

A joint newsletter of the  
Insight Meditation Society  
and the Barre Center for  
Buddhist Studies

# Insight



Spring 1998

IMS 1998 Retreat  
Schedule

BCBS 1998 Course  
Schedule

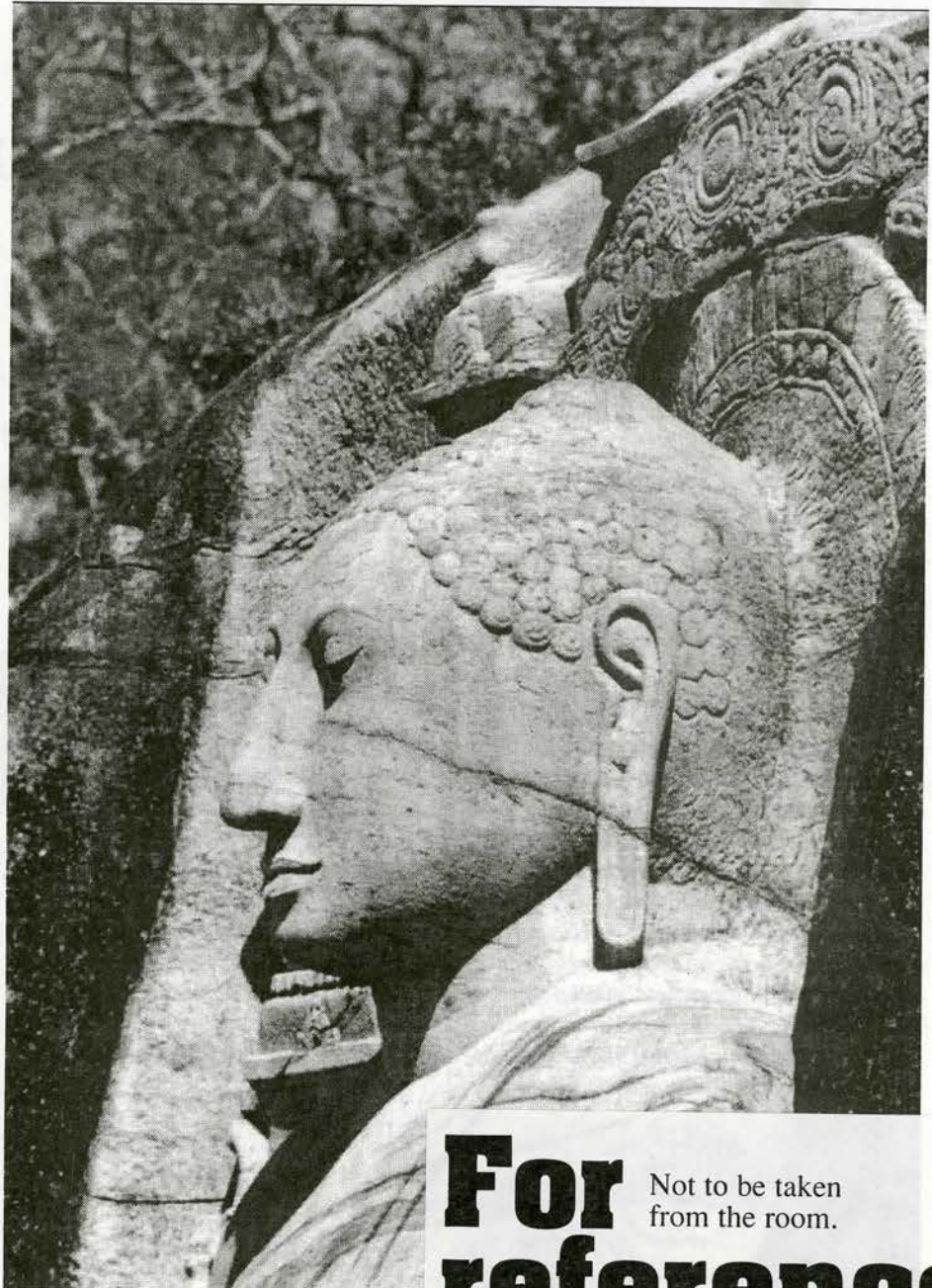
Teacher Interview:  
*Rodney Smith*

Buddhist Engagements:  
Contemporary Challenges

*Gavin Harrison*

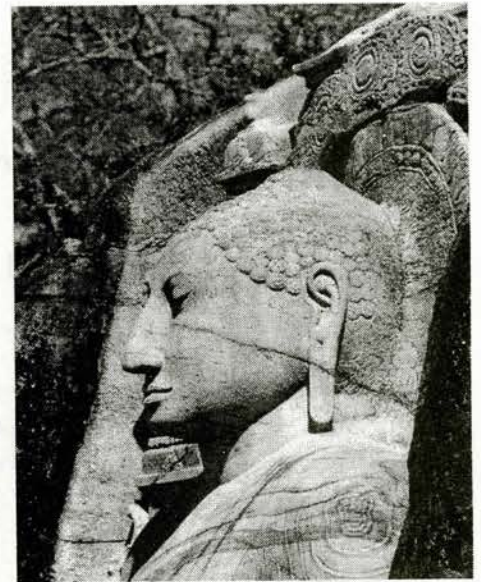
*Paula Green*

*Christopher Queen*



**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

*Editor*  
Andrew Olendzki

*Managing Editor*  
Mu Soeng

*Contributing Editor*  
Edwin Kelley

*Production Assistance*  
Sumi Loundon

*Photographs*  
Pages 3, 5, 11, 12  
by Libby Vigeon

*Line drawings*  
Pages 26, 36-37  
by Sumi Loundon

## In this issue

Spring 1998

Teacher Interview: <i>Rodney Smith</i>	3
Sangha Pages	8-9
IMS News Worth Noting	10-11
IMS 1998 Retreat Schedule	14-17
BCBS 1998 Course Schedule	22-25

*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.

### Buddhist Engagements: Contemporary Challenges

*Gavin Harrison*  
*Paula Green*  
*Christopher Queen* 29-35

**Sutta Studies:**  
*Devadaha Sutta* 36-37

**Pāli Poetry: Irresistible Force** 40

# May All Beings Practice Dying

An interview with Rodney Smith

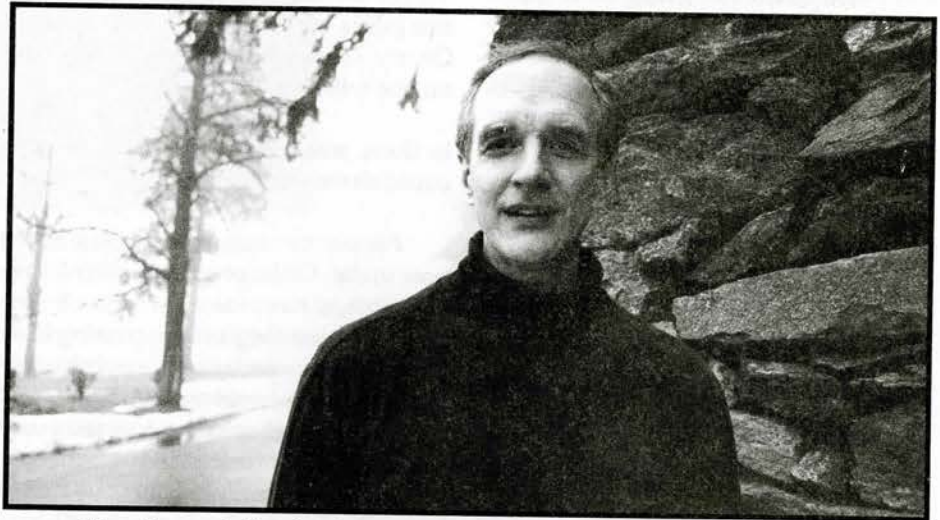
*Rodney Smith lives in Seattle, Washington, where he has been running a hospice. He has also set up hospices in Texas and Massachusetts, and teaches workshops nationwide on working with death and the dying. He has been offering vipassana retreats at IMS for many years, and has recently completed a book called Lessons from the Dying, to be published by Wisdom Publications.*

**You were on staff at IMS in the very early years, weren't you? What was it like in those days?**

When I first came on staff in 1977, one really didn't have to know much to find a place in one of the departments. They were hungry for bodies to fill positions. I began in a newly created position called a rover. My job was to rotate between the kitchen and maintenance. Besides putting up with a lot of Rover dog jokes, I really knew nothing about either cooking or fixing things. The first meal I cooked was a complete disaster (I multiplied the entire recipe by 13—including the cayenne and chili peppers). They quickly put me permanently in maintenance.

Then they sent me to plumbing school so I could learn how to fix the pipes. On my first job I shook the pipe I was working on and four other leaks occurred. I was useless. But for the most part, we were all that way—well meaning, good hearted, with a strong desire to practice; but by today's standards mostly useless if any unusual circumstances arose. Just after I left I remember the staff wanted to save money, so they turned off the water flow through the radiators to the annex during the winter while the building wasn't in use. Needless to say, the pipes froze and burst throughout the entire building. We were hopeless.

*Insight*



*I have been privileged to know many people who have come to deep levels of insight as they approach death. Their wisdom is the wisdom of the ages.*

**Where did you go from IMS?**

I had gotten a real taste of vipassana practice during my time at IMS, and only wanted to deepen that practice. So I went off to Asia and eventually became a monk in Thailand.

**How did you find your way from being a Theravada monk to a hospice worker?**

It was really an extension of my practice needs. I had spent several years on retreat, including a few years in Asia as a forest monk, and at some point felt my practice was becoming rather dry. I wasn't sure why. I had always thought that a monk's life would fulfill my spiritual needs, and it did for awhile; but later I began wanting to connect with people and work more with my heart.

I read Steven Levine's book *Who Dies?*, and said to myself, "I want to do that work." Upon returning from Asia, Ram Dass was staying at IMS, and he hooked me up with a hospice in Houston that had a spiritual focus. Fourteen years later, here I am, still doing the same work.

Dying has given me the same focus and interest in self-discovery that I had during those years of intensive meditation practice. In some ways, I never left the forest.

**What do you bring personally in your work with hospice patients from vipassana practice?**

The willingness to listen and learn from the dying. Nothing more, I hope, because I think we do a disservice to the dying (or anyone, for that matter) when we attempt to move a person's mind in any direction whatsoever. We are not there to intrude on the person's consciousness.

The preparation for death is often a sacred time. We join them in this human process as human beings, not as teachers or instructors of a good death. Our experience of having been with thousands of people at the edge of their life offers the hospice patient some reassurance around the process they are going through. But as Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says, "people die in character," and each one of us will go through it in our unique

way. The hospice worker honors that way by creating the optimum environment for the person to grow as he or she needs to grow, independent of our own ideals of what a good death may be for us.

Growth seems optimally to occur through listening, when the listener is not demanding anything or judging the speaker. Through the intimate contact of being heard, the speaker is able to grow in whatever way he or she determines.

---

*The preparation for death is often a sacred time. We join them in this human process as human beings, not as teachers or instructors of a good death.*

---

Now here is where vipassana really helps: to practice vipassana is to be a skilled internal listener. If we can externalize the practice so that we listen to others as we have learned to listen to ourselves, the same mechanism for growth is available to others as we have used on ourselves. As in our own internal practice, the awareness of others must be laced with affection in order for the trust and growth to be complete. Then we essentially offer the speaker a meditative environment, and the same healing can potentially occur within them as within ourselves.

Of course the other component of vipassana practice which is essential in working with death is the willingness to look, no matter where the looking takes us. That fearlessness is essential when you confront death, or death will beat you every time. Looking at death is as safe as looking internally. But there are just as many surprises!

**You are writing a book on the experiences you have had with the dying. Can you tell us the thesis of the book?**

The book is entitled *Lessons from the Dying* (Wisdom Publications, May 1998). I have been privileged to know many people who have come to deep levels of insight as they approach death. Their wisdom is the wisdom of the ages, but their lives are often very ordinary. Some-

how, without any special preparation or practice history, there often comes a very acute spiritual understanding. The question I pose in the book is: Can we access this perception now, and live accordingly, without waiting until we are on the edge of our own life? Through their stories and the exercises in the book, I attempt to make the lessons from the dying our own. The book is actually a practice guide on how to live with death.... Oh my, I shouldn't have said that—now no one will buy it!

**Is there one lesson in particular you could share with us?**

People have so many ideas about how to die. Often people who think they are spiritual have the most difficult time dying because they keep bypassing their very human experiences for spiritual reassurances. In hospice care, we call this dysfunctional theology. A person uses their practice to take them away from their humanness. They falsely believe that to be spiritual means they will die with love in their hearts or some other misconception. They can't tolerate what they really feel because it doesn't conform to their ideas about practicing all these years. It is sad, because practice is and has always been about being fully human. This means both screaming and loving, and loving the screams.

This is certainly an important lesson of death. Death is the great equalizer. We all die, and what we have been in the past means nothing to that moment (it actually means nothing to any moment). For each of us to go through that moment without pretension or regret, free of the past, is the optimum way to die—and to live! Like toothpaste through a tube, death squeezes the past out of us as we are dying. The dying often try to square themselves with their lives through life review. They will talk endlessly about the areas of their lives which still hook them and ensnare them in the past.

**We sometimes hear of exceptional phenomena occurring around the time of death. Has this been your experience?**

There is such profound mystery to death. I was with a dying man who was in and out of coma, and unknown to him his brother suddenly dies in an automo-

bile accident. The family and I meet in a distant part of the house to consider whether the dying man should be told about his brother. The family decides not to; because the dying man is so close to death himself, they feel it would cause him unneeded stress at a very critical time in his dying. We then go upstairs and down the hall the where the man is in bed. As we enter his room he looks up and says, "Why didn't you tell me my brother died?" Shocked, we ask him how he knew. He says, "I've been speaking to my brother in the tunnel." He then turns over and dies five minutes later.

Our hearts love stories such as these, because it breaths a breath of fresh air into our lives. We rejoice at the fact that the known world may not be all there is. Our mind is frightened by that fact, but our hearts delight in such revelations. Working with the dying brings a reconciliation to that split. We go through the fear to discover the wonder of death.

**Is the involvement of Buddhist teachers making a difference in our culture's approach to the processes of sickness, old age, and death?**

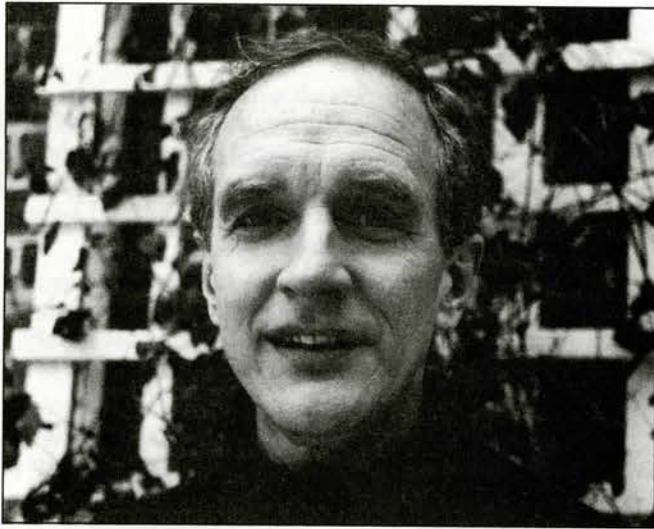
I think it is one of the factors. It is a chicken and egg question, since the readiness of our culture to look at death is the same readiness which allows Buddhism to gain a foothold. But more to the point, it is not just the Buddhist community which is alive to the subject. This well-spring of activity is the first indication that a secret has been revealed, and once opened can never be completely denied again.

---

*Often people who think they are spiritual have the most difficult time dying.*

---

The baby-boomer generation is aging. And I think the same consciousness which expanded through Woodstock and the anti-war protests, and then contracted back into the stock market and traditional living, may be reemerging as death approaches. It seems to me that an insight occurred to many people back then, which is returning its fruit now. There is much less denial of death, and Buddhism is playing a role in how people are examining the issue.



*Looking at death is as safe as looking internally.  
But there are just as many surprises!*

Of course the problem is still the intellectual versus the experiential modes of knowing. People are beginning to read about all the right ways to die and navigate the *bardo* [intermediate] states and near death experiences, and angels, and on and on. But what has this done for us? It certainly is the first step in the subject receiving the attention it deserves; but after all of the reading, what change has really occurred? People are still living in extraordinary fear of death and distorting their lives with forethoughts of grief.

---

***The power of death [is that] it gets your attention and takes you suddenly into the experience of life.***

---

It seems to me that it is here that Buddhism can have a real impact. It provides the tools to make the experience our own, to work with the fear and projection, and make death a workable moment. We are and have been doing this, but more is needed. Maybe meditation courses around the theme of death and dying can be offered. I think Buddhism can help this process through the instrument of inquiry—reflecting and investigating the issues all along the way.

**How has death and dying been a spiritual practice for you?**

It is very interesting, the multiple levels from which death touches us. Try

saying to yourself, right now, seriously, that you have only twenty seconds to live. What happens to your mind during those seconds? Immediately there is spaciousness. Immediately everything is simplified, and your way is clear. That is the power of death. It gets your attention and takes you suddenly into the experience of life.

If you really take it on as a spiritual practice, be prepared for a wild ride. Everything comes at you. Almost immediately, death begins to evoke a vast mystery. But the other side of the mystery is fear. It entices and threatens at the same time. So one of the first ways it works on us is through fear. "I've got to get myself together because I am going to die!" Death brings up many of the ways we hold on to life at the expense of clarity and compassion. There is a great deal of ego involvement at this stage.

I remember a time when I had been working in hospice about six months. It was Christmas time, and I couldn't believe anyone could be happy with so much death in the world. I was really taking it on: angry and frustrated with my inability to alter death, and yet totally enamored by it. I saw a father playing ball with his son, and suddenly realized that I was missing the joy contained in that scene. After that I began to balance the living and the dying, and to stop fighting so much with death. I used the first precept on it [the refraining from doing injury to anything], and let it live. This led into the next phase.

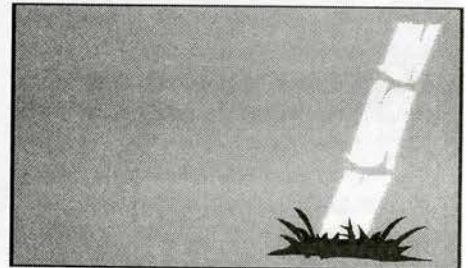
Now death begins to intercede in my perspective in a more subtle way. It becomes the psychic posture, the perceptive stance that we take towards all things. At this point, everything is weighed in light of death. For instance, one begins to irreversibly understand that everything ends in death. At that point all of our actions, purpose, and meaning begin to merge into that realization. What is life about? Is it about the products that die or the process itself? At this level we are not only talking about gross material products, but the subtle ways we "save" or "waste" time, or cultivate one state of mind as opposed to another state. But there is still separation here. Death is still outside peering in. We are cleaning up much of the fear, but there lingers the residual dualism of life versus death.

Now death begins to take us headlong into the whole issue of time. If everything within time dies, and death is the ending of time, what then is time? If something ends, it must by definition be finite, imaginary, and limited. As long as our spiritual practice is based in time, meaning we are growing, cultivating, and becoming, then death stalks us all along the way. This takes us to the final conclusion of death.

The way to freedom is to become death itself. In death there is no movement yet complete aliveness. To pursue anything in the light of death is to be fooled—so we stop all movement. No pursuits, no death; no building up, no destruction. The serious practice of death leads us into the deathless, and puts an end to itself.

**Are there any final words of encouragement you would like to offer us all?**

We are told that Plato, on his deathbed, was asked to summarize the *Dialogues*, his life's work. Coming out of a reverie, Plato said simply, "Practice dying." May all beings practice dying.





# An IMS Hermitage

During the past two years, IMS has been engaged in a strategic planning process, aimed at exploring different issues about where we are and where we're heading.

This lengthy undertaking was prompted largely by the steady growth of interest in retreats offered at IMS.

Many of our retreats are full, with long waiting lists, and some retreats are now being allocated by a lottery.

Our strategic planning process conducted a thorough inquiry into the opinions of a number of teachers and many of the yogis who came to IMS last year.

We asked questions about the quality of the retreat experience: What motivates people to come here? What prevents people from coming here?

What works at IMS, and what does not? How can we improve? Are we big enough, too big, could we get bigger?

Should we expand our current facility? Should we build an additional center somewhere else?

What we learned from this process is that most people love IMS just the way it is.

Only a few people were happy to think that we might get any bigger; most felt that if we did, it would somehow diminish the quality of the IMS retreat experience.

So, while we are still committed to the ongoing improvement of our existing facility and services, IMS has decided not to expand to allow for more people to attend the current scheduled retreats.

We agree that the current retreats at IMS are big enough.

There is, however, an idea that captured the imagination and interest of almost everyone involved: the creation of a facility that would provide the opportunity for on-going, intensive, long-term meditation practice.

We foresee a secluded, forest environment of great natural beauty, possibly located somewhere between IMS and BCBS.

It would be a small, self-contained center where twenty-five to thirty people would settle in for various lengths of long-term practice; where, over time, all the factors of enlightenment could mature and ripen.

As we now envision it, the hermitage would have a less formal structure than the current programs at IMS.

There would be no regular evening talks, no set schedule of sitting and walking, and teacher interviews would most likely occur once a week.

There would be a strong emphasis on individual commitment, and an expectation of some minimum stay.

Yogis would need to demonstrate that their meditation practice was sufficiently mature to thrive and benefit in this environment.

Joseph Goldstein has been an important contributor to this vision.

He has expressed an enthusiasm to commit much of his time and energy, both to the creation of this facility and to the guidance of those yogis who might eventually practice there.

We hope to enlist the creative and financial support of all those interested in helping realize such a vision.

We feel that the establishment of such a hermitage, dedicated to the welfare and happiness of all beings everywhere, will be an important step in the flowering of the Dharma in the West.

*Edwin Kelley*  
executive director

## *Planning, Planning, Planning.*

We are now beginning the design phase of the hermitage or long-term practice center (we are not even sure what to call it yet), and are interested in hearing from anyone who has ideas that might help us in our creative thinking.

What we are looking for is input on such broad issues as the layout of the site and the style of buildings to construct: what sort of look, feel, and configuration of buildings do we want to achieve? Of what materials might their facades be made?

We have a small information packet available for those who would like to know more about the site and the design criteria.

Please understand that anything you send us will be considered as *dana* to IMS; we are not offering remuneration for your work or ideas. They may (or may not) be used in our final design, without recompense to the originator of the idea.

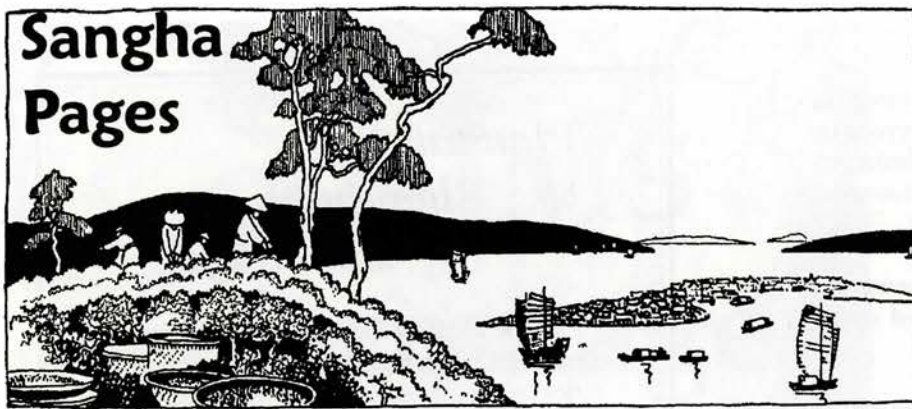
But if you have a creative itch to scratch and would like to offer IMS the benefit of your thinking, send us a sketch or a description, or ask us for an information packet.

Your offering may be as simple as a drawing on a napkin, or as elaborate as you wish.

And while I'm on the subject, a better name than "Long-Term Practice Center" would be nice....

Thank you!

Send inquiries to: Bob Trammell, IMS  
1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005



**For a Cambodian Nun  
Mothers Day 1997**

From the land of brutal slaughter,  
a jungle flower uprooted and replanted  
midst the granite, hemlock, maple, pine  
of that New England hillside,  
Ye Wan holds no tension in her eyes,  
holds no sight,  
just a clear space from which she smiles.

"Mahhk, you have muthah?"

The question, like she, arises out of nowhere;  
conversation, it seems, but more.  
Being blind, she listens closely  
to hear the unseen.

"Yes, she lives in Washington State," I answer.

Yet I feel an orphan, a child left behind.  
The world that raised me rushes off  
in its mad pursuit of happiness,  
while I, alone and lonely,  
show up hungry at her door.

Here are but shoddy trailers.  
Women, bent with age, seek their footing in the snow.  
The bathroom floor sags with rot.  
The shrine has plastic flowers.  
The wiring makes me nervous.  
Why, then, when I am here, am I so happy?

"Would you be my mother, Ye?" I think.

No need to ask.  
She bore no child to become a bosom for all.  
Holding the box of cookies I offer like a chest of gold,  
she chants for my well-being,  
and the gift, now released from self,  
flows out to all that breathes.

*Mark Hart*

**Containing the World**

Containing the world,  
we sit.

Emptying out the worlds,  
we sit.

Leaning forward, fear is felt.  
Leaning backward, staleness arises.

In gratitude for the pain,  
we sit.

All self-distinctions seen as limiting,  
we sit.

Allowing the 10,000 things their freedom  
we receive freedom from them in return,

And we sit.

*A Yogi*

Listen to it rain  
Each drop full of emptiness  
Greed, delusion, pain

*Elazar Aslan*

Thought is the lantern  
I cling to in the darkness  
Searching for moonlight

*Elazar Aslan*

Throw yourself into your retreat, wallow in it  
Be a pig in the mud  
A dog in a cow pie

Eat with gusto the soul food and the body food

Throw yourself into whatever you do  
Relish putting pants on  
Rejoice in doorknobs

After all, this chance to live may not come again.

*Ernest Isaacs*



## The Simple Things I learned from being a Potwasher

In the first week I learned that dirty pots become clean and clean pots become dirty.

In the second week I learned that different people wash differently but the pots get cleaned just the same.

In the third week I learned that if the water is too cold, it won't cut the grease, and if it's too hot it'll burn your hands.

In the fourth week I learned that if you don't put things away properly then you run out of space quickly.

In the fifth week I learned that aggressively attacking stains with a steel wool pad takes a lot of energy; allowing them to soak until they're ready to come off, does not.

In the sixth week I learned that walking into a kitchen full of pots and thinking of the Indian summer is dukkha, but walking into the kitchen full of pots and feeling the water element is not.

In the seventh week I learned that if you want to feed the world, you best be ready to clean some pots.

In the eighth week, I learned that a pot full of gifts for the hungry, becomes a pot of leftovers that have to be put away, then a pot of scraps that have to be thrown away, then a pot of stains that have to be rubbed away before it is empty enough to be useful.

In the ninth week, I learned about relative conditioning when I went from "yum, slightly burnt sweet potatoes, my favorite to oh, slightly burnt sweet potatoes, damn those pans are going to be a bitch to clean."

In the tenth week I learned that when my hands are greasy, even the clean pots feel greasy.

In the eleventh week I learned that long after I'm gone the pots will still be washed.

In the twelfth week I learned that leaving friends borne of silence is much more difficult than friends borne of speech, for when the speech is gone, the silence still remains.

*Elazar Aslan*



*Insight*



## On a Greyhound Bus

Remember this when  
the house is still,  
when the quiet

numbs your brain,  
when all you long for  
is the sound of a human voice.

Remember this when  
the calm seems like death  
the serenity so seamless

you have become  
part of the furniture.  
Remember this when

your peaceful and orderly home  
takes so much work  
you wish

there were an easier way.  
And remember to pray for  
the mad woman unable to stop

her strident raving  
for five hours,  
and the three toddlers

out of control  
screaming constantly,  
their mother distraught,

and the fat man, sleeping,  
on your right,  
crushing you...

for we're all  
rolling towards the same  
dark tunnel.

*Carol Sherman*

I am collecting Buddhist stories which are suitable for children to be published as a children's book. If you know of any suitable stories or have any favorites, I would love to hear about them. Full source acknowledgement will be given. Thank you. Kevin Moulder, 11 Heritage Road, Hingham, MA 02043.

# IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING



## BREATH *by* BREATH

THE  
LIBERATING  
PRACTICE  
OF  
INSIGHT  
MEDITATION

*foreword by*

Jon Kabat-Zinn

**LARRY ROSENBERG**

*with David Guy*

In Larry Rosenberg's first book, "*Breath by Breath*," he brings to life a key component of the Buddha's teachings, the *Anapanasati Sutta*. Larry illustrates the timelessness of these teachings by making them accessible and practical for each and every one of us. Through his precision, clarity and humor he helps us to understand how something as simple as contemplation of the breath can lead us to freedom.

Although the practice may first be done in a formal setting, Larry is very gifted at demonstrating how this same practice can be used in any moment in life, and how to work with it in everyday situations. One is left with the feeling that liberation is not something that is out of one's reach; but by just breathing breath by breath, or living moment by moment, transformation is possible.

It is a book that offers clear instruction to the beginning meditator. There is guidance for working with many of the difficult states that may arise in practice by simply paying attention and connecting with our experience. The practice itself helps to bring about a steadiness of mind that makes this possible.

There is also a lot that is offered to the experienced meditator. It contains valuable commentary on this sutra. He not only takes us step by step through the sixteen contemplations of the breath outlined in the sutra, but also offers guidance on the condensed method of practice. It is a commentary that is based on years of personal experience, and is explained through contemporary examples.

Larry Rosenberg is a founding and resident teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center (CIMC) and a guiding teacher at IMS. "*Breath by Breath*" is published by Shambhala.

*Myoshin Kelley*

## Sayadaw U Lakkhana To Teach at IMS

At the end of May we will be blessed with a guest visit from one of Burma's most revered meditation masters, Sayadaw U Lakkhana. Sayadaw is the abbot of Kyaswa Monastery, located along the Irrawaddy River in a more remote part of the Sagaing Hills in Upper Burma. Sagaing is the heart of the

Buddhadharma in Burma. A small city just west of Mandalay, it encompasses over 700 monasteries which are home to more than 7,000 monks and nuns.

Sayadaw is best known for his joyful, loving and wise presence, as well as his work establishing the Wachet Jivitadana Sangha Hospital, adjacent to his monastery, which serves both monks and nuns without charge. For the past two years Sayadaw has taught a retreat

for westerners, which he founded with Steven Smith, at Kyaswa Monastery. He has been assisted by Steven Smith in teaching these retreats, as well as by Michele McDonald-Smith and Joseph Goldstein this past January.

Sayadaw has kindly agreed to visit IMS and teach with Steve and Michele during their scheduled Metta retreat from May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998.



**Staff life  
at IMS  
revolves  
around the  
winter  
staff retreat**



## ↑ OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE ↓

### WORK RETREAT PROGRAMS AT IMS

Do you ever ask yourself: "How do I apply mindfulness when I'm not sitting but doing ordinary things?" If so, the IMS work retreat program may be just right for you. It is designed to make the connection between the formal sitting and what we do when we are outside of the meditation hall.

There is a lot of work to do here at IMS. We depend on work retreatants to help us, particularly in the housekeeping and kitchen. In doing work retreat you are giving IMS a form of dana through your work efforts. There is yet another bonus: it costs you only \$25, which represents the application processing fees. This is true whether you stay one week or two months! For further information, contact the administrative assistant at (978) 355-4378 x19 to ask for our Work Retreat Information Packet.

### VOLUNTEER for the NEXT GENERATION

IMS is trying to help cultivate the mindfulness, compassion and wisdom of the next generation, and we need your help to do it! During this summer's **Family Retreat** (Aug. 3-8, 1998) we need a number of people to act as group leaders for the children. These people should have experience in meditation, teaching or working with kids. We will also need volunteers to serve in the kitchen and housekeeping departments.

The annual **Young Adults Retreat** (June 24-28, 1998) is also an event requiring a lot of supervision, and we are in need of volunteers to lead discussion groups and activity groups. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact IMS at (978) 355-4378.

## Join the IMS Staff

- Deepen Spiritual Investigation
- Explore Work as Spiritual Practice

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

*IMS Asks:* Vipassana retreat experience, commitment to daily meditation, adherence to the five precepts, a dedication to service, ability to live and work harmoniously with others, and an 18 month commitment.

If you have office skills, cooking experience, computer skills and/or a maintenance background, please consider applying.

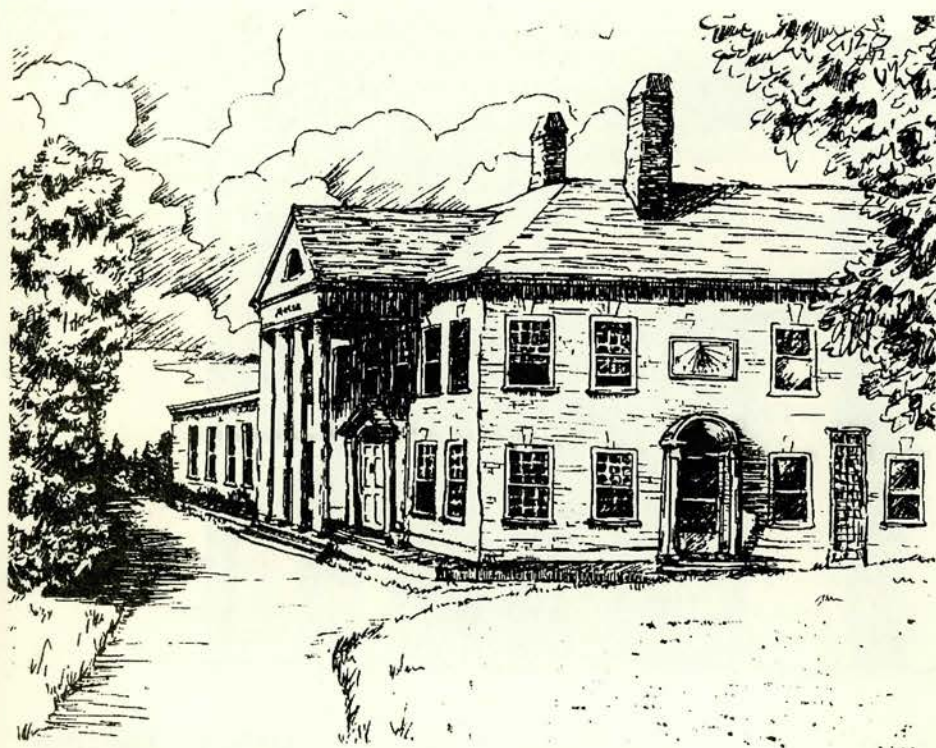


Ongoing Vacancies

*Call or write for more information:*

Insight Meditation Society, Personnel Coordinator, 1230 Pleasant St. Barre, MA 01005  
tel. 978/355-4378 fax 978/355-6398

# INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



**I**nsight 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 5 AM and ends at 10 PM. 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 simple single and double 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; meditators with vipassana experience are welcome to attend 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 \$32 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 (ask for ext. #19) 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 1998 RETREAT SCHEDULE

IMS, 1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005 Tel: (978) 355-4378

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



- |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |             |                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Jan 30-Feb 1</b> | <b>DANA WEEKEND (2 days)</b><br><b>Michael Liebenson Grady and Sarah Doering</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>DANA</b> | <b>Donation</b> |
|                     | <p>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: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 10, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.</i></p>                                                                   |             |                 |
| <b>Feb 6-13</b>     | <b>METTA RETREAT (7 days)</b><br><b>Sharon Salzberg, Sylvia Boorstein, and Carol Wilson</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>SS1</b>  | <b>\$230</b>    |
|                     | <p>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: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.</i></p> |             |                 |
| <b>Feb 13-22</b>    | <b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)</b><br><b>Sharon Salzberg, Sylvia Boorstein, and Carol Wilson</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>SS2</b>  | <b>\$285</b>    |
|                     | <p>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: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.</i></p>                                                                                     |             |                 |

Feb 6-22	<b>METTA &amp; VIPASSANA RETREATS (16 days)</b> <i>Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.</i>	SS3	\$465
Feb 27-Mar 8	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)</b> <b>Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady</b> The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without 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	\$285
March 13-16	<b>INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days)</b> <b>Rodney Smith and Narayan Liebenson Grady</b> 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	\$130
March 21-28	<b>WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days)</b> <b>Christina Feldman and Narayan Liebenson Grady</b> 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	\$230
April 3-5	<b>WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)</b> <b>Larry Rosenberg and Sarah Doering</b> See description for Feb 27-March 8 course above.	LR2	\$100
April 10-19	<b>BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIONS (9 days)</b> <b>Ajahn Amaro--Amaravati Sangha</b> This retreat will be a time to explore the way of the Buddha as taught in the Theravadan monastic tradition. There will be instructions in a variety of different meditation techniques, together with a focus upon the development of a wholesome attitude towards the use of all techniques. Through daily devotional and reflective chanting (morning and evening <i>pujas</i> ), the cultivation of mindfulness, loving-kindness and the many concentrative and reflective practices, the expansiveness and simplicity of the Buddha's Path is revealed. <i>Note: Retreat participants are requested to keep the 8 monastic precepts, which include not eating after noon. Candles and incense will be burned during the early morning and evening pujas.</i>	AV	\$285
Apr 25-May 3	<b>INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)</b> <b>Christopher Titmuss and Sharda Rogell</b> 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	\$260
May 9-16	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)</b> <b>Narayan Liebenson Grady and Michael Liebenson Grady</b> See description for Feb 27-March 8 course above.	NLG	\$230

May 22-25	<b>MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND RETREAT (3 days)</b> <b>Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith</b> The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 6-16 retreat. (See below)	MEM	\$130
May 29-Jun 6	<b>METTA RETREAT (8 days)</b> <b>Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and Marcia Rose</b> <b>Guest Teacher: Sayadaw U Lakkhana</b> 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, revealing our fundamental connectedness to all life.	SM1	\$260
June 6-16	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days)</b> <b>Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and Marcia Rose</b> 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.	SM2	\$310
May 29-Jun 16	<b>METTA &amp; VIPASSANA RETREATS (18 days)</b>	SM3	\$515
June 24-28	<b>YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT (4 days)</b> <b>Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, and others.</b> This retreat is specifically for teenagers. It will offer beginning meditation instruction, half-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 14-19 only.</i>	YA	\$150
July 3-12	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT--For Experienced Students (9 days)</b> <b>Larry Rosenberg and Corrado Pensa</b> See description for Feb 27-March 8 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>	LR3	\$285
July 17-26	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)</b> <b>Christina Feldman and Anna Douglas</b> An opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom and compassion in a supportive environment. Emphasis is placed upon developing sensitivity, attention and awareness in sitting and walking meditation to foster our innate gifts of inner listening, balance and understanding. Silence, meditation, instruction and evening talks are integral parts of this retreat.	CF1	\$285
Aug 3-8	<b>FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)</b> <b>Marcia Rose and Jose Reissig</b> 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 a minimum of an additional \$35 for professional child care coordination.</i> Your registration <b>MUST</b> specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.	FAM	Adult \$175 Child \$55
Aug 15-23	<b>BORN ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1954 OR AFTER RETREAT (8 days)</b> <b>Christopher Titmuss and Sharda Rogell</b> This retreat is primarily intended for people in their 20's, 30's, and 40's. The retreat will refer to such issues as responsibility, career, the future, roles through the Dharma of liberation. <i>People born before July 4, 1954 who have participated in three residential retreats with Christopher or Sharda anywhere, are also welcome.</i>	CT2	\$260



Sep 4-7	<b>LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days)</b>	<b>RD1</b>	<b>\$130</b>
Sep 4-13	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)</b>	<b>RD2</b>	<b>\$285</b>

**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.

Sep23-Dec16	<b>THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)</b>	<b>3MO</b>	<b>\$2,350</b>
Sep23-Nov 4	<b>PARTIAL #1 (6 Weeks)</b>	<b>PART1</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>
Nov 4-Dec16	<b>PARTIAL #2 (6 Weeks)</b>	<b>PART2</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>

**Joseph Goldstein, Carol Wilson, and Steve Armstrong (all 3 months);  
Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith (1st half only);  
Sharon Salzberg and Kamala Masters (2nd half only).**

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: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 15, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.*

Dec 28-Jan 6	<b>NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (9 days)</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>\$285</b>
--------------	------------------------------------	-----------	--------------

**Jack Kornfield, Rodney Smith, Tara Brach, Susan O'Brien and Ralph Steele**

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.

*Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 20, 1997 will be included in the lottery. Others may be waitlisted.*

Susan O'Brien has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1980 and has studied with a variety of teachers.

Ralph Steele has been practicing meditation for more than 20 years. His teachers include Lama Yeshe, The Karmapa and Steven Levine, and he has worked with Jon Kabat-Zinn for 10 years doing mindfulness-based stress reduction. He currently is in teacher training with Jack Kornfield.



## SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

**Ajahn Amaro** began his training in Thailand in 1978 with Ajahn Chah and later joined Ajahn Sumedho in England. He was a senior monk at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England for some years and now resides in Mendocino, California in a newly opened branch monastery in the forest meditation tradition.

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

**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.*

**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.

**Corrado Pensa** teaches vipassana retreats in the U.S., England and Italy. He is the founder of Association for Mindfulness Meditation in Rome, a professor of Eastern philosophy at the University of Rome, and a former psychotherapist.

**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 *Loving Kindness and A Heart As Wide As The World.*

**Rodney Smith** is the author of the forthcoming book, *Lessons From the Dying.* He has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975 including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching retreats and working full time in hospice work since returning to this country in 1984.

**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.

**Carol Wilson** has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1971, most recently with Sayadaw U Pandita. She has been teaching since 1986 in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

## 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.

**Anna Douglas**, in addition to eighteen years of vipassana practice, has a background in Zen, psychology and the arts. She is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock.

**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.

## VISITING TEACHERS

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

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

## 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.

## REGISTERING FOR A RETREAT AT IMS

### Registrations:

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

### Payment:

- The cost of each retreat is listed in the course schedule. A minimum deposit is required to confirm a registration—see table below.
- Please pay by check or money order in U.S. funds only; we cannot accept credit cards or foreign drafts, including those from Canada.
- If possible, please **prepay** the entire retreat cost.
- Checks are cashed only when the registration is confirmed or when you include a donation. If you are put on a waiting list, your check will be cashed when there is an opening.
- Please request a scholarship application form if you need one. A deposit of \$25 for weekend courses and \$50 for all others must accompany the application.
- A deposit of \$750 for 3MO and \$350 for PT1 or PT2 is required even when applying for a scholarship.

### Cancellation Deadlines:

- The first deadline for most retreats is six weeks before opening day.
- The final deadline for most retreats is four weeks before opening day.
- Please note the special deadlines for the 3-month retreat.
- Cancel fees apply if you are called off the waitlist and do not accept the vacancy.

ALL CANCELLATION FEES ARE DONATED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Deposits		Cancellation or Change Processing Fees		
Course Type	Min. Deposit	Before 1st deadline	On/after 1st deadline	On/after final deadline
2 & 4 day	Full cost	\$25	\$100 / 6 wks. before	Full cost/4 weeks before
5-26 days	\$150	\$25	\$100 / 6 wks. before	\$150 / 4 weeks before
Family Retreat	\$50 per adult	\$25 per adult	\$50 / 6 wks. before per adult	\$50/ 4 weeks per adult before
3-month	\$750	\$50	\$150/ March 1	\$750/ April 15
Partials 1/2	\$350	\$50	\$150/Mar.1/May 1	\$350/ Apr.15/ Jun.1

## I.M.S. Registration Form

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

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

Course Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Course Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check here \_\_\_\_\_ if new address.

Old address \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Retreat Experience \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I have attended a retreat at IMS before.

\_\_\_\_ I have not attended a retreat at IMS before.

M/F \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Do you snore? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_

Physical disabilities or special needs \_\_\_\_\_

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

Deposit Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

(See table for cancellation dates.)

Dates you will be here:

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

I have added \_\_\_\_\_ to the deposit as a donation to IMS.

**IMS tries to accommodate MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivities) and other medical problems when possible. Please indicate above if you have a special medical need that would be important for your room assignment. For a sheet of information about the IMS environment as regards chemical sensitivities, contact the office. The manager will not make room changes on or after opening day unless due to medical need.**

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 food, 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.

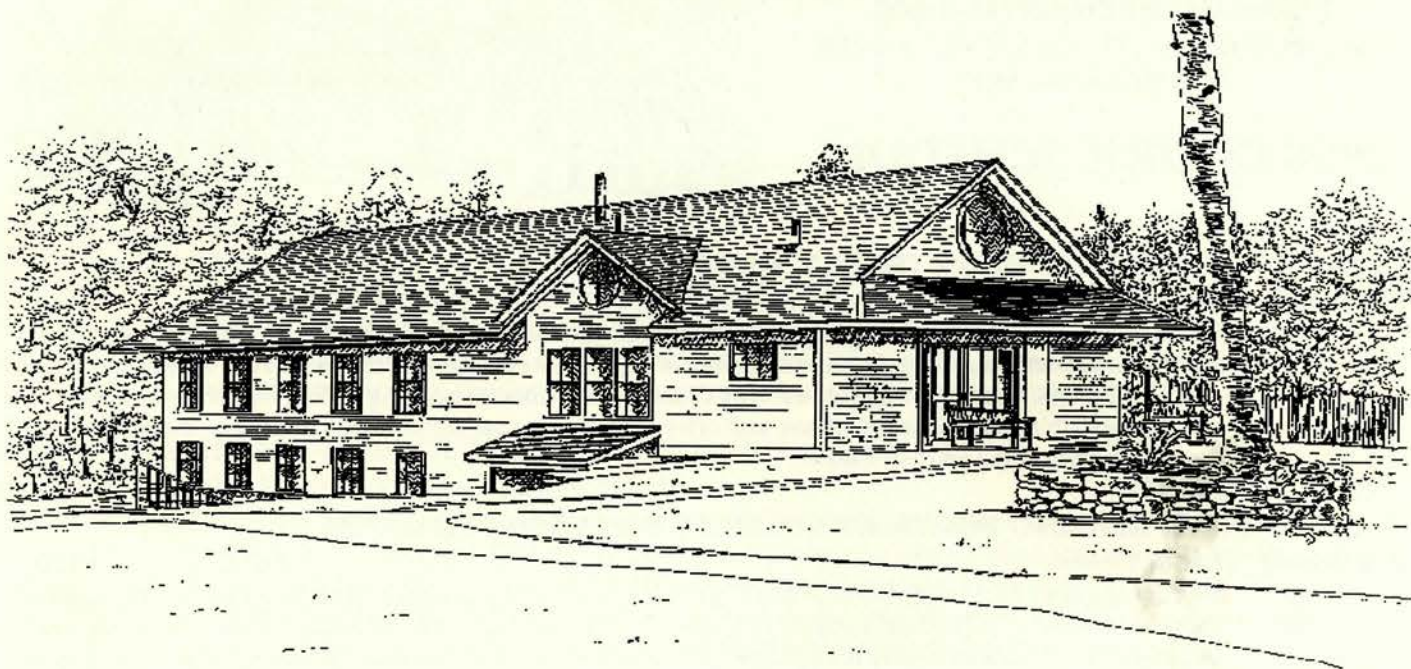
**Dāna Retreat:** Each year, IMS has a weekend retreat with no fixed course rate—come and practice and give what you can.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

- IMS Membership:** A direct contribution to each year's operating costs, memberships help keep the daily rate as low as possible. An annual 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



**T**he Barre Center for Buddhist Studies is a non-profit educational organization 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 the current world. 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 a scholar-in-residence programs. The study center also coordinates a publication program of dharma books and translations for free distribution, *Dhamma Dana Publications*. Its vision calls for dialogue between different schools of Buddhism and discussions with other religious and scientific traditions. The emphasis is on the inter-relationship 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, just a half mile from the Insight Meditation Society (IMS). Founded in 1989, BCBS provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teaching. After extensive renovations in a 225-year old farmhouse, there are now residential facilities, a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A dormitory and classroom/meditation hall provides space for larger workshops and more course participants. Recently constructed cottages provide secluded space for our Independent Study Program.

## Our facilities are handicap equipped.

**The Library** at the study center is a major resource to be used by both students and visitors. Our collection consists of the complete Canon in Pali, with the most complete English translations currently available, several thousand volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and a variety of journals and newsletters. We continue to expand our current collection into a respectable research library for Buddhist Studies.

**Courses and Registration:** The study center courses offer a wide range of learning opportunities, both for the novice and the advanced student. If you have questions about a course, please call the office at (978) 355-2347 or e-mail us at [BCBS@dharma.org](mailto:BCBS@dharma.org).

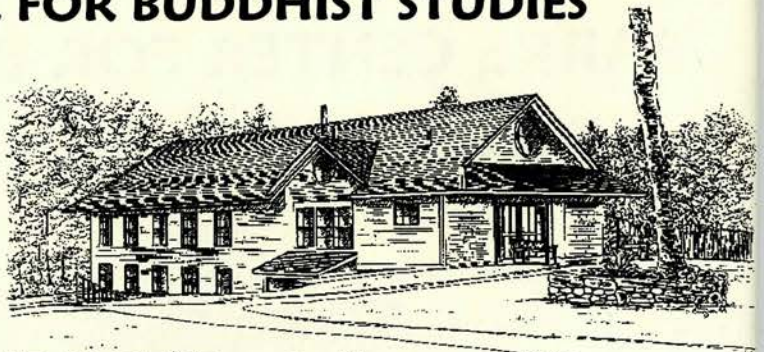
**Registrations** are accepted only by mail or in person. We cannot accept registrations by phone or fax. Early registration is advised since our capacity is limited. Upon receipt of your deposit, a confirmation will be mailed to you with information on travel details and what you need to bring. Please see the registration information policy on page 28.

**Registration fees** at BCBS are set as low as possible to cover housing, food and the overhead expenses of the center; in most cases the fees also cover a modest honorarium for teachers. The study center welcomes (tax-deductible) donations to help support the services and programs we provide.

The study center makes scholarships available to those who might not be able to attend a course due to financial need. We are committed to BCBS being available to all, so please do not hesitate to inquire into the scholarship program.

# THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

149 LOCKWOOD ROAD  
 BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS 01005  
 Voice (978)355-2347 Fax (978)355-2798  
 bcbs@dharma.org



## 1998 COURSE SCHEDULE

- May 15-17 (Weekend)** **CH'AN BUDDHISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE**  
**Master Sheng-Yen** **98SY \$120**  
 Ch'an (Japanese: Zen) was a uniquely creative and reformatory impulse in Chinese Buddhism from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. In our own time, Ch'an/Zen has decisively influenced how Westerners understand Buddhism. Master Sheng-Yen, the only Chinese Ch'an master teaching in the West, will revisit the spirit and goals of Ch'an in its original phase, and offer guidance in practice methods leading to the realization of the authenticity of the spirit of Ch'an.
- May 22-24 (Weekend)** **THE HEALING POWER OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM**  
**Paula Green** **98PG \$120**  
 Socially engaged Buddhism is a heartfelt expression of our compassion (*karunā*), friendship (*kalyāna mittā*), and interdependence (*paṭicca samuppāda*). Compassionate action rooted in wisdom and awareness creates transformation, simultaneously bringing peace and healing to ourselves and to the world. This workshop will explore the traditional teachings of the Buddha as they guide and inform us, lighting the path of social responsibility and moving each of us in our way toward positive and life-giving engagement with society.
- June 5-7 (Weekend)** **PATIENCE**  
**Daeja Napier** **98DN1 \$120**  
*Vissudhimagga*, the classical compendium of Buddhist meditational practices, refers to Patience (*khanti*) as a protective power. As one of the ten *paramis* (perfections), patience is a purifying factor in our awakening process. It is also essential in the ripening of Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity (the four *Brahma Viharas*). It instills our practice with a quality of non-reactivity and deepens the capacity to embody mindfulness in daily life. This weekend will consist of presentations from classical sources, discussion, sitting and walking practice, and individual interviews.
- June 13 (Saturday)** **NO-THOUGHT**  
**Mu Soeng** **98MS2 \$45**  
 The teaching of "No-Thought" or "Not-Knowing" by Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch, was the beginning of a new revolutionary approach to Buddhism in medieval China. In time, this movement known as Ch'an (Zen) became perhaps the most influential form of East Asian Buddhism and has greatly influenced Western understanding of Zen. This workshop will use the *Platform Sutra* of Hui-neng as the basic text to trace the development of Ch'an in China and its relevance to our own times.
- Jun 21-Jul 3 (2 Weeks)** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: THERAVĀDA STUDIES**  
**Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty** **98THINT \$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 historical Buddha's teachings as rooted in the canonical literature of Theravada Buddhism. Morning sessions will be spent examining historical and cultural issues such as the world into which the Buddha was born and lived, his biography and 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 *Tipitika*.

- July 12-24  
(2 Weeks) **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHĀYĀNA STUDIES**  
**Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty** 98MHINT \$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 *Prajñāpāramitā* texts; the two major schools of Mādhyamika philosophy; and the teachings of the Yogācārā 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). The course will culminate with a look at the arrival and interface of these Mahayana lineages in contemporary American culture.
- August 15  
(Saturday) **LESSONS FROM THE DYING**  
**Rodney Smith** 98RS \$45  
What insights can we learn from the dying? Does the realization of a time-limited life create its own spiritual urgency? This course will explore the wisdom which comes from facing our death. Through texts from the Buddhist tradition, stories, and examples of people who died a mindful death, we will investigate how to make their wisdom our own. The day will consist of meditation, reflections, and exercises.
- August 16-21  
(5 Days) **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: VĀJRAYĀNA STUDIES**  
**John Makransky and Visiting Faculty** 98VAJINT \$300  
This course will concentrate on the Tantric Buddhism of India and Tibet. It starts with an exploration of the development of Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism as a movement of late Indian Mahayana that profoundly influenced Tibet, whose genius lies in its appropriation of a remarkable diversity of Indian religious methods toward rapid identification with Buddhahood in all its dimensions. We will then study ancient and contemporary Tibetan writings in translation: a systematic treatise of Buddhist practice and experience from a Tantric perspective, sacred biographies of Indian and Tibetan Tantric masters, spontaneous Tantric songs, and short manuals of visionary practice and experience. The course will explore fundamentals in a general enough way that formal tantric initiation is not required.
- August 29  
(Saturday) **EVOKING THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE**  
**Gavin Harrison** 98GH \$45  
The Buddha urged an accommodation of our mortality within the fullness of life. During this day-long program using Buddhist death awareness practices, reflection and meditation, we will explore that shared sacred ground of peace, contentment and love beyond the grip of our fear of death.
- Sept 6  
(Sunday) **AWAKENING FROM THE DREAM: THE FOUR LIBERATING REFLECTIONS**  
**Joseph Goldstein** 98JG \$45  
How do we get ensnared by the seductive scents of samsaric (conditioned/deluded) existence and how can we find our way to what the Buddha called "the ancient royal city" of liberated awareness? This workshop will investigate these questions through meditation, talks and discussion, focusing on the four reflections that turn our minds towards the Dharma of liberation. Topics that will be touched on include the preciousness of our human birth, how to vitalize and make relevant our understanding of impermanence, the aspiration of bodhicitta and freeing the mind from samsaric entanglements.
- Sept 12-19  
(7 Days) **BHĀVANA PROGRAM: FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS** 98BHAV1 \$350  
**Andrew Olendzki and Myoshin Kelley**  
In the *Satipatthana Sutta* the Buddha gives the core instructions for the practice of vipassana or Insight meditation. Using this sutta as the basis for our study and discussion period, we will explore what the Buddha said and how it can be interpreted. As we proceed through the day in silent meditation there will be opportunities to work directly with the four foundations of mindfulness as described in this sutta. See page 27 for more information on this new program offering.
- Sept 20-25  
(5 Days) **ABHIDHAMMA: CLASSICAL BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Andrew Olendzki** 98ABHI \$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 application.

- Sept 26**  
**(Saturday)**      **WORKING WITH FEAR**  
**Narayan and Michael Liebenson Grady**      **98LG**      **\$45**  
The energy of fear can overwhelm us or provide an opportunity for awakening. We will explore various Buddhist practices which develop balance and insight while working with fear. The day will consist of presentations, discussions, and meditation practices to work with this aspect of our existence.
- Oct 2-7**  
**(5 Days)**      **BRAHMA VIHĀRA INTENSIVE--A CONTEMPLATIVE AND MEDITATIVE INQUIRY**  
**Daeja Napier**      **98DN2**      **\$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 full course, one may register as a day student for each of the themes taught separately from Saturday to Tuesday (Loving Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, Equanimity, respectively), and take part in a modified schedule. Details of full course or single-day participation available on request.*
- Oct 11-16**  
**(5 Days)**      **INTRODUCTION TO THE PALI LANGUAGE**  
**Andrew Olendzki**      **98PALI**      **\$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 five-day residential course, students will receive a thorough grounding in the background of the language, its pronunciation, chanting styles, basic grammar and vocabulary, and will begin being able to read simple texts with the help of a translation. The primary text we will work with is the Satipathana Sutta, so the material will be of immediate usefulness and interest to meditators. No prior language study is expected.
- October 18**  
**(Sunday)**      **DEPENDENT ORIGATION: THE WHEEL OF LIFE**  
**Christina Feldman**      **98CF**      **\$45**  
The second noble truth of Dependent Origination is sometimes described as the heart of Buddha's teaching. Not a mere theory, this teaching on the wheel of life illustrates the ways in which our personal world is formed on a moment-to-moment level and the ways in which we misperceive and misconstrue our world. This day-long program is a reflection, through teachings, discussions and meditation, upon the twelve links of dependent arising and how to cultivate ways to get off the wheel.
- October 24**  
**(Saturday)**      **SUFFERING AND JOY IN BUDDHAHOOD AND CHRISTHOOD**  
**John Keenan and Robert Jonas**      **98CB**      **\$45**  
Buddhist tradition points to the suffering inherent in the conditioned world (*samsara*) and the joy of liberation (*nirvana*) in transcending it. The Christian tradition emphasizes the deep integration of suffering and joy in the mind and heart of Christ. This annual gathering will explore the approaches to suffering and joy in these two traditions through presentations, shared silence, and the sharing of our contemporary spiritual journeys.
- October 31**  
**(Saturday)**      **LOTUS SUTRA**  
**George Bowman**      **98GB2**      **\$45**  
The Lotus Sutra (*Saddharmapundarika-sutra*) is one of the most important of the Mahayana wisdom texts. It is thought to contain all the Buddha's teachings, and proclaims them as one Dharma. In the beginning of this sutra the Buddha says that the meaning of Avalokitesvara is "to see the world and be seen by the world." This true reality between the world and Avalokitesvara is a supporting, sustaining and compassionate one. In this workshop, we will explore the nature of clear seeing and the willingness to be seen.
- Nov 6-8**  
**(Weekend)**      **ADVANCED DZOGCHEN: NATURAL MIND, NATURAL MEDITATION**  
**Lama Surya Das**      **98SD2**      **\$120**  
This weekend is designed for people who have had experience in Dzogchen practice. It incorporates awareness techniques for awakening to primordial inner freedom and finding the natural meditations in your daily life. The weekend program focuses on the View, Meditation, and Action that directly introduces the freedom, purity and perfection of Dzogchen, the Natural Great Practice. *Admission by application.*



**Nov 14**      **TRANSITIONS: LIFE AND PRACTICE**  
**(Saturday)**   **Jack Engler**

**98JE**      **\$45**

For most of us, our lives have moved on a lot since we first started practicing. Few of us are the same now as when we started. Have our attitudes and feelings about practice changed as our life has changed? How do we view our life now, and how do we see the role of practice in it? Do we approach practice differently? Has our initial aspiration for practice changed? What is easier? What is more difficult? During this program we will look at our practice in the context of home, work, children, growing older, caring for aging parents, experiencing death and loss, and our own mortality. Allen Chinen's *Elder Tales* and Sogyal Rinpoche's *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* will be our guide for these discussions.

**Nov 21**      **HAPPINESS**  
**(Saturday)**   **Sharon Salzberg**

**98SS**      **\$45**

The Buddha's teachings are remarkably simple and of one piece. Throughout his forty five years of teachings, he pointed out that all beings wish to be happy and free from suffering. The Buddha also taught that through the practice of meditation and the cultivation of loving-kindness, we can begin to live in a way that is commensurate with our own extraordinary potential for happiness rather than the unhappiness we fall into through ignorance. This day will explore the experience of happiness through discussions and guided meditation.

**Nov 29-Dec 4** **ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY**  
**(5 Days)**      **Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty**

**98PSY2**      **\$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 specifically 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 classical and contemporary perspectives on psychology. Includes visiting faculty from the Institute of Meditation & Psychotherapy.

**Dec 12-19**   **BHĀVANA PROGRAM: UNDERSTANDING THE HINDRANCES**  
**(7 Days)**      **Andrew Olendzki and Susan O'Brien**

**98BHAV2**      **\$350**

The Buddhist teachings point to certain unwholesome forces of mind called hindrances — sense desire, aversion, slothfulness, restlessness and doubt — as factors contributing to our suffering. During this week of study and practice, we will draw on the Pali suttas to clarify our understanding of the hindrances and their antidotes. We will bring that understanding into our practice to work directly with these difficult mental aspects. Learning to see the hindrances clearly provides the tools needed to help loosen their hold on the mind both in our meditation and in our lives. See page 27 for more information on this new program offering.

## **TEACHERS AT THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES**

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

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

**Jack Engler, Ph.D.**, teaches psychotherapy at The Cambridge Hospital in Cambridge, MA, and is on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, with a private practice in Cambridge. He is a board member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and is the co-author, among oth-

er books, of *Transformations of Consciousness* with Ken Wilber and Daniel Brown.

**Paula Green, Ed.D.**, directs Karuna Center in Leverett, Mass., and teaches peace-building 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*.

**Gavin Harrison** has practiced vipassana since 1980. He teaches worldwide and is the author of *In the Lap of the Buddha*. He has deep interest in finding ways to bring the ancient teachings alive in accessible and authentic ways within the circumstances of this time. Gavin lives with AIDS.

**Myoshin Kelley** has practiced in the vipassana and Zen traditions for many years, and has done intensive practice both in Burma and at IMS. She is a teacher-in-training under the guidance of senior teachers at IMS.



## Independent Study Program

The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies has recently completed the construction of two cottages on our rural campus; these have been designed to support our visiting teachers and our growing Independent Study Program.

The idea of the program is simple: Anyone who is looking for a place to quietly and independently investigate the Buddhist tradition, through the integration of study and practice, is welcome to come to Barre and stay in one of the cottages or in one of our single rooms.

**Who might best make use of this program?** Dharma teachers who want to study the textual tradition to enrich their teaching; professors of Buddhism or a related field who want to get a start on that next book and gain some space to begin or deepen their practice; graduate students who are trying to finish their thesis or write an article; meditators who want to delve into a new dharma book or follow some line of inquiry in our library; college students who need a peaceful environment to write that big term paper for Buddhism 101; retirees who finally have the time but lack the contemplative environment for their investigations of dhamma...the list goes on.

**What facilities are provided?** In addition to the two new cottages, we have fourteen single rooms available for independent study students. In each case we provide pillows and blankets, but because of limited laundry facilities we ask you to bring your own sheets and towels. The study center has a well-stocked library and a lovely meditation hall, both of which may be used any time there is no other program scheduled.

**What about meals?** The study center does not cook every day, so self study students will need to take care of their own food needs. The two cottages are equipped with full kitchens; students can bring and prepare for themselves whatever is needed (vegetarian). The single rooms are without facilities, so students will prepare their food in the center's main kitchen.

**What does it cost?** There is no fixed fee for this program--arrangements can be made to fit each individual's circumstances. A guideline we have used in the past is \$25 per night,

but we are dedicated to making this resource available to everyone, and have a work scholarship program for those of limited means. Others may have the means to pay more than this, and donations to support the program are most welcome.

**What does the program include?** The program is tightly focused around the theme of investigating Buddhist teachings through integrating study and practice. It is not a place for long-term meditation retreat (that is better done at IMS); nor is it a place to socialize or to stay in Barre while pursuing other interests; nor is it suitable for writing a great spy novel. We ask each applicant to submit in writing a course of study they intend to follow, and this is subject to approval.

**How long can I come?** The Independent Study Program has two major tracks, one short and one long. The *short track* is between three and seven days, and is renewable for similar periods. This period of time is suitable for shorter, more focused projects or for your first time at the study center. The *long track* is between one and four weeks at a time, and is more appropriate for longer projects.

**When is the space available?** Many of the facilities devoted to the independent study program are also used for our other regularly scheduled programs, so not all dates and facilities are available. Scheduling the best use of our limited resources is always a challenge, so please expect to be flexible.

**How do I apply for the program?** Simply call or write us at the study center and ask for an application. Here you will be asked to describe your background a bit, what dates you have in mind, and to sketch out the course of study you wish to pursue. Upon receipt of this information we will contact you and either confirm your stay or ask for more clarification.

The Independent Study Program is an exciting new initiative for the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. We hope the program will attract scholars--inviting them to experience the benefits of a contemplative environment for their work. We also hope to attract meditators--inviting them to explore the benefits of the academic exploration of the Buddhist tradition.



is dedicated to finding creative and effective ways of integrating both study and practice as two interdependent modes of inquiring into the Buddhist tradition and into human experience. Complimentary ways of doing this may be found in the two programs outlined below. Each program integrates study and practice, but in different proportions: One offers mostly study with some practice; the other offers mostly practice with some study. Each approach has its unique benefits, and you might want to try both programs.

## Nālanda Program

Nalanda is the name of the great Buddhist university of classical India where scholar/monks from many different traditions lived, studied, debated and practiced together. Using a range of intellectual and discursive tools, the members of this diverse community supported one another's deep inquiry into both the theory and practice of the Buddha's teaching.

The Nalanda Program at BCBS offers a model for the serious and intensive academic study of Buddhism, such as one might undertake at a college or graduate school. Six to eight hours of daily classroom time is balanced by morning and evening meditation sessions, as well as plenty of informal time for discussion, reading or walking in the countryside.

The intention of the Nalanda Program is to meaningfully engage and explore the sophisticated Buddhist tradition in ways that help us understand the context of the Buddha's teaching and its deeper meaning for our own lives and world.

The core faculty of the study center is augmented during these programs by a diverse group of visiting faculty from area colleges, universities, institutes and meditation centers.

### Upcoming Nalanda Program offerings include:

**TWO WEEK PROGRAMS** begin on Sunday evening and conclude midday on the following Friday. A two-day silent meditation retreat is held on the weekend between the two weeks.

**Jun 98: Theravada Studies.** *Andrew Olendzki & visiting faculty.* A thorough examination of the history, culture, literature and thought of early Buddhism as preserved in Pali sources.

**Jul 98: Mahayana Studies.** *Mu Soeng & visiting faculty.* An exploration of the vast range of Mahayana Buddhist teachings as they developed in India and other countries of Asia.

**Jan 99: Buddhist Studies.** *Andrew Olendzki, Mu Soeng & visiting faculty.* A broad overview of both early (1st week) and later (2nd week) Buddhist history, literature, art, thought, etc.

**ONE WEEK PROGRAMS** begin on a Sunday evening and conclude at noon Friday. Meditation sessions morning & night.

**Aug 98: Vajrayana Studies.** *John Makransky.*

**Sep 98: Abhidhamma Workshop.** *Andrew Olendzki.*

**Oct 98: Introduction to Pali Language.** *Andrew Olendzki.*

**Dec 98: Buddhist Psychology.** *A. Olendzki & visiting faculty.*

## Bhāvana Program

Bhavana is the traditional Buddhist term for developing the mind, combining the techniques of meditative tranquility and well-directed inquiry. Concentration settles the mind in calmness and gathers its latent powers, while wisdom directs the focused mind and allows it to penetrate to the heart whatever it investigates. Cultivated together, each strengthens the other.

The Bhavana Program at BCBS offers a new model for combining the benefits of meditation with insight into the teachings of the Buddhist tradition. Most of the day is spent in silent meditation, much like a classical vipassana retreat at IMS, but each day also includes a three hour study period of issues complementary to the practice of meditation.

The intention of the Bhavana Program is to skillfully direct our attention to the issues thought crucial to the cultivation of wisdom, and to allow the meditative time and space needed for these perspectives to sink in and become meaningful.

Each program is co-taught by a scholar and an experienced meditation teacher, and the study component is carefully selected to harmonize with the sustained practice of meditation.

### Upcoming Bhavana Program offerings include:

**Sep 98: Foundations of Mindfulness.** *Andrew Olendzki & Myoshin Kelley.* A close reading of the Satipatthana Sutta, the classical text of mindfulness (*vipassana*) practice.

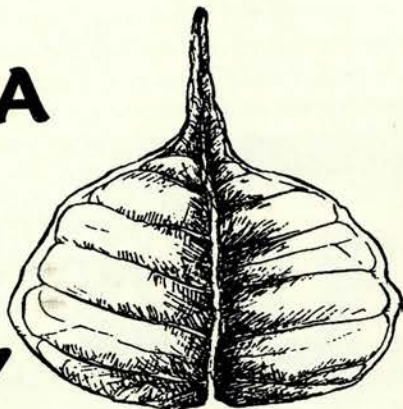
**Dec 98: Understanding the Hindrances.** *Andrew Olendzki & Susan O'Brien.* Working experientially with the hindrances of desire, ill will, slothfulness, restlessness & doubt.

**Mar 99: Insight into Impermanence.** *Andrew Olendzki & Carol Wilson.* Using various textual phrases to help draw our attention to the arising and passing of our experience.

**Jun 99: Dogen's Zen.** *Mu Soeng and Issho Fujita.* Working with passages from Dogen's literary masterpiece, the Shobogenzo, in light of *zazen* and meditative experience.

**Note:** Due to limited residential space at the study center, admissions to the Bhavana Program is made by means of application. Please call the office (978 355-2347 or [bcbs@dharma.org](mailto:bcbs@dharma.org)) for an application form. Some priority will initially be given to experienced meditators and previous study center students.

# 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 1998 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 1998 catalogue call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-SEED or fax us at (413) 772-5599  
Please visit us at Dharma Seed @ [www.dharma.org](http://www.dharma.org)

## 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. **PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHECK FOR EACH COURSE REGISTRATION.**

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.

Feel free to call (978) 355-2347 any day 9AM-5PM for up-to-date information about course offerings, availability of spaces, or 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  
Barre, MA 01005  
(978) 355-2347 Fax: (978) 355-2798  
email: [bcbs@dharma.org](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

# BUDDHIST ENGAGEMENTS:



## Contemporary Challenges

This section of the *Insight* newsletter is dedicated to exploring the diversity of perspective found among some of the many different teachers associated with the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. Gavin Harrison is a teacher of meditation; Paula Green is a peace activist; Christopher Queen is a scholar teaching at Harvard University. These distinct voices contribute to a larger choir which is increasingly being labeled *Engaged Buddhism*.

These voices originate in the issues and concerns of lay Buddhist practitioners, who are the overwhelming majority of participants in American Buddhism. All three teachers have evocative things to say about the role of Buddhism in our world today, and about their own practice as an active engagement with social issues. We present these perspectives in the hope that it will initiate a meaningful examination of these and related issues among the readers.

I must confess that wherever I am, a large part of my heart always lies in Africa where I was born. Among the tribes in Africa, there is a tradition that I would like to retell:

Soon after her wedding, the young newlywed wife leaves the hustle and bustle of the village and goes out to a quiet place in the surrounding veld. Perhaps she finds a tree under which she sits, or a river beside which she places herself. And there, she listens. She listens for the song of her child that has yet to even be conceived. She listens, perhaps, for the chords, the words, the strain, or the melody of that child.

And when it comes to her, and when she knows it well, she returns to the village and teaches it to her husband. And it is the song that accompanies their lovemaking when the child is conceived. It is the song that the midwives sing around the bed of the birthing mother. And it is the song that she sings when she holds the newborn infant to her breast for the first time; when she feeds it, it may be sung as a lullaby. It is the song the father sings when he holds the child upon coming home from work at night, when together they watch the glorious African sun setting behind the mountains.

It is sung on the birthdays of the child, when the child moves into adolescence and puberty. It is sung together with the song of the spouse on their wedding day. The final times that the song is sung is at the deathbed of the old man and the old woman, and then finally for the very last time, when the body is lowered into its grave, at the funeral.

## Flying in the Face of Death

by Gavin Harrison

*From a talk given at the  
Cambridge Insight Meditation Center  
on May 5, 1997.*

It was upon a misty mountaintop in Zululand, in a place called Ixopo, that I met Joseph Goldstein for the first time, and where I was introduced to insight meditation practice. Ixopo is where Alan Paton based his novel *Cry the Beloved Country*. He called it a land more beautiful than the singing of it. For me, meditation practice has become my way of beginning to remember my own song, long forgotten.

For me, my song whispers and calls me to know who I am beyond the self-images, beyond the expectations I have of myself and the expectations that others have of me. Who am I beyond the ideas, and all the labels I carry? Beyond Gavin, the gay man...Gavin, the white South African...Gavin, the person living with AIDS...Gavin, the Certified Public Accountant? Who am I, beyond Gavin, the Buddhist meditation teacher? Or Gavin the author? Who am I beyond the drama and catastrophe of living with AIDS now?

I wish so much to live an honest and authentic life that is true to my song that, thank goodness, at long last begins to emerge from the clouds of forgetfulness that have kept it hidden for so long. And within the melody of my song, I hear the promise of true love, of real happiness,



and of that peace which passes all understanding...way beyond the ideas that I have of these things.

These days, the lens through which I experience my life is steadily shifting from darkness into light as I begin to remember the strains of my song and its melody more clearly. The words of that song remind me that who I am, fundamentally, is simply a great and pure love that I long ago forgot. And my song reminds me to remember this constantly.

The love has always been there, hidden, denied, swamped perhaps by the circumstances of my life at times, smothered by fear and confusion, but blessedly ready always to return to the light of day. Gone is what feels, to me, to be the absurd notion that this love needs to be found outside of myself, that it needs to be madly cultivated or accumulated. My song was simply always there. I forgot. And now, I am beginning to remember again.

For me, certainly, the highest expression of love is awareness. To be fully present with oneself and another is the truest love there is. For me, the practice of meditation, the practice of mindfulness, is essentially a practice of love. Unconscious love, I feel, is an impossi-

bility, an oxymoron; it cannot be. To be aware is to love. We forget...and then we remember.

For me, meditation is about becoming more sensitive and more loving. The reverberations of a careless word, or an incautious action, an unloving thought, seem now too painful to ignore. And this deepening sensitivity begins to calibrate, for me, an ever more kind and loving

path in life, expressed both inwardly and outwardly in the world. It feels as though love has blossomed into a great kindness in my life, in spite of everything.

As my heart whispers its wisdom more clearly than ever, I trust this stirring way beyond the chattering of my mind. I find myself able to move more fully out into the world, trusting that the resources of my heart are always there.

When I first heard the teachings of the Buddha years ago, it was his wild, radical passion for truth, and his defiance of external authority that got my own blood boiling, and catapulted me on a spiritual journey. "Believe nothing," he said, "merely because you have been told it, or because it is traditional. Do not believe what your teacher tells you out of respect for your teacher. But when, through your own thorough examination, you find a way leading to good and happiness for all creatures, then follow that path like the moon follows the path of the stars."

I knew then that his words, spoken two and a half thousand years before, were also speaking to my own broken, confused, and closed heart now. It really inspired me to set forth on my own journey. He was not telling me what to do. He was not telling me what the truth was. And he certainly was not threatening me with damnation or punishment. He was simply suggesting that I listen, look, and find out the truth for myself.

I believe that deep down, in places we are barely aware of, there is for all of us an abiding yearning for connection, for union, and for oneness with each other and with all of life. This thirst for an experience of relatedness, I believe, gives birth to the passion, courage, and effort necessary to begin and continue the spiritual journey. Can we create a place where our hearts and minds might be joined, far beyond the ludicrous notion that we are ultimately isolated, separate, disconnected and alone?

In this sacred land, when one person is hungry, we are all starving souls. When someone is oppressed, we are all violated. When a woman is imprisoned, we all are in jail with her. When a man is laid off work, or humiliated and ostracized, we share his pain immediately. And when a person is diseased, we are all infected. No one is immune.

In truth, one suffering soul anywhere, I believe, tears each of our hearts apart. We are all a strand of that great web of interconnection out of which none of us could fall, ever. We only think we can. We are not alone. We bleed together. We cry together. We rejoice together. We are infected together. And we heal hand-in-hand, undivided, together always.



A few years ago I was admitted to a hospital in Northampton. My temperature was 106.7 degrees. I had pneumonia. My friends and doctors all thought I was checking out, or, that I would suffer the irreparable brain damage, which usually occurs when fever gets that high. I lost twenty-five pounds. I was drenched in sweats day and night. My mind was dull and I was absolutely exhausted.

In the middle of all of this, one night, I awoke from this nightmare with a jolt. My mind was crystal clear and alert. Surrounding me, in every direction, was a deep comforting velvet blackness. It appeared to have great depth. And below me, stretching way ahead to a pinpoint in the distance, was a river of salmon-apricot colored rose petals. The petals shimmered and glowed in contrast with the pitch black all around me. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I can never forget it.

I was sitting cross-legged a fraction above the river, and I silently and effortlessly skimmed the surface as I slowly moved ahead. At the point where the river disappeared, far, far in the distance, a bright white light shone back towards me. The closer I approached this light, the stronger I felt the impact of it. The white light embraced me with an experience of limitless, full, and absolute unconditional love, quite unlike anything I had ever experienced before. The closer I got to this light, the deeper the sense of coming home. I felt bathed, saturated and infused with light. A feeling of safety and protection embraced me as the light reached out to me, and as I moved towards it. My heart erupted with great joy, as I remembered this great love. Some-

how, I had forgotten it, but now I knew it once again. It was old. It was familiar.

At this point, my mind got really busy. "This is far out!" I remember thinking, "This is cool! I am dying. It is all so beautiful. I remember this love. I am on my way home. I haven't suffered all that much really!" I remember feeling a glimmer of self-satisfaction, also. Instantly, I did a 90 degree turn and fell straight into the blackness to my right. My eyes opened and I was back in the hospital bed. Nurses were all around me. There was life-support equipment at my bedside. Clearly there had been some panic. My fever broke and the crisis was over. My overwhelming memory of that night, far more than the visual imagery of it, was of the loving light.

I have no idea, really, what happened. But what I am left with is an unshakable knowing that the movement towards death, for me, is in some unfathomable way a movement to a profound and boundless love long forgotten. At any time I am able to evoke the joy, relief, and gladness I felt that night in hospital. More than ever these days, death feels like a short step, really, from one garden to another, a return to a love long forgotten.

What increasingly defines my life these days, particularly since that night, is an unquenchable thirst to know the deepest and most unconditional love possible within the fire, complexity and drama of my life now. I believe it is my birthright to know this love expressed both within me, and outside of me; along with, and not defined by, the circumstances in which I live.

We live in a fragile world. We know that life, breath, wellness, hope, joy, pain, are all, in the end, transitory, undependable, and changing. And in the end, the fire of our passage stirs us to the great mystery of life. With courage and strength, listening deeply, hand-in-hand, we set foot together on that succulent ground where we ask the ancient questions:

Who am I? Who is it that dies? What is secure? Why this fear, rage, guilt, and confusion? What is faith? Where is love, joy, kindness? Where is my song?

We journey together to the heart of life. We admit to every cell of our being the inherent insecurity of all we value, treasure and covet. Here nothing is dependable, reliable or stable. In this sacred place, we stand together naked, vulnerable, courageous. And we come, finally, face-to-face with death and all the fear that rages there.

In our willingness to face this truth of our mortality, it is my experience that blessedly, thankfully, and miraculously, we unleash the alchemy of the heart which gives birth to the peace, ease and contentment we always yearned for. The irony is manifest. What we feared most holds the key to our birthright which has alluded us for so long! Coming face to face with death must birth us into a fullness of life unfettered by the thirst for a security and certainty that was an impossibility right from the beginning. Finally, in the end, the joke seems to be on us. In collusion with the fear of our death, we paint a nightmare in our minds and recoil in terror from our handiwork. While all the time, behind and beyond the illusion, ironically, is the promise of all the blessings we've prayed so hard for.

I know today, in my life, a degree of contentment, ease, equanimity, quiet joy, and a peace in life that far exceeds my wildest dreams of what I ever thought could be possible for me. And, while my life may seem like the designated tragedy and the identified catastrophe, the big joke, really, is that we all, in the end, are in the same boat. It is just that some of us feel the rocking of the waves a little more distinctly than others.



## Dharma on the Front Lines

By Paula Green

*From a weekend workshop on Engaged Buddhism held at BCBS on June 1, 1997*

### Finding a Path

My path to the field of social change began early and has progressed steadily over time. In early years I completed an masters degree in social justice and human rights, working in New York in the anti-war and civil rights movements, having my first taste of intercommunal relations that would later become my life work.

After some years, I became aware of my very limited and incomplete understanding. I needed to know more about persons, not just systems. "Who am I? Who are you? Who are we in relationship to each other? What's going on inside of me? What do I do with my anger and judgment?" Thus, I moved from the work of systemic change to the task of personal change, eventually earning a doctoral degree in psychology and becoming a psychotherapist.

During those days of study, I again realized that my field of awareness was finite and restricted. I had a sense that, yes, I knew myself better and I could fathom the connection between individual behavior and social systems, but an aspect of my own nature remained inaccessible. I could not give a name to this missing dimension of self. At that time an acquaintance was coming to the then-young IMS for a weekend vipassana retreat and asked if I would come along. During that weekend, and in the many years of exposure to Dharma practice since, I discovered the missing piece: spiritual growth, or the cultivation of wisdom and compassion.

### Person, Spirit and Society

For me, and perhaps for some of you, the challenge now lies on this intersection, the juncture where the social, the personal and the spiritual come together. How do we keep this convergence in balance? All the wheels want to go flying off in their own directions, and we often fall out of harmony. It feels to me that my



task relates to bridging personal awareness, social responsibility and spiritual growth, pulling together the various dimensions of my autobiography and weaving a meaningful whole.

For some people, it seems possible to focus for a lifetime on personal change without ever looking at injustice or experiencing spiritual longing. Others can spend many years dealing with the spiritual and undertake arduous self-development, introspection and change, without being called by social justice. For me, to commit to the spiritual realm and ignore the social realities is an incomplete spirituality. There is no judgment here about the path of others, but rather an exploration of my own direction.

As I understand it, spirituality brought to earth is justice. Since the time of my spiritual beginnings at IMS, I have found the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists and the Peace Pagoda community of Nipponzan Myohoji, and now also Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, to be avenues merging my Buddhist commitments with my global responsibilities. My spiritual path requires the active expression of compassion, which arises when I can serve humbly in the world, unattached to results but grateful for the opportunity to give.

### Dharma Seeds

I am drawn to the basic teachings of the Dharma that talk about the two wings of wisdom and compassion. Without the compassion, life might be very dry and without the wisdom we cannot see clearly. Compassion may well up naturally, but we need to call forth the wisdom to inform the compassion, shaping our work, channeling our do-gooder impulses. As agents of social change, our compassion must be based on deep knowing in order to be effective; we must access our wisdom to act, to reflect, to evaluate, to recognize our usefulness and our limits.

## Karuna = Compassion

When I founded Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, the nonprofit organization through which I teach, I named it Karuna (the Pali word for compassion) because compassion fuels and motivates me. Karuna Center's early work was in Burma and as a "Buddhist activist" I assumed I would serve in Buddhist countries. Then a colleague called with: "Would you go to Africa?" And I thought, "Of course, who wouldn't? How could I not respond to Africa?" So I went to Africa, and then began to lead peacebuilding and conflict transformation workshops in the Middle East and later in Bosnia.

The workshops and seminars we offer might be three to ten days, depending on circumstances. Whatever the amount of time, we teach almost non-stop, morning to night, using translators to give our words life in Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Arabic, Serbo-Croatian, Nepali and so many other languages. We teach people all the principles of nonviolence for social change, studying Gandhi and King and Mandela and the many places like Prague or the Philippines where nonviolence has been used for profound social change. We work together with people from opposing ethnic communities, encouraging dialogue and re-humanization, facing our intolerance and prejudices in order to change ourselves and our societies. We encourage forgiveness and reconciliation, where possible, and support the restoration of civil societies. Sometimes we focus on healing the inner brokenness, necessary for some before the social reconstruction can begin.

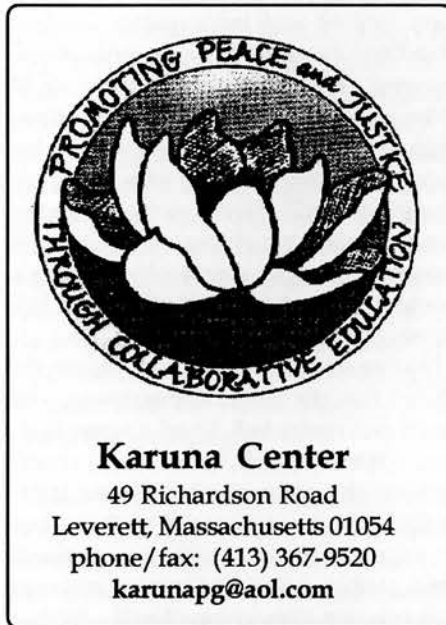
The work moves slowly; the results are not always visible. We work in faith and practice humility, witnessing human communities at their most devastated, knowing we cannot imagine what we would do in their circumstances. But I feel grateful for every opportunity, despite the hardships and danger, because this is my offering, a small expression of *karuna*.

## Rwanda

We were in the Hutu refugee camp in Goma, Zaire for about two weeks. The workshops would be four or five days, and then we would do another one and another one until we had educated hundreds of people.

There were two hundred thousand people in that one camp, the largest settlement in the history of the United Nations refugee camps. Every family receives a piece of plastic sheeting from UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. The families cut a few poles, place their sheeting over the poles, line it with hay to keep it warm and live there for two years. Imagine two hundred thousand people, each family living under a piece of plastic!

I looked around, and as far as I could see in all directions there were these little blue plastic tents. And I thought, "Here I am, with three other trainers, teaching for a few weeks in a camp of two hundred thousand people who have never had the opportunity to think about the possibility of nonviolent conflict resolution and social change. Their lives have



reached a state of unimaginable misery because they or their kinsmen have recently used a machete to kill each other." And I thought, "This appears to be ridiculous. What difference can we possibly make? Teaching here feels like scratching at a mountain with a toothpick, in this case a mountain of 200,000 traumatized, homeless and disoriented people, many the perpetrators of brutal violence." But we taught every day, all day, under our own blue-sheeted tent, and the responses were enthusiastic, perceptive and very strong.

Six months later we were invited back again. Much to my amazement, our participants had translated all the materials that we had brought. And there were

seventeen tents in that camp with the sign in front of each, written in French: "Center for the Study of Nonviolence." I was delighted, and so happy to reconnect with Hutu friends. It was such a reminder that the work of Karuna Center for Peacebuilding is going around just like Johnny Appleseed — planting little seeds of peace in the utter faith that something might matter.

## Israel and Palestine

Part of Karuna Center's work in the Middle East is to facilitate dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. These days we offer our workshops in Palestinian cities, to which Israelis can travel. (We cannot bring groups of Palestinians to Israeli cities due to the closed border.) We might have ten or twelve Israelis at a time, all of whom have volunteered to be group facilitators, and we spend three days in a West Bank city. Every Israeli receives generous hospitality from a Palestinian family — and that is a profound experience on both sides. For the Israelis, this trip is often their first time in a Palestinian city, let alone sleeping with a family. And for the Palestinian, they are bringing the "other," the "enemy," into their homes, risking the censure of friends and neighbors.

The exposure to home life, walking in the Palestinian city, visiting schools, shopping in the markets — all are simple activities and radical peacebuilding. The dialogues enhance the relationships, but the presence of being there in that mixed group, sleeping in these houses, is thrilling. Just one example is the couple who run the dialogue groups in Nablus: she is in her forties and was in jail for eight years, and he's in his fifties and was jailed for seventeen years. I thought to myself, "How do you spend seventeen years in an Israeli jail and come out committed to dialogue with Israelis — and to being the center for all these Israelis to sleep in your house?"

So you don't have to be a Buddhist to get transformed. These are Muslims; and the Israelis, of course, are Jews. And they're all together in a process of transformation that is so touching to me. They are committed to each other. When there is trouble on either side, which is constant, they call each other to express their sadness. If the Palestinians are killed, the Israelis call. If the Israelis are killed, the Palestinians call, because the trans-



formative dialogue workshops have bonded their hearts and opened their compassion for each other. These people are building interdependent relationships that could eventually transform a legacy of desperate hatred into mutual understanding and loving-kindness. Metta is simple friendship between people, caringly cultivated.

### Bosnia

I went to Bosnia for the first time last year, at the invitation of a women's non-government organization. I found unbearable suffering there, from a war so brutal as to be unimaginable. We worked with two groups of women mornings and afternoons for three weeks. We offered trauma survivor help and some peace building and leadership development. But the suffering had been very fierce, and the women were feeling very fragile.

When I teach in these places that are not dharma countries, I do not speak directly about Buddhism. But when one Bosnian participant asked, "Did you ever hear of something called relaxation?" I saw the opening. So we did meditation, and we did *metta* practice. It was so good for them because their hearts are so closed...there is so much fear and brokenness.

I thought that if I could give a little bit of witness consciousness and Buddhist practice, helping them experience a self that is not the trauma, that would be a gift. And that's just what we did. We did practice everyday...we just did not call it dharma practice. We did call it meditation—I introduced that word to them, and they loved it. On evaluations they wrote at the end, many highlighted a deep appreciation for the practice.

### Dharma in Disguise

Sometimes I'm a Buddhist in disguise. In other venues I am working in Buddhist countries; I can use Dharma language and talk about engaged Buddhism. But I don't mind changing the language, because it's the teaching that counts and not what you call the teaching. It's the spirit that's important, not the unfathomable names for the thousand fingers pointing at the moon.



## A Fourth Turning of the Wheel? Ambedkar Buddhism

by Christopher Queen

From a talk given at BCBS  
on July 3, 1997

One way of looking at the coming of Buddhism to the West, and the beginnings of the true interpenetration of these profound world views, is to see it as a fourth yana [vehicle]. If we look at "Buddhism" as a tradition and we use that term in the singular we're really covering a multitude of practices and beliefs. To focus on the kinds of beliefs and practices that people like ourselves are attempting in the name of Buddhism raises fundamental questions about whether we're doing something brand new, or whether in fact the seeds of what we're doing were planted by Shakyamuni Buddha twenty-five-hundred years ago.

To my way of thinking, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) is the most articulate and perhaps radical spokesman for a new turning of the wheel. Ambedkar, I think, really went to the heart of this problem, and left us all with a provocative vision of Buddhism for the modern world.

### Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

He was born among the so-called "untouchables" in India, but through his remarkable genius he became one of the most prominent personalities of his time. After India achieved independence in 1947, Ambedkar became the first law minister in independent India (what we might call the Attorney General). As such, he was the principal architect of India's Constitution. It's the world's longest democratic constitution, and includes many articles against the practice of untouchability. It also provides for what we call affirmative action; people from all backgrounds should have access to education, scholarships and government jobs, but the preferences would be given to the lowest people in society. Ambedkar was responsible for all that.

In the last five years of his life he made good on a promise he made in 1935, "I



was born a Hindu, but I'm determined not to die a Hindu. I'm going to figure out which of the religions offers me and my community the most dignity and humanity." Many who knew him and study him think Ambedkar had Buddhism in mind all along, because he was deeply moved by a book on the life of the Buddha given him upon graduation from high school. But if he had declared himself a Buddhist in the 1930s he would have lost a lot of his clout as a negotiator with the British and with other Hindus like Gandhi in the drama of emerging independence. So he held off until 1951 when he retired from the government, and spent the last five years of his life preparing for a huge conversion ceremony on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1956 which is the traditional date of Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism.

The year 1956 saw the worldwide celebration of the twenty-five hundredth year of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni. So the date and the place—Nagpur in central India, a city which was associated with the preservation of Buddhist teachings by the Nagas, the serpent people—was highly symbolic of the rebirth of Buddhism in a land which had seen no Buddhism for virtually a thousand years. Nearly a half-million untouchables took refuge at Ambedkar's conversion ceremony; and then six weeks later, he died of a long-standing illness.

In the years since his great conversion, Ambedkar had become a symbol of hope for low-caste people throughout India but his Buddhist movement since then has had to struggle along with support from outsiders like Sangharakshita and his British Buddhist followers, though it also attracted some talented leaders within India and the untouchable community. Where it's going, and whether it's growing and flourishing, is anybody's guess. But we have Ambedkar's own thoughts and writings to consider for our purposes today.

## Choice and Adaptation

I'd like to mention two proposals that he made in his effort to adapt Buddhism to modern circumstances—not just for the untouchables, but really for the modern world. The first is that one must choose what religion one will follow, and the second is that one must adapt it to fit one's needs.

One premise of Ambedkar's religious sensibility was that as modern (or even postmodern) people we are forced to choose our belief system. It's not only possible for people to become heretics, but we have what Peter Berger called the "heretical imperative." (The word heresy, by the way, comes from the Greek root which means simply "to choose"; it means to choose a belief and a lifestyle.) We really are forced by the world today to choose who we will be and what we will believe, because the grip of tradition on our minds has now been loosened by modern education, by science, by travel and by global communication. We are now faced with so many options for belief and practice that we have to sit down quietly with ourselves and say, "What do I believe? What shall I do with my life? Who will be my friends and allies? Where should I put my extracurricular energies?" These are things that all people in the world are now facing. (There are certainly repressive countries where those options are limited, but I think most in the world today recognize the goal of being able to make yourself, remake yourself, and point yourself in some direction.)

Following his dramatic announcement in 1935 that he would adopt a new religion, Ambedkar considered Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism as possible options for him in India. They were all active religions, except for Buddhism, which, although originating in India had vanished by the twelfth century. Ambedkar asked, "Which of these traditions offers my community the most dignity, the most inspiration, the most empowerment to move ahead and to realize a good life or a good future or a good symbolic universe, a universe that makes me feel that life is worth living and there's a future for the world?"

Buddhism seemed to offer the most for Ambedkar and his followers because it was an indigenous religion; it wasn't, like Christianity or Islam—something imported. It also offered something unique, a kind of reticence to lock onto fixed beliefs or practices. There was this notion within Buddhism that you must experiment within the laboratory of your own life to see what works and what makes sense.

This helped with Ambedkar's second principle: the notion that once I've chosen a major tradition or body of thought, I must adjust it so that it works in the circumstances that I face or that my community faces. Ambedkar echoed the discourse in the *Kalama Sutta* in which the Buddha said, "Don't blindly trust teachings and writings, but test them in your own life." This idea of testing for yourself and questioning authority has become a hallmark of Western or modern Buddhism.

The heart of Buddhism was an attitude, or, perhaps, Buddhism was an attitude of heart. The Buddha, of course, was a human being representing a potential that all human beings have. So all of that went into Ambedkar's search for a tradition that could be adaptable to a culture in which pluralism was present, but in which a significant proportion of people felt disempowered and dehumanized. Buddhism, for Ambedkar, emerged as a model for becoming a full human being. Yet it was a model still in need of some changes.

## The Limitations of Buddhism

In his final work, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar pointed to four problems he saw with the Buddhist tradition as received from the past, four issues that conflict with our modern sensibility. We should not forget that Ambedkar was trained in the West; he was a follower of John Dewey, the eminent American pragmatist philosopher.

1) The first thing that Ambedkar questioned was the legend of the Buddha's isolation, as a prince, from normal human experiences. How could a twenty-nine year-old man suddenly discover ill-

ness, suffering, and death, and then abandon his family in a fit of existential angst? Wasn't that a little late for someone to discover these things? So there's something about the Buddha's story that's a little odd to our way of thinking, because we know that young people today confront these realities of life during their adolescent years and we encourage them to wrestle with these things and resolve them in certain ways.

2) The second issue has to do with the causes of suffering. The second noble truth says that suffering is a result of craving and ignorance; therefore if someone is suffering we have to say, "Change your attitude. Practice meditation. Practice morality and your life will improve." But might there be circumstances in which there are innocent victims? There are children or whole communities who are marginalized and oppressed by social, political and economic forces that are essentially beyond their control, unless they somehow collectively organize a resistance to oppression. Can Buddhism encompass the notion of social change, which has both victims and oppressors?

3) The third problem was the question of karma and rebirth. Do we really believe in rebirth? Do we really believe that karma is a kind of ongoing accumulation of energy that will dictate not only the quality of our life but cause us to be reborn again and again? Must we conclude, for example, that a handicapped person is serving a sentence for past indiscretions or crimes? Ambedkar had difficulty with the place of traditional teachings of rebirth in our modern world view, not only in terms of what we now know about psychology and physics, but in light of the social issues surrounding the life of untouchables in India.

4) The final contradiction or problem Dr. Ambedkar saw in Buddhism was the role of the monk or the ordained person. What is the true role of the ideal practitioner of Buddhism? Should it be one who is renouncing and retreating from the life of family responsibilities, work, and society, living essentially apart, except for the ritualized contacts of the begging rounds or teaching? Or should those ideal practitioners of the Buddha's teaching be seen not as sitting but as walking;

that is, walking out into the community and trying to help people improve their material circumstances as well as their spiritual condition? Shouldn't the monks be trained as social workers? This was one of Ambedkar's core questions. And his model was the Jesuits, the Benedictines and Protestant missionaries who founded clinics and literacy programs and helped people to dig wells, build roads, and otherwise improve their situation through engaged activity.

## Modifications

In looking at these issues and other basic notions of Buddhism, Ambedkar modified the tradition quite freely. One of the most important changes he made was a rather radical re-interpretation of what was meant by nirvana. According to Ambedkar, nirvana is not a metaphysical or psychological state or attainment, but a society founded in peace and justice. He brought a transcendent view of nirvana down to earth.

This is an important feature of engaged Buddhism as manifested in many parts of Asia today. A common feature of this movement is to disregard notions of another world, whether it's a psychological world or a metaphysical world, and to translate that into a society based on equality and the free exchange of ideas and goods. This is a kind of socialism, and Ambedkar himself, though not a socialist *per se*, was significantly influenced by socialist thinkers.

With this different understanding, the discussion of nirvana becomes analogous to the discussion in Christianity about the kingdom of God or heaven. Is it an afterlife, or is it an ideal community on this planet? Ambedkar and his followers would vote for the latter concept. We need to create communities that unlock human potential and dignity — that's nirvana.

If you look at the *Satipatthana Sutta* or the *Visuddhimagga* you find texts setting forth a complex set of meditation skills and ethical practices which the tradition offers us as the path to awakening. That is largely deemphasized in Ambedkar's writings and in his thought. For him the pursuit of education at all levels was a form of meditation and mental cultivation.

This in turn supplemented the institutions of a free society—representative government, due process, and an impartial judiciary when an untouchable can go to a court and have a judge actually award the verdict to him or her. This is nirvana. All this has nothing to do with the traditional wealth of meditation practices available.



It is important to keep in mind that Ambedkar's primary teachers were books. In this sense he shares something with Western "Buddhists" who have been brought to Buddhism by reading Alan Watts, D.T. Suzuki, Shunryu Suzuki, or Trungpa Rinpoche, rather than being trained in Buddhism by a personal teacher who is devoting his or her life to practice and teaching meditation. There are many people in America who call themselves Buddhists because they've read books about it—the "bookstore Buddhist" or the "rightstand Buddhist," as Tom Tweed calls them. Ambedkar had thirty thousand books, including a huge collection on Buddhism; these have marks all over the margins and underlines and crossings out, agreeing and disagreeing with elements of the tradition and deciding how Buddhism would work for him. These books were his teachers.

As a personality, Ambedkar was certainly volcanic; he didn't have the calm demeanor of Thich Nhat Hanh. It wasn't breathe and smile for Dr. Ambedkar. Ambedkar was deeply scarred by being an untouchable in his society all his life, and he brings the passion of that experience to his understanding of Buddhism. Educate, Agitate, and Organize — this was Ambedkar's slogan during his years

as a civil rights leaders in India. Today it is still used by his followers as Buddhists, which really irritates other Buddhists who say that agitation has no role to play in Buddhism. Well, does it? Should Buddhists be, in a certain sense, agitators for a better society, for reconciliation, or are these irreconcilable concepts?

## Ambedkar's Challenge

Given the way Buddhism is evolving in the West, with its strong emphasis upon meditation and psychology, Ambedkar's perspective is very provocative. Many of us are drawn to Buddhism because it offers peace — inner peace and world peace. We would like to be more unperturbable, loving, compassionate and joyful, rather than the crusading radicals some of us were in the sixties. If Buddhism has to do with stilling the fires of passion, then *metta bhavana* [the cultivation of lovingkindness] is probably the best and highest practice for engaged Buddhism in the traditional mold — achieving peace and then projecting that peace to others. If this attainment of peace has some ripples in the world, great; but the world is really not the primary concern of a traditional Buddhist. It is rather training the monkey mind to settle down.

But it may be worth looking closely at Ambedkar's idea that Buddhism is something we receive and then have to work with. Buddhist teachings invite us to take responsibility for ourselves, and this is being interpreted in engaged Buddhist circles as taking responsibility for the entire sangha, the larger community, and ultimately, our eco-system on this planet Earth. Ambedkar's approach tells us that if we spend too much time in personal meditation practice, and in retreat from the world of social relationship, we will be irresponsible to our community. So we need to get off the cushion, get out of the house, get out there and start to educate, agitate and organize. This is a collectivist notion of sangha as people working together for a society of justice, wherein our Buddhist practice becomes the engaged activity of social change.

*Dr. Queen is the co-editor, with Duncan Ryuken Williams, of the forthcoming American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship from Curzon Press, U.K.*

# Practicing the Middle Way

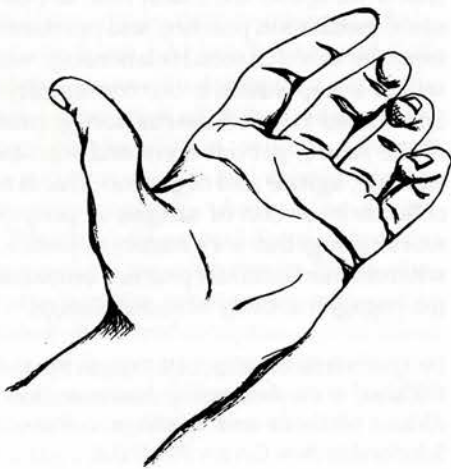
Devadaha Sutta  
Majjhima Nikaya 101

On one occasion, when he was visiting his homeland among the Sakya clans, the Buddha is said to have given a significant discourse on the nature of exertion and striving. The context of the discussion was his criticism of the Jain ascetic practices, so common in ancient India, but his remarks on the subject are of immense importance to the contemporary practice of insight meditation.

**And how is exertion fruitful, bhikkhus, how is striving fruitful? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is not overwhelmed by suffering and does not overwhelm himself with suffering; and he does not give up the pleasure that accords with Dhamma, yet he is not infatuated with that pleasure.**

**He knows thus: 'When I strive with determination, this particular source of suffering fades away in me because of that determined striving; and when I look on with equanimity, this particular source of suffering fades away in me while I develop equanimity.'**

**He strives with determination in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him because of that determined striv-**



**ing; and he develops equanimity in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him while he is developing equanimity.**

**When he strives with determination, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him because of that determined striving; thus that suffering is exhausted in him. When he looks on with equanimity, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him while he develops equanimity; thus that suffering is exhausted in him.**

This is the dilemma: If we "try" too hard to practice meditation, if we deliberately exert ourselves to "succeed" at the task, then we may tap into an entire complex of unwholesome conditioning so prevalent among Western students. "Striving mind" can be extremely counterproductive, unleashing a crippling self-judgment if we don't match up to the goals we have set for ourselves. On the other hand, if we do not strive at all, and merely "go along" with whatever is arising in all situations, then we may simply drift to wherever the "monkey mind" happens to take us. Our underlying tendency to pursue pleasure and avoid pain, left to its own devices, can result in our mindfully avoiding any significant transformation.

The Buddha's profound teaching of the middle way, applied particularly to the dynamics of meditation practice, is the theme of this passage from the *Devadaha Sutta*. The point is finding the right balance between "striving with determination" and "looking on with equanimity." Neither approach is correct all the time, but each can be used as a skillful technique for addressing certain mental states. The two approaches complete one another.

"Striving with determination" (*samkhāram padahato*) can mean disciplining oneself in morality, as when one might want to cover up a misdeed by lying or one might want to consume something greedily. Through a certain strength of character or dedication to what we know to be right, we can sometimes determine to do the proper thing, even though it means the acceptance of

certain difficulties (as in the former case) or the renunciation of certain immediate pleasures (as in the latter). But in a more delicate way, such determined striving is also what we do when we gently return the wandering mind to awareness of the breath during sitting practice. The practice of meditation differs from an hour of spacing out on a zafu precisely in this quality of recollecting to return our attention to a primary object—again and again as it inevitably drifts off.

"Looking on with equanimity" (*ajjhupekkhato*), in the context of meditation practice, refers to the non-judgmental quality of open, choice-less awareness, so crucial to bring to whatever enters the field of experience. Equanimity is described in Buddhist literature as that quality of mind that is in equipoise—neither drawn to what entices nor shunning what is painful or disgusting, but balanced evenly amidst all phenomena. It is the perspective that allows us to open to the full spectrum of our experience—the pain in the knee as much as the songbird outside the meditation hall window, the beautiful thought of inspired insight as much as the ugly realization of personal shortcomings—while holding it all with a selfless, mindful awareness.

As this text says so clearly, there are certain sources of suffering that fade away by determined striving, and others that do so by looking on with equanimity. This is the example the Buddha gives to illustrate what he means by looking on with equanimity:

**Suppose, bhikkhus, a man loved a woman with his mind bound to her by intense desire and passion.**



He might see that woman standing with another man, chatting, joking, and laughing. What do you think, bhikkhus? Would not sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in that man when he sees that woman standing with another man, chatting, joking, and laughing?

“Yes, venerable sir. Why is that? Because that man loves that woman with his mind bound to her by intense desire and passion....”

Then, bhikkhus, that man might think: ‘...What if I were to abandon my desire and lust for that woman?’ He would abandon his desire and lust for that woman.

On a later occasion he might see that woman standing with another man, chatting, joking and laughing. What do you think bhikkhus? Would sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in that man when he sees that woman standing with another man....?

“No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because that man has no attachment to that woman.”

Whether or not we would all find it quite so easy to simply abandon desire for a person we loved (or, as the story more precisely describes, a person with whom we were possessively infatuated), the point is that we look upon something very differently when we look with desire and with equanimity. Sometimes, the bonds of grasping are best loosened by this gentle technique of simple non-attachment. On the meditation cushion this is manifest as treating no arising object as more dear than another, but observing all phenomena with equal interest.

The story told in this sutta about striving with determination is put in the language of turning away from what is pleasurable, even if it means temporarily opening up to what is painful. The point is that while this may seem difficult at first, it becomes easier as one become habituated to it, until it is no longer painful at all:



Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu considers thus: ‘While I live according to my pleasure, unwholesome states increase in me and wholesome states diminish; but when I exert myself in what is painful, unwholesome states diminish in me and wholesome states increase.

**What if I exert myself in what is painful? He exerts himself in what is painful. When he does so, unwholesome states diminish in him and wholesome states increase.**

**At a later time he does not exert himself in what is painful. Why is that? The purpose for which that bhikkhu exerted himself in what is painful has been achieved....**

**Suppose, bhikkhus, an arrowsmith were warming and heating an arrow shaft between two flames, making it straight and workable. When the arrow shaft had been warmed and heated between the two flames and had been made straight and workable, then at a later time he would not again warm and heat the arrow shaft and make it straight and workable. Why is that? The purpose for which that arrowsmith had warmed and heated the arrow and**

**made it straight and workable has been achieved....**

Our mind may find pleasure in pursuing its whimsical trains of thought into one story after another; and indeed it is the very pursuit of pleasurable experience that leads the mind’s meandering. At first it may feel like a chore to retrieve the mind from its excursions and return it to the primary object of attention, but as we practice this we gradually get used to it and it can in fact become a most rewarding habit. This is just one example of how striving with determination, though interventionist in the short run, can before long lead to very beneficial results.

Balance is the key. As we’re told in the *Upakkilesa Sutta* (M128), grasp a quail too tightly and it will die then and there; but grasp the quail too loosely and it will fly out of your hands. Or, as in the metaphor of the lute string told by the Buddha to the monk Sona (A6.55), neither too much striving nor too much acquiescence is as effective as tuning our method carefully to bring the factor of effort (*viriyā*) into perfect harmony with the moment.

—Andrew Olendzki

I follow the translation of Bhikkhus Nanamoli and Bodhi in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Wisdom Publications, Boston (1995), with some minor changes to the end of the 2nd passage.

continued from page 39

nothing to do with avoiding or escaping the unpleasantness of fear but instead find a refuge that rests on our capacity to be in the present moment with balance and spaciousness. Without a certain degree of calm and steadiness, investigation of fear can lead to "spinning wheels" and a proliferation of thinking that arises out of aversion. When the mind becomes a bit more serene in the face of fear, we can look at fear more directly and with less reactivity. We can begin to investigate fear with the intention to learn rather than to get rid of. So much of our thinking about fear — the analyzing, the figuring out, the desire to be fearless comes out of reactivity and aversion. I remember quite clearly that one of my main motivations in beginning to practice was so that I could overcome fear.

Cultivating wisdom in working with fear requires gentle perseverance in being awake to what is. This is quite different from trying to conquer fear. The practice of vipassana reveals directly the arising and passing away of all experience, including fear. Through this practice of

moment to moment attention we begin to understand fear on deeper levels than the personal. A helpful investigative tool is "mental noting". Making a soft mental note when experiencing fear can increase our ability to recognize and acknowledge the experience of fear. This is a big investigative step to take because so much of our experience of fear goes unacknowledged. It operates just below the conscious level, yet affects us in profound ways. Anxiety and worry are common forms of fear that often do not get recognized, yet they condition so much of our approach to life. The simple mental note that I often use is "fear, fear." Mental noting is not meant to create distance from the experience of fear, but rather to bring us more into the present, while helping us to recognize fear as a conditioned process that is not me or mine. Seeing quite directly the impermanence of fear, as it arise and passes away, frees us gradually from the constrictive hold of identifying with it.

Last year, I spent a month at Maha Boowa's forest monastery. It was a wonderful opportunity to have some contact with one of the last of the great forest

meditation masters. Because of his age, Maha Boowa has limited much of his teaching, but I did work with his senior monk, Tan Panna, who had practiced with Maha Boowa for something like forty years. Though I wasn't facing any fear of tigers (they have long disappeared), there were plenty of opportunities to investigate fear while practicing in my forest kuti (meditation hut) at night. Tan Panna was relentless in his instructions on working with fear. He encouraged me to bring sustained attention to the myriad of unpleasant body sensations that were arising because of the fear, while restraining my impulse to think about the fear. It took all of my perseverance to be willing to be attentive rather than to move away.

Formal meditation practice is extremely helpful in bringing balance to the mind when fear arises. But, it is essential to pay attention when fear arises in all our activities, and to use the tools that we have been strengthening in our formal practice. It is important to remember that, in meditation, we have been cultivating the capacity to love the difficult. The time to use that capacity is always now.



#### BCBS Teachers continued from p. 25

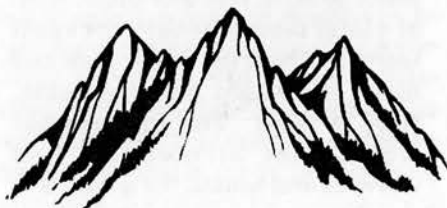
**Robert Jonas** is the founder-director of The Empty Bell, a contemplative sanctuary in Watertown, Mass. He is a Christian in the Carmelite tradition and has received spiritual training in Buddhist traditions. He is a retreat leader as well as a student of *Sui-Zen*, the Japanese bamboo flute (shakuhachi).

**John Keenan** is an Episcopalian priest and Professor of Buddhist Studies at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont. He is the author of, among other books, *The Meaning of Christ: A Mahayana Theology*.

**John Makransky** teaches Buddhist Studies and Comparative Theology in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He is the author of recently published *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet*. He is also a practice leader in Dzogchen retreats on the East Coast.

**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 is a visiting lecturer at Harvard University.



**Master Sheng-yen** is one of the world's foremost Ch'an teachers. He is a lineage holder in both the Ts'ao-tung (Soto) and Lin-chi (Rinzai) traditions and is the abbot Nung Ch'an monastery in Taiwan and America.

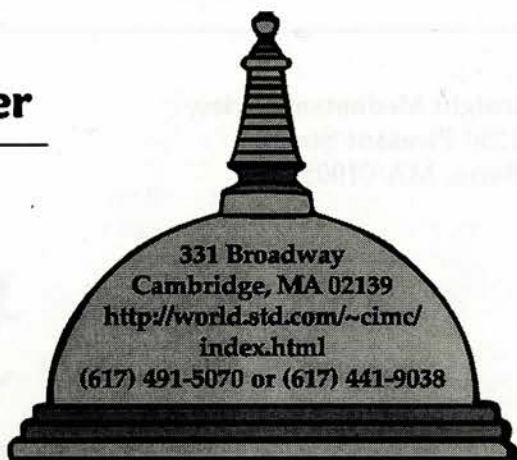
**Mu Soeng** is the director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He trained in the Korean Zen tradition and was a monk for 11 years. He is the author of *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality* and *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen—Tradition and Teachers*.

**Lama Surya Das** is an American meditation teacher, Tibetan Buddhist lama, poet and writer, and founder of the Dzogchen Foundation. He is the author of *The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane: Buddhist Tales from Tibet* and *Awakening the Buddha Within*.

# Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

CIMC is a non-residential urban center for the teaching and practice of insight meditation. CIMC's programs and facilities are designed to provide a strong foundation for daily practice. Our program includes daily sittings, weekly dharma talks, ongoing classes and practice groups, teacher interviews, and a variety of weekend meditation retreats.

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.



## Working With Fear

*This is a summary of some of the meditation practices and issues covered in an eight-week practice group led by Michael Liebenson Grady at the CIMC in the winter of 1997.*

We can have a very committed spiritual practice, doing all the "right" things—sitting every day, getting in our annual retreats, reading and listening to Dharma, and even having moments of deep concentration and clarity of mind. And yet, at the same time, we can be living our lives actively avoiding our fears and keeping them at a distance.

Rilke said, "What is required of us is that we love the difficult and learn to deal with it. In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands that work on us." Understandably, fear is a difficult energy to love. The source of our difficulty with fear is tied up in two deeply conditioned responses to fear—aversion and identification. On a physical level, fear doesn't feel good. It's unpleasant. The energy of fear expresses itself in so many ways through the body: from very subtle sensations that often go unnoticed to very distinct sensations of contraction and tightening—constriction in the chest, stomach, face, throat. Our breathing and our heartbeat are affected. Even our skin and body temperature are effected (cold, clammy hands); couple these unpleasant physical sensations with the unpleasant mental sensations (thoughts of vulnerability, powerlessness, and separation) and we can begin to understand why we respond with so much aversion to the experience of fear.

Our aversion to fear—the judging and condemning, the avoiding and denial, the embarrassment and shame—are intensified by our identification with fear. There is a strong tendency to personal-

ize fear, to take separateness and self-judgment. The notion of self is not far from our experience of fear. It conditions the way we hold fear. It strengthens aversion and makes the experience of fear more threatening. Not only do we judge fear as a bad experience (aversion), but we judge ourselves for having the experience. Identification with fear gets in the way of looking at fear directly and prevents us from recognizing the true nature of fear.

It is this inability to see fear as an impersonal, conditioned response that creates so much suffering. One of the things that I appreciate about our discussions of fear in the practice group is that they facilitate a more open way of relating to fear. In many ways our discussions help take fear out of the closet of embarrassment. We can see that our fears are not necessarily as personal as we assume. Others share similar fears and relate to these fears in much the same way that we do. The recognition of this commonality helps dissolve the separation caused by our identification with fear and can give us the confidence to examine fear in a less reactive way. Through "noble friendship" and suitable conversation the mind can come into more balance, facilitating clarity and inner freedom. The challenge, in working with fear, is to learn how to soften the habitual reaction of aversion while letting go of the tight grip of identification. The practices of samatha-vipassana can settle the heart and balance the mind. Shamatha practices are particularly helpful in regaining balance and calm when we find ourselves reacting to or getting lost in the energy of fear. One samatha practice that we explored in this practice group was the mindfulness of "touchpoints" (contact of the body with the cushion, contact of feet or legs with

the floor, hands touching). Whether experiencing fear on the cushion (it could be anxiety, worry, fear) or in other daily activities (i.e. walking past a stranger at night or facing some conflict in relationship), remembering the touchpoints in the moment of fear can help bring us into the present in a more connected way. Bringing attention to only one or all of the touchpoints can bring a steadiness of heart and mind that balances the reactivity and disconnection that often accompanies fear. We often leave our bodies behind when confronted by fear. Or, at least we want to, because of the aversion. Awareness of touchpoints brings us back into our bodies. But, because they tend to be neutral, attention to these sensations can have a calming effect, bringing us more into the present moment. This is unlike the common response of avoidance, which may bring immediate relief yet has a limiting effect of strengthening fear.

The Buddha taught metta (loving kindness) practice to the monks and nuns as a compassionate response to their fears of practicing in the forest. Cultivating thoughts of lovingkindness strengthens one's ability to meet experience with greater openness and less aversion. Metta also encourages less identification with fear because it dissolves separation and nurtures connection. In using metta in relationship to fear, choose a phrase or phrases that resonate with you. I use "May I be at ease" or "May I be at peace with what is". Every time you become aware of fear, remember the phrase, saying it softly and silently to yourself. By remembering to use these shamatha practices in working with fear, we nurture the serenity aspect of practice and begin to respond in a very different way. We can discover a refuge within that has

*continued on page 38*

## IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

Samyutta Nikāya 3.3.5

yathā pi selā vipulā  
nabham āhacca pabbatā  
samantānupariyeyyum  
nipphoṭento catuddisā

evam jarā ca maccu ca  
adhivattanti pānino

khattiye brāhmane vesse  
sudde caṇḍāla-pukkuse  
na kiñci parivajjeti  
sabbam evābhimaddati

na tattha hatthīnam bhūmi  
na rathānam na pattiyā  
na cāpi manta-yuddhena  
sakkā jetum dhanena vā

tasmā hi paṇḍito poso  
samppassam attham attano  
buddhe dhamme ca saṅghe ca  
dhīro saddham nivesaye

yo dhammacārī kāyena  
vācāya uda cetasā  
idh-eva nam pasamsanti  
pacca sagge pamodatīti

Just as a mighty mountain range,  
scraping the sky with rocky crags,  
Might advance from four directions,  
crushing everything before it—

So also do old age and death  
roll over all living beings.

Nobles, brahmins and working folk,  
peasants, outcastes and garbage men—  
None of them can escape [this end]:  
everybody surely gets crushed.

Nothing on earth can defeat them:  
not elephants, chariots or troops;  
Nor the use of a magic spell;  
nor [can you buy safety] with gold.

So the person who's firm and wise,  
seeing what is best for themselves,  
Will place their faith in the Buddha,  
the Dhamma and the Sangha too.

One who practices the teaching,  
with body and speech and with mind—  
That one is praised here in this world,  
and after enjoys the pure realms.

*This verse emerges from a discussion between the Buddha and the Kosala king Pasenadi, who generally feels secure behind his four-fold army (elephant, chariot, cavalry and infantry divisions), his conjurers and his treasury. The Buddha asks him to imagine a situation—the fantastic closing-in of four mountain ranges—where all his royal resources will not help him meet the foe.*

*Such is the situation in which we actually all find ourselves—rich or poor, aristocrat or laborer—though we are reluctant to face it. How do we respond to the inevitable onslaught of aging and death? The answer given in the body of the sutta is “What else is there to do, save to live righteously and justly and to work good and meritorious deeds?” The verse summarizes this phrase by saying one should have confidence (another way of translating the word saddham) in the triple gem and practice the Buddha's teaching.*

*Ever practical, the Buddha often points out that in this way we are covering our bets: there are immediate benefits in this life, and in the next our chances are better of emerging well-off.*

--A. Olendzki