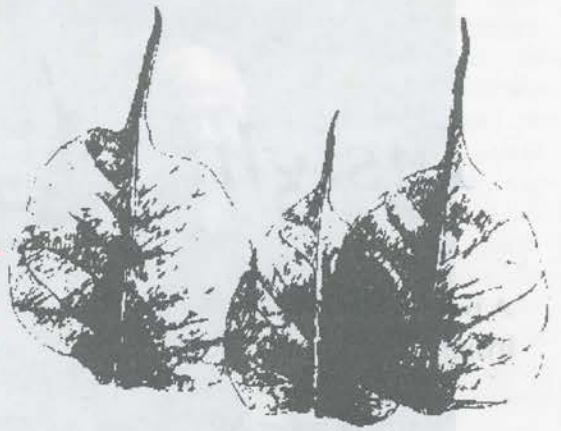


A joint newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society
and the Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies

Insight



Spring 1999

IMS 1999
Retreat Schedule

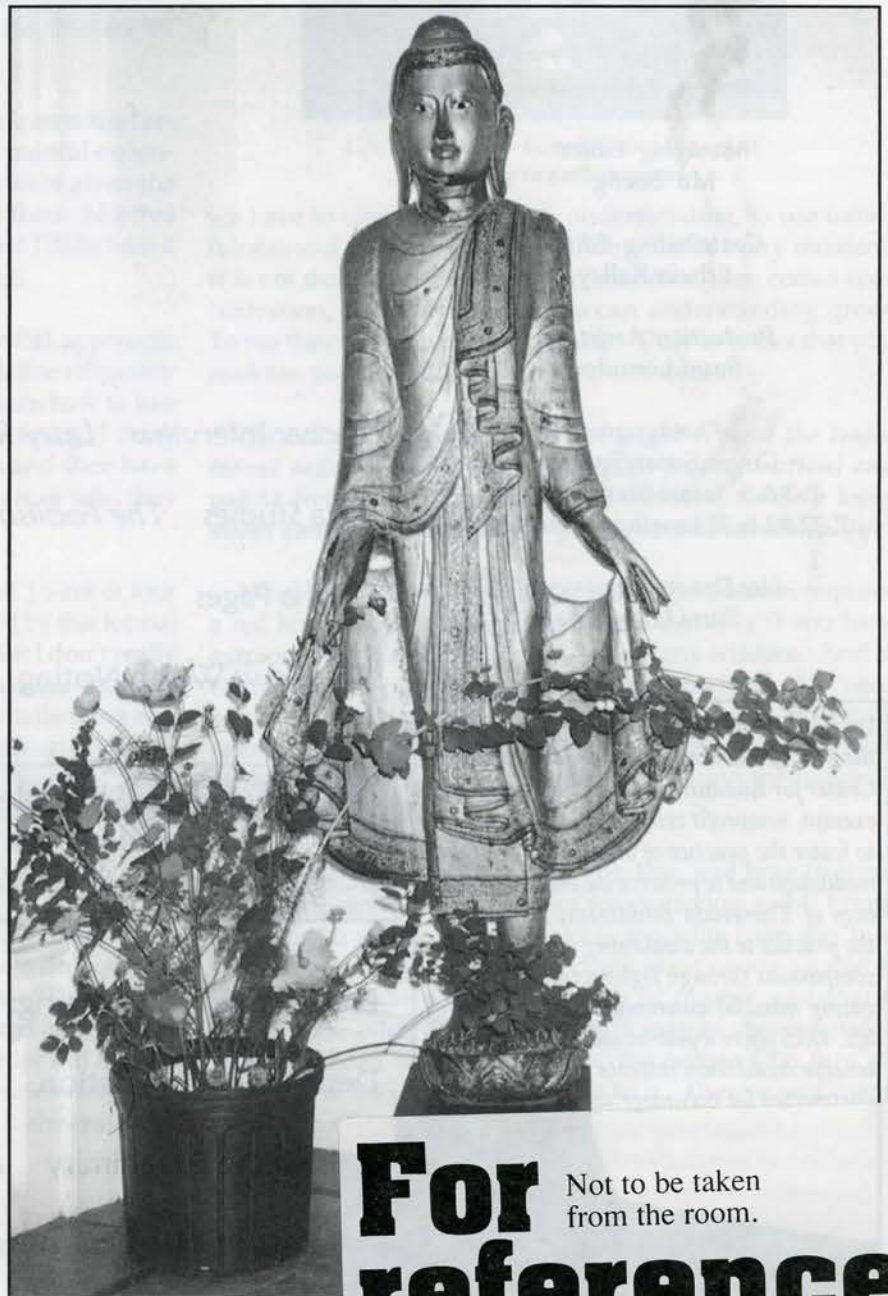
BCBS 1999
Course Schedule

Teacher Interview:
Larry Rosenberg

Practicing for Awakening:
Part Two
Jack Engler

Dependent Origination
Christina Feldman

Cultivating Equanimity
Narayan Liebenson Grady



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from the room.
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Insight



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

Editor
Andrew Olendzki

Managing Editor
Mu Soeng

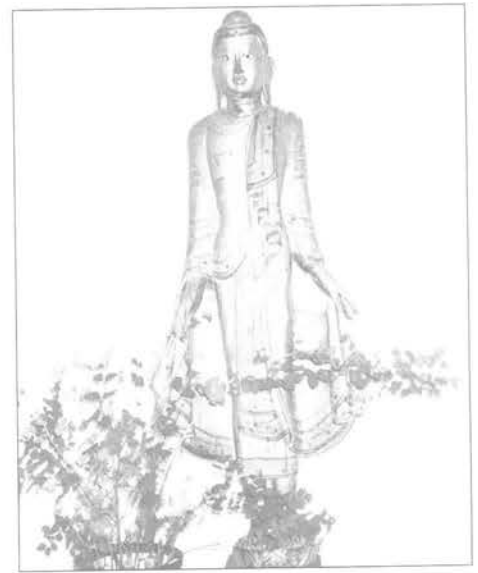
Contributing Editor
Edwin Kelley

Production Assistance
Sumi Loundon

Photographs
Cover: Susan Spilman
P. 3 & 5: James Stanton Abbot
P. 22 #2 & 35 Jonathan Stolzenberg

Line Drawings on page 8
Sumi Loundon

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.



This Buddha statue has been standing beside the entrance to the IMS dining hall for more than twenty years.

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The Wisdom of the Ordinary Mind

An interview with
Larry Rosenberg
March 1, 1999

Larry, you have been involved with the dharma for some time now, and you have studied, practiced and taught in a number of different ways. How would you describe your current interest in dharma practice? Where is your greatest passion these days?

In recent years I have mostly been working with people who practice dharma in the context of householder life. This has required a great deal of flexibility and creativity, insofar as every practitioner finds himself or herself in unique circumstances and requires very specific guidance for dharma instructions to be beneficial.

For me it is extremely important that such instruction remain open and flexible, in part because of the painful experience I've had with Judaism growing up: you were given the ten commandments and commanded to follow them. Not that there is anything inherently wrong with that, but I didn't see it work out so well, and it didn't inspire me much.

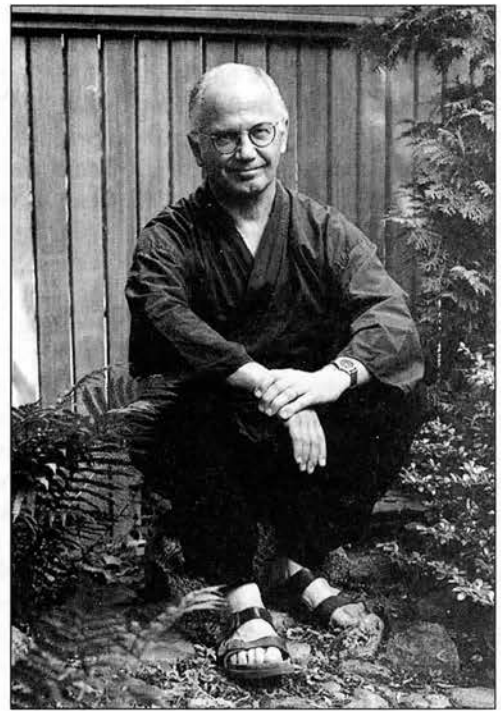
The last thing we need is another puritanical approach, grinding out rigid and repressed people who define religiosity in narrowly pious ways. In helping people learn how to live ordinary lives with more authenticity and meaning, I don't want to just apply some universal principles and then have people struggle to live up to who they think I am or who they think the Buddha was.

We give the refuges and precepts here [at CIMC] three or four times a year, and I think some people are helped by this formal commitment to conscious and ethical living. But I don't really have much confidence in such formalities unless they are backed up by practice. But what I find very challenging and interesting and bring into my teaching is encouraging people to find out for themselves what is wrong in their life. It's a matter of using mindfulness, using insight, to understand the law of cause and effect in practical terms. This is wisdom in action.

One of the greatest challenges for a householder is getting their house in order. When people ask me how to do this, I feel more comfortable not giving them assurances—"This is what you should do"—but rather suggesting they start noticing disorder in their lives. When people come to order out of their own understanding of disorder, it has a more meaningful effect on their lives. It brings the wisdom in, and it always makes it more interesting.

I think the Buddha's approach lends itself to integration with all aspects of life. Mindful living is the bare minimum of civilized living. What I emphasize to my students is that

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Life teaches me. Simply bring the spirit of inquiry to each moment.

we have to come to it through understanding, to use mindfulness and insight for understanding life at every moment. It is not that virtue or morality comes first, then comes concentration, and only afterwards can understanding grow. To me they are all working together. Only in books that you read can you separate the three aspects so neatly.

So are you suggesting that we might reverse the traditional order of sīla [virtue], samādhi [concentration] and paññā [wisdom], recognizing that wisdom can help bring about concentration and help guide one into an ethical life?

Absolutely. Many people feel that to get wisdom requires a red hot, fiercely concentrated mind, that only if you have extraordinary *samādhi* can you get any wisdom. And of course there are certain levels of depth to that sort of focused mind which are essential for a deep and thorough liberation from suffering. But there is also a lot of wisdom that is possible with just the ordinary mind if it is trained and the person is motivated enough.

You just start noticing how you live, and how in some ways it doesn't work: it brings you suffering and it brings suffering to others. This insight is available from day one. Of course, some people either don't want or are unable to use their wisdom to keep them out of trouble, and that is where some other aspects of the path may be very helpful. I know it's hard work, but a lot of the people who turn up here and at IMS and BCBS are up to it. They're intelligent, they're motivated and I like to introduce wisdom from day one. Wisdom is what excites me the most about the whole journey.

And yet you also seem most interested in how this wisdom is expressed in the daily details of ordinary life.

In the early days of our contact with the dharma, all of us [in the "first generation" of western dharma teachers] were in love with meditation. Speaking for myself, I think I neglected the devotional and ethical dimensions of the practice. It is not that I was so corrupt (I think we've all done pretty well on that front), but I wasn't explicit about the place of morality in the practice. Yes, we would take the refuges and precepts during a retreat and then remind the yogis [meditators] at the end, but meditation was where all the action was.

Teaching at a center like CIMC, which is urban and non-residential, is a very different experience than teaching in an intensive residential retreat center like IMS. There is a whole community of practitioners here that is sustained over years—people come together, develop friendships, get married, have families and usually cope with very challenging jobs and careers. People come to CIMC to learn how to sit, how to walk mindfully, and how to do retreats; but the message is very, very clear that we throw them out, back into their lives, marriages, relationships, school, work—whatever their life is, it doesn't really matter. We say, "Learn dharma principles and how to meditate here at CIMC, and deepen that understanding in retreat at IMS, but now start doing it everyday and bring it into the whole of your life."

We have developed a special interview form to help support this. During a one-day or a weekend (non-residential) retreat that we regularly offer at CIMC, we will provide a brief personal interview like at any other retreat. But we also offer interviews of a half hour each—it has to be longer—where people come and can talk about anything they want to. Much of the time it's still about sitting and walking, but here we also probe into every other aspect of their lives. We are not trying to relate to them as therapists or marriage counselors, but trying to help bring their own dharma insights more authentically into their lives, habits and relationships. And people are doing it.

This level of practical on-going support sounds like a distinctive feature of CIMC as an urban center. It seems to balance and complete the more intensive vipassanā retreat experience.

I would not have started the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center had there not already been IMS. It wasn't that I wanted to create an alternative practice to IMS so much as a complementary one. I saw that certain very profound and wonderful things went on at IMS. But inevitably, because we are lay people, we return to the world with little or no support, and it can be very challenging.

A kind of fragmented, divided lifestyle can develop from this pattern, where people live to raise money and earn time off for the next long retreat, and meantime months can go by. The view may develop that working life isn't really as important as going to the next retreat. Not only does this neglect the bulk of one's ordinary life, but it can also set up unhelpful expectations and projections upon the retreat experience itself.

My idea for CIMC was for an urban center which strongly endorsed a contemplative way of life without undermining the immense benefits of attending longer retreats whenever possible. As you know, my colleagues [Narayan and Michael Liebenson Grady] and I continue to lead longer retreats at IMS, and many of our Cambridge students regularly attend these. I see CIMC, IMS and BCBS as three legs of a tripod; our missions all mutually support one another.

How would you characterize your own approach to dharma teaching in this larger context?

The message of my own teaching involves a certain boldness or directness. My feeling is that a number of people who are strongly committed to meditation are afraid of life, or afraid of relationship, or afraid of work on some level. But in my view, dharma practice is not to hide. It is not to become a hothouse plant—thriving only in a protected environment—it is to jump into life.

My role is to not allow people to use the dharma to create escapes for themselves. But it's not to rub their face in it either—they're already in it, the challenges are there. I try to offer an invitation to use the dharma to inquire into daily life, but not to the extent that formal meditation is undermined. We don't

want the pendulum to swing to the other extreme where people might say, "Daily life is my practice. Now I don't have to do much sitting meditation." That's not the message. It is all about keeping an authentic balance.

I discovered a few years ago that the daily life piece is not easy to teach. There is an intrinsic difficulty that comes from the fact that all these people are running around in a notoriously intellectual environment like Cambridge and are not meditating much. My job is to constantly remind them about dharma... dharma... dharma. But also many people basically lack conviction that daily life really and truly is as valuable as, say, the walking or sitting practice. And it is; it really is. It's not better than. It is not worse than. It is just as much of a problem to set the spiritual life above daily life as it is to consider daily life the acid test for your spiritual practice. There's just your life, period.

So when you're at IMS doing your sitting, or when you're at BCBS doing your study, then do that. And then when you're with your child or your school, in your office, then do that. Try not to make anything stand for the whole thing. I love to just sit, and I've seen enough of that to know that just sitting doesn't do it. Maybe there are a few geniuses who break through at a deep level, and for whom daily life is no problem, but most of these people have also been monks. Children don't go away. A job is not optional—you need to pay your bills. It doesn't go away.

The people I work with are often fully embedded in life—married, with children, working difficult jobs. They are also intelligent, good-hearted people with a sincere aspiration for deeper inner development and understanding. Sometimes people lack conviction because they have been wounded in their lives. Sometimes there is a fair amount of fear—of growing up, of taking responsibility, of commitment to partners or family. You are not exempt from all the things that every human being faces just because you are a yogi.

As teachers we show them the tremendous love we have for the contemplative aspect of the Buddha's teach-

ings, and we help them taste it for themselves—but it does not end there. The yogi and the mother are not two separate beings; the sacred and the secular are not adversaries. It is all seamlessly unfolding moment to moment, and Buddhist practice is a matter of facing it moment to moment, just as it is. And that's the message. It's a simple message.

Is there an ideal model of contemporary lay practice—living the life of the family and career and community, but going on retreat once or twice a year?

To tell you the truth, I threw that one out quite a while back. Every time I set up a paradigm, I would find that I imposed a pattern on someone. And it was as if I was deforming them by trying to squeeze them into that role. I think an appropriate model emerges from each person, and sometimes it takes awhile to get to know what that is.

Some people at a certain point in their life, maybe forever, might assume that they're not going to become monks or nuns—and that's fine. I am not going to urge them to a nunnery. Others may want to live pretty much like a monk or a nun would, but without formally ordaining. I don't see any reason here to say, "You'd better get back into society and test your equanimity in the fire." Other people may not want to sit much at all. Sometimes they interpret that to mean that they're not good practitioners like they should be. I don't harangue them about this, but I also say "That doesn't mean you have to give up the practice." There are many ways to study, many ways to apply what you learn in daily life, and there is no shortage of challenges in any life.

You must have learned a lot over the years about applying this principle.

I have certainly learned some things along the way. For example, in the early days I would give standard instructions like, "Throughout the day, give 100% undivided attention to whatever you are doing." You know, the typical "When you're doing the dishes, only do the dishes." But I think what I conveyed was some kind of fixed gaze that people would take on as they stood at the sink in their own little

bubble of *samādhi*.

Later on, I would say something more like, "Start noticing the consequences of your actions." Doing the dishes is relatively easy—it's just you and the dishes. But when you start to be sensitive to the motives of why you're doing what you're doing in your life, and when you begin to be sensitive to the impact your actions and attitudes are having on other people, it's a little bit different. But looking at these things is the practice. And for goodness sakes, learn from it.

And yet you continue to stress the value of silent meditation retreats. Might we say that mindfulness is a tool for full and meaningful living, a tool which can be sharpened and honed on silent retreat?

Well, it's helpful in some ways, but the limitation is that it makes it seem like the retreat is a means to live. I don't live in order to sit; nor do I sit in order to live. Sitting is a form of living.

When I'm on retreat I'm really very happy. I don't miss the movies, which I love. I don't miss anything. (Well, I do think of my wife.) For me, life on retreat is an expression of life, where silence and stillness are given much more respect and appreciation. In our culture, to be alive means to think, to do, to get, to raise, to accumulate; but to me silence is not a luxury. To enter into deep, inner silence is a normal, healthy and extraordinarily important part of the wholeness of life.

So being on retreat itself is life; it is something that can be lived, and it just has this form. And then, being with my family has another form. I don't even use the term integration anymore. There's nothing to integrate. There's no stitching to do. Granted, if you've been quiet for two weeks or longer there is a change when you return to the city and see cars

and people and all that. But okay, that's a part of your practice too—no big deal. It's just that how you're taking in the present situation is influenced by the fact that you were quiet for those two weeks; you watch your hard-earned samadhi start to disintegrate (with equanimity, of course!)

There need not be any echo from where you have been to where you are now. Simply bring that spirit of inquiry to the present moment, whether in the silence or in the cacophony. It is the very same attitude, wherever you are. I like this. It's really simple. When I can get it, I learn. Life teaches me.

Why do you think the dharma is of increasing interest to people these days? Is there something being said that our society needs to hear?

I continue to be impressed by the incredible capabilities of the human brain. The human race has an absolutely immense potential (though we are chal-



lenged in terms of what we elect to use this capability for). We are brilliant about so many things, but we haven't really learned how to live together. We don't know what to do with this planet, and it seems to me we have never given much priority to the quality of life. There are a lot of confused individuals around who are handling toys that are extraordinarily powerful, and some of these are weapons. Clearly something is way out of balance, and people are suffering.

We need to attend more to the science of understanding ourselves, and I think this is what the Buddha's teaching addresses. For me self understanding is not for some aristocratic intellectuals or bohemians or monks or nuns. It is a matter of survival—I do see it in such a dire way. Awareness practice should be part of the general education of a civilized, educated human being. It is nothing special, you know. You don't have to be a misfit or a weird person who just wants to be in a cave, although there will always be some who go to the full depth of what is possible. But I don't see why self understanding can't become a cultural value.

You have often said the biggest challenge Buddhism will face in America is success; that mainstream American culture has a way of absorbing, commodifying and ultimately trivializing almost everything of value it encounters. Now that we are beginning to see more outward signs of the dharma's success in our culture, do you have any new thoughts on the matter?

When the first generation of teachers went to Asia to learn this tradition, and I would count myself among that generation, it felt like a kind of heroic journey. We went through hell, in some respects—giving up secure jobs, traveling from place to place without a real home, not knowing the language, living frugally and getting sick in various parts of Asia. And when we came back we were often considered fools for the strange sorts of things we were teaching and doing. But speaking for myself, I was riding high about the heroic, wonderful thing we had discovered and were now bringing back to share with others. So some of the obstacles we have faced were simply part of that heroic journey.

Some of the current obstacles, however, are more subtle and hidden. There are so many camouflaged and tempting forces at work that it is far more than I can keep track of. There is much more money, fame and power available. Will we get lost in it? Will the rush to create more teachers to meet the growing interest undermine the quality of the Dharma being taught? I feel I just have this tiny little piece of the universe to care for—I have some influence with CIMC, IMS and BCBS, and this is more than enough for me. My main guide is what the Buddha said, which I re-read regularly. I want the dharma to survive, and I think in order for it to do so it's got to be very conservative. We need to conserve the essence, which is timeless. But at the same time it has to be radical, which means we have got to be willing to throw some things away—and to take on some new things. These ideas are not in opposition.

Can you think of some example of this?

One example of a challenge calling for new ideas is the whole issue of lay/monastic relationship. I have gone through a lot of swings on this. I have lived in monastic settings before, and I am able to live that way. I can live on one meal, go on alms rounds, and all the rest. But I have no interest in being a monk; I am happy being a layperson. Those of us who are living and practicing as lay people have to be practical. If we're going to live as laypeople, then let's use the whole of our life as it is in the best way we can, including marriage, children, relationship, money, and so forth.

The monastic commitment is a strategy, it's not absolute truth. It is a convention—a beautiful one—that has worked wonders for many people, and the Buddha devised it for good reason. However, nobody should be told "If you are really serious about this, you have got to become a monk or nun." For laypeople to constantly see themselves through monastic eyes is disabling. If we judge ourselves from a monastic perspective, we are handicapping ourselves. There was a time in my life when I was quite angry about this, and I worked up a certain political energy --but I have long since let go of it.

The way I see it now, the monastic piece and the lay piece have to learn how to work together. I don't even know if this lay movement will last. It may evolve and eventually become, again, mainly monastic. That's fine with me. My role now is to try to teach this stuff so that I help laypeople understand that their practice has dignity and value; they should do it whole-heartedly, but without undervaluing the monastic piece.

But the monks have to do their share too, and I talk to every one of them who comes through town. I say, "Look, you guys have got to start looking at your frame of reference, because you're not living in Thailand. You're in America, and if you don't start recognizing that something has changed over here the laypeople are going to float out to sea and we're going to have nothing left. We are going to be two universes not connected at all, and I think that's too bad. Respect should go both ways. If someone wants to become a monk, I'm whole-heartedly for them. And if someone has several children and a meaningful job where people depend upon them, let's not treat that situation as if it is second-rate. Such a person needs lots of support to help them use the actual forms making up their life in a dharmic way.

In the process of this give-and-take, are we formulating a new form of Buddhism?

America is a land of immigrants—it's always been that way. All that is happening now is that the next batch of immigrants is getting assimilated. It's as if the Buddha's children have all been scattered—they have fled to Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, the various countries of Southeast Asia. Now we are in the midst of a family reunion. The geographical and historical distinctions that existed between the different branches of the family have dissipated, and we are all starting to talk to each other, really for the first time. Of course there are some people who are hanging on to their school ties for dear life, but by and large there is a lot of communication taking place. Something is going to happen as part of the assimilation, but I don't think we can predict what it is. Whatever it is, I trust it will emerge naturally.





CURRENT JOB OPENING

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Insight Meditation Society

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

The Insight Meditation Society has a challenging and exciting opportunity for an experienced leader as Associate Director of Operations.

The Associate Director of Operations reports directly to the Executive Director and is responsible for the direction and leadership of the day-to-day operations of the retreat center. This person works in cooperation with the Associate Director of Human Resources and the Associate Director of Facilities to assist the Executive Director in ensuring that the center is operating within guidelines set by the Board of Directors and the Guiding Teachers. The Associate Director of Operations oversees the retreat operations and maintains the financial systems for the center.

The successful candidate will have:

- Demonstrated experience and expertise working within complex and diverse operation, with responsibility for its coherence and effectiveness.
- Strong abilities to manage, design and implement office and financial system policy and procedures that effectively accommodate human, financial and physical resource constraints.
- Well-developed discernment and decision-making skills so that clear direction is provided to ensure healthy system-people interactions.
- Skill in leadership, communication and facilitation. This person must have the ability to coordinate the efforts of the many people who come together to provide retreats.
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Executive Director, Insight Meditation Society, Re: Operations Director vacancy
1230 Pleasant St., Barre, MA 01005.

IMS is an equal opportunity employer.

The Foolish Monkey

Saṃyutta Nikāya 47.7

There is, on Himavat,
king of mountains,
a rugged and uneven land
where monkeys do not wander
—and nor do men.

And there is, on Himavat,
king of mountains,
a rugged and uneven land
where monkeys do indeed wander
—but men do not.

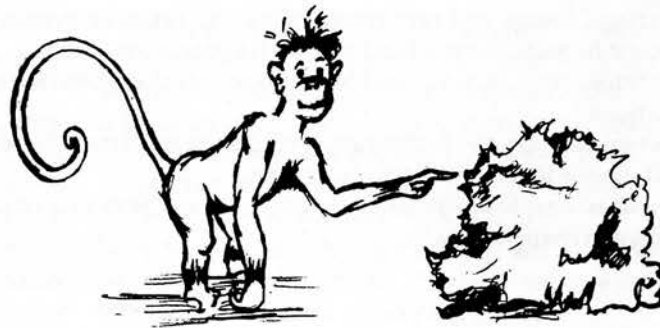
And there is, on Himavat,
king of mountains,
a level stretch of ground, quite pleasing
where monkeys do wander
—and so do men.

There a hunter set a trap
on the trails used by the monkeys,
in order to capture those monkeys.

There were monkeys there who were
not of foolish nature,
not of greedy nature.
Seeing that trap, they stayed well away.



But there was one monkey
of foolish nature,
of greedy nature.
He went up to that trap
and grabbed it with his hand.
It got stuck there.



"I'll free my hand!"
He grabbed it with his other hand.
It got stuck there.

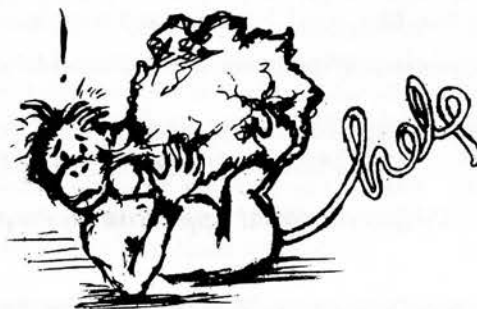
"I'll free both hands—and a foot!"
He grabbed it with his other foot.
It got stuck there.



"I'll free both hands!"
He grabbed it with his foot.
It got stuck there.

"I'll free both hands—and both feet!"
He grabbed it with his snout.
It got stuck there.

And now that monkey,
caught five ways,
lays himself down and howls.
Fallen into trouble,
fallen into ruin,
for the hunter to do with as he pleases.



This is what happens to one who
wanders in wrong pastures,
in the habitat of others.

Therefore, monks, do not
wander in wrong pastures,
in the habitat of others.

Wandering in wrong pastures,
in the habitat of others,
Māra will gain an access,
Māra will gain a footing.

And what, for a monk, are
wrong pastures,
the habitat of others?

The five strands of sense desire.
What are these five?

Forms discerned with the eye
—appealing, pleasurable,
yearned for and lusted after.

Sounds discerned with the ear
—appealing, pleasurable,
yearned for and lusted after.

Odors discerned with the nose
—appealing, pleasurable,
yearned for and lusted after.

Flavors discerned with the tongue
—appealing, pleasurable,
yearned for and lusted after.

Touches discerned with the body
—appealing, pleasurable,
yearned for and lusted after.

These, for a monk, are
wrong pastures,
the habitat of others.

Wander in right pastures,
in your own natural habitat.

Wandering in right pastures,
in your own natural habitat,
Māra will not gain an access,
Māra will not gain a footing.

And what, for a monk, are
right pastures,
your own natural habitat?

The four foundations of mindfulness.
What are these four?

Here, monks, a monk abides:

Observing body as body
—ardent, mindful, fully aware, leading
away unhappiness and worldly worries.

Observing feelings as feeling
—ardent, mindful, fully aware, leading
away unhappiness and worldly worries.

Observing mind as mind
—ardent, mindful, fully aware, leading
away unhappiness and worldly worries.

Observing mental phenomena
as mental phenomena
—ardent, mindful, fully aware, leading
away unhappiness and worldly worries.

These, for a monk, are
right pastures,
your own natural habitat.



Alas, this cautionary tale does not have the happy ending we would like of such fables. In fact, as a childhood fan of Curious George and with a certain affection for (and resemblance to?) this foolish monkey, I could not bring myself to translate what the hunter does to him upon his arrival. The Buddha was not one to pull any punches, especially when an important point of training for the monks was at stake.

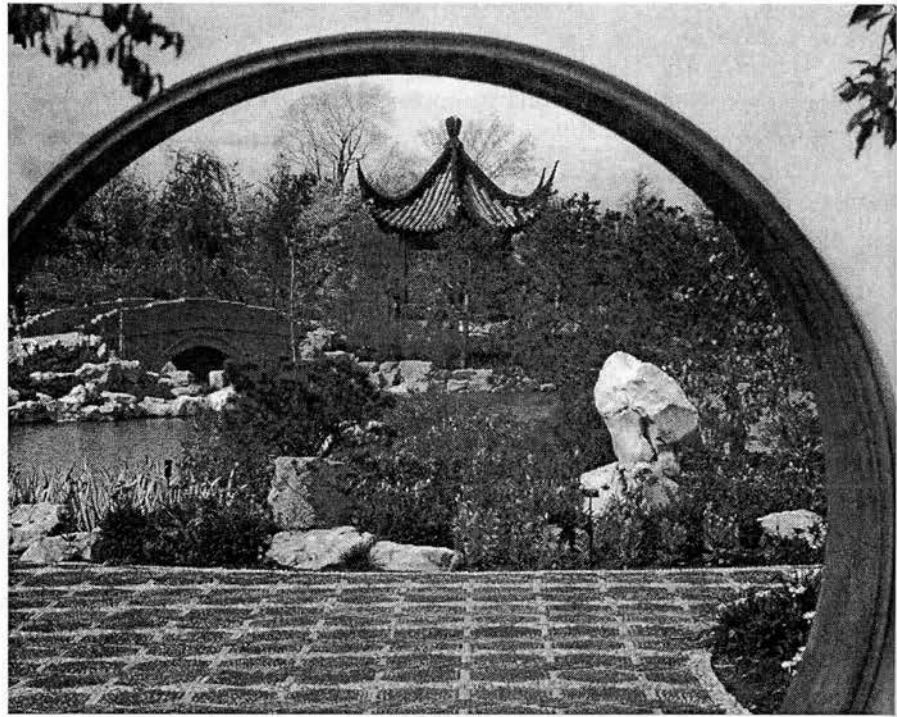
The story is taken from the *Satipatthana Samyuttam*, a collection of discourses which discuss the Foundations of Mindfulness, root teachings of the vipassana meditation tradition. The message is one that has much to do with the application of “wise attention” (*yoniso manasikara*), and involves changing one’s frame of reference through which sense experience is received and processed.

If we give our attention to the appeal or the pleasurable that accompanies sensory experience (the sticky trap), then we are necessarily caught by the perceptual object. There can be no freedom of mind, because we are subtly (and usually unconsciously) yearning for more gratification than the transient object is capable of delivering. Instead of satisfying our desires, such experience merely stirs up more desire. This is the situation most of us take as normal—we seek satisfaction of desire through the pursuit of pleasure in the realms of the senses.

The monastic ideal that so thoroughly shaped the flavor of early Buddhism involves a wholly different way of relating to experience. The idea is not that monks are to avoid or ignore the data that comes in through the five sense doors—indeed this is hardly pos-

sible, since all of our sensory experience must pass through these gateways. Rather the instruction is about not getting attached to sense pleasures, as the poor monkey gets stuck to the monkey trap. Sense data itself is not harmful, but the sweetness of pleasure in which each sense input is wrapped is the factor that gets us caught, due to our “foolish and greedy nature.”

The difference in strategy, where a monk is “wandering in the pastures” of the four foundations of mindfulness, is the presence of equanimity. Vipassana meditation trains us to attend more dispassionately to the nuances of experience. When we simply observe, “mindful and fully aware,” then we begin to undermine the mechanisms by which the mind gets stuck to the objects of our experience. —A. Olendzki



Winged Dharma

In the Massachusetts pine forest,
above the Quabbin, orange needles
poking up from the snow,
there is a place off the trail,
(you'd have to know to find it),
where a flat, long, rectangular rock
sits evenly horizontal above the ground on two
stone pedestals.

It was made by a yogi on retreat, or perhaps
one of the Blessed Fathers who were here
before the Buddhist takeover twenty years ago.
The woods are dotted by grottos with Kwan-Yin
statues, Buddhas of every nationality tucked
under ledges, on boulders.
Mother Mary, pocked and crumbling,
favorite of those in the know,
eighteen inches high, receives
the lion's share of crystals,
brilliant leaves, seashells.

In winter, if you are very still and very lucky,
sparrows come and eat from your hand.
I try to lure them to me,
standing, palm full of seed, open to the sky.
The more they fly by without stopping,
the more I crave their company.
Shattered (yes) by the rejection
I feel as a heavy, wet crescent
from forehead to belly, I sit on the cold stone slab,
mind making similes and trying not to.
Then, on my hand beside me, on the bench,
the touch of bird feet, her eyes meet
mine above the seed I offer.

Jonathan Stolzenberg

West

Melancholy purple bank of cloud
reminds — another day dying.

Heart leaps! Raging orange
streams ignite shimmering
pool of yellow —

it sinks,
oozing on horizon's hills.

Sun sets without thought,
catches me dancing
naked in front of mind's mirror.

Sun sets, no feeling .
I empty with the darkening sky.
Eighteen crows fly southeast,
One speaks,
"Caw."

Jonathan Stolzenberg



Fall at Beaver's Pond

Beaver
Wetly shining friend
Night by night
Rearranging
The great bouquet

Leave that birch
And the maple for me,
Gold and purple
On my path of change.

Sybillie Ackermann



Rain

Sit, close your eyes
open your heart
watch the rising and falling.
You will never be the same, again
and yet, we always think
we are always the same.

Sit, close your eyes
open your mind
and watch the rising and falling
like
standing in the rain
never being touched by the same raindrop,
feeling every different drop.
You will never have the same rain drop.
You will never the same.

Sitting as sitting
walking as walking
thinking as thinking
hearing as hearing
feeling as feeling
living as living.
What it is, it is.
When it is, it is.

theikdi

In a Garden of Ten Thousand Flowers

We try to believe
the wide shawl
of the black
night sky
is stitched
with infinite
care and design.

We want to feel
in a garden of ten
thousand flowers
one life
means something
or anything
at all.

Some have found joy
in visions grand
as a celestial rose
or humble as heaven
in the palm of a hand.

But why this need
to explain
the Mystery
of all that is?

Is it not enough
and more
to leave it all
unmetaphored?
To simply name
and let it
be.

As here
in this patch
of violets, in this stone,
and in the encompassing
silence.

Sylvia Ryan





IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING

Trouble in Tofu Territory

-or-
The Kitchen Redux

When IMS was purchased 23 years ago we were fortunate to inherit a working kitchen stocked with equipment and ready to go. Since that time our cooking load has multiplied many-fold, but we have continued to work in essentially the same space with essentially the same equipment. For the past decade or two there has been a growing interest and a growing need to renovate our kitchen and update some of the equipment. This project came to the point of being scheduled some dozen years ago but was dropped at the last minute due to expense.

We are now poised to proceed. Plans have been drawn up with the input and participation of our cooks, equipment repairers and dealers, a chef or two, and sundry others, and we feel we have designed a kitchen that will be easier and safer to cook in and a more pleasant workspace, to boot. Originally it was thought that we might need an entirely new building to accomplish this improvement, but we have found that a careful remodeling of the existing footprint will do just fine, and with considerably less cost.

The wall between the kitchen and potwashing rooms will be removed along with the old plastic container room, producing a large open space. Additional work tables and shelving will be installed allowing a smoother flow of people and work when it's time to wash pots and put away leftovers. The walls will be resurfaced and the floor will be tiled.

A new reach-in refrigerator will be purchased, but the real jewel will be a convection steamer, capable of cooking vegetables quicker than you can say "oh no...not tofu *again!*"

Needless to say, this is a big project and will not be completed without a fair amount of disruption and noise. Yet we are taking steps to minimize the inconvenience and keep the noise down. We will set up a temporary kitchen in the small dining room and serve somewhat simpler meals during the renovation, ordering more foods that arrive already prepped. We will serve more corn flakes and less oatmeal. You get the picture.

Three courses will be affected by this project: the Young Adults Retreat, Larry Rosenberg and Corrado Pensa's Experienced Yogi Retreat, and Christina Feldman's summer retreat.

The project should be completed before the Family course begins, or I'll have to skip town. Those attending the three affected courses should be prepared for some disruption, but we don't think it will be too bad--not as bad as the last three month course, with bulldozers and excavators digging up the front lawn. We are very pleased to finally be poised to accomplish this renovation. It will be of great benefit to all those yogis and staff who, in the future, work in the kitchen.

Regards,
Bob Trammell (Facilities)

Where am I on the Wait List?

Recently, as interest in meditation has grown in western society, demand for retreats at IMS has also increased. Many people find it increasingly difficult to get confirmed into their favorite course at IMS. In some cases we are running lotteries. Virtually all courses have more demand than in the past. Wait lists are common.

And yet, we often approach an opening day for a very popular course--one that has had a long wait list--to find that we are spending hours on the phone trying to fill available spaces. So, we thought, if we offered an inside perspective, you may have a better understanding of what it means when you are wait-listed.

If you are number 50 on a wait list for a course, you may think you have no chance to get in. You may make other plans and not be free to get here if a place was offered. So, when we get to your name--and often we will--there may be surprise to find you have been confirmed and perhaps upset that you are now going to lose your deposit. We cannot predict the chances that we will get to your name; but we can guarantee that there will be last-minute cancellations

continued on p. 14



Architecture, Learning and Practice: The Forest Refuge Project

As project manager of the Forest Refuge, one of my roles has been to oversee the process of finding and securing the best person/architect for the job of designing the Forest Refuge. Not an easy task when the client is the Insight Meditation Society—it required finding just the right person—someone who would resonate with the practice and truly understand the challenges of designing and building a center whose purpose is to nurture the deepening of insight and compassion. Could this be done? Could we find an architect who could participate in the very traditional client/architect relationship and have the operating guidelines of the process and relationship being the Buddha's eight-fold path?

Late last fall the Forest Refuge committee chose to work with Michael Rotondi of ROTo Architects. In an initial discussion, Michael said, "I believe there are projects that can help us integrate intellectual and spiritual practice. At ROTo Architects we have been focusing, both personally and publicly, on creating the conditions for these types of projects to emerge. The meditation center is quintessentially this type of project. I consider this a project of a lifetime, and if I was given the gift to participate, I would give it my full attention".

Michael is a world-renowned architect and one of the leading educators in the field of architecture today. Given that, at that point, he had yet to receive our project background document, he seemed to grasp the essence and significance of this project. We had hoped that our outreach into the world of architecture would find such enthusiasm and interest.

The next week Michael arrived at IMS and spent a considerable amount of time with Joseph, Sharon and myself, exploring some of the architectural challenges we would face as we moved forward with the design of the Forest Refuge. One of the first things we all realized was that during this process Michael would teach Joseph and



Sharon how to be architects, while they taught Michael about being a yogi. This experience, for everyone involved, would be teaching and learning—meditation practice and architecture—in action.

Working together over the past five months has made it clear that we are all committed to making this happen. We are now completing the initial design phase. This includes defining the architectural program of the Refuge, determining the relationships between building functions (i.e. yogi housing,

meditation hall, dining, etc.) and placing the buildings on the site. For all involved this has been an experience of integrating practice, the creative mind, the realities of architectural design, and the pragmatic aspects of finances.

The relationship that we hoped for is emerging. The working sessions have not only included discussions on the architecture, but also an investigation into the nature of meditation practice. We have explored together notions of awakening and have talked about the aspects of silence, light, privacy, and aesthetics and how they can affect one's practice. Almost all architecture is created to facilitate some form of community—where people come together to communicate. Community is very important, but is only the backdrop for individual long-term practice. How do you design for silence and a place with no singular, fixed center? These are just a few of the conversations we have engaged in. They have felt like dharma talks come alive.

Our goal throughout the process is to bring to life a harmonious environment—of stone, wood, light, trees, and yogis—for the sole purpose of nurturing and supporting long-term silent meditation practice, leading toward full awakening.

May our efforts be of benefit to all beings!

Ed Hauben

PS.: Due to a very generous initial contribution, we are able to proceed with the design process during this summer and fall, with the intention of breaking ground on the site in the spring of 2000. We will need to raise an additional \$1.7 to \$2 million dollars to complete this phase of the project — our hope is to open the center by the end of the year 2001.

Ed Hauben has been actively involved in the IMS community in many roles over the last 20 years. Trained as an architect, he is presently Operations Manager at OMR-Architects, in West Acton, MA.

VOLUNTEER for the NEXT GENERATION

The fact that you might originally be number 50 on the wait list, and then confirmed, does not indicate there have been 50 cancellations from the course. Many people also cancel from the wait list. What determines whether you get into a course is the cancellations from the wait list combined with cancellations from the course.

Our purpose at IMS is to provide an opportunity for as many people as possible to experience the benefits of meditation. In order for us to be able to do this we must have your cooperation. We respectfully request that you support us in making the dharma available.

If you have registered for a course and are on the wait-list, please know that you may be confirmed at any time. Please cancel from the wait list as soon as you know you can no longer attend the course.

IMS is trying to help cultivate the mindfulness, compassion and wisdom of the next generation, and we are currently seeking group leaders for the 1999 Family Retreat. These people 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.

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.

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:

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 a 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 a separate application form.

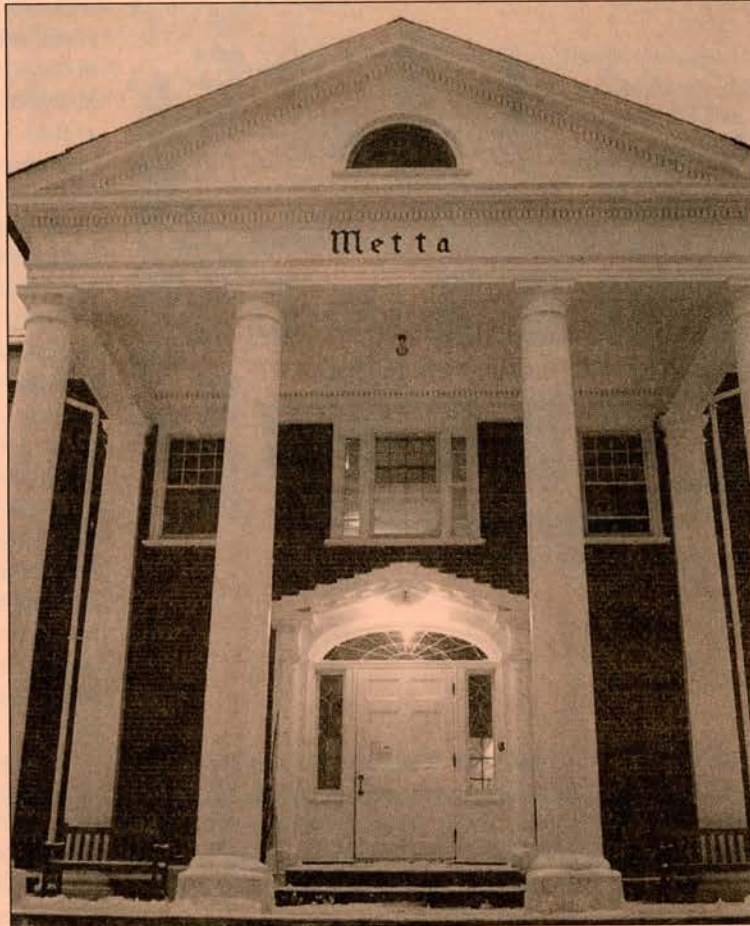
• **Work Retreats:** Work retreats provide a unique opportunity to explore the integration of mindfulness practice with work activity. The daily schedule combines periods of formal meditation practice with five hours of work in silence in one of the IMS departments. Participation is limited to experienced 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 an 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 \$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 \$200**
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 \$200**
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 \$400**
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 INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days) ROD Deposit \$130 Cost \$130**
(Fri-Mon) 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 BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days) AV Deposit \$150 Cost \$285**
(Fri-Sun) 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.
- Mar 20-27 WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) WOM Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
(Sat-Sat) Christina Feldman & Narayan Liebenson Grady
 In the annual gathering of women at IMS, insight meditation is the vehicle used to develop calmness and clarity, wisdom and compassion, openness and vision. This retreat is an opportunity for women to focus on a spiritual path free of dichotomies as well as spiritual, social and psychological conditioning. There is a full daily schedule of meditation and silence, as well as small group meetings.
- Apr 3-10 VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) LR1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
(Sat-Sat) Larry Rosenberg & Michael Liebenson Grady
 The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without judgment. 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 WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days) NM Deposit \$100 Cost \$100**
(Fri-Sun) 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 INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days) CT1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$260**
(Sat-Sun) 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 VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) NLG Deposit \$150 Cost \$230**
(Sat-Sat) Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady
 See description for Apr 16-18 course above.
- May 21-23 WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days) SMW Deposit \$100 Cost \$100**
(Fri-Sun) Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith
 The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 5-15 retreat. (See below).
- May 28-Jun 5 METTA RETREAT (8 days) SM1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$260**
(Fri-Sat) 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 \$315
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 his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily loving-kindness practice is also included.
- May 28-Jun 15 (Fri-Tue)** **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 week-long retreat at IMS.
- Jul 16-25 (Fri-Sun)** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** CF1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$280
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 the on-going work of Gaia House.
- Aug 2-7 (Mon-Sat)** **FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)** FAM Deposit \$50 per adult Cost Adult \$175 Child \$50
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. You 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 (Fri-Sat)** **BORN ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1955 OR AFTER RETREAT (8 days)** CT2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$215
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 co-founded a project to bring awareness-based practices to high-risk youth.

Aug 27-29 (Fri-Sun)	DANA RETREAT (2 days) Bhante Gunaratana	DANA	Deposit & Cost	Donation
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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 (Fri-Mon)	LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days) Ruth Denison	RD1	Deposit \$130	Cost \$130
Sep 3-12 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Ruth Denison	RD2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$285

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 (Wed-Wed)	THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)	3MO	Deposit \$750	Cost \$2,350
Sep 22-Nov 3 (Wed-Wed)	PARTIAL #1 (42 days)	PART1	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,200
Nov 3-Dec 15 (Wed-Wed)	PARTIAL #2 (42 days)	PART2	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,200

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 30, \$50; from May 1 to June 14, \$150; after June 14, 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 (Tue-Thu)	NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (9 days) Rodney Smith, Anna Douglas, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien	NY	Deposit \$150	Cost \$285
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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.

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



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 his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily loving-kindness practice is also included.

May 28-Jun 15 (Fri-Tue) **METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (18 days)** **SM3** Deposit \$150 Cost \$510
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 week-long retreat at IMS.

Jul 16-25 (Fri-Sun) **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)** **CF1** Deposit \$150 Cost \$280
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 the on-going work of Gaia House.

Aug 2-7 (Mon-Sat) **FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)** **FAM** Deposit \$50 per adult
Marcia Rose & Jose Reissig Cost Adult \$175 Child \$50
 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. You 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 (Fri-Sat) **BORN ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1955 OR AFTER RETREAT (8 days)** **CT2** Deposit \$150 Cost \$260
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 co-founded a project to bring awareness-based practices to high-risk youth.



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, among other books, of *Woman Awake!* and *Quest of the Warrior Woman*.

Joseph Goldstein is a co-founder and guiding teacher of IMS. He has been teaching vipassana and metta retreats worldwide 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. He is the author of *Breath By Breath*.

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, among other books, of *Light on Enlightenment, Freedom of the*

Spirit, The Profound and the Profane, Fire Dance and Other Poems and *The Green Buddha*. He is 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 18 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 (Taraniya) 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 without sufficient deposit) will be returned for completion.
- Are processed on a "first received" basis or lottery (see course descriptions). Processing order is not affected by scholarships.
- A confirmation letter will be sent out as soon as your registration is processed; 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 to six 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 wait list 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 _____ Amt of deposit enclosed _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Country _____ Zip _____

Check here if new address. Old Address _____

Day Phone () _____ Evening Phone () _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

M/F _____ Have you been to IMS before? YES / NO. Year of Birth _____ Do you smoke? _____ Do you snore? _____

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

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

Retreat Experience: _____

Please send me scholarship information and form _____. I have added _____ to the deposit as a donation to IMS.

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 engagement with the tradition in a spirit of genuine inquiry and investigation.

The study center offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats and independent study programs. Emerging from the teaching tradition of IMS, the study center program is rooted in the classical Buddhist tradition of the earliest teachings and practices, but its vision calls for dialogue between different schools of Buddhism and discussions with other religious and scientific traditions. The emphasis is on the interrelationship between study and practice, and on exploring the relevance of classical teachings to contemporary life.

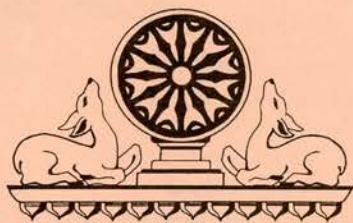


The study center is located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, just a half mile from the Insight Meditation Society (IMS). BCBS provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teaching. After extensive renovations in a 225-year old 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, and three cottages provide secluded space for independent study.

The library at the study center is a major resource to be used by both students and visitors. Our collection consists of the complete Tipitaka in Pali (and, of course in good English translations) several thousand volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and a variety of journals and newsletters. We continue to expand our collection, and have something to offer both the serious scholar and the casual visitor. Some reference works must remain on site, but most books may be checked out for up to a month at a time.



The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies offers a variety of programs from a wide range of visiting faculty, covering a diversity of topics of interest to students of the Buddhist tradition and of meditation practice. Most programs are one-day or weekend offerings, though some are for one week or two weeks. We can host about 20 people for the longer residential courses, 45 people for weekends, and up to about 90 people for popular one-day programs. Although not a degree-granting institution, many people can get academic and professional credits from their home institutions for programs attended in Barre. Course offerings for the rest of 1999 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 29.



The **Nalanda Program** offers a model for the serious and intensive academic study of Buddhism, such as one might undertake at a college or graduate school. Six to eight hours of daily classroom time is balanced by morning and evening meditation sessions, as well as plenty of informal time for discussion, reading or walking in the countryside. The intention of the Nalanda Program is to meaningfully engage and explore the sophisticated Buddhist tradition in ways that help us understand the context of the Buddha's teaching and its deeper meaning for our own lives and world.

The **Bhavana Program** offers a new model for combining the benefits of meditation with insight into the teachings of the Buddhist tradition. Most of the day is spent in silent meditation, much like a classical vipassana retreat at IMS, but each day also includes a three hour study period of issues complementary to the practice of meditation. The intention of the Bhavana Program is to skillfully direct our attention to the issues thought crucial to the cultivation of wisdom, and to allow the meditative time and space needed for these perspectives to sink in and become meaningful.



The **Independent Study Program** is for anyone who is looking for quiet place to independently investigate the Buddhist tradition through the integration of study and practice. We hope the program will attract scholars--inviting them to experience the benefits of a contemplative environment for their work. We also hope to invite meditators to explore the benefits of the academic inquiry into the Buddhist tradition. Two small cottages have been built on the premises for this purpose, and other single rooms are also available. The program operates on a dana basis, with no fixed fees for independent study.

Dhamma Dana Publications is a publishing program coordinated by the study center that prints high-quality dharma books for free distribution. So far we have published five books that remain in print, and a number of other manuscripts are being prepared. This program also operates entirely by dana. Requests for books are always welcome, as are any donations that will help support the continuing publication of dharma materials.



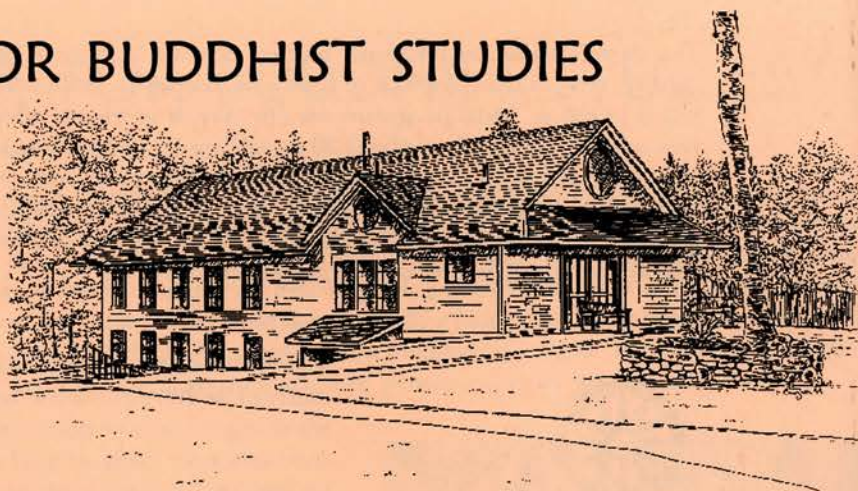
Dhamma Dana



The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies has recently opened an urban campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Located about mid-way between CIMC and the Harvard Divinity School at 1531 Cambridge Street, the BCBS **Cambridge Campus** consists of a medium-sized meeting room, classroom and meditation hall on one floor, with offices, entry area and informal meeting space on another floor. The Cambridge program will focus on small, advanced study groups integrating the meditation, university and professional communities.

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

- May 14-16 (Weekend) SONG OF ENLIGHTENMENT**
Rev. Issho Fujita **99IF \$120**
Yung-Chia Ta-Shih (665-713) was one of the most famous disciples of Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an (Zen). Yung-Chia's poem, *The Song of Enlightenment*, has been a source of inspiration for countless generations of Zen practitioners and is highly revered for its clarity and insight. This weekend will be devoted to exploring the insights of Zen through the study of this classical text and the practice of zazen.
- May 21-23 (Weekend) THE HEALING POWER OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM**
Paula Green **99PG \$120**
Socially engaged Buddhism is a heartfelt expression of our compassion (*karunā*), friendship (*kalyāna mittā*), and interdependence (*paṭicca samuppāda*). Compassionate action rooted in wisdom and awareness creates transformation, simultaneously bringing peace and healing to ourselves and to the world. This workshop will explore the traditional teachings of the Buddha as they guide and inform us, lighting the path of social responsibility and moving each of us in our way toward positive and life-giving engagement with society.
- May 29 (Saturday) THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF HUI-NENG**
George Bowman **99GB \$45**
In this workshop we will study and practice the teachings of Hui-neng (638-713), the most famous Zen master of the Chinese Tang dynasty. We will focus on his teachings of the relationship between samadhi (absorption) and prajna (wisdom) in a down-to-earth manner. Hui-neng's enlightenment poem: "There is no Bodhi tree/ Nor stand of a mirror bright/ Since all is void/ Where can the dust alight?" will be our frame of reference.
- May 30-Jun 4 (5 Days) NĀLANDA PROGRAM: VĀJRAYĀNA STUDIES**
John Makransky and Visiting Faculty **99VAJINT \$300**
This course will concentrate on the Tantric Buddhism of India and Tibet. It starts with an exploration of the development of Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism as a movement of late Indian Mahayana that profoundly influenced Tibet, whose genius lies in its appropriation of a remarkable diversity of Indian religious methods toward rapid identification with Buddhahood in all its dimensions. We will then study ancient and contemporary Tibetan writings in translation: a systematic treatise of Buddhist practice and experience from a Tantric perspective, sacred biographies of Indian and Tibetan Tantric masters, spontaneous Tantric songs, and short manuals of visionary practice and experience. The course will explore fundamentals in a general enough way that formal tantric initiation is not required.
- June 5-12 (7 Days) BHAVANA PROGRAM: LOTUS SUTRA STUDY WEEK**
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 (2 Weeks)** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: THERAVĀDA STUDIES**
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 (2 Weeks)** **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHĀYĀNA STUDIES**
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 *Prajnaparamita* texts; the two major schools of Madhyamika philosophy; and the teachings of the Yogachara 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 (Saturday)** **LESSONS FROM THE DYING**
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 explores the wisdom which comes from facing our death. Through texts from the Buddhist tradition, stories, and examples of people who died a mindful death, we will investigate how to make their wisdom our own. The day will consist of meditation, reflections, and exercises.
- August 14 (Saturday)** **HSIN SHIN MING: FAITH MIND VERSE**
Mu Soeng **99MS2 \$45**
 The poem *Hsin Shin Ming* (Faith Mind Verse) attributed to Seng t'san (d. 606), the third patriarch of Ch'an in China, is one of the great classics of the Ch'an approach to Buddhism — rather than getting confused by the metaphysical issues of Being and Non-Being, one should attend to how to be in the world. While firmly rooted in the Buddhist ideas of its time, it is nonetheless greatly shaped by Taoist influences as well. In this workshop, we will explore the creative synthesis of Taoist naturalism and Indian Mahayana ideas through meditation and discussions.
- August 21 (Saturday)** **SECRETS ON CULTIVATING THE MIND**
Mu Soeng **99MS3 \$45**
 Zen Master Chinul (1158-1210) was the founder of a native Zen tradition in Korea, and also one of the most important thinkers ever in East Asian Buddhism. *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* is a seminal text in which Chinul harmonizes the two aspects of practice — samadhi and prajna, meditation and wisdom — as a mutually supportive unity. We will use this text as a frame of reference to reflect on our practice through talks, discussions, and meditation.
- September 4 (Saturday)** **BUDDHA'S CONTEMPLATIONS ON DEATH AND THE NON-BEAUTIFUL**
Mathieu Boisvert **99MB \$45**
 The *Satipatthana Sutta* is the major text in the Pali Canon outlining various classical meditation techniques. Among these we find the awareness of death meditation (*maranasati*) and the contemplation of the non-beautiful (*asubha-bhavana*). These contemplative practices are designed to bring the realities of life to the hearer so that one is able to live life fully and wholeheartedly without illusions. This workshop will use the *Satipatthana Sutta* and the commentaries from the *Visudhimagga* to clarify the textual prescriptions assigned to these practices. We will also discuss how they are applied to contemporary monastic and lay environments.

- Sep. 11-18**
(7 Days) **BHAVANA PROGRAM: DOGEN'S ZEN**
Mu Soeng and Rev. Issho Fujita **99BHAV3 \$350**
Dogen Zenji was the founder of the Soto school of Zen meditation and perhaps the greatest thinker Japanese Buddhism has produced. This zazen-based week will work with passages from Dogen's literary masterpiece, the *Shobogenzo*, in such a way that the practice of zazen is deepened by an understanding of the text, and the understanding of the text is informed by the practice of zazen. The intention of the course is to create a balance of scholarship and personal practice, where each deepens and nurtures the other.
- Sept 19-24**
(5 Days) **ABHIDHAMMA: CLASSICAL BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY**
Andrew Olendzki **99ABHI \$300**
Abhidhamma is the systematized psychological teaching of the Theravada scholastic tradition. Profound and far-reaching, the Abhidhamma literature is also renowned for its complexity and difficulty. Not for the faint hearted, this workshop is intended for students with considerable exposure to Buddhist thought and/or experienced vipassana meditators. We will work our way through the classical Abhidhamma textbook by Anuruddha, the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Emphasis will be upon the text's contemporary relevance to practice.
- Sept 26**
(Sunday) **STILLNESS AND INSIGHT**
Christina Feldman **99CF \$45**
Stillness is a recurring theme in the traditions of both concentration and insight meditation. In this day-long workshop we will explore the quality of stillness that is born of concentration and the deep inner stillness of insight. The focus will be on the differences and parallels between these two important strands of meditation, as well as the effects of deepening stillness upon our practice and in our lives.
- Oct 1-6**
(5 Days) **BRAHMA VIHĀRA INTENSIVE--A CONTEMPLATIVE AND MEDITATIVE INQUIRY**
Daeja Napier **99DN2 \$300**
The Buddha taught that cultivation of four wholesome (engendering wholeness) states of mind—Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity—are the great peacemakers and healers of the suffering inherent in our human condition. During this intensive program, we will use classical contemplative practices to explore and cultivate these four qualities of heart and mind.
Note: Although preference will be given to those registering for the full course, one may register as a day student for each of the themes taught separately from Saturday to Tuesday (Loving Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, Equanimity, respectively), and take part in a modified schedule. Details of full course or single-day participation available on request.
- October 9**
(Saturday) **INVESTIGATING FEAR**
Narayan and Michael Liebenson Grady **99LG \$45**
The energy of fear can overwhelm us—or it can provide an opportunity for awakening. We will explore various Buddhist practices which develop balance and insight while working with fear. The day will consist of presentations, discussions, and meditation practices to work with this aspect of our existence.
- October 10**
(Sunday) **BUDDHA'S PRACTICE OF BREATH AWARENESS AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**
Doug Phillips **99DP \$45**
This workshop will focus on the relationship between the Buddhist practice of breath awareness and the Christian desert tradition. Working with the experience of God as Being, we will explore how, through breath awareness, we can begin to see through our superficial "self" and be born fully into our true Self, which is the Holy One of the Christian contemplative tradition. The day will consist of formal presentations, practice and discussion, and will end with a brief Eucharist for those who wish.
- October 16**
(Saturday) **SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT**
Jack Engler **99JE \$45**
What is our aspiration in practice? If awakening is to take place, certain qualities of mind are particularly important. Of the fifty-two mental factors identified by Theravada Buddhist psychology, seven are considered essential to the awakening process. They are important enough that the tradition calls them "the factors of enlightenment" or the *bojjhngas*. These factors of enlightenment must be cultivated and they must also be in balance. We will devote the day to inquiring into these qualities of mind and incorporating them into our practice for awakening.

Dec 12-17
(5 Days)

ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY

Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty

99PSY2 \$300

The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what causes contribute to happiness and unhappiness, and how techniques of mental development can purify and transform the mind. This workshop will consist of a close reading of specifically selected Pali texts (in translation) which help illuminate the early Buddhist understanding of the mind, the senses, consciousness and the world of human experience. One of the aims of the workshop is to build a bridge between classical and contemporary perspectives on psychology. Includes visiting faculty from the Institute of Meditation & Psychotherapy.

Jan. 9-21 2000 NĀLANDA PROGRAM: BUDDHIST STUDIES

(2 Weeks) Andrew Olendzki, Mu Soeng, and Visiting Faculty

2000NAL \$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.



TEACHERS AT THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

CORE FACULTY

Andrew Olendzki received a Ph.D. 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 eleven 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*.

VISITING FACULTY

Mathieu Boisvert has been practicing vipassana meditation for the last twenty years. He is a scholar of Pali language and Theravada Buddhism. He teaches Buddhist studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada.

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

Jack Engler teaches at Harvard Medical School and has a private psychotherapy practice in Cambridge. He is a board member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and is the co-author, among other books, of *Transformations of Consciousness* with Ken Wilber and Daniel Brown.

Rev. Issho Fujita is the resident Zen priest at the Valley Zendo in Charlemont, 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, Mass.

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*.

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

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

John Makransky teaches Buddhist Studies and Comparative Theology in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He is the author of recently published *Buddhahood 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 the mother of five children.

Doug Phillips is a psychologist in private practice in Newton, Mass. He is also an Episcopalian priest and teaches at Andover Newton Theological School. He has studied in both Zen and vipassana traditions and leads retreats in the New England area.

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*.

Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg is the rabbi of the Jewish Community of Amherst, in Amherst, MA. A graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, she is active in the Jewish-Buddhist interfaith dialogues, and has taught mindfulness practice at meditation retreats for rabbis.

REGISTERING FOR COURSES
at the
BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

- Please include with your registration a deposit as follows:
 - full cost of the course for one-day courses and half the cost for longer courses.
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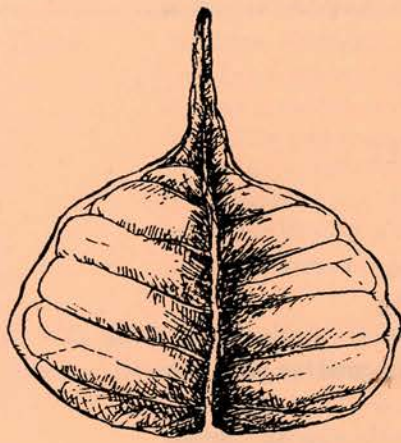
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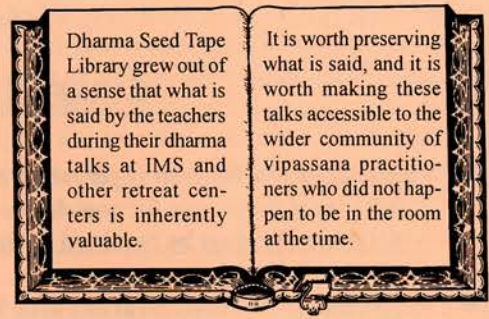
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PRACTICING FOR AWAKENING

PART II

by
Jack Engler

The following remarks continue the excerpt of a day-long workshop given by Jack Engler at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies on November 1, 1997. Jack is on the study center board of directors, teaches at Harvard Medical School and practices psychotherapy in Cambridge.

ASPIRATION AND AMBIVALENCE

I was fortunate in having a teacher who talked about awakening as though it were the most natural thing in the world. Munindra-ji assumed practice would lead to enlightenment. He had no illusions about what it would take: "Simplest thing in the world—most difficult thing in the world!" he would say. Still, it was part of his everyday thinking and teaching. How could you talk about Buddha-dharma and not talk about those moments in which you experienced the path and finally discovered who you were? He never told me not to "strive;" he assumed practice would unfold in this direction and encouraged me to devoted myself to it.

It is harder for us to make the same assumption. We live in a culture with a very different view of human nature and human purpose. Our personal goals are often at odds with the goal of awakening. The western psyche seems to be structured differently, too. Our emphasis on autonomy and individuation at the expense of mutuality and interdependence, our drive toward individual achievement and our nuclear social institutions, leave us more prone to insecurity, loneliness and self-doubt,

with more of a need to defend ego than still its agitation and grasping. The Dalai Lama, for example, has talked about his astonishment at the degree of self-criticism and self-hatred he found among western students.

Our personal goals are often at odds with the goal of awakening.

These may be some of the reasons why we seem to have gotten away from the aspiration to enlightenment over the years. We don't talk about it as much, even in teaching. We don't make it the core intention in our practice, though I suspect it remains a secret aspiration in our heart. But why so secret? Why is it not acknowledged and talked about? How can we realize what we don't consciously intend? How can we support each others' efforts if we aren't clear what our effort is about?

I've wondered about this. Is it that the aspiration is so daunting? Does it seem so impossible of fulfillment? Are we afraid of tempting fate or the gods to say this is what I want, this is what is most important to me? Perhaps in

our culture, which has no conception of awakening and offers little support for it, the aspiration feels too much of a personal goal, and therefore too compromised by a sense of personal aggrandizement, or by the shame or guilt we can feel in acknowledging what we most deeply want. We are being too bold. We will be brought down, like Icarus who tried to fly too close to the sun. Perhaps we are afraid of provoking the envy and resentment of others, or their scorn and criticism: "Who are you to think you can.....?! That's just another form of attachment and striving!" Yes, of course, it can be.

But we can use these notions defensively to protect ourselves. They're ready-to-hand rationalizations in spiritual guise. What's there to protect ourselves from when it comes to our freedom? Lots. Anxiety and self-doubt; fear of not succeeding, of not getting what we want; of failing to live up to our ambitions and ideals. Fear of looking deeply into ourselves. Afraid we might not have "the right stuff." It is always hard to own our own aspirations. The more noble and ambitious they are, the more dangerous they can feel, eliciting secret shame or guilt in ourselves or the fear of envy or ridicule from others.

Aspiring to awakening can awaken the deepest fear of all: discovering we do not exist in the way we think we do. The fact that we need to grasp at all and go on grasping is continual evidence that in the depths of our being we know that the self does not inherently exist. The fact that we talk incessantly to ourselves about ourselves in a never-ending internal monologue betrays our anxiety about the emptiness we might fall into if we stopped. "Without any true knowledge of the nature of our mind....the thought that we might ever become ego-less terrifies us," says Sogyal Rinpoche. This "secret, unnerving knowledge" is unwelcome and unwanted. It makes us chronically restless and insecure. So we talk ourselves out of it; "I can't do it;" "I don't deserve it;" "I'm tempting fate;" "Others won't understand;" "I'll end up alone."

Any process with the potential for real change evokes this kind of ambivalence. "Every patient," says Robert Langs, "enters therapy with a mind divided." But the mind is ratcheted up enormously in spiritual practice because ego projects awakening as something outside ourselves, and therefore perceives it (rightly!) as the ultimate threat to itself. As a source of suffering, "ignorance" (*avijjā*) in Buddhist teaching doesn't simply mean not knowing the facts: not knowing the truth of *anattā*, for instance. Ignorance means "ignoring": a dynamically charged ignorance; a not-wanting-to-



Jack Engler and his teacher Munindra-ji

know, a resistance to knowing, an allowing ourselves to know only so much. "The resourcefulness of ego is almost infinite," says Sogyal Rinpoche, "and at every stage it can sabotage and pervert our desire to be free of it. The truth is simple and the teachings are extremely clear, but... as soon as they begin to touch and move us, the ego tries to complicate them because it is fundamentally threatened."

By minimizing the importance of awakening, we make our own self-doubts and insecurities easier to live with.

Anticipate the mind's ambivalence and resistance to awakening, and then we will not be dismayed or deterred. Left to itself, the mind will always hedge its bets. "Your mind has a mind of its own," my first *vipassanā* [insight meditation] teacher, Sujata, once wrote—"Where do you fit in?" That part of us would prefer not-to-know and will settle for relief instead—any relief if we feel badly enough—anything that will ease the pain and discomfort without requiring deeper inquiry into its source. Rather off-hand one day, Sujata said, "Let's face it—we're all pigeons for a little bit of *sukha* (pleasurable feeling)." I resented his crudeness at the time, but in part because he pointed to something I did not want to recognize.

Have you ever noticed how much more problematic happiness or joy are than unhappiness and misery? Happiness actually frightens us, doesn't it? "It won't last," we tell ourselves. "I'll crash, and then I'll feel worse than before. At least when I'm miserable, I have nothing to lose. It sucks, but it's familiar, and I don't have to live with the anxiety of keeping this high wire act going. I don't deserve to be happy anyway. I'll pay for it one way or the other—God or fate or my karma will see to that. If they don't, my superego will."

A poet-professor of mine wrote many years ago in a meditation on the sacred in art, "It's not the skeleton in our closet that we fear. It's the god." It is not ghosts which evoke our deepest anxieties. It is glimpses of freedom. Like the prisoner in Plato's allegory of the cave, the shackles are off but the light outside is too bright; better the comfort and familiarity of the shadows on the wall of the cave. Sometimes even though the cell door is flung open, the prisoner chooses not to escape.

Instead of practicing for awakening as a real possibility, we hold enlightenment up as a remarkable and rare attainment, the highest ideal of the spiritual life. But enlightenment doesn't work as an ideal. As an ideal for a few, it distances us and discourages us. At the same time, of course, this puts it comfortably out of reach where we can venerate it without feeling we have to do anything about it. And then we have to defend ourselves against our disappointment that it will never be ours. So we take the opposite position that it doesn't really matter anyway—all that matters is being awake in the moment.

This may be true, but here it is used as a rationalization. By minimizing its importance, we make our own self-doubts and insecurities easier to live with. Idealizing awakening and minimizing its importance are both defensive, and repeat what has already happened in the history of Buddhism. Awakening was a common occurrence in the beginning if we believe the *suttas*; over the centuries it came to be viewed as a rarer and rarer event as it took on more of a mystical aura, and most Buddhists eventually abandoned the aspiration for awakening in this lifetime. Is this coincidence?

Buddhaghosa [the 5th century commentator] called practice a *visuddhimagga* or "path of purification." Wholehearted aspiration is often mixed up with pressures to unwittingly turn practice into another means of shoring up ego. From this initial alloy, the impurities are refined out in the fire of practice. But this requires intention, desire, the will-to-do—the mental factor Buddhist Abhidhamma calls

"chanda." Without this will or desire or intention to awaken, awakening will not happen. "I wanted to know the meaning of my life," a student once said to Kapleau Roshi. "How did you ask your question?" Roshi replied. "Only when you are driven to cry from your guts, 'I must, I will, find out!' will your question be answered." Aspiration can be confused with longing; longing is only a wish for what we believe we will never have. Aspiration is setting our face to the wind with conviction, purpose and intention. What we don't intend we will never accomplish.

Insight alone is not transformative. Not in therapy. Not in meditation.

INSIGHT AND MOURNING

As long as we cling, we don't awaken. So how do we let go of clinging? How do we let go of anything that we cherish and believe is essential to our happiness? That's the crucial issue in practice, as it is in therapy and as it is in life.

We call our practice "insight" meditation, because in it we see the truth of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* [impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness]. But insight alone is not transformative. Not in therapy. Not in meditation. Not in any process of transformation. How many times have you understood quite clearly what you should do, see very clearly into some old pattern of behavior and why it doesn't work, and yet find yourself still repeating it? Coming to see that someone or something needs to be surrendered and surrendering it are two different processes. It is the hard, working-through of insight that makes the difference.

At its core, this always involves coming to terms with some loss. Because genuine insight always challenges us to give up something we're clinging to: a long-held belief, a mistaken image of self, a misplaced hope,

a habit or familiar way of doing things, the assumption that someone we love will always be there. True insight means seeing things as they really are (*yathā-bhūta*), not as we want them to be. Coming to this acceptance is the work of mourning.

Mourning—letting go of the way we want things to be—is much harder than coming to understand that we must let go. We seldom, if ever, just accept anything, especially anything that threatens our safety and security, what we feel we need to survive. Most of the time, when reality doesn't accord with our wish or the way we think things should be, we only come to accept it gradually, haltingly, sometimes with despair, always with resistance. Without grieving what we are being forced to give up, we don't let go. Grief-work is precisely about coming-to-acceptance of a new state of affairs in which something we have cherished is absent. Through the work of mourning, insight becomes truth; maladaptive clinging and desperate holding on are surrendered and we start to live again.

This is never more true than in dharma practice, since what we confront and have to surrender is our clinging-to-self (*attavād-upādāna*)—a belief about who we are and how we are—that we have cherished for so long and believed essential to our happiness. Experiencing the reality of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* in each and every moment is the ultimate threat to our ego and security. Coming to an acceptance of these truths, which run counter to everything we want to believe and evoke the archaic fear of not existing, is the work that leads to awakening. Not *samādhi* [concentration], not insight, but acceptance.

The two people I know who experienced awakening very shortly after beginning formal practice, one in six days and one in six weeks, were both women who had suffered great losses in their lives not long before, and who were themselves close to death. One had lost her husband and two of her three children and had been given only weeks to live by her doctors. The other had made three suicide attempts. It was not because their *samādhi* was good

(though it was). Both had already experienced profound *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. Both were already grieving deeply. Neither was holding on to much any more. Mourning had prepared them, much as the shock of his father's death and subsequent poverty prepared the Sixth Zen Patriarch's mind to awaken without formal practice on hearing the Diamond Sutra.

Awakening happens when self-grasping stops. Any experience of *anicca*, *dukkha* or *anattā* that is direct enough and deep enough will stop it. From one point of view, the higher "stages of insight" in *vipassanā* are just a way to introduce us to a direct and deep enough experience of *anicca*, *dukkha* or *anattā* that our mind will stop grasping. But Buddhist literature is full of stories—like that of the Sixth Zen Patriarch—that tell of awakening without formal meditation practice in someone whose mind has reached a point of readiness, someone who is no longer holding on to much.

Some of us have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, before we let go, and so there tends to be more struggle in the process. For others, it's not a lot of struggle. Their conditioning and preparation is different. Mourning is a dramatic word, but the basic process is the same. There's no way around that. Whatever the path and however the practitioner comes to it, the path turns on the working through of loss, acceptance and surrender—at every moment, but especially in the process of awakening.

Insight brings you to the door; only your capacity to leave something long-cherished behind enables you to walk through.

So insight and mourning go hand in hand. We can't give up what we don't understand. We have to come to know something for what it is before we can let go of it. We try to short-circuit this process all the time: "All right, take me, I give up, I surrender." But pre-

mature surrender never works, because it isn't based on fully facing whatever needs to be faced and working it through. Letting-go is not something we can just decide to do and do it, not when it comes to our most deeply held and our most cherished beliefs and attachments.

This is a somewhat different way of thinking about practice and what leads to awakening, but how could it be otherwise? If we're going to let go of the ways of being and acting that constrict us, our ways of holding on to ourselves, then that's going to confront us with loss. And the only way we can deal with loss and finally let go is through some process of mourning.

THE "PROGRESS OF INSIGHT"

For centuries, the Theravada tradition has described seventeen "stages of insight." Each one is technically termed a *nāna* or "knowledge." At each stage, one comes to progressively deeper "knowledge" through direct experience of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. This happens through a sequence of experiences which unfold in a natural progression, once you understand what they are about.

The sequence begins at the point at which the five "hindrances" (*nīvaraṇa*) are no longer active, leaving moment-to-moment concentration deep, unbroken, and non-distractable. This is called "access concentration" (*upacāra-samādhi*) because this level of concentration accesses the stages of insight which lead to awakening. They are essentially about a process of insight and mourning. Cognitively, what the meditator actually does is retrace, step by step in his or her own experience, the process whereby consciousness literally constructs the world and self moment by moment—it actually brings them into being.

It is remarkable that we can observe this. Normally we are only aware of the end-products of this process after they are fully formed—thoughts, concepts, perceptions, feelings, and sensations that make up our ordinary experience. At this stage in practice, how-

ever, consciousness can observe its own moment-to-moment working in bringing these elements of our ordinary experience into being. You come to see directly the fabricated, momentary and interdependent nature of the self and 'reality' by actually experiencing the steps in their construction. "Meditation," says Mircea Eliade in his great book on yoga, "reverses the way the world appears."

Buddhaghosa describes what happens at the start of this process as "dispelling the illusion of compactness." From the very first *nāna* our reality is turned inside out—like passing through the looking glass—from our normal world of apparent substance and solidity to a rushing stream of momentary, discrete and discontinuous events. You discover first-hand, in your body-mind, the discreteness and

*When we see our own
existence slip through
our fingers like water
through a sieve, we
don't say "Whoopee!
This is wonderful!"*

temporality that is the fundamental order of things, whether subatomic particles, DNA, or consciousness. In this rushing stream, "I" am no longer an independent observer observing. Consciousness no longer appears continuous or localized as it normally does—the sensation of "me" being "here" observing events "there" drops away. There are thoughts, or movements in the mind that will emerge as thoughts, but no "I" thinking them—thoughts without a thinker; feelings and sensations, but no "I" feeling or sensing them. Instead consciousness is experienced as a radically temporal process, coming to be and passing away, rather than a unitary and ongoing state of awareness. All that is discernible are discrete moments of consciousness, themselves part of the stream of events, not outside them as a separate observer. There is no ontological core to consciousness or self to be found anywhere that is independent and enduring.

Nor are there stable "objects" of observation, just the stimuli out of which "objects" (thoughts, sensations, feelings, perceptions) are being ongoingly constructed—a view now confirmed by neuroscience and contemporary cognitive research. In this rushing stream, discrete acts of consciousness and their objects arise and pass away co-dependently moment by moment, like virtual particles bubbling up out of a quantum vacuum and immediately disappearing again. The process happens so quickly that it eludes normal perception and creates the appearance of continuity and stability we know as "the world"—much as running a film at high enough speed creates the illusion of continuity on the screen because you don't see the separate frames. When attention and concentration are this refined, and, more importantly, when the mind is willing to let go of its clinging to the need for the world as we know it (this is not just about developing good *samādhi*—good *samādhi* depends on relaxing grasping) you see the individual frames. Each act of consciousness (*nāma*) and its "object," (*rūpa*) as a discrete and completely separate event, arises and disappears together, interdependently, one event after the other, nano-second by nano-second, with no "I" or "thing" enduring across the gap between the disappearing of one event and the arising of the next. This is truly a looking glass world where, as the Mad Hatter tells Alice, things are not what they seem!

Each of the following "stages" is just another step backward in seeing and experiencing how consciousness constructs reality like this, moment after moment, from the first moment of "contact" (*phassa*) between the sense organ and the stimulus, until we bring a full-blown thought, sight, sound, smell, taste, physical sensation, or representation of self into being one nano-second after another. At this most fundamental level, the radical impermanence and selflessness of experience is unavoidable and inescapable. You also experience in each moment how even the slightest reactivity in the mind, the slightest attraction or aversion, causes profound suffering in a world of such complete impermanence and insubstantiality. From being a "truth,"

dukkha becomes a “noble” truth here, not just understood but lived in the marrow of your bones. The “inverted views” are righted: *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* are simply “the way things are” in this and every conceivable moment.

WORKING THROUGH: ACCEPTANCE AND SURRENDER

But seeing this and accepting it are two very different things. Each step in this process profoundly shocks our normal mind and temporarily destabilizes attention and concentration. It also confronts us with yet another loss which is difficult to accept. As we continue practice, each mind-moment becomes like a trial in a tachistoscopic experiment in which we are asked to identify some particular feature when a high-speed image is flashed on a screen—in this case an ontological core. And we can’t; over and over again we can’t. We can’t find that core that persists. This is too different from the way we normally experience ourselves and our world.

The real challenge of the *nāṇas*, however, is acknowledging and surrendering to what you now know and see. Practice isn’t just a matter of dispassionate and disinterested observation of mind-moments. This is ME that’s at stake! When the world gets turned on its head like this, it’s an experience of immense loss (even though what it feels we have lost never existed in the first place). When we see the breakup of what we thought was solid and real and enduring and desirable, when we see our own existence slip through our fingers like water through a sieve, we don’t say “Whoopee! Terrific! This is wonderful. I’m finally grasping what the Buddha taught!” That’s not what the experience is about, nor is that the reaction it produces. On the contrary, after some initial exhilaration, it becomes profoundly unnerving as the implications set in. Mindfulness is momentarily shaken each time until it can accept the “knowledge” of each successive *nāṇa*. The next *nāṇa* comes into view only when the experience of the previous *nāṇa* is fully worked through and accepted. This involves the emotions and the will even more than the

understanding. As in other transformational processes, insight necessitates the work of mourning. Insight brings you to the door; only your willingness and capacity to leave something long-cherished behind enables you to walk through.

We can’t cheat on this. We have to come to know anything for what it is before we can let go of it—hence the description of each stage as a *nāṇa* or “knowledge.” Trying to surrender without really facing what needs to be



faced, or trying to avoid dealing with pain, confusion, fear and sense of loss never works. But not being able to cheat is also what makes it so inspiring and so profoundly real. It has to be real or it’s nothing. There are lots of ways of trying to short-circuit the process: “All right. Take me, I give up, I surrender.” But this is a premature surrender because it’s not based on really facing what needs to be faced and not dealing with the pain, confusion, fear and sense of loss. It never works. But not being able to cheat is also what makes it so inspiring and so profoundly real. It has to be real or it’s nothing.

The work of mourning—the process by which we let go—tends to proceed in phases, in tandem with deepening insight. If you look at the *nāṇas* this way, you can see that each one involves one of the phases and tasks of mourning work. This helps explain why the “stages of insight” unfold as they do, and why they follow the order they do. As in normal mourning, not every stage is experienced in quite the same way by every practitioner, but the basic structure seems to be the same.

In “dispelling the illusion of compactness,” there is typically an initial feeling of joy and freedom, a burden being lifted. But usually this gives way quickly to instinctive recoil, disbelief, resistance, even denial. In this case, it is not around what you have actually lost, but what you have been unable to find or discovered never existed in the first place—an ontological core to the self. As this reality inescapably sets in, recoil is succeeded by restlessness, the physical pain that comes with contraction and resistance, and feelings of losing control. Without the cherished self to hold on to any more, emotional reactions become unanchored and tend to temporarily oscillate between core feelings of bliss and dread.

Freud described the impulse in the early stages of mourning to hallucinate the presence of the person who has died, as though they had only been “lost” and could be “found”—an adult version of hide-and-seek which we practiced as children to master fears of abandonment and separation. Something equivalent happens at this stage: full-blown imagery and fantasies occur in an attempt to recreate a solid world with a stable core. All of this parallels the phase of acute grief in normal mourning.

But attempts at restoration gradually give way to a sense of misery and suffering as the reality of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* can no longer be denied. Instinctive disappointment and anger follow—ego’s response to its own pending demise—then sorrow and sadness, and finally some degree of apathy and disengagement from an inner and outer world that doesn’t even of-

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Dependent Origination

by
Christina Feldman

This article has been excerpted from a program offered by Christina at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies on October 18, 1998. Please note that this represents only a small portion of the material offered in the full program.

In the Buddha's teachings, the second noble truth is not a theory about what happens to somebody else, but is a process which is going on over and over again in our own lives—through all our days, and countless times every single day. This process in Pali is called *paṭicca-samuppāda*, sometimes translated as "dependent origination" or "co-dependent origination" or "causal interdependence."

The process of dependent origination is sometimes said to be the heart or the essence of all Buddhist teaching. What is described in the process is the way in which suffering can arise in our lives, and the way in which it can end. That second part is actually quite important.

Paṭicca-samuppāda is said to be the heart of right view or right understanding. It is an understanding that is also the beginning of the eight-fold path, or an understanding that gives rise to a life of wisdom and freedom. The Buddha went on to say that when a noble disciple fully sees the arising and cessation of the world, he or she is said to be endowed with perfect view, with perfect vision—to have attained the true dharma, to possess the knowledge and skill, to have entered the stream of the dharma, to be a noble disciple replete with purifying understanding—one who is at the very door of the deathless. So, this is a challenge for us.

What the *paṭicca-samuppāda* actually describes is a vision of life or an understanding in which we see the way everything is interconnected—that there is nothing separate, nothing standing alone. Everything effects ev-

erything else. We are part of this system. We are part of this process of dependent origination—causal relationships effected by everything that happens around us and, in turn, effecting the kind of world that we all live in inwardly and outwardly.

It is also important to understand that freedom is not found separate from this process. It is not a question of transcending this process to find some other dimension; freedom is found in this very process of which we are a part. And part of that process of understanding what it means to be free depends on understanding inter-connectedness, and using this very process, this very grist of our life, for awakening.

Doctrinally, there are two ways in which this process of *paṭicca-samuppāda* is approached. In one view it is held to be something taking place over three lifetimes, and this view goes into the issues of rebirth and karma. My own approach today is the second view, which I think is really very vital and alive, which looks at *paṭicca-samuppāda* as a way of understanding what happens in our own world, inwardly and outwardly, on a moment-to-moment level. It's about what happens in our heart, what happens in our consciousness, and how the kind of world we experience and live in is actually created every moment.

To me, the significance of this whole description is that if we understand the way our world is created, we also then become a conscious participant in that creation. It describes a process that is occurring over and over again very rap-

idly within our consciousness. By this time in the day, you have probably all gone throughout countless cycles of dependent origination already. Perhaps you had a moment of despair about what you had for breakfast or what happened on the drive out here, a mind-storm about something that happened yesterday, some sort of anticipation about what might happen today—countless moments that you have gone through where you have experienced an inner world arising: I like this; I don't like this; the world is like this; this is how it happened; I feel this; I think that.

Already this early in the day, we could track down countless cycles of this process of *paṭicca-samuppāda*—when we've been elated, when we've been sad, when we've been self-conscious, fearful—we've been spinning the wheel. And, it is important to understand this as a wheel, as a process. It is not something static or fixed, not something that stays the same. You need to visualize this as something alive and moving, and we'll get into how that happens.

The basic principle of dependent origination is simplicity itself. The Buddha described it by saying:

When there is this, that is.

With the arising of this, that arises.

When this is not, neither is that.

With the cessation of this, that ceases.

When all of these cycles of feeling, thought, bodily sensation, all of these cycles of mind and body, action, and movement, are taking place upon a foundation of ignorance—that's called *samsāra*. That sense of wandering in confusion or blindly from one state of experience to another, one state of reaction to another, one state of contraction to another, without knowing what's going on, is called *samsāra*.

It's also helpful, I think, to see that this process of dependent origination happens not only within our individual consciousness, but also on a much bigger scale and on more collective levels—social, political, cultural. Through shared opinions, shared views, shared perceptions or reactions, groups or communities of people can spin the

same wheel over extended periods of time. Examples of collective wheel spinning are racism or sexism, or the hierarchy between humans and nature, political systems that conflict, wars—the whole thing where communities or groups of people share in the same delusions. So understanding dependent origination can be transforming not only at an individual level, but it's an understanding about inter-connectedness that can be truly transforming on a global or universal level. It helps to undo delusion, and it helps to undo the sense of contractedness and the sense of separateness.

In classical presentations, this process of dependent origination is comprised of twelve links. It is important to understand that this is not a linear, progressive, or sequential presentation. It's a process always in motion and not static at all. It's also not deterministic. I also don't think that one link determines the arising of the next link. But rather that the presence of certain factors or certain of these links together provide the conditions in which the other links can manifest, and this is going to become clearer as we use some analogies to describe how this interaction works.

It's a little bit like a snowstorm—the coming together of a certain temperature, a certain amount of precipitation, a certain amount of wind co-creating a snow storm. Or it's like the writing of a book: one needs an idea, one needs pen, one needs paper, one needs the ability to write. It's not necessarily true that first I must have this and then I must have this in a certain sequential order, but rather that the coming together of certain causes and conditions allows this particular phenomena or this particular experience to be born.

It is also helpful to consider some of the effects of understanding *paṭicca-samuppāda*. One of the effects is that it helps us to understand that neither our inner world, nor our outer world is a series of aimless accidents. Things don't just happen. There is a combination of causes and conditions that is necessary for things to happen. This is really important in terms of our inner experience. It is not unusual to have

the experience of ending up somewhere, and not knowing how we got there. And feeling quite powerless because of the confusion present in that situation. Understanding how things come together, how they interact, actually removes that sense of powerlessness or that sense of being a victim of life or helplessness. Because if we understand how things come together, we can also begin to understand the way out, how to find another way of being, and realize that life is not random chaos.

Another effect of understanding causes and conditions means accepting the possibility of change. And with acceptance comes another understanding—that with wisdom, we have the capacity to create beneficial and wholesome conditions for beneficial and wholesome results. And that's the path—an understanding that we have the capacity to make choices in our lives that lead toward happiness, that lead toward freedom and well being, rather than feeling we're just pushed by the power of confusion or by the power of our own misunderstanding. This understanding helps to ease a sense of separateness and isolation, and it reduces delusion.

A convenient place to start in order to gain some familiarity with the process of dependent origination is often with the first link of ignorance. This is not necessarily to say that ignorance is the first cause of everything but it's a convenient starting place:

With ignorance as a causal condition, there are formations of volitional impulses. With the formations as a causal condition, there is the arising of consciousness. With consciousness as a condition, there is the arising of body and mind (*nāma-rūpa*). With body and mind as a condition, there is the arising of the six sense doors. (In Buddhist teaching, the mind is also one of the sense doors as well as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.) With the six sense doors as a condition, there is the arising of contact. With contact as a condition, there is the arising of feeling. With feeling as a condition, there is the arising of craving. With craving as a condition, there's the arising

of clinging. With clinging as a condition, there's the arising of birth. And, with birth as a condition, there's the arising of aging and death. That describes the links.

This process, when reversed, is also described as a process of release or freedom. With the abandonment of ignorance, there is the cessation of karmic formations. With the cessation of karmic formations, there is the falling away of consciousness, and so on.

Ignorance (*avijjā*)

Ignorance is used in Buddhist teachings in a very different way than it is used in our culture. It's not an insult, or an absence of knowledge—it doesn't mean we're dumb. Nonetheless ignorance can be deeply rooted in the consciousness. It may be very invisible to us, and yet it can be exerting its influence in all the ways we think, perceive, and respond. Ignorance is often described as a kind of blindness, of not being conscious in our lives of what is moving us on a moment-to-moment level. Sometimes it is described as perceiving the unsatisfactory to be satisfactory, or as believing the impermanent to be permanent—this is not an unusual experience. Ignorance is sometimes taking that which is not beautiful to be beautiful, as a cause of attachment. Sometimes it is defined as believing in an idea of self to be an enduring and solid entity in our lives when there is no such thing to be found. Or as not seeing things as they actually are, but seeing life, seeing ourselves, seeing other people through a veil of beliefs, opinions, likes, dislikes, projections, clinging, attachments, et cetera, et cetera. Ignorance flavors what kind of speech, thoughts, or actions we actually engage in.

Formations (*sankhāra*)

Ignorance is the causal condition or climate which allows for the arising of certain kinds of *sankhāras*—volitional impulses or karmic formations. In a general sense we're all formations; we're all *sankhāras*. Everything that is born and created out of conditions is a formation. Dependent origination gets a little more specific: it talks about intentional actions as body formations, intentional speech as both body and

mind formations, and thoughts or states of mind as mental formations. As such it is describing the organization or shaping of our thinking process in accordance with accumulated habits, preferences, opinions. *Sankhāras* lend a certain fuel to the spinning of the wheel. Within a given cycle, they interact and form more and more of themselves. There is also a constant interaction of the inner and outer, through which the whole cycle keeps getting perpetuated. Some of the formations arise spontaneously in the moment, and some are ways of seeing or ways of reacting that have been built

Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

Formations condition the arising of consciousness. Consciousness is used in the sense of the awareness of all the sensations that enter through the sense doors. So there is the consciousness of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. At any given time, one or the other of these sense door consciousnesses dominates our experience. Consciousness also describes the basic climate of the mind at any particular moment—the way it is actually shaped or flavored. So any particular moment might be aversive

mind, describes the feelings, the perceptions, the intentions, the contact, and the kind of attention we give to what appears in the field of our awareness. So *nāma* describes the whole movement of mind in all its components in relationship to materiality. This is how it works: there's an arising of *rūpa*, and then *nāma* creates concepts or attitudes about it. The kind of relationship we have with any material form, including our own body, is shaped by what's going on in the mind, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. So the shape of the mind and our body, this *nāma-rūpa*, is always changing, always moving, never staying the same. Consciousness, body, and mind are always interdependent, with consciousness leading the body and the mind to function in a certain way. If a consciousness has arisen flavored by anger or by greed, by depression, by anxiety—or whatever—it provides the conditions for the body and mind to organize itself in a particular way.



A quiet corner of the garden at Gaia House in England, where Christina leads retreats.

All of the events that have taken place so far in these links of ignorance, karma formations, consciousness, and mind/body—these are actually the most important steps in the generation of karma. These volitional impulses—what is happening in the body and the mind—are actually the generation of karma.

Six-Senses (*saḷ-āyatana*)

We go on from body and mind to the six sense doors or the six sense spheres, for it is the psychophysical organism that provides us the capacity to see, hear, smell, taste touch and think. One of the deeper understandings we can have is to acknowledge that the mind is one of the sense-spheres. The thoughts, images and perceptions that arise and pass away in the mind are not so essentially different from the sounds or bodily sensations that come and go in the realm of the senses. We may sometimes have the impression that mind is constant or always “on duty,” but a little bit of a deeper exploration of what happens within the mind actually shatters that perception.

up throughout our whole life. Due to their repetitive use, these *sankhāras* become somewhat locked or invested in our personality structures, and stay close to the surface as more automatic or habitual ways of response. However, it is important to understand that each *sankhāra* is actually new in every moment. They arise through contact, through certain kinds of stimulation. We tend to think of them as habitual or ever-present because of how we grasp them as something solid. But in our encounter with them in the present moment, they are not presented to us as history or as something that is there forever.

or dull or greedy, for example, though without interest or intention some of these flavorings of consciousness may not be noticed. Consciousness is also interactive: not only is it shaped by formations and by ignorance, it is also shaping everything going on around us—regardless of whether we pay attention to it or not.

Name and Form (*nāma-rūpa*)

Consciousness gives rise to *nāma-rūpa*, which is sometimes translated as mind and body, but that's a little too simplistic. *Rūpa*, or body, describes not only our own body but all other bodies and all forms of materiality. *Nāma*, or

Contact (*phassa*)

When the sense doors are functioning, contact arises. Contact is this

meeting between the sense door and the sense information—I ring the bell, hearing arises. You smell something cooking in the kitchen, the smell arises through the nose sense door. The arising always involves the coming together of the sense door, the sense object and consciousness—the three elements together constitute contact. The Buddha once said that with contact the world arises, and with the cessation of contact there is the cessation of the world. This statement acknowledges the extent to which we create our world of experience by selectively highlighting the data of the senses. Each moment of contact involves isolating an impression out of the vast stream of impressions that are present for us in every moment as we sit here. Contact is what happens when something jumps out of that background and becomes the foreground. When we paying attention to it, there's a meeting of the sense object and consciousness and the sense door. That is contact.

Feeling (*vedanā*)

Contact is the foundation or the condition for the arising of feeling. In speaking about feeling here we are not speaking about the more complex emotions such as anger or jealousy or fear or anxiety, but the very fundamental level

of feeling impact that is the basis not only of all emotions but of all mind states and responses. We are speaking about the pleasant feeling that arises in connection with what is coming through any of the sense doors; or the unpleasant feeling, or those feelings that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. This doesn't mean they are "neutral," in the sense of a kind of nothingness. Some feelings are certainly there, but they don't really make a strong enough impression to evoke a pleasant or painful feeling response in us. Actually the impressions and sensations and experiences that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant are some of the more interesting data received by our system.

It is important to acknowledge that the links of contact, of sense doors and feeling that we have been talking about are neither wholesome nor unwholesome in and of themselves; but they become the catalyst of what happens next. The sense doors, the feelings and the contact are the forerunners of how we actually react or respond and how we begin to weave a personal story out of events or impressions that all of us experience at all times. Therefore contact, feeling and sense doors are pretty important places to pay attention.

Craving (*taṇhā*)

Where does craving come from? From our relationship to feeling; feeling is the condition for craving. This craving is sometimes translated as "unquenchable thirst," or a kind of appetite that can never be satisfied. Craving begins to be that movement of desire to seek out and sustain the pleasurable contacts with sense objects and to avoid the unpleasant or to make them end. It's the craving of having and getting, the craving to be or to become someone or something, and the craving to get rid of or to make something end.

Pleasant feelings or impressions are hijacked by the underlying tendency for craving; and unpleasant feelings are hijacked by aversion. And

when a feeling is felt as neither pleasant nor unpleasant, it is also hijacked, in this case by the deluded tendency to dismiss it from our consciousness and say it doesn't matter. Our sense of self finds it very hard to have an identity with any impression or sensation which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

It is at the point where craving arises in response to pleasant or unpleasant feeling that our responses become very complex, and we run into a world of struggle. When we crave for something, we in a way delegate authority to an object or to an experience or to a person, and at the same time we are depriving ourselves of that authority. As a result, our sense of well being, our sense of contentment or freedom, comes to be dependent upon what we get or don't get. You all know that kind of restlessness of appetite—there's never enough; just one more thing is needed; one more experience, one more mind state, one more object, one more emotion, and then I'll be happy.

What we don't always see through when we are in the midst of ignorance is that the way such promise is projected, externalized, or objectified, is actually something which always leaves us with a sense of frustration. We are dealing here with a very basic hunger, and we allow our world to be organized according to this hunger by projecting the power to please or threaten onto other things. But the important thing to remember is that craving is also a kind of moment-to-moment experience; it arises and it passes.

Clinging (*upādāna*)

Craving and clinging (also called grasping), are very close together. Craving has a certain momentum, a certain one-way direction, and when it become intense, it becomes clinging. Now, one way that craving becomes clinging is that very fixed positions are taken; things become good or bad; they become worthy or unworthy; they become valuable or valueless. And the world is organized into friends and enemies, into opponents and allies according to what we are attached to or what we grasp or get hold of. That sense of becoming fixed reinforces and solidifies the values that we project



onto experience or objects. But it also reinforces belief systems and opinions, and the faculty of grasping holds on to images of self. "I am like this." "I need this." "I need to get rid of this," and so on. And, often, many things in this world are evaluated according to their perceived potential to satisfy our desires. What all this does is actually make us very busy. Think about the situations when you really want something, how much activity starts to be generated in terms of thinking and plotting and planning and strategizing: you know, the fastest route to get there from here, the most direct route to make this happen.

Traditionally, clinging is often broken down into four different ways in which we can make ourselves suffer. There is the clinging to sensuality or sense objects. The other side of clinging to sense objects is clinging to views, theories, opinions, beliefs, philosophies—they become part of ourselves. Another form that grasping takes is clinging to certain rules—the belief that if I do this, I get this. Or one says, "this is my path. This is going to take me from here to there." The last of the forms of clinging Buddha talked about was clinging to the notion of "I am"—the craving to be someone, and the craving not to be someone, dependent on clinging to an idea and an ideal of self. This notion of self is perhaps the most delusory force in our lives.

Becoming (*bhava*)

Clinging is followed by becoming or arising—the entire process of fixing or positioning the sense of self in a particular state of experience. Any time we think in self-referential terms, "I am," "I am angry," "I am loving," "I am greedy," "I know," "I'm this kind of person," and so on, an entire complex of behavior is generated to serve craving and clinging. I see something over there that I've projected as "this is going to make me really happy if I get this," and I organize my behavior, my actions, my attention in order to find union with that. This is the process of becoming—becoming someone or something other than what is.

Birth (*jāti*)

Birth, the next link in the chain of dependent origination, is the moment of arrival. We think "I think I got it!" "I found it (the union with this image or role or identity or sensation or object)," "I am now this"—the emergence of an identity, a sense of self that rests upon identifying with a state of experience or mode of conduct, the doer, the thinker, the seer, the knower, the experiencer, the sufferer—this is what birth is. And there is a resulting sense of that birth, of one who enjoys, one who suffers, one who occupies, one who has all the responsibility of that birth.

Aging and Death (*jarā-marana*)

Birth is followed by death in which there is the sense of loss, change, the passing away of that state of experience. "I used to be happy;" "I used to be successful;" "I was content in the last moment," and so on. The passing away of that state of experience, the feeling of being deprived or separated from the identity, "I used to be..." is the moment of death. In that moment of death, we sense a loss of good meditation experience, the good emotional experience. We say it's gone. And associated with that sense is the pain and the grief, the despair of our loss.

These different factors interact to create certain kinds of experiences in our lives. What is important to remember is that none of this is predetermined. Just like the climate for snow, the presence of certain of these links is going to allow other experiences to happen. Not that they must happen, or definitely will happen, but they allow for certain experiences to happen. This may sound like bad news in the beginning, but we get to the good news later.

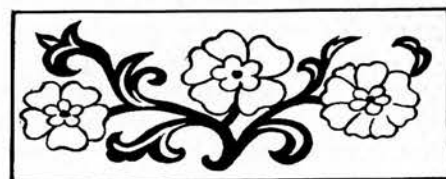
The second noble truth of dependent origination describes a process that happens every single moment of our lives. But clearly there is a distinction between a process and a path, and it is an absolutely critical distinction. One doesn't actually want to continue in life just as a spectator, watching the same process happening over and over and over again—a spectator of our own disasters. Awareness is actually something a bit more than simply seeing a process take place. In choosing to be

aware, we make a leap which is really about an application of a path in our lives, otherwise mere seeing of the process becomes circular and we continue to circle around. The path is what actually takes us out into a different process.

Now, the third noble truth [the cessation of suffering] is not a value judgment in itself; it is simply a portrayal of the way in which it is possible to step off a sense of being bound to this wheel of *samsāra* or to the links of dependent origination. It is significant to remember that it doesn't have to be any one link that we step off or that there is only one place where we can get out of this maze. In fact, we can step out of the maze and into something else at any of the links.

The well-known Thai meditation master Buddhāsa Bhikkhu describes the path out of suffering as "the radiant wheel." It is also called the wheel of understanding or the wheel of awakening, in which the fuel of greed, anger, and delusion which give us the feeling of being bound to the wheel of *samsāra*, is replaced by the fuel of wise reflection, ethics, and faith.

One portrayal of the alternate wheel is that wise reflection, ethics, and faith lead to gladness of heart and mind, the absence of dwelling in contractedness and proliferation. The gladness is in itself a condition for rapture, a falling in love with awareness. The rapture is a condition for calmness and calmness is a condition for happiness. Happiness is a condition for concentration; concentration is a condition for insight; insight is a condition for disenchantment or letting go, and letting go is a condition for equanimity, the capacity to separate the sense of self from states of experience so that an experience can be just an experience rather than be flavored by an "I am"-ness of a self. And equanimity in itself is a condition for liberation and the end of suffering.



fer temporary relief, let alone lasting satisfaction. This corresponds to the phase of withdrawal and psychic disorganization in normal mourning, though here it is observed and undergone with clear mindfulness. This phase is pronounced following the *nāṇa* called "dissolution" (*bhaṅga-nāṇa*) in which consciousness and its objects are experienced as dissolving nano-second by nano-second, "part by part, link by link, piece by piece," in which even the arising of mind-moments isn't apparent; only their vanishing.

It's "like seeing the continuous successive vanishing of a summer mirage moment by moment; or the instantaneous and continuous bursting of bubbles on a pavement in heavy rain; or the successive extinction of candles blown out by the wind" (Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw)—a thousand in the blink of an eye. When nothing remains stable for a fraction of a second, when the radical temporality of all existence becomes overwhelmingly and incontrovertibly clear, the reactions that follow are so pronounced that each comprises a separate stage or *nāṇa*: first fear or "terror" (*bhaya*) as you might expect; then "misery" (*ādinava*) as fear gives way to unbearable absence and loss; finally "disgust" (*nibbidā*) and withdrawal as there seems to be no consolation or satisfaction anywhere. The 16th century Christian contemplative, St. John of the Cross, called this phase "the dark night of the soul" for the same reason: the night is dark because it is overwhelmingly clear that neither God nor the soul nor the self as we

knew them are any longer to be found. There is instinctive recoil and withdrawal: nothing seems sufficiently worth doing or caring about without them.

Though the process is profound, there is nothing mystical about it. It is exactly what we would expect.

This is the stage where practitioners in both traditions are most vulnerable to becoming stuck or giving up. It is the point at which mourning is always most vulnerable to becoming blocked. Not through lack of insight, because there is great clarity and an understanding that this is the way things are; but through becoming mired in despondency and despair because it's so difficult to accept and the way forward isn't yet clear—even that there is a way forward—or that there is anything beyond this at all. If we get stuck in practice, as in life, it is not around insight, but around grief and mourning.

As these reactions are worked through in turn, a willingness to face reality as it is gradually emerges, and along with it, a re-dedication to practice. At first this brings renewed restlessness and agitation that is part of facing a truth resisted. The final series of *nāṇas* comprise the working-through that completes mourning: a re-finding of the will to continue and face precisely what is most feared; and out of that renewed application and

effort, finally a new equanimity (*upekkhā*). This in turn becomes the basis for a final acceptance of what we have discovered. Though the process is profound, there is nothing mystical about it. It is exactly what we would expect.

Just prior to the moment of full acceptance and letting go, there is one final experience of *anicca*, *dukkha* or *anattā*. For most at first path it will be an experience of *dukkha*. It is as though the mind needs to convince itself of the truth one last time—"Yes, this is how it is"—before letting go. Whichever truth it is for you, the tradition calls it your "door of deliverance" (*vimokkha dvāra*) or "door of emergence," because it leads immediately to the moment of full and complete acceptance and final surrender of any wish that things be different. In the next moment, consciousness ceases to be bound to any object, and stops bringing forth any mental constructions altogether. Consciousness "passes to the other shore." My teacher called this "the supreme silence."

When "reality" returns and mental constructions resume, practitioners describe happiness, lightness, joy, a sense of unparalleled freedom and spaciousness, as if a great burden had been lifted. This state of consciousness passes too, however, after a shorter or longer length of time. What the tradition says does not pass are the "fetters" or sources of suffering that bind us to the wheel of life and death which are permanently extinguished in the moment of awakening.



To learn how to be more equanimous with these conditions, we have to be able to see their insubstantiality. Through being mindful we become more aware of the impermanence of both. We see the conditional nature of fame, and that lasting peace and happiness doesn't come through being famous. We see that disrepute is temporary, and need not bring lasting unhappiness. The more balanced we can be in relationship to these, the more we free ourselves from having to be seen by others in any particular way. When

no longer swayed by changing tides of fame or disrepute, we discover a peace that doesn't depend on how others see us.

If we can remember more and more to bring mindfulness to these worldly *dhammas* as they arise in our daily life, we can begin to see the suffering of attachment. We can begin to see the essential emptiness and impermanence of conditions. In meditation practice we may not like what arises, and yet it is the willingness to stay with what is

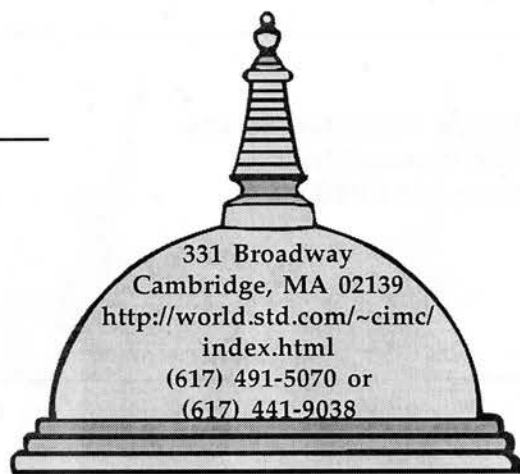
happening that brings liberation. The less attached we are to comfort, the more at ease we are within ourselves and within this world.

Cultivating equanimity doesn't mean that we have to be passive participants in life. If it's hot we can open the windows. But in the many times when we cannot change or control our experiences, can we find an inner refuge? This inner refuge is the capacity to be equanimous.

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.



Cultivating Equanimity

Narayan Liebenson Grady

Excerpted from talks given during an 8-week course at CIMC on Equanimity.

As human beings we are subject to continual changes in life. The Taoists spoke about the ten thousand sorrows and the ten thousand joys. Joy turns to sorrow. Sorrow turns to joy. No one is exempt. Equanimity is the liberating quality that allows us to keep our hearts open and balanced, quiet and steady, in the midst of all these changes.

We develop equanimity through being mindful of our reactions to what the Buddha described as the eight worldly *dhammas* [phenomena]. The worldly *dhammas* are four sets of contrasting conditions that all of us are subject to at one point or another in our lives. The cultivation of equanimity involves looking deeply at our relationship to these eight conditions in life.

The first set of worldly *dhammas* is **praise and blame**. In the moment of being praised, can we be aware of our reactions? We may discover that we push praise away automatically, because of discomfort, or that we take it in too much and find ourselves dependent on receiving more. In the moment of being blamed, can we be aware of our reactions? We may discover that our reactions include trying to justify our actions, blaming ourselves, or blaming the person who blamed us. We may immediately think the person is right. We may immediately think the person is wrong.

Of course we will probably feel badly when blamed. The question is: Can we be mindful of feeling badly rather than allowing ourselves to get lost in it? Can we be aware of the reaction instead of caught in the story about it? If it is useful information, can we learn from it? If it is not useful, can we let it go? Can we see that praise and blame are often out of our control?

The second of the worldly *dhammas* is the arena of **gain and loss**. What is our relationship to gain? Is gain always positive? What is our relationship to loss? Is loss always negative? When we reflect on past experiences is it ever true that what we thought at the time was a gain was actually a loss and that what we thought was a loss turned out to be a gain? In attaching to having gained something, is there as well the fear that it will be lost? In attaching to having succeeded in something, is there as well the fear of failure?

In any culture there are fixed ideas of what it means to be successful and what it means to fail, of what it means to gain and what it means to lose. When we cling to models of success, we set ourselves up for disappointment. To question these models is to find an inner freedom that emerges out of understanding and is not based on models. In non attachment we allow for wisdom to emerge. We see that gain and loss are a natural part of the flux of life.

In meditation practice we may not like what arises...yet the willingness to stay with it brings liberation.

In cultivating equanimity we need to become aware of our relationship to **pleasure and pain**, the third set of worldly *dhammas*. What is the result of running after pleasure and pushing away pain? Can we become more aware of the suffering inherent in the pursuit of pleasure and in the avoidance of pain? Is this suffering inherent in these worldly *dhammas*? Or is it possible to experience pleasure fully without clinging to it and trying to make it last? In the moment of experiencing something painful can we open to the pain without trying to get rid of it?

To experience liberation in relationship to these worldly *dhammas*, we need to understand their changing nature. Understanding that both pleasure and pain arise and pass away, and seeing that both *dhammas* are often out of our control, we learn not to cling to either; and in non clinging there is freedom. We open to pleasure and pain, yet are not overwhelmed by desire or aversion.

The last set of worldly *dhammas* is **fame and disrepute**. Do we need to be seen by others when we do something we think worthy? What is our reaction to being misjudged or? What is our relationship to status? Being aware of our relationship to fame and disrepute allows us to be free from dependency on the opinions of others.

continued on page 42

You Call Yourself a Farmer?

Kasibhāradvāja Sutta

Sutta Nipāta 76-80

At one time the Buddha was living in Magadha, just below the hills, near a brahman village called Ekanāla. At that time the brahman Kasibhāradvāja had yoked together a number of plows, for it was planting time.

The Buddha arose in the morning, and having dressed and taken up his bowl he went up to where the brahman Kasibhāradvāja was working. At that time the farmer was feeding his workers. So the Buddha went up to where that feeding was taking place and stood to one side.

Seeing the Buddha standing there for alms, the brahman Kasibhāradvāja said this to him: "I, recluse, plow and sow; and only after having plown and sown do I eat. You too should plow and sow; and only after having plown and sown should you eat."

"I do indeed plow and sow, brahman," replied the Buddha, "And only after having plown and sown do I eat."

"But, Gotama, we do not see your yoke and plough, nor your ploughshare, oxen or goad. And yet you say you plow and sow, and eat only after having plown and sown!

And then the brahman Kasibhāradvāja addressed the Buddha with this verse:

*kassako patijānāsi,
na ca passāma te kasim,
kasin no pucchito brūhi,
yathā jānemu te kasim.*

So you claim to be a farmer...
But we do not see you ploughing!
Tell me, since you're asked, of ploughing,
So I'll know what you call "ploughing".

*saddhā bījaṃ, tapo vutthi,
paññā me yuganaṅgalam,
hiri isā, mano yottam,
sati me phālapācanam.*

Faith is the seed, practice the rain,
And wisdom is my yoke and plough.
Modesty's the pole, mind the strap,
Mindfulness my ploughshare and goad.

*kāyagutto vacīgutto
āhāre udare yato
saccam karomi niddānam,
soraccam me pamocanam,*

Body and speech are guarded well,
And food and drink have been restrained.
Truthfulness I use for weeding,
And gentleness urges me on.

*viriyam me dhuradhorayham,
yogakkhemādhivāhanam
gacchati anivattantam,
yattha gantvā na socati.*

Effort is my beast of burden,
Pulling me onward to safety.
On it goes without returning,
Where, having gone, one does not grieve.

*evam esā kasī katthā,
sā hoti amatapphalā:
etaṃ kasim kasitvāna
sabbadukkhā pamuccatī ti.*

This is how I plough my ploughing—
The crop it yields is deathlessness!
And when one has ploughed *this* ploughing,
One is released from all suffering.

Then the brahman Kasibhāradvāja filled a large bronze bowl with food and offered it to the Buddha: "Please eat, Gotama sir, this food! You are indeed a farmer! Surely you plough the ploughing that yields the crop of deathlessness!"

—A. Olendzki