

## **A life of 'nothing'**

Since 2004 I've considered myself a Buddhist. And during the years in between I've been fortunate to meet and spend time with someone who's been a Buddhist monk in Thailand for over 30 years. He is affectionately referred to as 'Luangpor' (venerable father).

At his temple in Isan NE Thailand, there are 2 young people who are following in his footsteps. One is a monk known as 'Luangpee' Tui ('venerable brother') and a nun called 'Mae Chee' Bpan ('Mother of Life').

It is the ordained Buddhist way of life to renounce everything but these 2 young people didn't have anything in the first place. NE Thailand is in general pretty poor and people who come from there typically farm rice and don't have a great deal. Luangpee Tui is from Luangprabang over the border in Laos which is poorer still.

Their very simple day consists of waking up around 4am, meditating and doing chores before going on 'bindabat' or 'alms round' around 5:30am. They walk into the local village carrying a bowl into which the villagers place food which is carried back to the temple and shared with the others there.

The food isn't always what they perhaps would choose to have. But they don't choose. They can't. They accept what is offered and are genuinely pleased to receive.

I have walked behind them both on bindabat and I have never in my life witnessed a more graceful and regal gait than these 2 young people have. I have also never in my life witnessed a more humble pair of people or seen a more serene and beautiful smile that comes deep from within their hearts.

I have been to many places on this planet and in January 2019, I will follow Luangpor on a pilgrimage to India to visit the places where the Buddha was born, taught and died. I have been very fortunate in my life to do such things.

But the 2 people I have briefly written about can't go. They don't have any money, nor any means to earn money and the 1000 pounds cost puts the pilgrimage beyond their reach.

I believe that the journey should they be able to go would be a life changing experience. I also believe it would change many others' lives too. The other lives would be the people these 2 young people meet between now and when they die.

They teach and with the experience we can offer them, their teaching will be enriching to the people who are taught.

If you feel you can help these people do something they would otherwise never be able to do, any donation you feel able to give will make a difference to many more than 2 people, I am certain.

You can donate in a collection box at the events below or to the Buddha Metta Society which is a charity (registered 1154796) setup to support Luangpor's work : Buddha Metta Society, Barclays Bank, Sort code: 20-24-09 Account no: 33980383, but please use a payment narrative of 'Sponsor' and your name.



"Even as a mother with an only child would risk her life for it, cultivate a limitless heart for all beings, above, below and all around without enmity or hate."

There will be 3 fund raising efforts to try and raise money for Luangpee Tui and Mae Chee Bpan, all arranged by the Buddha Metta Society charity :

1. Bridge – Play with an Expert, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2018 starting promptly at 6pm.

This will be an opportunity to play in an event and score up with an expert pair. John Holland and Boris Ewart will play N-S and Michael Newman and Alec Smalley E-W. Participants will score up with the expert pairing sitting in the opposite direction and the experts will talk through the hands with hand records available afterwards.

2. Bindabat (alms round), Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

The monks and nuns walk barefoot on their alms round. Ken Garrod, Peter and Karen Foster will make a typical 'bindabat' sponsored walk of around 3 miles barefoot around Brereton Park.

3. Christmas Concert – Musical evening.

Karen Foster (harp), Lynne Ashmore (flute) and Rob Glassonbury (piano) will play and sing popular songs in a Christmas concert (date to be arranged).

All proceeds will go to finance the travel for Luangpee Tui and Mae Chee Bpan to go on pilgrimage. If you are a tax payer and can 'Gift Aid' your donation, I can provide a simple form. If you give it or send it to me (Paiwaiki, Brereton Heath Lane, Congleton, CW12 4SZ), the UK Tax Office give us 25% of all 'Gift Aided' donations and this makes a massive difference to all fundraising.