



Hampshire Buddhist Society

2020 Second Newsletter April

The object of the Hampshire Buddhist Society is to make known the principles of Buddhism and to encourage the study and practice of those principles.

Visit to the Buddhism Exhibition at the British Library

Penny Lawrence



In February Members of the Theravada and Zen groups travelled to lunch in London together followed by a visit to the Buddhism Exhibition at the British Library. An enormous screen animation greeted visitors at the entrance. The curation also allowed close examination of finer details.



Life of the Buddha, Burma 19th Century



Lotus Sutra, Japan 1636

As one would expect at the British Library there was an emphasis on text in the exhibits. There was also acknowledgement of experiential understanding in the soundscape throughout the exhibition accompanying the visit with flowing water and birdsong.

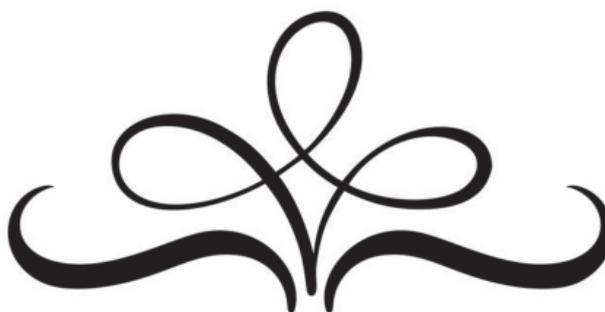


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I left the exhibition with many impressions resonating, not least from huge standing bells/singing bowls struck at the exit. Overall, a favourite of mine was the time-lapse film showing the *Heart Sutra* in calligraphy on paving stones. The words *form is emptiness and emptiness is form* were written and faded away.



Hong Kong Artist, Stanley Wong

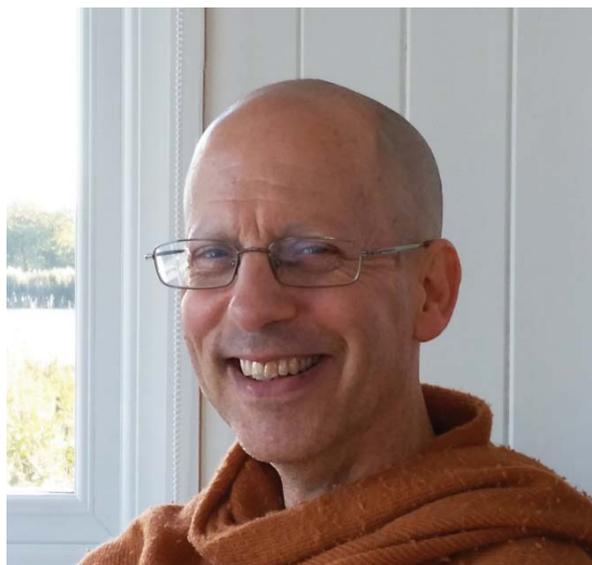




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HBS Annual Retreat

Michael Laycock



picture: Ajahn Ahimsako

Pencil in the date of Sunday 20 September 2020 in Southampton for the Theravada Annual Retreat. It will be led by Ajahn Ahimsako, Abbot of Chithurst.

Invitations will be sent out when we are clear what the position for group gatherings will be.

Ajahn Ahimsako was born near San Francisco, California in 1959, and spent nearly thirty years living in various countries pursuing a career in classical ballet as a dancer, teacher, and educator. While living in England he travelled to Sri Lanka, where his interest in Buddhism prompted him to begin visiting Amaravati Buddhist Monastery and the London Buddhist Vihara. He began his monastic life in 2002 at Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery in California, and was accepted into the Bhikkhu Sangha there in 2004 with Luang Por Pasanno as preceptor. Since 2009 Ajahn Ahimsako has spent eight years living at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery under the guidance of both Luang Por Sumedho and Ajahn Amaro. More recently Ajahn Ahimsako spent one year living at Wat Ratanawan in Thailand. He joined the Chithurst community (Cittaviveka) in the autumn of 2018.

(https://forestsangha.org/community/news/uk_cittaviveka-new-abbot)





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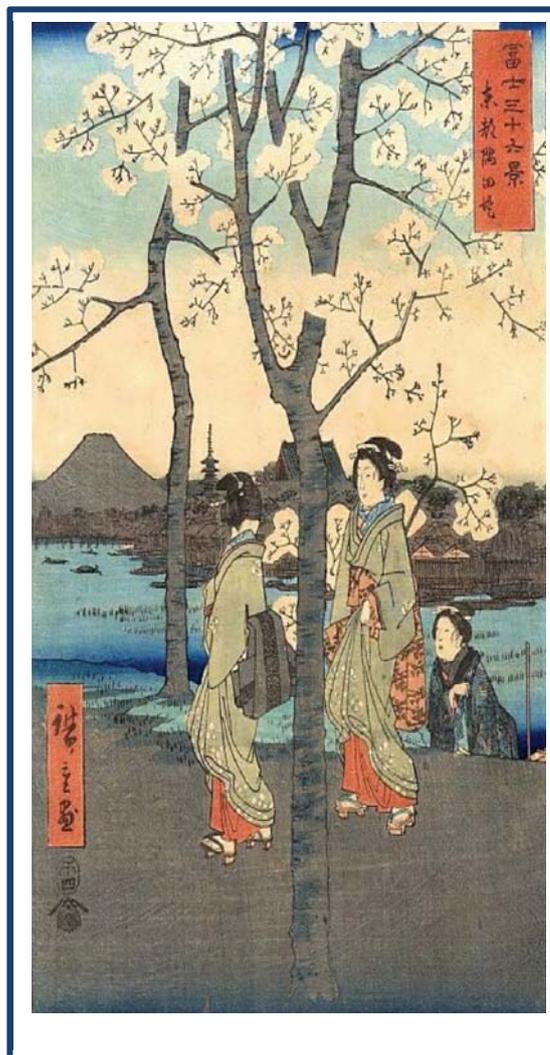
Editorial

As we continue with the Spring and into Summer we have restrictions on being with people whom we may wish to be with. We can in our immediate environment find a beautiful companionship in blooming life above and around us. Blossoming is an everyday occurrence and one of continuous change that rewards our attention.

In Japan admiration of blossoms has been ritualised. "Hanami" is the centuries-old (since c. 700) practice of drinking under a blooming tree. In particular cherry blossoms are the focus. In Japan people have lunch and drink sake in cheerful feasts to celebrate them.

Every year the Japanese Meteorological Agency and the public track the 'cherry blossom front' as it moves northward up the archipelago with the approach of warmer weather via nightly forecasts following the weather segment of news programmes.

We could start with the cherry blossoms and we could continue on through the seasons of other blooms.



On the Sumida Embankment in the Eastern Capital, two bijin (beautiful people) walking under cherry blossom, 36 Views of Mount Fuji Series 7 by Hiroshige [Public domain]

In a typically ingenious ways humans have sought to preserve the temporary. Cherry blossoms and leaves are edible and both are used as food ingredients in Japan: The blossoms are pickled in salt and vinegar and used for flavour in confectionery; salt-pickled blossoms in hot water are called *sakurayu* and take the place of green tea at weddings. I have not experienced this and so cannot make a recommendation!



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Preserved cherry blossom and *sakurayu* tea by Suguri F - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=699513>

In Japan, cherry blossoms symbolise clouds due to their nature of blooming *en masse*. Their transience also means they are seen as a metaphor for the ephemeral nature of life often associated with the Buddhist notion of impermanence.



Their temporary beauty links them to the notion of *mono no aware*, literally 'the pathos of things' (and also translated as 'an empathy toward things', or a 'sensitivity to ephemera'). Such attentive empathetic sensitivity seems particularly suited to a time of global pandemic. I wish you and yours well.

CCO Public Domain

Penny Lawrence

Please send any items you would like to include to hbs.newsletter.editor@gmail.com.



Hampshire Buddhist Society

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Zen Group meetings:

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Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

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Hertfordshire, HP1 3BZ
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The Buddhist Society

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The Zen Centre

58 Marlborough Place, London, NW8 0PL
www.rinzaizencentre.org.uk
020 7624 4987

The Zen Gateway

www.thezengateway.com

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome. Please send them to us by email or post.
If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please tell us.



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Programme for Summer 2020

At the time of writing our regular face-to face meetings are currently suspended due to the Corona virus/Covid-19. However, the Zen group is meeting weekly online with phone access. For questions about the Zen group email hbs.zen.group@gmail.com or telephone 023 8049 6315. For general enquiries and for information about the Theravada group please email hampshirebuddhistsociety@gmail.com.

The Buddhist Society - Online classes and courses resumed from Monday 20th April but the building remains closed to visitors. Some talks, for example the usual Monday Theravada Class and the 'Fundamentals of Zen Class', are also being run on-line. See the end of the Newsletter for some details and check the website <https://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/>

Cittaviveka (Chithurst Buddhist Monastery) - the monastery is closed to all visitors and guests until further notice. All public events and gatherings, including Songkran and Wesak, are cancelled until at least the start of June, and perhaps longer. Keep up to date by checking the website at <https://www.cittaviveka.org/announcements>

The Zen Centre Shobo-an and Fairlight – The programme is currently taking place online. Members of Hampshire Buddhist Society groups are also welcome to join. For Zen group members there will be weekly classes on Wednesdays and Fridays. This is for those settled in the training, which generally means being an attendee at sesshins at Shobo-an, Fairlight or Douai Abbey. You will have received the details.

For others, Shobo-an will be holding open events via Zoom that anyone can attend. These will be listed on Eventbrite as they are organised. To check on upcoming events please use this link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/shobo-an-zen-temple-12876433475> and click on 'Live Events' - (as it also lists past events).

May 2020

Mon	4	Zen	Study Meeting online
Thurs	7	Theravada	No meeting pending lockdown review
Mon	11	Zen	Study Meeting online
Mon	18	Zen	Study Meeting online
Thurs	21	Theravada	No meeting pending lockdown review
Mon	25	Zen	Study Meeting online
Sat	30	HBS	No Monthly Day Retreat pending lockdown review
Sun	31	Zen	Zen Sunday, The Buddhist Society, London online tbc

June

Mon	1	Zen	Zazen tbc
Thurs	4	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	8	Zen	Soko Roshi tbc
Mon	15	Zen	Zazen tbc
Thurs	18	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	22	Zen	Zazen tbc
Sat	27	HBS	Monthly Day Retreat tbc
Sun	28	Zen	Zen Sunday, The Buddhist Society, London online tbc
Mon	29	Zen	Open Meeting tbc



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July

Thurs	2	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	6	Zen	Zazen tbc
Mon	13	Zen	Sojun Kannun Roshi Memorial tbc
Thurs	16	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	20	Zen	Zazen tbc
Sat	25	HBS	Monthly Day Retreat tbc
Sun	26	Zen	Zen Sunday, The Buddhist Society, London online tbc
Mon	27	Zen	Open Meeting tbc

August

Mon	3	Zen	Zazen tbc
Thurs	6	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	10	Zen	Zazen tbc
Mon	17	Zen	Open Meeting tbc
Thurs	20	Theravada	Meditation & Dhamma tbc
Mon	24	Zen	Recess
Sat	29	HBS	Monthly Day Retreat tbc
Mon	31	Zen	Recess

Saturday 22nd AUGUST – Saturday 29th AUGUST 2020

The 69th Buddhist Society Summer School is planned to be held at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. For the latest information check the website at <https://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/page/buddhist-society-summer-school-2020>

The Buddhist Society Public Lectures & Events online

The summer term will be starting with a **Lunchtime Meditation** class at 12:40pm led by Richard Bober, and there will be the usual **Monday Theravada Class** at 6:30pm.

The **Fundamentals of Zen Buddhism** will also be running from Monday 27th.

The **Introducing Buddhism Course** led by Rachel Hilton, which sadly had to be first suspended and then cancelled due to Rachel's commitments in helping patients with the Covid 19 outbreak, will begin anew as a seven day course starting this Tuesday 21st April at 10:30am led by Roy Sutherwood.

Roy will also be continuing to take the Thursday night **Tibetan Meditation Class** and there will be a **Basic Meditation Class** led by Richard Bober this Thursday 23rd April.

Lunchtime classes will be held on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays by Richard Bober, a previous teacher of the Theravada class, and Deirdre Cunningham and Rohit Shah both long time members of the Zen Centre and teachers at The Buddhist Society. Ven GB Kassapa's usual **Wednesday lunchtime class** is planned to resume soon.

The Tuesday and Friday **Zen meditation classes** will be resuming as will the open monthly **Zen Sundays**.

The Calendar and Blog pages of the HBS web site may contain information about events arranged after the publication of this newsletter.