



Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery

Annual Review

2023

This Document contains the ratanagiri.org.uk news blogs from 2022, generally published in new moon days, as well as Luang Por Munindo's full moon Dhammapada reflections for that year

Both those types of content have been interwoven to offer a chronological reading experience.

For the latest Dhammapada reflections, please see ratanagiri.org.uk/teachings/dhammapada-reflections where you can also subscribe to receive them via email.

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FULL MOON - UNDERSTANDING THE CHAOS

Published Monday, 17 January 2022

*All states of being are determined by the heart.
It is the heart that leads the way.
Just as the wheel of the oxcart follows
the hoofprint of the animal that draws it,
so suffering will surely follow
when we speak or act impulsively
from an impure heart.*

Dhammapada v.1

It is obvious when we look around that currently many people are caught up in a maelstrom of conflicting views and opinions. A lot of these people are likely suffering from feelings of hopelessness. This short teaching by the Buddha, which forms the first verse in the Dhammapada, is not a naive feel-good message. Rather it is a practical pointing to where we need to be focussing attention if we are sincere in wanting to understand this state of chaos. To some, the image of an oxcart could appear archaic, but the truth of the message is still thoroughly relevant. There are causes for the way things are: acting and speaking from an impure heart will lead to suffering. We might have profoundly clever ideas in our heads, and be able to eloquently offer advice to others, but are we able to free our hearts from the pollution of self-centeredness? One place to begin is increasing the effort to be honest.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2022

Posted on February 01, 2022

Today, Tuesday 1st, is the **New Moon** day for the month of February 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** and falls on Wednesday 16th February.

Currently our community is on our annual Winter Retreat, until 31st March.

On Sunday 16th January we remembered the passing away, 30 years ago, of our teacher Ajahn Chah. The talk I gave on that occasion is titled **How To Contemplate**.

Please see the latest **ANNOUNCEMENT** for news about relaxing the restrictions around making offerings of food and requisites to the community.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - NO ABIDING SELF

Published Wednesday, 16 February 2022

*"All realities are devoid
of an abiding self";
when we see this with insight
we will tire of this life of suffering.
This is the way to purification.*

Dhammapada v.279

Students of child development tell us that it takes many months before an individual sense of self emerges in the consciousness of an infant. And at the other end of the spectrum that we call our life, the sense of self that we have grown used to, often becomes much less defined; in some cases disintegrating altogether. This might not be something we are comfortable thinking about. However, it accords with what the Buddha said about all realities being devoid of any abiding 'self'. What we call our 'self' develops over the years, it changes and as such is not something we ought to be clinging to. So where, then, should we be looking for security, for identity? This is why we say, 'I go for refuge to the Buddha.' We trust that a reliable, stable sense of who we truly are is to be found in the Buddha. We are not talking here about the historical Buddha who lived in India around two and a half thousand years ago. The Buddha we go for refuge to, that we have faith in, is here-and-now, selfless, just-knowing awareness.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: MARCH 2022

Posted on March 02, 2022

Today, Wednesday 2nd, is the **New Moon** day for the month of March 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** and falls on Thursday 17th March.

Currently our community is on our annual Winter Retreat, until 31st March.

Please see the latest talk given at Aruna Ratanagiri: **Being Interested in Dukkha**

Please see the latest **ANNOUNCEMENT** for news about relaxing the restrictions around making offerings of food and requisites to the community.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - SECURITY

Published Thursday, 17 March 2022

*We are our own protection;
we are indeed our own secure abiding;
how could it be otherwise?
So with due care we attend to ourselves.*

Dhammapada v.380

To want to feel safe and secure is perfectly natural. We do need to be careful, however, about where we look for safety and security. Looking in the wrong places can mean that when we encounter uncertainty, we stumble and our awareness collapses into a painful knot of fear and anger. In this verse the Buddha directs us to look inwards for a secure abiding. Such advice can conflict with our instincts to try to control outer conditions. Maybe we feel mean for paying attention to ourselves while others around us are suffering. Remember that the Buddha isn't telling us to *only* pay attention inwards; rather, that having access to an inner sense of security is the priority if we want to live in this world and remain sane. So long as we do not have an honest, conscious relationship with our desire for certainty, we are bound to project our fear of uncertainty outwards; to demand that outer circumstances are stable and accord with our preferences. This leaves us dangerously vulnerable. One important aspect of 'attending to ourselves with due care' is to study our reactions when faced with feelings of uncertainty. Can we feel afraid without becoming lost in fear? Can we feel sad without becoming lost in sadness? 'Protecting ourselves' doesn't mean not having feelings. It means learning how, at the right time, to remember the refuge in the Buddha: in selfless, just-knowing awareness – that which can lead to accurate understanding and true compassion.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: APRIL 2022

Posted on April 01, 2022

Today, Friday 1st, is the **New Moon** day for the month of April 2022. The next *Uposatha Day* will be the **Full Moon** and falls on Saturday 16th April.

Winter Retreat for 2022 has finished and we express our gratitude for the thoughtfulness and generosity shown during this time. There are a few announcements to make, but since we are still getting used to the Covid restrictions being lifted there is also a degree of uncertainty.

On Saturday 9th April, all going well, there will be an 'in-person' meeting at the monastery of the Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trustees.

And then on Sunday 10th April we are expecting to mark the South and Southeast Asia New Year (Thai: *Songkran*). Events begin at 10.30 am in the Dhamma Hall.

Saturday 23rd April should see a gathering for the first proper Lake Work Day of the year. All invited.

Please note that the midday meal time now takes place at 11.30 am and we would ask donors who wish to make offerings in the conservatory to be here well before 11 am.

As mentioned above, other changes can be expected e.g. opening of Kusala House guest accommodation, beginners' meditation classes, Saturday evening pujas. Information regarding these changes will be mentioned in special **ANNOUNCEMENTS** that will be sent out. The information on the current **ANNOUNCEMENTS** page still holds though this is likely to change after the New Year's event on 9th April.

For the latest talk given at Aruna Ratanagiri please see: **Different Ways of Dealing with Suffering.**

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - TRUST & FAITH

Published Saturday, 16 April 2022

*Even those who live wholesome lives
can experience suffering
so long as their acts have not yet borne direct fruits.
However, when the fruits of their actions ripen
the joyful consequences cannot be avoided.
Dhammapada v.120*

It takes faith to trust in the law of kamma. However, since faith is not as showy as insight, some meditators ignore its place in practice. We are not talking here about naive belief, which easily gets us into trouble. Matured faith takes a lot of work. Perhaps we feel inspired to put effort into developing mindfulness and understanding, but forget to pay attention to that which actually motivates us. Faith is like the juice in the tank. Regardless of how good our car might be, without fuel we won't get very far. We wouldn't sit on a chair if we didn't trust it would support us. We are unlikely to feel really relaxed around someone if we don't trust them. Trust and faith are powerful motivators. Just because we don't have all the answers to life's many complex questions, does not necessarily mean we are failing. Trusting in true principles – Dhamma – and waiting for an answer can sometimes be exactly the right approach.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: APRIL 30TH 2022

Posted on April 30, 2022

Today, Saturday 30th, is the second **New Moon** day in the month of April 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** and falls on Sunday 15th May, which will be Vesak.

A few days ago we sent out a message announcing this year's **Vesak Celebration**. We hope many of you will wish to be part of that. Since there are still incidences of Covid 19 being reported, we will ask everyone to wear a mask when inside the dhamma hall or in crowded places. Please note, a variety of age groups and vulnerabilities are expected to be in attendance.

The most recent dhamma talk given at Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery was titled **Contentment Emerging Naturally**.

For those who would be interested in participating, the next Lake Work Day is May 21st.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - A REFRESHED COMMITMENT

Published Sunday, 15 May 2022

*Let the dread of endless mediocrity spur you into great effort,
like a well-trained horse encouraged by the mere touch of the whip.
Relinquish the burden of endless struggle with unapologetic confidence,
with purity of action, effort, concentration,
and by conscious and disciplined commitment to the path.*

Dhammapada v.144

The tedium of life's struggles can sometimes drag us down. That same tedium can also spur us on to increase the effort we make as we walk the path. On this Vesakha Puja day, when we reflect on the good fortune of having heard the Buddha's teachings, let's all refresh our commitment to use whatever difficulties we encounter, in constructive and creative ways. Without conscious commitment, the Buddha-to-be would never have Awakened. The wisdom he realized wasn't found in a book or borrowed from anyone else. That wisdom was inspired by a passionate wish to benefit all beings and a resolve to see beyond the surface level of life's struggles.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: MAY 30TH, 2022

Posted on May 30, 2022

Today, Monday 30th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of May 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Tuesday, 14th June.

Our celebration of Vesak was a delight with many visitors joining us for the morning gathering in the Dhamma Hall, the midday meal, the afternoon circumambulation (see picture below) and the evening puja. A dhamma talk was given on that occasion by Luang Por Munindo titled **Awareness Upgrade**

For anyone interested in participating in the next Lake Work Day, one is booked for Saturday 25th June. All welcome.

At last we have managed to have an elevating plinth constructed beneath the large Buddha rupa down by the lake (see picture). Now it looks more suitable. Anumodana to those whose donations made this possible.

It seems word is gradually spreading that thankfully the routine at the monastery has returned to usual: everyone is welcome once again in the Reception Room for the midday meal; tea with a bhikkhu takes place in Kusala House most Sunday evenings at 5 pm (check calendar to be sure); a Public Puja happens each Sunday evening in the Dhamma Hall; and a Beginner's Meditation Class will be available at 5pm each first Sunday of the month, recommencing July 3rd, at Kusala House.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - DEATH

Published Tuesday, 14 June 2022

*There is no place on earth
beyond the reach of death -
not in a mountain cave,
the ocean nor in the sky.*

Dhammapada v.128

All living beings are afraid of death. The way the Buddha wanted us to deal with this fear is to look at it directly; not to deny it by way of distraction. Hence such uncompromising teachings as this Dhammapada verse. Not much in life is guaranteed, though the evidence around us would indicate that one day we will indeed die. It is natural to try to avoid pain – and obviously fear is painful – however it is not wise to ignore clear evidence. So how should we prepare ourselves to be able to look directly at fear? We develop the spiritual faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, collectedness, discernment. We also need to own up to how much of human society endorses an habitual avoidance of the inevitability of our own death. Acknowledging our own backlog of avoidance requires great patience. Honesty, patience and kindness help dissolve habits of denial and lead to contentment.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: JUNE 28TH, 2022

Posted on June 28, 2022

Today, Tuesday 28th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of June 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Wednesday, 13th July. Thursday 14th July is the first day of our annual Vassa (three months Rains Retreat).

On Friday 17th June, we marked with gratitude the birthday of our teacher, Venerable Ajahn Chah. Here is a link to the talk given on that occasion.

Lots of recent rain and sunshine has contributed to verdant vistas and an increase in hay fever. Several friends, old and new, participated in the Lake Work Day on Saturday 25th June. It feels like a relief to see people gradually returning. The next Lake Work Day is scheduled for Sunday 31st July (check online calendar for confirmation.)

Currently a pattern seems to be emerging of a dhamma talk being given every second week at our Sunday Evening Puja. Please check the online calendar for details. The **beginners' meditation classes** at Kusala House will recommence on Sunday 3rd July. Every Saturday evening a guided meditation is included in the Evening Puja in the Dhamma Hall.

The most recent dhamma talk given at Aruna Ratanagiri on Sunday 26th June was titled, **Are We Suffering From a Virtue Deficiency?**

As far as future events go, we are looking forward to having Ajahn Kaccana from Abhayagiri Monastery in California, USA, join us for a few days from 27th June until 6th July. And on Sunday 10th July, there will be a special meal offering to mark Ajahn Punnyo's 60th birthday. All welcome.

Our trustees have asked that you please be advised, Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust has recently updated its Privacy Policy - June 2022. See our website for the relevant announcement.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - PERFECT FREEDOM

Published Wednesday, 13 July 2022

*Gradually, gradually,
a moment at a time,
the wise remove their own impurities
as a goldsmith removes the dross.*

Dhammapada v.239

If we have the concept that gold is inherently pure, we can be motivated to remove impurities within it. We don't have to try to create pure gold because we trust that the potential for pure gold is already there within that which is impure. Similarly, we can consider that the potential for perfectly pure awareness - with its expression as wisdom and compassion - is already here within our somewhat scattered and impure awareness. We don't have to create pure awareness; rather we give ourselves into the work of removing the impurities within the awareness we already have. Self-centred greed, hatred and confusion are not inherent in awareness. If they were the Buddha could never have realized perfect freedom and the beauty of selflessness.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: JULY 28TH, 2022

Posted on July 28, 2022

Today, Thursday 28th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of July 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Friday, 12th August.

It appears we were spared much of the heat wave that covered the southern parts of UK though there was one day that was a bit hot. On the 10th July we marked Ajahn Punnyo's 60th birthday and are now anticipating with pleasure his return in September/October to being resident once again at Harnham.

On the weekend of 22nd - 24th July we were happy to have friends from the Dhammapala Buddhist Group in Leeds visiting.

This approaching weekend will see be the Annual General Meeting of the Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust (HBMT) with most trustees being physically present.

And the next Lake Work Day is scheduled for Sunday 31st July (check online calendar for confirmation.)

We will be hosting a meditation retreat, mostly for members of the Thai community, from 31st July to 3rd August. This coincides with 6 days of monastic retreat.

The most recent dhamma talk given at Aruna Ratanagiri on Sunday 24th July was titled, Concord of Conflict. Among other things it considered how training in forgiveness serves to increase concord. It also questioned the way 'Going for Refuge' can contribute to a secure sense of personal identity.

We are happy that from 8th to 14th August we will be hosting Luang Por Sucitto. He was the very first abbot of this monastery and is presently resident in Ireland.

A new iteration of our Forest Sangha Calendar has been released suitable to install on a smartphone. Please see here - <https://cal.forestsangha.org/> It is still being developed so we hope you will be patient with us in the process.

On a similar theme, a conversation has begun around rekindling the idea of creating a smartphone app that gives ready access to the contents of the **Forest Sangha website**. Earlier attempts met with a number of obstacles so we will see how far we get this time. Anyone who has skills or suggestions for what such an app might feature is welcome to be in touch: sangha@ratanagiri.org.uk

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - THE EASY LIFE

Published Friday, 12 August 2022

*Life is easy
for one who lacks shame,
who is as impudent as a crow,
who is arrogant, aggressive,
invasive and corrupt.*

Dhammapada v.244

Shame in the sense that it is used here is not the toxic mind state associated with humiliation and unkindness. Rather it is a wholesome sense of remorse associated with any intention to cause harm; harm to both oneself and others. Such skilful shame is described by the Buddha as a 'protector of the world' – lokapala. Without it, the outer world and our inner worlds disintegrate. Life might appear easy for those who reactively follow any impulse they feel, but what they don't see is the distress and despair they are storing up for themselves.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: AUGUST 26TH, 2022

Posted on August 26, 2022

Today, Friday 26th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of August 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Saturday 10th September.

(At this time of writing) the sangha at Harnham are presently on retreat.

The most recent dhamma talk was titled, '**New & Improved**' or '**Tried and Tested**'.

Next Lake Workday is scheduled for tomorrow, Saturday 27th August.

On 4th September there will be a Beginner's Meditation Class held at Kusala House, 5 pm. No booking required.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - THE POWER OF VIRTUE

Published Saturday, 10 September 2022

*The fragrance of flowers or sandalwood
blows only with the prevailing wind,
but the fragrance of virtue
pervades all directions.*

Dhammapada v.54

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2022

Posted on September 25, 2022

Today, Sunday 25th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of September 2022. The next *Uposatha Day* will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Monday 10th October. This is also the last day of our annual Rains Retreat, Pavarana Day.

Before, during, and after my birthday on 16th September many good friends visited and sent messages. A life without friends would be painful. The mere thought of attempting this spiritual journey without friends is daunting. I am very grateful.

On Sunday 18th September I offered a reflection titled, **Functional and Dysfunctional Frustration**. Wherever we live, in a forest monastery in a busy city, or anywhere else, we all encounter feelings of frustration. How do we meet those feelings? Is it with resistance, saying, 'it shouldn't be this way', or with well-prepared, open-hearted awareness that has the space to receive all the intensity life is throwing at us? Obviously I advocate cultivating the second response. It does take work though, and in the beginning our efforts can look feeble. Remember, it is unwise to blindly believe in apparent reality. Actuality could be completely different.

Tonight, Sunday 25th September I plan to offer a reflection titled, On Being Ordinary. It is intended that this talk will continue on the same theme and consider how idealistically attaching to views about life, including clinging to views about dhamma practice, doesn't help. When held rightly, views are like principles: they serve to guide us along the path.

Presently we are planning a schedule of lay retreats for 2023. Our new Retreat Manager, Gilla, has so far secured commitments from Ajahn Amaro, Ajahn Abhinando, Ajahn Punnyo and Ajahn Khemako. Dates will be announced nearer the time.

The Rain Retreat this year will end with 2 weeks of monastic retreat - 26th September until 8th October. As usual, this means minimal (to no-) talking. You are, as always, welcome to visit, to join in the Sunday night *pūja* and to participate in the midday meal-offering.

There will not be a Kathina Ceremony at Harnham this year since we did not have the required 5 monks resident for the *Vassa*. However, various friends of the monastery are instead organizing a traditional almsgiving event (Thai: *Pah Bah*) to be held on Sunday 16th October. If you wish to find out more and participate in the event, please contact :

Bee Wan: gohbee1@hotmail.com - Tel: 07912 683 576

Yom Mame: mametemduang@hotmail.com - Tel: 07855 902 226

Yom Rungarun: aloonpink@gmail.com - Tel: 07943543695

Please note, the next Lake Work Day will be on Saturday 29th October. For the following month we have two days set aside - 26th and 27th November.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - PROTECTING OURSELVES

Published Monday, 10 October 2022

*As a border city must be carefully protected
so guard yourself both within and without;
build your defences wisely and in time.
If these things are not attended to
at the right moment, great sadness will come.*

Dhammapada v.315

We are probably sufficiently aware of how to guard ourselves outwardly; so how do we guard ourselves inwardly? First and foremost it is by protecting ourselves from negative mind states. When Venerable Anando asked the Buddha why it is so important to live a life of integrity, he replied that it meant the heart could be free from remorse. Secondly, we need a good degree of alertness, mindfulness. If our attention is dissipated then we are not in a position to tell that which is beneficial from that which is not. Thirdly, it is necessary that we build a capacity to exercise composure. From the outside composure might appear unimportant, but without it we will probably function in automatic mode; we don't so much respond to situations as react out of habit. Fourth, and finally in this reflection, we need well-developed discernment. The intelligence we are gifted with as human beings has the potential to be refined to the point where it is ready to ask the right questions at the right time in the right way.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 24TH, 2022

Posted on October 24, 2022

Today, Monday 24th, is the **New Moon** day for the month of October 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Tuesday 8th November.

The recent alms-giving event (Thai: *Pah Bah*) was a delight. We were joined for the occasion by a minibus load of bhikkhus, siladharas, samaneras and an anagaraka from Amaravati, Cittaviveka and Hartridge Monasteries. Also a generous crowd of local friends and supporters brought food and offerings and enjoyed each other's company. Ajahn Amaro offered an uplifting dhamma talk on dealing with change.

Ajahn Chandapalo arrived from Wat Santacittarama in Italy on the day after our Pah Bah and stayed for 6 days. From 27th October to 3rd November, two bhikkhus from Harnham will be going to participate in the Cittaviveka Monastery Kathina in West Sussex. Shortly after that Samanera Nibbuto, who has spent the Rains Retreat there, will return to Harnham.

On Sunday 9th October I offered a talk titled, **Meditation and/or Therapy**. This was not the average theme of Sunday night's contemplation, but nevertheless relevant. Many people start out in their Buddhist practice full of faith and aspiration and are rewarded with an initial increase of confidence that there is 'actuality'; life is not mere chaos. However, for some their faith then becomes obscured by complex and apparently intransigent difficulties. It is a great pity if at that point they give up and lose faith altogether. It is similarly regrettable if they persist in hammering away using techniques that are not suitable. This is where we need to be agile in our approach to practice. The forest tradition of Theravada Buddhism is well known for its emphasis on asceticism, and for those who have the ability to pick up such practices there can be great benefit. For those whose conditioning means asceticism is likely to put them off meditation, a more gentle approach is called for. Although the tradition encourages, 'eat little, sleep little, speak little', that doesn't work for everyone. For some the opposite is called for. They need to relax around their eating habits and stop trying so hard to become 'spiritual'. Some actually need more sleep not less, and others benefit from finding a trusted friend they can speak with. Agility can be an important virtue.

As for what lies ahead, please note, the next Lake Work Day will be on Saturday 29th October. Then in November there is a Lake Work Weekend planned for 26th - 27th. Do feel free to join us. The next Harnham Buddhist Monastery Trust (HBMT) meeting is planned for November 5th, via Zoom. And, as is usual for this time of year, the clocks are about to go back which means from Sunday 30th October the midday meal bell will ring at 10.45 am with the meal being served at 11 am. Also as usual, there is a beginner's meditation class on the first Sunday of the month, 6th November.

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - HAPPINESS FOLLOWS

Published Tuesday, 08 November 2022

All states of being are determined by the heart.

It is the heart that leads the way.

*As surely as our shadow never leaves us,
so happiness will follow when we speak or act
from a pure heart.*

Dhammapada v.2

For those who are truly pure-hearted, all actions lead to happiness. Our practice is to purify our hearts. Sometimes on this path of purification we feel like we know what we need to do and just have to muster up the energy to do it. Then there are times when we are not so sure what we ought to be doing. In such cases not-doing could be the right action – carefully waiting; standing on the edge, feeling as if we are about to be overwhelmed any minute. This path of purifying the heart calls for great patience and great agility.

NEW MOON NEWSLETTER: NOVEMBER 23RD, 2022

Posted on November 23, 2022

Today, Wednesday 23rd, is the **New Moon** day for the month of November 2022. The next Uposatha Day will be the **Full Moon** which falls on Thursday 8th December.

In our last newsletter it was mentioned that two bhikkhus would be joining in with the Kathina at Cittaviveka Monastery in West Sussex. Unfortunately that didn't happen. Covid happened instead. (Conveniently) about half of the community went down with it first, then the second half had it. Hopefully we are all now well-stocked with antibodies.

Before, during, and after the Covid attacks there has been quite some travelling. Tan Sucinno visited his ninety-six year-old grandmother in Borneo, Tan Samacitto is presently with his parents in Germany, Ajahn Punnyo is at his mother's in Ampleforth, and Samanera Nibutto has returned from Cittaviveka as well as attending funerals of both his grandparents who passed away in close succession.

On Sunday 13th November I offered a talk titled, So Happiness Follows. It started with considering Dhammapada verse 2: All states of being are determined by the heart. It is the heart that leads the way. As surely as our shadow never leaves us, so happiness follows when we speak from a pure heart. In the process of reflecting on the consequences of acting from a pure or impure heart we considered how many of us have trouble even accessing our own hearts. With affluence comes increased possibilities for avoiding the natural dukkha of life. Habits of avoidance lead to increased unawareness, then, until around mid-life we discover our heart has grown numb and we wonder why we have become addicted to distraction. The entertainment and travel industries profit from this situation but our hearts are not necessarily enlivened. That which brings warmth and life back to our hearts is reality, or Dhamma. If we are interested in being happy it means we are obliged to be interested in reality. Thankfully these days we have access to many great teachings that can help guide us through the quagmire of denied life and in the direction of reality.

This month there is a Lake Work Weekend planned for 26th - 27th. Do feel free to join us. No need to contact us in advance, just turn up. Unless that is you wish to stay overnight in which case please do write to guestmaster@ratanagiri.org.uk

With good wishes,

Ajahn Munindo

FULL MOON - SELFLESS, JUST-KNOWING AWARENESS

Published Thursday, 08 December 2022

*Since ancient times it has been the case that
those who speak too much are criticised,
as are those who speak too little
and those who don't speak at all.
Everyone in this world is criticised.*

Dhammapada v.227

It can hurt to be criticised. It can hurt to feel we are failing. Since there is no way of getting through this life without being both criticised and feeling like we are failing, surely we need to learn how to meet the hurt without turning it into suffering. Hurt is another word for pain, and all sentient beings experience pain. The Buddha experienced pain, though it didn't cause him to suffer. Neither having to put up with problematic monks, nor the discomfort of old age and sickness disturbed his inner clarity and contentment. From his Awakening onward, the Buddha's consciousness was free from all tendencies to seek security in habits of clinging to the body-mind. If we want to cease from turning the inevitable pain of life into suffering, we need to learn to do likewise. We need to stop seeking for a sense of identity by clinging and realize true security can only be found in selfless, just-knowing awareness.