

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

Insight

Fall 1998

**IMS 1999 Retreat
Schedule**

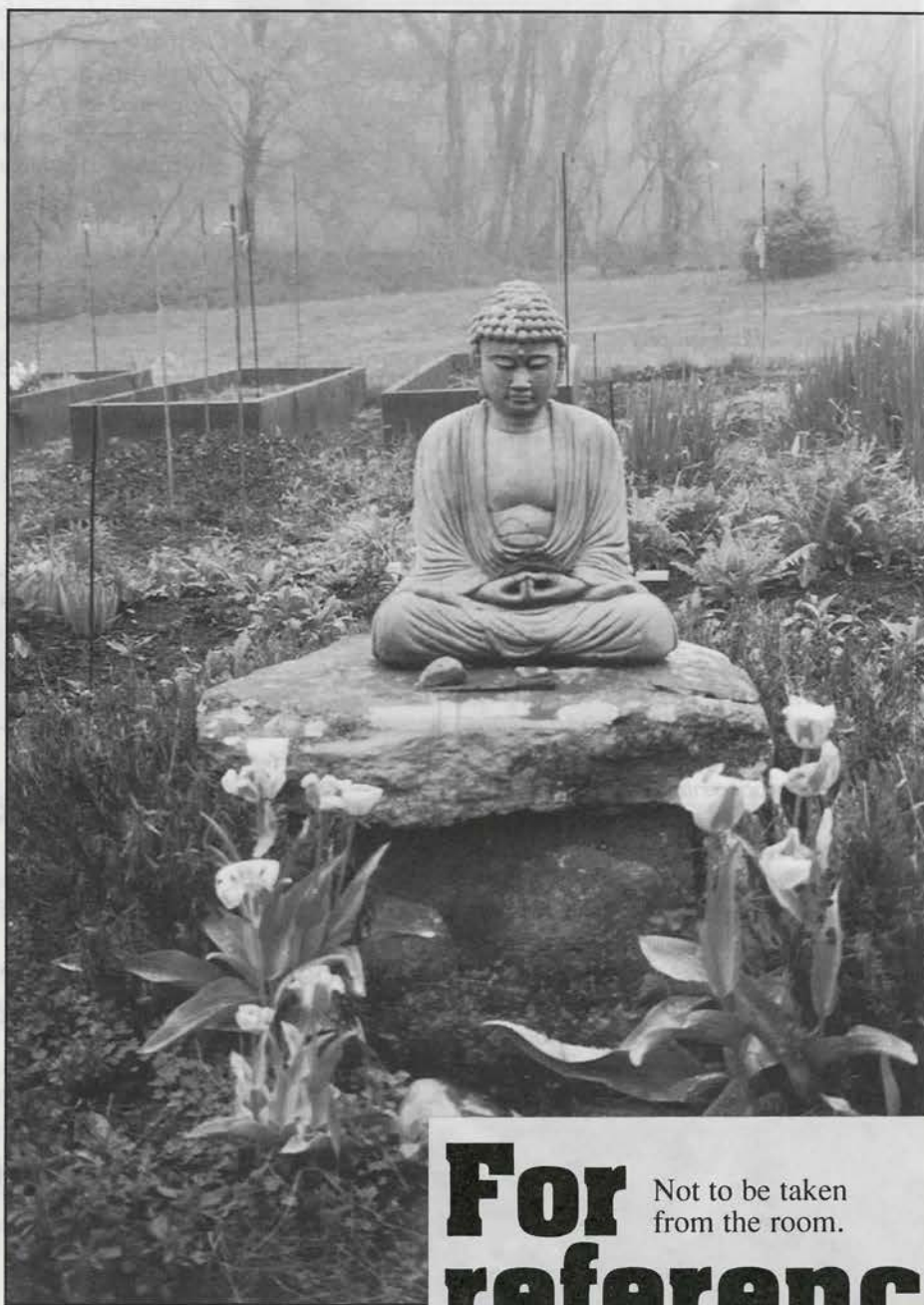
**BCBS 1999 Course
Schedule**

Teacher Interview:
Joseph Goldstein

Practicing For Awakening
Jack Engler

Mindfulness:
Gateway Into Experience
Carol Wilson

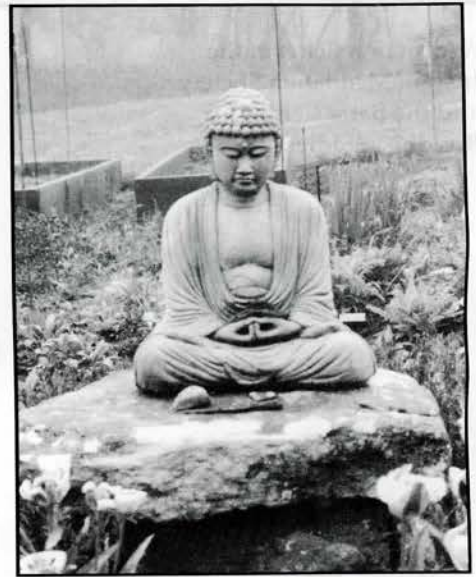
**The Place of Vipassana
in Buddhist Practice**
Thanissaro Bhikkhu



For Not to be taken
from the room.
reference

Insight

A twice-yearly newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society
and the
**Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies**
with schedules and Dharma articles
of lasting interest



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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.



To the Forest for Refuge

An interview with
Joseph Goldstein
September 1, 1998.

Joseph, after practicing in India for ten years and teaching in this country for more than twenty, you have recently returned from a well-earned teaching sabbatical, in which I understand you did quite a bit of personal meditation practice. Has anything emerged from this experience, in terms of greater clarity?

I think one of the pieces that has emerged from the time off is a greater clarity about where I'd like to put my energy in the following years. With so many newer teachers coming along who are well qualified to teach the shorter (nine- and ten-day) retreats, I'm feeling that I would like to devote more of my time to teaching yogis [meditators] who are more committed to longer term situations.

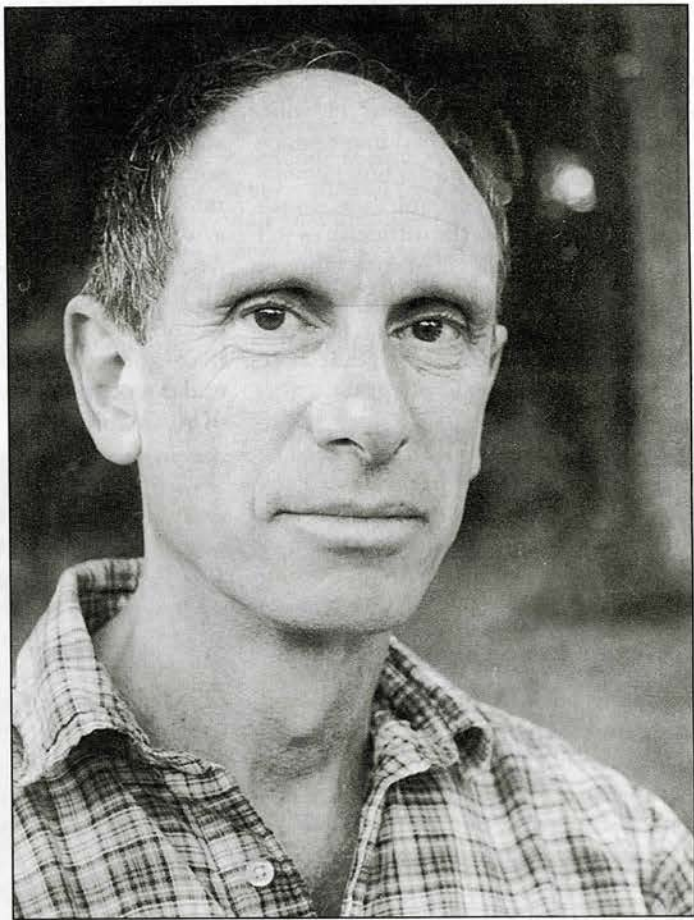
I feel that there is a need, given the development of the dharma in the West in the last quarter century or so, for some group of people to immerse themselves in long-term practice. There are some who have the time, the commitment, and the experience to do this, and I would like to help support this deepening of practice.

And why is that? What happens on a long retreat that doesn't happen on a shorter retreat?

Well, lots of things. It works on so many levels, and there are many models for talking about it. In an obvious way, it's more of a chance for the mind to quiet down, and to actually develop a deepening power of concentration and attentiveness—and that really makes possible the opening to different levels of insight and understanding.

The deepening of concentration and the quieting down of the mind provides the stability of attention, of attentiveness, which is necessary for deeper seeing of the nature of the mind and the body. When the mind is quite scattered or distracted, and we're struggling to keep bringing it back, it's very difficult to develop penetrating insight.

For most of us, the development of concentration, of an undistracted quality of mind, takes time. There are some few people who seem to have a natural ability, and can settle right into it; but from my own experience in practice, and working with so many others, I know it doesn't often come naturally. So a longer retreat provides the space for people to cultivate this important skill. A focused mind then allows us to see more clearly, both the more obvious and the very many subtle places of attachment.



The Buddha was very straightforward in his teaching: liberation happens through not clinging to anything. That's a very radical and uncompromising statement. But to me it's also very inspiring. OK, this is the work to do, and the first step is using the power of increased concentration to actually begin seeing all the places of attachment, identification and fixation of mind that are there.

So much of what we hear from dharma teachers these days has to do with the integration of mindfulness with the details of a layperson's complex daily life. This interest of yours for longer term semi-renunciate practice seems to go somewhat against that grain.

Clearly, it's really important for people to bring what they've learned in practice to their lives in the world; otherwise, both their spiritual lives and their worldly lives are very fragmented. On one level, the point of practice is to be able to live with greater freedom, greater integrity, and greater compassion in the world. And I think that the deeper people go in their practice and understanding, the more complete that integration becomes.

It is easy to say that daily life is our practice, and as an ideal, it's admirable. But whether in fact we're actually doing it in a way that's meaningful, in terms of deepening spiritual understanding—I think that's something we all have to look at for ourselves. It's perhaps the most difficult of the paths to follow with real integrity.

One of my teachers was once asked, Is it really necessary to renounce the world in order to get liberated? He said, "Well, even the Buddha had to renounce the world!" And he had a few *paramis* [previously developed spiritual qualities]! So to minimize the difficulty of it, I think, is to miss the level of commitment it actually takes. When there is an opportunity for long-term practice, it allows our practice to go deeper — so that there is actually something to integrate.

It sounds paradoxical: We need to retreat from worldly lifestyles to see more deeply into our experience, and the more we are able to do that, the more depth we can then bring back into our worldly lives.

That's right. And the cycle of retreat and going back in the world, of going inside and then bringing it out — we all have different rhythms for that at different times in our lives. So much depends upon our interest, our motivation, our circumstances, lots of factors. But I think there will always be some people for whom the conditions would be right for long, uninterrupted practice. And right now, that opportunity is not easily available in the West.

In the traditional models of the Asian monastic tradition, people would leave the world, devote themselves to practice, and lead the holy life. Here in this country, at this point anyway, it's not necessarily going to take the outward form of monasticism, with many people ordaining as monks or nuns. But still I think there is a great interest in having the chance for long term practice.

I know for myself, whenever I've done what in this country would be considered a long retreat (two or three months), it always feels like I'm just getting started — and then it's over. I've always felt sorry that the retreat was coming to an end. So both for myself and others, it would be a great opportunity for yogis to have a place that supports longer practice. That's really my vision for what could happen at the Forest Refuge.

The Forest Refuge, your new project for creating a long-term practice center in the forest between IMS and BCBS,

sounds like an exciting development for the dharma in the West.

It's tremendously exciting to me. It's something I have a great love for, both as something I would like to do myself, and imagining the possibility of other western yogis in that setting. Somehow, it resonates in me: The vision of people in all the Buddhist cultures over the last twenty-five hundred years, just doing this — going off, for longer periods of time, and devoting themselves to the practice of awakening.

Do you think there are enough people in America today who are willing and able to do that?

Yes, I do. I don't have any doubt about it at all. In fact, although we are beginning with the idea of perhaps twenty-five or thirty people in long-term practice of varying lengths, I don't have any problem imagining a hundred people — even hundreds of people! I think the dharma is well-enough established in the West now. As I go around teaching in so many places, I continually hear from people that this is just the sort of thing they are looking for: a quiet, supportive environment for settling into their practice. There are enough people who have undergone significant basic training in practice, and who are really inspired by the possibility of genuine awakening.

So much of what we've learned about awakening or liberation has been represented in traditional terms. Now that you have spent so much of your life practicing the dharma in English, so to speak, and in American culture, I wonder: Do you have a sense yourself, in contemporary terms, of what that awakening means? How might it manifest in a contemporary western personality?

That's a complex question which can be approached on a couple of different levels. Whether or not we can tell whether somebody's enlightened or awakened is always problematic, for a variety of reasons.

One is that we often confuse expressions of personality with an assessment of spiritual realization. I don't think that all personality quirks are somehow leveled out in the process of awakening. But

we're so used to reacting and responding to the more superficial levels of personality that we can miss the deeper understandings that might be there. So that's on one side.

On the other side, when someone is in a certain role, it's very easy to project onto them some great awakened experience which may or may not be true. We may miss it when it's there, and we may attribute it when it's not.

And the middle way?

Well, the middle way, I think, is one of the key reference points for me — both in my own practice, just watching my own mind, and then being with others: It is just to see the degree of self-reference that is present. To see if the self is really at the center of our life and our actions and our motivations, or to see that there is less of that. My understanding is that the deep realization of emptiness, in the Buddhist sense, really means emptiness of self. So one becomes less and less self-referential.

This is a long process, and I think we are all somewhere along a continuum, from totally self-absorbed to completely selfless. My hope is that as we all continue in our practice, whether in daily life or on long retreats, we are moving in the direction of becoming more selfless, and express that understanding by greater compassionate responsiveness.

It is not that we eliminate the personality; rather it is being not so attached or identified with it. And in that non-identification is the space to be responsive, and to help lighten the suffering that's in the world. I don't see that there's any one way to be responsive. We each will have our own expression of that.

As one reaches a certain understanding, is it natural that a person will, as they become less self-referential, be more inclined to public service?

I question whether there is any one model or any one way to manifest (though I hesitate to use this phrase) enlightened behavior. I can imagine someone staying as a recluse their whole life, yet managing from that place of great compassion and openness to influence

things on other levels. I don't think we should become too dogmatic in our views of how wisdom expresses itself. For one thing, if the core piece is there — real wisdom — and if we view things from the perspective of rebirth and many lives, then there is lots of time to manifest wisdom in a wide variety of ways. The Jataka tales [stories of the Buddha's many previous births] provide good examples of this.

Another model for thinking about what happens in practice has to do with weakening, and hopefully finally eradicating greed, hatred, and ignorance as motive forces in the mind. Still another image that comes to mind to express the deepening of practice is the ripening or the balancing of the five spiritual faculties: faith, wisdom, concentration, energy and mindfulness.

What models of awakening do you find most compelling?

Something that has been of increasing interest to me lately is the relationship of compassion and emptiness — or perhaps you could say wisdom and compassion — as the two core principles of the awakened mind. What I have been inspired by, and what has transformed my own practice, is a growing understanding that compassion and emptiness are not two different things. Compassion is not a stance, but is the simple responsiveness to circumstances from a place of selflessness. So it is not that someone becomes more compassionate. Rather, the emptier we are of self, the more responsive we are.

So it is a matter of getting out of the way so compassion can manifest itself?

Yes, exactly. Compassion is the manifestation of emptiness. And that feels very liberating and inspiring to me, because when I think of a self responding to all the suffering in the world, it feels too overwhelming. There's too much suf-

fering — how could a self hold it? It feels like the burden is just too immense.

But when I think of compassionate action being the expression of emptiness, then it's not resting on the shoulders of anyone. It feels big enough to hold it all. And that's how I now understand the whole bodhisattva notion, the bodhisattva vow, in a way that makes sense to me. It's not a self, it's not someone doing it. It's just a natural manifestation ...



Students new to the Buddhist tradition always seem to eventually ask the question, If all is emptiness, why is there compassion? How is it that this ethical quality is somehow built into the fabric of the universe?

For a few reasons, I think; and maybe this also can be seen on a couple of different levels.

One might come out of an investigation of what the root of greed or fear or hatred in the mind really is. Even look-

ing at the matter conceptually, but then more experientially from a meditative awareness, these afflicted states seem to me very clearly rooted in a sense of self. Someone is greedy for something, or someone is angry, or fearful, or whatever — in each case it is the notion of the self that actually feeds those unwholesome states. And so, in the absence of that sense of self, in emptiness, from where would greed arise? From where would hatred or anger arise?

This perspective is expressed in the traditional teachings when they speak of the effects of seeing through the illusion of self. Even though the other defilements, out of habit, may still arise, the root has been cut. And from that point forward those defilements will wither away, because they are no longer nourished by the sense of self. This is one way of looking at it.

From another perspective, we can see compassion arising out of an experience of non-separation. As long as there remains a sense of self, the very notion of self predicates other. With the self, there's other than self. And other than self is everyone else and everything else! And so the very notion of self carries within it, implicitly, the notion of separation. From the perspective of absence of self, there's no one there to be separate. So then it's just the interplay, the

dance of elements, experience, phenomena; there's just the dance of all this — interconnected, interrelated — with a real sense of non-separation. And non-separation, I think, is another word for love. Again, it is not a matter of someone loving someone else, but goes beyond this to a simple manifestation of love.

And have you felt this yourself?

Oh yes, at times. At times. I am definitely a long way from the continuous experience of this simple clarity, but I have tasted it enough to know it's a pos-

sibility.

I think we want to be careful about not romanticizing or—I don't quite know what the right word is—perhaps glorifying this stage, because in a way I see one aspect of it as being quite commonplace. I think we all experience it a lot more than we actually acknowledge. Going through our lives, we are very often quite naturally responsive to situations of suffering. In simple ways, with no great dramatic statement, we may just feel a natural, caring connection—without a sense of acting from self, or ego, but just as a natural response to the situation. So that's one piece. I don't want to see it only in terms of some extraordinary state that we may have glimpses of, because I think that puts it in the wrong frame.

On the other side, even though we may be in that place of natural responsiveness more and more often, we don't want to become complacent and miss the very many moments when the mind does get fixated in a sense of self. It can be very subtle—even when our basic response is wholesome, there can often be all sorts of unskillful motives mixed in.

So while I don't want to make it something extraordinary, I also think it takes an incredible quality of attentiveness not to delude ourselves, and to really be watching, in the course of the day, when we are acting from that place of ego. It happens a lot more than we think it does.

During long-term practice, we do develop a very refined sensibility of what's happening in our own lives. We can more easily catch those moments when the mind is self-referential, when it gets caught, fixated or attached. There is definitely the possibility of long retreats preparing the ground for genuine and deep transformative experiences, what I call moments of enlightenment or moments of awakening.

It's also important to recognize that these experiences are themselves something to which the self can attach, and we must take care that the self doesn't co-opt them—as I've seen happen. All of a sudden, our life can start revolving around an experience of selflessness [laughter]. So I become the person who's

had this experience of selflessness! It can be very subtle. And, it happens. Hopefully, if the experience is genuine, that eventually will be seen through and we let go of that as well.

Can you say more about your vision of this new center for long-term practice—the Forest Refuge?

With pleasure! On a physical plane, I'm excited by the possibility of designing this center, from the ground up, specifically for the purpose of long-term practice. We want to create something that is very simple, and yet—beautiful, harmonious, tranquil and inspiring. Something that reflects that line of T.S. Eliot: "A condition of complete simplicity, costing not less than everything. And all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well."

It will be in the middle of a New England forest, through which I've walked many times. It has always been both incredibly beautiful and very opening—just walking through the woods in the space of intensive practice is wonderfully meditative. So the whole environment, both the physical structure and the natural environment, will be designed to support the practice in beautiful ways.

And we are also hoping to create a style of practice that supports people finding their own individual rhythm. Not everyone will follow a particular pre-set schedule, but each will sit and walk throughout the day as suits them best. But with the timely use of the meditation hall and the dining room, practitioners will also find the support of other people doing the same thing. I see the possibility of a wonderful combination of solitude and support of sangha at the same time. It is the way I would love to practice. It is the way I do love to practice!

So we will see you out there! And what about the teaching component? How will the Dharma be brought to this environment and to this community?

Well, I certainly am planning to devote a fair amount of my time to it. I see it as a place for experienced practitioners who are quite independent in their practice and don't need the level of support usually provided for shorter retreats. But, I can imagine perhaps weekly check-ins,

occasional talks, and also a small dharma library. With the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies just next door, some people might do some simple reading or study of the classical tradition to help support and direct their practice.

Do you see the Forest Refuge as continuing IMS's tendency to be thoroughly grounded in the Theravada tradition, or would this be an opportunity to bring in a more diverse Buddhist presence?

I think all the traditions of Buddhism are rooted in the basic teachings of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness—these are the core teachings of Buddhism, and I see these basic principles being the foundation of the center. The principle of liberation—the cultivation of a mind of no clinging—is also universal to Buddhism, and will be a primary focus.

But these principles have been elaborated in many different ways over the centuries in different traditions, and some of these other modes of expression can be very helpful. The particular ways that we might work with these are not immediately clear to me. I think we're going to draw primarily on the IMS teachers and the cadre of senior vipassana teachers to be guiding people. But I could also imagine having some guest teachers from other traditions for periods of time if it felt appropriate. All such details are still very much in the visioning stage. But the basic foundation of where it's rooted seems quite clear to me.

I am *very* inspired by the whole project. And I'm hopeful that many of my colleagues will also join in.

So this new practice center is an important part of your legacy, is it not? You will have a leading role in setting it up, and you will have a continuing role—for some decades we hope—in guiding it along. But then you're also presumably looking towards passing it all on...

And coming back to sit in it. I'm really just preparing for my next life here. If I help to get things in place now, I'll have a place to sit when I come back next time...

Family Dharma

Every summer about 30 families descend upon IMS to take part in a retreat unlike any other: the Family Retreat. This retreat is unusual because it offers an abundance of sounds, talk, and speediness instead of the stillness that usually prevails at IMS. It is also remarkable because the coming together of parents, children, group leaders, and teachers give rise to a tapestry of relationships like that of a small village. To practice in the midst of this vibrant and ever changing village is quite a challenge, and a unique learning opportunity.

In this retreat I became aware of breathing through my heart. I felt engaged in a meditative state even while I was working, talking, eating and living daily life. My actions and thoughts took on a new aspect of increased kindness. The retreat gave me the opportunity to be part of a sangha of staff and group leaders, as well as the parents of the children entrusted to my care. I am grateful for the experience, and for the growth of my practice. - Sandra.

The very young children, because of their closeness to no-self as they sang, listened to stories and expressed themselves, taught me to open myself to change and to be present all ways. - Linda

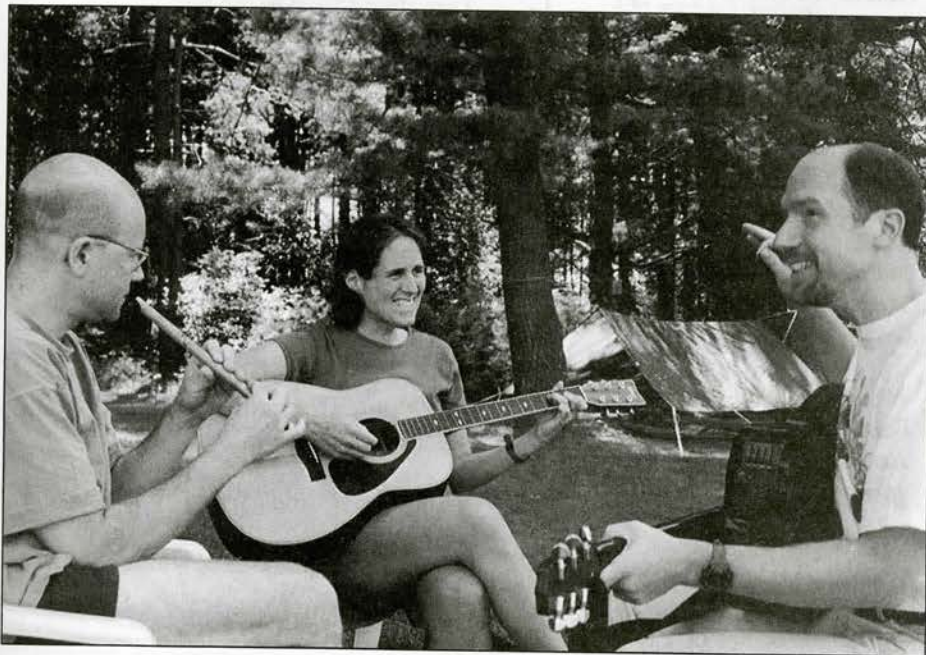
One of the key ingredients of this village is the group leaders, volunteers who are in charge of the children's groups for a good part of each day. Typically, these volunteers lead the children through a variety of activities, ranging from sports to meditation, from arts and crafts to nature walks.

What is it like to be a group leader? The following words from previous volunteers may offer some understanding:



During the Family Retreat we had an opportunity to witness our interconnectedness. We felt gratitude for how the lines between practice time and other time dissolved within the whirling, mercurial energy of children. Nowhere do we experience the passion of impermanence so clearly as we do with children.

I was a group leader for the young teens. One of our discussions was about how to get from the boredom, anxiety, restlessness, distraction they felt in the hall on the first day, to the peace, relaxation, awareness and mindfulness they see as the reason why their parents meditate. One of the girls suggested that the way was to "just do it" (meaning meditation). They were wonderfully open to experience. - Karen



We are currently seeking group leaders for the 1999 Family Retreat. They should have experience in meditation and in working with children. Would you consider volunteering to be a group leader? If so, please call IMS at 978-355-4378.



Sangha Pages

Set your sights

With the determination of a warrior
go on your way
along this spiritual journey

Learn to give.
understand and watch the mind
be able to live without remorse
blamelessly go about your business
unhurried by artificial concerns

Realize true happiness
not driven by external desires
or random comparisons

Act for the sake
of doing good
for all living beings:
Aim High

--Jakimo Soucy

Bugs, bugs, bugs
Bugs everywhere.

The yogi next to me snuffles
And hocks and makes me
Crazy -- then leaves the
Retreat early. Did I drive
Her away? Hard to say.

Mosquitoes are revenous,
Black flies not too bad in
Late July. Bad enough.

But mosquitoes, better
Than death, stinging my eyes
On the pillow

Where I die and weep
For the world's beauty
And myself. I will be
gone.

Bugs, bugs, bugs
Beautiful bugs.

-- M. Fox

vipassana

poems

by Lisa Elander

Choiceless Awareness

I am love's captive
Pressed in a tight embrace
A ruthless insistent lover
Who bursts all locks
Yet patient withal
Who has taught me
Painfully often
That a moment's hesitation
Is to plunge
Crazily spinning
A ruderless craft tossed on a sea of fear
Mind dimmed by the darkness of doubt

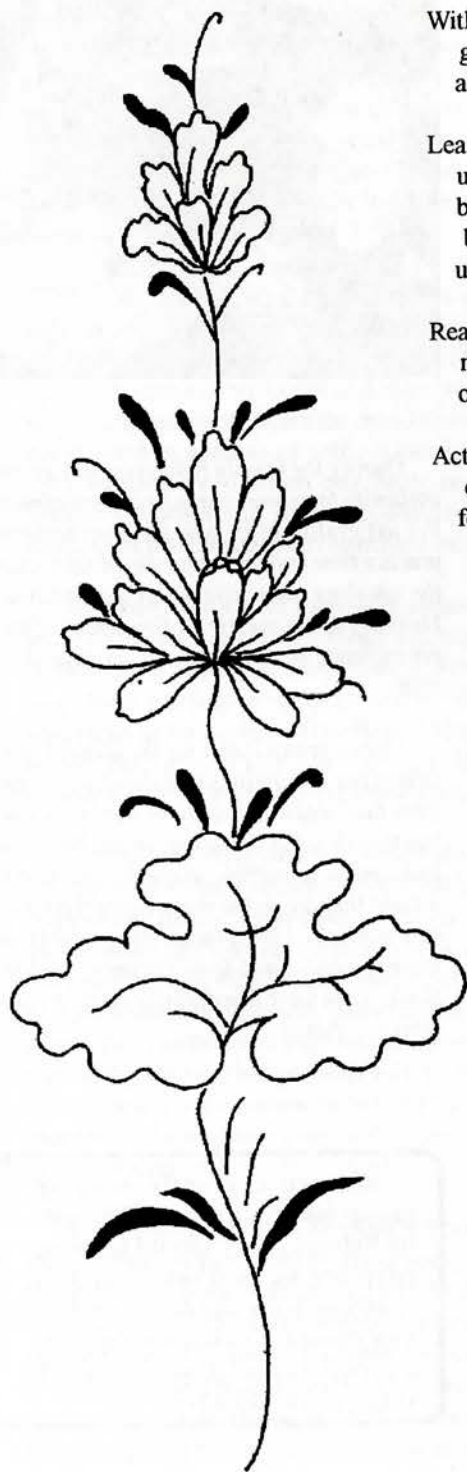
Once I thought I had a choice
Now I know there is none
But to surrender to the surging silence
Drunk with singing splendor
Born upon beating wings
Deafened
What was or will be
Lost in this mystery

My boat has sprung a leak
And sunk beneath me
I am abandoned to the sea
In ceaseless movement
Dissolving into foam
Rocked by the waves

I know nothing
Words writ upon the moving stream
With flowing colored inks
Without language is this
A moving vastness
Pregnant, still

Silence gentle and vibrant
A rocking adoration
Of love's emptiness

I am born up and carried
Weightless
Beaten by a splendor of wings



Metta / Vipassana

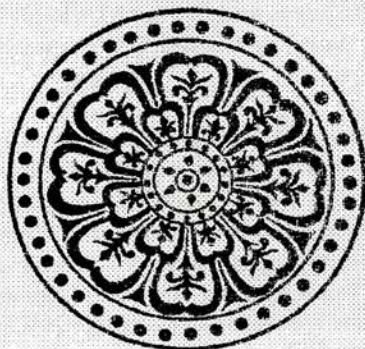
Wildness storms in every cell
Balanced breath by breath
—May I be safe from all harm

Flesh and bones burn
Consumed by solar wind
—May my heart be peaceful and happy

Ground to dust and torn asunder
—May my body be healthy and strong

Possessed by love, I know nothing
—May I live with ease and joy

There is the taste of blood in my mouth
And the silence thunders, relentless
—May I awaken



Retreat Night

Last night
Just after sliding into sleep
A nameless terror brushed my shoulder
A winged darkness rising from the
depths
With a wail
I rose to wake
To realize I had screamed aloud
And loudly

I lay listening
Doors opened
Footsteps pattered softly in the hall
Question marks hung silent in the air
Let it be
I thought
Not unkindly
Holding the present moment
With its passing dread
It's just the way it is tonight

Untitled

I fell into a sea of seething sound
A sudden drop
To light so fierce
I seemed to lose my sight
A storming of the senses so profound
Once fear had fled
No I was to be found
But knowing

This seething vibrant bright surround
This sea that bore me weightless
Was love itself
Insistent, all pervasive
A beating glowing tenderness
A love, warm deep and edgeless
That is the dance in time and space
Of emptiness

Untitled

Tonight the earth's vibration
Rumbles as an earthquake
Through my spine
Space rolls unimpeded
Walls now porous, roof quite gone
To wheeling stars and planets over-
head
Silence throbs
With a hum that's most insistent
Through the corridors of timeless time
Love and terror coexist in awe
Mind glows
With a cool bright light
Where no thing is
So clear, so clear
On and on and on

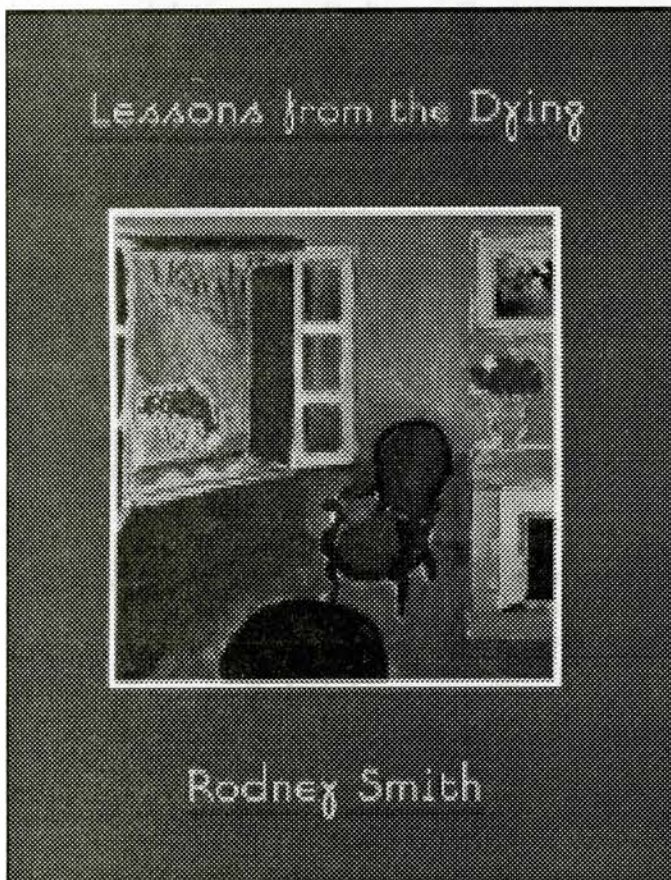
Untitled

A place where thoughts
Are hollow echoes
That collapse as they are born
Where storms have ceased
At least for now
Where mind runs down
And stills to space
As when the power fails
In a winter storm
Snow whispering upon the window
pane

Then silence blooms
Replete with inner sound
As those within a sea shell
Kuan Yin listening
Here all is soft and gentle
And unformed by love
This wide and empty space
Is not some other place
It is our very home
And no one home



IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING



Death is an event that will happen to each and every one of us. Yet in our culture it is a topic that is seldom talked about. To think of preparing for one's own death is often considered morbid. In Rodney's first book, *Lessons from the Dying*, he helps to break down the barriers that keep us from facing not only the reality of death, but also the truth of life.

To do this Rodney calls upon his many years of Buddhist practice, combined with several years of service in hospice care. He brings a depth and an intimacy to what it is to be alive, what it is to face our hopes and fears, and what it is to face death. The stories shared by the dying become a true inspiration to live.

Rodney helps to bring death out of the confines of an intellectual spiritual event into a process that is happening in each moment. The invitation to face our own death is the invitation to live this moment fully and completely, with total honesty. Throughout the book he offers numerous reflections and exercises that enable us to develop a loving and accepting heart. This allows us to open to the web that can be so tightly woven around our hopes and fears. When we begin to acknowledge our underlying beliefs, our fear, our grief and our denial, our energy is freed, allowing us to step into the mystery of the unknown.

Rodney Smith is a senior mediation teacher at IMS. He is a founding teacher of Seattle Insight Meditation Society. *Lessons from the Dying* is published by Wisdom Publications.

— Myoshin Kelley

New Year's Retreat 2000

Jack Kornfield wishes to express appreciation and gratitude for having been able to teach the New Year's retreat at IMS for the last twenty years. He will be unable to attend the New Year's of the year 2000, because he will be spending it with his family. He plans to return to teach the New Year's retreat in the year following.

New Sewage System

As this newsletter goes to print, teams of workmen and heavy equipment are digging up our front lawn and blasting the rock on the ridge between IMS and BCBS. What the three-month yogis are noting is the final chapter in our long battle to find a satisfactory solution to our failed sewage system.

By the time this newsletter is safely on your living room coffee table, the whole project should be completed. We will have built a pressurized line that will carry our effluent from our septic tank, more than two miles through the woods, all the way to Barre town center.

We would like to thank everyone who has generously donated to our building fund. Your contribution has made it possible; it has helped us to secure the future of IMS.

The Daily Rate Stays the Same

At a recent meeting of the board of directors it was agreed that IMS would not raise its retreat rates for 1999. This means that the average daily cost of a retreat at IMS is about \$32. This low rate is made possible by the generosity of our members who annually contribute to our membership appeal. If you are not a regular contributor to IMS, now is your chance to help keep the retreat rates low by making a contribution.

The recent establishment of an endowment fund has also assisted us to keep our retreat fees low. It is our goal to add to this endowment fund as a way of continuing to offer the retreat experience at IMS at rates affordable to everyone.

If you are considering your estate planning and would like to include IMS in your plans, please write to Edwin Kelley, our executive director, for further details on how to make a lasting bequest to the future of IMS. He can be contacted at 1230 Pleasant St, Barre MA 01005 or (978) 355-4378 Ext. 21.

The annual **Young Adults Retreat** (June 21-25, 1999) is an event requiring considerable supervision.

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.

Born July 4, 1954 and After

In August, 1998, Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell and Rodney Smith conducted the first retreat at IMS intended primarily for people aged in their 20's, 30's and early 40's.

Labeled the "Born July 4, 1954 and After Retreat," it addressed issues and concerns around study, career, relationships and perceptions of the future. About ninety-five people participated in the retreat. Christopher said: "We still emphasized the significance of realising enlightenment and liberation in the midst of daily circumstances."

The teachers reserved some spaces for older Dharma students. Nineteen of the participants in the eight-day retreat were over 44 years of age.

Christopher said: "The spark for our decision came from a young 22 year-old on his first retreat at IMS. He said that everybody in his small group meeting with the teacher was old enough to be his parent."

"Others told me it was not always possible to book early for a retreat. Such people included those returning from India, single parents, unemployed and people finding it difficult to arrange time for a retreat. It often seems easier for older people, financially independent and retired people, to book well in advance."

Every year, IMS offers a young adults retreat for about 60 young people aged 14-19. It is hoped that a number of them moving out of that age group will wish to join the August retreat with Christopher and Sharda. Some yogis expressed appreciation for holding the retreat in August during school holidays.

Christopher and Sharda, who have been teaching twice a year together at IMS since the mid 1980's, were delighted with the response. "We did not expect a full house for this retreat. It was a delight to see the Dharma hall full."

The same retreat will be held again in August 1999, titled "Born July 4, 1955 and After." Twelve places will be kept for those born before July 4, 1955 who have sat three retreats with Christopher and Sharda at IMS or anywhere else in the world. Their April retreat at IMS will continue to be open to all.



Practicing, Serving, Learning:

Staff Life at IMS



Beautiful flowers greet your eye as you enter the doors of IMS. The floor is freshly washed and the meditation hall ready for your presence. Friendly faces register you for a course, you receive yogi job training and the next thing you know, you're in the thick of the retreat feeling supported and free of the usual worldly life. Your world is protected, silent and calm.

Behind the walls marked STAFF ONLY, there is another world. It is a world of interaction, movement, sound, relationships, conflicts, tears and laughter. Is it like a regular business? Yes, there are phones, computers, and faxes. Yet if you step inside, you know something is different. This is not only a place where people work, it is a place where people live and practice.



All the people who work at IMS either as volunteers or as employees share a love of the dharma. We work to make it possible for teachers to teach and for people to hear the dharma and experience the richness of vipassana practice. All of us have gone through various levels of renunciation and place our practice in the forefront of our lives.

We continually work the balance between formal sitting practice and daily life practice. Many learn to do jobs they've never done before and develop strengths and uncover weaknesses. We come and stay because of our desire to serve, to be in the midst of a dharma center and because much growth and deepening happens.

Facing Life With An Open Heart

Working at IMS is a challenging and rewarding experience, according to volunteer staff interviewed recently.

The following highlights the motivations, benefits and difficulties of working as a volunteer. It describes, mostly in their own words, the world of the volunteers that support yogis on retreats. It is hoped that, as you read this, you might also be inspired by their experiences to think about becoming a volunteer staff member at IMS.

A primary motivation for many volunteers joining IMS is finding themselves at a crossroads in their life. They see working at the center as an alternative to their previous direction. Before coming to IMS many volunteers have different perceptions of what working on staff might be like. The realities, as the comments show, are another matter. When asked to describe the main benefits of working at IMS, volunteers listed them as the:

- * Opportunity to deepen their personal meditation through practicing moment to moment awareness in daily life.
- * Access to the retreats and teachers.
- * Sense of community, personal growth, safety of interpersonal life and learning about themselves in relationship.
- * Benefits provided by IMS.
- * Peaceful, beautiful rural environment.

One staff member said, "I love being on staff! My position is a good fit for me because it is challenging and varied. There is a definite community spirit at IMS: At any given time you can find someone to go to a movie, to laugh with or to help you if you are in need."

Another staff member sees the experience of being on staff as helping their personal growth and learning how to be in relationship in a direct and trustworthy way.

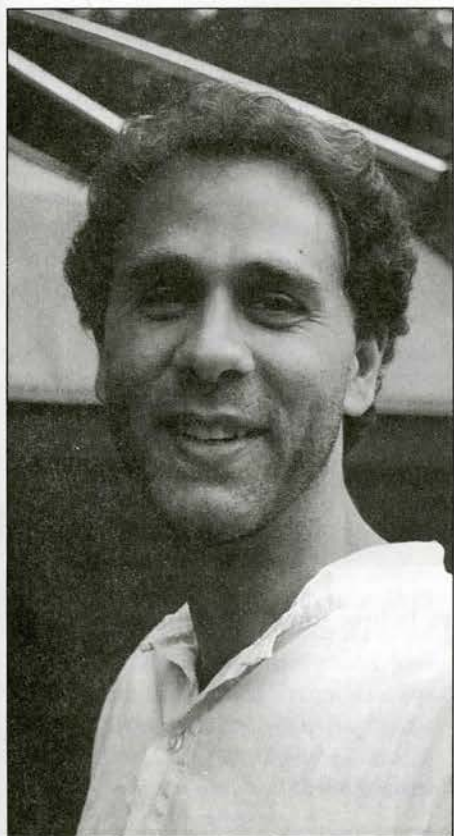
Benefits turning into challenges

Ironically, many of the benefits, such as interpersonal relationships and balancing work and meditation, also present volunteers with the greatest challenges.

In the sensitized atmosphere of the meditation center, where retreats are conducted almost continuously, IMS could well post a sign on the work notice board saying, "Warning! Being a volunteer at IMS means 'stuff' will come up."

In the words of a kitchen worker, the 'rub' is "the interpersonal difficulties that arise with other volunteers and the opportunity to explore them, work them out and learn about yourself. The opening that comes through doing this, and the letting go, is a rich place of practice."

Another staff person said, "At IMS there is more softness and openness for people to share things. There is a general feeling of more safety here and it allows you to take some risks and open up your heart". Another comment was "Even in a sweet and simple life here we make things difficult and complex -- and that has been kind of fascinating."

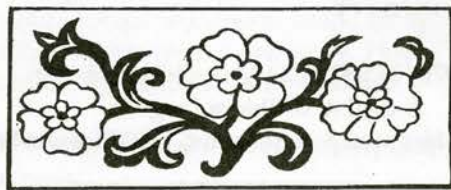


Evolving the concept of work as practice

At IMS, it seems, volunteer staff are forging new territory in western dharma with the evolution of the notion of work as practice. Recognizing that it exists, and reinforcing its validity, is a daily challenge that raises many questions. For example, the administrators, resident teacher and staff are working together to answer the question, how can the dharma be applied to the resolution of our conflicts?

"Practice at IMS is both deep and totally integrated," says one volunteer who feels she is very open from the daily sitting and the climate of mindfulness. "At the same time, I'm interacting with other people and doing complex tasks, so I can't be absorbed in my inner feelings."

IMS has a resident teacher who provides counsel to staff on ways to be more conscious of dharma principles and practices in their work. Courses on different aspects of the dharma and individual interviews are offered.



Learning about 'moment to moment' practice

Working at IMS means that many times a day you transit between the worldly talking of the workplace and the silent space of yogis, where people are moving silently and mindfully. According to one staff member, this is an excellent teacher of moment to moment practice.

"I'll come from some exciting conversation and then walk out into the silent space. It reminds me to walk a little slower; and then I remember all the points of practice, such as feeling sensations. Some of this then carries over into my next task."

One longer serving staff member says the deepening of practice which occurs for volunteer staff is not the retreat vision of going deeper into practice that he had before coming to IMS:

"It's more about understanding the moment to moment practice of day to day life here. I am actually practicing a lot more than I even imagined possible. There's such a full life here, with work, practice and community life. To keep afloat in the whole thing I've had to learn more how to practice in the moment."





An opportunity to join us

For some of you, joining volunteer staff may be a viable and attractive path. For others, you may not be able to commit to being a volunteer staff member. If this is you, then please consider being a Work Retreatant or letting us know if you can spend some extra days before or after a retreat to help us.

In the summer and in January, we need volunteers to cover for our regular staff so that they may enter into a retreat together. Sometimes we have discrete projects that need to be done: these can range from sewing or plastering, to word-processing. We are also open to receiving dana in the form of services from massage therapists, communications consultants, organization development specialists, or other types of experts who can help us do our work better and help us have more ease.

OK! You've sat the retreats; but are you ready for the Dharma in action?

Become a volunteer at IMS and:

- *Deepen your spiritual practice*
- *Live in a community of meditators*
- *Receive a diverse benefits package*
- *Learn about yourself in relationship*
- *Grow personally in a safe, caring place*



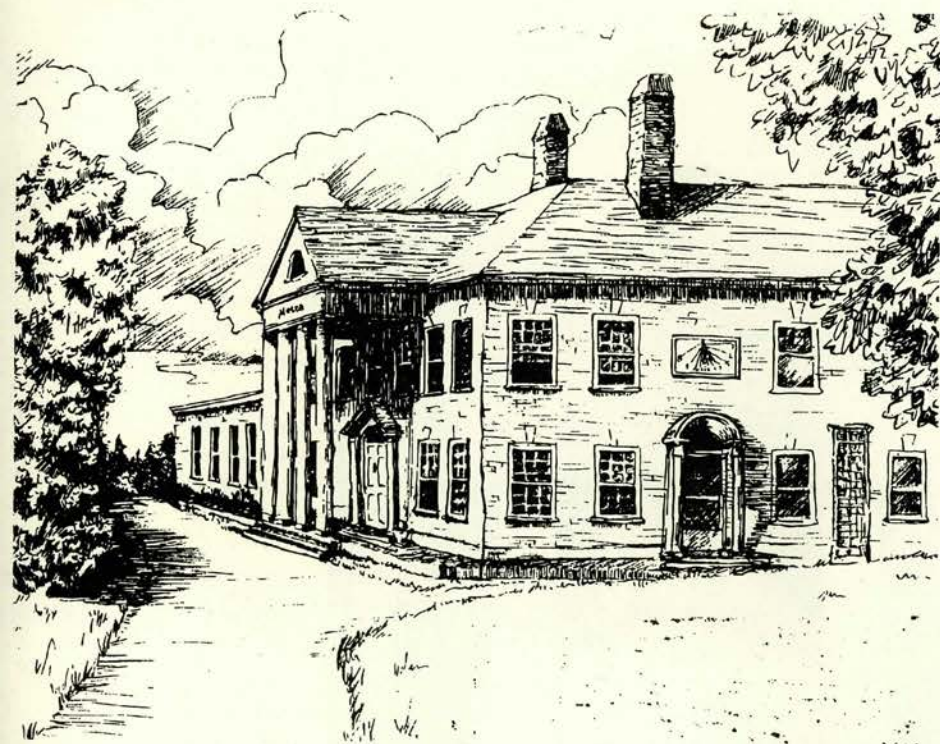
If you're ready for work-as-practice, please contact IMS at the numbers below for information about becoming a volunteer staff member.

Phone. 978/355-4378 X19, Fax 978/355-6398

E-mail AA@dharma.org

Insight Meditation Society, Administrative Assistant, 1230 Pleasant St., Barre, MA 01005

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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

The Insight Meditation Society was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide a place for the intensive practice of insight meditation. IMS operates a retreat center which is set on 80 wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts. It provides a secluded environment for intensive meditation practice. Complete silence is maintained during retreats at all times except during teacher interviews.

Vipassana Retreats are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. Daily instruction in meditation and nightly Dharma talks are given, and individual or group interviews are arranged with the teachers at regular intervals. A typical daily schedule starts at 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 for an entire 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 at IMS. 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 1999 RETREAT SCHEDULE

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

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



- Feb 5 - 12 (Fri-Fri)** **METTA RETREAT (7 days)** **JS1** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$230**
Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Sylvia Boorstein & Myoshin Kelley
Metta is the Pali word for friendship or loving-kindness. Classically, it is taught as a practice along with meditations cultivating compassion, rejoicing in the happiness of others (appreciative joy), and equanimity. They are practiced to develop concentration, fearlessness, happiness, and a loving heart. This course is devoted to cultivating these qualities.
Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1998 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.
- Feb 12 - 21 (Fri-Sun)** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** **JS2** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$285**
Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg & Myoshin Kelley
This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (loving-kindness) meditation. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the quality of precise open awareness as a way of deepening the wisdom and compassion within us.
Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1998 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.
- Feb 5 - 21 (Fri-Sun)** **METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days)** **JS3** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$465**
Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1998 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.

- Feb 26-Mar 1 (Fri-Mon) INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days) ROD Deposit \$130 Cost \$130**
Rodney Smith & Narayan Liebenson Grady
 The way of meditation is the way of the heart. This retreat will focus on the path of the heart, and how awareness gives access to the joys and sorrows of life with ever-increasing sensitivity, stability and love. Special attention will be given to the role of nature in our spiritual journey
- Mar 5-14 (Fri-Sun) BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days) AV Deposit \$150 Cost \$285**
Ajahn Sucitto & Ven. Punnadhammo
 This retreat will be a time to explore the way of the Buddha as taught in the Theravada 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 pujas), the cultivation of mindfulness, loving-kindness and the many concentrative and reflective practices, the expansiveness and simplicity of the Buddha's Path is revealed.
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.
- Bhikkhu Punnadhammo** began studying and practicing Buddhism in 1979 under the guidance of Kema Ananda, a lay teacher in Canada. In 1990 he went to Thailand and was ordained as a bhikkhu in the Ajahn Chah tradition in 1992. He returned to Canada in 1996 where he is now the abbot of the Arrow River Center.
- Mar 20-27 (Sat-Sat) WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) WOM Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
Christina Feldman & Narayan Liebenson Grady
 In the annual gathering of woman 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.
- Apr 3-10 (Sat-Sat) VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) LR1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
Larry Rosenberg & Michael Liebenson Grady
 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.
- Apr 16-18 (Fri-Sun) WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days) NM Deposit \$100 Cost \$100**
Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady
 Through the direct and simple practice of openhearted attention, this retreat will nurture our innate capacity for awakening and inner freedom. Emphasis is placed on developing wise and gentle effort in the sitting and walking practice, as well as in all activities throughout the day.
- Apr 24-May 2 (Sat-Sun) INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days) CT1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$260**
Christopher Titmuss & Sharda Rogell
 This retreat consists of sustained silent meditation, deep inquiry into our life experiences, and realization into the nature of things. It provides the opportunity to free the mind from the influence of tensions and negative patterns, and for the heart's awakening to immensity.
- May 8-15 (Sat-Sat) VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) NLG Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady
 See description for Apr 16-18 course above.



- May 21-23 (Fri-Sun) WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)** SMW Deposit \$100 Cost \$100
Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith
 The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 5-15 retreat. (See below).
- May 28-Jun 5 (Fri-Sat) 5 METTA RETREAT (8 days)** SM1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$260
Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith & Carol Wilson
 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.
- Jun 5-15 (Sat-Tue) VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days)** SM2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$310
Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith & Carol Wilson
 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 with greater wisdom. Daily loving kindness practice also included.
- May 28-Jun 15 (Fri-Tue) 15 METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (18 days)** SM3 Deposit \$150 Cost \$515
Steven Smith, Michele McDonald Smith & Carol Wilson
- Jun 21-25 (Mon-Fri) YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT (4 days)** YA Deposit \$150 Cost \$150
Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith & others
 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. For ages 14-19 only.
- Jul 4-11 (Sun-Sun) VIPASSANA RETREAT--For Experienced Students (7 days)** LR2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$230
Larry Rosenberg & Corrado Pensa
 See description for Apr 3-10 course above. Retreatants are required to have sat at least one weeklong retreat at IMS.
- Jul 16-25 (Fri-Sun) VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** CF1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$285
Christina Feldman, Fred Von Allmen & Yanai Postelnik
 An opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom and compassion in a supportive environment. Emphasis is placed upon developing sensitivity, attention and awareness in sitting and walking meditation to foster our innate gifts of inner listening, balance and understanding. Silence, meditation, instruction and evening talks are integral parts of this retreat.
- Yanai Postelnik** has practiced and studied insight meditation in Asia and the West. He has been teaching retreats at Gaia House in England and internationally since 1992. He was the resident teacher at IMS for 18 months and now lives in England and is closely involved with on-going work of Gaia House.
- Aug 2-7 (Mon-Sat) FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)** FAM Deposit \$50 per adult Cost Adult \$175 Child \$55
Marcia Rose & Jose Reissig
 This course explores integrating meditation and family life. In a less formal atmosphere, a full program of sitting, discussions, family meditations, and talks is offered. Childcare is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers.
- Each family unit pays a minimum of an additional \$35 for professional child care coordination. Your registration MUST specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.**
- Note: Due to the popularity of this course all applications received on or before January 5, 1999 will be processed in the following manner: half of available places will be reserved for families who have attended this course 3 out of the past 5 years and allocated on a "first received" basis. The remaining places will be filled by lottery.*

Aug 13-21 **BORN ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1955 OR AFTER RETREAT (8 days)** CT2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$260

(Fri-Sat) **Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell & Andrew Getz**
 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.

Andrew Getz has been practicing in the tradition of vipassana for 22 years with the guidance of such teachers as Sayadaw U Pandita, and Venerable Ajahn Buddhadasa, and spent four of those years as a Buddhist monk. He presently lives in the Bay area teaching mindfulness in healthcare settings and has co-founded a project to bring awareness-based practices to high-risk youth.

Aug 27-29 **DANA RETREAT (2 days)** DANA Deposit & Cost Donation
 (Fri-Sun) **Bhante Gunaratana**

This retreat is offered by 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.

Sep 3-6 **LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days)** RD1 Deposit \$130 Cost \$130
 (Fri-Mon) **Ruth Denison**

Sep 3-12 **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** RD2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$285
 (Fri-Sun) **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.

Sep 22-Dec 15 **THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)** 3MO Deposit \$750 Cost \$2,350
 (Wed-Wed)

Sep 22-Nov 3 **PARTIAL #1 (42 days)** PART1 Deposit \$350 Cost \$1,200
 (Wed-Wed)

Nov 3-Dec 15 **PARTIAL #2 (42 days)** PART2 Deposit \$350 Cost \$1,200
 (Wed-Wed)

Joseph Goldstein (all 3 months); Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Guy Armstrong & Sarah Doering (1st half only); Sharon Salzberg, Carol Wilson, Fred Von Allmen & Marcia Rose (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.*

Special cancellation fees and deadlines apply for this retreat. 3MO and PART 1: Up to March 1, \$50; from March 1 to April 15, \$150; after April 15, full deposit. PART 2: Up to April 15, \$50; from April 15 to June 1, \$150; after June 1, full deposit.

Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 15, 1998 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.

Dec 28-Jan 6 **NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (9 days)** NY Deposit \$150 Cost \$285
 (Tue-Thu) **Rodney Smith, Anna Douglas & others**

With respect for the old, an appreciation for the new, and an abiding trust in the present, this retreat will usher in the next millennium. Embracing all experience with loving kindness and clarity we will face the challenges of each moment and thereby begin the 21st century as the Age of the Dharma.

Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 20, 1998 will be included in the lottery. Others may be wait listed.

SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

Ajahn Sucitto has been a monk for 22 years and is a senior disciple of Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. He is currently the abbot of Cittaviveka Chithurst Buddhist Monastery in England.

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

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*.

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.

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

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 has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975 including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching since 1984 and worked full time in hospice care for 14 years. Currently he works on end-of-life issues in Seattle and conducts meditation classes and retreats around the country. He is the author of *Lessons From the Dying*.



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 Pro-*

found 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

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.

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

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

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

Myoshin Kelley has been practicing meditation for over 20 years. During this time she has done intensive practice in Burma and more recently at IMS where she has trained as a teacher.

VISITING TEACHERS

Guy Armstrong has practiced insight meditation for over 20 years. His training included practice as a Buddhist monk in Thailand with Ajahn Buddhadasa. He began teaching meditation in 1984 and has led retreats in the U.S., Europe, and Australia.

Fred Von Allmen has studied and practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970 in both the Theravada and the Tibetan tradition. Since 1984 he has taught over two hundred meditation retreats and Buddhist workshops worldwide. He is the author of *Die Freiheit Entdecken* and *Mit Buddhas Augensehen (Theseus, Germany)*.

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.

Registrations:

- Are accepted only by mail or in person, not by phone, fax or e-mail. Incomplete registrations (including those with out 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; processing may be delayed by volume of registrations at the start of the year.
- If the course has openings you will be confirmed.
- If the course is full you will be placed on a waiting list. When a place opens you will be confirmed by mail.
- 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 IMS.
- Retreats involve a one-hour work period each day.
- For an information sheet about the IMS environment as regards chemical sensitivities, contact the office.
- Participation in retreats is always at the discretion of IMS.

Payments:

- The cost of each retreat and the deposit required are listed by the course on the retreat schedule.
- If you are applying for a scholarship, the minimum deposit for a weekend course is \$25; for up to 26 days, \$50; and for PT1, PT2, and 3MO full deposit.
- Please pay by check or money order in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. 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 if you are confirmed. If you don't get into a course your check will be destroyed.

Cancellation:

- If you need to cancel your registration, please let us know as early as possible. Cancellation fees are \$25 six or more weeks before a course starts, \$100 four or more weeks before, and full deposit if later than that. Special fees and/or dates apply for FAM, PT1, PT2 and 3MO. (See course schedule for details).
- Cancellation fees apply if you are confirmed off the waitlist and do not accept.

All cancellation fees are donated to the scholarship fund.

IMS Registration Form

If you will be registering for more than one course, please photocopy this form and send a separate form for each course. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Course Code: _____ Course Cost _____

Name _____ M/F _____ DOB _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Country _____ Zip _____

Check here if new address. Old Address _____

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

Fax: () _____ E-mail: _____

Dates you will be here: From _____ To _____ Can you offer a ride? YES or NO

Do you snore? _____ Do you smoke? _____ Have you Been to IMS before? YES or NO

Please indicate any physical disabilities or special needs to assist in making your room assignment.

Retreat Experience: When applying for LR 2, PT1, PT2, or 3MO please document your retreat experience: _____

Amt of deposit enclosed _____ Please send me scholarship information and form. _____

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

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

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

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

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

Teacher Support: Teachers do not receive any payment for leading retreats at IMS. The course fees are only to cover 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.

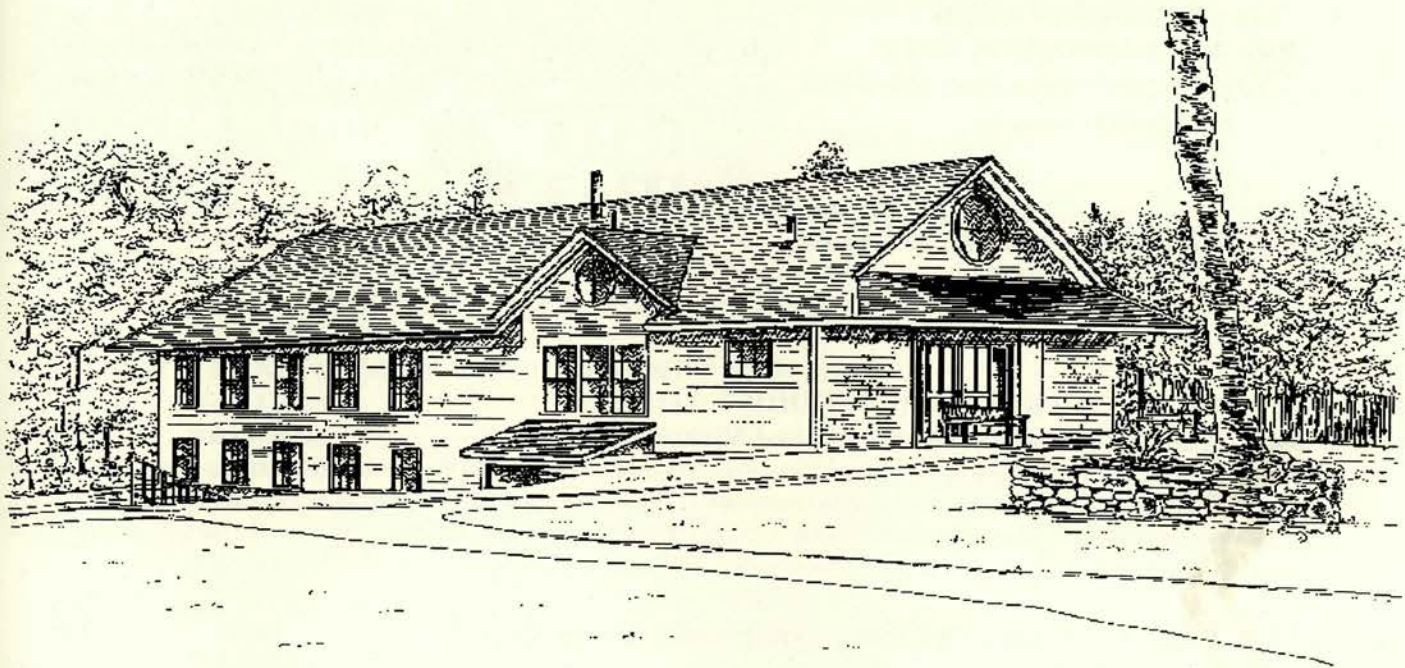
Dāna Retreat: Each year, IMS has a weekend retreat with no fixed course rate—come and practice and give what you can.

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



The 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.

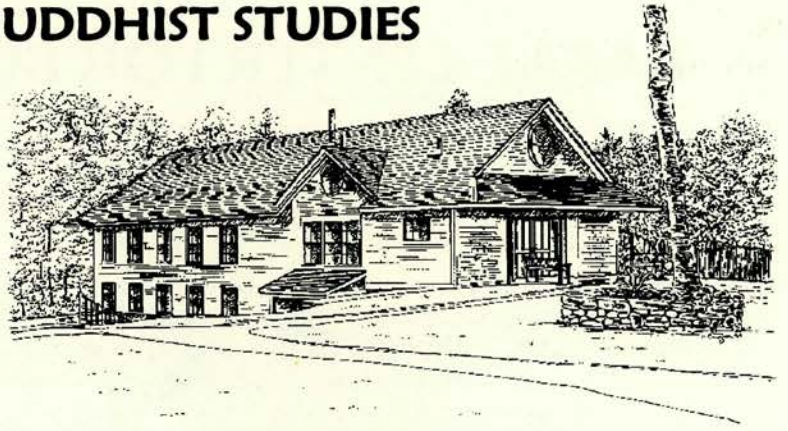
Registrations are accepted only by mail or in person. We cannot accept registrations by phone or fax. Early registration is advised since our capacity is limited. Upon receipt of your deposit, a confirmation will be mailed to you with information on travel details and what you need to bring. Please see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



1999 COURSE SCHEDULE

- Jan. 10-22 (2 Weeks) **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: BUDDHIST STUDIES**
Andrew Olendzki, Mu Soeng, and Visiting Faculty 99NAL \$750
This academic program provides an in-depth introduction to the doctrinal and historical background of Buddhism within a contemplative environment. The objective of the program is to explore Buddhist tradition in ways that enable students to discern various strands of thought and practices that are now at the forefront in the formulation of a new Buddhism in the contemporary West.
- January 23 (Saturday) **PĀRAMIS (PERFECTIONS): THE HEART OF PRACTICE**
Sylvia Boorstein 99SB \$45
The ten perfections (paramis) of the Theravada tradition—generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, patience, energy, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness and equanimity—lie at the heart of Buddha's teachings and our own practice. This workshop will offer a didactic explanation of the ten paramis as well as an exploration of how we may cultivate them in our everyday life. Through experiential exercises and discussions we will investigate the relevance of these ancient yet timeless teachings to our own lives.
- Jan 29-31 (Weekend) **OX-HERDING PICTURES: ENTERING THE MARKETPLACE WITH EMPTY HANDS**
Matthew Flickstein 99MF \$120
Created in the 12th century by a Chinese Zen master, the "Ten Ox-herding Pictures" are a classic of Zen and Buddhist practice. The wild ox is a metaphor for our restless and confused mind; taming the wild ox symbolizes our ability to live in the world through the eyes of wisdom and compassion. This weekend workshop will be mostly experiential with guided imagery, group discussion and awareness exercises for working through our unresolved grief and anger, and obstacles that prevent us from completing our inner transformation.
- Feb 6 (Saturday) **SUTTA STUDIES: THE METTĀ SUTTA**
Andrew Olendzki 99AO1 \$45
One of the best-loved Buddhist poems of all time, the *Metta Sutta* continues to be chanted regularly by Buddhist communities worldwide. We will study the sutta line by line—first looking at the Pali to get a sense of what is being said in the original, and then comparing up to a dozen English translations of each line to see what each translator has added or left out. Discussion will cover a wide range of themes introduced by the text. Students will then be encouraged to compose their own translation of each verse. We will also explore several different chanting styles. *No prior exposure to Pali language is needed or expected.*
- Feb 12-14 (Weekend) **LESSONS FROM THE WILD: TEACHINGS OF PHRA AJAAN LEE**
Thanissaro Bhikkhu 99TB DANA
Phra Ajaan Lee (1906-1961) was one of the most colorful and articulate teachers of the Thai forest tradition. This course—through talks, discussions, readings, and meditation—will examine his teachings in light of his life and his place in Thai Buddhist history, as well as in terms of their universal message and appeal.

Note: The weekend will be followed by a 3-day retreat (Feb. 15-17) to give course participants an opportunity to work intensively with Ven. Thanissaro Bhikkhu in putting the forest meditation teachings into practice. The retreat participation will be limited to 15 people on a first-come, first-served basis. Preference will be given to people registering for the entire five days, including the weekend.

- Feb 27 (Saturday)** **HEART SUTRA: FORM AS EMPTINESS, EMPTINESS AS FORM**
Mu Soeng **99MS1 \$45**
 Using this seminal text of Mahayana Buddhism, the course will explore the teachings of shunyata (emptiness) in the traditions of Zen Buddhism, Madhyamaka dialectic, Yogachara idealism, and the findings of quantum physics. Through talks, discussions, meditation and chanting, we will investigate the ever-embracing play of form and emptiness.
- March 6-13 (7 Days)** **BHĀVANA PROGRAM: INSIGHT INTO IMPERMANENCE** **99BHAV1 \$350**
Andrew Olendzki and Carol Wilson
 Understanding change, and knowing how to respond skillfully to change, is a major theme of Buddhist thought and practice. This program is basically a 7-day silent vipassana retreat, but each day will include a three-hour study session in which key passages from the Pali texts on the issue of impermanence are reviewed, discussed, and then investigated from the perspective of practice. Admission by application. See page 29.
- March 19-21 (Weekend)** **TRANSFORMING PROBLEMS INTO HAPPINESS**
Ron Leifer **99RL \$120**
 We struggle constantly to fulfill our desires, ambitions, and happiness projects and to avoid failure, shame, fear, and death. The result is ordinary to severe mental and emotional suffering from which we seek relief. Based on Atisha's "Seven Points of Mind Training," this workshop will use traditional Buddhist meditation practices and teachings to open to our pain and unhappiness in order to transform it into wisdom and peace. The workshop will incorporate Lo-jong, or Thought Transformation, practices that are particularly useful for working on relationships, along with interactive teachings and discussions.
- March 26-28 (Weekend)** **WOMEN IN BUDDHISM**
Trudy Goodman **99TG \$120**
 This course will explore the lives and awakenings of several Buddhist women from ancient India (e.g. Buddha's own stepmother) to the contemporary West (e.g. Maureen Stuart Roshi). How did Buddhism affect the course of their lives? How has Buddhist practice changed our lives, the first two generations of Western female practitioners? And in what ways are we transforming Buddhism in the West? The weekend is offered as a supplement to Women's meditation retreat at Insight Meditation Society and will include study of the lives of women Buddhist teachers, sharing our stories, silence, and meditation.
- April 1-4 (3 Days)** **DZOG CHEN: AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN** **99SD1 \$180**
Lama Surya Das
Dzog Chen (Tibetan for "The Natural Great Perfection") teaches awareness techniques for awakening to inner freedom, and directly introduces the inherent freedom, purity and perfection of the innate Buddha-Mind, and the interconnectedness of all beings.
- April 9-11 (Weekend)** **INSIGHT DIALOGUE: DEEP LISTENING AND MINDFUL SPEAKING**
Greg Kramer **99GK \$120**
 Insight Dialogue is a new model of mindfulness practice that brings the detail and spaciousness of vipassana/Insight meditation together with (David) Bohm-inspired dialogue and other talking circle practices. The purpose of Insight Dialogue is to allow the hindrances of attachment, confusion, and deeply-held assumptions become apparent, as well as nurture compassion. As we discern the gap between pure knowing and thinking, and the shared nature of mind is apprehended, the dialogue becomes transformative for individuals and whole groups. In addition to grounding in silent practice, this weekend we will meditate with deep listening and mindful speaking to create a spacious awareness in which to discover the true nature of mind.
- April 16-18 (Weekend)** **MINDFULNESS: A MEDITATIVE AND COGNITIVE INQUIRY**
Daeja Napier **99DN1 \$120**
 Mindfulness (Pali: Sati) is the very heart of the awakening process in Buddha's teachings. It is not a thought, unit of time, or measurement; rather an active agent of awareness. This foundational awareness illuminates the mind-heart with a mirror-like capacity to be with things as they are and therefore see deeply into the nature of our being. This weekend will include the textual and commentarial presentations, discussions, sitting and walking practices, to explore and develop a wise understanding of the nature of Sati, and its implications and applications in our awakening process.

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- June 5-12** **BHAVANA PROGRAM: LOTUS SUTRA STUDY WEEK**
(7 Days) **George Bowman and Trudy Goodman** **99BHAV2 \$350**
In this meditation and study retreat we will explore the teachings of the Lotus Sutra (*Saddharamapundarika sutra*) one of the most important of Mahayana wisdom texts. We will emphasize the centrality of Buddha's teaching of compassion--the capacity to be with ourselves and others in our times of greatest aliveness--in the Lotus sutra which holds that to see and be seen is the very heart of the practice of a Bodhisattva.
- Jun 20-Jul 2** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: THERAVĀDA STUDIES**
(2 Weeks) **Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty** **99THINT \$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 11-23** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHĀYĀNA STUDIES**
(2 Weeks) **Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty** **99MHINT \$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 Yogācāra school. We will study the rise of major Buddhist schools in China (Pure Land, Ch'an, Tien-tai, and the Hua-yen) and Japan (Kegon, Shingon, Tendai and Zen). The course will culminate with a look at the arrival and interface of these Mahayana lineages in contemporary American culture.
- August 7** **LESSONS FROM THE DYING**
(Saturday) **Rodney Smith** **99RS \$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.

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.

Matthew Flickstein is the founder-director of The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center, a long-term practice center in rural Maryland. He has been a student of vipassana for more than 20 years and teaches workshops nationally.

Rev. Issho Fujita is the resident Zen priest at the Valley Zendo in Charlemon

MA. He has been trained in the Soto Zen tradition and has a degree in psychology from Japan. He also leads a Zen meditation group at Smith College in Northampton, MA.

Trudy Goodman has studied in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974. She is a teacher at the Cambridge Buddhist Association where she has taught classes and led retreats for women.

Paula Green 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*.

Greg Kramer has practiced vipassana for more than 20 years with Anagarika Dhammadina, Achan Sobin Namto and Ven. Ananda Maitreya Maha Nayaka Thera, and has just completed his doctorate on Insight Dialogue Online from the California Institute of Integral Studies. He is the founder-director of Metta Foundation in Portland, Oregon, and teaches Insight Dialogue on the West Coast.

Continued on next page



Independent Study Program

The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies has recently completed the two cottages on our rural campus; these are to support our visiting teachers and a 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 a single room.

What facilities are provided? In addition to the two new cottages, we have fourteen single rooms available for independent study students. 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 does the program include? The program is intended for investigating Buddhist teachings through study and practice. It is not a place for long-term meditation (that is better done at IMS); nor is it a place to stay in Barre while pursuing other interests; nor is it suitable for writing a great spy novel. We ask you to submit an outline of the project you wish to do, and this is subject to approval.

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.

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.

Teachers at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies....continued

Ron Leifer, a Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, studied with Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche for fifteen years and is associated with the Namgyal Buddhist Institute in Ithaca, NY., where he also has a private psychotherapy practice. He is the author of *The Happiness Project: Transforming the Three Poisons that Cause the Suffering We Inflict on Ourselves and Others*.

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

Daeja Napier, a lay Dharma teacher and founder of the Sati Foundation for Mindfulness Training, teaches Insight Meditation and Brahma Vihara retreats throughout the country. She is also a guiding teacher of the newly-forming Dhamma Dena Meditation Center in the Northampton area. She is also the mother of five children.

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

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

Woods Shoemaker is a long time student and teacher in the lineage of TKV Desikachar of Madras, India. He taught yoga at the Krishnamurti School in England from 1979-81, and has been a vipassana practitioner since 1976 with Dhira-vamsa, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Christopher Titmuss and Larry Rosenberg.

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*.

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



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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.

Teachers at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies....continued

Ron Leifer, a Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, studied with Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche for fifteen years and is associated with the Namgyal Buddhist Institute in Ithaca, NY., where he also has a private psychotherapy practice. He is the author of *The Happiness Project: Transforming the Three Poisons that Cause the Suffering We Inflict on Ourselves and Others*.

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

Daeja Napier, a lay Dharma teacher and founder of the Sati Foundation for Mindfulness Training, teaches Insight Meditation and Brahma Vihara retreats throughout the country. She is also a guiding teacher of the newly-forming Dhamma Dena Meditation Center in the Northampton area. She is also the mother of five children.

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

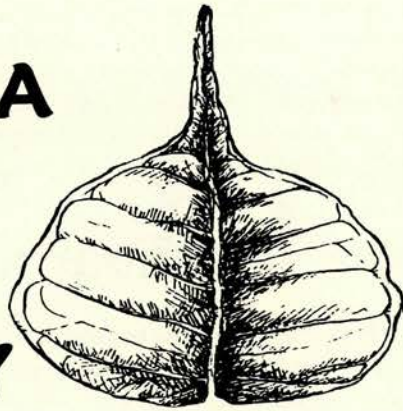
Mu Soeng is the director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He trained in the Zen tradition and was a monk for 11 years. He is the author of *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality* and *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen-Tradition and Teachers*.

Woods Shoemaker is a long time student and teacher in the lineage of TKV Desikachar of Madras, India. He taught yoga at the Krishnamurti School in England from 1979-81, and has been a vipassana practitioner since 1976 with Dhira-vamsa, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Christopher Titmuss and Larry Rosenberg.

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*.

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

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.

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PRACTICING FOR AWAKENING

by Jack Engler

These remarks have been excerpted from a day-long program given by Jack Engler at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies on November 1, 1997. Jack has had a long association with Dharma study and practice. He studied Pali language and Abhidhamma at the Post-Graduate Institute of Buddhist Studies in Nalanda, Bihar, and practiced meditation for several years in India with Anagarika Munindraji and Dipa Ma. He also studied with the Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw in Burma. He is co-author of Transformations of Consciousness (Shambhala, 1986), and has been a clinical psychologist for more than twenty years. Jack is on the BCBS board of directors, and teaches in Barre from time to time.

THE POSSIBILITY OF AWAKENING

As the dharma has spread into different cultures over the centuries, it has always been adapted and practiced somewhat differently in each unique cultural environment. We are seeing this again today as dharma is being practiced within western culture.

Asian and Asian-trained American teachers first brought the dharma here in its traditional context as a practice for enlightenment. The longer it has been here, though, the more it has adapted—or been adapted—to different western cultural forms, and the more it has inevitably been integrated with a lot of other processes of personal transformation prevalent in our culture like psychotherapy and stress reduction. And that is perfectly legitimate. Particularly in the form of mindfulness, meditation has proven to be a very adaptable and powerful practice. It can alleviate anxiety and stress, it can promote the development of basic psychological functions like the capacity for self-observation and self-regulation of emotional states, it can access the unconscious and facilitate psychological insight into oneself.

Yet, at least in the mainstream world in which I mostly live, it seems we talk less and less about the original and more profound purpose of practice—the realiza-

tion of enlightenment—as a possibility for ourselves. I think we are in danger of repeating what has happened in all Buddhist countries: holding on to awakening as an idea or ideal, but letting it become so far removed from personal aspiration and practice that it becomes a kind of carrot out there on the horizon: something that maybe we will some day, some way, get to—but not right now. We rationalize this by saying we have given up “striving” or any “gaining idea.”

Somewhere in our hearts we’re in danger of losing our personal connection with awakening as a possibility for ourselves. It’s extremely important we don’t do that, because awakening is our true nature. It is the work we have come here to do. Losing touch with who we really are, with what we most hunger for and love, produces the deepest kind of self-alienation and suffering.

Perhaps you are all familiar with that famous statement of the Buddha: “I teach suffering, bhikkhus, and the end of suffering.” Now if the Buddha only taught suffering, we’d have a problem. But he taught the end of suffering too: all these states of mind that plague us can come to an end. Do we really believe that? Was he really talking about me? Yes, he was!

It is important to keep the original aspiration and possibility alive, especially as dharma takes root here in the West. When I was trying to create a frame of reference for today’s workshop, I asked myself, “What do I care most about? What is most passionate in my heart? What motivated me in the beginning? What has sustained me through all the years?” And I realized that for me all these questions are really resolved in that statement of the Buddha that there is an end to suffering, that we can awaken—not as some far off, distant, ideal possibility, but as a possibility in this life.

THREE TYPES OF SUFFERING

What is awakening? It’s important to have some idea of what it means. Traditionally, this is known as the need for “right view” in starting out. Otherwise we import all our own conscious and especially unconscious associations into it, and it becomes anything and everything from the answer to all our problems to an unconscious narcissistic wish for perfection or invulnerability. In Buddhist teaching, awakening is a very specific event with very specific outcomes.

It's important we don't lose our personal connection with awakening as a possibility for ourselves, because awakening is our true nature. It is the work we have come here to do.

One way of beginning to grasp it is to ask, What is the problem to which enlightenment is the solution? And how does practice address that? Because enlightenment is not the answer to all problems. It won’t tell me how to resolve conflicts with my partner—and the really bad news: it won’t by itself prevent them!—it won’t tell me how to raise my kids or how to pay the mortgage, it won’t by itself make work or career more satisfying or fulfilling. So what is it that the practice of dharma addresses? It is important to understand this because an investigation of this question makes clear why the path is the kind of path it is, and has the outcomes that it has.

As we know, that very first thing the Buddha talked about after his enlightenment was the noble truth of suffering. If you stop and think of the kind of chutzpah it took to say that our life as we live it is suffering — to start your teaching with that kind of a message — it's nothing short of staggering. It's not the way to keep your audience. It flies in the face of what most of us want to hear. And yet it's what we secretly know to be true. I remember the shock and then the great sense of relief I felt when I heard this teaching for the first time: "At last, someone's telling the truth!"

When someone walks into a therapist's office, what they usually want is relief. They don't want to hear about suffering. But the Buddha, being the extraordinary teacher and truth-teller that he was, presented this teaching of the first noble truth at the very outset — that life as we normally live it does not bring us what we want.

We're all dinosaurs in a way--some part of us is going extinct from maladaptation every moment.

But the suffering that Buddhist teaching address is very specific. It is also multi-layered, which I think is just the way we experience it.

First, there is what in Pali is called *dukkha-dukkha*, basic *dukkha* or "ordinary suffering" — the states of physical illness or disability and mental anguish we all recognize in everyday experience. It's interesting that birth should be included here as a source of suffering. When my children were born, like most parents my wife and I experienced their birth as a great joy. But within a larger frame of reference, it's the need, the desire, to take birth yet once again that's a mark of suffering.

Taking birth again is a sign that our work isn't finished. Dynamically, it also means we haven't been ready to finish it. So we do it again, like other repetition compulsions, to master the trauma until we work it through. We need not think of this only as birth in the traditional sense of rebirth. We can think of it as the pain-

ful process of catapulting ourselves forward into the next moment because we haven't completed the work of the last moment, or been able to accept it for what it is was — that nagging discontent that drives us to try to manipulate our experience and our life (never mind others'). We're constantly scrambling to change or complete or fix our experience or others, and so we're taking birth again and again every moment through the day. We are being catapulted by one experience into the next one in an endless project Buddhist teaching calls *samsara*, literally, "perpetual wandering".

Think about how you go through your day. If it looks anything like mine, you know you've got a problem! So there is birth — the ultimate re-cycling process. There is old age. There is death. There is sorrow. There is pain. There is grief. There is despair. And many, many other states of mind and body we could add to this list of "ordinary sufferings."

Another aspect of basic *dukkha* is the suffering of our own likes and dislikes — not getting what we want, or being stuck with what we don't want, or losing what we love. As Oscar Wilde once said, "The only thing worse than not getting what you want is getting it." This is a very special kind of suffering. Nothing ever turns out to be quite the right thing; but if it's close enough, then we worry about losing it!

Freud called this kind of suffering "ordinary human unhappiness." In a famous statement in the *Studies of Hysteria* at the very beginning of psychoanalysis, which remained his view — and which proved to be overly optimistic! — he said, "The best I can do is exchange your neurotic misery for ordinary human unhappiness." Most therapists would probably agree. "Ordinary human unhappiness" remains the limit of therapeutic effectiveness. But the Buddha took this as a starting point and said, No, we can do something about that — about the way we suffer from these experiences.

Secondly, there's the suffering brought about by change — *dukkha-viparinama*. And that again is not too hard to understand. We no sooner get the bird from the bush into our hand than we lose it, or something else happens, or it all

changes. When it changes for the better, we're happy; but when it changes for the worse, we're unhappy. We're constantly on that roller coaster. There's no peace. There's no rest.

So change is a problem for us. It's not clear why it should be. As organisms evolving over millions of years, we're adapted for change. That's the driving engine of evolution. Species become extinct when they cannot adapt to a changing environment, like the dinosaurs. We're all kind of dinosaurs in a way. Change is a problem for us, unless it breaks our way, but then we live with the constant anxiety that next time it might not. Some part of us is going extinct from maladaptation every moment.

The third type of suffering that the dharma addresses is more difficult to understand, namely the "suffering of conditioned states" (there are no other states; the unconditioned is not a 'state') — *sankhara-dukkha*. This is a way of saying that every state of consciousness, every state of mind and body, without exception, is conditioned. What does that mean? It means that every state arises only when certain conditions are present — in Abhidhamma terms, every state "arises dependently". And these conditions are constantly changing. At the deepest level of mind, body and the physical universe itself, there are no "things" which change — no ultimate entity in any domain, no atom, particle, soul, self, mind, consciousness — that is an independently existing, unanalyzable entity. Any "thing" is only a momentary set of relationships that reach outward to other sets of relationships, which are all constantly changing.

In our ordinary way of thinking and in ordinary sense experience, relationships exist between "things" that are connected in some way. But on very close examination — via an electron microscope or a particle accelerator or a quantum experiment — or via meditative examination of moment to moment experience — "things" suddenly dissolve. When perception resolves again, only momentary configurations — patterns of relationships — are observable. You have passed through the looking glass.

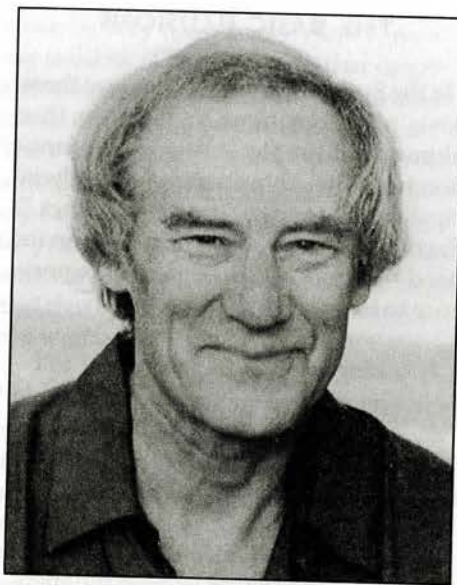
If this is the nature of reality, there is no solid place on which to stand. No state of consciousness, meditative or otherwise, to reach or retreat to in the hope that it will be an ultimate place of refuge and security, no matter how permeated with bliss, peace or understanding.

It is in this specific sense that every state of mind and body is potentially or actually a condition of suffering. I think that's much harder to accept. There's something in us that just resists that notion. There's got to be somewhere I can land, where I don't have to be anxious or scared: this relationship will be different; my parents will finally start acting like parents and I'll get what I need from them; if not, I can find peace and fulfillment in some meditative state. And on and on and on.

In a way, practice is a matter of testing that hypothesis moment after moment. Is this it? Is that it? Is this place secure? Do I feel whole, complete, here? Is this firm ground under my feet? In effect, we are testing every possible experience in practice as it arises, asking that question. And again and again we come to the conclusion, no, this is not ultimately safe, this is not ultimately stable or secure.

Mindfulness practice confronts us with the same challenge Faust set Mephistopheles, who promised him the world if he could have his soul: "You can have my soul if you can bring me one experience that will be so compelling that I will say, 'Stay thou moment, thou art so fair.'" And Mephistopheles brings out one state of mind and body, one experience, after another and presents them to Faust. Faust tests each one, tastes it thoroughly, and has to say each time, "No, that's not it." And that's what ultimately saves him and prevents Mephistopheles from getting his soul.

This is what we are doing in practice. We're tasting, in effect, every moment, every experience, and asking, "Is this it? Are you it? Are you it? Are YOU it?!" We have to fully taste each experience — not just be aware of it — to fully test it and get back a trustworthy answer to our question. If we do, we will save our soul until we pass beyond all states and all experiences and find a peace and joy that is deathless.



THE CAUSES OF SUFFERING

Now, what produces these different types of suffering that practice is designed to address? What have we heard endlessly in dharma talks? Desire. Wanting and not-wanting. The dynamics of desire are very interesting when you watch them in your own mind. Why is desire such a problem? Why is it so central and enormous a problem that the human realm is defined by it?

First we need to make a distinction between enjoyment and desire. If you eat a meal that's wonderful, you're satisfied. The enjoyment of the meal need not be associated with any desire. The point on which suffering turns is to let enjoyment be enjoyment without it leading on to desire. How to be with a particular experience without it generating either a wish for more or a wish for less?

Desire is definitely a problem. Why? Because it is insatiable.

Ultimately, that's what we're trying to do with mindfulness. That's what mindfulness is about. Mindfulness is about eating the meal and enjoying the meal, but not lingering over it. When it's over, it's over. It doesn't generate desire, regret, aversion, guilt, or any other reaction to the basic experience that catapults us forward. It's a simple concept, but we watch how difficult it is to practice it all of the time — or even a fraction of the time.

In 1967 I had a 3-star meal in Avallon with 2 friends. We'd driven from Munich over the Easter break. By law, there are only 12 3-star restaurants in all of France. We arranged the meal in the morning with one of the world's great chefs. It took most of the day to prepare, and all of the evening to eat, ending with a 1907 armagnac — far and away the best meal I've ever had. I can still taste it as I'm talking about it. Lots of catapulting through lots of mind moments: from desire, to anticipation, to enjoyment, to satiation; to limping back to Munich afterwards, broke; to regret, and back to desire again as I'm thinking about it. In Dzogchen practice they say, "Leave the arising in the arising." And this is 30 years later.

So desire itself is definitely a problem. Why? Because it is insatiable. And what drives the insatiability of desire? What conditions desire? In the Buddhist analysis, the Pali term for desire is *tanha*, literally, "thirst," more generally, craving. In the chain of co-dependent origination, what conditions (causes) desire is *vedana*. "Vedana" is usually translated as "feeling", but not feeling as emotion. Rather, feeling as the pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral quality of each moment of experience. This is a crucial point — that every experience comes with a certain affective quality, what western psychology calls feeling-tone.

Think about it. It is really an extraordinary insight. When you're sitting next in practice, tell yourself, just for one minute, you're just going to be mindful of the feeling-tone of each thought, feeling, sensation, sound, mood that comes to awareness. Try to be mindful of just the pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral quality of that mind-moment or that experience. If you can just be with the pleasurableness and let it be pleasurable — no problem.

The trouble is, if its pleasurable, it usually impels us on to some kind of desire — to wanting. If it's unpleasurable, it usually evokes not-wanting, pushing away, avoiding, defending, waiting for it to pass — all forms of not-wanting. If the feeling-tone is neutral, we usually aren't interested and either don't pay attention or space out the experience altogether.

From the point of view of practice, the object of mindfulness is not to get rid of pleasurable or unpleasurable experience, not to get rid of pleasure and pain—that's the ascetic stance of self-denial which the teachings term "wrong view." It's a common misunderstanding. We can't get rid of those troublesome feelings of liking and disliking that accompany all experience because—in one of the Buddha's most important insights—we can't. They are hard-wired. Every experience comes with its own pleasurable, unpleasurable or neutral quality. We never get beyond that. Even Buddhas experience that in their moment-to-moment experience. So a goal of practice can't be to maximize pleasure and/or minimize pain.

To Freud, that project was the basic drive in life. He called it "pleasure-principle functioning." That nails it. He made exactly the same analysis as the Buddha. He just didn't think we could do anything about it because pleasure inevitably leads on to desire in his view, and ultimately to the build-up of psychic drives and drive states. The same with unpleasurable or painful feelings: they inevitably lead on to aversion and ultimately to anger and aggression. So how to just let pleasure be pleasure without being drawn to it and pain be pain without avoiding it?

I said to Dipa Ma once, very early on when I didn't understand much, that the outcome of practice sounded pretty dull and blah to me. Once you got rid of desire and aversion, where was the chutzpah? Where was the pizzaz? Where was the juice? Life would be pretty tepid and uninteresting if you didn't enjoy anything at all! To my surprise, she broke out laughing. "No," she said, "you don't understand. Life is so much more full of zest now than it was before when I was carrying all that baggage around. Now each experience has its own taste. And then it passes and it's gone. And then the next experience has its own taste." The conviction was not in her words but her spontaneous laughter at my question.

The next question is: what drives that dynamic of pleasure/unpleasure that leads on to desire/aggression? What pushes us on to this clinging and grasping, wanting more pleasure and less pain?

THE BASIC ILLUSIONS

In the Buddhist analysis, there are three basic misperceptions or illusions that ultimately drive pleasure-principle functioning. The Abhidhamma calls them *vipallasas*, literally, "inverted views." Each fundamentally turns reality on its head—takes a critical aspect of experience to be precisely what it is not:

1) taking what is impermanent to be permanent;

2) taking what is inherently incapable of satisfying us as satisfying;

3) and—the root misperception—taking what is inherently lacking independent existence as independently existing; taking co-dependently arising phenomena as independent entities. Most critically, taking our "self" as a self-existent entity. Identifying with one or more of the constituents of experience—body, feelings, perceptions, mind-states or consciousness—as "me" or my "self" in some ongoing way. And therefore thinking—and needing—to defend, protect, augment, justify, stake out a claim for against other independent "selves" who are either allies or threats.



In this sense, "all worldings are de-grasped" (*sabbe puthujjanāummattakā*) according to the Buddha. It's the same term we use in our clinical terminology to denote delusional thinking—thinking which misperceives the way things really are in the service of protecting a self under threat.

So taking what is impermanent to be permanent, treating it as though it were graspable; looking to what is inherently incapable of satisfying us as a source of satisfaction that would ease our unease and the ache in our heart and bring us peace and contentment; taking what is inherently empty of substance as being solid, enduring, immortal, a secure place to stand, a precious treasure to be defended at all costs—these are our fundamental delusions, in the service of which we cling and condemn, hold on and push away, suffer any number of indignities and humiliations to protect.

These three "inverted views" are what constitute "ignorance" (*avijja*) in the Buddhist sense. As in psychodynamic thinking, this is a willful ignorance: not just a not-knowing, but a not-wanting-to-know for which we are responsible. Likewise, the way forward is to see through these distortions and illusions.

Well, it's one thing to hear about this and even have a good conceptual grasp of what no-self or selflessness means. It's quite another to actually experience it in our entire being and integrate it bodily and emotionally and then live from there. An Australian friend of mine who worked in high-energy physics used to describe watching this apparently solid world of ours cut away to a universe of particles with half-lives of infinitesimal fractions of seconds.

But is that transformative? No. These entities are atoms or particles and don't grab my attention very much. But when we see—actually experience—the same process in our own minds, in our own bodies, moment after moment, then it hits home with tremendous impact. Then it's us we're seeing. And something in us says, "Oh s___!" Then it has the potential to be transformative. But we have to experience it in our own bodies and minds for that to happen, and that is what practice is ultimately about.

Experiencing the dynamics of desire and the way that creates suffering, and then ultimately seeing through the delusions that create and sustain craving—that's what the so-called "stages of insight knowledge" (*vipassana-nana*) describe. They take our mindfulness, our perception of reality, to that level where we actually see and experience the 3 marks of all existence—impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness—in our own minds, moment after moment. Then it hits home, and then it's potentially transformative. There are glimpses at moments prior to this. We've all had them. But in the course of the *nanas*, it hits home fully in an inescapable, all-pervasive, and progressive way.

SETTING UP PRACTICE: MODELS OF AWAKENING

Buddhist lineages have generated a number of different systems for mapping out the process of awakening— for bringing practitioners to liberation. Teachers and lineages have often been leery of spelling out all the detailed stages and steps because it is easy for us to get hung up. We can constantly be taking our spiritual pulse: "Am I at the third stage or the fifteenth stage?" That can obviously become a serious impediment to practice. On the other hand, if you approach it with the right spirit or "view,"

it can be very inspiring: "Yes, awakening is there. There is a path that can be followed and it's not mysterious or alien to me. It follows a predictable sequence." The Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw himself wrote a manual, *Progress of Insight*, describing each of the stages in detail as a guide to practice. The challenge in working with these maps is to use them skillfully, and that usually requires the assistance of a teacher.

Another caution about such maps is the immense narcissistic seduction that enlightenment represents. Once you set it up as an object of desire, an object of striving—like any other object that you want—it's hard for there not to be some narcissistic motive involved in its pursuit, some motive that augments the self instead of seeing through the illusion of independent selfhood.

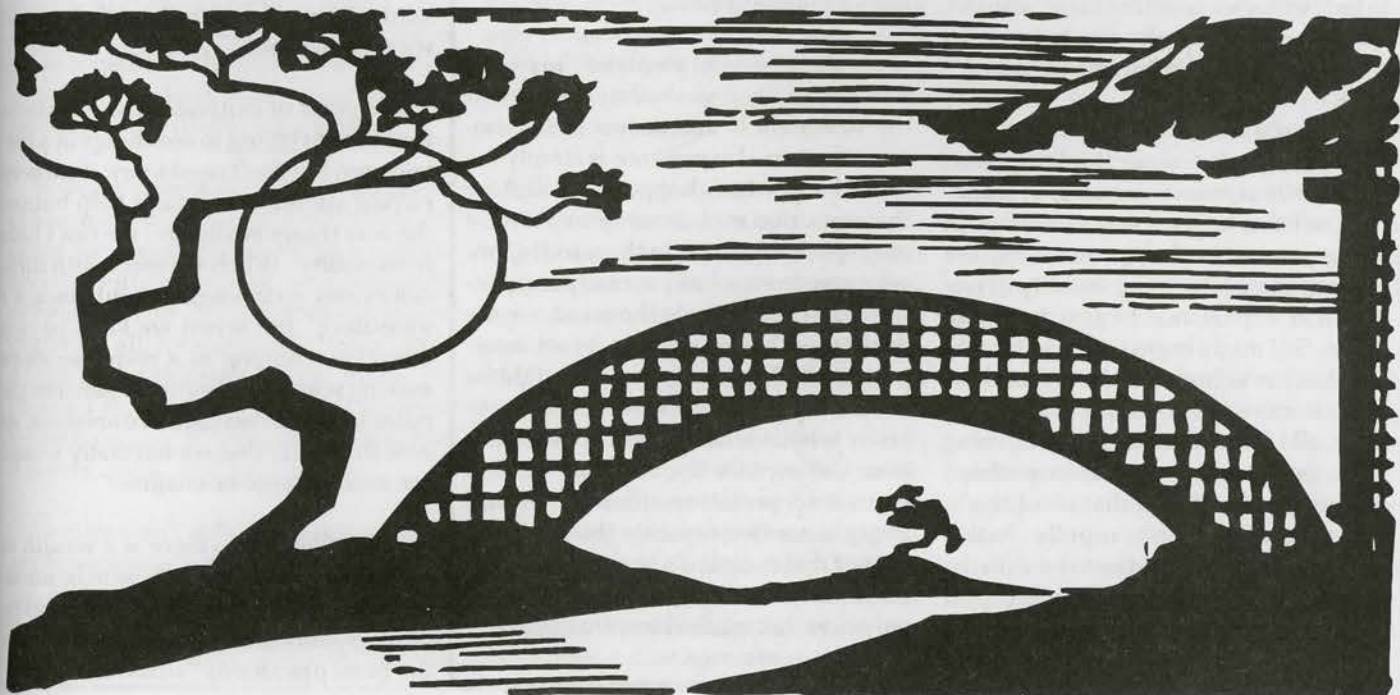
At the Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw's center in Rangoon, where I practiced for a brief time, one of the main responsibilities of senior teachers was to determine the markers of enlightenment. In their view, enlightenment doesn't just happen any old whichway. It evolves out of a sequence of experiences that follow a very predictable pattern. This doesn't mean one will progress through them in a linear manner. Typically there is a lot of going forward and backward, forward and backward. What it means is that you won't advance to the next level of insight without some experience of the

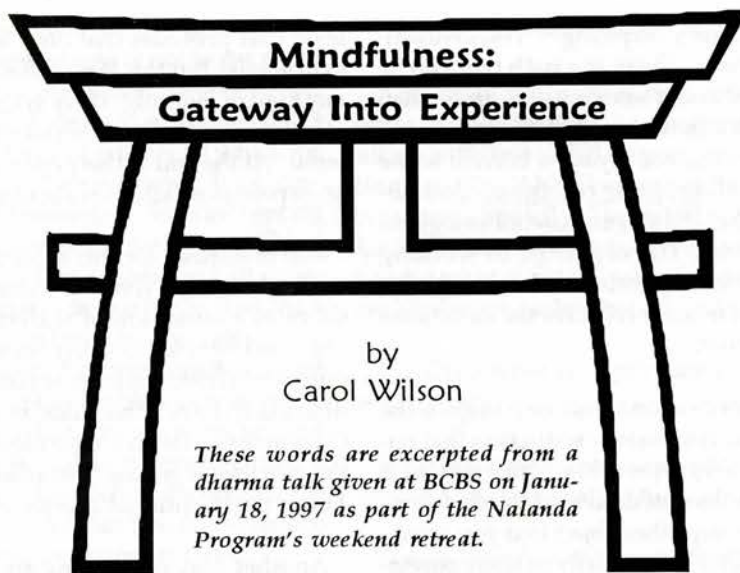
level that precedes that one. You can't skip levels. But this is no different from any kind of learning: there is a sequence of experiences to be undergone and mastered. At the end of this process, there is an experience called awakening.

One metaphor for this model of practice is crossing a river. We start on this shore in a condition of suffering. The object is to get to the other shore, which represents freedom from suffering. The dharma is the raft that takes you across. Once across, you no longer need the raft. Practice then is getting from here to there. This is the traditional Theravada view.

Another way of thinking about practice, which is the Mahayana and Vajrayana view, is that you are already on the other shore. In this "other shore" practice, there is no river to cross and no need for a raft. Your true nature is already enlightened. Practice is simply an expression of that true nature. One benefit of practicing from this view is that it tends to undercut narcissistic striving. But this still does not mean that practice won't unfold in a certain way, even in these traditions.

At this point Jack discusses the four stages of awakening outlined in the early texts, and the gradual extinction of the ten fetters (samyojana) in each of these stages. This part of his presentation will be presented in another issue of this newsletter in near future.





Mindfulness:

Gateway Into Experience

by
Carol Wilson

These words are excerpted from a dharma talk given at BCBS on January 18, 1997 as part of the Nalanda Program's weekend retreat.

Mindfulness of Body

Let us say you are sitting, and a strong pain develops in your back. There is a real difference between a thought of, "my back is killing me," and the actual experience. The thought seems very solid—impermanence doesn't seem to have much to do with it—and it really feels like "me." Through mindfulness, by bringing careful attention to the sensation, we become free of concept and in touch with the experience itself. First there might be burning, or there might be tightness. If we are attentive to what's really happening, it's hard to appropriate it as "my burn," or "my tightness." In fact, when we're sitting there with our eyes closed, and really just being with sensations, where is "my back?"

Although the notion "my back" may be present as part of our thinking, what we *actually experience* is burning, throbbing, or other kinds of raw sensation. In being present to these sensations, the sense of the unchanging solidity of our physical experience begins to break down. So I might begin with the thought "my back is killing me," but when I explore it more fully, when I really go in there, all I find is throbbing and burning first, then tingling, and then perhaps something else. I find that all of this is actually changing quite rapidly. In this way, mindfulness helps us to be with the body as we actually experience it, and we begin to see how much of what we do respond to as body is based on our idea

of the body. We also see how unreliable that idea is in the light of the actual data received.

Mindfulness is very much about being in the middle of experience without identifying with it. We bring a quality of attention that is non-judging, yet completely connected—participatory. We don't add anything extra, but we're right there. We participate fully in the mindfulness of body, feelings, mind, and mind objects, rather than studying them. I like Thich Naht Hahn's description of this, "this means that you live in the body in full awareness of it, and not just study it like a separate object".

So the simple example of "my back hurts" actually reveals a lot. It's not that the statement is untrue, yet in the moment the actual experience is simply the sensation of what's happening. Whether that sensation is pleasant or unpleasant may spark a reaction in the mind. Once we move from what's actually happening to the reactivity in the mind, we are dealing with a translation or an interpretation. The interpretation might be useful, but the direct view of truth is to know what's what. There is the sensation. Calling it the third lumbar vertebra is an interpretation. Sensation and thought are two separate things; in the case of that moment's back pain, sensation is what's actually happening. So it's only here that we can have true intimacy with our experience.

Mindfulness (*sati*) reveals to us the nature of reality, of our own mind and body in each moment of our experience. When we apprehend any aspect of our experience with mindfulness, we find that experience to be fleeting. Seeing the fleeting nature of all our experiences over a period of time, we become grounded in the wisdom or insight that we cannot rely on any experience whatsoever for lasting happiness. A fleeting experience cannot satisfy us on a basic level, hence on that level, every experience is ultimately unsatisfying. Moreover, we find that an experience has no separate existence; the things that arise are out of our control, and whatever arises cannot be separated from the conditions out of which it arises.

Mindfulness allows us to see these three aspects of reality: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self. The last of these, the illusion of a separate self, can also be seen as interconnectedness, because nothing can be said to have its own self existence—it exists as a product of all other experiences before it. When the heart and mind really understand *experientially* that this is the nature of reality, then the craving and the holding on we bring to our experience, in search of security, cannot be maintained. Seeing this nature of reality, our clinging to experience naturally releases itself. Little by little, it just begins to vanish. This opens the door for our heart and mind to recognize the true nature of mind and body. We begin to see what we are.

The point of cultivating mindfulness is not about trying to see things in a certain way. We don't need to try; if we keep paying attention, we can't help but see the way things really are; we can't hide from reality. When we meet with difficulties and go through painful times, it's unsettling. But when we keep paying attention, clinging as a response stops making sense. We begin to open into the potential for a real ease in ourselves, an ease in our life that we normally would not even glimpse or imagine.

In the Pali texts, there is a wealth of information available on how to be mindful of each of the four foundations: body, feelings, mind and mind objects. This is the basic practice of "vipassana."

The point of mindfulness, of the body for instance, is to meet the body just as it manifests. We attend to the body as it is actually experienced within this moment, rather than through the ideas we have of it. When experiencing just the actual sensations of the body that may arise, without visualizing or thinking about them, we are meeting reality with full integrity.



Mindfulness of Feelings

The Pali word for the second foundation of mindfulness is *vedana*, usually translated as feeling. I like to think of it as “feeling tone.” It is a subtle mental experience which is present in every moment of experience. It is important to begin to notice it, because noticing feeling tone can be a great way to break a whole cycle of delusion and suffering.

The Buddha talked about our moment to moment sense experience in terms of the six faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind). The physical base for each of the faculties is an organ—for example, the ear—that works and is not impaired. Then there is another source of vibration, causing sound waves to travel through the air. There also has to be consciousness, and the coming together of all three of these is what creates a sense experience for us. So if there is a sound while you’re in a deep, deep sleep, there’s no consciousness of sound, and it will not register. But when those three come together—the sense object, sense door and consciousness (meaning a *knowing of it*)—that’s called contact.

In that moment of contact—moment of hearing a sound, or any other contact in our sense experience—what is experienced is either pleasant, or unpleasant or neutral. This isn’t particularly in our control at all; for example, a sound that might be unpleasant for me might be pleasant for you. It’s just how it arises for each person. It’s not good or bad; but it is very quick, and quite subtle.

We often don’t notice the pleasantness, unpleasantness or neutrality in each arising, and the habits of mind are such that if it’s pleasant, the mind is going to be inclined to want more. This can lead into

a whole world of craving, and a lot of suffering. If the contact is unpleasant, just the reverse happens; it can lead to fear, to anger, all kinds of negative reactions. Neutrality can be hard to notice; there’s nothing too *juicy* about it. We tend to go to sleep, or get bored, or look for more stimulation in the face of neutral feeling tone.

To actually *see* that link—between pleasure or displeasure and the mind’s immediate response—is quite amazing; it is something we experience *all* the time, and yet we hardly ever see the link. This seeing is really *mindfulness*. You know the experience for what it is, without judging, without needing to change it. Take pleasant experience, for example; often we don’t notice the pleasant aspect; we get fairly seduced into craving and into wanting. But when we really look at it closely we find that when we are not mindful, all we are trying to do is have *more* pleasant experiences. How much of our activity is about trying to have *more* pleasant sensations arising? I would say, a *vast* amount of it.

In one of his discourses about feeling [SXXXVI.6], the Buddha talks about how helpful and how *freeing* it can be to see what happens when you’re *aware* of feelings as compared to when you’re not. He says that if an “untaught, worldly person,” i.e. someone who is still caught in confusion in their mind, experiences an unpleasant bodily feeling (a pain or anything unpleasant), he worries, he grieves, he gets upset, he resents it, he resists it, he gets angry about it. Thus he experiences *two* kinds of unpleasant feelings: an unpleasant bodily feeling and an unpleasant mental feeling. It’s as if someone threw a dart or an arrow at your

body and that’s the unpleasant physical feeling. Then when you carry on and resist and get angry at it, it’s as if you’ve pierced yourself with a second dart: the unpleasant mental feeling.

In the case of someone who is awakened, sure, unpleasant feelings are going to arise—physical, mental, whatever—but the person recognizes “Oh, that’s just an unpleasant feeling,” and *doesn’t* throw a second dart. And that’s a crucial difference. When you can just notice the feeling tone as “Oh, this is unpleasant,” and *not* get resistant or upset; or notice “this is pleasant,” and *not* get lost in how to create more; when you can just “be” with it as it is—there is an enormous freedom that comes with that, a real ease and happiness in life.

If we begin noticing how we stick the second dart in ourselves, we can open up into spacious awareness. Feelings are *so* fleeting; in being aware of their tone as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, we can’t help but see their impermanence. As soon as there’s something pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, it changes to something else. An unpleasant moment might *seem* like it’s going on forever, but if you *really look*, you’ll see it’s interspersed with a few pleasant moments, a neutral moment.

When we notice that, it becomes a lot harder to identify with this rapidly changing phenomena and say, “This pleasant feeling *is me*.” Looking at it as “pleasant feeling” cuts away a lot of the interpretation; a lot of the sense of “me” and “my,” and the “holding on” and separation that “me” and “my” creates. Such seeing allows us to rest much more in the bare experience of feeling.

Mindfulness of Mind

The third foundation, *citta*, usually translated as "mind" means consciousness of the state of consciousness. Consciousness, in its *barest* sense, is just a moment of knowing; knowing what's happening—seeing, hearing, touching, thinking. Any moment of experience can be a moment of knowing; that's consciousness. But when it arises *together* with a particular "mental factor" (we could call it, "emotions" or "quality", "state of mind and heart") the mental factors color it. So when we talk of being mindful, being aware of consciousness, we're talking basically of knowing a moment of consciousness *and* what's coloring it. It's knowing the mind *with* lust when the mind is colored by lust, and the mind *free* from lust when the mind is not colored by lust, and so on.

The Buddha doesn't talk about hating the mind with lust, and loving the mind free from lust. You just notice how it is. The mind is contracted or the mind is spacious; the mind is clinging or the mind is free from clinging; the mind that's full of ill will or the mind's that's free from ill will. Simply noticing this coloration of consciousness or absence of coloration is mindfulness of mind.

We might include in this awareness of consciousness the mindfulness of emotions. This awareness is extremely important; because when we're *not* aware of the coloring of the emotion or the mental state that's present in the moment, it can color our perception of reality almost as if we were wearing rose colored glasses, or dark glasses.

Gradually we begin to get it: freedom is not about changing a particular experience of body or a particular experience of mind; rather it is about our relationship to *whatever* experience is arising. That's why these different foundations are so important. It's not that one is better than the other, or that we are trying to make a certain foundation—the feeling tone, for example—the pinnacle. It doesn't matter what's arising; it really doesn't make *any* difference what experience comes into awareness.

When we first fall in love everything is wonderful, and we're so happy; we don't recognize that the emotional state is *coloring* that moment of knowing and *affecting* how we perceive experience. It's the same when we're experiencing anger, or deep grief. I know for myself that times when I've been in a period of deep grief, it's like a black hole; my friends can come in, they may be *so* happy, and it's almost impossible to muster up a really genuine feeling of happiness for them. Sure, we can get intellectual, and say "Oh, I'm so happy for you," but our real experience at that moment is, "Life is such a horror show," and *that* colors everything. So, the importance of being mindful is just to know what's what—that there is a moment of knowing, and in that moment the mind is colored by happiness or unhappiness, the mind is colored by anger, the mind is colored by grief.

When we stay with our attention to the *quality* of mind, it naturally begins to happen that our sense of identification, our sense of *being* that state of mind, begins to dissipate. I'm not speaking here of observing from a distance—we're still fully participatory. So if anger is arising in the mind, it's not as if, "Oh, anger is arising, but if I note it it doesn't effect *me*" [spoken with intentionally mechanical, dispassionate intonation.] With mindfulness, we're *not* fooling ourselves. We're *really feeling* anger—in the body and in the mind, but we have the knowing, "It's *not* who I am." Because we *pay attention* to the state of consciousness, we see that it's changing *so* rapidly.

Meditation is about cultivating a quality of gentle, compassionate yet intimate attention that can be fully present with *whatever* experience arises. See it come. Let it go; without getting attached, without needing to push it away, without believing, on a very pre-thought level, *this is who I am*.

The difference comes from knowing "cellularly." When we talk about impermanence, we all know cognitively that everything changes. But do we live from that? When we're really confronted with

We often say things like, "I've been in a bad mood all day," or, "I'm so tired" or "I've been depressed since yesterday morning." But if you *really* pay attention, you know that though the state of mind might *seem* very solid, you begin to see that no state of mind lasts very long. It might come *back*, but that's what the human condition is all about.

In our experience, there are times when conflicting emotions are voicing themselves very rapidly. For example, we might notice about five different states of consciousness coming in rapidly. Yet we often do not really notice, because we grasp on to *particular* ones that we either identify with strongly, or that are stronger than the other and so grip our attention. We can also notice that none of them last very long. And this is the case not only with difficult mind states but also with *beautiful* mind states. It also applies to states of mind that are brought about through meditation: concentration, bliss, rapture, you name it.

We may not want to hear it, but the fact remains that *any state of mind is transitory*. Nothing hangs around. I notice in my own experience, even though I'm practicing noticing, whenever a strong emotion comes up a kind of unconscious appropriation takes place. Even though everything else passes, through this lens it seems as if *this* strong emotion is how it's always going to be. It just feels so *real*. That's why it's so important to keep a continuity of mindfulness, so you can see when the emotion passes, so you can see the holes in it.

change? with death? with disease? with something we love slipping away? with something we dislike coming in?

When we can really live, knowing at some level that everything comes and goes, and knowing that we can't get lasting satisfaction, that it's not what we want—then there is a great big peace and sigh of relief that comes with it.

That is what the four foundations of mindfulness can be, our gateway into *any* experience in *any* moment.

What exactly is vipassana?

Almost any book on early Buddhist meditation will tell you that the Buddha taught two types of meditation: samatha and vipassana. Samatha, which means tranquility, is said to be a method fostering strong states of mental absorption, called jhana. Vipassana—literally “clear-seeing,” but more often translated as insight meditation—is said to be a method using a modicum of tranquility to foster moment-to-moment mindfulness of the inconstancy of events as they are directly experienced in the present. This mindfulness creates a sense of dispassion toward all events, thus leading the mind to release from suffering.

These two methods are quite separate, we’re told, and of the two, vipassana is the distinctive Buddhist contribution to meditative science. Other systems of practice pre-dating the Buddha also taught samatha, but the Buddha was the first to discover and teach vipassana. Although some Buddhist meditators may practice samatha before turning to vipassana, samatha practice is not really necessary for the pursuit of Awakening. As a meditative tool, the vipassana method suffices for attaining the goal. Or so we’re told.

But if you look directly at the Pali discourses—the earliest extant sources for our knowledge of the Buddha’s teachings—you’ll find that although they do use the word samatha to mean tranquility, and vipassana to mean clear-seeing, they confirm none of the other received wisdom about these terms. Only rarely do they make use of the word vipassana—a sharp contrast to their frequent use of the word jhana. When they depict the Buddha telling his disciples to go meditate, they never quote him as saying “go do vipassana,” but always “go do jhana.” And they never equate the word vipassana with any mindfulness techniques. In the few instances where they do mention vipassana, they almost always pair it with samatha—not as two alternative methods, but as two qualities of mind that a person may “gain” or “be endowed with,” and that should be developed together.

One simile, for instance (S.XXXV.204), compares samatha and vipassana to a swift pair of messengers who enter the

ONE TOOL AMONG MANY:



The place of
vipassana
in Buddhist
Practice

by
Thanissaro
Bhikkhu

citadel of the body via the noble eight-fold path and together present their accurate report—Unbinding, or nibbana—to the consciousness acting as the citadel’s commander.

Another passage (A.X.71) recommends that anyone who wishes to end mental defilement should—in addition to perfecting the principles of moral behavior and cultivating seclusion—be committed to samatha and endowed with vipassana. This statement is unremarkable in itself, but the same discourse also gives the same advice to anyone who wants to master the jhanas: be committed to samatha and endowed with vipassana.

This suggests that, in the eyes of those who assembled the Pali discourses, samatha, jhana, and vipassana were all part of a single path. Samatha and vipassana were used together to master jhana and then—based on jhana—were developed even further to put an end to mental defilement and bring release from suffering. This is a reading that finds support in other discourses as well.

There’s a passage, for instance, describing three ways in which samatha and vipassana can work together to lead to the knowledge of Awakening: either samatha precedes vipassana, vipassana precedes samatha, or they develop in tandem (A.IV.170). The wording here suggests an image of two oxen pulling a cart: one is placed before the other or they are yoked side-by-side.

Another passage (A.IV.94) indicates that if samatha precedes vipassana—or vipassana, samatha—one’s practice is in a state of imbalance and needs to be rectified. A meditator who has attained a measure of samatha but no vipassana should question a fellow meditator who has attained vipassana: “How should fabrications (sankhara) be regarded? How investigated? How should they be viewed with insight?” and then develop vipassana in line with that person’s instructions. The verbs in these questions—“regarding,” “investigating,” “seeing”—indicate that there’s more to the process of developing vipassana than a simple mindfulness technique. In fact, as we’ll see below, these verbs apply instead to a process of skillful questioning called “appropriate attention.”

The opposite type of meditator—one endowed with a measure of vipassana but no samatha—should question someone who has attained samatha: “How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?” and then follow that person’s instruction to develop samatha.

The verbs used here give the impression that “samatha” in this context means jhana, for they correspond to the verbal formula—“the mind becomes steady, settles down, grows unified and concentrated”—that the Pali discourses use repeatedly to describe the attainment of jhana. This impression is reinforced when we note that in every case where

the discourses are explicit about the levels of concentration needed for insight to be liberating, those levels are the jhanas.

Once the meditator is endowed with both samatha and vipassana, he/she should "make an effort to establish those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of the mental fermentations (sensual passion, states of being, views, and ignorance)." This corresponds to the path of samatha and vipassana developing in tandem.

M.149 describes how this can happen. One knows and sees, as they actually are, the six sense media (the five senses plus the intellect), their objects, consciousness at each medium, contact at each medium, and whatever is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain based on that contact. One maintains this awareness in such a way as to stay uninfatuated by any of these things, unattached, unconfused, focused on their drawbacks, abandoning any craving for them: this would count as vipassana. At the same time — abandoning physical and mental disturbances, torments, and distresses — one experiences ease in body and mind: this would count as samatha. This practice not only develops samatha and vipassana in tandem, but also brings the 37 Wings to Awakening — which include the attainment of jhana — to the culmination of their development.

So the proper path is one in which vipassana and samatha are brought into balance, each supporting and acting as a check on the other. Vipassana helps keep tranquility from becoming stagnant and dull. Samatha helps prevent the manifestations of aversion — such as nausea, dizziness, disorientation, and even total blanking out — that can occur when the mind is trapped against its will in the present moment.

From this description it's obvious that samatha and vipassana are not separate paths of practice, but instead are complementary ways of relating to present experience: samatha provides a sense of ease in the present; vipassana, a clear-eyed view of events as they actually occur, in and of themselves. It's also obvious why the two qualities need to function together in mastering jhana.

As the standard instructions on breath meditation indicate (M.118), such a mastery involves three things: gladdening, concentrating, and liberating the mind. *Gladdening* means finding a sense of refreshment and satisfaction in the present. *Concentrating* means keeping the mind focused on its object, while *liberating* means clearly seeing the grosser factors making up a lower stage of concentration and then freeing the mind from them so as to attain a higher stage. The first two activities are functions of samatha, while the last is a function of vipassana. All three must work together to bring the mind to right concentration in a masterful way.

The question arises: if vipassana functions in the mastery of jhana, and jhana isn't exclusive to Buddhists, then what's Buddhist about vipassana? The answer is that vipassana *per se* isn't exclusively Buddhist. What's distinctly Buddhist is (1) the extent to which both samatha and vipassana are developed; (2) the way they're developed, i.e., the line of questioning used to foster them; and (3) the way they're combined with an array of meditative tools to bring the mind to total release.

In M.73, the Buddha advises a monk who has mastered jhana to further develop samatha and vipassana so as to master six cognitive skills. The most important of these skills is that "through the ending of the mental fermentations, one remains in the fermentation-free release of awareness and release of discernment, having known and made them manifest for oneself right in the here and now." This is a description of the Buddhist goal. Some commentators have asserted that this release is totally a function of vipassana, but there are discourses that indicate otherwise.

Note that release is twofold: release of awareness and release of discernment. Release of awareness occurs when a meditator becomes totally dispassionate toward passion: this is the ultimate function of samatha. Release of discernment occurs when there is dispassion for ignorance: this is the ultimate function of vipassana (A.II.29-30). Thus both samatha and vipassana are involved in the twofold nature of this release.

The *Sabbasava Sutta* (M.2) states that release can be "fermentation-free" only if one knows and sees in terms of "appropriate attention" (*yoniso manasikara*). As the discourse shows, appropriate attention means asking the proper questions about things. Instead of framing questions in terms of self/other or being/non-being, such as, "What am I? Do I exist?" one asks questions in terms of the four noble truths: "Is this stress? The origination of stress? The cessation of stress? The path leading to the cessation of stress?" Because each of these categories entails a duty, the answer to these questions determines a course of action: stress should be comprehended, its origination abandoned, its cessation realized, and the path to its cessation developed.

Samatha and vipassana belong to the category of the path and so should be developed. To develop them, one applies appropriate attention to the task of comprehending stress, which is comprised of the five aggregates of clinging — clinging to physical form, feeling, perception, mental fabrications, and consciousness. Applying appropriate attention to these aggregates means viewing them in terms of their drawbacks, as "inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self" (S.XXII.122). A list of questions, distinctive to the Buddha, aids in this approach: "Is this aggregate constant or inconstant? And is anything inconstant easeful or stressful? And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?'" (S.XXII.59). These questions are applied to every instance of the five aggregates, whether "past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle, common or sublime, far or near." In other words, the meditator asks these questions of all experiences in the cosmos of the six sense media.

This line of questioning is part of a strategy leading to a level of knowledge called "knowing and seeing things as they actually are," where things are understood in terms of a fivefold perspective: their arising, their passing away, their drawbacks, their allure, and the escape from them — the escape, here, lying in dispassion.

Some commentators have suggested that, in practice, this fivefold perspective can be gained simply by focusing on the arising and passing away of these aggregates in the present moment; if one's focus is relentless enough, it will lead naturally to a knowledge of drawbacks, allure, and escape, sufficient for total release. The texts, however, don't support this reading, and practical experience backs them up. As M.101 points out, individual meditators will discover that, in some cases, they can develop dispassion for a particular cause of stress simply by watching it with equanimity; but in other cases, they need to make a conscious exertion to develop the dispassion that will provide an escape. The discourse is vague—perhaps deliberately so—as to which approach will work where. This is something each meditator must test for him or herself in practice.

The *Sabbasava Sutta* expands on this point by listing seven approaches to take in developing dispassion. Vipassana, as a quality of mind, is related to all seven, but most directly with the first: "seeing," i.e., seeing events in terms of the four noble truths and the duties appropriate to them. The remaining six approaches cover ways of carrying out those duties: 1) restraining the mind from focusing on sense data that would provoke unskillful states of mind; 2) reflecting on the appropriate reasons for using the requisites of food, clothing, shelter, and medicine; 3) tolerating painful sensations; 4) avoiding obvious dangers and inappropriate companions; 5) destroying thoughts of sensual desire, ill will, harmfulness, and other unskillful states; and 6) developing the seven factors of awakening: mindfulness, analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity.

Each of these approaches covers a wide subset of approaches. Under "destroying," for instance, one may eliminate an unskillful mental state by replacing it with a skillful one, focusing on its drawbacks, turning one's attention away from it, relaxing the process of thought-fabrication that formed it, or suppressing it with brute will-power (M.20). Many similar examples could be drawn from other discourses as well. The overall point is that the ways of the mind are varied and

complex. Different fermentations can come bubbling up in different guises and respond to different approaches. One's skill as a meditator lies in mastering a variety of approaches and learning which approach will work best in which situation.

On a more basic level, however, one needs strong motivation to master these skills in the first place. Because appropriate attention requires abandoning dichotomies that are so basic to the thought patterns of all people—"being/not being" and "me/not me"—meditators need strong reasons for adopting it. This is why the *Sabbasava Sutta* insists that anyone developing appropriate attention must first hold the noble ones (here meaning the Buddha and his awakened disciples) in high regard. In other words, one must see that those who have followed the path are truly exemplary.

One must also be well-versed in their teaching and discipline. According to M.117, "being well-versed in their teaching" begins with having conviction in their teachings about karma and rebirth, which provide intellectual and emotional context for adopting the four noble truths as the basic categories of experience. Being well-versed in the discipline of the noble ones would include, in addition to observing the precepts, having some skill in the seven approaches mentioned above for abandoning the fermentations.

Without this sort of background, meditators might bring the wrong attitudes and questions to the practice of watching arising and passing away in the present moment. For instance, they might be looking for a "true self" and end up identifying—consciously or unconsciously—with the vast, open sense of awareness that embraces all change, from which it all seems to come and to which it all seems to return. Or they might long for a sense of connectedness with the interplay of the universe, convinced that—as all things are changing—any desire for changelessness is neurotic and life-denying.

For people with agendas like these, the simple experience of events arising and passing away in the present won't lead to fivefold knowledge of things as they are. They'll resist recognizing that the

ideas they hold to are a fermentation of views, or that the experiences of calm that seem to verify those ideas are simply a fermentation in the form of a state of being. As a result, they won't apply the four noble truths to those ideas and experiences. Only a person willing to see those fermentations as such, and convinced of the need to transcend them, will be in a position to apply the principles of appropriate attention to them and thus get beyond them.

So, to answer the question with which we began: Vipassana is not a meditation technique. It's a quality of mind—the ability to see events clearly in the present moment. Although mindfulness is helpful in fostering vipassana, it's not enough for developing vipassana to the point of total release. Other techniques and approaches are needed as well. In particular, vipassana needs to be teamed with samatha—the ability to settle the mind comfortably in the present—so as to master the practice of jhana. Based on this mastery, samatha and vipassana are then applied to a skillful program of questioning, called appropriate attention, directed at all experience: exploring events not in terms of me/not me, or being/not being, but in terms of the four noble truths. The meditator pursues this program until it leads to a fivefold understanding of all events: in terms of their arising, their passing away, their drawbacks, their allure, and the escape from them. Only then can the mind taste release.

This program for developing vipassana and samatha, in turn, needs the support of many other attitudes, mental qualities, and techniques of practice. This was why the Buddha taught it as part of a still larger program, including respect for the noble ones, mastery of all seven approaches for abandoning the mental fermentations, and all eight factors of the noble path. To take a reductionist approach to the practice can produce only reduced results, for meditation is a skill like carpentry, requiring a mastery of many tools in response to many different needs. To limit yourself to only one approach in meditation is like trying to build a house when your motivation is uncertain and your tool box contains nothing but hammers.

Abbreviations: A = Anguttara Nikaya; M = Majjhima Nikaya; S = Samyutta Nikaya



This remarkable and powerful poem, found buried amid the rather dry linguistic commentary of the *Niddesa* (a canonical commentary on the *Atthakavagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta* attributed to Sāriputta), speaks to the dual themes of impermanence and selflessness. In the later systematic psychology called Abhidhamma, these themes are developed into the doctrine of momentariness and the thorough enumeration of impersonal phenomena.

All human experience is ever-changing, but is known in fleeting moments of perceptive and affected consciousness. Close awareness of these moments, using heightened attention which can be developed through concentration and insight meditation, reveal a plethora of non-personal mental factors (dhammas) arising and passing away in innumerable unique combinations.

Upon the Tip of a Needle

Mahā Niddesa 1.42

Guhatthaka-suttaniddeso

jivitaṃ attabhāvo ca
sukhadukkhā ca kevalā
ekacittasamāyuttā,
lahuso vattati kkhano.

Life, personhood, pleasure and pain
—This is all that's bound together
In a single mental event
—A moment that quickly takes place.

cullāsīti sahasāni kappā
tiṭṭhanti ye marū,
na tv eva te pi jīvanti
dvīhi cittehi samāhitā.

Even the spirits who endure
For eighty-four thousand aeons
—Even these do not live the same
For any two moments of mind.

ye niruddhā marantassa
tiṭṭhamānassa vā idha,
sabb' eva sadisā khandhā,
gatā appaṭisandhikā.

What ceases for one who is dead,
Or for one who's still standing here,
Are all just the same aggregates
—Gone, never to connect again.

anantarā ca ye bhaṅgā
ye ca bhaṅgā anāgatā,
tadantare niruddhānam
vesammaṃ n'atthi lakkhaṇe.

The states which are vanishing now,
And those which will vanish some day,
Have characteristics no different
Than those which have vanished before.

anibbattena na jāto,
paccuppanna jīvati,
cittabhaṅgamato loko,
paññatti paramatthiyā.

With no production there's no birth;
With becoming present, one lives.
When grasped with the highest meaning,
The world is dead when the mind stops.

anidhānagatā baṅgā,
puñjo n'atthi anāgate,
nibbattā yeva tiṭṭhanti
āragge sāsapūpamā.

There's no hoarding what has vanished,
No piling up for the future;
Those who have been born are standing
Like a seed upon a needle.

nibbattānaṃ ca dhammānaṃ
bhaṅgo nesam purekkhato,
palokadhammā tiṭṭhanti
purāṇehi amissitā.

The vanishing of all these states
That have become is not welcome,
Though dissolving phenomena stand
Uncombined from primordial time.

adassanato āyanti bhaṅgā,
gacchanti dassanaṃ,
vijjuppādo va ākāse
uppajjanti vayanāti cā ti.

From the unseen, [states] come and go,
Glimpsed only as they're passing by;
Like lightning flashing in the sky
—They arise and then pass away.

The poem captures something of this dance of dhammas, yet steers us away from identifying it as "ours." The elements out of which the mind so quickly constructs these glimpses of experience are universal—pleasure and pain, for example, are felt equally by all.

Every mental state is certainly unique, partly because each moment's sense data changes and partly because the causal matrix from which they arise, the personality, is so different for each person. But the characteristics of the basic aggregates that comprise all human experience—materiality, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—have remained similar from time immemorial.

Our subjective world is created by these states emerging in a moment of mind's awareness, and when no longer aware—in deep sleep or death, for example—our world dies with us. (There is little place in the more profound levels of Buddhist thought for the notion of an "objectively real" world independent of experience).

The image of a tiny seed balancing on the point of a needle is striking—it so poignantly describes the exquisite precision of the human condition. With the past long gone and the future unmanifest, all we have access to is the present moment, and this is only as accessible as we are attentive to it. How much of our legacy we neglect when we fail to attend!

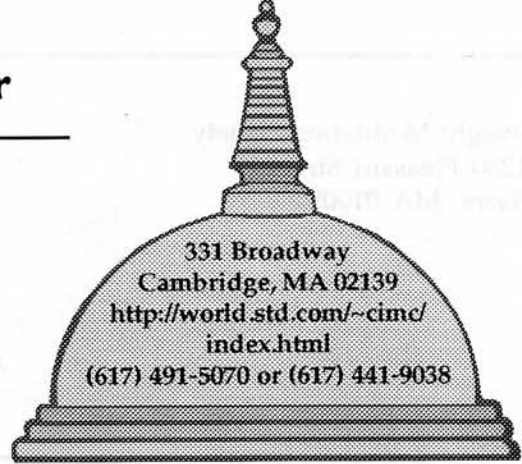
Meditation can train the mind to be as sharp as a needle point, to notice phenomena as fleeting as a flash of lightning. So whether we live 84,000 years or only a few dozen, each life can be as infinitely deep as our mindfulness can penetrate.

—A. Olendzki

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.



Sitting Just to Sit

The intimacy of practice is the practice of non-separation, of being at one with whatever is happening. We tend to think that we are not all right now – we're too fearful, greedy, angry, whatever – and if we take up some spiritual practice we can improve ourselves. By doing this, we think, we will be all right at some moment in an imagined future. This is the mind that works on the "in order to" principle – we are always doing this in order to get that, or to be that. Yet this very tendency – to strive, be ambitious, set a goal, get ahead of ourselves – takes us out of the present moment, away from how we are right now. It actually prevents intimacy from this moment; our wish for intimacy prevents us from being intimate.

One of my favorite Buddhist traditions is the Soto Zen lineage of Kosho Uchiyama roshi. Uchiyama was the disciple of Sawaki-roshi, and their exchanges informed several of

Uchiyama-roshi's books. Sawaki, who had a difficult, orphaned childhood, practiced a very austere and "homeless" form of Zen. He was a powerful and charismatic teacher, while Uchiyama presents himself in his writing as being timid and weak. At one point as a young monk, Uchiyama says to Sawaki, "If I practice zazen for many years, will I be as strong as you?" Sawaki, without a moment's hesitation, says, "No, you won't. I've always been this way. Zazen didn't do this for me."

Sawaki was famous for saying that zazen was entirely useless. He said he wanted his epitaph to read, "Here lies Sawaki-roshi. Wasted his whole life sitting on a cushion." (But if you don't wholeheartedly do this useless activity, he would say, your whole life will be useless.) Sawaki was trying to counteract the "in order to" mind, and insisted that his students sit just for the sitting. Practice Dharma for the sake of Dharma, and not something else. He was in the tradition of the great teacher Eihei Dogen, who made the puzzling statement that it is

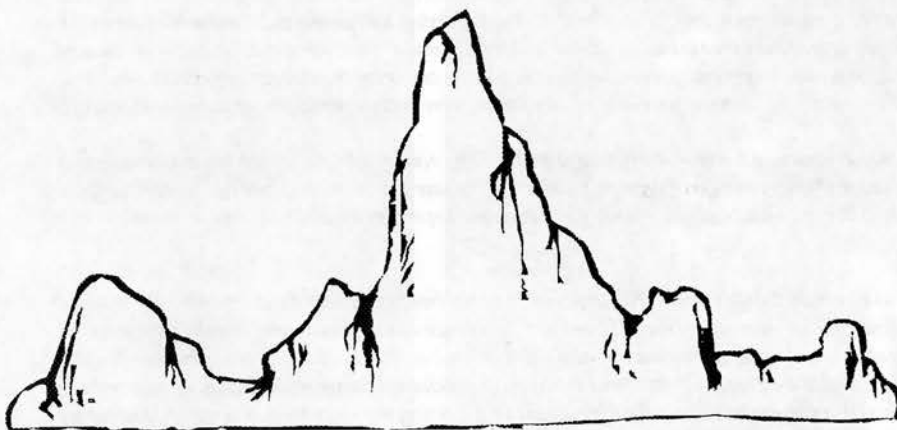
not practice that leads to enlightenment, but that correct practice is enlightenment – wholehearted sitting is already an expression of the awakened mind. Dogen even invented a compound word for this concept, and referred to it in his writings as practice-enlightenment. He wanted his students to sit and know they were enlightened.

On the one hand, sitting is one of the most practical things you can do. It definitely has beneficial physical and psychological effects, as anyone will tell you who does it (though it is not always easy to define those benefits). But when you sit in order to gain something – the way Uchiyama wanted to be like Sawaki – you are undermining yourself. You limit what sitting can do for you.

So, after you have learned how to calm and stabilize the mind, simply be as you are. You may find that your willingness to be nakedly face this moment exactly as it brings with it an extraordinary fulfillment, a fulfillment that is independent of the actual content of the moment. Over time, the mind will hanker less after notions of a better future.

In the words of Ajaan Chah, the great Theravada teacher, "Don't try to get anywhere in practice. The very desire to be free or to be enlightened will be the desire that prevents your freedom. You can try as hard as you wish, practice ardently night and day, but if you still have the desire to achieve you will never find peace.... simply let go. Watch the mind and body mindfully, but don't try to achieve anything."

*Excerpted from a talk given by
Larry Rosenberg at CIMC.*



Let the Wilderness Serve!

Samyutta Nikāya 6.2.3

At one time the Buddha was residing in Magadha,
near [a place called] Andhakavinda.
At that time the Buddha was seated under the open sky,
in the deep darkness of the night,
and the rain-god was making it rain, drop by drop.

Then the Brahmā Sahampati, as the night was passing away,
lighting up Andhakavinda with his surpassing brilliance,
approached the Buddha and stood to one side.
As he stood to one side, the Brahmā Sahampati
offered up these verses in the presence of the Buddha:

sevetha pantāni senāsanāni
bhāyā pamutto abhaye vimutto
yattha bheravā sirimsapā
vijju sañcarati thaneti devo
andhakāra-timisāya rattiyā
nisīdi tattha bhikkhu vigatalomaḥṃso

Let the wilderness serve for your seat and bed!
Freed from fear; and in the fearless, released.
In places where frightening serpents abide,
Lightning clashes and the rain-god thunders,
In the blinding darkness of the deepest night,
There he sits—the monk who's vanquished his dread.

sevetha pantāni senāsanāni
careyya samyojanavippamokkhā
sa ce ratim nādhigacchaye tattha
saṅghe vāse rakkhitatto satimā
kulā kulam piṇḍikāya caranto
indriyagutto nipako satimā

Let the wilderness serve for your seat and bed!
Go about set free from the ties that bind.
But if, perchance, you don't find there your bliss, then
Live in a group—but watch over yourself:
Mindful, proceeding for alms from house to house,
Mindful, with guarded faculties—and wise.

The theme of Sahampati's first lines is fear, a present issue for the followers of the Buddha who were encouraged to practice alone in the depths of the wilderness. Poisonous snakes are a source of fear, as are the thunder, lightning and profound darkness of the night. The "dread" overcome by the bhikkhu in the last line of the verse is literally the wonderful phrase "the hair standing up on the back of one's neck." (In oral presentation the long phrase would be pronounced with contractions in order for the line to fit into the 11-syllable meter of this tristubh poetic form.) It suggests the terrifying, creeping anxiety of threatening forces only partly imagined or understood.

The play on words in the second line is clever, equating freedom from fear with the liberation of nibbāna, which is sometimes given the epithet "the fearless." Since fear is always rooted in protection of the ego, working with fear is a useful practice for overcoming the ego's instinctive defenses. A waking results in fearlessness because one lets go of the need to protect the limited view of oneself as one gains a much wider perspective.

The second verse allows that dwelling as a hermit, though a powerful practice, may not be appropriate for everybody; for many it is better to live in community. But one should not thereby consider oneself free from the objects of fear, because ultimately these forces are all within us. Removed from the dangers of the wilderness, a person must be especially attentive to watching over the workings of their own mind. In community, the serpents of ill will, the storms of desire, and the darkness of delusions are equally dangerous for those seeking the peace of liberation. And mindfulness is our greatest ally in watching over or guarding the workings of our minds as we try to get along with others. — A. Olendzki