

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

Insight



Spring 1997

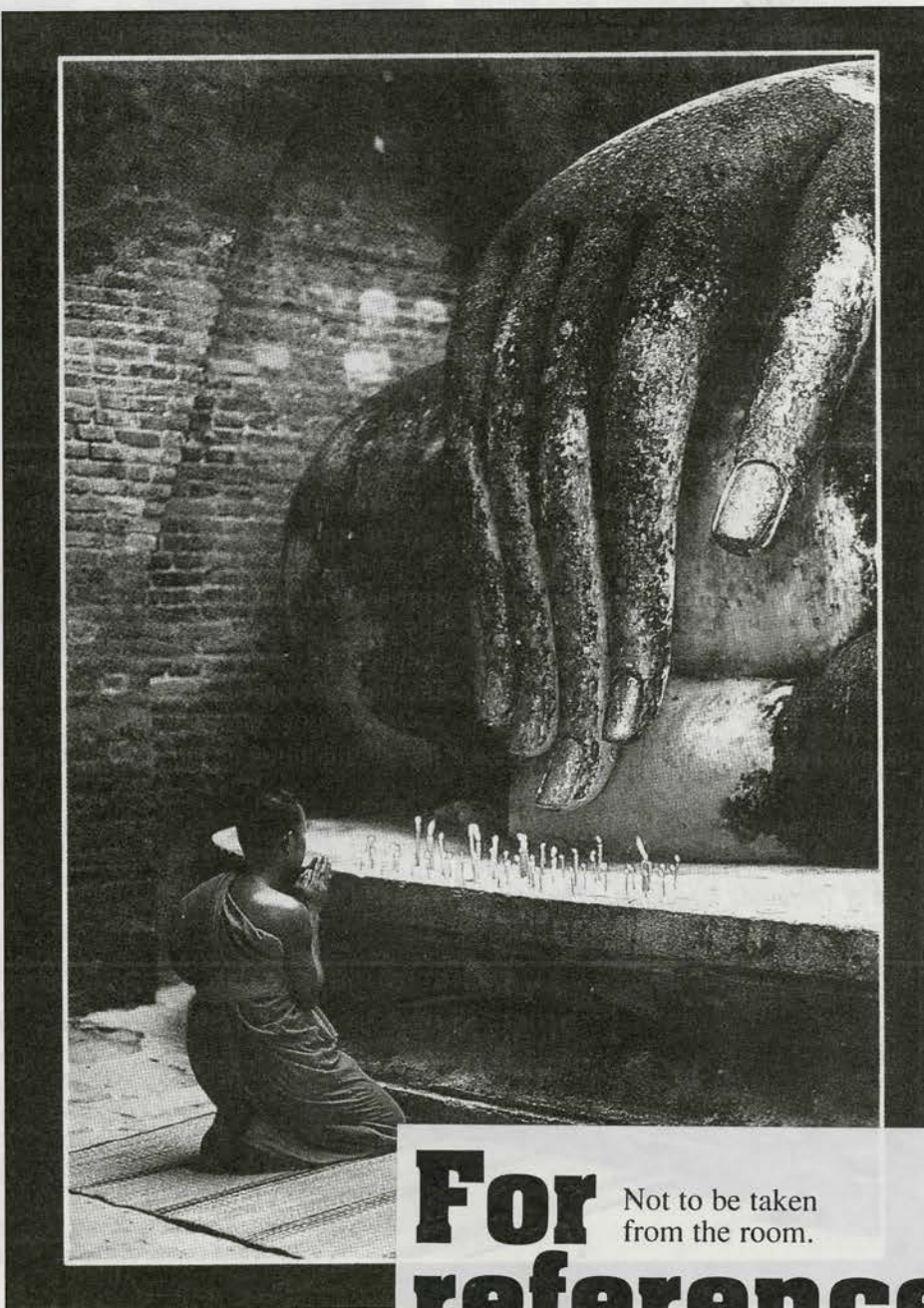
IMS 1997 Retreat
Schedule

BCBS 1997 Course
Schedule

Teacher Interview:
Ruth Denison

Sharon Salzberg on
Faith

Buddhist Psychology:
*Excerpts from a 5-day course
at the
Barre Center for Buddhist
Studies*

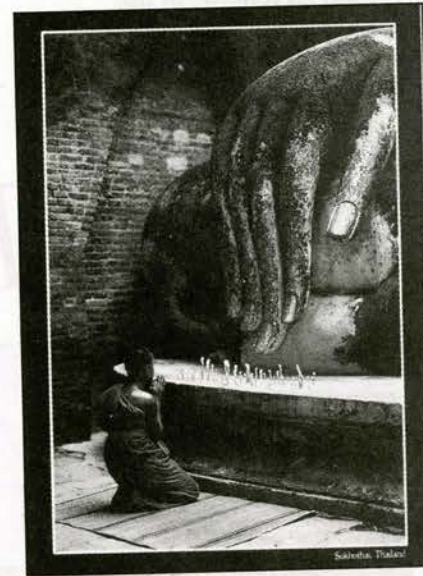


For Not to be taken
from the room.
reference

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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In this issue

Spring 1997

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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BOWING TO LIFE DEEPLY

An Interview with Ruth Denison

Ruth Denison is the founder and resident teacher of Dhamma Dena Desert Vipassana Center in Joshua Tree, California. She is the first generation of women teachers of vipassana in the West, and has been teaching at Insight Meditation Society in Barre since its inception in 1976. Ruth shared her life story and thoughts with Insight's editors while teaching at IMS in the fall of 1996.

Ruth, you have a fascinating and unusual life story to tell. Can you share some of it with us? How did you get involved in things spiritual?

I was born in a small village in eastern Germany, near the present Polish border, in what used to be called East Prussia. As a child I had experiences of saints and angels talking to me. Since I was raised in a Christian tradition, it is not unusual to interpret them in this light. I took refuge in them without knowing what I was doing. Later, as a teenager, I read about Theresa of Avila and was quite affected by the narration of her experiences.

Prior to the war I was an elementary school teacher. Then, when the war ended, the Russians pushed westward and everyone had to evacuate. There were lines of horse-drawn wagons many miles long, and many people froze to death in sub-zero weather. Eventually I ended up in Berlin in the midst of allied bombing.

In the meantime, I had lost track of my entire family; however we were later reunited. When the Russians occupied Berlin I tried to survive by returning to my home town. Due to lack of transportation I had to hide myself on freight trains. After much hardship I reached my hometown, only to find it occupied by the Russians. I was sent to a forced labor camp with the rest of the civilian population. People in the camps were dying in great numbers from disease and mistreatment.

How did you manage to survive in such conditions?

In the midst of all this, I found solace in my childhood visitations of saints, and came to understand the meaning of prayer. In it you have an object of concentration (I called it God at the time),



"It's a wonderment I am even here now."

and trust is developed. You know you have help and think it comes from outside, but even then I also realized it comes from inside.

Like all other young women in the camp, I was subject to repeated rape; however, I found I had no animosity or anger against these occupying soldiers. I had a tacit sense that I was one individual recipient of a collective karma brought on by my entire country. Although I did not personally contribute to its causation, I realized that as a member of that society I must share in experiencing the consequences.

Perhaps you had some precocious understanding of karma at the time?

I was not in touch with that then, of course. I was unaware of the concept. But I somehow knew that if I did not hate anyone God would save me and somehow make my condition better. And it did happen. I got some form of help wherever I went. It's a wonderment when I think back to these difficulties that I am even here now.

In one camp I was assigned to the household of a Russian officer as a domestic servant. I still wanted to get to Berlin, so I escaped from that camp and hid in the undercarriage of a freight car. At one point I was discovered by a Russian soldier and subsequently found myself peeling potatoes for the Russian occupation forces. At this time I became severely ill and was put into a hospital. One of the doctors was very kind to me, but he had thoughts of marriage. I escaped again by jumping from his carriage on a rainy night, and after more hardship and abuse I reached Berlin.

Later I managed to secure a teaching position in West Berlin. Through a teacher's organization I made contact with teachers in America, and after a time I was fortunate enough to have someone offer to sponsor me if I wished to come to the United States. I settled in Los Angeles, went to college, and through a circle of friends in 1958 met the man who would become my husband.

Was it through your husband that you got interested in Buddhism?

Before we married my husband had been an ordained Vedanta monk for some years, but had left the temple. He was a friend of Alan Watts and eventually we both became interested in Zen. Our home became a central meeting point for others with similar interests. It was not uncommon to find a Fritz Perls seminar or Lama Govinda at the house.

And how did you wind up in Burma?

In 1960 my husband wanted to experience other approaches to meditation. We spent some time in Japan at Zen monasteries, and then continued on to the Phillipines, Hong Kong, Singapore, and eventually Burma. In Burma, we practiced at the Mahasi Sayadaw monastery. I discovered that I had a natural affinity for staying in touch with my body. Even though I suffered from back problems which made sitting extremely painful, I was able to stay in touch with my bodily sensations and began to enjoy ever deeper levels of concentration.

After leaving the Mahasi Sayadaw monastery we went to the meditation center of U Ba Khin, who spoke English and could provide a more comfortable learning situation. He became my teacher. At this time I was experiencing a lot of resistance to being in Burma. I was worried that my husband would become a monk again, and I innocently felt also that I was satisfied with my inner life and I already knew the things U Ba Khin was teaching (I had previously had sensory awareness training with Charlotte Selver.) But I did persevere and my meditation practice with U Ba Khin was a breakthrough experience. U Ba Khin emphasized awareness of bodily sensations. I opened to a deeper level of *samādhi* [concentration] and to a more correct understanding and comprehension of what was happening in the mind-body system, as well as to the genuine purpose of meditation.

Did you stay long with U Ba Khin?

We stayed about three months (visa restrictions did not allow a longer stay), then we went to India. We stayed at the Ramakrishna temple complex in Calcutta where I enjoyed devotional practice. When we returned to Los Angeles I became very involved with Zen practice as there was no opportunity to carry on vipassana practice; it was, for the most part, unheard of in the West.

In the mid-60's we returned to Japan and stayed a year, training more seriously with Yamada Roshi and Soen Roshi, and also with Yasutani Roshi.

How did Zen practice suit you?

Although the *sesshins* were quite rigorous, I grew to like the discipline they required. I found the concentration on the *Mu koan* disconcerting. Concentration

was very forceful and led to temporary states of separation between me and my body. Soen Roshi encouraged me to return to my vipassana practice. He taught me *shikantaza* ["just sitting"] practice, which balanced my energy and healed my condition.

I had some training in sensory awareness and I put it to some intuitive use.

When I then returned to Los Angeles a rich period of spiritual practice began. I kept in close touch with Maezumi Roshi's Zen Center, and with Sasaki Roshi who was starting a *zendo*. I offered my house for fund raising benefits to build those *zendos* and also as a place for spiritual teachers to hold *darshans*, *pujas*, and lectures. I found myself often in the role of cook and hostess. My living room became a great birthplace for spiritual investigation.

And what about vipassana?

I continued with my vipassana practice during the hours of sitting in the Zen Centers. I returned to Burma three or four times after my initial practice with U Ba Khin, but could only stay for short periods. Once I stayed for six days and that was a deepening experience for me. My teacher died in 1971.

Did you ever get some formal transmission from him?

Yes. U Ba Khin had founded an international meditation center. At the time I was there, he gave transmission to teach to only four or five Westerners, and of those, to only one woman. I was that woman. He wrote me a letter as a formal document for receiving the seal of Dharma to teach. I remember him touching the tip of my nose as I was leaving and saying, "May this be your best friend."

At that time I didn't really know how to acknowledge the transmission. I felt I needed more training. U Ba Khin encouraged me to proceed and told me not to worry, that I was "a natural," and that the practice would guide me.

And so you started teaching...

In the early 70's I was in Switzerland, attending a Krishnamurti seminar.



Sketch of Ruth by Suzanne Thrift

While there I got a message from Robert Hover, who had also been given transmission by U Ba Khin, inviting me to teach a retreat with him in Frankfurt. I subsequently was asked to teach in France, England, and Switzerland. Then I did a number of courses all over Europe, from Spain to Norway and Sweden. For the next four years, I was on the road teaching non-stop. Looking back I realize that I started vipassana in all those countries, and really did the ground breaking for all that followed.

At what point did your center, Dhamma Dena, come into existence?

I never intended to have a retreat center, let alone in the middle of the desert. In 1977 I purchased a cabin on five acres outside of Joshua Tree, California. I often used it as an escape from Hollywood. My students just followed me there and it began to grow.

At one point, Mahasi Sayadaw came with his retinue of monks and gave his blessing to the center. At that time the *zendo* was an old garage with a sand floor. Over time we acquired additional buildings and land. We now have comfortable but rustic accommodations and a 360 degree view of mountains and desert. We also have several small cabins that can be rented. Students may come for formal or self-retreats.

I encourage people to go into their difficulties and cope with the change that's taking place.

As we grew, occasionally other teachers would also use the facility. We host a month-long Zen *sesshin* each year. Since I do not travel to Europe much anymore, I live at Dhamma Dena full time. We have six to eight people who live as a sangha. There are always a few students from Germany, and a number of students have bought houses or cabins nearby, so there is an extended sangha.

You do not seem to teach vipassana in the usual way—silent sitting and walking with an occasional Dharma talk. Can you say anything about your methods of teaching?

As I mentioned earlier, U Ba Khin (my teacher) stressed awareness of bodily sensations. Each of the teachers in his or her own time develops their own emphasis within the awareness of bodily sensations. Some stress hearing, others sight, etc. Some teachers utilize only sitting. U Ba Khin taught and practiced the development of awareness only in strict sitting—with only very short informal periods of walking meditation.

The longer I taught, the more I realized the difficulties that the meditators displayed in their meditation; they did not have the cultural and religious background for the ability to simply sit and pay attention to their own living process, body-mind sensations. In focusing so intently on the breath and body parts for long periods of time, people would try too hard.

So I expand the selection of body sensations to keep the meditators engaged, and to foster softness and gentleness within themselves. I experiment with the application of mindfulness to body, breath and sensations in body positions other than just sitting. What evolves is meditation while standing, walking, running, jumping, lying down, rolling on the grass—meditation in the entire scope of body's mobility and expression, in yoga *āsanas*, in dance and laughing, in sound, touch, taste, sight or imitation motions such as crawling like a worm, etc.

But let me stress that what I do is strictly within the prescribed bounds of Buddha's teachings—using the body and its sensations as a vehicle for mindfulness training, for developing awareness for clear comprehension of the present moment, of correct understanding of life's living and dying.

By using such variety of sensations for developing awareness students learn how to apply their practice in situations other than simply sitting on a pillow. Often students do not know how to carry practice home with them after a retreat. But awareness developed in such a wide scope of meditation pattern, as I teach it, becomes gradually a natural state, and for that reason it is effortless and not easy to lose.

The kinesthetic sense is corrected by means of movement, the focusing ability more easily strengthened than in strict sitting, and ease and relaxedness in body and mind is naturally invited. Often, however, students fail to recognize the fact that these psychological exercises or meditation in expression are actually part of the First Establishment of Mindfulness [in the *Satipathāna* text]. So, in truth, I am not teaching a different version of vipassana meditation. I feel it is rather the extended edition.

And you offer your students more guidance than is usual, don't you? I believe the IMS course description refers to "sustained and on-going verbal teacher instruction throughout the day."

I do feel that this description of verbal guidance is slightly exaggerated and misunderstood, for I do give or allow sufficient time for the meditators to practice by themselves, on their own, and without instruction.

As we know, there are many obstructions and difficulties in our meditation practice. So my so-called "ongoing verbal instructions" are one way of alleviating or easing these difficulties the students suffer in their sitting meditation. So instead of insisting upon the traditional meditation pattern of sitting for a full hour with only a few moments' interruption, I include verbal support during quiet sitting practice as a natural reminder for returning from daydreaming or lost-thought-processes to mindful attention to the meditation object proper.

I provide verbal support during the sitting meditation also for the purpose of perhaps quicker recognition of the student's alertness or sleepiness, or for realizing and knowing what is happening in one's emotional or thinking level.

Clear comprehension—a mental abil-

ity to discern and know the present situation clearly and fully—is part of mindfulness and therefore very much enhanced through verbal assistance during the quiet practice as well as during any kind of practice in motion. In this way, as one student told me, "self-correction and self-observation can occur on the job."

I also use verbal assistance as encouragement for perseverance in the vipassana practice, or as reminders for self-examining the quality of attitude and effort.

Practicing in these various modalities within the vipassana meditation features an outstanding quality—"Never a dull moment,"—and a demand for total participation from the students and the teacher. This in turn cultivates a wonderful spirit of genuine communion.

Most of all, I encourage people to go into their difficulties and to cope with the change that's taking place even as they are paying attention to it. Our life is nothing but change and it is to this change that I bow deeply. I bow to this change, I bow deeply to life itself.



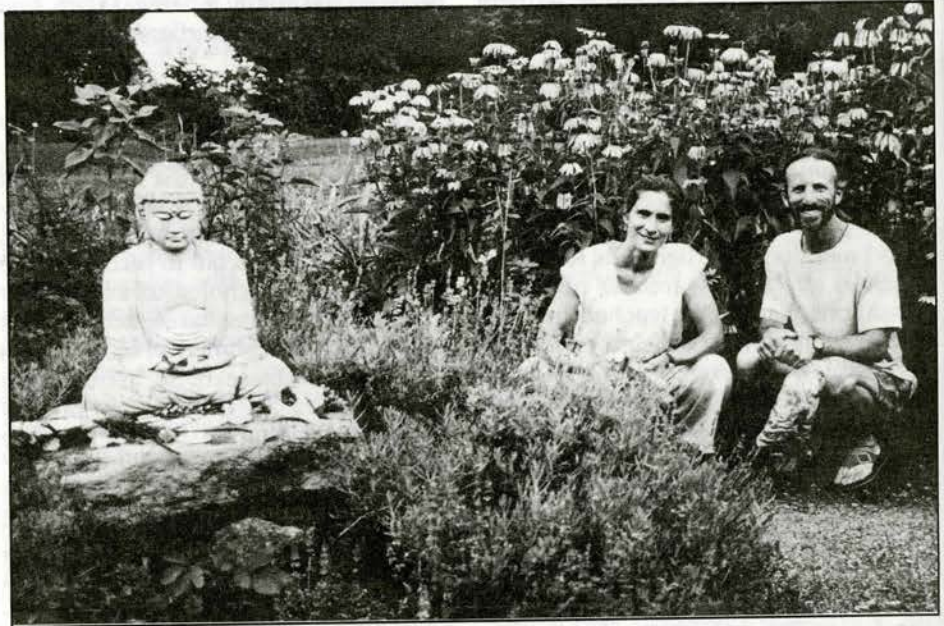
STAFF LIFE AT IMS

I once asked a teacher to describe how community life supports one's individual awakening. He told me it is like putting a handful of jagged-edged stones into a gem tumbler and turning on the machine. After sufficient tumbling the stones emerge polished and sparkling—free of their rough edges. But, he said, one has to realize that the stones become precious gems by rubbing up against one another in a rather intense environment.

Staff life at IMS involves softening one's edges—living in community as a means of not only cultivating wholesome states of mind but also waking up to the places where one's edges might be a little rough. This can be intense at times but, then, it's what practice is all about. And I think it is safe to say that most staffers find that they emerge from their IMS experience a little bit freer and happier. Many say that the support for practice at IMS is ideal.

Here we find twenty-or-so spiritual practitioners whose common bond is service, whose foundation is the five moral precepts, and whose spiritual practice is mindfulness.

With the five moral precepts as our foundation we make the effort to live together harmlessly and with kindness, to give of ourselves to each other and to support the meditators who come to IMS without losing sight of the need to take care of ourselves. As you might imagine, this is a delicate balance—one that can be difficult to "get right" but one that is a dominant theme in our lives at IMS. We make the effort to respect each other as human beings without making objects of one another for our own gratification. We work hard to communicate effectively without using harsh, untrue, or unkind speech. Finally, we make the effort to examine the impulse to numb ourselves



with busyness, or by consuming intoxicants which lead to carelessness, or by simply giving in to our lazy or dull inclinations.

These are the standards we try to live by. In our weekly dhamma meetings, and in more spontaneous conversations with each other, we talk about how to live well.

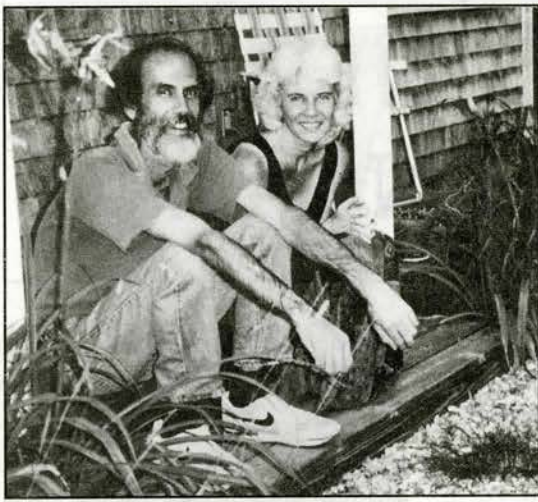
With mindfulness as our practice we need to make the effort to keep our lives simple, so that it's possible to focus the mind on what we are doing. This often involves a give and take between IMS the institution and the people who live here. The demands of the institution, through which we serve so many others, can often be at odds with the need to live simple and uncomplicated lives in order to stay focused and clear. Admittedly, this is an area which is now being addressed at the institutional level.

There are ample opportunities and supports at IMS for developing and sustaining a daily sitting practice. There is an annual two-week staff retreat which all staff attend, and staff are encouraged to develop their work schedules so that

they can participate in at least part of the meditation retreats offered to the public. While visiting teachers may not always be available for individual interviews, they are usually accessible to staff in other ways and often meet with us as a group. We have weekly dhamma meetings which focus on the teachings and how to do this practice. Regularly scheduled interviews with the resident teacher help IMS staff keep their practice alive and foremost in their lives.

Almost from its inception IMS has been viewed as an optimal environment for individuals to conduct formal meditation practice. Its success in doing so has not gone unnoticed. By most accounts, IMS is the best place to practice insight meditation in the world. This success is due in no small part to those who cook the meals, manage the retreats, maintain the building and grounds, and greet the public. Ours is a practice of service, mindfulness and living well. If this interests you, you may want to look into the possibility of applying to be an IMS staff member.

---Gloria Ambrosia, Resident Teacher



Glimpses of Staff Life



Being involved with the IMS board of directors, as the staff board member, has forced me to be more active in community life. Probably the major challenge at first was learning how to listen. I've been exposed to more opinions and beliefs than I ever wanted to be. The job has been interesting because at times I've loved it, and feel like I'm in my element. This was a surprise to me. At other times I start to take peoples' opinions and views personally. Both extremes, feeling I'm doing well and feeling like I want to quit, have been excellent places to watch my mind. After the last board meeting my head was spinning with the issues discussed and I saw how I wasn't

letting go of several opinions I had expressed. I began to think that my being on the board wasn't a good idea. It creates too much turbulence in my life. Why put myself in situations that create stress and suffering? A few days later I realized responsibility is always to be a possibility for me, why not learn how to be with responsibility without getting attached to results? That previous sentence could be written: "Put myself in situations that reveal stress and suffering." If I never allow myself to feel stress, how can I ever learn to be peaceful with those sensations?

---Don Sperry, Staff Board Member



Facing Aversion

---Eva L. Bruha, front office staff

Living on staff at IMS is an opportunity for me to deeply investigate *dosa* (hatred), *domanassa* (displeasure) which goes with it, and *paṭighā* (aversion). Using the Pali words makes it sound a bit like a fairy tale story; but don't be blinded by it—it's tough reality...

I always thought I was a greedy type. I like to be surrounded by beautiful things. Here at IMS I discovered catalogue shopping, and I love to eat really nice things, even if I'm one of the "special-needs-food-beings."

But then, quite early in my stay here on staff, once in a while I started to feel this pressure in my chest, a narrowness

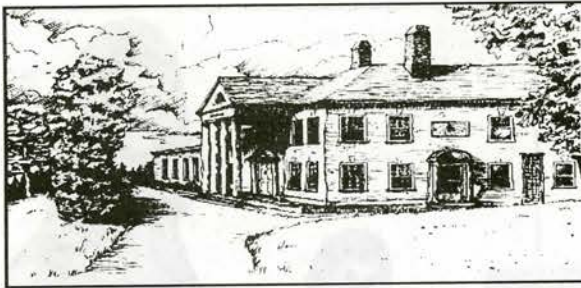
in the throat, more and more often a slight desire to turn away or to hide when I felt that someone wanted to address me, and sometimes even a strong urge to scream or to jump at the throat of the next person who would cross my way. I found myself thinking all sorts of judging thoughts about people I really liked at other times. Over time I had to admit to myself that what I was (and still often am) experiencing—is PURE AVERSION.

Aversion, in Pali *paṭighā*, is a synonym of *dosa*, which is hatred. It is easier for me to use the term aversion than it is to use the term hatred...but sometimes the stronger term hatred is really more appropriate to name my feelings. That's when I feel "I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYBODY!" or "I CANNOT STAND

THE BEHAVIOR OF THIS PERSON!" or "I WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS SITUATION!" or simply "I HATE IT!"

In the past years I had mostly lived alone, enjoying very much the stillness and undisturbedness of my little room at home in Switzerland or the undisturbedness from other people at the places where I was practicing meditation. Now, all of a sudden, I was—and am—constantly confronted with 20, 25 (100,125!) people. People I had not chosen to live with.

Somewhere I read: "When you select your own friends they usually perpetuate your own delusion. But in a community you are stuck with each other. This is the difficulty and the richness of community." *continued on page 12*



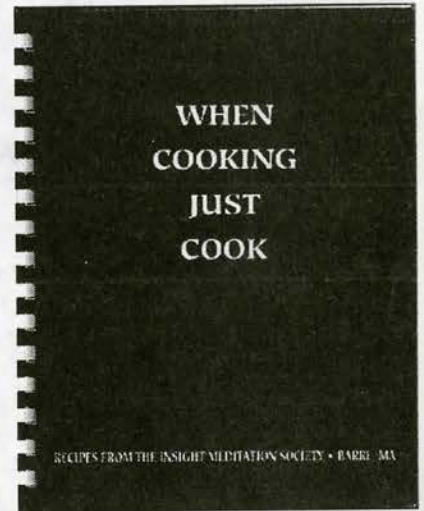
IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING

The IMS Cookbook

It has long been the desire of many who have been on retreat at IMS, as well as many who have served on staff, that the culinary experience of IMS be captured in a cookbook. Last year, in conjunction with our 20th anniversary, we managed to do just that.

When Cooking Just Cook is packed with over 120 recipes of your favorite vegetarian food from IMS. The recipes range from breakfast to dessert and include such delights as "Foolish Monk Bread" and "Mary McDonald's Devil's Food Cake." The book comes with an easy to use, lay-flat spiral binding and includes a detailed reference section with handy hints about the use of seasonings, special needs, growing your own sprouts, how to use knives and much more.

You can purchase your own copy of *When Cooking Just Cook* when you next visit IMS for a retreat, or you can obtain a copy by mail from Dharma Seed Tape Library by calling toll-free 1-800-969-SEED.



New Registration Policy for 3-month retreat

IMS is carefully reviewing its registration policy, with regards to the 3 month retreat. In light of the anxiety created in the sangha by the possibility of not being able to get into the course, we are looking at problems regarding last minute cancellations and the inaccuracy of the wait list.

The goal of the new policy is to have an accurate confirmation list and wait list several months before opening day in September. To accomplish this end, we are considering several points:

- Instituting a non-refundable processing fee for each registration submitted. This will encourage yogis to consider exactly which course they are likely to be able to attend and apply for that rather than all 3 possibilities: Full 3MO, Part 1, Part 2.
- Payments for the course will be made in installments: initial deposit followed by perhaps two additional payments. This will serve as a reminder and incentive to follow through on attendance.
- Introducing a monthly graduated increase in cancellation fee. There will be a similar graduated cancellation fee for those on the wait list who do not accept an opening when it is made available. This will make yogis seriously consider if they wish to continue holding a confirmed spot and will allow yogis on the wait list to be considered earlier in the year.

More details of the new policy will appear in the Fall issue of *Insight*. Implementation will begin in 1998.

Vipassana & Metta Retreat

IMS 3-month teachers Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters are offering a month-long retreat in Hawaii this summer from August 2-30. If you'd like to sit a longer retreat but haven't been able to register this fall at IMS, you might give them a call at (808) 573-3450 for more information.

Dāna does it -- again!!!

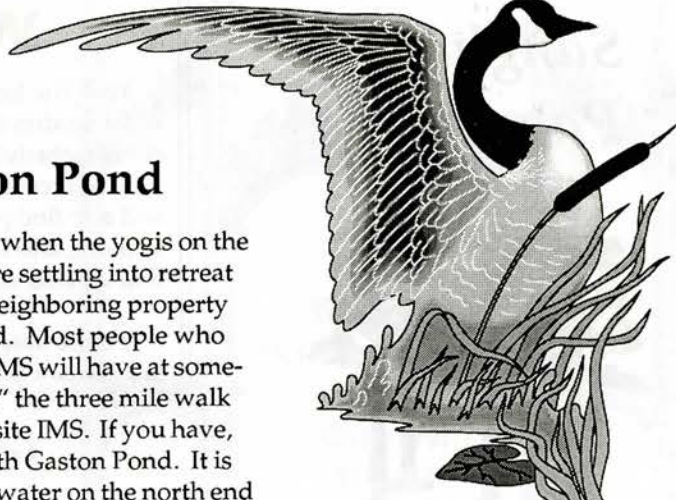
In the past two years we have made a conscious effort not to raise our retreat fees. We have done this in order to allow as many people as possible to attend our retreats. However, we are no more immune to inflationary pressures than anyone else, and in order to meet our operating costs we have had to make a strong request for support during our annual membership appeal.

In our fundraising appeals, and our newsletter, we have talked about the possibility of never raising our retreat fees again, and even the prospect of some day being able to reduce them. This way IMS can slowly switch from being dependent on revenue from retreat fees and become more reliant on *dana*, that ancient Buddhist tradition of spontaneous generosity.

We are grateful that the response to our latest membership appeal, conducted late last fall, has been most generous and we will easily make our target. May your generosity contribute to the liberation of all beings.



On Gaston Pond



In the middle of last fall, when the yogis on the three month course were settling into retreat life, IMS purchased a neighboring property known as Gaston Pond. Most people who have been on retreat at IMS will have at some time walked "the loop," the three mile walk around the block opposite IMS. If you have, you will be familiar with Gaston Pond. It is that delightful stretch of water on the north end of the loop, encircled by woods.

The property is 76 acres in area with the 16-acre pond located in the middle. It is heavily wooded and home to many creatures native to New England. Beaver have made their home there for many years, along with the fish, and the woods abound with squirrels, chipmunks and numerous species of small birds. Water fowl are often seen on the pond in season, including Canada geese.

The beauty of the ever changing seasons of the northeast are constantly being reflected in the surface of the pond, so that Gaston Pond has many faces. In winter it is frozen solid and frequented by people skating or ice fishing, and when the snow falls it is a great place to cross country ski. As spring comes the ice thaws, the snow melts and the winter wonderland gives way to an abundance of new life. The trees sprout new leaves and the reeds grow in the pond. Above and below the water insect life begins to swarm. On a sunny day it is common to see yogis sitting near the water's edge watching the reflection of the clouds as they drift lazily through the sky, or maybe they are watching their own thoughts drift lazily through their mind, like clouds in the sky. It is in the fall, however, when the face of Gaston Pond puts on its most colorful display, reds, golds and browns are mirrored back together with the clouds and the sky.

The pond takes its name from Col. William A. Gaston, a noted Boston lawyer, who in 1913 built the original mansion that is now the main building of IMS. In 1976 when IMS bought the property from the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, the pond was also for sale. Unfortunately the funds were not available to purchase the pond at that time, so it was sold separately. Now, in the year of our twentieth anniversary, it seems fitting that the two properties are reunited.

The quiet reflection of the pond, together with the natural woodland, make an ideal environment for contemplation. So the existing system of pathways will be extended to include this area, and allow for sitting beside the still waters.

The acquisition of this new land was made possible by a gift, for which we are very grateful.

Edwin Kelley
Executive Director

Sangha Pages



How Good It Is

I enter the meditation hall,
bow to the Buddha,
tallis and prayerbook under one arm.

I sit on my zafu and hear the rabbi,
blessed be she,
humming *Ma Tov*,

a song about God's dwelling place.
God is with us
in the meditation hall,

smiling as we chant the morning blessings,
sing God's praises, pray in silence, and
cradle the Torah from arm to arm.

Lech, Lecha, said God to Abram.
Go forth from your land, your nation, your family.
Venture into the unknown.

And you will be a blessing.
As each of us, following a call from within
or from without

to tread new ground, to leave behind
familiar ways, family or friends,
each of us is

a blessing. As I leave
the meditation hall
I bow and thank the Buddha

for sharing this dwelling place,
this home of silence,
with us noisy Jews

who are learning to be quiet.

Tova Green

www.dharma.org

Yes! The Insight Meditation Society (IMS) and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies (BCBS) now have a home page on the world wide web. The course schedules for both centers, as well as articles from this newsletter can now be accessed electronically by clicking on the above address. There you will also find profiles of teachers, the latest news, information on how to get to Barre, and links to a number of other sites of interest to dharma students and vipassana practitioners. Next time you are in cyberspace, take a look.

Please note we do not accept registrations for retreats over the internet, but you can get from our web site a registration form with instructions.

Ladak Province

In Ladak, two old men rest on the craggy path
to the mountain monastery.

"I still feel pretty good," says one.

"Let's see how far you can throw this stone," says the other.

"I should be stronger than you, I'm six years younger,
but when you were young, you ate a lot of meat
that's why you're stronger," says the first.

"Not true," says the other, "we were poor when I
was a child. We often went hungry to bed."

"Now I use a cane," says the first. "That's because
I have one leg in the next world,
but my stronger leg is still in this world."

"Let's get going," says the eldest.

The monastery appears before them

horns announce the festival

they enter, turning the prayer wheels

so they won't get caught in the wheel of life.

One says, "Too much of this world and not enough
is the same thing."

"It is empty," says the other,

"beyond wanting, beyond qualities. I want it."

Anne Brundevold

Mettawalk

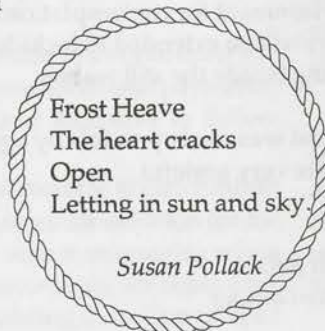
Stacked in hard, grey chunks, a stone wall stares
like a sentinel as I stroll myself through October woods
this time speaking kindness into my bones, while
yellow oak leaves spiral-dance themselves down.

May I be happy.

A chipmunk--rusty as an old nail--scurries by,
while I continue on a path of well-being, carrying
the lost and missing with me, sending them love.

Why, after all, do we need a story
when the dead mouse in the road
is simply there and I can bless him,
knowing only that the sun is shining on us
and we're here together, *Henay Ma Tov*,
all beings, peaceful.

Myrna Patterson



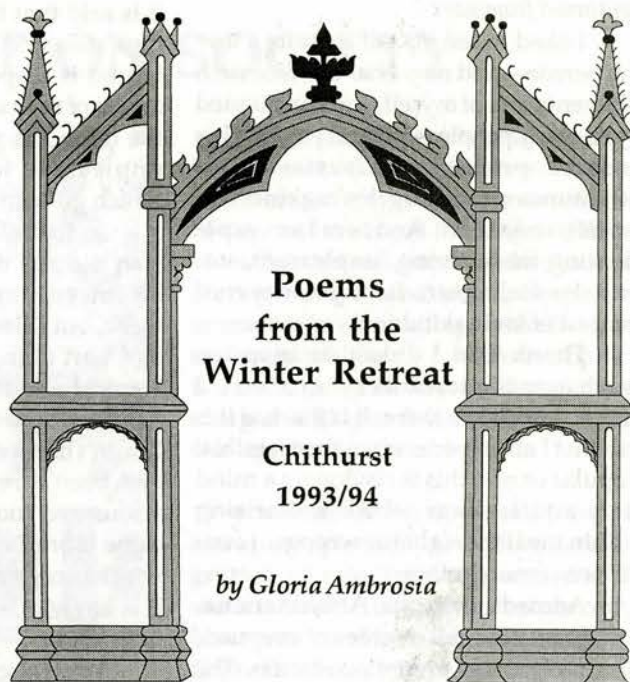
Walking up Hammer Lane,
My mind is immersed in the ten thousand things,
Lost in my inner world,
I do not see the rooster who's crossing my path,
His cock-a-doodle-do jolts me into the now.
Thank you, Mr. Rooster.

Too much earth element,
Too little air,
This zafu sits hard.

I stand before the mirror
But no one looks back;
I am the one who is looking.



Photograph by Doreen Schweizer



**Poems
from the
Winter Retreat**

**Chithurst
1993/94**

by Gloria Ambrosia

Beyond the monastery fence,
a world of glamour and ease.
Why does my heart still hunger for it?

I find him hostile and aggressive,
And I cannot believe how it is affecting my mood;
One thorn in a sea of marshmallow cream,
And my heart whimpers.

The incense penetrates my nostrils
In just the right way
And I sneeze;
Irritation and release,
Such is the flow of dhamma.

A bird's song at dusk
Is louder than the sound
Of the falling rain.

For three hours I have been sitting under the Yew tree.
Without warning I disengage from my ranting mind.
My jaw loosens,
My tongue rests gently in my mouth,
My hunched shoulders release.
I notice the landscape before me
For the first time.

continued from page 7

I liked to see myself as quite a loving person—and now I have to face such different parts of myself. I'm surrounded by so many people (staff and yogis) who, besides practicing *vipassanā*, are oftentimes practicing lovingkindness (*mettā*) meditation. And here I am, experiencing these strong, unpleasant, unpopular feelings, radiating annoyance instead of lovingkindness.

Thank God I didn't develop too much aversion towards my aversion. I know, well, if it is there, it is there; if it is this that I am experiencing, then it is this! Popular or not, this is obviously a mind state and feelings which are arising within me if the right (or wrong...) conditions come together.

According to the Abhidhamma, *paṭighā* includes all degrees of aversion, from violent rage to subtle irritation. The word literally means "striking against," which indicates a mental attitude of resistance, rejection or destruction. And I'm getting to see and feel the whole range within me. I know that sometimes it can be sort of pleasurable to feel aversive feelings like, for example, anger. But seeing and feeling aversion on a bit deeper level it becomes clear that it is indeed a very painful mind state. In the Abhidhamma

it is said that the feeling that accompanies states of consciousness rooted in hatred is displeasure. The more I am aware of the more subtle states of *paṭighā*, the more I'm aware of the more subtle unpleasant feelings and sensations which go with it.

In the following months the aversion did not diminish—heavens no! I became even more courageous to face and feel it, but I also started to really accept it as a part of my experience as a human being. I also started to see how much it had been a part of my life in the past, but I hadn't had a clue that actions, reactions, had been a result of this state of consciousness rooted in hatred. I also became more aware of the judging mind, which becomes even more righteous than it is anyway when it is caught in levels of irritation.

What also happens, along with getting acquainted more intimately with this mind state, is a disidentification with it. As I accept it as a part of the experience of life, as I make also this part of my mind my friend, I see the fleeting nature of it; it becomes less solid, less threatening, and so less of a problem. If I'm not getting caught in it, if I just see it for what it is—a reaction of the mind to specific circumstances—then it does not have to have a

very big bad unwholesome influence on me and on people around me.

According to the Abhidhamma, consciousness rooted in hatred does not arise in association with wrong view (although wrong view can give rise to acts of hatred). I'm certainly glad to read that, because oftentimes I feel that my perception of something which gives rise to aversion is accurate. But it is certainly more desirable to develop right view without the unpleasant and deluding company of aversion. Okay, I'm working on that.

The richness of community! I'm definitely very grateful to have the opportunity to practice on staff at IMS. I'm also very grateful for living and working with peers who help me along in my investigation of this specific topic. There is nothing more soothing than an exchange with another aversive being when I meet this particular mindstate. And then to burst out in laughter about our rage or irritation, embracing the foolishness of the mind just as it is—what a relief! No need to do anything about it!

So it is not only painful to be aversive, it is really okay to be aversive and at times it is even fun to see it. And, over time, I can see how facing *paṭighā* makes space for experiencing more love and friendliness to myself and all beings.

Join the IMS Staff

- 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:

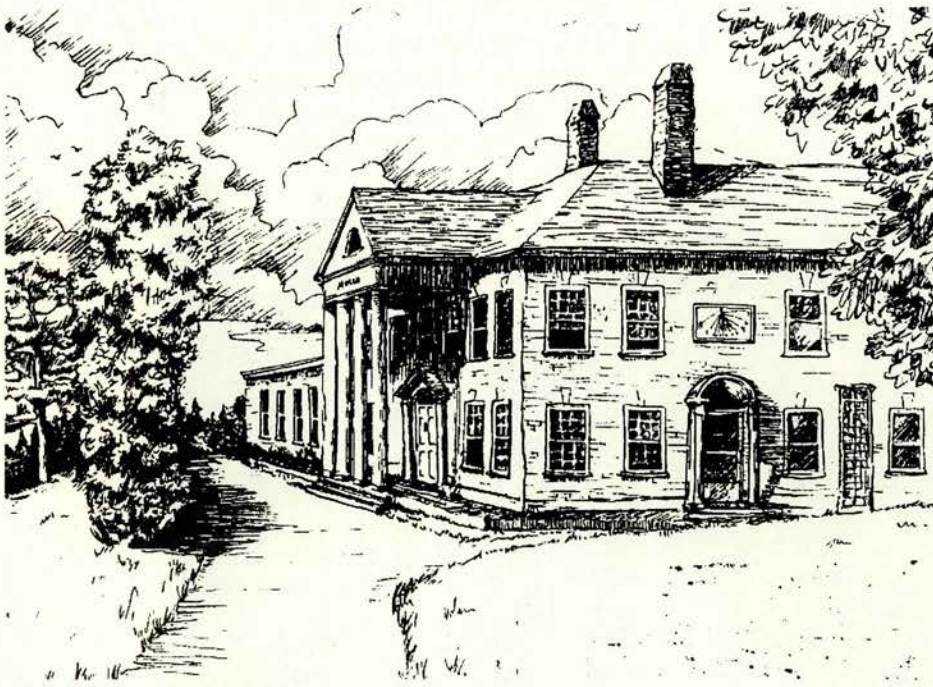
Insight Meditation Society, Personnel Coordinator, 1230 Pleasant St. Barre, MA 01005
tel. 508/355-4378 fax 508/355-6398



Immediate Openings:

in Kitchen
3 to 18 months,
by arrangement.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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.

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 80 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. 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.

IMS offers several forms for individual retreats:

• **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. Self-retreats are charged at \$30 per day, and require separate application form.

• **Work Retreats:** Work retreats provide a unique opportunity to explore the integration of mindfulness practice with work activity. 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. Work retreatants are expected to come at least one day before opening day and stay at least one day after closing day. 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.

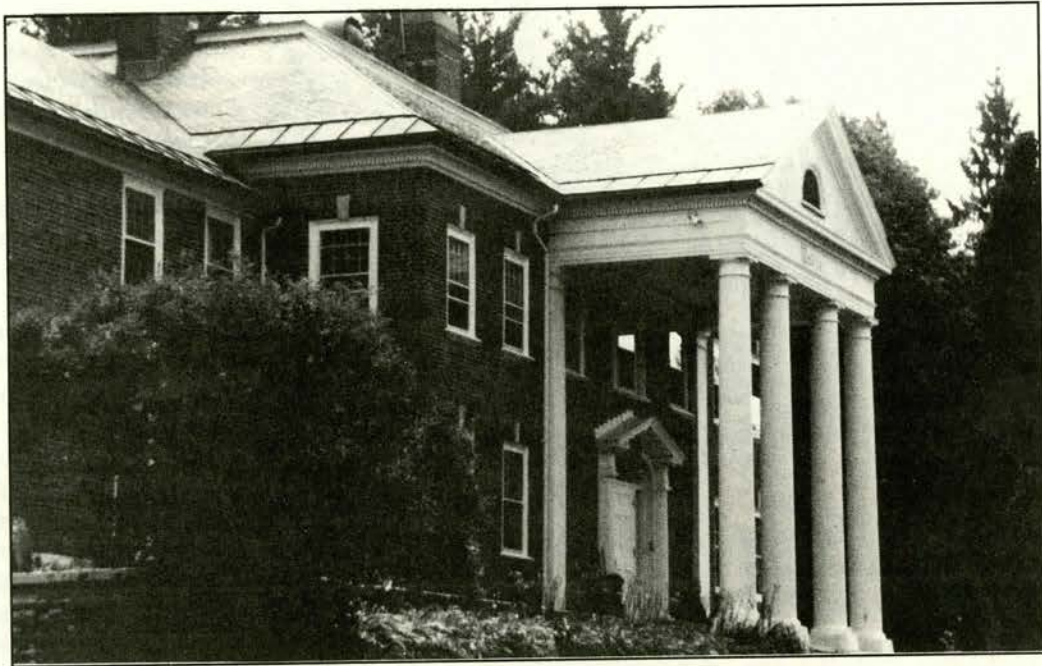
• **Long-Term Practice:** For those wishing to do long-term meditation practice of 118 days or more, IMS has available a limited number of scholarships in the form of reduced daily rate after the 84th day. Practice guidelines are similar to those for shorter individual retreats with an additional emphasis 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 SOCIETY 1997 RETREAT SCHEDULE

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

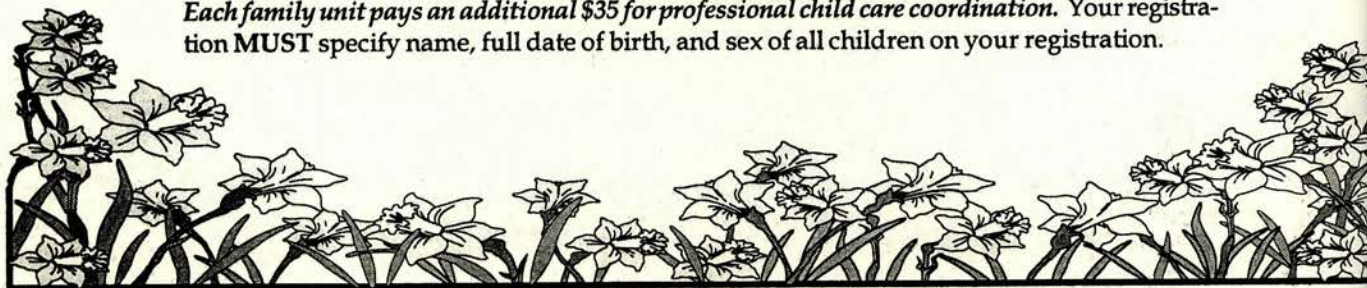
Telephone Hours: 10am - 12noon; 3pm - 5:00pm (Except Tuesday and Sunday)



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Jan 31-Feb 2 | DANA WEEKEND (2 days)
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. <i>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.</i> | DANA | Donation |
| Feb 7-14 | METTA RETREAT (7 days)
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. <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> | SS1 | \$215 |
| Feb 14-23 | VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)
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. <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> | SS2 | \$265 |

Feb 7-23	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREATS (16 days) <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>	SS3	\$440
Feb 28-Mar 9	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) 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.	LR1	\$265
March 14-17	INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days) 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.	ROD	\$125
March 22-29	WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) 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.	WOM	\$215
April 4-6	WEEKEND (2 days) (See April 4-13)	AV1	\$95
April 4-13	BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIONS (9 days) 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>	AV2	\$265
April 19-27	INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days) 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.	CT1	\$240
May 2-4	WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days) Larry Rosenberg and Sarah Doering See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above.	LR2	\$95
May 10-17	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Narayan Liebenson Grady and Michael Liebenson Grady See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above.	NLG	\$215

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|-----------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------|
| <p>May 23-26</p> | <p>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)</p> | <p>MEM</p> | <p>\$125</p> | |
| <p>May 30-Jun 7</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>SM1</p> | <p>\$240</p> | |
| <p>June 7-17</p> | <p>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 lovingkindness practice is also included.</p> | <p>SM2</p> | <p>\$290</p> | |
| <p>May30-Jun17</p> | <p>METTA & VIPASSANA RETREATS (18 days)</p> | <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">WAIT LIST ONLY</p> | <p>SM3</p> | <p>\$490</p> |
| <p>June 25-29</p> | <p>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. <i>For ages 13-19 only.</i>
 <i>Note: 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 this may cause.</i></p> | <p>YA</p> | <p>\$140</p> | |
| <p>July 4-13</p> | <p>VIPASSANA RETREAT--For Experienced Students (9 days)
 Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady
 See description for Feb. 28-March 9 course above. <i>Retreatants are required to have sat at least one 9-day retreat at IMS, or a comparable vipassana retreat situation elsewhere.</i></p> | <p>LR3</p> | <p>\$265</p> | |
| <p>July 18-27</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>CF1</p> | <p>\$265</p> | |
| <p>July 31-Aug 5</p> | <p>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. Your registration MUST specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.</i></p> | <p>FAM</p> | <p>Adult \$165
 Child \$50</p> | |



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 ONLY 3MO \$2,250

Sep20-Nov 2 **PARTIAL #1 (6 Weeks)** 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 ONLY NY \$290

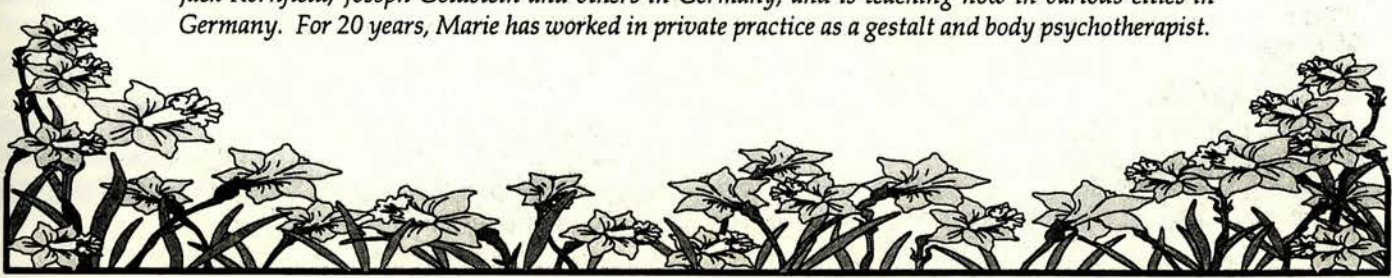
Jack Kornfield, Rodney Smith, Tara Brach, Eugene Cash, and Marie Mannschatz.

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.

Eugene Cash has practiced meditation since 1981. He teaches vipassana retreats at Spirit Rock and through out the country as well as leading a weekly sitting group in San Francisco. His teaching draws from many streams of vipassana traditions as represented by Achan Chah, Mahasi Sayadaw, Achan Jumnien, and U Ba Khin. As a psychotherapist he has worked extensively with those who are ill, dying, and the bereaved.

Marie Mannschatz began her vipassana practice in 1978. She has organized vipassana retreats for Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein and others in Germany, and is teaching now in various cities in Germany. For 20 years, Marie has worked in private practice as a gestalt and body psychotherapist.



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 1973. 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.

D

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.)

A

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 lay-people, he would almost always begin with the importance and the benefits of *dāna*.

N

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.

A

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.

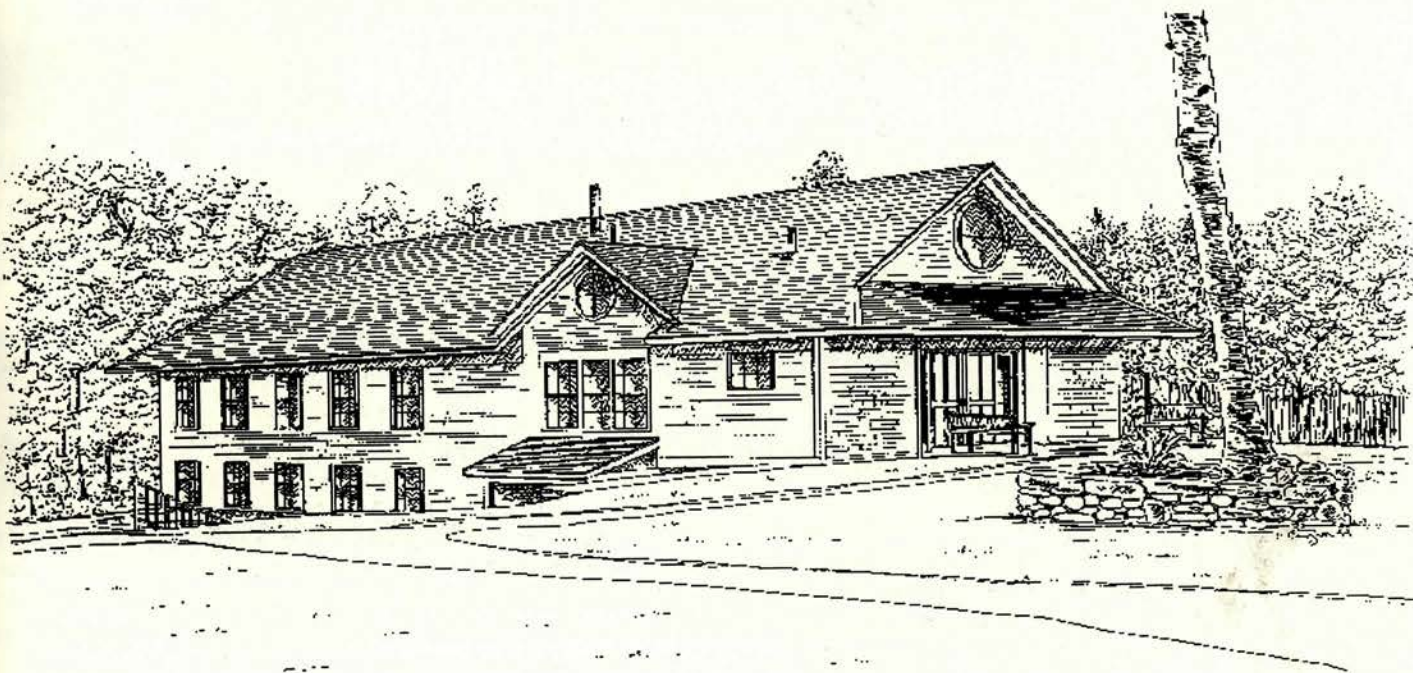
Dāna Retreat: Each year IMS has a weekend retreat with no fixed course rate—come and practice and give what you can.

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

- 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**
Rev. Issho Fujita 97IF \$120
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**
Paula Green 97PG \$120
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)** **SATIPATTHĀNA VIPASSANĀ AND METTĀ**
Sayadaw U Kundala 97SUK \$120
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**
Mu Soeng 97MS1 \$45
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**
Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty 97THINT \$750
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

erature 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 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 *Tiṭṭaka*.

July 13-25
(2 Weeks)

NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHAYANA STUDIES

Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty

97MHINT

\$750

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 Yogācarā 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.

Sep. 2-5
(3 Days)

INTENSIVE PALI LANGUAGE COURSE

Andrew Olendzki

97AO2

\$180

This course is designed for people who would like to begin learning the classical language of the Pali texts, and yet who find it difficult to get started on their own. In the context of a three day residential course, students will receive a thorough grounding in the background of the language, its pronunciation, basic grammar and vocabulary, and will begin being able to read simple texts with the help of a translation. A correspondence course of some sort will be offered as a follow-up, so students can continue progress with the language on their own. No prior language study is expected.

Sep. 7-12
(5 Days)

ABHIDHAMMA: CLASSICAL BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Andrew Olendzki

97ABHI

\$300

Abhidhamma is the systematized psychological teaching of the Theravada scholastic tradition. Profound and far-reaching, the Abhidhamma literature is also renowned for its complexity and difficulty. Not for the faint hearted, this workshop is intended for students with considerable exposure to Buddhist thought and/or experienced vipassana meditators. We will work our way through the classical Abhidhamma textbook by Anuruddha, the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Emphasis will be upon the text's contemporary relevance to practice. Admission by approval.

Sep. 18-21
(Thurs-Sun)

AWAKENING TO WISDOM AND COMPASSION: A CONTEMPLATIVE INTERSEARCH IN JEWISH AND BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

Sylvia Boorstein and Rabbi Sheila Weinberg

97JBC

\$180

This annual Jewish-Buddhist conference is devoted to exploring the pathways of awakening to wisdom and compassion through mindfulness and liturgy. A day of silent vipassana (insight) and metta (loving-kindness) meditation and practice will precede Shabbat celebration and liturgy. Through contemplative practices, talks and textual discussion, we will explore ways of being in the contemporary world that connect us with the ancient heritage in both traditions.

Sept. 27
(Saturday)

BUDDHIST ECONOMICS: ENVISIONING A DHAMMIC SOCIETY

Glen Alexandarian

97BE

\$45

This workshop is an exploration of the importance of economics in American culture and in the life of Buddhist practitioners; how our understanding of economic systems may influence the application of Buddhist principles in lay life and in monastic life. A thorough understanding of Buddha's teaching necessarily involves the practice of Buddhist economic behavior. We will discuss the issues of national and societal priorities; Buddhist macro-economics; the possibilities of a sustainable future, the concept of Presidential economics as *dharma-rajā*; and ways of creating Buddhist economics from the bottom up.

Sept. 28
(Sunday)

FIRE AND LOVE: DEATH AWARENESS AS A DANCE OF LIFE

Gavin Harrison

97GH

\$45

The Buddha's teachings show it is possible to know a peace, contentment and balance undefined by the circumstances of our lives. During this day, we will explore the way of meditation, awareness and kindness as a path of experiencing love in the midst of all our challenges. Gavin will use his experience of living with AIDS and healing from pain as a context for this exploration.

- Oct. 3-8 (5 days)** **BRAHMA VIHARAS INTENSIVE--A CONTEMPLATIVE AND MEDITATIVE INQUIRY**
Daeja Napier **97DN2** **\$300**
 The Buddha taught that cultivation of four wholesome (engendering wholeness) states of mind – Loving Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity – are the great peacemakers and healers of suffering inherent in our human condition. During this intensive program, we will use classical contemplative practices to explore and cultivate these four qualities of heart and mind.
Note: Although preference will be given to those registering for the residential course, one may register as a day student for each of the themes taught separately from Saturday to Tuesday, respectively, and take part in a modified schedule. Details of full course or single-day participation available on request.
- October 11 (Saturday)** **FAITH**
Sharon Salzberg **97SS1** **\$45**
 The Pali word `saddhā,' usually translated as faith, means "to place the heart upon." This day is an exploration of the role of faith in a wisdom tradition, the meaning of the word in a classical Buddhist context, and the role of faith and trust in contemporary meditation practices.
- October 18 (Saturday)** **THE PRACTICE OF EQUANIMITY IN DAILY LIFE**
Narayan Liebenson Grady **97NLG1** **\$45**
 Equanimity (upekkha) is the balance of heart in the midst of change. Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, praise and blame, are experiences that we all encounter. Equanimity makes it possible to respond to these experiences with less reactivity, more wisdom. This day-long presentation will include talks, practices, and discussion.
- Oct. 24-26 (Fri-Sun)** **ZAZENKAI: PRACTICING THE HEART OF ZEN**
Richard Clarke **97RC1** **\$120**
 The practice of zazen lies at the heart of the Zen tradition that began in China in the 7th century as a revolutionary effort to recover the original insights of Shakyamuni Buddha. This weekend program introduces both seasoned and beginning students to the Living Dharma style of Zen practice through formal Dharma talks (teisho), private interviews (dokusan), and group sittings.
Note: Preference will be given to seasoned practitioners applying for the entire course. Other students may join in for a day, from 9AM to 5PM. The cost for a single day participation is \$45, including meals.
- November 1 (Saturday)** **THE EXPERIENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**
Jack Engler **97JE1** **\$45**
 As Buddhist meditation continues to be viewed from the perspectives of therapy and stress reduction in our contemporary culture, there has been a de-emphasis on enlightenment as a traditional goal of practice. This course will start with the canonical account of the Buddha's enlightenment, the different levels of enlightenment according to the Theravada tradition, and the specific outcomes attributed to each. We will then look at the stages of practice which culminate in enlightenment, why they follow the sequence they do, what the experience is, and what changes and what doesn't.
- November 2 (Sunday)** **THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP**
Jack Engler **97JE2** **\$45**
 There are different models of the teacher-student relationship in the different Buddhist traditions, but it always has an emotional charge, impacts both teacher and student reciprocally, and is one of the most important catalysts in the process of transformation. This course will examine the personal and interpersonal dynamics of this relationship: the expectations and motivations of those who pursue a practice and those who teach it, and the dynamics between them. We will also examine the cultural and social dimension to this relationship which often complicates the interactions between Asian teachers and American students; and see how these issues impact on practice.
- November 8 (Saturday)** **DUKKHA AND THE PASSION OF CHRIST--A CHRISTIAN-BUDDHIST DIALOGUE**
Father Robert Kennedy **97RK1** **\$45**
 Buddhist tradition emphasizes dukkha--the unsatisfactoriness and pain inherent in human conditioning--and its cessation/transcendence in nirvana. The Christian tradition emphasizes the participation/transcendence of human suffering in the passion of Christ, personified by Jesus. This annual gathering will explore the common territory between these two spiritual traditions through presentations, shared silence, and the sharing of our spiritual journeys.

- Nov. 14-16 (Weekend)** **SEVEN POINTS OF MIND TRAINING: BODHICITTA IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**
Lama Surya Das 97SD2 \$120
 Bodhicitta, the "awakened heart-mind," is the luminous heart of the Dharma. The "Lo-jong" (Mind Training/Attitude Transformation) is the practice of this precious bodhicitta in the Tibetan Mahayana tradition. These practices were first brought to Tibet by the great Indian teacher Atisha in 1042. He taught the revolutionary "Tong-len" practice—"Giving and Taking," or exchanging self and others—in order to bring intelligence and compassion into the ordinary situations of daily life. The basic text book for this course will be Jamgon Kongtrul's *The Great Path of Awakening*.
- November 22 (Saturday)** **"WHO IS THE MASTER?" THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF BASSUI**
Richard Clark 97RC2 \$45
 Bassui (1327-1387) was one of the greatest figures in Japanese Rinzai Zen. He lived in a time of great social and political turbulence but sought to live a life of unremitting emphasis upon genuine awakening, disregarding the distracting "toys" of special clothing, regulations, titles, hierarchy, and the like. This workshops will present the essential teachings of Bassui through talks, discussions and silent sittings to connect more deeply with the source of life here and now that is the essence of Zen.
- Nov.30-Dec.5 (Sun-Friday)** **ESSENTIALS OF CLASSICAL BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY**
Andrew Olendzki 97AO3 \$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 can 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 and contemporary perspective on psychology. Co-sponsored by the Institute of Meditation & Psychotherapy.
- Dec. 12-14 (Weekend)** **ANAPANASATI SUTTA: BUDDHA'S MOST SYSTEMATIC MEDITATION TEACHING**
Santikaro Bhikkhu 97SAN1 \$120
 The Anapanasati Sutta is the most important discourse on meditation by the Buddha in the entire Pali Canon. In it, the Buddha explains how to put the four foundations of mindfulness into practice, and how to develop them into the seven factors of awakening and finally into liberation. This weekend will combine reflections on the sutta with sitting and walking meditation, and link the teachings of the sutta to the Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination. Required reading: *Mindfulness with Breathing* by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (Wisdom, 1996).
- Dec. 19-21 (Weekend)** **A DHAMMIC SOCIETY**
Santikaro Bhikkhu 97SAN2 \$120
 This workshop is a continuation of and greater in-depth exploration of the theme of the application of the Four Noble Truths to social dimensions, including the collective ego-structures that underpin our economic and political systems.
Note: Although this year's workshop is geared to deepening the discussion held last year, all effort will be made to include newcomers into the reflective process, allowing them to fully integrate with the rest of the group.



TEACHERS AT THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

Glen Alexandrin is a professor of economics at Villanova University. He studied Buddhism at Naropa Institute and under Geshe Wangyal at the Lamaist Buddhist Monastery. He has been teaching workshops on Buddhist economics for a number of years, and has published in scientific and economic journals in America and internationally.

Richard Clarke, Ph.D., founded the Living Dharma Center in Amherst, MA., and Coventry, CT., in 1972. He has received transmission in the Harada-Yasutani-Kapleau lineage of Zen, that has synthesized the traditional Soto and Rinzai schools. He is also a psychotherapist and Director of the New England Institute for Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

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*.

BCBS Teachers: continued on p. 28



REGISTERING FOR COURSES
at the
BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

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

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.

We cannot guarantee always meeting special dietary needs but if you telephone the kitchen before registration, the cook will be glad to discuss your situation.

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
 149 Lockwood Road, P.O. Box 7
 Barre, MA 01005
 (508) 355-2347 Fax: (508) 355-2798
 email: bcbs@dharma.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

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 Nālandā 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 NĀLANDĀ 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 28 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.

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*.

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.

BUDDHIST STUDIES

**A two-week residential program
January 11-23, 1998**

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.

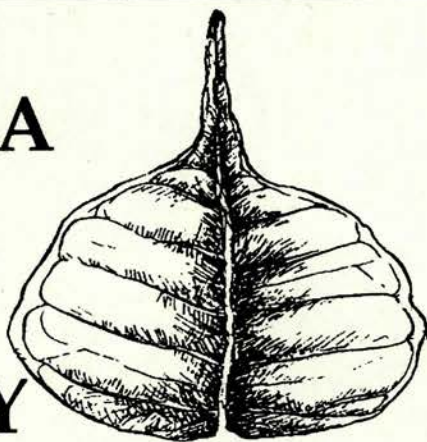
During the first week the focus will be on the origins of Buddhism in ancient India; the life and teachings of the historical Buddha; the intellectual milieu in which Buddhism arose; the primary texts of the Pali Canon; and key doctrines such as karma and rebirth, mind and mental development, and the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

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

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 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.

OUR 1997 CATALOGUE INCLUDES TALKS BY:

Joseph Goldstein Sharon Salzberg Jack Kornfield
Christina Feldman Larry Rosenberg Steven Smith
Christopher Titmuss Carol Wilson Michele McDonald Smith
Ajahn Sumedho Ruth Denison Corrado Pensa
Narayan Liebenson Grady U Pandita Sayadaw
Vimalo Kulbarz Sharda Rogell Sylvia Boorstein
Rodney Smith Steve Armstrong Jose Reissig
Gavin Harrison Ajahn Sucitto John Orr Fred von Allmen
Anna Douglas James Baraz Mary Orr Guy Armstrong
Howard Cohn Tara Brach Gil Fronsdal Kamala Masters
Marcia Rose John Travis Arinna Weisman Ajahn Amaro

For more information or a free copy of the 1997 catalogue call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-SEED or fax us at (413) 772-5599

BCBS Teachers *continued from p. 25*

Gavin Harrison teaches Buddhist insight meditation in groups and retreats throughout New England. He is HIV+ and meditation practice is at the core of his efforts to engage the AIDS virus in a life-affirming way. He lives in Northampton.

Fr. Robert Kennedy, S.J., is a Jesuit priest who has practiced Zen with Japanese and American masters. He is now a Zen teacher (sensei) and Dharma successor to Tetsugen Glassman Roshi. He is a professor of Theology and Japanese language at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, N.J. He is also the author of *Zen Spirit, Christian Spirit*.

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 has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard University.

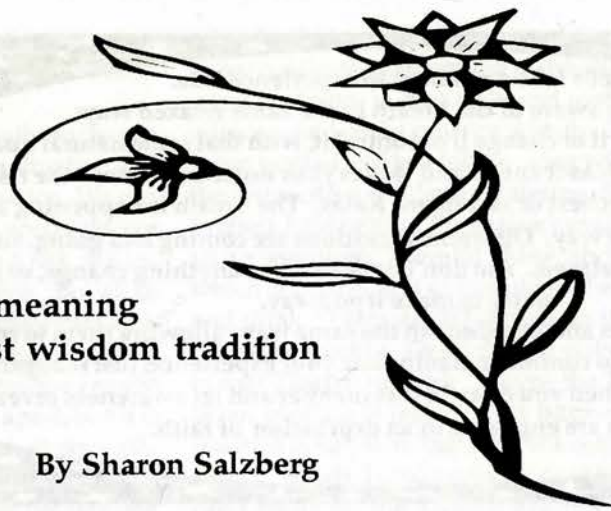
Santikaro Bhikkhu is an American monk, and currently abbot of Atammayatarama near the Suan Mokh monastery in southern Thailand. He was a close disciple and translator for the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the founder of Suan Mokh monastery.

Mu Soeng is the director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He trained in the Zen tradition and was a 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*.

Rabbi Sheila Weinberg is the Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Amherst, Mass, and a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. She is one of the principal organizers of the Jewish-Buddhist Dialogue at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and is interested in feminism, social change, and spirituality as forces for the renewal of Judaism.

FAITH



Its role and meaning in a Buddhist wisdom tradition

By Sharon Salzberg

This article is excerpted from a workshop offered by Sharon Salzberg at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies on September 22, 1996. Sharon is writing a book on the subject, to be published by Shambhala.

Faith is something very personally meaningful to me. It is something difficult to understand, and it is something that is not often spoken about within the context of a wisdom tradition—especially in the West.

The last time I led a program on Faith, I heard people express disquietude, uneasiness, and even hostility. Somebody said to me, "I came to Buddhism to get away from all this." And for him, because of his own conditioning or background, the very word "faith" was difficult to hear. It brought up questions of being good enough and having enough faith; it brought up facing dire consequences if he didn't have enough faith or didn't have the right kind of faith. The word faith brought up a lot of fear, rather than faith seeming like an antidote to fear.

The word we normally translate as faith from the Pali language, the language of the original Buddhist texts, is *saddhā*, which literally means "to place the heart upon." *Saddhā* means to give our hearts over to, or place our hearts upon something. Its meaning can vary a lot, depending on what we put our heart upon or the quality with which we give our hearts over. So there are a number of different ways faith can be manifest.



Sometimes faith means **trust**. In your reflections you can contemplate: Is there some quality within yourself that you trust? Awareness, love, critical thinking? What do you trust? I remember having a great deal of difficulty with my practice at one point in my life and my teacher U Pandita said to me: "You just sit and walk. The dharma will take care of the rest." I was trying too hard to "make the practice work," and the faith that came from simply trusting that the practice would work all by itself has been tremendously helpful for me.

Faith can also take the form of **inspiration**, where all of our being comes together behind something, behind an endeavor. This doesn't feel like a struggle, because we are so inspired to engage in a pursuit. We might be inspired by a teacher or a teaching, but whatever it is a sense of possibility is awakened for us. This initial inspiration is what brings us to a practice or to any deeper exploration, and it helps sustain us in the difficulties we inevitably encounter.

Or faith can mean **confidence**. You might think of a time in your life when you faced a task that was a little bit daunting, but you had a quality of confidence so you persevered. As we begin to practice, there may be a lot of restlessness and sleepiness and resistance and pain and boredom and angst—all kinds of different experiences. It can be very hard. But what allows us to keep going? What allows us to say "Well, maybe this

is just the way things are in the beginning, or maybe this is just going to take some time, and I need to devote time to see what happens?" What allows us to take that risk and keep going? This also is a form of faith.

Another way we might think of faith is in terms of **patience**: when we can be present in a situation and allow it to unfold without needing to manipulate it, letting things take their natural course, allowing things time to ripen. You might think of a time in your life when this was very present for you.

The faith that inspires us to take a step away from the normal dictates of society, as it defines happiness, success, prosperity or goodness, and perhaps to begin a meditation practice—is **courage**. We step back from our conditioning, from our past, from our belief systems, and then we step forward to take a look in order to allow the truth to speak to us, in order to be present for whatever might be revealed through our own experience. All this takes courage, and this courageous aspect of faith is by no means insignificant. The purity and simplicity of faith is very powerful. Faith is what begins our energy, our willingness to look; it is what sustains it. It is what allows us to take a risk, to open up to seeing the truth for ourselves, rather than simply going along conventionally or conveniently believing only what we have been told.

"We might be inspired by a teacher or a teaching, but whatever it is a sense of possibility is awakened for us."

There is one sense of the word faith that is closer to **relaxation**. You can just sit and listen to sounds as they come and go—the sound of my voice, for example, or other, even internal sounds. Notice how you don't have to construct or create an awareness of them. You simply have to be quiet, to be present, and the awareness will happen naturally. You can relax.

Let's take a moment to experience this.

You can be aware of the breath in the same relaxed way; not trying to manipulate it or change it or control it; with that same natural quality of awareness. Feel the breath as it enters and leaves your nostrils, or sense the rising and falling movement of your chest or abdomen. Relax. The breath is happening anyway. Feel the body in just the same way. Different sensations are coming and going. Maybe you feel tension or pressure. You can be relaxed. You don't have to make anything change, or try to prolong it, or try to make it go away.

You can deal with mind states and emotions in the same way: allowing them to come, allowing them to go, without trying to control or manipulate your experience; just recognizing them, like a passing show. When you relax in this manner and let awareness reveal itself, you are engaging in an expression of faith.

I have been very interested to see the different ways that faith weaves throughout the traditional teachings of Buddhism. There is an evolution in the quality of faith that is not dissimilar to an evolution or deepening of wisdom. And in fact faith and wisdom seem to go hand in hand.

First there is what we call **bright faith**, which is a sense of being able to draw near, to open up, to be inspired, that happens when we meet somebody who is very impressive for us. They awaken some confidence in ourselves about a way of being that might be possible for us as well. We meet a teacher or a great being or a great poet, and somehow the experience is not just about them and who they are—they also serve as a mirror in some way for who we might be. We feel very inspired and moved. There is an emotional quality of wonderment, of excitement, and of confidence. Faith is what allows us to draw near.

But bright faith, while it can be powerful and important, is not very reliable. We might meet one person one day and another person another day, and find ourselves just careening back and forth between these different sources of inspiration, because we are not so centered within our own experience.

There is another quality of faith, somewhat more evolved, known as **verified faith**. Maybe we've met a person or we've encountered a teaching and have gotten inspired; and we've done something about that—we've actually practiced or we've explored something for ourselves, and in doing so we've opened to some amount of experience. The feeling we

have about that path or process, the sense of being able to place our hearts upon it, is now rooted in our own experience and strengthened.

When I was first practicing meditation, one of the great one-liners my teacher Munindra offered to me was "The Buddha's enlightenment solved the Buddha's problem, now you solve yours." It was important to me to feel that the Buddha's enlightenment did solve his problem, because after all here was the very path he had offered. And I also recognized that I clearly hadn't yet solved mine! But I saw that Munindra was implying a confidence that I actually could solve the problem of suffering for myself. There was some amount of energy and effort and actual practice that was being called for from me so that I could step up to this experience of verified faith.

And then there is what is called **unshakable faith**, where we have experienced something so deeply and strongly that from that point on there is no turning back. It is not that somebody can then appear to us in the role of the inspirer and say, "Well, you know it's really this way, it's not that way" and have us believe that simply because they say so. We know from our own experience that this is how things are; we have a more complete faith in the truth of our own vision and our perception of the truth. This three-fold progression is one way faith is talked about as it evolves through our own understanding.

The opposite of faith, as talked about in the traditional teachings, is doubt. Of course there are many sides to doubt. There is a kind of doubt that is very posi-

tive. It is an edge of investigation which says, "I'm not going to accept this just because somebody else says it's so. I really want to know." And this is the cutting edge of wisdom, the voice that says, "I want to know for myself, not just because you say so."

This, of course, is echoed in the teachings of the Buddha such as the Kālāma Sutta in which people say something like, "Here in this village there are so many teachers of spirituality who come and go. Some say this and some say that. There are all kinds of different messages and different instructions and different ways of practice that are offered. How do we know what's true, what's worth doing?" (Sound familiar?)

And the Buddha's response, in effect, is: Put it into practice. Don't believe anything just because I say it or some worthy being says it. Don't believe anything because it is held to be traditionally true. Don't believe anything because you've read it. Believe it is truth from your own experience. If you put it into practice and you find that this particular meditation or spiritual practice leads to a diminishing of greed and desire in your mind, then you can trust that. If you find that it leads to a diminishing of anger and hatred and fear in your mind, you can trust that. If you find it leads to clarity, so there's less delusion, there's less feeling of being cut off and disconnected, you can trust that. You put it into practice. That's how you know.

So this aspect of doubt, of not just believing in something because somebody else says it's so, is very helpful. But there

is another aspect of doubt that is far less helpful—namely, endless speculation.

Sometimes doubt is actually an excuse to remove ourselves from a situation and not put something into practice. We can then stand back and judge, speculate, not commit ourselves, not take a risk, not see what happens if we practice. But all of this is a process of intellectualization; it is not at all from our own experience. There may be a feeling of empowerment that comes from standing apart, but it is really a very shallow kind of strength. This is a way of protecting ourselves, because we don't have to take the risk and commit ourselves and open up to something and then see what happens. But really the strength we then feel, which is a kind of conceit and indulgence, is very short-lived. It will not actually give us the sustained strength and confidence to discover the truth for ourselves.

Probably the strongest period of doubt I ever had was fairly early on in my own meditation practice. I first went to India in 1970, and I first began practicing mindfulness meditation, *vipassanā* meditation, in January of 1971. I was quite young, 18 years old. I remember that from the first moment I entered that room and the first moment I sat down, I felt like I had come home. There was just a sense of rightness to it. One of the meanings of faith is knowing within the feeling of rightness, of alignment, of being in harmony with something. So faith in the dharma was very present for me right away, though I had a lot of doubt about myself and my own capacity.

I also had a lot of speculation about which practice to actually do. My first teacher was somebody from a Burmese tradition, and he taught a practice quite similar to what is taught at IMS today. That seemed a really wonderful way to practice. It was simple and direct, yet very profound. And it was accessible, which I appreciated a lot.

After a few months of being in a particular place in India and practicing with that teacher I traveled up into the mountains and met a Tibetan teacher with whom I felt a very strong connection, and I appreciated everything that he was teaching as well.

I had a choice, it seemed to me: I could either continue on practicing in this Burmese tradition, in that style and methodology, or I could practice with the Tibetan teacher and just follow along with the instructions that he was offering. So, in effect, I did neither. Every time I would sit to meditate, I would think about which one to do, and so I would sit there and think, "I wonder if I should do the Burmese practice. Or if I should switch to that Tibetan practice. Maybe the Tibetan practice is faster. This Burmese practice is so plain, but then it's really simple. Maybe I could actually do this. I can't really do the Tibetan practice so well..."

And that was what my meditation practice looked like. It was a continual stream of speculative thinking about which practice to do. And what was almost worse, whenever I was with my Burmese teachers I would ask them what they thought the Tibetan practice was about. And then whenever I was with my Tibetan teachers I would ask them what they thought of Burmese practice. So not only was I learning nothing from my practice, because I wasn't really practicing, only thinking about which one to do, I was actually learning little from my teachers because I was asking them about traditions they knew the least about, rather than asking what they were so extraordinarily steeped in and proficient in teaching. It just went on and on until finally I said to myself, "Just do something. It doesn't matter what you do. It doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment, but do one or the other because this way you're doing nothing."

I found that to be a perfect example of the difficulties of doubt. In the traditional texts they describe doubt as being like a traveler at a crossroads—you just don't know which way to go. Rather than trying a way and see what happens, you just stand there waiting for enlightenment to strike. We can't make a decision as to which way to try, and that is the most draining and debilitating characteristic of doubt with which we get stuck.

Faith has the quality of allowing us to open, to draw near, and to go forth, to harness our energy to pursue a goal or an aspiration. But faith also has to be

carefully balanced with wisdom. If we have too much faith without enough wisdom, then it really becomes what we ordinarily call "blind faith." We can be very gullible. We can with bright faith hear somebody and they're impressive and they move us and our hearts sing and we experience an extraordinary feeling of inspiration; and then the next day we hear somebody else and they say a different thing and we feel inspired by them. This is mere belief—faith without enough wisdom.

I think that belief and faith sometimes go together. It's not that they are mutually exclusive—we can believe something and also have faith in it. I would use the word belief to refer to something more in the realm of an idea about things. It can be something that we have never really examined, and therefore we don't have a quality of faith in it that comes from seeing for ourselves that it is true. It's more just an idea that we have. Beliefs are often these assumptions that we have about so many things that are really fabrications of the mind, not based on an actual, personal experience of things.

It's not that all belief is wrong; some belief might reflect a true or a deeper understanding of things. But because it's untested, perhaps, or not even acknowledged as a belief, I would distinguish it from that quality of faith which only deepens as it's tested. And the practice is a great deal about examining these things and seeing what has some basis in actual experience and what is just a construction that has been made up.

I prefer to think of faith (as Coleridge says of poetry) as "the willing suspension of disbelief." So rather than thinking of it as the assumption or the taking up of a belief, it's the willing suspension of disbelief—a willingness to be open, to explore, to investigate.



Buddhist Psychology

Classical Texts
in
Contemporary
Perspective



In the first week of December last year the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies held a five-day residential course on Buddhist Psychology. The intention of the course was to introduce students to the classical models of mind and mental processing contained in the primary texts of the Pali Canon and other Buddhist texts, and then to review this material from the contemporary perspectives of modern psychology.

The program was co-sponsored by the Cambridge Institute of Meditation and Psychotherapy, and four of the institute's members gave presentations during the course. Continuing

education credits were available through the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, and many of the participants were practicing therapists or other trained health care professionals.

As with all course offerings at BCBS, the intensive program of lectures, reading and discussions was framed by a schedule of contemplative practice—sitting meditation morning, midday and evening, with regular periods of silence overnight and in the early morning. The course is being repeated again in May and December of 1997, and we hope to offer some variation of it twice a year into the future.

Overview: Basic Themes

Andrew Olendzki

What is Psychology?

The field of psychology—whether Buddhist or western—involves both theoretical and therapeutic dimensions. Theoretical psychology has to do with understanding the mind and how it works, in part by formulating models of the human psycho-physical organism. Practical or therapeutic psychology has more to do with health—what it is, how to achieve it, how to sustain it. Each perspective is of course dependent upon and informed by the other, and the two need to be studied as siblings. Our goal will be on the one hand to try and open our minds as much as we can to some ancient and in some ways quite challenging ways of looking at ourselves and our world, and on the other hand to try equally hard to examine these ideas and practices in the critical light of our contemporary experience.

Five Aggregates

The foundation of Buddhist psychology is a process view of personhood. One expression of such a view is the dynamic model of interdependent phenomena—the five-fold classification of subjective experience into *material form, feeling, perception, formations* and *consciousness*. When we attend to our experience from this perspective it undermines our tendency to construct misleading theories of self, illuminates the changeability and impersonality of phenomena, and points towards the importance of our relationship to our experience. The discourses of the *Elephant's Footprint* (MN 28) and of the *Full Moon Night* (MN 109) from the *Majjhima Nikāya* help clarify these five important categories of experience.

Six Sense Spheres

Another way to look at our subjective experience is in light of the “door” through which sense data reaches the mind: the *eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-doors*. Each of these organs is receptive to different sorts of stimuli, and each combines in an interactive relationship with a corresponding sort of sense object to give rise to different modes of conscious awareness. Each also touches off a cognitive series of processing by which we add perceptions and feelings to the sense data and construct a world, a personality, and a sense of self. According to the analysis of this cognitive process detailed in the discourse of the *Six Senses* (MN 148) or of the *Honey Ball* (MN 18), the craving that causes all our suffering emerges directly from the feeling tone of this constructed experience. We can begin to recognize the way craving arises naturally out of sensory experience—and much of this can be directly observed in meditation.

Interdependent Origination

The doctrine of interdependent origination synthesizes much of Buddhist psychology in a single sophisticated model that describes some of the interrelationships between mental states that arise in the mind from moment to moment. It elucidates how the present mind moment is influenced by preceding mental states, and how present states condition succeeding moments of experience. When we look at texts that describe the Buddha's penetration of the doctrine on the night of his awakening, such as the *Samyutta Nikāya's* discourse on the *Great Sākyamuni Gotama* (SN 12.10) or

Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita*, we can better see how the system can be used to understand the causal conditioning that affects us in every moment of consciousness.

Working With Mental States

One of the practical skills taught by the Buddha for bringing about psychological transformation is the ability to discern the two different sorts of mental states that arises in the mind: healthy and unhealthy. The latter cause and constitute the bulk of our unhappiness, but can, through patient and consistent application of method, be gradually replaced by the former. The *Majjhima Nikāya's* discourse on the *Two Kinds of Thought* (MN 19) and on the *Removal of Distracting Thoughts* (MN 20) discuss this method, and offer a wealth of practical guidance for the process of healing and transformation of the mind.

The Role of Intention

One of the tools for liberation in the Buddhist tradition is understanding and utilizing the power of intention. Although it may often seem like we are compelled by our conditioning to think, speak or act in certain ways, the Buddhist approach places great importance on the exercise of our free will. Being able to get in touch with our motivations experientially, and then being able to recondition our activities by transforming our intentions, is a major strategy for treading the path to freedom. This is discussed in some detail in texts such as *Advice to Rāhula* (MN 61) or the discourse on *Inference* (MN 15).

Mindfulness Meditation

The most effective means of accessing the inner life, both to recognize the various classical schemes of classification and to work with mental states, is the cultivation of mindfulness. Mindfulness is developed by the practice of insight

meditation, a process of introspection and self-awareness that has been well explicated by modern western meditation teachers over the last two decades. Both the theoretical understanding of how mindfulness works and the development of an effective personal practice are im-

portant tools for understanding Buddhist psychology. A careful reading of the *Foundation of Mindfulness* (DN 22, MN 10, etc.) and related texts, as well as the literature on concentration techniques, can help ground a modern sitting practice in the classical systems of Buddhist meditation.

Self as a Cultural Construction

Paul Fulton

I would like to look at the idea of the self, and Buddhist psychology, from a perspective that might be new to many of you—the perspective of psychological ethnography. Psychological ethnography sees the self as a construction, built of materials provided by the cultural context in which it is found. It views psychological systems as indigenously conceived by each cultural group, drawing on such influences as biology, historical period, personality, personal developmental history and life experiences, family context, and culture. The self exists, the cultural anthropologist might contend, as a multidetermined product of all these factors.

One of the key questions in this field is whether or not, and to what degree, there exists a sense of self that is a universal across cultural settings. Are the differences we perceive among peoples merely local conventions, minor variations overlaid on a human nature which is universal to everyone? Or, alternately, perhaps the way we think about ourselves—what and who we think we are—actually constitutes or creates that self; perhaps there is nothing about the self which stands apart from our efforts to construe the self. These are two major positions debated among psychological ethnographers and they sometimes fall under the titles of “universalistic” versus “culturally specific” (also objectivist vs. constructionist views of the self.)

One example of a universal of human nature is biology—all human beings have basically the same anatomy, which shapes development. For example, all cultures must embrace universals of birth and death, puberty and procreation.

Yet it is very difficult to find or establish similar psychological universals across all cultures. In its extreme form, a culturally specific position would argue that there are no such psychological universals, and that we can understand an-

other culture's psychology only within its own unique context. An exception to this, it is arguable, is that every culture provides its members with some sense of what a person is within that society, and a sense of self. However, having said this, the range of meanings, and the range of the experience of the self, vary hugely.

Despite this variation, there are two qualities of self which are universal: that the individual can take oneself as an object, and distinguish between what is self and what is not; and that this distinction between self and not-self is mediated through symbols, such as language. It is because our symbol systems vary cross-culturally that we can begin to see how the experience of what is self—what it embraces, how mutable it is, and its relations with other selves—varies across cultures.

The way we experience ourselves is conditioned by the means available to us for understanding and construing. Therefore, psychological reality itself cannot be known except through the process of coming to know it, and this process of understanding is mediated by language, symbol and metaphor.

From this perspective, the terms used by indigenous psychologies are not appendages added on to a deeper universal human nature, but actually determine that experience. The symbolic languages used to grasp and make sense of experience usually exist outside of the user's awareness, at deep and unconscious levels of mind. (Many of us can use proper use of subtle rules of grammar which we would be at a loss to articulate. Similarly, it may take years of psychoanalysis to discover the subtle conditioning of early childhood experience on our adult relationships.) In this sense, the terms and concepts and metaphors we use to make sense of our experience are not phenomenologically separable from what they try to describe. To think about something, you have to think with something, and

what you think with is going to have a tremendous influence on what you can think. Because the categories, language, and symbol systems are provided by culture, the experience of self becomes a cultural product.

Is our, or my, or anyone else's system of psychology more accurate than any other? Does any ethnopsychology of self more closely approximate what is truly “true?” From a relativistic, or culturally specific perspective, the assessment of the relative truth of different systems of psychologies is a spurious issue. There is no basis on which to judge. Each system invents meaning, and meaning does not exist outside of our efforts to make sense of it.

We don't experience ourselves, or our world, as so conditioned. It is taken for granted that the way we see things is representation of the world “as it is,” as it is objectively given. But the shaping influence of our language, for example, becomes abundantly clear after an experience of *samādhi* (concentration, meditation), when one perceives experience in its rawest form, without the mediation of language or metaphor.

Buddhism contains a model of the psychology of self, which itself was indigenous to a particular remote time and place—India, 2500 years ago. Yet it has travelled to culturally remote environments, such as China, Tibet, Southeast Asia, and now the West. How is it possible that a system of psychology which arose in such specific conditions can describe aspects of human experience which appear to have immediate resonance to late 20th century Americans? Might not the successful adaptation of Buddhism to different cultural settings be evidence of something universal in human nature, which its teachings touch? Is Buddhism just another form of cultural relativism, or is it somehow getting down to some deeper structures of mind?

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Some aspects of the Abhidhamma are, in my opinion, constructions; they are theoretical representations of the mind which are suggestive, but are not themselves universals. For example, the analyses of the self described by the *skandhas*, or aggregates, is a useful model—nothing more or less. Such models draw on metaphors available in the Buddha's day—for example, the self as an accumulation of parts, much like a chariot.

Less culturally-specific, however, was the Buddha's direct observation of the nature of conditioning at a very funda-

mental level of mind. As psychological experience becomes complex, it becomes more influenced by—and accessible to—personal history, personality, and differentiated experience. This is the domain of psychotherapy: the understanding of the particular conditions of one's life. By comparison, as Dan Goleman noted, meditation moves toward understanding of the process of conditioning itself. As such, it is separate from this or that experience, this or that personal history.

This may point the way to how psychological ethnography helps to inform

the "Buddhist model." Most of what can be described, the complex ideas which culture generates about selves and the elaborate interrelationships within and among people, vary enormously and are conditioned. The most central and enduring aspects of Buddhist psychology address something more basic, transcultural, and yes, universal: the means by which all that diverse construction occurs, the consequences of taking such constructions as reality, and the means for granting freedom through the direct understanding of this process.

The Unconscious Motivations for Meditation Practice Jack Engler

I think there was a tendency in the first generation of vipassana practitioners in America to look upon meditation in the same way as a traditional Catholic would look upon the sacrament. There is a principle in sacramental theology, called *ex opere operato*, according to which the sacraments are efficacious in and of themselves, independent of the person administering them or the person receiving them. In the early days of vipassana practice at IMS, we tended to adopt the same attitude towards meditation practice: "Here are the instructions—you understand them, you do it, and it works."

My experience over the years is much more complicated than that. I find that meditation practice, like any other kind of behavior, can be used for good or for ill. It can be liberating—or we can yoke it into the service of our own neuroses. Buddhaghosa called practice a "path of purification." It's like refining the alloys out of ore until what you're left with is the pure metal. As a process of refinement, practice is often loaded with trial and error. We make mistakes and discover how we've lost our balance again and again; but gradually we learn what's right effort and what's compulsion, what's straining, what's avoidance. A lot of practice is just the process of discovering what is *not* the path.

From a certain perspective of course it is all path—the process itself is the path. But in asking the same kinds of questions of a spiritual practice that a therapist, for example, might ask of any experience, one might discover a dozen unconscious motivations towards practice. And it's worth looking at these for a moment, because meditation practice—like any

other behavior—is multiply determined. It may have a lot of different meanings and be driven by a host of different motives. This is of course very much the Buddhist teaching of conditionality: there is no one simple cause and effect, but many ways in which even a single sitting is conditioned by many factors.

For example, at certain stages of the life cycle the major developmental task is the task of identity formation, of finding out who I am as a person, what values I am going to live by, who I am going to be. And if one is having trouble with that, or is ambivalent or conflicted about it, you can adopt the view of selflessness and egolessness and use it as a way of not really tackling this task.

Or practice can take the form of a narcissistic wish: through practice I am going to become self-sufficient and invulnerable, I am not going to hurt any more, I won't feel pain or disappointment. I think for most of us this is buried somewhere in our psyche, though it would usually be subtle. It may be a lingering kind of narcissistic ideal around the notion of perfection. Practice can be fueled by the hidden thought, "I'll be rid of all these yucky things about myself that I don't like." It's important to be aware of this impulse or motive to the extent to which it is there.

You see how these things can skew even how you pay attention and what you pay attention to. Attention itself is very conditioned. The day that you can sit down and be mindful is probably the day you don't need to practice anymore. It's like the old principle in psychoanalysis: the day you can come in and just free associate on the couch is the day you

don't need analysis anymore. In other words, mindfulness and free association have to be learned and sorted out from all of the potential distortions. But that's the wonderful part of practice, discovering all this and sorting it out, refining it.

Another unconscious motivation is often a fear of individuation, a fear of becoming independent and asserting oneself. This may show up as a certain passivity which could be rooted in avoidance of commitment and accountability. My experience with western practitioners is that we're too detached—we need to learn how to become attached, in a healthy way. When people talk about detachment and renunciation, it often means there is some phobic avoidance. True detachment or true non-attachment is really plunging in and doing something with your whole heart, giving yourself totally to the act, totally to the person or totally to the situation and not holding anything back, doing whatever you are doing completely and then letting go.

Sometimes practice can be driven by devaluation of reason and intellect, especially for people for whom thinking is painful or who don't like to think. It's the converse of people who find feeling painful. Or it can, even in the act of looking into the inner world, be an escape from the inner world. So I can say to myself, "Well, it's all just sensation, or it's just thinking, or it's just feeling." That's the classic instruction right? The classic way of noting, just noting; don't get all caught up in the content. But that in itself can sometimes be an avoidance, not really wanting to know what I'm thinking, not seeing my thought very clearly and not seeing what I'm feeling

ing bad. This is the basic Buddhist analysis of what leads to suffering.

Analytic theory uses different terms, but these are not really so different from Buddhist terms: trying to stay in the territory of good feelings, and stay out of the territory of bad feelings. (In fact we defend against good feelings almost as much as we defend against bad feelings—joy is actually quite a threatening emotion.) So we blind ourselves and we limit ourselves—and then we suffer because we now have a limited, stale and dull life, and we miss what we have shut out. It

also takes an incredible amount of effort to shut things out, and that is a big waste of time. To successfully blind yourself to a feeling takes an incredible amount of work.

This is basically also the Buddhist theory of karma. To understand the ways in which we recycle the same issues again and again is to understand the ways of working out our karma. Many Buddhists regard this process as rebirth between entire lifetimes, but it can also be viewed as moment to moment rebirth, hour to hour, five minutes to five min-

utes, etc.—you can use it for intervals of time. The notion of karma works so well in parallel to the analytic analysis of neurosis, because according to that theory once we blind ourselves we get into repetitive neurotic patterns and suffering that come up over and over and over again, even when we try to get out of them. One of the basic analytic clinical questions that you are always asking as a therapist, is "Where is this person stuck?" In both models desire and aversion set in motion a cycle of repetitive neurotic suffering.

Buddhist and Western Psychology

Charles Styron

I would like to make a few remarks about some of the differences between western and Buddhist psychologies. Please keep in mind that everything I say here will be both true and untrue; it will be an exaggeration or an oversimplification. I will be trying to stimulate some thinking by pointing to some rather general differences.

We are not doing this to take sides or to decide where to place our allegiance. It is a natural tendency to try to integrate things that are different, and by pointing out some of these differences, the issue of bringing them together in our consciousness becomes more deliberate. I want that to be the backdrop—how to find a balance between these two disciplines.

To begin with, we should recognize that a great deal of the Buddha's teaching emanates from experience in the meditative realm. Most teaching takes place in the hermeneutic realm, but that is not where the original understanding arises. In Buddhist psychology our knowledge is derived primarily through meditation practice. It doesn't stop there, but meditation is where it all starts. So much of the teaching that has come down to us over the millennia has come from people who have spent years in retreat.

Much of western psychology, experimental psychology for example, derives from the empirical realm, although some of it—the analytic traditions in particular—stem from the hermeneutic realm. Our knowledge of the mind comes from scientific and empirical investigation, from experimentation or analogues to experimentation, and trial and error; and some of those same techniques are em-

ployed in the meaning-making, hermeneutic realm. So western and Buddhist psychologies come from different ends of the spectrum, and they overlap in the hermeneutic arena, the arena where we talk with each other and try to make sense of our experience.

These arenas of experience of course do not have chain link fences around them—the boundaries are very permeable. In fact all are present at any moment. We live in a time and a culture which is forcing us to think, if we are so inclined, that the only matters worthy of our attention dwell in the empirical realm. And yet we all know in our hearts that this is not enough. A satisfactory marriage cannot be negotiated in the empirical realm alone. The meaning of Hamlet can not be discerned in the empirical realm.

In Buddhist psychology the data base is primarily internal. Our laboratory is the meditation hall and the crucible is our mind. The data base in Western psychology, even to a great extent in the analytic traditions, is somewhat external, phenomenal. Western psychology studies the object, behavior that is exhibited. Buddhist psychology studies the instrument, the mind itself. Another way of saying this is that Buddhist psychology places emphasis on process; Western psychology and culture places emphasis on result.

From the Buddhist point of view the result is seen to be empty. The teaching of emptiness is of course not nihilistic; emptiness is just the emptiness of the power of your conceptual mind to embrace reality fully. The teaching of the Buddha is to find the middle way be-

tween what he called eternalism, the belief in the immutable existence of everything and, nihilism, the belief that nothing actually exists. It is just the failure of the conceptual mind to embrace reality fully. Another way of understanding emptiness is through the doctrine of codependent origination, the notion that everything is in some fashion related to everything else around it.

I think it is fair to say that western psychology takes the world "out there" a bit more seriously than Buddhism does. From the Buddhist perspective, the world is understood to be largely a projection. This is not to say that there is no stuff out there, but what we understand in our minds to be out there is our projection onto that. And when those projections are undone through meditation practice, we begin to see that our experiences are comprised of aggregates. Things that seem quite solid at the beginning of the week begin to fall apart by the end of the retreat. Western psychology views the world much more solidly, the empirical view of matter.

There are no actual boundaries between the empirical, the intellectual, and the meditative, and ultimately they are just heuristics for breaking down a reality which is seamless and has no natural distinctions or categories. The light comes into your eye and it registers, but it doesn't register "tree." Tree is the label that you place onto it. It doesn't even register image; image is also a concept. The arising and falling of these things and their understanding, cannot be separated from experience of the tangible world, but they are not totally circumscribed by that world either.

A Tree Called Steadfast

Anguttara Nikaya 6.5.54

Once upon a time there was a royal fig tree called Steadfast, belonging to king Koravya, whose five outstretched branches provided a cool and pleasing shade. Its girth extended a hundred miles, and its roots spread out for forty miles. And the fruits of that tree were indeed great: As large as harvest baskets—such were its succulent fruits—and as clear as the honey of bees.

One portion was enjoyed by the king, along with his household of women; one portion was enjoyed by the army; one portion was enjoyed by the people of the town and village; one portion was enjoyed by brahmins and ascetics; and one portion was enjoyed by the beasts and birds. Nobody guarded the fruits of that royal tree, and neither did anyone harm one another for the sake of its fruits.

But then a certain man came along who fed upon as much of Steadfast's fruits as he wanted, broke off a branch, and wandered on his way. And the deva who dwelled in Steadfast thought to herself: "It is astonishing, it is truly amazing, that such an evil man would dare to feed upon as much of Steadfast's fruits as he wants, break off a branch, and then wander on his way! Now, what if Steadfast were in the future to bear no more fruit?" And so the royal fig tree Steadfast bore no more fruit.

So then king Koravya went up to where Sakka, chief among the gods, was dwelling, and having approached said this: "Surely you must know, sire, that Steadfast, the royal fig tree, no longer bears fruit?" And then Sakka created a magical creation of such a form that a mighty wind and rain came down and toppled the royal fig tree Steadfast, uprooting it entirely. And then the deva who dwelled in Steadfast grieved, lamented, and stood weeping on one side with a face full of tears.



Perhaps this is a true story—perhaps Steadfast is a name for the entire planet, not just a mythological tree. How else might we explain the earth's great forbearance and continued beneficence in the face of the rapacity and destruction we have wrought upon her? I think Gaia, the deity inhabiting the abode of our lovely Earth, was taught this lesson by Sakka in ancient times, and has with great patience and dignity put up with the worst we can render. If this is true, then she will not give us a sign when we have gone too far—perceiving this is our own responsibility.

Like every Buddhist story, this one works on many levels simultaneously. It is no accident that the great tree has five branches, or that the word used for each portion is *khandha*—the term

designating the five aggregates of form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. The man eating his fill of fruit is manifesting greed, craving or desire, and his breaking of the branch represents hatred, anger or aversion. These are two of the three poisonous roots out of which all unwholesome action arises (the third—ignorance—is always present when others occur). Thus the entire image is representative of a person being wronged by another or facing the eruption of their own latent tendencies for harmful action.

Notice that the story does not teach the "evil man" the folly of his ways, since there is often nothing one can do to avoid such people or such inclinations in oneself. The teaching is more about our response to transgression. Sakka's point is

And then Sakka, chief among the gods, went up to where the deva was standing, and having approached said this: "Why is it, deva, that you grieve and lament and stand on one side with a face full of tears?" "It is because, sire, a mighty wind and rain has come and toppled my abode, uprooting it entirely."

"And were you, deva, upholding the dhamma of trees when this happened?" "But how is it, sire, that a tree upholds the dhamma of trees?"

"Like this, deva: Root-cutters take the root of the tree; bark-strippers take the bark; leaf-pickers take the leaves; flower-pickers take the flowers; fruit-pickers take the fruits—and none of this is reason enough for a deva to think only of herself or become morose. Thus it is, deva, that a tree upholds the dhamma of trees."

"Then indeed, sire, I was not upholding the dhamma of trees when the mighty wind and rain came and toppled my abode, uprooting it entirely." "If it were the case, deva, that you were to uphold the dhamma of trees, it may be that your abode might be as it was before." "I will indeed, sire, uphold the dhamma of trees! May my abode be as it was before!"

And then Sakka, chief among the gods, created a magical creation of such a form that a mighty wind and rain came down and raised up the royal fig tree Steadfast, and its roots were entirely healed.

that it is self-centered to react petulantly to such an affront, and that the only suitable response is with kindness and generosity—to oneself as well as to others. As the Dhammapada so aptly says, "Never at any time in this world are hostilities resolved by hostility; but by kindness they are resolved—this is an eternal truth." (Dhp 5)

This teaching is given to Dhammika, a monk who complains of his treatment by certain laypeople. The Buddha reflects the situation back upon Dhammika, who as it turns out does not treat his fellow monks very well. It is an occasion to teach Dhammika, with the help of this story, the "dhamma of a recluse," which boils down to "not returning the insult of the insulter, the anger of the angry or the abuse of the abuser."

—A. Olendzki

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An open invitation is extended to all to stop by CIMC and browse through the library or join in any of the public sittings or Wednesday evening dharma talks. A growing number of out-of-town yogis have enrolled in our weekend retreats and several members of our local sangha offer rooms to these yogis either for free or at a nominal charge.

Speech as Skillful Means

Narayan Liebenson Grady

I find speech to be a very rich area of practice. Observing the ways in which we speak can be a guide to observing what is going on in our minds. What comes out of our mouths may be quite different from what we want to come out, or may be very different from what we think is coming out. We can use awareness of speech as a guide to the inner life, as a vehicle leading to self-understanding. It is also an essential area in which to express harmlessness. In the Buddha's discourses there are four guidelines that relate to the awareness of wise speech. These are: speech that is truthful, unifying, kind and useful.

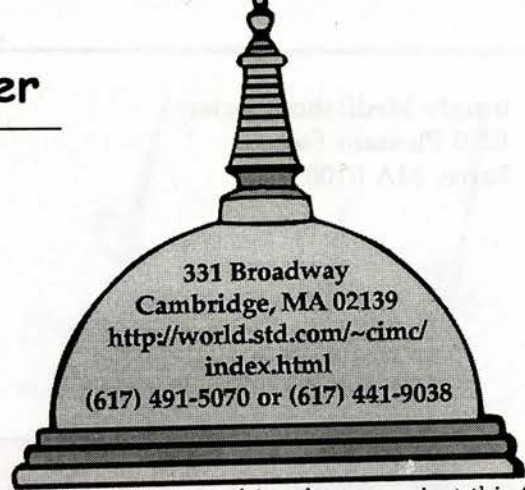
The first guideline is speaking truthfully; saying that which is true, accurate and direct. With the commitment to try to speak truthfully, the mind is quieter, softer, more open and at ease, and naturally more harmonious. Remorse, confusion and complications are often the results when we don't tell the truth. We may lie because of fear, anger, self-protection or desire, and because of insecurity and wanting to be seen in a certain way. We may notice that we often exaggerate or understate. We can look directly at the lack of confidence and the desire to feel full, and attend to the insecurity itself. In dharma practice we make a commitment to seeing the truth in all ways, and truthfulness of speech is a way of expressing that commitment. In dharma practice we make a commitment to non-harmful action; speaking truthfully allows for trust.

The second guideline is speaking in a way that unifies and brings people together. This expresses itself by trying to refrain from divisive speech—undermining, fault finding, and malicious gossip.

When we speak in an unkind way we may notice the judgmental mind. We may become aware of how contracted the mind is through resentment and self-righteousness. We may find that we speak in divisive ways because of a yearning for intimacy and alignment with others, and find that the consequence is further alienation. When we speak in a divisive way we lose ourselves, because we are out of harmony with our true nature. In refraining from divisive speech we may be giving others the space and acceptance that we want for ourselves. In this way our speech becomes a vehicle for discovering more compassionate connection to ourselves and others.

Refraining from divisive speech does not mean compliance with that which is inappropriate or unskillful. It does not mean suspending discernment. Sometimes in spiritual communities this particular aspect of wise speech is misunderstood and used in a conspiracy of silence. An important aspect of this guideline is to speak when something needs to be said, and to challenge what needs to be challenged. But checking our intention is helpful: "Do I just want to vent, or do I want to learn?"

The third guideline is kind or gentle speech versus harsh, arrogant, or cruel speech. A way of observing harsh speech is to notice the tone of what is said rather than the content. Many times we can see that the source of harsh speech has to do with impatience, this feeling of "I want something different to be happening than the way it is" or, "I want you to be different than the way you are." Noticing the edge in the voice is useful. Perhaps there is aversion or annoyance, maybe some self-righteousness mixed up



in it too, and it rubs up against this "I want-ness" that we have. We may notice that the impact of sarcastic, abusive or scolding speech is that it pushes people away. Aldous Huxley came to a realization before he died that all of spiritual practice is learning to be kind to one another. And, of course, learning to be kind to ourselves as well. It is all linked. One can't be kind to another without being kind to oneself, and one can't really be kind to oneself without being kind to others. There is a unity here, and paying attention to speech is honoring that unity.

The fourth guideline has to do with speech that is useful rather than speech that is really just a waste of energy. This aspect has very much to do with intention rather than content. One discovery that one makes on retreat is how much energy is used in speaking. Speaking hides boredom, loneliness, restlessness and fear. Can we notice when we are chattering on and on: Why are we chattering? What's going on inside? What is the reason for it? Perhaps we can attend directly to the loneliness, restlessness or boredom. Much of speech in our culture today is not so useful and deflects from real communication. When we attend to this area we may see how habitual our speaking often is.

At times something comes out of our mouths; we don't know how, we wish it hadn't come out, and yet there it is and it has an impact and causes a great deal of suffering. To bring compassion and gentleness into this whole area is essential if we are going to learn from it. The practice of wise speech has nothing to do with repression. It does have much to do with exercising restraint from speaking out of habit and in a harmful way. This kind of practice leads to a deeper level of inner freedom.

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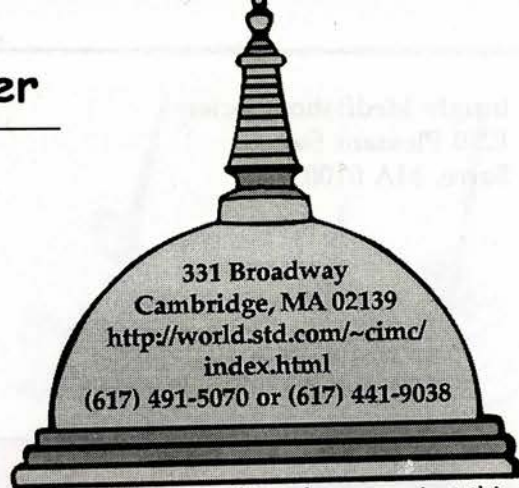
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No Greater Contentment

The Poem of Bhūta

Theragāthā 522-526

*yadā nabhe gajjati meghadundubhi
dhārākulā vihaṅgapathe samantato
bhikkhu ca pabbhāragato 'va jhāyati
tato ratim paramataram na vindati*

When the thundering storm cloud roars out in the mist,
And torrents of rain fill the paths of the birds,
Nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates.
—No greater contentment than this can be found.

*yadā nadīnam kusumākulānam
vicittavāneyyavatamsakānam
tīre nisimmo sumano 'va jhāyati
tato ratim paramataram na vindati*

When along the rivers the tumbling flowers bloom
In winding wreaths adorned with verdant color,
Seated on the bank, glad-minded, he meditates.
—No greater contentment than this can be found.

*yadā nisīthe rahitamhi kānane
deve galantamhi nadanti dāthino
bhikkhu ca pabbhāragato 'va jhāyati
tato ratim paramataram na vindati*

When in the depths of night, in a lonely forest,
The rain-deva drizzles and the fanged beasts cry,
Nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates.
—No greater contentment than this can be found.

*yadā vitakke uparundhiy' attano
nagantare nagavivaram samassito
vītaddaro vigatakhilo 'va jhāyati
tato ratim paramataram na vindati*

When restraining himself and his discursive thoughts,
(Dwelling in a hollow in the mountains' midst),
Devoid of fear and barrenness, he meditates.
—No greater contentment than this can be found.

*yadā sukhi malakhilasokanāsano
niraggalo nibbanatho visallo
sabbāsave byantikato 'va jhāyati
tato ratim paramataram na vindati*

When he is happy—expunged of stain, waste and grief,
Unobstructed, unencumbered, unassailed—
Having ended all defilements, he meditates.
—No greater contentment than this can be found.

Three entirely different moods are portrayed so sensitively in the first three stanzas of this poem by the monk Bhūta—the first wild and clamorous, the second bright and benevolent, the third dark and mysterious. Constant among these dramatic changes of nature is the meditating monk, content in any setting.

Mindful awareness allows all things to be just what they are, undisturbed by the reconstructions of the petty ego. Like the tiny figure in a Chinese landscape painting, the monk blends into phenomena because of his transparency of self.

The original tristubh meter is an alteration of 12 and 13 syllables per line, reproduced here in a 12 and 11 syllable translation that seems to work better in English. The Pali images are so richly textured in this poem, one could easily use twice as many English words and still not capture the nuances.

The second line alone, for example, evokes the image of twisted streams of water cascading down the steep streambeds of a mountain gorge, and then transfers the image to the heavens, where the plunging rivulets now course down the invisible tracks left everywhere in the sky by the passage of birds. That's a lot to fit into eleven syllables!

—A. Olendzki