



Online weekend: The Tree, the Snake and the Goddess

Exploring the Buddha's relationship with nature: a study practice weekend with Dhivan

About the retreat

The teaching of the Buddha is practical and concerned with the ending of dukkha or suffering. But the life-story of the Buddha shows him becoming Awakened at the foot of the Bodhi tree, encouraged and sheltered by the nāgas or mythical snakes, and having defeated Māra with the help of the Earth Goddess. These symbols of tree, snake and goddess tell us something on the level of myth and story about the animistic context of Awakening.

This weekend will offer an opportunity to study Buddhism with Dhivan, an Order member and Buddhist scholar who works in the area of early Buddhism as well as Buddhism and ecology. We will be looking at discourses from the Pāli canon and extracts from the traditional life-stories of the Buddha that show the Buddha in an intimate relationship with nature. By entering into this story we start to understand how an imaginative relationship with nature as a living whole is an important condition for our own Dharma lives.

What can you expect from the programme?

The online retreat will run on the [zoom meeting platform](#). This works in most web browsers, and you can also get free apps for all major mobile platforms too. You don't need to pay for an account to take part. The zoom room will open 10 minutes before each session starts so you have time to settle in, make sure your technology is working and say hello before each session starts. Sessions will start on Friday evening and run as follows:

Friday

- 7.30–9pm Introductions, talk, meditation

Saturday

- 7.30–8.30am Meditation
- 10.30–12.00pm Talk and discussion in groups
- 4.30–6.00pm Talk and discussion in groups
- 7.30–8.30pm Meditation and ritual

Sunday

- 7.30–8.30am Meditation
- 10.30–12.00pm Talk and discussion in groups
- 4.30–5.30pm Concluding session