

A watershed in the history of Acem

The year 2003 will be remembered as a turning point in the history of Acem International.

The World Retreat

The most obvious milestone was the First World Retreat of Acem Meditation, held in Oslo, Norway, this summer. Acem has arranged many retreats with international participation, however this retreat was different in several respects.

First, the number of participants from outside Scandinavia was higher, and they came from many different countries: India, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Spain, Canada, the United States and Latvia.

Second, activities at the World Retreat had a wider scope than ever before: meditation, guidance, talks and discussions, awareness training, seminars and workshops on a wide variety of topics, yoga, dreiva dancing, social dynamics, and a concert with Norwegian and Iranian music.

Third, after the World Retreat, 47 participants from a number of different countries went on a four-day tour of Norway. They saw many of the most scenic spots of the country; they were able to watch how an organization built on idealism works in practice, and many contributed with voluntary work.



Fourth, after the tour there was an international deepening retreat with long meditations. Participants came from Scandinavia, Germany, India and Taiwan.

Halvorsbøle

Another important milestone was the acquisition of a new international retreat



centre, acquired by Acem less than two weeks before the World Retreat started. Though the name "Halvorsbøle" may be difficult to pronounce, its location by Lake Randsfjord and the high standard of its facilities make the venue most suitable for the continued growth of the organization. Acem already has three retreat centres in Scandinavia (Lundsholm in Sweden; Skaugumåsen and Hesteløkka in Norway), but Halvorsbøle is in a class of its own.

For Norwegians, Halvorsbøle is already well established as a high-quality conference centre in beautiful natural surroundings. It is famous for having hosted the government's budget negotiations for several years running, as well as the peace negotiations between Israel and the PLO which led to the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993.

To build the centre today would cost around 15 million euros. Only four years ago, more than a million euros was spent on a magnificent new dining hall with a stylish high ceiling made of glass. Due to a slump in the hotel market in Norway, Acem was able to acquire Halvorsbøle for less than 1.5 million euros.

Halvorsbøle lies on a hill overlooking Lake Randsfjord, with squirrels and sparrows playing in the pine trees just outside one's window. All rooms in the main house and the main lecture hall have a direct view of the lake. Both within and outside the grounds of the centre there are a number of walking paths, one leading to a charming little beach. Not far from the centre lies Fjorda, one of Norway's most famous canoeing areas.

The centre has already hosted this summer's international deepening retreat, a student's weekend retreat and, in October, the Opening Weekend Retreat with Acem's founder, Dr. Are Holen.

Two new initiators

A third important milestone last summer was the appointment of two new initiators in Acem, Eva Skaar and Merete Lund Hetland.

Initiators constitute the leadership of Acem. They are in charge of the personal encounters with meditators who are given individual meditation sounds. Their qualities must include a strong willingness to enter into a growth process, an ability to initiate such processes in others, a lifestyle and behaviour that reflect basic Acem values, and a long history of dedicated work for the organization.



Eva Skaar has long had a central position in Acem International. She is in charge of Acem's activities in Britain, and in her capacity as a meditation guide and lecturer she has visited Taiwan twice and India once. In addition, she somehow finds the time to work as the general editor of Acem Radio in Oslo, she heads Acem's leadership training programme in Norway, and pursues her career as an artist painter.



Merete Lund Hetland from Denmark is the first initiator from outside Norway. She is a medical doctor with a Ph.D. working as a Consultant in Rheumatology at Copenhagen University Hospital in Hvidovre. For more than twenty years, she has spent much of her spare time building up Acem Denmark in close collaboration with other Danish instructors.

Gift to humanity

Acem Meditation comes from Norway, but belongs to humanity. Together, the three milestones presented above indicate the extent of Acem's growth as an international organization. The long-term effect of these changes is difficult to gauge, but in many Acem centres around the world, meditators are asking obvious questions: How can I contribute to the advancement of this process? How can I help in spreading the practice of Acem Meditation?

When you meditate, you are using your brain. It's been scientifically proven.

If you meditate, you do as ten million American adults do, among them film stars Goldie Hawn and Richard Gere, and former Vice President Al Gore. You are also an object of study for serious scientists, who are now discovering that some kinds of meditation have interesting effects that can be measured.

Many people still associate meditation with romantic dreams of a golden age. Someone—a prophet, a guru, a reincarnated Maitreya—is going to come and initiate a new era, where all pain is gone and all enigmas are solved. People who practise meditation are seen as escapists guided by such fantasies of a problem-free existence. Meditation entails crystals and pyramids, weird notions and even weirder lifestyles. Normal, sensible and realistic people do not meditate.

The average American does meditate

The American weekly *Time Magazine*, with a certain degree of wonderment, says goodbye to this idea of the weirdness of meditation, in its cover story on August 4 (notably in its American issue, not in the European one). The article begins with the statement that meditation has been associated with “New Age mumbo jumbo”, a discipline for nutty people. (The fact that the magazine uses an interestingly lightly clad film star on its cover, meditating in a new-age type landscape, probably reflects a healthy understanding of the newsstand market). The writer, who does not meditate, notes with surprise that he almost belongs to a minority.

Meditation is becoming demystified. People who meditate are no longer hippies past their sell-by date or dotty people living in California with crystals, pyramids and new-age magazines, but normal and average Americans. Meditation rooms are appearing at airports. Meditation is increasingly recommended

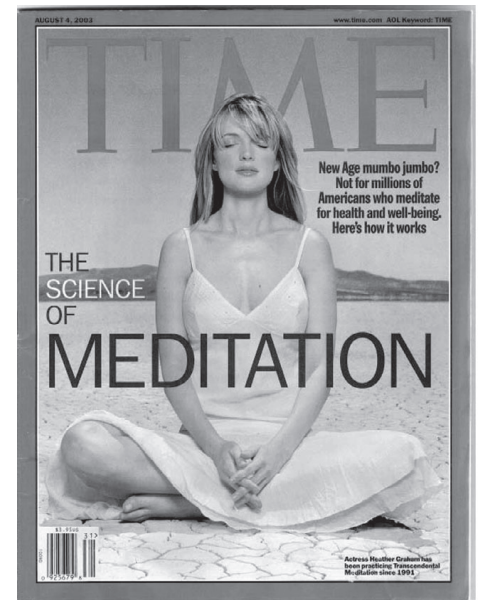
by medical doctors as a means to prevent, or at least control, stress-related problems or diseases, and to strengthen the body's immune system. Research has shown that meditation can, in computer terminology, “reset” the brain and change the “cluster” that makes you react with rage at traffic jams. You can actually train yourself to be present here and now, and not remain stuck in past reaction patterns.

Time reports a series of studies and various meditation techniques, highlighting the material with attractive illustrations and graphics.

Goodbye to romantic theories

In countries where Acem Meditation is more widespread, the demystification of meditation may not be regarded as remarkable. Those who read issues of the Acem periodical *Dyade* from the early 1970s will find clear analyses and dismissal of romantic meditation waffle and uncritical submission to charismatic prophets.

Acem's sober and demystified efforts to develop an understanding of meditation have been a relief to many—and a disappointment to some—who sought simple and seductive solutions. People who come to Acem's beginner's courses usually do so precisely because they have discovered the reality that *Time* describes: this is a method for everyday life, for normal people who want something more in their lives. There is a seriousness here that provides security.



More acceptable science

Time's main point is, of course, that the effects of meditation can be shown scientifically. There is nothing new in this. The problem is, rather, that such proof has largely appeared to be pseudo-scientific. Cool graphics and sensational results have often appeared to be made-to-order, as if the conclusion preceded the research. Self-respecting scientists have distanced themselves from all studies of meditation.

Time reports that such research is now becoming more sound and reliable. The magazine may very well be right, because about a week later, the *New York Times*, in its Sunday magazine, published a feature referring to a fax that the Dalai Lama sent to an American professor of psychology in 1992, wherein the exiled Tibetan leader offered his meditating monks for scientific research. Most American neurologists would have declined, or run away from, an invitation to do research on Buddhist meditation, but the professor started a project and gradually involved other eminent scientists. They are now presenting their conclusions. We may well come to see more cover stories about the good sense of meditating.

Acem Retreats in Germany 2004

Summer Retreat

Saturday 14 August - Sunday 22 August
Germerode, close to Eschwege,
west of Kassel.
Led by political correspondent
Ole Nygaard and Dr. Are Holen.
Language: German (Dr. Holen's talks
will be in English with German
translation)

Weekend Retreats

NORTH
Friday 30 April - Sunday 2 May
Am Schillersee in Bergfeld, Landkreis
Güstrow, south of Rostock.

Both weekend retreats are led by political correspondent Ole Nygaard.
Retreat language: German
Retreat fee: EUR 150

SOUTH

Friday 28 May - Sunday 30 May
Gästehaus Osswald, Kirchheim am
Ries, west of Stuttgart.

Information and registration: acem.deutschland@acem.com.

Learn Acem Meditation now - and recommend it to someone you care about

International Weekend Retreat of Acem Meditation 2004

Friday 23 - Sunday 25 April
Charney Manor, close to Oxford



This retreat offers a unique opportunity to achieve a deeper understanding of Acem Meditation through the experience of longer meditations, guidance groups and evening talks. In addition, meeting and discussing with other practitioners of meditation provides new perspectives on the meditative process.

The retreat will be led by Initiator Eva Skaar, in cooperation with Acem instructors from the UK and Scandinavia.

The retreat is open to anyone who has learned Acem Meditation. If you wish to learn Acem Meditation during the retreat, please contact Acem UK.

Charney Manor

Charney Manor is one of the oldest inhabited houses in Britain. It is located by the small village of Charney Bassett in the Vale of the White Horse, about 14 miles south-west of Oxford and the same distance west of Didcot. Trains depart from London every hour.

For centuries, people have come to this place of tranquillity for reflection, renewal and retreat. Once the grange of the Benedictine abbey of Abingdon, Charney Manor is now owned and managed by the Quakers. With its comfortable rooms and delightful grounds, Charney Manor offers a most pleasant setting for a weekend of meditative deepening.

Retreat fee

GBP 150 including accommodation and all meals.
Students below 30 years of age GBP 120.

Information and registration: acem.uk@acem.com.

International Deepening Retreat of Acem Meditation 2004

Sunday 25 July - Sunday 1 August
Acem Retreat Centre Lundsholm, Sweden



This retreat is for Acem meditators who have some experience of long meditations and want to practise sittings of more than six hours. A deepening retreat will provide a good opportunity to work thoroughly with one's meditation practice and to explore aspects of meditation

that are not easily available in other contexts. Meals and lifestyle are designed to intensify the meditative process.

Typical daily programme

0730 - 0830: Breakfast, exercise
(including swimming in the Mangel Lake)
0830 - 1630: Silence for meditation
1630 - 1700: Pause
1700 - 1900: Process guidance
1900 - 2000: Dinner
2000 - 2130: Seminar

The retreat includes instruction in advanced meditation practice, group discussions, seminars, process guidance and existential questions. On some days, there will be yoga instruction and group meditation.

Participants must have practised Acem Meditation regularly for at least three months before the retreat starts. They must have recent experience (from the past year) of long meditations of three hours or more. Earlier participation in overnight retreats in Acem Meditation is highly recommended.

The retreat will be led by Dr. Halvor Eifring.

Retreat fees

Fees include accommodation and all meals.
EUR 715 (with single room/private bath accommodation in new building), EUR 640 (accommodation in old buildings).
Students below 30 years of age: EUR 500 (accommodation in old buildings)

Information and registration: acem@acem.com.

Contact Acem to enrol or to obtain a free information brochure

Indians in Norway, the homeland of meditation: “Acem Meditation is fantastic!”

Jayaraj and Kalpana

They are proud. They are impressed. And they are deeply moved. Kalpana and Jayaraj guided a group of 18 Indians to this summer’s World Retreat of Acem Meditation in Norway.

We meet them over a glass of freshly made Norwegian apple juice. They have already spent almost one month in Norway, this exotic country of mountains and fjords, forests and seas, a country where every inhabitant is surrounded by a surprising amount of space. This is the place where Acem was founded almost 40 years ago. And this is the place where this summer’s World Retreat of Acem Meditation, Post-retreat Tour and International Deepening Retreat took place. Now, in the middle of August, it is time to go back to the crowded streets and boisterous life of Delhi, to their work in the area called Central Market in the district of Lajpat Nagar, and to the pocket meetings and all-members meetings of Acem India. According to Tamil custom, we address her by her first name, Kalpana, and him by his family name, Jayaraj.

They are filled with impressions: faces and energetic movements from the dreiva dancing and the social dynamics at the retreat; rewarding conversations along a forest road at Hadeland; the quiet mood after hours of meditation; existential dialogues between retreat participants and Are Holen or other lecturers; sunrises and sunsets; and the natural beauty of Norway.

With a smile they tell us about the time when they were offered earplugs for the long meditations at Halvorsbøle. “At home we are used to meditating while noisy traffic rushes by outside our windows. At Halvorsbøle, the windows were facing the pine trees and Lake Randsfjord. The silence was almost obtrusive. Why should we need earplugs?”

They praise Norwegian nature. “In Norway the green is really green, and the blue is really blue. In India, at least in Delhi, every colour is covered by a shade of grey due to all the dust and the pollution.”

Working for the community

They are proud to have been part of a group of 18 Indians at the World Retreat. They had worked hard in order to get as many participants as possible, and their work was crowned with success. Their 21-year-old son Anoop and their 18-year-old daughter Nivanthee were among the participants. For a long time, many Indian members were uncertain as

to whether they would be able to take the time off from work. Travelling to one of the most expensive countries in the world represented an economic challenge as well. Some of them had to stay at home this time, but hope to participate in the future.

“We are happy that so many people had the opportunity to participate. This will increase their understanding of meditation and their commitment to Acem.”

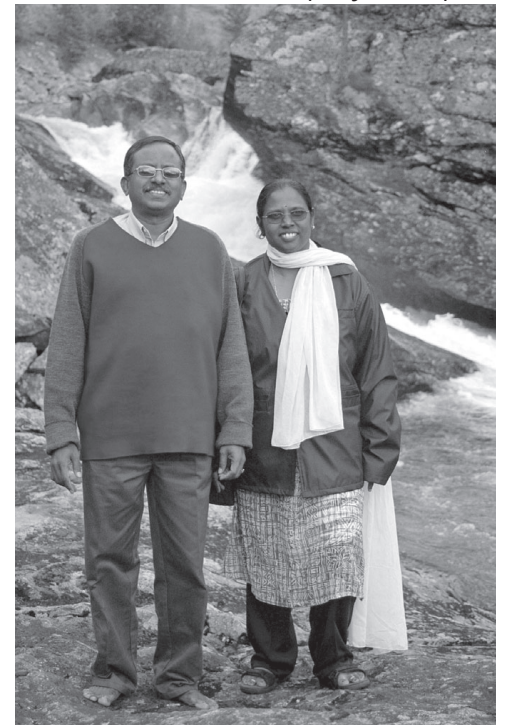
They are impressed by the work carried out by Acem International in order to arrange the World Retreat, the Post-retreat Tour and the International Deepening Retreat. “You cooperate so well and you really put your hearts into the work. We feel that you have taken good care of us. We will try to establish the same working style back home in India. You have made such a great effort in order for everything to go smoothly. Seeing this has made many Indian participants think. We understand better now what it takes for Acem India to develop further. We enjoy working for an organization that manages to create such a sense of community.”

Pocket meetings

The first fruit of the inspiration brought about by this trip to Norway is the establishment of a youth wing in Acem India. Six of the 18 participants belong to the youth wing. After coming back home at the end of July, they continued to meet. As a beginning, they collected photos from the trip to Norway. Next, they will lead and establish pocket meetings.

Some of them have enrolled in Acem’s leadership training and want to represent Acem at colleges and universities. “I have told them that Acem started out as a student organization,” said Kalpana.

Pocket meetings are weekly meditation meetings where members of a district get together in order to “meet, meditate, and discuss”. There are currently three regular meeting places in Delhi, all of them holding weekly meetings, in addition to an All Members Meeting once a month. Kalpana said: “Our aim is to have a meeting being arranged somewhere in India every day of the year. I think it is realistic.” She points to the fact that three days of the week are already



covered. “All you need for such a meeting to be arranged is that three persons get together. As the saying goes: ‘three is a crowd’.”

It is important to Jayaraj that Acem expands its activity to larger parts of India. “It is a huge country. We already arrange courses in Delhi, Chennai (formerly called Madras), Chandigarh, and Varanasi (formerly called Benares). This year, we plan to arrange courses in Bangalore. In 2004, Chennai or Bangalore should become an Acem centre for South India. For them, Delhi is too far away.”

Opening up

The events of this summer have made a strong personal impression on both Kalpana and Jayaraj. “I have practised Acem Meditation for five years, and I have experience with long meditations. Still, the evening lectures on awareness and other topics deepened my understanding and brought me further in my meditation process,” says Jayaraj. “It was important for me to hear about Acem Meditation from the man who started the organization, Dr. Are Holen.”

He is also excited about the yoga. “In India, yoga is often characterized by tough and exhausting exercises. At the World Retreat, the yoga exercises were focused on slow movements with no pressure.” The form of dance called dreiva was new to him. “Dreiva is not just a dance, but is connected to the meditation process. It helped us to overcome inhibitions, express ourselves and move our bodies together with others. Dreiva creates energy. I enjoyed the

dreiva dancing after the long meditations, and the dreiva made it easier to return to long meditations on the following day.”

The deepening retreat probably made the strongest impression. “I talked about important things in my life, things that happened 25 or 30 years ago. Many feelings came to the surface: some sadness, but also relief at finally having the opportunity to share these things. It wasn’t easy, but I am glad it happened.”

When comparing the World Retreat to the deepening retreat, Kalpana says: “The World Retreat had everything: meditation, lectures, dreiva, yoga, social activities, shopping, and a strong sense of community with the other participants staying in the same flat. We felt like a family. I really enjoyed meeting again Scandinavian participants who visited India during the Millennium Retreat in 2000.

At the deepening retreat, we spent more time on our own. The activities consisted mainly of meditation and reflection, and there was sort of a thoughtful mood. In addition to the talks and seminars, the conversations I had during the evening walks were important to me. My physical shape is not too good, and physically speaking the countryside walks were a bit trying. However, I really appreciated the possibility to share doubts and questions with others on the way.”

Responsibility for your own process

People often ask them why they, coming from the country usually considered the homeland of meditation, wanted to learn a Norwegian technique. “The manner in which Acem teaches meditation is different,” Kalpana says. “Acem Meditation is not connected to one country or one culture. It is based on universal psychological principles. The dialogue is far more important and meaningful than what I have experienced in other groups. In India you could talk to your guru and tell him that you see colours in your meditation, and the guru would respond: ‘Good. This is a sign that you are moving in the right direction.’ This attitude can easily stimulate day-dreaming and escapism.”

Jayaraj has personal experience with this problem. Before he became involved with Acem, he had learned another meditation technique based on the chanting of mantras.

“At the beginning, I enjoyed it. It gave me a pleasant, almost blissful feeling of emptiness. But after some time, I started to question the point of it. Did I just use meditation in order to escape from my

everyday life? Then I got in touch with Torbjørn Hobbel, initiator in Acem. I understood that meditation was about something more than just a momentary feeling. First of all, it is a method to enrich one’s life. Instead of submitting to a guru or a master who charges 20.000 rupees to talk to you, you take charge of your own development.”

A meditating family

So, what has meditation meant to them? “I have become more self-assertive,” Kalpana says. “For a long time I thought I had to be kind all the time. At the beginning, I was a bit sceptical to meditation, and it took me a year before I began to meditate regularly. But I noticed what the technique did to others, especially to my son, who plays chess, and whose ability to concentrate had improved noticeably. After a while, meditation helped me to say ‘No’ in situations where I normally would have responded ‘Yes, of course’. And this was not just a superficial change, like the kind of change you can get from reading a book and learn to say ‘I am ok, you are ok’ even when everything is far from ok. Meditation goes to the root of the problem.”

In Jayaraj’s case, the process has been almost the opposite. “I have often found it hard to keep back my reactions towards other people. I am sometimes too straightforward without considering the consequences of telling people exactly what I think. But I have become more tolerant. Everybody has their way of being, and I have mine. I don’t always have to express my reactions.”

Growing together

Kalpana and Jayaraj have always pulled together as a team. Acem Meditation has drawn them even closer together, and the same goes for the rest of the family. Their son Anoop has practised meditation regularly for several years now. Their daughter Nivanthee has also become more and more interested in Acem. Kalpana’s father, who used to live with them in Delhi, got the chance to enrich his life with the technique during the last few years before he passed away. “Acem Meditation has helped us grow as a family. We have seen the same thing happening in other families. This is one of the reasons why we wish to work to disseminate the technique.”

Before they leave the apple juice and return home to Delhi, they remind us that Acem Travels is arranging for another India tour in January 2005. This time the destination is the southern part of the country. “We are looking forward to seeing you all there!”



Flatmates at the World Retreat of Acem Meditation. At the back: Jayaraj, Otto Laurits Fuglestad, Kalpana, and Inger Halvorsen. In front: Liljan Smith Aandahl and Roy Halvorsen.



On a boat trip together with K.G. Awasthi and Hildegunn Bell.



Their daughter, Nivanthee, dancing an Indian dance at the World Retreat.



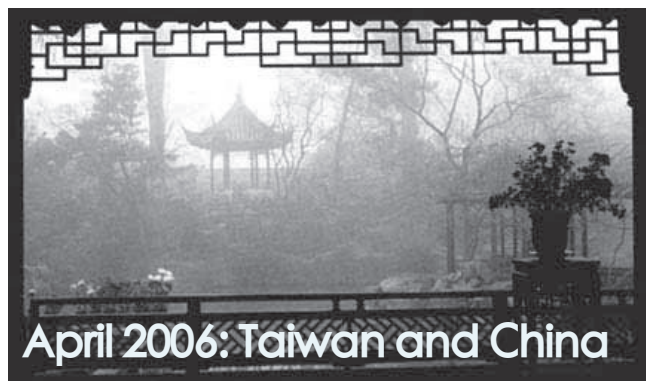
Kalpana and her son Anoop



January 2005: India

This tour will bring you to the legendary southern tip of India at Kanniya Kumari, recognised as one of India's most holy places. Here the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet. The beautiful beach is covered with coloured sand that the raging goddess Bhagavati left behind when her bridegroom Shiva failed to turn up on their wedding day. Standing here you can see the sun set and the full moon rise at the same time. A number of ancient—and quite a few new—pilgrimage sites are located here.

A one-week meditation retreat arranged by Acem International in collaboration with Acem India will be followed by a scenic tour of the area, including sites of great natural beauty and cultural, historical and spiritual importance. Torbjørn Hobbel, who is the founder of Acem India and has spent years in the country, will guide the tour.



April 2006: Taiwan and China

An extended Easter holiday that combines meditative reflection and ancient tradition with a visit to the booming and expansive financial centres of Taipei and Shanghai.

While 'Taipei 101' recently became the world's tallest skyscraper, Shanghai is determined to break the record soon with its costly 'World Financial Centre'. Upon leaving Taipei, however, it is easy to understand why the Portuguese gave Taiwan the name 'Ihla Formosa' (beautiful island). Likewise, upon leaving Shanghai, one sees in the countryside the inspiration for China's long tradition of nature poetry and landscape painting, much of which has its origin in this area. We will visit the famous gardens of Suzhou, the legendary West Lake of Hangzhou and the picturesque mountains of Huangshan, plus the Buddhist island Putuoshan, with its superb beaches, rural walks and old monasteries.

The tour starts with a five-day meditation retreat arranged by Acem International in collaboration with Acem Taiwan. The tour guide will be Halvor Eifring, who started Acem's activities in both Taiwan and China, and is a Professor of Chinese at the University of Oslo.

Information: acem.travels@acem.com

Preliminary announcement

Three-month retreat with long meditations

March - May 2007

Acem Retreat Centre Lundsholm, Arvika, Sweden
Led by Are Holen and other initiators of Acem

Acem is considering arranging a three-month (12 weeks) retreat consisting of long meditations, seminars and group activities. The retreat will probably last from the beginning of March until the end of May 2007. As a preliminary indication, the retreat fee will be around NOK 36,000 (to be paid in advance), including accommodation, meals, lessons and group activities.

Admission

Interested persons are invited to apply for admission. Full participation during the whole retreat is required. Prior to the retreat, participants should have practised Acem Meditation regularly for at least three months and have had experience with long meditations of more than three hours during the last two years. Applicants should be mentally stable and not in need of psychiatric treatment, help or support.

Draft programme

There will be long meditations every day on the retreat, starting with meditations of three hours, the duration gradually increasing to eventually include meditations around the clock. The whole retreat, especially the first and last month, will include group activities, such as meditation guidance, process guidance, and, after some time, communication groups. The mid-period of the retreat will mainly be devoted to long meditations. The last four weeks will see a gradual reduction in the duration of long meditations, and increases in the time devoted to seminars and group activities. On average, seminars and talks on meditation will be held every other day. Seminars and talks will be more frequent at the beginning and towards the end of the retreat, and less frequent during the middle period.

Potential

Long meditations speed up the inner processes of Acem Meditation. More energy for work and relations, personal insights and self awareness, plus improved health may result. Also, long meditations will improve the effects of regular meditations in everyday life. The beneficial effects of retreats with long meditations may continue to influence one's life for months or even years afterwards. Long meditations and group activities over an extended period provide unique opportunities to work with deeper psychological and existential aspects of one's life, and to approach the realization of the timeless aspects of the inner self.

Exact dates and place have not been finally decided.
This early announcement is made to provide those interested with sufficient time for future planning.

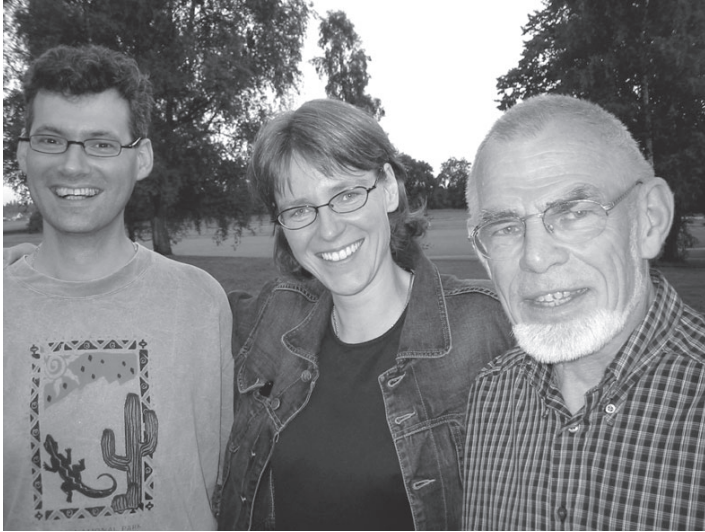
International Summer Retreat of Acem Meditation 2005

with Dr. Are Holen, founder of Acem

Saturday 16 July - Sunday 24 July
at Acem Retreat Centre Halvorsbøle, Norway

Three new Acem instructors in The Netherlands:

“We want to spread Acem Meditation!”



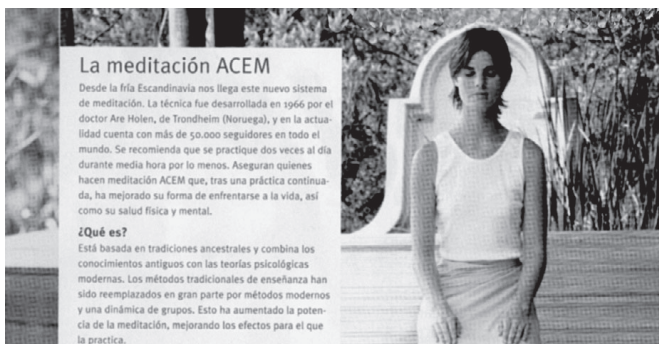
“We wanted to contribute to the dissemination of the knowledge and practice of Acem Meditation, and not just be consumers. That’s why we participated in Acem’s leadership training,” say lawyer Edwin Mac Gillavry, adviser Inge Wichard and retired teacher Piet Kodde. After one and a half years of training, they now practise as Acem instructors in The Netherlands.

“The training programme was challenging. We highly appreciate Acem’s thorough and serious approach. It’s been an exciting process. Teaching others helps us to reflect upon our own meditation. Our understanding of the psychology of meditation needs to be connected to our own experience.”

With three new instructors, Acem Netherlands is now able to offer more courses and more opportunities for personal growth.

Dietética y salud on Acem Meditation:

A technique for relaxation, recreation and health



In a recent article on meditation in the Spanish health magazine *Dietética y salud*, Acem Meditation figures prominently. The article describes this “new Scandinavian system of meditation” as “an efficient technique for relaxation, recreation and health”, which “stimulates inspiration and existential reflection”. In Spain, Acem Meditation is now taught in a number of cities, see acem.com/spain.

Beginning with last year’s report by the BBC World Service on Acem Meditation “taking India by storm”, a number of radio channels and magazines have discussed Acem Meditation, including the China Broadcasting Corporation on Taiwan and Saga Magazine in Britain.

Taiwanese Acem member donated 1000 dollars:

“Don’t you want donations?”

How is it possible to travel across the world’s most expensive country on a 4-5 days guided tour for a modest amount of money that includes board and lodging? Many of the participants on Acem’s Post-Retreat Tour last summer asked this question. One of them, Mr Tseng Yung-hui from Taiwan, decided to donate 500 US dollars to Acem International and 500 US dollars to Acem Taiwan.

It is not the first time Mr Tseng or his wife Ms Lin Chun-chen have offered their generous support to Acem Taiwan, both in terms of donations and voluntary work. They are well aware that non-profit organizations depend on such contributions, and they were puzzled by the fact that during last summer’s World Retreat, which gathered almost 300 participants from a number of countries for a whole week, they were not even once asked for donations. Organizations they know in Taiwan would have been extremely conscious of the opportunity for donations offered by such a retreat. “Don’t you want donations?” Mr Tseng asked. “Doesn’t Acem need money?”

The truth is, of course, that Acem does need monetary and volunteer support. Norway has a poorly developed culture for private donation. Instead, many Norwegian organizations choose to rely on government support. This has never been an option for Acem: the voluntary work of members is Acem’s most important asset. Only in the past few years has the organization begun to receive more substantial donations. It may in fact be ‘typically Norwegian’ to forget to mention the opportunity to donate money.

Most countries have different attitudes towards donations. One single issue of Acem Taiwan’s newsletter, published after the opening of the Acem localities in Taipei in 2001, list the following donations from local members:

- Lorna Jeng—refrigerator, TV, sofa, bed, desk, cupboard, gas oven, computer desk, desk lamp, kitchen utensils and stereo equipment
- Lin Chunchen—30 chairs suitable for meditation
- Alice Lu—washing machine, water filtering machine
- Huang Chinlien—40 pairs of slippers
- Lotus Chang—telephone, fax, signboard
- May Lin—all the food for the opening festivities
- Cassy Cheng—tea set
- Chang Fu-ning—printer
- Chou Hung—keyboard and mouse
- Frank Hsieh—modem

In addition there were many anonymous donors. The willingness to support Acem has not abated: when the water pipes began to leak this year, one member took it upon herself to find a suitable plumber and pay the cost.

To further the international growth of Acem, donations are most welcome. If you want to donate to Acem, or help in other ways, please e-mail acem@acem.com or contact your Acem instructor.

ACEM

School of Meditation

is a non-profit organisation which helps people develop existentially by means of a mindful, reflective process known as Acem Meditation.

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Go to www.acem.com/info/centres.html to locate addresses in other countries.

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Eva Skaar, Cathrine Pedersen and Nina Tjomsland (transl.).

International Summer Retreat of Acem Meditation 2004

Saturday 17 July – Sunday 25 July
Funen, Denmark

with Dr. Are Holen

Retreats inspire changes of direction that will provide new possibilities in life. Additionally, they offer plenty of opportunities to meet other meditators in scenic and quiet natural surroundings.

Directed by the founder of Acem Dr. Are Holen

The retreat will be directed by Dr. Are Holen, who founded Acem in 1966 and is the international head of the organization. Dr. Holen is a recognized expert on meditation and an inspiring lecturer and meditation guide. He is also a world-renowned stress researcher. He teaches at the Faculty of Medicine, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.



Evening talks

Dr. Holen and other leaders of Acem will give lectures designed to explore the practice and the psychology of meditation.

Long meditations

One aim of the retreat is to help participants master the three-hour level of long meditations. Abundant time for meditation gradually makes deeper layers of mental stress and muscular tension give way to a calmer and more open condition of mind. Also, by refining your meditative practice, you can gradually become aware of patterns and emotions that were hitherto unconscious.

Daily guidance

Small guidance groups led by experienced instructors provide meditators with opportunities to discuss individual meditative experiences. This enhances meditation skills and deepens insights into central personal issues. Guidance groups in Dutch, Mandarin and Scandinavian will be offered.

Yoga

Basic instruction in Acem Yoga is designed to stimulate the processes of long meditations.

Programme committee

Eva Brandt, PhD, Senior Researcher in Collaborative Design Processes
Merete Hetland, MD, PhD, Consultant
Knud Erik Meyer, PhD, Associate Professor
Christian Weithøft, MSc, System Developer

Social interaction

The activities of the retreat will enable rich and varied social interactions.

25 years anniversary

During the retreat, Acem Denmark will celebrate its 25 years anniversary with a variety of activities.

Who may participate?

The retreat is for all who have learnt Acem Meditation, both beginners and experienced meditators. It is also possible to learn Acem Meditation during the retreat.

Typical daily programme

- Long meditation of 3 to 4 hours in the morning
- Guidance groups
- Afternoon group meditation
- Evening talks
- Social interaction

Retreat language

The official language will be English with simultaneous translation into Scandinavian, Dutch and Mandarin.



Programme start and end

Registration is from 3 to 5 p.m. on 17 July. Dinner will be served at 7.15 p.m. and the Opening starts at 8.30 p.m. The retreat will finish at 3 p.m. on 25 July. Participants who need inexpensive accommodation before or after the retreat may contact Acem Denmark.

The venue

Korinth Agricultural School at Funen in Denmark is situated in beautiful and peaceful surroundings 30 kilometres south of Odense. Participants will be accommodated in single rooms (students may be accommodated in double rooms).



The Garden of Denmark

The Funen landscape is as taken out of a fairy tale of Hans Christian Andersen, who was born on the island. Known as the 'Garden of Denmark', pastoral and picturesque Funen is Denmark's second-largest island. Its rural scenery, with thatched farmhouses and quaint windmills scattered around the landscape, has an irresistible charm. During the retreat, the participants will visit the beautiful Egeskov Castle and Egeskov Park nearby. Acem Denmark can provide you with information regarding holidaying in Denmark.

How to get there

By car, Korinth is approximately 2 hours from Copenhagen or 3-4 hours from Hamburg. If you have questions regarding transportation, or if you need to be picked up from Copenhagen Airport, please contact Acem Denmark and we will do our best to help you.

Retreat fee

All fees include accommodation and all meals (lacto-vegetarian diet).

Early registration: Registration and payment before 1 April, 2004: EUR 545
Full-time students of less than 30 years of age: EUR 385 (accommodation may be in double room)

Late registration: EUR 605

Full-time students of less than 30 years of age: EUR 425 (accommodation may be in double room)

Registration deadline

Early registration: 1 April, 2004.

Late registration: 31 May, 2004.

Information/registration:

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www.acem.com