



Rainbows

N O T I C E B O A R D

SUMMER DHAMMA SCHOOL 1990:

Fully Booked (waiting list only)

The 'Summer Dhamma School' is now fully booked; further applications will be placed on a waiting list. We apologise in advance to any families who will be unable to attend because of the lack of space.

HELP STILL NEEDED

We are still in need of a few more helpers for the camp.

The KITCHEN staff would appreciate one or two general helpers, as well as a 'housekeeper'.

If you are interested, then please contact:

Sally Ash

Woodthorpe, Manor Crescent, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2AX.

If you would like to help with teaching or running an ACTIVITY OR WORKSHOP (either Dhamma-orientated or general arts, crafts, etc.), then please contact:

Medhina

113, Waytemore Rd., Bishops Stortford, Herts CM23 3RD.

It would also be especially good to have some help in running a CARPENTRY WORKSHOP, as this was a very popular activity with the children last year.

BUDDHIST SCHOOL PROJECT

An summary of developments can be found on page 27 of this issue.

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO
RAINBOWS

We are always grateful to receive articles, drawings, stories, poems, etc., that are based on Buddhist principles. It is especially cheering to receive contributions from children. If you or your children would like to contribute to *Rainbows*, please do not hesitate to sit down and put pen/pencil/crayon to paper!

Contributions should be sent to

Rainbows Editor
Amaravati Buddhist Centre
Great Gaddesden
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP1 3BZ

It is also helpful to receive suggestions, feedback and ideas that will help *Rainbows* more effectively benefit children and young people.



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The Story of the Buddha

The full moon of May has just passed. This is the day we call 'Wesak' or 'Buddha Day'. It is said that on this full moon the Buddha was born, was enlightened, and passed away (in different years, of course). So that you might get a better picture of what that means, here is a short story of the Buddha's life ...

ONCE UPON A TIME in a land called India, there lived a King and Queen who had a baby son. They called him Siddhattha. Soon after the birth, a wise man told the King that his son would either become a great Emperor or he would become a Buddha.

A Buddha is someone who is very wise. Buddhas don't study books to become wise. The wisdom of a Buddha comes from meditating – looking quietly and deeply inside ourselves and into the way that life is. Because they understand life completely, Buddhas do not get upset or hurt by anything. They are happy to live with things as they are, wanting nothing and fearing nothing.

Buddhas are very rare to find in the world so the wise man was very excited. He said that Siddhattha would become a Buddha if he were to see an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a holy man. Of course, the King wanted Siddhattha to become a great Emperor who would make the kingdom strong, so he tried to make Prince Siddhattha's life so happy that he would not want to leave the kingdom and would not see any signs of old age, sickness or death.

In many ways Siddhattha's father succeeded in his aim very well, and Siddhattha

grew up carefree and happy. He had plenty to eat and drink, and he had plenty of friends. As Prince Siddhattha grew older, it came time for him to get married. He chose a beautiful Princess called Yasodhara to be his bride. The King built three palaces for the couple, one palace for each of the three seasons of India: the cold season, the hot season and the rainy season. The King also filled the palaces with thousands of musicians and dancers to amuse the Prince and Princess with music, singing and



dancing. He tried his best to create heaven on earth for his son.

Prince Siddhattha lived a life of luxury with his Princess until he was 29 years old. But Siddhattha began to find that he was bored with this carefree life. He wondered if there was anything more to being alive. Then one day as he was on his way to the pleasure gardens, he saw an old man.

He had never seen an old man before, so he asked his driver Channa what he was. 'An old man,' said Channa. 'That's what happens to everybody if they live that long.' Hearing these words the Prince was shocked. He said to the charioteer: 'How can I enjoy my walk in the pleasure park when I am full of fear of getting old? Turn the chariot around and take me back to the palace.'

Some time passed and once again prince Siddhattha thought he would go out into the world outside the palace to see if there was anything else as strange as the old man.

This time, on his way to the countryside, he saw a man who was seriously ill. The man was rolling on the ground in great pain. When this was explained to the prince, he was really surprised and felt deeply sorry for the sick man. Siddhattha said in a low voice: 'So this is what sickness is, and it affects all people!' The prince and his driver arranged a comfortable bed in a nearby house for this poor sick man and then they went home.

Siddhattha was now even more deeply troubled. 'I want to go out again,' he told Channa. 'I have to see the world outside the palace as it really is.' So they went out in the gleaming chariot for the third time. This time, quite a distance away from the pleasure palace, they came upon a funeral.

'What is this?' asked Siddhattha in amazement. 'What on earth is happening here? Why are those people crying? Who is that man lying asleep among them?'

'He is not asleep, Lord,' said Channa, 'he is what we call "dead", so his family are weeping.'

The Prince was deeply moved. 'Does this happen to all of us?'

'O Prince, everyone is born and everyone dies. Some even die when they are still



quite young because they are sick,' said Channa.

Siddhartha could not enjoy the life of pleasures at the palace any more and he had very restless nights and very unhappy dreams. His dreams were full of people crying out in pain and sorrow.

On a fourth outing, in the early morning as the sun rose over the top of the nearby hills, Prince Siddhartha saw a very calm-looking monk walking down the road.

'Who is this wonderful man? He seems so peaceful, Channa.'

'He is a wandering monk,' said Channa, 'a man that has given up normal life in the world because he has seen that it is so full of suffering. He makes his life as simple as possible, so that he never forgets that the most important thing in his life is to understand himself and others through meditation, and so to free his mind from sadness.'

Back in the palace, the Prince kept thinking of the serene smile of the wandering monk. He thought, 'I have lived for 29 years and yet I have no peace. The time has come for me to leave this life of pleasure and to become like that monk. I too have been born and will certainly suffer because of sickness, old age and death. I must find the Noble Path that can free people from this suffering.'

Thinking in this way Siddhartha decided to find the way to stop suffering. He made the final decision to leave the palace. While Channa was fetching his horse, Siddhartha took a last look at his sleeping wife and new-born son and hurried off.

He left all his wealth and loved ones behind, and cut off his hair to show that he had turned away from the world. He wore simple robes and he spent some time learning to meditate with two different teachers. But Siddhartha still felt that he did not understand how to escape from suffering. For this reason he decided to search for the way out of suffering by means of his own wisdom and effort.

Having stopped in a forest near a river, he decided to be an ascetic. This is someone who eats and drinks very little in order to control their mind. Because the mind gets excited by pleasant things, ascetics give up anything pleasant. They also do painful things to learn not to mind pain. In that place there were also five other people doing the same thing. Seeing how dedicated Siddhartha's efforts were, they let him be their teacher.

For some years the Siddhartha tried to make his mind peaceful by giving up everything that was pleasant. He began by eating less and less until eventually he was eating almost nothing at all; he became so thin that his bones were clearly visible through his skin. He went without sleep for long periods thinking that would reduce laziness, and he dressed in rag-robes. He was hungry and thirsty and often in great pain. He was scorched in summer and very cold in winter. He often meditated among the corpses in a cremation ground.

His body got very weak but he didn't give up. One day however, he fainted, and he would have died, but someone fed him some goat's milk and he felt better. He thought: 'Why am I better now?' and he realised that he would have to eat enough food to keep his body strong if he wanted to keep going.

Soon after this, as he was sitting in meditation under a Bodhi tree, he heard a group of girls. One of the girls was playing a lute (an Indian guitar) and he thought: 'If the strings are too loose a lute won't play, but if you tighten the strings too much they break. When the strings are not too loose and not too tight the lute sounds so nice!'

Siddhartha liked the girl's song so much that he understood that he had been trying

too hard in his search for the truth. He remembered a time in his childhood when his father had been ploughing and he had been sitting quietly under a rose-apple tree. He had felt a great sense of peace just sitting there. Remembering this experience, Siddhattha was suddenly aware that in order to understand things your mind has to feel calm and peaceful. Then you can start to really look at life.

The next morning, a girl named Sujata, who lived in a nearby village, cooked a pot of delicious milk rice and brought it over to where Siddhattha was meditating. She offered him the food and he accepted it because he needed strength to continue his meditation. But when his companions noticed him relaxing a little they left him, because they thought that he had given up.

After this, Siddhattha sat quietly under the Bodhi tree and decided to stay there until he had understood life completely. He sat for one whole day and one whole night, and during that time he saw many things in his mind's eye! He understood that everybody is unhappy and suffers sometimes, and that this is because of not getting what they want or

being with people they don't like. In his meditation he understood that everything must change; that everybody who is born must die, including ourselves; that all things arise and pass away. So, actually, it is impossible to have what you want for long – it will change. Also, unpleasant things will pass away, so one need not worry about them.

Knowing all this he became 'the Buddha'. Seeing these things, he understood that if you want to stop suffering, you don't have to give up everything; you just give up wanting and not wanting. Even when you get sick or have pain – it is only not wanting it that makes you suffer. This is called 'Enlightenment', and it made him full of great peace and love. He sat under the Bodhi tree in this state for seven days.

After his enlightenment the Buddha went around India teaching many, many people – in fact anyone who asked for his guidance. He showed people how to be monks and nuns. These were people who wanted to spend their lives following his teaching by living like he did. Although that was about two and a half thousand years ago, there are still many monks, nuns and other people who follow his teaching.





Many people, animals and other beings loved the Buddha and they felt sad when it came time for him to die. But his wisest monks and nuns were not sad, as they knew that if they followed his teachings, they would always be close to the heart of the Buddha, whether they lived then or they lived now.

Actually, we do not say that the Buddha died, but rather that he 'entered Parinibbana'. This last word means complete peace and complete freedom from the suffering which is caused by having a body. Before he entered Parinibbana, he said that everyone should try their best to understand the truth of life so that we also may be free from all unhappiness.

If we use our lifetime to become wise and to understand some of these truths, we can become like the Buddha and have great peace and love and so we will be able to help not only ourselves but all beings.



The Leopard and the Fox



One day, a leopard was admiring himself, talking of his fine-coloured skin, and of the number and beauty of his dark spots. He had become proud, and treated other beasts as if they were not as good as he was.

Among them was a fox, who walked up to him and said: 'Being painted on the outside is certainly attractive, but it is beauty of the mind which is the true beauty.'



You see, the fox knew that a wise and clear mind is worth far more than the appearance of beauty on the outside.

A letter from a friend in Sri Lanka ...

Saturday 14th of April 1990
New Year Festival

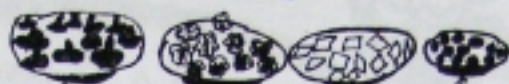
Sinhalese and Hindus celebrate the New Year Festival every year. It falls in April. After the harvesting season farmers have new rice. They prepare sweetmeats and people go to the market and they buy new clothes for a new year. Also they go to see their relations. On New Year's Day mothers prepare milk rice. They eat *kuang*, *kokis* and other sweetmeats. In *Nonagathatua* they go to the temple and worship.

Children play many games. Their games are Punch and Judy and other things. People spend this day very happily. We are playing very happily and help our mothers. This is our New Year Day.

K T Dhanusha (age 12) Ambalangoda, Sri Lanka

Here are pictures of some Sri Lankan sweets:

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කුංගු

Kuang Oil Cakes

කොකි

Kokis

අලු පි

Alu Piri

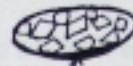
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Kavili



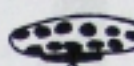
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Alu Kavili



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Alu Mi



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Alu Piri

Here is the recipe for one of the favourite New Year sweets

SESAME BALLS

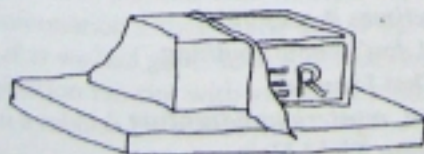
What you need:


- 250 g sesame seeds
- 250 g fine brown sugar
- 2-3 tblsp melted butter
- pinch of salt
- oil paper



How to do it:

- 1 Powder the sesame seeds. You could use a pestle and mortar for this.
- 2 Put the sugar into a bowl. Add salt and sesame seeds, and mix well.
- 3 Add the melted butter and form into balls with your hands.
- 4 Wrap in oil paper and serve.





Right Now

If I look at the window
I think it is made of straight lines.
But when I really look
The lines form crazy angles:
Nothing is straight in fact.

Looking through my window
I see trees.
My thoughts say 'they are huge trees';
But when I really look
I see green and gold blobs,
And swirling shapes on blue.
My mind says 'they have leaves'
But that is just something I remember.

Then I look at my body -
At my hand holding the cup.
My thought says 'that's me'.
But if I really look
The hand and the cup and the jumper
Are all the same picture:
I can't really tell what is me.

My mind makes a lot of noise
It likes to talk and chat,
But sometimes it goes quiet.
It is when I don't know anything
That I can see
This wonderful, mysterious adventure
Of being Right Now.

Eva is a little girl who is now five years old. She lives in Hollywood with Paddy and Linda, her parents, and she has three sisters: Neena, Tara and Kerry. Their Buddhist names are Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha, which were given to them by Ajahn Tiradhammo. One of Eva's favourite years was 1985 when she chose a little brown, cuddly monkey off a toy shelf. 1989 was her other – and this is why . . .



THE MONKEY'S TALE

by Thavara

Do you know who I'm thinking about?" Eva asked me with tears in her eyes. Immediately I felt emotion rising and I hesitated to reply, for I knew what was coming next.

'No', I lied, 'Who?'

'Monkey.'

We were walking to playgroup one morning several months after coming home from a second visit to Amaravati where the 'dreadful thing' had happened. You see, that day in 1985 when Eva chose a 9" high, dark brown and buff coloured cuddly monkey, with black beady eyes and a slightly mischievous expression, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. She simply called him 'Monkey' and they became inseparable. She spent every moment (waking and sleeping) with him. He shared all her special moments like birthdays and Christmases; he featured in all her games and was always tucked under her left arm (never carried around by an ear or a tail). She never mistreated him and wouldn't let anyone else either – he was always there when she needed a friend who would totally accept her as she was. And now Monkey was gone.

'I wonder what he is doing?' she went on. 'When can we get enough money to go on a plane and look for him?'

When she talked like this I think I suffered more than she did. I felt so helpless; here was my child asking me in her own way to relieve her grief and suffering, and I couldn't do anything.

We had gone to Amaravati in July '88; Eva was almost four and Monkey was two and a half years old and, as usual, he went everywhere with her, even to the local launderette that we visited the day before we left.

Later that day, when we were packing the car and caravan for our departure, she noticed he was missing. I sent her sisters, Kerry and Tara, to the Rainbow Room, where she had gone to play on coming back from the launderette – but no Monkey. . . . We phoned the launderette – no, they hadn't seen him . . . he was GONE.

We drew a poster with Monkey on it, and our name and address, and pinned it up in the Information Office at the end of the Sala at Amaravati, hoping someone might find him after we had gone. I felt like I was leaving one of my children behind; my imagination ran riot with visions of someone throwing Monkey in a bin, and him ending up on a rubbish tip somewhere.

Two weeks after we returned home we moved house, and things were in upheaval. I think Eva hoped that he would turn up.

I tried desperately to help her cope with her grief by telling her that someone – maybe some little girl like her – had found him and was taking good care of him, and just holding her while we both cried. My own grandmother had died when I was Eva's age and I didn't grieve for her the way Eva grieved for her Monkey.

The whole family felt her loss, and when her birthday came that November we toured the toy shops, looking for a replacement. She spotted a very expensive pony – very soft and very cuddly, with a nice face – and we thought that was it. But no.

I phoned Amaravati again, but he hadn't turned up. I phoned the launderette, and they must have thought I was mad – phoning from Belfast for a child's cuddly toy. Then in December she fell for a white monkey that she saw; he reminded her of Monkey and she cried so badly in the shop that I bought him there and then!

1989 saw a lessening of the grief, in that she still talked about him and cried for him, but less often. We searched out some old photos of them together so that she could have some happy memories of those times. . . .

When Ajahn Amaro came to lead our Easter retreat we quizzed him about Monkey – but nothing!

The year rolled on and talk of going to Amaravati in the summer rekindled Eva's hope – maybe she would find him this year.

Then one morning in May, Ajahn Amaro phoned to ask if we wanted to book into the Summer Camp and, at the end of the conversation, he asked me to describe Monkey. My heart beat fast as I gave Monkey's vital statistics over the phone: dark brown with worn patches on the sides, very scruffy, black beady eyes, almost disintegrated label, etc.

Ajahn Amaro then said the magic words: 'Well, I think I have Monkey right here, or at least one that fits that description – what do you want me to do?'

'Oh, send him over right away!' I said, wondering if I could get on a plane and fetch him myself – I was so sure it would be him. We agreed that when the parcel arrived I would check it before I gave it to her, just to make sure, and if it wasn't him I would send it back. I think it took three or four days to arrive and I watched for the postman every day – hoping that it was Monkey, that nothing would happen to him on this, the last bit of his journey home.

When the parcel arrived I locked myself in the bathroom to open it. I only needed to see a little bit of fur of one buff-coloured paw to know it was HIM. I was so excited and lots of other emotions all rolled in together. I wanted to give him to her straight away, but had already agreed with Paddy that that moment had to be captured on film. When he came home we got the camera, sat Eva on the settee and gave her the parcel. She had no idea what it was, even



though we told her it was from England.

She undid the paper and pulled Monkey out from the Buddhist flag he was wrapped in. She held him away from her in disbelief; then she turned him over and checked for the label. . . . Yes, there it was, all worn and threadbare – yes, it really was her beloved Monkey. Then a marvellous expression of joy spread over her face as she hugged him.

She kept on looking at him while we opened the rest of the parcel for her and read a 'letter' that Monkey had written:

Dear Eva,

It has taken me such a long time to find you since we got separated at Amaravati!

I have had many adventures and exciting times but I was a bit sad too. I missed you a lot. I hope you did not cry too much after I lost you – after all you knew I would find you again if I could.

It has been a long journey but now we are together again. I am glad to be home.

Lots of love,

MONKEY xxx

The days that followed were glorious. Monkey was treated like a baby – wheeled in a pram, tucked up in bed, sat on the breakfast table and held tightly in Eva's arms. How happy everyone in the family was to see that little face around the house again.

So once again Monkey travelled to Amaravati with us, but he wasn't allowed up on deck on the ferry. He wasn't allowed in the Rainbow Room (where he had been lost and eventually found). In fact, he hardly saw the sun at all – Eva wasn't taking any chances this time.

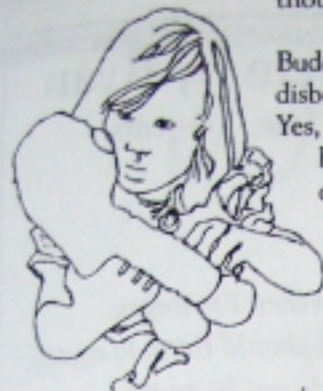
Eva's Buddhist name is Mudita, which means sympathetic joy. The 'death' of Monkey helped us all to share in Eva's grief, to develop loving-kindness for her in her suffering, but the most beautiful lesson from this story was how wonderful and transforming Sympathetic Joy is. We all felt Eva's happiness as acutely as if it had been our own.

Thank you, Monkey.

And we must say a special 'thank you' to Ajahn Amaro and Sister Thanissara, who found monkey and cared enough to realise his importance to Eva. This article is also written as an extra-special 'thank you' to all the Sangha at Amaravati.

Linda Boyle

Drawings by Anagarika Daryl



Poem by Ryan

(age, 10 years)

When I'm happy,
I should think,
it's just happiness,
don't hold on.
It's just a feeling
in your mind,
it will go,
eventually.
With happiness,
you cannot stop it
from going by.

When I'm sad,
I should think,
it's just sadness,
let it go.
It's just a feeling
in your mind,
it will go,
eventually.
With sadness,
you cannot stop it,
from coming.

When I'm angry,
I should think to myself,
do not be angry
any more,
it's just a feeling.
Even if you don't let go,
it will go,
eventually.
With anger,
you cannot stop it,
from coming.



BUDDHA



by

MONIKA

DANNY'S ADVENTURE

by Sister Thanissara

‘What happens to things when they die?’ and ‘Where do we come from?’ These were questions that were on Dan’s mind, especially since Grandma Nana died. He asked his Mum and Dad over and over again.

Sometimes he’d ask Mum when she was in the middle of cooking dinner. ‘Let’s not go into all that now,’ she’d say. ‘Otherwise I’ll burn the potatoes. We’ll talk about it some other time.’ Or he’d ask Dad, but he’d just say that life was a great mystery.

So Dan would go off down to his favourite spot at the back of the garden to ponder these things. He’d sit there under the apple blossom tree and stare into the murky waters of the fish pond. One day during the school lunch break, he was sitting in his usual spot staring into the garden pond when he felt himself falling asleep. He tried to keep his eye lids open but they felt like lead.

As he was sleeping, he had the feeling of slipping into the pond, though he couldn’t feel the water in the usual way. He slipped right under, going down and down as he felt himself being pulled many feet below the surface of the water. The thought crossed Dan’s



mind that it was very strange to be able to breathe the water quite easily, but as he looked down at himself he got quite a surprise. His body looked like a huge orange goldfish. Funnily enough, he wasn’t frightened – he just thought that he was in for some kind of adventure. And that certainly was the case!



Dan became used to swimming quickly. He delighted in darting between the underwater plants and manoeuvring around jagged rocks. ‘This is great fun,’ he thought. Just then he caught sight of a glittering light. ‘I wonder where that’s coming from,’ he thought. As he swam nearer, he noticed that the light was at the end of a long tunnel that seemed to go down miles into the depths of the earth. ‘Well, I think it’s worth seeing what’s at the end of this tunnel,’ he thought – and in a blink of an eye he was well on his way. After some time, the light became stronger and brighter and, although it was a little blinding, he couldn’t resist continuing his journey.

Danny really enjoyed the feeling of being so free as the cool water rippled past his

smooth golden body. As he swam through the tunnel, images of his friends and family flashed through his mind. Soon he reached the end of the tunnel and was surfacing into a most unusual place, not at all like the back garden. 'How strange,' thought Dan. 'If I get out onto the bank, I'll be able to have a good look round.' He wriggled onto the bank only to find out that his body had changed back into its usual form. 'Oh, good,' he thought, 'Mum and Dad wouldn't recognise me as a fish. I can't wait to tell them about this journey I've been on.' It was then that it struck him that actually he felt strangely removed from his friends and family, even his brother Tom who he got on so well with. It was almost as if he didn't have any ties to anyone. It made him feel a little funny, but not at all sad; in fact he felt quite grown up and free.

Dan looked to see where the light came from and was taken aback when he saw a huge sun, much larger and brighter than the sun he was used to. He could swear that he saw a smiling face in the middle of it, but he couldn't be sure. 'This is a very interesting place,' he thought, as his gaze took in strange shrubs, brightly coloured flowers and the most beautiful green trees. The earth was a rich reddy-brown, and amongst the rocks and stones there were little pebbles that looked like glittering jewels.

Dan stood in amazement enjoying the beauty of this strange and magical land. Before long he heard a crying sound, and following it to see where it came from, he stumbled across a most unusual creature that looked something like a deer. 'Oh please help me,' it whimpered. 'The nasty ogre has caught me in a snare and I have to get back to my babies, or they will die of starvation.'

'What can I do?' asked Dan, feeling terribly worried.

'There's only one way. The ogre can only capture you if you are overcome by fear and hatred. But a spell's been cast on him so that he can't touch anyone who remains calm and has a loving heart. You see, I'm only an animal, so I can't help being overcome by fear. But you're a human boy and, although it's very difficult, you can do it. If you hit him between the eyes with this magic stone you'll release him from a dreaded curse.'

The strange creature pointed to a glittering stone that lay on the ground. Dan was always one to take up a challenge, and as he'd practised meditation, he knew how to stay very still and very calm. So he released the animal, who swiftly fled away, and then he stood in its place. Although his heart was pounding, he watched his breath and stayed very still. 'I'm determined not to be overwhelmed by fear,' he said loudly.

Before long, Dan heard heavy footsteps crashing through the undergrowth, and coarse and heavy breathing. Fear rose up in his heart, but he calmed his mind and waited for the exact right time to strike the ogre. Suddenly, the most awful looking beast appeared before him: its eyes were bloodshot and its fanged mouth was drooling. 'Ah ha,' it bellowed, 'a human child! You'll be a good supper for me tonight.'

'You don't scare me,' said Dan very calmly, as the beast drew towards him. He held the stone tightly in



his hand and stayed right with the feeling of his breath.

The ogre reached out to grab him with its terrible claws. Calmly and swiftly, Dan looked at him right in the eyes and struck him on the forehead with the magic stone. The ogre's claws grabbed Dan's arms – and at that moment he nearly passed out with fear. But he tried to keep his mind steady. 'Even if I lose this battle, at least I've saved that beautiful creature.' As that loving thought passed through Danny's mind, the frightful beast in front of him turned into the most beautiful woman, dressed in a streaming white gown.

'Well done, young man,' she said. 'You've passed the first test, showing you have fearlessness and kindness. And you've helped to release me from the most terrible debt that I had to pay off by being in this fearsome body.'

'What do you mean?' asked Dan.

'Well, as for myself and the debt,' she replied, 'that's a long story which we won't go into now. But as for the test, I'll explain that later.'

At the invitation of the White Lady, Dan walked on with her, exploring the strange and beautiful land. She said that she knew he'd come here to gain some knowledge, but first he had to be tested to make sure he was worthy to receive this knowledge. She explained that the ogre's intention wasn't really to be nasty, but rather to test newcomers to the land. If they didn't show themselves to be worthy, he'd take them away to a far-off place and keep them there until they'd become stronger and kinder people.

The White Lady and Dan roamed around for hours, talking about this and that and admiring the beauty that surrounded them. As time went on Dan noticed that he was rather thirsty and a little peckish. Before long, they came across a well. 'Oh great,' thought Dan, and without giving a second thought, he rushed over to pull up some water.

'Stop!' came a stern voice from the well. 'You can only drink from me if you're over 12 years of age.'

'Oh bother,' thought Dan. 'I'm only 11 years old, but no one would know the difference except me.' He thought about lying, but decided against it. 'Well, actually I'm 11, but I'll soon be 12. Please let me drink some of your water.'

'Hmm,' said the voice. 'I have a question. If you had only one glass of water, what would you do: drink it yourself or give it to another who may be equally thirsty?'

Dan thought for a while. 'I'd share it,' he said. 'Then we would both benefit.'



'Well done,' said the voice, 'you have passed the second test, showing that you have honesty and wisdom. Please drink your fill.' The water was the most delicious that Dan had ever tasted. Not only was his thirst quenched, but his hunger also completely evaporated. 'What a strange place,' thought Dan. 'This is certainly a magical land.'

The White Lady sat on a nearby rock waiting for him to finish drinking. 'Come here, Danny,' she said, 'there's something I have to tell you. Sit down and listen.' She told him how to get to a special place where he would find the answers to some of his questions.

'There is a forest just beyond that hill,' she said pointing in the distance. 'The sun will set before too long, so you must hurry. You have to get through the forest before dark; otherwise you'll get lost. I'm afraid this is a journey you must do on your own.'

'Do I have to go?' gulped Dan. 'I'd really rather stay here with you. It's such a pretty place.'

'No, you must go on,' she said. 'There's a narrow track through the forest. Don't lose sight of it, but keep on it. Many voices and strange beings will try to pull you off the path, but don't trust any of them, even if they seem to be friendly. Keep to the track and you'll be protected. When you come to the other side, you'll see a hill where there are many caves. Find the cave that feels right for you and go inside. The rest will become clear when you are there. Go on now, and hurry,' she said, smiling at Dan as she pointed in the direction of the forest.

Danny looked, and then turned to ask her more questions – but the White Lady was nowhere in sight. Already some shadows were beginning to fall, so Dan hurried on as fast as he could.

When he arrived at the edge of the forest, there were three different paths. 'Oh dear,' thought Dan, 'she didn't tell me about this.'

Just then a friendly-looking squirrel scurried up. 'Hello Hello,' it squeaked, 'the path on the left, the path on the left, that's what you want, that's what you want'. The squirrel sat watching him intently.

As Dan caught its gaze he got a funny feeling, and at the same time he remembered the White Lady's words: 'Don't trust anyone.' So he stopped short, closed his eyes and asked himself: 'Which is the correct path?' 'Go left, go left,' he could hear the squirrel squeaking. 'Go right, go right,' another voice chimed in. Dan stood very still and listened to his own wisdom. A very clear feeling arose within him that he should take the middle path. He set off in haste, as night was already falling.

Dan hurried through the shadowy forest. He kept his eyes, as well as he could, on the track before him. He heard all sorts of strange noises. Different voices called out to him. Some were



friendly and some were frightening, some called for help and some tried to make him doubt that he was on the right path. But not once did Dan take his gaze from the track, even when strange creatures flitted right in front of him, trying to make him stumble.

The last rays of the sun were barely visible when he reached the end of the forest. 'Gosh, what a nightmare,' he thought, as beads of sweat dripped from his forehead. He wondered if there was yet another test, when he heard a voice coming from the forest.

'Well done,' it said. 'You have passed the third and last test, showing that you have great determination and courage.' Dan felt pleased with himself, though he also felt a little lonely and wondered if he'd ever see his old friends again.

Before he had time to think about it too much, he spotted a row of caves set in the hillside in front of him. Just as the White Lady predicted, he was able to find 'his' cave very easily. It felt just right. Inside there was even a ledge to sit on that fitted him perfectly.

When Dan sat down he realised how weary he felt ... though he also felt very happy and quite peaceful. As he sat there, the hours ticked past. His mind went into a deep and peaceful state, but he was not at all sleepy.

Many visions now came to him that helped him to understand some of his questions.

Where do we come from? Danny saw how all people and things are made up of the four elements – earth, fire, water and air – and that these elements are constantly changing. He saw this when he thought about how things grow in nature. He had a vision of an acorn that grows into a huge oak tree. The acorn has within it the blueprint for the whole tree, and when it is nourished by the four elements it grows accordingly. He saw that if you opened up the acorn – or any seed – to see what was at the heart of it, there would be nothing there, only space. Then he remembered that if you looked at it under a microscope, you'd see it in a different way entirely, as tiny atoms and particles. Dan realised that all things were changing forms of energy and not *really* solid at all.

When he saw all this, Dan had a surprising feeling. He began to sense what true love is, because in his heart he knew he was just like everything else, and everything was just like him. When he saw this, he felt closer to the people he knew than he had ever felt before.

At the same time, he noticed that the way everything changes is according to the laws of Nature. He saw that nothing could actually belong to him, not even his own body. If the things of this world 'belonged' to anything, they belonged to Nature. He felt a little dizzy when he saw this, but he also felt quite free.

He realised that if he held too tightly to people and things, he would always bring himself pain. However, if he learned how to let go, the problems, fears and worries of life would have a chance to fall away. His heart could become open, clear and unlimited ... with enough space for all things and all people to be included.

Then Dan remembered Grandma Nana, who had died. He saw that her death was only her old body reaching its natural end, and that death was not something to be frightened of. It was just like going through a change.

He realised that when you look at people and things with your ordinary eyes, they all seem very solid and separate from each other. But if you can see them as they really are, they are forms of energy changing. They come into being and then disappear again.

Dan saw that when death takes place, all the elements go back to their source. He

then saw how people go through many lifetimes, so that they could learn and grow through their experiences.

He remembered how he'd learnt about the Buddha, who no longer needed to be born because he'd learnt all that he needed to learn and had done all that he needed to do. The Buddha was truly free. 'The mind of the Buddha must be like space, with room for everything,' thought Dan. 'It must also be full of true love, because there would be no greediness, anger or silliness any more.'

As Dan thought about the Buddha, peace and happiness welled up in his heart. He decided that he would also like to have a mind that was free and infinite like the Buddha's. He thought it was probably the best thing to have in this whole wide world.

As Dan was thinking this over, he felt a hand on his shoulder shaking him. 'Wake up lazy-bones, you'll be late back to school. Your eyes are bigger than your tummy. If you hadn't eaten so much chocolate pudding, you wouldn't have fallen asleep like this. And look ... you've got your shoes and socks all wet. You've been so fast asleep that you haven't noticed that your feet have slipped into the goldfish pond.'

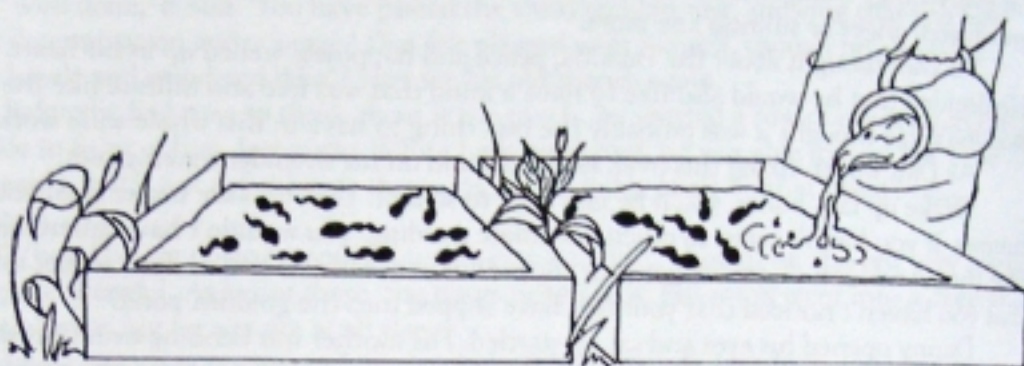
Danny opened his eyes and sat up startled. His mother was bending over him shaking his shoulders. And sure enough, his feet were sopping wet! He felt a little silly sitting there, slumped under the apple tree with his feet dangling in the fish pond.

As he dashed off to change his shoes and socks and to grab his school satchel, he remembered that the school football team was playing that afternoon. Being the goal keeper, he shouldn't be late.

Later on, sitting on the school coach on his way to the match, the memory of his dream adventures came back to him. Somehow he felt quite different inside, as if he knew something important now that he hadn't known before. Dan couldn't be sure if the adventure had really happened or not, but as he was trying to figure it out he caught a glimpse of the sun pouring through the coach window. He thought he could see a face in the sun that was smiling ... however, he couldn't be sure!



TADPOLES



IF WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND LIFE properly, we should understand that everything changes. All things are born (or begin), grow, and die (or end); this is change. If we want to live properly, we should practise being kind.

Nature shows us change and gives us the chance to be kind – to animals, plants, and other people.

Do you watch things grow? Have you seen the trees and plants grow this spring? Baby birds and young animals that you can see have been born. Be careful not to harm them, or harm the birds' nests.

In March, one of the monks noticed that frogs and toads had laid eggs in our pond at Amaravati. These eggs are very small, and they come by the hundreds, stuck in a kind of jelly, floating in the water. This jelly-and-eggs mixture is called spawn.

The monk took the spawn and put it in some baths that we don't use, which were just lying in the grass full of rain water.

After a few weeks, the eggs hatched – and the baths were full of tadpoles, squirming and wriggling about.

We have to put new water in every few days, because the tadpoles use up all the goodness in the old water. Normally, plants in the water help keep it fresh. So looking after these tadpoles took a lot of care.

Now the tadpoles are quite big – like peanuts with tails on them. Gradually their tails will disappear, and they will get bigger and fatter. In a few weeks they will be young frogs and toads, and leave the water to go hopping around. Then they will eat insects and eventually lay eggs themselves.

This is the way Nature works. When you help Nature and watch it closely, it teaches you many things that are helpful – because you are part of Nature too!

Boris the Cat



-WHERE IS BORIS GOING?
-EVER SINCE HE HEARD THAT
THE BUDDHA TAUGHT PEOPLE
TO BE KIND...

BORIS DECIDED TO STOP CHASING MICE AND
SERVE THEM TEA INSTEAD.



* WHERE'S THE CHEESE? *

* GIMMEE THE SUGAR! *

* DO WE ALWAYS HAVE TO HAVE
TEA? — I WANT COFFEE. *

IT'S HARD TO BE NICE TO MIKE,
THEY OFTEN COMPLAIN,
WHICH CAN BE A PAIN,
BUT I FIND THAT BEING KIND
BRINGS ME PEACE OF MIND
SO I'LL DO IT AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN!



The
End!

THE RETURN

by Sister Viveka

CARIN WAS A WEAVER. Always a bit of a 'loner', she lived in a cottage right on the edge of the village, under the wood. Much of her life was spent on her own. She did not have friends in the village; everyone was friendly but somehow she was more content to spend her time quietly, living her life very simply. People saw her and thought she moved almost as if she were with something else, some silent music or invisible thing which she related with – but which was hidden to them.

One day in winter, the wind was blowing off the ice-capped snow, and it caught the back of Carin's throat as she turned to walk back to her cottage. The world was bald with snow – except where it was pierced by the dark green of holly and evergreen trees – and very still. The silence was expectant; hushed in anticipation of another thudding fall of heavy, grey flakes.

She arrived home, and even the brook which ran through the end of the garden behind the house was quiet. Sluggish and freezing at the edges, it moved in time with the rest of the world.

On this day, as Carin took one last look at the white world her eye was drawn upward in puzzlement – and then delight. A flock of silver birds was flying, strong and seemingly with one movement. These birds passed through every winter, and then again in spring, returning to whatever land housed them. No-one knew what kind of birds they were – it didn't seem important – but the sight of them flying past filled people with a great joy which they couldn't find words or reason for.

Entranced, she gazed after the flock for some moments, although they were hard to distinguish from the grey, snow-filled sky. Looking down at last she saw something strange lying in the snow some yards away – a small, silvery shape, huddled together. Stepping towards it, Carin moved so gently that she hardly touched the snow. She was very curious.

There, lying in the whiteness, was a small silver bird, looking very unhappy. One wing was half spread out at an awkward angle and Carin realised that it must be damaged. As she came near it looked up at her with clear, sapphire-blue eyes – looked straight into her own eyes and held the gaze. For those moments there was just that gaze; nothing else . . . Eventually, when the time came, Carin moved forward and very carefully picked up the silver bird and carried it into her cottage. She bandaged its wing and fed it on Horlicks and sunflower seeds and other delicacies. Gradually it regained its strength.



From that day onwards her life had changed. From the moment she had looked into the bird's eyes, something had happened to her heart. It began to feel warm, and the warmth spread through her whole being and filled it with light. The world became a golden place for her, filled with wonders and beautiful things.

The flowers blooming around the cottage that spring were magnificent, and walking in the woods – she with the silver bird as her companion always – they moved through patterns of green-gold filigree. Her house shone, and her face shone, and often she would laugh – for no reason – and it would sound as if wind-chimes were ringing. For the first time in her life Carin knew what it was to love something.

Carin and the silver bird were inseparable.

While she wove, the bird would perch on the back of her chair. In the garden, in the house, in the village, walking, the silver bird was always there. It seemed as though they were talking to each other

constantly, although an audible sound was never uttered – there was no need.

Time passed, summer through to autumn and winter. For two years life continued in the same way. But the second winter things started to change.

It was a green winter's day and they had just reached the garden gate after roaming in the wood for some hours. Carin put her hand on the latch and they stopped. She felt the bird's attention move away, upward. Looking up she saw a flock of silver birds flying over-head. And she became aware of the bird, her bird, and she felt it long to follow the others.

When the birds had passed, they went into the cottage. Carin felt completely numb, as if all the energy had drained from her body. She sat still on her own for hours, until darkness enveloped the cottage. Slowly she became aware of great pain in her stomach and chest; a raw, dull, ache. It was so great she could not move, and somehow she knew she just had to sit and be with it. She thought about the silver bird and the happiness of the time they had spent together, and she thought about the way the bird's heart had leapt to follow the others. And her eyes filled with tears, and her heart with pain.

She spent four days sitting in this way, in a world which had turned to darkness. After four days she sighed, got up, and began to go about her life again. Things were much the same, except Carin was quieter: she didn't laugh so much and there was a very tender air of sadness about her.

Winter passed quickly and the spring began. Carin and the bird did all the things they usually did together. They were in the garden one lovely spring day; there was a clear blue sky, and primroses and cowslips were thronging on the banks. Carin saw the silver birds coming from a long way off: flying their way back home.

The bird – her bird – hopped onto her shoulder. Her eyes filled with tears, but this time her heart was peaceful, and a little sad. She held out her hands for the bird to rest on

a moment – then lifted them up as the bird flew, soaring to join the flock. She followed the silver birds with her gaze until they completely disappeared, leaving only the clear, blue sky.

After a while she went to the brook at the end of the garden, and she sat and watched the water flowing past. As she watched the strength and the speed of the water pushing its way forward, she saw how her eyes wanted to hold one patch of water and follow it. But each time it was impossible. It was almost as if the water was poking fun at her by changing its shape under her very eyes – constantly turning and twisting and disappearing into the distance where it was dappled with golden glints from the sun. Slowly she relaxed and enjoyed the swirling maze of the water and the burbling roar it made. And Carin began to see that the brook was so beautiful because it was so rapidly changing.

The roar of the water seemed to get louder and louder in her ears until it seemed that she was part of the water and the sound – no longer having a body. All the memories of her times with the silver bird seemed to flow through her and out into the distance. Her heart began to feel very light and free as she saw how life was rather like the river hurrying past and that trying to hold onto one bit of it was impossible. At that moment it was as if she no longer existed, and yet everything was completely there and perfect.

Carin realised that the love she had shared with the silver bird had taught her something very precious, and her life changed again from that time onward. She began to visit the village more often, and made friends with the villagers. It was especially the children, and the old men and women who befriended her. They loved her because she was gentle and always had time to listen to them, or to tell them stories. And after she left, they felt a great sense of peacefulness and space surrounding them and they often heard the silence roaring like the sound of a brook.



Drawings by
Anagarika Robin

Update on the Dhamma School Project

THERE HAVE NOW BEEN SEVERAL MEETINGS to discuss the actualisation of this timely project. Considerable interest has been generated amongst a wide range of people. These include parents with a desire for a Dhamma-based education for their children, and teachers dissatisfied with the current state system who would like to pioneer the integration of the principles of Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha into an educational framework – a framework which will cultivate the heart as well as the mind. Many of those interested, who have taken the trouble to attend the meetings at Amaravati (there were upwards of 20 there on 22 April), are well qualified in various educational fields. Many have also responded by post to the articles on the project in the January and April 1990 editions of the *Forest Sangha Newsletter*.

A variety of ideas and reflections have been articulated which touch on key issues, especially the need to give the school a strong spiritual dimension, while avoiding the pitfalls of religious dogmatism which so often leads to stultification and separatism. In this context, it was felt that a Buddhist framework which was too narrowly defined, either in cultural or ethnic terms, could be detrimental to the flowering of free enquiry and universal responsibility which lie at the heart of all genuine education. Thus, most of those involved in the discussions so far see the influence of Buddhism in a school setting growing out of a whole way of life, based on Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha, where those in educational and leadership roles exemplify the teachings, rather than merely expound them in a formal fashion. In this context, a special emphasis on *sila* (moral conduct based on the five precepts), both for teachers and pupils, was regarded as crucial. A further support for the school's spiritual dimension – indeed a cornerstone of the whole project – are the inherent qualities of Dhamma which grow out of the symbiotic relationship between lay and monastic communities. An important point here was the need for wisdom and direction to flow through a genuine sangha (community) of teachers, parents and monastics, thus avoiding some of the problems which arise when such undertakings are based on the vision of a single individual, however charismatic.

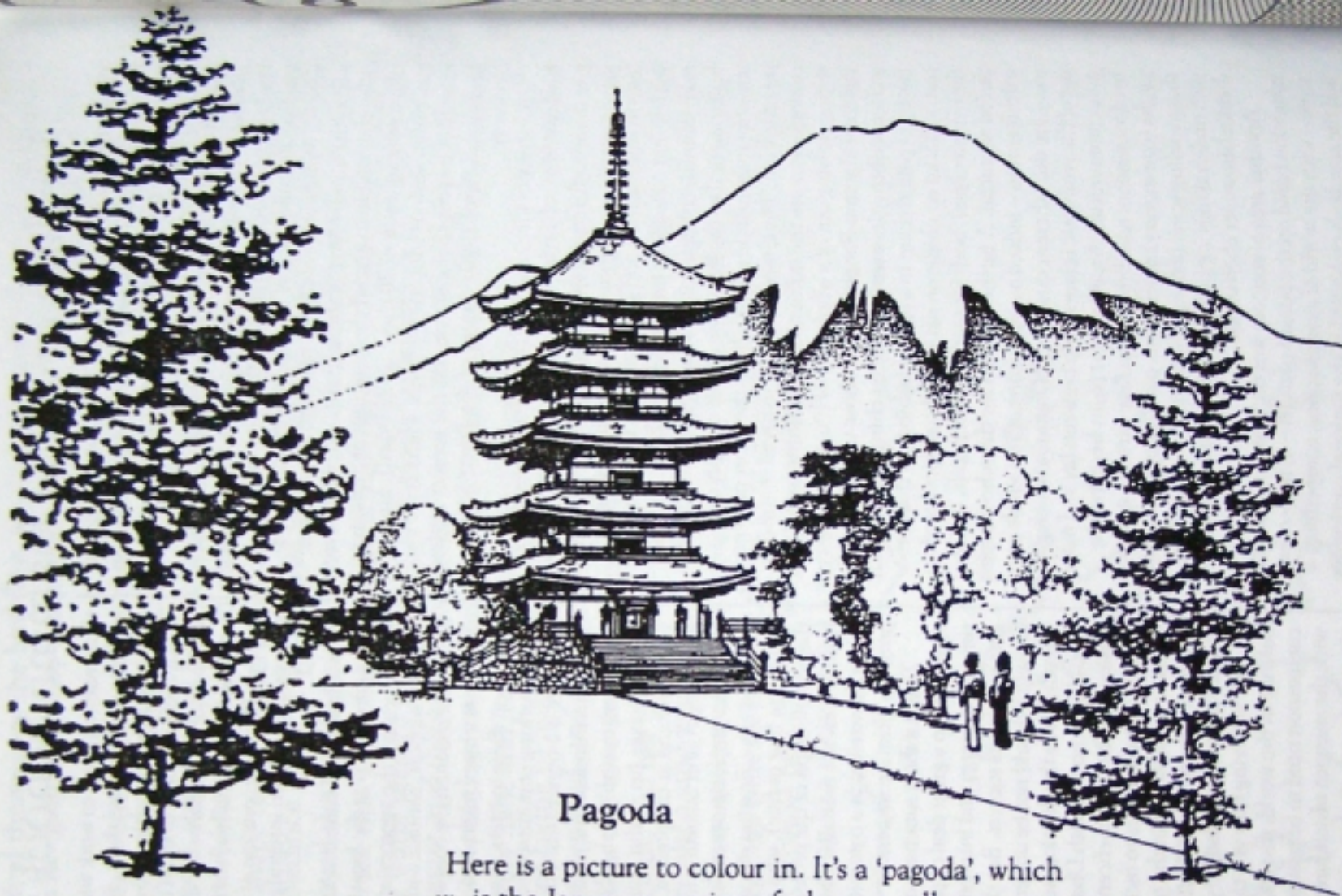
Another area of concern was the need to balance an education based on the pursuit of truth – in its deepest sense – with the world of examinations, competition and the standards embodied in the national curriculum. Many took the view that these two aspects need not necessarily be in conflict, and that any school which strives to educate the whole person should also ensure proper academic standards. The production of young people with 'separatist', 'elitist' or 'spiritual' notions, which cut them off from wider society, is not seen as an aim of the school. Instead, it was felt that young people should be encouraged to explore the physical, mental and emotional planes through the perspective of insight,

thus enabling them to work wisely and compassionately with the world around them, and to establish responsible human relationships. The flowering of such insight would come not only from an understanding of the teachings of the Buddha, but also from skilful conduct in everyday life, especially silent observation, dialogue and enquiry. The incorporation of silent or meditative periods would thus be an integral part of the daily life of the school.

More detailed concerns have been voiced dealing with such matters as the location of the school (whether rural or urban), the appropriate age group, the need for financial support, contact with the viharas, and whether the school should have boarders (thus accommodating those from a more international background). The way forward on these matters, however, will not be clear until a working committee has been established. At present, there is a need to distil the existing information and reflections into working guidelines, perhaps even a succinct 'constitution' for the school – but drawn up in pencil at this stage (as Ajahn Amaro has astutely observed). This is in hand at the present time, with an eye to approaching Ajahn Sumedho for his blessing and guidance before the project proceeds further. In this medium-term, the identification of a small group of people (not more than four or five), who are committed enough to the actualisation of the project, and who can work closely both with the monastic Sangha and within a sangha ethos themselves as a committee, will be essential to the project's ultimate success.

This is a short summary of what has actually amounted to a great deal of progress in a short space of time. The energy and interest the project has aroused augurs well for its success. But the gap between vision and actuality should not be underestimated. One of the vital ingredients to the development of the project is that it should be in accord with Dhamma. If this congruence is achieved, then the beneficent forces in the universe will provide many miracles to facilitate its growth (as indeed we have experienced in the ten short years of the Forest Sangha's sojourn in the West). This does not, however, absolve us from responsibility for our part in the process.

We are living now at a time of great change and turbulence in the world, when all the forces of wisdom and compassion need to be summoned forth to deal wisely with the energies which have been unleashed. It is at times such as these that concerns of self, grudges, complaints and animosities need to be transcended. Our own petty interests must be replaced by a vaster and more generous vision. One of our most valuable resources for a more enlightened world lies in the proper nurturing and education of our children. The actualisation of this vision of global responsibility, through skilful education and service, is one of the noblest responses we can make to the current world crisis.



Pagoda

Here is a picture to colour in. It's a 'pagoda', which is the Japanese version of what we call a stupa.

You can see the spire at the top, which is the same as the spires on stupas all over the world.

But this is not the only picture in *Rainbows* for colouring – just about any picture will do, especially the cover picture, and the pictures in *The Story of the Buddha* and *Boris the Cat*.

And don't forget . . . If you have any good pictures for *Rainbows*, or poems or stories, please send them to us. The address is on page 2.

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