

Wild Goose *Flyer*



Forthcoming Events

February 12, 2009. Patrick & the Wild Goose sangha will be leading an introduction to Zen meditation especially orientated to Christians from 8 pm – 9.30 pm at the Ashcroft Centre, Ashcroft Street, Cirencester. There is no charge. If you are interested in attending or want more details please email helenium@care4free.net or phone Helen and Edmund on 01793 752491.

February 21, 2009. ZAZENKAI – A Day of Zen Practice which provides the opportunity to deepen and intensify our practice from 9.30a.m. for 10a.m. to 4p.m. This is presented by Father Patrick Eastman at the Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath. The cost is £35 , which includes coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. See www.ammerdown.org or phone 01761 433709 for full details.

May 29 – 31, 2009. ZEN SPIRIT, CHRISTIAN SPIRIT. Ammerdown Centre, Radstock. This weekend silent retreat is presented by Zen master (roshi) Father Robert Kennedy, a Jesuit priest who teaches theology at St. Peter's College, Jersey City, and is the author of 'Zen Gifts to Christians' and of 'Zen Spirit, Christian Spirit'. Participants will have the opportunity to attend the installation by Roshi Robert Kennedy of Father Patrick Eastman as a Sensei. The cost is £199 residential and £133 non-residential. See www.ammerdown.org or phone 01761 433709 for full details.

The Wild Goose Sangha meets weekly for Zen meditation on Thursday evenings from 7.45 p.m. - 9.30 p.m. in Cirencester at the Ashcroft Centre, Ashcroft Road. All are welcome. For further details and directions please contact Patrick via email to patrick@northwall.plus.com

Patrick's Piece

WELCOME everybody to 2009! This year will be unique for us all with its challenges, consolations and with special times to remember. The important thing will be to taste and savour well each occasion. For me personally this year has some special moments for celebration. On June 1 this year I will be recalling with joy the fortieth anniversary of my ordination as an Anglican priest in Durham cathedral; then on August 14 it will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of my ordination as a Roman Catholic priest in Holy Family Cathedral Tulsa, Oklahoma. But before each of these will be my installation as a Sensei (Zen teacher) of the White Plum Asangha by Father Robert Kennedy Roshi. I think that this will mean that as well as being the first married man from England to be ordained a Catholic priest for about 1000 years I will also be the first Catholic priest in England to be recognised as a trained Zen teacher. As you will see in this issue of "The Flyer" my installation will be at the end of a Zen retreat at the Ammerdown Centre May 29 -31. I do so hope that you will be able to be there for this special moment in my life and for the work of helping people to discover the riches of wordless, and image-less contemplative prayer.

Take care and keep well.

United in the One breath/Spirit that unites
all creation

Dharma holder Patrick Eastman

What's in a name?

FOR THOSE INTERESTED in the names given to Zen teachers a **Dharma Holder** is one who is an assistant teacher. He or she under the authority of a teacher can give talks on Zen practice, lead workshops and sesshin (Zen retreats). They can, under the supervision of a teacher, lead a small sangha or practice group.

A **Sensei** is someone who has been passed mind to mind transmission from a senior teacher. This makes the student on the same level as the teacher and gives full authority to teach and take students of their own. In the case of the Wild Goose Sangha here in the United Kingdom the seal of approval comes through the White Plum Asanga stemming from Taizan Maezumi Roshi through Father Robert Jinsen Kennedy Roshi who received transmission from Bernie Tetsugen Glassman Roshi. The formal transmission ceremony will of course take place for Father Patrick Kundo Eastman on May 31, 2009 at the Ammerdown Centre. (See 'Forthcoming Events').

Roshi is a title awarded after many years as a teacher (**Sensei**) and it carries with it approval of being designated a Zen Master.

Kundo (*Empty Way*)

WHEN KENNEDY ROSHI installs someone as a Sensei he also gives them a Dharma name. In my case he has chosen the name "Kundo" which being translated from the Japanese means "The way or path is empty" or alternatively "There is no way or path." It is in some ways very premature for me to go into any sort of explanation into what this means. The name is simply something that one has to grow into and, over the years, becoming and internalizing what is described out of one's engagement with the words through one's own personal experience. Having said that we can say the reference to the word "empty" takes us right to the heart of the Zen as given expression in the well-known Heart Sutra that points to an experience of the essential nature of all reality. In Case number 19 of the Zen Koan collection *The Pathless Path* Joshu asks the Zen master Nansen "What is the Way"

to which Nansen answers "The Ordinary Mind is the Way." Thus he points out that the Way is none other than ordinary everyday life. There is no separate special objective way out there somewhere that has an identity all of its own. Nansen also states that "the more you seek it, the more it will elude you. If you hunt for it, you will never find it." But Joshu is still not satisfied and, like many of us, he wants to know the right way. But the answer is that the Way is not some object that can be known or not known. It is experienced in the actuality of one's own life experience. If this intrigues you then simply sit Zazen faithfully and be thoroughly in touch with your life moment by moment. I hope that you will be there for my installation where, no doubt, more will be said about Kundo and emptiness.

Spring Ango: one at one



AS PREVIOUSLY we will be keeping the traditional Buddhist Spring 'Ango' again this year following the times of the Christian Lenten season. We will therefore begin on Ash Wednesday (February 25) and end on Good Friday (April 10). We decided together that this year we will commit to have a time of Zazen (Silent sitting) every day at 1 pm. The length of time can be governed by each person's personal circumstances. Of course if anyone wants to do some other way to deepen their spiritual practice they are welcome. Readers are encouraged to joining us in our daily Zazen time and if you can please let us know by emailing Patrick@northwall.plus.com It would be good to know those who will be sitting in solidarity with us.

Book Review

The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh (Mobi Ho, 1975), 140pp

THICH NHAT HANH is a Vietnamese poet, Zen master, peace activist and teacher who was nominated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for the Nobel Peace Prize. Since the Vietnam War, Thich Nhat Hanh has lived in exile in France.

This book was originally written in 1974 as a letter of advice and encouragement to Brother Quang of the School of Youth for Social Service in South Vietnam, Thich Nhat Hanh having founded this school in the 1960s. The monks, despite facing many difficulties, continued to live their lives according to his teaching.

Thich Nhat Hanh presents the practice of meditation in a simple way yet brimming over with deep wisdom. The purity and simplicity of the teaching must have been like a beacon lighting up the path clearly in times of uncertainty and gloom. And, although written over thirty years ago, I believe the book speaks as relevantly and powerfully to readers in the first decade of the 21st century.

The book is divided into seven chapters, the first ones being concerned with living in the moment, mindfulness and stilling the body and mind in meditation. I was particularly touched by the idea of putting one day a week aside, from the moment one wakes to the moment one returns to bed, to practice mindfulness.

For those wanting to know more about Buddhist traditions, the last three chapters touch on subjects such as: contemplation on interdependence; life and death; compassion and the non-discrimination mind. The seemingly abstract concepts are presented in a very practical and accessible way. They end with a story by Tolstoy that illustrates how important it is for us to be of service to our family and community through mindfulness, before helping the society that lies further afield.

In the final section are practical exercises, e.g. deep breathing, measuring your breath by your footsteps or mindfulness while washing up. What could be more practical than that?

James Forest then shares great insights into the way Thich Nhat Hanh lives his life in a chapter entitled 'Nhat Hanh: Seeing with the Eyes of Compassion,' and the book ends with a selection of Buddhist Sutras.

Having read and referred to this book for a number of years, I find that it always has something new to teach me whenever I turn to it. I would recommend it highly to both the beginner and to anyone wishing to deepen their practice.

Reviewed by: Meri Goad



Kinhin at the Ammerdown Centre

Keep in touch

YOUR COMMENTS, requests and contributions for future issues are most welcome. These should be sent to our editors Edmund and Helen Lee at helenium@care4free.net. Please let us know if you know of others who would like to receive this Flyer and also if you no longer wish to receive it.

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