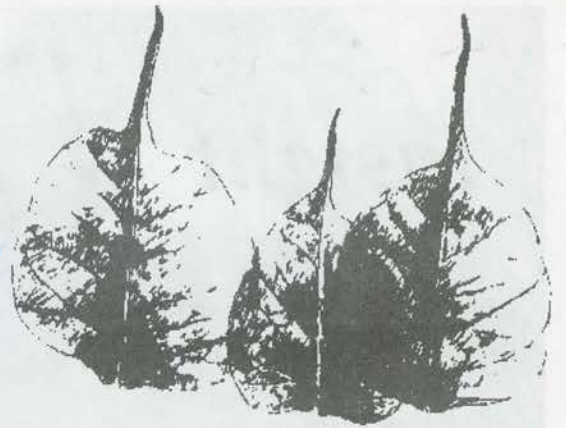


A joint newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society
and the Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies

Insight



Fall 1999

IMS 2000
Retreat Schedule

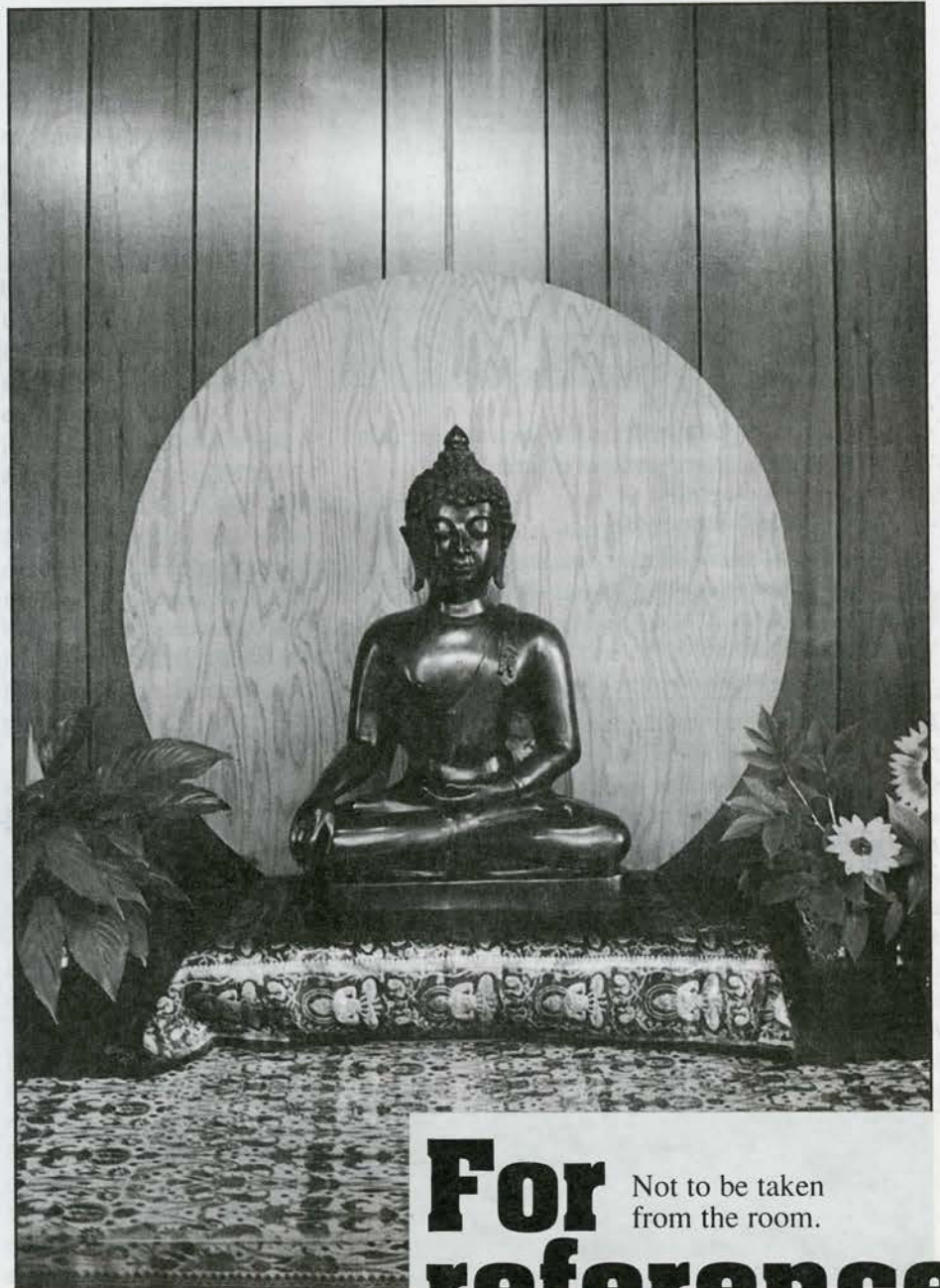
BCBS 2000
Course Schedule

Teacher Interview:
Sharda Rogell

Notes from the
Bhavana Program:

Insight into
Impermanence:

Carol Wilson
&
Andrew Olendzki



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from the room.
reference

Insight



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

Editor

Andrew Olendzki

Managing Editor
Mu Soeng

Contributing Editor
Edwin Kelley

Production Assistance
Gyano Gibbson
Eric McCord
Jenny Lambert

Photographs
"Buzz" Bussewitz
p. 1, 2, 14
Cherie Westmoreland
p. 3, 5
Ruth Nelson
p. 34, 35

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.



Printed on recycled paper



Anyone who has sat a retreat at IMS at any time over the last 23 years will recognize this image--the "earth-touching" Buddha from the meditation hall.

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Seeing the Truth of Freedom

an interview with

Sharda Rogell

Sharda Rogell has been teaching retreats at IMS for more than ten years. After living in England for the last three years, she will soon be moving back to the US.



People have come to the practice by many different paths. What brought you to meditation, Sharda?

When I was about 27 I was going through a very difficult time in my life and was experiencing an extreme amount of *dukkha* [suffering]. I was living in North Carolina at the time and was at a point where I really didn't have any resources. I had not adopted the religion of my upbringing (which was Judaism) and felt I had nowhere to turn. Like so many people who get to that point of feeling extreme helplessness in their lives, I had to go for some kind of refuge.

All that seemed available at the time, at least in my part of the world, was Transcendental Meditation. So I started practicing TM very intently and found that very quickly—within the first two or three weeks of practicing twice a day for twenty minutes—there was a great change in myself. It was quite sudden. As soon as I began practicing meditation I felt a shift—I felt more at ease; I felt happier; I felt some relief from the pain that I was in.

From the very beginning I was a diligent practitioner. But after about two and a half years it just started to fade. The feeling of relief didn't fade, but I felt there was not much movement, not much happening in my meditation. I felt a certain amount of relaxation, but

not much insight or understanding. So I stopped doing TM and just let it go.

A few months after that I met James Baraz in San Francisco, where I had moved, and he was offering a class in *vipassana* [insight] meditation. So I joined his class and from then on (that was 1979) I was hooked. Because I had the foundation of discipline and some stability in doing the concentration practice of mantra, once I started doing the *vipassana* there was a certain clarity of mind and the ability to see aspects of myself that I had never seen before and that was very powerful.

Have you spent any time in Asia for your meditation training?

I am one of the newer generation of teachers who have not practiced in Asia. I went to India for the first time in 1987, but I went to teach a *vipassana* retreat in Bodh Gaya.

In 1990, while I was in India, I met Poonja-ji, an Advaita Vedanta teacher, and that had a huge impact on me. Poonja-ji pointed us directly to the freedom that already is here and now, and this pointing came at a time when I was really prepared to hear it and take it in. It also created a problem for me for about

I have come to understand the truth of freedom through seeing into the nature of my own mind.

three years in my relationship to *vipassana* practice, because in the place of freedom that Poonja-ji was pointing to I couldn't find a role for method and technique. If one could just meet a guru and have a profound realization, what else was needed? It became an important question for me to sort out.

It took me a number of years to integrate an understanding around that issue, and during the years I was struggling with my question I did some Dzogchen practice. I went to meet Tulku Urgyen in Nepal before he died and had instructions from him, and did Dzogchen practice in California with Tsoknyi Rinpoche. It was through Dzogchen practice that I was able to understand and to hold my experience with Poonja-ji within the context of *vipassana* practice. I discovered that although the Dzogchen tradition had the Buddhist forms and the Buddhist lineage, it was pointing to the nature of mind

that I had experienced with Poonja-ji; it has the language to explain and articulate the nature of mind.

The Theravada language is really more about a progress of insight towards a goal, at least in the way I was taught in the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition. The language of Dzogchen points towards immediate freedom. The Dzogchen experiences were—and do continue to be—a very important resource for me.

When did you start teaching?

In the early 80's, when I was practicing quite intently, there were really only five main teachers: Christopher, Christina, Joseph, Sharon and Jack. There were lots of people getting involved in vipassana meditation, but there were not that many teachers. So the main teachers started to ask some of the senior students, the students showing the most commitment to practice, to help out.

It was also around this time that Jack Kornfield was starting his first teacher training program. Because I had been around and was, I suppose, showing some potential, I was chosen to participate in the first teacher training program with Jack. That was really the springboard. The first time I actually functioned as an assistant teacher at a retreat was in 1987 when Christopher invited me to join him in India to teach the winter retreat in Bodh Gaya. Soon after that I moved to England and joined Christopher as a co-teacher at Gaia House.

In India nothing is hidden; everything is out in the open; there is no real protection.

I started to teach fairly early in my practice years—I had been practicing vipassana for about five years before I started the teacher training. Now that I have been involved for about 20 years, I see that this was a little early. I wouldn't advise somebody to start that quickly, but rather to mature in their own meditation practice first.

Do you still go to India every year to teach?

Yes, I have gone to India for twelve winters, and have stayed for nearly two or three months each time. It has been a tremendous influence in my life. Few experiences have had such a major impact, but going to India the first time completely transformed my life. (That's when I decided to leave San Francisco.) In India nothing is hidden; everything is out in the open—very raw. It forces the psyche to be exposed to everything that it doesn't want to be exposed to. Life, birth, aging, sickness and death are all there, and there is no real protection. (In our culture we are so protected from these experiences.) It was a real blast to my psyche.

What aspects of the practice or the tradition do you most emphasize when you teach?

Because I was teaching primarily with Christopher, whose style is so unique and particularly emphasizes inquiry, I found myself following his example; but I wasn't sure what my own particular approach would be. Eventually I realized that my strong point remains investigation and inquiry through vipassana; but at the same time I have a strong interest in incorporating the beneficial influences of *metta* [loving kindness] as well.

Christopher is not quite as interested in *metta* practice, but I like the heart-based approach—though perhaps not so much in the form as it is taught classically. For me, *metta* is an attitude of mind which brings a compassionate quality to investigation.

I talk a lot about the qualities of heart: gentleness, patience, tolerance, kindness and compassion. I usually take a period of time each day or every other day to bring in the more formal practice of *metta*, because I find that it is very effective.

And where is your particular passion these days? What is it that you really want to communicate to people?

My own journey began with such a deep place of suffering, and I have come

out of that suffering through the practice. Consequently I have so much faith—really boundless faith—in the methodology, in the teachings, in the power of the dharma, that it empowers all of my teaching. I have so much confidence in the dharma that I want to share that with others.

So my passion comes from the fact that I know the practice works, and I know the mechanics of it. Having suffered very intensely, and no longer feeling that suffering, I know the difference. I believe I bring to my students a sense of urgency, a sense of confidence, and an understanding of how the practice works. And I think I have some ability to articulate that as well. I try to speak simply, so they can understand. I just keep pointing towards the investigative quality: investigate, investigate.

Liberation is not about having a happy, integrated, well-balanced life.

It is about deeply understanding the nature of things.

I would even go so far as to say that I try to communicate a faith in the truth of happiness; the truth of freedom; the third noble truth of the Buddha. This faith empowers me and provides the energy for me to teach.

And how do you understand the third noble truth [the cessation of suffering]?

I have come to understand the third noble truth as the truth of freedom, through seeing into the nature of my own mind. It is the freedom that comes from seeing that the phenomena of this mind and body are essentially empty; empty of a "me," of a self-being. So there is no longer any belief in this arising condition as anything that is going to bring me to some fulfillment. It is this understanding of the essential emptiness of things that has brought me to some level of fulfillment.

What I have come to see is that I am not moving towards some goal or some end result, but in a moment of clarity, wisdom itself sees the empty nature of

things. For me this understanding has come about primarily through the methodology of vipassana and through looking clearly at my own mind. It has meant taking the time to look at each thought, at each feeling, at each sensation, at each sound, each sight, each smell, and seeing that it is of the nature of the three characteristics—it is impermanent, it is unsatisfying, and it is selfless. Seeing that—again and again and again and again—has eroded the belief that anything here is really substantial.

Liberation and happiness--are these the same or different?

I think it really depends what we mean by happiness. Practice certainly does lead to a deep sense of well-being. However, it is easy to have a very limited idea of what is meant by happiness. Individual happiness could mean something very different than the happiness of the Buddha. This is an issue that I think is not looked into very deeply by a lot of practitioners. Liberation isn't about having a happy, integrated, well balanced life. Liberation is the deep understanding of the true nature of things. It is through this seeing deeply into the nature of things that one doesn't keep perpetuating the conditions of becoming.

This really doesn't have to do with a state of mind, and has nothing to do with the way we feel. It is not depen-

dent on feelings, or on the condition of this body, or on any formation whatsoever. It is formless in nature.

Do you find your students having difficulty with the three characteristics, or with this notion of self and selflessness?

What makes teaching so exciting and totally fulfilling to me is the discovery that at every level people have insight. Maybe in the wider range of a person's rhythm of life there are periods of confusion and stuckness, but I don't find that as an issue in a retreat situation. In a retreat setting, whether they are new to the practice or in the middle or well-advanced, people have incredible insight about where they are at—there is always something in them that opens to the nature of existence. And that is enough; even a little bit, even a little chink coming out. It is so fulfilling to see people experience that.

And there is such beauty in the methodology of the practice, because the more we let go of the conceptual baggage we are carrying with us, and just look, just sit and watch, just walk and watch, and let go—something starts to bubble from deep within if one is interested. Interest is such a key factor, isn't it?

And how do you arouse and sustain this factor of interest?

I really use the opportunities when I am face to face with someone to take them deeper into the wisdom factor, into the investigation. There is so much depth around investigation—questioning can be used to direct somebody deeper, to look further, to look in a different way.

In each moment there is the fact of choice--but this choice only becomes available through awareness.

For example, someone might come in to an interview and start talking about "MY knee pain," "MY aversion towards it" and "what do I do about it." Rather than talking about it in a technical way, I might start asking questions about their relationship to the "MY." "What would happen, right now, as you are sitting there, if you talked to me in the same way but you dropped the ownership concept?" Then I might say to the person, "Perhaps you could repeat what you said to me earlier without using the pronoun, "my," and let's see where that takes us."

I might further ask them, "Can you go right into the sensation and see what happens to the mind as you sink more into the sense of no ownership of the knee pain? And then can you drop the concept of "knee pain," and just keep going further and further into the bare experience?" Directed in this way, people tend to get very interested in viewing their experience from these fundamentally different perspectives.

How do you motivate people to continue practice after they leave the retreat situation?

Because it is so clear to me that right now is the only moment we have, I find myself saying a lot to retreatants to put more emphasis on moment to moment practice than on formal practice. Sometimes I have to be a little bit careful with that, because formal practice is incredibly valuable and it has certainly been my vehicle. And yet I do put a lot of emphasis on integration of all activities through the day, and on really inquiring into the non-differentiation between sitting and not sitting, between being on



The most important thing for me now is becoming more clear--discerning the places where I am still clinging.

retreat and not being on retreat. The body doesn't have to be in any particular posture; the mind doesn't have to be in any particular condition in order to do the practice; the practice is in every moment. So I usually give people a break by saying that if you can't find time for formal practice every day, it's okay; because people are generally under a lot of pressure in their daily lives.

Did anything you read in the ancient texts surprise you, in light of your modern education as a student and teacher of dharma?

What stood out for me were the themes and patterns by which the Buddha taught. Before this period of self-study, most of the teachings that I had heard were by western teachers. One of the things I had been taught when I first started practicing and working with my own experience was a particular emphasis on paying very close attention to whether my mind was moving towards fear or whether my mind was moving towards love and harmony. Watch the motivation behind the thought and the way the mind is moving, toward wholesome or the unwholesome. I always liked that and always watched it within myself.

When I read the *Majjhima* I was really amazed to see how strongly this theme was emphasized throughout all the discourses—the importance of wise discrimination between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. On and on, in discourse after discourse and method after method, the Buddha elaborated how to do that. He continually draws attention to the dangers of the uncultivated mind, to the advantages of mental development, to working with the mind, and to how it can so easily move towards the unwholesome action, the unwholesome thoughts, the unwholesome physical movements. He shows how to actually turn that around, to transform the energy of mind and body towards the wholesome and happy mind states.

Can you just keep going further and further into the bare experience?

This is somewhat different from the way I was originally taught about the practice. I was encouraged primarily to practice letting go—just let go, be with what is, notice what is happening and don't get caught in it. But the Buddha, at least in my reading of *Majjhima* texts, seems to place more emphasis not only on seeing what is happening but also on taking appropriate steps to actually

change it. He offers a lot of methodology for how to do that.

What these texts seem to be saying is that in each moment there is the fact of choice—between moving toward what is wholesome or unwholesome—and this choice becomes available only through awareness, only when we are mindful and awake. With mindfulness arises discrimination, and a choice becomes apparent. Inherent in awareness is discrimination, and then we can see: Do I want to follow that aversion, that hatred, that ill will, that anger? Or do I want to bring about some condition of mind and heart that will transform that movement of mind towards something that is more wholesome?

And when the mind becomes more refined we can see the consequences that will follow from either choice; we can know that the choice of each moment will lead to these particular consequences. That's the whole sequence: the intention, the action and the result. It's the intention of where the mind is moving, the action that starts to form from that intention, whether it's a thought or the physical body, and then the result, the consequence of that intention.

With mindfulness and wisdom we are able first of all to just notice, and then to have the strength and vitality of mind to choose wisely. We can say: "No, I'm not going to go in that direction; I'm not going to follow that movement of mind. I'm not following the old habitual tendency." We can then apply mindfulness to change that habitual tendency. This entire dynamic, which is so clear in the texts, has really become a foundation for my teaching and my own practice.

Where do you go from here?

The most important thing for me right now is to continue to work on becoming even more clear—discerning the places where I am still holding or clinging—so the dharma can flow more freely. The urgency for me to work on myself goes two ways; so that I can experience more and more levels of liberation and with that clarity, allow others to hear and experience the teachings of liberation.



A New Anthology of writings by IMS Teachers!!!

Voices of Insight is a wonderful tribute to the unfolding of the dharma in the west. It takes the form of an anthology of teachings given by beloved and renowned IMS teachers. Though many voices make up the different chapters, it clearly illustrates how the "ocean has but one taste." The teachings offered throughout come from that clarity of mind that is only possible through experience.

For all who have contributed to this book, and for those who purchase it, there can be great joy in knowing that all profits will go to Ram Dass, a source of great inspiration himself, for the continuing medical care needed since his stroke in 1997.

Ever since IMS first opened its doors it has been evident that the teachings offered here come to us from an enormous wealth of Buddhist tradition. Throughout the pages of this book we see these teachings come to life--insights are shared showing the ways the practice has touched lives, and helped wisdom to unfold.

Voices of Insight is divided into three sections corresponding to the three refuges—the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha. It brings the refuges to light in our modern world and illustrates how the triple gems play a large part in our lives, even if we don't realize it.

The book begins with stories that help connect us to the vast lineage of people who have walked this path before us over the last 2,500 years. Some stories date back to the time of the Buddha, others are stories of our teachers' teachers. By hearing the difficulties others have encountered and the benefits they have received, it helps us reconnect to the possibility of recognizing our own inherent Buddha nature.

The section on the dharma begins with the core teachings of the Buddha—the four noble truths. It then offers clarification and practical advice for one who might be navigating some of the difficult terrain that can be encountered on this path. Throughout these chapters there is much to find to support our day-to-day practice.

VOICES *of* INSIGHT

EDITED BY

SHARON SALZBERG

TEACHERS OF BUDDHISM
IN THE WEST SHARE THEIR
WISDOM, STORIES, AND
EXPERIENCES OF THE PATH
OF INSIGHT MEDITATION

These teachings become very practical as we move into the section on sangha. It brings home the importance of coming together to support each other in practice. It also gives helpful encouragement for bringing the practice into every corner of our lives; through the precepts, service, parenting, and through the very way we view life.

For someone just beginning to practice this book is incredibly useful in outlining the teachings of the Buddha in a way that illustrates the benefits and potential of meditation. For the experienced meditator it offers connection with our lineage and potent reminders and inspiration to continue the journey of awakening. This book represents something of the spiritual journey itself—from the initial inspiration we might receive from our teachers, to doing the practice ourselves, and then embracing the practice as a way of life.

If fault must be found with this book, it can only be that it has been so long in coming!

Myoshin Kelley

Voices of Insight is published by Shambhala Publications, and priced at \$22. Orders may be placed through Dharma Seed Tape Library (800-969-7333) or other popular outlets.



IMS NEWS WORTH NOTING

Weighing the Costs

IMS has gone through many significant changes in the past few years. Improvements to the facilities, such as refurbishing the kitchen and connecting to the town sewer line, have been made possible through your generous donations. We would like to sincerely thank you for these contributions.

Many of the other changes, which include having more salaried staff positions to help stabilize the running of IMS and offering health insurance to some of our teachers to help sustain their teaching efforts, are funded through course revenues. Because we feel these changes are important and appropriate, we find it necessary to raise the course rates for next year in order to balance the operating budget.

Even as IMS improves both its physical plant and its personnel support systems to meet the growing yogi population (most of the courses

through the year are now full, many with waiting lists), we are still committed to keeping the costs of retreats affordable for anyone who wishes to come. To this end, we invite and encourage anyone who might need financial assistance to avail themselves of our generous Scholarship Fund.

If you are sitting a retreat at IMS and would like more information about scholarships, please check the appropriate place at the bottom of the registration form.

We are also renewing our efforts to build an endowment whose interest income will support the yearly budget. This could help to stabilize and possibly, in time, reduce the daily rate.

The administration, staff and board of directors of IMS are all working to make IMS a place of refuge accessible to all.

Third Time's the Charm!

or, if at first you don't succeed...

Many of you know that over the last few years we have had to introduce a lottery system for some of our retreats, due to the high number of applications. However, some people unfortunately have repeatedly missed out on getting a place. So we have determined a new policy to help.

If you have applied for a lottery retreat two or more times before, and have not made it in, you will now qualify for automatic inclusion. When you send in your new registration form, please call our attention to this fact, and we will confirm with our records.

Hapu'u Bay Refuge

Vipassana Hawai'i, under the guidance of teachers Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith, will soon complete the purchase of a beautiful piece of land at Hapu'u Bay on Hawai'i Island (Big Island). Work will then begin to create the Hawai'i Insight Meditation Center (HIMC).

Bridging East and West, tradition and innovation, the great forest monastery tradition of Southeast Asia will merge with the spiritual geography of the Hawaiian Islands to provide a unique environment for the contemplative practices of mindfulness and

lovingkindness. HIMC will offer a long-term practice hermitage, retreats for all levels of students as well as specialized retreats for young adults, families, and environmental, medical, educational and corporate leaders.

The center's new land consists of 180 undeveloped acres in North Kohala on Hawai'i Island. Beautifully contoured, the land slopes seaward from a 300 foot elevation down to 2000 feet of ocean frontage along Hapu'u Bay. It is bordered on each side by streams flowing through valleys lush in tropical forest. The rolling plains between are suitable for building and planting. Incorporating sustainable tropical design ele-

ments, the facility will reflect Eastern, Western and Polynesian influences. This region of North Kohala, and the HIMC land in particular, is rich in cultural history & ancient Hawaiian sites. It is a place of mana (spiritual power).

The broader dharma community is invited to participate in the creation of a unique practice center at Hapu'u Bay. Individuals with experience in development, facilities management and environmental sustainability are especially needed. For more information or to offer your support, contact HIMC at 380 Portlock Road, Honolulu, HI 96825, himc@vipassanahawaii.org, or on the web at www.vipassanahawaii.org.

Kitchen Updated!

For 23 years we have cooked in the same well-loved and well-worn space. Now, with the help of your generosity, we have renovated our kitchen. We are deeply grateful. Through your support we are able to continue to serve the dharma.

Coming from an Italian family, I realize I have an inherent bias that the kitchen is the heart and soul of any home. I have brought this attitude with me to IMS and it has become my theme song since I arrived on staff here in 1997. Now I am the manager of the kitchen, and recently helped work out the multitude of details of the renovation. Yes it has happened! But my emotions haven't quite caught up with the present moment.

evacuate. It made me think of all the cooks who ever worked in that kitchen. I felt them there. I could almost see them; some walked through wearing serving uniforms and chef hats, some wore robes, and some wore the work-stained aprons of more recent generations.

I thought I could almost see the minds and hearts of all the yogis who labored in that space--in the steamy

notorious place in the building--the potwashing sink! You strained and sweated over huge hot sinks scrubbing huge, hotter pans. It seemed to me, as I passed all of you at different times in the past few years, that you accepted your task with great equanimity. I often found out, to my surprise, that a number of you actually enjoyed it!

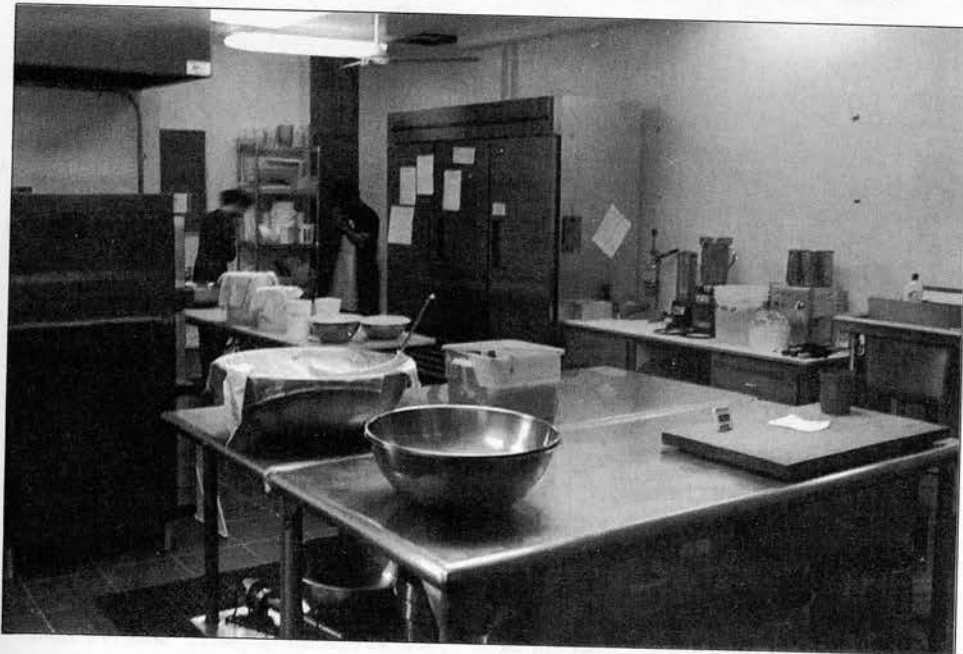
I realized, as I looked around, that the kitchen had never been so bare of things, nor had it been so filled with the emanations of past staff and yogis. The torn down walls seemed to be releasing the stored up energy of all of you who worked there.

Funny things happened in the old kitchen. I remember the day a cook misread "apple cider vinegar" for "apple cider" and it wasn't until the biscuits were baking that she thought they smelled awfully tart. You all ate them, and someone even complimented the cook!

Today the kitchen is a bigger place. It is clean and white. The floor is covered with forest green tile. The old wooden cupboards above the potwashing sink have been put back on the wall to remind us of our beginnings. We have a new kitchen sink and reach-in refrigerator, new tables and cupboards, and an amazing steamer. The lighting and ventilation systems have been vastly improved. Two of our stoves were new two years ago and the third one has been reconditioned.

May you all feel nurtured by this new kitchen at the heart of IMS.

Gerry Walsh
Kitchen Manager



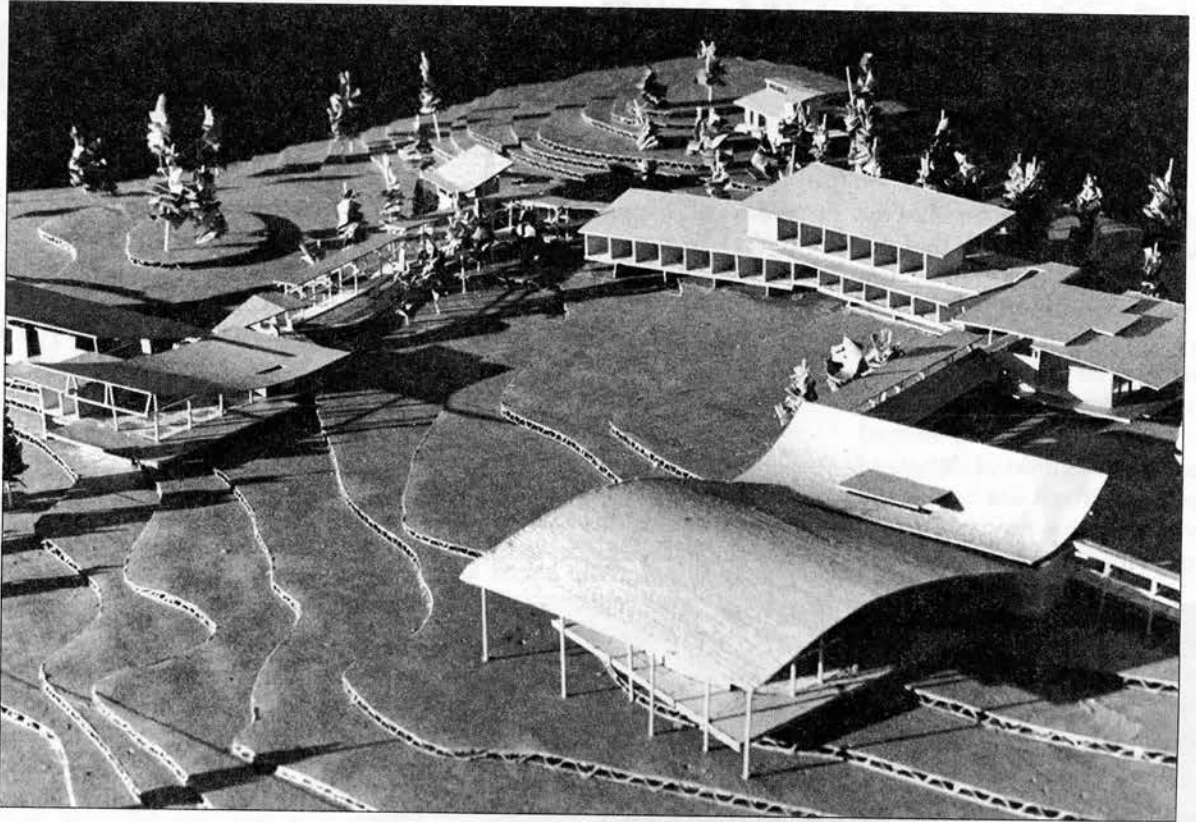
Not long ago the "demolition team" came in, stripped the place to the bare walls and left. I watched them do it. Each hour I poked my head in through the tarp-covered door to look. They took out the counters where so many cooks stood and prepared food, or gazed out the window and took a deep breath or two--a bit of quiet relief from their hectic schedule.

The next day, I noticed the little mindfulness bell on the windowsill. It sat there covered with plaster dust, abandoned in a previous day's race to

heat of summer and the finger numbing cold of winter. How many of us looked out those windows to see the pine trees on the south lawn blowing in the wind or covered with thick layers of snow and in that moment felt the "rightness" of being--in that very spot!

So many of you gave yourselves over to the cooks in the past, trusting that the 14" knife you held would do the job intended--on the vegetables and not on your hands. So many of you spent time working over the most

The Forest Refuge



A scale model of The Forest Refuge site.

All people desire happiness and peace in their lives. The teachings of the Buddha provide a systematic training in wisdom, love and compassion—those qualities that bring more joy and fulfillment in our own lives and greater peace in the world. Meditation is an essential part of this training, and for thousands of years has been an effective means for liberating the mind from suffering.

There are many monasteries and centers in Asia where people can go for extended periods of time. Some have existed for centuries and have long provided refuge for those seeking liberation. Many of these centers have also been the training grounds for exceptional teachers.

However, there are few places

in the West where people can engage in this kind of long-term meditation practice. Retreats in this country are typically seven or nine days long, with some offerings of one to three months. Over the last twenty years there are growing numbers of people who have done numerous courses of this kind. Many experienced practitioners are now looking to practice in a less structured, more independent manner.

Is the time right for the development of such a long-term center in the West?

We have skilled teachers at IMS, but we don't have enough of them to respond to growing requests from groups and communities around the world. We have many experienced practitioners;

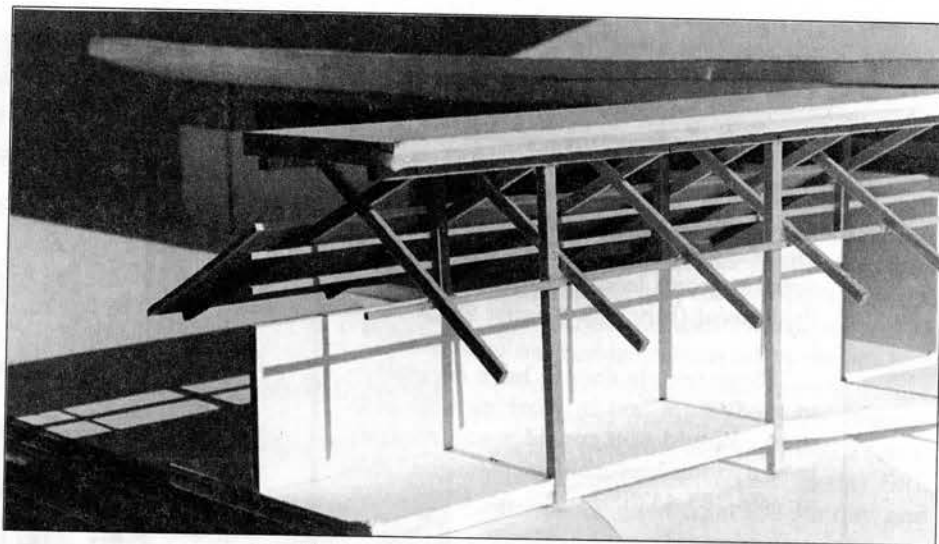
we just don't have adequate space to accommodate them while also offering opportunities for less experienced yogis to start on the dharma path.

These are good problems to have: they mean that the dharma is flourishing here. But we now have the responsibility to address the needs created by this tremendous growth of interest.

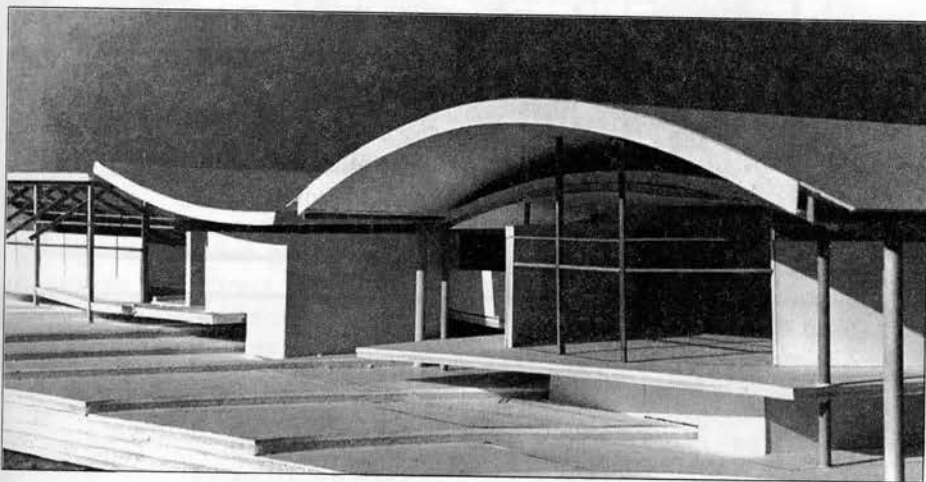
The Forest Refuge will help to serve these needs by providing an environment where people can devote themselves to the cultivation of insight and compassion for extended periods of time. It will provide the facilities and teachings necessary for on-going practice and will serve as a fertile training ground for western dharma teachers.

The Forest Refuge is an essential next step in strengthening the roots of the dharma in our society.

The need to expand creates unusual opportunities. For the first time, IMS has the chance to design a center for intensive practice from the ground up. There have been many months of reflection, discussion and planning to determine what will best facilitate the deepening of practice. While we may look to Asia for some clues, we are not in Asia. Our climate and culture are unique. It is our intention to provide a simple and beau-



Detail of a walkway between buildings.



The Forest Refuge meditation hall.

tiful environment, in harmony with the natural world around it, which will hold and support deep, uninterrupted practice.

The work of awakening is a difficult, joyous and often lengthy process, as concentration and insight gradually develop in the light of sustained awareness.

We welcome you to join the creation of this remarkable new center. It is dedicated to the welfare, the happiness, and the liberation of all beings.

The Forest Refuge is being designed with
Michael Rotondi of ROTO Architects.

Current cost projections are \$6.3 million,
and efforts are underway to raise the \$2 million balance needed.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for Spring 2000, with a targeted completion date of 2002.

Inquiries and donations may be addressed to:

The Forest Refuge
1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, MA 01005.
(978) 355-4378 ext. 37

IMS is trying to help cultivate the mindfulness, compassion and wisdom of the next generation, and we are currently seeking group leaders for the 2000 Family Retreat (July 31 - August 5).

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 23-27, 2000) 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.

a combined www page for:

Insight Meditation Society

and

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

with links to:

Dharma Seed Tape Library
Vipassana Retreat Centers
Teacher Web Pages
Access To Insight

and other sites
of possible interest to
the vipassana meditation community

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

Become a volunteer at IMS and:

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



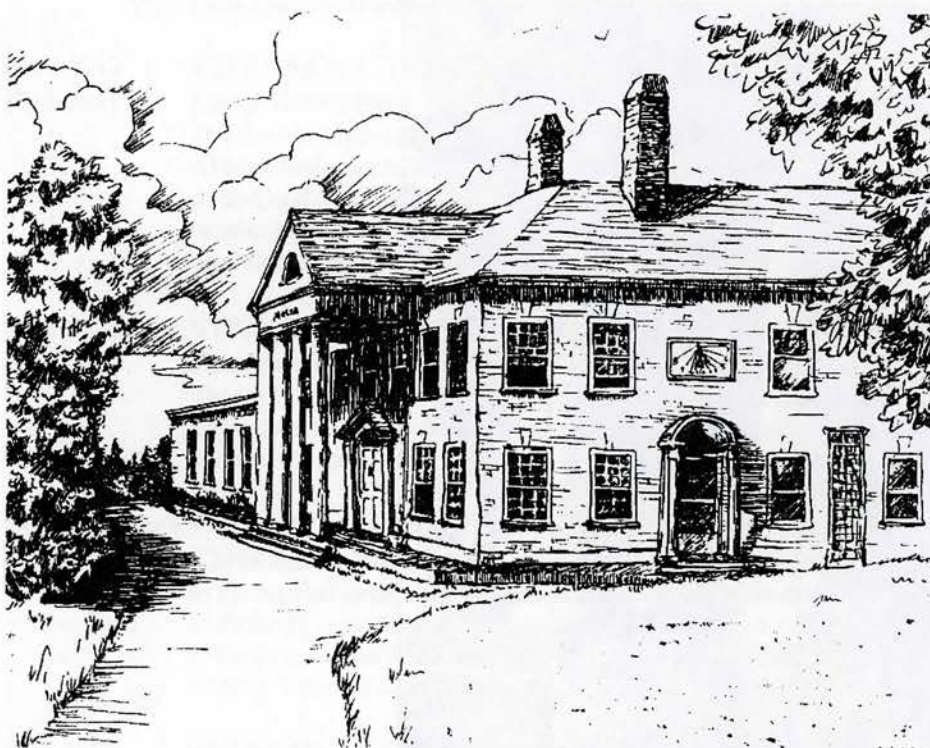
If you're ready for work-as-practice, please contact IMS at the numbers below for information about becoming a volunteer staff member.

Phone: 978-355-4378 X19, Fax: 978-355-6398

E-mail: AA@dharmadharma.org

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

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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 \$38 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.

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.

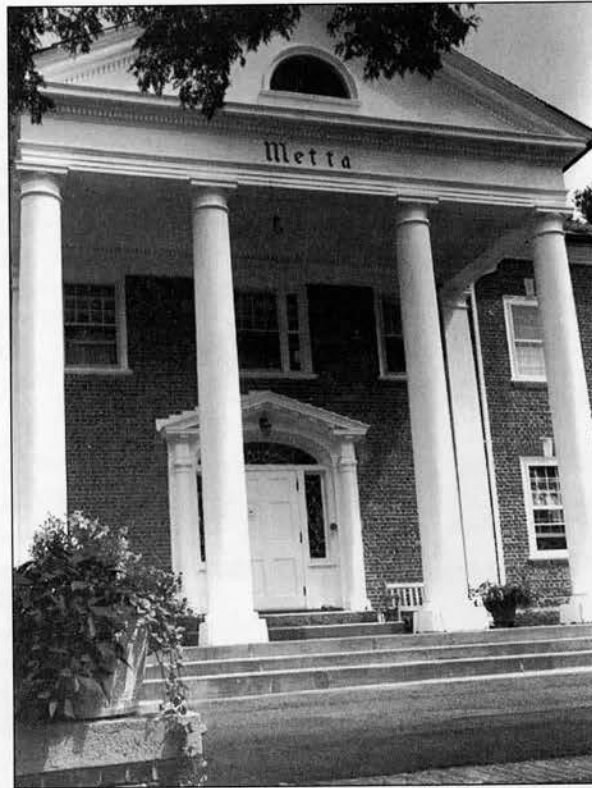
• **Evening Discourses:** When a retreat is in progress, anyone is welcome to attend evening talks; meditators with vipassana experience are welcome to attend group sittings. Some restrictions apply. Please call the IMS office for a daily schedule.

• **Scholarships:** It is our wish that anyone who would like to practice here be able to do so regardless of financial situation. Please refer to the registration page (p. 19) or call IMS for more information about our generous scholarship program.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY 2000 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 4 - 11
(Fri-Fri)**

METTA RETREAT (7 days)

JS1

Deposit \$150

Cost \$270

Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien

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, 1999 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.

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

**Feb 11 - 20
(Fri-Sun)**

VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)

JS2

Deposit \$150

Cost \$335

Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien

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, 1999 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.

**Feb 4 - 20
(Fri-Sun)**

METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days)

JS3

Deposit \$150

Cost \$540

Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien

Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1999 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.

- Feb 25-28 (Fri-Mon)** **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days)** **ROD** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$150**
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 4-11 (Sat-Sat)** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)** **LR1** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$270**
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.
- Mar 17-19 (Fri-Sun)** **VIPASSANA WEEKEND (2 days)** **NM** **Deposit \$120** **Cost \$120**
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.
- Mar 25-Apr 1 (Sat-Sat)** **WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days)** **WOM** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$270**
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 7-16 (Fri-Sun)** **BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days)** **AV** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$335**
Ajahn Candasiri & Amaravati Sangha
 This retreat will be an opportunity to explore some of the more traditional aspects of Theravada Buddhism. Along with the cultivation of meditation practices, we will examine how qualities such as generosity, renunciation and devotion can enhance and broaden our appreciation of the Buddha's dispensation. May the experience of these qualities have direct relevance to our everyday lives after leaving the retreat.
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.
- Apr 22-30 (Sat-Sun)** **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)** **CT1** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$305**
Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell & Sally Clough
 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.
 Sally Clough has been practicing vipassana since 1981. Trained by Jack Kornfield, she has led meditation classes and assisted on retreats since 1994.
- May 6-13 (Sat-Sat)** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)** **NLG** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$270**
Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady
 See description for March 17-19 course above.
- May 19-21 (Fri-Sun)** **WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)** **SMW** **Deposit \$120** **Cost \$120**
Steven Smith and Rebecca Bradshaw
 The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 3-13 retreat. (See next page).
 Rebecca Bradshaw has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1983 and teaching since 1993, including classes and retreats for Spanish speaking individuals, Christians, and youth.

- Feb 25-28 (Fri-Mon)** **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days)** **ROD** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$150**
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.
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- Apr 7-16 (Fri-Sun)** **BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days)** **AV** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$335**
Ajahn Candasiri & Amaravati Sangha
 This retreat will be an opportunity to explore some of the more traditional aspects of Theravada Buddhism. Along with the cultivation of meditation practices, we will examine how qualities such as generosity, renunciation and devotion can enhance and broaden our appreciation of the Buddha's dispensation. May the experience of these qualities have direct relevance to our everyday lives after leaving the retreat.
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.
- Apr 22-30 (Sat-Sun)** **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)** **CT1** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$305**
Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell & Sally Clough
 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.
 Sally Clough has been practicing vipassana since 1981. Trained by Jack Kornfield, she has led meditation classes and assisted on retreats since 1994.
- May 6-13 (Sat-Sat)** **VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)** **NLG** **Deposit \$150** **Cost \$270**
Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady
 See description for March 17-19 course above.
- May 19-21 (Fri-Sun)** **WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)** **SMW** **Deposit \$120** **Cost \$120**
Steven Smith and Rebecca Bradshaw
 The emphasis of this retreat is similar to June 3-13 retreat. (See next page).
 Rebecca Bradshaw has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1983 and teaching since 1993, including classes and retreats for Spanish speaking individuals, Christians, and youth.

- May 26-Jun 3 METTA RETREAT (8 days)** **SM1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$305**
(Fri-Sat) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw
 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.
- Marvin Belzer** has practiced vipassana since 1982, studying primarily with Sayadaw U Pandita since 1986. He teaches philosophy at Bowling Green University.
- Jun 3-13 VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days)** **SM2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$360**
(Sat-Tue) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw
 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 26-Jun 13 METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (18 days)** **SM3 Deposit \$150 Cost \$600**
(Fri-Tue) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw
- Jun 23-27 YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT (4 days)** **YA Deposit \$180 Cost \$180**
(Fri-Tue) Michele McDonald-Smith with Marvin Belzer, Rebecca Bradshaw & Ed Hauben
 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.
- Ed Hauben** is a long term vipassana meditation practitioner and friend of IMS. Ed has served on the IMS board and has assisted with the Family and Young Adults retreats for the past 20 years.
- Jul 1-8 VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)** **CF1 Deposit \$150 Cost \$270**
(Sat-Sat) Christina Feldman & Rodney Smith
 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.
- Jul 15-22 VIPASSANA RETREAT--For Experienced Students (7 days)** **LR2 Deposit \$150 Cost \$270**
(Sat-Sat) Larry Rosenberg & Corrado Pensa
 See description for Mar 4-11 course above. Retreatants are required to have sat at least two week-long retreats at IMS.
- Jul 31-Aug 5 FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)** **FAM Cost Adult \$210 Child \$60**
(Mon-Sat) Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig & Anna Klegon **Deposit \$100 per adult**
 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.
- Anna Klegon** has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1976 in the Zen and vipassana traditions. She teaches yoga and lives with her husband and two children in Newton, Massachusetts.
- 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 February 25, 2000 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.

SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

Steve Armstrong has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975, both as a layman and as a monk, and leads retreats in the U.S. and Australia. His primary focus is Buddhist psychology.

Ajahn Candasiri joined the Theravada monastic community in Chithurst, England, in 1979 as one of the first four nuns. She has taught meditation retreats in the UK and abroad, and is current the senior nun at the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England.

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*.

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*.

Narayan Liebenson Grady is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center where

she has taught since 1985. She is the author of *When Singing, Just Sing: Life As Meditation*.

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

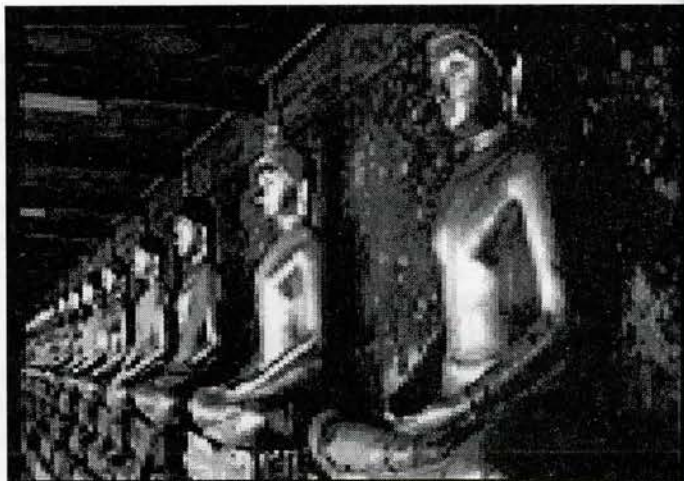
Michele McDonald-Smith has practiced vipassana meditation since 1975 and has been teaching at IMS and worldwide since 1982. She has a deep interest in preserving the ancient teachings and in finding ways of expression that make them more accessible and authentic for us in this time.

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

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

Sharda Rogell has practiced in the Theravadin tradition for the last 20 years. She has also been influenced by the non-dual teachings of Advaita and Dzogchen. For the past three years she has been living in England near Gaia House in Devon. Sharda has been teaching worldwide since 1985 with a strong emphasis on awakening heartfulness.

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 *Lovingkindness* and *A Heart As Wide As The World*. The newly-published *Voices of Insight* is edited by her.



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 a co-founder of Gaia House and lives in Totnes, England.

Carol Wilson has been practicing meditation since 1971. She studied with a variety of teachers, including practice as a Buddhist nun in Thailand. She has been teaching vipassana and metta retreats at IMS and around the world since 1986.

ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

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

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.

Michael Liebenson Grady has practiced vipassana since 1973. He lives in Cambridge, MA and teaches at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.

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

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

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

VISITING TEACHERS

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

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 _____ Have you been to IMS before? YES / NO

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Country _____ Zip _____

Check here if new address. Old Address _____

Day Phone () _____ Evening Phone () _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____ M/F _____

Year of Birth _____ Do you smoke? Do you snore? Dates you will be here: From _____ To _____

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

Can you offer a ride? YES / NO Retreat Experience: _____

Office Use Only
Date Received:

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.

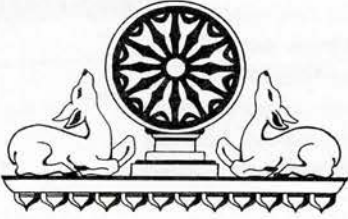


The study center is located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, just a half mile from the Insight Meditation Society (IMS). BCBS provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teaching. After extensive renovations in a 225-year old 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 27.



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 dhamma materials.



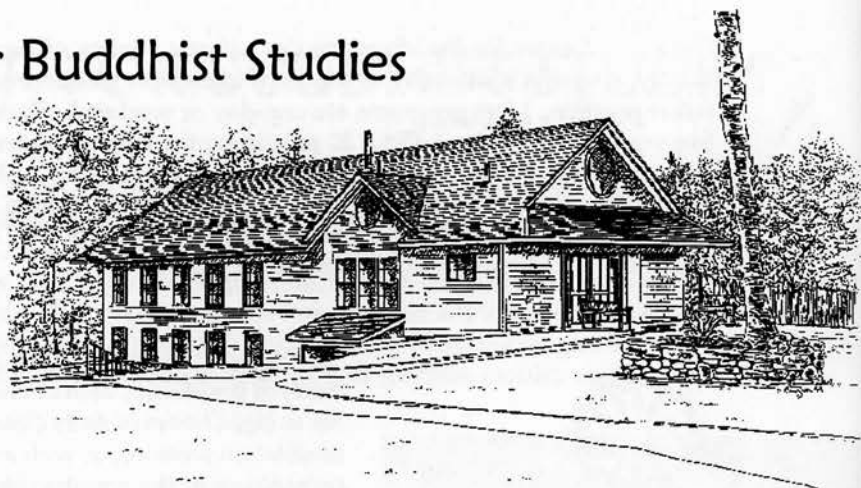
Dhamma Dana



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



COURSE SCHEDULE 2000

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|---------------|
| Jan 9-21
(2 Weeks) | NĀLANDA PROGRAM: BUDDHIST STUDIES
Andrew Olendzki, Mu Soeng, and Visiting Faculty
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. | 2000NAL \$750 |
| Jan 29
(Saturday) | MEDITATION AND HEALING: THE KARMA OF BODY AND MIND
Chok Hiew
How are we to understand the healing aspects of Buddhist meditative practices in the light of our current psychological and medical understandings? This day-long program will consist of a didactic presentation of the energy healing aspects of Buddhist meditation and will combine it with actual practices that allow the participants to embark on the path of self-healing and healing others. | 2000CH \$45 |
| Feb 11-14
(3 Days) | YOGA AND ĀNĀPĀNA-SATI
Larry Rosenberg and Woods Shoemaker
Anapanasati is the vipassana meditation system expressly taught by the Buddha in which conscious breathing is used to develop both serenity and liberating insight. Vipassana meditation focuses on the four foundations of mindfulness for cultivating the seven factors of awakening leading to liberation. The yoga tradition of Krishnamacharya and TKV Desikachar focuses on a form of mind-body training and is fully compatible with vipassana meditation. It emphasizes the coordination of conscious breathing with all bodily movement, strengthening the spine, and opening the body for sitting practice. Each day of this program will include yoga movements, teachings on <i>Anapanasati Sutta</i> , and the actual practice of breath awareness meditation. | 2000LR \$180 |
| Feb 18-20
(Weekend) | ENLIGHTENMENT AS SELF-MASTERY
Ron Leifer
A basic Buddhist teaching points to the universal experience of suffering or unsatisfactoriness. The basis of this unsatisfactoriness lies in a dualistic, or neurotic mind. In the Buddhist view, happiness is a product of mind, and the search for happiness is a spiritual search which means looking within oneself into one's own mind for the causes of suffering. Looking is not enough, however; skill is also required in stabilizing the mind so that one can gain clarity into its working. Enlightenment is self-mastery. In this retreat, we will practice and discuss, in a supportive, interactive setting, basic Buddhist approaches to taming and training the mind. | 2000RL \$120 |
| Feb 25-27
(Weekend) | KARMA
Thanissaro Bhikkhu
We often think of the doctrine of karma as an accidental part of Buddhism—something it simply picked up from its Indian environment—but early Buddhists regarded their teachings on karma as one of the most central and distinctive part of their message. This course will explore—through readings, talks, discus- | 2000TB DĀNA |

sions, and meditation--what is distinctive about these teachings and how they permeate the entire Buddhist path of practice. Although the relationship of karma to rebirth will be covered, the primary emphasis will be on how karma relates to day-to-day practice.

Note: The weekend will be followed by a 3-day retreat (Feb. 27-29) to give course participants a further opportunity to practice meditation in light of the teachings presented on the weekend. Retreat participation will be limited to 15 people on a first-come, first-served basis. Preference will be given to those registering for the entire five days, including the weekend.

March 3-5
(Weekend)

INSIGHT DIALOGUE: DEEP LISTENING AND MINDFUL SPEAKING

Greg Kramer

2000GK \$120

Insight Dialogue is a new model of mindfulness practice that brings vipassana together with (David) Bohm-inspired dialogue and other talking circle practices. Insight Dialogue allows the hindrances of attachment, confusion, and deeply-held assumptions to become apparent, and be held in mindfulness and non-identification. Compassion is nurtured. The dialogue can be transformative for individuals and whole groups. In addition to grounding in silent practice, this weekend we will meditate with deep listening and mindful speaking to create a spacious awareness in which to discover the nature of mind.

Note: Prior meditation experience is a pre-requisite. At least one meditation retreat is recommended.

March 11-18
(7 Days)

BHĀVANA PROGRAM: SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Santikaro Bhikkhu and Susan O'Brien

2000BH-1 \$350

In this workshop, we will explore the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga) on three levels: 1) as descriptors of the highest level of contemplation (their proper meaning); 2) in their application to ordinary meditation practice; and 3) in responding to the myriad duties of daily life practice. The main focus of this program will be to deeply explore the application of core Dhamma teachings to everyday life. We will look at one of the factors each day and then connect it with certain daily life issues, such as food and health, conflict resolution, work, relationships, community, and so on. Using various Pali suttas, we will consider how to approach the factors in our lives and to respond to our actual experiences. We hope for the participants to gain confidence in Dhamma reflection and its application to their lives.

March 24-26
(Weekend)

SUTTA NIPĀTA: A ZEN READING OF PĀLI TEXTS

Issho Fujita

2000IF \$120

The Sutta-Nipata is one of the oldest collections of Buddhist discourses in the Pali Canon, and by far one of the most popular as well as being the most important. This weekend will be devoted to the textual study of the chapter called *Atthakavagga* (The Chapter of Eights) which focuses on the earliest Buddhist understanding of suffering and liberation from it. We will study this important Pali text within the context of zazen practice and a Zen understanding of the core teachings of Buddhism.

April 7-9
(Weekend)

DZOG CHEN: AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN

Lama Surya Das

2000SD1 \$120

Dzog Chen (Tibetan for "The Natural Great Perfection") teaches awareness techniques for awakening to inner freedom, and directly introduces the inherent freedom, purity and perfection of the innate Buddha-Mind, and the interconnectedness of all beings. Through meditation practices, Tibetan Vajrayana breath and energy exercises and relaxation techniques, chanting, self-inquiry, attitude transformation and compassion practices, this luminous Tibetan teaching will be presented in a light and lively manner accessible by beginners and advanced students alike.

April 14-16
(Weekend)

PATIENCE

Daeja Napier

2000DN1 \$120

Visuddhimagga, the classical compendium of Buddhist meditational practices, refers to patience (*khanti*) as a protective power. As one of the ten *paramis* (perfections), patience is a purifying factor in our awakening process. It is also essential in the ripening of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (the four *Brahma Viharas*). It instills our practice with a quality of non-reactivity and deepens the capacity to embody mindfulness in daily life. This weekend will consist of presentations from classical sources, discussion, sitting and walking practice, and individual interviews.

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- April 21-23
(Weekend) **WOMEN IN BUDDHISM**
Trudy Goodman 2000TG \$120
This course will explore the lives and awakenings of several Buddhist women from ancient India (e.g. Buddha's own foster-mother) to the contemporary West (e.g. Maurine Stuart Roshi.) How did Buddhism affect the course of their lives and understanding? How has Buddhist practice changed our lives, the first generation of Western female practitioners? And in what ways are we transforming Buddhism in the West? The weekend will include meditation, study of the lives and teachings of Buddhist women; chance to share our stories, and maintain silence.
- April 28-30
(Weekend) **THE HEALING POWER OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM**
Paula Green 2000PG \$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 7-12
(5 Days) **ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY**
Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty 2000PS-1 \$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.
- May 13
(Saturday) **MINDFULNESS AND EDUCATION: INTEGRATION OF LEARNING AND WISDOM**
Claire Stanley 2000CS \$45
As our ideas about education and educators come under closer scrutiny, is it possible to bring aspects of wisdom and ethics as taught in vipassana (insight) meditation to our current exploration? The challenge for educators and learners is to have a reflective practice that allows us to see things clearly, to accept them, and to respond to each situation with wisdom and compassion. This workshop will consist of didactic presentations, discussions, and experiential practices in order to develop an awakened approach both in the class room and daily life.
- May 20-28
(8 Days) **NĀLANDA PROGRAM: VĀJRAYĀNA STUDIES**
John Makransky and Visiting Faculty 2000VAJ \$400
The genius of Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism lies in the diversity of its methods for rapid identification with Buddhahood in all dimensions. This course begins with exploration of the development of Vajrayana Buddhism as a novement of late Indian Mahayana profoundly influential upon Tibet. It then explores ancient and contemporary Tibetan writings: a systematic treatise of thought and practice from a Tantric perspective, sacred biographies of Tantric masters, spontaneous Tantric songs, and manuals of visionary experience. Each day, basic meditations of the traditions under study are integrated with classroom studies.
- June 3-10
(7 Days) **BHĀVANA PROGRAM: UNDERSTANDING SELFLESSNESS (ANATTĀ)**
Andrew Olendzki and (meditation teacher to be announced)
Using the depth of silence provided by the Bhavana Program model of study/retreat, we will investigate the central Buddhist teaching of non-self (*anatta*). Each morning a carefully chosen selection of Buddhist texts and key passages addressing the theme of selflessness will be reviewed, to inform a guide the rest of the day's silent meditation practice. Individual interviews by an experienced meditation teacher and an evening dharma talk are also included in the program. This format has shown itself to be a fruitful way for experienced students and meditators to investigate more closely the core teachings of the Buddha.

June 18-30
(2 Weeks)

NĀLANDA PROGRAM: THERAVĀDA STUDIES

Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty

OOTHINT \$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 *Tipitaka*.

July 1
(Saturday)

WISDOM OF THE DYING

Rodney Smith

2000RS \$45

The wisdom of the dying and Buddha dharma often parallel one another. Facing our death with awareness brings us immediately into the Buddha's eight-fold path by establishing right view. Through guided meditations, exercises, scriptural references, and stories of those who have died, we will investigate how facing our own death can deepen our understanding of the Buddha's teaching.

July 9-21
(2 Weeks)

NĀLANDA PROGRAM: MAHĀYĀNA STUDIES

Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty

OOMHINT \$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.

July 28-30
(Weekend)

SHIN BUDDHISM: LAY PERSON'S PATH TO LIBERATION AND FREEDOM

Taitetsu Unno

2000TU \$120

The Pure Land tradition attains one of its peaks in the person of Shinran (1173-1263), founder of Shin Buddhism, who clarified the working of boundless compassion that awakens a penetrating insight into self-delusion and the liberation from its binding powers. Lectures and workshops will provide guidance through the progressive stages of its basic practice, MONPO or deep hearing, carried out within the flooding light of compassion. Shinran was the first Japanese Buddhist monk to de-monastize Pure Land practice and make it available to lay people in the midst of their busy and complicated daily life.



BCBS TEACHERS

(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 BCBS.

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

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, MA.

Trudy Goodman has studied in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974. She is a child psychologist and is on board of directors of Barre Center for Buddhist Studies.

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*.

Chok C. Hiew, born in Malaysia, has taught psychology and health at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada for the last 25 years. His research interest is on resilience, life energy, and the human spirit. His book, *Energy Meditation: Healing the Body, Freeing the Spirit*, is due out soon.

Greg Kramer has practiced vipassana meditation for more than 20 years with Ven. Ananda Maitreya Maha Nayana Thera, Achan Sobin Namto and other Asian teachers. He is the founder-director of Metta Foundation in Portland, OR., and teaches Insight Dialogue seminars on the west coast.

Ron Leifer, a Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, studied with Khenpo Kartha Rinpoche for 15 years and is associated with the Namgyal Buddhist Institute in Ithaca, NY., where he also has a private practice. He is the author of *The Happiness Project: Transforming the Three Poisons that Cause the Suffering We Inflict on Ourselves and Others*.

John Makransky teaches Buddhist Studies and Comparative Theology in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He is the author of *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India 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.

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

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

Claire Stanley teaches applied linguistics in the Master of Arts Teaching program at the School of International Training. She travels worldwide to work with teachers in classrooms on developing awareness and compassion for themselves and their students.

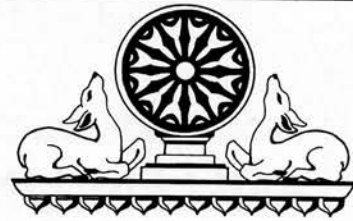
Lama Surya Das is an American meditation teacher, Tibetan Buddhist lama, poet and writer, and founder of the Dzogchen Foundation. He is the author of *The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane: Buddhist Tales from Tibet* and *Awakening the Buddha Within*.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff) has been a Theravadin monk since 1976. The abbot of Metta Forest Monastery in San Diego County, CA, he is the author of *Wings to Awakening*, *Mind Like Fire Unbound*, *Noble Strategy*, and translator of a number of Pali texts and Thai meditation guides.

Taitetsu Unno is professor emeritus of religious studies at Smith College in Northampton, MA. He is a Buddhist scholar specializing in Pure Land Buddhism, and author of *River of Fire, River of Water*. He is also a priest ordained in the Shin tradition.



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.
 - All deposits must be received at least ten days before the start of the course.
- Registrations are received at any time by mail, but are only confirmed when a deposit has been received.
- Registrations are processed on a first-come first-served basis after the receipt of the deposit amount.

PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHECK FOR EACH COURSE REGISTRATION.

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

Half the deposit will be retained as a cancellation fee if canceling more than 2 weeks prior to the course opening.
The entire deposit will be retained if canceling within the last 2 weeks.

**TRANSFERRING YOUR DEPOSIT FROM ONE COURSE TO ANOTHER WILL INCUR A \$20 PROCESSING FEE;
YOU CAN TRANSFER FOR ANY COURSE ALREADY PUBLICIZED IN THIS CALENDAR YEAR.**

ALL CANCELLATION FEES SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THOSE IN NEED OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

- Feel free to call (978) 355-2347 Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM for up-to-date information about course offerings, availability of spaces, or information pertaining to courses and schedules, or send email to: bcbs@dharma.org

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

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

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BCBS 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 _____ M/F _____ DOB _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Country _____ Zip _____

Check here if new address. Can you offer a ride? YES or NO

Day Phone () _____ Evening Phone () _____ Is this a new phone #? Yes ___ No ___

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

A MILLENIUM OF DĀNA?

Dharma Seed Tape Library
has a vision:

For the next millenium,
the oral dharma teaching
presented by vipassana
teachers in the West could be
freely distributed.



Dharma Seed Tape Library
has an announcement:

All dharma tapes recorded
after January 1, 2000 will be
offered without charge to
anyone and everyone who re-
quests them.

[Everything listed in the
2000 Catalogue was recorded
before the millenium and will
remain for sale, as will books,
video tapes, etc.]

Dharma Seed Tape Library
has a promise:

We will continue, at the
lowest possible cost, to
preserve the contemporary
oral teaching tradition,
share the teachings by
widely distributing the tapes
to all who wish to hear them,
support the dharma teach-
ers with a 10% royalty of their
tape sales.

What is Dāna?

Dāna is the ancient San-
skrit word for **generosity**; it is
the foundation upon which
the Buddhist tradition rests.

It empowers an alternative
economic model that is built
upon acts of voluntary giving
rather than upon mandatory
fees—an economic system
that nurtures the mental fac-
tors of generosity and kind-
ness, rather than the factors of
greed and self-interest.

Dāna is manifest whenever
one gives anything to another
person—a flower, a kind word
or thought, a gift of food, or a
gift of financial support.

According to the Buddha,
the greatest gift of all is the gift
of dharma (the teachings).

Dharma Seed Tape Library
has an observation:

This idea can only succeed
if the dharma community un-
derstands the tradition of
Dāna, and gives the dharma as
a gift to one another.

Dharma Seed Tape Library
has a request:

Please help make this vision
possible by voluntarily offering
Dāna when receiving free ly-
offered tapes.

Also, show your support for
this vision by making a dona-
tion to DSTL sometime before
the start of the new year. This
intitiative can only succeed if
we have the financial support
of the sangha.

DSTL Box 66
Wendell Depot
MA 01380

If there is enough support for this idea, we can eventually freely offer **all** the talks, old and new!

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

For more information or a free copy of the 1999 catalogue:
call our toll-free number 1-800-969-SEED or fax us at (978) 544-5550.

e-mail: dharma@crocker.com

www.dharmaseed.org

Do We Really Believe in Impermanence?

Carol Wilson

Two questions come into my mind when thinking about the teaching of impermanence in relation to my life. Do we really believe that things are impermanent, that all experience is impermanent, that all arising phenomena will pass? Do we *really* believe that? The other question that arises from the first reflection is: What is the effect, in our life day to day, of living from that truth? Reflecting upon these questions involves looking through the more refined and subtle levels of meditation to see how we relate to impermanence on different levels.

Let's consider the first question: Do we truly believe that whatever arises will pass, that all arising phenomena are not going to last? Of all the different truths that the Buddha talks about, the truth of the impermanence of existence—how things are—is the easiest to understand intellectually. It's an idea with which an average person on the street who doesn't think much about philosophical issues would agree: "Yes, things change."

So on the conceptual level, it's pretty reachable; we don't have a problem with it. But is that what we live from? Would any of us be here if we were living at ease, dancing with the constant flux of existence? This is really interesting to me.

I know that I have actually experienced that everything is arising and passing and there's nowhere to rest. And yet, using myself as an example—and I am assuming that I'm not alone in this—when something in my life that I value or that's important to me changes, do I say, "Well, the conditions that allowed for that to exist have changed and it's passing away?" Maybe eventually I get there, but that certainly is not my first, spontaneous reaction to the loss of cherished things.

continued on page 30

Insight

Notes from the Bhavana Program: Insight Into Impermanence



The Bhavana Program at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies is intended as a special way of integrating academic study and meditation practice for the investigation of the Buddha's teachings.

The 7-day program is modeled on a traditional vipassana retreat, with alternating sessions of sitting and walking practice throughout extended periods of silence, including personal interviews and a dharma talk each evening from an experienced meditation teacher.

The program also incorporates a daily two-hour study period with a scholar of the Buddhist tradition, wherein the careful reading of selected passages from the classical literature and their detailed discussion, in the light of one's meditative experience, is encouraged.

These remarks are excerpted from the opening talks of each series of sessions held at the study center in March, 1999.

The Context of Impermanence

Andrew Olendzki

Some of the best dharma talks I have ever heard are the ones given by the Buddha. Fortunately, much of what he said was recorded and transcribed, and though there are numerous historical questions we are unable to fully answer about their transmission, I have found that, by and large, what is published in the Pali Canon is an immeasurably valuable source for trying to understand—in some detail—what the Buddha taught regarding the nature of my own experience.

I like to look very closely at what is recorded in these texts, and use scholarly tools such as linguistic analysis, cross-referencing and comparative translation schemes to clarify, as much as possible, what exactly the Buddha might have been trying to communicate. Also very important to this process is the use of common sense and one's own present experience. So I invite you this week to share in such an exploration of the central Buddhist notion of impermanence, *anicca*.

Let's start by recognizing the roots of this word, *anicca*. Like many other important words in the Buddhist vocabulary, it's constructed as a negative. The prefix "a-" reverses its meaning, and what is negated is the term *nitya* in Sanskrit or *nicca* in the Pali spelling (the two languages are very similar). This word *nicca* means everlasting, eternal, unchanging. In what sense was the word "permanent" being used in ancient India? What exactly were the Buddhists negating?

In the intellectual environment in which Buddhism evolved, the concept of something being stable and lasting was very important. Many religious traditions of the world take this view: clearly the world of human experiences is constantly changing, the data of the senses and all they reveal is in

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Do I say, "My father has Parkinson's disease and can't really see any more—it's just because conditions have changed?" No, of course not. I experience the pain of seeing him suffer; that's normal. And I experience compassion for him. But there is also an edge of panic: What can I do to stop this from happening? What can I do to fix it?

We respond like this to our own bodies, to people we love, to our relationships changing, to losing a job—even down to your knee starting to hurt in the middle of a sitting. Our basic response, even though we know all conditions are subject to change, is: "Something has gone wrong and this is changing. If I can figure it out, I can stop it from happening." Isn't that often how we end up responding? And in that response we suffer, sometimes enormously.

And even though I've seen it a thousand times, it's still not so easy for me to get the fact that the suffering is not about the change itself. The suffering, if you get right down to it, is about my reaction to the change; it is in my denial, my lack of acceptance, my basically not wanting to feel pain or loss.

I find this paradox to be fascinating, how I can know something so clearly on one hand, and yet live my life so often as if I didn't know it at all. Let's face it, on a very basic level, we want



pleasant experiences to linger, to hang around; we don't really want unpleasant things to happen. We can explore this edge in our meditation practice and it can expand out to our whole life, and still we may find there is a level where we don't quite get that all pleasant experiences are coming and going, that everything unpleasant is coming and going. It's really uncontrollable. If we could just flow with the coming and going of both pleasant and unpleasant, our life truly would be no problem.

Why are we conditioned the way we are? It's a habit of mind—we crave the pleasant and can't stand to have something we don't like—and there we're stuck. It's not the truth; but it is our habit, and it is a deep habit.

Someone said in the group today, "I do notice that I never strive to be uncomfortable. I'm always striving to be comfortable." That's how we move through life. No one tends to grieve too much when the headache goes away or when the really bad weather turns nice, "Oh shucks, the pleasant is back!" Rather, we think: "Now things are fine. I can flow with that." So impermanence is a problem only when the pleasant changes, when the place we're looking for rest goes away. We cling, even though we all know rationally that the problem is not the change. The problem is our clinging. But that doesn't stop us for one minute.

Our task is to look into this tendency to cling. Why do we keep perpetuating this clinging, doing it over and over? This question takes me into looking deeply at how I live my life. Do I believe the Buddha when he said over and over that whatever is impermanent is inherently unsatisfying? It is said throughout the *suttas* (the early texts): anything impermanent is inherently unsatisfying; it can not be the self.

Yeah, right! We know that we turn around and want that other cup of tea, want that warm weather, don't want it to be snowing. If we stop and look, we see that underneath that wanting is a sense of clinging to the pleasant. Somewhere underneath the wanting is the unspoken, un-conceptualized belief that there is some way to find a point

of rest, of ease, of pleasantness that basically will not go away. That's really how we move through life—looking over and over to find this place of rest, and clinging to that sense of security.

What's so unsettling about the inevitability and the absoluteness of impermanence is that it allows no resting place. To us, who want a resting place (and who doesn't?), that sounds fearful, insecure, unreliable, awful. But it is our very grasping at the passing of any phenomenal experience—the external or the so-called internal—the looking always for a resting place, that actually provokes the suffering in our life. And it's very hard to see that.

Have you ever been in an earthquake, one with a lot of aftershocks? I was once; the earthquake itself was scary, but it was also kind of neat. There was a "Wow, look at that" kind of feeling. But the aftershocks that went on for the next three days were unsettling; you could never just relax back on the earth, into the bed, at the table. As soon as you relaxed, it would start shaking again—every five minutes. Of course the radio was saying constantly "Twenty five percent possibility of the big one in the next three days." So you couldn't even think, "Oh, it's just an aftershock." You had to keep thinking, "Is this it? Do I have to run out of the building? Do we have to get away from the glass? No, it's settling down." Then you'd let go and relax, but the radiators would start shaking in the middle of the night and you'd jump up and have to run out, to get the flashlight, and so on. It lasted for three days.

That to me is like the ultimate sense of insecurity. Without ever even thinking about it, I had trusted that the earth is solid, unchanging, and here to support me. Then I found out otherwise, and moreover that there's absolutely nothing anyone can do about it. The aftershocks of the earthquake have been a metaphor for me for years now. The experience revealed the effect that insecurity of constant change can have on the mind and heart that is looking for the happiness of unchanging stability. It is our very grasping at any phenomenal experience as it passes—the external or the so-called internal—our

looking always for a resting place, that provokes the suffering in our life. And it can be very hard to recognize. But freedom comes, not from finding somewhere to rest, but from no longer needing to look for someplace to rest.

There's a wonderful quote from the Diamond Sutra which says, *He abides in peace who does not abide anywhere.* That's the trick—to give up the search for abiding or resting or stopping the flow somewhere, the search that actually keeps the sense of anguish going. It is the search itself—for somewhere to rest, usually in the pleasant—that is profoundly unsettling.

Even when we train ourselves to be mindful, and see that all observable experience seems to be coming and going, we may not notice that "we" are still watching it all. "We" (or "I") is experienced as some unchanging entity doing the observing, and so we still don't get it. Our anguish then becomes: "I really see, I see everything is changing—so how come I'm not free? Why am I still suffering?" This anguish is very subtle and very deep.

Thinking about it isn't going to take us out of it, but thinking about it can take us into an exploration. We can learn to give mindful attention to all the manifestations of "me, myself, mine." It may seem like there is a stable entity here from which I am observing the whole world change, but it only seems that way through lack of inquiry, lack of attention, lack of investigation. We usually don't think to turn our attention back on *moi*, the point of stability we tend to hold on to.

We can get so wrapped up in our search for a peaceful abiding, in our search for happiness, that we overlook the possibility of just letting go of the search. And we can let go of trying to find the peace of abiding; let go of that constant to-ing and fro-ing between pleasant and unpleasant, liking and disliking; let go of the ongoing effort to manipulate experience. We are so involved in our judgments, our reactions, our assessments, our interpretations, our cogitations about anything that is happening, that we're often not even in touch with what's actually happen-

ing. We don't see that the impediment to peace is not the experience, but the fact that we're so involved in our reactions. We don't see that, as Thich Nhat Hanh says, "Happiness is available. Please help yourself." It just means stop fighting, stop reaching.

Someone once told me that the reality of life is like being in jail—we are so involved in rearranging the furniture to make it as comfortable as possible that we don't notice that the door is wide open and we can just walk out. That's what we're doing in our life—constantly rearranging the furniture. It's amazing that we don't recognize the secret. Perhaps we don't trust it. If we can meet—with total presence, absolute connectedness, alertness, acceptance, and wakefulness—just what's happening in this moment...everything is revealed in that. That is the essence of non-abiding.

But this is not a place we can recognize conceptually. It's really hard to talk about, because it's not a thing. The essence of non-abiding is total immediacy of presence—headache or no headache, traffic jam or no traffic jam. It really doesn't matter what's happening. And I mean that. It's not a metaphor. It really doesn't matter what's happening. And not just on the pillow. This is from an absolute standpoint.

Can you even believe that? And not merely believe it, but trust it enough to look for yourself? The freedom of the heart, of mind, has nothing to do with what phenomenal experience is arising or passing, and whether we like it or not. It has everything to do with immediacy, totality, openness, vivid presence. And that requires, in that moment, total acceptance. Total acceptance doesn't mean resignation. It doesn't mean, "Okay, whenever bad things happen, I'll just sit here and let people walk all over me." It means, "In this moment, this is happening. It cannot be changed. It's already happening. Can I be totally present and alert within it, without resistance, without clinging in that moment?"

This is really the practice of mindful awareness, moment by moment. It's not thinking, "I will be like this for the

rest of my life." That's just another thought. The mindful awareness is in this moment, as the breath comes in, as the breath goes out, it's just there; it's a totally accepting alert presence without discriminating, without preference. And yes, I am all too well aware that it's easier said than done.

I find it a huge relief to come back to this awareness in difficult situations something like getting stuck in the traffic when going to the airport. We all have that experience. We can fret and we can pretend, "Oh, it doesn't matter." You know, you can pretend for a while, but after a few minutes, "Why am I gritting my teeth? How come I'm barking at my friend?" And finally, we give up: "It's out of my control; I missed the plane; something will happen; I don't know what. It was all out of control from the beginning."

In that moment, there is letting go. It doesn't sound great, does it? It doesn't really sound like what you might think of when the Buddha talks about the supreme state of sublime peace being liberation through non-clinging. It may not be our idea of liberation, but that's the start of it—stuck in the traffic jam, missing your plane, things being out of control, and yet really being at peace. We are at peace in that moment because we are simply letting go of all our layers of how we want things to be and wish they were, and we are just opening to things as they are. Non-abiding. Non-abiding, because how things are now changes in the next moment.

So the most we can do is abide in this moment, just as it is, without clinging, without resistance; because in the next moment there is something else. It is all part of the flow.

The Buddha said it over and over again: *The supreme state of sublime peace has been discovered by the Tathagata, namely liberation through non-clinging.* This is another way of saying non-abiding. Just opening into this moment, with full presence, is our way into trusting. Living in the truth of impermanence, opening to it as we experience it—whether on the grand scale of a loved one becoming sick or dying, or

on the minute scale of noticing our agitation when what had felt like a pleasant sitting suddenly turns unpleasant. The scale doesn't matter. Noticing those moments of resistance to change, and opening into it again—that's what we can do.

The more deeply we really live from this truth of impermanence, the more we open to the non-agitation of heart, of mind. But in order to really get it, we have to see through all the layers of belief, the conceptual workings of the mind. The precision of meditation practice can be very helpful here.

In our practice, in mindful attention, we discover more and more subtle ways in which we manipulate our experience, either toward something pleasant or toward some experience that we've had or read about that we somehow think is IT. This is the one that's going to do it. But we are not looking too carefully, because if we really looked we would find out that conditions are causing even this to arise. We will also find out that we are manipulating conditions like crazy to cause this to arise. So we need to keep investigating, to keep seeing on a more subtle level. It's nothing to judge ourselves about. Rather, we might think: "Yes, I see this one now. It won't fool me again. There might be another one, but this one doesn't fool me."

Our mindfulness practice, simply being with the breath, being with sensations, being with sounds, and as we expand, with emotions, with feeling tones, with thoughts—just as they are—is a place where we begin to recognize the potential of freedom. It really doesn't matter what you are attending to; it is the quality of mindful presence itself that allows you to see the truth. No matter what the nature of our experience, it is our willingness to bring this indiscriminating, participatory awareness to it, without preference, that opens us again and again and again and again to resonating with this peace of non-abiding. This moment is like the situation in the traffic jam when we suddenly let go of all desire to control.

It's a quick moment of real peace.

And then of course our conceptual minds tries to cognize it and talk about it and say, "This is what it feels like," and "This is what it looks like, and "This is IT." Of course, it's long gone by then. Then we wonder and we doubt, and we don't really trust. Speaking for myself, I start looking so hard for some idea of what the sheer heart's release would look like and feel like, how the mind of non-clinging would manifest, that I overlook the reality, the potential for peace here and now. Because actually it's so obvious; it's always available. It's so normal that we easily get into looking for something more.

There is a story in the Pali suttas about the Buddha's teaching to Bahiya of the Bark Cloth. Bahiya came to the Buddha when the Buddha was on his alms-round and insisted that the Buddha address his anguish. Part of what the Buddha said to Bahiya, in regard to the six senses, was,

When in the seen is merely what is seen, in the heard is merely what is heard, in the sensed is merely what is sensed, in the cognized is merely what is cognized, then, Bahiya, you will not be 'with that'; when you are not 'with that,' you will not be 'in that'; when you are not 'in that,' then you will be neither here nor beyond nor in between the two. Just this is the end of suffering.

(Udana 1.10)

This saying of the Buddha points directly to the end of suffering. To me what he is saying is that you're not stuck in this, you're not stuck in that, and you're not stuck somewhere in between the two. As human beings we want to abide in peace, yet the Buddhas do not abide anywhere.

In other words, there's no fixation; there's no landing; there's no yearning. There's no grasping of any experience. When you are not in this, nor in that, then you're not abiding anywhere. There's only



the simplicity of experience—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, sensing, feeling the body and mental activity.

That, to me, is the invitation of this practice of mindfulness. It seems deceptively simple. When we talk about bringing bare attention, beginner's mind, to whatever experience is arising in the moment, that's what we're saying. Can we bear it? Can we live in the wisdom that that's all there is? Can we experience life in that way?

What's interesting is how much of the time, with all our best intentions, we're not able to do that. And we don't even have a clue what it is that's arising, because so much gets added to it in the realm of perception and thought. At Bahiya's funeral, the Buddha uttered a phrase:

*When a sage...has come to know this
for himself,
Through his own experience,
Then he is freed from form and formless.
Freed from pleasure and from pain.*

Freed from pleasure and from pain? Not too many people come to the teaching because they want to be freed from pleasure. But that's the real freedom the Buddha is pointing to. Freed from all of our attachments. And that's all. That really is all. But it's very, very, difficult to bring that beginner's attention to meet experience with no assumptions, no preconceptions, no preferred opinions. That is what training in mindfulness is all about.

The invitation is to the simplicity. But it's not easy. It's radical. Actually it is the greatest renunciation, because every time you're willing to let go of "me," the whole story collapses. And you can just let it be. You don't have to "end" it; you don't have to talk your way out of it; you can just let it be, and return your attention to the simplicity of hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, sensing, thinking, imagining.

It's that basic. It's the renunciation in a moment—the renunciation of clinging and identification—that allows us to see through this whole round of *samsāra*, allows us to stop running in circles forever.

constant flux, but underlying all this change surely there must be something stable, something that it all rests upon.

In the pre-Buddhist Indian world, the word *nitya* was often used to designate that foundation, that stability. The view put forward in the Upanishads, for example, suggests that within all the changes of the individual being there is a deep part of one's psyche, called the *ātman* or the self, that in some way either underlies or transcends (these are just different perspectives on the same model) all of the changes that go on moment to moment. If we could only discover this subtle self in our experience and dwell in it moment to moment, we would manage to overcome the transience of the world and become established upon something eternal and everlasting.

This idea works on both the microcosmic and the macrocosmic level. There is a sense that all the way out there, at the very limit of this world or world system, there is something permanent (*nitya*) from which this world emerged—Brahman or God. And all the way in here, deep in the inner-most world, there is also something stable—the soul or Self. In the profound mystical intuition of the Upanishads these two are not separate, but are two manifestations of the same reality.

This is the background against which Buddhism was working. And the Buddha, with his several excursions into the nature of human experience, basically came to the conclusion that this is an entirely constructed concept. The claim of stability articulated in these traditions is really just an idea that we project on to our world; it is not to be found in actual experience. So one of the principle insights of the whole Buddhist tradition is that the entire world of our experience—whether the macrocosmic material world or the microcosmic world of our personal, inner experience—is fundamentally not permanent, not unchanging. Everything is in flux.

So that's a place to start. Let's begin by looking at this issue from its broadest perspective, as an *idea* of

change or non-change. Then gradually, as the week goes on, we're going to move away from the level of concept to the level of experience, becoming intimate with the details of looking at change in our experience, moment after moment after moment.

One of the widest views we can begin with is I think fairly well expressed in a series of passages of the *Samyutta Nikāya* called the *Anamatagga Samyutta*. This volume is a collection of discourses organized around certain themes, and one of these themes is the application of this word *anamatagga*.



The construction of this word is again negative: *ana* + *mata* + *agga*, all of which together is taken to be "incalculable" or "unthinkable." The *ana* is a negative prefix; *mata* is from a root (*man*) which means "to think, to conceive;" and *agga* means an end, the tip, or the extreme of something; when applied to time, as it is here, it means the very beginning point. So literally the word means something like "unthinkable beginning point."

These texts represent a whole section of discourses about what is fundamentally inconceivable to human beings, fundamentally unimaginable or inaccessible to the mind. And one of the things inaccessible to us is the immense scope of the drama we find ourselves in. Not only does this vast history go back over our long personal history, beyond this life to innumerable rebirths, but even this entire world system we inhabit can be seen to be just one episode in a much larger cyclic order of the creation and destruction of cosmos after cosmos.

Let's look at the first line of this text:

Incalculable is the beginning, brethren, of this faring on. The earliest point is not revealed of the running-on, the faring-on, of beings cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving. (Samyutta 15.1&2)

It's a small phrase, and yet it includes a lot of important things. First of all, the beginning is what's incalculable. In other contexts we'll also find that the end is incalculable. One of the interesting themes of Buddhist cosmology, which is now drawing the attention of modern cosmologists, is its approach to time in general. It's largely non-historical; everything is cyclic, and, in a way, timeless.

And because these cycles go on and on and on, it really doesn't make any sense, conceptually, to even think about or talk about the beginning or the end of something. In fact, beginnings and endings are entirely constructions of the mind. Yet we seem to have inherited from our Greek philosopher ancestors the notion that there had to be something that started it all—an unmoved mover, perhaps? It is just conceptually necessary.

But the Buddhist critique of this view would be simply to say that "beginning" and "end" are just ideas that have been created by our minds to serve a useful purpose. They are helpful in defining our world: the beginning and end of the planting season; the end of my field and the beginning of yours. There are various ways in which the mind carves reality up into spatial categories that we call things—where this thing ends and that thing begins merely indicates a transition between things.

And we do the same thing with time: where this day ends and the next day begins; this hour ends, the next hour begins. But these are all entirely constructed concepts. The notions of "beginning" and "end" by definition can never be fixed, because they are always defined by, and are placed beyond, any other concept (kind of like the New Hampshire presidential primary). The problem is that when we take a concept derived from a limited context, one

that functions to help us keep the days, seasons, objects and fields straight, for example, and then try to project it back into imaginary beginnings and ends, the usefulness and even the meaning of the concept breaks down.

So the Buddhist critique of conventional cosmology is less a metaphysical insight than a psychological one. Absolute beginnings and endings are concepts that by nature express much more about the structure of our minds than they reveal of the world. This is a theme we will find ourselves returning to again and again throughout our experience with meditation practice.

The next phrase to look closely at is the expression: *faring-on; the running on, the faring on of beings*. There is another foreign concept imbedded in this wording that needs to be carefully looked at. Can anybody guess what Sanskrit or Pali word is being translated by this phrase? It is such a common word, it's almost an official member of the English language now: *samsāra*. We often hear *samsāra* contrasted with *nirvāṇa*: *samsāra* is this fallen, changing world of suffering, while *nirvāṇa* is a perfect, transcendent world. But that's not really the way the term is used in the Pali texts at all. *Samsāra* is a word based on the verb *sarati*, which means "to flow." It is used of water, as with the flowing of water through streams and rivers. As such what is here translated as "faring on" might more literally be called "flowing on" or "on-flowing."

So the word *samsāra*, though constructed as a noun, is not referring to a thing as much as to a process. As soon as this life is over, the momentum of existence—whether conceived as consciousness or as karmic formations or dispositions—somehow flows into a whole other life. And at the end of that life, if certain important factors are unresolved, the momentum abides and flows on to another life, and another. The texts use the analogy of water overflowing one pot to fill and eventually overflow another and another.

We are also going to find this to be a very useful concept for describing the nature of conscious experience, flow-

ing on from one moment on to the next. In Buddhist understanding, the dynamic of what happens between lifetimes is not very dissimilar from the explanation of what happens between moments. So when we get more focused in our practice on the microcosm of experience, we're going to see that conditioned experience flows on from one moment to another in the same way it flows on from one lifetime to another. In both senses of the word, then, we are living our whole existence as an on-flowing: *samsāra*.

We should also look at the final part of this first quotation, at the important expression: *cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving*. Ignorance and craving are the two fundamental factors keeping us in the world of suffering—they are keeping us from seeing things as they are, from accepting the impermanence of our experience. They significantly prevent us from discerning the impermanence of our experience. Each works in a specific way to prevent us from seeing clearly: Ignorance obscures reality, while craving distorts it.

The Pali phrase for *cloaked in ignorance* is *avijjā-nīvaraṇa*, the latter being a word having to do with one thing covering, obscuring, or hindering something else. It suggests something hidden underneath a cloth, for example, or,



in a popular poetic expression, the moon obscured by dark clouds. You might recognize the word *nīvaraṇa*, for it is the technical term for the hindrances. The five hindrances—sense desire, ill will, sleepiness, restlessness, and doubt—obscure or prevent access to concentration meditation in much the same way that ignorance in general hinders us from accurately perceiving the changeable nature of our experience.

Ignorance, of course, is used in a very technical sense in Buddhism. It does not mean unintelligent or uneducated. It means not being able to see the truth of change, of unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness (the three characteristics), or the inability to discern the truth of suffering, the causes of its arising, its passing away, and the means used to achieve that passing away (the four noble truths). There seems to be a trust that the mind, being inherently capable of true knowledge, would naturally understand the nature of its situation if it weren't for this covering of ignorance. So sometimes we meet with metaphors of uncovering the mind's ability to understand by removing obstacles (e.g., delusion), and sometimes we find metaphors of bringing a lamp (of wisdom) into the darkness so that one can see more clearly what is present.

Another common symbol of ignorance in Buddhist art is a blind man fumbling around. But this man is not in total blindness, and this is half of the problem. It's not so much that we cannot see at all; it is that we see badly. In this sense ignorance is not only a passive lack of clarity; it also involves actively mis-knowing, misperceiving, and misunderstanding the nature of our situation, which leads us very much astray.

Finally we come to the phrase *tied to craving*, which is a rendering of the Pali expression, *taṇhā-samyojana*. Again, you might recognize the word *samyojana*, for this too has an independent life in the technical vocabulary of early Buddhism. Officially there is a list of ten "fetters" or "bonds" or "attachments," but here the word is used more generally to refer to the binding process itself. What is really binding us

to *samsāra*, what is fueling this craving, is an underlying tendency in each of us as human beings to pursue pleasure and avoid pain.

A natural feature of all our experience is that it's accompanied by an affect tone or feeling tone. Everything we experience generally feels pleasant or unpleasant. Sometimes we can't tell whether it's one or the other, but that too is a natural part of our sensory apparatus. Unfortunately, because we have this underlying tendency for gratification, we want—we crave—for the pleasurable aspects of our experience to continue. We also have an underlying tendency to avoid pain, and so we yearn for the painful aspects of our experience to stop or to remain unacknowledged. So this force of craving, in both positive (attachment) and negative (aversion) manifestations, arises naturally (though, as we shall see, not necessarily) from the apparatus of our sensory experience.

The problem is that when this craving is present in experience, it prevents us from being authentically in the moment. For one thing, this craving impels us to act, and in acting we fuel the process of flowing on. It also prevents us from seeing our experience "as it is," and inclines us to view it "as we want it to be." This, of course, contributes to a significant distortion of reality. The wanting itself is the fetter, the tie, the attachment. Because of our *wanting* to hold on to the pleasure, and our *wanting* to push away the pain, we are both *tied to craving* and *tied by craving*.

You might think of it as a ball and chain that we're dragging around with us. As long as we're encumbered by this burden, it is going to influence how we confront each moment's experience. The intriguing thing about this ball and chain, however, is that it's not shackled to us—we clutch it voluntarily. We just don't know any better.

It is important to recognize the way in which these two factors—*ignorance* and *craving*—support and reinforce one another. If we understood that the objects we cling to or push away are inherently insubstantial, unsatisfying, and unstable, we would know better

than to hang on to them. But we cannot get a clear enough view of these three characteristics, because our perception of the objects is distorted by the force of our *wanting* them to be the source of security, satisfaction and substance. If we could let go of wanting experience to be one way or another, we could see its essentially empty nature; but we cannot stop wanting, because we don't understand these things we want so much are ephemeral.

And so we are *cloaked in ignorance* and *tied to craving*; and we are also incapable of discerning a beginning or an end to the flowing-on known as *samsāra*. Taken as a whole, this passage is laying out the nature of the human condition and the limitations of our ability to see the impermanence of our own experience. It shows how, from one moment to the next and from one lifetime to the next, we are compelled to move on and on and on, continuing to construct and inhabit our world. And both the beginning and end of the entire process are entirely beyond the capacity of our minds to conceive.

So this passage sets the stage for us: this is the starting point of our week's investigation. No story is going to help us much in figuring out what we're doing here. All we have is what is right in front of us, and that is obscured by the ignorance and craving we continue to manifest.

But this is by no means an insignificant starting point. The beginning and end of the process might be unknowable, but we *can* know what is present to our immediate experience. Since there is no point in wasting energy on speculation about origins or destinies, our attention is best placed on investigating the present and unpacking the forces that keep it all flowing onward. This is really where Buddhism starts and where it thrives—in the present moment. We have no idea how many moments have gone before or how many will yet unfold—either cosmically or individually—but each moment that lies before our gaze is, potentially, infinitely deep.

The critical factor is the quality of our



attention. If a moment goes by unnoticed, then it is so short it might not even have occurred. But if we can attend very carefully to its passage, then we can begin to see its nature. The closer we look, the more we see. The more mindful we can be, the more depth reality holds for us.

The Buddhist tradition points out some of the dynamics of the present moment—its arising and passing away, its interrelatedness to other moments, its constructed qualities, the interdependence of its factors—and then we have to work with it from there. The only place to start is the only place to finish—in this very moment. And that of course is why the experiential dimension to Buddhism—the practice of mindful awareness—is so crucial. You can't think your way out of this. You just have to be with the arising and passing of experience, and gain as much understanding from the unfolding of the moments as you can.

Step by step, investigated moment by investigated moment, the illusions that obscure things and the desires that distort things will recede as they yield to the advance of insight and understanding. In this direction lies greater clarity and freedom.





The rain comes and soaks in
Snow falls, melts
The flowers bloom and brown
Trees bud and go bare

As I sit in the seasons of my heart

Ernest Isaacs

With bareness
I see sadness
And touch its shell

With clearness
I greet sadness
And watch it swell

With kindness
I meet sadness
And feel it dwell

With awareness
I free sadness
And bid it well

Arlene Weiland



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

Eat with gusto the soul food and the body food

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

After all, this chance to live may not come again

Ernest Isaacs

Metta Message

Laura Zolotarev

I send Metta to you
my roommate
who couldn't have
a good night sleep
because of my snoring,
so I prayed God every night
to let me not to snore.

I send Metta to you
my partner in slums
who I met every morning
while we were cleaning
toilets and showers.

I send Metta to you
the humble woman with
short dark hairs.
Maybe Metta you sent to me
during Metta meditations
made my retreat so special.

I send Metta to you
my right zabuton neighbor
in the meditation hall
always so concentrated,
with a beautiful smile.

I send Metta to you
the young woman with blond hairs
who offered me a bunch of tissues
when I started crying
overwhelmed with emotions
at our farewell meeting.

I send Metta to you
the man with kind blue eyes,
shaved head and
two earrings in one ear and
one--in another.
I will remember Pure Love and
Compassion
arising in my heart
when we stayed embraced
which seemrd for eternity
while saying farewell.

I send Metta to you
the young man with blond hairs
tied into pony tail.
I will remember your humble bow
from the roof of the building
where you were watching sunset
when I greeted you with
bow and folded hands
from the ground.

I send Metta to you
my brother in God.
I know that you will never forget
this retreat because
it has changed your life forever.

To all my fellow retreaters--
Christians, Jews, Moslems, Universalists,
Buddhists, agnostics and others,
to the teachers Guy, Christina and Yanai
I bow, and bring my folded hands
to the middle of the chest near the heart,
and send Metta.

The Reflecting Pond

I stood by the pond
And saw how it reflected the truth
Not just the palate of flying colors
or the mass of trees
But the texture, the fragrance,
and even the passing breeze
I was entranced.
The green leaves still fresh, though
they were painted many months ago
The pale yellow ones, waiting
to be filled in by the golden glow
And the red ones, flaunting their sunset tans,
before their graceful eyes.

I stood there staring in, staring, staring still
And as if by command, the leaves began to dissolve
And the colors started to run
What was once a painted canvas
became a canvas of paint
A million bits of color buzzing about
It was as if 1,000 tiny butterflies were fluttering
to a celestial tune.
It was the frenetic flow of kinetic energy.

I stood by the pond
And I saw
That it was the truth
And I a mere reflection.

Poems by
Elazar Aslan

84 Days and Then Some

I cycle through the ghetto gardens
and I feel distain
Not for the stench of ignorant bile
that highlights the dark corners
Nor for the cacophony of honking hearts
and screeching souls
endlessly trying to move on
Not even for the choking black soot spewing out
from vain attempts to incinerate one's aversions.
No, I feel the distain for the masterful thief
who broke into my stillness,
and emptied the gratitude from my every breath.

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

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

Each Bird, Each Leaf

Do we celebrate each star, each seed?
Do we celebrate each drop of water
that is part of the fog, the tide?

Do we love each spearing,
every seagull garrulous with greed?
Do we love every face, every birth,

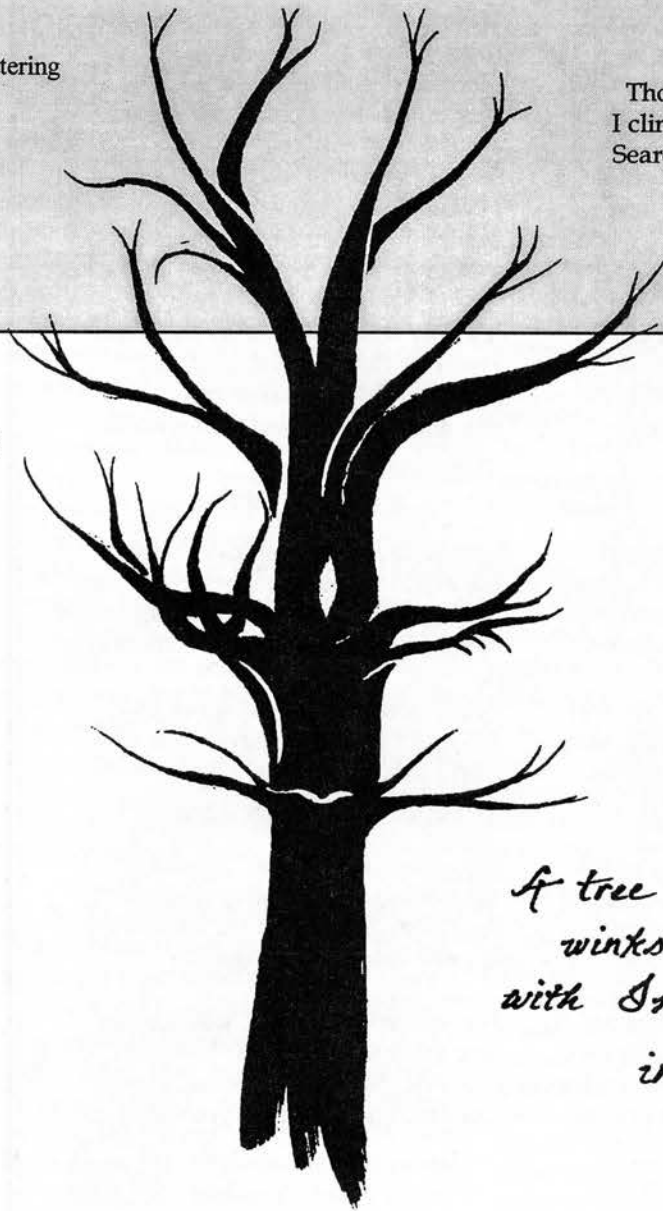
every suicide?
Do we pay attention?
We listen to the story

of someone else's moments,
do we pay attention to
our own lives, to the poetry

of our breaths? Do we pay attention
to the sonnets of our sighs
to the lyrics of our laughter

to the lament of our unfulfilled lust,
to the threnody of our own
dear death to come?

Carol Sherman



Tinkling
Tickling china.
Whistling
Birds banter.
Bodies breath.
Chanting
Churning bellies.
Sobbing
Graceful tears.
Sangha's
Sweet song.

Arlene Weiland

*A tree
winks back at me
with Insight,
in Barre*

The Thorn in Your Heart

Selections from
the *Attadaṇḍa Sutta*
of the *Sutta Nipāta*

- 935 attadaṇḍā bhayaṃ jātaṃ,
janaṃ passatha medhakaṃ,
saṃvegaṃ kittayissāmi
yathā saṃvijitaṃ mayā. Fear is born from arming oneself.
Just see how many people fight!
I'll tell you about the dreadful fear
that caused me to shake all over:
- 936 phandamānaṃ pajāṃ disvā
macche appodake yathā
aññamaññehi vyāruddhe
disvā maṃ bhayaṃ āvisi. Seeing creatures flopping around,
Like fish in water too shallow,
So hostile to one another!
—Seeing this, I became afraid.
- 937 samantaṃ asaro loko,
disā sabbā sameritā,
icchaṃ bhavanam attano
nāddasāsiṃ anositaṃ, This world completely lacks essence;
It trembles in all directions.
I longed to find myself a place
Unscathed—but I could not see it.
- 938 osāne tv-eva vyāruddhe
disvā me aratī ahu,—
ath' ettha sallaṃ addakkhim
duddasaṃ hadayanissitaṃ. Seeing people locked in conflict,
I became completely distraught.
But then I discerned here a thorn
—Hard to see—lodged deep in the heart.
- 939 yena sallena otinno
disā sabbā vidhāvati,
tam eva sallaṃ abbuyha
na dhāvati, nisīdati. It's only when pierced by this thorn
That one runs in all directions.
So if that thorn is taken out—
one does not run, and settles down.
- ...
- 948 yo 'dha kāme accatari
saṃgaṃ loke duraccayaṃ,
na so socati nājjheti
chinnasoto abandhano. Who here has crossed over desires,
the world's bond, so hard to get past,
he does not grieve, she does not mourn.
His stream is cut, she's all unbound.
- 949 yaṃ pubbe, taṃ visosehi,
pacchā te māhu kiñcanaṃ,
majjhe ce no gahessasi,
upasanto carissasi. What went before—let go of that!
All that's to come—have none of it!
Don't hold on to what's in between,
And you'll wander fully at peace.
- 950 sabbaso nāmarūpasmiṃ
yassa n' atthi mamāyitaṃ,
asatā ca na socati,
sa ve loke na jiyati. For whom there is no "I-making"
All throughout the body and mind,
And who grieves not for what is not
Is undefeated in the world.
- 951 yassa n' atthi 'idam me' ti
'paresaṃ' vā pi kiñcanaṃ,
mamattaṃ so asaṃvindaṃ
'n' atthi me' ti na socati. For whom there is no "this is mine"
Nor anything like "that is theirs"
Not even finding "self-ness," he
Does not grieve at "I have nothing."

The *Sutta Nipāta* is probably one of the most diverse collections of discourses to be found in the Pali Tipitaka, and the chapter from which this sutta is taken, the *Aṭṭhaka-vagga*, may well be the oldest portion of the entire canon. It is composed mostly in verse, and includes some lovely poetry.

There is something particularly moving for me about this poem, perhaps because it is composed in the first person and appears to reveal the process through which the Buddha himself came to understanding; perhaps because of the vulnerability expressed in the opening stanzas, where he admits his fear and sense of dread over the the nature of the human condition. Or maybe it is just the utter simplicity of first, the problem (people hurting each other), and then its cause (basic human selfishness, driven by desire), and finally, its solution (letting go of the ego's attachments). How easy he can so often make it all sound!

The first line alone is a counter-intuitive show-stopper. Conventional wisdom suggests that arming oneself is a prudent response to fear of self-injury. Yet the Buddha's wisdom goes deeper to observe how this actually contributes to the generation of more fear. Do we really feel more safe when we lash out at our critics and adversaries? Our culture certainly assumes so; but the Buddha is offering an alternative response, emerging from his own experience.

The phrase translated here as "arming oneself," which serves as the title of the sutta, is elsewhere rendered "embracing violence" (Norman) or "violent conduct" (Saddhatissa). The basic image is of a person taking up a stick, (*daṇḍa*); the stick being a common symbol in Indian literature for both violence and punishment.

The reader can hardly help feeling swept up in the emotional turmoil of the author. The tension mounts as the fear and despair builds, and then breaks suddenly with the insight that, like an animal driven to madness by an injury, mankind is not evil by nature but is only driven to violence by the relentless pressure of desire.

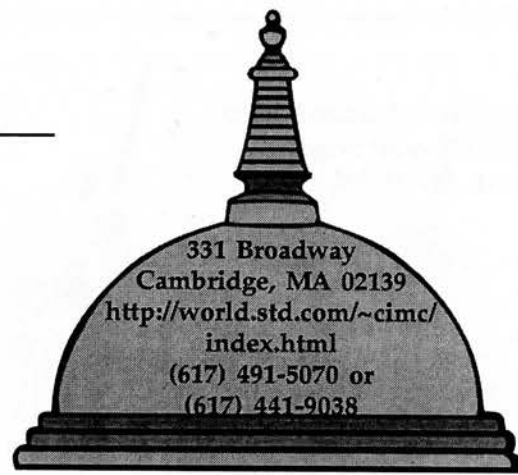
The latter half of the poem describes how to cultivate a state of mind—a stance within unfolding experience—that avoids the dysfunctional move of creating and projecting oneself on every situation.

These few verses embrace the whole of the four noble truths: the suffering manifest as violence, its cause by the thorn in the heart, the "unbinding" or crossing over this, and the way to cultivate the selflessness that constitutes real freedom. --A. Olendzki

Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

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

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



Anatta: A Practical Approach

Like many practitioners, I have always found the teachings about anatta—or selflessness—hard to fathom. And the experience of anatta has always seemed elusive to me. (If there's no self, then who's writing this sentence?) So last fall, when I saw that Narayan Liebenson Grady's "old yogis" practice group at CIMC was about to take on the subject, I was intrigued.

The group, which has been meeting since 1994, is for people who have been practicing for three years or more, and who have some retreat experience along with a daily practice. Each weekly meeting includes meditation practice and discussion, either with the entire group or in small groups. And the discussion is usually about the previous week's "homework." These homework assignments are a key component of the curriculum.

Under Narayan's guidance, the group has examined a variety of Buddhist teachings, including the Ten Paramis, the Noble Eight-Fold Path, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, and the Four Brahma Viharas. And as a more-or-less regular attendee, I've benefited from most of them. But what about anatta? Unlike these other topics, there's no list associated with anatta and no built-in structure. Where would Narayan go with it? How could we spend a whole year on it? I was eager to find out.

What I came to see during the course of the year was that anatta is not quite as mysterious as I had imagined it to be. Narayan's talks and homework assignments encouraged us to experience self/selflessness in practical terms, in the context of our daily lives—not as a lofty, esoteric teaching reserved for the meditation hall. For example, one assignment was to notice how often we compare ourselves to others, especially at work and in our families. Doing this exercise let me see how my sense of self is constantly shifting. First I'd be "better than," then "worse than," then "equal to." Then back to "worse than." But if the self were really so solid, how could I hold such differing and often contradictory views of it? Another related assignment was to be aware of the many ways we think of ourselves—"I am an anxious person," "I am an angry person," "I am a good person," "I am a bad person,"—and to see how these thoughts and self-images change from day to day, or even from moment to moment.

By bringing these assignments to mind at least from time to time during the day, I was able to get a clearer sense of how fluid the self is. In the process, I also realized that anatta is really nothing special, that our various "selves" are continuously arising and passing away, and that in any given day, we have moments of anatta and moments of "selfing." At the same time, I could

So do I fully understand anatta? Not by a long shot. But it does seem more accessible than it did a year ago.

feel the burden of self, and see how clinging to any sense of self—even a highly positive one—leads only to suffering. Of course, whatever insights I may have had were reinforced by sharing them with the group and by listening to others' experiences—as well as to Narayan's comments and feedback.

So do I fully understand anatta? Not by a long shot. But it does seem more accessible than it did a year ago. In fact, participating in the class has helped me see that it's not something to be attained in the distant future. It's right here, all the time. And fortunately, the topic has proven to be such a rich one that the "old yogis," along with Narayan, will be exploring it for another year.

Tom Pedulla

This article is one of a series of occasional submissions by long-term practitioners at Cambridge Insight Meditation Center. The purpose of this series is to highlight the ongoing practice sessions at CIMC and how these sessions are bringing new understanding and clarification to those enrolled in those sessions. These submissions have been approved by the guiding teachers at CIMC.

Like Moths to the Flame

Udāna 6.9

One time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattī, in Jeta's grove, at the garden of Anāthapiṇḍika. At that time he was seated under the open sky, on a night of blinding darkness, while oil lamps were burning. And also at that time a great number of winged insects were flying around and falling into those oil lamps, thus meeting with misfortune, meeting with ruin, meeting with both misfortune and ruin. The Buddha saw those great number of winged insects flying around and falling into those oil lamps... And then the Buddha, understanding the meaning of this, gave utterance—at that moment—to this profound utterance:

upātīdhāvanti na sāram enti
navam navam bandhanam brūhayanti
patanti pajjotam iv'ādhipātā
ditthe sute iti h'eke nivīthā 'ti

Rushing up but then too far, they miss the point;
Only causing ever newer bonds to grow.
So obsessed are some by what is seen and heard,
They fly just like these moths—straight into the flames.

This is a wonderful example of the Buddha using whatever situation presents itself as an opportunity for teaching, and his remarks, as usual, can be taken on many different levels.

The insects are drawn irresistibly in the dark night to the shining lamps, but in their zeal to approach the light they go too far and only meet their doom. Humans likewise are drawn to the pleasures of the senses, to what is seen and heard, not realizing the dangers involved. When we get too close—when we hold on with too much attachment—we get burned by suffering. The senses can still be enjoyed, as the moth can stay circling the flame, but only when one holds the proper distance. This quality of “stepping back” or “standing off” from obsession with the senses is something that is cultivated with the practice of mindfulness meditation.

But the fire can also be taken as a symbol of wisdom. We are naturally drawn to the light of truth, to the teachings of the Buddha for example, but must take care not to over-shoot the mark. Getting too attached to views, even if these views are correct, can also lead to harm and the strengthening of bondage. The word translated here as “point” is *sāra*, which can mean the heart, the essence or the crux of something. The subtle idea that seems to be expressed is that rushing or running will never reveal what is essential—the pith can never be approached headlong. What is needed is the tranquility of mind that meditation brings, and the ability to keep even wisdom in proper perspective.

The passage is in the form of an Udāna, a solemn utterance, and is in the *tristubh* meter of eleven syllables per line. The order of the last two lines has been re-arranged in translation to better reflect the syntax of English. --A. Olendzki