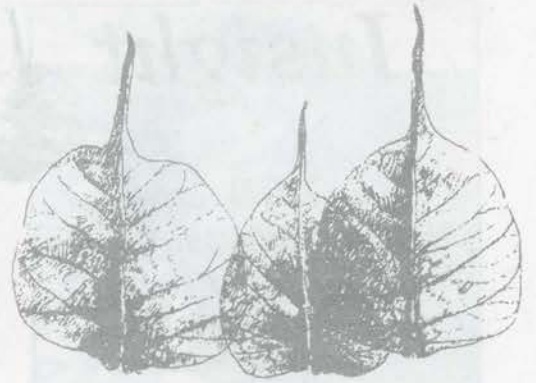


A Joint Newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society
and the Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies

Insight



Fall 1996

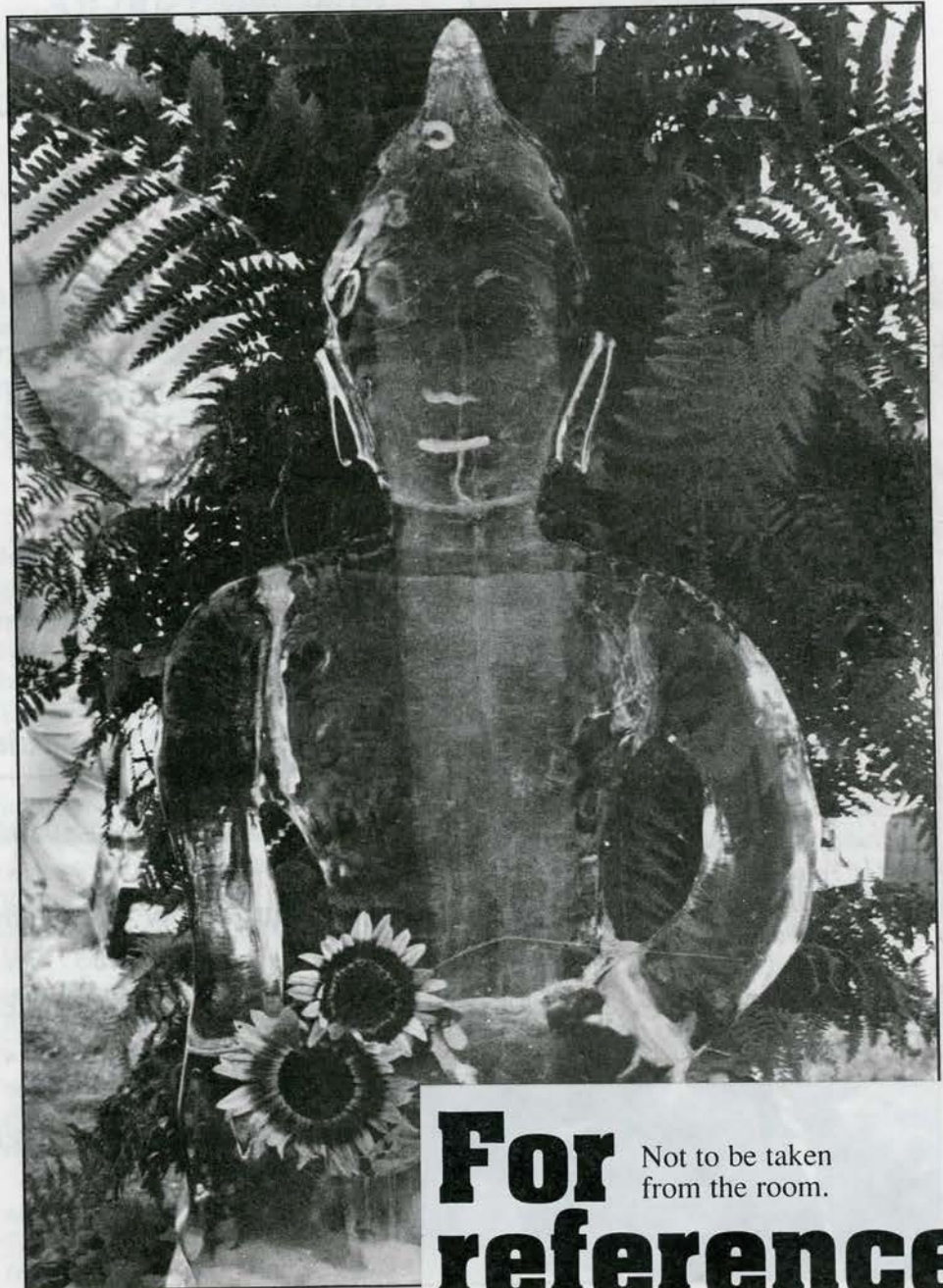
IMS 1997 Retreat
Schedule

BCBS 1997 Course
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Teacher Interview:
*Martine and Stephen
Batchelor*

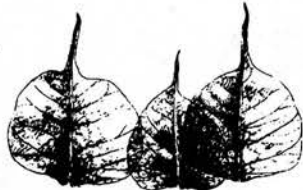
Renunciation
by Sister Siripaṇṇā

Investigation
*by Narayan
and Michael
Liebenson Grady*



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from the room.
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Insight



A twice-yearly newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society

and the

**Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies**

with schedules and Dharma articles of
lasting interest



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Ralph Davis

The Buddha, carved in ice for IMS' 20th anniversary celebration, seems a particularly appropriate symbol of the truth of impermanence.

Photographs
Page 7: Buzz Bussewitz

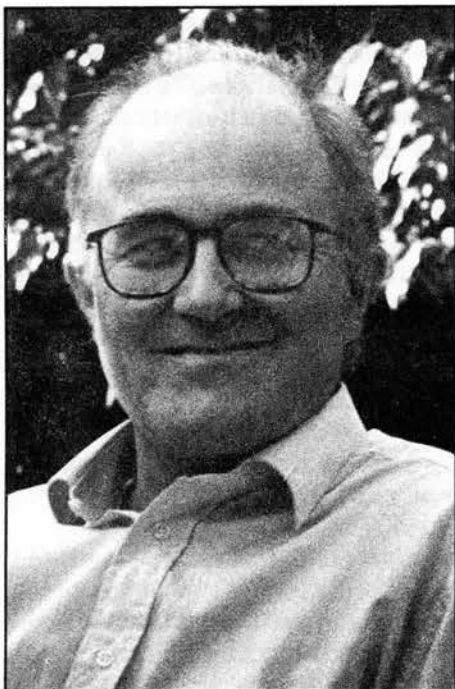
Insight is a newsletter jointly published by the Insight Meditation Society and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which are tax-exempt, nonprofit centers whose purpose is to foster the practice of vipassana (insight) meditation and to preserve the essential teachings of Theravada Buddhism. The goal of the practice is the awakening of wisdom and compassion through right action and cultivating mindful awareness in all aspects of life. IMS offers a year-round program of intensive meditation retreats and various opportunities for volunteer service. BCBS offers a year-round program of workshops and seminars in the study of the larger Buddhist tradition within a contemplative framework so as to build a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.

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VERY GOOD DHARMA FRIENDS

*An Interview with
Stephen and Martine
Batchelor*



*Stephen Batchelor and Martine Batchelor, both with extensive backgrounds in monastic Buddhism, are currently lay dharma teachers, practitioners and authors of a number of important books. Naming only a few, Martine has written *Walking on Lotus Flowers: Buddhist Women Living, Loving and Meditating*; and has co-edited *Buddhism and Ecology*. Stephen has written *Alone with Others*, *Faith to Doubt*, and *The Awakening of the West*; and they have cooperated on *The Way of Korean Zen*. They live in South Devon, England, and teach at Gaia House and the Sharpham College for Buddhist Studies and Contemplative Enquiry.*

How did you become interested in Buddhist practice?

Stephen: It is very difficult to reconstruct one's initial development of interest in anything as significant as Buddhist practice. I suppose to some degree it simply was something I picked up on in the counter culture of the 1960's that resonated.

Having read a few books when I was a teenager in England (I can't even remember which ones), I was sufficiently inspired to trail off to India at age 18. I ended up at Dharamsala, and made contact with Tibetan Lamas, and there was a course at the library in Dharamsala starting just then. It was a two-month series of lectures on basic Tibetan Buddhism with lots of reading, meditation, a *puja*. It wasn't academic, but nor was it a meditation retreat. I enrolled in that, and I have been doing that sort of thing ever since.

Martine: I came from a Socialist background growing up in France, and I had no interest whatsoever in any religious form, but I was interested in traveling from a very young age. When I was about 18 I came across the *Dhammapada* and that actually changed my life.

I was very active politically at that point, and in the *Dhammapada* there was a sentence which I understood as saying something like "Before you change all the people, you might want to change yourself." Suddenly I got the understanding: I can't even change my anger, the way I feel about the political causes—How can I change the world? I still wanted to be a journalist but I decided I would try to find some form of meditation, and that helped me to live a more relaxed life for a few years.

When I was about 21 I traveled East, and for various reasons ended up in Thailand. Here I met some scholar monks from Korea, who told me that I could

study Zen meditation there. So I went to Korea with the idea of staying a month or so, before going on to Japan.

I immediately went to Songgwang Sa monastery and shortly after I arrived a laywoman asked me, "Why don't you become a nun?" I said, "No, no way!" Then she said: "Aren't you lucky. I am a mother and have all these children, but I would love to become a nun. But you, you could do it!" And so I thought, "Yeah. I have no relationship, no job or anything, so why not?" So that is how I started.

That is quite a transition—from activist to nun. And in your case, Stephen? Did you ordain fairly soon after this first experience in Dharamsala?

Stephen: No, it was about a year and a half after I started my studies and practice that I finally became a monk, and I did so for the fairly traditional reasons. I

am very reluctant to make clear cut statements about my motives—I think one edits them considerably as one makes sense of one's life in retrospect. But no doubt there was a certain amount of romantic idealism; thinking of enlightenment, and recognizing a degree of suffering.

What did become quite clear was that if I wished to really go into this complete commitment to practice, the optimal lifestyle would be that of a monk. It would enable me to take certain vows that would maximize my ability to study and practice.

And what sort of training did you receive as a Tibetan monk?

Stephen: My primary training was with Geshe Rabten in Switzerland, along with a small group of fellow Western monks and lay people. The initial aim in the Gelugpa tradition was to undergo the basic training of the monastic university, which entailed the study of logic, epistemology, philosophy, psychology. Following traditional texts, memorizing those texts, debating in Tibetan—doing the whole thing in Tibetan. It was intellectually very demanding, because we were doing a course of study at which time there were no, or very few, English translations of this material, so we had to learn it all in Tibetan.

In retrospect, I think that was an extremely positive intellectual discipline and training that I feel has probably served me well just in terms of being able to use my mind. And this intellectual training was not in isolation—throughout this period we were doing a lot of other basic practices. So it was a very complete, very complex practice, under the guidance of a very highly qualified and highly regarded teacher.

And yet you wound up joining a Zen monastery in Korea, where you met Martine?

Stephen: Yes, that's true. After about 6 years as a monk in the Tibetan tradition I felt increasingly frustrated with the kind of studies we were doing. A lot of the study seemed to be less and less actually relevant to my own practice. I felt all this emphasis on debate and study and

memorization was becoming a bit top-heavy.

I looked at that time for a more contemplative training—initially within the Tibetan schools, but I didn't find that. So I was moved to follow that impulse I had had for many years to practice Zen. I had actually, throughout this period as a monk in the Tibetan tradition, been practicing *vipassanā* [insight meditation] in the Goenka style.

As a Tibetan monk, you were practicing Goenka-style *vipassanā*?

Stephen: Yes. Goenka came to Dharamsala in 1974 or 1975, shortly after I was ordained, and I did a 10-day *vipassanā* retreat with him. It completely turned my whole view of Buddhism around, because it then became clear that one could actually, in a relatively short period of time, enter into a meditative state that really altered one's quality of experience. The mind slowed down and became still, and one saw things in another way.

This was quite different from what the *geshes* would say, and certainly it was more immediately effective than any of the meditations I was doing with the Tibetans.

Was there any conflict or difficulty around mixing the practices?

Stephen: Yes and no. There was a conflict in the sense that this practice was not really understood by the Tibetans, and also not regarded as being of any great significance. Yet, it was tolerated. The Tibetan Lamas realized it was not incompatible with what they were doing, but it certainly didn't fit into their scheme of things.

But I had run into a certain conflict with Goenka, so I chose to stay in my Tibetan training but to continue the *vipassanā* practice. But that quality of *satipatthāna* [mindfulness] never left me, and that is really what I wanted to develop.

But I did find an element in the *vipassanā* practice that was a somewhat passive observation, whereas I found the Zen approach—particularly as I found it taught in Korea—to be a more dynamic inquiry. That appealed to me because it

valued a deep kind of existential question which I didn't find in Tibetan Buddhism or (at that time at least) in the Theravada approach either.

Therefore I chose to go to Korea, and found it exactly what I wanted. I was very, very happy there; I stayed for the last three years of Master Kusan's life, and then for another year to try and help keep the International Meditation Center going. It was at that point that Martine and I decided that we wanted to return to the West.

Martine, what was it like being a Korean nun?

Martine: I took to it quite warmly and enthusiastically once I understood what was going on, and it was a fantastic training. We did a lot of meditation because that is why we were there—we were in a meditation school and in a meditation monastery. They would tell us to meditate six months of the year, 10 hours a day at least, if not more. In between retreats, you would sit maybe 2-4 hours a day. So I took my meditation as my task because that was what I was there for, and it was a perfect place to do it with Master Kusan, a great master.

After the first five years I began to read more, and learned the language to understand what was going on. After a while I became a translator for Master Kusan, and translated some of his talks and teachings. It was really quite a rich environment among the Westerners and also our connection with Master Kusan. Then Stephen came, and with his scholarly background, we were able to work together translating and editing more teachings and texts.

Can either of you say anything about your decisions to disrobe, marry and return to the West?

Stephen: In my case, and this may be true for both of us, I saw less and less reason to remain as a monk by the end of my Zen training. It had, in a sense, served its purpose.

Also we discovered that we were very close to each other and, quite naturally after about a four year friendship, realized that we would very much like to live together and live the lay life with another

kind of commitment. I saw it always as moving from one kind of commitment (in the monk's case, celibacy) into a commitment to a married relationship with one person, and always within the context of dharma practice. So in that sense I didn't personally find it at all disorienting to disrobe.

Martine: In Korea we had to spend some time together and got to know each other as good friends. We had strong discussions about the dharma and the precepts and this and that, so we were already very good dharma friends—which I think is very important.

When Master Kusan died, it was a shock for both of us, and things at the monastery really changed. Stephen had already decided to go back to Europe. It worked that we continue our commitment to ourselves and to the dharma in that way.

Compared to a lot of people's experience in disrobing, I think it was very smooth. Thanks to Christopher [Titmuss], who Stephen knew from before, we were invited to visit and then join the Buddhist lay community of Sharpham, in Devon. This was very lucky—it was like moving from one dharma community to another. For us who had been ten years living in monasteries, it was fine to be in a community.

I am very intrigued in what you both think or feel about this whole phenomenon of Buddhism coming to the West. You have written a whole book on it, Stephen. From your fairly unique perspective of being Westerners who have really quite fully immersed yourselves in various Asian Buddhist cultures and in the Buddhist tradition, what do you make of all this? What do you think that the prospects are? Are we getting the real stuff these days in the West? Are we diluting things to follow our hopes and wishes?

Stephen: I don't think it is anything different from what has occurred historically many times before, particularly when you think of Buddhism going outside of its original cultural environment to China, Korea and Japan. It is not an unprecedented thing, and I don't think

one should make too big a deal out of it as though coming to the West were something special. It is not that different from what has already occurred.

What is happening really, in crudest terms, is that there is in our Western culture a need, both a personal and a social need, for another way of looking at the world that is perhaps more complete, more satisfying, that addresses certain questions in our lives that we don't find answers for in our own traditions. Buddhism seems to offer some response to those needs. If it didn't, I don't think there would be any interest in it.

Martine: I think one has to be careful of this big subject: Buddhism in the West. For me the primary thing is the method of the teaching about suffering. You might be teaching something very deep, but you might not be able to help the person you are addressing; so you might be slightly lighter, and that is maybe what they are needing in that moment—then maybe when they are ready they can go deeper.

There are many Western teachers who are very practiced and are very, very good teachers—and they continue to practice, which is very important. With good teachers the teaching can become both deeper and wider. For me, the two are important. Depth is important of course; but breadth, too, is important. In the West we can't afford to neglect the breadth because this is a pluralistic society and we see all these Buddhisms at once.

If you are a dedicated practitioner, I don't see why your practice won't be as deep as somebody who is practicing in Korea. I think it is intention that is important—the sincerity and the dedication.

Can you say more about the importance of addressing people's suffering?

Martine: This has to do with the basic Buddhist doctrine of the three trainings. Master Kusan always emphasized the importance of training equally in ethics, concentration, and wisdom. To me what the problems seem to be in the West (and it could have been the same in the East, I don't know) is that somebody might choose only ethics or only concentration

or only wisdom; but the teaching has been that you must practice the three together.

I think this is what we are called to do: practice the three together in our lives—not just as an intellectual understanding. I think you have to practice the precepts, you have to cultivate meditation, you have to study, you have to develop wisdom and understanding at various levels. We must never lose sight that these three trainings must go together.

We are not psychologists or doctors. We come from the Buddhist tradition; we come with a certain base from which we then try to alleviate the suffering. I cannot work on alleviating the suffering without also cultivating the Buddhist practice. To me that is very important.

Some dharma teachers are psychologists, and at least some parts of the American medical profession are looking to Buddhism for inspiration in their treatment of pain; also it seems many students use both traditional Buddhist and modern psychological techniques of self-understanding in parallel. Any thoughts on this?

Stephen: Well, again, I don't think it is anything surprising. In order for Buddhism to communicate its message within a given culture it has to learn to speak the language of that culture. (I don't mean French and English, but the dominant cultural modes of expression.)

Buddhism has always tended to enter into a particular foreign culture at a fairly specialist level, and it seems that in our culture one of the areas in which Buddhism has connected to the West is through psychology and psychotherapy. These disciplines have numerous resonances with Buddhist understanding. I think it is quite natural that Buddhism would adopt a psychological manner, because it is particularly apt.

At the same time, Buddhism is not a fixed body of dogma (like perhaps some other religions). It has always been transformed by its interactions with those cultures into which it has moved; at the same time, those cultures have been transformed by their interaction with Buddhism. So the style of the teaching reflects Buddhism's creative capacity to

interact with a culture in a way that makes it available to that culture, but at the same time it remains true to its own principles and its own pattern. With psychology, I think that is precisely what is going on.

The problem is that people may think that this is a corruption or a dilution of Buddhism when it begins to take on another linguistic form. I know that many of my Tibetan teachers are highly suspicious of any adaptation of the traditional forms of expression, because they see it as a process of corruption. I think one needs to respect that warning. One certainly does not want to reduce Buddhism to, say, psychotherapy because then it could easily just get absorbed into Western culture, lose its own identity.

I respect that warning, but on the other hand, if Buddhism doesn't engage creatively in other forms of expression, it is quite likely to remain marginalized, to remain a specialist interest amongst a few groups of people. But then I think Buddhism would not in the long run have much significant impact on the West.

Martine: Buddhist meditation is a healing power, but I think one has to be very careful to note it is not therapy. They can meet, but they are not the same thing. Meditation teachers can be psychotherapists as their profession, but need to be clear that there are real differences between therapy and meditation and the Buddhist path.

I have done some counseling training, because I saw that would be very useful for working with people in meditation interviews. But I can't look back at people's past or anything like this—what I want them to look at is the present and their future and how meditation could help them in their lives.

When we talk about concentration, we are talking about training the mind in a certain way. When we talk of inquiry, then I think it becomes a little bit more psychological. When we look into greed, hatred or anger, then we are beginning to look in a slightly different way.

I think the problem with putting too much psychology in meditation is that it might become too personal, too individual. People may become self-absorbed, which is the opposite of what

meditation wants to do—the inner stopping in order to be more responsive to the world.

Meditation and psychotherapy may complement one another in helpful ways, but they may also become obstructive to one another. Meditation can become an anesthetic to one's problems, and psychology can lead one to be too self-centered. The two need to be used together very carefully and very wisely.

Can you talk a bit about your current projects in England, especially the newly-started college of Buddhist Studies?

Stephen: We have been living in South Devon now for more than ten years, and throughout that time we have been involved with both Christopher Titmuss and Christina Feldman in the running of Gaia House Retreat Center as well as our projects at Sharpham House.

This year has been a year of considerable change on both these fronts. Gaia House has recently purchased a large old convent very close by, and we are now able to take many more people on retreat. We have a very large meditation room that can take up to about 100 people. It's a wonderfully quiet and contemplative place, largely due perhaps to the fact that it has been a home for nuns for so long.

One of the wings we have turned into the hermitage wing, which is a place where people can stay for any length of time to do solitary retreats with the support of the teachers at Gaia House. That I think is an amazing thing we can offer, a place for people to have their own room and to sit according to their own schedule and to do their practice by themselves.

At the same time that this is happening, we are also creating in Sharpham House a college for Buddhist studies and contemporary inquiry which will start September, 1996, offering year-long residential and non-residential courses on mainly Buddhist themes, but always seeking to apply those Buddhist themes to the contemporary world. So in addition to studying, say, *abhidhamma* or Tibetan *vajrayāna* or whatever, we would also be offering courses in psychotherapy, for example, Western religions, Western philosophy, elements of science that are of interest to Buddhists like con-

sciousness studies and so on, and providing that education within the context of an integrated way of life somewhat similar to that of a Buddhist monastery.

The students will live as a community, they will have regular periods of meditation together, they will work together on the land taking care of the garden, they will have classes in yoga and various kinds of body work, there will be opportunity for creative expression as well as some work in the community of offering services to the elderly and so on.

So we hope—and this is a completely experimental venture—that we will be able to create an educational environment in which people can deepen their understanding of the diversity of Buddhist traditions at the same time getting at least a feel for different forms of Buddhist practice and particularly applying that theory of practice in actual concrete situations in compatible fields within Western culture.

Martine: And everything—even the Western study—is taught by Buddhists. So when they look at something like the relationship of consciousness studies with Buddhism it is not just a kind of dry academic study, but there will always be the experience of looking at the problems within a Buddhist and contemplative perspective.

Stephen: We are limiting the program to twelve participants, and choosing them as carefully as we can. We have had a lot of experience running a community for the last ten years, so the lifestyle has been worked out and the students will live just as the community lived. We have experience at Gaia House with teaching and so on, and we also have a tremendous resource of people in the locality who can offer courses.

I think we are very fortunate in terms of what is available to us and what our background is, so I am confident it will work well. There is a lot of good will.



IMS

URNS TWENTY

A Guest Reflects On The Celebration

by Abhi Hudson

On a fine day in August, interrupted only briefly by a dramatic and well-timed thunderstorm, founders, friends and supporters came from far and wide to help celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Insight Meditation Society.

For me the occasion is laced with nostalgia for an era brimming with innocence, wonder and hope for the world to live as one big human family. The guests, who number close to 400, are predominantly those who came of age in that era. They are joined by handfuls of young adults, kids and old people like me.

Tales told from the podium of early managerial uncertainty at IMS are both touching and amusing. Sharon recounts endless deliberations over whether Buddha statues should be displayed or whether "METTA" should appear over the front door. There were heated debates over the impact of staff sexual behaviour upon the silent yogi practice environment. Sharon recalls a yogi statement at the close of a retreat which aptly characterized the operation. "How amazing", he exclaimed, "that IMS runs without any adult supervision."

In a more serious vein Jack points to a 1980 teachers' meeting when the participants told how they each had experienced their deepest realizations. The outpouring was such a palpable expression of love of the *dhamma* he knew then "that it would be fine here."

Indeed every speaker pays homage to the IMS program. Ram Dass calls it, "a model of clarity and quality which maintains the purity and integrity of the teaching." Joseph emphasizes IMS's adherence to classical *dhamma* with these words: "The original teachings are held in a container provided by the West." Larry Rosenberg calls IMS, "an ingenious invention to get us to sit quietly and learn who we are." He expresses awe at the



vast number of yogis who have come to IMS and sat and walked, sat and walked. Rachel Bagby's provocative *cappella* vocalization reminds us of the challenging nature of the practice, so simple in its instruction, at times so hard to do. Her haunting notes evoke the experiential range of insight meditation during retreat: "A combination of the deepest gratitude and the dirtiest *dukkha*", as she puts it.

In spite of the difficulties of practice, the yogis keep on coming in ever larger numbers. We are told that the demand for IMS retreats is so great courses fill as soon as they are offered. The teachers are being invited to ever more distant places. And the *dhamma* is spreading to a new generation. Visible evidence of this last development is manifest as four representatives of the Young Adult Course first give their impressions of IMS and then conduct a tree-planting ceremony.

By the time Mirabai Bush of Seva Foundation runs through an impressive list of fields which have been influenced by IMS teaching, I am overwhelmed. My nostalgia has vanished, replaced by deep appreciation for what twenty years have wrought.

The entire celebration is carried along on waves of enthusiasm and joy which do not falter even as afternoon showers pelt the white tents dotting the lawn. There is a giant tent housing the main events, one in which a *metta* chant is kept alive throughout the day, one for sale of T-shirts and cook books, and a big festive one for the buffet banquet of exquisite Indian food. The luncheon itself is a visual feast, presided over by a Buddha sculpted in ice, cakes mounted on ped

estals, gorgeous floral displays and white tablecloths.

The amount of coordination, planning and preparation to pull off this flawless event is impressive. No detail has been overlooked, including a play area for restless kids, overflow parking at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies with a shuttle bus between the two facilities, a gallery of photos spanning the years (where we see Joseph shaggy and bearded and Jack at his most gaunt). Everybody gets an elegant free Buddha poster. Teams of volunteers assist with every phase, including food preparation and clean-up.

When it is all over, I touch the three knots in the "protection cord" around my throat-- a talisman of the moving noon-time ceremony conducted by Joseph, Sharon and Jack. Each knot symbolizes a portion of the ritual: Jack's the three refuges, Joseph's the precepts and Sharon's loving-kindness. For a moment I'm immersed in the powerful feelings of tenderness that surged through me as we chanted and tied each other's cords. Then I laugh out loud as I remember Jack's tale about Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Someone had asked Trungpa at a similar cord-tying ceremony, "Protection from what?" "From yourself, of course," came his quick response.

Ah, yes! The ego identity hook, the big danger with which we all grapple. How lucky "I" am for the protection of this practice and this place. My gratitude spills out over the teachers, other yogis, the meditation hall, the walking rooms, even the pots; and I whisper a thousand thank-yous as I leave the grounds.



IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING

Dāna DOES IT!!!

In 1996 we were able to keep the cost of doing a retreat at IMS the same as it had been in 1995. This was the first time in over five years that the retreat fees at IMS were not subject to a modest annual increase.

In our newsletter last fall we published an article titled "Tipping the Scales," which detailed how 88% of our operating revenue was dependent on retreat fees. It went on to speculate about the prospect of keeping the retreat fees frozen at their current rates and maybe even one day gradually reducing them—with the eventual possibility of becoming a free center. What a concept!

Of course modern economic reality suggests that operating costs will continue to rise. So how would this be possible?

The only way this could ever become a reality was if the revenue we received from the generous hearts of our members were to continue to grow each year. That is, if we could continue to rely more and more on the cultivation of *dāna*, that ageless practice that has supported the teachings of the *dharma* since the time of the Buddha.

It was in this vein that we appealed to our *sangha* last fall in our annual membership drive and were overwhelmed with the most generous response. Everybody associated with IMS is very grateful for your unselfish support.

We've frozen the rates ...again!

Encouraged by this spirited demonstration of generosity, our board has decided not to raise the retreat fees for 1997. We realize we are taking a risk in making this decision, but we wanted to test this hypothesis to see if it was possible to never raise the rates at IMS again. We believe that the cultivation of *dāna* is a powerful agent for transformation, both at a personal and global level.

So when our membership appeal arrives in your mailbox this fall, please remember that your generosity can make a difference, not only to IMS by helping us keep our course rates low, but to yourself and the whole world by the joy created through your actions.



JOSEPH TAKES A SABBATICAL

Joseph Goldstein will be on sabbatical from March 1997 to June 1998. His next planned retreat at IMS is the 1998 3-Month course. When asked what he will be doing during this time, Joseph replied: "I'm delighting in the prospect of unscheduled time. At the moment I have no definite plans, but I hope to do some long retreats, perhaps take a trip to Asia to study with various teachers, and read a spy book or two."

Our best wishes to Joseph. May you be safe and happy.



BRINGING THE DHARMA TO DAILY LIFE

This spring saw the successful piloting of the "Mindful Living Program" pilot. In four, one-month sessions, between four to eight participants experienced service, community, formal practice, and dhamma teachings. Although not the usual retreat it proved no less intense or rewarding. Time was spent serving in different departments at IMS, sitting on a daily basis, and in group discussion, with weekends of conventional retreat practice. Meetings with visiting teachers and volunteer staff were included. All of this provided a rich training for bringing the dhamma into daily life.

One of our goals is to provide a pool for staff recruitment. To date three participants have joined staff, others have

made application, and some are serving in other capacities. We're delighted to welcome these yogis into the staff community. The service provided to IMS is evident from first walking into the freshly painted front foyer through to the deep cleaning of many nooks and crannies of the building.

We learned much from this experiment, and all agree it was a fine offering of the teachings. We are continuing to explore how it might evolve as part of IMS' regular staff and/or yogi program. We are looking at ways we can present another program, possibly in the fall of 1997. Look for more information in the spring *Insight*.

RIDE SHARING TO RETREATS

With the current popularity of courses at IMS, the number of cars arriving for each retreat is higher than ever. For some retreats all available parking space fills up, and we have been using the secondary lot, the old tennis courts, which reduces the space available for walking meditation. As well, it is clear that the environmental impact is significant, and could be reduced.

With this in mind we ask that you consider car-pooling with others coming to IMS from your area. If you belong to a sitting group or go to a center with others who may be attending the same retreat, you may be able to organize rides among yourselves. If you are unable to organize rides in this way, indicate on your registration form that you are willing to offer a ride, or call IMS for the names of people in your area who are willing to share rides.

We hope that, more than being an inconvenience, car-pooling will facilitate connection among sangha members, as well as increasing our awareness of interconnectedness, both in the IMS community and meditation facilities, and in the world. Thanks for your help.

YOGI RUNS

This past summer we changed our system where by we furnish transportation for yogis between IMS and air, rail and bus terminals in Worcester, what we called *yogi-runs*. As the number of people coming to IMS has grown, greater demands have been placed on our small number of volunteer staff and in an effort to maintain affordable retreat fees we felt we could no longer do *yogi-runs*. This has enabled us to focus our resources on running retreats.

This change has been made easier by the recent emergence of an alternative commercial van service, Brahma Charits, operated from Barre by a Sangha member, Paul Slattery. Everyone registering for a retreat will receive detailed information on how to get to IMS, including how to make van service reservations.

Over the past few years more and more people are finding out about IMS and the benefits of meditation and therefore are wanting to come and sit here. Whereas there used to be plenty of room for everyone, our popular courses are now filling very rapidly, we have long waitlists and it is sometimes hard to get into a course. Last year when we opened our registration season on December 1st we were swamped with registrations and our system was overloaded. This year, in an effort to alleviate our system and make it more equitable for the largest number of people wishing to sit at IMS, we have decided to hold a lottery for some of the most popular courses.

Here is how it will work. We will begin accepting registrations from the day this newsletter is mailed. We will accept registrations for those courses indicated (see course schedule) up until a cut off date (see below). All registrations received in the mail by the cut off date for that course, will be entered into our computer. We have programmed our computer to randomly allocate available retreat spaces and then sequentially waitlist all others who have registered. A separate lottery will be run for each course. We also reserve the right to use this procedure for other courses should the need arise. We acknowledge that some people will still miss out on a place, but feel this is still the best system.

Registration cut off dates are:

Course	Course Dates	Course Code	Cut off Date
Dana Weekend	Jan 31 - Feb 2	DANA	Dec. 15, 1996
Metta - Vipassana	Feb 7 - 23	SS 1, 2 & 3	Dec. 5, 1996
3 Month	Sep 20 - Dec 15	3 MO, PT1, PT2	Dec. 10, 1996
New Year	Dec 28 - Jan 7, 1997	NY	Dec. 20, 1996

This new system means that we will be accepting registrations from the time this newsletter is mailed out and not only from December 1st as in the past. This applies to all our courses and not just those mentioned above.

We have also made other changes to registration conditions for the 3 month and partial courses. Firstly we have increased the minimum prerequisite from one to three, 9-day retreats with an IMS teacher. We are continuing to review both the requirements and application process for this retreat in conjunction with the 3 month course teachers. Unfortunately this process was not finalized at the time the newsletter went to print, but will be completed by the time registration begins. We encourage everyone who is interested to sit all or part of the three month retreat to apply.

Secondly we have brought forward the cancellation dates for the first and final deadlines to March 1st and April 15th respectively. We have been compelled to do this as a dis-incentive to those who would choose to cancel late. This then allows others who are on the waitlist enough time to make plans to sit the retreat. Unfortunately this year we still had a large number of late cancellations. We urge that in future if you are registered to do the three month course and have any doubts about whether you will be able to sit, that you notify us as soon as possible as a courtesy to others who are waitlisted and would greatly appreciate sufficient notice to make the necessary plans.



Sangha Pages



ANNIVERSARY

Tremors shake the sacred ground
that has held so many moments
of silence

Our home has been transformed

After twenty years
our eyes meet
and smiles appear
on these once somber yogi faces
we see children laughing
teachers sitting beside us
eating curried potatoes
remembering

The sun beams
the rain dances
it's all here--
the first two gems
and finally
for me
the sangha
begins to sparkle, too

Tom Pedulla

RELATIONSHIP

Oh when you look at me that way
you only see yourself,
and when I look at you that way
I only see myself.

Come, let us look each other through,
so when I next look on myself
I only will see you
and when you look upon yourself
you only will see me.

And what we both will see, I pray,
is neither you nor me,
but Buddha-heart and Buddha-mind,
and we shall never sleep again
but from our selves be free.

Richard St. Clair

A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM?

Walking meditation.
Well placed footsteps, safety and fellowship
inside the warmly glowing meditation hall.

Through windows, the night peers in,
dark and beckoning.
Outside, leaves rustle, fireflies blink,
nature stirs, restless, wild.

A breeze whirls in half-opened window and
wraps around me tentacle-like.
One fragrant whiff, time and space dissolve.
Primordial memories flood my awareness and
arouse my senses.
Images of moonlit beaches, woods and meadows,
years, lifetimes, existances away,
connected by a common longing.

And then, soles of feet connect to wood.
Boundaries reappear
and "I" am here.

Robin Kirsche
Barre Center for Buddhist Studies
July 1996

HELLO DEAR SANGHA MEMBERS:

Several of us who have come to IMS for some years are moved to consider establishing a residential community of people seriously committed to Dharma/Meditation practice. We plan to be located somewhere near IMS at Barre, Ma.

We envision a combination of individual and shared housing with community space, including meditation hall, dining room and kitchen, garden, etc. We hope to be accessible to people of diverse ages and incomes some of whom may require some help in daily living. We envision buying this land cooperatively. Individuals might build their own home or pool resources with others to share housing.

This is a preliminary call. Are you willing to explore this further with us? Perhaps you are willing to join our Planning Committee? If so, please write us c/o Frank Young. P.O.B. 1352 Woodstock, NY 12498.

We plan to have a preliminary meeting in Barre in the near future. **Please note: This is an independent project, not affiliated with IMS.**

With Metta,

Linda Blake, Lea Tenneriello, Frank Young

Poetry

by Carol Ann Bassett
(written after various
vipassana retreats)

Body rumbles
like unstable earth
jarred by some
unknown force.

Heart braces
then shatters like ice
leaving in this quaking breast
the birthplace of fire.

RAVENS

Ravens, your black wings
fill the branches of that pine
like a gathering of monks.
I walk hunched against the cold
thinking, thinking
the mind turned back on itself.
I can hear you laughing
"caw-caw!"
stop thinking about it
as you rise
with a great flapping of wings
empty branches bobbing on the wind.



That glance from afar
brushes like wings
startling the heart.

BECOMING NOTHING

Sitting here
mindful of orange blossom
and dove-song
I note hand, chest, head.

The body moves
in ancient rhythms
rocking in some vast womb
like an imprint among stars.

Thigh, heart, eye
become fluid
until there is
no distinction.

I sit with heart full
yet empty.
I sit for what the self is becoming
and for what it is not.

I know you,
an earthly paradox
caught between centuries
like wings of the butterfly
in a spider's web
not knowing
whether to remain there
or to change.
Yet here in the
blue light of morning
I know change
is the only certainty
as each breath
creates the universe
then suddenly tears it down.

DRY LEAVES

Lifting
moving
placing
until
foot
crunches
dry
leaves
instant
samadhi.



Woodblock print by Matt Czaplinski

NOTHING

Like a beaded brocade dress these granite chunks farmhouse
oak table roses dirt in the rug frost-bronzing begonias
milk and bread in the fridge pottery sky changing each second
mountains red orange like overcoats flesh aches
exulting energy migraines lovers dogs students
like sleet pull down and tangle the mind
as the dark-thoraxed dolomede spider entangles the wasp
passions stereo broken fixed dinner with friends arugala pricing a roof contract
pull as flesh pulls toward the rock roots dirt fire-core of earth
binding the mind to change toward ashes the grave
warp of mind through gravity down to collapse
down through rot digestion carpet beetles through wilt and spring re-greening
only to brown off again and again to bud.

Yet though the mind tangles and sinks in its own racing probing exhausting
yet some awareness is still free watching as if it were outside galaxies
void as the space between atoms neutrinos
watching indifferent while suns explode and collapse bend time warp space
spiraling into black holes yet awareness verbless between and beyond the clatter
of stuff of mind opening rearing yearning
something dispassionate still within circles still beyond spheres
empty as nothing
unsaid.

Ann Barker

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

The Insight Meditation Society is looking for someone to oversee and supervise all of the day-to-day operational affairs of the retreat center. The AD has the following responsibilities:

Administration: Working as a team member with the executive director, resident teacher, personnel and facilities coordinators, teachers and members of the board of directors to provide leadership and a center of gravity for the management of daily affairs.

Retreat Management: Overseeing and coordinating the management of meditation retreats, including troubleshooting, policy making and decision making (in cooperation with the registrar and office staff).

Finances: Managing all the routine financial affairs of the center (in cooperation with the executive director). A professional accounting consultant is available as a resource, along with a part-time bookkeeper and administrative assistant. IMS currently uses the Peachtree accounting system.

Computers: Overseeing of all the information processing needs of the center. IMS currently uses a Microsoft Office for Windows network for retreat registrations, mailing list, and word-processing needs.

The position requires a good deal of worldly experience running a business, a non-profit organization, or some other similar enterprise. The ideal candidate will have some training and experience in accounting or bookkeeping (Peachtree experience is a plus), will be familiar and comfortable with computer systems (especially PC networks), and will have the ability to coordinate a complex operation gracefully.

Because of the special challenges of IMS as a residential community, the position further requires maturity and balance, excellent communication skills, good insight and judgment about human nature, flexibility, compassion and a deep commitment to the *dharma* and *vipassana* practice. The ideal candidate will have a strong personal spiritual practice and some experience living in community.

This is a potentially long-term, administrative position offering food, housing, excellent health benefits, generous vacation and retreat time off, and a modest but adequate salary. It is a unique opportunity for right livelihood with unsurpassed *dharma* support in a beautiful, New England environment.

Qualified applicants should send a resume and cover letter as soon as possible to: *Executive Director, Insight Meditation Society, 1230 Pleasant St., Barre, MA 01005. IMS is an equal opportunity employer.*

Join The IMS Staff

Explore the

- ▲ Deepen Spiritual Investigation
- ▲ Explore Work as Spiritual Practice
- ▲ Experience Living in Sangha

IMS Offers: A supportive practice environment, daily and monthly sitting time, access to *dharma* teachers, staff retreats, room, board, health insurance, stipend.

IMS Asks: Vipassana retreat experience, commitment to meditation practice, adherence to the five precepts, a spirit of service, ability to live and work harmoniously with others, one-year commitment.

Positions In: Kitchen, maintenance, housekeeping, groundskeeping, office, computers.

Call or write for more information:

Insight Meditation Society, Personnel Coordinator, 1230 Pleasant St. Barre, MA 01005
tel. 508/355-4378 fax 508/355-6398

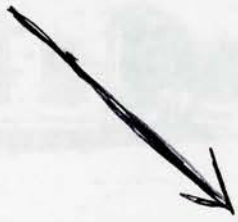
at IMS



Immediate Openings
in Kitchen ~~Serve in our~~
3 to 18 months ~~Year-long~~
by arrangement ~~Volunteer~~
~~Staff Program~~

• Work Retreats:

* Work retreatants are expected to come at least one day before opening day and stay at least one day after closing day.



• **Self-Retreat:** If space is available during a retreat, otherwise between retreats. A self-retreat may consist of any number of days not to exceed the longest period of teacher-led retreat sat by the student. During this time, meditators are expected to practice in silence, observe the five precepts and maintain a continuity of practice throughout the day. ~~There are at least four group sittings daily. Students schedule their practice individually during the remaining hours of the day.~~ Self-retreats are charged at \$30 per day, and require a separate application form.

Keep the same.

• **Work Retreats:** Work retreats provide a unique opportunity to explore the integration of mindfulness practice with work activity. Retreatants practice cultivating presence of mind in a wider variety of daily activities than during other retreats. The daily schedule combines periods of formal meditation practice with five hours of work in silence in one of the IMS departments. Participation is limited to experienced meditators only and requires a high degree of self-reliance. The work can be physically demanding at times. Work retreats require a separate application form. They are offered without a daily fee and require a \$25 nonrefundable application processing fee. A work retreat is not meant to take the place of a scholarship. Write or call to request program information and an application.

• **Long-Term Practice:** For those wishing to do long-term meditation practice of 118 days or more, IMS has available a limited number of scholarships in the form of reduced daily rate after the 8th day. Practice guidelines are similar to those for shorter individual retreats with an additional emphasis on self-reliance. Long-term practice requires the prior consent of two teachers. Those interested should contact the office for application form and limited available dates.

• **Scholarships:** IMS administers a generous scholarship program. It is designed to assist those who would otherwise be unable to attend a retreat. Please write or call for a separate application form. A deposit of \$25 for a weekend course or a \$50 for all other courses must accompany a scholarship application.

Insight Meditation (vipassana) is a simple and direct practice—the moment-to-moment observation of the mind/body process through calm and focused awareness. This practice originates in the Theravada tradition of the teachings of the Buddha. Learning to observe experiences from a place of stillness enables one to relate to life with less fear and clinging. Seeing life as a constantly changing process, one begins to accept pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life with increasing equanimity and balance. As insight deepens, wisdom and compassion arise. Insight meditation is a way of seeing clearly the totality of one's being and experience. Growth in clarity brings about penetrating insight into the true nature of our experience and increases peace in our daily lives.

The Insight Meditation Society was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide a place for the intensive practice of insight meditation. IMS operates a retreat center which is set on 10 wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts. It provides a secluded environment for intensive meditation practice. Complete silence is maintained during retreats at all times except during teacher interviews.

Vipassana Retreats are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. Daily instruction in meditation and nightly Dharma talks are given, and individual or group interviews are

arranged with the teachers at regular intervals. A typical daily schedule starts at 5am and ends at 10pm. The entire day is spent in silent meditation practice with alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation. This regular schedule, the silence, group support, and daily instruction combine to provide a beneficial environment for developing and deepening meditation practice. Meals are vegetarian, and accommodations are austere, mostly single rooms. Men and women do not share rooms. Camping is not available. ~~Retreats offered in 1997 are listed on the following pages.~~ Our current retreat schedule is listed on the following pages.

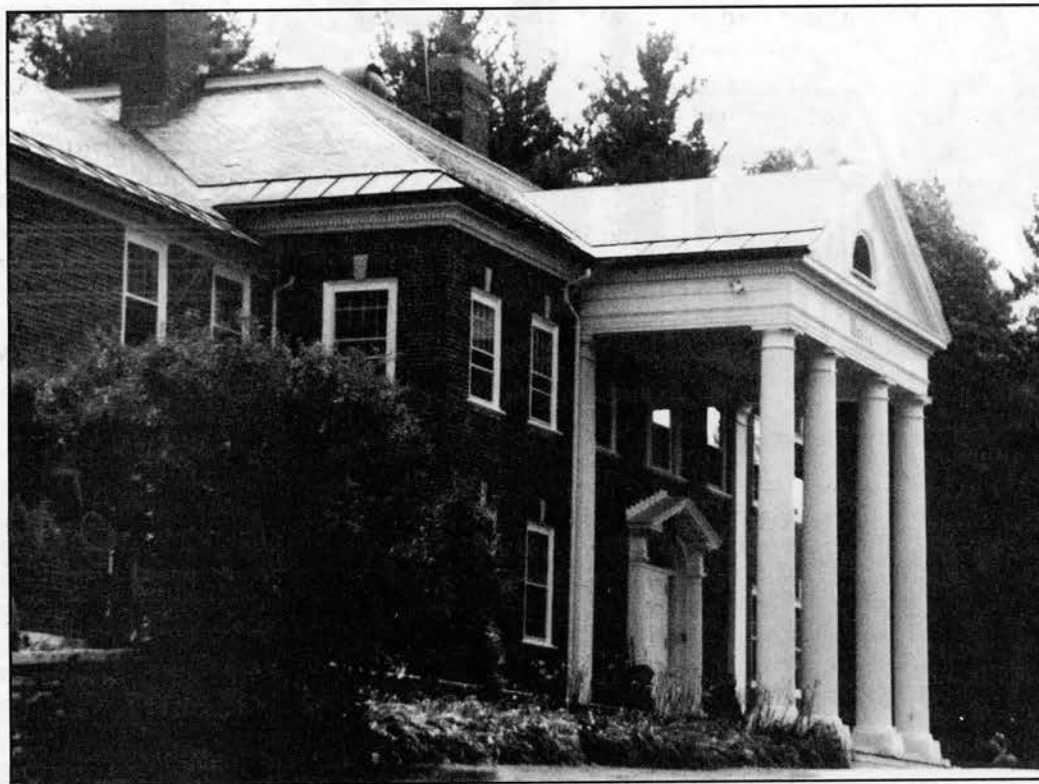
• **Evening Discourses:** When a retreat is in progress, anyone is welcome to attend evening talks, and meditators with vipassana experience are welcome to attend the group sittings. Some restrictions apply. Please call the IMS office for daily schedule.

• **Individual Retreats:** In addition to teacher-led retreats, the center is open to experienced meditators (except the month of January) for individual retreats. IMS and its teachers encourage experienced students—anyone who has practiced in a teacher-led retreat in the style of vipassana offered at IMS—to use the center for individual meditation as a way of strengthening self-reliance and increasing the value of meditation in one's life. IMS offers several forms for individual retreats:

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY 1997 RETREAT SCHEDULE

IMS, 1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005 Tel: (508) 355-4378

Telephone Hours: 10am - 12noon; 3pm - 5:00pm (Except Tuesday and Sunday)



- Jan 31-Feb 2 DANA WEEKEND (2 days)** **DANA** Donati
Bhante Gunaratana
This retreat is offered on the part of IMS to affirm the spirit of giving. There is no fixed course fee; participants are encouraged to offer whatever contribution fits their means. Priority will be given to those who, for financial reasons, are unable to attend courses with fixed course rates.
Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 15, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.
- Feb 7-14** **METTA RETREAT (7 days)** **SS1** \$21
Sharon Salzberg, Steve Armstrong, and Kamala Masters
Metta is the Pali word for friendship or loving kindness. Classically it is taught as a practice along with meditations cultivating compassion, rejoicing in the happiness of others (appreciative joy), and equanimity. They are practiced to develop concentration, fearlessness, happiness, and a loving heart. This course is devoted to cultivating these qualities.
Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 5, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.
- Feb 14-23** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** **SS2** \$26
Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Steve Armstrong, and Kamala Masters
This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (loving kindness) meditation. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the quality of precise open awareness as a way of deepening the wisdom and compassion within us.
Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 5, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.

Feb 7-23	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREATS (16 days)	SS3	\$440
	<i>Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 5, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.</i>		
Feb 28-Mar 9	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)	LR1	\$265
	Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady		
	The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees with out judgement. Sitting and walking meditation, the first step in formal practice, becomes the foundation and continuous inspiration for meeting all aspects of life with a greater openness and willingness to learn. The ordinary activities of retreat life become a part of the practice because the challenges they offer help us develop the art of mindful living.		
March 14-17	INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days)	ROD	\$125
	Rodney Smith and Narayan Liebenson Grady		
	The way of meditation is the way of the heart. This retreat will focus on the path of the heart, and how awareness gives access to the joys and sorrows of life with ever-increasing sensitivity, stability and love. Special attention will be given to the role of nature in our spiritual journey.		
March 22-29	WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days)	WOM	\$215
	Christina Feldman and Narayan Liebenson Grady		
	In this annual gathering of women at IMS, insight meditation is the vehicle used to develop calmness and clarity, wisdom and compassion, openness and vision. This retreat is an opportunity for women to focus on a spiritual path free of dichotomies as well as spiritual, social and psychological conditioning. There is a full daily schedule of meditation and silence, as well as small group meetings.		
April 4-6	WEEKEND (2 days) (See April 4-13)	AV1	\$95
April 4-13	BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIONS (9 days)	AV2	\$265
	Ajahn Amaro-- Amaravati Sangha		
	This retreat will be a time to explore the Buddhist way as taught in the Theravadan monastic tradition. There will be a focus on the Three Refuges and how they can create a place of belonging and trust in our heart. Through daily chanting (morning and evening pujas), cultivation of mindfulness, loving kindness and forgiveness of ourselves and others, one can experience a lightening of the heart so that each moment is experienced as a fresh beginning.		
	<i>Note: Retreat participants are requested to keep the 8 monastic precepts, which include not eating after noon. (Exceptions can be made for those with health difficulties.)</i>		
April 19-27	INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)	CT1	\$240
	Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell, and Guy Armstrong		
	This retreat consists of sustained silent meditation, deep inquiry into our life experiences, and realization into the nature of things. It provides the opportunity to free the mind from the influence of tensions and negative patterns, and for the heart's awakening to immensity.		
May 2-4	WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)	LR2	\$95
	Larry Rosenberg and Sarah Doering		
	See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above.		
May 10-17	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)	NLG	\$215
	Narayan Liebenson Grady and Michael Liebenson Grady		
	See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above.		

May 23-26	MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND RETREAT (3 days) Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 7-17 retreat. (See below)	MEM	\$125
May 30-Jun 7	METTA RETREAT (8 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and Kamala Masters Metta is the practice of friendship or loving-kindness. It is cultivated as a meditation and a way of life along with compassion, joy and equanimity. These practices strengthen self-confidence, self-acceptance, and a steadiness of mind and heart, and reveal our fundamental connectedness to all life.	SM1	\$240
June 7-17	VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and Kamala Masters This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the very simple and direct awareness practice that the Buddha taught. Each individual is encouraged to find a balance in their own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment more fully and with greater wisdom. Daily loving kindness practice is also included.	SM2	\$290
May30-Jun17	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREATS (18 days)	SM3	\$490
	<i>WAIT LIST ONLY</i>		
June 25-29	YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT (4 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and others This retreat is specifically for teenagers. It will offer beginning meditation instruction, 1/2 hour sitting and walking periods, discussions, stories, and free time. The aim is to allow young adults to discover, develop, and value their natural spirituality with a tremendous amount of support. Extensive supervision will be provided. For ages 13-19 only. Due to the large number of applications received, we are wait listing 13 year olds. We will notify you by June 9, 1997 if there is room in the retreat. We are sorry for any inconvenience.	YA	\$140
July 4-13	VIPASSANA RETREAT--For Experienced Students (9 days) Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above. Retreatants are required to have sat at least one 9-day retreat at IMS, or a comparable vipassana retreat situation elsewhere.	LR3	\$265
	<i>This may call</i>		
July 18-27	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Christina Feldman, Guy Armstrong, and Yanai Postelnik An opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom and compassion in a supportive environment. Emphasis is placed upon developing sensitivity, attention and awareness in sitting and walking meditation to foster our innate gifts of inner listening, balance and understanding. Silence, meditation, instruction and evening talks are integral parts of this retreat.	CF1	\$265
July 31-Aug 5	FAMILY RETREAT (5 days) Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig, and Julie Wester This course explores integrating meditation and family life. In a less formal atmosphere, a full program of sittings, discussions, family meditations, and talks is offered. Child care is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers. <i>Each family unit pays an additional \$35 for professional child care coordination.</i> Your registration MUST specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.	FAM	Adult \$165 Child \$50

Aug 9-17 **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)** CT2 \$240

Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell, and Howard Cohn

See Course Description for April 19-27 course above.

Howard Cohn has practiced since 1972 and has led vipassana retreats since 1985. He is a Ph.D., candidate in East/West psychology with a private practice in counseling in the Bay Area.

Aug 29-Sep 1 **LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days)** RD1 \$125
 Aug 29-Sep 7 **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** RD2 \$265

Ruth Denison

This retreat fosters awareness and correct understanding of life's process in ourselves and others. The focus of the practice is on opening the heart, discovering oneself, and developing insight into the reality of the mind and body. Retreat activities include sound and body movement meditations, and the development of mindfulness in the day-to-day activities of our lives. This retreat is somewhat different from other IMS retreats, and includes sustained and on-going verbal teacher instruction throughout the day.

Sep20-Dec15 **THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)** WAIT LIST 3MO \$2,250
 Sep20-Nov 2 **PARTIAL #1 (6 Weeks)** ONLY PART1 \$1,150
 Nov 2-Dec15 **PARTIAL #2 (6 Weeks)** PART2 \$1,150

Sharon Salzberg, Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters.

The three month course is a special time for practice. Because of its extended length and the continuity of guidance, it is a rare opportunity to deepen the powers of concentration, wisdom and compassion. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the skillful means of mental noting, slow movement and precise, open awareness.

Prerequisite is three retreats with an IMS teacher or special permission. This must be documented on the Registration Form. Please note the special cancellation deadline for this retreat.

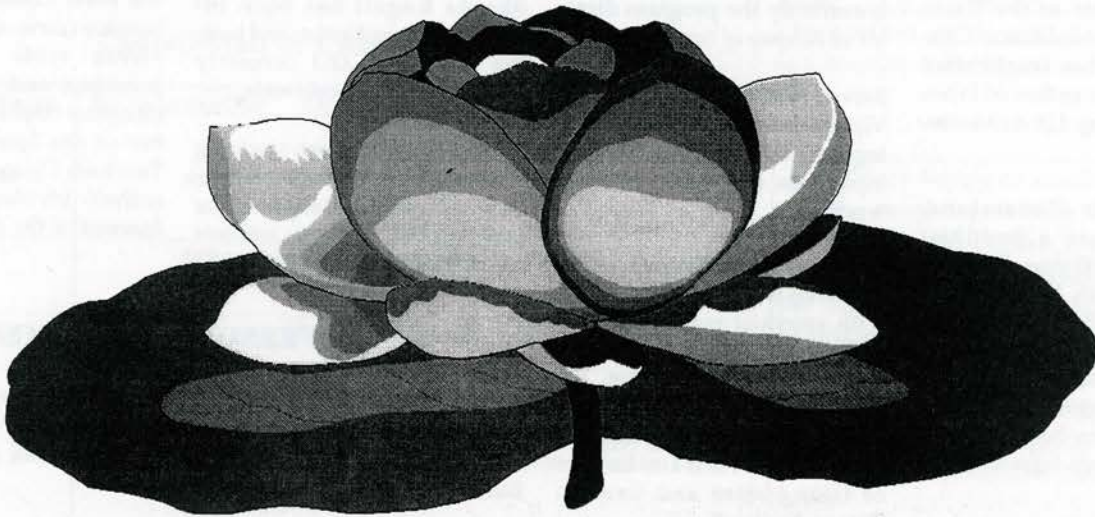
Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 10, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.

Dec 28-Jan 7 **NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (10 days)** WAIT LIST NY \$290
 ONLY

Jack Kornfield, Rodney Smith, Tara Brach, and others.

The New Year is traditionally a time for listening to the heart and taking stock of our lives from the deepest wisdom within. This retreat offers a systematic training in mindfulness of breath, body, feelings, and mind. Emphasis is placed on incorporating a spirit and training of loving kindness into all aspects of the practice, developing our capacity for clarity and compassion in each moment. *Please note the special cancellation deadline for this retreat.*

Note: Due to the popularity of this course a lottery may be required. All applications received on or before December 10, 1996 will be included in the lottery. Others will be waitlisted.



SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

Ajahn Amaro trained in Thailand with Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. A senior monk from Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England, he now resides in Mendocino, California in a newly opened branch monastery in the forest meditation tradition.

Ruth Denison studied in Burma in the early 1960s with the meditation master Sayagi U Ba Khin. She has been teaching since 1973 and is founder of Dhamma Dena, a desert retreat center in Joshua Tree, California, and The Center for Buddhism in the West in Germany.

Christina Feldman has been studying and training in the Tibetan, Mahayana and Theravada traditions since 1970 and teaching meditation worldwide since 1974. She is co-founder and a guiding teacher of Gaia House in England and is a guiding teacher at IMS. She is the author of *Woman Awake!* and co-editor of *Stories of the Spirit*, *Stories of the Heart*.

Joseph Goldstein is a co-founder and guiding teacher of IMS. He has been teaching vipassana and metta retreats world-wide since 1974 and in 1989 helped establish the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He is the author of *The Experience of Insight*, and *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*, and co-author of *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*.

Narayan Liebenson Grady is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center where she has taught since 1985. She is the author of *When Singing, Just Sing: Life As Meditation*.

Ven. Henepola Gunaratana, Ph.D., has been a Buddhist monk for over 50 years. Knowledgeable in both Western and Buddhist psychology, he is the founder of Bhavana Society, a retreat and monastic center in rural West Virginia. He is the author of a number of books, including *Mindfulness in Plain English*.

Jack Kornfield is a co-founder of IMS and Spirit Rock Meditation Center. He has been teaching vipassana retreats worldwide since 1975. He is the author of *A Path With Heart*, co-editor of *Stories of the Spirit*, *Stories of the Heart*, and co-author of *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*.

Michele McDonald-Smith has practiced vipassana meditation since 1975 and has been teaching at IMS and worldwide since 1982. She has a deep interest in preserving the ancient teachings and in finding ways of expression that make them more accessible and authentic for us in this time.

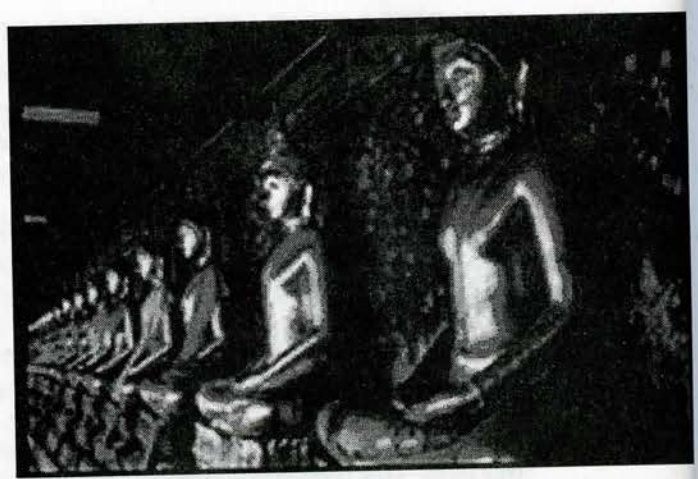
Larry Rosenberg practiced Zen in Korea and Japan before coming to vipassana. He is the resident teacher at Cambridge Insight Meditation Center and a guiding teacher of IMS.

Sharon Salzberg is a co-founder of IMS and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. She has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970 and has been teaching worldwide since 1974. She is a guiding teacher at IMS and the author of recently published book *Loving Kindness*.

Rodney Smith has been practicing vipassana meditation since the mid-70's including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching meditation since the early 80's and has worked as a full time hospice worker since 1984. He is currently the program director of *Hospice of Seattle*.

Steven Smith is a co-founder of Vipassana Hawaii, and is a guiding teacher of IMS. He teaches vipassana and metta retreats worldwide.

Christopher Titmuss gives teachings worldwide concerned with spiritual realization and insight meditation. He is the author of *Spirit of Change*, *The Profound and the Profane*, and *Fire Dance and Other Poems*, and *The Green Buddha*. He is a co-founder of Gaia House and lives in Totnes, England.



ASSOCIATE DHARMA TEACHERS

Steve Armstrong has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975, both as a layman and as a monk and leads retreats in the U.S. and Australia. His primary focus is Buddhist psychology. He was on the staff and Board of Directors at IMS for several years.

Michael Liebenson Grady has practiced vipassana since 1975. He lives in Cambridge, MA and teaches at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.

Kamala Masters began practicing more than 20 years ago and has practiced both vipassana and metta meditations intensively under the guidance of Sayadaw U Pandita.

Jose Reissig, a former university professor, has taught meditation at Gaia House, and teaches regularly at IMS.

Sharda Rogell has been involved with meditation and healing since 1975 and currently teaches retreats worldwide.

Marcia Rose has been studying and practicing Buddhist meditation and related disciplines for many years. She was resident teacher at IMS from 1991-1995.

IMS RESIDENT TEACHER

Gloria Ambrosia has been offering instruction in basic Buddhist teachings and spiritual practices since 1990. She has been greatly inspired by the nuns and monks of Amaravati and Cittaviveka Buddhist monasteries in England.

VISITING TEACHERS

Guy Armstrong has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1974, both in the West and as a Buddhist monk in Thailand. He began teaching in 1984. Guy lives in Woodacre, California and also teaches at Spirit Rock.

Tara Brach has been practicing meditation and yoga for over 20 years. She is a clinical psychologist and lives in the Washington D.C. area.

Sarah Doering has practiced vipassana since 1981 and teaches at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.

Yanai Postelnik has practiced and studied Insight meditation in Asia and the West. He was the resident teacher at IMS for 18 months and teaches retreats in India, United States and England.

Julie Wester has been leading vipassana retreats, primarily on the West Coast, since 1985. A hospice nurse, she lives in California with her husband Jonathan and three-year old daughter Sophia. She is a member of the Spirit Rock Center Teachers Council where she is actively involved in the development of the family program.

Registrations:

- Are accepted only by mail or in person, not by phone, fax or e-mail. Incomplete registrations (including those without sufficient deposit) will be returned for completion.
- Are processed on a "first received" basis or lottery (see course descriptions). Processing order is not affected by scholarships.
- A confirmation letter will be sent out as soon as your registration is processed:
 - If the course has openings you will be confirmed.
 - If the course is full you will be placed on a waiting list and contacted when an opening becomes available.
- Due to the volume of registrations to be processed, confirmation letters may not be issued until 1-2 months before the course.
- All retreatants must participate in the entire course; late arrivals who do not notify the office in advance cannot be guaranteed a spot; exceptions (for emergency or medical reasons) must be approved by the office staff.
- Retreats involve a one-hour work period each day.
- Participation in retreats is always at the discretion of IMS.

Payment:

- The cost of each retreat is listed in the course schedule. A minimum deposit is required to confirm a registration--see table below.
- Please pay by check or money order in U.S. funds only; we cannot accept credit cards or foreign drafts, including those from Canada.
- If possible, please prepay the entire retreat cost.
- Checks are cashed only when the registration is confirmed or when you include a donation. If you are put on a waiting list, your check will be cashed when there is an opening.
- Please request a scholarship application form if you need one. A deposit of \$25 for weekend courses and \$50 for all others must accompany the application form.

Cancellation Deadlines:

- The first deadline for most retreats is two weeks before opening day.
- The final deadline for most retreats is one week before opening day.
- Please note the special deadlines for the 3-month and New Year retreats.

ALL CANCELLATION AND PROCESSING FEES ARE DONATED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Deposits

Cancellation or Change Processing Fees

Course Type	Min. Deposit	Before 1st deadline	On or after 1st deadline	On or after final deadline
2 & 3 day retreats	Full cost	\$25	\$50 / 2 wks. before	\$95/\$100/1 week bef.
5-26 days retreats	\$100	\$25	\$50 / 2 wks. before	\$100 / 1 week before
Family Retreat	\$50 per adult	\$25 p.a.	\$50 p.a. / 2 wks. before	\$50 p.a. / 1 wk. before
3-month	\$500	\$50	\$100/ March 1	\$500 / April 15
Partial 1/P2	\$250	\$50	\$100/Mar.1/May 1	\$250/Apr.15/Jun.15
New Year's	\$100	\$25	\$100 / December 1	\$100 / Dec. 14

**I.M.S.
Registration Form**

If you are taking an IMS course, please fill out this form. If you will be registering for more than one course, please photocopy this form in order to assure receipt.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

Name _____
Address _____

City _____ State _____
Country _____ Zip _____

Check here _____ if new address.
Old address _____

Day Phone: () _____
Evening Phone: () _____
Fax: () _____

Retreat Experience (3-month retreat: Please see course description) _____

attended a retreat at IMS

I have ~~been~~ *attended* to IMS before.
I have not ~~been~~ *attended* to IMS before.

M/F _____ Date of birth _____

Do you snore? _____ Do you smoke? _____

Physical disabilities or special needs _____

Can you offer a ride to others in your area coming to this retreat: Yes / No

Course Code _____

Course Cost _____

Deposit Enclosed _____

(See table for cancellation dates.)

Dates you will be here:

From _____ To _____

I have added _____ to the deposit as a donation to IMS.

We are happy to receive special room requests up to a week before a retreat begins. IMS tries to accomodate MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivities) and other medical problems when possible. Please be aware that we have a limited number of single rooms. The manager will not make room changes on or after opening day unless due to medical need.

Registrations:

- Are accepted only by mail or in person, not by phone, fax or e-mail. Incomplete registrations (including those without sufficient deposit) will be returned for completion.
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**I.M.S.
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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

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Address _____

City _____ State _____
Country _____ Zip _____

Check here _____ if new address.
Old address _____

Day Phone: () _____
Evening Phone: () _____
Fax: () _____

Retreat Experience (3-month retreat: Please see course description) _____

attended a retreat at IMS

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I have ~~not been~~ *attended* to IMS before.

M/F _____ Date of birth _____

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Physical disabilities or special needs _____

Can you offer a ride to others in your area coming to this retreat: Yes / No

Course Code _____

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D - A N A

Dāna is an ancient Pali word meaning "generosity," "giving" or "gift." It is directly related to the Latin word *donum*, and through this to such English words as donor and donation. *Dāna* is intrinsic to the 2,500-year-old Buddhist tradition. Going back to the days of the Buddha, the teachings were considered priceless and thus offered freely, as a form of *dāna*. The early teachers received no payment for their instruction, and in turn the lay community saw to it through their voluntary generosity, their *dāna*, that the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine were provided for the teachers (who in the early days were monks and nuns.)

Beyond this practical dimension, *dāna* also plays an important role in the spiritual life of Buddhists. It is the first of the ten *pāramis*, or qualities of character to be perfected in one's lifetime or lifetimes. And when the Buddha would give a discourse to laypeople, he would almost always begin with the importance and the benefits of *dāna*.

The act of giving itself is of immeasurable benefit to the giver; for it opens up the heart, diminishes for a moment one's self-absorption, and places value on the well-being of others. The simple gesture of offering a flower, or an act of service, a kind thought or a simple meal is in fact a sincere form of practice. The size or value of the gift is of almost no importance—the act of giving itself generates a thought-moment devoid of greed and full of loving kindness.

Many people regard *dāna* as a beautiful—and even essential—aspect of the Buddhist tradition, and are trying to keep the tradition of voluntary giving alive in the West. Clearly this will require a gradual maturation of the Western sangha and a good deal of education of the meaning and value of *dāna*. There are a number of ways that the Insight Meditation Society is trying to maintain the tradition of *dāna*:

Teacher Support: Teachers do not receive any payment for leading retreats at IMS. The course fees are only to cover for lodging and the day-to-day operating costs of the center. Teacher support is provided by voluntary donations given by students at the end of each retreat, and to a Teacher Support Fund which helps with some medical expenses.

Staff Service: A few key administrative positions at IMS are salaried, but most of the staff who run the retreat center are volunteers. The center depends on dedicated volunteer staff people for its continued existence, and serving on staff for a year is a vital form of *dāna*. Staff life offers a challenging opportunity to integrate mindfulness with daily life, and for service to others.

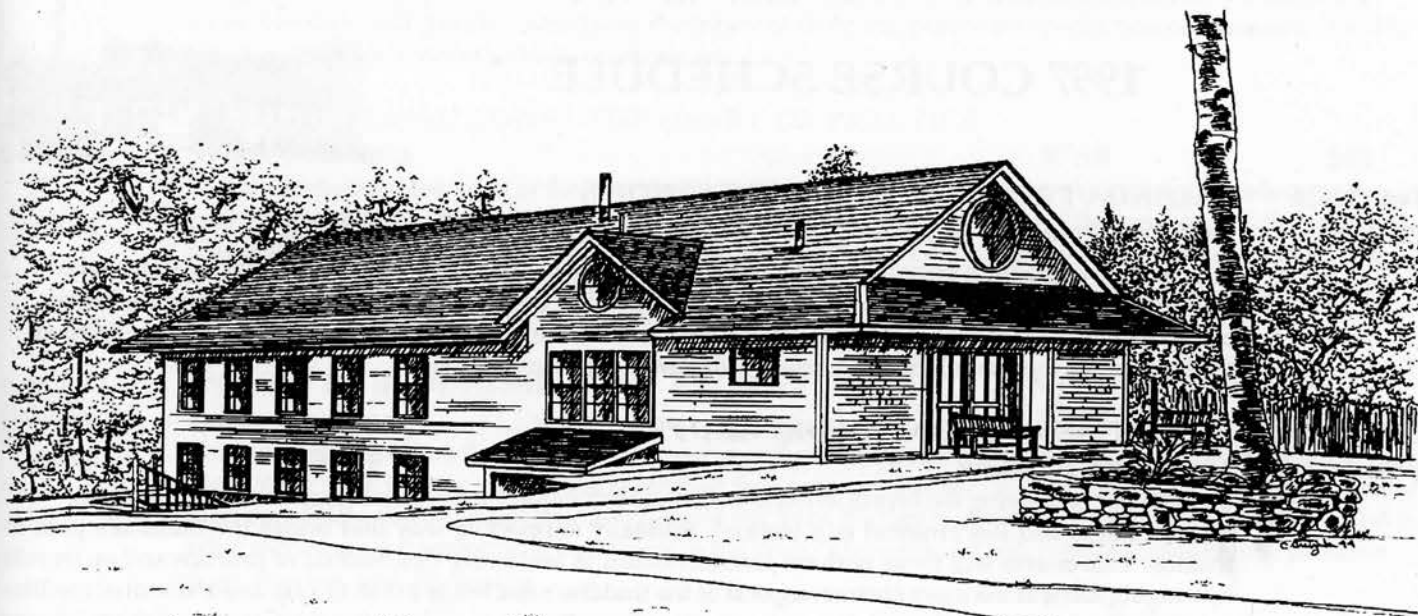
Dāna Retreat: Each year IMS has a weekend retreat with no fixed course rate—come and practice and give what you can.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

- IMS Membership:** A direct contribution to each year's operating costs, memberships help keep the daily rate as low as possible. A donation of \$35 is recommended but anything more or less than this amount is most welcome.
- Scholarship Fund:** Scholarships are given out each year to people who request financial assistance to sit meditation retreats. It is a vital program of yogis helping yogis.
- Sponsor-a-yogi Fund:** These funds support the meditation practice of people with life-threatening illnesses who are not otherwise able to sit a retreat. It is an important expression of compassion.
- IMS Dana:** A general contribution to the center, IMS dana is allocated each year by the Board wherever it is most needed.
- Building Fund:** The facilities of IMS are in continual need of major repairs and renovations. The Building Fund helps protect the operating budget from these expenses, and is used for capital improvements.

You may send your donation for any of these funds to IMS at any time. Simply indicate the fund/s you wish to support. Also, please consider making a bequest to IMS as part of your estate planning. All charitable contributions are tax-deductible.

BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES



The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies is dedicated to bringing together teachers, students, scholars and practitioners who are committed to exploring Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, faithful to its origins and lineage, yet adaptable and alive in each new time and place. The Center's purpose is to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight. It encourages active engagement with the tradition in a spirit of genuine inquiry and investigation.

The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, or more informally, the Study Center, offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats, independent study, and, in the future, a scholars-in-residence program. The Study Center plans to offer research and publication facilities for Buddhist scholarship and translation. Its vision calls for dialogue between different schools of Buddhism and discussions with other religious and scientific traditions. The emphasis is always on the interrelationship between study and practice, and on exploring the relevance of classical teachings to contemporary life.

Location: The Study Center is located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, one-half mile from Insight Meditation Society. Founded in 1989, the Study Center provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teaching. For many years, it had been a dream of teachers at Insight Meditation Society to complement the silent meditation retreats at IMS with study programs. This vision became a reality with donations enabling the purchase of a 200-year old farmhouse and surrounding forest property. After extensive renovations, there are now residential facilities, a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A newly completed dormitory and conference/meditation hall provides space for larger workshops and more course participants.

The Library at the Study Center is a major resource to be used by both students and visitors. Our collection consists of the complete Pali Canon in both English and Pali, several hundred volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism and a variety of journals and newsletters. As part of our vision, we plan to expand our current collection into a respectable research library.

Courses and Registration: The Study Center courses offer learning to students with a wide range of exposure to the material taught. If you have questions about a course, please call.

Registrations are accepted only by mail or in person. We cannot accept registrations by phone or fax. Early registration is advised since our capacity is limited. Upon receipt of your deposit, a confirmation will be mailed to you with information on travel details and what you need to bring. Please see the cancellation policy on page 26.

DANA (generosity) is intrinsic to the 2,500-year-old tradition of Buddha Dharma. Going back to the days of the Buddha, the teachings were considered priceless and thus offered freely. Teacher support comes primarily from the voluntary contributions of students. The registration fee covers the center's cost of housing the retreat and a small part of our ongoing expenses.

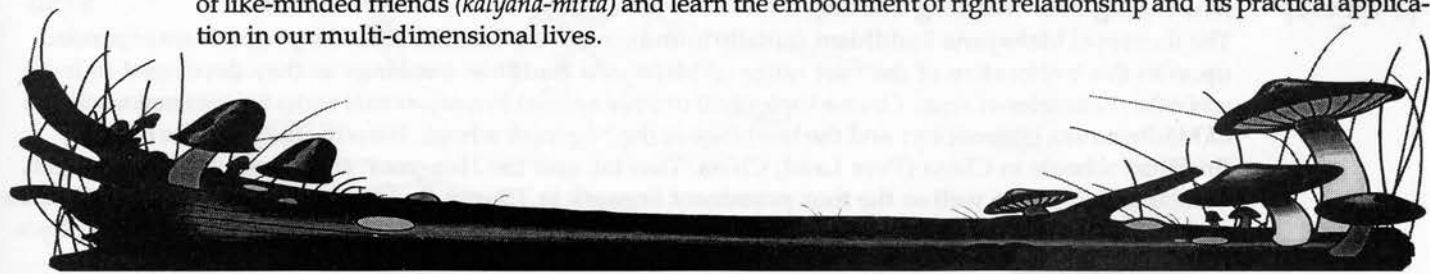
As another expression of dana, the Study Center makes scholarships available to those who might not be able to attend a course due to financial need. If you need financial assistance, please contact us at BCBS, P.O. Box 7, Barre, MA (508) 355-2347.

1997 COURSE SCHEDULE



- Jan. 12-24** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: BUDDHIST STUDIES**
 (2 Weeks) **Andrew Olendzki, Mu Soeng, and Visiting Faculty** **97NAL** **\$750**
 This academic program provides an in-depth introduction to the doctrinal and historical background of Buddhism within a contemplative environment. The objective of the program is to explore Buddhist tradition in ways that enable students to discern various strands of thought and practices that are now at the forefront in the formulation of a new Buddhism in contemporary West.
- Feb. 7-9** **BREATH MEDITATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE**
 (Weekeend) **Thanissaro Bhikkhu** **97TB1** **\$120**
 The practice of keeping the breath in mind is an ideal technique for developing mindfulness, alertness, concentration, and discernment in a blanced, mutually supportive way that brings the Buddha's path to fruition. This course will focus both on practical issues in mastering this method of practice and on its role in bringing some of the more abstract aspects of the Buddha's teachings to life. Group and individual meditation will alternate with talks and discussions and with readings drawn from the Pali Canon and the teachings of two Thai forest masters of breath meditation: Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo and Ajann Fuang Jotiko.
- Feb. 14-16** **BEYOND COPING: AGING, ILLNESS, AND DEATH**
 (Weekend) **Thanissaro Bhikkhu** **97TB2** **\$120**
 Buddhism treats the realities of aging, illness, and death as the central issues of life. As the most blatant manifestation of the Noble Truth of suffering and stress, they must be faced squarely so as to thoroughly comprehend them. That way one may go totally beyond their power. In this course we will explore--through readings, talks, discussion, and meditation--the role of these realities in practice, both as objects of contemplation and as incentives to the wise structuring of the values, priorities and conduct of one's life.
- Feb.28-Mar.2** **VINEGAR INTO HONEY: TRANSFORMING PROBLEMS INTO HAPPINESS**
 (Weekend) **Ron Leifer** **97RL** **\$120**
 Our search for happiness is continually obstructed by problems of all kinds. An unfavorable course of events may frustrate us. Other people may resist or fail to cooperate. Often, we get in our own way. This workshop will review the Tibetan Buddhist teachings of *Lo-jong*, or Thought Transformation, through the insights of contemporary Buddhist psychotherapy to help us convert the vinegar of our personal problems into the honey of clarity, compassion, and equanimity.
- March 15** **THE RECORD OF LIN-CHI**
 (Saturday) **George Bowman** **97GB** **\$45**
The Record of Lin-chi is a seminal text in the history of Zen and contains the teachings of the 9th century Chinese Zen master after whom the Lin-chi (Rinzai) tradition is named. In this day-long workshop we will explore teachings of Lin-chi and focus on the cultivation of trust, deep inquiry, and fearlessness in Dharma. There will be talks, group sittings, walking meditation, discussion, and practices from the Lin-chi tradition.
- March 21-23** **DIAMOND-CUTTER SUTRA: THE MARRIAGE OF KARMA AND EMPTINESS**
 (Weekend) **Geshe Michael Roach** **97MR** **\$120**
 This retreat will examine why the fact of emptiness necessitates following the laws of Karma and its consequences which in turn leads to an ethical way of life. Using a rare Tibetan commentary from the 17th century, this weekend will explore the profound meaning of one of the most important Mahayana sutras. Each student will receive a copy of an English translation of important sections from the root text and commentary and will be requested to attend all sessions and complete brief homework assignments in order to solidify their understanding. A certificate will be issued to those who complete the course.

- March 27-30 (3 days)** **DZOG CHEN: AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN**
Lama Surya Das 97SD1 \$180
 Dzog Chen (Tibetan for "The Natural Great Perfection") teaches awareness techniques for awakening to inner freedom, and directly introduces the inherent freedom, purity and perfection of the innate Buddha-Mind, and the interconnectedness of all beings.
- April 5 (Saturday)** **PĀRAMIS (PERFECTIONS): THE HEART OF PRACTICE**
Sylvia Boorstein 97SB \$45
 The ten perfections (*paramis*) of the Theravada tradition — generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, patience, energy, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity — lie at the heart of Buddha's teachings and our own practice. This workshop will offer a didactic explanation of the ten *paramis* as well as an exploration of how we may cultivate them in our everyday life. Through experiential exercises and discussions we will investigate the relevance of these ancient yet timeless teachings to our own lives.
- April 11-13 (Weekend)** **WOMEN IN BUDDHISM: FROM ANCIENT INDIA TO CONTEMPORARY WEST**
Trudy Goodman 97TG \$120
 This course will explore the lives and awakening of Buddhist women from ancient India to the contemporary West. Were these women more remarkable than their contemporaries? How did Buddhism affect the course of their lives? How has Buddhist practice changed our lives, the first generation of women practitioners? And in what ways are we transforming Buddhism in the West? The weekend will consist of meditation, presentations, sharing, and discussion.
- April 18-20 (Weekend)** **BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT: HISTORY AND MYTH, PRACTICE AND REALIZATION**
Ajahn Amaro and Amaravati monks 97AMR \$120
 The enlightenment experience of the Buddha calls upon each generation of Dhamma students to interpret it and relate to the history and myth of this event in a way that is meaningful for their times, and one that would allow the story to be internalized. We will explore the mythological imagery of Buddha's experiences leading up to, during and after the event, as well as the historical setting in which it all took place. We will look at the practices and resolutions that the Bodhisattva pursued beforehand, his meditation methods during the night of Awakening and the dimensions of insight that arose with the Awakening.
- May 4-9 (Sun-Friday)** **ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY**
Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty 97AO1 \$300
 The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what causes contribute to happiness and unhappiness, and how techniques of mental development work to purify and transform the mind. This workshop will consist of a close reading of specially selected Pali texts (in translation) which help illuminate the early Buddhist understanding of the mind, the senses, consciousness, and the world of human experience. One of the aims of the workshop is to build a bridge between the classical Buddhist psychology and contemporary psychological perspectives.
(This course is cosponsored by The Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy in Cambridge, MA and 28 CEU credits may be obtained through them.)
- May 16-18 (Weekend)** **KALYĀNA-MITTĀ AND RIGHT RELATIONSHIP IN A LAY SANGHA**
Daeja Napier 97DN1 \$120
 The practices and teachings of Buddhadharma on spiritual friendship (*kalyāna-mittā*) can be a dynamic and creative tool for the cultivation of right relationship in our life. As we create a community (sangha) with our own immediate family or a circle of friends, the principles of spiritual friendship allow us to create right relationship with one and all. During this weekend we will explore these principles by living in a community of like-minded friends (*kalyāna-mittā*) and learn the embodiment of right relationship and its practical application in our multi-dimensional lives.



- May 23-25 (Weekend)** **JIJUYU-ZANMAI: THE SAMADHI OF THE TRUE SELF** 97IF \$120
Rev. Issho Fujita
 Dogen, the great Zen master of Japan, considered zazen as the true gate to genuine Dharma. This workshop will use the writings and teachings of Dogen as an inspiration to study *Jijuyu-Zanmai* (The Samadhi of the True Self) both theoretically and experientially. Through the practice of zazen meditation, walking meditation, talks and discussions, this workshop aims to taste the samadhi of True Self and to cultivate and deepen it in everyday life.
- May 30-Jun 1 (Weekend)** **THE HEALING POWER OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM** 97PG \$120
Paula Green
 Socially engaged Buddhism is an outward expression of our compassion (*karunā*), friendship (*kalyāna mittā*), and interdependence (*paṭicca samuppāda*). One of the myriad manifestations of our compassion for all beings brings the spirit of Dharma to situations of inner and communal conflicts, encouraging the exploration of shared suffering, inviting investigation as a tool of personal and social change, and planting seeds of peace and transformation. This weekend will explore Buddhism's wholesome engagement with societal concerns through meditation, talks and discussions, with special emphasis on Dharma as a bridge to the transformation of conflict.
- June 6-8 (Weekend)** **SATIPAṬṬHĀNA VIPASSANĀ AND METTĀ** 97SUK \$120
Sayadaw U Kundala
 During a rare visit to the United States, the study center is pleased to host this venerable Sayadaw from Myanmar (Burma) for a weekend program of talks, discussions and questions and answers on various aspects of mindfulness meditation and loving-kindness practice. Although not a formal retreat, the program will include extended periods of silent practice.
Sayadaw U Kundala was recognized as a senior monk by his teacher Mahāsi Sayadaw, is the founder of the Saddhammaransi Meditation Center in Rangoon (serving two hundred yogis daily), and is renowned throughout Burma as the "Mettā Sayadaw" because of his special interest in this practice.
- June 14 (Saturday)** **HEART SUTRA: FORM AS EMPTINESS, EMPTINESS AS FORM** 97MS1 \$45
Mu Soeng
 Using this seminal text of Mahayana Buddhism, this course will explore the teaching of *shunyatā* (Emptiness) in the traditions of Zen Buddhism, Mādhyamika dialectic, Yogācāra idealism, and the findings of quantum physics. Through talks, discussions, meditation and chanting, we will investigate the ever-embracing play of form and emptiness.
- Jun 22-Jul 4 (2 Weeks)** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: THERAVADA STUDIES** 97THINT \$750
Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty
 This program undertakes an in-depth exploration of the inner architecture of the classical Theravada teachings. Intensive study of the Pali suttas, including some introduction to the Pali language, will allow participants to solidify their understanding of the teachings of the historical Buddha as rooted in the canonical literature of Theravada Buddhism. Morning sessions will be spent examining historical and cultural issues such as the world into which the Buddha was born and lived, his biography and personal life, and a systematic exploration of the major doctrines of early Buddhism. Special attention will be given to Buddhist psychology and the applicability of these teachings to modern life. Afternoons will be spent following up these themes with a close and careful reading of primary texts from the Pali *Tipiṭaka*.
- July 13-25 (2 Weeks)** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHAYANA STUDIES** 97MHINT \$750
Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty
 The themes of Mahayana Buddhism initially introduced in the Buddhist Studies program are expanded upon in this exploration of the vast range of Mahayana Buddhist teachings as they developed in India and other countries of Asia. Course topics will include several *Prajñāparāmitā* texts; the two major schools of Mādhyamika philosophy; and the teachings of the Yogācāra school. We will study the rise of major Buddhist schools in China (Pure Land, Ch'an, Tien-tai, and the Hua-yen) and Japan (Kegon, Shingon, Tendai and Zen); as well as the four prominent lineages in Tibetan Buddhism. The course will culminate with a look at the arrival and interface of these Mahayana lineages in contemporary American culture.

(For teachers not listed here, see biographies in the IMS Section)

Sylvia Boorstein has been teaching vipassana since 1985 and is a founding teacher of Spiriti Rock Meditation Center in California. She is also a psychotherapist, wife, mother, and grandmother and is particularly interested in seeing daily life as practice. She is the author of *It's Easier Than You Think; the Buddhist Way to Happiness; Don't Just Do Something, Sit There;* and *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist.*

George Bowman is a Zen Master and lineage holder in the tradition of Korean Zen. He is the resident teacher at Cambridge Buddhist Association in Cambridge, MA., and also has a private psychotherapy practice in Cambridge.

Rev. Issho Fujita is the resident Zen priest at the Valley Zendo in Charlemont, Massachusetts. He has been trained in the Soto Zen tradition and has a degree in psychology. He leads a Zen meditation group at Smith College in Northampton, Mass.

Trudy Goodman ordained as a lay Buddhist in 1974, and has studied in Zen and vipassana traditions. She is a teacher at the Cambridge Buddhist Association where she has taught classes and led retreats for women. She lives in Cambridge, Mass., where she works as a child and family therapist.

Paula Green, Ed.D., directs Karuna Center in Leverett, Mass., and teaches peacebuilding and conflict transformation throughout the world. She is on the faculty of the School for International Training and serves on the Board of Directors of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. She is co-editor of *Psychology and Social Responsibility: Facing Global Challenges.*

Ron Leifer, M.D., a Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, studied with Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche for fifteen years and is associated with the Namgyal Buddhist Institute in Ithaca, New York, where he also has a private psychotherapy practice.

Daeja Napier is the founding teacher of Newbury Insight Meditation Center and the Phillips Academy Insight Meditation Program. She is also on the teaching staff of Interface Foundation. She has been studying and practicing Buddhist meditation for over 20 years and is the mother of five children.

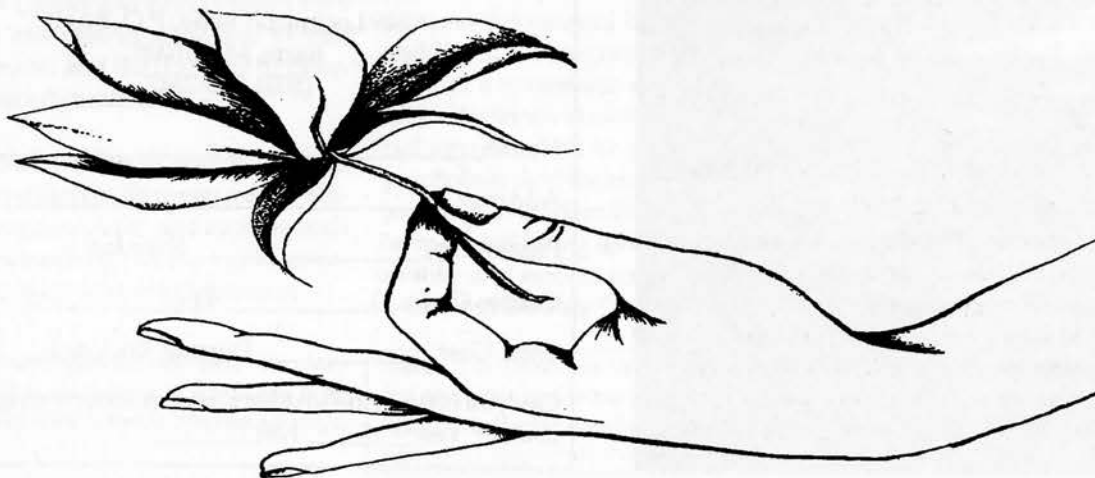
Andrew Olendzki, Ph.D., received a degree in Religious Studies from the University of Lancaster in England, and has studied at Harvard and the University of Sri Lanka. He is the executive director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and a visiting lecturer at Harvard for the fall of 1996.

Geshe Michael Roach is an ordained American monk, and was the first Westerner to qualify for the Geshe (Doctor of Philosophy) program at Sera Monastery in India. He founded and directs the Asian Classics Input Project, preserving Buddhist texts by computerizing them. A scholar of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Russian, he has published numerous works.

Mu Soeng is the director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. Until recently, he was a Zen monk for 11 years. He is the author of *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality* and *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen--Tradition and Teachers.*

Lama Surya Das is an American meditation teacher, Tibetan Buddhist lama, poet and writer. He has studied with teachers in all the major Tibetan schools and spent eight years in secluded retreats. He's the author of *The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane: Buddhist Tales from Tibet.*

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff) has been a Theravada monk since 1976. He is the Abbot of Metta Forest Monastery—a combined monastic and lay meditation community—in San Diego County in California. He is the author of *Mind Like Fire Unbound* and translator of *The Buddhist Monastic Code*, as well as a number of Thai meditation guides.





REGISTERING FOR COURSES at the BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

Feel free to call (508) 355-2347 at any time for up-to-date information about course offerings, availability of spaces, or any other information pertaining to courses and schedules.

Registrations are received at any time by mail, but are only confirmed when a deposit has been received.

Please include with your registration a deposit totalling the full cost of the course for one-day courses and half the cost for longer courses.

Deposits are refundable (less a \$20 processing fees) if we are notified more than 10 weeks prior to the course opening. Later cancellations are subject to cancellation fees as follows:

One-day to three-day courses: Half the deposit will be retained as a cancellation fee if cancelling more than 2 weeks prior to the course opening. The entire deposit will be retained if cancelling within the last 2 weeks.

All longer courses: Half the deposit will be retained as a cancellation fee if cancelling more than 3 weeks prior to the course opening. The entire deposit will be retained if cancelling within the last 3 weeks.

ALL CANCELLATION FEES ARE DONATED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Please do not let financial hardship prevent you from attending any of the offerings at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. Work scholarships are available for those unable to afford the course fees and special arrangements can be made for special circumstances.

BCBS REGISTRATION FORM

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies
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Barre, MA 01005
(508) 355-2347

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: Day _____ Evening _____
Course Code: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
Total Cost: _____ Deposit Enclosed: _____
Can you offer a ride to others in your area coming to the course? Yes: _____ No: _____

Based on the model of Nālanda Buddhist university in ancient India, where scholar/monks from all different Buddhist schools lived, studied and practiced together daily, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies has been developing a program specifically intended to integrate the academic study of Buddhist doctrine and tradition with the intensive practice of meditation—all in a residential community setting.

For two weeks at a time, a small group of about fifteen students sit together morning and evening, participate in lectures, discussions and reading periods throughout the day, and join in evening seminars hosted by a wide range of visiting scholars and dharma teachers. There is plenty of unstructured time for students to follow their own interests, and a classical silent meditation retreat takes place on the weekend between the two weeks.

THE NĀLANDA PROGRAM



OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

At the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

Each participant is housed in a single room on our beautiful rural campus, with access to a well-stocked library, a tranquil meditation hall, miles of woodland trails, delicious vegetarian food and an excellent faculty and staff. The cost of each program is \$750, which includes room, board and tuition fees.

The core faculty for these programs is Andrew Olendzki (Theravada Studies) and Mu Soeng (Mahayana Studies). (See page 25 for biographies)

Visiting faculty changes each year, and has included Joseph Goldstein (IMS), Charles Hallisey, Diana Eck, Christopher Queen (all of Harvard), Dorothy Austin (Drew U.), Janet Gyatso (Amherst College), George Dreyfus (Williams College), Perrin Cohen (Northeastern U.), Jack Engler (Harvard Medical School), Susan Murcott (M.I.T.), John Makransky (Boston College), Frank Hoffman (West Chester U.), among others.

BUDDHIST STUDIES

**A two-week residential program
January 12-24, 1997**

This program is intended as a sweeping introduction and broad overview of the entire Buddhist tradition. It will provide students with a solid foundation for both further studies and an on-going meditation practice.

During the first week the focus will be on the origins of Buddhism in ancient India; the life and teachings of the historical Buddha; the intellectual milieu in which Buddhism arose; the primary texts of the Pali Canon; and key doctrines such as karma and rebirth, mind and mental development, and the doctrine of interdependent origination.

The second week will review the Mahayana tradition in its many manifestations throughout Asia, and explore such important teachings as the bodhisattva ideal, emptiness and enlightenment.

Note: No prior experience with either the study of Buddhism or the practice of meditation is required for any of the Nālanda Program offerings.

THERAVADA STUDIES

**A two-week residential program
June 22-July 4, 1997**

This program undertakes an in-depth exploration of the inner architecture of the classical Theravada teachings. Intensive study of the Pali suttas, including some introduction to the Pali language, will allow participants to solidify their understanding of the teachings of the historical Buddha as rooted in the canonical literature of Theravada Buddhism.

Morning sessions will be spent examining historical and cultural issues such as the world into which Siddhattha Gotama Sakyamuni Buddha was born and lived, his biography and personality, and a systematic exploration of the major doctrines of early Buddhism. Special attention will be given to Buddhist psychology and the applicability of these teachings to modern life. Afternoons will be spent following up these themes with a close and careful reading of primary texts from the Pali Tipitaka.

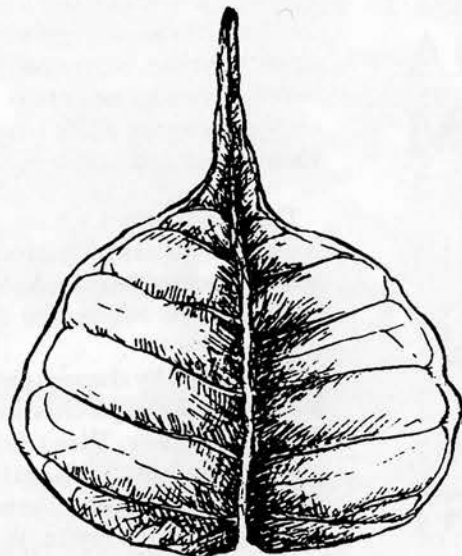
Note: The Theravada Studies and Mahayana Studies programs are scheduled to sandwich a 9-day vipassana meditation retreat led by Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady at the Insight Meditation Society from July 4-13, 1997. Participants will have the opportunity to register for this retreat if they wish to do so. The cost of the retreat at IMS is \$ 265.

MAHAYANA STUDIES

**A two-week residential program
July 13-25, 1997**

The themes of Mahayana Buddhism initially introduced in the Buddhist Studies program are expanded upon in this exploration of the vast range of Mahayana Buddhist teachings as they developed in India and other countries of Asia. Each subtradition is an immensely rich and complex phenomenon, giving rise to a multitude of philosophical and meditational schools in East and North Asia.

Course topics will include several Prajnaparamita texts; the two major schools of Madhyamika philosophy, and the teachings of the Yogacara school. We will study the rise of major Buddhist schools in China (Pure Land, Ch'an, Tien-tai, and the Hua-yen) and Japan (Kegon, Shingon, Tendai and Zen); as well as the four prominent lineages in Tibetan Buddhism. The course will culminate with a look at the arrival and interface of these Mahayana lineages in contemporary America.



DHARMA SEED TAPE LIBRARY

The Dharma Seed Tape Library was founded in 1983 to provide a resource of meditative instruction, guidance and inspiration from teachers who conduct retreats on insight meditation. It is a non-profit organization with a small staff, currently operating from a private home in Wendell Depot, Massachusetts, 01380, and is guided by a volunteer board of directors.

The mission of the Dharma Seed Tape Library is simply to share the Dharma. It preserves the oral tradition of contemporary dharma teaching by taping talks and instructions given by teachers at various retreat centers around the country, and supports the daily practice of students everywhere by making these tapes and other materials inexpensively available to all.

These ancient teachings are offered freely by a diverse community of contemporary teachers, each with their own unique perspective and idiom. Following the Buddhist practice of dāna--voluntary generosity--students traditionally make donations to these teachers at the end of retreats. In the spirit of dāna, the Dharma Seed Tape Library donates 10% of all tape sales to the teachers.

We thank all of you who have ordered tapes from us in the past for your support and generosity, and welcome whatever (tax deductible) donations you can make to help us provide this service. We often send free tapes to yogis, prisons and overseas to less fortunate communities, and would appreciate whatever help can be given to help us continue this outreach program.

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RENUNCIATION: THE HIGHEST HAPPINESS

Sister Siripaṇṇā

On March 29-31, 1996 Sister Siripaṇṇā, from the Amaravati monastic community in England, assisted by Sister Thaniyā, offered a weekend program at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies entitled "Renunciation: The Highest Happiness." These are just a few excerpts from that rich and diverse program.



Once saw a cartoon strip about a little character called Hagar the Horrible. It really summed up for me what so many people seem to feel about the theme of renunciation.

Hagar is climbing a very steep mountain, and in the first frame you see him going up, laboring away. In the second frame you see this very wise-looking sage with a long white beard sitting on the top of this mountain. And Hagar says to him "Oh great sage, please teach me the secret of happiness." In the third frame, the sage says, "Simplicity, self-restraint, renunciation." And in the fourth frame you can see Hagar pausing, and saying "Is there anyone else up here I can speak to?"

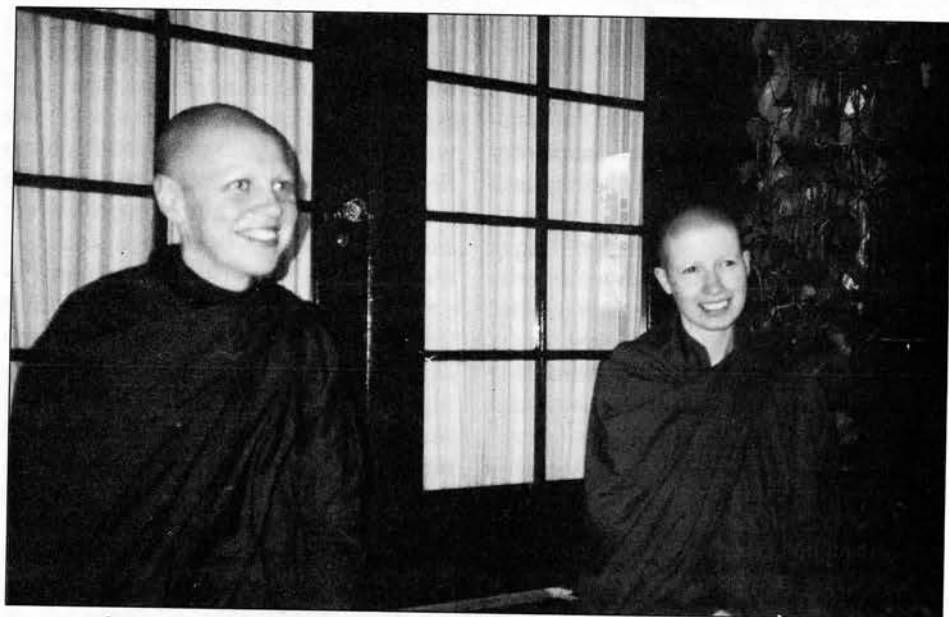
In a way, I think that says it all, doesn't it?

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness and who knows the path of peace: Let them be...contented and easily satisfied, unburdened with duties, and frugal in their ways.

(Metta Sutta Sn 143-4)

When we find out what the spiritual path involves it sounds to our worldly mind like a deprivation. There is a part of us that feels renunciation means to lose everything we love; having to deprive ourselves of what is pleasant and enjoyable in life. This is understandable, for this is really the only way that the worldly mind can conceive of letting go of seeking fulfillment in pleasant experience.

Insight



Sister Siripaṇṇā (left) and Sister Thaniyā: "My own study has always been of the heart."

Yet I'm sure that within all of you there is also something else, something beyond that mind that is always wanting and craving and trying to hold on to our identity and experiences, that recognizes and resonates to this word *renunciation*. Whenever I've talked about this theme with other people, often they say that although the word horrifies them in a way, there is also a fascination, an echo of something we intuitively long for. This is the aspect of renunciation that I hope to tap into as we explore this very deep theme.

As the contemporary Indian thinker Raimundo Panikkar says, "Not everyone has the inclination to take up the vocation of monasticism, but all of us have some part of us which is a monk or a nun; and that should be cultivated."

So as we consider these teachings and reflections that speak to that part of all of us which is a monk or a nun, it is not necessarily something that involves having a shaved head or wearing a robe. It is an attitude, a way of approaching life, which essentially boils down to giving up seeking our fulfillment from the experiences of our life, of needing them to have a particular quality, and giving our energy instead to understanding experience itself.

When we understand this, we can start to glimpse that renunciation is not a matter of doing something or having to create something, or getting rid of something or exterminating something in life. Rather it is moving towards non-contention, a sense of rest and relaxation—not having constantly to try and manipulate and control and evade and maneuver any more. We are able to open in a fearless way and relax into the experience of the moment, whatever its quality may be. In opening to receive life, we still engage in the conventional level of reality—the social level of moral values, identities, mother and father, livelihood and mortgages. If we grasp these things and expect complete fulfillment from them, we will always be disappointed. But if we see our life as an opportunity to understand Dhamma—the way things are—that is renunciation. This letting go is very freeing. Whatever comes to us is Dhamma, and there is a joy in being in contact with Truth, whatever its particular flavor.

Renunciation can sound like passivity, a "door mat" philosophy, but actually it is the opposite. True response-ability—the ability to respond wisely and compassionately to life—naturally arises in the non-attached mind. There can be both activity and letting go.

*I have seen the misery of pleasures.
I have seen the security involved in
renouncing them:
So now I will go.
I will go on into the struggle.
This is to my mind delight.
This is where my mind finds bliss. "*
(Sn 424)

The theme of renunciation is not very widely talked about, and even less widely understood. Obviously one cannot come to a complete understanding of such a topic in one weekend—it is really a lifetime's endeavor for each of us. But we may be able to give you some meaningful food for thought, some building materials that you can take away with you.

At the Amaravati monastery we have quite a lot of study groups, and we have quite a lot of familiarity with the Buddhist scriptures. But our investigation of the tradition is always coming from a very experiential point of view, which interests us far more than scholarship for its own sake. My own study has always been of the heart.

We are always encouraged to talk about our own experience and our own practice. It seems to me that's really the only way that it's worth using the teachings—that is what the Buddha offered them for. He was always encouraging people to think for themselves and to develop their own understanding.

It is from this perspective that I draw your attention to certain texts and quotations from the Buddhist tradition. Reading the text is actually only a small part of the enterprise of study—it is far more important to try and understand for yourself what the Buddha is saying, and to try to bring this understanding alive in your lives.

*I do not say that you can attain purity
by views, traditions, insight, morality
or conventions;
nor will you attain purity without
these.
But by using them for abandonment,
rather than as positions to hold on to,
you will come to be at peace
without the need to be anything.*
(Sn 839)

The Buddha offered some quite specific and very practical teachings on the subject of renunciation in the Pali *Tiṭṭhaka*. One of these is called the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (MN 2). *Sabbāsava* means "all the *āsavas*," a word often translated as 'taints'. Perhaps, though, a more immediately understandable translation of *āsavas* would be "outflows of self," the way our sense of being someone tends to flow out and collide with the world. The *sutta* is a useful examination of how we can let go of—how we can renounce—these aspects which are sometimes described as "the states that defile, that bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering and lead to future birth, aging and death." The text gives a simple outline of various areas of our life and how we can work to free ourselves from the trouble that comes when we don't really understand the way things are.

It starts by examining the insight into the unsatisfactoriness of attachment to any form of identity, to any form of self, to conditions—to any experience at all. This arises as a natural consequence of seeing into and starting to understand the transience of the experiences we have. I think each one of us has had some glimpse of that unsatisfactoriness. And yet for most of us it is a very different thing to move on from that—to really live in a way which expresses that understanding.

The *Sabbāsava Sutta* shows us how to take this insight, which is quite accessible to anyone who looks carefully at life, and to really put it into action so that we can start to free ourselves. It's putting it into practice that's the difficult thing, not the actual insight itself.

After the *sutta* considers the insight, seeing clearly, which is the foundation of all our practice, it goes on to explore very practical ways in which we can support and actually put into practice letting go, abandoning that which is hindering our life in everyday situations: 1) restraining—a wise use of the senses that does not give rise to outflows of self. One manifestation of the insight into impermanence is that one starts quite naturally to restrain oneself; 2) using—how we use the things of our life, the material objects, our homes, our clothes, our food, and more subtly, how we use the time in our life; 3) and 4) enduring and avoid-

ing—how to bring insight and clarity into the more unbearable aspects of our life. We have to endure some things and we have to avoid some others. We consider carefully which things are worth enduring and which things are best avoided: 5) removing—how we can actually remove and free ourselves from things which are unwholesome or harmful in our life; and 6) developing—how through letting go of what is unwholesome, we move toward what is supporting enlightenment, freedom, peace, and what is supporting wholesome, beautiful mind-states.

*The days and nights
are relentlessly passing;
How well am I spending my time?
This should be reflected upon
again and again
by one who has gone forth.*
(AN 10.87)

Let us start by reflecting a little bit around one particular aspect which supports renunciation, restraining—both restraining the senses and moral restraint. Until we have at least a glimpse of the futility of grasping—of constantly seeking and manipulating and chasing after pleasure as an end in itself—then sense restraint doesn't actually make much sense. And if it doesn't make much sense, obviously we're not going to do it.

And yet, the Buddha repeatedly pointed out that restraint is the absolute bedrock of the practice of letting go of the world, of renunciation. If we are just completely lost in the flow of desire, there's no possibility of finding perspective, of understanding more deeply. There has to be a reining-in—a turning against the stream, before there can be any sense of perspective or clarity.

*Lose the greed for pleasure. See how
letting go of the world is peacefulness.
There is nothing that you need to hold
on to and there is nothing that you
need to push away.* (Sn 1098)

In the *Sutta Nipāta* there is a verse which says: "Those who leave one thing to take up another, and follow attachment, never relinquish desire. They are like monkeys who let go of one branch only to grasp another, only to let it go in turn." (Sn 791)

This mad monkey mind swings through the trees, endlessly chasing after sweet fruits, on and on and on, and never ever ever gets enough. This is what we must start to look at, find out for ourselves.

In many texts the Buddha explains the danger inherent in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation. What do we make of this phrase, "The danger of sensual pleasures?"

The Buddha's only concern in all the teachings he gave over 45 years was with two things: he was addressing the issue of dis-ease or suffering (*dukkha*) and the end of suffering. This was his only interest. So, when he talks about the danger of sensual pleasures, he's talking about it in relation to suffering. It's not the danger that sensual pleasures are bad in themselves, or evil; but if we have the wrong relationship to the sense realm, then we'll all find (if we reflect on our own experience) that just reacting to the sensual world is a continual experience of unsatisfactoriness.

*Whatever bliss in the world
is found in sensual pleasures,
and whatever there is of heavenly
bliss--*

*These are not worth one sixteenth part of
the bliss that comes with craving's end.*
(Ud 2.2)

After pointing to the dangers of sensual pleasures, the Buddha next speaks of the blessings of renunciation. My own experience, in a monastic life where by necessity there has been a lot of sense restraint, is a tremendous sense of freedom and relief. There is a real ease and relief in not having to be obliged to run after the world all the time. It really has to be experienced to be believed—how wonderful it is, what a privilege it is. And yes, there is sometimes this little wanting voice that whispers (and sometimes screams!) "I want that. I want it." Believe me, it's there. But it is not something I trust anymore. It is just not something I want to follow. It is a liar! This becomes clearer and clearer over time.

*Whoso has turned to renunciation,
Turned to detachment of the mind,
Is filled with all-embracing love
And freed from thirsting after life.*

(AN 5.55)

In monastic life we stop just following desire because we want to understand it rather than be deluded by it. The attention has to turn inward so that we can start to understand the very mechanism of how we grasp the sense realm itself. With this understanding we can learn to let go.

*Whatever is not yours, monks,--
abandon it!*

*When you have abandoned it,
that will lead to your welfare
and happiness for a long time.*

And what is it that is not yours?

*Material form is not yours--abandon
it!*

Feeling is not yours--abandon it!

Perception is not yours--abandon it!

*Formations are not yours--abandon
them!*

Consciousness is not yours--abandon it!

*When you have abandoned it,
that will lead to your welfare
and happiness for a long time.*

(MN 22)

Now, we talk a lot in this kind of way, but when you come down to real life, how do you actually do it? The Buddha gave some very simple but clear suggestions—ways that we can begin to ground ourselves more in our experience, to have some kind of anchor from which to contemplate this constant driving force in the mind that is always moving towards sense experience. One of them I find so clear and simple, and is probably well known to most of you: mindfulness of the body.

"This is how a monk trains himself in restraint: A monk seeing objects with the eye is not drawn to attractive objects, is not repelled by unattractive objects. He remains with firmly established mindfulness of the body, his mind being unrestricted." (SN 35.206)

This is very useful training as to how we can anchor ourselves more amidst sense experience without being drawn in to it. The body, being the first foundation of mindfulness, is the most easy within which to sustain attention—and the least deceptive.

Our body is a very honest thing. It doesn't tell us lies, like the mind that rationalizes and tries to convince us it has good reasons for following its wishes and

whims. So the body is a very good place to use as a first base for our expeditions into the more hair-raising spheres of the mind, and it's where attention should gravitate towards as a kind of anchoring post.

The image is often used of this post firmly stuck in the ground. When there's something fixed in one place, and you start pulling against it, you notice there's a tugging. But if you have no reference point, then the mind is just constantly shooting off here and there and—oops, there we are again swinging through the trees. And we haven't noticed because there was nothing to refer to, there's no contrast to movement.

Anchoring the attention within the breathing (when we are in a situation where it is possible to be that refined), or as we sit here, feeling the body pressing against the seat; feeling the whole body, the posture, sitting, standing, walking, lying down—this is anchoring the mind in the body.

A very simple thing, and yet it does start to give us a tremendous possibility; now the mind hasn't been drawn out, grabbing hold of something—but has a space within it. A space within which it can see what's going on.

So we start to contemplate sense experience with an inner questioning: "How am I seeing this?" instead of just seeing something and "Oh, I want it!" Your whole energy has shot out through your eyes and you've completely lost that post, that centeredness. Instead, turning inwards, we notice "Ah, the eye has seen something attractive." We can reflect on that. This is something that can be known.

We can notice our habitual response to a pleasant sight, for example, or a particular sound, or a memory, or the way someone speaks to us, the tone of voice, a thought: "How am I receiving this? How does it feel?"

This very simple awareness is in itself restraint. And it's the beginning of a true renunciation. When we step back a little there comes to be this sense of detachment, which allows the mind to begin to reflect. This allows a clarity to begin to arise in the mind, a sense of brightness. And within that brightness we can start to understand when it is appropriate to follow—when a desire is valid and

it's going to help and be something useful to follow—and when it's going to just lead to these vexations and fevers that are so unsatisfying.

*The impulse "I want"
and the impulse "I'll have"
--lose them!*

*That is where most people get stuck.
Without those, you can use your eyes
to guide you through this suffering
state.*

(Sn 706)

One of the joys of the Buddhist path is that it is something we are taking upon ourselves. Nobody is judging us except ourselves. And there is room to experiment. It's a gradual teaching, a gradual path. So if we have a little bit of insight we can let go of a little. And we see the result. And then maybe it's three steps forward and two steps back. But if we always have this attitude of inquiry, of interest, we avoid falling into this trap of coming from the "should" position.

Just reining in our impulses in an attempt to conform to an ideal is a willful restraint that does not necessarily lead to renunciation. Renunciation is an inner freedom, a sense of ease. There are people who grasp hold of the idea that we should be restrained, we shouldn't have too much fun and we shouldn't do this, and we shouldn't do that. "A proper Buddhist, a real meditator wouldn't do that." People come into the monastery and they say things like "Oh, I know I shouldn't have, but I had fish and chips last night. And I did enjoy it." Well, for goodness sake, if you are going to have them, enjoy them!

There is this little voice in us that grabs hold of the idea and is trying to live to an ideal, whereas in fact we still want to do it.

You really have got two choices: you can want to do it and do it, or you can want to do it and not do it. But don't want to do it, do it, and then feel guilty about it. Do one or the other, do it toally, and determine to learn from it. If you are caught by guilt and judgement and self-hatred because you think you shouldn't be doing it, then there's no opportunity for understanding. That's a very contracted mind-state; it can't reflect.

We have to be clear enough and com-

passionate enough to allow ourselves to indulge sometimes—but really watch the effect. Be clear enough to notice how you feel. Does it feel as good as you thought? Was it worth it? What are the consequences to yourself and to others? The restraint of mindfulness leads to understanding, and understanding leads to peace.

This is the middle way, falling between two extremes: not constant indulgence, nor on the other side a kind of "shouldn't" accompanied by the guilt and the clamping down and tightening up that says, "I'm going to get my act together." This is actually falling into the other extreme of repression, or self-hatred—which is really a form of self-mortification.

*When he does not think:
"This is mine" or
"That belongs to them;"
then, since there is no self there,
he cannot grieve with the thought,
"I do not have"*

(Sn 951)

A very useful simile for understanding our relationship with sensual pleasures is offered by a wise layman called Citta. In this story from the *Samyutta Nikāya* he is speaking to some senior monks: "Venerable Sirs, it is just as if a black ox and a white were joined together with a single collar or yoke. If someone were to say, 'The black ox is the fetter of the white ox, the white ox is the fetter of the black'—speaking in this way, would he be speaking right?"

And the elder monks reply: "No, householder, the black ox is not the fetter of the white ox, nor is the white ox the fetter of the black. The single collar or yoke by which they are joined—that is the fetter there."

And Citta replies: "In the same way, friend, the eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire and passion arises in dependence on the two of them—that is the fetter there. [The same is said for the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind] The mind is not the fetter of ideas. Nor are ideas the fetter of the mind. Whatever desire or passion arises in dependence on the two of them—that is the fetter there."

Reflecting on this, one realizes that something very important is being said here. The problem does not lie in sense experience—in alluring or unattractive

sights or sounds or tastes or thoughts or emotions. Nor does it lie within the fact that we have to see and hear and taste and touch and smell and think.



If we're not careful, we can start to make some mistaken assumptions. When we start to wake up to the dis-ease inherent in the constant bombardment of sensory experience, we can start to feel that the experience itself is the problem.

Sometimes you see this amongst people who meditate, or are very committed to a spiritual path, when it seems they want to withdraw more and more from strong, difficult, or complex experience. And it can become a very contracted, fearful, un-alive form of living if one is not careful. One becomes more and more frightened of being stimulated too much by life, and from a kind of weariness of strong experience one wants to get away from it.

We can do this in meditation, too, except we call it something nice: we call it 'getting concentrated' or focusing the mind. But sometimes the attitude behind that, if we are not honest and careful, can be a sense of wanting to shut things down, to "get away from." Or, alternatively, sometimes we can start feeling averse to being a sensitive creature which has eyes that see and ears that hear and a mind that thinks, thinks, thinks. Sometimes we can wish to not exist, to somehow not have to feel, not have to think.

Māra says to a group of young monks:

"Do not abandon what is visible here and now and run off to distant things."

And the young Monks reply:

"We have abandoned what is distant and run towards what is visible here and now. The Lord Buddha has said (worldly) pleasures are distant (of uncertain result), produce much suffering and despair, and are a continual disappointment. But this Dhamma is visible here and now, immediate (in result), inviting one to come and see, guiding one nward and capable of being experienced by the wise."

SN 4.3.1

Actually there is no problem with the sense realm when we are firmly established in knowing that it is just as it is. The sense realm has its own quality of suchness. Some of it is ghastly, some of it is wonderful, some of it is blissful, some of it is terrible and tragic. This is the way it is.

And we are sensitive beings—we are always going to feel the world. Rather than feel it less and less, as we become more open we actually feel it more and more. And if we practice correctly, more and more deeply, we allow the world to enter us.

But the escape in the case of sense pleasures is not poking out our eyes or stuffing wax in our ears. And it's not blaming "it" or "them" out there for our sense of unsatisfactoriness. Unpleasant people and things and experiences are always going to exist—but where is the actual problem? The problem lies in the grasping of the desire to get rid of, the desire to have, the desire and passion that arise in dependence on having senses and upon sense objects.

The beautifully simple image of two oxen yoked together says a lot, doesn't it? Where is the fetter?

There are two extremes which should not be followed, bhikkhus, by someone who has gone forth:

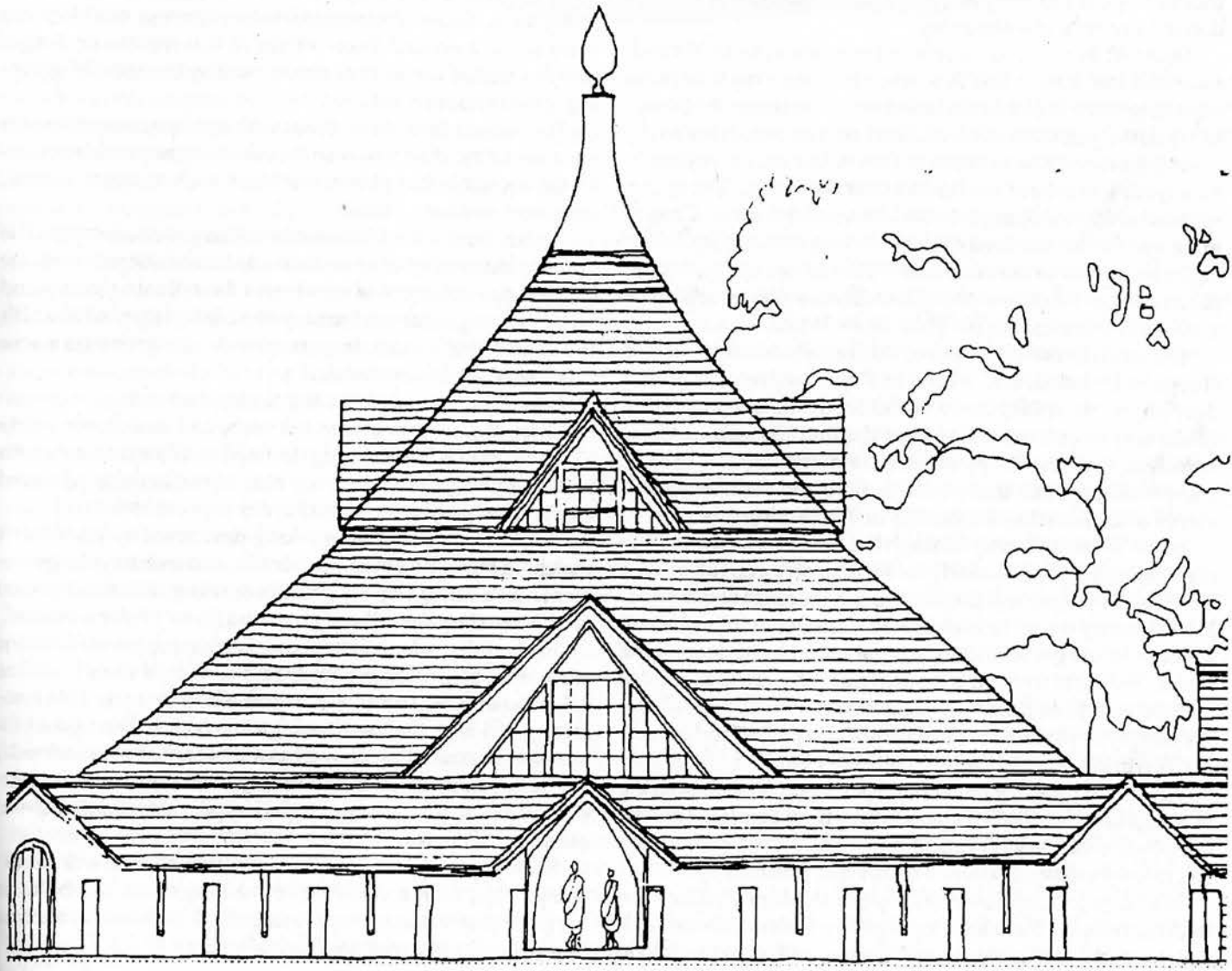
Devotion to pursuing sense pleasure, which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble and produces no useful result;

And devotion to self-denial, which is painful, ignoble and produces no useful result.

Avoiding both these extremes, bhikkhus, the Middle Way that a Tathāgatha has Awakened to gives vision and insight knowledge, and leads to peace, profound understanding, full realization and to Nibbāna.

(Mv 1.6)

An artist's rendering of the new monastery building under construction at the Amaravati Buddhist monastery in England.



Vipassana in Snow White

A Fairy Tale Jātaka Story by Zoe Newman



Once upon a time there was a child whose heart and mind were as pure as snow. But she came under the power of a wicked queen whom we shall call Mārā, ruler of illusion, greed and hatred. To free herself from Mārā's huntsman, the child sets out on a journey through the dark forest. The journey leads to discovery and, despite Mārā's attempts to poison her, to awakening and true happiness.

There are many stories that come to us from Asia, called Jātaka tales, about the Buddha's lives as a bodhisattva and applicable to all of us on the path to enlightenment. But some of our own fairy tales are like Jātaka tales too—like Snow White.

Forget, for a moment, Walt Disney. Bring to mind, rather, Dante's opening lines: "Midway this way of life we're bound upon / I woke to find myself in a dark wood" as he begins his odyssey through the Inferno. Picture, perhaps, the path through the forest at Barre.

In essence, Snow White is the story of a girl bodhisattva brought face to face with suffering—the loss of the mother who loved her, and the prospect of her own death—and who is plunged into the journey as we set out on the path of meditation to freedom and awakening.

Snow White's very name reflects the pristine purity of mind, pure like the snow. But this original mind which is pure, according to the Buddha, has somehow come under the power of Māra, the personification of greed, hatred and delusion.

In this story, Māra appears as the wicked queen, willing to do anything to extend her control over the world. The queen spends her days looking into the mirror of delusion. Caught in the spell of her self-image, and believing that only by fulfilling her desire to be the most admired of all can she be happy, she tries to get rid of everything and anyone who stands in the way—and this includes the child Snow White.

She sends Snow White out to the forest in her huntsman's charge to be killed, and when the huntsman returns with a deer's liver, she thinks Snow White dead. But actually Snow White is alive and well. It is what the Buddha tells us about ourselves: that despite appearances, underneath Māra's seeming sovereignty, our true nature is alive and well. It's just a matter of undertaking the journey of discovering this.

Snow White's journey through the forest is what mindfulness meditation, particularly in an intensive retreat, is like. It's a journey deeper and deeper through the forest of our mind. In this journey we get to know all the parts of our inner terrain, as Snow White got to know the dwarfs that lived deep in the forest. We get to know the faces of our different mind states and are able to call them by their names: Happy, Grumpy, Sad, Angry... We learn to greet them as they come and go, and begin to bring order to the house of our mind.

And we explore deeper and deeper levels of our being, the very depths of our mind—symbolized by the mines of the dwarfs deep inside the very bowels of the earth. In this exploration we, too, sometimes discover treasure and precious ore.

We have to also, however, cope with Māra's visits. The Buddha refers to the *kilesas*, or negative forces and emotions which cloud our true nature, as "visitors" of the mind. And in

the fairy tale, disguised under many forms, Mārā keeps visiting. In mindfulness meditation as in the story, there's not a lot we can do to stop the visits, but by being mindful and investigating, like the dwarfs, we can unhook or detach from what's happening.

The three visits of Mārā in the story represent the three root *kilesas*, the "three poisons" of greed, hatred and ignorance. They also point to the attention to breath, thoughts, body and movement we use in mindfulness meditation to free ourselves. In their role of liberating Snow White from Mārā's dark magic the dwarfs might here be seen as representing the seven factors of enlightenment.

First Mārā, in the disguise of an old peddler, comes with pretty laces. Snow White desires their prettiness, but Mārā ties them so tight around Snow White so that she can no longer breathe—just as we become constricted by the *kilesa* of grasping, greed and wanting.

The second time Mārā comes with a poisoned comb which she fixes in the child's hair so that she become unconscious—all the thoughts that poison our mind such as anger, hatred, judgment, jealousy, blame.

On her third visit, Mārā comes with a poisoned apple. The apple is the symbol of ignorance, the loss of oneness with the original spaciousness of mind, and the fall into duality and sense of being separate, found in the biblical story of Eve. It's the poison that's most deep and stuck: an ignorance we've swallowed and taken inside.

Investigating and observing closely the breath and its constriction, the dwarfs loosen the laces and free Snow White after the first visit. Exploring the head and hair (mental states and thoughts), the dwarfs are able to remove the poisoned comb. The last poison is a bit harder to overcome.

But at some point, after a long time spent by the dwarfs watching the body in the glass coffin, and watching its movement as it's carried by the prince's servants, this third poison or kills also becomes dislodged. And Snow White awakens.

In the fairy tale this final awakening happens—and the piece of apple dislodged from Snow White's throat—as the prince's servants stumble over some brushwood. (It's comforting to know that awakening can come in the midst of a moment of stumbling as well as a moment of mindfulness!) For us too the moment of awakening often comes as unexpectedly, at any step of the way. It can happen, also, gradually—at each step of the way.

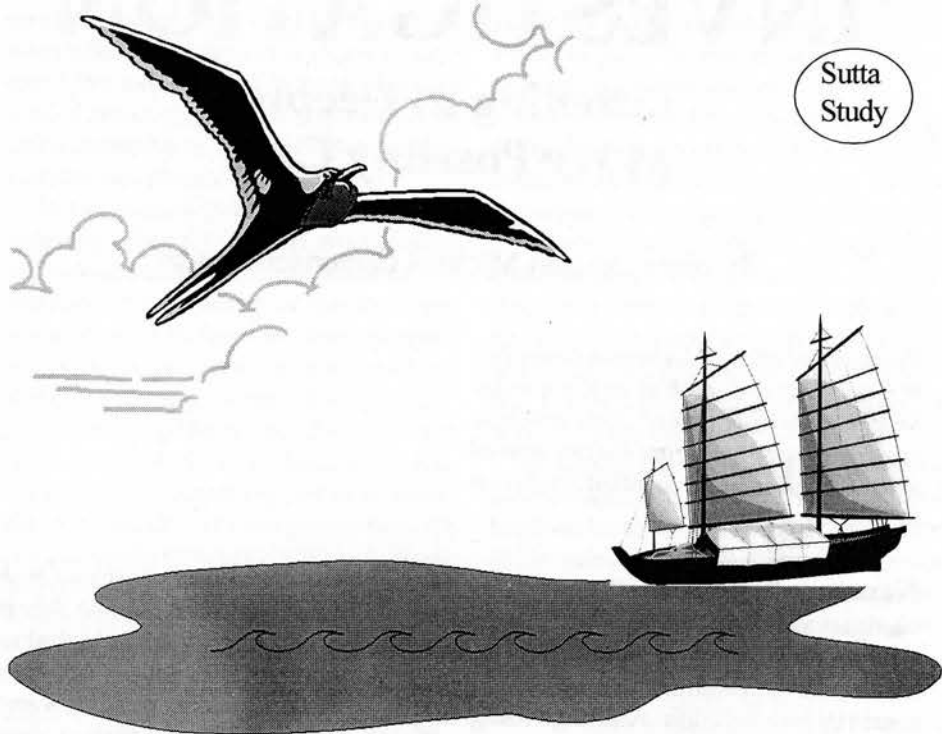
So the story, that began with a dark forest, ends with awakening. And with a wedding to the king's son, symbolic, in fairy tales, of union with our true Self (or, in this case, our true No-Self), with our true unclouded nature.

The Tathāgata is "Truly Gone"

Sutta
Study

"In ancient times when seafaring merchants put to sea in ships, they took with them a bird to sight land. When the ship was out of sight of land, they released the bird; and it flew eastward and westward, northward and southward, upward and all around. And if the bird sighted land nearby, it was truly gone; but if the bird saw no land, it returned to the ship."

Anguttara Nikaya 6.54



The word used here for "truly gone" is *tathāgatako* (translated by E.M. Hare in the PTS edition as "gone for good"), and this story helps us considerably in understanding how the Buddha used the epitaph *Tathāgata* to describe himself.

His given name was Siddhattha; as a wandering ascetic he went by his mother's clan name, Gotama; he was known throughout his world as the sage of his father's family, or Sākyamuni; and when enlightened he became known as Buddha, the Awakened One. His followers most often referred to him as Bhagavant, or "Blessed One," but the name he almost always used for himself was *Tathāgata*.

Tathāgata has always been an awkward word to translate. *Tathā* on its own means something like "so," "thus," or "in this way;" and *gata* is the past participle of the verb to go, and simply means "gone." We therefore often find the phrase translated in the texts as "Thus-gone" or "the Thus-Gone one." The commentator Buddhaghosa lists eight different ways the word can be construed (*DighaAtthakathā* 1.59), and in the process engages in some characteristically creative etymology.

I admit to having never really understood the import of the term *Tathāgata*—until I came across this story. With the

image of the bird released by the sailors, searching for land upon which to alight, a number of things began to fall into place.

To begin with we should recognize two ways the expression is used: one referring to the Buddha as a being who will no longer be reborn, and the other describing how the consciousness of an awakened person still in this world relates to the object of experience.

Sometimes when one of the arahants passes away, Māra like a dark cloud can be seen searching for where their consciousness has become re-established (i.e. reborn). In such cases, the Buddha says of the arahant that their consciousness is "not stationed anew anywhere" (e.g. S 22.87). In this sense the Buddha is clearly using the epitaph "*Tathāgata*" to mean that he will not be reborn again—like the bird leaving the ship without returning, his consciousness does not alight again in any of the worlds to become re-bound with another body.

But there is also a sense in which the phrase aptly describes the nature of the awakened mind here in this life. When his questioners try to pin the Buddha down about whether his consciousness survives after death, he rebukes them by saying that even here and now the consciousness of a *Tathāgata* is untraceable, since there is no means of measur-

ing or knowing it (e.g. Sn 1074). The awakened mind is said to be unattached to anything in the world—like a bird that does not alight upon and thus get bound to any object of experience.

In fact learning to un-attach the mind from its fetters is a good deal of what insight meditation training is all about. The *Satipatthāna Sutta*, for example, (the main text that gives instructions for insight meditation) states that when practicing mindfulness properly a person "abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world" (M 10.5). The householder Anāthapiṇḍika, just before his death, received instructions from Sāriputta urging him to train himself thus: "I will not cling to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after, and examined by the mind; my consciousness will not be dependent on any of that" (MN 143).

All this combines to suggest that a crucial aspect of the Buddha's teaching is the notion of consciousness being unattached to mental or physical objects. In moment to moment practice this means letting go of attachments and letting experience be simply what it is. Perhaps with proper practice we can live as a bird freely circling the ship of our body and our world, rather than as one imprisoned in a cage on its deck.

INVESTIGATION

Listening as Deeply as We Possibly Can

By Narayan and Michael Liebenson Grady

Narayan and Michael Liebenson Grady live in Cambridge and teach at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center. This article is excerpted from a program the two offered at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies on October 21, 1995.

Narayan: We may hear the word "investigation" and think it has only to do with analyzing, because in our education and in our culture this is what is meant by investigation. Although using thought skillfully is certain a level of investigation, a deeper level of investigation in meditation doesn't have anything to do with thought. This deeper level has to do with bringing a silent, concentrated inner listening into our lives, into our moment to moment experiences. This is really what investigation is—listening deeply, as deeply as we possibly can.

To investigate is to bring a quality of openness into our life and to fully experience whatever it is that is happening without choosing sides; being for or against. The opposite of investigation is assuming—assuming that we already know how things are; this cuts off the oxygen in our minds, and cuts off the oxygen in our hearts as well. A kind of hard-heartedness emerges when we assume that we know anything at all.

Investigation is very soft; it's very open. It is a certain quality of probing into; but it's not a hard, harsh kind of probing, nor a striving kind of probing. It's simply an *interest* in life, in all aspects of life, really wanting to know very clearly and directly for ourselves, not based on anybody else's ideas or opinions. In practice, we're doing something quite radical; we're saying, "Enough! I want to find out for myself because everything in my life depends on it."

Ajahn Sumedho talks about investigation as being the quality of affectionate

curiosity. It comes out of *caring*—truly caring about ourselves, about others, about this life, about this world that we find ourselves in. It is not a cold, superficial analysis; it's affectionate, it's warm, it's intimate. It is an investigation about the very nature of life.

This quality of investigation is, of course, strong in most children. Some years ago I was at a museum looking at some paintings. I looked around at a certain point and I noticed a child who seemed to be about two years old playing in the center of the floor where there was a very small step that one had to go down to get to the rest of the museum. This two year old was fascinated with this step: he climbed up, he climbed down, he got down and examined it, he started eating it (of course). Everyone else was walking around, "Ah, what a nice picture! Ah, what a nice..." though you could see that there was a certain amount of boredom in the air. But this child was absolutely not bored! What was right there in the here and now for him was very interesting and it really wasn't anything at all.

This is what is meant by investigation; this innocence and curiosity about everything that we encounter. We are learning how to let go of our attitudes in order to be willing to see. We're not trying to assume any particular perspective, any particular attitude. We're not attempting to create any particular images, images about ourselves or images about the world. We are attempting, rather, to let go of our images and perspectives.

There are clearly different levels upon which investigation occurs. One level is the investigation of our personal stories. This is an important level of investigation; often this work is done in therapy. This kind of insight can come quite naturally through practice, as well, as we notice repetitive thought patterns.

Investigative practice can, however, bring us to a deeper aspect, which is not so much an investigation of a personal story as investigation of a human being's story. What this means is that we look deeply into what is common to us as human beings; what connects us, what binds us together. What is common to all phenomena? And what we begin to see, of course, is that regardless of our personal stories or histories, everything is changing, all the time. Everything that arises also passes away, everything that appears also disappears. That which appears to be solid, upon closer examination, is seen to be just energy. We begin to learn that no thought, emotion, sight, sound, smell or physical sensation can possibly bring lasting contentment. We find great peace in letting go of the hope of finding something that will.

It is easy for us to react blindly to what is happening within us as well as outside of us. This is an instinct that we have—we can react to stimuli. Without an awareness practice, without investigation, we tend to be drawn in by what looks attractive or appears to be pleasant; and we normally pull away from what appears to be unpleasant or frightening. We also don't pay much attention at all when experiences are neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

But we are blessed, really, with minds that have the ability to be attentive. Not all life forms have this particular capacity. We can be grateful we are here as human beings with this ability. With investigation, with attentiveness, we have the option to not blindly react to what is occurring in the environment, or to what arises inwardly. We have the alternative of investigation, of paying attention with a great deal of openness and a real freshness of mind. Each one of us has the ability to observe.

Let's say we are experiencing something—a particular state of mind, or a particular thought, or a particular sensation—and we are lost in it, over

whelmed by it in some way, drawn into it. Instantly, upon remembering that we have this capacity to observe, this capacity to look deeply and to investigate, we have the ability to free ourselves from its clutches. Instead of being lost in boredom or lost in anger, or lost when we become upset, disturbed, irritated, frustrated or annoyed, it may be possible to observe our annoyance or our anger or our frustration. We have this capacity to look deeply and to investigate instead of being tossed around. We have the capacity to look more deeply, to call forth stillness from within. This is what makes all the difference. Each time one notices that one has been lost there is a little bit of freedom, a little bit of insight that occurs. Investigation brings about faith and inner confidence.

Investigation is very soft; it's very open. It's really simply an interest in how things are.

From this perspective, it doesn't matter what the contents of consciousness are. If anger is occurring, we can recognize anger as a mental state. If we can look more deeply and stay with it long enough we see that it actually dissolves or disappears or changes into something else. Much of investigation has to do with staying with the experience until we see a change.

In fully experiencing the body and the mind, we may experience a sense of discomfort that is a natural element in life. If we can acknowledge this discomfort fully we can open up into something that's very free. It can take away from the personal sense that this is just hard for me, when the reality is that it's often hard to be a human being. When my sister's children were little she used to say to them, "I know, I know; it's hard to be a baby!" One might think it's kind of nice to be a baby; you get taken care of and all, but her understanding which I think was quite accurate is that it's really hard to be a baby; it's a lot of work. And it becomes more work as one grows up! But if we can acknowledge this, some

space opens up and we can sit with serenity in the midst of our life. We can sit with intense discomfort with great comfort. We can sit with intense pleasure with a sense of ease. We can sit when our experience of life is neither uncomfortable nor pleasurable.

In the guided practice session in the morning when we focused on exploring the sensations in the hands, some of you mentioned that many of the thoughts were either, "Oh, there's nothing happening in the hands...I want to get something done; I want to go where there's pain," or, "I want to go have a good time; I want to go to where there's pleasure." Neutrality is not something we're so interested in usually. It's not passionate, it's not culturally interesting, it's not stimulating. And yet, for many of us, life is just ordinary much of the time. Can we be aware of the experience of neutrality?

It is helpful to be able to stay with pain until we see it change. It is helpful to be able to stay with pleasure until we see it change. It is helpful to be able to stay with neutrality until we see it change. In doing so, we can begin to see that what we thought to be inherently a certain way, isn't. Without investigation we may think, ice cream is always pleasurable; a particular posture is always painful; paying attention to the hands is always neutral — when in actuality, everything is changing. To see this can free us from the cycle of moving towards pleasure and away from pain.

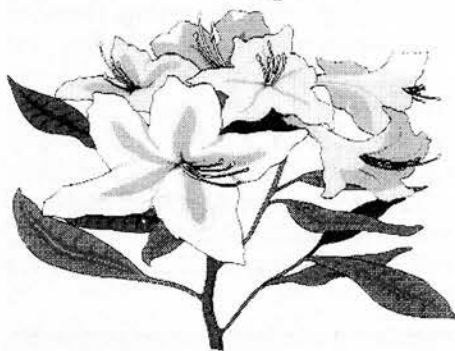
Most of us already have areas in our life where we are naturally investigative — it might be in relationship or while cooking or when walking in nature. But for many of us there are also places where we do not even think of the possibility of investigating. We seem quite sure that there's no reason to. An important part of our investigation in practice is looking into those areas which we find difficult to investigate.

We put ourselves and we put others in these little boxes and then we say, "This is who you are, and this is who I am," but then, with a curious, affectionate quality of investigation, we look more deeply and we see, "Ah, this is a state of mind, this is a thought. It is not who I am. It is a thought." So much of the box created is just a construction of thought. We can see how much we define our-

selves — and confine ourselves — by the thoughts that arise and pass away, by the feelings, or the emotions, or the states of mind that arise and pass away.

This openness of investigation is something that we can really work with in our lives, work with in our practice. Noticing when we are having these thoughts of "I know you," or "I know myself," and then seeing if we can look a little bit deeper, a little bit further, investigating the mental constructions, the belief systems, the thoughts based on conditioning, the thoughts based on emotions. It is really quite exciting.

Assuming that we don't know leaves an enormous space in which we can truly begin to learn on a nonverbal level. The understanding that begins to emerge is a growing inner sensing, a growing presence which may include but is not confined to words or concepts.



Michael: Ajahn Maha Boowa, a great teacher from the Thai forest tradition, describes the process of investigation in insight meditation as *sati-paññā*. This path of inquiry joins mindfulness, *sati*, with clarity of understanding or *paññā*. The investigative process uses mindfulness to question, to observe and discover the true nature of our experience. With investigation leading the way, the changing nature of our experience becomes apparent, as well as the wisdom to see that the source of our discontent comes from clinging to these changing experiences.

To investigate and discover the deepest levels of truth and inner freedom, one has to begin to pay attention in a new way. At the heart of Buddhist meditation is this spirit of investigation.

In his advice to the Kalāmas (AN 3.65) the Buddha stresses the importance of inquiry in any spiritual practice, making a clear distinction between faith based on beliefs and faith based on in-

vestigation and direct experience. However, learning to observe without the reference of secondhand knowledge and without preconceptions of what we are going to find requires courage and energy. It can help to have a sense of immediacy in one's practice—particularly during the times when our efforts to awaken become lax or when we find ourselves slipping into habit or preoccupation with all the endless dramas that fill our lives. There are many ways of cultivating a sense of immediacy and some reflections work better than others, depending on one's personality and motivation level.

In the Thai forest tradition, an awareness of death provides a compelling sense of immediacy in one's practice. The great 20th century forest monk, Ajahn Mun, took the sense of immediacy to the farthest edge. He chose to live in the forest, day and night, and consciously chose the areas where tigers were dwelling. He and his monks did a lot of walking meditation: they set up a walking path of thirty or forty feet, and set two large candles at each end, and just walk back and forth. Ajahn Mun would do this all night, up to twelve hours at a stretch—fast walking, slow walking, medium, varying it a lot.

I want to spend my life as aware as possible--I want to get to the truth of what this life is all about.

And while walking at night there would be sounds of tigers, close by, growling. There are many stories of monks encountering tigers, sometimes successfully, sometimes not! But this factor gave his practice a real sense of immediacy—every step could easily have been his last step.

And I think all of us have our own tigers. When I start getting lazy and find myself slipping into old habits, and find myself getting preoccupied with all the little dramas and contents of whatever is going on, I take a few minutes to reflect on the fact that life is going by very quickly and how do I want to spend it? And I always come up with the same answer, that I want to spend it as aware

as possible of what my experience is, and I want to get to the truth of what this life is all about.

Having a sense of urgency in practice has to be balanced by wisdom which recognizes and tempers the striving mind—the mind that is trying to make something happen. With investigation we are not trying to make anything happen, but rather our energies are directed towards seeing more fully and directly what is already happening. This requires a balanced effort. The spacious and accepting qualities of mindfulness create the climate for experiences to surface and concentration enables us to sustain the attention needed to experience the present moment more fully. The power of concentration helps harness and focus the energies needed to investigate our experience in a fresh way.

The simplicity and solitude of the forest tradition encouraged concentration. Yet, most of us live lives which are complex and demanding. Concentration does not come easily for many of us; it takes work to cultivate it. I think this is why it is so essential to keep a daily formal practice going and to take retreat time whenever possible. We need to take the time to focus our attention and to say to ourselves, "I am going to look at my life as deeply as possible and try to keep my attention there long enough to understand better the true nature of this body-mind process."

Quite often we can be aware of what our experience is in a general way, touching it perhaps for a few moments with a vague awareness, but our attention gets distracted and the investigation of "what is" gets blocked. This distracted state of affairs keeps our understanding on the surface and often fuels discontent rather than liberating us from confusion. Living an ethical life based on authenticity and principles of non-harm is also essential in freeing energy and keeping us focused in our inquiry. If we are in earnest in our efforts to discover the deepest levels of truth and freedom within us, our actions in relationships must begin to support this process. There is no better way to stifle investigation and liberation than attaching to pretense or harming ourselves or others.

When we are caught up in our conditioned aversion and fear of the unpleas-

ant, or clinging to the pleasant through fantasy and unskillful action, opening up to the experience in a full and direct way is difficult, at best.

One crucial way to develop equanimity is through investigating our reactions when they arise. Much of our practice in investigation requires opening to reactions without identifying with the reactions; that is, investigating reactions with the silence of mindfulness and a deep interest in listening without the "I" or "me" closing in around the experience. Holding on to any concepts and images of "I" or "me" prevents us from seeing in a new way. The "I" or "me" is the legacy of the past; it represents the known. When life is experienced and filtered through assumptions and habit, we become de-energized and life can become joyless.

One crucial way to develop equanimity is through investigating our reactions when they arise.

Investigation also includes examining, through observation, the attitudes and preconceptions that we hold towards others—attitudes which prevents us from engaging in relationships in an open and direct way. When we think we know someone, we no longer are in relationship with a living changing being. Rather we are now in relationship with an idea of that person. Investigation can bring new energy and joy to our relationships because we are paying attention with interest, while opening to the actuality of change.

Through investigation we strengthen our capacity to live without fear and to live in harmony with the changing nature of our lives. When we can face the truth without contracting inwardly through clinging or aversion, we can discover peace in genuine confidence because we no longer rely on that which is fleeting.



CIMC is a non-residential urban center for the teaching and practice of insight meditation. All are invited to browse in our library or join in any of our public sittings and Wednesday evening dharma talks. We offer many opportunities for meditation instruction for beginners: these include class, workshop and drop-in formats. A variety of retreats (mostly one-, two-, and three-days) are offered throughout the year. Other CIMC offerings include practice groups, which explore various dharma themes for experienced students, and teacher interviews. For further information or to request our schedule call our information line at (617) 491-5070, or call (617) 441-9038 to contact the office. Our address is: CIMC, 331 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Stepping Out of the Palace

Prince Siddhartha's father wanted to keep him protected from the outside world, for fear of his taking up a religious calling and neglecting the kingdom. So he kept him enclosed in various luxurious palaces and kept him distracted with all those things that gratify human beings. But according to legend the prince ventured out at age twenty-nine and in sequence saw the "four messengers." First he saw an old man, bent over (aging), a very sick person (illness), and a corpse in the street (death). He had not seen these things before, and it awakened him to dimensions of life from which he had been protected. The fourth messenger was a wandering ascetic or yogi, heir to the ancient Indian meditative tradition, who the prince saw to be calm, at peace, and quite fulfilled—despite the presence of aging, illness and death. The entire experience was a shock to prince Siddhartha; it stirred him up, and put into question how he had been living his entire life thus far.

It may be that all of us have a tendency to ignore these "messengers" as we seek to remain gratified by pleasures and short-term fulfillments. And yet paying attention to the realities of aging, sickness and death can help us to get our existential priorities straight. Just how are we living? To what do we apportion our time? What is it that we value? What are we doing with our brief time here on this planet? Heeding the message of our own mortality can awaken us to practice as it did the young prince who became the Buddha. The fourth messenger holds out the promise of finding truth and lib-

eration—even in a world that is inherently unsatisfactory, constantly changing, and devoid of an abiding essence. Security can be found amidst the sorrows if we follow a path of personal integrity, of mental development, and of insight into the very nature of our experience. The practice of insight meditation, in the appropriate context, is an integral part of this path.

This fall at CIMC Larry Rosenberg will introduce a practice group entitled "Conscious Aging as Dharma Practice," a program based upon Theravada Buddhism's "Five Subjects for Frequent Reflection." In focusing explicit attention on aging, illness and death, Larry will attempt to fill a gap in dharma practice in the West. Many of us mention these themes as we talk about *dukkha*,

FIVE SUBJECTS FOR FREQUENT REFLECTION

1. I am sure to become old.
I cannot avoid aging.
2. I am sure to become sick.
I cannot avoid sickness.
3. I am sure to die.
I cannot avoid death.
4. All things dear and beloved to me
are subject to change and separation.
5. I am the owner of my actions;
I will become the heir of my actions.

Anguttara Nikaya 5.57

♪ know of no other single thing
so conducive to misery
as the uncultivated,
untrained mind.

♪ know of no other single thing
so conducive to well-being
as the cultivated,
well-trained mind.

Anguttara Nikaya 1.3



aniccā, and *anattā*, but rarely do we focus directly on any of these themes for extended or sustained contemplation. This reflection is meant to be part of a balanced approach to practice which has *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* at its core.

In addition to regular sitting and walking, the new practice group will include formal meditations touching upon various aspects of the five subjects for frequent reflection. Also, the natural events of daily life provide us with rich material to explore these very same themes, such as noticing signs of our own personal aging and the emotions evoked by such perceptions.

A number of benefits can come from such a practice group: One of these is seeing the preciousness of life—this can help clarify our priorities like nothing else. Since we don't have forever, how do we want to use our brief stay on this planet? We are also given an opportunity to work with and weaken the fear that can arise when we are reminded of our aging and death. Moreover, as the Buddha points out, the pride that some of us have in being young, robust, healthy and long-lived can be diminished. Finally, for a vipassana yogi, there is the emergence of *samvega*—seeing the urgent need to practice which grows out of a heightened sense of the perishable nature of our life.

We are not so different from the prince Siddhartha, also having elaborate ways of denying harsh truths. Yet with clarity and awareness, life and death can walk hand in hand. Can we also step outside the palace walls?

MĀRA MEETS HIS MATCH

(Saṃyutta Nikāya 1.5.2)

The nun Somā has entered Andhavana (Blind Man's Grove) near Sāvattihī to practice meditation. Māra, the embodiment of delusion, sees her there and desires to make her waver and abandon her concentration. He addresses her with a verse:

*yan - tam isihi pattabbam
thānam durabhisambhavam
na tam dvangulapaññāya
sakkā pappotum itthiyā ti*

That which can be attained by seers
—The place so hard to arrive at—
Women are not able to reach,
Since they lack sufficient wisdom.

Somā replies:

*itthibhāvo kim kayirā
cittamhi susamāhite
ñānamhi vattamānamhi
sammādhammam vipassato*

What difference does being a woman make
When the mind is well-composed,
When knowledge is proceeding on,
When one rightly sees into Dhamma?

*yassa nuna siyā evam
itthāham puriso ti vā
kiñci vā pana asmīti
tam Māro vattum arahatī ti*

Indeed for whom the question arises:
“Am I a man or a woman?”
Or, “Am I even something at all?”
To them alone is Māra fit to talk!

This, in my view, is the definitive statement in the Buddhist tradition regarding the equality of the sexes. Whatever other words have crept into the literature—from ancient times to the present—whatever attitudes may have been expressed by Theras, Lamas, Roshis or Teachers over the ages, this position of thoroughgoing equality in light of the Dhamma is plainly stated by Somā, one of the Buddha's contemporary nuns.

Somā was the daughter of the chief priest of King Bimbisāra of Magadha, and was an early convert to the Buddha's teaching. She spent many years as a lay supporter before eventually becoming a nun, and achieved awakening—like so many of her sisters—not long after joining the order.

In this exchange Māra is clearly trying to provoke and discourage Somā, but only reveals his delusion. The expression he uses literally means “two fingers” [worth]“ of wisdom. It may originally have been a reference to the domestic task of checking if rice is cooked by examining it between the fingers, but here it is obviously used pejoratively to impugn that women are less capable of liberation. Somā not only refrains from getting offended (perhaps remembering Buddha's teaching to always “forebear the fool”), but calmly points out how ludicrous the statement is when viewed in light of the Buddha's higher teaching about the nature of personhood.