

ALBA WHITEBOARD

Two Day Retreat - 11 & 12 March 2023

Understanding the Buddha's first Noble Truth - There is Suffering

Led by Randula Haththotuwa & Martin Evans

Thank you friends for joining the retreat.

Please use the space below to share your reflections. The board will be cleared a week after the retreat. You may wish to put your name or leave it anonymous.

Thank you Randula & Martin

" Because it's simple so it's difficult " , that's my take from the retreat.

Being with the experience is the most natural way to mindfulness. Just being with or in the experience.

Thanks again for the wonderful time spent.

Randula - you had mentioned a couplet about heart & pain. I couldn't get it. Could you kindly mention it again and also elaborate a little.

Thank you Sangha.

Hi

Thank you all for joining us and sharing the space and Dhamma .
Re. couplet, Yes, it was the last four lines of a poem I once wrote to say
thank you to my Dhamma teacher 😊 - I share the whole poem here,

*'Words - they so fail to speak out
The gratitude that shines from within this heart
Yet, in every moment that passes by
You will feel it in the silence and hear it in your heart
For when you feel what you hear
And listen to how you feel
The heart will awaken
And the Truth will be revealed'*

So the last four lines - is about receiving and feeling our sense experience - rather than creating a story/sankara about it. So what we see, words we hear, words we think it, what we smell - that contact - gives rise to a feeling - and we stay with that feeling - rather than what the mind would create out of it - we observe this feeling - let it in - allow the feeling to pass away - and in doing so we will find the Truth of what we sensed or thought. Here we let go of our perception of what is experienced - surrendering - and stay at the level of feeling - silently, receiving, feeling and knowing this feeling - then we may have an 'aha moment' 'aha, that's what it really is'. We can apply this to all sense experience - even when listening to a Dhamma talk. We then listen with our hearts and so we've given the space for true understanding to arise within us, beyond which the mind can conceptualise. Once I heard of a story where Ajahn Sumedho had said - 'it's not about what I say - ie. whether you should eat little or speak little - but how does that resonate in you? how is it felt in your heart?'

With Metta
Randula

Randula & Martin, & everyone, thank you so much for a wonderful retreat. I really enjoyed it. So much to take away & work with,
Best Wishes,
Alison Ashwell Wood

Thanks for sharing your experience Alison 🌺

Dear Randula
Thank you for sharing your poem of gratitude and appreciation to your Dhamma teacher. And thank you for embodying the Dhamma yourself in such an open-hearted and sincere way. Sharing the practice with you is a joy and a blessing.
With metta
Madeline

Thanks Madeline 🌺

Hello
So much to express gratitude for!
The chant you taught us has stayed with me since the retreat and I've also passed it on. The explanation of the restraint within walking meditation was quite revelatory, I hadn't understood that before. Overall the establishment of the fact of suffering but emphasising the way out of suffering was very enabling. A reminder that, as you put it, both our human existence and this dharma path are rare and precious.

Thankyou Randula and Martin, to everyone arranging it and all who joined for a very human, practical and yet uplifting retreat
Jude

Thank you Jude 🙏

Thank you very much for offering this weekend retreat, Randula and Martin. Although I wasn't very present at times, I enjoyed and benefited from the experience. More so on the Sunday, perhaps because it felt more informal than the Saturday, with less people so we felt more at ease with the group. I wonder if you have ever tried (or considered) dividing for a short time into small groups in the shrine room, and breakout groups on Zoom? This might not be to everyone's taste, but I've found it can really enhance connection between people who may be joining the online group from all over, and give an opportunity to practise Dhamma in conversation with each other, sharing kindness and compassion together.

Much gratitude for the teachings and for the opportunity to practise together, and to connect with the Amaravati Retreat Centre again - especially valuable for those of us like me who cannot get to an in-person Buddhist group.

With metta to all, from Judith

Thanks for sharing your experience Judith and lovely to hear you enjoy small groups 😊 we usually have those on one day retreats so look out for it at the next one on 1 April..

Thank you so much for the weekend, for the teaching and the good space for practice. I feel so lucky and grateful to have this group to join and Amaravati to visit. It means a lot, and it helps so much!

Metta

James

Ps

I also like it when we break into smaller groups, it's nice to get the opportunity to share

Thank you James 🌻
