



Dear friends,

Hope you are enjoying the flowers which are surviving this unusually cold winter. It's fascinating to see the tenacity of the pansy flower in Dehradun when it braves the frost and peeps out to make us smile.

### **AHIMSA NEWS and UPDATES**

It has been a wonderful last month for us to have the 5 monastics from Thich Nhat Hanh's tradition, visiting from Plum Village, France. Their wisdom, sharing, depth and practice have touched many of us deeply as we try and sustain the wonderful energy and teachings offered to us.

(For those of you who could not join us, the details of the visit are at the end of this letter along with some comments by the participants and photographs of each event)

Besides promoting and introducing Mindfulness in Education in schools, Mindfulness to the Police and Para -military and conducting retreats/days of mindfulness for institutions, corporates and the general public, Ahimsa Trust continues to:

- \* Work towards building Jamun Village, a mindfulness centre in Dehradun.
- \* Support the school education for a number of children, especially girls
- \* Support programmes in villages in the Shantiniketan area in West Bengal

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

In continuation of what we have been practicing last month, Ahimsa Trust would like to invite you to:

**'Joy is Every Step' – A half Day of Mindfulness  
on Sunday, the 2nd of February 2020 at:**

Basement, 112 Anand Lok, New Delhi 110049 (at the home of Ms Kamla Bhasin)

Please arrive by 10.15 an do bring a cushion and a mat

We will start at 10.30 am and finish by 1 pm.

Dharmacharya Shantum Seth and other sangha friends will be leading the practice.

We look forward to practicing together. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with Shalini at 8860694315 (10 am to 3 pm)



Please make a note of Ahimsa Trust **Mindfulness events in Delhi for the 2020 calendar year** The location and timings will be sent to you a week before each event.

2 <sup>nd</sup> February, Sunday	'Joy is Every Step': A half Day of Mindfulness
28 <sup>th</sup> March, Saturday	'This is It': A half Day of Mindfulness
7 <sup>th</sup> May, Thursday	<b>Budh Purnima</b> : An Evening of Mindfulness
26 <sup>th</sup> July, Sunday	'The Tears I shed yesterday have become Rain:' A half Day of Mindfulness'
27 <sup>th</sup> September, Sunday	'Listen with Compassion': A half Day of Mindfulness
29 <sup>th</sup> November, Sunday	'Breathe and Smile': A half Day of Mindfulness

## AN APPEAL

Ahimsa Trust supports itself through the time and energy of volunteers and donations. We also believe that the teachings should be offered to everyone, whether they can afford it or not. We charge a minimal fee for retreats to cover the meals of participants and our basic costs, however if that is also difficult, then we cover that too. Our sangha meetings, days of mindfulness, talks are all offered free of charge.

The visits of the monastics, including their international tickets, board and lodging in India, transport etc. amounts to a substantial amount and is not covered by our heavily subsidized retreat fees. Thanks to volunteer support, collaboration with institutions and generous donations by few friends, some of our costs have been covered but we are yet to break even. We would so appreciate any support you can offer. (You can send your contributions via bank draft/cheque in favour of "AHIMSA TRUST" or through NEFT/Bank transfer: Beneficiary Name: AHIMSA TRUST, Axis Bank **A/C No: 910010036807214, IFSC CODE: UTIB0000022**, AXIS BANK, Sector 16 Branch, NOIDA 201 301.)

*(The above costs do not include any daan for the monastics for their teachings. It only covers costs of their India visit, so any donation to support our brothers and sisters would also be much appreciated. In most countries, when they offer such teachings, people pay a substantial fee . If you would like to make them an offering, please let us know)*

## **VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

99% of us at Ahimsa are volunteers. Many friends offer their time, energy, resources. Please feel free to offer whatever little time or energy you can afford ranging from an hour a week to being full time. We need help with website design, architects, landscapists, contractors, database maintainers, computer techies, translators, phone repliers, newsletter writers, retreat organisers, fund raisers and lots of friends.

We can promise lots of fun, good food, endless cups of tea, laughter and a tonne of mindfulness practice. We would love you to join our volunteer group.

## **SUGGESTIONS:**

We would like to share a **wonderful talk** by Brother Phap Linh at the **Neuroscience Retreat: 'Science and Spirituality, Hand in Hand'** held at Plum Village, France in June 2019 Please click on the following link: <https://youtu.be/FY946jZdFPg>

*Book recommendation:*

**'Answers from the Heart'** Author: Thich Nhat Hanh

Published by Aleph Book Company, India

We continue having regular sangha gatherings in Dehradun and Delhi (Gurgaon, Anand Lok, Vasant Vihar, Noida) 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) (which needs a desperate revamp!)

So looking forward to seeing you on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February.

With maitri, smiles and a deep bow,

**Ahimsa Trust Volunteers**

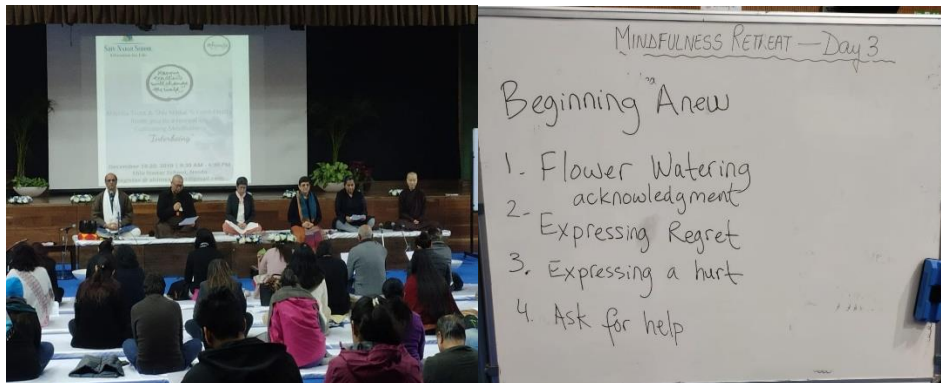


## **The Monastic Visit**

Five senior brothers and sisters visited India from the 15th of December 2019 to the 13th of January 2020.

### ***'Interbeing' – a 3 day retreat (December 18-20, 2019), Noida***

A 3 day retreat was hosted in collaboration with the Shiv Nadar School, Noida. 262 Shiv Nadar teachers/administration attended the retreat over 3 days along with 90 others who were educators and members of the public. We had talks, practiced sitting, walking, eating meditation, circle sharing and deep relaxation. Being an engaged practice, the teachings focused on practicing all day, mindful of whatever activity we are engaged in.



*'I came in with a lot of unease and anguish at the overall situation in our city and country. A lot of frustration has been building up. So the workshop is a most timely reminder to water the seeds of mindfulness. I am deeply grateful for the 5 mindfulness trainings and hope to deepen my practice with it. The gathas, the dharma talks, the beautiful practices and the meditations and last*

*but not the least the lovely fraternity of people have all enriched me.'*

*-Sukanya Bose, Researcher*

*'The session worked at multiple levels. It not only provides peace to participants but is an important reminder for all of us to stop and be Mindful, be present in the moment'.*

*Homemaker*

*-Ashita Rastogi,*

*'The retreat was particularly helpful. The 5 mindfulness trainings will help me stay on the path and will act as a blue print for daily living. The Dharma teaching on how to have and maintain effective communication in the event of a challenging situation will help me to deepen and better interpersonal relations. Eternal gratitude and reverence to the monastics of Plum Village and Shantum'.*

*-Purobi Menon, Teacher, trainer, free-lance writer*

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### ***'A Cloud Never Dies' – a 3 day retreat (January 8-10, 2020), Dehradun***

A second retreat was organised and co-hosted by Ahimsa Trust and Welham Boys School, Dehradun and was conducted entirely with Hindi translation. It was attended by 96 people including 44 CRPF jawans, school teachers from John Martyn School and various other educators, NGOs, students etc. It was a learning and humbling experience for all of us to hear each other within the generated energy of practice created by the monastics.



*'This 'Wake Up' program is a miracle; bringing joy, mindful actions, peace and a love thyself feeling. By practicing Mindful walking, breathing, eating, sleeping, socialising I really expect miracles in my life which in turn will also bring happiness and peace in surrounding people, family members and my own students as well as all who can be motivated to live happily, peacefully by following Mindful actions in their day to day life. (The) seed of mindfulness will definitely bring (a) change in our lives (and)of all who practice. I am thankful to all respected Teachers and organizers who have given us this opportunity of learning the mindful actions to brighten our personality physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.*

*-Madhu Marwah, Director, Dehradun Shooting Training Academy*

*'The workshop was of immense benefit for me in controlling my emotions and promotes my mental health, not only for my mental peace but also for others I interact with'.*

*-Chanda Prasad Ghosal, Professor, Jadhavpur University, Kolkata*

*'This retreat helped me to attain the insights for conflict resolution. I am really thankful to the organisers and monastics who helped me to break the shell of my inhibitions. Special thanks to Brother Spirit for his realizations. I will surely do my part to help the cosmos to spread the positive energies. Thank you for giving a refreshing start to a new year.'*

*- Annu Khatri, Teacher*

यह कोर्स अच्छा है - कैसे सम्मोजिक भावनाओ तथा रिश्ते और परिवार रिश्ते मे भेद भाव को खत्म कर सकते हैं । देश के ड्यूटी मे तैनात CRPF के जवान मानसिक तनाव को काबू कर सकने के लिए बहुत ही सकारात्मिक कदम है । तनावो भरी जिन्दगी में अपने परिवार से दूर रह कर भी (CRPF) फैमली के साथ में खाना खाना , गरुप शेयर (group share) में बातचीत से अपने अन्दर के भेदभाव को खत्म करना बहुत अच्छे से समझाया गया । अपने परिवार के साथ समाज सेवा भी करना बहुत अच्छा है । हम एक बार फिर सारी CRPF कि तरफ से सारे सटाफ को बहुत बहुत धन्यवाद अदा करते हैं ।

-Onkar Singh, Central Reserve Police Force, Soldier

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***'Breathe, You Are Alive'- a half day of mindfulness (January 5, 2020),  
New Delhi***

A half day of mindfulness was organised at the India International Centre in New Delhi on the 5th of January 2020. The freezing cold did not deter 150 Delhiites who among other activities, practiced walking meditation in Lodi Gardens followed by samosa and chai 'eating meditation' practice! The Q and A session at IIC was lively and some wonderful questions were asked by the participants which the monastics answered most skilfully.



***'Be Beautiful, Be Yourself' – a day of mindfulness (January 11, 2020),  
Dehradun***

World Integrity Centre (WIC) and Ahimsa Trust co-hosted this event, where different practices were introduced including deep relaxation which was enjoyed by 75 participants. The talks affected people deeply and many shared how profound and life changing they were.

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***'Walking with the Buddha' – a pilgrimage (December 22 to January 4,  
2020) Bihar and UP***





The monastics went on a 14 day pilgrimage with 40 others to Bodhgaya, Sarnath/Varanasi and Rajgir/Nalanda. While there, Dharmacharya Shantum Seth led the pilgrims from 20 nationalities on the Buddha's path and the entire group literally walked in the Footsteps of the Buddha.....from the caves where the Buddha practiced his austerities to the Niranjara river where he bathed and was given the kheer by Sujata. On the path, through villages and mustard fields, walking across the the half foot deep Niranjara river, collecting kusa grass (which the Buddha used as a cushion). Practicing walking meditation from the Bamboo Grove in Rajgir to Vulture Peak, the Buddha's favourite sunset point. Chanting the Heart Surtra on Vulture Peak. All this was done in the form of a travelling retreat with sitting and walking meditation, Dharma talks by the Brothers and Sisters and Shantum, picnic meditation, circle sharing....including bus meditation!



*'No amount of reading, preparing or listening to others can ever make one ready for the overwhelming and transformative experience of parenthood. For me this pilgrimage was the same. I am no longer the*

*person I was (and yet I am not different, either)*

*- Prodeep Mukherjee, Medical Doctor, Ireland*

***Insight poem by one of the pilgrims***

Under a tree of enlightenment  
Dharma fog permeates the great earth  
Sitting still, dog next to me, peace  
Fresh cold dew drops on my forehead  
Pigeons enjoy the fruits of awakening  
Listening to the sounds of the world

Under a tree of endarkenment  
Walking slowly on the path of mindfulness  
Stepping on a leaf of wisdom, moving on  
Walking right to the edge, turning back  
Stepping on the same leaf, new direction  
Seeing the colours and movements

Over and over  
Stillness and motion

*-Wit Sumathavanit, Thailand*

