

EVALUATIONS/COMMENTS FROM 2006 APPRENTICES

L.S. (age 27)

Perhaps the most significant training grounds for mindfulness were the rituals of daily life. We learned that meditation was more than a practice on our cushions. Garden work, household chores, miscellaneous projects, and interactions with others formed a laboratory for dharma teachings in action. I had no previous conception of how absentmindedly I lived each moment.

Scheduled dharma teachings each morning were my favourite part of the training. Through an interactive process of questioning, Bonni helped create a foundation in which to approach the teachings. As a student with almost no foundation in Buddhist principals, this was fundamental for a fledgling meditation practice.

Exercises directed to awakening the sense doorways demonstrated how fuzzy the tools were with which I use to perceive the world. I was amazed to perceive geometrical shapes in natural elements, as well as a greater variety of colour in plant life after meditating on the senses.

The variety of teaching-tools used to convey concepts was very helpful. The anatomy books; texts on the senses; gentle body-movements; and the scale-model skeleton helped to align my concepts of physiology with the physical body I inhabit. Access to the library, in compliment with the texts selected by Bonni were a rich source for independent study.

The weekend workshops in association with the Path of Peace were complimentary to the Apprenticeship program. Outstanding courses were those taught by Robert Sinclair, Bonni Ross and Matthew Eades!

M.P. (age 24)

How to go about explaining what, to me, has been the hardest, yet probably also the most profitable summer "vacation" of my life? I find it difficult to say the least . . . Does this difficulty arise because I am not a poet? Perhaps because English is not my mother tongue? Perhaps I'm intimidated because I've realized that communicating clearly, especially solely with the help of words, no matter what language, is a very hard thing for me to do? Perhaps because most of my learning occurred through my left hemisphere? Perhaps these questions can serve as an illustration of the incredible amount of question arising in my mind throughout this summer's experiences? Perhaps instead I should just state that I have learnt about my vast and profound ignorance. I can only guess at the many wonders that are hidden underneath the filters of my conditioning. So many things I would not believe, had they not happened to me. Even in the aftershock I am amazed. Amongst which, I would never have imagined, three months ago that I would end up having a rosary and being happy about it! Somehow through all my skepticism, through all my cynicism, through all my piti and unwholesome thoughts and actions, I got a glimpse

into light, into emptiness . . . I do not pretend to even know what this new “understanding” is, but my intuition says something in my being is different. Perhaps it is the bodhisattva vibration that I am not yet aware enough to recognize? Whatever it is, I am very grateful for it . . . and here I must thank you for ALL your constant help, realizing at the same time that this little word seems pale in comparison to the gratefulness I feel in my heart . . . The only thing I would change/suggest is the purchase of a non-stick pan for downstairs . . . but then again, perhaps it is all in the master plan to encourage patience and awareness!?!

S.F. (age 22)

The Summer WOW! Remember suffering **OTHERS FIRST**

Eating yummy food

Mornings early, days seeming VERY long

Feeling excited for what is to come

FEELING THE SUPPORT OF THE GROUND

Much attention to order

Clearing the senses

*****LEARNING TO RECEIVE******

Taking responsibility

DULL!!!! Remember . . . again and again! **O P E N I N G**

TERROR What am I going to do now?

Other people feel differently? Really???

Exploring art

Awareness

It's ok to be vulnerable what would be most helpful in this situation?

Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional

Precious human birth (not good enough, no one loves me! AM I DOING THINGS RIGHT?)

Wake up Wake up WAKE UP WAKE UP

AHHHHHH

