

Cultivating Insight Course & Weekend

A precious opportunity

5 Thursday nights 2nd July-30th July; weekend 18th & 19th July

*Call forth as much as you can
of love, of respect and of faith
Remove the obstructing defilements;
clear away all your taints;
Listen to the gentle wisdom
of the Perfect Buddhas –
Taught for the weal of the world;
for heroic spirits intended!
(Ratnagunasamcayagatha)*

Dear Friend,

We really enjoyed last year's course, and are keen to explore the theme further, with different material and a different structure – this time incorporating a weekend retreat at the LBC which can allow us to take our whole experience of the material deeper. We're particularly interested in finding ways of using the whole range of our experience more explicitly, in order to explore what Sangharakshita calls 'the texture of Reality'.

Insight is a human experience – we all have *glimpses* of the way things really are: particularly through nature, and the cycles of the seasons and our lives. It also *touches* all of our lives: parting, longing, mystery, connection, responding unselfconsciously for the good... So connecting this vision, this insight, with our own lived-in embodied reality, we'll set the scene by invoking the spirit of the verse above, and *delving* into the three kinds of faith. Gampopa calls them deep conviction, lucidity and longing; Bhante describes them as faith in realities, faith in qualities, and faith in capacities. They're about

- *recognising* what's most deeply true in life;
- *connecting* to qualities and abilities that can grow in us as we *align* with that truth; and
- *undertaking* the path to *embodying* and *expressing* it.

The course will be experiential: we will try to *experience* these aspects of reality rather than merely *talk* about them. We do encounter them - as Andy Goldsworthy describes it: "you feel as though you've touched the heart of a place; seeing something that was always there but you were blind to" (we'll be looking at some of his and others' work during the course) – but as he also says, "the real work is the change". This will involve all of us (our minds, our hearts, and our actions) in meditation, quietness, reflection, discussion, ritual, and home-practice each week. We'd like to support the continuity provided by home-practice with weekly emails (or letters), bringing some reminders and suggestions into your everyday life.

The evenings will start promptly at 7.15pm ; we will be leading a body scan meditation, beginning at 7pm , for those of you who would like to prepare for the class in this way.

The weekend (18th & 19th July at the LBC) will run from 10am-5pm each day. This gives us the opportunity to take the material to more depth, and in a wider variety of ways, than we can in an evening, letting us carry through our reflective experience for a longer period of time – all positive conditions for allowing our insights to flow across into our everyday lives and interactions.

Looking forward very much to seeing you there!

Yours in the Dharma,

Maitrivajri and Dhammadassin