



**Change is easy.
It's not "changing" that takes time,
it's "not-changing" that takes time.**
- Dr R. Bostad

Dear Dharma friends,

Welcome to the first edition of NovayanaNews from Brazil; a series of reflections and internet resources to inspire you and in particular to prepare for the retreat in Maitreya House June-July 2012. I am writing this to you sitting in the Casa Namgyal, listening to a multitude of birds, immersed in a sphere of song; golden yellow flower petals falling like snow from a giant tropical tree just outside the window; - in the evenings the large (really!) cicadas deafening in their sound; all this abundance of nature juxtaposed with the hi-tech computer at my fingertips, connecting with you via radio and internet. What a wondrous world! <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Magicicada>

To begin, here is some advice from Guru Rinpoche reminding us that our meditation can produce results when practised wisely...

"Guru Padmasambhava instructed, when approached by a Hindu queen, 'It is better to persevere with meditation at short intervals, than to meditate for a long period of time without any results'. He gave the example of water drops; when water drops accumulate they can gather force, but each drop remains separate, each drop is unique unto itself. In a similar way, meditation sessions should be allowed to accumulate by being broken up into short intervals". - Khen Rinpoché

Secondly, here are BBC links to Prof. Ramachandran's Reith lectures from 2003. They cover a wide range of topics, all to do with brain function and consciousness and the new buzz word "neuroplasticity". He raises many fascinating questions, particularly concerning the delay between the time an action is initiated in the brain and our becoming aware of our intention to act. What are the implications for "free-will"? Is this research providing a modern description of Samsara; i.e. if decisions are made unconsciously before we become aware of what we are doing, then it is reasonable to suggest that we are indeed very subject to the impulses of previous karma. Is mindfulness meditation a functional way to bridge this time delay between unconscious decision-making and conscious awareness of our activity? What are the implications, also, for our emotional reactions? And so on...

Here is a little taster from the final lecture...

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2003/lecture5.shtml>

"So you see the amazing paradox is that on the one hand the experiment shows that free will is illusory, right? It can't be causing the brain events because the events kick in a second earlier. But on the other hand it has to have some function because if it didn't have a function, why would evolution bother delaying it? But if it does have a function, what could it be other than moving the finger? So maybe our very notion of causation requires a radical revision here as happened in quantum physics. OK, enough of free will. It's all philosophy!"



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Accompanying the series is a very useful glossary of terms...
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2003/glossary.shtml#top>

And also an interactive diagramming of brain functions and structures. Have fun...
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/body/interactives/organs/brainmap/>

Thirdly, from the world of NLP and the pen of Dr Richard Bolstad...

"Another essential quality which successful NLP Practitioners bring to their work is one that is rarely mentioned. It is love. In this book we will present many, many skills, and many, many theories. In the end though, love is more important than having all these skills and theories. Virginia Satir once said, 'The ability to give and receive love is as important to the soul as inhaling and exhaling air is to the body'. (Satir and Baldwin, 1983, p 168). Love cannot be faked therapeutically; our clients are far too perceptive for that to work. Love is not merely rapport, though effective rapport is an expression of love. Love is not merely the ability to focus on positive aspects of a client's exploration, though that too is an expression of love. Love is more than just an attitude, more than just a strategy or a metaprogram. It is not adequately expressed in any of the research on psychotherapy or change, because it cannot be so simply measured. And yet it is there, every time someone assists someone else to heal."

I trust this finds you all in good health and good spirits as we celebrate the dark moon and prepare for a period of increase leading to the full moon on the 10th November.

Best wishes,
Jangchub

P.S. From Ramachandran's first Reith lecture...

I would like to conclude with a quotation from my previous book, Phantoms in the Brain, "There is something distinctly odd about a hairless, neotenus primate that has evolved into a species that can look back over its own shoulder to ponder its own origins. Odder still, the brain cannot only discover how other brains work but also ask questions about itself, who am I? What is the meaning of my existence, especially if you are from India? Why do I laugh? Why do I dream, why do I enjoy art, music and poetry? Does my mind consist entirely of the activity of neurons in my brain? If so, what scope is there for free will? It is the peculiar recursive quality of these questions as the brain struggles to understand itself that makes neurology so fascinating. The prospect of answering these questions in the next millennium is both exhilarating and disquieting, but it's surely the greatest adventure that our species has ever embarked upon."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2003/lecture1.shtml>