

# Rainbows

Spring  
1988



# Noticeboard

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It is now three years since the first Family Day was held at Amaravati, and also since the first 'homegrown' (to put it politely!) edition of Rainbows was printed and handed out to a few local friends of the community. This was a beginning, and as in any new situation experimentation has taken place, amidst some uncertainty. Now, three years later, it is possible to determine a direction that will best serve families who are interested in having the Dharma taught in a way that children can easily comprehend.

Over this time the Rainbows mailing list has increased considerably to include places such as New Zealand, Australia, Poland and America; this growth encourages the perception of a global community. In response to suggestions, ideas and criticisms, Rainbows has undergone various improvements, and no doubt will undergo more as the future unfolds (We are always delighted to receive constructive feedback).

The annual Family Summer Camp, held at Amaravati, initially grew out of the Family Days and, like Rainbows, has developed in an organic way. At present it is felt that the camp is very worthwhile and has much potential.

The Family Days, which have been the source from which both Rainbows and the camp evolved, have been rather uncertain affairs. This is mainly due to the lack of continuity that individual families can offer. For many, the long travelling distances to Amaravati have allowed for only occasional visits. Running Family Days has always been unpredictable - there is no way of knowing who will come and what ages the children will be. A great deal of adaptability has been necessary to make the best of these days. Actually, in spite of the uncertainties, each of the gatherings have been delightful, with a sense of sharing and warmth amongst the people involved. However, until there are more interested families able to come on a regular basis, the idea has been put forward to hold these days less frequently.

So for this year we shall hold three main Family Days with overnight accommodation available. This could stretch to a week-end event within which a wider scope of activities and more involvement with the community could be offered for both parents and children. There will also still be a few regular Family Days which will now function more as a 'class' for children. This 'class' would include a short puja, story, discussion, reflection and some kind of activity.

Sister Thanissara

## DATES OF DAYS FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS AT AMARAVATI

### FAMILY DAYS/WEEKENDS (See above)

(7 -) 8th May  
(10 -) 21st Aug  
(1 -) 2nd Oct

{ Tentative, please  
check nearer time

Please contact 'Families', Amaravati, if you have any suggestions or would like overnight accommodation.

### FAMILY SUMMER CAMP 1988 at Amaravati

The annual Summer Camp will be held  
25th - 31st July

All welcome. For further details, contact 'Families', Amaravati.

**HELPERS NEEDED** If you would like to help with the camp, we need: general, cooking & kitchen help, creche attendants, helpers for activity workshops (crafts, etc.) and someone to lead yoga for parents or children.

### SUNDAY CHILDREN'S CLASS

17th April Please note:  
29th May 12th June &  
26th June 10th July  
are cancelled

The class is from approx. 1 - 3pm. Those who would like to participate in the meal offering at 10.30 are welcome.

### TEENAGE DAYS

At the request of some, we shall experiment in holding special days with young people in mind. An initial meeting to discuss ideas, etc. will take place during the Summer Camp on Saturday, 30th July at 1.00pm. All welcome.

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# Timothy's Tree

Illustrated by Maga

Once there was a young boy named Timothy. He lived deep in the country. From the window of his bedroom he could see miles and miles of green hills rolling into the distance until they met the sky. It felt as though he was living on the top of the world as he gazed out at the shapes and colours of the fields and hedgerows. When the weather was fine Timothy spent his days outside going on short adventures, sometimes following a small stream for several hours to see where it went or exploring new places near to his house. There was so much to look at: wild flowers and grasses, insects, birds, trees, and the movement of the clouds across the sky. It always seemed new and marvellous to Timothy - nothing ever stayed quite the same two days running. All in all, life was very pleasant.

Just outside Timothy's window there was an old hawthorn tree whose branches had grown into a beautiful mass of intricate patterns rather like a chinese carving. In May and June it was covered in frothy white blossoms. He used to look at it for hours at a time and would sit and rest under it on hot days.

The hawthorn tree was actually the home of a tree spirit. This spirit had lived there for many, many years and was a very kind soul. It loved the house and garden as much as Timothy did and was also extremely fond of Timothy. The spirit would watch him as he played and used to make sure that he was very comfortable and slept deeply whenever he crept underneath the tree.



One spring night there was an awesome storm. The wind blew a strong gale and lashed at the house furiously. All the windows shook and the boards creaked and groaned. Rain poured down and the sky was lit by forks of lightening. The noise of the storm woke Timothy up, and although a little frightened by the power and din of the storm he was also very interested in watching the world outside his window. He saw that the natural world could be quite terrible sometimes as the wind and rain beat down grass and flowers.

As he stared out of the window he noticed that the hawthorn tree looked odd. Puzzled, he kept watching it and suddenly realised that it was leaning right over to one side. The wind was so ferociously strong that it was pushing the old tree over. He began to hear it creaking and heard snapping noises as its roots were loosened from the ground. Then, with a sudden crash and shiver of its beautiful leaves it fell right over.

Timothy felt his heart thump as he saw the tree fall and he felt very sad. He left the window and sat down on his bed quietly. He sat and thought for a while until he began to feel something different about the room. It felt very peaceful and there was a slightly sweet smell filling the air. He almost thought that he could hear silver bells faintly ringing. He looked up and in the far corner of the room was an oval shaped golden glow with the most wonderful face Timothy had ever seen. It was not a round, pink-skinned face but a very faint shape showing through the golden light. It had the pattern of swirling bark that an old tree might have and the eyes which looked out at Timothy were dark and shining, like a deep pool. They were so old and kind looking that Timothy loved them immediately. Then he noticed that they were filled with tears. The spirit sighed with a sound like leaves rustling in a forest.

Timothy started to speak and then realised that he did not need to - the spirit spoke to him in thoughts. It told him that his home was in the hawthorn tree and that he had nowhere to live now that it had fallen. Timothy said to the spirit, just by thinking, that he was welcome to stay in his room until they could find another tree that was a suitable home for the spirit.

So the spirit stayed in Timothy's room that night. The next day Timothy suggested to his mother that it might be a good idea to plant another tree in the place where the hawthorn had stood. She agreed and they went off together and chose a young beech tree which they planted in the very same spot where the hawthorn had once stood.



That night Timothy and the spirit went together to the new tree and Timothy invited the spirit to live there. The spirit's golden light grew even stronger at Timothy's kindness, which it accepted immediately.

When Timothy left the spirit at the tree he knew that he probably would not see it again. But every time he looks out of his window at that beech tree he feels a golden glow in his heart as he remembers how he was able to help someone in distress, and that makes him feel happy.



*Trees are our very good friends. They help us in many ways. Can you think of some of the ways in which trees help us? Can you think of any ways that we can help trees?*

*Planting trees is a very helpful thing to do as many are cut down and blown down by the wind every year. If you plant a tree it may live to be much older than you!*



A PICTURE TO COLOUR IN

\*\*\*\*\*

*Do you enjoy watching how the trees change through the seasons?  
Next time you go out walking take a good look at all the different  
kinds of trees!*

Here is a story from Agata (aged 11), who lives in Poland. English is a foreign language for her!

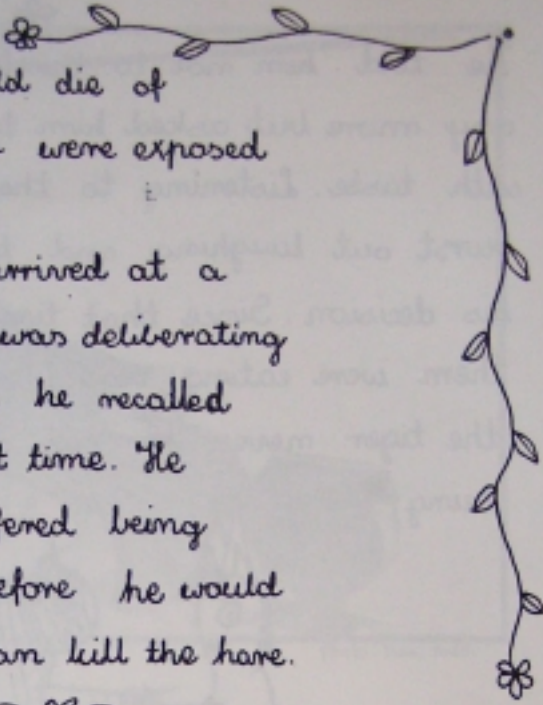
## \* Two Friends. \*

It happened long time ago,  
when animals could speak.  
There lived a tiger and a hare.



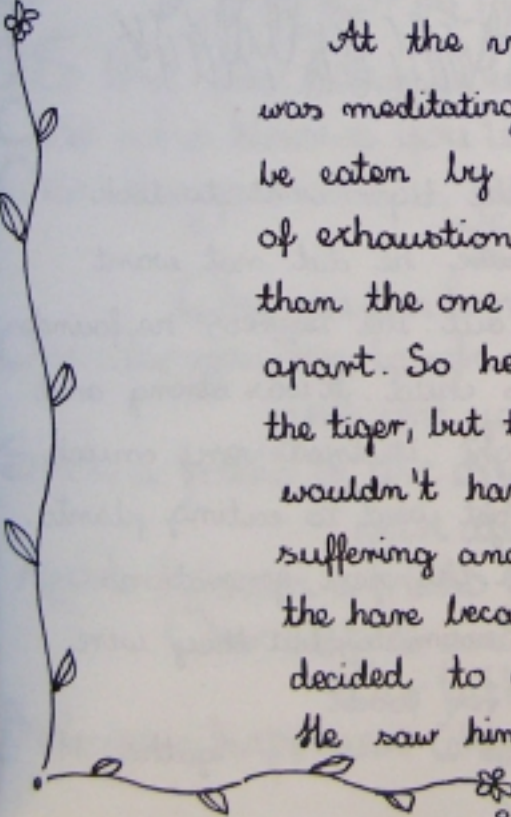
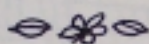
The hare led a sad life because of his enemy, the tiger, who made it miserable for him. He preyed upon him day and night but the hare was a great trickster and it was not easy to catch him. The tiger did not have a pleasant life, either, because only he and the hare lived in the area. If he didn't catch the





hare, he himself would die of hunger. So both of them were exposed to death.

One day the tiger arrived at a hard decision. When he was deliberating how to catch the hare he recalled a hare he ate the last time. He could see how he suffered being torn by his claws. Therefore he would rather die of hunger than kill the hare.



At the very same time the hare was meditating on allowing himself to be eaten by the tiger, for the death of exhaustion seemed to him worse than the one caused by being torn apart. So he was quietly waiting for the tiger, but the tiger was glad he wouldn't have to look at the hare's suffering and he did not come. At last the hare became impatient and he decided to go to the tiger himself. He saw him lying on a path.

He told him not to think of death any more but asked him to eat him with taste. Listening to that the tiger burst out laughing and told him of his decision. Since that time both of them were eating vegetables only and the tiger never harmed any little being.



Then the tiger went to look for a wife, because he did not want his breed to die out. The tigress he found gave birth to his child. It was strong and clever but though it tried very much, it could not get used to eating plants. For that reason the next generations of tigers killed animals, but they were doing it only for food.

Agatha, 11



Photo: Duck, Todd.

## A SPIRITUAL FRIEND....

IS the one who you can depend on,  
One who knows you like you know yourself.  
One who you can.... fight with    play with  
   scramble in the hay with,  
One you can do nothing and be quiet with.  
One who you can laugh and cry with,  
   and one you're never shy with.  
Such a friend is the one you can trust  
   with all your heart,  
And to be such a friend to others ~  
   Our sisters and our brothers,  
   Our fathers and our mothers ~  
Brings a happiness which never will depart.

# WAYS to help

Your self,  
Your family & friends, Your town & country,  
The planet, The universe.

## THE FIVE PROMISES.

1. I promise to try not to harm any living beings.
2. I promise to try not to take that which does not belong to me
3. I promise to try not to take more from life than I really need.
4. I promise to try not to use my speech in harmful ways.
5. I promise to try not to take harmful drinks or drugs which cloud my mind.

Here are some guidelines that the Buddha gave us to follow in our lives. The five promises are usually known as the 'FIVE PRECEPTS' and the ten Powers of Goodness are usually known as the Paramitas or 'PERFECTIONS'.

If we use these guidelines in our lives then we attract good things and good people to us. Goodness is a force both within ourselves and within the universe. It protects and helps us and brings joy and happiness into our lives. Without goodness our lives are unhappy and we may do wise things which bring harm to ourselves or others.

Developing goodness is not always that easy - we have to keep trying. Sometimes not everyone understands how important it is. As we learn to trust the power of goodness in our lives, then other people may also see how helpful it is and follow our example.

by

## THE TEN POWERS OF GOODNESS (PĀRAMITĀS)

1. Generosity (Dāna)  
Giving or sharing what we have with others.
2. Virtue (Sīla)  
Doing good and not doing harm.
3. Unselfishness (Mekkhama)  
Giving up things which we don't need.
4. Enthusiasm/energy (Viriya)  
Putting effort into developing goodness.
5. Wisdom (Pañña)  
Understanding things and people, knowing for yourself the difference between good and bad.
6. Honesty (Sacca)  
Being truthful.
7. Determination (Adhitthāna)  
Being determined to do good no matter how difficult it is.
8. Patience (Khanti)  
Being patient with life.
9. Kindness (Metta)  
Being kind and helpful to all beings.
10. Even-mindedness (Upekkhā)  
Being quiet inside yourself, accepting whatever happens in life calmly.

Can you think of ways that you can use these guidelines in your life? For example if you had some sweets and you decided to share them with your friends, do you know which powers you would be using? If you find it difficult to understand the 'Five Promises' or the 'Ten powers of Goodness', then ask me or dad to explain them.

# THE TRUTHS TEX TAUGHT ME!

*by Brenda Popplewell*

I guess you have never heard of Tex - well, five years ago I hadn't either. So who - or what - is Tex?

This question has been heard rumbling around Amaravati and the other monasteries: 'Who is this Tex, who has been able to teach so much about the truths of life, and about care and consideration for others?'

Well, you might not believe this - because by now you might be expecting Tex to be a wise teacher (like Venerable Sumedho) but...

Can you guess?

Yes, he is our faithful family dog, and he is only 30cm tall!

Oh, Tex has many faults (as we all do) but there are so many things he has made me think about.

It isn't that he 'tells' me about these things in words, because even though we think he is rather special he cannot do that - but when I look at his life, it often helps me to understand the truth of the Buddha's teachings about being kind, friendly, obedient and reliable.



## TEX TELLS ABOUT BEING RELIABLE

Have you ever noticed how good it feels when you can rely on someone? And what worry it can cause if you are unsure of someone?

When Tex was only a pup, he began to bark (in the squeaky way that pups do) when anyone knocked at the door, or even came down our path. We were glad that he was going to be a good 'house dog' because it is very dark and quiet where we live - but I suppose if a burglar saw Tex he might laugh! (He is like 'Mighty Mouse'). Still, he has become a good

house dog and he can always be relied on to let us know what is happening.

Then, about two years ago, a strange thing happened, and we do not know how it started. One night, as the telephone began to ring, Tex began to howl; and he howled and he howled like a dog baying at the moon - and perhaps we laughed. But whatever we did, ever since then each time the telephone rings, off goes Tex howling and singing as if his life depended on it.

Our neighbour says she always knows when our 'phone rings - not because she can hear it, but because she can hear Tex howling!

And it's true. We can rely on him to howl, so that even if we are in the greenhouse or working upstairs when the telephone rings, although we cannot hear it, Tex can - and he lets us know about it...ALWAYS!

Tex has shown me what it means to be reliable - well at least, he has made me think about it; and I think that I would like to be reliable too.

So, I'm working on it - what about you?

---

*When someone is RELIABLE it means that you can depend on them; you can be sure that they will not let you down if they can help it; and that they will always try to keep their promises.*

*Do you know people like that?  
It is a nice feeling, isn't it, when you can RELY on someone.*

HOW RELIABLE ARE YOU?

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY  
WAYS YOU COULD BE  
MORE RELIABLE?





"THE BUDDHA WAVING TO HIS FRIEND"





# A LETTER *from Anagarika Tim*



Hello, my name is Anagarika Tim. If you have visited Amaravati, Devon or Chithurst monasteries recently you may have seen me dressed in white clothes with a shaved head and no eyebrows. We thought it might be nice if you knew more about who the Anagarikas are and what we do.

I am a twenty-six year old American. I was born in Boston and have one brother who is three years older than me. Neither of my parents are Buddhists, nor are they involved in any type of religion. In fact, I had never even heard about the Buddha and his teachings until I was nearly twenty! But my parents have always encouraged me to be a kind and good person.

As a child I had a strong belief in magic and mystery and all those things most grown-ups don't seem to understand. We had a marshy forest behind our house and in the middle of it was a great big rock. To get to it you had to balance yourself carefully and walk across a bridge made out of grass hummocks and a few old car tyres that squished in the mud. If you weren't careful you'd fall in and get all muddy. I used to love to go out to that rock. It was my secret place and I never wanted anyone to go with me. I would go out there every day and just sit on the rock. I would just sit and listen to the birds, look at the tall trees blowing in the wind, feel the cold hard rock and the soft moss below me, smell the damp and musty smells that a swamp has. That rock was a very special place. It was full of magic. I knew that it had a secret treasure buried beneath it. I knew that for certain - and also that probably no-one else would believe me, and would think me silly if I told them. And I also knew that that treasure was meant just to be there. That I was not supposed to go digging it up. Just knowing that it was there made it special and that was enough for me.

When I was about eight years old - that is about how old I am in this picture - when people asked me what I wanted to be when I was all grown up I would tell them that I wanted to be a wise old man. One with long flowing white hair and a great white beard and kind gentle eyes that sparkled and a soft smile. Almost everyone else wanted to be a fireman, or a doctor, or a professional athlete. For a while I found myself also wanting to be an athlete and I devoted myself entirely to playing football and basketball. It was so much fun to run around, to score a goal, to share the fun with my friends, to work well as a team together. But as I got older the fun and close friendships seemed to be taken out of it. All everyone seemed to care about was winning. Instead of co-operation there was competition. People would sometimes play mean and dirty tricks just to win. Most people seemed to accept that, but I always thought that it was the good feelings people had playing together and the fun that was important, not just winning the match.

Once when I was about ten years old our family went to the sea for our summer holiday. While there we heard that a great whale had died and had been washed ashore not far from where we were. So we went to have a look at it and there it was: a gigantic black hulk, bigger than our house, lying beached on the sand. There were lots of people there and some of them had climbed up on top of this magnificent animal's back and were walking around on it. Some people were kicking it to see how soft its blubber was. And some people were carving off pieces of its skin with their pen-knives in order to take home a souvenir. It was so sad to me that I cried. Not because the whale had died, we all have to die sometime, but I was so sad because people were treating it so disrespectfully and meanly. Why would people want to be so mean and cruel, I kept wondering.

I saw my first Buddhist monk when I was in Asia about six years ago. How peaceful, I thought, how beautiful. How kind and noble they are. What wise men. At that time I really didn't think that I wanted to become a monk, but I recognised the goodness of their lives. When I visited their monasteries it reminded me of the peace I had found while sitting on my secret rock in the swamp. How



different life in the monastery was from the competition and cruelty you sometimes see in the world!

So my decision to become an Anagarika has been a long time in the making. 'Anagarika' is the word in the ancient Pali language which means 'Homeless One'. Our main purpose is to study and train ourselves in order to become monks or nuns after two years. We shave our heads and our eyebrows like the monks and nuns, but we have fewer rules to follow than the monks and nuns have. Because of our fewer rules we are able to help look after the monks and nuns by doing things that they are not allowed to do - just as you help your brothers and sisters as best you can. We cook, use money to buy things and drive cars, in addition to many other small jobs. Looking after the monks and nuns allows us to develop the qualities of the Paramitas, or 'Perfections' like generosity, patience, truthfulness, kindness and acceptance. These are not things we do because we have to, or because someone tells us to, but because being kind and gentle and friendly makes us happy and is good for everyone around. Have you ever felt happy when you gave someone a present or did something nice for someone? I find that being kind and good is a lot of fun and makes me feel happy. Although it is not always easy, and we don't always succeed, we try to be and we want to be as good and wise as we can. Being happy is what the teachings of the Buddha can lead us to.

I feel very lucky to be able to be an Anagarika. It has given me a chance to study and learn about things not always taught at school, like being thoughtful and good; and how to try to be kind and wise no matter what happens in my life. Perhaps I will never become that wise old man with the long flowing white hair but I hope to become someone my family and friends can be proud of. Someone who is a blessing to this world and an inspiration for others.

I hope that I will be able to meet you sometime if you come to the monastery for a visit. Please come and say hello.

Yours sincerely,

Anagarika Tim

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF.. ANAGARIKĀ ANNE



4:00am  
"HARK, THE RISING BELL"



4:02am  
LEAP OUT OF BED WITH ALACRITY!  
\* Fast



4:20am  
After a quick wash-EXERCISES!



5:00am  
MORNING CHANTING AND MEDITATION



6:45am  
Time for PORRIDGE



7:45am  
HELPING TO CLEAN THE MONASTERY



8:30am  
VOLUNTEERING TO WASH THE DISHES...  
WONDER WHAT THEY'RE COOKING IN THERE!



10:30am  
THE MEAL-TIME OFFERING



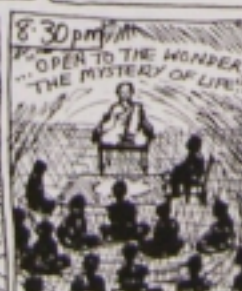
1:00pm  
A short rest, then ~ HELPING TO LOOK AFTER THE MONASTERY



5:30pm  
After 5 o'clock tea-FREE TIME



7:30pm  
EVENING CHANTING and MEDITATION ~ Time to sit quietly



8:30pm  
OPEN TO THE WONDER THE MYSTERY OF LIFE!

THE ABBOT GIVES A TALK about the Mystery of Life



9:40pm... AND I MUST TRY TO BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT... I WONDER WHAT HE MEANT TONIGHT BY ??

LAST REFLECTIONS



10:00pm  
MAY ALL BEINGS BE AT PEACE...

The end of a WELL-SPENT DAY



# POINTERS

*'The results of kamma cannot be known by thought, and so should not be speculated about. Thus thinking, one would come to distraction and distress.'*

*(Anguttara Nikaya, Vol 11)*

*'Therefore, Ananda, do not be the judge of people; do not make assumptions about others. A person is destroyed by holding judgements about others.'*

*(Anguttara Nikaya, Vol 5)*

## COMMENTARY

It is impossible to predict the precise results of kamma due to the conditional causal nature of kamma. We can only speak of our intentional actions inclining towards certain possibilities. The results of some actions are obvious since they need very few conditions to be fulfilled, for example, anger results in immediate emotional upset. When our intentions are complex or unclear we can never be sure of the results. This is why mental clarity and self awareness are extremely important and should be developed in meditational practice. In order to know ourselves, we must know our intentions clearly and unless we know ourselves clearly, we can never be liberated from self.

*'Even though one recites the scriptures only a little, but live in accordance with the Teaching - giving up greed, aversion and delusion, rightly knowing, with the mind truly freed, not clinging to this realm or another realm - one thus shares in the religious life.'*

*(Dhammapadam, verse 10)*

## COMMENTARY

The Forest Tradition emphasises meditation practice in preference to scholastic learning. It emphasises direct experience of the Buddha's teaching as a priority over learning about the teachings. And the formal meditation exercises are only part of that experience. Unless we have a grounded and comprehensive expression of the teachings in our everyday lives they will only remain peripheral or superficial. The religious life is the living of the teachings, that is, continuously striving to transcend greed, aversion and delusion each and every moment of our conscious life. It is in this way that we come to embody the teachings rather than merely preserve the body of the teachings.

Taken from *The Essential Teaching of Buddhism*  
published by Syder Books.  
Text by Tirathana Thakku, M. Brown & O'Brien



Anaravati is a Dharma Centre and monastic residence for about thirty monks and nuns practicing in the Theravada Forest Tradition. The Centre is open for informal visits during most of the year, and families with children are welcome.

Anaravati is set in 22 acres of grounds in rural Hertfordshire; a spacious complex of wooden buildings includes various meditation and meeting halls, a separate retreat centre, an extensive Dharma library and the Rainbow Room, a play-space for children.

The Centre holds special Family Days and Weekends, Childrens' Classes and annual Summer Family Camps, which offer programmes for children and parents (see Noticeboard, p7). There are also several traditional Buddhist festivals throughout the year when all the community's friends, old and new, are invited to come for the day.

The monastic community offers regular teaching in the form of weekly meditation classes and workshops, public talks and informal discussion. The retreat centre offers its own programme of long and short retreats.

Guests, including young people, can stay at Anaravati for a time, living closely with the monastic community. The accommodation - for up to fifty people - is fairly basic, with separate living spaces for men and women. There is at present no family accommodation (though hopefully this will change in the near future); Family Events can usually make use of the retreat centre. There is a campsite in the grounds which is available at certain times of year. All intending guests are asked to book in advance; please contact the Guest Monk or Nun, by post when possible.

There is no charge for the teaching or accommodation at Anaravati; the Centre operates entirely on voluntary donations.

## The Shrine room

By Abigail



*RAINBOWS is a Dharma magazine for families. It is published quarterly by Anaravati Publications, Anaravati Buddhist Centre, Gt Gaddesden, Newel Bempstead, HERTS HP1 3PZ. Rainbows is printed for free distribution; it is funded entirely by donations. If you enjoy reading RAINBOWS and would like to contribute towards the cost of producing and distributing it, please make your donation payable to The English Sangha Trust, Anaravati. If you are currently receiving RAINBOWS but do not really want it, please let us know! We also appreciate being told of any changes or corrections to the mailing list.*

*Other Anaravati publications include the quarterly FOREST SANGHA NEWSLETTER and LOOKING AWAY, a bulletin of forthcoming events at Anaravati Buddhist Centre.*