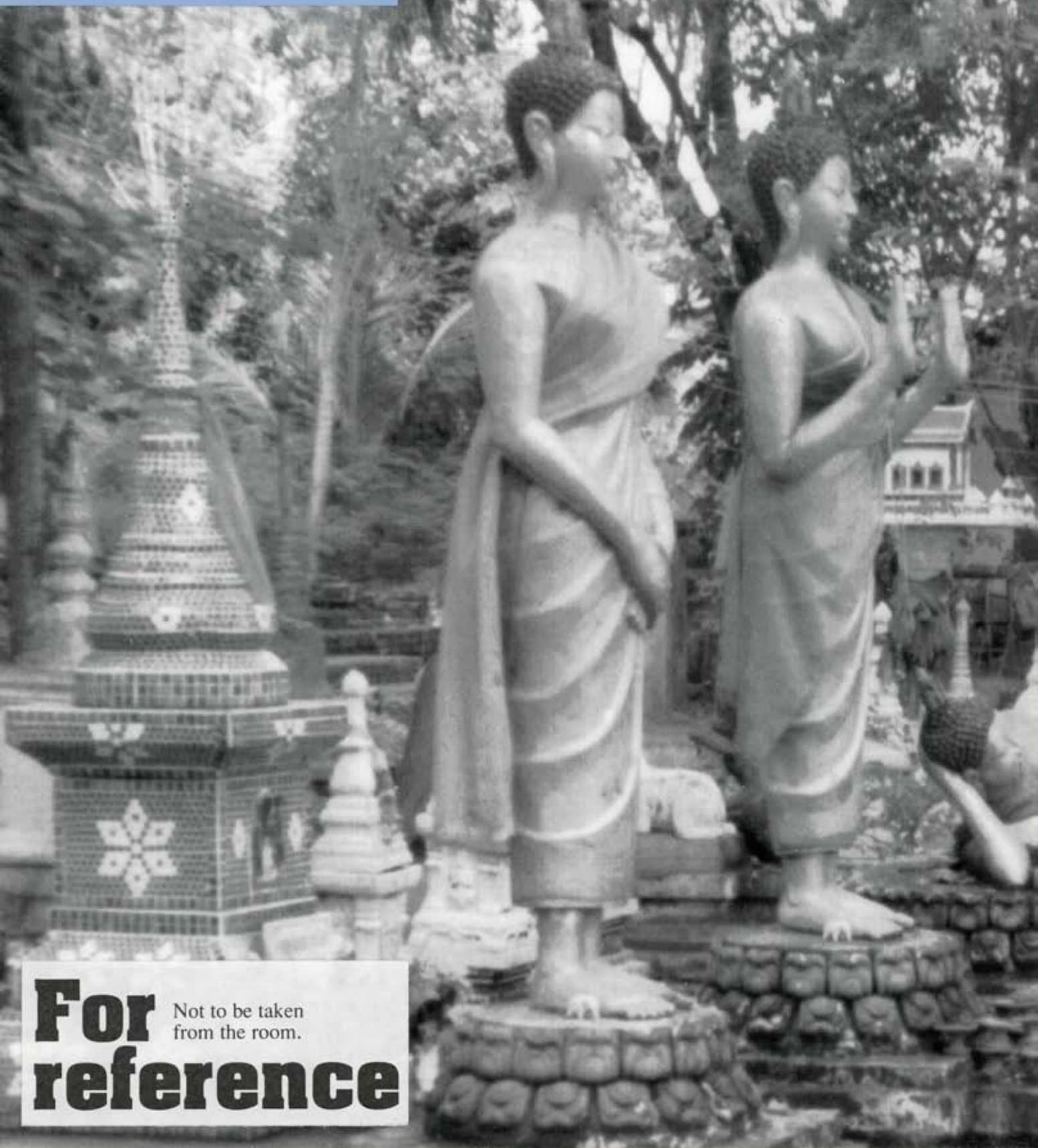


Insight

Fall / Winter
2001



For Not to be taken
from the room.
reference

Insight

A twice-yearly newsletter of the

Insight Meditation Society
and the
**Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies**

with program schedules and
Dharma articles of lasting interest

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Insight is a newsletter jointly published by the Insight Meditation Society and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which are tax-exempt non-profit centers whose purpose is to foster the practice of *vipassanā* (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 Buddhist tradition within a contemplative framework. The intention is to build a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.



In the garden of Wat Chet Yot, Chiang Mai

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IT CAN BE VERY SIMPLE

An interview with

Ajahn Sundarā

Ajahn Sundarā, a senior nun from the Amaravati community in England, spent the three-month vassa, or rains retreat, at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies in the summer of 2001. She spoke to us just before her departure.

Thank you, Ajahn, for taking the time to talk with us this morning. Let me start by asking you something simple: What do you feel is the essence of dharma?

[Laughter.] This is not such a simple question... The essence of dharma is liberation. Liberation from *dukkha*, from suffering in its widest meaning. And also liberation from any kind of delusion, any kind of ignorance.

Sometimes liberation is portrayed as a goal at the end of one's path, and at other times one hears about moments of liberation and freedom. Can you clarify this?

Liberation is not out there somewhere, or an event that will happen sometime in the future. It begins right here right now. Many conditions are supporting the time when one might have a profound experience of letting go of some particular blind spot or pattern of attachment. Even though *nirvana* is presented as a goal—the goal of final liberation—each moment is a moment where there is a possibility of liberating the mind from its habitual grasping, its clinging, its blindness. So it's the goal, and at the same time it's happening in the moment. These do not contradict one another.

What do these moments feel like, when you actually experience insight?

It's not like a major fireworks experience, where everything is suddenly just blown apart. For me, it can be very simple: just suddenly noticing an habitual way of the mind seeing things. You contact the world, and suddenly you see the *dukkha* and you KNOW. You just see the experience of tension, and the actual *tanhā* [craving] behind it. You can experience both the wanting—and then the relaxing into that experience and allowing it to just be there. You see that you can stop acting on it.

When it becomes clear that grasping is the cause of *dukkha*, you just let go. Instead of clinging, you just release it. The peace that comes from releasing, that is *nirodha*, the experience of cessation, the third noble truth which is often hardly even noticed. The mind, under the influence of ego, is more inclined to notice what is exciting or interesting. Usually you might be pushing away the experience, or grasping it, or struggling with it, or making something out of it, or becoming it. And then, in this moment of insight, you see these as just reactive responses that we usually have out of ignorance towards our mind states, our bodily experiences, and so on. Cessation is peaceful:

Each moment there is a possibility of liberating the mind.



the ending of grasping, the ending of our problems, the ending of ME with my story and all its complexities.

You realize that there is no one there. The mind with its thoughts, feeling and perception just seems to arise out of nowhere, and disappears, and arise again. It is only through our delusion that we are constantly building up a sense of self around that, creating what we hope is some kind of secure landscape. We construct a person, again and again, out of our misapprehension of physical and mental phenomena.

So the noble truths are really revealed in experience moment after moment?

Yes. If you are awake.

And how do we wake up, or remain awake, in order to see these things in our experience?

Paradoxically, the experience of *dukkha* is part of our waking up. Somehow I've noticed that most human beings around me—including myself—seem to be spurred on by the experience of unsatisfactoriness. I don't think any one of us is looking for that, or wants it, and it's not necessarily unsatisfactory in the

sense of being unhappy. But often with the experience of *dukkha* comes the realization that you are asleep; there is a lack of mindfulness, a lack of awareness and energy. A kind of contraction has already begun, and then suddenly you realize that you are not aware. You are not really present with what's happening. You are seeing the world through the veil of habits, the veil of misery and depression, excitement, anger or frustration. As a well known teacher says, you are not meeting the moment as a fresh moment.

Do you mean that you need to be awake to see the noble truths in your experience, and at the same time, by seeing them, you wake up?

That's right. When you really see suffering, you have already come to that place of wakefulness, which is not clinging and grasping. So in a way by seeing suffering, you have also almost seen the ending of suffering. It's not like a linear sequence in time, one, two, three, four. It's more like the case of a hand touching a cinder of hot coal. As soon as you pick it up you drop it, because you just know it is hot. You don't wait, you just drop it. At some point it becomes as urgent as this.

And what might you say to help a person who can see the unsatisfactoriness arising again and again in their experience, but somehow just can't seem to manage to see the holding that is underlying and causing it?

We all go through this. We can often feel the misery of *dukkha* and not be able to drop it. It is as if we were addicted to it. I think all of us are in the same boat. But this is where practice makes a difference. With meditation we have tools that help us to investigate the nature of our experiences and to see our habitual grasping. Much of the practice is about being very patient and willing to bear with our habits until they run out of fuel.

When you enter the practice, you enter a fire.

It's as though we were starting a program of detox: it doesn't feel so good. We can experience the withdrawal symptoms of addiction to delusion. For a while you just feel very ill at ease because you are not feeding the habits of grasping. Many people come to practice thinking, "Oh, it's going to be really nice. I'm going to

find peace, and I'll be confident and more clear." They don't realize that actually when you enter the practice, you enter a strong fire.

And what helps us make the breakthrough? Is it just the gradual effects of patiently returning our attention to the present? Or is it a momentum that grows from moments of insight getting closer together, or more deep?

Sometimes it is just a matter of patiently bearing with difficult states of mind, mood, emotion, perceptions, old conditioning and so on. As we keep taking refuge in mindfulness, moment by moment, we are not fueling our habits and our grasping begins to loosen up. It does not seem like very much at first, yet you begin to notice how certain situations, certain people, certain moods that used to agitate your mind do not have any hold anymore.

We don't have to be afraid of the heat generated by the shadow side of our personality.

When I first learned about practice, my teacher emphasized right view. His teaching constantly reminded me to observe experiences as changing—and to notice when there was suffering or not. Paying attention, I began to be aware when I took things personally and when I did not, when the sense of self was present or not. The more it hurt, I noticed, the more I was invested in what I experienced. I was noticing the patterns of attachment in my life and the lack of inherent selfhood of the mind.

I think sometimes in the West we see the practice and the path of training the mind in a way that is a little narrow. We think of it, perhaps, as a technique or some kind of special conditions to reach a breakthrough. We often forget that every aspect of life is a tool to realize Dhamma. Everything in life influences us, and awareness is key. Awareness of mistakes can take us right into the fire. Sometimes not getting it quite right is what wakes you up, much more sharply than developing a lot of techniques to be aware. Transformation sometimes needs fire, and we don't have to be afraid of the heat that's generated by the shadow side of our personality.

It becomes possible to be at peace with whatever is happening.

But what is the wisdom component of that? For many people, when their ego gets thrown down, they feel bad about themselves; and this can just fuel more unskillful states. What is the crucial factor that will allow one to use this as a tool for growth rather than for further suffering?

Wisdom can help discern the suffering that perpetuates itself and the suffering that takes us to the end of suffering. Most people identify with what they experience. So when they feel miserable, they don't know how to let awareness reflect back their experiences. If we are still desperately clinging to being successful, or being loved, or being praised, or being famous, or whatever—then we won't be able to see the bigger picture. We won't be able to reach the state of peace that Ajahn Chah was pointing to when he said:

"If you let go of a little you have a little peace. If you let go of a lot you have a lot of peace. And if you let go completely, then you have complete peace."

When you have seen through insight that the things we crave are not really worth making ourselves miserable, it becomes possible to be at peace with whatever is happening.

Is this easier to do in a monastic environment?

Certainly in the beginning it's easier to practice in an environment where people share a common interest and commitment, and whose lifestyle is designed to support the practice and realization of Dhamma. It is also an advantage to be away from a lot of situations where the worldly assumptions hold undisputed sway. In our Western secular society, to be famous, and successful, and loved, and praised is the only goal isn't it? That is what you are brought up to believe from childhood. But when you are in a monastic environment for a while you have many encouragement to just drop the whole thing and to see what happens when you don't cling to these ideals. There are also very clear ethical standards, which is a big help.

Sila (morality) provides clear guidelines that remind us to be mindful of all aspects of our life: mind, body, speech and our interaction with the outside world. But these guidelines would not be very useful if they were seen simply as another set of ideas to be clung to. Wisdom and a compassionate attitude must be present to use them skilfully, and to realise that our mistakes as well as our success are valuable material for practice.

So even as a monastic you still have an occasional opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them?

Occasional? [Laughter] People have such a funny idea about monasticism. It's a place where your shortcomings become magnified and you have to face yourself as you are rather than as an ideal you may be trying to uphold. You have many mirrors of yourself in a community. It can be quite a shock sometimes to realize how many identities you are living with!

How did you come to the dharma? Who has been your teacher?

I always think of Thomas Merton and Krishnamurti as the people who gave me an inkling of an inquiring mind and the dimension of awareness. But it all really began for me with Ajahn Sumedho. I met him early in 1978, when he came to visit the university where I was studying at the time. One of the students, who had been a monk with Ajahn Chah, had started a Buddhist Society where some meditation was being taught.

What really struck me is that Ajahn Sumedho was describing in his talks a lifestyle which I had been looking for but never imagined I could ever find in our culture. I had always lived in metropolitan areas, in a world of artists and intellectuals where tranquility and peace was not exactly the aim of life. He spoke of the simple lifestyle of a monk in Thailand and I saw somebody who was intelligent, reflective, bright and humorous. He embodied qualities which I appreciated. I remembered his humor more than anything.

There was a certain freshness about his outlook on things that was very reassuring. Having trained as a dancer, I was familiar with the kind of focused attention and concentration you need to be in the present moment. You can't dance by thinking, or with a manual in your hands—you've got to be right there. I was looking for something that could sustain

that experience of presence in my every day life, but there was nothing in our society that seemed able to provide this.

Presumably as a dancer you were well trained in mindfulness and concentration. If these are factors that lead to awakening, why don't all dancers have wisdom?



There was a slow transformation happening, beyond my control.

Well, concentration and a certain degree of mindfulness are present, but not what the Buddha calls right mindfulness. There was no shortage of suffering and opportunity to see the Dhamma, yet I didn't know how to find a skillful way to deal with it. Even though I had learned a lot about the body, I did not know what it was about. It was a bit like a doctor who might know every detail about the human body, but who is totally ignorant of its real nature. I eventually found the dancer's world ego-centered and narcissistic.

So how did you get from there to the monastic community?

Inspired by the teaching of Krishnamurti, I started inquiring into what I was feeling and thinking, sitting quietly and simply being present. In the stillness there was a strong awareness of the restlessness of the mind, the fear, the agitation, the frustration and so on. It was like opening the gates to all that which did not want to be present. And I began to see how mind and body interacted with one another, which triggered my curiosity: "Oh that's very interesting. What's going on here?" I had never known that I was living with such an active mind and body. All sorts of things were

becoming conscious, not just difficult aspects of the mind but also some very positive ones, which came as a surprise. Suddenly I felt a great wish to be generous, and not being so preoccupied with myself, I had more time and wanted to share what I had. So there was a slow transformation happening, beyond my control.

This was a very unfamiliar experience, because like most people I thought that my strength and ability to act and respond to life came from getting actively involved—not by relaxing and just being at peace in the present moment. Yet so many experiences were coming up by doing nothing, by just being present. There were also some changes in my professional and personal life taking place, raising many questions which I knew had no real answer. Somehow the answers were not so important, but I felt that the questions were.

We're getting closer. And the final step?

The turning point was a retreat with Ajahn Sumedho. I discovered that I loved getting up at four o'clock in the morning and eating only one meal a day. I did get totally bored, miserable, hungry and critical at times—yet to me, because of the presence of mindfulness, it was ten days in heaven! I discovered that I had enough space to see my critical mind reflected everywhere: "I don't like him. I don't like it here. She's not practicing right" and enough compassion to let things be. This incredible simplicity of the present moment, and all this energy to just be here and now and to notice what was going on in the mind, fascinated me.

However, the last thing I thought is that I would wind up at a monastery. I had all sorts of ideas and plans for the years ahead. And at some point I was talking to Ajahn Sumedho about all of this—going on about the greatness of the challenges of the world. When I stopped he just said "Yes, and it's a matter of knowing where the world is, isn't it?" And that was like a lightening bolt. It changed everything. Suddenly I realized something that I had read in many books, that I was actually making my world and was free to lead my life as I wanted.

So "The world is in this fathom-long body." [M1:82] Is that what he was referring to?

Yes. "You cannot reach the end of the world by walking, but you cannot end dukkha without going to the end of the world" the Buddha said. I didn't realize the impact it had

until I realized my mind had stopped somehow. Soon thereafter I thought, "Well, ten days did a jolly good job. How about three months? That should sort yourself out for the rest of your life." Of course, that first month turned out to be so fascinating I stayed on, and eventually joined the order of nuns.

And how developed was the nun's community at that point?

Well, there was nothing. We were four laywomen who happen to come to the monastery at about the same time. We were ordained together a few weeks later. Learning to live together under the same roof was an extraordinary classroom. We were four incredibly strong individuals—very different. [Laughter] It was an entirely different lifestyle for all of us, to suddenly find ourselves with three other people day in and day out in really rough conditions. In the early years the monastery was a really tough place to live. It was virtually a building site, stripped from the cellar up to the roof. It was cold and damp, and there was a kind of spooky atmosphere at times.

We got up at four and had to be up at the main house at five o'clock in morning. Since we were fifteen minute's walk up a tiny deserted lane from the bottom of a hill, we had to get up even earlier than the men. Each week there was an all-night vigil where we meditated until four or five o'clock in the morning. We lived on one meal a day, we didn't have breakfast for two years. Being French (food is important!), that was really quite a drastic change for me. [Laughter] A real mind-stopper!

And there must have been some special difficulties around the fact that nuns and monks were relatively close together?

Yes, of course. It was quite an extraordinary situation. The monks had just moved from Thailand to the West, in an entirely different culture. They did not have the support of an Asian society that is predominantly Buddhist, and had never lived close to nuns. Personally, not knowing much about this tradition, it wasn't too bad as I remember at the time, because I just took on board the situation as it was. As a female monastic I never felt particularly inferior in those days—I think I was too conceited to feel that I was inferior, anyway. But I have to say we were very well treated, very respected.

Over the years a great mutual respect between the male and female members of the community has developed.

I am often asked questions like "How can you cope with the fact that women are subordinate to men" [according the ancient monastic codes] and so on. This has been an issue in our community not just for the nuns but for the monks too, and has not been an easy one. We have had to learn to work with a situation that challenges much of our conditioning around being strong and independent western women.



The practice helps us respond to the way things are, rather than projecting some sort of ideals onto a monastic form which is to be used as a skillful means rather than an end in itself. But this is an ongoing challenge, and the question remains: "How do we relate to this whole convention skillfully, and translate into our culture a tradition that is so incredibly different from what we know in the West?"

In the last decade, the nun's community has become much more independent, and administers its own internal affairs. The responsibilities of running the monastery are shared, and most decisions are made by a group of senior monks and nuns. Over the years a great mutual respect between the male and female members of the community has developed.

In this and many other ways there seems to be a good deal of evolution in the modern Sangha.

I have noticed, since I have been in the United States more over the last ten years, that there is a sense of growing interest in monastic life that I had not seen so much before. There seems to be a deeper understanding of what monastic life means for us, and a greater interest in supporting monastics. I think the more understanding there is between the lay community and the monastic community, the more mutual respect naturally develops. This will surely benefit and enrich each other's experience and quality of practice. It was not too long ago that more polarity existed, and I feel this is a really positive development.

The growing connection between our Sangha on the one hand, and the larger retreat centers in America such as IMS and Spirit Rock is very heart-warming. I was at Spirit Rock recently when Ajahn Sumedho was there teaching a group of senior lay dharma teachers, and was very happy to see a bit more of the harmony within the communities of which the Buddha so often spoke when he reminded us to meet often, meet in concord, and part in concord.

Any last thoughts, Sister?

I would just like to express my gratitude and appreciation to everyone at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and at the Insight Meditation Society for the kindness, generosity and support that I have received during my three-month stay, and to thank particularly those who made it possible for me to spend the Vassa here.



IMS News Worth Noting

Off the Cushion, but Still on Retreat

(...Sitting, Walking, Working,
...Sitting, Walking, Working...)

- *Would you like to be on retreat at IMS and yet integrate mindful work into your daily practice?*
- *Would you like to play an important role in helping IMS offer retreats?*

If so, we need you! Work retreatants contribute 5 hours a day during a retreat, either in the housekeeping department or the kitchen, learning how to mix work activities with formal meditation practice. We typically need 2-4 people per course who would like to experience this kind of practice.

The only requirements are an able body and a willingness to serve. Work retreatants pay a small application fee and are not charged a daily rate.

For application information please call (978) 355-4378 ext. 19 or email aa@dharma.org.

An Act of Generosity

Since the early eighties, western monks and nuns from the Thai forest tradition, in the lineage of Ajahn Chah, have taught a retreat each year at IMS. These include such notable teachers as Ajahn Sumedho, Ajahn Sucitto, Ajahn Amaro, Ajahn Sundara, and Ajahn Candasiri.

Next year, in the spirit of generosity, we will offer this retreat, taught by Ajahn Sucitto, on a full dana basis for the first time. This means there will now be two dana retreats each year. There is no fixed fee for these courses; participants are encouraged to offer whatever contribution fits their means.

This is an experiment—we are interested to see if offering another retreat on a dana basis will not only bring us closer into accord with the traditional style of Buddhist practice, but also still allow us to meet our financial responsibilities. If we are successful, who knows, one day we may be able to offer more retreats in this manner.

2002 Schedule: Many Beloved Teachers

Be sure to note the exciting developments on our 2002 schedule. Joseph Goldstein will once again teach the February Metta and Vipassana retreats with Sharon Salzberg and others, after taking time off in 2001 to write his forthcoming book, *One Dharma*.

Carol Wilson, who has long been a senior teacher at IMS will hold her own course here next March for the first time. In April, Ajahn Sucitto will lead the 8-precept monastic tradition retreat.

Sylvia Boorstein is back on the schedule—she last taught here in 1999—teaching a vipassana course in May. And Jack Kornfield returns to IMS after an absence of over 3 years. His retreat will also take place in May.

Many other well-known and familiar teachers will continue to offer the teachings of liberation—please see the schedule, which starts on p.16. It identifies those retreats requiring lotteries and their application due dates.

Scholarship Fund

In keeping with the tradition of *dana* (the Pali word for generosity) that stretches all the way back to the Buddha, it is our intention that anyone who desires to practice at IMS be able to do so, regardless of financial situation.

Our Scholarship Fund now assists all those with low income and /or life-threatening, progressive or disabling illness who might otherwise be unable to afford the entire cost of a retreat.

To provide financial aid to as many people as possible we normally limit the value of scholarships to the cost of one nine-day retreat per person per year. (The annual 3-Month Retreat, as well as extended individual practice are considered separately.)

A small deposit is required on registering - see P. 15 & 21 for further information. To access financial assistance, check the relevant section of the registration form on P. 21. Please be assured that we will do our best to help you attend a retreat with us.

dharma.org

a combined www page for:

**Insight Meditation
Society
and
Barre Center
for Buddhist Studies**

with links to:
Dharma Seed Archive
Vipassana Retreat Centers
Teacher Web Pages
Access To Insight
and other sites
of possible interest to
the vipassana meditation community

OPPORTUNITY FOR RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

FOREST REFUGE DIRECTOR

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY

Further information is available at
www.dharma.org under Job Listings.
Qualified applicants should send a resume
and cover letter to the Director of Human
Resources at the Insight Meditation Society
1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005
or e-mail FrancineT@Dharma.org

IMS is an equal opportunity employer

IMS is seeking a Director for its new Forest Refuge retreat center. The Forest Refuge offers a silent, secluded environment for experienced meditators to undertake extended practice. The position will start in the fall of 2002, with the successful candidate guiding and facilitating the staffing and operations prior to opening in early 2003.

The Director will be responsible for the overall operation of The Forest Refuge, including fiscal and office management, registration, supervision of personnel and facilities, support and care of retreatants and fund-raising.

The successful candidate will:

- Have demonstrated competencies in: planning, budgeting, contract development, fiscal management and administration, staff supervision and development, and team leadership.
- Have a strong commitment to the dharma and an experiential understanding of deep practice and the requirements of an environment devoted to it.
- Understand and abide by the ethical guidelines at IMS.
- Be an effective problem-solver and communicator with the ability to handle varied and multiple tasks.
- Experience in "start-up" roles in non-profit organizations highly desirable.

This is a long-term administrative position offering housing, food privileges, comprehensive health benefits, retirement plan, generous vacation and retreat time, and a modest but adequate salary. It is a unique opportunity for right livelihood as part of an unsurpassed dharma center in a beautiful rural New England environment.

the forest refuge



Planned Giving — Securing the Future

"Acts of generosity inspired by loving kindness live long in human memory, generating love and respect among humankind, thus laying foundations for the unity of the whole world."

Mahasi Sayadaw (Wheel Pub. #299)

From its humble beginnings just twenty-five years ago, IMS is today one of the most renowned meditation retreat centers in the West. This is due to the generosity and deep commitment of yogis, staff, teachers, board members, and many kind supporters around the world. Over two thousand retreatants come to courses each year. They demonstrate the great on-going interest in the practices of awakening that the Buddha taught more than 2,500 years ago.

Now, in its twenty-fifth anniversary year, IMS is looking to ensure the future and longevity of this tradition in the West. We want to continue and expand our efforts to make meditation practice available to all. We wish to plan not only for the next twenty-five years, but also for many more years to come.

A big step in furthering our commitment to dharma practice in the West is the development of The Forest Refuge. This new retreat facility, currently under construction, will offer a silent, secluded environment for long-term sustained meditation practice. It will also be a center for training future dharma teachers.

With IMS soon to be running two major programs—its current full schedule of retreats and The Forest Refuge—we need to establish a solid fiscal foundation in order to ensure the sustainability of IMS's mission at a rate accessible to all. This can only be achieved by your continued generosity and kindness.

Planned giving is an essential element in securing this stable financial future. Just as acts of lovingkindness bear fruits in so many ways, so too, the generous intention of planned giving will bring benefit to many future dharma practitioners. Several individuals, appreciating the great gift of meditation in their own lives and wishing to make meditation practice financially accessible to others, have already designated IMS as a beneficiary in their wills.

If you would like to support IMS's vision, estate planning, bequests and gifts of appreciated assets are some of the options you might consider.

Life Insurance This is a way to offer a significant gift at a relatively low cost to yourself. You can contribute a life insurance policy, either by making IMS the owner and beneficiary of an existing policy or by purchasing a new policy in IMS's name. You may receive a charitable tax deduction and also benefit IMS's future.

Retirement Plans As your legacy, consider naming IMS as the beneficiary of your retirement plan. This form of donation is gaining

in popularity because it can be transferred tax-free to a nonprofit organization. (Retirement funds left to individuals may be doubly taxed—all are subject to income tax and, if the estate is large enough, to estate taxes as well.)

Bequests You may designate a fixed amount in your will to be left to IMS upon your death. You can also gift the residue of your estate—that is, whatever property is left after all gifts and obligations have been satisfied. A bequest to IMS can be made by having your lawyer write a simple addition to an existing will.

Appreciated Stock If you own appreciated stock, one of the best tax advantages for a year of good investment return is a gift to a charitable organization.

. . .

In recent months, estate planners have been advising clients to take a second look at existing financial plans, in light of the new 2001 tax law. Please consider including IMS as you revisit your estate plan or as you make a will for the first time.

If you have questions about any of this information, or would like to talk further about supporting IMS through your estate plan, please call Tricia Sawyer at (978) 355-4378 ext. 82 or e-mail TriciaS@dharm.org. To receive further information, please fill out and return the form below to IMS, 1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005.

I am interested in more information about providing for IMS in my estate plan or with appreciated assets. I have indicated some areas of interest below. I understand that all replies will be held in strictest confidence.

- bequests/wills
- supporting IMS through a life insurance policy
- supporting IMS through my retirement fund
- gifts of appreciated assets

I have already named IMS as a beneficiary of my estate through my:

will retirement plan life insurance

Please contact me. I have a question.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
EMail _____
Telephone _____
Best Time to Call _____

Forest Refuge Update

Construction Begins!

It was just five years ago that IMS first considered the idea of a center for long-term meditation practice. Two years later, in 1998, we committed ourselves to the creation of The Forest Refuge. Now, after countless hours of planning, designing, budgeting and many meetings, construction of this unique facility has begun.

The Forest Refuge committee wanted to acknowledge this occasion with a blessing ceremony honoring the vision, the land, and all those beings (seen and unseen) who dwell there. The ceremony date coincided with a retreat at IMS taught by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Punnadhammo, Western Buddhist monks from the Thai forest tradition. On the afternoon of May 16, 2001, a procession of monks, staff, yogis and guests made its way through the woods (miraculously free of the season's biting black flies) to the entrance of The Forest Refuge site.

The staff had created a wonderful outdoor sanctuary with lilac boughs arching over the footpaths, prayer flags hanging from the trees, and a temporary altar set up in a beautiful forest glade. Ajahn Amaro led the group in the ancient Pali chants and rituals, blessing the endeavor, extending *metta* [lovingkindness], and asking forgiveness from the multitude of beings whose environment would be disturbed in order for the project to be completed. Water was ceremoniously sprinkled in the six directions and poured onto a mandala, created from stones from the site, bark and flower petals, symbolizing all the elements. In closing, there was a sharing of merit with all beings. Joseph Goldstein then led a tour of the site, where the location of the various buildings had already been staked out.

Project Milestones

The final town permission needed to go ahead with the new water project (connecting IMS, The Forest Refuge and BCBS to Barre town water) was secured on May 7th, happily coinciding with Vesak, the date of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana. A local contractor, EW Sykes, started installation of the water main in late May and finished it three months later. This is the same contractor



Blessings from Ajahn Amaro.

who successfully completed the sewer project three years ago.

Work on the water project was undertaken concurrently with construction of the access road to The Forest Refuge, which was also ready for use in late August. Combining the two projects in this way saved costs, minimized environmental impact and enabled surplus project material to be recycled. One safety requirement was that the road be of sufficient width and gradient for fire trucks to reach all the buildings, in case of an emergency. Entry to the site is from Lockwood Road, crossing an easement given to IMS by BCBS.

By mid-August, the architects—the Boston-area firm of O'Neil/Pennoyer—had finished all construction documents, allowing site excavation and utility preparation to commence. IMS is working with North Branch Construction of Henniker, NH to build The Forest Refuge, with its completion date targeted for October 2002.

Once the facility is completed, it will be furnished, staff will be hired and the process of moving in and setting up will start. We hope to have a Forest Refuge Director on board by the end of next summer.

Program Development

The Program Development committee, responsible for developing The Forest Refuge teaching program and schedule is composed of Joseph Goldstein, Sarah Doering, Carol Wilson and Myoshin Kelley. All will teach at The Forest Refuge, with Joseph serving as Guiding Teacher and Myoshin as Resident Teacher.

Because the new center is intended for long-term, largely self-sustained practice, the dharma program will offer retreatants regular but moderate levels of teacher support. They will have one or two interviews a week, depending on the number of teachers available, and one weekly dharma talk.

The first planned retreat, to test all systems—human and mechanical—will be held in January 2003 for the IMS staff. This will be followed by the first formal retreat, for vipassana teachers, in March and April, 2003. It is anticipated that The Forest Refuge will be open to other retreatants in May, 2003, with the application process for those who wish to practice there opening next spring—the next issue of *Insight* will have more information about this.

Organizational Development

As mentioned in the last update, a Forest Refuge/IMS interface committee has been established to review several issues pertaining to the integration of this new facility within the IMS organization. These include assessing the long-term structure of The Forest Refuge committee, how integrated or autonomous The Forest Refuge should be with other IMS operations, and the reporting lines for The Forest Refuge staff and administration. Recommendations regarding governance and organizational structure will then be proposed to the IMS Board.



Sarah Doering and Joseph Goldstein break ground.

Financial Development

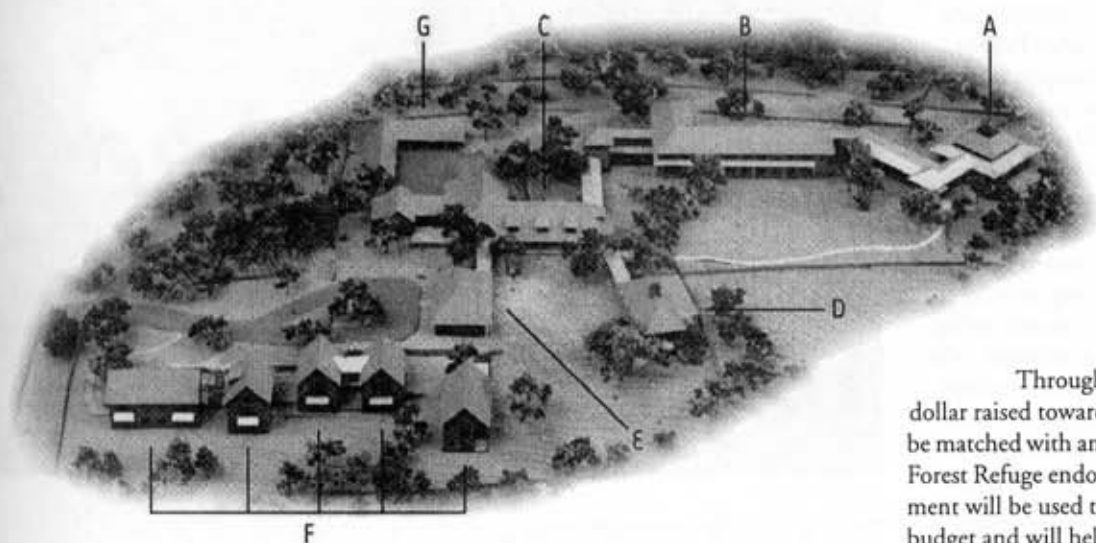
The total current estimated expense for the water project, The Forest Refuge, and long-term IMS fundraising is \$8.23 million. Of this amount, \$6.75 million has been received or pledged, leaving a balance of \$1.48 million to secure.

Through a generous pledge, every dollar raised towards this needed amount will be matched with an equal contribution to The Forest Refuge endowment fund. This endowment will be used to subsidize the operational budget and will help keep daily rates as low as possible.

The vision of this new long-term practice center is coming to fruition, and we are grateful for your on-going interest and support.

Inquiries and contributions can be directed to:

The Forest Refuge
1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, MA 01005
Phone: (978) 355-2063
Fax: (978) 355-4307
E-mail: theforestrefuge@dharma.org



The total square footage of the buildings is approximately 33,700.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A Meditation Hall | E Staff offices |
| B Retreatant accommodation | F Staff & teacher housing |
| C Dining Hall & Kitchen | G Garage (pole barn) |
| D Counseling center | |

A blessing ceremony was held at the site of the new Forest Refuge project in May, 2001.



Family Retreat Week

A popular feature of the IMS calendar is its annual summer Family Course. Started in 1982 by Christina Feldman, the retreat is designed to support parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teens—in fact, most of us—in developing a meditation practice within a household environment.

This year's course was taught by Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig and Trudy Goodman. In the meditation hall, sitting gear ranged from the traditional zafu through to a dinosaur-shaped cushion. An altar was set up surrounded by favorite toys. Seth Castleman coordinated the children's dharma program and, together with Margo McLoughlin, told stories that set everyone's imagination alight—from the very young to the retreat's 93-year-old elder.



I had a great time at Family Week. There were kids and adults of all ages so you got to know what it's like to be together in a kind of village. Animals also got to be part of the village, especially Kelsey, a dog who lives nearby, and a stray cat who was adopted by someone at the end. We promised to be kind to all beings at the retreat, although I think we would be kind to animals anyway.

Kids spent part of each day in groups with others around their own age. The 10-and-11-year-old group I was in went blueberry picking and wrote a skit, but we also practiced meditating for about two minutes. I learned that you can be in any position when you meditate. The important thing is that you relax your mind. You can think of things, you just don't go into them.

Margo's and Seth's stories were fantastic. One story that Seth told was about a tiny bird that tried to put out a fire. She finally did when all the animals helped out. The lesson of that story is that things can go far when you get help.

The thing I liked the best about the retreat was the bonfire on the last night. This year we had an imaginary bonfire inside because it was pouring outside. We threw confetti into the air to bless prayer flags that we made earlier in the week. Then each group put on skits or sang songs that had to do with IMS or Buddhism.

My time at IMS taught me that working together and being together can take us all a long way.

Alexandra Zaleski, aged 11



In learning to bow
For the first time I begin
To know my true size.

—Karen Lavender



A mallet rocks and accents the silence.
Outer drilling deeper listening.
Roaring engines and pacing dragons.
Gargoyles erupting from stone.
Tears washing slate clean.
Sounds, rhythms and vibrations tools of
The dharma sculptor shaking and shattering
My inner walls apart.
Boulders and bricks dismantled moved and
Retired to grace fields and gardens.
Hoping some day to be chosen to
Rest at the front door of IMS.

—Manus Campbell

Mica Bandini, Nalanda Program at BCBS.

Meditation

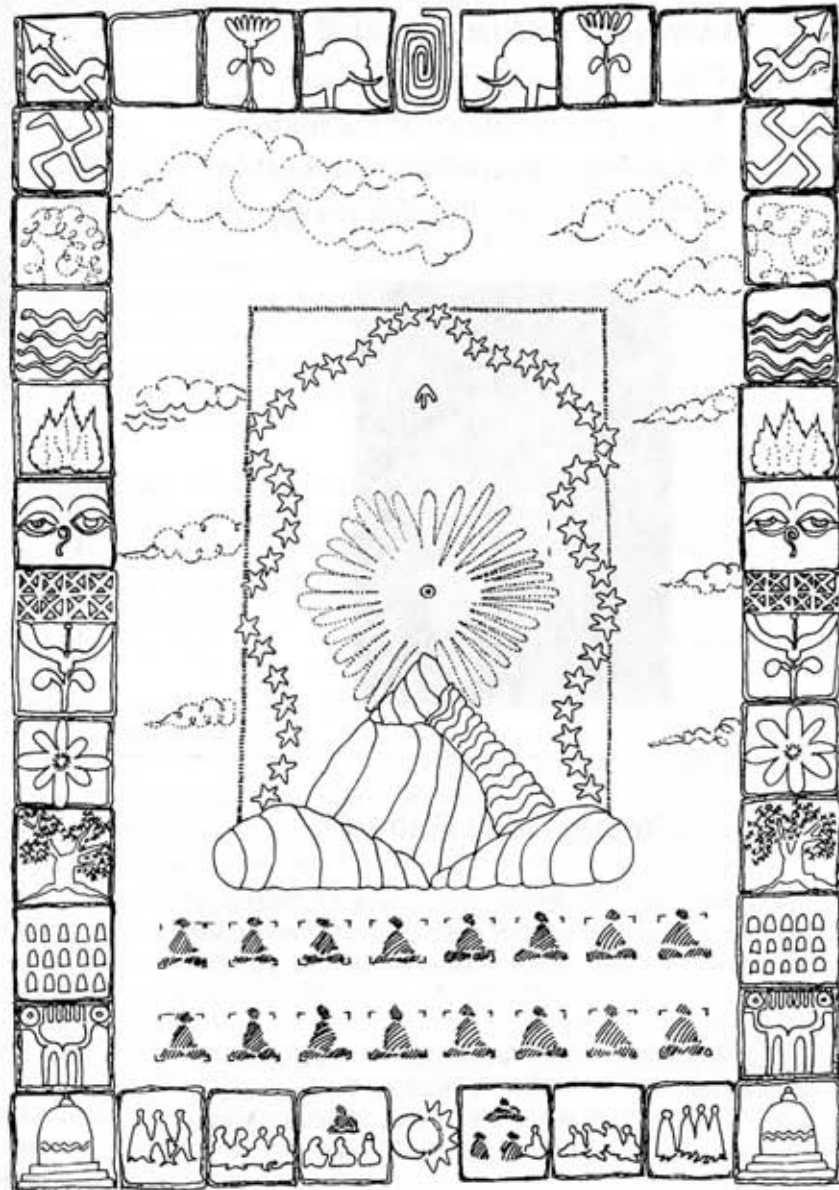
only one block
between our offices and the coffee shop
one block and by now
we could go
we could come back
we could go back and forth with our eyes closed

some days however
a lazy fat bird
who's forgotten to fly south
or a door
wide open for the first time in years
tickle lightly our rational mind

and there is no need for chatter

just a brief smile

—Beatriz Gonzalez-Flecha



Serve the Dharma at IMS



Volunteer Staff Openings *Starting in Winter/Spring 2002*

- Housekeeping
- Front Office

For a complete job description see our website: www.dharma.org under "Job Listings"

Become a volunteer and

- Deepen your spiritual practice
- Live in a community of meditators
- Learn about yourself in relationship
- Receive a diverse benefits package



Contact: Administrative Assistant
Insight Meditation Society
(978) 355-4378 Ext. 19
(978) 355-6398 FAX
personnel@dharma.org

Young Adult Retreat

The annual Young Adult Retreat (June 21- June 25, 2002), especially for teenagers, is a wonderful opportunity to help awaken mindfulness, compassion and lovingkindness in budding meditators.

IMS needs volunteers to lead discussion and activity groups. Volunteers should be experienced in meditation and enjoy teenagers! If you are interested, please call IMS at the above number. Volunteers will receive sitting days in exchange for service.

Family Retreat

Each year, IMS endeavors to cultivate the mindfulness, compassion and wisdom of the next generation through its Family Retreat. Part of this course's continued success is due to the role that volunteer group leaders play, in developing and supporting children's creativity and expression.

We are currently seeking group leaders for the 2002 Family Retreat (July 29-August 3). If you have experience in meditation and in working with children, and would like to consider this, please call us at the above number. Volunteers will receive sitting days in exchange for service.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



Insight Meditation (*vipassanā*) 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 160 secluded wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts.

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. Complete silence is maintained during retreats at all times, except during teacher interviews. A typical daily schedule starts at 5 AM and ends at 10 PM. The entire day is spent in silent meditation practice with alternate periods

of sitting and walking meditation. This regular schedule, the silence, group support and daily instruction combine to provide a beneficial environment for developing and deepening meditation practice. Meals are vegetarian, and accommodations are simple single and double rooms. Men and women do not share rooms. Camping is not available. Our current retreat schedule is listed on the following pages.

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

IMS offers several forms of individual retreat:

•**Self-Retreat:** Is scheduled between retreats and consists of any number of days not exceeding 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. Self-retreats cost between \$36-\$44 per day, depending on length. Please call for an application form.

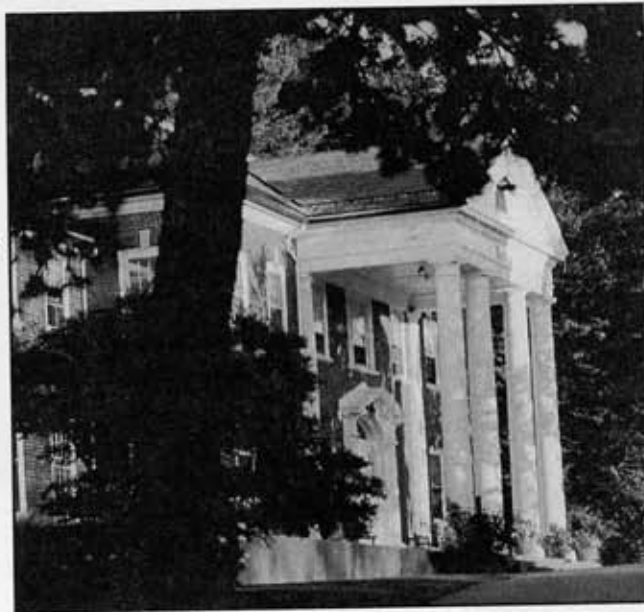
•**Work Retreats:** Work retreats provide a unique opportunity to explore the integration of mindfulness practice with work activity. The

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 (ext. #19) for information and 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.

•**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 article on financial aid (p. 7) or call IMS for more information about our generous scholarship program.

IMS RETREAT SCHEDULE 2002



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

Insight Meditation Society
1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, MA 01005
Tel: (978) 355-4378
www.dharma.org

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----|---------------|------------|
| Feb 2-9
(Sat-Sat) | VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)
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. | LR1 | Deposit \$150 | Cost \$310 |
| Feb 15-22
(Fri-Fri) | METTA RETREAT (7 days)
Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien
Metta is the Pali word for friendship or lovingkindness. 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 14, 2001 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. | JS1 | Deposit \$150 | Cost \$310 |
| Feb 22-Mar 3
(Fri-Sun) | VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)
Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien
This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (lovingkindness) 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 14, 2001 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. | JS2 | Deposit \$150 | Cost \$380 |
| Feb 15-Mar 3
(Fri-Sun) | METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days)
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 14, 2001 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. | JS3 | Deposit \$150 | Cost \$650 |

Mar 9-16 (Sat-Sat)	WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) 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.	WOM	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300
Mar 22-31 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Carol Wilson, Guy Armstrong, Rodney Smith & Sharda Rogell This retreat emphasizes continuous mindfulness through cultivating sensitivity and precision of awareness in both sitting and walking meditation. This enables us to realize more deeply the innate wisdom and compassion within us. Daily lovingkindness meditation practice is also included.	CW	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300
Apr 6-13 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) 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.	CF1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300
Apr 19-28 (Fri-Sun)	THE EMBODIED MIND (9 days) Ajahn Sucitto, Ven. Natthiko & Sr. Thaniya The theme of this retreat is to cultivate awareness of the ordinary and subtle body as a foundation for mindfulness, well-being and concentration. Techniques employed include mindfulness of breathing, some simple bodywork and daily devotional exercises such as chanting and offering. This is also a Sangha retreat with a format that enhances the sense of belonging to and supporting the group as a whole. 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.	AS	Deposit & Cost: Donation	
May 4-11 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Sylvia Boorstein, James Baraz & Sally Clough Instructions for practice will be given following the structure outlined by the Buddha in the Sermon on the <i>Foundation of Mindfulness</i> . Practice will be presented in the spirit of Metta (Lovingkindness), and there will also be a daily period of formal Metta teaching and practice. Apart from interviews, the retreat will be in silence, emphasizing continuity of practice and including the activities of the day as areas for mindful attention.	SB	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300
May 18-26 (Sat-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (8 days) Jack Kornfield, Tara Brach, Adrienne Ross, Susan O'Brien & Ralph Steele In this retreat emphasis will be on quieting the mind, opening and heart and developing clarity and depth of practice. Traditional instruction in the four foundations of mindfulness will be combined with a spirit of lovingkindness and a daily schedule of walking, sitting, dharma talks, and interviews. Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 28, 2001 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.	JK	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300
May 31-Jun 7 (Fri-Fri)	METTA RETREAT (7 days) Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw Metta is the practice of friendship or lovingkindness. It is cultivated as a meditation and a way of life along with compassion, and equanimity. These practices strengthen self-confidence, self-acceptance and a steadiness of mind and heart, revealing our fundamental connectedness to all life. Franz Moeckl will lead Qigong practice each afternoon. Franz Moeckl has practiced Qigong for more than 20 years, which he teaches in the US and Europe. He has practiced vipassana meditation since 1985.	MMS1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$300

Jun 7-16 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the simple and direct awareness practice taught by the Buddha. 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 lovingkindness practice is also included. Franz Moeckl will lead Qigong practice each afternoon.	MMS2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$380
May 31-Jun 16 (Fri-Sun)	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days) Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw	MMS3	Deposit \$150	Cost \$650
Jun 21-25 (Fri-Tue)	YOUNG ADULT RETREAT (4 days) Michele McDonald-Smith with 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.	YA	Deposit \$200	Cost \$200
Jun 29-Jul 6 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT—For Experienced Students (7 days) Larry Rosenberg & Corrado Pensa 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. Retreatants are required to have sat at least two week-long retreats at IMS. This must be documented on the registration form.	LR2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$310
Jul 13-21 (Sat-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (8 days) Christina Feldman, Guy Armstrong & Susan O'Brien 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.	CF2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$350
Jul 29-Aug 3 (Mon-Sat)	FAMILY RETREAT (5 days) Jose Reissig & Trudy Goodman 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. Child care is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers. Note: Due to the popularity of this course all applications received on or before February 22, 2002 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. 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.	FAM	Cost Adult \$235 Deposit \$100 per adult Child \$60	
Aug 10-17 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady Through the direct and simple practice of mindfulness, this retreat supports opening our hearts and minds to the deepest truths within us. Emphasis is placed on developing confidence, lovingkindness and wisdom in meditation practice throughout the day.	NLG	Deposit \$150	Cost \$310

Aug 23-25 (Fri-Sun)	DANA RETREAT (2 days) Bhante Gunaratana	DANA	Deposit & Cost:	Donation
	This retreat is offered by IMS to affirm the spirit of giving. There is no fixed course fee; participants are encouraged to offer whatever contribution fits their means. Priority will be given to those who, for financial reasons, are unable to attend courses with fixed course rates.			
Aug 30-Sep 2 (Fri-Mon)	LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days) Ruth Denison	RD1	Deposit \$165	Cost \$165
Aug 30-Sep 8 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Ruth Denison	RD2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$380
	This retreat fosters awareness and correct understanding of life's process in ourselves and others. The focus of the practice is on opening the heart, discovering oneself, and developing insight into the reality of the mind and body. Retreat activities include sound and body movement meditations, and the development of mindfulness in the day-to-day activities of our lives. This retreat is somewhat different from other IMS retreats, and includes sustained and on-going verbal teacher instruction throughout the day.			
Sep 20-Dec 13 (Fri-Fri)	THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)	3MO	Deposit \$750	Cost \$3,050
Sep 20-Nov 1 (Fri-Fri)	PARTIAL #1 (42 days)	PART1	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,600
Nov 1-Dec 13 (Fri-Fri)	PARTIAL #2 (42 days)	PART2	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,600
	Joseph Goldstein (all 3 months) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson & Myoshin Kelley (1st half only) Guy Armstrong, Steve Armstrong, Kamala Masters & Marcia Rose (2nd half only)			
	The three-month course is a special time for practice. Because of its extended length and the continuity of guidance, it is a rare opportunity to deepen the powers of concentration, wisdom and compassion. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the skillful means of mental noting, slow movement and precise, open awareness.			
	Prerequisite is three retreats of a week or more in duration with a recognized vipassana teacher or special permission. This retreat experience, including teachers' names, dates and lengths of retreats, must be documented on the registration form.			
	Special cancellation fees and deadlines apply for this retreat. 3MO and PART 1: Up to March 1, \$50; from March 1 to April 15, \$150; after April 15, full deposit. PART 2: Up to April 15, \$50; from April 15 to June 1, \$150; after June 1, full deposit.			
	Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before January 25, 2002 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.			
Dec 27-Jan 5 (Fri-Sun)	NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (9 days) Rodney Smith, Anna Douglas & others	NY	Deposit \$150	Cost \$380
	The New Year is traditionally a time for renewal and reflection, a time to pause and ponder our spiritual lives. It is also a time to establish a direction of sensitivity and wakefulness for the rest of the year. This retreat will offer the opportunity to nourish our hearts through mindful awareness and loving contact in each moment.			

CORE FACULTY

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.

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 meditation since 1970 and teaching 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 *The Buddhist Path to Simplicity*.

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 BCBS. 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*.

Jack Kornfield trained as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He is a founder of IMS and Spirit Rock Meditation Center and has taught meditation internationally since 1974. He is the author of a number of books, including *A Path with Heart* and *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*.

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*.

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.

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 in our time.

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

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

Sharon Salzberg, a co-founder of IMS and BCBS, has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970 and has been teaching worldwide since 1974. She is a guiding teacher at IMS and author of *Lovingkindness, A Heart As Wide As The World* and editor of the anthology *Voices of Insight*.

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 in hospice care for 14 years. 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.

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.



VISITING FACULTY

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

James Baraz has practiced vipassana meditation since 1974 and taught since 1980. He is a co-founder of Spirit Rock Meditation Center. In addition to Theravada Buddhist practice, he has been influenced by Advaita and Dzogchen teachings.

Sylvia Boorstein has been teaching since 1985. She is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center and a psychotherapist. She is the author of *It's Easier Than You Think, Don't Just Do Something, Sit There!* and *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist*.

Tara Brach, Ph.D., has practiced and taught meditation since 1975 and is the founder of Insight Meditation Center Washington. Tara is a clinical psychologist, and leads retreats at meditation centers around the country.

Rebecca Bradshaw has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1983 and teaching since 1993. She is a guiding teacher of the Dhamma Dena Meditation Center in Northampton, MA, and also works as a Spanish-speaking psychotherapist.

Sally Clough was introduced to vipassana meditation in India in 1981. She co-founded the Sharpham meditation community in Devon, England, in 1983. Sally has led meditation classes and assisted on retreats since 1994.

Anna Douglas, Ph.D. is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock. She also leads retreats nationwide. In addition to 25 years of vipassana practice, she has studied with teachers in the Zen, Advaita, and Dzogchen traditions.

Trudy Goodman has studied in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974. She is a co-founder and guiding teacher of the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy and leads retreats nationwide.

Michael Liebenson Grady has been practicing vipassana since 1973. He is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.

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

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.

Venerable Natthiko was born in 1961 and ordained in Thailand in 1993. He has been living at Cittaviveka Buddhist Monastery in Chithurst, England since 1999.

Susan O'Brien has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1980 and has studied with a variety of Asian and western teachers. She began teaching in 1996 and coordinates the Insight Meditation correspondence course.

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.

Sharda Rogell started practicing vipassana meditation in 1979 and teaching worldwide in 1985. She has also been influenced by the non-dual teachings of Advaita, as well as Dzogchen.

Adrienne Ross, MD has been practicing vipassana since 1984. She practices family medicine in Vancouver and teaches Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction to people with chronic pain and illness.

Ralph Steele has practiced meditation for over two decades and taught since 1987. Recently he completed a year of intensive practice as a monk in Burma and in Thailand.

Ajahn Sucitto has been a monk since 1976. He is currently abbot of Cittaviveka Buddhist Monastery in Chithurst, England.

Sister Thaniya was born in 1960 and ordained in 1993. Since then she has mainly been living at Cittaviveka Buddhist Monastery in Chithurst, England where she is currently the senior nun.

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 or wait-list 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.
- 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.

Wait List:

- If a course is full you will be placed on a wait list. When a place opens you will be confirmed by mail, and your deposit check cashed.
- If you cancel off the wait list you must notify us.
- Cancellation fees apply if you are confirmed off the wait list and do not accept.

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. or Canadian bank. We cannot accept credit cards or foreign drafts (Canadian drafts must say: US Funds)*
- 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.)

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 _____ Dates you will be here: From _____ To _____ Amount 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? _____

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

Can you offer a ride? YES / NO Retreat Experience (for LR2, PT1, PT2, 3MO). Please list

teacher names, dates and locations. Attach extra paper if necessary _____

I wish to apply for a scholarship _____ I have added \$ _____ to the deposit as a donation to IMS.

Office Use Only
Date Received:

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 teachings. A 225-year-old farmhouse holds a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A dormitory and classroom/meditation hall provide 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 borrowed for up to a month at a time.



B.C.B.S.

BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

149 Lockwood Road
Barre, Massachusetts 01005
Tel: (978) 355-2347
Fax: (978) 355-2798
e-mail: bcbs@dharma.org
web: www.dharma.org

The study center in Barre 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 it is not yet a degree-granting institution, many people can get academic and professional credits from their home institutions for programs attended at BCBS. Course offerings for the year 2001 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 29.

The **Nālanda 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 explore and engage with 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 **Bhāvana 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 direct our attention in skillful ways to the issues considered 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 a quiet place to investigate the Buddhist tradition on their own through the integration of study and practice. We welcome scholars to come and experience the benefits of a contemplative environment for their work, and we invite meditators to explore the benefits of the academic inquiry into the Buddhist tradition. Three small cottages have been built on the premises for this purpose, and other single rooms are also available. The program operates on a *dāna* basis, with no fixed fees for independent study.

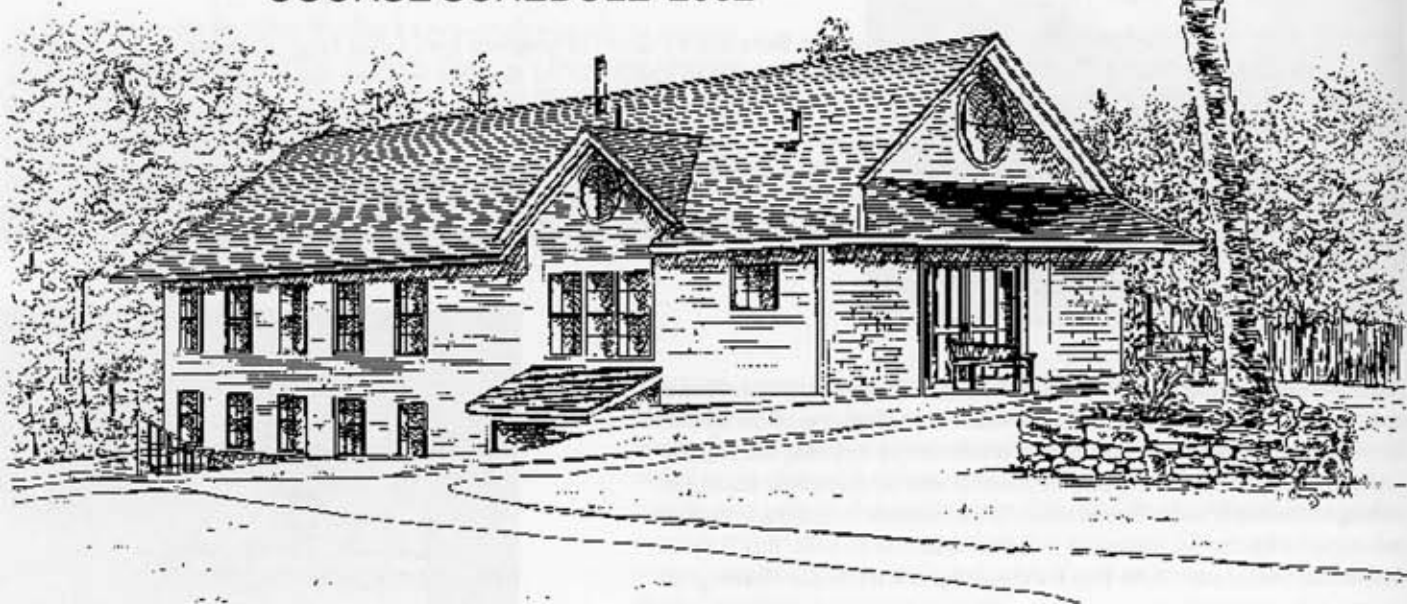


Dhamma Dāna Publications is a publishing program coordinated by the study center that prints high-quality Dhamma books for free distribution. So far we have published five books that remain in print; other manuscripts are being prepared. This program also operates entirely by *dāna*. Requests for books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

1. Upasika Kee Nanayon, *An Unentangled Knowing*.
2. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*.
3. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *The Wings to Awakening*.
4. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Dhammapada; A Translation*.
5. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Itivuttaka; A Translation*.

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

COURSE SCHEDULE 2002



Feb. 8-10
(Weekend)

The Aggregates of Experience

Ajahn Thanissaro

02-TG

DANA

The five *khandhas* (aggregates, bundles, heaps) figure prominently in the Buddhist analysis of the human predicament and the way out of that predicament. In this course we discuss how the *khandhas* are experienced; how--through clinging--they relate to the concept of the self; and how they may be converted into the path that leads to the end of clinging. Readings draw on the discourses of the Pali Canon and the teachings of the masters of the Thai forest tradition. Talks and discussions alternate with extended periods of meditation.

Feb. 22-24
(Weekend)

Socially Engaged Buddhism and the Practice of Insight Dialogue

Paula Green and Greg Kramer

02-PG

\$150

Socially engaged Buddhism can be a heartfelt expression of our wisdom and compassion. Engagement with the world, however, challenges the mindfulness we develop in individual and silent meditation. Peacemaking requires deep listening, emptying, self-knowing and truthfulness. For peacemaking to be successful, we must cultivate inner peace while in relationship with others, embodying the peace we wish to see. In this workshop we explore Paula Green's international peacemaking work in conjunction with Gregory Kramer's speaking and listening co-meditation of Insight Dialogue. Using an explicit engaged meditation practice, we delve into the synthesis of inner and outer peace, where we can nurture the personal and social transformation needed in our world today.

March 1-3
(Weekend)

Advanced Dzogchen: Natural Mind, Natural Perfection

Lama Surya Das

02-SD

\$150

This weekend is designed for people who have had experience in Dzogchen practice. It incorporates awareness techniques for awakening to primordial inner freedom and finding the natural meditations in your daily life. The weekend program focuses on the View, Meditation and Action that directly introduces the freedom, purity and perfection of Dzogchen, the Natural Great Practice. This weekend includes teachings on the Dzogchen text by Longchenpa called "Four-Themed Precious Garland" and the special pith-instructions of Mahamudra and Dzogchen. The Dzogchen ngondro practice of Ru-shen, or subtle discernment, is introduced for the first time during this weekend teaching. **Prerequisite: Prior Dzogchen meditation practice.**

March 9-16
(7 Days)

Bhāvana Program: Ānāpānasati: Suttas & Practice

Ajahn Santikaro

02-SK

\$400

According to the Pali Suttas, the Buddha regularly practiced mindfulness with breathing and recommended it to others more than any other form of meditation. It integrates calming and insight, perfects the four foundations of mindfulness, and fulfills the seven factors of awakening. In daily classes we study the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (M 118) in depth, along with related suttas. Evening talks emphasize the practical application of the material. Throughout each day there is plenty of time and space for exploring these teachings personally. Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu's *Mindfulness with Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners* (Wisdom Publications) is highly recommended reading.

March 23
(Saturday)

Jātaka: The Mythopoeitics of the Buddha's Former Lives

Margo McLoughin

02-MM

\$60

The birth-stories of the Buddha have been described as the lay-person's entrance into the Buddhist teachings. In each story the Buddha is developing one of the ten paramis or perfections, such as generosity, wisdom, equanimity and effort. How can an investigation into the Jātaka help us to look at the stories of our own lives? This day-long course includes an overview of the history of the Jātaka literature and the modern-day relevance of these stories in countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka. There are also opportunities to listen to some of the stories, to reflect on them and to explore their meaning for us today.

March 29-31
(Weekend)

The Lived-Body Experience in Buddhist Meditation

Rev. Issho Fujita

02-IF

\$150

Two of the greatest teachers in Japanese Buddhism, Kukai (774-835), the founder of the esoteric Shingon sect, and Dogen (1200-1253), the founder of the Soto Zen sect, among others, have placed great emphasis on the phenomenological aspect of the body-mind continuum. In meditative practice, we often experience our body at a very deep level, which is a vital element of meditation. In order to practice meditation deeply, we need to have right understanding and right cultivation of the lived-body, which might be very different from the conventional understanding of the body and physical training. This workshop explores, through lectures/discussion, videos, meditation, and experiential exercises, how to experience our own body in a new framework and to gain some hints on how to apply it to our meditative practice and daily life. Insights of the Japanese movement educator Michizo Noguchi (1914-1988) and the anatomist Shigeo Miki (1925-1987) are introduced as a basis for our discussion on body and meditation.

April 5-7
(Weekend)

Kālāma Sutta: Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry

Daeja Napier

02-DN1

\$150

The Buddha taught the path of freedom. His instruction to the villagers of Kālāma is famous for its encouragement of free inquiry. The spirit of the sutta signifies a teaching free from fanaticism, dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance. It confirms the importance of establishing faith in one's own direct experience aiming at the release from greed, ill-will, and delusion. This weekend course supports the spirit of inquiry through the teachings of the *Kālāma Sutta*, and includes sitting and walking meditation and discussion.

April 12-21
(9 Days)

Satipaṭṭhāna and Jhāna (Foundations of Mindfulness and Meditative Absorptions)

Leigh Brasington

02-LB

\$500

This course focuses on the wealth of practices outlined in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (Digha Nikaya 22). We study the traditional twenty-one mindfulness practices in this critically important sutta, as well as examine the other practices also mentioned therein. The format of the course includes a formal study and discussion of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, and a special emphasis on learning the jhānas (meditative absorptions). There is ample opportunity for students to practice the Buddha's comprehensive instructions.

Note: This course is limited to students who have completed at least two one-week or longer silent retreats.

- April 26-28**
(Weekend) **Meditation and Healing: The Energy-Karma of Body and Mind**
Chok Hiew 02-CH \$150
How are we to understand the healing aspects of Buddhist meditative practices in the light of current psychological and medical findings? This weekend program consists of didactic presentations of traditional energy healing aspects of meditation. Metta consciousness is combined with energy healing exercises for dealing with trauma and chronic mind-body illnesses.
- May 3-5**
(Weekend) **Turning the Wheel: The Dhammacakkappavattana Sermon**
Ajahn Sucitto and Amaravati Monks 02-SUC \$150
The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* of the Pali Canon contains the very first teaching the Buddha gave after his great awakening to his five former colleagues. This teaching that later on was systematized as the Four Noble Truths is the foundational framework for all of Buddha's subsequent exposition. This weekend explores the teachings in the discourse through an analysis of key Pali words and phrases, an examination of the context in which the Buddha gave this sermon, and their timeless relevance to awakened living.
- May 12**
(Sunday) **Pāramīs (Perfections): The Heart of Practice**
Sylvia Boorstein 02-SYL \$60
The ten perfections (pāramīs) of the Theravada tradition—generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, patience, energy, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity—lie at the heart of Buddha's teachings and our own practice. This workshop includes meditation practices designed to cultivate the pāramīs, as well as offers a didactic explanation of how we may cultivate them in our daily life. Through experiential exercises and discussions we investigate the relevance of these ancient yet timeless teachings to our own lives.
- May 12-17**
(5 Days) **Essentials of Buddhist Psychology**
Andrew Olendzki 02-PSYCH1 \$400
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 consists 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 and Psychotherapy.
- May 19-25**
(6 Days) **Nālanda Program: Vājrayāna Studies**
Lama John Makransky 02-VAJ \$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 movement of late Indian Mahayana which was 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 1-8**
(7 Days) **Bhāvana Program: The Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness (dhammā)**
Andrew Olendzki and Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia) 02-BHAV3 \$400
The benefits of the Bhavana Program—mostly silent vipassana retreat with morning study sessions (see p. 23)—are brought to this investigation of mental states. After an overview of the other three foundations of mindfulness, students undertake an experiential exploration of the hindrances, aggregates, bases, awakening factors, and noble truths as prescribed by the classical instructions for vipassana meditation, the *Satipatthana Sutta*. Intended for advanced students—meditation experience required.

June 16-23 (7 Days)	Nālanda Program: Theravāda Studies Andrew Olendzki	02-THER	\$400
	The origins of Buddhism in ancient India are examined in this program. The life and times of the historical Buddha, the intellectual climate which shaped his vision, and the dynamics of his original movement are all explored in some detail. We also undertake a comprehensive review of the basic teachings of early Buddhism, including the psychological doctrines of selfhood and liberation, the various techniques of meditation, and the instructions for the guidance of lay Buddhist life. A useful overview of the classical Buddhist tradition for students, meditators and prospective dharma teachers.		
June 23-28 (5 Days)	Nālanda Program: Mahāyāna Studies Mu Soeng	02-MAHA	\$400
	In this program we explore the basic themes of Mahayana Buddhism as they developed in India, and the range of teachings in the Prajnaparamita, the Madhyamika, and the Yogacara schools. The idea is to give course participants a thorough grounding in the Mahayana teachings in their homeland, and in the developments of Indian Buddhism. These teachings form the basis of later developments in China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet, among other places. We also examine the arrival of Buddhism in China and the transformation of Mahayana teachings there.		
Jul 19-21 (Weekend)	Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold Taitetsu Unno	02-TU	\$150
	The primary goal of Mahayana Buddhism is the transformation called "turning delusion into enlightenment." We explore this transformation based on the teachings of Shinran (1173-1263), the founder of Shin Buddhism. The boundless compassion of the Buddha Amida, nonjudgmental and all-embracing, concretely manifested as the Primal Vow, focuses on imperfect, vulnerable and karma-bound beings (likened to bits of rubble) and transforms them into their direct opposite (gold).		
Jul 26-28 (Weekend)	Emptiness and Fullness: The Ox-Herding Pictures Mu Soeng	02-MS1	\$150
	Buddhist tradition has offered several models of awakening and functioning in the world, of which the Ox-Herding Pictures became one of the most influential paradigms in China and Japan. This workshop explores the themes of Emptiness (śūnyatā) and compassion (karuṇā) in the various strata of Mahayana Buddhism, and connects the philosophical understanding of these themes to the practice traditions of Ch'an in China and Zen in Japan. The emphasis in this course is on a thorough integration of understanding and practice in our lives.		
Aug 9-11 (Weekend)	Women in Buddhism Trudy Goodman	02-TG	\$150
	This course explores the lives and awakenings of several Buddhist women from ancient India (e.g. the Buddha's own foster mother) to the contemporary West (e.g. Maurine Stuart Roshi). How did their practice of the Buddha's teachings change the course of their lives and their understanding? And how can our practice of these ancient teachings affect our way of living? The weekend consists mostly of silent retreat, with an evening to tell our stories and a chance to study and be inspired by the teachings of enlightened women.		
Aug 16-18 (Weekend)	El Dharma en Espanol Jose Reissig and Rebecca Bradshaw	02-SPA	\$150
	Un curso tradicional de meditacion Vipassana, que sera tambien una exploracion de como esta practica puede entroncar con las vivencias culturales hispanas en las Americas -- tanto a traves del lenguaje (las partes verbales del curso seran totalmente en espanol) como a traves del silencio. Ademas de los periodos de meditacion sentada y caminando, se ofreceran instrucciones, charlas y oportunidades para entrevistas individuales, y se crearan espacios para indagar y para compartir nuestras vivencias del Dharma. Exploraremos como nuestro idioma y cultura pueden ser portales para comprender las ensenanzas del Buddha. <u>Se disponen de fondos de apoyo para ayudar a las personas que lo necesiten.</u>		

BCBS TEACHERS

(For teachers not listed here, see biographies in the IMS section, p. 20)

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 BCBS. 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*; *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen—Tradition and Teachers*; and *The Diamond Sutra: Transforming the Way We Perceive the World*.

VISITING FACULTY

Leigh Brasington has been practicing meditation since 1985 and is the senior American student of the late Ven. Ayya Khema. Leigh began assisting Ven. Ayya Khema in 1994, and was authorized to teach in 1997. He teaches in Europe and North America.

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 co-founder and guiding teacher of the Institute for Meditation and Psychology and leads retreats nationwide.

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 Buddhist Peace Fellowship. She is co-editor of *Psychology and Social Responsibility: Facing Global Challenges*.

Chok 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, and is the author of *Energy Meditation: Healing the Body, Freeing the Spirit*; and *The Tao of Healing*.

Greg Kramer has taught vipassana meditation for more than 20 years. He is the director of Metta Foundation in Portland, OR., and teacher of Insight Dialogue meditation worldwide. He has studied, among others, with Ven. Ananda Maitreya and Ven. Punjabi Mahathera.

Lama John Makransky, trained in Nyingma and Gelug traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, is an associate teacher of Lama Surya Das in the lineage of Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche. A meditation teacher at retreats for the Dzogchen Foundation, he is also professor of Buddhist Studies and Comparative Theology at Boston College.

Margo McLoughlin, a storyteller and former teacher, has been studying the Jataka in Pali and in English for a number of years. She is currently a master's student at the Harvard Divinity School.

Daeja Napier teaches vipassana and Brahma Vihara retreats nationally. She trained in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974, and is the mother of five children.

Ven. Santikaro Bhikkhu ordained as a Theravada Buddhist monk in 1985 and has recently returned to the United States after twenty years in Thailand to start a training center for monks and nuns in the St. Louis area. He is the primary translator and editor of his teacher, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and has led number of workshops at BCBS in recent years.

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 *Awakening the Buddha Within*, among other books.

Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia) served as resident teacher at Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA., from 1996 to 1999. She has been greatly inspired by the nuns and monks of Amaravati and Cittivieka Buddhist monasteries in England. She has been offering reflections on Buddhist teachings and meditation since 1990.

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

Taitetsu Unno is Jill Ker Conway 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* and the forthcoming *Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold* (Doubleday). He is also a priest ordained in the Shin tradition.



Registering for Courses at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

149 Lockwood Road, Barre, Massachusetts 01005

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



Please do not let financial hardship prevent you from attending any of the offerings at BCBS. Work scholarships are available for those unable to afford the course fees.

Registration

- Please detach or copy the form below and mail it to us with a deposit to hold your place in a course.
- Registrations cannot be taken by phone, e-mail or fax--only by mail.
- Registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis after the receipt of the deposit.
- Please send a separate check for each course registration.

Deposits

- Registrations are only confirmed when a deposit has been received.
- The deposit is the full cost of the course for one-day courses and half the cost for longer courses.
- Please send your deposit at least ten days before the start of the course.

Cancellations

- Deposits are refundable in full (less a \$20 processing fee) if we are notified more than 6 weeks prior to the course opening.
- Later cancellations are subject to cancellation fees as follows:
 - Half the deposit will be retained 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.

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

BCBS Registration Form

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Course Code _____ Course Cost \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

I have added \$ _____ to the deposit as a general donation to help support the valuable on-going work of BCBS.

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

Amount of deposit enclosed \$ _____

Have you been to BCBS before? YES / NO

Are you on the **Insight** mailing list? YES / NO

Can you offer a ride to someone in your area? YES / NO

Do you have any special dietary needs? _____

We cannot guarantee always meeting special needs, but if you telephone the kitchen before registration (978-355-2347), the cook will be glad to discuss your situation.

Dharma Seed

presents:

Dharmastream.org

Internet access to the oral tradition of the Buddha's teachings



May this offering be of benefit to all

Dear Friends,

We at Dharma Seed have some wonderful news to share. We are delighted to announce that we are now offering dharma talks and guided meditations online in streaming audio! Please come visit our audio website—Dharmastream.org—to see the current selection and to begin listening.

Dharmastream is the name of the site devoted to holding these oral teachings. When you go to Dharmastream.org you'll see talks and instructions from just about all of the teachers whose recordings we carry. We have been gifted the capacity to stream fifty recordings, and so we are making available approximately one talk per teacher. You will be able to listen right away, or download to listen later. And fifty recordings is just the beginning. Our archive now holds over 5,000 recordings. With your support, the number of talks online will grow!

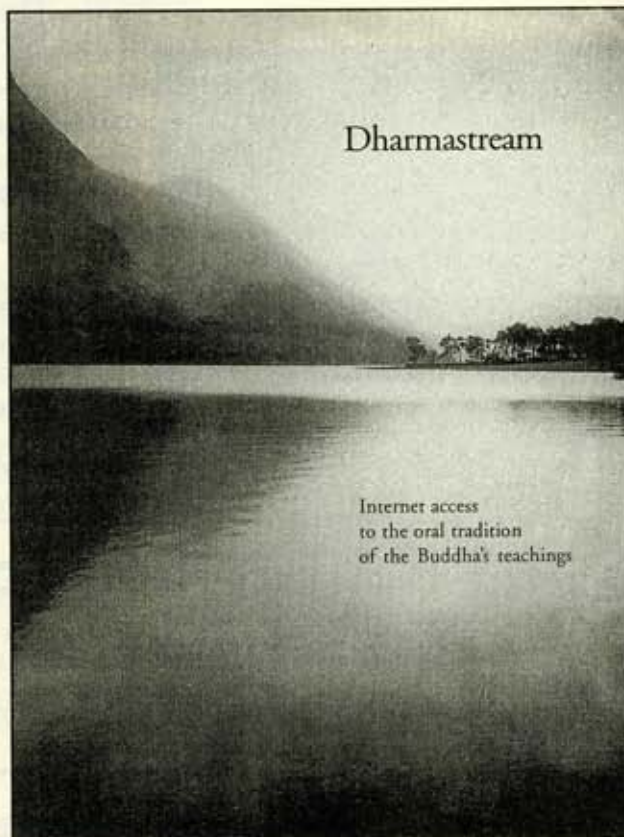
In light of the tragic events of this fall, there have been heightened requests for making the wisdom of the teachings more accessible as quickly as possible. In response, we have moved up our deadline on this project; the site is now functioning with these first talks. Another high priority for us is the reconstruction and upgrading of dharmaSeed.org, our main website, which we will be working on over the course of the next year.

Originally, our vision of placing dharma talks online came with seeing the enormous growth of the Internet, and feeling that many would benefit if we could access this modern tool for communication. An important part of this shift is our new commitment to doing an ever-growing amount our 'business' on a *dana* basis. Since the beginning of the year 2000 we have freely offered all of our new recordings, and in turn have received generous donations of support from the vipassana community. The *dana*/internet link makes a connection between the Buddhist tradition, whereby the most precious gift—the teachings—is offered freely, and Internet culture, which fosters free access to information.

Our main goal as an organization has always been to preserve and share these teachings we so value. We believe that by freely providing the talks online and becoming more active on the Internet, we are taking a great step forward in this goal. For practitioners all over the world who have computer and Internet access, it is another, perhaps more immediate, way to connect with the oral tradition and share it within their communities. We hope it will be a significant support to meditation practice away from the retreat setting.

Heartfelt thanks are due to the incredibly generous donors who have helped make this happen for all of us. We have received gifts of

sophisticated equipment for digitizing our audio recordings and formatting them for Internet use, and contributions to help fund the Archive Project. The hosting and web-mastering of our two sites, and the project coordination of Dharmastream, are all done by volunteers. Many of you have kindly responded to our appeals, and your donations have helped keep our projects moving along. We are so grateful for the time and talent of our volunteers, and for the generosity of everyone who is contributing to this important work of sharing the dharma online.



Please come visit us at Dharmastream.org and take some time to listen! We hope all of you will find your own practice nourished and supported by these projects.

Blessings to all,
Your Friends in the Dharma

Financial contributions to Dharma Seed's *Internet Access Fund* are still needed. To make a donation, please call us at 1-800-969-7333; e-mail us at dharma@crocker.com with credit card information; or send checks to: Dharma Seed, P.O. Box 66, Wendell Depot, MA 01380. Thank you!

Battering upon the gummy silence
I no longer feel any lever against this world.
The deaths are too many,
The births are too many,
The headlines chronicle too many hatreds and wars.
I have grown grey as much from the searing of ineffectuality
as from individual decay.

All I have left is a pencil, a voice, and a holy fire
To reassert that beaches and rivers remain baptismal
and beautiful,
That youth remain fervent and devoted,
That joy remains the only great liberator.

I will strike out at the human world of folly, desecration,
and destruction
With my weapon of consecrated fire
That burns away bitterness from the maturing seed.
Emptiness. I will draw in the raw banality of evil
with my emptiness,
With my absence of manipulations,
With my remove to the enfolding metamorphic hills.

My evenings will ring with rectitude and meditation
at the hour of owls.

It is through this "tapas", this burning away of delusion,
That I can preserve and bestow my gift.
I invite you to my cabin, to my meditation hour,
To the empty husk of my best days.

Drawn like dried leaves into a hollow at the root of a tree,
Honored guests will wend their way across the burning ground.
When they arrive, even if it is after centuries,
Among the ashes old pine cones will still be roaring
With the heat of a conflagration
That consumed everything but one indestructable seed.

If I cannot purify this world entirely
Then let me at least be recognized
As someone who curled beneath the soil of the ages
Conjugal with the purifying spark.

Tell me that you, too, realize
That our human eyes are signal fires
Flashing messages of hard-won tranquillity
Backward into the oncoming hordes.

TAPAS



Paul Fleischman, M.D.

Paul Fleischman is a psychiatrist and a Teacher of vipassana meditation in the tradition of S.N. Goenka. He is the author, among other works, of *Cultivating Inner Peace* and *Karma and Chaos*.

These words were written before 9/11/01

How to Understand?

Joseph Goldstein

Joseph had been scheduled to speak with a group of people at CIMC the day after the tragic events September 11th. Here are some excerpts from that talk.



I'm glad we are able to come together this evening and share some reflections about the events of September eleventh. More than ever, it is timely and necessary to connect more deeply with ourselves, with each other, and with the many suffering beings in the world. The question looming large for most of us is how to understand what happened in some meaningful and compassionate way.

In the crash of the planes into the twin towers, the pentagon, and the fields of Pennsylvania, we see the enormous power of hatred and delusion in the mind. The Buddha used very strong words to describe these states. In his discourse called *The Five Sermon*, he said "the mind is on fire, burning with greed, burning with hatred, burning with delusion." Normally, we don't see these forces to be the dangers that they are—until they are acted out in such clear and undeniable ways. The magnitude of the destruction that occurred highlights the urgency of training our hearts and minds.

Often, in contemporary spiritual or new age circles, we hear the phrase, "follow your heart." But we can see in both ourselves and others that not everything in the heart is always wise and kind and generous. We all have tendencies to anger and selfishness as well. Ajahn Sumedho, one of the most senior American monks in the Thai forest tradition, suggested a more useful understanding: "It's not a question of following your heart, but training your heart."

Observing the range of our own feelings, reactions, and responses to what happened illuminates the vast potential for both good and harm that is in the mind. People across the world expressed a wide range of feelings: tremendous

sadness, grief, helplessness, and outrage along with compassion, love and understanding. There are calls for war and for peace, for cruise missiles and for airdrops of food. If we want to understand these events, we need to understand our own minds.

When something happens on a scale that can no longer be overlooked—whether in an individual life or in a society—it becomes a great wake-up call. It is a call to open our eyes and see clearly on many levels. "Buddha" means awakened, and throughout his teachings he demonstrates that resolute willingness and ability to see what is true. This is our practice.

Although we construct seemingly solid and secure worlds of places and relationships and things, we all share in a great vulnerability. The Buddha expressed it so clearly: whatever has the nature to arise will also pass away. Sometimes things pass in orderly, peaceful ways, sometimes in violently destructive ways. But the falling apart of conditioned, constructed things is inherent in their very nature. We see this in the normal changes in our lives. We see it in the inevitable illness and decay of our bodies. We see it in conditions of social or economic turmoil. We see it in the fall of civilizations. We see it in the explosion or collapse of stars. Although we know intellectually it is the nature of all things to change, we don't always know it in our bones.

The Buddha pointed to the inherent instability of changing conditions and the suffering of relying on these conditions staying a certain way. The first noble truth of his teachings is not an abstract philosophical principle. It reflects the openness, honesty and courage necessary to face the suffering that is there. It is not always

easy to open in this way. In watching the images of the disaster, it was often hard to let them in. There was a sense of disbelief that this could really happen, and sometimes a sense that we were watching another Hollywood movie.

Dharma practice is so much more than simply living with greater ease or peace in our lives—although these are of great value. The dharma reveals the deepest and most profound aspects of life and death, of suffering and freedom. The Buddha was urging us to awaken from our ignorance out of great compassion for the magnitude of suffering in the world.

The events in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania are also a call to see the basic ungovernability of experience. This means that things occur when the appropriate conditions are present, not because we want or will them to be a certain way. Our bodies age and become ill, according to causes, whether we wish them to or not. We might wish for there not to be war, or famine, or violence, but these situations will continue to arise as long as the necessary conditions are there. Events are not in our control in the way that we think they are.

There is a great cost to this pretense of control. When things don't happen the way we want them to, our minds can easily be filled with anger, frustration, rage, jealousy, or hatred. This happens on an individual level, and as we have seen, on a collective level as well. If we want a desired end—the stopping of violence, for example—we need to understand the causes that bring violence about and the conditions necessary to bring it to an end. It is not enough to simply wish or demand that it happen. Somewhat surprisingly, the more we let go of the illu-

sion of being in control, the greater clarity we have in seeing the conditions necessary to accomplish our aims.

The difficult and complex question remains: what is the appropriate response to mass violence? We know from many years of direct experience that hatred never ceases by hatred. The Buddha expressed this 2500 years ago, and we see the truth of this for ourselves in the conflicts of Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Israel and the West Bank, and many other places around the world. Hatred and violence only breed more of the same. It becomes a cycle of destruction from which it is hard to emerge.

But does this mean that we don't respond at all to protect the lives and safety of people threatened by these forces? In the week before the attacks, I was listening to the biography of Winston Churchill on audiotapes. His role before and during the Second World War is well known. Would more lives have been saved if the policy of appeasement had not been pursued? The Buddha himself spoke to laypeople of the appropriateness of self-defense.

In trying to sort out these issues, we come to a subtle and often overlooked point. Both as individuals and as a nation, we need to investigate the motivations behind any response in order to determine its moral value. It is our motives that will determine the long-range outcome. Is it possible to confine the perpetrators of violence without causing massive suffering to innocent people? Can we take action from a motivation of wisdom and compassion rather than from hatred and revenge? It is not enough to wrap ourselves in words of virtue; we need to look deeply to see what our motives really are.

The present situation is a wake-up call to see the conditions underlying the events, to act wisely and decisively in response, and to look into our own minds to see what wholesome and unwholesome qualities arise within us. The forces for good and for harm that play out in the world are manifesting in our own minds and lives as well.

It is very difficult to illuminate unskillful mind states. We don't usually like to contemplate our own shadow side, and often feel more comfortable in the illusion that our lives and actions are completely pure and well intentioned. Although much of it is, there are also parts that are not. One of the turning points in dharma practice happens when we would rather see the

defilements in our minds than not see them. This openness is the only way to be honest about our motivations and to thereby assess what is a wise response to situations.

Unskillful states are rooted in attachment, aversion or delusion. On the side of attachment, we see how much harm in the world occurs because of greed—greed for resources, wealth or power. Tremendous suffering also comes from attachment to views and opinions. "This is right; all else is wrong" becomes the calling cry of zealots. When beliefs are held to be absolute truths, conflict is inevitable, because people invariably have different perspectives. When we loosen our grip on our own points of view, it then becomes possible to listen to and learn from one another.

Defilements also arise in the form of aversion, anger and hatred. The devastating power of these mind states revealed itself so clearly on September eleventh. Yet, these forces in the mind are tremendously seductive. The Buddha pointed this out when he talked of "anger, with its poisoned source, fevered climax, murderously sweet." Anger and hatred arise in response to painful and unpleasant situations, either real or imagined. Small unpleasant circumstances cause irritation and annoyance. Powerful painful circumstances can lead to hatred and violence.

It's vital that we learn to recognize these feelings within ourselves, so that we neither deny or suppress them, nor habitually act them out. It is so easy to get caught up in the powerful vortex of these emotions, which are often fed by underground streams of self-righteousness, hurt and fear. When we feel really caught by our own reactivity, it is helpful to see what is fueling it. In difficult, insecure and uncertain times, feelings of vulnerability often give rise to fear. It might be fear of loss, fear of the unknown, or fear of death. If we don't recognize these strong emotions, they often propel us into either withdrawal or aggression. We need a consistent and strong practice to see these states within ourselves and not be swept away in the floodtide of feeling. Awareness is the process of transformation.

Some years ago, I was teaching a retreat for law students. In speaking of the intensity of the adversarial system, one of the students said that he needed his anger in order not to feel fear. Mindfulness was not on the law school curriculum, and it never occurred to him that opening to and accepting the fear might be a more powerful and sustaining source of strength.

Fear can also grow in our minds when we spin out disaster scenarios and then inhabit those projections of mind. Although this is easy to do in the present circumstances, it is not a useful strategy for embodying wisdom and compassion. We need to open to what is true, recognize the motivations behind our responses, and act from as wholesome a place as possible.

Given the suffering that exists in the world and the forces we see at work in our own minds a deep question remains: Where is the place of ultimate safety? Where is our true refuge? These are the questions the Buddha responded to in forty-five years of teaching. The awakened mind is a refuge; the teachings are a refuge; association with wise beings is a refuge. These three jewels are not imitation gems. They do provide a place of safety in the midst of confusion and turmoil. Thich Nhat Hanh writes of "peace in every step." We *can* practice peace in every step, in every breath, in every moment. It is up to us.

We can also practice lovingkindness and compassion, for our own benefit and for the benefit of the world. It is only through love and compassion that hatred ceases. These expressions of kindness are the necessary conditions for peace. We need to start with ourselves, in our own lives, and let it radiate outward as a force for good in the world. The Buddha's words from the *Metta Sutta* are a powerful prescription and prayer for our times:

May all living beings be happy and at their ease.

May they be joyous and live in safety.

May all beings, whether weak or strong, small or great, visible or invisible, near or far away, born or to-be-born—omitting none—be happy and at their ease.

Let none deceive another, or despise any being in any state.

Let none by anger or ill will wish harm to another.

Even as a mother watches over and protects her only child, so with a boundless mind should one cherish all living beings, radiating friendliness over the entire world.

So let one cultivate a boundless good will toward the entire world, free from ill will and enmity.

STILLNESS AND INSIGHT

Christina Feldman

These excerpts were taken from a program offered by Christina at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies in September of 1999.

own busy-ness. How many times do we have the intention not to get caught up in greed, anger, delusion, and yet, somehow, through the force of our conditioning, we end up in places far from where we wish to be?

With training, gentle persistence, and the sustained commitment to let go and disentangle, concentration begins to deepen. Concentration practice refines the skills and qualities of perseverance, wise effort and patience, and lays the foundation for true serenity. The body begins to calm down, and a deep physical ease emerges. The agitation of the mind too begins to calm, and our mind begins to rest in a deeper well-being and ease. The obscurations of dullness, agitation, aversion, craving and doubt begin to loosen. When these familiar obscurations begin to be penetrated by serenity, there's a great deal of happiness that begins to emerge. The first immediate benefit of concentration practice is thus the making of deep happiness.

Samatha practice does not hold the development of insight as its primary purpose, yet inevitably there are some profound insights that emerge. *Samatha* practice is a training that has the power to change the shape of our mind in an enduring way. Another of the great benefits of the practice, which comes with the discovery of such rich levels of inward happiness, is the discovery that there is actually nothing to be gained through any of the sense doors that can match the pleasure of that happiness. This is a major insight, and has the power to change our entire relationship to the world.

We often live for the projected promise of desire. We tend to believe that, "If I had this meal, or that taste, or that experience, or that person, or that life style, that would make me really happy." The promise of these satisfactions, projected onto experience, draws us into cycles of pursuing and avoiding, of striving and attaining. And we live with all of the fallout that comes with that—tension, disappointment, feelings of failure and frustration, and all the agitation that comes with the projection of happiness onto the world outside of ourselves.

The discovery of inner happiness that does not rely upon getting something externally or getting rid of something externally, but relies upon the resources that lie within our own heart and consciousness, is, in many ways, a shattering discovery. With the withdrawal of projected promise, we learn how to let go much more easily. There is greater equanimity about the highs and the lows, the pleasures and the pains, that inevitably come to us in life. We learn how to rest and trust in that quality of happiness inwardly and know that it's always available to us. This too is of lasting benefit.

Another benefit comes as inner confidence. *Samatha* practice is an empowering practice. So much is spoken in the Buddhist tradition about the potential of consciousness, the potential of the mind. When we develop *samatha* we discover for ourselves that our own consciousness has this extraordinary capacity to see clearly, to penetrate deeply. With that confidence, there emerges a deep faith both in the practice and in ourselves. Faith is an antidote to doubt, a deeply

Samatha is a Pali word meaning stillness, tranquility or calm. *Samatha* practice involves a sustained, unwavering attentiveness to a single focus or object. Whenever the attention is drawn to other thoughts, sensations or sounds, one simply lets go of them, and attention returns to the object. In the deepest development of *samatha*, the absorption states, there is a temporary suspension of the activity of body and mind, which means there is also a temporary suspension of the hindrances and of all the obscurations. Although concentration itself does not liberate, nevertheless its benefits are manifold.

Some people think concentration practice is somewhat irrelevant, and even regard it as a distraction, because the states of absorption are only temporary. They think the obscurations are going to return in exactly the same way as they were before, but this is not what actually happens. When there is sustained focus—one-pointedness through not dwelling anywhere except the chosen object of meditation—the grip of agitation, the grip of discursive thinking, and the grip of the mental meandering loosens. Sustaining one-pointed attention is actually a practice for learning how to let go. And learning to let go is a training for our lives.

Just because we decide we're going to focus on the breath, or some other object, doesn't mean that the mind is suddenly cooperative and amiable. The practice of one-pointedness challenges our life-long habits of distractedness and grasping. Despite our intention to apply and sustain one-pointedness, the mind continues to regurgitate its habitual patterns and become lost in its

debilitating quality in our life. With faith comes inspiration; with faith comes motivation; with faith comes devotion; with faith comes a clear sense of direction, of what is important and what's maybe not so important. And ultimately that faith is in ourselves, in our capacity to hold and embrace all things; it's something we can trust in, and we can trust in its wholesomeness. Such trust leads to happiness, and to understanding.

Also with *samatha* practice comes a very deep level of calmness, and the discovery that calmness is peace. This is not bad news. Our lives are not made less rich by the absence of drama and intensity. It does not mean the absence of some essential vitality. Calmness is simply peace. What happens when we discover this kind of peace? It changes the shape of the mind.

Peace...changes the shape of the mind.

We lose our addiction to entanglement in anxiety, worry, guilt, busyness and regret. If you reflect on the kind of tapes running through your mind, isn't it amazing that we can think so much about so little? Not "little" in the sense of unimportant, but that we can think so much about the same things. So much of our identity is tied up in what we think about or obsess upon. It gives us the sense that we are someone. But somehow we seem to miss the point most of the time: thinking more does not make our life better or clearer; it does not liberate us or fix our life. It fills up a lot of space, and in doing so it suffocates silence.

If we are faced with a dilemma or problem, our primary response is usually to think about it. We rarely give stillness a chance in this life, because we're so busy thinking. So, in becoming still, the mind begins to lose some of its addictedness. It's not that thoughts are bad, or are magically going to disappear forever; but we need to learn how the mind can be an ally to us rather than an adversary. As an ally, it articulates insight, and has the power of reflection and contemplation. We can learn to practice in such a way that the mind becomes a great friend. There is a vast difference between intentional thinking—wise and appropriate thinking—and all the messy, confused, entangled activity of thinking. Wise thought is born of stillness. We discover calmness within the thoughts, and in the space between the thoughts. Discovering the richness of serenity, we discover we are much less

inclined to become lost in the meanderings of the mind.

Another dimension of *samatha*, and another of its lasting benefits, is the discovery of non-stickiness, non holding. In becoming attentive, we begin to discover how much agitation is born of the stickiness of grasping. We discover how the apparent continuity of things is created by grasping and holding, in all their manifestations of aversion and craving. We discover that grasping is actually the fuel that makes the contents of the mind linger; that without grasping or aversion or holding on to things, there is really little that lingers.

Many of you have experienced this in the course of your meditation practice. You know that you can have an experience of an agitated mind, where everything seems to stick. You can also have another experience where there is a lot of calmness, and many of exactly the same thoughts or images will arise—and yet they just pass away, without sticking. What has changed is not the content of the mind, but the climate of the mind. Instead of agitation, there is calmness. In *samatha* practice a non-sticky environment is created, in which there is a lessening interest in clinging. And one of the insights that emerges in that environment is a clear view of how holding causes suffering. We begin to enlarge the capacity to let go—with interest, with compassion, with understanding, and with a knowledge that this is happiness. The distinction between what is suffering and what is freedom becomes very clear

Everything in consciousness becomes increasingly visible to us.

Another of the lasting benefits of *samatha* practice comes from its role as a purification practice. Not purification in a self-righteous sense of the word, but purification practice in the sense that everything in our consciousness becomes increasingly visible to us. It's like a process of opening doors in consciousness. And when that happens, there are very few skeletons that don't get shaken out of the cupboard. This process does not necessarily happen only within the deep states of *samatha*; often it happens upon coming out of the deeper levels. Upon coming into contact again with the world and all our responses to it, one can begin to see some very powerful places of holding and sticking.

The process of purification is not just a matter of shaking things out of the closet and moving them into consciousness. Purification is also accomplished through the calmness that builds up in *samatha* practice. Steadiness and equanimity are there, so when things arise it is more possible to simply let them go. Thus *samatha* practice opens the front door and the back door at the same time, so to speak. It is not just that things arise and we get battered by them; rather things are arising and moving through.

If there are multiple unresolved issues in your life...the conditions for samatha practice are not ripe.

There is some significant preparatory work involved in doing *samatha* practice. One of the areas that needs attention is environmental. In the Tibetan tradition they talk about finding a place that has long views. Long views means having a sense of spaciousness and openness around oneself. Having proper environment really helps in cultivating the lightness, the spaciousness of mind that is necessary for concentration practice, because it involves such an intense inward focus. It should be a place where you are undisturbed, which is simple, and which allows you to do your *samatha* practice with an unencumbered mind.

And there should be preparation in terms of entanglements. The Buddha said it is not the right time to undertake *samatha* practice if you have a lot of things in the world demanding your attention. If you're heavily in debt, or have family or relationship obligations that require attention, or if your body is ill and you are having to care for it. If there are multiple unresolved issues in your life that are going to be continually demanding your attention, then the conditions for *samatha* practice are not ripe. It is said that in order to begin the deep dimension of *samatha* practice, it is important that the mind must be fairly happy, it should be easy to collect itself, that it's not kind of stirred with things that are causing a lot of anxiety or concern. This is really important.

Though I caution you not to underestimate the amount of time and perseverance involved in this practice, the benefits are great. They make a substantial impact on both our understanding and our way of being, yielding lasting benefits that ripen in all aspects of our everyday lives.

However there are also limitations, insofar as that quality of stillness is not in itself liberating. Although one does perhaps get a glimpse of a happiness that is really possible for us, it is ultimately a temporary suspension of activity, a temporary suspension of movement within the mind and body. As we all know, one gets up off the cushion at some point. And in doing so the world, both inwardly and outwardly, arises, and we are asked to be responsive—to be engaged, present, awake.

The early Buddhist texts talk of activity—of the very world—arising where there is contact. Contact is the meeting of the sense door and the sense information; the eyes meet sights; the ears meet sounds; sensation arise in the body; thoughts, images, plans, memory flood the mind. The Buddha said that the foolish seek to pursue contact, while the wise seek to understand it. And wisdom has something to do with maintaining stillness in the midst of the activity. What does it mean to be able to be really still, unshakable in the midst of a body and mind that is constantly active, in the midst of a world that keeps offering us all its endless sensory information? To understand this, we need to understand the nature of agitation.

How does agitation arise due to clinging? This is something we can explore in our own experience. We cling to form as self. We say, "I'm my body. I'm my mind. I'm my feelings. I'm my thoughts. I'm my personality." What then is the agitation that arises in that identification? "This happens to me. It's solid. It's personalized. I am the owner of this. I've had this thought. I have this mission. I have this opinion. I have this responsibility." In this endless responsibility to fix and alter and improve and modify, to be perfect, we see form as self. Sometimes we see self in form. We have a particular form in our

lives of being a parent, a partner, a daughter, a son. We have an identity and a role. We say, "That's what I am. That's who I am." Different mental states of sadness, of happiness, of elation arise and we say, "this is my true self. This is who I am." I have to then defend it, or to assert it, and there is agitation in the mind.

ant begins to disappear—the good health, the pleasant mind state, the nice feeling, the good experience—we also get agitated. Of course, if we're clinging and what we are clinging to is subject to change, as all things are, there is the agitation: I am deprived. I have lost something. Something is being taken away from me. We become distressed when whatever we are identified

with begins to change and we enter into the field of activity and agitation: what we want and what we don't want; how we suffer or how we're going to get rid of suffering. We are tied to the forms and all of their changes.

We may at times—many times, actually—believe that the things of the world have the power to prevent stillness in our lives. We may think, "If only this wasn't happening; if only this event, or this activity, or this person or this noise, or this expectation; if only this wasn't happening I would be still." But none of that in the world has really the power to prevent stillness on any level. It is the obscurations and the hindrances that surround all of the activity of body and mind that drowns stillness.

Sometimes we may have the feeling that we move in and out of stillness, or our experience may have the appearance of that movement. Personally I don't think that's true. I believe that we move in and out of agitated states. Stillness is always there as the essential nature of our being but we do move in and out of agitation whenever there is grasping that gives rise to aversion and wanting. We move from a place of vastness and spaciousness into a place of contractedness. And

that place of contractedness is always agitated. Our world is formed and shaped and at times contracted by what we pay attention to.

In the *samatha* practice you stay as absolutely simple and bare bones as possible. You don't need to add anything. Now in insight



The agitation comes because clinging does not have any room for change. It does not take account of the fact that everything changes. All of these states; this body, these feelings, these experiences; they all change. Nothing is exempt. And so when things change, and when they are pleasant, we become agitated. When the pleas-

practice, in *vipassana*, you wouldn't do that because you want the clear comprehension which I am going to be talking about. But in *samatha* practice you are not concerned about clear comprehension in anything except your primary object of concentration; your only relationship to anything else is to let go. It doesn't matter what it is, there's an equal treatment of everything. You don't even have to know what it is. So there is a real simplicity there; *samatha* practice is about stillness that comes with emptying the mind, the calming and unifying of the mind and body. And some of the very deep states of stillness that can be experienced are remarkably still places, where there is not even anything ending because there is nothing arising.

What does it mean to stop? It points not to the cessation or the eradication of the activity of our inner or outer world, but actually to the cessation of ignorance, of grasping, of holding. And this kind of stopping is said to be the true stopping or true stillness. The cessation of the grasping and agitation and all the noise when our inner world or outer world is defined by our likes and our dislikes, our wanting, our pursuing or avoiding. Even in the deepest states of concentration, or coming out of them, there can still be ignorance because the latent seeds of agitation only get suppressed. When there is a true cessation or stopping, all these latent seeds or tendencies get eradicated and what is left is simply the suchness. The "what is" of whatever appears. The world is actually liberated from our own agitation. In that quality of stopping, that quality of cessation, whatever happens to the mind it remains unmoving, imperturbable, equanimous. It is undisturbed and serene in all things.

The Buddha said that the foolish seek to pursue contact, while the wise seek to understand it.

In talking about insight meditation, it is important to keep in mind that we don't actually practice insight meditation; we practice mindfulness. This is a critical difference. When we practice mindfulness, if we are fortunate—and if all the other factors are present—then insight arises. There's a lot of emphasis on insight in Buddhist tradition, because insight is what leads to liberation. In mindfulness practice, the em-

phasis is solely upon the development of wisdom, of breaking down our concepts and our beliefs and our images about ourselves, and understanding what is true. And mindfulness practice is usually focused upon the uprooting of ignorance. Please understand that ignorance in the Buddhist tradition is not a personal insult; it's not considered, you know, your fault or something you should blame yourself about. But ignorance is essentially defined as not understanding what is true. And not understanding what is true is said to be the root of all agitation.

Sometimes ignorance is defined as seeing something as satisfactory when it really is not. Now that has many levels. For example, we can see fantasy as being satisfactory when actually it's just disconnectedness. You know, we can see sloth and torpor as being satisfactory whereas actually it's just being asleep. We could see the pursuit of fame and gain as being satisfactory while it may be all layers of delusion. Ignorance is sometimes defined as seeing continuity in things that are impermanent. You can delude yourself into thinking this is going to last forever. "This is who I am. This is, you know, unchangeable, unshakeable, this mental state defines who I am." To see all of this as solid when actually it is not. Ignorance is sometimes defined as seeing solidity and self in that which has no independent self existence. Ignorance in that sense is often kind of an underlying belief system; but all of these underlying belief systems find their expressions in greed and anger and delusion.

Now the practice of mindfulness is said to be a wisdom practice. Concentration supports it, but concentration is not the goal. In the *Satipatthana Sutta*, which is the root source of mindfulness practice in Theravada tradition, the Buddha does not actually prescribe any particular technique of insight meditation. What he does is lay down the guidelines for contemplation, for investigation and for reflection. This is one of the major differences between *samatha* and *vipassana*—the investigation factor. Insight meditation is here to understand, to investigate what arises with a calm and clear attentiveness. Countless techniques of insight meditation have evolved over the centuries, and they are not only found in the Theravada tradition of Buddhism. I first learned insight meditation with my first Tibetan teacher, for example.

It's a little bit hard to talk about insight because it is kind of a charged word, especially in this culture. You know, people feel like they ought to be having insights and they're not even sure

what they look like. Never mind what kind of insights they're supposed to be having. People keep talking about insight meditation and there's often this kind of uncertainty about, you know, Have I got the insights? Do I know if I've got an insight? (Laughter) Does it come in headline banners, like a sudden awakening experience?

Sometimes you don't even know the way insight develops.

Can I have insights and not even know it? Yes! Sometimes you don't even know the way insight develops until you might go into a charged situation in which you previously reacted in a particular way. And suddenly you're not doing it any more. Something has changed, and you don't even know when it changed. You don't know when you let go of something. But something has been let go of. It is a kind of fruition, a very gentle fruition of systematic practice. Yes, there are also those dazzling moments when you seem to suddenly "get it." But I think it's good to know that insights come in both forms.

We need to remember that that the purpose of insight is to awaken, to liberate, to bring an end to suffering and anguish. We don't seek insight in order to suffer more, or to deprive ourselves in some way, or to make ourselves unhappy. But insight is a process, and it is not always easy. That is because this path of awakening, this path of developing insight, almost always involves leaving something behind—that's the hard part for us. What we have to leave behind might be an illusion we have fostered for a long time about ourselves or others. It might be an image or a craving or a goal we've held onto for a long time. We might be asked to leave behind a particular belief or an area of contractedness. And it is not just unpleasant things that have to be left behind. Sometimes we are asked to leave behind even our more pleasant illusions—"Oh, I'm so wonderful. I'm so terrific. I'm a success. I'm this. I'm that." We're asked to be willing actually to leave everything behind. And then we begin to see what opens up in that leaving behind.

Andrew Olendzki

A question that has been coming up a lot lately in various discussions is this: "According to the teaching of the Buddha, is violence ever justified?" The short answer is "No." But in a longer answer that probes more carefully some of the practical dimensions of the human condition, there may be grounds for modifying this position.

Perhaps the situation is not dissimilar from the two levels of truth found articulated in Buddhist philosophy, whereby something can be conventionally true but, when viewed from a higher perspective, can be seen as ultimately an illusion. The conventional level is appropriate for a certain realm of discourse and shared experience, but breaks down on a closer level of scrutiny. The ultimate level may be theoretically true and more accurate, but not very useful for the coarser mode of discourse and experience at which we so often operate. Neither perspective entirely falsifies the other—they co-exist.

The principle example of these two levels of truth has to do with persons or beings. Even the Buddha used reflexive pronouns like "my" body or feelings, or even "myself," and referred to others quite conventionally by name, clan, occupation, and so forth. From the perspective of ultimate truth, as the Abhidhamma and the Mahayana traditions so usefully inform us, the notion of persons' or 'self' or 'being' is illusory.

I would like to suggest, in looking to the Buddhist tradition for guidance in the midst of current world affairs, that a similar two-level way of understanding may be appropriate in the ethical realm: Ultimately, all violence will only plant the seeds of further violence, which will have to work its way out eventually. This truth, I believe, is unassailable. But conventionally, this does not necessarily mean that we, as householders with responsibility for the safekeeping of our families and friends, can and should never make use of violence. What is appropriate for a monk or nun, grounded as they are in the ultimate perspective and working towards liberation in this lifetime, might not be the same as what is appropriate for householders, ministers or kings, who participate in a more practical reality.

A crucial thing to recognize, in my opinion, is the thoroughly psychological perspective of early Buddhism. The Buddha seems to be much more concerned with the quality of one's mind at any given moment than by the outward actions and even the consequences of those actions in the physical sphere. This is a perspective so different from ours in the mainstream west that it is very difficult for us to appreciate.

For example, in the *Jivaka Sutta* (M 55) the Buddha holds a monk harmless for eating meat that may have been given to him in his begging bowl by a layperson. If his mind is filled with loving kindness before, during and after the meal, there is no mechanism by means of which unwholesome karma is produced. On the contrary, if anyone orders the killing of an animal for the sake of the monks' meal, five distinct ways are specified in which unwholesome karma is produced. The point is that it is intention that creates karma, and it is always the intention of the act that determines its karmic quality.

The Samana (=Wanderers) movement sweeping India at the time of the Buddha, which both shaped the Buddha's thinking and to which he contributed greatly, was very much about this fundamental change of perspective. Instead of viewing things externally and physically, the emphasis shifted to viewing them internally and psychologically. Instead of "What action should I perform in the world in this particular situation?" the question became "What inner attitude should I hold in response to this particular situation?" The action will follow from the inner stance. Perhaps this shift in perspective could use some explanation.

Both ritualistic brahmins and secular materialists in India were arguing what might perhaps be considered a sort of primitive behaviorism. For the brahmins, human understanding and well-being was a matter of conducting certain rites that called upon various deities to intervene and protect human endeavor. What was important was that the ritual was done, and that it was done precisely according to traditional directions. For the materialists, who ignored anything in the inner life that went deeper than the

gratification of the senses and who denied the workings of ethics, rebirth and liberation, emphasis was placed upon external actions that resulted in pleasure, power, prestige and wealth.

The Samana movement (led by Upanishadic sages, Ajivikas, Yogis, Jains, Buddhists and others), with its roots in the very ancient Indus civilization, drew attention to the inner landscape of the human mind and body, to the world of personal experience, in which intentions, desires, states of consciousness and insight into one's own motivations became the focus. This was a radical transformation of perspective, and one that Western civilization has taken a long time to catch up with.

As an example of this transition, we can look at the *Upali Sutta* (M 56), which records a conversation between the Buddha and a less progressive Jain follower about the creation of unwholesome karma. Both parties recognize that action can be either physical, verbal or mental, but disagree on the relative impact of each. The Jain argues that physical action is the most reprehensible for the performance and perpetration of evil actions, and not so much the verbal or mental action. "What does the trivial mental [action] count for in comparison with the gross bodily [action]?" The Buddha, on the other hand, points out the primacy of mental action in a number of ways, in the sense that even verbal and physical action are guided by—and even performed by—acts of mental will or volition. As he puts it elsewhere, "Intention is action, I declare; having intended, one acts—either bodily, verbally or mentally." (A 6:63)

All this is offered as a way of re-contextualizing the opening question. From the perspective of the Buddhist tradition, it is not so much a matter of "What acts are justified or not in this situation?" but rather "With what intention is one abiding in this very moment? What motives are guiding my response here and now?" Notice that this immediately shifts the issue from a conceptual analysis of right and wrong, from thinking about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, to becoming aware of one's personal and intimate intentional relationship to the mo-



ment. This is the practice of introspective awareness; it is both the heart of the revolution that took place in ancient India, and the heart of the Buddhist meditative enterprise.

Once we frame the issue this way, the answers begin to become more apparent. In short, the Buddhists would say that anything rooted in attachment, aversion or confusion (aka greed, hatred and delusion) will contribute to more of the same. In the words of the discourses, "This leads to my own affliction, to the affliction of others, and to the affliction of both. It obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from awakening." (M 19) Conversely, any intentional stance, and ultimately any action, that is rooted in generosity, kindness or wisdom (aka non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion) will contribute positively to any outcome. How do we apply this to the present situation?

The case against hatred of any kind is clearly articulated by the Buddha and his followers in unequivocal terms: "Hatreds are never appeased by further hatred. Only by non-hatred are they appeased. This is always true" (*Dhammapada* 5). And in even more graphic terms: "Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching." (*Kakacupama Sutta*, M 21) We have heard of this attitude being modeled magnificently by certain Tibetan Buddhist prisoners under Chinese oppression, and is, I believe, the answer that any monk or nun needs to give—from the perspective of ultimate truth—to questions of violent action in response even to horrific criminal acts.

But the story I would like to focus on here has to do with something that emerged in a discussion with a worldly person, the prince Abhaya of Rajagaha. The conversation had to do with the Buddha's use of speech. The prince recognized that a person's always telling the truth was bound to injure others from time to time, if only because of their own delusions and attachment to views. Is there some basic incompatibility inherent in the Buddha hurting someone's feelings by speaking the truth to them? Here is the Buddha's response, from the *Abhayarajakumara Sutta* (M 58):

Now on that occasion a young tender infant was lying prone on Prince Abhaya's lap. Then the Blessed One said to Prince Abhaya: "What do you think, prince? If, while you or your nurse were not attending to him, this child were to put a stick or a pebble in his mouth, what would you do to him?"

"Venerable sir, I would take it out. If I could not take it out at once, I would take his head in my left hand, and crooking a finger of my right hand, I would take it out even if it meant drawing blood. Why is that? Because I have compassion for the child."

So too, prince, [with the speech of the Tathagata]:

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true [or untrue], correct [or incorrect], but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others [or which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others]: such speech the Tathagata does not utter.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others [or which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others]: the Tathagata knows the time to use such speech.

The last section is an attempt to simplify what is drawn out in more detail in the text. Essentially it is saying that the Buddha (Tathagata) will never utter speech that is unbeneficial, even if it is true and correct, and certainly not just because it is welcome and agreeable to others. By the same token, he will speak up if what he has to say is beneficial, i.e. it will help a person progress on the path—even (and this is the point) if it will be disagreeable to others and cause them distress. In other words, the harm one might cause in many cases must be weighed against the good one might do. As the matter is stated in the *Kinti Sutta* (M 103): "It is a mere trifle that the other person will be hurt, but it is a much greater thing that I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome."

I find the image of the Prince Abhaya extracting the obstruction from the throat of the infant to be a compelling one. Here the sentiment is translated from speech into action. Certain actions may be uncomfortable, may cause some distress, and may even go so far as to draw blood—but if they are done in the context of trying to heal or rescue someone from a far greater harm, it is appropriate action. The same message is given in another story found in the *Devadaha Sutta* (M 101):

Friend, suppose a man were wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and because of this he felt painful, racking, piercing feelings.

Then his friends and companions, kinsmen and relatives, brought a surgeon. The surgeon would cut around the opening of the wound with a knife, probe for the arrow with a probe, pull out the arrow, and apply a medicinal cauterizer to the opening of the wound, and at each step the man would feel painful, racking, piercing feelings.

Then on a later occasion, when the wound was healed and covered with skin, the man would be well and happy, independent, master of himself, able to go where he likes.

Here again we find an image of short term suffering deliberately inflicted for a long term good. In both cases the motivation is compassion, a sincere wish for the infant or the man to be healed, safe, and free from suffering. The experience of "painful, racking, piercing feelings" might be the same in two different circumstances,

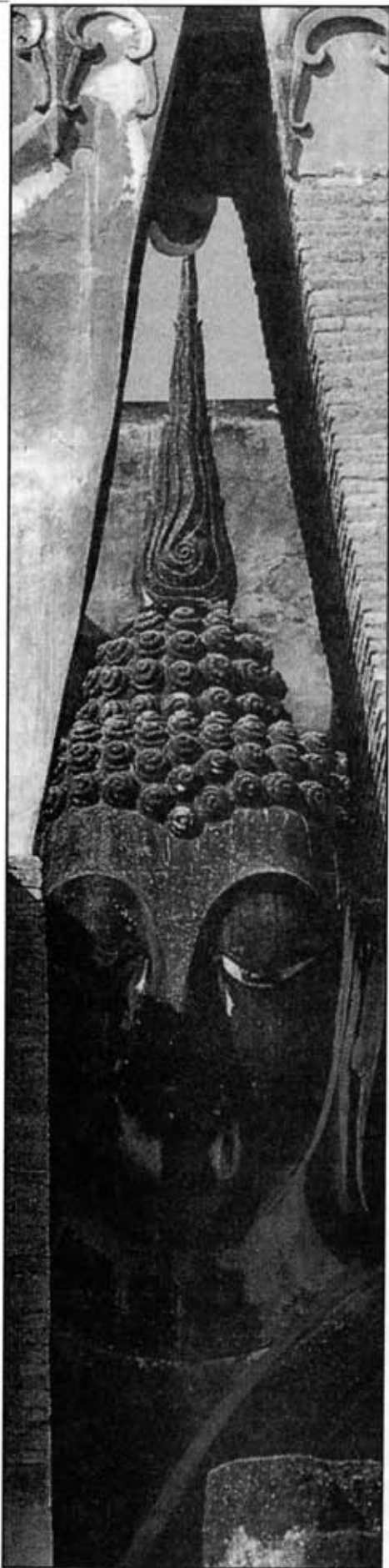
but it makes a world of difference whether they are inflicted by an enemy trying to torture a person or a physician trying to heal him. The crucial difference is the quality of intention.

So let us return to the question at hand: "According to the teaching of the Buddha, is violence ever justified?" It depends entirely upon the quality of intention. If we can—honestly!—be motivated by compassion for the well-being of the world, or of our Islamic brethren, or of the people of Afghanistan, then perhaps the use of some force in extracting the obstruction or pulling out the poison arrow of violent extremism can be seen, not only as justified, but even as entirely appropriate. It might accomplish great healing.

Having said this, however, the practice now requires of us a sincere and truthful self-examination. If our motivation is entirely our own security at the expense of others, then the focus is too narrow. Because of the interdependence of self and other, wisdom encourages us to seek a broader outlook that encompasses the well-being "of ourselves, of others and of both ourselves and others."

The question then becomes one of skill. There is a big difference between the careful probing of a wise physician or a caring parent, and the ham-handed pounding of a person in the throes of anger, hatred or revenge. As we know, the forces of delusion, led by their marshal, self-interest, are very strong in human beings; we need to be scrupulously on guard against the three unwholesome roots. It may be relatively clear that a response motivated by greed or hatred is inherently unskillful, but the influence of delusion is far more subtle. The argument that violence can sometimes be justified can easily turn into a slippery slope. Moreover, we can easily forget the ultimate perspective, that any violence we may undertake, even with compassionate intent, will surely result in more violent consequences—for ourselves and others.

As always, inquiry following Buddhist principles leads back to the core issue of developing wisdom. The principle tool for this is a calm, steady and powerful mind, rooted firmly in an attitude of kindness, generosity and non-attachment, inquiring deeply and honestly into the interdependence of causes and conditions unfolding around us in a world that embraces far, far more than simply what is "me" or "mine." May we all, collectively, have the wisdom to be skillful—now more than ever.



A Simple Matter of Choice?

Taraniya
(Gloria Ambrosia)

These remarks are excerpted from a Bhavana Program on Intention offered at BCBS in June of 2001.

When we first look at the issue of intention, we might have the sense that it is all just a simple matter of choice. But when I reflect upon this phrase, I find myself putting a question mark at the end of it. A simple matter of choice? Maybe yes, maybe no. Let's have a look and see what is happening when we make choices.

First of all, we should recognize that in Buddhist teachings the idea of intention carries a somewhat different meaning than in our everyday language. Usually we think of intention as the decision-making process, but that is a relatively coarse level of understanding. In dhamma practice, in the texture of our actual experience, it is pointing to a very subtle urge felt at the beginning of a movement or of an action. And you may find that it is very hard to see.

It is not a thought, though we often think of it as a thought. According to Buddhist teachings it is present in every single moment of our experience: "having willed, one acts through body, speech and mind." [A 6:63]. So nothing happens without this volitional activity. In terms of practice, intention is where all the action is! It is happening right now, in this very moment, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, it is always changing, just like everything else.

In any given moment there is a whole range of possible things one could be experiencing—sights, sounds, this bodily sensation, that bodily sensation, etc.—and yet only one of them is selected. Attention lands on only one object at a time, and this due to intention. Intention determines where our attention is going to light. Every moment the attention wants to go somewhere, it wants to attend to something. Can you get a feeling of it?

The Buddha tells us that there are six kinds of intention, six flavors, so to speak. Three of these are wholesome, and three of them unwholesome. The urge to attend to something can manifest with an attached, averse or deluded flavor, or it can manifest with non-attachment,

non-aversion or non-delusion. This is the difference between the experience of suffering in any given moment, or of non-suffering. We might even say, metaphorically, that the quality of intention determines the difference between a moment in heaven realms or a moment in hell realms.

Not only do we experience these states in the present, but intention has much to do with how our future unfolds as well. The choices we make right now have a momentum; they establish a pattern; they create a habit, an inclination or a tendency to respond in similar ways in the future. This is what the Buddhists refer to as karma. Choices lead to actions which establish dispositions, from which future choices are made. It is a cycle of karma that we are bound up in and contributing to moment after moment.

When I first heard of this cycle I started to look for it in the details of my own life. For instance, one day I just noticed I had a bag of potato chips in my hand. I went to get the scissors and cut the top of the potato chip bag off so I could start eating them. And right in that moment I had this thought, "Oh...now you've gone and done it!" It was like a little Laurel and Hardy voice saying, "I know this one. I know where this leads. You love potato chips. And as you dip your hand into this bag, and take that first bite, the momentum of that is going to just sweep you away." We all have our own versions of this, and we can begin to see them when we look at our cycles of intention.

At every moment we are standing at a crossroad. We have the option to choose a future that is happy and carefree, or one that perpetuates habits and patterns that we know lead to more suffering. It is a remarkable and profound teaching that we have the ability to choose the ending of suffering, to choose the path that leads to awakening. But how do we go about turning our intention in the direction of goodness and freedom, in the face of a momentum that keeps us headed for more difficult states? If it is a

simple matter of choice, why don't we do it? This is the issue we are going to be looking at all week, as we explore the nature of intention in our own experience.

The first thing we have to understand is that intention is not under the control of self. We don't have the control we think that we have. This is a hard one to get, because we all have this feeling that there is somebody in here running the show. I put on my shoes, go and get a drink, lift up my cup and bring it to my mouth. It is somewhat simplistic, but I think we all have a sense that there is somebody sitting inside our heads at some sort of control panel. But a closer examination of our experience will reveal that intention is not self.

It may be helpful to work up to this insight through the teaching of the five aggregates. Perhaps it is easiest to recognize that the body is not self. Once you've practiced for awhile, you begin to get some semblance of detachment from the physical experience, don't you? Some sense that this body is operating according to its own laws and not under your control? Look in the mirror, and see the gray hairs and feel the sagging skin. It tends to get our attention as we get a little older. You start to think, "Maybe this really isn't who I am!" Body is not self.

One can begin to get a sense that feeling, too, is not who we are. Even the possibility of being with things we don't like, of letting go of things that we do like—that grows with practice, doesn't it? You begin to get a sense that your happiness does not depend on them. It is okay if pleasant feelings end, and I can bear with unpleasant feelings. These are not who I am. Feeling is not self.

And you can notice the same about perception. We begin to get less attached to certain memories and the associations that the mind makes. For example, we can get a sense of the difference between pain as a concept and the actual experience of it. I know there was a time, especially when I was a child, when the idea of pain was enough to make me crazy—let alone the experience of it. With practice, I have come to see the difference between the concept and the experience. These perceptions are not who you are. Perception is not self.

Now consciousness gets a little tricky; the possibility of seeing consciousness isolated out from the rest of our experience usually takes a lot of intensive practice to accomplish. But one actually can discern the spark of awareness as

something other than the content and texture in which it is embedded. Take, for example, when you're looking at something and you're aware of the "I" that's looking at it. You can be aware of this little thing that happens that makes the seeing possible. There is an experience which is seeing, pure and simple. And in the moment where we can experience that, everything else drops away. There is no "me" who is looking at it. There is no "it" being looked at. The experience is just "seeing." Even consciousness is not self.

But then you come to this experience of the *sankharas*, the mental formations, the volitions. Even these, with practice, you can begin to see. What are your highly conditioned tendencies? What patterns dominate the way you organize your experience? Are you aversive, pushing things away all the time and defining your world by what you don't like about it? Are you piggy, wanting this, that and the other thing to make you feel good about everything? Do you tend to be deluded and out to lunch most of the time, not really knowing or wanting to know

what is going on deep within? Whatever they are, you can begin to see these tendencies—and in doing so, you can get some distance from them. You can begin to get a sense of "Well, that's not who I am, either. If it was who I am, it would be more solid, more permanent." The mental formation also change—moment to moment, in response to changing conditions—and after a while, that insight starts to sink in. Formations are not self.

The illusion of control is the last stronghold of self view. We just don't want to let go of the idea that all this experience is not in the control of self, that there is not somebody running it all. But when we begin to see it for ourselves, we start to get a sense of how compulsive the whole experience of being alive really is. I remember one of my teachers saying to me how, after years of practice, it just suddenly struck him full in the face: "My gosh," he said, "it's all compulsion! It's all just happening, isn't it?" When you begin to get this sense that intentions just sort of come up on their own, and that the movements of our lives are just happening, without the con-

trol of self—it is a very illuminating insight.

For myself, I felt a tremendous relief. Suddenly it felt as though I could stop beating up on myself for doing unskillful things out of habit. "It's my karma, after all, and it's a given that I will do that. That's the way it is when we are not awake." And with this insight I began to put a lot more emphasis on mindfulness. Suddenly I knew in a much deeper way why I needed to be mindful. Self is not getting me free. Mindfulness is. I found I could relax more and just pay attention.

These are not truths that can be known by thinking about them. If you're nodding your head, you know what I mean; you've seen it. Even this experience of insight into the nature of intention is arising out of conditions. It is arising, in any particular moment, based on whatever patterns or habits of mind each of us is accustomed to. And the process is rarely conscious; it's almost entirely invisible. Reflect a moment on the profundity of this teaching.

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have difficulty letting go of the notion that how our children are doing in the world reflects on us. It's hard to see our children as separate individuals with their own Karma. I thought I was a terrible mother when my daughter was a teenager. Everything teenagers do that parents don't like was a sign that I had blown it. Now that my daughter is a lovely young adult, my perceptions about myself as a mother are much kinder and less judgmental." Because of our work with sanna, she added, she is increasingly aware that her perceptions about being a good mother aren't necessarily true, and she is less inclined to judge herself as either a bad or a good mother.

In our class discussion about this assignment, a member of our group pointed out how liberating it would be if we were unconcerned with others' perceptions of us—positive perceptions as well as negative ones. "It's tempting to want to just get rid of others' bad opinions of us," he said. "But if we really want to be free, I think we have to let go of our investment in peoples' good opinions too." In fact as he noted, it's not possible to let go of the bad opinions and hold onto the good ones, since good and bad are interdependent.

In the months during which our Old Yogis group has worked with sanna, we have also prac-

ticed being aware of perceiving experiences as good or bad, being aware of seeing others as better or worse than or equal to ourselves, and focusing on a person we are close to and noticing our perceptions about him or her. Shortly before our late-summer semester break, Narayan read some of our past assignments aloud and reflected that just hearing them is a teaching. One reason this is so true, I think, is that she chooses assignments that invite us to be aware of things that we do all the time, or of issues that come up for us constantly.

Most recently, we've been focusing on happiness. We've practiced being aware of different sources of happiness and of things that we thought would make us happy but didn't. In class we've talked about how the cultural model of happiness that exalts pleasure, achievement, prestige, and material things is ultimately unsatisfactory. And we've reflected on the revelation of a monk who wrote on the wall of a cave in Thailand, "Oh joy, to find that there is no happiness to be found in this world." The monk had discovered that it is possible to find great joy independent of conditions.

A yogi who is a composer told me about an experience he had that fit the cultural model of happiness but turned out to be quite fraught, as

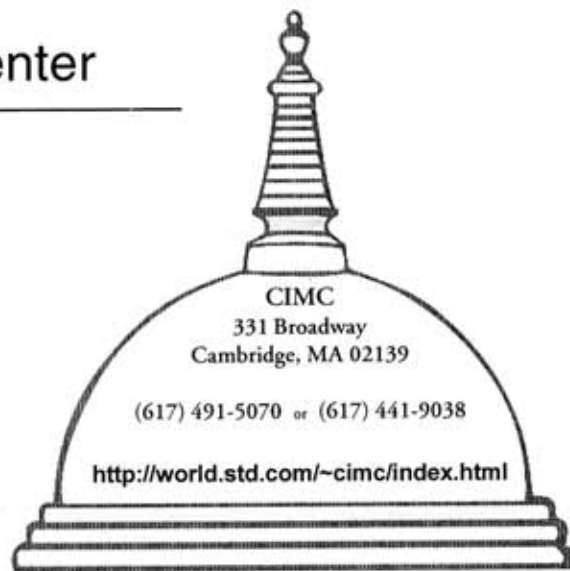
our monk could no doubt have foretold. One of his pieces was chosen to be performed at a prestigious venue with a top orchestra. "Everyone said how wonderful it was and how happy I should be," he said, "but I thought that there was going to be a lot of dukka." As he had anticipated, the rehearsals were stressful, and he was anxious that there wasn't enough rehearsal time. And although the performance went quite well, "there was a lot of worry and suffering throughout."

Around the same time, he said, he was carrying his laundry home from the laundromat when "this really deep joy welled up for no apparent reason. It was a simple but profound sense of peace and lightness, and it was totally unexpected. This is the happiness that comes from not being burdened with trying to get somewhere."

During our semester break, our assignment has been to notice the changing nature of happiness. When we resume, it will be instructive to hear others' insights. And if the work we have done in our Old Yogis group has not convinced us to wholeheartedly share the monk's exhilaration over his discovery that worldly happiness can't be found, it has surely contributed to our collective well-being.

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.



Leaving No Trace

Nancy Waring

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 on-going 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.

A member of our ongoing "Old Yogis" practice group at Cambridge Insight Meditation Center (CIMC) recently told me that one of our homework assignments had helped her overcome her aversion to an IMS work retreat job she had disliked intensely. During the women's retreat at IMS last March, she was assigned to the kitchen, where most of her tasks suited her fine. But washing the floor in the walk-in refrigerator was anathema. She dreaded having to drag out the heavy jugs of oil, the cumbersome bags of flour, and the big boxes of fruit and vegetables, and having to drag them back in when the floor was dry. She hated the mop, with its long dingy strings; and she especially disliked having to wring it out over and over again. When the job was done, she inspected her work like a boot camp sergeant, judging herself a failed floor washer.

During sittings in the meditation hall, her mind often transported her to the dreaded walk-in refrigerator, her aversion assuming the proportions that such aversions sometimes do on retreat. She tried one of the practices we had focused on in our Old Yogis group—ascribing equal meaning to each and every activity, and engaging wholeheartedly in whatever one is doing. But to no avail—washing the floor just didn't measure up to eating a delicious lunch, or

even to her other kitchen duties for that matter. Narayan Liebenson Grady, one of the retreat teachers and also our Old Yogis teacher at CIMC, suggested in a group interview that the practice of "leaving no trace"—another one of our Old Yogis assignments—might be helpful. (Our group has been focusing on no-self (annata) for several years and on the aggregate of perception (sanna) for some months.) "When you do something, you should burn yourself completely, like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of yourself," counsels Suzuki Roshi in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind. Our preconceived ideas about our activities leave traces that "make our minds very complicated," he writes, as do our recollections of our activities. But, he explains, when we act "with a quite simple, clear mind, we have no notion or shadows and our activity is strong and straightforward." When the yogi who hated the string mop began practicing leaving no trace, "Washing the floor became a whole different experience," she said. "It was just another part of the job, and I was able to do it mindfully and then let it go."

Our Old Yogis group focused on Suzuki Roshi's counsel for several weeks, discussing its meaning in our weekly meetings and practicing leaving no trace between classes. Several members of our group said they viewed "leave no trace" as a fundamental reminder to be mindful.

A number of us observed what a powerful ally this practice can be in such relatively simple situations as trying to let go of anger when another driver cuts us off, or letting go of the pleasure of a good meal when it's over. One yogi described his efforts to leave no trace in interactions with others—attempting, as he explained, "to keep conversations clean, so that when they're over, there is as little residue as possible, as little as possible for the other person to deal with. When there's "less self," he said, there are fewer traces in what you leave around, whether it's a plate or a hurtful comment."

Another assignment that resonated strongly for many of us was being aware of wanting to be seen in a certain way, or not wanting to be seen in a certain way. One yogi I queried about this said he is very invested in being perceived as "a nice guy." He worries, for example, that because he is a man, women are sometimes afraid of him, and he feels wounded when they are. "This assignment helped me lighten up and let go and laugh at myself a little bit," he said. "How is a woman alone on a dark street supposed to know that I am a nice guy and that she has nothing to fear from me?" Another yogi said she recognizes that she wants to see herself as a good mother and that her daughter's behavior has been her measure of her success as a mother. "We mothers

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The Moon Released

Aṅgulimāla Thera
Theragāthā 871-873

He who once lived in negligence
And then is negligent no more,
He's the one who brightens this world
—Like the moon released from a cloud.

yo ca pubbe pamajjitvā
pacchā so nappamajjati,
so 'maṃ lokam pabhāseti
abbhā mutto 'va candimā.

Who follows up with wholesome deeds
Unwholesome deeds he may have done,
He's the one who brightens this world
—Like the moon released from a cloud.

yassa pāpaṃ kataṃ kammaṃ
kusalena pithīyati
so 'maṃ lokam pabhāseti
abbhā mutto 'va candimā.

Indeed that youthful bhikkhu who
Pours himself into the Buddha's teaching,
He's the one who brightens this world
—Like the moon released from a cloud.

yo have daharo bhikkhu
juṇṇjati Buddhasāsane,
so 'maṃ lokam pabhāseti
abbhā mutto 'va candimā.

Of all the monks and nuns who awakened under the guidance of the Buddha, none was more notorious than the author of these verses, the robber and murderer Aṅgulimāla. Originally named Ahimsaka (the harmless one), he was the son of the brahmin chaplain to the Kosala king and became a brilliant student in the medical school at Takkaṣilā. On account of a number of intrigues perpetrated by his jealous classmates, he set upon a course of ambushing victims on the road and cutting off their thumbs in order to assemble a "garland of thumbs" which is the translation of his monastic name Aṅgulimāla.

The Buddha fearlessly confronted the robber and helped him to see the error of his ways. Then, in the face of tremendous opposition from the population, he allowed Aṅgulimāla to join the Sangha, and in due time he became an awakened Arahant. The karma of his previous deeds still followed him, however, and he was later stoned in the street by an angry mob. Coming into the teacher's presence "with blood running from his cut head, with his bowl broken, and with his outer robe torn," the Buddha simply said, "Bear it! brahmin, Bear it! You are experiencing here and now the result of [your] deeds..."

It is within this context that the above verses were composed. The author is clearly referring to his own emergence from negligence and unwholesome deeds into a wiser and more wholesome understanding. I cannot help but feel this story is timely, whether referring to individuals who have committed terrible deeds yet being capable of radical transformation, or to a nation looking more closely at its impact in the world. The goodness that fills our world may well be poised to emerge, like the bright moon, from behind the clouds which far too often obscure it.

--Andrew Olendzki