



1993

A YEAR OF INTER-FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF AJAHN CHAH

Notice-Board

Young People's Retreat 20-22 October with Ajahn Attapemo

This retreat is designed for people between 13 and 18 years old who are interested in understanding how meditation helps in our everyday lives. There will be formal meditation instruction and group discussions. Everyone who comes is expected to keep the 8 precepts while at the monastery and be willing to speak about their experiences. Advanced booking is required and early confirmation advised. For further details, send s.a.e. to: 'Retreats', Amaravati Buddhist Monastery.

Dhamma School Project

The Dhamma School has achieved charitable status. We are now moving ahead with the plan to establish a school in the Brighton-Hove area. An Open Meeting on the theme of *The Dhamma School Project: Education from a Buddhist Perspective* is being held in order to introduce the project to local families. The meeting will be Thursday, 24 June at 8 PM at the Friends Centre, Ship Street, Brighton. All are welcome. For more information, contact: Graham and Alison Mayo, Tel: (0273) 6999 536.

Oxford-Harnham Pilgrimage - August 1992

Peter Carey and Stanley de Frietas would like to thank all those who contributed to their sponsored pilgrimage last August in Aid of the Dhamma School Project. They walked just over 350 miles and raised over £2000 for the project. For more information on this project, please contact: Peter Carey, Trinity College, Oxford OX1 3BH Tel: (0865) 279 900.

Ratanagiri:

Harnham Buddhist Monastery Activities for Families

Activities for families are organised for each month. For more information contact: Kate Jackson, Tel: (0434) 684 487 or Harnham Buddhist Monastery, Tel: (0661) 881 251

Women's Peace Pilgrimage: A Prayer For Peace - June-Sept 1993

A pilgrimage from Devon, England to Yugoslavia is being planned. If you would like more information, see page 23 or contact Morning Star or Christianne at Sharpham North, Ashprington Totnes, Devon TQ9 7UT. Tel: (0803) 732 549.



1993

A YEAR OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH THE RAINBOWS WORKSHOP
THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ANANDI CHEN

These are the people who participated in the Rainbows Workshop:

Keith, Lynn, Jessie, and Olivia Errey.
Medhina, Tissa and Nimala Fright. Katie.
Mike, Jane, Holly, Laruel and Rosa
Gilbert. Tony, Cathy, Sam, Claire and Joe
Halper. Olga and Nick Kenyon. Rita and
James De Podesta. Richard, Manuya,
Ryan and Sunita Ottridge. Beth. Vijita,
Anoja, Samanti and Ruvani Weyasekera.
Peter, Sue, John and James Worthington.
Jos Razell. Concha Gutierrez. Maja
Canning. Mark. Karl Maslin.
Ven. Sobhano, Ven. Sudhammo and
Sister Thanasanti

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AJAHN CHAH'S FUNERAL

On 16 January 1993 the body of Ajahn Chah was burned in a beautiful furnace specially built at the monastery where he had lived and taught. It was inside a great white circular building called a chedi or stupa which had a large arched doorway facing each of four directions. (The outline you see is that of the chedi.)

People came from all over the country and from abroad to climb the steps and go inside the stupa to see the ornate mother-of-pearl coffin in which Ajahn Chah's body had been kept for exactly a year since he died. (It had been specially treated so that it would keep that long and give everyone a chance to pay their respects to such a special person).

Nearly half a million people including the King of Thailand, the Sangharaj (the head of the Thai Sangha) and Luang Por Sumedho assembled by the stupa to chant blessings, listen to talks, and sit in quiet reflection for many hours that day and night. At midnight the furnace was lit and many climbed the steps to see this final moment of Ajahn Chah's physical existence. White smoke curled out of the top of the tower on the stupa and drifted into the night sky.

On the next page you can see a picture story of the life of Ajahn Chah which may give you some idea why so very many people wanted to say goodbye to him, and remember his teaching.



REPORT

by Katie, Nimala and Tissa

This issue of Rainbows is a bit special. It was created by a group of families who met together for a weekend to write, illustrate, and lay out their own edition under the editorial guidance of Sister Thanasanti.

One of the first things that made this weekend enjoyable was meeting old friends and making new ones. There were several projects to be completed. These included the front page, Bodhi Bubbles, Parents Page, a dedication to Ajahn Chah, puzzles and quizzes, children's stories, the colouring page, illustrations for stories and the back page – in other words, all the things you are about to read! In order to get all of these done we were divided into teams, so everyone had a chance to contribute and nobody got left out. The teams also enabled adults and children to cooperate and work together.

After Puja work started early on Saturday morning and a great deal of inspiration arose from working and compromising within the teams.

By the time we broke up for lunch many teams had decided on what their final piece/pieces would look like. After an enjoyable meal in the Sala (having taken the five precepts) the hard work continued.

The supper on Saturday was enjoyed by all – a lot of hard work was put into preparing it. All projects were finished on Sunday and the big clear-up was also done then. On Sunday there was a blessing ceremony led by Venerable Sobhano where both blessed string and water were generously distributed!!

The weekend was very successful; lots of pieces were produced by all to make a 'bumper issue' by the end of the two days. A lot was learnt over the weekend about a wide range of things – people learnt about computers, other faiths, photocopiers, meditating and chanting. All in all the weekend was enjoyable, successful and very satisfying. There was a very relaxed atmosphere and everyone worked really well.

THE LIFE OF VENERABLE AJAHN CHAH

17.8.18 TO 16.1.92

BAHN GOR 1918



9 YEARS LATER
IN THE LOCAL VILLAGE WAT



NAMO TASSA
BHAGAVATO....

AT 17 HE RETURNED TO HIS FAMILY



HE LIKED THE MONASTIC LIFE AND
AT 20 YEARS OLD HE BECAME A
BHIKKHU



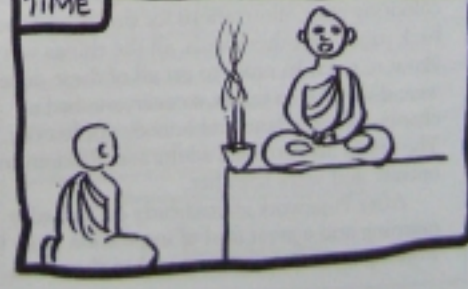
1944 AJAHN CHAH'S FATHER DIED
AND THIS GAVE HIM NEW
INSPIRATIONS



TO DISCOVER THE REAL ESSENCE OF
THE DHAMMA, HE WENT ON
MENDICANT PILGRIMAGE.



VENERABLE AJAHN MUN BURIDATTO
TAUGHT AJAHN CHAH FOR A SHORT
TIME



IT WAS ALL CLEAR!

AJAHN CHAH RETURNED HOME AND SET UP A MONASTERY IN PA PONG FOREST



1966 - AJAHN SUMEDHO WENT TO WAT PA PONG TO LEARN AJAHN CHAH'S TEACHINGS



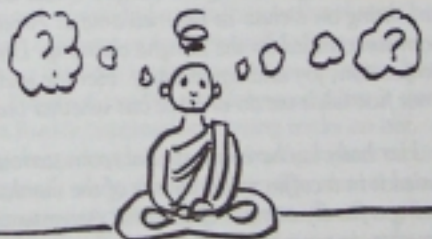
1976 AJAHN CHAH AND SUMEDHO WENT TO ENGLAND AND SET UP A MONASTERY.



TIME PASSED AND AJAHN CHAH'S TEACHINGS BECAME KNOWN WORLD WIDE



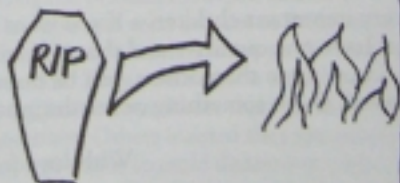
1980 AJAHN CHAH BECAME VERY ILL. HE WAS DIZZY AND HAD MEMORY LAPSSES.



1981 HE HAD AN UNSUCCESSFUL OPERATION AND BECAME PARALYSED AND WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK



AFTER TEN YEARS OF DEVOTED CARE FROM THE DISCIPLES, AJAHN CHAH DIED ON THE 16th OF JANUARY 1992. HE WAS 74.



THE END

...OR THE BEGINNING



Fallen Petals from a Lotus Blossom

This winter in keeping with the seasons, Sister Uppala-muni died. Many of you will have known her through reading the things she had written for Rainbows, a few having seen her, a very old nun sitting on a chair at the mealtime at Amaravati. She died as she had said she wanted to. In her room surrounded by the Sangha chanting. Dying as we finished a chant on spreading loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity. Her life and death reminding us that what matters for our own lives is not just what we do or have but whether our hearts are smiling.

Her body lay here in a special room surrounded by candles and flowers for a week. Then we buried it in a coffin made by one of the monks. The grave is out by the small stupa (the one built during a family camp). If you visit Amaravati, you may like to go there, stop for a while and hold the thoughts in your hearts that she had wanted to share with you.

An offering for Rainbows –

One morning, while getting dressed there arose in my heart these words, 'Uppala always have gentleness of heart.' When there is gentleness of heart you are not at odds with yourself or anybody else.

Very important children – if you want to gain any real wisdom, peace or happiness at all you must have one quality – and that is humility. Without it you can learn nothing. Do not think you know more than others. Just be humble; willing to learn, without conceit or thinking you know all about something or anything at all. I had to learn that myself.

With love from,

Sister Uppala

The Princess with Rainbow Hair



by Venerable Sobhano,
with drawings by Jesse, John and Sam.

In this year of Inter-faith, we are celebrating the different religions of the World. This is a story that shows what happens when we think only our beliefs are right and everyone else is wrong.

When Princess Jennifer was born many years ago, in a land where dragons still roamed the wild places and princes won their crowns on the battlefield, the wise men of the kingdom came to make predictions about the future of the Royal child.

There were seers and druids with their amulets and magic crystals. Experts in the astrological arts came with their star charts and gypsy fortune tellers with magic herbs and potions. Some were doctors, some were spies from neighbouring kingdoms and some were venerated holy men who had been brought down from their mountain caves in order to lend significance to the occasion.

It was one of the young nurse maids, Ruth, who first noticed the strange multicoloured glow around the baby Jennifer's head. At first she thought it was a trick of the light as she gently bathed the new born babe. Then as she looked again at the princess resting quietly in her mother's arms, she was sure, absolutely certain, that it was no trick of the light. Every hair seemed to glow with the colours of the rainbow; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet; all shimmering as one light from each hair. Ruth kept on blinking and rubbing her eyes, and looking to see if she was dreaming. She ran to the water pail and rubbed her face with icy cold water to try to

startle herself awake, and looked again, so wonderful was the sight.

Ruth did know one thing though, that if she told anyone of her discovery she might be dismissed for making such an impudent suggestion. So she remained silent, and carefully continued with her work, enjoying every now and again a quick glance at the princess's mysterious rainbow hair.

Now you may be wondering whether it was just Ruth's imagination playing tricks on her, which can happen to any of us from time to time. After all, when she first noticed it, the room was thronging with a strange assortment of people. Sages were chanting, druids were intoning sacred verses, and gypsies casting spells and muttering incantations over the gurgling baby. Well you know what, nobody else seemed to notice . . . nobody that is, except for the old hermit, Father Browbeaten, who sat quite still, with his kindly eyes watching the princess's rainbow hair.

The sages and seers present at Princess Jennifer's birth made extraordinary predictions about the princess. They said that she would be a mighty warrior Queen, even fiercer than her father, King Andoverfoot. Others insisted they saw untold riches, still others foretold disasters to come. Some said that she would gain great magical powers, some that she would bring peace to the land. However, the seven Royal doctors were of another

mind. They were all in agreement that the predictions were all superstitious mumbo jumbo. But strangely, there was one thing they could not agree on. The seven different reports that the doctors gave to the King all described the colour of the princess's hair in a different way; one saw red, the other green, one saw indigo and another pure violet, one saw yellow and one saw blue and one even swore the right colour was a perfect orange. And of course each seemed absolutely certain that their version was the right one!

Years passed like the falling of autumn leaves. Princess Jennifer grew up to be a carefree and happy little girl. Although she was treated in every way like a princess should be, what she loved most was to go off, when she was allowed, with her friend

Robert, the baker's son. They would go to the high mountains where they would play in the streams, climb up high trees in secret forests or watch the little rabbits playing. Princess Jennifer's favourite game was staring into pools in the mountain streams to see if she could catch sight of the trout silently circling underwater. Sometimes she would lean over a high rock and dangle her hair into the water below. Rays of blues and reds and greens danced in the clear water, while the trout gathered around, drinking in the glorious rainbow colours.

The time came for the princess to find a husband. This was to be an occasion of great importance as whomever was chosen to marry her would help to rule the vast kingdom of King Andoverfoot. When the fated day approached, seven princes from the seven neighbouring kingdoms came to the palace of King Andoverfoot. There they all were, swaggering back and forth in the palace grounds in all their finery, hoping that the princess would catch sight of them.

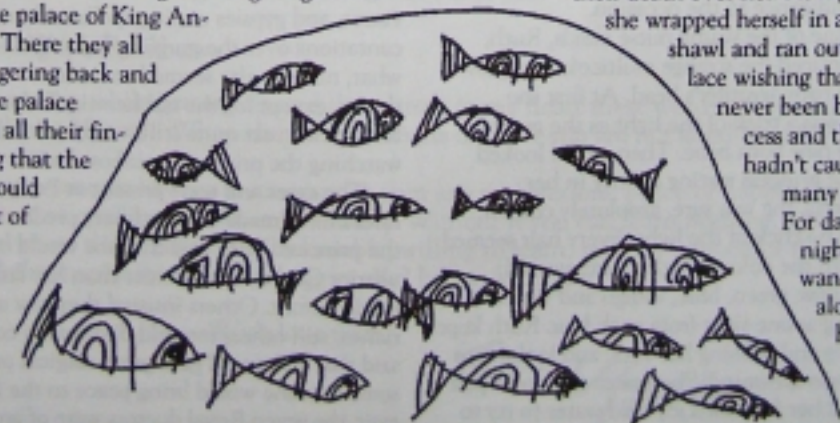
As was the custom of the day, it was arranged that the princess would show her favour by giving a lock of hair to her favourite suitor. Looking down from her high window onto the young men strutting back and forth like peacocks, she could not help laughing at the silliness of it all. And yet to please her father, she knew she must choose one amongst many. It was then that she thought of a way out. "Why not give a lock of hair to all of my princes, and let the one who can tell it's true colour be my husband!" So one by one, the princess selected a lock for each prince, tying each one with a silver thread and a message asking every prince the true colour of her hair.

Now for those with the eyes to see, each lock of hair glistened with the colours of the rainbow. But for each prince, so obsessed with the thought of winning the contest and gaining the power of the kingdom, it was a different matter altogether. One saw red, the other green. . . one saw indigo and another pure violet, one saw yellow and one saw blue and one even swore the right colour was a perfect orange. The louder they declared that they had chosen the right colour, the more sure they felt that they were right. And the louder they shouted, the more furious they became, until the entire courtyard was resounding with the sound of the warring princes and their followers.

King Andoverfoot, arose from his afternoon rest in the Royal chambers. He called the Royal Guard and marched to the source of the uproar.

"What," the King yelled above the din, "is the meaning of waking me from my Royal nap. I'll have you all thrown in the dungeons. I want an explanation, and it better be good!"

Meanwhile, the Princess was stricken at the sight of the princes, who seemed ready to fight to their death over her. As night fell, she wrapped herself in a woollen shawl and ran out of the palace wishing that she had never been born a princess and that she hadn't caused so many problems. For days and nights she wandered alone. Exhausted with



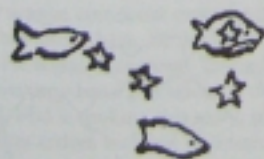
hunger, she soon was forced to beg for scraps of food from kind travellers. One day she came across what seemed like another beggar, standing by the side of the road. It was in fact Robert, her childhood friend. After hearing the princess's story, he told her that he was now a wandering monk living on alms food. He had spent all these years living in the mountains with the old sage Father Browbeaten, who had seen the princess's rainbow hair at her birth.

"Father Browbeaten told me that if you ever left your kingdom you would become a great sage. Now you have left the palace and you are wandering alone. If you want to find freedom from this world of greed and hatred, you can go and live with him in the mountains."

The princess knew then that she had found her calling, so there and then she decided she would leave with Robert, and live as a hermit with Father Browbeaten. They set off for the mountains, and as they climbed higher they came across the streams that she and Robert had played in as children. As Robert went ahead, Princess Jennifer paused by the rock where she used to dangle her hair in the water. She took out the sharp knife she had been carrying, and leant over the pool saying to herself,

"There, I leave behind the cause of all my troubles."

With one quick swipe she cut off her rainbow hair so that it tumbled into the pool in sparkling shimmers. The moment her hair struck the water it instantly turned into a shoal of swimming fishes, with bright new rainbow colours on their sides. But the Princess had already turned to follow Robert. So she didn't see the fish swimming back down the stream, where they live to this day, known as rainbow trout.



Back at the palace, King Andoverfoot sent his men to search high and low for his beloved daughter. The princes left feeling both disappointed at having lost the princess, and suspicious that one of the other princes had stolen her. The only thing left of her that they possessed was the lock of hair, so they made magnificent glass cases to enshrine them in.

Some built temples around the glass cases, while others gathered writers and painters to their court to tell of the wonder of their precious lock of hair. Thousands came to worship in front of the shrines in the seven kingdoms and the princes waited. Philosophers, ancient soothsayers and sages debated. The colours of the national flags were even changed to suit the chosen colour of the lock of the princess's hair. Of course no-one was allowed to disagree or present any other point of view. As time wore on the people of the kingdoms themselves became convinced that the colour of the lock of hair belonging to the prince of their kingdom was the only true one, no matter what their own

eyes told them. And if anyone tried to convince them otherwise, you could be sure there would be a squabble!

The princes grew old and grey and remained unmarried, somehow transfixed by the memory of the princess. Their citizens eventually found other things to worry about, so the princes became united in their common loss. They would meet to discuss their strange plight and yearned to finally put an end to the mystery that had haunted them all their lives. Finally, they decided to go in search of an answer themselves. They travelled far and wide through the seven kingdoms until at last they heard of a wise old woman who lived high up in the mountains. It was told that in the mountains where the old sage lived, rainbows were sure to appear always over the same place.

After many days and many nights they arrived at the foot of the cave. One of them shouted up to

the high cliff face where the old woman lived. "Come down, oh revered mother of the mountains. We seek your wisdom and knowledge."

The princes waited for a long time, when just as they were about to go, a shape appeared high up on the cliff face. It was the old woman they had come searching for. Slowly, clutching a gnarled staff in one hand, her stooped figure made its way from her cave towards the princes. They also were old and wizened, but none were quite as wrinkled and weather-worn as the old mother who settled herself down before them and eyed each of them with a piercing look.

"Well then," she snapped, "I haven't got all day, you know. What seems to be the matter then, or are you wanting to come and join me in my life of prayer?"

She obviously thought this was very funny as she roared with laughter so loudly that the dignified old men started to look embarrassed and coughed into their beards. After a long silence one of them plucked up enough courage to stammer . . .

"ahem . . . most reverend mother . . . we have come to ask you about the mystery of the princess's hair. All our lives we have been haunted by the memory of the princess who left us each with a lock of her hair to show her love for us. Ever since then, our lands have been torn by strife because of our vanity and pride. Each of us believed that we had chosen the right colour, and now we are tired of this quarrelling. Before we die we have one last wish which is to solve the mystery of the princess's hair."

"I have been waiting for you for many years my valiant princes."

She roared another great earth-trembling laugh, leaving the princes even more baffled.

"I wonder if you would still be so keen to have the princess for your bride?"

The princes all nodded their heads as one, looking suddenly hopeful.

"Well maybe you would, maybe you wouldn't."

At this she shook off the ragged shawl that covered her head. Bundles of hair fell around her and the princes staggered back as dazzling rays of rainbow light filled the sky. Suddenly they realised that this wise old woman was, in fact, the very same enchanted princess that they had fallen in love with.

"Now," the old princess said, "do you see what the right colour was?"



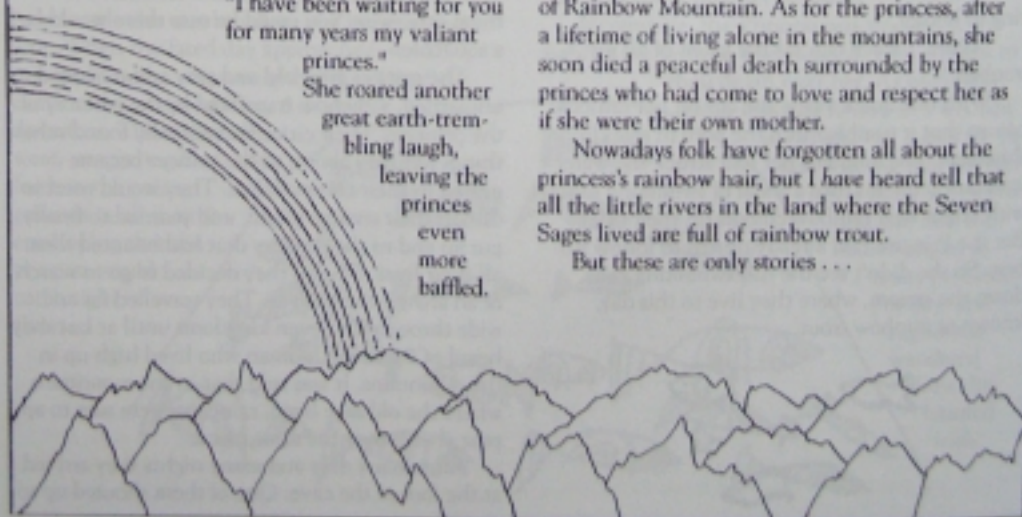
The princes were at once enraptured by the sight of her hair, and ashamed at their foolishness. All these years they had fought for what they had thought was the right colour, when the true colour of the princess's hair was beyond

description.

The princes knew that nobody in their kingdoms would be able to understand what they had seen. And they knew that neither their wealth nor their magnificent palaces could compare with the beauty of the sight they had witnessed. So they settled in little wooden cabins at the foothills of the mountains. There they grew cabbages, prayed and watched the stars at night. People came to know of them as the Seven Sages of Rainbow Mountain. As for the princess, after a lifetime of living alone in the mountains, she soon died a peaceful death surrounded by the princes who had come to love and respect her as if she were their own mother.

Nowadays folk have forgotten all about the princess's rainbow hair, but I have heard tell that all the little rivers in the land where the Seven Sages lived are full of rainbow trout.

But these are only stories . . .



Leaves from the Dhamma Camp

Dear Diary : Day 1 (the only one so far!)

Woke up at 6.45 a.m.!! Had a cold shower – brrr. Got on some nice clothes – nice warm polo-neck. Had breakfast – porridge and bread, chucked a tennis ball around. Went to puja at 8.30

Dhamma class with the funk monk - he was a butterfly in his previous life – he's a real cool dude. We talked about the barefoot boogie and other dead religious stuff. Really heavy.

Marquee-time for tea. work time for all, painting, picking, planting and digging. Lunch – food! Wonderful Sally painting, large and messy. Talking about polishing bald heads.

Dinner- food (thank you very much Sally)
Puja – rounders with Heather's (slightly different) rules. Dragging firewood, using the trolley, sitting on benches. Watching the hot flames and toasting marshmallows. Telling jokes and rolling over.



My Family Dhamma Camp Diary Tuesday 25th August

A small dining room has been designated as a quiet eating area for the first time on Family Camp. All day people have been excitedly exchanging news, renewing old acquaintances, and getting to know newcomers. I am looking forward to that gentle camaraderie that rises in quietude, with just a smile, and the warmth that grows in proximity of friends. Lunchtime - there is only one person in the quiet room and people are taking out chairs to sit elsewhere!

Wednesday 26th

One other family has joined the lone diner; it seems there are no places left in the large, noisy dining room so they will suffer the silence. Faces look through the door and walk away.

Thursday 27th

The main dining room is not full, yet the quiet room is occupied, mostly with solitary figures seeking a peaceful meal, and the odd mother and child.

Friday 28th

Little groups of people sit at the tables, sharing a meal with their companions. Someone whispers, "It's nice in here, isn't it?"

Saturday 29th

Not many seats left unoccupied in the little dining room now. We seem to have discovered another way to enjoy each other's company, alongside the boisterous, noisy chatter . . . in stillness.

Extracts from a Family Camp Diary

"So this is the Vassa Retreat! — pounding rain on the tent walls all night. Lay down for half an hour. Waiting. Listening. At 5 am the clock buzzed and with relief, I got up. Amaravati at that time of the morning belongs to you. Empty bathrooms. No-one walking. The sangha are at their meditations. Perfect . . .

My daughter is to come to Amaravati at the end of the morning. When it is nearly noon, I find myself wandering down to the Sala, suddenly unable to do anything but wait. I sit in the sunshine which is now bright and swallowing up the puddles.

A young woman comes out onto the tarmac with a friend. They hug for about a minute. The nuns come up and wait alongside them. So does a tall monk. A white taxi arrives. There is more hugging. The taxi driver watches. He seems to approve. The monk bends, and courteously hands a small gift to the woman. A stone? A leaf? Everyone bows and waves as the taxi drives off. The Sangha disperse. I walk to the end of the drive and see Carol, who is cooking this week, picking blackberries for lunch. We wave and laugh, but don't speak. Then my daughter arrives with her wonderful smile . . . My daughter. Bursting happiness . . ."

Looking for a rainbow...
if you have never been to
the summer camp, then
next year should be
the time for you to
discover your own
crock of gold...

BODHI BUBBLES

FROM THE FAMILY CAMP

1992

The Summer Camp
Loads of people
come to the Camp
every summer
every year
to learn about the Buddha
and about his past.
Monks and nuns tell you
about the Dhamma
and joke.
The puja is fun (sometimes).
Our walk was muddy and rainy.
But the campfire was cosy and warm.
Everyone drank comforting cocos
(that I made)
and ate toasted marshmallows.
The people were kind as well!
Until the rain came
and blew our tents down...



The Summer Camp

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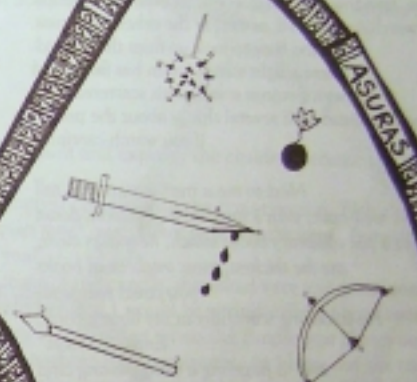
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HEAVEN

The Heavenly Realm

where clouds
effortlessly drift
through deep blue skies.
Softly streams trickle
through
luscious undergrowth
and beautiful angels
sing heavenly
lullabies
and all is
calm
serene
and
peaceful



ASURAS

HUNGRY GHOSTS

The Hungry Ghost Realm
I want! I need!
Give me more!
This is what the hungry ghosts cry.
They need love and are empty,
dissatisfied
Their desire is so great
they become greedy and miserable.
All day they are grasping
for objects, possessions.
Their unhappiness
is never ending.



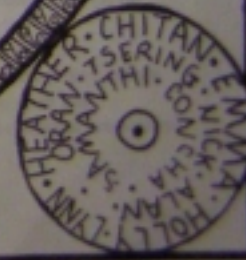
THE ANIMAL REALM

The animal realm
Strong prey on weak,
Yet weak prey on weaker,
Natural instinct brings
Death to the weaker.
Through life they are nervous,
alert and afraid,
till death comes
in a sudden,
from a stronger one's blade.
They feel no guilt,
no sadness, or sorrow,
but tear at their prey
and strike again
tomorrow.



HELL

This is
The Wheel
of Life...
The 1992 Family
Camp Theme Club
The Six Realms



Faces in the Crowd — A Story of the Six Realms

By Jessie Errey (aged 12)

Saturday morning, 10 am in the town.
People push past each other and bustle
in the crowded streets.

Shiny grey cars equipped with genuine grey-suited
businessmen zip past unconcernedly
and a drizzle of rain descends from the white sky.
I am standing in a bus queue with nine other people
and watching them all, as well as the others who pass,
too busy to look up from the ground
where a light summer rain has fallen and
the paving stones smoke with scattered dust.
You can already tell several things about the people
if you watch carefully.

Next to me a man is standing, tall
well-built, with a large nose. He looks down
on to a pile of library books which, he makes clear,
are the thickest, most intellectual books
you could ever find.
He is looking scornfully at my library book,
"Emily's Moon"
and is fingering a white visiting card
pinned to his tweedy jacket.
I can't read it from here, but it might say
'A. Sara, the best auctioneer in the Universe'.
And when an old lady cranes her neck to read it,
he crossly covers it with his hand.

Over on the other side
a bent old man holds out a cap for money
while sorting through a paper bag for scraps
and throwing away the less valuable ones.
He watches the people who pass, with their
Great Big Macdonalds Happy Meal take-aways,
his eyes watery and his throat dry.
He is like a ghost,
too old and too frail even for this weather,
and he stays so longously hungry, the cap empty.

A woman comes striding through the crowd,
her stylish summer frock, too old for the day,
blowing out behind her,
carrying bags with refined shop labels;
she has long red hair which she swooshes around
and those who pass her will smell roses,
jasmine and lavender. Her lips are turned upwards
in a joyful, vacant smile

while in her other hand she carries a bouquet of
chrysanthemums wrapped in soft tissue.
Any minute now she will ascend a stairway to heaven,
waving delicately at all those below.

A weary man sits on another bench, shushes
her toddler, he can have an ice-cream at home.
He says, "No minding about one NOW!" and she
replies sharply, "I'm not making money, you know!
I'm only human!"

Also waiting in my bus queue
is a sleepy-looking man
with a droopy white moustache,
a drop on the end of his nose, and an old dog
which looks very much like him.
They are both gnawing on something.
"Alright, Tod, don't eat too much now,
we still have dinner at home", he says
quietly to nobody but himself and the dog,
who goes and sniffs a puddle where someone
dropped a sausage roll.

A man and a woman are sitting nearby,
apart from each other;
the woman waits for nothing, sad and lonely,
and the man crumples a hankie and tears it up
and she waits, muttering "Hell, hell, hell".
The woman is cold but she has no coat and soon
a tear rolls down her face; she is unable to keep warm.
The man gets up and sits down again, clenches his
teeth, restless and nervous.

And I?
Well, I am still waiting in the queue.

The busy people have vanished now.
It is too wet to window-shop, so,
I can start watching the cars instead —
cars and buses and lorries
moving and stirred with speed and rain.
But there is one clear-cut bicycle shape.
As it goes, the spokes seem to overlap,
and in my mind's eye there are only six spokes,
each reflecting a different realm.
But then the bus comes,
And I get on . . .

How did your children start to meditate?

This is a question that I am often asked when people see my teenage daughters sitting engrossed in a dhamma class or motionless on the field, in a formal meditation posture.

It all started long ago when they were less than eight years old. At that time my own meditation practice was erratic and quite solitary, and the children had never seen anyone meditate nor visited the monastery.

One summer day they were all playing in the garden and I was inspired to use the moment to creep into my quiet corner for an early 'sit', convinced that they would be fully occupied with the new sandpit for at least half an hour. When I was nicely settled there was the sound of feet on the stairs. As the footsteps stopped behind me I wondered whether to draw to a close, and attend to their needs, but decided to continue and see what happened.

The footsteps retreated to the garden to reappear accompanied by two other pairs of feet within minutes.

'What is mummy doing?'

'I don't know.'

'Is she asleep?'

'No. Her eyes are open.'

Satisfied that I was well, and not about to disturb myself and explain, the children returned to their game.

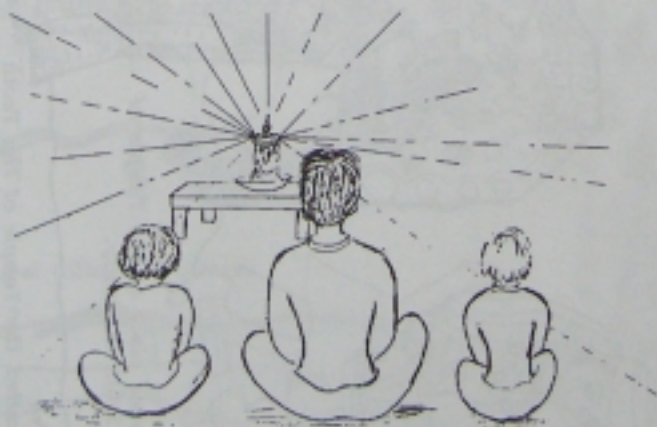
When I appeared in the kitchen the questions dropped casually into the conversation. 'What were you doing?' 'Why didn't you just sit on the settee for a quiet time?' and 'What were you thinking?' Eventually the eldest (seven) said, 'Next time can I do that with you?'

When we sat down the next day side by side in front of the candle, she asked very few questions. I invited her to get up as soon as she had enough, but told her that I would be sitting still for about twenty minutes irrespective of what she did. I would be happy to talk to her when the candle was blown out, but not before. That little girl never moved throughout the whole twenty minutes. As I blew out the candle, she picked up her cushion, put it away and went off to play. I stood amazed. No questions. No fidgeting. No worries? Who was showing who how to meditate?

It was some weeks later before the other two asked to join us, and after a few sessions the novelty wore off as a regular activity. They have returned to it again and again looking forward to opportunities at the monastery to meditate with others, and many times sitting alone.

We continued as we started, each person practising when they felt inclined, sometimes inspired by another member of the family. It seems to lack discipline but grows beautifully as each year passes. This year they have all requested a course of meditation teaching from the Sangha to put into context what they are doing and see what to do next.

Medhina



A COLOURING PAGE

This is a picture of the festival called the Asalha Procession.



It takes place at the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy.

It is called the Temple of the Tooth because it has one of the Buddha's teeth, a sacred relic, in a golden casket.

The festival lasts ten days and during the last nights the Perahera (procession) starts.

by Claire Halter

A DROP OF WATER

I am a drop of water. I was in a line of drops and was the first one that could come out of the tap. Eventually a woman called Jane came and turned the tap on. I came out of the tap very fast and it was like when I went on a boat because I felt sick.

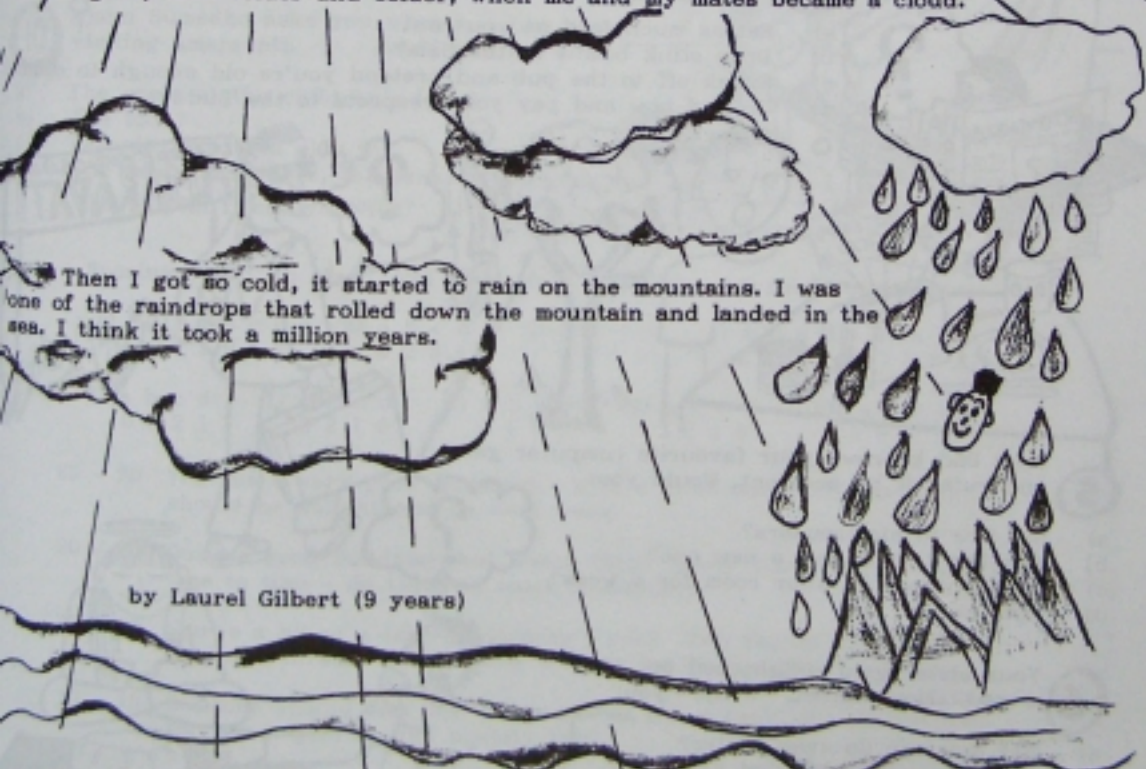
I fell into a bucket of water. I spat out something that was all bubbly and foamy. I realized I was in a bowl with fairy liquid which was making the bubbles.

When Jane finished, she was going to tip me down the sink. Then she had another idea. She tipped me on the grass. So I sank down into the grass and went along a kind of river underground and landed in the sea.

When I got to the sea, I stayed there for a bit. Then the sun started beaming down on me. I started rising up. I got higher and higher, then colder and colder, when me and my mates became a cloud.

Then I got so cold, it started to rain on the mountains. I was one of the raindrops that rolled down the mountain and landed in the sea. I think it took a million years.

by Laurel Gilbert (9 years)



THE GOOD BUDDHIST SURVEY ARE YOU A GOOD BUDDHIST?

Find out from this remarkable new self-test questionnaire. Simply choose either a), b), c), or d) as your answers.

THE GOOD BUDDHIST SURVEY

1 Your mother has a new baby. Will you:

- a) Help her as much as you can?
- b) Put sand in the baby's bottle?
- c) Make lots of noise while the baby's asleep?
- d) Moan a lot?

2 Your big brother's friend says Buddhism is a load of rubbish. Do you:

- a) Punch him on the nose?
- b) Let him have his say and then tell him he's stupid?
- c) Listen to him first and then explain what you know?
- d) Tell him to go and jump in a lake?

3 Your pet rabbit is stolen. Would you:

- a) Steal your next-door neighbour's rabbit?
- b) Get very upset and pull all your hair out?
- c) Run away from home?
- d) Hope that your rabbit is happy in his new home?

4 You come for a weekend at Amaravati. Would you:

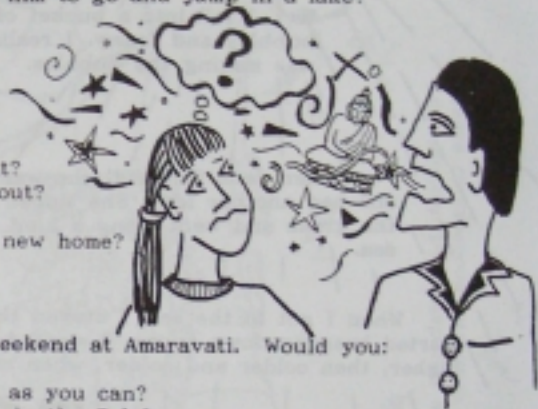
- a) Eat as much food as you can?
- b) Drop stink bombs in the Sala?
- c) Sneak off to the pub and pretend you're old enough to drink?
- d) Go and bow and pay your respects to the Buddha?

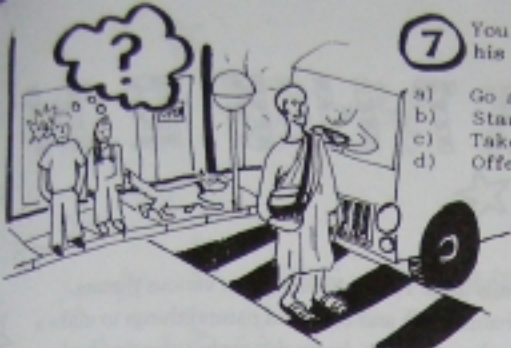
5 Your Dad borrows your favourite computer game and ruins it by accident. Would you:

- a) Set fire to his trousers?
- b) Ask him to buy you a new one?
- c) Lock yourself in your room for a week?
- d) Ruin one of his?

6 Your sister gets enlightened on a meditation retreat. Would you:

- a) Say you can do even better?
- b) Listen carefully to what she says?
- c) Steal her meditation cushion?
- d) Try to sell her story to a newspaper?

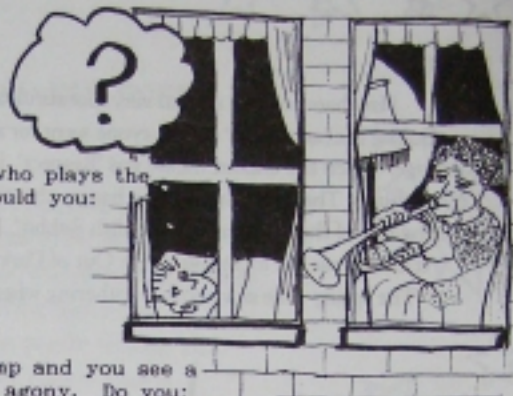




- 7 You see a Bhikkhu walking down the street with his alms-bowl. Would you:
- Go and get some food and give it to him?
 - Stand and watch?
 - Take a photograph, while singing "Hare Krishna"?
 - Offer him some money?

8 Your next door neighbour is an old lady who plays the trombone very loudly every evening. Would you:

- Set fire to her house?
- Have a rave party every night?
- Ask her to play more quietly?
- Move house?

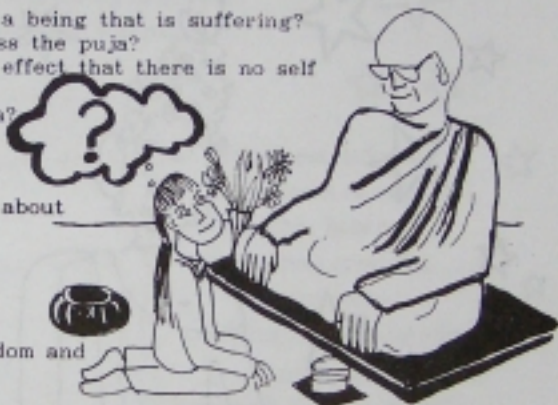


9 You are walking to Puja on the family camp and you see a fellow camper on the ground, writhing in agony. Do you:

- Stop to help out of compassion towards a being that is suffering?
- Stop to help because that way you'll miss the puja?
- Stop and deliver a stern lecture to the effect that there is no self which is feeling any pain?
- Pass by so that you're not late for puja?

10 Ajahn Sumedho asks you what you like about visiting Amaravati. Would you say:

- The goats at the children's farm?
- The food?
- The nice fields to play in?
- The calm atmosphere, the sense of freedom and the helpful friendly people?



Scoring: Add up your total score from this list, and read your report.

1) a b c d 2) a b c d 3) a b c d 4) a b c d 5) a b c d
 3 0 1 2 0 2 3 1 0 2 1 3 2 1 0 3 0 3 2 1

6) a b c d 7) a b c d 8) a b c d 9) a b c d 10) a b c d
 0 3 2 1 3 2 1 0 0 1 3 2 3 2 1 0 3 3 3 3

- 25 - 30 You are a very good Buddhist. With a little more practice, you should be enlightened by next week.
- 20 - 25 Quite a good Buddhist, but watch those funny moments you have from time to time - do twice as much meditation.
- 15 - 20 You're a bit of a tear-away, aren't you? You should start getting hold of yourself - do a three months' meditation retreat at once.
- 10 - 15 Someone should sort you out - you've got a problem. Ordination for you - give up the worldly life!
- 0 - 10 You obviously don't know right from wrong! Better luck in the next life!

Peace

Did you know that there are wars going on in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Burma? Where else in the world can you think of that people are killing each other? Do you understand why? What causes wars in the first place? How can we stop them? These next two articles are different views and responses to these basic questions. What are yours?

Can you recognise an angry neighbour?

For most of us our home is a place where we feel safe and where we relax after being busy at work, school or on a shopping trip. It is a place for resting, cooking, eating and playing. It is one of the most important places where people grow up and grow old. Our home is where we really want peace and happiness. And so long as there is kindness and understanding in the family, it can be a happy family.

Next door there usually is another house with another



family living in it. What kind of family lives next to you? Are they happy or unhappy? How could you find out? Just see if the children are happy or do they cry and scream, and are they afraid? Do their parents greet their neighbours with a smile on their face or are they angry, violent, and frightened? We can recognise happiness in others. When we meet a happy person, he or she makes us even more happy. So everybody's happiness grows bigger.

But what if there is an angry neighbour next door? Actually, there are many angry and fearful people living in the world. How do we understand when others are like that? How do we know what anger, fear and distrust are all about? The secret is to see if we ever get angry, afraid and suspicious ourselves? It's not that difficult to understand hatred and fear in others, just remember how it feels when one is beginning to get angry oneself. When someone else is angry, it is the same anger that is in us too. In fact, it is the same anger all over the world.

The same is true with fear. If we look inwardly when we are afraid, we can know a lot about what it is like to feel fear. It doesn't matter if it is ourselves or someone else who is afraid, we can see that it is just fear. All over the world, it doesn't matter where or why, fear is just fear.

What happens if we end up living next door to someone who is angry or fearful? Usually our peace is disturbed. We become angry or fearful or both. People who are filled with fear or anger find it difficult being kind. So in return, we become unkind and hard on them. In this way, everybody's anger, fear and distrust grows bigger. We could run away from nasty people, but most of us don't want to lose our precious homes. So instead of running away ourselves, we prefer to drive others away. And that is how hatred grows bigger and bigger. Then people begin to kill each other and want to get even. When a situation becomes so horrible, it is very difficult to remember anything else. It is difficult to remember how to be kind.

If we really want to keep our homes, families, neighbourhoods, entire cities, different countries, races, religions and in the end the whole world, a happy, kind and peaceful place, we must first start by looking in our own hearts. Ask your heart, 'Are you an angry and fearful heart? Are you a gentle, kind and understanding heart?' So that whenever we catch our heart covered in the mist of fear, anger or distrust, we will know how to protect our heart, our home, our family, our neighbours, our town, our country, our continent, and our planet.

This is where it all starts. It is easier to do this here and now. In our own hearts, can we recognise our angry neighbour?

Women's Peace Pilgrimage -A Prayer for Peace

I'm sure you all have heard that there is a war in Yugoslavia. People who once used to live together as friends and neighbours are now fighting with each other and are even killing each other. Even though it is the men who do most of the fighting, a lot of women and children suffer enormously during a war. Many don't have enough to eat any longer, they even die of hunger. Many had to leave their homes as they were afraid that they might get killed if they stayed. Some children have lost their parents, siblings, grandparents. How do you think it would be for you if you lost your family, friends, home or if you wouldn't have enough to eat any longer?

Unfortunately, those who are involved in the fighting and killing don't often listen to the voices of women and children. They even claim that they fight to protect women and children! But in a war, there is a lot of suffering - for those who fight, their families and the families of those who have been killed. People become more and more hurt, angry and hateful.

We feel very sad about what is happening in Yugoslavia and in other countries of this world that are at war. So we have decided to go on a peace pilgrimage. We hope to meet adults and children on our pilgrimage and hear what they think about peace and how they deal with conflict and forgive each other in their daily lives.

We also want to encourage women and children to speak up during times of conflict or even a war. Wars are often decided and fought by men. And even if defending one's family or country is used to justify war, the women and children who want to live in peace often have no formal rights to influence the men's decisions.

As we will carry no money on our pilgrimage we will have to depend on people who want to offer us shelter and food. This is an old pilgrimage tradition and teaches us to be grateful for whatever is given. Walking this way we express our trust in human beings, believing that we are all basically, loving, kind, caring beings .



May all beings be free of suffering
May all beings live in peace
love and blessings,

Morning Star

Our route will be: Buckfast Abbey - Exeter - Salisbury - Winchester - Brighton - Folkstone - Bologne - Metz - Strasbourg - Ulm - Augsburg - Salzburg - Villach - Lublyana - Zagreb - and maybe Sarajevo.

If you want to know more about the pilgrimage or want to offer us food and shelter on the way, you can contact us at Sharpham North, Ashprington Totnes, Devon TQ9 7UT. (0803) 732 549 ask for Christiane or Morning Star

The past is the past, the future is ours. We must do our best - and if we fail - it doesn't matter."
 (The Dalai Lama - Buddhist)

"We have enough religion to hate one another but not enough to love one another. The more religious we grow the more tolerant of diversity shall we become."
 (Hindu teaching)

All the times Jews try to remember God and make ordinary things, like food, special. To show respect to God Jewish men cover their heads, particularly when saying prayers. The little hat many wear is called a kipa.



"Of what use is love if you have no-one to love?"
 (The Talmud - Jewish)

"The universe is the visible expression of the Real, and the Real is the inner unseen reality of the universe."
 (Muslim)

Christians believe not only in 'loving their neighbour', but also in loving their enemies.

Muslims should not drink alcohol. They should not fight except for Islam. They must not gamble. Muslims should not be mean and must be kind to strangers.

"Make me a channel of your peace where there is hatred, let me bring your love. Where there is doubt, true faith in you."
 (Christian prayer)

INTERFAITH IS LIKE A TREE

It grows tall and strong, taking its nourishment from the earth. The roots spread in all directions, yet from them grows a solid trunk, upward, straight and tall. The leaves, millions upon millions, kiss the sky. And flutter in the changing wind. Each fed from the changing source. Beliving deep and strong, each growing on a different branch.

This world might be a better place to live if people were friendlier and didn't kill each other so much.



Why do some people say that their religion is better than other religions when they do not know what the other religions are about?

Why in some religions do men have more rights than women?

Why do many people believe in their own gods and not in the gods of other religions?

Why are there so many religions?

What is the point of interfaith?

Can you think of a way to bring different religions together?

What if you come from one country but don't speak the language of that country?

What if you come from one country but don't speak the language of that country?