

ordination training
at padmaloka
2012



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This booklet first appeared in 2006. It communicates the training for ordination offered by the team of Public and Private Preceptors based at Padmaloka. As we want to keep the training as fresh and as vital as possible, we publish a new handbook each year, giving full details of the retreats you will find particularly useful, as well as updating you on any new developments. In recent years we have been inviting other senior Order members to join us regularly on Going for Refuge retreats, to train as study leaders and work more closely with the ordination team. This is working very well and some are now leading study groups.

We hope that you find the booklet useful. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the team here if you have any questions.

Saddhaloka

Saddhaloka
August 2011

You have asked to be ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order. The request for ordination is a highly significant step in your spiritual life.

In asking for ordination you have decided to go for refuge to the Three Jewels within the context of the spiritual community we call the Triratna Buddhist Order. This means that you have asked to make a formal commitment to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You have also asked to be formally accepted, through the ceremony of ordination, into our spiritual community.

We want to respond to your request as fully as we can. One of the main ways we do this is through providing a training for ordination. This booklet describes as succinctly as possible how that training takes place in relationship to the team of Order members who are based at Padmaloka. That team consists of Padmavajra, Surata, Saddhaloka, Satyaraja and Dharmadipa. The training we provide consists of retreats held at Padmaloka. We will also work closely with the Order members around your centre who know you well, as well as with other Order members with whom you have a significant relationship.



essential elements of ordination training

Relevant Retreats Going for Refuge

The Act of Going For
Refuge:
20 - 29 April 2012



Although readiness for ordination cannot be reduced to a set of external criteria, there are nonetheless, an essential set of elements that are central to ordination training. By the time someone is ready to be ordained we would expect them to be well established in these. Each of them are in themselves extraordinarily rich in meaning. Training in these elements does not end at ordination, you will continue to deepen your experience of them for the rest of your life. Although, for practical reasons, these are listed in a particular order, they are all of equal importance. At Padmaloka we hold retreats on these different elements of ordination training. As we want to keep things as fresh and vital as possible our retreats will approach these elements of training in different ways each year.

What follows are seven essential elements of ordination training, with a list of the retreats relevant to each of them. You're free to come on any of these retreats. However we recommend that you don't attend the "Entering the Mythic Realm" or the "Transcendental Principle" retreats as a first retreat without first speaking with an ordination team member before booking.

Going for Refuge

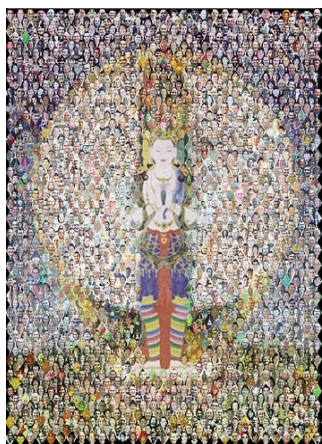
Ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order consists, essentially, in Going for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The ceremony of ordination consists in the witnessing of your 'effective Going for Refuge' by senior members of the Order. Your entire ordination training will be orientated towards deepening your Going for Refuge to the point where Order members can say that it is 'effective'. Much could be said about the term 'effective Going for Refuge'. Put simply, it means that you are Going for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, in all aspects of your life. We also want to be as sure as we can that your Going for Refuge will be sustained for the rest of your life. Someone training for ordination will be dedicated to understanding the nature of Going for Refuge and living it out in their lives as fully as possible.





What is the Order?

Going for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha needs to take place within a specific context to be effective. In founding the Triratna Buddhist Order Sangharakshita was clear that there were two models he did not want to follow. One was that of a Buddhist society that simply provided a platform for teachers of different traditions, the other was the purely monastic model. Instead he decided to start an Order that was neither monk nor lay, and required a definite commitment. Sangharakshita is the spiritual teacher of the Triratna Buddhist Order and the Order is founded on his elucidation of the Dharma. In joining the Order, we need to have a clear understanding and effective practice of its fundamental teachings and practices.



Spiritual Community and Spiritual Friendship

In asking for ordination you have asked to enter a spiritual community which consists of those who are deeply committed to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. As part of that commitment they are dedicated to being in the deepest possible harmony with one another, whilst at the same time deepening their distinctive individual qualities. Such a community comes about through the cultivation of spiritual friendships. The Order in fact from a certain point of view is nothing other than a network of spiritual friendships.

So a key part of your training will involve the cultivation of such virtues as friendliness, generosity, patience, forgiveness, kindness, empathy and so on. It will also involve getting to know others in the Sangha in different contexts, some quite closely.

Friendship and community are an important source of spiritual support and inspiration. They are also the best context in which to study and practice. Within the context of serious spiritual commitment our interaction with others can lead us beyond our sense of separate selfhood.

Relevant Retreats

What is the Order?

What is the Order?

17 - 26 Feb 2012

Relevant Retreats

Spiritual Friendship

Spiritual Friendship:

18 - 27 Jan 2012





Relevant Retreats

Ethics

The Ten Pillars:

15 - 24 Aug 2012

Relevant Retreats

Wisdom

The Transcendental Principle:

27 July - 10 Aug 2012



Ethics

The importance of ethics in the spiritual life is stressed throughout the training for ordination. At the time of ordination you will take the ten Dharmachari precepts. These precepts are what Sangharakshita has termed 'the mula pratimoksha' - the basic ethical code. These ten precepts are what a Dharmachari lives by. They represent the living out of Going for Refuge in all aspects of your life. Your training in ethics will consist in developing an understanding of the Ten Precepts and imbibing their spirit. Practicing ethics also involves such things as the cultivation of mindfulness of body, speech and mind, as well as such things as confession of faults and the making of resolutions.

A true ethical life grows from an ethical sensibility and this is cultivated through developing sensitivity to oneself and others by reflection and open communication. Training in Buddhist ethics has a contemplative and meditative dimension involving a deeper awareness of mind and mental states.

Wisdom

Going for Refuge involves having a good understanding of the teachings of the Buddha, in particular the basic Buddhist doctrines and teachings such as conditioned co-production, the three marks of conditioned existence, the four noble truths, the noble eightfold path and so on. It is also important to know the distinctive emphases that Sangharakshita has enunciated which find expression within our Order.

Understanding the Dharma will involve having a regular study practice both individual and collective. It also involves reflecting on what you have studied and learning to make it a living experience. In this way we develop the three kinds of wisdom: of learning, reflection and meditation.

Study and discussion groups give you a chance to clarify your understanding, share experience, and learn new approaches and perspectives.



Radiate Love

Meditation

Meditation is the direct way to transform the mind. Meditation practices enable you to encounter your experience directly. One learns the patterns and habits of the mind and the practice offers a means to cultivate new, more positive ways of being. With discipline and patience these calm and focused states of mind can deepen into profoundly tranquil and energized states. The regular practice of sitting meditation is indispensable to the cultivation of transcendental insight.

This regular and effective practice of sitting meditation is also essential to ordination training. By the time you are ordained we want you to have a well established daily meditation practice. We want you to be very familiar with the metta bhavana, the mindfulness of breathing and just sitting practices, as well as with meditations that involve reflection on the Dharma. It is also important to have a clear understanding of Sangharakshita's system of meditation which we use in the Triratna Buddhist Community. In order to establish an effective meditation practice retreats of all kinds are essential.

The Bodhisattva Path

The teachings associated with the path of the Bodhisattva make it clear that the attainment of Enlightenment is not a purely individual attainment. Enlightenment is the transcending of the distinction between self and other. This means that Going for Refuge is directed to gaining Enlightenment for the benefit of all. From its inception the Order has been inspired by the path of the Bodhisattva. Indeed Sangharakshita sees the Order as an attempt to manifest bodhicitta - the essence of wisdom and compassion. Ordination training involves contemplating the profundity of bodhicitta, cultivating the altruistic intention and doing what you can with others to help with the expression of the Dharma in the world.



Relevant Retreats Meditation

Anapanasati:
02 - 13 Apr 2012

The Brahmaviharas:
05 - 19 Oct 2012

Relevant Retreats The Bodhisattva Path

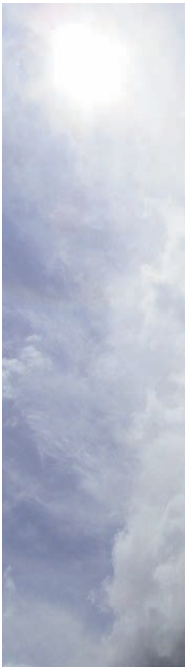
The Bodhisattva Ideal:
06 - 18 May 2012



Relevant Retreats

Faith and Imagination

Mythic Context - the
Realm of Imagination:
14 - 28 Sept 2012



Faith and Imagination

The Buddhist path cannot be reduced to a set of concepts and ideas, it involves the activation of an intensely positive emotional response to the Three Jewels. This emotional response is called faith in the Buddhist tradition. Faith has been described as the reflection of Enlightenment within the heart. It is the driving force of Going for Refuge. This faith also has the quality of imagination because it sees the manifestations of the Dharma as myth, symbol and image.

Through training in faith and imagination we enter the rich, colourful and mysterious realm of 'undefined meanings'. This aspect of one's training is of great importance as it involves the transformation of very deep emotional drives. It will also prepare you for the visualization and mantra meditation you will be introduced to at the time of your ordination.

This year, the retreat on this theme is also an ordination retreat for men unable to attend the four month Guhyaloka ordination course.

Retreats

At Padmaloka we provide retreats that focus on one or another of the essential elements of the ordination training. The aim of these retreats is to explore a particular element of the training in depth and detail. The form of the retreats will vary. Some of them involve quite a bit of group study and personal reflection. Other retreats are more meditative whilst others have more of a flavour of faith and devotion.

It is important to prepare well before you come on retreat through reading any background reading recommended to you when you make your retreat booking. It is also important to be as free as possible from any concerns in order to fully engage with the retreat. The retreats tend to fill up quickly. So, to ensure a place we recommend booking early.

There are also other retreats at Padmaloka, all of which will enhance your ordination training. See the current Padmaloka programme or our website www.padmaloaka.org.uk



Getting to Know Padmaloka Team Members

If you regularly attend retreats and gatherings at Padmaloka you will be able to spend time with the resident team of Order members who provide ordination training. The team consists of Public and Private Preceptors who are all very experienced both in terms of the Order and also in terms of helping men go for refuge to the Three Jewels. Building a connection with members of the Padmaloka ordination team is a good way to help with your training for ordination.

Kula Gatherings

Twice a year we hold weekend gatherings for all men who have asked for ordination. They are an opportunity for everyone to look more closely at their Going for Refuge with members of the Padmaloka ordination team and others who share the same spiritual training.

During these weekends there are talks, discussion groups and the usual programme of meditations and pujas. These weekends are usually well attended so they are also an opportunity to experience the range and diversity of the Sangha.

The Going for Refuge and Prostration Practice

This incredibly rich practice involves the visualization of a great lotus tree with the Buddha at the centre encircled by bodhisattvas and great teachers of the past and the present. This particular form of the refuge tree was composed by Sangharakshita and represents his vision of the Dharma. In the practice one goes for refuge with body, speech and mind, through prostration, chanting and visualizing the refuge tree. We teach this practice at Padmaloka and it is possible to take up this practice on a regular basis.



Relevant Retreats Kula Gatherings

Kula Gathering 1:
30 March - 1 April
2012

Kula Gathering 2:
10 - 12 Aug 2012



training locally



Although attending retreats and gatherings are of great importance, most of your training will take place locally. This means sustaining your individual Buddhist practice in whatever circumstances you are in by maintaining and deepening your daily practice of meditation, ethics, and reflection on the Dharma. Although external supportive conditions are crucial to any course of spiritual training you will also need to cultivate a strong sense of personal endeavour. One aspect of the ordination ceremony is the private ordination which symbolizes your willingness to follow the Buddhist path alone if necessary.

Getting to Know Order Members

As well as having an effective personal practice, becoming part of the Triratna Buddhist Order involves cultivating friendly connections with Order members, especially the Order members at your local Triratna centre. Ordination is the witnessing of your Going for Refuge, and for that to be possible you need to get to know members of the Order and they need to get to know you. Getting to know Order members comes about in a variety of ways: through meditating with them, studying the Dharma with them,

going on retreat with them, through personal conversation, through working along side them, and in many other ways. Essentially through your connections with Order members you are entering the life of the spiritual community. Out of this ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order emerges.

Kalyana Mitras

In time friendships with Order members may deepen to a point where you decide to form a Kalyana Mitra relationship with two experienced Order members. This implies a commitment to a friendship based on a shared commitment to the Dharma. Your Kalyana Mitras will have a special role to play in helping you prepare for ordination, and in helping you find your feet in your first years after ordination. This friendship is marked by a simple, though very significant Kalyana Mitra Ceremony.

Mitra Study

Most centres offer regular study for Mitras. A four year Triratna Dharma Training Course for Mitras has just been developed and launched, which consists of a one year Foundation Course followed by three years of further study. We recommend that you ask the local Mitra Convenor or



Chairperson about the study facilities offered at your centre. Mitra study offers an excellent opportunity to study and explore the Dharma and is therefore seen as an invaluable element in your training for ordination.

Dialogue About Your Training

As you get deeper into your training and as you get to know Order members well you will begin to get into dialogue with Order members about your training. As time goes on you will want to know what you need to work on in order to be ready for ordination. At some point the Order members who know you well will need to discuss your readiness for ordination. Different centres approach dialogue and discussion about ordination in different ways so we would recommend that you speak to the men's Mitra Convenor or the Chairperson to find out how your local centre approaches this important area.

Solitary Retreats

A solitary retreat is a very good way of experiencing Going for Refuge alone. Before you are ordained we recommend that you take a solitary retreat. It is best if you discuss going on such a retreat with the Order members that you know before you go.

Going for Refuge Groups

Another aspect of one's local training that we are keen to encourage is participation in what have come to be known as 'Going for Refuge groups'. These are groups of men who have asked for ordination who meet regularly to explore different aspects of Going for Refuge and ordination training.

These groups are a very good way of forming friendships with other men who have asked for ordination. They can also be a great source of support and inspiration and a good preparation for the regular weekly chapter meetings you will attend after ordination. Like the chapter meetings the 'Going for Refuge groups' aspire to be what Sangharakshita called "an ongoing spiritual workshop with a strong confessional element".

Going for Refuge groups are useful. At the same time they should not be regarded as an alternative for participation in other aspects of your training such as taking part in a Mitra study group.

If you would like to join or form such a group you can speak to men who have asked for ordination around your centre.



approaching ordination

Preceptors

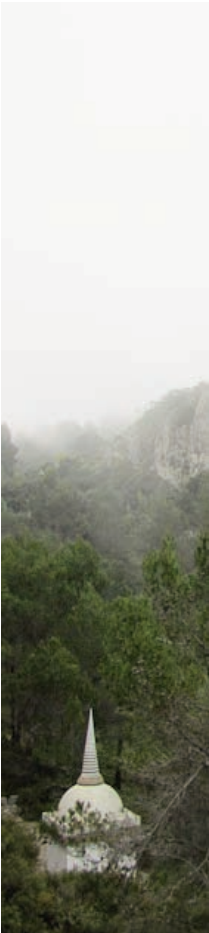
Ordination has two aspects. The first is the private ordination, performed by one's Private Preceptor. In this ceremony you go alone to a specially prepared shrine and the Private Preceptor witnesses your Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels. He will also introduce you to your personal meditation practice which usually takes the form of a visualization and mantra recitation practice associated with a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva. The private ordination ceremony symbolizes your willingness to go for refuge and to keep Going for Refuge alone if necessary. The ceremony symbolizes that you are individually committed to the Buddhist path regardless of what others might do or what they might think about you.

The Private Preceptor is a senior Order member who can see that you are indeed committed in this way. He knows you well enough to be able to affirm and confirm that. He will also be someone who you know quite well and towards whom you have natural feelings of respect. You can ask any male Order member of ten or more years in the Order to act as your Private Preceptor. Having said that, it is important that it is someone you know well, who you

have a positive regard for, and who is willing to be your Private Preceptor.

The Order member himself must also have the confidence of the Order to be a Private Preceptor. If the Order member you ask is not already a Private Preceptor his appointment will have to be agreed by the Order which can sometimes take some time. We recommend that before you ask an Order member to be your Private Preceptor that you talk things over with another senior Order member. Your relationship with the Private Preceptor is of very great importance. It is he who sees, affirms and keeps faith with your individual commitment to the Three Jewels, so it's essential that great care is taken over who you choose.

Choosing a Private Preceptor is not something to be concerned about early on in one's ordination training. The important thing first of all is to engage with the ordination training as fully as possible. Out of that you will discover the most appropriate person to be your Private Preceptor.





Public Ordination

Public ordination symbolizes entry into the Triratna Buddhist Order. The person performing the ordination is the Public Preceptor. Because the Public Preceptor receives you into the Order he has to be sure that you are Going for Refuge as other Order members are. It is unlikely that you will have a close personal relationship with your Public Preceptor. Nonetheless it is a very important relationship because in the end it is the Public Preceptor who makes the final decision regarding your readiness for ordination. He has to be confident that you have been thoroughly trained. He will be confident in the recommendations of your Private Preceptor and all the Order members who know you. There is no need to find someone to be your Public Preceptor. The best thing to do is to engage as fully as you can in ordination training and the Public Preceptors in dialogue with others will work out the best person to publicly ordain you.

Four Month Ordination Retreat

Every year there is a four month long ordination course at our retreat centre in Spain called Guhyaloka. This course is of very great importance. It gives you an opportunity to concentrate wholeheartedly and without any other distractions on Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels. Your ordination takes place therefore in the best possible spiritual conditions.

As well as being able to concentrate on the Dharma intensively you will also form strong spiritual bonds with the other men on the course, thus intensifying your experience of spiritual community. During the period the ordinations take place you will also have the opportunity to spend more time with your preceptors especially your Private Preceptor.

As we would like everybody who is ordained to attend these retreats it is important that you start thinking about how you can best arrange to attend such a course.

There are also shorter ordination retreats for those unable to attend the four month course due to health, age or family commitments.





Approach to Training

The best approach to ordination training is to think of it not in terms of 'getting ordained' but more in terms of continuing to deepen your Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels. Going for Refuge is a dynamic process and as Sangharakshita has shown it is something that you deepen and deepen to the point of Enlightenment itself.

What we want to see in someone who is ready for ordination is a real feeling for this which is actually manifesting in their lives. The Zen tradition speaks of the importance of 'beginner's mind'. The same applies to one's ordination training. Whether we are training for ordination or whether we are Order members of many years standing the training never ceases. There is always more to learn.

The retreats offered at Padmaloka for men asking for ordination are also applicable and open to Order members. Padmaloka also runs special retreats for Order members so that they can deepen practices specific to being an Order member.



suggested reading and listening

These days we have so many Dharma riches available; there is an almost endless amount of material that could be read. What follows is a suggestion of how to approach personal study.

It is important to follow your interest in Dharma study. If you are interested that will enable you to emotionally connect with the Dharma much more deeply. At the same time we think it is important to root one's reading and study in two particular areas: the 'basic teachings' of the Buddha as found in the sutta pitaka of the Pali Canon and the writings and audio material of Sangharakshita.

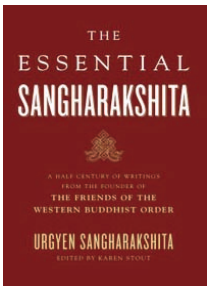
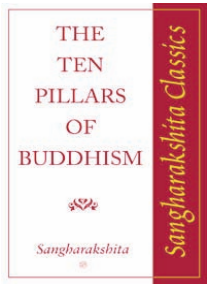
Reading the sutta pitaka of the Pali Canon gives a very good feeling for the historical Buddha, as well as a sense of the depth and profundity of the Buddha's original teachings. A very good place to start one's reading is 'The Life of the Buddha' by Bhikkhu Nanamoli, Buddhist Publication Society. We also recommend 'In the Buddha's Words - An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon' by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications and 'The Udana' translated by John D. Ireland, Buddhist Publication Society.

Becoming familiar with the work of Sangharakshita is particularly important because the Triratna Buddhist Order is founded on his particular approach to the Dharma. Below is a list of material by Sangharakshita and other Order members that we think will be helpful to your training. We have also indicated works that will help you prepare for particular retreats.

At first sight the list might appear daunting, so if you are not sure where or how to begin we suggest you speak to Order members who could help clarify what would be most useful to you. There is also available a large audio archive of lectures by Sangharakshita and other members of the Order which covers a vast range of important Dharma topics. See www.freebuddhistaudio.com to access them for free, or contact your local Buddhist centre who may have some of them as part of an audio library.

We would particularly recommend listening to Sangharakshita's talks as well as reading his books, as the talks can communicate a subtlety, warmth and humour that is not always so immediate in the printed word.





**Sangharakshita
General Reading**

Recently Sangharakshita mentioned the following works he would like people to be familiar with:

- A Survey of Buddhism*
- The Three Jewels*
- Who is the Buddha?*
- What is the Dharma?*
- What is the Sangha?*
- Ritual and Devotion in Buddhism*
- The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*
- The History of My Going for Refuge*
- A Guide to the Buddhist Path*
- The Essential Sangharakshita*

He also thought it would be good if people were familiar with his memoirs to get some idea of who he is:

- Rainbow Road*
- Facing Mount Kanchenjunga*
- In the Sign of the Golden Wheel*
- Moving Against the Stream*
- Precious Teachers*

For a good introduction to the different aspects of Sangharakshita's Dharma teaching we recommend:

Sangharakshita: A New Voice in the Buddhist Tradition by Subhuti.

**Essential Elements
Recommended Reading List**

The following is a reading list associated with particular aspects of ordination training mentioned earlier. Titles are by Sangharakshita and published by Windhorse Publications unless otherwise stated.

Going for Refuge
The History of My Going for Refuge

Going for Refuge, Sangharakshita
The Best of Refuges, Padmavajra, Padmaloka Publications

The Refuge Tree, Aloka, Padmaloka Publication
Teachers of Enlightenment, Kulananda
My Relation To The Order

What is the Order
What is the Order?, Subhuti 1995
My Relation to the Order
What is the Western Buddhist Order ?(message from Sangharakshita, April 2009)

Spiritual Friendship and Spiritual Community

What is the Sangha?
Buddhism and Friendship, Subhuti
One Mind of Friendship, Padmavajra, Padmaloka Publication



Going for Refuge and the Liberation of the Heart, Padmavajra, Padmaloka Publication
My Relation to the Order

Ethics

Ten Pillars of Buddhism
Know Your Mind
Patterns of Buddhist Morality
Living Ethically
Training in the Ten Precepts, Padmavajra, Padmaloka Publication
Remorse and Confession in the Spiritual Community, Subhuti

Wisdom

A Survey of Buddhism, Chapter 1 The Three Jewels
The Buddhist Vision, Subhuti
What is the Dharma?
Talking the Dharma, Padmavajra/Devamitra, Padmaloka Publication
Listening, Reflecting and Meditating, Padmavajra, Padmaloka Publication
Revering and Relying upon the Dharma

Meditation

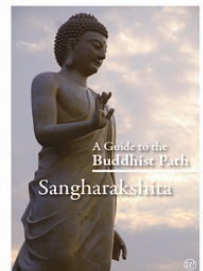
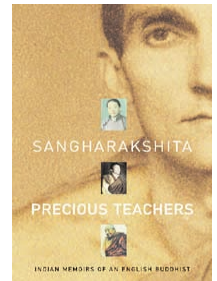
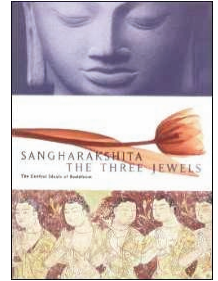
Living With Kindness
Living With Awareness
Meditation, Kamalashila
A System of Meditation, Cittapala
A System of Meditation, audio talk 135

The Bodhisattva Path

The Bodhisattva Ideal
The Inconceivable Emancipation
Wisdom Beyond Words
The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment

Faith and Imagination

The Journey to Il Convento, from *The Priceless Jeweli*
St. Jerome Revisited, from *The Priceless Jeweli*
Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism
The Mythic Context, Subhuti, Padmaloka Publication
Visualization Workshop, Subhuti
The Life And Death Of The Imagination, Aloka, Padmaloka Publication
The Padmasambhava Refuge Tree, Aloka, Padmaloka Publication
The Refuge Tree As Mythic Context, Aloka, Padmaloka Publication
What Is Myth?, Aloka, Padmaloka Publication
Re-Imagining the Buddha
The Life of the Buddha, Nyanamoli
Gautama Buddha, Vishvapani
Blomfield





For up to date details of all Padmaloka Retreats visit our website at www.padmaloa.org.uk or ask us to send you our latest programme.