contact the Editor

## STOP PRESS ...

... The Dhamma School received a warm and enthusiastic visit by a group of NBO (Network of Buddhist Organisations) delegates who were holding a conference in nearby Brighton. This coincided with the schools first governors meeting since the acquisition of new larger premises which will take up to 50 children. Head Teacher Medhina, local parents and Buddhists of many traditions all delighted with the development. An appeal will soon be launched to help finance this expansion. More in future issues of U/Newsletter.

... A Working Party has been formed to discuss and explore the possibility of establishing a Residential / Nursing Home for elderly Sangha and lay Buddhists. If you wish to support this in any way please contact: Colin Ash c/o Amaravati Buddhist Monastery.

## ... in future issues:

- Dhamma contributions by the Sangha.
- News of Upāsikā groups and local support groups nationwide.
- Existing local meditation groups, their format and personal experiences of them.
  - Retreats and their function
  - The relationship between monastic and lay Saugha.
  - Individual experiences of the Dhamma.
- Personal practice and the workplace, family and relationships.
  - Poems, reflections.

Editor: Nick Carroll

Design & Production: Frank Watkins

Typing: Kate Cummins

## Financial Statement March 1995

### UPASIKA NEWSLETTER

Dana/Offerings	£ 25.00
Printing cost	£ 140.00
Postage	£ 40.00
Other	£ 10.00
Balance	£ 190.00 Debit

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