



Padmaloka

2014 Retreat Centre for Men

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From the Chairman

I lived at Padmaloka as part of the Support Team for ten years from 2001. During that time I did most of the jobs here, eventually becoming the Support Team manager. In 2010 I left to work for the Buddhafeld East project, doing two summers of retreats and other events. Towards the end of the 2012 Buddhafeld East season I was asked to return to Padmaloka as the Chairman, as Lokeshvara was coming to the end of his five year term as Chairman.

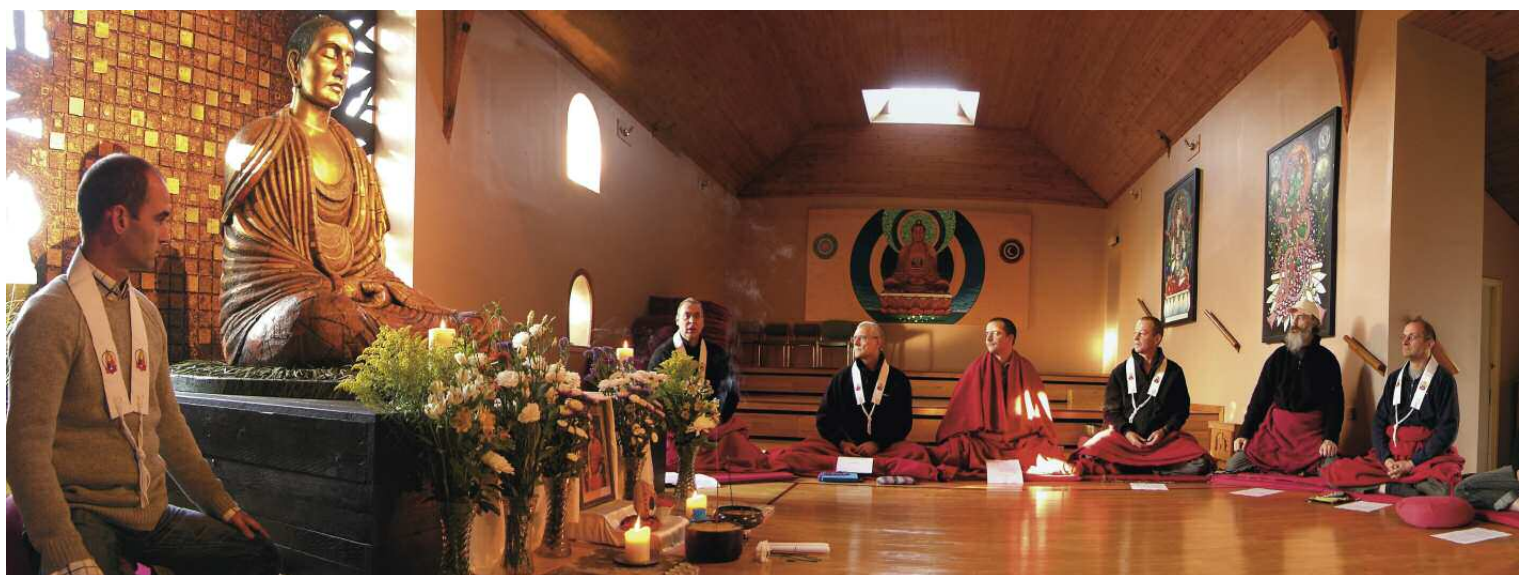
Being offered the post of Chairman was too good to refuse, for a number of reasons. Having lived here at Padmaloka for ten years, I already had some of my closest friends living here and friendship is very important to me. Not only friendship, but the simple life of a men's retreat community is something that I have valued since I became involved in the Triratna Community. As a retreat centre Padmaloka provides supportive conditions for the men who attend retreats here. I have seen men come here, sometimes a bit battered from the demands of busy lives. In just a few days they mature and blossom spiritually because of the strongly positive conditions of Padmaloka. I see Padmaloka as being something of a protective mandala in which men can deepen and mature with spiritually like-minded men. As the Chairman I see it as my responsibility that Padmaloka continues to improve as such a mandala for men in the Triratna Community.



The Community

At the moment the Padmaloka community has a Support Team of Aryabandhu, Jinapalita, Sthiramani, Sanghanistha, Taradasa, Dayajina, Matthieu Delattre, Billy Frugal and myself. The Support Team, which is managed by Aryabandhu, look after the day to day running of Padmaloka and as the name of the team suggests, supports the retreatants and the Ordination Team work. The latter has the responsibility of running the retreats for men who have asked for Ordination, as well as a number of other Triratna-wide responsibilities. The members of the Ordination Team are Saddhaloka, Surata, Satyaraja, Dharmadipa, Padmavajra and Lokeshvara. Lokeshvara has just joined the team and will be more of a roving team member, spending some of his time visiting centres, as well as being on retreat.

Aryapala, July 2013



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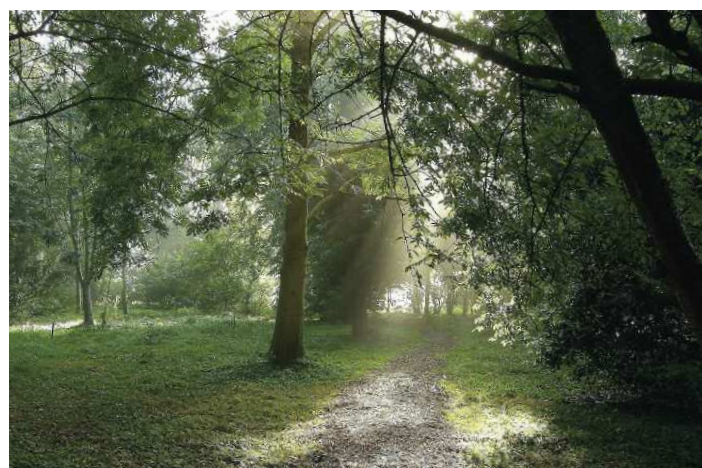
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Our Prices

We have kept our suggested rates the same since 2012.

Most retreats give three options e.g. £115/£80/£65, which we describe as full/concession/unwaged.

Booking

To book go to www.padmalo.org.uk
or call us on 01508 538112

Our Bursary Fund

We have a bursary fund, available to anyone who has financial difficulty. Just ask the retreat organiser. Also, some retreats we do on a donation basis, we ask for a deposit before the retreat and a donation at the end.

Ordination Training Retreats

In asking for Ordination you have decided to go for refuge to the Three Jewels within the context of the spiritual community we call the Triratna Buddhist Order. This means that you have asked to make a formal commitment to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You have also asked to be formally accepted, through the ceremony of ordination, into our spiritual community.

Meditation retreats are also an important part of an aspirants training for Ordination. *"Meditation proper...represents the spearhead of a basic reorientation of one's whole being."* Sangharakshita

More information is in the 'Ordination Training handbook', sent to men who have asked for ordination. If you want to know what ordination training is about ask us for a copy.



January

The Bodhisattva Ideal

Monday 06 January - Wednesday 15 January, 9 days
£375/£325/£285

February

Mythic Context

Friday 14 February - Friday 28 February, 14 days
£475/£430/£385

Ordination Training Weekend

The Unity of the Order

Friday 28 February - Sunday 02 March, 2 days
Led by the Padmaloka Ordination team with Maitreyabandhu, Paramabandu, Jnanavaca and Jayaka
£115/£80/£65

March

The Five Aspects of Sangharakshita's System of Dharma Life

Sunday 02 March - Tuesday 11 March, 9 days
Integration, Skilful Intention (Positive emotion), Receptivity, Death, Rebirth. On this retreat we will study the seminal talks by Subhuti's 2013 talks on the System of Practice within the Triratna Community.
£375/£325/£28

April

Anapanasati

Thursday 10 April - Tuesday 22 April, 12 days
Led by Guhyavajra and team
This retreat follows the Anapanasati sutta teaching on the mindfulness of breathing. On the retreat we are led through the 16 aspects of mindfulness taking us to the heart of Buddhist meditation.
£430/£390/£330

May

What is the Order?

Wednesday 14 May - Friday 23 May, 9 days
£375/£325/£285

July

Transcendental Principle

Friday 04 July - Friday 18 July, 14 days
£475/£430/£385

Ordination Training 5 day Summer Retreat

Entering the Greater Mandala

Friday 18 July - Wednesday 23 July, 5 days
On this five day retreat we will be exploring the essential elements of the Dharma life through meditation, ritual, talks and discussion.
£190/£130/£100

The Ten Pillars of Buddhism

Friday 25 July - Sunday 03 August, 9 days
£375/£325/£285

August

The Brahma Viharas

Sunday 03 August - Thursday 14 August, 11 days
Led by Satyaraja, Surata and Dharmadipa
The 'Sublime Abidings': *"Mettā or loving-kindness, muditā or sympathetic joy, karuṇā or compassion, and upekkhā or equanimity. Exploring the whole aspect of positive emotion to bring about the state in which the whole movement and tendency of our being is expansive, spiralling creatively outwards and upwards... It is our positive emotions that keep us going on the spiritual path. Unless we have love, compassion sympathetic joy, equanimity and faith, there will not be any real life in the Order. Positive emotion, is the life-blood of the Order."*
£395/£360/£315



September

System of Meditation and Ordination Retreat

Friday 12 September - Friday 26 September, 14 days

£475/£430/£385

November

How to Serve the Sangha & be a True Individual

Friday 07 November - Friday 14 November, 7 days

Led by Lokeshvara and Dharmadipa

£285/£250/£220

Spiritual Friendship

Friday 21 November - Sunday 30 November, 9 days

£375/£325/£285

December

What is a Dharmachari?

Monday 08 December - Saturday 13 December, 5 days

On this short retreat for men who have asked for Ordination we will explore what it means to be a Dharmachari (lit: 'one who fares in the Dharma'). The ordination ceremony in the Triratna Buddhist Order is the Dharmachari Ordination, so it is of very great importance that to understand the real meaning of the word Dharmachari.

£225/£170/£125



Long Summer Camp I

Friday 04 July - Sunday 03 August, 30 days

Come for the Transcendental Principle retreat, Ordination 5 Day Training Summer Retreat, have a day off then join The Ten Pillars of Buddhism, at a special discounted rate.

£870/£740/£630

Long Summer Camp II

Friday 25 July - Thursday 14 August, 20 days

Come for the Ten Pillars of Buddhism and straight after enter into the Brahma Viharas, at a special discounted rate.

£500/£490/£420

Triratna Regulars

These retreats are open to men who are familiar with the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana meditation practices, as well as the Sevenfold Puja, as taught and practised within the Triratna Community.

Men's Event Weekend Retreats

These weekend events aim to give an essential experience of Buddhist teaching and practice. The weekend will include meditation, talks, discussion, workshops and rituals. Led with warmth and clarity by experienced members of the Triratna Order.

Running from Friday evening to early afternoon on Sunday
£115/£80/£65

Celebrating the Buddha

Friday 24 January - Sunday 26 January
Led by Suriyavamsa, Alokadhara & Swadipa

Stirring the Depths – Mantra and Image

Friday 06 June - Sunday 08 June
Led by Arthasiddhi, Paraga & Vadanya

Liberation and Discipline

Friday 24 October - Sunday 26 October
Akuppa, Nibbhaya & Pramudita

4 day Seminar/Retreat

The Prajnaparamita-Ratnagunasamacayagatha

Monday 10 February - Friday 14 February, 4 days

Four Day Seminar with Sagaramati and Surata on The Prajnaparamita-Ratnagunasamacayagatha, exploring the Perfection of Wisdom which is a Storehouse of Precious Qualities. This seminar explores the oldest of all of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. It is also a sutra that has been very important for Sangharakshita, it being one of the first sutras he led study on at Padmaloka. "The transcendental life is the Bodhisattva's natural element. This is why the Bodhisattva does not think 'Here I am, a Bodhisattva', or 'Hear I am coursing in Perfect Wisdom'" (from the seminar on the Ratnagunasamacayagatha).

Led by Sagaramati
£180/£135/£100

Buddhist Vision

Friday 28 March - Friday 04 April, 7 days

A one week retreat on essential Buddhist teachings with with a particular emphasis on Buddhist practice applied to work.

Led by Maitridasa
£285/£250/£220

East Anglian Men's Event

Friday 14th - Sunday 16th November, 2 days

Led by Rijusiddha
Contact Rijusiddha to book and for more info 07933 185 934
£80/£60



Young Men's Retreats



These retreats are open to all men regardless of experience, between the age 18 and 35 years.

The Adamantine Bond of Brotherhood Connection and Friendship in the Spiritual Life

Friday 14 March - Friday 21 March, 2/7 days

On this retreat we'll be exploring the quest to build and deepen our connection with others as a foundation for a wholehearted spiritual life. Come for the first weekend or the whole 7 days.

£50 booking deposit and give what you can (Dana)

Young Men's Weekend Retreat

Friday 26 September - Sunday 28 September, 2 days

£50 booking deposit and give what you can (Dana)



Meditation & Longer Retreats

Open to men with at least 6 Month's Experience of the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana meditation practices, as well as the Sevenfold Puja, as taught and practised within the Triratna Community.

Anapanasati Meditation Retreat

Thursday 10 April - Tuesday 22 April, 12 days

Anapanasati

"The meditator, having gone to the forest, .. sits down with legs folded crosswise, body held erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, one breathes in; mindful, one breathes out." The Buddha, Anapanasati Sutta

This retreat follows the Anapanasati sutta teaching on the mindfulness of breathing. On the retreat we are led through the 16 aspects of mindfulness taking us to the heart of Buddhist meditation.

Led by Guhyavajra

£430/£390/£330



Brahma Viharas Retreat

Sunday 03 August - Thursday 14 August, 11 days

The Brahma Viharas. The 'Sublime Abidings': *"Mettā or loving-kindness, muditā or sympathetic joy, karuṇā or compassion, and upekkhā or equanimity. Exploring the whole aspect of positive emotion to bring about the state in which the whole movement and tendency of our being is expansive, spiralling creatively outwards and upwards."* Sangharakshita regards the development of the brahma viharas as crucial to our spiritual development. Through developing boundless love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, we identify with all beings and transcend all self-grasping.

Led by Satyaraja, Surata and Dharmadipa

£395/£360/£315

Winter Retreat 2013

Spiritual Death, Spiritual Rebirth and Receptivity to the Dharma

Thursday 19th December 2013 – Thursday 2nd January (2014), 14 days

On the first week of the retreat Padmavajra will be giving a series of talks on the theme, with shrine room activities led by Satyaraja. The second week will be a meditation retreat focussing on Just Sitting and other practices.

As well as Satyaraja and Padmavajra there will be other members of the Ordination team, the Padmaloka community and other experienced Order members attending the retreat.

This year we shall be providing much more for men who have asked for ordination. We aim to have discussion groups, especially for men who have asked for ordination (alongside groups for mitras, friends and Order members).

Please note, the winter retreat this year is for two weeks only and there are no one week options.

Led by Satyaraja and Padmavajra

£475/£430/£385

Winter Retreat 2014

Saturday 20 December 2014 - Saturday 03 January 2015, 14 days

We have a tradition of having a winter retreat at Padmaloka over New Year. Like the end of a long breath the end of the year turns around and begins anew. The 2014 winter retreat will be for two weeks. Theme, leaders and cost will be announced nearer the time.

£475/£430/£385

Order Retreats

Regional Order Weekend 1

Friday 21 March - Sunday 23 March
Organised by the Eastern Region
£30 Deposit + donation on arrival.

Men's Area Order Weekend (UK and Ireland)

Friday 02 May - Sunday 04 May
Theme to be announced.
£65/£55/£33

Regional Order Weekend 2

Friday 05 December - Sunday 07 December
Organised by the Eastern Region
£30 Deposit + donation on arrival.



Order Sadhana

Sunday 04 May - Sunday 11 May, 7 days

Visualization practice is a dramatized enactment of the nature of reality. Meditation on emptiness, non-self, impermanence and non-duality. It is full of pointers to the nature of mind. In this week, open to practitioners of all sadhanas, we shall explore how to make our sadhana practice more effective, especially as a method for developing liberating insight.

Led by Vessantara.

(Follows on from May Order weekend)

£285/£250/£220

Post-Ordination Retreat

Friday 13 June - Friday 20 June, 7 days

For those ordained in 2012 and 2013 at Guhyaloka

£285/£250/£220

Kalyana Mitrata

Friday 03 October - Friday 10 October, 7 days

"Living imprisoned by defilements, we will not even see the face of a superior spiritual friend. Instead we will have to seek an ordinary human being who can illuminate the path with his counsel. Therefore our greatest benefactor is a spiritual friend in the form of an ordinary human being" Gampopa

Led by Padmavajra

£285/£250/£220

Receptivity, Death and Rebirth

Friday 10 October - Monday 20 October, 10 days

"When one Just Sits, well, one Just Sits." Sangharakshita

A mostly silent Meditation retreat exploring Just Sitting - the responsive, open, spacious state in which Dharma processes can arise - in the context of the Contemplation of the 6 Elements and Visualisation Practice.

Led by Satyaraja

£395/£355/£315

Events and Retreats 2014

January

The Bodhisattva Ideal	Monday 6 - Wednesday 15
Community At Home	Thursday 16 - Thursday 23
Men's Event 1	Friday 24 - Sunday 26
Mitra Convenors 1	Sunday 26 - Friday 31

February

Ratnaguasamcaygatha Seminar	Monday 10 - Friday 14
Mythic Context	Friday 14 - Friday 28
Ordination Training Weekend	Friday 28 - Sunday 2 (March)

March

Sangharakshita's System of Dharma Life	Sunday 2 - Tuesday 11
Young Men's Retreat	Friday 14 - Friday 21
Regional Order Weekend 1	Friday 21 - Sunday 23
Buddhist Vision	Friday 28 - Friday 4 (April)

April

Anapanasati	Thursday 10 - Tuesday 22
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May

Men's Area Order Weekend (UK & Ireland)	Friday 2 - Sunday 4
Order Sadhana	Sunday 4 - Sunday 11
What is the Order?	Wednesday 14 - Friday 23

June

Men's Event 2	Friday 6 - Sunday 8
Mitra Convenors 2	Sunday 8 - Friday 13
Post-Ordination 2012/2013	Friday 13 - Friday 20
The Mysteries of Shraddha	Friday 20 - Friday 27

July

Transcendental Principle	Friday 4 - Friday 18
Summer Camp 1	Friday 4 - Sunday 3 (Aug)
Ordination Training 5 Day Summer Retreat	Friday 18 - Wednesday 23
The Ten Pillars of Buddhism	Friday 25 - Sunday 3 (Aug)
Summer Camp 2	Friday 25 - Thursday 14 (Aug)

August

The Brahma Viharas	Sunday 3 - Thursday 14
Surlingham Summer Fayre	Saturday 30 - 1-4pm

September

Community At Home	Monday 1 - Wednesday 10
System of Meditation & Ordination Retreat	Friday 12 - Friday 26
Young Men's Weekend	Friday 26 - Sunday 28

October

Kalyana Mitrata	Friday 3 - Friday 10
Receptivity, Death and Rebirth	Friday 10 - Monday 20
Men's Event 3	Friday 24 - Sunday 26
Mitra Convenors 3	Sunday 26 - Friday 31

November

How to Serve the Sangha & be a True Individual	Friday 7 - Friday 14
East Anglian Men's Event	Friday 14 - Sunday 16
Spiritual Friendship	Friday 21 - Sunday 30

December

Regional Order Weekend 2	Friday 5 - Sunday 7
What is a Dharmachari?	Monday 8 - Saturday 13
The Winter Retreat	Saturday 20 - Saturday 3 (Jan 2015)











Fundraising

Padmasambhava's Realm

For 37 years Padmaloka has been an inspiring place to practice and unfold in the Dharma life. A realm that provides supportive conditions for radical transformation of self and World; for any man willing to enter the fire of spiritual death and rebirth.

Flow of Generosity

Padmaloka has been built on the generosity of men in the Triratna Order and Community who have given of themselves so others can enter the great stream of spiritual energy that has been generated.

Why do we need your ongoing financial support?

Padmaloka as a retreat centre, is itself subject to impermanence and needs ongoing care and development to continue to provide good conditions for men wishing to come on retreat here.

Help Padmaloka go green

In the last several years we have become increasingly greener, and at the same time have continued to keep retreat costs the same. Projects included re-roofing, insulation, vehicle LPG conversion and solar hot water. Our long-term projects for energy solutions are double glazing, solar panels and installing a greener low Co2 heating system.

Developing buildings and grounds

We are constantly improving our buildings, grounds and the overall beauty of Padmaloka. Our last effective project was the pot wash room transformation. Our next project will be the Stupa courtyard dormitories upgrade and re-insulation.

Shrine room iconography project

There is of course our ongoing visionary project commissioning Aloka to fill our shrine room with images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

In order for us to continue with these important projects, please consider contributing towards our vision.

Ways you can give dana to Padmaloka

A monthly standing order will really help benefit our ongoing development vision. One off cash donations or cheques (payable to 'FWBO Surlingham') are also appreciated, and if you can gift aid your donation we can claim 25% more on what you have given.

For dana beyond the grave... you can also make Padmaloka a beneficiary in your will to benefit future generations. Please pick up one of our 'Dana From the Other Side' flyers for more information.

"Padmaloka is very dear to me, especially as it occupies an important place in the life and work of our movement, and I hope it will continue to receive widespread support" Sangharakshita

Thank you so much!



Saddhaloka



You cross the stupa courtyard, once a farmyard, and enter the shrine building, a converted Norfolk barn. Removing your shoes in the foyer you enter the main shrine room and come face to face with a striking, more than life-size image of Buddha Shakyamuni, sitting in meditation.

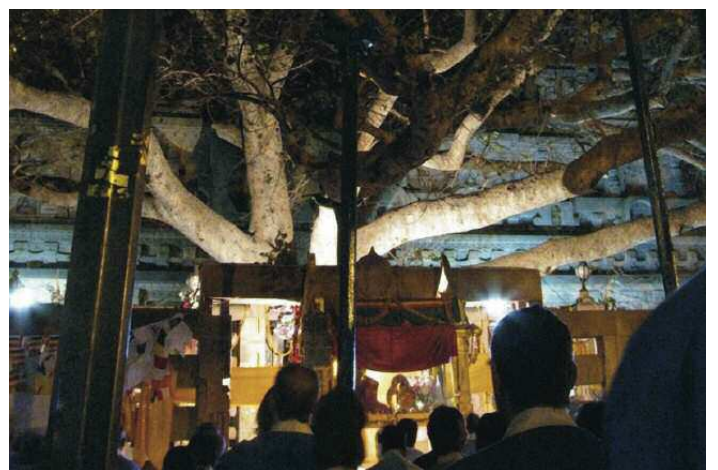
Around an image like this can gather, can constellate, all our moments of inspiration, all our study and our understandings of the Buddhist path, all our experiences on retreat, all that we have learned over months and years of meditation and practice, all our deepest aspirations. When we bow before the Buddha we are in living connection with our truest and most heartfelt values.

This spring I was in India, at Bodh Gaya, for our Order Convention. I spent quite a bit of time around the Mahabodhi Temple that marks the place of the Buddha's Enlightenment. Here it was not the Buddha image inside the temple that most immediately caught my imagination and touched my faith, but spots just outside the temple connected with the Enlightenment story. At one end of the temple is the Bodhi Tree, an ancestor of the tree beneath which the Buddha sat in the days and hours leading up to and following his Enlightenment. It is surrounded by a stone railing, and all through the day pilgrims sit and meditate or recite verses of devotion near it. They come from all over the Buddhist world, including Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet, Burma and Japan, and Vietnam. There are many colours of robes and styles of chanting. Monks with microphones and portable PA systems lead groups of pilgrims in circumambulating the temple or sit and perform puja. Tibetan monks read from wood-block print scriptures. People chat and take photographs. In the background are the sounds of birds and the cries and traffic of the town. It can seem a complete cacophony, yet in the midst of it all I sensed a remarkable peace and stillness.

To one side of the temple is a raised stone platform, with carved stone lotuses spaced out along its length. This marks the place where the Buddha walked up and down in the third week after his Enlightenment, absorbing

the profundity and immensity of his experience. The lotuses symbolically mark his footprints. The platform and lotuses are usually covered in offerings of garlands and sweet smelling flowers and gold leaf. Pilgrims touch the lotuses and reverently place their heads on them. The atmosphere I sensed here was of joy, beauty and expansiveness.

Our 21st century world is pervaded by a shallow materialism, a ready cynicism, a fearful acquisitiveness. We are a part of this world and it can be difficult to avoid being infected by these attitudes, which can see us reducing the Buddhadharma to just a matter of meditation technique and personal liberation. If we are going to allow the Dharma to truly transform ourselves and the world we need to find ways to make an ongoing imaginative connection with the mystery, beauty and otherness of the Buddha and his Enlightenment whilst yet grounding it in our lives and experience. This is what our Order and movement, and places like Padmaloka, are all about.



Shrine Keepers Manual



Composed by Padmavajra, aged 17

Shrine keeping is a spiritual practice. For a traditional Buddhist, caring for the shrine, means caring for the supreme 'objects' of Buddhist worship: The Three Jewels (the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha). Through their symbols e.g. a Buddha image and so on, the Three Jewels are present, so we treat them with the utmost reverence. They remind us of our ultimate spiritual ideals. Shrine keeping is a way of practising mindfulness of those ideals. Shrine keeping becomes a practice when we bring mindfulness and reverence to cleaning and taking care of the shrine.

1. Before entering the shrine room

Be silent and ready yourself for what you are about to do. As you open the door, think: may I open the door to liberation for all living beings.

2. In the shrine room

Bow to the shrine. Do whatever chanting you wish e.g. the refuges and precepts. If you are preparing a special shrine for a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva it would be good to chant their mantra as much as possible while setting up the special shrine and cleaning.

Then, mindfully dust down surfaces and sweep the floor. As you clean, think: may I clean the dust of the defilements from the hearts of all living beings.

3. Work on the shrine itself

Remove all dead flowers, used incense sticks, spent candles and so on, reflecting on the impermanence of all things. Not long ago these things were fresh and new and now all that is left are their remains. Empty water from the puja bowls. The water can be poured into the garden as an offering to the local deities.

Thoroughly clean the bowls and all the other implements, reflecting that these are all used to make offerings to the Buddha, who is our honoured guest. If there are any cloths on the shrine, make sure that they are clean and fresh and free of wax and marks, again recalling that the Buddha is our honoured guest.

4. Cleaning the Buddha images and pictures

Very carefully clean and dust the images and the paintings. You could adapt verses from Shantideva's Bodhicaryavatara, which describes a special ritual of washing and cleaning the Buddha images:

'In those sweet-smelling bath-houses, where canopies gleam with pearls, over

delightful pillars, brilliant with gems, rising up from mosaic floors of clear, brilliant crystal, From many pots, encrusted with enormous gems, filled with exquisitely fragrant water and flowers, see, I bathe the Tathagatas and their sons and daughters, to the accompaniment of songs and music'

Ch2 vv 1-12

5. Setting out the offerings

Once everything is cleaned, make the offerings. First of all arrange flowers in vases with care and attention. As you are offering you could reflect that in offering flowers we are offering beauty to the most supremely beautiful. We can also reflect that although the flowers are beautiful, they will soon pass away.

'Reverencing the Buddha, we offer flowers:

Flowers that today are fresh and sweetly blooming, flowers that tomorrow are faded and fallen. Our bodies too, like flowers, will pass away.'

When setting up the candles, we can reflect that these candles are the light of wisdom that we are kindling in our heart from the inspiration of the Buddha.

'Reverencing the Buddha, we offer candles:

To Him, who is the Light, we offer light.

From his greater lamp a lesser lamp we light within us:

The lamp of Bodhi shining within our hearts.'

When setting out the incense, we can reflect that this incense symbolises our practice of the Dharma that we want to perfume and pervade all directions, bringing happiness to all beings.

'Reverencing the Buddha, we offer incense:

Incense whose fragrance pervades the air,

The fragrance of the perfect life, sweeter than incense,

Spreads in all directions throughout the world.'

If we have puja bowls, we set them out in a line in front of the Buddha image. Then, moving from left to right, we slowly fill each bowl to the brim, taking care not to spill any of the water.

As we pour the water, we chant OMAH HUM: The OM purifies the water. The AH transforms the bowl of water into a vast, jewel encrusted bowl, filled with all kinds of wonderful things.

The HUM brings the realisation of emptiness: offering, offerer and the receiver of the offering are empty, yet, everything is perfectly offered.

6. Conclusion

At the end, in front of the shrine, dedicate the merit of all these acts to the happiness and liberation of all sentient beings:

'May the merit gained in my acting thus,

Go to the alleviation of the suffering of all living beings.

My personality throughout my existences,

My possessions, and my merit in all three ways,

I give up without regard to myself for the benefit of all beings.

Just as the earth and other elements are serviceable in many ways

To the infinite number of beings inhabiting limitless space;

So may I become that which maintains all beings situated throughout space so long as all have not attained to peace.'

Bow to the shrine and when you leave the room, as you close the door, you think: may I close the door to suffering for all living beings.

Subhuti



A Trans-personal Force

I was the chairman of Padmaloka at the time that the Ordination process was launched in its present form along with Padmavjra, Surata, Sona, Suvajra, Cittapala and Aloka. We worked together very harmoniously with great inspiration to establish the process that you are all now participating in.

And for me having been there when it was launched and to come back now and see it continuing, and to see you, many of whom I've never met before befitting from that process, is a great inspiration, a pleasure, a great delight, a sort of confirmation of the work that we did; because something of it continues that you are participating in and that will no doubt be passed on to others who will benefit from it in the future.

My association with Padmaloka goes back much further; to when I came on a seminar Bhante conducted in the room that is now Surata's room and I listened to Bhante pouring out the Dhamma; taking some text, some basic text of Buddhism and exploring it in ways I wasn't even aware, but completely fresh and new and so much of it still unexplored today.

They were extraordinary times, those were very very creative times, Bhante so active, so engaged dhammically, kind of inventing a presentation of the Dhamma that was relevant to us and that is a foundation for this movement that we are all part of, and what's so gratifying to someone like me who's been involved from so early on, is to see it so alive now.

Padmaloka has continued to blossom ever since it was bought, its grown more and more vital, more spiritually alive, more and more creative and a more and more tangible atmosphere of spiritual upliftment has attached to the walls, soaked into the walls which I'm sure many of you, if not all of you have felt just the moment you came.

You feel something in the atmosphere, in the mood of things that is independent almost of the people concerned, something that's very much alive and that you can begin to participate in, not just in the sense of passively absorbing but participating in the sense of contributing to a great stream of spiritual energy that has been generated here. It's what Bhante was bringing to life in those seminars, a very strong sense of a vision that while Bhante was speaking you could actively see, you could witness tremendous excitement.

That is what this whole thing is about; its about sensing, participating in, contributing to, a spirit, an atmosphere, a force that is absolutely experienceable, it's something that you can definitely taste, that is indefinable

and that transcends anyone as an individual, at the same time as being experienced by individuals and emerging from individuals.

We are here to generate and to experience, to participate in and to enliven, to bring to greater and greater fruition that sort of spirit, that atmosphere that is especially experienced in a place like Padmaloka. That's what your request to join the order Order is about; it's about putting your shoulder to that wheel to helping it to spin to your own benefit and the benefit of all who it can touch. That's why you're here; well, whether you know it or not that's why you're here.

You're here to help that for you own benefit because it enables you go beyond that dreadful sort of self absorption and self-preoccupation and self reference; everything coming back to I, which, can be momentarily pleasurable, and when your ahead of the game and 'winning' can be intensely satisfying, but you can't ever sustain it indefinitely.

We're here to participate in something that goes beyond that narrow self preoccupation that narrow egotism, egoism, and we're here to help that participation in the world, linking up with others who are experiencing it, generating it, especially linking up with other Buddhists who are doing so because, in Buddhism we have a unique insight into what it is that hinders that force, that trans-egoic force and what benefits it, what helps it. In Buddhism we have a unique, clear conception of what it is that stands in the way of that trans-egoic force and a way of thinking about it, talking about it, and thereby practising for it that at least in my own relatively limited understanding is unique.

That's what you're here for. And of course for many of us we want that not just for ourselves because we are strongly affected by the suffering in the world, by the mess the world is in and by the poverty and the injustice and the violence that so many people suffer from. If we all put our minds to it, it would be relatively easy to solve. Whether it's safe drinking water whether its hunger or whether it's just decent education. So it's that force that spirit that we can feel at Padmaloka that our Order is about.

We're about channelling that; our Order is nothing but about that, that's what we live the Dhamma; life for, we practice the Dhamma; life for. And I'm a living witness in the way that does actually happen, I was here right at the beginning and I've seen Padmaloka grow in its ability to manifest that sort of spirit.

Going for Refuge Retreat, May 2013

Sanghanistha



Health and Safety at Padmaloka?

The language of Going for Refuge implies safety, but those of you who have practised for any length of time will know that a wholehearted spiritual life is not safe; in fact it's dangerous, it's a risky business.

So what of Padmaloka? You may not realise, but there are three Padmalokas, only one visible to the mundane eye. If Padmaloka were a lotus this is the stem. This is the nuts and bolts physical Padmaloka, the buildings, furniture, gardens etc. Where there are work duties to perform and unfortunately for the support team, health and safety meetings to attend.

Above this is the ideal Padmaloka, Padmaloka as pure land, when you glimpse this Padmaloka you realise that all the activities in the physical Padmaloka are in fact part of a vast, continually occurring, cosmic puja to the Buddha's and Bodhisattva's. This is Padmaloka as an immense all encompassing mandala with The Three Jewels blazing with wisdom fire at its centre. This is the lotus flower.

And the third? This is the Padmaloka that lies beneath, as cathartic transformation and cremation ground. Here the roots of the lotus draw upon the nutrients that feed stem and flower: Transforming the mud and slime of our self-clinging into the beauty of the blossoming lotus far above. Here dwell gods and demons, undermining our efforts to grow, our blind spots, spiritual bypass, the parts of us that do not go for Refuge to The Three Jewels, the parts of ourselves we'd rather not know about. Here also lie the bones of spiritual death, nourishing the calyx of spiritual rebirth in the realm above. Going here is dangerous, it's a risky business. But you will be in the company of other men willing to venture here.

Be prepared to practise in all three, there are risks, there are no guarantees, it's in your hands.



Padmasabhava's Realm

Lecture 151: Padmasambhava Day 1979
Urgyen Sangharakshita



Padmasambhava is the one who subdues the demons. That is his principle work. Subdues the gods and demons, influences on deeper and deeper levels what one can only describe as the archetypes of the collective unconscious, to coin or to borrow a Jungian phrase.

They're not just mythological figures; they're forces within the human mind itself. They're forces existing at a very deep level, not only within the individual mind, they exist as it were where the individual mind ends and the collective mind, the collective consciousness, the collective unconscious begins, but which at the same time influence and affect every individual conscious mind.

So this is what Padmasambhava does. He tackles the gods and the demons. That is the sort of help that we need to invoke.

It's not enough to scratch the rational surface of our minds. We have to penetrate to the depths, we have to drop as it were a sort of depth charge and blow up all those primordial forces which are sort of holding us down and holding us back.

One wants to bring oneself as it were right up against these forces in a very vivid and concrete manner.

Padmasambhava goes to burning grounds, to cremation grounds. He practises austerities there, he meditates and the dakinis start gathering around him and sort of looking at him and he as it were subdues them. What that means you can understand perhaps for yourselves. But describing one of these places the text says,

"There to be seen countless dakinis. Some of them have eyes that dart out sun rays; others give rise to thunderclaps and ride water buffaloes. Others hold sabres and have eyes which inflict harm. Others wear death's heads, one above the other, and ride tigers. Others wear corpses

and ride lions. Others eat entrails and ride garudas (great winged birds). Others have flaming lances and ride jackals. Others, five-faced, are steeped in a lake of blood. Others in the numberless bands carry many generations of living beings. Others carry in their hands, their own heads, which they have severed." (Well some of you probably have done that!) "Others carry in their hands their own hearts which they have torn out. There are others who have made gaping wounds in their own bodies and who empty out and devour their own intestines and entrails. There are others who hide and yet reveal their male or female sexual organs, riding horses, bull, elephants."

These are primordial forces so to speak, within ourselves. These are the forces which have to be subdued, which doesn't mean just crushed, held down by force, but integrated into our conscious attitude so that our conscious attitude, our conscious being, our conscious personality if you like can be enriched so that our spiritual life isn't just some pale anaemic thing, so that it is glowing as it were and throbbing with the energy of the dakinis, with the energy of the gods and the demons that have been tamed and transformed.

"In the North-East is the dakini Adamantine Conqueror of Demons who arouses sexuality and vomits small children. She has a cranberry red body and wears trousers of blue cotton. She has the beak of a peacock, the eyes of an owl, wears the six ornaments of bone on her pure breast, a mirror in the middle of her forehead, a vajra circle tying a tuft of hair, and in her hands are yellow vajras."

Padmasambhava represents Buddhism itself. He represents if you like the Buddha himself, in this particular aspect of subduer of all these primordial energies and forces within us in the depths of our own unconscious mind, so that they can be integrated with the purer clearer

energies of the spiritual life, so that our spiritual life as I've said is not just an anaemic and pale and sort of watery thing but pulsing with life and with energy..

"On looking inside, the dakinis saw that the cadaver had been devoured. Having eaten her flesh and drunk her blood, he had also taken her skin as a tunic and her skull for a cup of bloody libations. Seeing a serpent he made himself an anklet for his foot, a bracelet and a necklace. Finding a dead elephant he ate his flesh and stretched out his skin. He drank the blood and ate the flesh of a tiger and he used its pelt as a cloak. Then from his mouth he produced the fixed form of a curd of blood and from his body disposed of a small pile of ashes. And he who had eaten his mother for nourishment and dressed himself in her raw skin, who in his thirst had drunk her blood and who in action had perpetrated crime, who had lived off the dead, had a complexion which shone with light, white on the red, on the right, red on the left, blue in the middle. His faces were fierce. His giant body was a pale ash colour. His face was maliciously gracious with coarse muscular bundles of rough flesh. He attached on one side of himself a row of withered heads and hung fresh heads about him. He made himself a garland of three fringes dangling with skulls, and he oiled all his cheeks with red semen. On his body a swine skin grew. His mouth and eyes were scarlet, his mop of hair red with the mud of his hanging curls."

It's this sort of thing that Padmasambhava was up against. It's in a way this sort of thing that we're up against!

...lurking in the depths of our own mind, in fact lurking in the depths of all our minds, lurking in the depths of the collective unconscious, lurking in the world, lurking in mundane existence, in fact in a sense is mundane existence, in a sense doesn't even lurk!

It isn't enough to sort of skim the sort of spiritual surface of these things and ignore them, because the flames as it were are licking at your heels and you have to do something about them. You can't just sort of soar above them. You've got to descend into the flames as Blake would have said and you've got to transform them. You've got to walk in the flames and delight in the flames, enjoy the flames, and use the flames, not run away from them into some vague, ambiguous sort of light, cool, and all that sort of thing.

We see these vast, primordial, archetypal figures and forces as something to be transformed and transfigured, not something to be disowned, something to be brought within the sphere so to speak of the spiritual life and this is what Padmasambhava represents.

So there are economic demons. There are social demons, sociological demons. There are political demons. There are even religious demons, not to speak of the odd philosophical demon, all of whom need to be brought under control. You're living in a world of demons. You're living in a society of demons. I mean, you yourself are half demon. But it's a good thing, provided you can subdue your demon, half or your demon, two-thirds, or nine-tenths or you know whatever it is, or you know your dakini half or whatever it is. But this is what again we're up against and this is what we have to do.

So it's not simply that we're in the midst of demons. It's all a demon. The world is a demon. The god of the world as it were is a demon.

The remedy is found in the depths of the demon itself. The remedy is found in the depths of the disease itself. If you understand the disease,

you arrive at the remedy. If you plunge deeply into the body, so to speak, of the demon, you can take out the treasure. You don't have to go outside the world to find the transcendental. You go very deeply into it, you utilize it. You utilize all its forces, its energies. You integrate them with yourself and that is your spiritual life. You dig deep within the body of the demon himself, this gigantic, festering, foul body, but that's where you'll find the treasure. And that's as it were you anyway.

We have to transform ourselves. We have to transform the world. So Padmasambhava represents that very powerful principle of transformation which is even more powerful than what has to be transformed.

It's all about the transformation, the integration of these energies into our own spiritual lives so they subserve those lives and into a more positive, a more creative society, in fact the spiritual community ultimately.

Your Buddhist centre, Padmaloka itself ideally is a centre of transformation, so that whatever you know comes in contact with this place, starts being transformed. Only then will our spiritual life be really rich and really growing, and not based upon tension and not based upon struggle all the time. And we need to do much the same sort of thing within the world. It's not that the world is bad, it's not that the world is evil, it's not that the world is wrong, it's simply that the world's energies, or the energies which are the world so-called are misguided. They've got to be redirected; they've got to be guided in the right direction. So transformation of life, transformation of world, as we saw in those talks some time ago on The Sutra of Golden Light. This also is an aspect of the message so to speak of Padmasambhava.

Let's try to realize that the spiritual life is essentially one might say, integrally a process of subjugation and incorporation and integration and transfiguration of all the -as it were- grosser but very powerful and potentially very rich energies of our own consciousness, the collective unconscious even of humanity as well as of the world in general. If we think of the spiritual life in this way we shall arrive at a sort of very heroic conception of the spiritual life, a spiritual life is not a running away, a spiritual life is a facing of these energies, a facing of these forces, these processes, a subjugating of them, a transforming of them and if you like even a dragging along of them, by the hair if necessary along the path of the spiritual life. But eventually you won't need to drag them, they'll sort of willingly go along with you and as it were melt into your being and reinforce your energies with theirs, because ultimately they are you and their energies are your energies.

This is essentially what our whole movement is all about. It's a sort of transforming and transfiguring agency. It's not simply a Buddhist movement in the narrow sense, it's not even a spiritual movement in the narrow sense. It's a stream of spiritual energy, you might say, which transforms or which deeply transforms and transfigures everything and everyone with whom and with which it comes into contact. So this is the sort of thing that we must do: allow ourselves to be in contact with these energies, yes, well if we're strong enough that is, not flee from them, allow ourselves to be in contact with them, especially the deeper energies within our own selves, and transform them, and go forward along the Path with renewed energy, renewed strength and renewed inspiration.

This is what we've got to do. We shall have a more and more flourishing spiritual movement involving more and more people and doing more and more true good to the whole world, or at least to that section of it with which we come immediately into contact.

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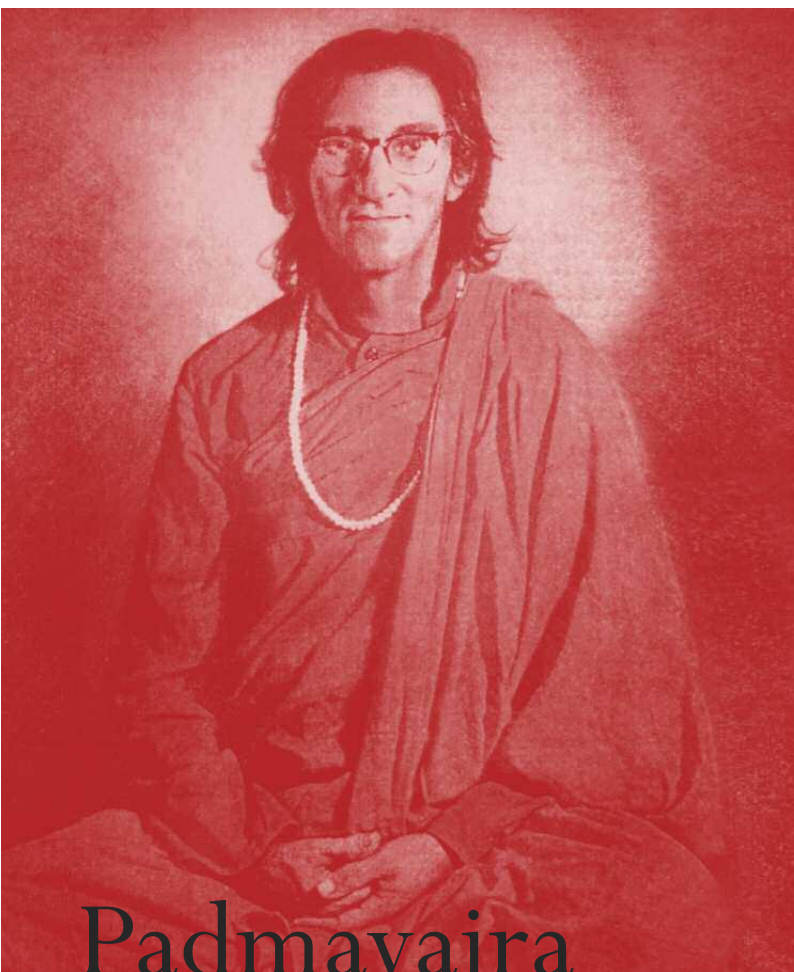
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Last winter I went on solitary for 14 weeks in Scotland. While I was there I felt for several weeks as if I was on the threshold of a vast realm. Although at the time fear prevented me from entering fully into that realm, I was able to put my trust in Vajrasattva and surrender to him. I felt a deep trust and confidence in the Dharma leaving the retreat and it was a reminder once again of the importance of building a broader base in order to absorb these experiences. I am very happy building that broader base through my work at Padmaloka. I love working closely with a team of Order members inspired by a common vision, which is bigger than our very different personalities. I love living in a large stimulating men's community and the work of helping men to join our Order. I thrive on the Dharma within a regular lifestyle. I have lived at Padmaloka for nearly 11 years now. It is the longest I have lived in one place and I still feel I am growing here, in fact more so than ever in recent years. To be truly fulfilled I need to have both a vivid inner life and an intense engagement with others; that I am having a positive effect on others and that my inner understanding of the Dharma is deepening. I experience both of these living and working at Padmaloka. It is broad and flexible enough to enable my Dharma life to continue to unfold in its natural course. I feel most fortunate.

Satyaraja





I am often irresistibly drawn to the Bodhisattva Kurukulla: brilliant red, sixteen years old, smiling with just a slight frown, her reddish yellow hair wild and loose as she dances ecstatically. Adorned with red lotus garlands, two of her hands holding a goad and noose, entwined with red lotuses, whilst she draws a red lotus tipped arrow in her bow of red lotus flowers. Originally a tribal goddess of love magic and enchantment, Kurukulla came to symbolize the fascinating quality of the Buddha's Enlightenment. The Buddha was not only wise and kind, for many he was fascinatingly mysterious, so much so that the Buddha was accused of inducing young men into his Sangha through the use of magic spells. But the enchantment was the magic of the Great Love, the Love that spontaneously flows from the heart of voidness. Kurukulla is also, for me, a quality of the Sangha. Kurukulla is the red of Maharaga, the Great Passion for the Enlightenment of all that the Sangha is working for. Kurukulla dances ecstatically in the Great Bliss, shooting her aphrodisiac arrows into the barren hearts of those who are lost. Enchanting them to gather and work together, in intense love, for the Liberation of all. That is what the true Sangha does. Padmaloka is a realm of Kurukulla. Do we see her magic, her enchantment, her play and fun? And immediately, my teacher Urgyen Sangharakshita comes to mind, with his long hair and crumpled yellow robes in the garden of Padmaloka on a hot day in 1976. I had asked him if he would lead a seminar on the Chan classic, The Blue Cliff Record, with a glint in his eye and a playful smile, he said. "You would have to be ready for anything...." Fascinating, enchanting... and a little scary....

