

# The Place of Imagination, Beauty, and Ritual in the Spiritual Life

## Week One

### **Emotional Energy and spiritual Aspiration**

Sangharakshita, *Ritual and Devotion* Chap.1, pp11 – 23

## Objectives for Week One

- overview of causes of emotions being blocked, wasted
- understand relationship between intuition and vision (higher thinking centre), emotional centre, and the moving centre (will).
- Explore difference between belief and faith
- How to involve our emotions more fully in our spiritual life

# The Place of Imagination, Beauty, and Ritual in the Spiritual Life (Handout 1.1)

## Week One

### **Emotional Energy and spiritual Aspiration**

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## Questions

1. Do you agree that `we are – almost all of us – chronically blocked, so that we do not fully express the emotional drives within us? Is it desirable to *fully* express these emotional drives? Why, or why not?
2. Are there aspects of the Buddha's teachings you want to bring into `being' as opposed to just `knowing'? Which are they?
3. How do you experience the relationship between the higher thinking centre, the emotional centre, and moving centre?
4. What is a `positive group member'? How does being this help us to developing individuality?
5. `one's unblocked emotions are more likely to be negative, if one does not have satisfactory communication with other people' (p.15) Why would this be so? Are we essentially negative then? What happens when we communicate fully?
6. What other ways of unblocking `blocked emotions' might work? What really stimulates our energies?
7. Is it possible in your experience `just to stop' verbal expression of negative emotions? What might be the effect?
8. What is the difference between `faith' and `belief'?
9. What does it mean to `refine' our emotional energies? How can the `fine arts' do this?

## The Place of Imagination, Beauty, and Ritual in the Spiritual Life (Handout 1.2)

### Home Practice: *Emotional Energy and spiritual Aspiration*

- Precept for the week to `stop` a particular verbal expression of a negative emotion
- Awareness (or make a note) of the effect of any `real` communication on you

### Optional further reading:

1. ***Poetry and Devotion in Buddhism*** Sangharakshita (This is the full version of Chapter One in *Ritual and Devotion*) if you want to hear Bhante. Read online or download as pdf: <http://www.freebuddhistaudio.com/texts/talks.php>
2. **`The Arising of Vision'**, pp12-15, *Vision and Transformation* Sangharakshita
3. **`Perfect Emotion'** Chapter 2, *Vision and Transformation* Sangharakshita
4. **`Tibetan Pilgrims'**, p210 original edition, *Crossing the Stream* Sangharakshita (beautiful piece on **faith**)
5. **`The Group and the Spiritual Community'**, Chapter Five, *What is the Sangha?* Sangharakshita (**on the positive group**)