

RAINBOWS



blessings

2006.





RAINBOWS 2006 was created over the weekend 28th April to 1st May 2006 at Amaravati Monastery by a group of monastics and families. We were:

Ajahn Kusalo, Sister Cittapala, Sister Brahmavara, Samanera Amaranatho, Angela, Anna, Aline, Alzena, Amy, Ben, Bethan, Bill, Charlie, Dan, David, Emily, Francis H, Frankie, Fabien, Genevieve, Ges, Giselle, Gus, Hannah, Holly, Iona, Isobel, India, Jack, Jane, Jasmyn, Jeff, Josh, Joy, Justine, Karen, Katherine, Lily B, Lily F, Lisa, Madeleine, Mashya, Mike, Millie, Miriam, Oliver, Olivia, Pamela, Ray, Raphael, Rosa, Saffron, Sam, Sarah H, Sarah M, Simone, Sunny, Tim, Tom, Tom N, Will, Yvette.

I bless my dog

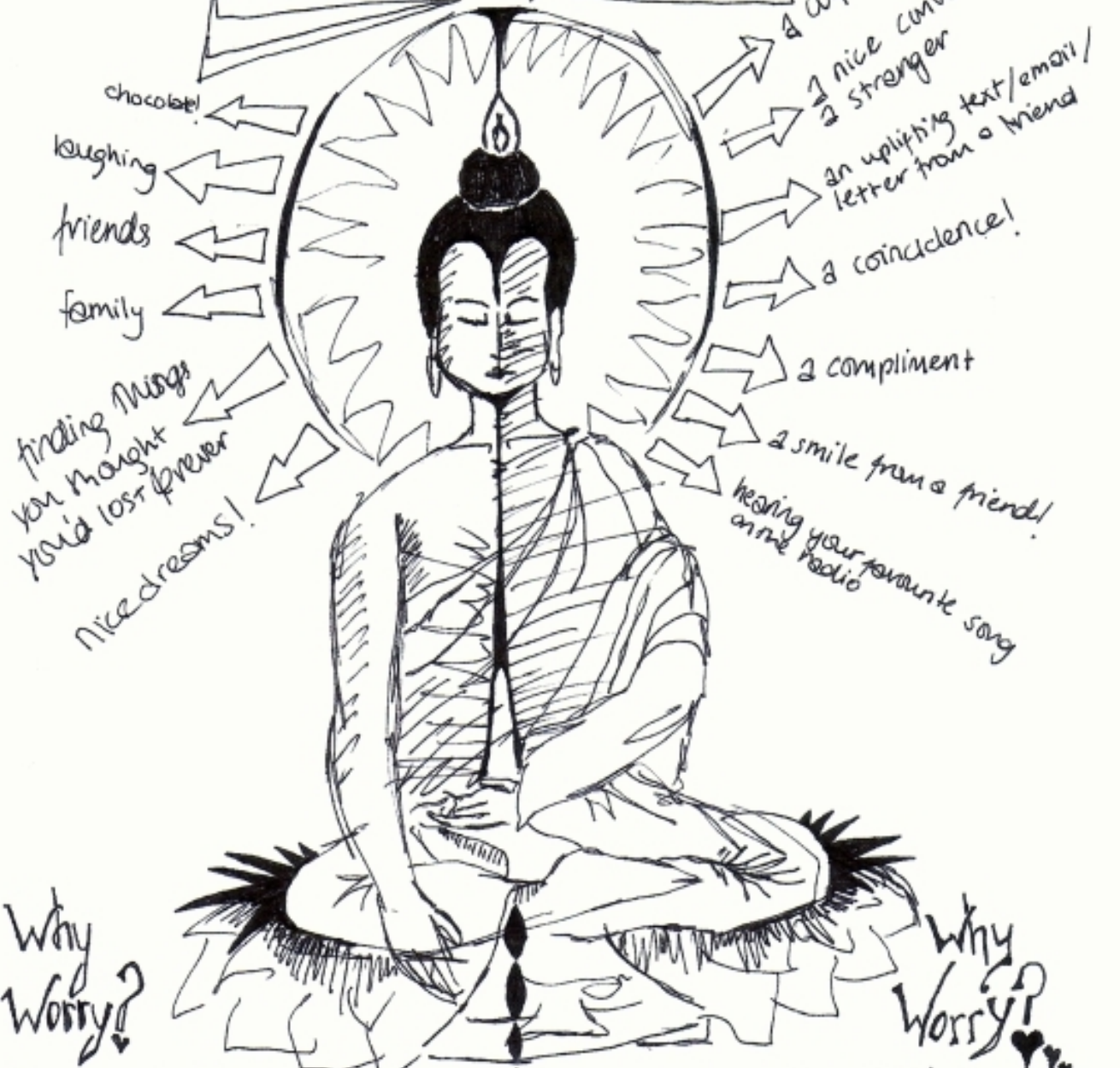


If you want more information about Amaravati, and about the Family Events that take place there, visit the website at www.amaravati.org and follow the links to the Family Events.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for the annual Rainbows Magazine, or if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact: **Dan Jones, 59 Cavendish Avenue, Cambridge, CB1 7UR, U.K.**
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What is a blessing?

The little things in life



There are only 2 things in life to worry well, if you are well then there is only 2 things to worry about: whether better there is nothing to worry about, and about: whether you go to heaven or whether worry about. If you go to hell then you'll be so busy shaking hands you won't have any time

to worry! about, whether you are ill or whether you are nothing to worry about. If you are ill there are you get better or whether you die. If you get if you die then there are only 2 things to worry you go to hell. If you go to heaven there is nothing to to worry!

MANGALA SUTTA

THE DISCOURSE ON HIGHEST BLESSINGS

Thus have I heard: that the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, residing at Jeta's Grove in Anathapindika's park. Then, in the dark of the night, a radiant deva illuminated all Jeta's Grove. She bowed down low before the Blessed One. Then, standing to one side, she said:



“Devas are concerned for happiness
And ever long for peace.
The same is true for humankind.
What then are the highest blessings?”

“Avoiding those of foolish ways,
Associating with the wise,
And honouring those worthy of honour.
These are the highest blessings.



Living in places of suitable kinds,
With the fruits of past good deeds
And guided by the rightful way.
These are the highest blessings.

Accomplished in learning and craftsman's skills,
With the discipline, highly trained,
And speech that is true and pleasant to hear.
These are the highest blessings.



Providing for mother and father's support
And cherishing family,
And ways of work that harm no being.
These are the highest blessing.



Giving with Dhamma in the heart,
Offering help to relatives and kin,
And acting in ways that leave no blame.
These are the highest blessings.

Steadfast in restraint, and shunning evil ways,
Avoiding intoxicants that dull the mind,
And heedfulness in all things that arise.
These are the highest blessings.



Respectfulness and of humble ways,
Contentment and gratitude,
And hearing the Dhamma frequently taught.
These are the highest blessings.

Patience and willingness to accept one's faults,
Seeing venerated seekers of the truth,
And sharing often the words of Dhamma.
These are the highest blessings.



The Holy Life lived with ardent effort,
Seeing for oneself the Noble Truths
And the realisation of Nibbana.
These are the highest blessings.

Although involved in worldly ways,
Unshaken the mind remains
And beyond all sorrow, spotless, secure.
These are the highest blessings.



They who live by following this path
Know victory wherever they go,
And every place for them is safe.
These are the highest blessings.”

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

When life seems tough
And you've had enough
And you need to walk for a while
Just grit your teeth and carry on
Then count your blessings and smile



When the journey's long
And you're not so strong
And you need to stand for a while
Just take a deep breath and close your eyes
Then count your blessings and smile



When life flows on
Like the sweetest song
Then you need to sit for a while
Just relax in the peace and be with the breath
Then count your blessings and smile



When the end is near
And you're consumed by fear
And you need to lie for a while
Just gently rest and be with the pain
Then count your blessings and smile



When the day has gone
And you've passed away
Then we need to stop for a while
For as we remember with fondness of heart
We shall count your blessings and smile



Bethan's BLESSINGS



Late into the night, Bethan was strolling through the dark streets of Cambridge when she came upon a bush on the side of the road. Ordinarily a girl like Bethan wouldn't notice if a monkey slapped her in the face. However, on this occasion she caught a glint of something silver shining in the bush. "How odd" she thought, "maybe I'll go take a peek..." She moved closer to the bush, and just as she had suspected, there hung a set of keys, curiously similar to that of her own. "But surely it couldn't be..." she wondered, shuffling through her bag.



And sure as sure can be, her keys were nowhere to be found. She flung the keys from the bush and into her bag, smiling with content. "Isn't it funny how you can come across a blessing when you least expect it," and with that she set off on her path.

A Blessing in Disguise.

Always on the run,
Had to sell, sell, sell,
No time for any fun,
Never heard the Pija bell.

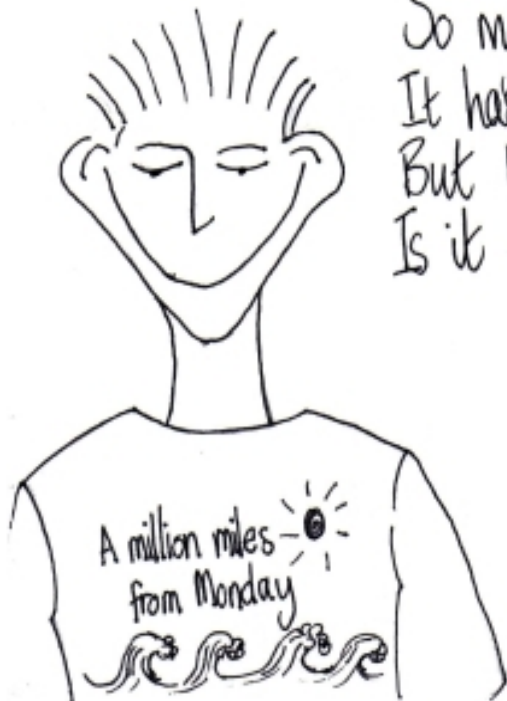


Until one day my heart stopped,
At last I felt the strain,
On the floor I dropped,
I couldn't help but notice the pain.

In hospital they fed me pill after pill,
My heart began to mend,
Finally the space to be still,
My life will start to bend.



So my heart is left sore and fragile,
It has really frightened me,
But I'm left with a huge smile!
Is it the chance to set this heart free?



Blessings

A surprise morning call,
Breakfast in bed for Mum and Dad,
Waiter takes orders on cardboard scraps,
The meal offered on a chopping board,
Cold toast and soggy flakes,
Such laughter, such delight,
Children cherished are the highest blessings.



Being there in the hardest of times,
Dropping schedules to meet another's needs,
Travelling daily, laying out meals,
Helpful support, creating space,
Such kindness, such consideration,
Friends offering help are the highest blessings.



Grace and beauty in the simplest of tasks,
Companionship and attentive listening,
Changing hearts by skillfully doing little,
Transforming a room with chants of victory,
Offering direction in a chaotic world,
Such presence, such wisdom, suchness,
Seeing Sangha are the highest blessings.



Celtic Blessings

*May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

*Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.*

It's a blessing to embrace
The whole human race.
Regardless, we are all
the same
We all know the Buddha's
name.
Even if we don't, we
oneday will
The world is already still.

The Water Blessing

Once upon a time there was a little drop of water. He was happy being a drop of water, doing water things, falling from the sky as a raindrop, splish splash into a stream, rushing alongside all the other water drops down long rivers to the sea, where the huge community of drops chattered to each other and passed on news of their travels all over the world as they were tossed around by the waves. Then, warmed by the sun, the little drop began to feel lighter and lighter as he turned to vapour, his thoughts getting vaguer as he rose up into the empty sky, and there he found another home in a cool fluffy cloud, where he felt himself gathering together again, gaining clarity and getting heavier as he prepared to fall once more.

Round and round the water drop went through the cycles of fall and flow and rise, and, as far back as he could remember, this is what his life had been. Occasionally, there were variations, like the time he was drunk by an elephant and passed out in its urine. Quite often, he had been sucked up from the soil by the thirsty roots of trees, to evaporate out through the underside of a leaf and back up into the sky. And once he had ended up in a bucket, being used to wash the marble floor of a glorious palace before running off into a gutter.



But as he went through the endless watery cycles down the ages, something began to grow in the little water drop's heart: a feeling of dissatisfaction crept in. He did not know what was wrong, but the vague sensation grew in time into a gnawing pain. He tried asking all the other water drops if they ever felt the same, but they mostly rushed on past him. Then, one Spring morning, when he was flowing along in a small stream through a beautiful country meadow, he found himself alongside another drop he knew, whom he had always rather admired for seeming to know quite a lot, and for having had a wider range of watery experiences than any other drop that he had ever come across. Rather shyly, the little drop tried to talk about his aching feeling inside, like an emptiness. And yet how could a drop of water be empty when all he was made up of inside was water? His friend paused and all he said was: "You sound more like ice to me." Ice? The little drop had never thought of that. Maybe that was what was wrong - he needed to be ice instead of water. So the next time he was in a cloud, the little drop put in a special effort not to fall as rain too soon. He tried so hard to stay up, even though he was getting heavier and heavier. Just when he thought he could hold on no longer, he felt a cold wind blowing his cloud North, and, sure enough, the little drop turned into a beautifully-formed snowflake fluttering slowly and giddily down to earth. He felt calm and excited at the same time. Everything was still and clear, but he was uncertain what experiences this new form would bring him.

On the ground, the little drop-who-was-now-a-snowflake waited. He was not used to not moving, and it gave him time to ponder. Was his empty ache still there? He was not quite sure, it was somehow hard to tell because he felt so frozen. Time passed and he realised that he was part of a majestic glacier marching slowly through a huge rocky valley down towards the sea. Next to him lay an old ice crystal who had been frozen for hundreds of years, and who spoke slowly and carefully: "Hello, little drop, how are you

doing?" The little drop told him about his ache, and his hope that being ice would make him feel whole and content again. "Oh, no," the old ice crystal sighed, "the only thing that can help with such a deep ache of dissatisfaction is to be blessed." "What does 'blessed' mean?" asked the little drop cautiously. But the old ice crystal seemed to have fallen half asleep, and could only mumble incoherently.

The little drop waited and waited patiently, but the ice crystal next to him slept on, and he could find out no more. But he knew one thing: that he had not found the answer to his problem, he had only found another question. The ache was there inside, sharper than ever.

Eventually, the part of the glacier with the little frozen drop on it reached the sea, and just as the drop was melting away to float off on a wave, the ice crystal next to him woke up as he, too, melted. "Ah, yes. Blessings..." said the ancient voice. "I was blessed once, by a wise old nun, it was... a wonderful ceremony... I've felt quite at peace ever since, really... You should go and ask her about it, Little Drop..." The little drop was desperate to ask more, but they were carried off in different directions by the currents, and all he had the chance to do was shout "Thank you" in a tiny voice that was probably lost in the sound of the waves.

But now the little drop was determined, and each cycle round he looked carefully for the old nun wherever he went. Sure enough, he soon had the good fortune to end up in a flower vase on the old nun's shrine. He was so very excited that the flowers in the vase got quite perturbed. The drop watched in awe, and a little envy, as the nun conducted a blessing ceremony in front of him, and he could feel all the good wishes that were being sent to the water in the bowl that the old nun held. He could sense the whole world around being drawn into the process, all the people and creatures and even the air and the earth, focussing on the water in the bowl, and he could feel that water changing, relaxing and basking in the rays of goodness that everyone beamed so powerfully into it. The people in the shrine room looked so happy when the water was sprinkled over them, and the children giggled with glee.

The little drop finally knew exactly what he wanted, and after all the people had gone he respectfully asked the old nun if he too might be blessed in such a ceremony. Her face looked even older than he was, but she had a sparkle in her eye, and she smiled at him. "But do you know what it means to be blessed?" she asked softly, and the little drop realised that he was not entirely sure that he did know. "To be blessed," she said, "is to have all the right ingredients for the fulfillment of happiness and peace. But remember - blessings are not just in the conditions around you, they are really in here." And she gently tapped her chest over her heart. The sun was warm in the shrine room, and the little drop felt himself begin to evaporate yet again into the air. But he felt happy and clear in his resolve now, and as he faded, he just had time to hear the old nun say: "And one more thing, Little Drop - blessings are sometimes in disguise..."

So the watery cycles of rain and sun continued for the little drop, but, in a way, he already felt a bit blessed by his life. He was still longing to be in a blessing ceremony, but because he felt happier now he also found himself able to help others from time to time in his travels, just as he felt he had been helped. He tried to help quench the thirst of creatures who needed water, and he never took part in any floods or drowned any

air-breathing creatures, but instead tried hard to lift them up towards the air. He felt a warmth in him whenever he fell as rain to help crops grow and he saw how grateful the farmers were. As time went on, he was more and more able to shape his own path and choose where to fall, but he still felt his old longing, deep inside, to be blessed.

Then, one day, he was floating along in a cloud when he saw far below the Buddha himself getting ready to perform a blessing ceremony. He felt a bolt of excitement run through him like electricity, so strong that he caused a little clap of thunder in the cloud and down he fell as rain. He was racing towards his destiny faster even than gravity could carry him. All he needed to do was to fall in the well where a young girl was just about to draw some water ready to present to the Buddha for the ceremony.

But just then he noticed something terrible - the young girl had been so excited in being given such an honour as to present the water-bowl to the Buddha, that she had got a bit distracted, and she did not notice that a spark from the fire in the bamboo hut where she lived had jumped out on to the thatch of the roof, and was just about to set the roof and the whole hut ablaze. The little drop could see that the girl would be caught in the fire and probably die, and the fire might even spread to other huts in the village all around. The little drop took all this in in one glance, and at the same time he knew that if he changed course to put the spark out he would miss his opportunity of being blessed by the Buddha, and he would never have such an opportunity ever again. He would miss out on what he had been striving for down long ages, and the pain at the idea of this loss



was very, very heavy in his tiny raindrop heart. But, without thinking more, he knew what he wanted to do and pounced on the spark, which was extinguished with a little hiss. The little drop was evaporated immediately, but the girl gave a gasp as she realised what had happened, and as she did so she breathed in the vapour of the drop and he found himself inside her, swimming along in her blood until he came into her eye and could watch out as she collected herself, went to draw the water from the well and took it to where the Buddha was

sitting with hundreds of people in attendance, waiting for the ceremony to begin. Although the little drop was pleased that he had saved the girl and that he could be in the presence of the Buddha, he still felt so hugely, deeply sad that he could not be in the water-bowl himself.

As the girl approached the Buddha carrying her bowl of water she began to be overcome with the emotion of the event. She felt such a mixture of the honour of the special place she had been given in the ceremony, and the relief that her life had been saved just moments before. The Buddha watched kindly. He knew what the girl was feeling, and he also knew about the little drop's efforts over many, many years. The girl felt such joy, and tears welled up in her eyes as she knelt down to offer the bowl. The little drop found himself as a teardrop, rolling gently down the young girl's cheek and falling lightly into the bowl.

"Bless you," said the Buddha.

Blessings - Some Reflections

Sometimes we receive blessings without realising what they are - blessings in disguise - in some cases...



A Blessing is not having what you want but having what you need - even if you don't realise it is what you need at the time...



Everyone has blessings, whether they come in the form of great achievements, good friends or in the briefest moment of peace & clarity ☺



By Hannah Park and Anna Mayo



To Be BLESSED Or Not To Be

Thunder Bunny thundered through the woods. He was on his way to the fair, but not to have fun. Horrible noisy rides and all those crowds - he was going to protest. "I absolutely hate fairs," thought Thunder. Suddenly,

CRASH

Thunder had walked into a tree. "That silly tree," he moaned. "How I am cursed with so many troubles." Meanwhile, Thunder Bunny's friend Sunny Bunny was also walking through the woods on his way to the fair. "How lucky we are to have the fair with us," he thought, "exciting rides and lots of good company."

BUMP

Sunny was so lost in his thoughts he bounced into a tree. "Wow," said Sunny Bunny, "I never noticed such a beautiful tree before. How I am blessed to live amongst such lovely things!"

by Sunny Bunny

May all beings have happiness
and the cause of happiness
May they be free from
suffering and the cause
of suffering.



BLESSINGS WORD SEARCH

M	A	N	G	A	L	A	S	U	T	T	A	Z
K	M	W	L	P	O	N	U	N	S	W	N	H
L	A	O	S	A	D	L	M	E	T	T	A	A
I	R	X	N	E	F	R	E	U	B	Y	G	P
S	A	P	L	K	I	N	D	T	B	F	A	P
T	V	M	A	V	S	R	H	Z	L	L	R	I
E	A	N	H	L	Q	L	O	V	E	O	I	N
N	T	K	D	O	S	W	M	T	S	W	K	E
K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S	I	S	E	A	S
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 AMARAVATI
 KINDNESS
 BUDDHA
 LOVE
 SUMEDHO
 METTA
 ANAGARIKA
 PRECEPTS
 NUNS
 BLESSINGS



SPRINKLE
 KIND
 PALS
 STORIES
 LAOS
 LISTEN
 HAPPINESS
 PUJA
 MONKS
 FLOWER





BLESSINGS



...○○○...



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