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Bhikkhu Bodhi

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Instructions for Jhāna

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Resistance in Meditation

Bill Morgan

Putting Down the Burden

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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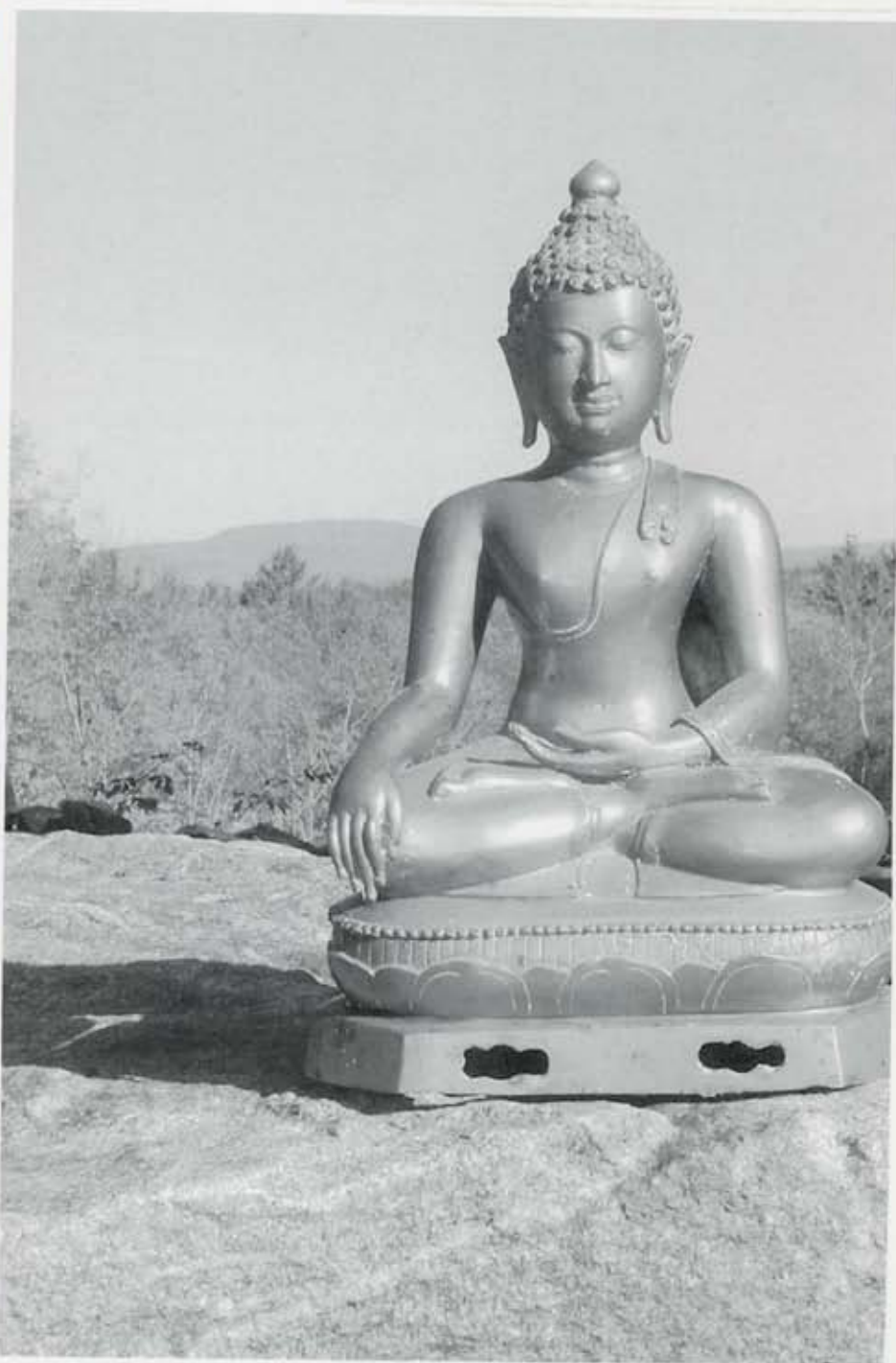
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Healing the Wounds of the World

Many of us in America today are thinking about security, wondering how best to keep our families and our nation safe. Because so much of the danger in the world lately seems to be focused in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, we most often encounter Islamic, Jewish and Christian perspectives on affairs in these regions. Perhaps it would be helpful to hear from one of the other great world religions. What is the Buddhist view of how to achieve safety and security in the world's trouble spots, in America following last year's attack, and even in our own communities?

One thing the Buddhist tradition emphasizes is the interdependence of all things. The world we inhabit is a vast network of interrelated systems—natural systems of earth, air and water, living systems of plants and animals, and human social, political and economic systems. In such a world every action has far-ranging effects, and often influences things in ways that go well beyond what is immediately apparent. This is particularly true of acts of violence, which often do as much or more harm to the perpetrator or to innocent bystanders as to the intended victim.

One morning while walking barefoot in ancient India the Buddha came across a young man who was pouring oblations and uttering mantras of protection while facing in each of the six cardinal directions (including the nadir and zenith). "How can you think such things will bring you security?" he asked. "I learned this from my father," replied the young man. "It is how things have always been done." "Listen," said the Buddha, "and I will tell you how to make sure that each of the directions is truly safe and free from danger."

He went on to describe how real security comes from cultivating and nurturing the network of social relationships within which each person finds themselves embedded. Caring for, supporting and respecting one's parents as the eastern direction will ensure that they in turn will care for, support and respect their children. Doing the same for one's wife or husband as the west, teachers and supervisors as the south, friends and colleagues as the north, workers and subordinates as the nadir, and spiritual guides as the zenith will similarly result in a reciprocal response and to the strengthening of the social bonds that connect one's whole community.

For example, being kind, generous and honest with your spouse is the best protection from the turmoil of divorce and acrimony. Treating your employees fairly and sharing the fruits of their labor equitably is the best way to encourage their loyalty and cooperation. Nurturing your own children with love and devotion is more likely to result in them caring for you when you are eventually in need.

How does this basic principle apply to our country in this pivotal period of response to terrorist attack? The police

action to go after the bombers and, by necessity, those who protected them may well have been an appropriate response to the immediate threat of danger. But our deeper, more lasting security will only come from the gradual transformation of our relationships with people who are currently considered adversaries and who presently wish us harm. Turning enemies into friends is a surer way of protecting ourselves than returning violence with more violence.

Not too long ago we felt under tremendous threat from the Soviet Union, while today we refer to Russia and most of its former satellites as friends or even allies. Our new-found security has not come from our nuclear stockpile, but from the transformation of our relationship with a former adversary. There is no "axis of evil" in this view, only countries with whom the process of reconciliation has not yet been completed. The wounds our network of relationships sustained from the Korean war, the Iranian revolution and the invasion of Kuwait have been slow to heal, but their eventual healing is inevitable.

Sometimes the conditions needed to allow for reconciliation involve a change of regime, but in most cases this will happen by natural evolution. To do so by violent means amounts to war, and once loosed the dogs of war tend to wreak havoc in unimaginable ways. Instead of soothing an area of conflict by trying to heal the ruptured relationship, we are inflicting a fresh wound, with its own set of new and expanding dangers. This simply does not make us more safe; rather it exposes us to greater and often unforeseen hazards.

America will be safe from terrorism when its relationships with all parties in all directions are honest, noble and just. The entire Islamic world can change from adversary to ally if we can help find an equitable solution to the problems caused by the formation of the state of Israel and from its ensuing insecurities, if we could ameliorate the effect our lust for oil has upon all our dealings in the region, and if we could cultivate a real understanding of Islamic tradition. Treated with such respect, it is natural that even the more fundamentalist elements in the area would reciprocate and would no longer yearn to do us harm. Similar healing through the cultivation of change in relationship can occur with the developing nations of the world, with the population that swells our prisons, and with alienated members of our own family.

This is not idealism; it is rooted in a deep understanding of human nature. The current trend of our country's leadership is to pour the oblations and mumble the mantras of the last century, beating the drums of war, and in the long run this will only increase the danger faced by our nation and by the entire world. Can't we try a wiser way?

—Andrew Olendzki

Climbing to the Top of the Mountain

An Interview With
Bhikkhu Bodhi

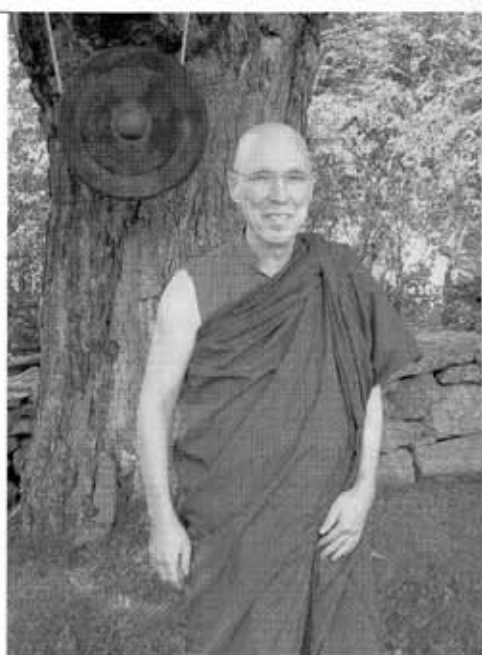


PHOTO: ALOENZO

You have lived in a forest monastery in Sri Lanka for many years, Bhante. What brings you to America?

I originally came to the U.S. to visit my father and sister. But for twenty-five years I have been afflicted with a chronic headache condition, which has resisted every type of treatment I have tried to date. My father suggested I arrange a consultation at The Headache Institute of New York, a clinic in Manhattan. Thus for the past few months I have been taking treatment at this clinic.

Is it true that you have decided to re-settle in this country?

I originally intended to stay in the U.S. only as long as necessary to treat the headache and then return to Sri Lanka. Over the past few months, however, two thoughts grew increasingly compelling in my mind: first, that I should be closer to my father in his old age; and second, that I might be able to contribute more to the Dharma here in America than in Sri Lanka. At the beginning of this year I formally retired as editor for the Buddhist Publication Society, and thus I no longer felt obliged to reside in Sri Lanka.

During my first six weeks in the U.S. I had been staying in the crowded and bustling New York Buddhist Vihara. In July I met by chance an old Chinese Dharma master and his translator, a young Chinese-Canadian monk, who

invited me to visit their monastery in New Jersey. I expected it to be a busy devotional temple in a run-down urban ghetto, but to my pleasant surprise it turned out to be a serious study monastery located on quiet and spacious grounds in rural New Jersey, with wooded hills all around and herds of deer grazing on the lawns. Master Jen Chun and I took an immediate liking to each other, and he invited me to stay as long as I wish.

So you will live as a Theravada monk in a Chinese Mahayana monastery?

In ancient India it was not rare for monks of different Buddhist schools to dwell peacefully in the same monastery. I have found Master Jen Chun to be one of the most admirable monks I have ever known: vastly learned, with profound understanding of Buddhism, yet utterly simple, humble, and selfless; strict in discipline yet always bubbling with laughter and loving kindness. He is, moreover, an authority on the Agamas, a body of literature in the Chinese Tripitaka that corresponds to the Pali Nikayas. Thus I find his approach quite congruent with my own. He has asked me to give teachings at the monastery on the Pali suttas and the Pali language, and the resident monks and many lay followers are keen to attend both courses. We hope to make the monastery a place where well-disciplined monks of any authentic

Vinaya tradition can reside and live together harmoniously. The place, incidentally, is named Bodhi Monastery, but it is sheer coincidence that I wound up at a monastery that bears my name.

How did you first find your way from Brooklyn to Sri Lanka?

My interest in Buddhism started around 1965, when I was attending Brooklyn College, with books on Zen Buddhism by D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts. In 1966 I went to Claremont Graduate School in southern California to study Western philosophy. There I became acquainted with a Buddhist monk from Vietnam named Thich Giac Duc who came to stay in the same residence hall where I was living. I asked him for instructions in meditation, and he guided me in the practice of mindfulness of breathing. He also taught me the fundamentals of Buddhism – what one didn't find in the writings of Suzuki and Watts! After several months I decided that I wanted to become a monk and asked him if he could ordain me. He agreed to do so, and thus I was ordained as a *samanera* [a novice] in the Vietnamese Mahayana order in May 1967.

Was this a big step for you?

Of course, viewed from the outside, it was a big step, but I never had to struggle with the decision to become a monk. One morning I simply woke up

and thought, "Why don't I ask Ven. Giac Duc if he could ordain me," and that was that. Thereafter we lived together for three years in Claremont while we both worked on our doctorate degrees [my dissertation was on the philosophy of John Locke!]. When he returned to Vietnam, I lived with another Vietnamese monk, Thich Thien An, at a meditation center in Los Angeles. By that time I had already decided I wanted to go to Asia to receive full ordination, to study Buddhism, and to make the task of practicing and propagating Buddhism my life work. Meanwhile, I had met several Sri Lankan monks passing through the U.S., most notably Ven. Piyadassi Thera, who recommended Ven. Ananda Maitreya, a prominent Sri Lankan scholar-monk, as a teacher.

By August 1972 I had finished my obligations in the U.S. I had written to Ven. Ananda Maitreya, requesting permission to come to his monastery for ordination and training, and he wrote back saying that I was welcome. After a brief visit with my first teacher in Vietnam, I went to Sri Lanka and took ordination with Ven. Ananda Maitreya, with whom I lived for three years studying Buddhism and Pali. Later I was invited by Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, the well-known German monk, to stay at the Forest Hermitage in Kandy. I eventually spent many years there caring for him in his old age and helping with the work of the Buddhist Publication Society.

How did you become a scholar of Buddhism?

I never intended to become a Buddhist scholar or a translator of Pali texts; in fact, I do not consider myself a serious scholar of Buddhism even now. I was initially attracted to Buddhism through the practice of meditation. It was my first teacher, Ven. Giac Duc, who impressed on me the need for systematic study of the Dhamma to serve as a proper foundation for both meditation practice and for teaching the Dhamma in the West. When I went to Sri Lanka and took ordination, my original intention was to study the texts for several years and then go off to meditate.

But I already knew that to study the texts properly, I would have to learn the language in which they were written, which meant I had to study Pali. When reading the suttas in the original, I often translated whole passages for myself – both canonical texts and their commentaries – and thus I gradually became immersed in translation. To acquire the foundation for practice, I studied the Sutta Pitaka in a systematic manner, using the material I read as topics of contemplation in order to transform my own understanding. The type of understanding I was aspiring towards was not the objective understanding that an academic scholar would attempt to acquire, but a subjective, personal comprehension of the essential meaning of the Dhamma. I was intent on seeing how the Dhamma imparted to us by the Buddha was addressing my own condition as a human being and as a follower of the Buddhist path. This eventually entailed a wholesale revision of my Western world-view to bring it into accord with the Dhamma.

Would you recommend the study of Dhamma to all meditators?

I wouldn't say that one needs a thorough knowledge of the texts before one can start to practice meditation. As with most Buddhist practitioners today, I entered the Buddhist path through meditation. But I believe that for the practice of meditation to fulfill the purpose entrusted to it by the Buddha, it must be strongly supported by other factors, which nurture the practice and direct it towards its proper goal. These factors include *faith*, in the sense of trusting confidence in the Triple Gem – the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha; *right view*, a clear understanding of the basic principles of the teaching; and *virtue*, the observance of Buddhist ethics, not as a mere code of rules but as a dedicated effort to radically transform one's conduct and character.

Individuals will naturally differ in the weight they assign to the complementary factors of study and practice. Some will aspire to extensive scriptural knowledge, driven by an urge to under-

stand the principles imparted by the texts. For such people, the practice of meditation may play a relatively subordinate role in this phase of their spiritual growth. Their emphasis will instead be on deep investigation and clear comprehension of the Dhamma. Others may have little interest in scriptural study or philosophical understanding but will instead be disposed to meditation practice. I myself believe the healthiest pattern is one of balanced development.

In my own case, under the influence of my early Buddhist teachers, I have wanted to understand Buddhism in detail, in its horizontal extension as well as in its vertical depths. Despite my early ambition to plunge directly into meditation, my destiny seems to have steered me towards teachers who did not exclusively emphasize meditation but rather an integration of study, meditation, and character development. They repeatedly guided me in the direction of slow, gradual, patient practice, utilizing a broad approach to spiritual cultivation, and this has agreed well with my own disposition.

Buddhism in the West has historically been rather anti-intellectual, and it seems only recently that meditators are turning more to study of the tradition.

I see the anti-intellectual bias of American Buddhism as a natural reaction to the overemphasis on conceptual study typical of Western education, which promotes learning for its own sake or for vocational ends, without concern for the values by which we live. The rejection of intellectualism also has roots in romanticism and surrealism, two revolts against the presumptions of disengaged rationality. Indeed, the beats and the hippies, who were in some respects the forerunners of the Buddhist movement in America, were essentially heirs to the romantic rejection of disengaged rationality.

The program of study articulated in the classical Buddhist tradition is, however, quite different from that employed by Western academia. Here one uses conceptual understanding as a springboard to direct personal experience. The program begins by *listening* to

"those teachings (*dhammas*) that are good in the beginning, the middle and the end." After listening, one *bears in mind* what one has heard, preserving it in memory. (Remember, this comes from a time when written texts were not available, so to "bear something in mind" meant that one must memorize the teachings that are to guide one's practice.) Then one *verbally recites* the teachings in order to imprint them more firmly upon the mind. Next, one has to *examine them intellectually*, to discern the meaning being conveyed by the words, to reflect on how the Dhamma applies to one's own experience. But one is not to remain content with conceptually comprehending the meaning—finally, one has to *penetrate it thoroughly by view*, by insight. This brings direct penetration of the teaching with wisdom, based on the practice of meditation.

What sort of training have you had in meditation practice?

During my early years in Sri Lanka I did very little intensive meditation. This was not my ordination teacher's mode of practice; he integrated regular periods of meditation into his day-to-day life. When I later practiced intensive retreats on my own, I used *anapana-sati* [mindfulness of breathing] as my sole meditation subject. But after some time, I found my mind became dry and rigid, and I felt the need to soften and enrich it with other types of meditation. Thus, at different times and under different circumstances, I learned the practices that constitute the "four protective meditations": recollection of the Buddha, the meditation on loving kindness, the contemplation of the repugnant nature of the body, and the recollection of death. Throughout my life as a monk I have made extensive use of these four meditation subjects. I have also done occasional extended retreats at hermitages in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Regretfully, though, because of my poor merits and the debilitating headache condition, I have not reached any attainments worthy of a true practitioner.

Aside from the metta practice, these forms of meditation are not very common in this country.

The Buddha did not teach the Dhamma as an "art of living" but as a path to deliverance.

What I find perplexing here is the use of *vipassana* [insight] meditation as a method in its own right, severed from the broader context of the Dhamma. In the way that I was taught and trained, *vipassana* meditation is the crown jewel of the Dhamma, but like any crown jewel it should be embedded in the appropriate crown. Traditionally this is the framework made up of faith in the Triple Gem, a clear conceptual understanding of the Dhamma, and an aspiration to realize the aim the Buddha holds up as the goal of his teaching. Upon this basis, one undertakes the practice of meditation to attain direct insight into the principles of the teaching. Then proper wisdom—the wisdom that conforms to the Buddha's intention—naturally arises and leads to the realization of the goal.

What do you make of the fact that Buddhism is becoming so popular in this country?

It is not difficult to understand why Buddhism should appeal to Americans at this particular juncture of our history. Theistic religions have lost their hold on the minds of many educated Americans, and this has opened up a deep spiritual vacuum that needs to be filled. For many, materialistic values are profoundly unsatisfying, and Buddhism offers a spiritual teaching that fits the bill. It is rational, experiential, practical, and personally verifiable; it brings concrete benefits that can be realized in one's own life; it propounds lofty ethics and an intellectually cogent philosophy. Also, less auspiciously, it has an exotic air that attracts those fascinated by the mystical and esoteric.

The big question we face is whether and to what extent Buddhism should be

refashioned to conform to the particular exigencies imposed by American culture. Throughout history Buddhism has generally adjusted its forms to enable it to adapt to the indigenous cultures and thought-worlds in which it has taken root. Yet beneath these modifications, which allowed it to thrive in different cultural contexts, it has usually remained faithful to its essential insights. This may be the biggest challenge facing Buddhism in America, where the intellectual milieu is so different from anything Buddhism has ever previously encountered that in our haste to effect the necessary adaptations we may be unwittingly diluting or even expurgating principles fundamental to the Dhamma. I believe we need to be very cautious if we are to find a successful middle way between too rigid adherence to traditional Asiatic forms and excessive accommodation to contemporary Western—and specifically American—intellectual, social, and cultural pressures.

It might be counterproductive to attempt to import into America a version of Theravada Buddhism that retains all the customs and mores of Southeast Asia. But I believe it is essential to preserve those principles that lie at the very heart of the Dhamma, and to clearly articulate the proper purpose for which the practice of the Dhamma is undertaken. If we tamper with these, we risk losing the essence along with the extrinsic accretions. In our current situation, I think the main danger is not inflexible adherence to established Buddhist forms, but excessive accommodation to the pressures of the American mind-set. In many of the Buddhist publications I have seen, I have detected signs of a widespread program, regarded almost as obligatory, to extract Buddhist practices from their grounding in Buddhist faith and doctrine and transplant them into a basically secular agenda whose parameters are defined by Western humanism, particularly humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

Can you point to ways this might be happening?

I think we see examples of this in the use of *vipassana* meditation as an adjunct

or companion to Western psychotherapy. Actually, I'm not overly worried about psychologists using Buddhist techniques to promote psychological healing. If Buddhist meditation can help people feel more comfortable about themselves, or to live with greater awareness and equanimity, this is good. If psychotherapists can use Buddhist meditation as a tool of inner healing, I would say more power to them. After all, "the Tathagata does not have the closed fist of a teacher," and we should let others take from the Dhamma what they can effectively use for beneficial ends.

What I am concerned about is the trend, common among present-day Buddhist teachers, of recasting the core principles of the Buddha's teachings into largely psychological terms and then saying, "This is Dhamma." When this is done we may never get to see that the real purpose of the teaching, in its own framework, is not to induce "healing" or "wholeness" or "self-acceptance," but to propel the mind in the direction of deliverance – and to do so by attenuating, and finally extricating, all those mental factors responsible for our bondage and suffering. We should remember that the Buddha did not teach the Dhamma as an "art of living" – though it includes that – but above all as a *path to deliverance*, a path to final liberation and enlightenment. And what the Buddha means by enlightenment is not a celebration of the limitations of the human condition, not a passive submission to our frailties, but an overcoming of those limitations by making a radical, revolutionary breakthrough to an altogether different dimension of being.

This is what I find most gripping about the Dhamma: its culmination in a transcendent dimension in which we overcome all the flaws and vulnerabilities of the human condition, including our bondage to death itself. The aim of the Buddhist path is not living and dying with mindfulness (though these are, of course, worthy achievements), but transcending life and death entirely to arrive at the Deathless, at the Immeasurable, at Nirvana. This is the goal the

Buddha sought for himself during his own quest for enlightenment, and it is this attainment that his enlightenment made available to the world. This is the end at which the proper practice of Dhamma points, the end for which the practice is undertaken in its original framework.

This end, however, is lost to view when insight meditation is taught as just a way to live mindfully, to wash dishes and change baby's diapers with awareness and tranquility. When the transcendent dimension of the Dhamma, its very *raison d'être*, is expunged, what we are left with is, in my view, an eviscerated, enfeebled version of the teaching that can

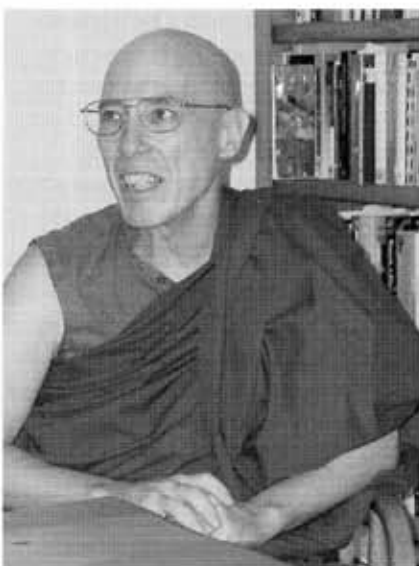


PHOTO: A. OLSON

no longer function as a vehicle to deliverance. Though correctly practiced, the Dhamma does bring abundant happiness within the world, ultimately the teaching is not about living happily in the world but about reaching "the end of the world"—an end that is to be found not in the far regions of outer space but within this fathom-long body with its senses and consciousness.

So you do not think Dhamma is being taught as a path of deliverance?

The impression I get from what I've read in contemporary American Buddhist publications is that this aspect of Buddhist practice is receiving little emphasis. I hear of students being taught to accept themselves; to live in the

present from moment to moment without attachment and clinging; to enjoy, honor and celebrate their vulnerability. Again, I don't want to underestimate the importance of approaching the practice with a healthy psychological attitude. For a person troubled by self-condemnation, who is always dejected and miserable, the practice of intensive meditation is more likely to be harmful than beneficial. The same might be said of a person who lacks a strong center of psychological integration or of one who tries to deny his weaknesses and vulnerabilities by presenting a façade of strength and self-confidence.

But I have to emphasize that the training that accords with the Buddha's own clear intentions presupposes that we are prepared to adopt a critical stance towards the ordinary functioning of our mind. This involves seeing our vulnerabilities, i.e., our mental defilements, not as something to be celebrated but as a liability, as a symptom of our "fallen" condition. It also presupposes that we are determined to *transform* ourselves, both in the immediate moment-to-moment functioning of our minds and in their more stable and persistent extension over time.

To take up the Buddha's training is thus to draw a distinction, even a sharp distinction, between our characters (proclivities, dispositions, habits, etc.) as they are now, and the ideals to which we should aspire and seek to embody by our practice of the Buddhist path. The mental dispositions we must acknowledge and seek to rectify are our *kilesas*, the defilements or afflictions: the three root-defilements of greed, aversion and delusion, and their many offshoots such as anger, obstinacy, arrogance, vanity, jealousy, selfishness, hypocrisy, etc.

So the great affirmation to which the Buddhist path points us is not the wonders of our "ordinary mind," but of the mind that has been illuminated by true wisdom, the mind that has been purified of all taints and corruptions, the mind that has been liberated from all bonds and fetters and has become suffused with a universal love and

compassion that spring from the depth and clarity of understanding. The practice of the Buddhist path is the systematic way to close the gap between our ordinary unenlightened mind and the enlightened, liberated state towards which we aspire, a state which rises to and merges with the Deathless.

To reach this transcendent goal requires training, a precise, detailed and systematic process of training, and fundamental to this whole course of training is the endeavor to master and control one's own mind. One begins with the development of such fundamental qualities as faith, devotion, moral virtue and generosity, proceeds through the development of concentration, and then arrives at direct insight and true wisdom.

You mention faith as a starting point. What do you mean by faith?

Faith is an aspect of Buddhism that until recently has been neglected in the West in favor of bare meditation practice. This, I think, misses something important. One's practice should be grounded in faith or *saddha*—a word I am using in the traditional sense as faith in the Triple Gem: the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. In some recent publications, I have noticed greater emphasis being placed on faith and devotion, but these terms seem to be used in a quite different way than I understand them. I've seen faith regarded as a quality that can attach itself to virtually any object, praiseworthy as long as it expresses the heart's deepest longings.

I know this is not a popular position these days, but as a Buddhist myself—a religious Buddhist—I believe that the true Dhamma of the Buddha can only be practiced as *Dhamma* when it is rooted in faith in the Buddha as the unique, fully enlightened teacher, and in the Dhamma as a unique teaching that discloses perspectives on reality not accessible through any other teaching. I am afraid that if faith becomes a “free floating” variable, it is just as likely to lead into futile bypaths as it is to spur one to the complete termination of suffering.

I don't think this position makes me dogmatic or intolerant. I am, I hope,

perfectly tolerant of other points of view. But when I am asked to give advice on how to practice the Buddha Dhamma correctly, I would underscore the proper and exclusive object of faith as the supreme enlightenment of the Buddha and the teaching that flows from this

Fidelity to the core insights and values imparted to us by the Buddha is essential.

supreme enlightenment. One's practice should also be grounded in right view, which involves other ideas that are also being disparaged in Western Buddhism: for example, the fact of rebirth; the acceptance of *kamma* or volitional action as the force that determines our modes of rebirth; the understanding of dependent origination as describing the causal structure of the round of rebirths.

It seems difficult for many modern practitioners to go beyond their immediate empirical experience to some of the doctrinal aspects stressed by the tradition.

Again, I think faith has an important role to play here. It allows us to place trust in precisely those disclosures of the Buddha that run contrary to our conventional understanding of the world, that conflict with our ordinary ways of engaging with the world. Remember that the Buddha's teaching “goes against the current” (*patisotagami*) of one's habitual assumptions and attitudes. After all, most of our habits revolve around the desire to enjoy pleasure, to avoid pain, and to preserve the illusion that the universe centers around our individual self. When one's personal experience of suffering becomes vivid enough, it will induce one to become repelled by these habits and to place trust in the Buddha's disclosures on reality as our guidelines to liberation.

Of course, at the outset of one's involvement with the Dhamma one need

not take on board the full baggage of higher Buddhist doctrine. The Buddha himself often adjusted his teaching to the capacity and temperament of the people he was addressing. When teaching people not yet ready for the doctrine that leads to final deliverance, he taught the benefits of generosity, of observing the five precepts, and of treating others with kindness and respect. But whenever he saw people in the audience mature enough to receive the higher teaching, then, as the texts put it, he would “disclose that doctrine special to the enlightened ones: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.” Each person lives and learns according to their capacity, and the teachings can embrace this diversity as well in the West as they have in Asia. But what is essential, along with the diversity, is fidelity to the core insights and values imparted to us by the Buddha from the heights of his supreme perfect enlightenment.

What do you see as the prospects for lay Buddhists here in the West?

I think in the West today there are significant opportunities for lay people to become engaged with the Dhamma at higher levels than in traditional Asian Buddhist societies. In Asian countries, laypeople consider their primary role to be supporters of the monkhood, to provide food and other material requisites to the monks. They express their commitment to the Dhamma through devotional activities, but with few exceptions feel almost no incentive to plunge into the deep waters of the Dhamma. Now in the West, because of higher standards of education and greater leisure, laypeople have the precious opportunity to become deeply involved with the study and the practice of the Dhamma.

How can a person practice both as a layperson and as someone sincerely treading the path to liberation?

I recommend the five qualities of the “superior person” often extolled by the Buddha: faith, virtue, generosity, learning and wisdom. We have already discussed faith. *Virtue* has a much wider scope than the mere adherence to rules and precepts

during the period of a meditation course. Beyond this lies the deliberate cultivation of the positive qualities of character that underlie the basic restraints of the five precepts. These positive qualities include the cultivation of loving kindness and compassion; the development of honesty and contentment; restraint over one's sensual desires and fidelity to one's partner; a strong commitment to truthfulness in all one's communications; and a sober, clear, balanced mind.

At this level the practice of Dhamma in daily life does become an art of living, not in a sense that supplants the traditional idea of a path to deliverance, but as a series of guideposts for a person living in the world. Here Dhamma becomes a comprehensive map for navigating one's way through the many difficult challenges we encounter in everyday life. It's not a body of rigid regulations, but a set of values that enable us to relate to others in wholesome and beneficial ways.

The third quality, *generosity*, is understood in Buddhist countries to mean making offerings to the Sangha, but I think we might give generosity a broader application by including in it the active expression of compassion for those less fortunate than oneself. One might, for instance, decide to allocate a percentage of one's regular income to charitable organizations and projects.

The fourth quality of the earnest layperson is *learning* or study. This entails an effort to acquire – and I'll use that expression again – a clear conceptual understanding of the Dhamma, at least of its basic framework. Even if one isn't ready to study the texts in detail, one should remember that the Buddhist understanding of existence underlies the practice of meditation, and thus that systematic study can contribute to the fulfillment of one's practice.

The fifth quality of the lay follower is *wisdom*, which begins with intellectual understanding and culminates in experiential insight gained through meditation.

If all this can be done as a layperson, why ordain as a monk or nun?

While there is much that a diligent

layperson can accomplish within the domain of household life, those fully inspired by the Dhamma will naturally feel a pull towards the life of renunciation. When one's faith is deep enough, when one feels that nothing less than complete surrender to the Dhamma will do, the lure of the saffron robe becomes irresistible. As a monk or nun, one gains advantages that a layperson, even an exemplary one, does not enjoy: one's every moment is dedicated to the teaching; one's whole life, in its innermost recesses, is governed by the training; one has the leisure and opportunity for intensive study and practice; one can devote oneself fully to the service of the Dhamma.

Within lay life there are still many tasks and duties that keep one from engaging fully in the practice. Though laypeople today can readily undertake long-term meditation retreats, there are tangible differences between the practice of a layperson, even a dedicated one, and an earnest monk whose renunciation is grounded upon right view. I don't want to sound elitist (okay, I'll admit it, I am one!), but one danger that emerges when laypeople teach meditation and the higher Dhamma is a penchant to soften, even squelch, those aspects of the teaching that demand nothing less than the ultimate cutting off of all attachments. Instead they will be prone to offer a compromised version of the Dhamma, one that subtly affirms rather than undermines our instinctual attachment to mundane life.

I am aware that the monastic life is not for the many, and I would hardly like to see a replication in the U.S. of the Asian Buddhist social model, with its large number of routinized monastics passing time idly in the temples. But I also think monastics have indispensable roles to fulfill. After all, they do represent the Third Jewel of Buddhism, without which any transmission of Dhamma is bound to be incomplete. They wear the robe of the Buddha and conform to the discipline prescribed in the Vinaya, the monastic code. They represent, at least symbolically, the ideal of complete renunciation—though individual monks

and nuns may still be very far from such an ideal. They can be regarded almost as a reflection, albeit a pale one, of the Deathless Element in this world, "Nirvana in the midst of Samsara." In spite of the many shortcomings of individual monks (myself included), the monastic life still makes possible full commitment to the training, and thereby points others in the direction of renunciation and ultimate liberation. And finally, the monastic Sangha is "the field of merit for the world," which enables devout laypeople to acquire the merit that supports their own quest for Nirvana.

Do you have any parting advice you would like to convey to our readers?

In following the Buddhist path to its consummation, I think we need to adopt a long-term perspective, and this means developing both patience and diligence. Patience ensures that we aren't avidly intent on quick results, out to add personal achievements in meditation to our list of credentials. Patience enables us to endure for the long run, even through the hard and sterile phases that we must inevitably confront. Diligence or effort means that though the way might be long and difficult, we don't become discouraged, we don't give up or become lax. Instead we remain resolute in our determination to tread the path no matter how many lifetimes it may take, in the confidence that to the extent we strive with diligence we are making progress, even if that progress isn't immediately apparent.

To follow the Dhamma properly, I think we also need an attitude of humility. It's not through a quick study of the suttas, or even a few years of meditation retreats, that we can really claim to understand and teach the Dhamma correctly. It might be prudent to conceive of the Dhamma as a very tall mountain, and to regard ourselves as mountain climbers still in the foothills with a long way to go to reach the top. What we need is the faith that this particular path will lead us to the top of the mountain, the patience to persist day after day in climbing that path, and the diligence not to give up until we reach the peak. 🙏

From Self-Judgment to Being Ourselves

Diana Winston

YOUNG
ADULTS
RETREAT
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Tonight I am going to talk about something that many of us deal with, especially in our teenage years: self-judgment. Here we are in retreat, which is a kind of laboratory for looking closely at what's happening in our bodies and minds. A retreat is a great place to observe self-judgment, and it's a place to learn how to relate to these old habits in new ways. I'll talk about how we can work with self-judgment and move from it into fully being ourselves.

Since you've been sitting on the cushion for a while now, I'm sure you've experienced a lot of judgments that either put you down or build you up. We experience judgments as on-going chatter in the mind: "I'm not very good at this; the person next to me is better than me. But I'm better than the person in front of me. That person has a much nicer outfit than I do. My back isn't straight at all!" I've had thoughts like this on retreats. When we're home we have judgments that come up all the time, too: "I'm too fat. I'm too thin. I'm not attractive. I'm bad at school. I'm good at school."

These voices seem like they are on automatic pilot in our head. A fourteen-year-old boy told me that every time he doesn't do well on a test, a voice inside his head says, "You're so stupid." I wonder if you can relate to this? If somebody said to you, "You are stupid and a failure," you would probably be shocked that they would say something like that. But rarely are we shocked when we say the same thing to *ourselves*. Actually we say some pretty awful things to ourselves, and we think it's normal to say them.

Where do these voices come from? They are voices that have been conditioned into us. They may have come from our family, when our parents said things like, "You're just not doing it right. You'll never be as good as your older sister." Or maybe they're from friends, or teachers at school. We also live in a culture that is incredibly superficial, that gives us messages that we are supposed to be thin, beautiful, successful and rich. It's really painful, because most of us don't fit the standards of what society says we are supposed to be.

Now, it is also important to differentiate between judgment and discernment. Discernment is something that recognizes what is happening and knows it to be what it is. For instance, if you get on a scale and you look at your weight and you say, "I weigh 110 pounds." That's discernment. But if you then go on to say "Oh no, I'm fat. I'm disgusting. I weigh 110 pounds." That's a judgment. We have to be careful not to confuse these two. Discernment just recognizes things and we know them to be true. But negative judgment has a slight layer of aversion, or of wanting something to be different.

We can also call judgment "comparing mind." Sometimes we compare what is actually happening now with our imagination of what is *supposed* to be happening. "I'm supposed to come to IMS and all my problems will be solved. I'll figure out everything about my life and everyone will love me." But if that doesn't happen, then we feel bad. We feel bad when we are meditating because of the comparisons of what happened last

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time ("Remember that bliss!") or what we think will happen next time ("Maybe no pain?"), or what should be happening now but isn't happening ("I can't concentrate!").

The Buddha had a word for comparison, the word *māna*, which means pride or ego or thinking too much about ourselves. A lot of our judgments say "I'm greater than, I'm lesser than, or I'm equal to this or that," and this is just *māna*—pride or ego coming up in the mind. The thing that I find so interesting about *māna* is that 2500 years ago, when the Buddha was alive, people were judging themselves just as much as we do now. They were judging others, and comparing everything. When I remember this I think, "Oh, actually 'comparing mind' is normal. Everybody does it."

So how do we work with these judgments when we are meditating, particularly the negative judgments—when we are cruel to ourselves? First, we can become aware of these judgments arising in the mind. Every time you see one go by, just notice it: "I'm a terrible meditator today because I wanted to sleep late. Hey, that's a judgment. That's interesting." When you notice a judgment, it's also useful to observe what it feels like in the body. How *exactly* does it feel? I know when I feel judgmental of myself I often feel a burning in my stomach. That burning can become an object of meditation. We take interest in the judgments. We feel it. If it's painful (which it often is) it can make us feel sad. We can notice that: "Oh, there's me judging myself again. It makes me feel sad. Hmm."

The second way to work with judgment is something we've been talking about: remembering impermanence. This is one of the major teachings of the Buddha. As we meditate, we see for ourselves that we don't stay the same from moment to moment. Our minds, thoughts, body sensations, and breath are always changing. The more we observe the impermanence inside ourselves, the more we will remember the truth of change when we need it—when we are experiencing difficult thoughts and emotions. If we can recall impermanence, we can know inside that we are not always this way. We're not always bad. We're not always ugly. We're not always fat or thin—or whatever. It's impos-

sible. We're not even always judging. In fact, a lot of the time we don't have much self-hatred or judgment in our minds at all. Things are pretty good.

The third way to work with self-judgment is to count judgments: "I'm a rotten meditator, Judging One... My brother's better in school than I am, Judging Two," and so on. I once gave this exercise to some twelve-year-old girls in a dharma group. I said, "Why don't you practice counting the judgments you experience in your daily life?" I didn't see the girls until a month later, and the first thing one of them said to me was, "One thousand six hundred and twelve." I said, "What?" I didn't know what she was talking about. And she said, "I've been counting judgments." Apparently she went to school and started counting her own judgments, and then she started counting her friends' judgments. Then anytime anybody in her classes made a judgment she would count it out loud. She spent the entire month at school counting judgments. I thought it was just amazing that she was that mindful and persistent, although possibly annoying to her friends!

A fourth thing to know is that judgments are just thoughts. This is something you can see in your practice, every moment that you're aware of a thought coming and going. Many of you have told me that you've seen this on this retreat. "There's a thought coming. I become aware of it. And it goes." What's the big deal? Thinking, "I can't do this right," or "That person's sitting much straighter than I am," is not so different from "The sky is blue." It's just a thought.

Finally we need to remember to be careful about judging the judging. After a judgment arises, the next thought might be, "Oh, that was a judgment. Diana told me last night I shouldn't judge, so that was bad of me. Oh no! Now I'm judging that I'm judging." It can go on and on and on. Try to be aware of all the funny things your mind does. It can become interesting to notice the layers, one on top of the other. And sometimes, in the noticing, something shifts; you might take them less seriously.

Acceptance is at the core of mindfulness. We can't be fully mindful if we don't accept some piece of ourselves, or

One thousand six hundred and twelve judgements last month.



The good news is, the more we practice, the more we can accept ourselves.

our experience. If we grit our teeth and say, "I am mindful of this knee pain," but actually we want to get rid of the knee pain, we have a fake kind of mindfulness. Our mindfulness is colored by aversion—not wanting, or trying to push away the experience. Mindfulness needs acceptance in order to fully, honestly be mindful. The good news is, the more we practice, the more that we can accept ourselves.

Practicing mindfulness develops an accepting quality of our heart. When we sit through so many different kinds of experiences, we learn to accept whatever comes up, because we are no longer taking it so personally. When we can see the thought, "I'm a terrible meditator" coming up for the fiftieth time, we learn to relax a little and accept it. It's not a big deal.

That's the amazing thing about mindfulness practice. We need self-acceptance in order to practice, and as we practice we develop more self-acceptance. It's a lovely circle.

Remember, when we talk about acceptance we're not talking about complacency or passivity. Acceptance is not saying, "Okay, I'll just give up and accept things as they are." It's really important that we don't give up in passivity, particularly when things are difficult or we know they are not right. Acceptance understands when there is injustice, or when you need to work for a change in the world, or for a change inside yourself. Acceptance includes the wisdom to get out of a relationship when you're in a lot of pain or not getting what you need.

Today in our group one teen said, "Maybe a better word for acceptance is understanding." I really like that. True acceptance is a quality of mind that sees things clearly. It understands and accepts things out of wisdom, not out of hatred, fear or apathy. For example, you can hate yourself and want to change something about yourself, or you can see yourself clearly and want to change something about yourself. These are two very different things. When we accept because we see clearly, we can act with love and compassion rather than acting out of fear and anger. This works in all areas of our lives.

One thing I have learned from this practice—and I want to pass this on to you—is that I am okay exactly as I am. And all of you are okay exactly as you are. You can be loudmouthed and opinionated and silly and into punk rock—whatever is you. You are you. And when you fully step into who you are, you are embracing your spirituality by fully accepting yourself. This practice, whether or not you think of yourself as Buddhist, is not supposed to make you into a zombie, or someone with no emotions, or someone who's good all the time, or anything like that. The practice is about being you. When you develop awareness, while you maintain a strong foundation of ethics, you can be who you are more deeply—and the whole world benefits.

Martha Graham, the dancer, said, "*There is a vitality that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique, and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to clearly and directly, keep the channel open.*"

Fully being exactly who we are, is part of our spiritual practice. When we become aware of how we judge ourselves, and learn to work with judgments, we begin to soften; and the goodness of who we are comes to the surface. I like to call it our "inner goodness." It's something inside us that knows—no matter how messed up we feel, or how many problems we have, or whatever—that we are actually good.

Meditation will bring you in touch with your inner goodness. You will taste it. You will have moments while you're practicing when suddenly everything is okay. You just know it, and you drop in to the sense of being alive. And this happiness is not dependent upon anything in particular, but comes from being awake and present in this moment. You might feel this inner goodness when you're doing sports, or when you're taking a walk in nature, or when you fall in love. It's the truth of who you are, and this practice helps us touch into it. It's a gift. 🌱

dhammesu dhamm-ānupassī
viharati ātāpī sampajāno
satimā vineyya loke
abhijjhā-domanassaṃ

One abides contemplating
mental objects as mental
objects, ardent, fully aware,
mindful, having put away
covetousness and grief for
the world.

—*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

Notes from the
Bhāvana Program:

The Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness

The Bhāvana Program is a seven-day vipassana retreat of sitting and walking practice which includes a textual study session each morning. This new model, unique to BCBS, allows for an in-depth investigation of the Dhamma using both intellectual and meditative tools of inquiry. It is usually co-taught by a meditation teacher and a scholar.

Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

Andrew Olendzki

The fourth foundation of mindfulness has to do with “contemplating dhamma as dhamma,” and how this phrase is understood becomes pivotal to its practice. The word “dhamma” is often used in two very different senses, and I would like to suggest a way of using this ambiguity to great advantage when practicing insight meditation as a form of reflection on the nature of experience.

You are probably most familiar with the word Dhamma (with a capital D) as referring to the teaching of the Buddha, the Truth of the way things are. In the context of this text [the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*], however, it is usually taken with a small d and in the plural “dhammas” and translated as “mind objects” or “mental phenomena.” Hence a common translation of the fourth foundation of mindfulness is “contemplating mental phenomena as mental phenomena.”

However, the interpretation I find most effective involves putting these two meanings of the word together to get “contemplating the Dhamma in the dhammas.” This means we are endeavoring to be mindful of, to consider, the Dhamma or Truth in the phenomena of experience. This is contemplation of phenomena in such a way as to bring insight into the fundamental principles of the Buddhist teachings. It is reflection for the purpose of insight. We are directing the observing power of the mind in order to see for ourselves what the Buddha taught. We can actually learn to see the Dhamma (the truth of the teaching) in the dhammas (all arising and passing phenomena).

In this section of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* there are five groupings for contemplation: the five hindrances that are to be overcome, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and external sense bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the four noble truths. These are the things the Buddha is inviting us to contemplate and to have insight into. He is pointing us in such a way that we can see these processes for

In order to better understand what these foundations of mindfulness [discussed in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*] are all about, let’s begin by going over the Buddha’s basic psychological model of perception and awareness. As you may recall, every moment of experience involves an organ of perception, an object of perception and also a moment of consciousness by means of which the organ is aware of the object. So whether we talk about a moment of seeing or hearing or tasting or smelling or feeling (bodily sensations), this triangulation always occurs. Thus, in every moment of sensory experience, consciousness is always present. If this consciousness were not present, you would be in deep sleep or a coma or you would be an inanimate object.

And the same is true for thinking: the organ is the mind, the object is a thought or memory or daydream, and there is a moment of mental consciousness through which we can say we are aware of the mental object. The fundamental awareness of cognizing an object—whether it be a sensory object or a mental object—is the very medium of all our experience and is thus always present. It manifests in six different modes, or six flavors, if you will, corresponding to the six doors of experience (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind). Built upon this event and interdependent with it are a number of other factors such as feeling and perception and intention, yielding the notion of the aggregates of experience.

Mindfulness, that quality of mind we develop in *vipassanā* [insight] meditation, is not necessarily part of this equation. Mindfulness may or may not be manifesting in any given moment of consciousness. You might be totally lost in a reverie, or driven by incessant, compulsive thoughts, or deviously plotting the downfall of an enemy—there is no mindfulness in such states, even though they exist in the stream of consciousness.

ourselves, in our own unfolding experience. All four of the foundations of mindfulness actually do this, but here in the fourth we are clearly bringing in the factor of recollecting or reflecting. Moving beyond mere mindfulness, we are guided through a way of putting things together in our minds so that we make sense of what is going on.

Let's look for a moment at the difference between the first three foundations of mindfulness and this fourth one. With the first three we are endeavoring to have a direct experience of body, of feeling and of mind without adding anything. We want to be able to just see these experiences as they are. This is no easy task. In order to do this we have to override an incredibly powerful propensity for thinking about things. We easily get

caught up in our experience of sensation, feeling and thought, and we proliferate endlessly around our experience at these levels. So the effort is to back off and develop a new relationship with them. We develop the capacity to pull out of identification, to objectify or detach enough to be with the experience in and of itself. If we can do this, it is a huge step.

From this vantage point of greater non-attachment, we are well-positioned for insight. Now the fourth foundation of mindfulness introduces another level of sophistication. We no longer look at just what goes on in the body, just what feeling is occurring, or just at the various states of mind that arise—we actually begin to examine the whole process going on around these. We look at the process of getting caught up, a process of suffering.

With the fourth foundation of mindfulness we see more clearly how we get identified with experience. We derive first hand understanding of how states come up, what makes them stick around, how they go away, and how to keep them from coming up again. We notice what is skillful and what is not. We start to understand for ourselves when there is suffering, how it is that we suffer, and where that suffering is rooted.

This moves our investigation up a notch, to a higher order of discernment. One could say that with this fourth foundation of mindfulness we're bringing reflective thought more fully into the picture and using it in the interest of our own understanding and freedom.

I find this fascinating. The mind

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So mindfulness is not referring to the foundational level of mental awareness, but to a mental factor that may or may not be present in any particular moment. It is considered one of the formations (*sankhāras*) rather than a form or a mode of consciousness. As such mindfulness is something constructed in the moment, something learned as a habit over time, something as ephemeral as all other arising and passing phenomena. A moment of experience might be organized around mindfulness, or it may not.

And even when mindfulness manifests in a moment's constructed experience, it may or may not persist. It can come and go as much as anything else, and when it does so it is not stable, it is not well established. A few moments of mindfulness, dispersed among any number of moments of discombobulated association driven by the forces of conditioning, are not particularly helpful to the enterprise of seeing things clearly. In fact mindfulness is bound to arise from time to time in almost any set of conditions.

The whole enterprise of this text, the *Satipatthāna Sutta*, is training the mind so that mindfulness is one of the factors constructed moment after moment in the mind. And that's hard to do. Mindfulness is not so much about the quality of this particular moment as it is about the quality of the series of moments. The presence of mindfulness in one mind moment is good, but as soon as it arises it will pass away. What about the next mind moment, and the next one, and the next one? When mindfulness arises again and again, then mindfulness can be said to have become established. This is what the text is trying to train us to do.

And because the flow of experience involves a huge range of objects and all six of the organs, vipassana practice is not about fixing the mind in a certain mode. When the quality of experience involves the factor of mindfulness, the objects of experience become almost irrelevant. It does not matter whether one is hearing the sweet song of a bird or the raspy breathing of one's fellow yogi; whether one is feeling the balm of

pleasure pervading the body or the gnawing pain in the back; whether one is thinking a sublime thought of loving kindness or the harsh aversion of a moment's jealousy. The practice is more about recalling the intention of being present with whatever is arising in an series uninterrupted by the shifting phenomena of mind and body.

From this perspective, let's try to better understand what the foundations of mindfulness are all about. What exactly are these texts telling us to do?

The first foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of the body, is basically trying to get us experientially into the fifth sense door, the door through which we experience the physical sensations of the body. Normally we are bopping all over the place all the time, cycling between the various sensory and mental gateways seemingly at random—though if we could look more closely we would see the subtle matrix of conditioning driving our attention from one door to

has the capacity, and as far as we know it's uniquely human, to turn around and observe itself. What are we doing when we're sitting here meditating? The mind is looking at the mind. The body can't do that. The eye can't see itself. The ear can't hear itself. But the mind can know itself.

In this teaching on the fourth foundation of mindfulness I hear the Buddha inviting us to recognize that we have this capacity, and to use it for the optimal purpose we possibly can, which is to get free. It's as if the Buddha is saying, "Look and see and understand. Garner the wisdom from your own direct observation, so that you can learn what I learned." And when we use this reflective capacity to discern things for ourselves, these "ah-ha" moments arise in our practice.

The ability to reflect upon experience is something we don't really use as confidently or even as consciously as I think we could. Maybe we haven't evolved enough yet, or maybe it has to do with some sort of cultural limitation. But it seems that this reflective capacity is often operating somewhere just below the level of our awareness, even if we do not acknowledge it. The mind is always putting things together, figuring things out, but we so often don't notice it as the useful process that it is. I think with this instruction on the fourth foundation of mindfulness the Buddha is trying to get us to make this reflective capacity more conscious so that insights can be more forthcoming.

How do we allow reflective thought into practice? First, it is crucial

to distinguish what I'm calling reflective thought from the more common discursive thought. Reflective thought actually has a slight investigative quality to it. The mind is reflecting on experience. It even pokes around at it. The mind is interested, cogitating. It's wanting to figure out what is happening.

Discursive thinking operates in another, more chaotic way. It's this tendency of the mind to just pick something up, play with it for a period of time, mull it about, and then put it down—either because something else more interesting comes along or because it's gotten tired of playing with it. Then it will pick up something else. It has no discrimination or discernment in this regard, and the picking up and putting down is going on virtually all the time.

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another. In fact humans spend most of their time in the mind door. We tend to experience something directly very little of the time, and spend a vast amount of our time thinking at the mind door about what we experienced through a sense door.

The commentaries say that mindfulness of the body is a great antidote for too much thinking. Perhaps this is why it is so popular in modern America—so many of us think too much. Developing mindfulness of the body can be a great relief from this, and training in it has the effect of bringing some order, some discipline, to an otherwise chaotic experience. What we are actually being asked to do by our meditation teacher is to bring attention to a particular sliver of over-all experience: the physical sensations that arise and pass away in the sense door of the body. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue and mind are still active, but each time a experience presents itself thought these other avenues we are asked to gently let it go and attend rather to the physical sensations. As we gradually habituate

ourselves to doing this, with the help of concentration, it becomes easier and gains some momentum.

The second foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of feeling, invites us to shift attention away from the sense door of the body, and in fact away from any of the sense doors as such. Instead we focus on the feeling tone or affect tone of all experience, its manifestation as pleasant, unpleasant or neither. In classical terms, we have shifted here from a sense door to an aggregate, from the content of physical experience (pressure, burning, sharp, dull) to the quality of our response to all experience (liking, not liking, can't tell). Insofar as this requires a shift from something quite concrete (a physical sensation) to something more mental (an evaluative, if intuitive, response) it can be considered a move to greater abstraction, from the physical to the mental.

The third foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of mind, continues this movement and suggests we look at the quality of every mind state. The shift is back to a particular doorway of

experience, this time the mind door. But the text does not speak of simply being aware of the object that presents itself at this door, but of becoming aware of the nature of the organ of perception itself—the mind. It is not just a matter of noticing "this thought of lunch" or "this memory of yesterday." Rather the instruction requests that we notice whether the mind discerning the thought or memory is laced with attachment or not, pervaded by aversion or not, rooted in confusion or not. We are being guided from content (the physical sensation) to texture (feeling tone), and now to quality or to an intuitive assessment of the mind's consistency. The training in awareness is becoming far more refined, and is moving towards a training in wisdom.

So given this model, what is happening in the fourth foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of mental phenomena? Attention is being directed toward the content of the thinking process, to the "mental objects" that interface with the "mental organ" (mind) and "mental conscious-

If we follow this stream of compulsive thinking, then it's as if we're living in a dream state. The mind is just moving from one thing to another to another to another, and not really discriminating in any way as to what is useful and what is not. These are just the voices inside our heads, chattering away when we sit in meditation or walk around throughout the day. And, as I'm sure you've seen, this discursive thought is usually free of any useful content. All the compulsive chatter could stop and we would not have lost much—except maybe a lot of agitation.

With the first three foundations of mindfulness we are trying to calm this activity and see things in-and-of themselves without all the commentary. We are trying to at least diminish if not

prevent for a period of time this crazy way of being with sensation, feeling, and thought. If you are having a truly mindful experience of any of these, then thinking about the experience is not going on in the same moment.

The capacity for reflective or contemplative thought is the ability to look at things and reflect upon what is happening. It allows us to ponder our experience, to consider it, to look at things from different angles. The mind is trying to get at the nature of what it is that one is observing. We are using the capacity of mind that is constantly looking for patterns in things and trying to figure things out, to put things together, to understand. And as it is applied in this fourth foundation of mindfulness, it forms the basis of insight.

You probably see this a lot in sitting practice, or even just throughout the course of a day. The mind is constantly trying to find patterns in things, to find a certain order in things. This is natural. With the fourth foundation of mindfulness we are turning this capacity for discerning toward the things that are useful and important: toward understanding, toward our own freedom. We are using reflection to sort out the inner workings of the mind and, more precisely, how we get into suffering and how we get out of it. Really it is no less than that.

I love this aspect of the teaching. It's as if the Buddha is saying, "Don't be afraid of using the mind to develop wisdom." What I find more unusual is that the use of reflective thought as it is being described here is not often included in meditation instructions.

THE FOURTH FOUNDATION

ness" (thinking) to reveal the details of our inner mental life. But crucial to this process is the recognition that it's being done with a cultivated mind, and is being directed not to random thoughts but to the prime components of the Buddha's teaching, the dhamma.

There is a huge difference between accessing the mental life on the near side of the training versus accessing the mental life on the far side of the training. Imagine going to a meditation retreat and having the teacher tell you to just focus on your thoughts: "Is that physical sensation of breathing in your abdomen interfering with your thinking about what is happening? Let go of that direct experience and gently return your awareness to the inner chatter of your mind." That is not likely to happen. This would be attending to the miscellaneous conditioned activity of the uncultivated mind, which is not what the foundations of mindfulness are all about.

The reason we spent the entire day yesterday just doing mindfulness of the

body was to quiet down some of that kind of thinking. And now we will be slowly opening up to a wider range of experience, especially mental experience; but it is a cultivated mind's attention we will bring into contact with mental objects. And this is the kicker: these are not going to be random mental objects. The fourth foundation of mindfulness is not telling us to just be aware of thinking as thinking, to just be mindful when you are daydreaming or thinking about lunch or whatever. It is not just a matter of looking at whatever mental object happens to come up, notice that, let go of it, and move on the next mental object that happens to arise. That would not be transformative.

According to the text in front of us, the fourth foundation of mindfulness involves following a very detailed curriculum of regarding our experience in terms of hindrances, aggregates, sense spheres, factors of awakening, and noble truths. We will be doing a very disciplined mindfulness of mental objects, which is quite different from a free-for-all noticing of mental objects.

This is where I think some of our contemporary training in this practice might not go far enough. We often hear so much emphasis placed on mindfulness of the breath and of bodily sensations (the first foundation), but when we get to the third or fourth foundation the instructions become a bit fuzzy. "Thinking is part of experience too, so be mindful of thinking—but not in a conceptual way, of course, because the intellect is not good, not intuitive enough." (I know this is a bit of a caricature.)

I just don't think this approach is really telling us much. The teachings of the Buddha, i.e. the Dhamma, is a magnificently subtle and profound intellectual construction, and here we find its core components at the heart of the text giving instruction in vipassana meditation. I think this is because the practice is ultimately about wisdom. Mindfulness is not an end in itself but is a tool to be used to access that wisdom.

Here is an analogy that came up the other day in a discussion

Rarely are we instructed to reflect on what's happening. It's as if there is a subtle implication that there is something wrong with thinking. Boy, if there's something wrong with it we're in big trouble, because we sure think a lot! And if we think there is something wrong with thought we are likely to go to war with thoughts—and this is not helpful. It just gets us more tangled.

Consider this: What if there is nothing wrong with thought? Just because some thoughts can be obsessive or shallow or can block the immediacy of mindful awareness, that does not mean that all thinking is to be shunned. We simply want to discern what kind of thought is helpful, and whether or not it's being turned to a useful purpose. We want to relate appropriately to thought.

The fourth foundation of mindfulness is like an invitation to look when you're sitting, to look and see: is there a part of your experience that knows what is happening and that is evaluating it and putting it together according to Dhamma? This is not an unfamiliar capacity at all. Everyone knows exactly what I'm talking about. The purpose of this foundation of mindfulness is to make us more aware that the mind is already reflecting, and to use this capacity more effectively. Let's not put thought outside the meditation process. You are already thinking, so make it more conscious and turn it towards things that are useful. But be sure you know how to do it so you don't get caught up in a lot of compulsive thinking. I would go so far as to say, if you're hesitant or just unsure of this, dare to risk getting caught up in some

discursive thought to figure out what it is that we're talking about. Just dare to try that out.

But it is not like we are entirely without guidance in this process of reflecting upon experience. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* the instructions on the fourth foundation of mindfulness takes up more than half of the text! So it's a very significant part of mind training. The Buddha is pointing us towards several things to contemplate, and guides us through it step by step. When we actually take the time to go through these instructions with care, no less than the entire Dhamma opens up to us in the contemplation of dhammas. And this is what we will spend the rest of the week doing—step by step. We will begin to see the Dhamma in the dhammas. 🌱

OF MINDFULNESS

of the relationship between practice and study, between mindfulness meditation and penetration of the Dhamma. The Buddha often refers to greed, hatred and delusion like three great fires raging in our hearts and causing us much suffering. The goal is to put out these fires, and this can be taken as the most basic definition of nirvana—the extinguishing of the fires.

So picture a fireman standing with his hose, poised to fight these raging fires. The water that comes from the hose to extinguish the flames is mindfulness, and according to the Abhidhamma the unwholesome roots cannot co-exist in a mind moment suffused with mindfulness. But the flow of water must also be very skillfully directed, or all that water will have no effect. It is not enough to stand there with a lot of water coming out of the hose, if you don't know where to point it. If you're facing the wrong direction and watering the garden with that water, you're not going to put out the fire. Neither does it do any good to stand aiming right at the fire with this hose

with only a little dribble of water coming out. That's not putting out the fire either.

I know this is an awkward analogy, but bear with me. In one case we have someone who may be intellectually very well trained in Buddhism, perhaps being able to say "Everything changes, is wrapped up in suffering, and is essentially without self" in four different ancient languages. They are pointed in the right direction, but without well-developed mindfulness it becomes a rather shallow conceptual object. That's like a skillful firefighter standing there with no water coming out of his hose.

But equally unfortunate is having this powerful stream of mindful awareness that is not being carefully directed at the heart of the problem. If one remains forever mindful of whatever happens to be arising in one's body or mind, without that mindfulness being skillfully guided to the underlying processes that fuel the fires, one is equally unlikely of attaining the desired end.

I think the Buddhist tradition clearly calls for a coupling of mindfulness with wisdom, and it does so most dramatically at this point in this text. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* begins with mindfulness of the body and feelings, and without the establishment of this mental factor in the unfolding flow of experience one is unlikely to see much of what's really going on. But with the third and especially the fourth foundation of mindfulness the meditator is being shown exactly where to direct that mindfulness.

And I also think in doing so we will discover that intelligence, a certain quality of intellectual intuition, is not an obstacle to mindfulness, but is its natural consummation. Only in the first two foundations of mindfulness are mental activities an interference from the primary object of meditation; in the third and fourth they become that very object, and it is through the skillful engagement of the intellect that wisdom begins to ripen. 🌱

Instructions for Entering

Jhāna

Leigh Brasington



These instructions have been taken from a nine-day retreat offered by Leigh Brasington at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies in April of 2002. The Pali word jhāna (Sanskrit dhyāna) is sometimes simply translated as “meditation,” but more accurately refers to an “absorption” into a very focused, very stable state of concentration. In the classical tradition there are several stages of jhāna, each one more focused than the previous.

Some people will experience some of the jhānas on this retreat; some people will not. The likelihood of you experiencing a jhāna is inversely proportional to the amount of desire that you have for it. After all, the instructions given by the Buddha in the early texts for practicing jhāna begin with “*Secluded from sense desire, secluded from unwholesome states of mind, one approaches and abides in the first jhāna.*” In order to experience a jhāna, it is necessary to temporarily abandon the five hindrances [sense desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, doubt]. However, if you are craving a jhāna, you’ve got sense desire and an unwholesome state of mind. You have to set those aside to be able to enter the jhāna.

The method for entering jhāna begins with generating access concentration. You begin by sitting in a comfortable, upright position. It needs to be comfortable, because if there is too much pain, aversion will naturally develop in the mind. You may be able to sit in a way that looks really good, but if your knees are killing you there will be pain and you will not experience any jhānas. So you need to find some way to sit that is comfortable. But it also needs to be upright and alert, because that tends to get your energy going in a beneficial way that keeps you awake. If you are too comfortable you will be overcome with sloth and torpor, which is an unwholesome state of mind that is totally useless for entering the jhānas.

So the first prerequisite for entering the *jhānas* is to put the body in a position that you can just leave it in for the length of the sitting without having to move. If you have back problems or some other obstacle that prevents you from sitting upright, then you need to find some other alert position that you can maintain comfortably.

Now this is not to say that you cannot move. It may be that you have taken a position and you discover that "My knee is killing me; I have to move because there is too much aversion." If you have to move, you have to move. Okay, be mindful of moving. The intention to move will be there before the movement. Notice that intention, then move very mindfully, and then re-settle yourself into the new position, and notice how long it takes for the mind to get back to that place of calm that it had before you moved. It is very important that you not move unmindfully.

This process encourages you to find a position where you don't have to move, because you'll notice the amount of disturbance that even a slight movement generates. And in order to get concentrated enough to have the *jhānas* manifest, you need a very calm mind.

Generating access concentration can be done in a number of ways. Today I will mostly talk about generating it using the breath, a practice known as *ānāpāna-sati*. The first word, *ānāpāna*, means "in-breath and out-breath," while the word *sati* means "mindfulness." The practice is therefore "mindfulness of breathing." When practicing *ānāpāna-sati*, you put your attention on the breath. It is probably better if you can observe the physical sensations of the breath at the nostrils or on the upper lip, rather than at the abdomen or elsewhere. It is better because it is more difficult to do; therefore you have to concentrate more. Since we are trying to generate access concentration we take something that is do-able, though not terribly easy to do—and then we do it. When watching

the breath at the nose, you have to pay attention very carefully.

In doing so you will watch the sensations, and then your mind will wander off. Then you'll bring it back and it will wander off, then you'll bring it back and it will wander off. Eventually though—maybe not in the next sitting, maybe not even in the next day—but eventually, you'll find that the mind sort of locks into the breath. You've been going first to one side and then the other, and finally you're there, and you know that you're there. You're really with the breath and the mind is not wandering off. Any thoughts that you have are wispy and in the background. The thoughts might be something like "Wow, I'm really with the breath now," as opposed to, "When I get to Hawaii, the first thing I'm going to do is..."

When the thoughts are just slight, and they're not really pulling you away, you're with the sensations of the breath. This is the sign that you've gotten to access concentration. Whatever method you use to generate access concentration, the sign that you've gotten to access concentration is that you are fully present with the object of meditation. So if you are doing *mettā* [loving-kindness meditation], you're just fully there with the feelings of *mettā*; you're not getting distracted. If you're doing the body sweeping practice, you're fully there with the sensations in the body as you sweep your attention through the body. You're not thinking extraneous thoughts, you're not planning, you're not worrying, you're not angry, you're not wanting something. You are just fully there with whatever the object is.

If your practice is *ānāpāna-sati*, there are additional signs to indicate you have arrived at access concentration. You may discover that the breath becomes very subtle; instead of a normal breath, you notice you are breathing very shallow. It may even seem that you've stopped breathing altogether. These are signs that you've arrived at access concentration. If the breath gets very shallow, and particu-

The Jhāna Text

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion.

With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, I entered upon and abided in the second *jhāna*, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration.

With the fading away as well of rapture, I abided in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, I entered upon and abided in the third *jhāna*, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.'

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, I entered upon and abided in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge...

Majjhima Nikāya 4, etc.
Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha.
Nanamoli/Bodhi translation.
Wisdom Publications 1995.

lary if it feels like you've stopped breathing, the natural thing to do is to take a nice, deep breath and get it going again. Wrong! This will tend to weaken your concentration. By taking that nice deep breath, you drop down the level of concentration. Just stay with that shallow breathing. It's okay. You don't need a lot of oxygen, because you are very quiet.

If the breath gets very, very subtle, or if it disappears entirely, instead of taking a deep breath, shift your attention away from the breath to a pleasant sensation. This is the key thing. You watch the breath until you arrive at access concentration, and then you let go of the breath and shift your attention to a pleasant sensation. There is not much point in watching the breath that has gotten extremely subtle or has disappeared completely. There's nothing left to watch. Shift your attention to a pleasant sensation, preferably a pleasant physical sensation. You will need a good bit of concentration to watch a pleasant physical sensation, because a mildly pleasant feeling somewhere in your body is not

early as exciting as the breath coming in and the breath going out. You've got this mildly pleasant sensation that's just sitting there; you need to be well-concentrated to stay with it.

The first question that may arise when I say "Shift your attention to a pleasant sensation" is "What pleasant sensation?" Well, it turns out that when you get to access concentration, the odds are quite strong that some place in your physical being there will be a pleasant sensation. Look at this statue of the Buddha: he has a smile on his face. That is not just for artistic purposes; it is there as a teaching mechanism. Smile when you meditate, because when you reach access concentration, you only have to shift your attention one inch to find the pleasant sensation.

Now when I tell you "Smile when you meditate," your reaction is probably "I don't feel like smiling when I meditate." I know this because when they told me to smile when I meditated, my reaction was "I don't feel like smiling." OK, so you don't feel like smiling. Nonetheless if you put a fake smile on your face when you start meditating, by the time you arrive at access concentration, the smile will feel genuine.

If you can smile when you meditate, it works very well for generating a pleasant sensation to focus upon when you arrive at access concentration; but actually, smiling seems to only work for about a quarter of my students. Too many people in this culture have been told "Smile whether you feel like it or not." And so now when I tell you "Smile whether you feel like it or not," your reaction is "No, I'm not gonna do that." OK. So you don't smile when you meditate. You'll have to find some other pleasant sensation.

Pleasant sensations can occur pretty much anywhere. The most common place people that find pleasant sensations when they get to access concentration is in the hands. What you want to do with your hands when you meditate is put them in a nice position

in which you can just leave them. The traditional posture is one hand holding the other, with the thumbs lightly touching. This is a quite excellent posture because it has the tendency of moving the shoulders back and lining up your spine nicely. When the hands are held like this, many people find that eventually there is a nice, tingly, pleasant sensation that appears in the hands. You can also put your hands in all sorts of other positions — just place them however appeals to you. When you get to access concentration, if you notice that there's a nice pleasant feeling in the hands, drop the attention on the breath and focus entirely on the pleasantness of that sensation.

Another common place that people find a pleasant sensation is in the heart center, particularly if you're using mettā as the access method. Just shift your attention to the pleasantness of that sensation. Other places people find pleasant sensations include the third eye, the top of the head, the shoulders—actually, you name a body part and I've had some student find a pleasant sensation there that they were able to focus upon long enough for the first jhāna to arise. It does not matter where the pleasant sensation manifests; what matters is that there is a pleasant sensation and you're able to put your attention on it and—now here comes the really hard part—do nothing else.

You find the pleasant sensation, and shift your attention to the pleasant sensation. You observe the pleasantness of the pleasant sensation, and do nothing else. If you can do that, the pleasant sensation will begin to grow in intensity, it will become stronger. This will not happen in a linear way. It'll sort of grow a little bit, and then grow a little bit more and then hang out, and grow a little bit more...and then eventually it will suddenly take off and take you into what is obviously an altered state of consciousness.

In this altered state of consciousness, you will be overcome with Rapture ... Euphoria ... Ecstasy ... Delight. These are all English words



PHOTO: BEN PAULLEY

that are used to translate the Pali word *pīti*. Pīti is this physical sensation that literally takes you over and takes you into an altered state. It will be accompanied by an emotional sensation of joy and happiness. The Pali word is *sukha*, the opposite of *dukkha* [pain, suffering]. And, if you remain one-pointed on this experience of *pīti* and *sukha*—that is the first *jhāna*.

So to summarize the method for entering the first *jhāna*: You sit in a nice comfortable upright position, and generate access concentration by putting and maintaining your attention on a single meditation object. When access concentration arises, then you shift your attention from the breath (or whatever your method is) to a pleasant sensation, preferably a pleasant physical sensation. You put your attention on that sensation, and maintain your attention on that sensation, and do nothing else.

The hard part is the do nothing else part. You put your attention on the pleasant sensation, and nothing happens, so you might think to yourself, "He said something was supposed to happen." No, I did not say to make comments about watching the pleasant sensation. Or, you might put your attention on the pleasant sensation and it starts to increase, so you think, "Oh! Oh! Something's happening!" No. Or it comes up just a little bit and then it stops, and you sort of try and help it. No. None of this works.

You are to simply observe the pleasant sensation. You become totally immersed in the pleasantness of the pleasant sensation. And I mean by this just what I say: the pleasantness of the pleasant sensation. I don't mean the location of the pleasant sensation; nor its intensity; nor its duration. I don't mean whether the pleasant sensation is increasing or decreasing or staying the same. Just focus entirely upon the pleasant aspect of the pleasant sensation, and the *jhāna* will arise on its own.

All you can do is set up the conditions for the *jhāna* to arise, by cultivating a calm and quiet mind



focused on pleasantness. And then just let go—*be* that calm quiet mind focused on pleasantness—and the *jhāna* will appear. Any attempt to do anything more does not work. You actually have to become a human being, as opposed to a human doing. You have to become a being that is simply focused on the pleasant sensation which is existing, and then the *jhāna* comes all on its own.

So now I have given you the instructions for the first *jhāna*. It's a little bit foolish for me to be giving it on the first day of the retreat, because you're not likely to get there any time soon. You're going to sit down and start rearranging the contents of your refrigerator, or something equally absurd. That's normal. Since I don't know when you're actually going to get to that state of access concentration, I

give out the instructions on the first day so you have heard them. And when you realize you've arrived at access concentration, you will know what to do: shift your attention to a pleasant sensation and do nothing else.

But don't expect the necessary concentration to show up any time soon. In fact, don't go expecting anything. Expectations are the absolute worst things you can bring on a retreat. Simply do the meditation method. And when access concentration arises, recognize it, and shift your attention to a pleasant sensation. Don't try to do the *jhānas*. You can't. All you can do is pay attention to the object of meditation, and recognize when it's time to pay attention to another object.

These are the instructions. Are there any questions? ●

The
**Visuddhi
Magga**

Path of
Purification

on the

**Brahma-
vihāras**

Sublime
Abidings

The early Buddhist commentarial tradition, exemplified by Buddhaghosa's fifth century encyclopedia called **The Path of Purification** (*Visuddhi-magga*), offers some detailed analysis of Buddhist technical vocabulary.

This table organizes some of the information contained in the chapter on the Brahma Viharas (Chapter IX), according to the traditional method of defining a term by characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. Further useful information is listed on the other half of the chart.

This material is perhaps best understood in the context of meditation practice, where the unique texture and flavor of each of these mind states can be explored. While these states are being developed, the hindrances (*nivaraṇa*) are temporarily suspended, and this often becomes the basis for absorption into *jhāna*.

	Characteristic (<i>lakkhana</i>)	Function (<i>rasa</i>)	Manifestation (<i>paccupaṭṭhāna</i>)	Proximate Cause (<i>padaṭṭhāna</i>)
Mettā Loving-kindness	promoting welfare (<i>hit-ākāra-ppavatti</i>)	to prefer welfare (<i>hit-ūpasamhāra</i>)	removal of annoyance (<i>āghāta-vinaya</i>)	seeing the loveability of beings (<i>sattānaṃ manāpa-bhāva-dassana</i>)
Karuṇā Compassion	promoting the alaying of suffering (<i>dukkh-āpanavan-ākāra-ppavatti</i>)	not bearing the suffering of others (<i>paradukkh-āsahana</i>)	non-cruelty (<i>avihimsā</i>)	seeing helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering (<i>dukkh-ābhībhūtānaṃ anāthabhāva-dassana</i>)
Muditā Gladness	gladdening (produced by the success of others) (<i>pamodana</i>)	being un-envious (<i>anissāyana</i>)	elimination of aversion (<i>arati-vighāta</i>)	seeing the success of beings (<i>sattānaṃ sampatti-dassana</i>)
Upekkhā Equanimity	promoting objectivity towards beings (<i>sattesu majjhata-ākāra-ppavatti</i>)	to see equality in beings (<i>sattesu- samabhāva-dassana</i>)	the subsiding of acquisitiveness and resistance (<i>paṭighānunaya-vūpasama</i>)	seeing ownership of deeds (<i>pavatta-kammasakatā-dassana</i>)

Why are these called sublime abidings?
(brahma-vihārā)

In the sense of being the **best** (seṭṭhā)
because they are the right attitude
to have towards beings.
(sattesu sammā-paṭipatti-bhāvena)

In the sense of being **pure** (niddosa)
because a yogi who practices them
abides with a mind that has become
as pure as the Brahmā gods.
(yogino niddosa-cittā brahma-samā hutvā)

One abides pervading (each) quarter with a mind imbued
with loving kindness...compassion...gladness...equanimity;
so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to
oneself, one abides pervading the all-encompassing world
with a mind imbued with loving kindness... compassion...
gladness... equanimity--abundant, exalted, immeasurable,
without hostility and without ill will.

so mettā... karuṇā... muditā... upekkhā-sahagatena cetasā
ekaraṇaṃ disaraṇaṃ pharitvā viharati (pe); iti uddham-adho tiriyaṇaṃ
sabbadhi sabbatthatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettā... karuṇā...
muditā... upekkhā-sahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena
appamāṇena averena abhābajjhena pharitvā viharati.

Succeeds when it (sampatti)	Fails when it (vipatti)	The Way to Purity (visuddhi- magga)	Near Enemy (āsanna- paccatthika)	Far Enemy (dūra- paccatthika)	Like a Mother with a Son (yathā mātā puttaṃ)
makes ill-will subside (vyāpāda-ūpasama)	produces sentimentality (sineha- sambhava)	for one who has much ill-will (vyāpāda- bahulassa)	attachment (rāga)	ill-will (vyāpāda)	who is a baby, for she wants him to grow & thrive (abhivudḍhi- kāmā)
makes cruelty subside (vihimsā-ūpasama)	produces sorrow (soka-sambhava)	for one who has much cruelty (vihesā- bahulassa)	mundane grief (gehasitaṃ domanassaṃ)	cruelty (vihimsā)	who is ill, for she wants the illness to go away (gelaṇṇ- āpanayana-kāmā)
makes aversion subside (arati-vūpasama)	produces amusement (pahāsa-sambhava)	for one who has much aversion (arati- bahulassa)	mundane joy (gehasitaṃ somanassaṃ)	aversion (arati)	who is young, for she wants him to long enjoy the benefits of youth (yobbanna- sampattiyā ciraṭṭhiti-kāmā)
makes acquisitiveness and resistance subside (paṭighānūnaya- vūpasama)	produces mundane equanimity of the uninformed (gehasitāya aññān-upekkhāya sambhava)	for one who has much attach- ment (rāga- bahulassa)	mundane equanimity of the uninformed (gehasitā aññān-upekkhā)	attachment and resistance (rāga-paṭighā)	who is busy with his own affairs, for she is not worried about what he does (kismiṃci pariyāye avyāvajā hoti)



RESISTANCE IN MEDITATION

Bill Morgan

There is a saying in Buddhism, "Meditation is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end." I don't know how it is for any of you, but my experience has been something more like: "There is resistance in the beginning of meditation, there is resistance later on in meditation, and there is resistance even later on in meditation." There is resistance in daily practice; there is resistance in retreat practice. There is resistance even when you have—to quote from the Buddha—"suitable conditions" for meditation. Tonight I would like to speak about some of the types of resistance that may manifest as meditation progresses, drawing attention to some of the parallels to the resistance encountered in psychotherapy.

We know something, both theoretically and experientially, about some of the fruits of meditation. These are well documented: starting with stress management, working through deepening levels of self-acceptance, the ability to tolerate what was previously intolerable, to some experience of calm and clarity and interconnection as things get a little deeper, and maybe even a glimpse into the manufactured nature of "self." However, the mind is very adept at keeping us from seeing the constructed nature of the self too clearly; we all possess a certain ambivalence about waking up.

There are good descriptions of the mind-state meditation is meant to access. "An unbroken flow of reality, without fixating," is a phrase used earlier this evening. In the Tibetan tradition they talk of "non-obstruction." In Zen they talk of "the samadhi of innocent delight." A phrase I heard recently from Morita therapy, is *arugamama*, which means a condition where the mind is "not unduly arrested by anything and runs smoothly." All these descriptions sound simple, but of course getting there is another matter. It's a journey filled with conflict and ambivalence.

The causes of our mental suffering include an unexamined and unremitting adherence to the pleasure principle and to an enduring sense of a self. We are very deeply attached here, and want the sort of insight that will not challenge these ways of viewing the world too much. And that's the rub. We want to have insight, but not too much insight.

I see the process of meditation as a series of narcissistic injuries. From the beginning right through to the end, it challenges our narcissism at every level. Do you remember the first time you tried meditation? The instructions were so very simple—being aware, with increasing continuity, to what is happening in the present

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These remarks are excerpted from a talk given at a joint BCBS/IMP program called "Buddhist Psychology in Contemporary Perspective" in Cambridge, MA in the fall of 2001.

moment. And yet, right away, we find this enormously challenging and humbling. The first insight is the ungovernableness of the mind, the difficulty of just placing attention on the breath. We form the conscious intention, but the unconscious has something else in mind, doesn't it?

And then of course the five hindrances come along. These are the things that come to visit when we try to pay attention to anything for more than a few seconds. The classical list of the five hindrances is sense desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, worry and flurry, and doubt. I find it more useful in my own practice to associate these terms with modern equivalents from the psychological tradition. You can check this out in your own experience and see if it captures the flavor of your hindrances. Instead of sense-desire I think of it as "accruing" or "embellishing." Instead of ill-will, I experience it as "disowning." Sloth and torpor manifests as "depression," while worry and flurry feels more like "anxiety." And doubt often has the flavor of "masochism" or "self-judgment." It is not just that I am having difficulty doing this, or I don't quite get it; rather it feels like "This is yet one more thing I can't do. I can't even pay attention to the breath."

Doubt is particularly prevalent for many western students. For a while we can rationalize our difficulty by thinking "If I really put my mind to this, I could do it. I'm not really trying." But this softens the blow only for a while. Soon enough, the mind is frequently lost in thought and a harsh superego is hovering around with self-judgment, self-doubt and self-condemnation. There may be a few moments of calm, but these are tempered by an overall sense of inadequacy. Eventually it becomes clear that our initial dream of rapid transformation is not coming true.

This is often the first narcissistic injury that someone coming to this practice has to deal with. And it is often something we don't talk about. We may not want to report it to our teachers because we want to be good students. The Buddha talked about three kinds of students. There is the really sharp one who just on hearing the Dharma gets it, and gets awakened. Then there is a middle, average kind of student. Finally there is the real sluggish kind of student. It can be

disappointing to realize that our fantasy of being that advanced, quick-study type of student that the Buddha talked about is not coming true. And although this is hard to swallow, we might wriggle around with it a little and perhaps finally accept that okay, perhaps we are an average student.

But then over time, we may have to face a further narcissistic injury... perhaps we are not even average, but are one of the slow students. It can be much harder to let this one in. Speaking for myself, it was a slow and painful insight: "I'm actually quite slow at this." But of course it is not about you at all. Really it's about seeing the limit of will power to undo some of those deep drives we have, the deep conditioning. It's seeing how deep it is, how long and steep a path it is that we are facing.

I think this accounts for some of the difficulty for many in sustaining a regular daily practice. I'm going to guess that many of you have struggled to find and keep a regular daily practice. The instructions we hear emphasize developing a non-reactive approach to whatever comes up in the mind, and an even-handed return to the breath. But the truth is that in daily practice there is usually a fundamental resistance to being with what is unpleasurable and out of control. Daily practice is by no means always pleasant.

There is resistance to forming a direct and intimate relationship with the first noble truth of suffering. We want to understand it intellectually, and to say, "Oh, yeah, I get that. The Buddha said that suffering is wanting something other than what is there [this is one way to understand *dukkha*]. No problem." But when it's actually happening in the mind, and we see, "This is happening, but I want something else to be there—not this. Or, I want this to stay—not go away. Yeah, that's what he was talking about. But that's enough now!" It's hard to actually sit with it, isn't it?

Early in psychotherapy there is also resistance to anxiety and pain, and a secret wish to be transformed without going into the heart of our suffering. Even after some ground of trust and acceptance has been established in therapy, there is more

I see the process of meditation as a series of narcissistic injuries—from the beginning right through to the end,



We meet clients where they are and take them where they do not want to go.

vulnerability and pain present to address, which is a tremendous disappointment. It is not what we were hoping for. This is a similarity between beginning meditation and entering psychotherapy. The late Norm Zinberg from Cambridge Hospital used to say, "We meet clients where they are and take them where they do not want to go." That's what meditation is about, too.

In what I will call the middle phase of meditation, the mind settles a bit. It is able to tolerate a wider range of mental and emotional states, which is a great relief. Also the initial narcissistic injury of disappointment and inadequacy subsides a little. There is an acceptance of the truth that one is neither particularly gifted, nor terribly deprived. So both ends of narcissism start to moderate a bit, which itself is one of the fruits of meditation.

Some of what was previously difficult is seen and held as less personal and more universal. Some of the sadness that starts to well up takes the form, "Oh, yeah, this is human sadness." Some of the anger becomes, "There is content here, but this is the angry mind and heart." The ability to tolerate and hold some difficult emotional states develops as well. The sense of self shows up as a little bit less solid and a little bit more malleable—like Gumby.

However, just when you thought it was safe to go into the woods, deeper, more primitive material begins to emerge. This is your reward—darker stuff comes up! We can hold it as, "Oh, it's coming up for a deeper level of integration," which is true, but that feels intellectual. The reality is, "Oh, no! Oh, no!" The impulses, thoughts and fantasies which come forward uninvited challenge our identity as a decent, or even reasonable, person.

The material is so foreign and threatening in some way that it feels like "This couldn't be me." It is actually some of the deeper unconscious stuff that has been repressed, starting to come up. In a paradoxical way, it forms a bridge of connection to humanity; at least this was my experience. These thoughts came up and I thought, "This,

too, is stuff of the mind." And further, "Oh, we've all got this stuff in our mind and heart." Wonderful stuff, and very difficult stuff, in every one of us.

Resistance at this level leads to an attempt by the mind to control and redirect, by focusing more narrowly on the breath. And distraction by rational thinking also occurs, as a way of self-soothing and consolidating one's sense of self. The mind is protecting itself and what it is identified with. It's a natural defense, this sort of resistance.

In psychotherapy, as we know to our chagrin, pain actually gets more vivid for a while, as the psychotherapy goes on. Self-acceptance may deepen, and we may be able to tolerate more of what is happening. But then even more difficult material begins to emerge, which we may choose not to share. Then there is strong transference, and counter-transference, and the whole process just continues to deepen. So it is in meditation. Deeper stuff comes up, including what is not yet safe to really open to.

The phrase which captures resistance at the middle phase of psychotherapy is Freud's: "Neurosis retreats in the face of the analysis." I think a corresponding phrase for this state of meditation might be something like: "Attachment to sense of self retreats in the face of awareness." The stronger awareness becomes, the more creative the self gets at camouflaging and finding places to keep its identity. As awareness deepens, the self gets more intent upon staying alive. And it feels like a primal struggle for survival.

As meditation deepens even more, less of what comes up in the mind is problematic. You can have more *arugamama*, more of that sense of non-problematic flow of things coming up. One is not frightened so much by the mind. Partly this is because as mindfulness becomes stronger, impermanence becomes clearer. It also becomes clear that the bogey-people are not solid entities. Things are arising, coming, and going—very quickly. And we have the courage to hang out with more of what arises, because it is all



rapidly changing. The mind becomes naturally less involved with holding on or pushing away. It becomes clearer that craving and aversion, to use the Buddhist terms, are the cause of a lot of our suffering. This is naturally what will happen as we go a little bit deeper. The self, too, starts to be seen more clearly as constructed, moment-to-moment. The thoughts of self come up, but there does not seem to be as much behind them. It's just, "Here's another self-thought." "Here's another self-thought." But there isn't anything to which they're referring, as the mind gets clearer.

Then a fascination begins to emerge. "Could that really be true, that there is nothing actually behind that thought of self?" It becomes quite compelling. But again, at the same time, there is something very frightening about seeing it. Now we are starting to get to "Oh, no, wait a minute now. Enough is enough." Trungpa Rinpoche, the Tibetan teacher, used to say, "This is a nice place to visit, but we really don't want to spend too much time here." We want to just do peek-a-boo with this, when insight starts to deepen. We've got a lot invested in the separate self.

So there are competing tendencies both to look more closely and to turn away. There are moments when you say, "Oh, I think there is something important here." Then the mind, a moment later, is turning and running away. The resistance takes two forms. The first is thinking—and we identify strongly with thinking—about meditation and about how the mind works. "Oh, now I understand. The self is really just constructed moment-to-moment. That's really cool." Rather than actually hanging out with the dissolution moment-to-moment, the mind is trying to make meaning of it to keep itself secure.

The second form resistance may take is returning to focus again only on the breath. The breath becomes a refuge. As concentration deepens, there is a pleasurable quality that starts to happen there with the breath, a sense of peace and ease. "Maybe I'll just stay here with the breath. This is sweet." So we

get attached to this sweet feeling. It's like a port in the storm. The attachment to concentration becomes, paradoxically, one of the last holdouts or hiding places of the separate self. We need concentration to have insight, but once we get enough concentration to have really deep insight, we'd rather stay with the concentration. This is a more subtle form of the pleasure principle at work. The sweet attachment that can happen with concentration provides a buffer from some more difficult kinds of things that are there waiting to be revealed by insight.

At some point—and here I am not speaking from personal experience—it is said that there is a place of really deep practice where resistance is finally overcome. At some point our holding on and our identification with self and with our old patterns, begin to truly exhaust themselves. This opens up a deeper area of practice where there is not much resistance. But until then, resistance is our constant companion.

Let me just say in closing that we can view this topic of resistance in meditation also through the lenses of systems theory, cognitive behavioral thought, or psycho-dynamic theories. Resistance to change and the attempt to re-establish ingrained dysfunctional patterns are central to systems theory. From a cognitive behavioral vantage point an intermittent reinforcement schedule, where we get rewarded every so often, is the hardest one to extinguish. The pleasure principle keeps rewarding us periodically, and when we least expect it, which makes it particularly hard to let go of. It is also worth noting that systematic desensitization is also a major part of meditation practice. Finally, from a psycho-dynamic point of view, we are motivated to be in control, to avoid anxiety and pain and fear of the unknown. With our friend repetition-compulsion, we prefer the familiarity of the known, even if it is not satisfying, to the unknown.

In summary, to paraphrase the immortal words of Roshi [Neil] Sadaka, "Waking up is hard to do." 🌱

The attachment to concentration becomes one of the last hiding places of the separate self.



A Shift of Mind

I live in a treasure chest
and there are times, I must confess
that I forget my own address.

Enclosed therein are the gifts and
me

'though sometimes they're more
difficult to see.

The darkness that keeps them
hidden from sight
is one I can banish with a slight
shift

of

mind

that brings them out of the shadows
into the bright light of awareness.

I'm enveloped in blessings
soft and kind
an eider-lined nest with not ties
that bind me
to my blindness.
And miracles obscured by the din of day
shimmering here
parade – a wondrous display
in glorious colours seen.

In the quiet of Now and Here
my abounding riches are crystal
clear to me.

In the peaceful Now
I gratefully bow to the universe for
all these.

Nestled in safety within the chest
I partake of the plenty and all the
best that is to me offered
with outstretched hand
unconditionally proffered.
When I'm here it's all clear and
uncluttered
for I am Home.

This is my base
where I work to remain
in a state of grace –
always grateful, ever mindful
of the treasure chest
where my soul resides.

This home not built of mortar and
planks
is a place I remember to
sing my thanks.

—*Esther Isaac*

As It Is

mind and body- vessel of human life.
striving to know the continuous creative
cycle-

un b r o k e n laws of cause
and effect and

cause.

sitsitsit to

understand! to appreciate.

to drink the nectar as well as the sludge.

prying the sixth sense from

ephemeral

worries, nuances, discriminations,

expectations. harness/

now

go for a journey... breath taking, but

limited; interlude.

breath in

breathe out. digits of the biosphere

absorbing molecules; destroying,

nature.

sat, sitting, will sit.

living by intuitive faith. the

unteleological boat-

as it is.

—*Kory Goldberg*

Fall

Turning the
kitchen
Clock back
Life and death

Only
One moment

—*Theikdi*

Others

What would I be without all the others
a particular woman I have loved
for almost forever
unlike me and yet we lean together
enmeshed in our mutual being
and a son whose changes
continually open my eyes
my now gone parents who live on
in my habits and dreams
and numerous family and friends
who I could not be other than I am without
and those who I only know about
through word and deed
and all the others not known by me
but by those I have known
and those not known by the others
but by those they have known
and on and on
until I wonder where it is
that I begin and end.

—*Roy Money*

Sometimes

Sometimes after a while
 almost imperceptibly
 awareness passes through a semi-permeable membrane
 the translucent envelope at the limit of conventional
 perception
 revealing a vast space with illusive oppositions
 the hard self-evident categories of language
 that here appear as drifting clouds
 separate and together
 separate again and then dissolved
 reappearing elsewhere though not immediately
 because transmutation takes time
 but inexorably proceeds
 producing a network of dense temporal threads
 that reach back to the beginning of creation.

—Roy Money

Feeling the breezes
 As I sit, wonder how could
 One wake up indoors?

Wet pavement, bare feet.
 Puddles heated by the sun:
 Hot tubs for the toes.

When living on faith
 If you do not get breakfast
 Lunch is excellent.

Haiku

Sister Sudhammā

Poison oak often
 The most colorful plant.
 "Here, come and touch me."

If resident ants
 Find the chocolate in my bag
 Wow what a problem.

You with the three leaves!
 Crouched amidst blackberry vines
 Poison on your mind.

Breathe in, fly in ear
 Breathe out, fly in other ear;
 Pull robe over head.

Do spiders daydream?
 Your patience puts me to shame
 Alert, mindful, calm.



Gampo in Ladakh

Janice Whipple

Putting Down the Burden

The Khandhas as Burden & Path

Thanissaro Bhikkhu



A pilgrim slowly makes his way up Vultures Peak in India.

The Buddha's Awakening gave him, among other things, a new perspective on the uses and limitations of words. He had discovered a reality—the Deathless—that no words could describe. At the same time, however, he discovered that the path to Awakening *could* be described, although it involved a new way of seeing and conceptualizing the problem of suffering and stress. Because ordinary concepts were often poor tools for teaching the path, he had to invent new concepts and to stretch pre-existing words to encompass those concepts so that others could taste Awakening themselves.

Of those new concepts, the most central to his teaching was that of the *khandhas*, which are most frequently translated into English as “aggregates.” Prior to the Buddha, the Pali word *khandha* had very ordinary meanings: A *khandha* could be a pile, a bundle, a

heap, a mass. It could also be the trunk of a tree. In his first sermon, though, the Buddha gave it a new, psychological meaning, introducing the term “clinging-khandhas” to summarize his analysis of the truth of stress and suffering. Throughout the remainder of his teaching career, he referred to these psychological khandhas time and again. Their importance in his teachings has thus been obvious to every generation of Buddhists after his death. Less obvious, though, has been the issue of *how* they are important: How should a meditator make use of the concept of the psychological khandhas? What questions are they meant to answer?

The most common response to these questions is best exemplified by two recent scholarly books devoted to the subject. Both treat the khandhas as the Buddha's answer to the question, “What is a person?” To quote from the jacket of the first:

If Buddhism denies a permanent self, how does it perceive identity? ... What we conventionally call a 'person' can be understood in terms of five aggregates, the sum of which must not be taken for a permanent entity, since beings are nothing but an amalgam of ever-changing phenomena.... [W]ithout a thorough understanding of the five aggregates, we cannot grasp the liberation process at work within the individual, who is, after all, simply an amalgam of the five aggregates.

From the introduction of the other:

The third key teaching is given by the Buddha in contexts when he is asked about individual identity: when people want to know 'what am I?', 'what is my real self?'. The Buddha says that individuality should be understood in terms

of a combination of phenomena which appear to form the physical and mental continuum of an individual life. In such contexts, the human being is analysed into five constituents—the pañca-kkhandhā [five aggregates].

This understanding of the khandhas isn't confined to scholars. Almost any modern Buddhist meditation teacher would explain the khandhas in a similar way. And this understanding isn't just a modern innovation. It was first proposed at the beginning of the Common Era in the commentaries to the early Buddhist canons—both the Theravadin and the Sarvastivadin, which formed the basis for Mahayana scholasticism.

However, once the commentaries used the khandhas to define what a person is, they spawned many of the controversies that have plagued Buddhist thinking ever since: "If a person is just khandhas, then what gets reborn?" "If a person is just khandhas, and the khandhas are annihilated on reaching total nibbana, then isn't total nibbana the annihilation of the person?" "If a person is khandhas, and khandhas are interrelated with other khandhas, how can one person enter nibbana without dragging everyone else along?"

A large part of the history of Buddhist thought has been the story of ingenious but unsuccessful attempts to settle these questions. It's instructive to note, though, that the Pali Canon never quotes the Buddha as trying to answer these questions. In fact, it never quotes him as trying to define what a person is at all. Instead, it quotes him as saying that to define yourself in any way is to limit yourself, and that the question, "what am I?" is best ignored. This suggests that he formulated the concept of the khandhas to answer other, different questions. If, as meditators, we want to make the best use of this concept, we should look at what those original questions were, and determine how they apply to our practice.

To define yourself in any way is to limit yourself; the question, "what am I?" is best ignored.

The canon depicts the Buddha as saying that he taught only two topics: suffering and the end of suffering. A survey of the discourses in the canon shows him using the concept of the khandhas to answer the primary questions related to those topics: What is suffering? How is it caused? What can be done to bring those causes to an end?

When the Buddha introduced the concept of the khandhas in his first sermon, it was in response to the first of these questions. His short definition of suffering was "the five clinging-khandhas." This fairly cryptic phrase can be fleshed out by drawing on other passages in the canon.

The five khandhas are bundles or piles of form, feeling, perception, fabrications, and consciousness. None of the texts explain why the Buddha used the word khandha to describe these things. The meaning of "tree trunk" may be relevant to the pervasive fire imagery in the Canon—nibbana being extinguishing of the fires of passion, aversion, and delusion—but none of the texts explicitly make this connection. The common and explicit image is that the khandhas are burdensome. We can think of them as piles of bricks we carry on our shoulders. However, these piles are best understood, not as objects, but as activities, for an important passage defines them in terms of their functions. Form—which covers physical phenomena of all sorts, both within and without the body—wears down or "de-forms." Feeling feels pleasure, pain, and neither

pleasure nor pain. Perception labels or identifies objects. Consciousness cognizes the six senses (counting the intellect as the sixth) along with their objects. Of the five khandhas, fabrication is the most complex. Although one of its basic definitions is intention, it includes a wide variety of activities, such as attention, evaluation, and all the active processes of the mind. It is also the most fundamental khandha, for its basic activity is to take the potential for the experience of form, feeling, etc.—coming from past actions—and turn it into the actual experience of those things in the present moment.

Thus intention is an integral part of our experience of all the khandhas—an important point, for this means that there is an element of intention in all suffering. This opens the possibility that suffering can be ended by changing our intentions—which is precisely the point of the Buddha's teachings.

To understand how this happens, we have to look more closely at how suffering arises—or, in other words, how khandhas become clinging-khandhas.

When the khandhas are experienced, the process of fabrication normally doesn't simply stop there. If attention focuses on the khandhas' attractive features—beautiful forms, pleasant feelings, etc.—it can give rise to passion and delight. This passion and delight can take many forms, but the most tenacious is the habitual act of creating a sense of me or mine, identifying with a particular khandha (or set of khandhas) or claiming possession of it.

This sense of me and mine is rarely static. It moves around like an amoeba, changing its contours as it changes location. Sometimes expansive, sometimes contracted, it can view itself as identical with a khandha, as possessing a khandha, as existing within a khandha, or as having a khandha existing within itself. At times feeling finite, at other times infinite, whatever shape it takes it's always unstable and

insecure, for the khandhas providing its food are simply activities and functions, inconstant and insubstantial. In the words of the canon, the khandhas are like foam, like a mirage, like the bubbles formed when rain falls on water. They're heavy only because the iron grip of trying to cling to them is burdensome. As long as we're addicted

The khandhas are like foam, like a mirage, like the bubbles formed when rain falls on water. They're heavy only because of trying to cling to them.

to passion and delight for these activities—as long as we cling to them—we're bound to suffer.

The Buddhist approach to ending this clinging, however, is not simply to drop it. As with any addiction, the mind has to be gradually weaned away. Before we can reach the point of no intention, where we're totally freed from the fabrication of khandhas, we have to change our intentions toward the khandhas so as to change their functions. Instead of using them for the purpose of constructing a self, we use them for the purpose of creating a path to the end of suffering. Instead of carrying piles of bricks on our shoulders, we take them off and lay them along the ground as pavement.

The first step in this process is to use the khandhas to construct the factors of the noble eightfold path. For example, Right Concentration: We maintain a steady perception focused on an aspect of form, such as the breath, and used directed thought and evalua-

tion—which count as fabrications—to create feelings of pleasure and refreshment, which we spread through the body. In the beginning, it's normal that we feel passion and delight for these feelings, and that consciousness follows along in line with them. This helps get us absorbed in mastering the skills of concentration.

Once we've gained the sense of strength and wellbeing that comes from mastering these skills, we can proceed to the second step: attending to the drawbacks of even the refined khandhas we experience in concentration, so as to undercut the passion and delight we might feel for them:

Suppose that an archer or archer's apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk...enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perceptions, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, a void, not-self. [Similarly with the other levels of jhāna.]

The various ways of fostering dispassion are also khandhas, khandhas of perception. A standard list includes the following: the perception of inconstancy, the perception of not-self, the perception of unattractiveness, the perception of drawbacks (the diseases to which the body is subject), the perception of abandoning, the perception of distaste for every world, the perception of the undesirability of all fabrications. One of the most important of these perceptions is that of not-self. When the Buddha first introduced the

concept of not-self in his second sermon, he also introduced a way of strengthening its impact with a series of questions based around the khandhas. Taking each khandha in turn, he asked: "Is it constant or inconstant?" Inconstant. "And is what is inconstant stressful or pleasurable?" Stressful. "And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?" No.

These questions show the complex role the khandhas play in this second step of the path. The questions themselves are khandhas—of fabrication—and they use the concept of the khandhas to deconstruct any passion and delight that might center on the khandhas and create suffering. Thus, in this step, we use khandhas that point out the drawbacks of the khandhas.

If used unskillfully, though, these perceptions and fabrications can simply replace passion with its mirror image, aversion. This is why they have to be based on the first step—the wellbeing constructed in jhana—and coupled with the third step, the perceptions of dispassion and cessation that incline the mind to the deathless: "This is peace, this is exquisite—the resolution of all fabrications; the relinquishment of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; Unbinding." In effect, these are perception-khandhas that point the mind beyond all khandhas.

The freedom lying beyond the khandhas also lies beyond the realm to which language properly applies.

The texts say that this three-step process can lead to one of two results. If, after undercutting passion and delight for the khandhas, the mind contains any residual passion for the perception of the deathless, it will attain the third level of Awakening, called non-return. If, however, passion and delight are entirely eradicated, all clinging is entirely abandoned, and the mind totally released. The bricks of the pavement have turned into a runway, and the mind has taken off.

Into what? The authors of the discourses seem unwilling to say, even to the extent of describing it as a state of existence, non-existence, neither, or both. As one of the discourses states, the freedom lying beyond the khandhas also lies beyond the realm to which language properly applies. There is also the very real practical problem that any preconceived notions of that freedom, if clung to as a perception-khandha, could easily act as an obstacle to its attainment. Still, there is also the possibility that, if properly used, such a perception-khandha might act as an aid on the path. So the discourses provide hints in the form of similes, referring to total freedom as:

*The unfashioned, the end,
the effluent-less, the true,
the beyond, the subtle,
the very-hard-to-see,
the ageless, permanence,
the undecaying, the featureless,
non-elaboration, peace,
the deathless, the exquisite, bliss,
solace, the exhaustion of craving,
the wonderful, the marvelous,
the secure, security, unbinding,
the unafflicted, the passionless,
the pure, release, non-attachment,
the island, shelter, harbor, refuge,
the ultimate.*

Other passages mention a consciousness in this freedom—“without feature, without end, luminous all around”—lying outside of time and space, experienced when the six sense spheres stop functioning. In this it differs from the consciousness-khandha, which depends on the six sense spheres

and can be described in such terms as near or far, past, present, or future. Consciousness without feature is thus the awareness of Awakening. And the freedom of this awareness carries over even when the awakened person returns to ordinary consciousness. As the Buddha said of himself:

*Freed, dissociated, & released
from form, the Tathagata dwells
with unrestricted awareness.
Freed, dissociated, & released
from feeling ... perception ...
fabrications ... consciousness ...
birth ... aging ... death ... suffering
& stress ... defilement, the
Tathagata dwells with unrestricted
awareness.*

This shows again the importance of bringing the right questions to the teachings on the khandhas. If you use them to define what you are as a person, you tie yourself down to no purpose. The questions keep piling on. But if you use them to put an end to suffering, your questions fall away and you're free. You never again cling to the khandhas and no longer need to use them to end your self-created suffering. As long as you're still alive, you can use the khandhas as needed for whatever skillful uses you see fit. After that, you're liberated from all uses and needs, including the need to find words to describe that freedom to yourself or to anyone else. ●

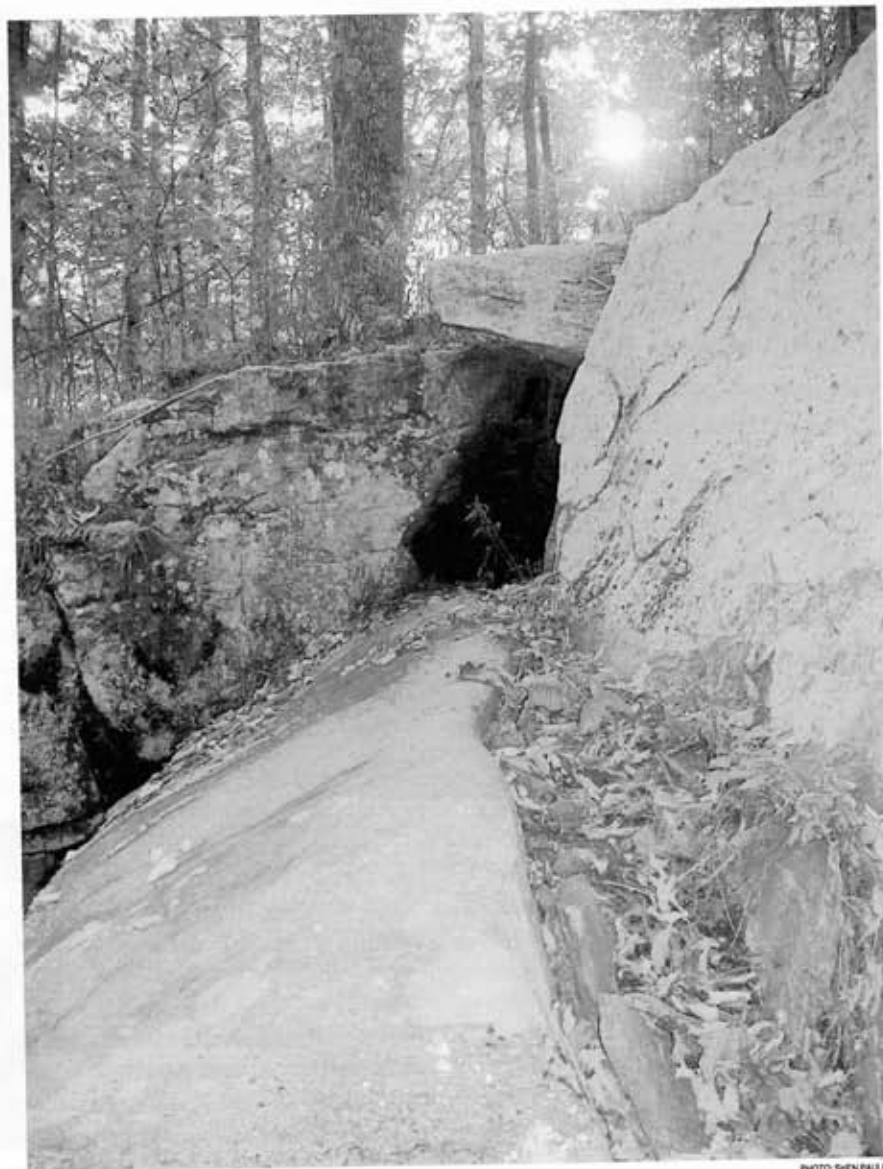


PHOTO SHEN PALLET



Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

...for the integration of scholarly understanding and meditative insight...



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.

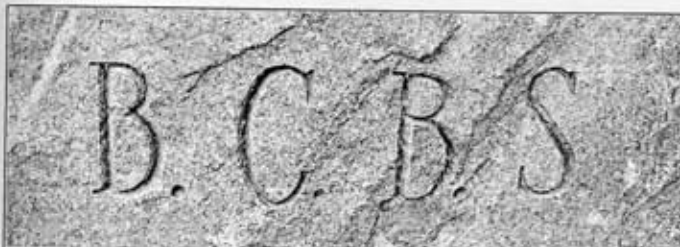
The study center offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats and independent study programs. Emerging from the teaching tradition of IMS, the study center program is rooted in the classical Buddhist tradition of the earliest teachings 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.



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 classes, workshops and retreats, 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.





PROGRAMS

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 one-day programs. Although not 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 2003 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 42.

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 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.



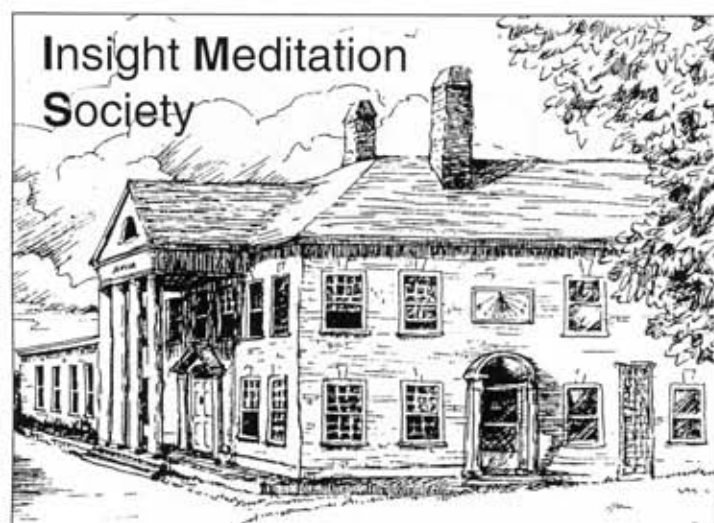
The **Bhāvana Program** offers a new model for combining the benefits of meditation with insight into the teachings of the Buddhist tradition. Most of the day is spent in silent meditation, much like a classical vipassana retreat, but each day also includes a three-hour study period of issues complementary 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 penetrate and become meaningful.

The **Independent Study Program** is for experienced students who may be 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.



The **Buddhist Psychology Program** investigates in depth the early Buddhist science of mind growing out of its profound contemplative practices, and explores the growing interface between Buddhist thought and modern psychology. Anchored by the 5-day *Essentials of Buddhist Psychology* course, offered twice a year, the program also offers a 5-day intensive study of advanced Buddhist psychology known as *Abhidhamma*, and a bi-annual meditation retreat and workshop specifically intended for psychologists and psychotherapists. Faculty from the *Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy* contribute to the program, and CE credits are available for most mental health professionals.

Insight Meditation Society



CALL FOR A FREE BROCHURE

1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, MA 01005
Tel: (978) 355-4378
E-mail: ims@dharma.org
www.dharma.org

Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

331 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 491-5070 or (617) 441-9038
world.std.com/~cimc/index.html



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.

The Institute for Meditation & Psychotherapy

35 Pleasant Street
Newton, MA 02459
(978) 526-4095
meditationandpsychotherapy.org

The Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy (IMP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to healing and growth through the practices of meditation and psychotherapy. It has been developed out of 20 years of conversations among therapists, meditators, and meditation teachers in the Boston area, in order to encourage an exploration of the interactions between these disciplines.

IMP primarily provides Continuing Education to psychologists, social workers, nurses, and mental health counselors. Secondary activities include psychological consultation to meditation centers, psychotherapy referral service, networking of interested clinicians, and clinical supervision.

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the Buddha's teachings

The Dhamma Dāna Publications is a publishing program, coordinated by the study center, printing 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*.

BCBS TEACHERS

CORE FACULTY

ANDREW OLENDZKI, PH.D. was trained in Buddhist Studies at Lancaster University in England, as well as at Harvard and the University of Sri Lanka. The former executive director of IMS, he is currently the executive director of BCBS, and also teaches occasionally at various New England colleges.

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

GLORIA TARANIYA AMBROSIA has been offering reflections on Buddhist teachings and practices since 1990. She has been greatly inspired by the example and teachings of the western forest Sangha, the disciples of Ajahn Sumedho. She served as resident teacher at Insight Meditation Society in Barre from 1996 through 1999.

MARTINE BATCHELOR lived in Korea as a Zen nun under the guidance of Master Kusan for ten years. She is the author of *A Woman's Guide to Buddhism, Way of Zen and Meditation for Life*. She is a Guiding Teacher at Gaia House and founding teacher of Sharpham College. She teaches worldwide and lives in southwest France.

STEPHEN BATCHELOR studied for eight years under the guidance of Tibetan lamas and completed a three-year Zen training in Korea. A former Buddhist monk, he is the author of *Alone With Others, The Faith to Doubt, The Awakening of the West, Buddhism Without Beliefs* and *Verses from the Center*. He is a Guiding Teacher at Gaia House and co-founder of Sharpham College. He teaches worldwide and lives in southwest France.

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 Khemma in 1994, and was authorized to teach in 1997. He teaches in Europe and North America.

DAN COZORT is an associate professor of Religion at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He did his Vajrayana studies with Tibetan lamas at the University of Virginia and in India. He has written two books on Buddhist tantra, a catalogue for an exhibition on tantric art, a video documentary on sand mandalas, a book on the Prasangika-Madhyamika school of Buddhist philosophy, and several articles and book chapters.

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*.

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 meditation group at Smith College in Northampton, MA.

CHARLES GENOUD has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism since 1970, and was a translator for the Ven. Geshe Rabten. He has also done many meditation retreats in India, Burma, and the US in the Theravada tradition. He has authored numerous books, including *La Non-histoire d'une Illusion*. He teaches Buddhist meditation and leads workshops in France, the US, England, and Switzerland.

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*.

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. Punraj Mahathera.

DOUG PHILLIPS PH.D. is a psychologist in private practice in Newton, MA, who has studied extensively in the Zen and vipassana traditions and leads retreats and groups in the New England area. Much of his clinical practice involves work with families and children and he is the father of two daughters.

DAEJA NAPIER teaches vipassana and Brahma Vihara retreats nationally. Trained in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974, she is the mother of 5 children.

AJAHN SANTIKARO 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.

AJAHN SUNDARA is a senior nun of the Amaravati community in England. She joined the monastic order in 1979 and in 1983 she took the Going Forth as a nun. Since then she has been involved in the establishment and the development of the nuns order. She teaches and leads retreat in Europe and the US since the late 80s. She currently lives at Abhayagiri Monastery in California.

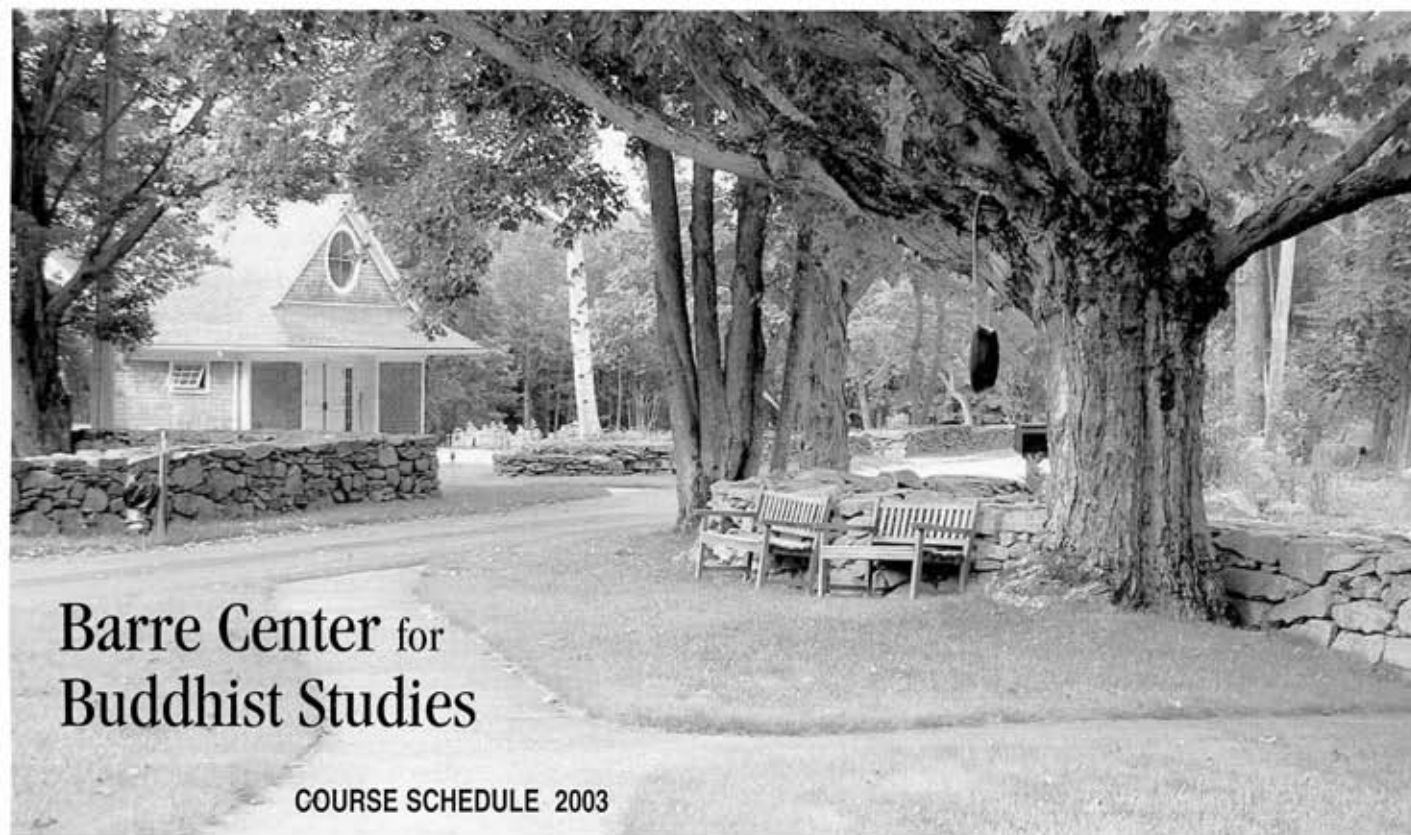
SISTER METTA joined the Amaravati community in 1993 and ordained that year as a novice. In 1997 she took the Going Forth as a nun. She is currently residing at Amaravati Monastery in England.

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.

AJAHN THANISSARO (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*.

GESHE LOBSANG TSETAN is a Tibetan Buddhist monk from Ladakh, India who holds the Geshe degree in Buddhist philosophy. He is the founder-director of Siddhartha School/Choskor Stok in Ladakh works to preserve Tibetan culture among Ladakhi youth.





Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

COURSE SCHEDULE 2003

Nov 22-24
(Weekend)

Indra's Net: The Interpenetration of All Phenomena

Mu Soeng

02-MS2 \$150

Indra's Net is a metaphor and teaching device from Hua-yen Buddhism of China that shows the mutual interpenetration and interconnectedness of all phenomena. In a world that's getting rapidly globalized, we are beginning to see an outline of what Indra's Net might mean for our own time and place; how we as new citizens of cyberspace and travelers on information highways might better understand our interdependence in each phenomenal event. This weekend will ground itself in classical teachings of Mahayana and Hua-yen Buddhism and will include meditation, discussions, and sharing.

Nov 30-Dec 7
(7 Days)

Bhāvana Program: The Gradual Training (*anupubbi-kathā*)

Andrew Olendzki & Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

02-BHAV4 \$400

In this week-long program combining both study and long periods of silent meditative reflection, participants have the opportunity to follow the Buddha's premier method of teaching dhamma. The "gradual training," as it is called, guides spiritual practitioners from basic principles through progressively more advanced teachings—generosity (*dāna*), virtue (*sīla*), heavens (*sagga*), the drawbacks of the sensual realm (*ādinava*), and renunciation (*nekkhamma*). Finally, when the practitioner was deemed ready, the Buddha offered instruction in the four noble truths (*saccāni*) and liberation (*nibbāna*). **Intended for advanced students--meditation experience required.**

Dec 15-20
(5 Days)

Essentials of Buddhist Psychology

Andrew Olendzki

02-PSYCH2 \$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 for Meditation & Psychotherapy. **28 CE units are available to psychology and other professionals.**

Jan 3-5
(Weekend)

Meditation for Psychologists and Psychotherapists

Trudy Goodman & Chris Germer, Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy 03-IMP1 \$150

The value of meditation practice for counseling and mental health professionals is becoming ever more apparent. Meditation practice supports the cultivation of qualities of mind which are essential to all forms of therapy. This program is intended to provide an opportunity for learning—or deepening—meditation practice. An evening's discussion is followed by a full day and night (36 hrs.) of silent practice—sitting and walking, and an opportunity for personal interviews. Sunday is devoted to a series of small and large group discussions of various issues arising for mental health professionals at the frontier of the interface between meditation and psychotherapy. **3 CE credits are available.**

Feb 1 (Saturday)	<p>The Four Bases of Power (<i>iddhi-pāda</i>)</p> <p>Thanissaro Bhikkhu</p> <p>The Buddha taught the four bases of power—concentration based on desire, effort, intentness, and discriminating analysis—as means for succeeding in the goals of our meditation. Yet three of these qualities are things we're often taught to avoid in our meditation, just as we're taught to avoid thoughts of "goals" and "success." This program will focus—through talks, discussions, and meditation—on the reasons for this contradiction, together with the skills needed to resolve it.</p>	03-TG1 DĀNA
Feb 2-9 (7 days)	<p>Bhāvana Program: Noble Silence, Noble Discussion</p> <p>Thanissaro Bhikkhu</p> <p>The Buddha once recommended that when his students met they should engage either in noble silence—the practice of concentration—or in discussion of any of ten topics: modesty, contentment, seclusion, non-entanglement, arousing persistence, virtue, concentration, discernment, release, and the knowledge & vision of release. This course will provide an opportunity to do both. Each morning will feature a discussion of readings on the ten topics, placing them in the context of right speech. The remainder of the day will be devoted to silent meditation, with opportunities for interviews and an evening dhamma talk.</p>	03-TG2 DĀNA
Feb 14-16 (Weekend)	<p>The Truth of Social Suffering: Its Cause, Its Ending, and a Path Including Interpersonal Meditation</p> <p>Greg Kramer</p> <p>During this retreat we will explore the truths taught by the Buddha as they relate to our lives with other people. The teaching is based upon the Four Noble Truths: (1) social suffering is an important aspect of all suffering, (2) it is caused by a thirst and feeling of lack that is sustained by confusion and habit, (3) release is possible, and (4) an interpersonal meditation practice is a powerful path for the freedom from social suffering. The logic of this fourth truth is that we practice letting go of interpersonal entanglements in the same way we got entangled: interpersonally. We will learn and practice such a social meditation. We will engage in the foundational practice of individual silent meditation, as well as speaking and listening co-meditation, and metta meditation.</p>	03-GK1 \$150
Feb 21-23 (Weekend)	<p>Socially Engaged Buddhism and the Practice of Insight Dialogue</p> <p>Paula Green & Greg Kramer</p> <p>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 Greg 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.</p>	03-PG \$150
Mar 1 (Saturday)	<p>Mind the Gaps</p> <p>Christina Feldman</p> <p>A sharpened awareness at times brings an uncomfortable sensitivity to the gaps that can exist between our insight and our embodiment of it in daily life. We are often frustrated at those gaps that seem to exist between our ideals and our day to day reality, between our sense of possibility and the limitations of our experience. Wisdom invites us not to avoid or judge the gaps but to appreciate their creative tension. This is where our practice deepens. In this day of talks, discussion and investigation we will explore the meditative factors we can cultivate and apply to enable us to heal and transform the gaps.</p>	03-CF \$60
Mar 2 (Sunday)	<p>Family Dharma: Practice in a Family Context</p> <p>Doug Phillips</p> <p>Establishing and maintaining a contemplative practice while fully participating in family life is a complex and rewarding challenge. How can we use the inescapable "mirrors" of family relationships to inform our search for self-knowing and freedom from suffering? If suffering arises from clinging, how are we to understand "attachment" to children and partners? During this day-long program, we will discuss these core issues of "Family Dharma" through talks and discussions, as well as sitting and walking together.</p>	03-DP \$60
Mar 7-9 (Weekend)	<p>Advanced Dzogchen: Natural Mind, Natural Perfection</p> <p>Lama Surya Das</p> <p>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 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 <i>Four-Themed Precious Garland</i> and the special path-instructions of Mahamudra and Dzogchen. The Dzogchen ngondro practice of Ru-shen (subtle discernment) is introduced for the first time during this weekend. Prerequisite: Prior Dzogchen meditation practice.</p>	03-SD \$150

Mar 16-23 (7 days)	Nālanda Program: Theravāda Studies Andrew Olendzki & Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia	03-THER	\$400
<p>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.</p>			
Mar 28-Apr 2 (5 days)	The Theory and Practice of Liberation Stephen Batchelor & Martine Batchelor	03-BATCH	\$350
<p>This retreat will combine study seminars with periods of meditation and Dharma talks. We will focus on a series of key themes in Buddhist teaching as a means to expand our understanding of the underlying doctrines as well as to explore how to integrate them into the experience of awareness. We hope to provide meditators with a framework of ideas within which to make sense of and deepen their practice. Participants will be provided with texts from the Pāli Canon, Nāgārjuna, Shāntideva and Lin-chi as tools for reflection and discussion. This retreat is not recommended for beginners.</p>			
Apr 4-6 (Weekend)	Kālāma Sutta: Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry Daeja Napier	03-DN1	\$150
<p>The Buddha taught the path of freedom. His instructions 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 free inquiry through the teachings of the <i>Kālāma Sutta</i>, and includes sitting and walking meditation and discussion.</p>			
Apr 11-20 (9 Days)	Satipaṭṭhāna & Jhāna (Foundations of Mindfulness and Meditative Absorptions) Leigh Brasington	03-LB	\$500
<p>This course focuses on the wealth of practices outlined in the <i>Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i> (Dīgha Nikāya 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 <i>Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i>, and a special emphasis on learning the <i>jhānas</i> (meditative absorptions). There is ample opportunity for students to practice the Buddha's comprehensive instructions. This course is limited to students who have completed at least two one-week or longer silent retreats.</p>			
Apr 25-27 (Weekend)	Dependant Co-origination & Ego Defenses Ajahn Santikaro	03-SB	\$150
<p>Dependent co-origination is central to the Buddha's definitive teaching. Along with voidness, this perspective penetrates to the core of our human dilemma and illuminates the process of liberation and spiritual freedom. Over the centuries, dependent co-origination has been encumbered with beliefs not intrinsic to its original purpose, such as rebirth over many lifetimes. A very subtle aspect of this teaching is how the interactions of ignorance, karmic formations, and consciousness are reactions to suffering. Another reading of dependent co-origination reveals how much it is relevant to every waking moment of our lives, and how it guides vipassana practice. This workshop uses the perspectives of dependent co-origination, habitual (often unacknowledged) world views, and defense mechanisms (influenced by Enneagram studies) to gain some new insights into what is happening on the most subtle levels of our reactivity. In turn, these insights can spark releases from conscious and unconscious egoistic patterns and facilitate our potential for "little liberations" as a vital aspect of everyday practice.</p>			
May 2-4 (Weekend)	Renunciation: The Highest Freedom Ajahn Sundarā & Sister Mettā	03-AS	\$150
<p>Renunciation is a concept that has often been misunderstood and one that has been associated with notions of punishment, self-denigration and self-inflicted misery. From the Buddhist perspective though, renunciation is the result of letting go and freeing the heart from its misapprehension of reality and the suffering of self-centered activities. This week-end will offer an opportunity to explore renunciation in its deepest meaning through canonical texts and contemporary teachings, through reflection and contemplation. We will investigate its relevance to our everyday life and practice and discover that in its essence, renunciation is the highest happiness and freedom.</p>			
May 10 (Saturday)	Right View, Renunciation & Compassion Geshe Lobsang Tsetan	03-GESHE	\$60
<p>In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Right View, Renunciation, and Compassion are three basic necessities on the path to Buddhahood. In this one-day workshop, we will examine why we need the Right View, how someone can practice it, when it is incomplete and when it is complete; why Renunciation is important, how we can practice it, and how we know whether we have cultivated it or not; why we have to generate Compassion, how to practice, and knowing the results of our practice. The day will consist of discussion and actual practices of these three elements of liberation.</p>			

May 11-17 (6 Days)	Nālanda Program: Vajrayāna Studies Dan Cozort	03-VAJ \$400
	<p>Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism is based upon the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism but adds remarkable techniques to use imagination in the service of the path. It also uses the subtle energy of the body in a replication of the process of dying to produce powerful states of consciousness that are purported to enable one to progress rapidly to Buddhahood. This course will survey the development of Vajrayana in India and Tibet, the presuppositions of tantra, the differences between the different "sets" of tantras, and the structure of the tantric path. We will also consider tantric systems such as Mahamudra and Dzogchen, practices such as Chod (cutting attachment), and the biographies of tantric masters. We will make extensive use of the rich resources of tantric art to elucidate tantric concepts. Some basic tantric meditations will be integrated with classroom study.</p>	
May 18-23 (5 Days)	Essentials of Buddhist Psychology Andrew Olendzki	03-PSYCH1 \$400
	<p>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 for Meditation and Psychotherapy. 28 CE units are available to psychology and other professionals.</p>	
May 31-Jun7 (7 Days)	Bhāvana Program: Saṃyojanā: The Ties That Bind Andrew Olendzki & Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia	03-BHAV \$400
	<p>In the Buddhist teaching there are ten fetters that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth. During this course we will explore the meaning of each of the ten fetters and learn how they are gradually overcome through the process of waking up. The five lower fetters are: self-identification view; skeptical doubt or uncertainty; grasping at rites and rituals, precepts and practices; sensual craving or passion; and ill-will or irritation. The five higher fetters are: craving or passion for fine-material existence; craving for immaterial existence; conceit; restlessness; and ignorance or unawareness. Intended for advanced students--meditation experience required.</p>	
Jun 13-15 (Weekend)	Somatic Elements in Sitting Meditation Rev. Issho Fujita	03-IF \$150
	<p>Sitting meditation is a whole-person activity involving not only the mind but also the body. The depth of mindful inquiry strongly depends upon the quality of balanced posture and natural breath. The purpose of this workshop is to deepen our understanding of the somatic aspects in the practice and to cultivate the embodied wakefulness and peacefulness. The lectures, meditations, and exercises in the workshop will throw light on topics such as uprightness, body-mind integrity, alignment, centeredness, relaxation, physical fluidity, resilience, responsiveness, role of images, "good use" of bodily parts, total body integration, breathing, etc.</p>	
Jun 22-27 (5 Days)	Nālanda Program: Mahāyāna Studies Mu Soeng	03-MAHA \$350
	<p>In this program we explore the basic themes of Mahayana Buddhism as they developed in India, and the range of teachings in the <i>Prajñāpāramitā</i>, the <i>Mādhyamika</i>, and the <i>Yogācāra</i> schools. The idea is to give course participants a thorough grounding in the Mahayana teachings in their homeland, and to explore the growth of Indian Buddhism in general. 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.</p>	
Jul 18-20 (Weekend)	Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold Taitetsu Unno	02-TU \$150
	<p>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 opposite (gold).</p>	
Aug 16-23 (7 Days)	Bhāvana program: In Nāgārjuna's Footstep Charles Genould	03-CG \$400
	<p>This week of meditation and inquiry will deal with two aspects of the Bodhisattva path: wisdom and compassion. We will use Nāgārjuna's <i>Verses From the Center</i> for our inquiry into the practice of the gesture of awareness to see how various preconceptions shape and restrain our lives; how we perceive the world through the notions of efficiency, time and space, here, now, etc. The gesture of awareness challenges the notions of time in all myriad forms: improvement, usefulness, movement, and so on. The concern here is not with personal history but with the totality of one's being. The practice of compassion will be based on Shāntideva's <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> where we focus on the exchange of self for other to question the constructed reality of self as well as to develop compassion.</p>	

BCBS COURSE SCHEDULE 2002/2003

	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su			
					1	2	3	Nov 9	Robert Jonas & Mu Soeng	Trinity & Trikāya: Three Dimensions of the Holy in Christianity and Buddhism
NOV	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nov 15-17	Lama John Makransky	Awakening to the Ground of Compassion: Tibetan Lojong Training
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Nov 22-24	Mu Soeng	Indra's Net: The Interpenetration of All Phenomena
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Nov 30 - Dec 7	Andrew Olendzki & Taraniya	Bhāvana Program: The Gradual Training (anupubbi-kathā)
DEC	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	Dec 15-20	Andrew Olendzki	Essentials of Buddhist Psychology
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Jan 3-5	IMP Faculty	Meditation for Psychologists and Psychotherapists
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Jan 3-5	IMP Faculty	Meditation for Psychologists and Psychotherapists
JAN	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Feb 1	Ajahn Thanissaro	The Four Bases of Power (iddhipāda)
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Feb 2-9	Ajahn Thanissaro	Bhāvana Program: Noble Silence, Noble Discussion
	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	Feb 14-16	Greg Kramer	The Truth of Social Suffering: Its Cause, Its Ending, & a Path of Interpersonal Meditation
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King Pasenadi Goes on a Diet

Samyutta Nikāya 3:13

Once when the Buddha was living at Sāvattthi, King Pasenadi of Kosala ate a whole bucketful of food, and then approached the Buddha, engorged and panting, and sat down to one side. The Buddha, discerning that King Pasenadi was engorged and panting, took the occasion to utter this verse:

**manujassa sadā satīmato
mattam jānato laddha-bhojane
tanu tassa bhavanti vedanā
saṅkamaṃ jīrati āyu pālayan-ti**

**When a person is constantly mindful,
And knows when enough food has been taken,
All their afflictions become more slender
—They age more gradually, protecting their lives.**

Now at that time the brahmin youth Sudassana was standing nearby, and King Pasenadi of Kosala addressed him: "Come now, my dear Sudassana, and having thoroughly mastered this verse in the presence of the Buddha, recite it whenever food is brought to me. And I will set up for you a permanent offering of a hundred *kahāpanas* every day." "So be it, your majesty" the brahmin youth Sudassana replied to the king.

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala gradually settled down to (eating) no more than a cup-full of rice. At a later time, when his body had become quite slim, King Pasenadi stroked his limbs with his hand and took the occasion to utter this utterance:

**ubhayena vata maṃ so
Bhagavā atthena anukampi
diḥhadhammikena c-eva
samparāyikena cā ti.**

**Indeed the Buddha has shown me
Compassion in two different ways:
For my welfare right here and now,
and also for in the future.**

Who would have thought weight-loss could be so easy! In this brief exchange the Buddha is suggesting that over-eating is the root of obesity, which hastens the aging process and threatens one's life, and that this only occurs when mindfulness is weak or absent. If we eat slowly and with a great deal of attention, it can more easily become apparent (if we are truthful with ourselves) when an adequate amount of food has been consumed. Interestingly, he seems to be saying that wisdom will provide what is needed to refrain from further eating, rather than the modern conventional view that it requires will-power or self-restraint.

Always one to play on words, the Buddha says that all our afflictions (literally, all our unpleasant feelings), and not just our bodies, will "become more slender." Perhaps this is what Pasenadi is referring to when he says the Buddha's teaching has not only helped him slim down his body (the immediate benefit), but the general increase of mindfulness and diminishing of greed will help with all aspects of the spiritual life (and thus with his rebirth in the future).

The commentary to this text informs us that the king did not engage Sudassana to utter the verse throughout the entire meal, but only once he had started eating. The idea is not to cultivate an aversion to food, for food itself is not an evil. As with so much else in the Buddha's teaching, it is a matter of understanding cause and effect, and of using food skillfully as a tool for awakening rather than allowing oneself to be caught by the latent tendencies of attachment, aversion and confusion that might be evoked by our relationship to food.

Notice the language of the last line of the Buddha's verse. The word for life (*āyu*) is the same one as in the Indian medical tradition of Ayurveda (=knowledge of life), and is regarded as something that can be squandered or carefully guarded. When approached with care, the preservation of life also slows down the aging process. The image is not one of conquering illness or death (for this comes only from full awakening), but of treating the precious resource of one's own vitality with wisdom.

