

# Rainbows



# Noticeboard

Our good friend in the Dharma, Medhina, who has offered so much to the development of the Family Events at Amaravati, has decided, due to increased home responsibilities, not to take such an active part in the organization of the camps in the forthcoming year. On behalf of the Sangha and our lay friends, we would like to express our gratitude for her support and encouragement over the last few years. Without Medhina's help, it is doubtful whether the Family Events would have gone so well. So we wish you Medhina, health, happiness and peace of heart for the year 1988.

We are fortunate that next year Brenda and Fred Popplewell have decided to come and live at Amaravati over the summer months to help with the organization of Family Events. Anyone else who would also like to help with the Family Camp, Family Days or 'Rainbows' is welcome. Enquiries c/o 'Family Events', Amaravati

## 'RETURN OF THE LIGHT' FAMILY DAY \* SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER

Programme: 10.30am, Meal offering; 1.00-3.00pm, Tea Party. (Please bring some food for the party.) For further details contact Jane Gilbert, Tel Berkhamsted 4796. There will be accommodation available for those who would like to stay the week-end (including the Sunday night.) For accommodation, contact above address.

### FORTHCOMING DATES

There will be no Family Events during January, February and March; on 10th April we shall hold a meeting to discuss the summer Family Camp; all are welcome especially those who would like to help with organisation, or who would like to offer ideas.

### FAMILY DAYS, SPRING/ EARLY SUMMER 1988

10th April 8th May  
18th May 12th June  
26th June 10th July

### FAMILY CAMP

25th-31st July 1988

Booking starts April.  
Contact above address



A mandala from Maga in Poland

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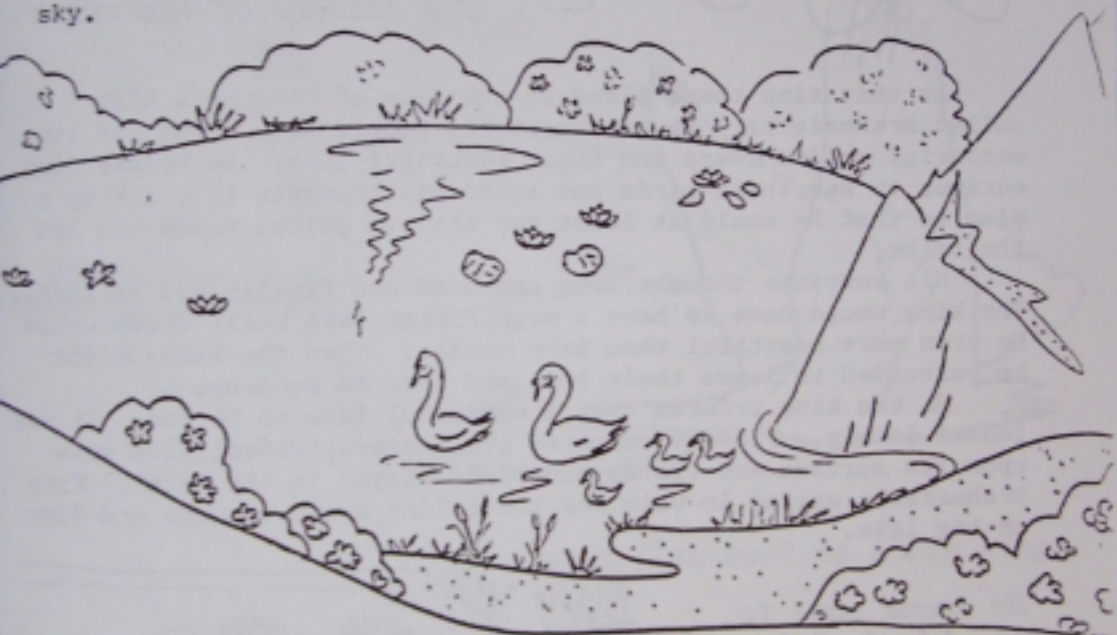
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# THE GOLDEN SWANS

*A Jataka Tale retold and illustrated by Kathy Halter*

Once, long ago, it is said that the Buddha was born as the King of the Swans. He lived with his large tribe of golden swans on a wonderful lake, Manasa, in the Himalayan Mountains.

Lake Manasa was extremely beautiful. Flowering trees reflected their beauty in its clear, peaceful waters. Pink and blue lotuses peeped out of the water. The swans would swim together on its surface, looking like golden clouds in a blue sky.



*The beautiful mountain lake at Manasa*

The two leaders of the swans looked very noble and majestic. The King of the Swans and his commander-in-chief, Sumakha, were good friends and very much superior to the rest of the tribe. They would teach the other swans how to live peacefully and well. In time, the whole tribe of swans became famous on account of their just and peaceful behaviour towards all other animals and birds. It was said that they surely had only the shape of a swan, and must in reality be human beings.



*The leaders of the swans*

At that time there lived in the city of Benares a king called Brahmadata. He had heard his people talk about the two wonderful golden swans and their beautiful lake. He became very curious to see these birds and asked his servants to think up a plan so that he could at least see the two golden swans who led the tribe.

His servants thought long and hard and finally had an idea. The king would have to have a magnificent lake built which would be even more beautiful than Lake Manasa. Then the swans might be persuaded to leave their home and come to Benares.

So the king ordered such a wonderful lake to be dug. It was indeed lovely. Flowers carpeted its borders, waterlilies grew upon its surface and fishes and birds played in the water. King Brahmadata waited in vain for the golden swans to come and live on his lake.

*No swans came to  
the king's lake*



Every day a tom-tom beater proclaimed that King Brahmadata was pleased to give this lake as a present to all the birds, and that he granted perfect safety to all.

'But where are the wonderful swans for whom I had this lake made?' asked King Brahmadata. His servants said that the swans would surely arrive later in the season. So the king waited and waited. Finally, one day, some young swans from the Swan King's tribe flew by and saw the glittering lake. They flew back excitedly to their leader and urged him to come and swim in the lake. They gave a glorious description of the lake and of King Brahmadata's promise of safety.



*The swans flew back to their king*

The Swan King asked his wise counsellor, Sumakha, for advice. Sumakha shook his head.

'I do not trust humans and I fear that the beauty of this place has been created as a trap.'

However, the tribe of swans were not satisfied with their own lovely home any longer. They asked the king over and over again to take them to the beautiful lake at Benares. Finally their king consented and they all flew to the new lake. Very soon they had forgotten their old home. They were happy in their delightful new surroundings and believed themselves to be safe.

The guardians of the lake at once reported to King Brahmadata that the swans he so longed to see had arrived. When Brahmadata heard this he was very glad and quickly sent one of his hunters to trap the majestic birds, quite forgetting his promise of safety to them.

Suspecting nothing and trusting Brahmadata's words, the king and his friend went swimming among the lotuses. Suddenly the Swan King was entangled in a snare. He cried a warning to the other swans, who all flew away - all but his loyal friend Smakha. The Swan King begged, then ordered, his friend to leave him to his fate. 'You know, wild birds such as us end up in the kitchen to be eaten. Fly to safety whilst you still can!'



*The Swan-King  
ensnared*

Smakha said it would not be right to leave a friend in distress, even for the sake of saving one's own life.

Just then the hunter arrived to catch the birds. He was greatly astonished that one swan chose to stay by the other, despite not being trapped. Full of admiration, the hunter asked Smakha why he did not fly away. Smakha replied: 'He is my king and I love him; how could I not help him when he is in trouble?'

The hunter was touched by these words and urged Smakha to fly away to freedom, but the loyal swan refused to desert his master. Smakha begged the hunter to take his body instead of the king's. The hunter, although used to the cruel sport of hunting, was very ashamed of his action and said to the swans that he would free both of them, even if his master was angry with him.

The noble swans thanked him for their release, but so that he would not be punished they said they would do with him of their own free will to the king. After some hesitation, the hunter took the two golden swans to the king.

Brahmadatta was astonished at their beauty, but even more, at why they had come to him untied and unhurt. Smakha and the King of the Swans bowed low to the king. The hunter told Brahmadata all that had happened and how moved he had been by Smakha's willingness to sacrifice himself for his master.

King Brahmadata was ashamed of his lack of truthfulness and for the wrong deed he had done. He bowed to the swans and had special thrones built for them since he realized that they

were great and noble beings. The hunter became rich through his reward from the king and never again trapped birds.

The King of the Swans and his counsellor talked with King Brahmadata all through the night and taught him how to be a good and wise king, whose words could be trusted by all who knew him. It was not enough to be beautiful on the outside only, like the lake was; one must be kind and noble at heart also. King Brahmadata ruled wisely and well from then on and his people were peaceful and happy.



*The two swans  
speak with the king*

As for the golden swans, they returned to King Brahmadata's lake, bringing all of the tribe with them. Thus they showed their gratitude to the king for releasing their master. King Brahmadata, in return, followed the path of righteousness to the end of his days.

### *DO YOU KNOW?*

- \* Why do you think the hunter let the swans go free?
- \* Why do you think Sumakha stayed with his master, the Swan King?
- \* Why is it not good to break a promise?

*Can you draw your own beautiful lake on a piece of paper? What animals or birds might live in or near your lake?*

Giving presents to others is at least as enjoyable as getting them - especially if you've made them yourself!  
 Here are two ideas for you:

## HOW TO MAKE PLAYDOUGH

FOR A YOUNG SISTER, BROTHER or FRIEND - (or... YOURSELF!)  
 Playdough is like soft plasticine - it shouldn't be eaten... but it's great fun to play with!

### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 1) 6 CUPS PLAIN WHITE FLOUR (AND SOME SPARE)
  - 2) 1 ROUNDED TEASPOON SALT
  - 3) 5 TABLESPOONS OIL
  - 4) WATER.
- Also, if you have them:  
 \* A FEW DROPS of EDIBLE FOOD COLOUR (makes it look nice)  
 \* A FEW DROPS of ALMOND ESSENCE (makes it smell nice)



### WHAT TO DO:

- 1) Put all the ingredients EXCEPT WATER into the bowl.
  - 2) Add 2 tablespoons water and start mixing everything up.
  - 3) Keep adding a little water and then stirring hard. DON'T ADD TOO MUCH! What you are aiming for is a lumpy mixture of dough-y bits and some dry flour.
  - 4) NOW, the messy bit! Sprinkle a bit of the table-top with spare flour and tip all the contents of the bowl onto it (scrape it out too).
  - 5) Start to squeeze and knead the dough with your hands until it joins into one smooth lump. (This is hard work!) Keep kneading for 5 more minutes.
- If it sticks to you and the table, keep sprinkling on flour and kneading it in.  
 If it is hard, dry and crumbly, sprinkle on a little water and knead it in.  
 You should end up with one beautiful lump of PLAYDOUGH.
- IN AN AIRTIGHT PLASTIC BAG IN THE FRIDGE.

## REMEMBER!



COVER UP and...



CLEAR UP!

## OR ... HERE IS A RECIPE FOR: SHORT BREAD SHAPES

(you can eat these!) Why not make them for family, friends, relatives, or to take to the monastery?

### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 1) 3/4 CUP MARGARINE or SOFT BUTTER
  - 2) 1/4 CUP BROWN SUGAR
  - 3) 2 CUPS PLAIN FLOUR (BROWN, WHITE OR A MIXTURE)
- An oven at 180°C (350°F GAS MARK 4)
- 
- Mixing bowl and spoon, rolling pin, small knife, or 2 baking trays

### WHAT TO DO: BEFORE STARTING - SWITCH ON OVEN.

- 1) Put the margarine (or butter) and sugar in bowl.
- 2) Beat them till they are mixed together.
- 3) Mix in the flour. If dough is crumbly add 1 or 2 more tablespoons soft marg. or butter.
- 4) Lightly flour a clean table. Roll dough out 12mm (1/2 inch) thick.
- 5) Cut into small shapes.
- 6) Place 12mm (1/2 inch) apart on an ungreased baking tray.
- 7) Bake on middle shelf of the oven until set (about 20 minutes.) GET A GROWN-UP TO HELP WITH THIS: Remove biscuits immediately from tray, and put on a rack to cool.

MAKES ABOUT 24 2 1/2 by 3 cm biscuits





# SHRINES

**A** Buddhist shrine is a special place which helps to remind us about the Buddha and his teachings. When we look at the peaceful Buddha-image, we can also remember that we have the same goodness, kindness and wisdom as the Buddha in our own hearts. We can find this out for ourselves by following the teachings of the Buddha.

When we go to the monastery we first go quietly to the shrine to bow three times to our teacher the Buddha. Sometimes we might offer a small bunch of flowers, or bring some sticks of sweet-smelling incense to light and put in the incense-holder in front of the Buddha-image. People might also bring candles to offer; they remind us of the light and happiness that a good and wise person brings into the world.



*Here are pictures of some different kinds of shrines*



*Can you draw your own picture of a beautiful shrine with flowers, candles and incense?*



# A Letter From Nicola

My name is Nicola Howard and I have an uncle who is a monk called Bodhipalo. He came to see us in the summer from Thailand. We live in Anglesy. He was very kind, and he showed us how to present gifts to monks in a special way. You shouldn't get embarrassed when you present a gift in this way. It is exactly the same as saying, "I've got a present for you," and giving him a kiss.

I thought that Bodhipalo would be strict and severe but he wasn't at all. He told us that he had to have his dinner and pudding in the same bowl and at the same time, and he wasn't allowed to pick around for savoury things or sweet things.

A short while ago Bodhipalo came to stay at Grandma's house. I expect it was very noisy for him because he had been in a quiet monastery for ages. Bodhipalo didn't carry many things, because all he needs are extra robes, a bowl and a spoon. He gets up very early in the morning to meditate.

One day my two sisters and I decided to give Bodhipalo some gifts. We had to give him the gifts in a special way. We did it a bit wrong so Bodhipalo explained to us how to do it properly. I hope that Bodhipalo comes to see us again.

Thankyou for the Rainbows comic I enjoyed reading it very much.

Nicola Howard

# The windy Night

In the dark and windy night,  
While the moon is shining bright,  
While the lights are turned off,  
The wind is blowing hard, hard, harder  
than ever

The north, south, east and west wind,  
All blowing together in this,

Dark, Windy, Night

by  
Dilaki  
age  
8 years



# INNER LISTENING *A guided meditation*

*This guided meditation is intended as an outline which can be adjusted to suit each child's age and interest; for younger children or 'beginning meditators' the DEEP RELAXATION section might be enough to start with.*

---

## DEEP RELAXATION

Lets see if you can let your body become all soft and comfortable and relaxed, just like when you are sleeping - but you will stay awake and be able to hear what I am saying.

Lie down and make yourself comfortable. Now close your eyes and begin to relax your body as I talk. Wiggle your toes and feet...and let them relax; let them go all loose and floppy. Now make your tummy tight...and let it relax; let it become very loose and soft. Now make your hands into fists and squeeze them tight...and let them relax. Now hunch your shoulders up to your ears...let them down again...and relax. Now squeeze your eyes really tight...and let them relax. Your whole body is very relaxed now, all comfortable...and loose...and still.

## DEEP BREATHING

Now take a great big breath, pulling in lots of air...and let it out slowly as if you were pushing it right around the world. Keep taking big breaths and slowly pushing out the air, pushing it to the ends of the world. *(Pause about one minute)*

## INNER LISTENING

Lets see if you can learn to listen with your inner ear. Listen now to the sounds your body is making as it breathes in and out... ..  
...Maybe you can hear other sounds in your body. Maybe you can hear or feel your heart beating...Maybe your tummy is rumbling a bit...Listen very closely to the sounds your body makes. Hear only the sounds of your own body. *(Pause about one minute)*

Now, listen very closely to the sounds around you, the sounds outside your body. Listen to all the small noises outside your body ... (mention the sounds around you). Now begin to shut out the sounds around you; close out all those sounds.

Now listen very, very carefully, and you may be able to hear the humming silence behind all sounds, the sound of silence which is always there - outside your body, inside your body, everywhere. *(Pause about one minute)*

Now start to listen again to the sounds in your body. Listen only to your own body. Listen to the sound of your breathing... .. Listen to your heart beating... Listen to your tummy rumbling... ..

Now open your eyes. Did you hear differently than you usually do? Were you able to shut out all the outside sounds and listen only to your body? What sounds did you hear in your body? What sounds did you hear outside? Did you hear the sound of silence?

# P A R E N T ' S P A G E

REFLECTIONS FROM A FATHER

by Mike Gilbert



I enjoy washing-up. After a busy day at work I find its quiet, rhythmic actions soothing. They enable me to escape in thought, to re-live the day's traumas: 'They did *this*, so I did *that*, so he said *this* and I did *that*,' and I rehearse the next day's performance: 'I'll say *this*, so they'll have to do *that*. They are not going to treat me this way!'

But then I catch myself when I take my mindlessness a stage further: 'If I get a move-on I'll just have time for twenty minutes of meditation before I feed the cat, and... As I really rushing mindlessly so that I can have twenty minutes which I can dedicate to mindful practice before mindlessly rushing on?'

When I catch myself like this, I begin to let go. The washing up becomes my practice. I concentrate, not on an in-breath or an out-breath, but on the movement of my hand, the placing of the dish, the selection of the next item. Over a period of time, my mind becomes able to concentrate on one thing while being distracted by 'mind-chatter'. It is this concentration which I need when two children are screaming, the cat has been sick, the kettle is boiling and the milk is about to boil over.

## Kitchen Samadhi

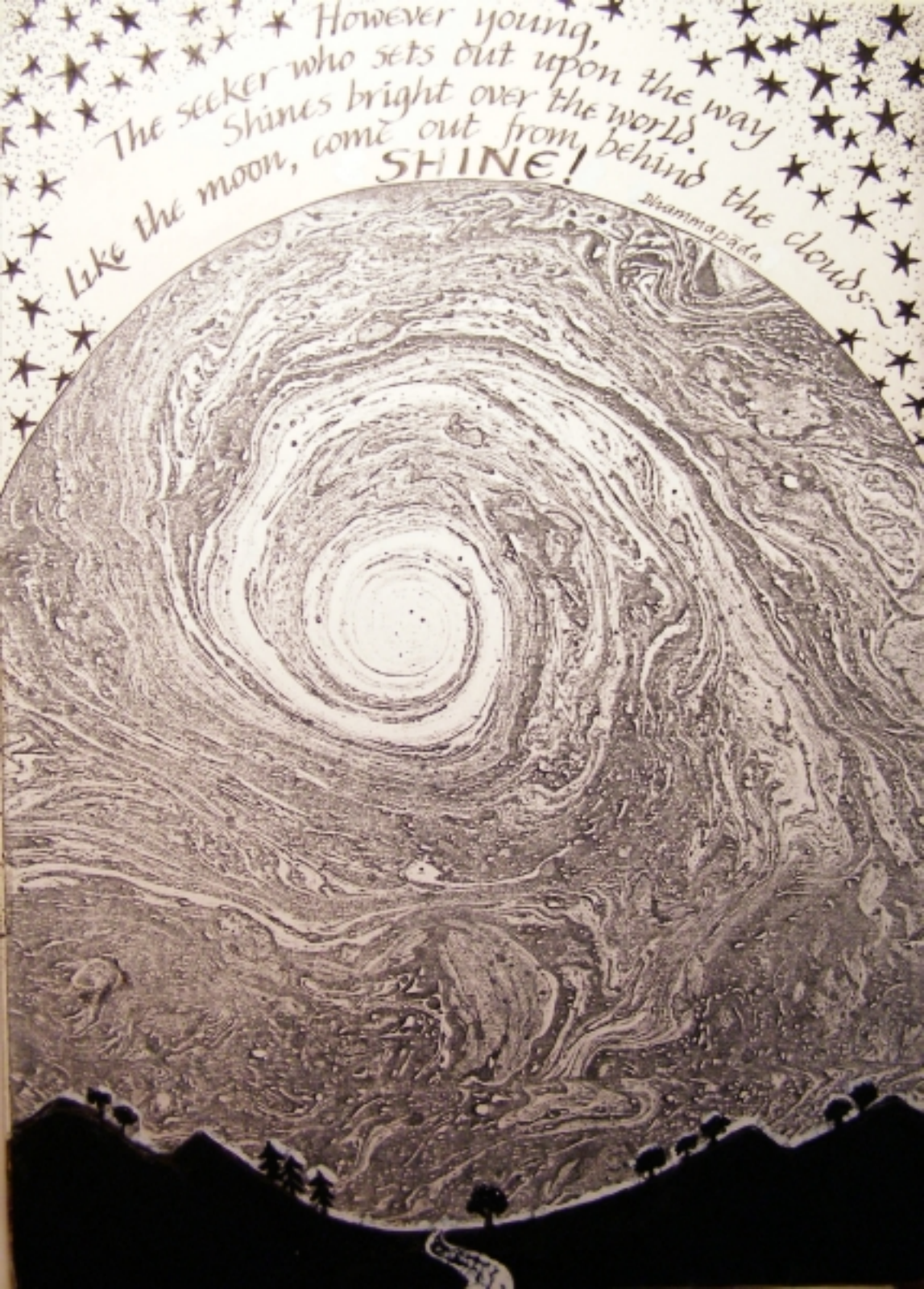
Venerable Sucitto Bhikkhu offered this response to Mike's reflection.

It is quite common for meditators to underestimate mindfulness and be trying to attain an imagined state of absorption which they equate with *samadhi*. A lot of effort goes into avoiding or suppressing memories and mind habits that might hinder the absorption into the meditation object. Such effort can cause a lot of stress, and many people feel that they can't meditate - especially after a stressful day's work - because meditation requires this ability to suppress, and only occurs when the mind remains unwaveringly fixed on the meditation object. However, Right Concentration arises from Right Mindfulness, which arises from Right Effort. In Buddhism there are factors other than willpower and energy that bear fruit. 'Rightness' implies a balanced steadiness, and an intention that is wholesome.

Washing-up can be a good occasion for Right Effort. It's not a matter of doing it quickly, or using power to scrub the plates: rather the opposite in fact. There is nothing in it for 'me' - and in that way it can be more wholesome than a self-obsessed meditation practice! From this Right Effort a natural, unbiased observation develops that recognises the waverings of the mind calmly without creating more waves. And the result: the concentration that keeps you alert and unflustered in the midst of domestic chaos!

So *samadhi* does not mean absorption, it means a contemplative balance and poise that in turn will give rise to Right View, Thought, Speech... and catch the milk before it boils over!





However young,  
The seeker who sets out upon the way  
Shines bright over the world.  
Like the moon, come out from behind the clouds:  
**SHINE!**

*Shamma-pada*