



*'We have more possibilities available in each moment than we realise' – Thich Nhat Hanh*



Dear friends,

July 2020

As humanity is going through unprecedented challenges, we hope you and your loved ones are doing well. The pandemic makes us realise how fragile our existence is. As our planet heals, may we all find the strength and courage to tide over this situation with a sense of calm and ease.



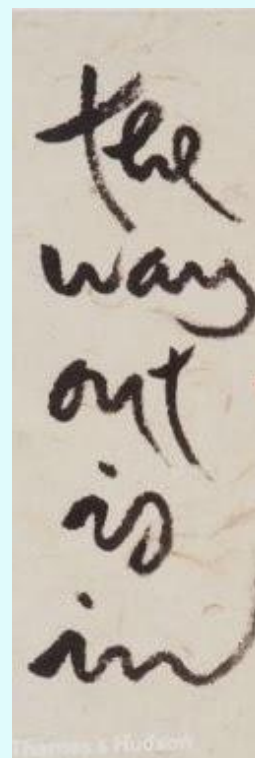
This is also a time of reflection and pause. Summer is here, and in India, the pre monsoon showers have started. We can still see some of our gardens and terraces blooming with beautiful flowers and even growing their own vegetables! The beauty of the red poppies, the Hydrangeas and Geraniums, each large one being a 'sangha' of little flowers, the roads carpeted with red Gulmohar and purple Jacaranda flowers. We have much to appreciate and be thankful for!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Please make a note of Ahimsa Trust **Mindfulness events in Delhi for the 2020 calendar year** These sessions will be held **online** in case the lock down continues and will be open to everyone wherever they are located. Details of the programs with timings will be sent to you a week before each event.

- **WakeUp Schools India: Cultivating Mindfulness**, 6th June to 8th August 2020 (every Saturday)
- **'Listen with Compassion'**: A half day of Mindfulness, 27th September 2020 (Sunday):
- **'Breathe and Smile'**: A half day of Mindfulness 29th November 2020 (Sunday)
- Fortnightly **Sangha Gatherings** (open to all)

(Please check [www.ahimsatrust.org](http://www.ahimsatrust.org) for details)



## Jamun Village

Inspired by the example of the community of mindfulness practitioners led by Thich Nhat Hanh at Plum Village, located in the south of France and other international communities around the world, Ahimsa Trust is setting up Jamun Village – a Mindfulness Practice Centre, in the foothills of the Himalayas in Dehradun, Uttarakhand (North India)

Jamun is the Black Plum tree under which the Buddha first sat in meditation at the age of 9. The Centre is conceived as a living four fold community, of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. A retreat and mindful refuge for individuals and families (including children) for those who want to live in harmony with the ecology and society in the area, while making a right livelihood through non-violent means. It will be a home for those who want to live in the beauty and the magic of mindful awareness and engage in bringing joy and happiness to people's lives, our wider community and nature.

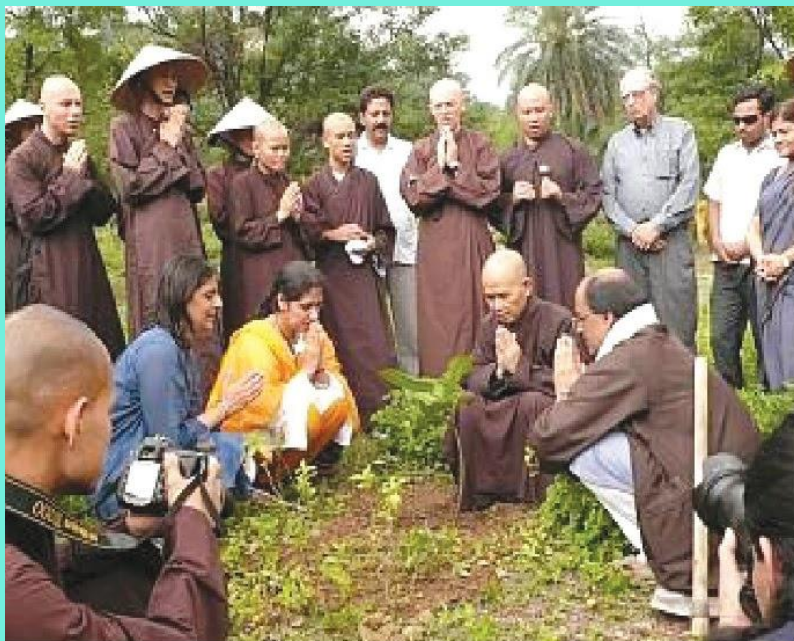


*The Jamun Tree*

Besides the activities, the Centre will be focusing on best practices related to water and waste management, alternative sustainable energy, organic design and farming and eco-buildings.

The concept plan has been designed and Ahimsa would like to start with Phase 1 which would entail landscaping, a lotus pond, two meditation gazebos, an amphitheatre, two huts, a guest/monastic house, a dining room gazebo with a kitchen and a toilet block. Ahimsa is looking for funds and expertise for Phase 1 of this project.

We would like to thank our volunteer who has been with us during the lockdown period. He has been working hard to get all the plans in place. We hope in the years to come, a place would be there for us to visit and practice together as a sangha.



*Thich Nhat Hanh planting a Banyan tree and blessing the land of Jamun Village, Dehradun*

## AN APPEAL

We are so grateful to our friends and well wishers in the US who have set up 'Friends of Ahimsa Foundation' (FOA), a 501 (C) (3) entity to support Ahimsa's work in India. Please find our programmes, projects and work listed below or write to us at [ahimsa.trust@gmail.com](mailto:ahimsa.trust@gmail.com) for details. Your donation does not have to be large, please offer whatever you can afford, as every little bit helps.

**We would so appreciate any support especially to set up Jamun Village, a mindfulness practice centre in India.**

If you are located in the US please find the following link for donations through FOA (501 (C) (3))

[Donate Now](#)

If you are anywhere else in the world please click on the Donate Now button.

[Donate Now](#)

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

99% of us at Ahimsa are volunteers. Many friends offer their time, energy, resources. We are urgently looking for someone who can help us with our **website** (which needs a revamp!) For our **Mindfulness Centre, Jamun Village**, we would love to have some landscape architects, enthusiastic gardeners, designers who can share their insights and inputs. Please feel free to offer whatever little time or energy you can afford.

## AHIMSA NEWS AND UPDATES

Since our last newsletter in January, we have a lot to share, especially about our activities during the lockdown period. There are photographs and details about each project/programme if you scroll down or click on the **Read More** link at the end of this box

**I. Community Development Initiatives** in the Santiniketan area, West Bengal, India [Read More](#)

## II. Mindfulness events

- A. Talk by Stephen Batchelor at Kanheri Caves, Maharashtra, India (Jan 2020)
- B. A half day of mindfulness, “Joy is Every Step”, New Delhi. Open for the public (Feb 2020),
- C. In the Footsteps of Thich Nhat Hanh’ Lions’ Roar retreat (March 2020).
- D. Online Retreat for Ahimsa Core Group (10th to 13th April 2020)
- E. Six Free Online Saturday Meditation sessions by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth (mid April to end May 2020)
- F. Budh Purnima Celebration on Zoom (7th May 2020) offered by the Ahimsa Thich Nhat Hanh sanghas around India.
- G. Fortnightly Sangha gatherings
- H. WakeUp Schools, India: Cultivating Mindfulness Online Course (6th June to 8th August 2020)
- I. Online retreat for the Central Reserve Police Force (25th June to 8th August 2020)
- J. Translation of Thich Nhat Hanh’s books/practices in Hindi.

[Read More](#)

## III. Education Support for economically disadvantaged children. [Read More](#)

*Sonakshi, with her younger brother, Satyam  
in Bakror Village, Bodhgaya, India*

Do click on the link [Read More](#) for details and photographs on any of the projects /programmes listed above and scroll down to the bottom of the page for details on each programme.





## MEDIA & OUTREACH

### Inspiring articles in Newspapers

Ahimsa Trust has set up a Communications Team and we have been publishing articles by Thich Nhat Hanh in the Economic Times and Speaking Tree, a supplement on wellness by The Times of India Newspaper. Do watch out for these articles. One particular article which was well received in these uncertain times was 'If you want to be Happy, Embrace Your Pain' by Thich Nhat Hanh.

In case you missed it do read it below.

<https://www.speakingtree.in/article/if-you-want-to-be-happy-embrace-your-pain>

## SUGGESTIONS

Talk on You tube by Brother Phap Dung :

*'This is a Noble Moment' - Dharma Talk by Brother Phap Dung, 29th March 2020*

Br Phap Dung talks about how, even in our current world environment, the present moment can be a noble moment, a moment for us to reflect.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnrZe\\_8Sb8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnrZe_8Sb8)

**Book Recommendation:**

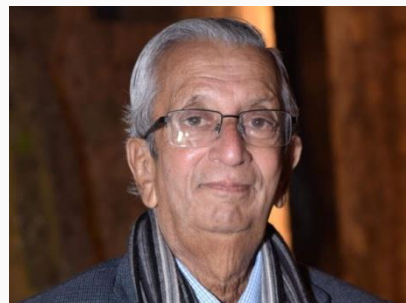
**'Heart of Understanding '**

Author: Thich Nhat Hanh

Published: Full Circle Publishing, India

## TRIBUTE

Shri Ashok Desai, a dear friend and advisor to Ahimsa Trust, passed away on the 13th of April. Ashokbhai and his wife, Suvarnaben, have been our biggest patrons and were always there to provide wise counsel whenever we needed it. Ashok Bhai had wide interests, including in the Buddha Dharma, being conversant with both the ancient sutras as also good contemporary teachings. When Thich Nhat Hanh was coming to India in 1997, he was the Attorney General of India and graciously invited Thay and Sr Chan Khong to his



home. At that time, he also launched the Indian editions of both the Hindi and English versions of Old Path White Clouds. A couple of years later Ashokbhai and Suvernaben, came on a pilgrimage 'In the Footsteps of Buddha' that was legendary in some ways and we brought in the millennium year 2000 meditating under the Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya.

Our friendship grew and some years later we were keen to get land to start the Jamun Village Mindfulness Community Centre and needed supporters to buy and donate the land to the Trust. His support was immediate, unhesitating and generous.

With maitri and a deep bow,

**Ahimsa Trust**

[ahimsa.trust@gmail.com](mailto:ahimsa.trust@gmail.com)

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with Shalini at 8860694315 (10 am to 3 pm) or you can check our website [www.ahimsatrust.org](http://www.ahimsatrust.org)

[Donate Now](#)

## I. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Ahimsa Trust continues to support 6 members in the villages near Shantiniketan area in West Bengal, India, working on kitchen gardens and medicinal plants for the betterment of tribal people's nutritional and primary health. The members are guiding and teaching the villagers on how to maintain their kitchen gardens, growing varieties of spinach and greens which have nutritional value instead of cash crops, encouraging fruit tree plantations and pulse & oil seed cultivation along with animal husbandry. Awareness camps have been being organised and skill development training programs conducted. Financial literacy programs are also being organised in the villages which is being supported by the Securities Exchange Board of India.



*Team members working with women on kitchen gardens and orchards*

## II. MINDFULNESS

### A. Talk:

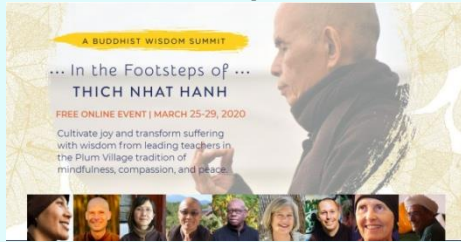
Stephen Batchelor visited in January 2020 and co led a trip to the Ancient Rock-cut Buddhist Monasteries of Western India with Martine Batchelor, Shantum Seth and Amod Basole. He offered a wonderful talk at the Kanheri caves as well as a 3 day retreat at Sanchi which has the famous stupa started by Emperor Ashoka in 3rd century BCE.

### B. A Day of Mindfulness

“Joy is Every Step” was organised on the 2nd of February 2020, in New Delhi. It was open to all and 35 people attended despite the freezing temperature.



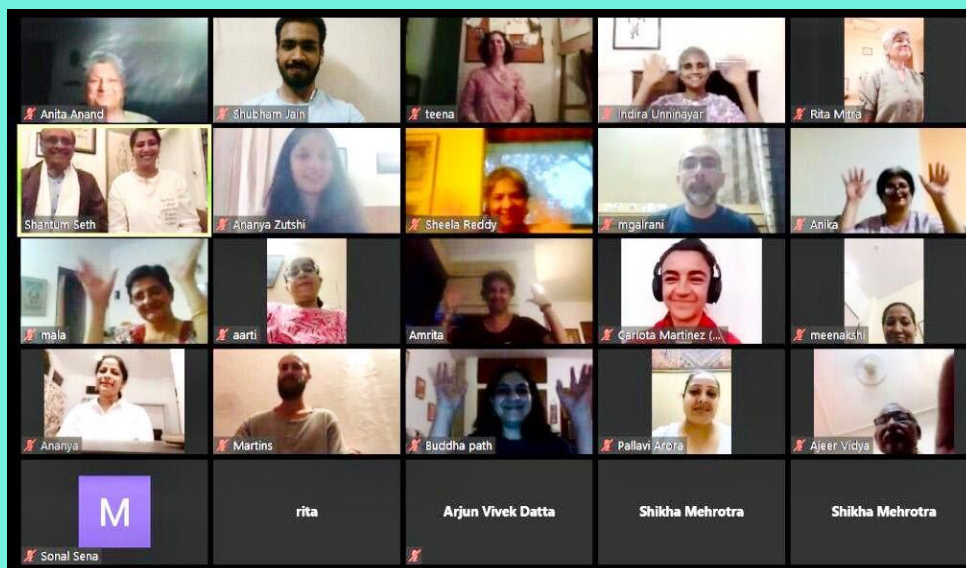
### C. 'In the Footsteps of Thich Nhat Hanh' Lions' Roar Retreat (March 2020)



One of our founders, Dh. Shantum Seth was amongst the teachers invited for the 5 day online **Lion's Roar Summit**. There were teachers from all over the world from Thich Nhat Han's tradition who gave us valuable insights and nourished us with their talks, meditation practices and sharings. At the time when when we are feeling so unsure of our future, this came as wonderful offering. After this summit, a 2 day session was organised for Q & A and Dharmacharya Shantum was invited to answer some questions alongwith the monastics of Plum Village. The summit was received very well world over.

### D. Retreat for Ahimsa Core group (10th to 13th April 2020)

Ahimsa Trust organised a 4 day retreat titled, "Nourishing Virtual Togetherness" for its Core Community from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2020. 28 friends who are part of this community, many of who lead sangha gatherings in different areas of Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon and Dehradun attended. Initially we were a bit hesitant about how we would conduct this but thanks to all the participants who were quick enough to learn the ropes of technology, it was a great success. The retreat included guided meditation, talks and trainings delivered by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth and each sangha friends had a range of offerings from talks and sharings to songs and poems.



*Ahimsa Trust Core Sangha Zoom retreat*

*"I thought I would share what a marvellous 4 days it has been. Just so nourishing and revitalising. I now look forward with fresh eyes to this new world inside and outside of me and the new days ahead of me. I feel much more alive and vibrant and new strength. I feel that life is filled with wonderful possibilities. And I feel deep joy and happiness. Thank you beautiful ones"*

*-Indira (Sangha Member)*

### [Blog of Sangha Member, Anita Anand](#)

#### **E. Free Online Saturday Meditation sessions (April - May 2020)**

During the lockdown by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth (every Saturday, mid April to end May 2020), Ahimsa offered six free online talks and Mindfulness Meditation on Zoom once a week. These ranged from the importance of Breath, the Body to Feelings including the elements. For those of us who could not attend, we are happy to share one of the sessions.



#### **Dharmacharya Shantum Seth's Talk on YouTube <https://youtu.be/DcknTNdoAyw>**

*'Deeply supportive, nourishing and unifying. How COVID teaches us the nature of life!'*

*- Jan Kernis, Tampa, Florida*

*'It is just wonder-filled that we could connect and be together, from all over the world'*

*- Seema Mehta, Mumbai, India*

### **F. Buddha Purnima (Full Moon) Celebration (7th May 2020)**

Since 1998, Ahimsa Trust has been organising Buddha Purnima celebrations at the beautiful location of Sanskriti Kendra. We normally start the celebration at the Bodhi Tree (the descendent of the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, planted by O P Jain and Anamika Seth) and end by offering candles at the Banyan tree planted by Kumar Gandharva.



For the first time in 23 years, due to the lockdown, we met virtually on Zoom at our homes, for our evening of Mindfulness to commemorate the Buddha's birth, Nirvana and Mahaparinirvana. We started by watering the Bodhi tree (a cousin of the Bodhi tree at Sanskriti

Kendra) and different friends of the Ahimsa community offered talks, readings, poems, eating meditation and songs. We are sharing the link of the celebration below

<https://youtu.be/b6JRsf1ItLQ>

*I lost my fear of the single star today...*

*- Prabhu Aryan*

*Bowing in gratitude to you, Brother Shantum and Local Sangha facilitators for your Buddha Purnima offering, today, for the healing and transformation of the world:*

### **G. Sangha Gatherings: Central Delhi, South Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Dehradun (April onwards)**

Our Central Delhi sangha has resumed sessions including songs and tea meditation virtually. Our other sanghas are adopting a wait and watch policy but we hope will follow suit!

**H. WakeUp Schools, India: Cultivating Mindfulness:** (6th June to 8th Aug 2020)

The Community of practitioners and Dharmacharya Shantum Seth of Ahimsa Trust are running a 10 week online course from the 6th of June to the 8th of August 2020 with a special emphasis on educators. It is linked to the Wake-Up schools' movement of Plum Village. We had the first Session last week focusing on an introduction to the practice of mindfulness and orientation to walking, sitting, eating, working meditation, circle sharing and noble silence. In the next three sessions we have focussed on stopping, the breath, the body and feelings. These sessions are in a retreat format for two hours every Saturday for 10 weeks and include a talk, sharing of experiences, practices and circle sharing in smaller groups.



**I. Retreat: Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** (25th June - 8th Aug 2020)

We continue our work with the CRPF, both with jawans and officers. We are offering the 10 week, Saturday Online Mindfulness course to 40 officers of the CRPF and are having circle sharing every week in two groups. For the Ahimsa community, it is an honour to work with them and hear them and we hope to offer support in whatever way we can.

### J. Translation of Thich Nhat Hanh's Books in Hindi

Some of our volunteers very kindly offered to translate the works and books of Thich Nhat Hanh in Hindi. As we had worked last year with the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) and other organisations, we felt there was a big need to offer the teachings and practices in hindi.

We are most thankful to Umaji for offering to translate some of the practices. She has done an absolutely amazing job in translating basic practices. It is not a mere translation but her wonderful energy is very much a part of the text, giving it the spirit it needs to make it alive.

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### III. Education support

We continue to support the school education of various children who are economically challenged.

**Report Card of Anjali Joshi, who Ahimsa supports**

<https://mcusercontent.com/05e8e55e46347e93a47aaa9da/images/229c0570-22fc-4e07-ada4-cc65dfeae80f.jpg>



*The first lotus to bloom in India, from a seed offered by the Plum Village root temple in Vietnam.*