

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

Fall 1994

Insight



IMS 1995 Retreat
Schedule

BCBS 1995 Course
Schedule

Interview with
Christopher Titmuss

Sangha Poetry

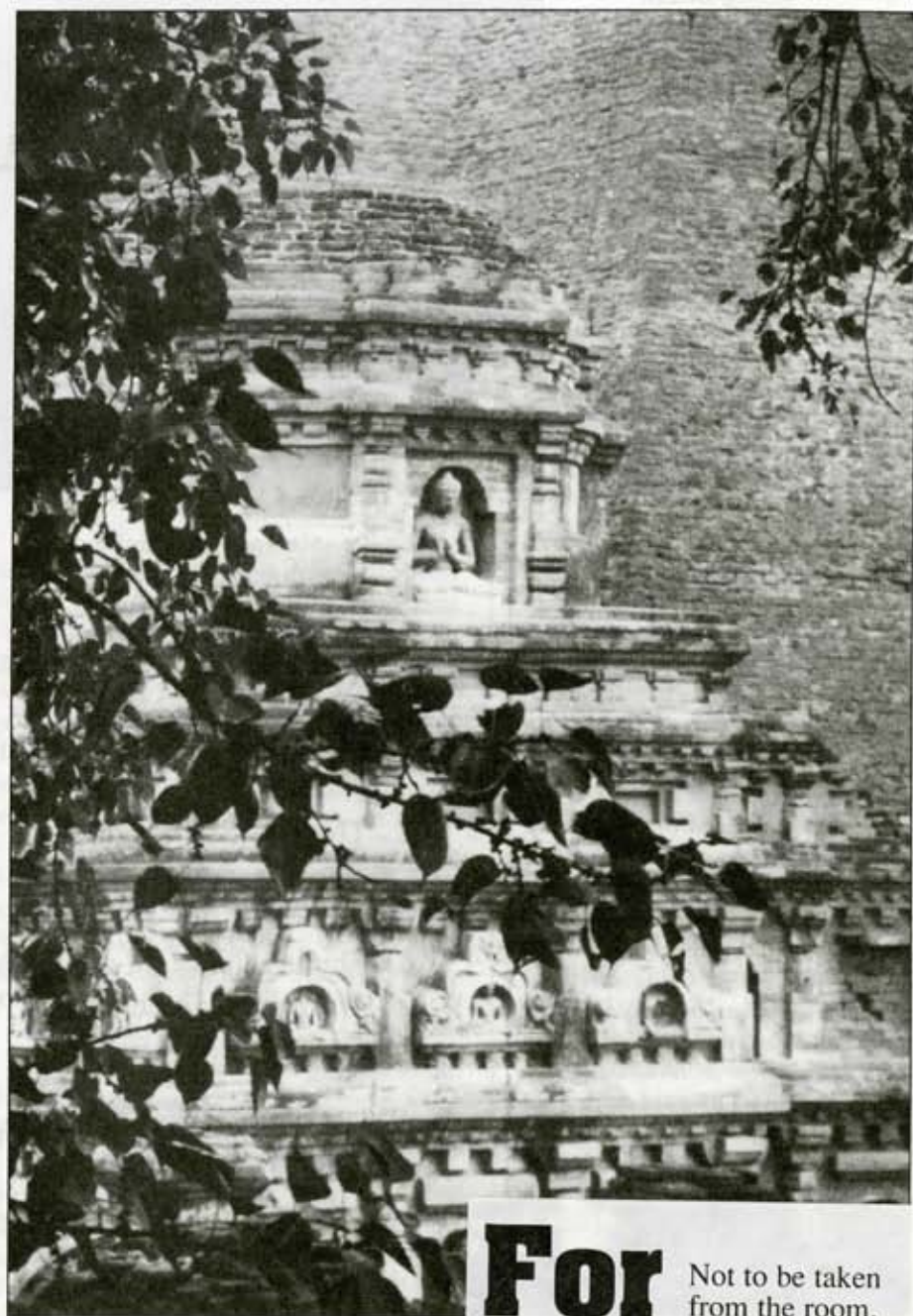
The Not-Self Strategy
by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

*Shining the Light of
Death on Life (Part II):*
by Larry Rosenberg

New *Majjhima-Nikaya*
Translation

Cambridge Insight
Meditation Center

Pali Poetry



For Not to be taken
from the room.
reference

Insight



A twice-yearly newsletter of the
Insight Meditation Society

and the

**Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies**

with schedules and dharma articles of
lasting interest

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Insight is a newsletter jointly published by the Insight Meditation Society and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which are tax-exempt, nonprofit centers whose purpose is to foster the practice of vipassana (insight) meditation and to preserve the essential teachings of Theravada Buddhism. The goal of the practice is the awakening of wisdom and compassion through right action and cultivating mindful awareness in all aspects of life. IMS offers a year-round program of intensive meditation retreats and various opportunities for volunteer service. BCBS offers a year-round program of workshops and seminars in the study of the larger Buddhist tradition within a contemplative framework so as to build a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.

Fall 1994

An unabashed enthusiasm for the Here and Now: an interview with Christopher Titmuss

Insight: *What prompted you to first go off to Asia more than 25 years ago?*

CT: God knows! When I was a little boy I knew I was going to be a journalist. I understood then that a journalist was somebody who made journeys. So in April 1967 I left London with about \$100 and a thumb and headed East. I kept going Eastwards and arrived back in London in May 1977. I think it was a case of never look back. But, of course, the truth of the matter is that there is no going back, no going forwards nor standing still. Our liberation shows there is no direction to life. Awakening is beyond any belief or idea.

Insight: *What led you to ordain as a monk in Thailand?*

CT: It was a minor transition. I simply swapped my wandering lifestyle with a backpack for a begging bowl and shaved head. I spent six years as a Theravada Buddhist monk, four of them in Thailand and two in India. A wonderful, wonderful experience. As a monk, whether I stayed in the vipassana monastery, in the forest or in the cell in a cave in solitude, it gave the opportunity to face not only one's existence but the truth of life itself. Ultimately, this facing shows there is nothing substantial to face. In reality, there is no problem in life. Problems belong to the tangled web of human beings, but not in the nature of things.

Insight: *Can you say anything about your experience in the traditional sangha?*

CT: In this world of relativity, it is invaluable to feel a deep connection with the Dharma that goes back generations. The Buddha himself acknowledged (and named) his link with previ-



ous Buddhas. The tradition is the expression of Dharma through the lives of generations of people of spiritual practice. As teachers in the West we have a particular responsibility since we brought the three jewels to the West. But I believe the sangha expands further than that to include all sentient life forms. Silence, solitude and meditation draws the passion out of the depths of one's being for the indefinable miracle of life. There is no greater blessing in life than to be stripped away of everything, to have no future and have no merit to one's existence.

Insight: *Why did you disrobe?*

CT: When the fruit is ripe it has to leave the tree.

Insight: *What about teaching the Dharma as a layperson?*

CT: When I ordained I wore plain robes and when I disrobed I continued to wear plain robes. I still prefer plain color clothes. I feel my life is a fusion of

home and homelessness, man and monk, contemplative and active. I live in an instantly forgettable suburban street in Totnes, England and travel from Bodh Gaya, India to Marin County (are these extremes?) and continental Europe every year. I am a small servant of the Dharma through retreats, community life and global issues. I hope that new teachers will feel a deep connection with spirituality that generates into the depths of the past as well as the present.

Insight: *Each of the Western lay Dharma teachers seem to have their own particular style or perspective on teaching the Dharma. What do you think most characterizes your own unique approach?*

CT: Thank you but I don't have a unique approach. Nobody does.

Nobody is special. Nobody is the same and nobody is different. We are all living out our life. I have an unabashed enthusiasm for the Here and Now. It is the immediate key to liberation and an enlightened life. I ask people to make the teachings, practices, sangha, meditation, service and the focus on a free and wise life as their only duty in life. Nirvana is accessible Here and Now. Place all the emphasis on the third Noble Truth [the cessation of suffering] and the fourth Noble Truth (the path of practice and spiritual discipline) will naturally fall into place.

Insight: *Do you believe in a householder's Dharma?*

CT: No. I regard monastic life and householder's life as a dualistic irrelevance. Our society has worked hard for its relative freedoms. For example, 125 people sat our last retreat in Bodh Gaya, and 80 of them were women. Dharma teachings call upon us to give up home and homelessness. The pur-

I am a teacher of the Middle Way, of inter-dependent arising of phenomena and self, the emptiness of inherent existence and the implausibility of all extremes.

Insight: *Have you used psychotherapy? Some teachers in the USA feel it is valuable.*

CT: I have relied upon the sangha, East and West. I cannot recall ever having communicated with another on my past for therapeutic purposes. Some people might say, "And, it shows, Christopher."

I have recommended many people to enter psychotherapy. I believe it primarily focuses on the relationship to oneself, or others, past or present. Attention must also be directed to a comprehensive spiritual life, including the force and influence of desire in the Here and Now, the impact of one's desires upon the social and natural environment and vice-versa.

Insight: *In what ways does psychotherapy need to expand?*

CT: Clients need a sangha. Spiritual experiences, renunciation, depths of meditation, environmental awareness, compassion, seeing the Sacred, and realization of Emptiness of consumerism are indispensable to a healthy psyche. Put those commitments to work and nothing can stop realization of Ultimate Truth.

To be fair, we must remember that Western psychotherapy is only 100 years old. Spirituality is realizing emptiness. It is the expansive miracle of life that's awakening, not my personal storyline. Emptiness makes everything possible.

Insight: *You are involved in a number of philanthropic pursuits. Can you describe some?*

CT: I looked up the meaning of the word "philanthropic." The Webster Dictionary says "love of mankind expressed as acts of charity." I prefer "love of sentient kind." I am a jack of all trades. I am a member of 16 campaigning organizations and am on several committees. I give support in whatever ways I can to the voice of protest, including to my teenage daughter! We are here not to just be mindful of this world but to see the Truth of it and change its appearance. The Buddha said we are to think of ourselves as warriors--to make war on greed, hate and confusion. I am a Dharma teacher employing insight meditation as one resource to invite people to cut through any superficial response to existence. Can you work out the two word anagram of my surname? MUST SIT! It shows my enthusiasm for meditation. Vipassana states the necessity to witness the essential truths of life moment to moment when sitting, walking, standing and reclining. It's not navel-gazing.

Insight: *You have been leading retreats at IMS for about 20 years. What changes have you noticed in your students?*

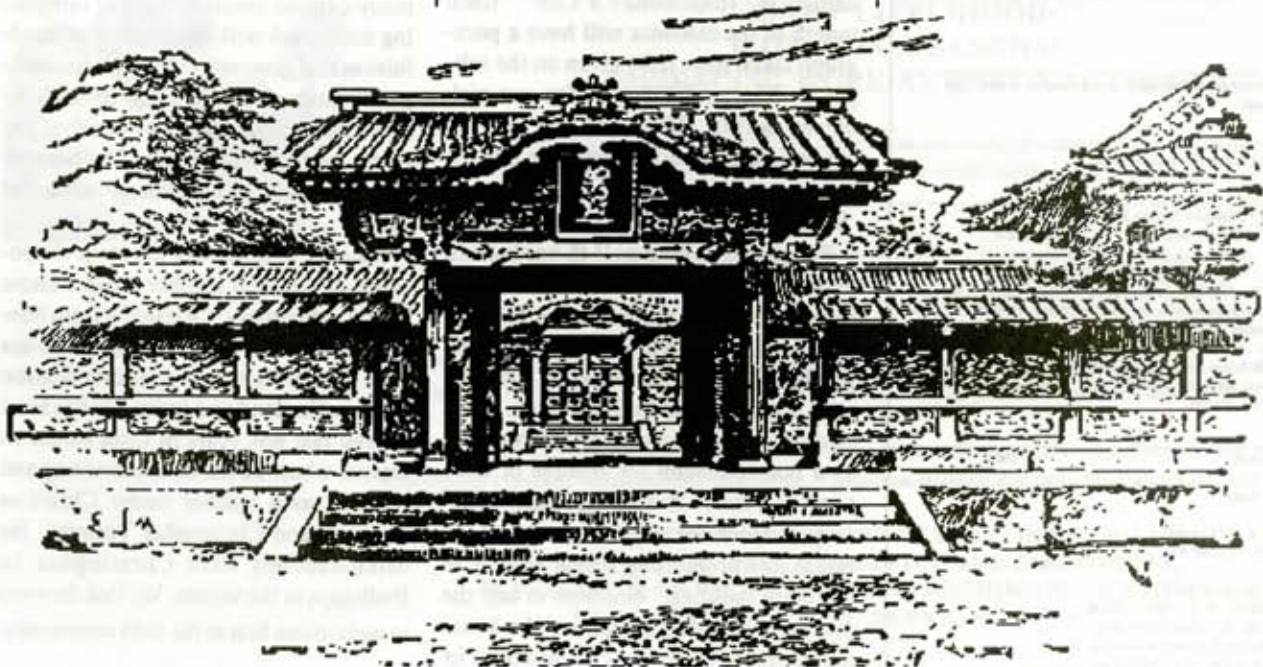
CT: Firstly, I have much love for IMS. IMS Board, staff and guiding teachers have never once interfered with my right to say whatever I wish to say in the Dharma hall. I am grateful for that. I can criticize some of the views of the Buddha, Theravada Buddhism, privileges and various other holy cows because of the spiritual tolerance and freedom that IMS offers speakers like me. What changes have I noticed about those who regularly sit retreats with me? You must ask them. All in all, I am delighted with the way the work is going, and the way that insights and realizations manifest in their lives. I am sure Sharda and Jose who co-teach with me would agree.

Insight: *Do you have any thoughts about the future of the Dharma?*

CT: The future never materializes. In a world of impermanence, obsessing over continuity is a form of human madness. I am a Here and Now teacher. Future plans and concerns are a social arrangement.

Insight: *Anything else you would like to communicate to our readers?*

CT: Awakening means dying to the socially constructed self! Thank you. And may all beings be happy, loving, unattached and free.



IMS NEWS

HELPSUPPORT THE TEACHERS

If you fill out this form and switch your long-distance carrier, the Affinity Fund will give you rates 10% less than you are paying now and will give IMS 5% of your total bill each month. This income will all be put towards the **TEACHER SUPPORT FUND** to help those dharma teachers who are primarily or solely living on dana.

AFFINITY FUND FAS-TEL Communications Corp.	
Print clearly and fill in all information	
Name (EXACTLY as it appears on current billing)	
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SERVICE INFORMATION Enter each telephone number including area code. Top number should be your billing number. List additional numbers on separate sheet, if necessary.	
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Print Name	
DRG # 311124-000 REP # 170-044781	
Mail this form to: AFFINITY FUND PROGRAM Colosky & Nakao Associates 935 South Normandie Avenue, Ste 5 Los Angeles, CA 90006-1321	

FIRST STEPS FOR THE CHEMICALLY SENSITIVE

As a result of numerous concerns raised by meditators, IMS is working to make its facility more accessible to people with multiple chemical sensitivity or environmental illness. So far two rooms have been specially prepared with this in mind, and others will follow with the new Annex renovation. We would like to hear your experiences of chemical sensitivity at IMS both to help identify problem areas at the center and to find out how common these issues are among visiting meditators. Please write to us. Meanwhile, if you have a special need for a room equipped for the chemically sensitive, please make this known when registering for a retreat.

INSIGHT CALENDAR

Each year a calendar is produced for the vipassana (insight meditation) community by Ruby Shoes Studio of Wellesley, MA. This used to be called the *Inquiring Mind* calendar, but it is now being prepared by the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and is simply called the *Insight Meditation* calendar. Always graphically elegant, the theme of 1995's edition is "Householder's Life." Each month of the calendar will have a paragraph taken from talks given on the subject by Sharon Salzberg. You can pick one up at IMS, BCBS or CIMC, or you can order from Dharma Seed Tape Library.

STAFF HOUSING A REALITY

For almost as long as IMS has been in existence (nineteen years now and counting) the need for more housing for staff outside of the main building has been urgently felt. While a completely silent retreat center is ideal for meditators, it can be difficult to live in such an environment as a non-retreatant for months or even years at a time. It is an especially unsavory situation for couples because of the house rule prohibiting sexual activity in the main building. Needless to say, the one good outside staff space—the house across the Street or HATS—has been in

high demand.

Some money was put aside for the purpose of building some staff housing units outside the main building more than ten years ago, but other conditions got in the way of the project being undertaken until now. This year, thanks mostly to a very generous donation, we have been able to build four small duplex cottages in the woods near the garden. The first grateful occupants should be moving in before the summer is over.

These new housing units, along with the new yogi rooms in the old gym completed two years ago, will allow us to accommodate that many more yogis (in space freed up in the main building) during the Annex renovation project this winter and spring.

NEW RESIDENT TEACHER

After more than three years as the resident teacher of the Insight Meditation Society, Marcia Rose has decided to move on to other adventures, and will complete her service to IMS in February 1995. The resident teacher is the member of the IMS community who guides and counsels staff members, self retreatants and long terms yogis as they navigate the significant personal transformations that are a crucial part of practicing insight meditation and living in community.

Marcia has been a true *kalyana-mitta*—a beneficial friend. She has helped so many explore creative ways of integrating daily work with the practice of mindfulness and generosity; and she has compassionately guided so many through the mysterious challenges of intensive, ongoing meditation practice. Her benevolent influence will be sorely missed at IMS.

Yannai Postelnik will take over the position of resident teacher when Marcia leaves in February. Originally from New Zealand, Yannai is new to IMS but he has been quite well known on the meditation scene in England and India. He has lived for the last few years at Gaia House in Devon, where he has been practicing and training as a teacher under Christina Feldman and Christopher Titmuss. He often teaches with Christopher in Bodhgaya in the winter. We look forward to welcoming him to the IMS community.

FIRST MEN'S RETREAT HELD

Nearly fifty men whose ages spanned a fifty year period enrolled for the first men's retreat at IMS in June. There were men new to the practice as well as old-timers. There were psychiatrists, doctors and a cardiologist, poets and writers, artists and musicians, a boiler mechanic, caretakers, business men, and several retirees. Some men worked with prison inmates while a number had served time. Though some belonged to men's groups, they seemed to be a minority. Some were gay; others are practicing celibacy at this point in their lives. Some chose this course because it was the only time they had to sit, and it was offered at the right time in their schedules. Some men voiced concern after learning there would be verbal sharing following a day and a half of silence. The teachers, Steven Smith and Steve Armstrong, also felt some trepidation, for this was the first time such a retreat was held at IMS and all involved had a tangible sense of breaking new ground.

My first clue that this course would not simply be like others, minus women, came on entering the meditation hall. Cushions were placed in concentric circles with two standing Buddhas facing each other amid a green canopy of tall plants and flowers. A long, low maroon-covered table sat in the center; on it were two more Buddha statues and candles. The teachers, sitting at one end of the circle, invited us to place on the table things of special meaning. There grew a collage of photos, bits of poetry, butterfly wings, a book, a stone, a stick of wood, a silk cloth. Some of the items would have more meaning after we heard bits of the lives of the men.

The first day and a half followed a typical schedule of sitting and walking, also some metta practice, all done in silence. In their talks the teachers shared the importance of men in their lives—as mentors, fathers, and “true-hearted” friends. We closed each evening with the metta chant.

For the remaining three and a half days a series of optional afternoon gatherings were nestled amid the periods of silence, in which each man present had a few minutes to speak to the group about his own experience as a man. The contributions were eloquent, entertaining, revealing. With great courage men bared parts of themselves covered in fear or shame. Each man's story became another strand to be woven into the larger fabric.

For me the retreat was a rite of passage that enabled me to move on to a stronger and more secure sense of my relatedness to other men. The experience added a new dimension to the practice. In acknowledging ourselves as males and as members of the sangha community, we were able to let go, embrace who we are, and enjoy a breath of fresh air. A greater sense of support led to create exposure—more caring led to greater ability to understand. By alternating the periods of silent practice and open sharing we allowed the sharing to emerge from deeper parts of ourselves, and then become reabsorbed into the silence.

I am left feeling much gratitude toward IMS, the two teachers, and all who made the course possible. I hope it will be repeated. May the beauty of the Dharma flourish in all of us.

'Buzz' Bussewitz

SERVE THE DHARMA ON STAFF AT IMS

TAKE A YEAR TO EXPLORE THE CHALLENGES OF:

- RIGHT LIVELIHOOD•
- LIVING IN A SANGHA•
- EMBRACING WORK AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE•



"If somehow we can practice the spirit of blessing in our work, the spirit of service, then we can transform a very ordinary job into something that really carries us along the great way."

--Joseph Goldstein

IMS OFFERS: An opportunity to grow in an environment which fosters mindfulness and metta, time and support for daily sitting, access to dharma teachers, annual staff retreats, room, board, health insurance, and \$125 monthly stipend.

IMS ASKS: Adherence to the five precepts, commitment to meditation practice, cultivation of a spirit of service, ability to live and work harmoniously with others, and at least a one year commitment.

POSITIONS INCLUDE: Cooks, office staff, maintenance staff, grounds keeper, housekeeper, computer coordinator, administrative assistance. Openings become available throughout the year.

**IF YOU FEEL IT MAY BE THE RIGHT TIME IN YOUR LIFE
FOR THE ADVENTURES OF SERVICE AND COMMUNITY,
PLEASE CALL OR WRITE FOR INFORMATION/APPLICATION:**

IMS, 1230 PLEASANT ST. BARRE, MA 01005

(508) 355-4378

DĀNA

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

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

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

In Asia this tradition has been kept alive by the lay community supporting the teachings through contributing to the monastic centers or giving foods to the monks and nuns as they walk from house to house on their daily practice of gathering alms. Once a year there is also a formal giving of robes to the order.

Many are trying to keep the tradition of *dana* alive in the West, even though it is not a part of Western tradition and few people understand it well. There are a number of ways that the Insight Meditation Society is trying to maintain the tradition of *dana*:

Teacher Support: Teachers do not receive any payment for leading retreats at IMS. The course fees are only to cover food, lodging and the day-to-day operating costs of the center. Teacher support is provided by voluntary donations given by students at the end of each retreat.

Staff: A few key administrative positions at IMS are salaried, but most of the staff who run the retreat center are volunteers. The center depends on dedicated volunteer staff people for its continued existence, and serving on staff for a year is a vital form of *dana*. Staff life offers a challenging opportunity to integrate mindfulness with daily activities, and for service to others. Due to regular turnover, staff positions are periodically available in the office, kitchen and maintenance department (including house-and grounds-keeping). Anyone who has sat at least one 9-day vipassana retreat is eligible to apply. If you are interested in a staff position, please contact the IMS office.

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

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

Memberships: A direct contribution to each year's operating costs, memberships help keep the daily rate as low as possible. A donation of \$35 is recommended but anything more or less than this amount is most welcome.

Scholarship Fund: This money is given out each year to people who request financial assistance to sit meditation retreats. It is a vital program of yogis helping yogis.

Sponsor-a-yogi Fund: These funds support the meditation practice of people with life-threatening illnesses who are not otherwise able to sit a retreat.

IMS Dana: A general contribution to the center, IMS *dana* is allocated each year by the Board wherever it is most needed.

Building/Annex Fund: The facilities of IMS are in continual need of major repairs and renovations. Rather than increase the retreat costs to provide for these capital improvements, we appeal to our community of supporters for donations.

You may send your donation for any of these funds to IMS at any time. Simply indicate the fund/s you wish to support. Also, please consider making a bequest to IMS as part of your estate planning. All charitable contributions are tax-deductible.

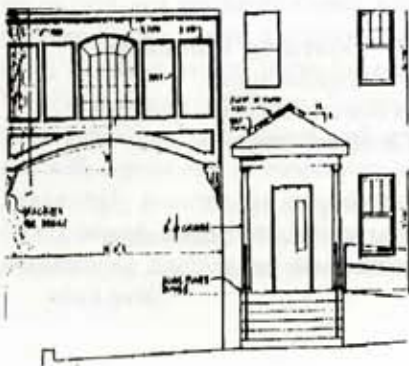
SINGLES ONLY!

You are all no doubt aware that IMS is renovating the old Annex building that has been housing meditators for almost 20 years. What you may not know is a relatively late-breaking design decision: All the rooms in the new Annex will be single rooms.

At the moment, when IMS has a full retreat of 100 meditators, 54 of them are sharing a double room while only 46 are in single rooms. But because of all the new single rooms being added by the Annex renovation project, we will be able beginning next summer to house 66 yogis in single rooms, while only 34 will share space in double rooms during a full retreat. That's an increase of 20 single rooms! IMS will be able to house 83 people in single rooms before thinking about doubling anybody up.

Some of you may be disappointed by all this—those who prefer the additional feeling of sangha that comes with rooming with another yogi, or who regard the subtle adjustments to each others' habits and behaviors as a valuable part of the retreat experience. You will always have the option of requesting a double room, however, and will in most cases be assured of this request being granted.

And for those of you who prefer a single room when practicing on retreat at IMS, it may appear that you have ascended to a slightly higher *deva* realm than on your last retreat. Every new Annex room will have a window with blinds, a sink with hot and cold running water, individual heating control, a closet or wardrobe, a high ceiling and plenty of extra sound-proofing so you will not hear your fellow-practitioners snoring next door. Many of the rooms will be long enough to allow for walking meditation.



Insight

WHAT TO EXPECT

The Annex renovation project will begin January 6, 1995 and will be completed by July 1, 1995. Until the project is finished, everyone will be called upon to make some adjustments. The teachers, staff and board of directors of IMS have all agreed that it is better to have smaller, more crowded and less silent retreats for six months of Annex construction than to close down and have no retreats at all. Anybody coming on retreat at IMS during the first six month of 1995 will have to be aware of the following:

* The center will not be entirely silent. Most of the work on the Annex will be interior work, and will occur during a season when the windows will naturally be closed; but there will still be some background noise going on during working hours on weekdays.

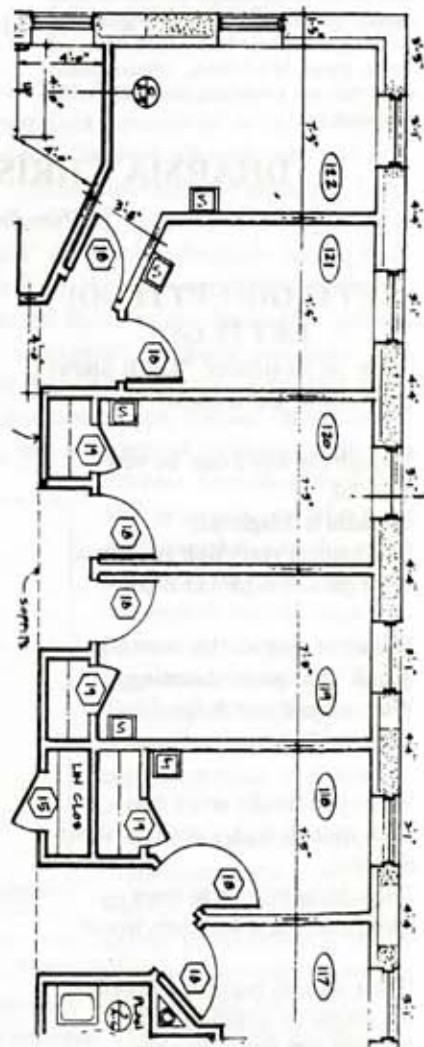
* Almost all yogis will be in double rooms. With the Annex out of commission, IMS has only about 10 single rooms and 25 double rooms. Singles will only be given out to those with compelling need and most others will be in double rooms.

* Some dormitory-style housing will be available. There will be some beds set up in the lower walking room in order to give as many people as possible a chance to practice. These spaces will be comfortable, but will not have as much privacy as a room. The single rooms will be given out first, and then dormitory housing will be offered as an option.

* Courses will be smaller. Even with the dormitory space, we will not be able to accommodate a full 100 yogis. Please register early (but after December 1, 1994) if you want to get into a retreat, and please be understanding if it is full.

* Walking space will be tighter. With dorms set up in the lower walking room and the Annex walking room out of service, indoor walking space will be tighter than usual.

Annex Update



FUNDING THE PROJECT

Thank you all for your exceptional generosity in helping to fund this project! With your help, we were able to meet the large matching challenge grant offered by an anonymous foundation.

WE STILL HAVE RAISED ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THE MONEY NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT.

We are proceeding with construction anyway, with faith that the many supporters of IMS will continue to donate generously to the Building Fund. Please send in whatever you can to help out with the Annex renovation project.

The space on these pages is reserved for the dharma-related writings, poems, sketches or photographs of our readers. If you would like to share your creativity with others in the insight meditation community, please feel free to send your work to: Insight Editor, IMS, 1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005. (Please understand that not everything received can be published.)

sangha page

DHARMA CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Tom Pedulla

LET IT GO! LET IT GO! LET IT GO!

(sung to the tune of "Let It Snow!
Let It Snow! Let It Snow!")

Though the mind can be very
frightful,
Samadhi is delightful,
So whatever you think you know,
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!

You try to stop all that wanting,
A task that can be daunting;
Why not just watch the flow?
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!

When you finally settle down,
And your thoughts start to slowly
disperse,
The kilesas may go to town —
Cling and you'll feel even worse!

If you want to become a Buddha
It's simple as zippity-do-da:
Sit back and enjoy the show!
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!

SHAKYAMUNI

(sung to the tune of "Frosty the
Snowman")

Shakyamuni
Was a very wise old soul
With a shiny head
And a simple robe
And a little begging bowl.

Shakyamuni
Was a seeker and a sage,
And he started something
So long ago
That today's still quite the rage.

There must have been some magic in
That big ol' bodhi tree,
For when he sat down next to it,
In an instant he was free.

Shakyamuni
Showed us all what we should do,
So on this fine day,
We've just got to say,
Shaky-Buddha, we love you.

HAIKU

*Walking down to the baths at the Esalen
Institute one morning I saw the mist on
the rockface of the cliffs. My brain leaped
to compare their fragile short-lived
beauty with the seeming solidity and
timelessness of the rock out of which they
grew. In the next instant light filled my
consciousness and I saw poppies, cliff
and self as being made of the same stuff.
It was one of those great moments. This
poem wrote itself on my mind:*

White tissue poppies against granite
cliffs evoke automatic dualities.
Too easy to think: ephemeral vs. timeless,
instead of dancing quantum particles.

Claudette Aras

The Treasure

You hold the keys,
the lantern;
Don't be timid.
Follow your breath....

You will become tourmaline,
Your heart fire opal
Your fingers amethyst
Your mind crystal
The universe,
One bright pearl.

Carol Sherman

Morning Rumbings

Pre-breakfast sitting
Is that the roof creaking or
Group borborygmus?

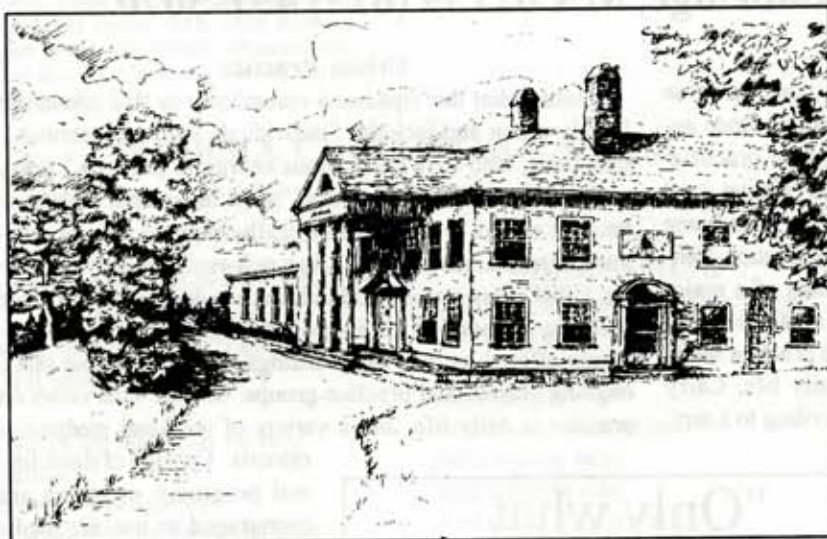
Like frogs in a pond
Empty stomachs croak hunger
In the empty hall.

Steve Kohn

The MisAdventures OF the Felonious Monk
by: Ven Man Shing



INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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

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

Vipassana Retreats are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. Daily instruction in meditation and nightly dharma talks are given, and individual or group interviews are arranged with the teachers at regular intervals. A typical daily schedule starts at 5am and ends at 10pm. The entire day is spent in silent meditation practice with alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation. The combination of this regular schedule, the silence, group support, and daily instruction combine to provide a beneficial environment for developing and deepening meditation practice. Meals are vegetarian, and accommodations are austere, mostly double rooms. Men and women do not share rooms. Camping is not available. Retreats offered in 1995 are listed on the following pages.

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

Individual Retreats: In addition to teacher-led retreats, the center is open to experienced meditators (except the month of January) for individual retreats. IMS and its teachers encourage experi-

enced students—anyone who has practiced in a teacher-led retreat in the style of vipassana offered at IMS—to use the center for individual meditation as a way of strengthening self-reliance and increasing the value of meditation in one's life. **Individual retreats require the prior approval of a teacher.** IMS offers several forms for individual retreats:

•**Self-Retreat:** A self-retreat may consist of any number of days not to exceed the longest period of teacher-led retreat sat by the student. During this time, meditators are expected to practice in silence, observe the five precepts and maintain a continuity of practice throughout the day. There are at least four group sittings daily. Students schedule their practice individually during the remaining hours of the day. Self-retreats require the prior consent of a teacher and can be arranged by contacting the IMS office.

•**Work Retreats:** Work retreats offer an opportunity to integrate five hours of work each day into the normal silent meditation schedule at the center. The center occupies a large complex of buildings which require extensive maintenance and care. We invite skilled, semi-skilled, and enthusiastic old students to offer their energy to the center for cleaning, painting and remodeling; landscaping, gardening and grounds work, and assisting the cooks or administrative staff. All work retreats are free. Work retreats are for experienced students only. Contact the office for an application form.

•**Long-Term Practice:** For those wishing to do long-term meditation practice of 118 days or more, IMS has available a limited number of scholarships in the form of reduced daily rate after the 88th day. Practice guidelines are similar to those for shorter individual retreats with an additional emphasis on self-reliance. Long-term practice requires the prior consent of two teachers. Those interested should contact the office for application form and limited available dates.

REGISTERING FOR A RETREAT AT I.M.S.

Registrations:

- Are accepted only by mail or in person; not by phone or fax.
- Are accepted only after December 1, 1994; anything received earlier will be returned.
- Are processed on a "first received--first processed" basis. Processing order is unaffected by scholarships.
- A confirmation letter will be sent out as soon as your registration is processed.
 - If the course has openings you will be confirmed.
 - If the course is full you will be placed on a waiting list.
- If waitlisted, you will be contacted when an opening becomes available.
- All transfers are placed at the end of the waiting list for the new retreat.
- Incomplete registrations will be placed on hold until completed.

Payment:

- The cost of each retreat is listed in the course schedule.
- Please pay by check or money order in U.S. funds only; we cannot accept credit cards or foreign drafts.
- A minimum deposit is required to confirm a registration--see table for minimum deposits.
- Please pre-pay the entire retreat cost if possible--this greatly reduces processing time.
- Checks are cashed only when the registration is confirmed; if you are put on the waiting list, your check will not be cashed until there is an opening.
- If you have difficulty attending an IMS retreat for financial reasons, please request a scholarship application form.

Changes and Cancellations:

- Transfers from one retreat to another before the first deadline incur no fees.
- Later changes--and all cancellations--incur a processing fee.
- Please cancel early--there are often yogis waiting to get in.
- After opening day there are no refunds except for emergencies.

Deadlines:

- The first deadline for most retreats is two weeks before opening day.
- The final deadline for most retreats is one week before opening day.
- Please note the special deadlines for the 3-month and New Year retreats.

Participation in Retreats:

- All participants are expected to arrive on time on opening day and to stay for the entire duration of the course.
- Any exceptions to this policy for emergency or medical reasons must be approved by the office staff.
- Most retreats involve a one hour work period each morning.
- Participation in retreats is always at the discretion of IMS--participation can be cancelled for individuals in some cases.

ALL CANCELLATION AND PROCESSING FEES ARE DONATED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND!

Course Type	Min Deposit	Cancellation or Change Processing Fees		
		Before 1st deadline	On or after 1st deadline	On or after final deadline
2 & 3 day retreats	Full cost	\$25	\$50 / 2 wks. before	Full deposit/ 1 week before
5-26 days retreats	\$100	\$25	\$50 / 2 wks. before	\$100 / 1 week before
3-month retreat	\$500	\$50	\$100 / June 1	\$500 / August 1
New Year's	\$100	\$25	\$100 / December 1	\$100 / December 14

I.M.S.

Registration Form

If you are taking an IMS course, please fill out this form. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. Please photocopy this form if you will be registering for more than one course

Name _____

Day Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Country _____ Zip _____

Check here _____ if new address. Old address _____

_____ I have been to IMS before

_____ I have not been to IMS before
Retreat Experience _____

Year of birth _____ Male/Female _____

Do you snore? _____ Physical disabilities or special housing needs _____

Can you offer a ride to others in your area coming to this retreat: Yes / No

Course Code _____

Course Cost _____

Deposit Enclosed _____

(See table for cancellation dates.)

Dates you will be here:

From _____ To _____

I have added _____ to the deposit as my contribution to the scholarship fund.

Days spent at IMS outside of formal retreat dates are charged at \$30 per day.

For many years now our retreats have filled and have had waiting lists of those unable to get in. We have adopted these policies to be as fair as possible to all applicants, and to allow the greatest number of people to have the opportunity to participate in retreats. We appreciate your understanding.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY 1995 RETREAT SCHEDULE

IMS, 1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA 01005 Tel: (508) 355-4378

Telephone Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10am - 12noon; 3pm - 5:00pm



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Jan 30-Feb 5 | METTA RETREAT (6 days) | JS1 | \$190 |
| | Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, and Sylvia Boorstein | | |
| | Metta is the Pali word for friendship or loving kindness. Classically it is taught as a practice along with meditations cultivating compassion, rejoicing in the happiness of others (sympathetic joy), and equanimity. They are practiced to develop concentration, fearlessness, happiness, and a loving heart. This course is devoted to cultivating these qualities. | | |
| Feb 5-15 | VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days) | JS2 | \$290 |
| | Joseph Goldstein and Sharon Salzberg. | | |
| | This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (loving kindness) meditation. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the quality of precise open awareness as a way of deepening the wisdom and compassion within us. | | |
| Jan 30-Feb15 | METTA & VIPASSANA RETREATS (16 days) | JS3 | \$440 |
| Feb 24-26 | DANA WEEKEND (2 days) | DANA | Donation |
| | Bhante Gunaratana | | |
| | This retreat is offered on the part of IMS to affirm the spirit of giving. There is no fixed course fee; participants are encouraged to offer whatever contribution fits their means. Priority will be given to those who, for financial reasons, are unable to attend courses with fixed course rates. | | |

- March 3-12 VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) LR1 \$265**
Larry Rosenberg and Narayan Liebenson Grady
 Anapana-sati, Buddha's teaching on the full awareness of breathing, will be the frame of reference for this retreat. Conscious breathing will be practiced to help develop and nourish both serenity (samatha) and liberating insight (vipassana). In addition to formal sitting and walking meditation we will learn to keep the breath in mind throughout the day, enabling us to stay awake in the midst of all ordinary activities.
- March 17-19 WEEKEND (2 days) AV1 \$95**
- March 17-26 CULTIVATING THE REFUGES (9 days) AV2 \$265**
Ajahn Sucitto -- Amaravati Sangha
 This retreat will focus on how cultivating the refuges can create a place of trust, a place of belonging in our hearts. This cultivation can be a gateway to deeper understanding of the Buddhadharma and freedom. Through daily chanting (morning and evening pujas), cultivation of mindfulness, kindness and forgiveness of ourselves and others, one experiences a lightening of our lives, so that each moment is experienced as a fresh, new beginning. Refuges are a place where this new beginning can be experienced. *Note: Retreat participants are expected to keep the 8 monastic precepts (including not eating after noon).*
- April 1-8 WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) WOM \$215**
Christina Feldman and Narayan Liebenson Grady
 In this annual gathering of women at IMS, insight meditation is the vehicle used to develop calmness and clarity, wisdom and compassion, openness and vision. This retreat is an opportunity for women to focus on a spiritual path free of dichotomies as well as spiritual, social and psychological conditioning. There is a full daily schedule of meditation and silence, as well as small group meetings.
- April 14-17 WEEKEND RETREAT--For Experienced Students(3 days) LR2 \$125**
Larry Rosenberg and Michael Liebenson Grady
 Anapana-sati, Buddha's teaching on the full awareness of breathing, will be the frame of reference for this retreat. Conscious breathing will be practiced to develop and nourish both serenity (samatha) and liberating insight (vipassana). In addition to formal sitting and walking meditation we will learn to keep the breath in mind throughout the day, enabling us to stay awake in the midst of all ordinary activities. *Note: Retreatants are required to have sat at least one 9-day retreat at IMS, or a comparable vipassana retreat situation elsewhere.* Micheal Liebenson Grady has practiced vipassana since 1973. He lives in Cambridge, MA and teaches at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.
- April 21-28 THE GREEN BUDDHA (7 days) CT1 \$215**
Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell and Jose Reissig
 This retreat consists of sustained silent meditation, deep inquiry into our life experiences, and realization into the nature of things. It provides the opportunity to free the mind from the influence of tensions and negative patterns, and for the heart's awakening to immensity.
- May 9-14 MEN'S RETREAT (5 days) MEN \$165**
Steven Smith and Steve Armstrong
 This traditional vipassana retreat will combine silent sitting with careful examination and thoughtful dialogue of significant issues in men's lives. Suitable for new and experienced students.

- August 3 - 8 FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)** FAM Adult \$165
 Christina Feldman, Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig Child \$50
 This course explores integrating meditation and family life. In a less formal atmosphere, a full program of sittings, discussions, family meditations, and talks is offered. Child care is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers. *Each family unit pays an additional \$25 for professional child care coordination.* Please specify names, year of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.
- Aug 12 - 20 INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)** CT2 \$240
 Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell and Jose Reissig
 This retreat consists of sustained silent meditation, deep inquiry into our life experiences, and realization into the nature of things. It provides the opportunity to free the mind from the influence of tensions and negative patterns, and for the heart's awakening to immensity.
- Aug. 25-27 VIPASSANA WEEKEND (2 days)** LR4 \$95
 Larry Rosenberg and Narayan Liebenson Grady
 Anapana-sati, Buddha's teaching on the full awareness of breathing, will be the frame of reference for this retreat. Conscious breathing will be practiced to help develop and nourish both serenity (samatha) and liberating insight (vipassana). In addition to formal sitting and walking meditation we will learn to keep the breath in mind throughout the day, enabling us to stay awake in the midst of all ordinary activities.
- Sept 1 - 4 LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days)** RD1 \$125
Sept 1 - 10 VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) RD2 \$265
 Ruth Denison
 This retreat fosters awareness and correct understanding of life's process in ourselves and others. The focus of the practice is on opening the heart, discovering oneself, and developing insight into the reality of the mind and body. Retreat activities include sound and body movement meditations, and the development of mindfulness in the day-to-day activities of our lives. This retreat is somewhat different from other IMS retreats, and includes sustained and on-going verbal teacher instruction throughout the day.
- Sep22-Dec17 THREE MONTH RETREAT (86 days)** 3MO \$2,250
Sep22-Nov 4 PARTIAL #1 (6 Weeks) PART1 \$1,150
Nov 4-Dec17 PARTIAL #2 (6 Weeks) PART2 \$1,150
 Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Michele McDonald-Smith,
 Carol Wilson and Steve Armstrong
 The three month course is a special time for practice. Because of its extended length and the continuity of guidance, it is a rare opportunity to deepen the powers of concentration, wisdom and compassion. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the skillful means of mental noting, slow movement and precise, open awareness. *Prerequisite is one 9-day retreat with an IMS teacher or special permission.*
- Dec 28-Jan5 NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (8 days)** NY \$240
 Jack Kornfield, Rodney Smith and others
 The New Year is traditionally a time for listening to the heart and taking stock of our lives from the deepest wisdom within. This retreat offers a systematic training in mindfulness of breath, body, feelings, and mind. Emphasis is placed on incorporating a spirit and training of loving kindness into all aspects of the practice, developing our capacity for clarity and compassion in each moment. *Please note the special cancellation deadline for this retreat.*

SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

Sylvia Boorstein has been teaching vipassana since 1985 and is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center. She is also a psychotherapist, wife, mother, and grandmother and is particularly interested in seeing daily life as practice.

Ruth Denison studied in Burma in the early 1960s with the meditation master Sayagi U Ba Khin. She has been teaching since 1973 and is founder of Dhamma Dena, a desert retreat center in Joshua Tree, California, and The Center for Buddhism in the West in Germany.

Christina Feldman has been studying and training in the Tibetan, Mahayana and Theravada traditions since 1970, and teaching meditation worldwide since 1974. She is co-founder and a guiding teacher of Gaia House in England, and is a guiding teacher at IMS. She is the author of *Woman Awake!* and co-editor of *Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart*.

Joseph Goldstein is a co-founder and guiding teacher of IMS. He has been teaching vipassana and metta retreats worldwide since 1974, and in 1989 helped establish the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He is the author of *The Experience of Insight*, and *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*, and co-author of *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*.

Narayan Liebenson Grady has taught vipassana at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center since its inception in 1985.

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

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

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

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

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

Sharon Salzberg is a co-founder of IMS and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. She has studied and practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970, and has been teaching worldwide since 1974.

Steven Smith is a co-founder of Vipassana Hawaii, and is a guiding teacher of IMS. He teaches vipassana and metta retreats worldwide.

Ajahn Sucitto has been a monk for 19 years and is a senior disciple of Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. He is currently the abbot of Cittaviveka Chithurst Buddhist Monastery in England.

Christopher Titmuss gives teachings worldwide concerned with spiritual realization and insight meditation. He is the author of *Spirit of Change, The Profound and the Profane*, and *Fire Dance and Other Poems*. He is a co-founder of Gaia House and lives in Totnes, England.

Carol Wilson has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1971, most recently with Sayadaw U Pandita. She has been teaching since 1986 in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

ASSOCIATE DHARMA TEACHERS

Steve Armstrong has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975, both as a layman and as a monk, and leads retreats in the U.S. and Australia. His primary focus is Buddhist psychology. He was on the staff and board of directors at IMS for several years.

Anna Douglas, in addition to vipassana, has a background in Zen, psychology and the arts. She lives in the Bay Area.

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

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

Sharda Rogell has been involved with meditation and healing since 1975 and currently teaches retreats in Europe, India and the U.S.

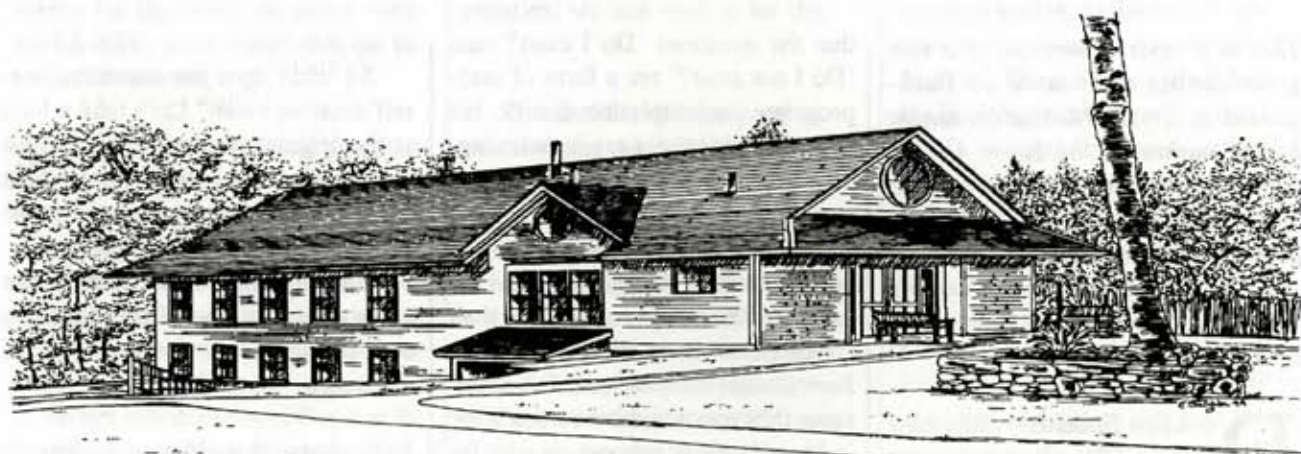
Rodney Smith has been practicing vipassana since 1975 both as a layman in the West and as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been working full time in hospice work since 1984 and is presently the director of the *Hospice of Seattle*.

IMS RESIDENT TEACHER

Marcia Rose has been studying and practicing Buddhist meditation and related disciplines for many years, and has been resident teacher at IMS since 1991.

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

149 Lockwood Road, Barre, MA 01005 (508) 355-2347



The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies is 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 each new time and place. The Center's purpose is to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight; it encourages active engagement with the tradition in a spirit of genuine inquiry and investigation.

The Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, or more informally, the Study Center, offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats, independent study, and, in the future, a scholars-in-residence program. The Study Center plans to offer research and publication facilities for Buddhist scholarship and translation. Its vision calls for dialogue between different schools of Buddhism, and discussions with other religious and scientific traditions. The emphasis is always on the interrelationship between study and practice, and on exploring the relevance of classical teachings to contemporary life.

Location: The Study Center is located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, one-half mile from Insight Meditation Society. Founded in

1989, the Study Center provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teaching. For many years, it had been a dream of teachers at Insight Meditation Society to complement the silent meditation retreats at IMS with study programs. This vision became a reality with donations enabling the purchase of a 200-year old farmhouse and surrounding forest property. After extensive renovations, there are now residential facilities, a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A newly completed dormitory and conference/meditation hall provides space for larger workshops and more course participants.

The Library at the Study Center is a major resource to be used by both students and visitors. Our collection consists of the complete Pali Canon in both English and Pali, several hundred volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism and a variety of journals and newsletters. As part of our vision, we plan to expand our current collection into a respectable research library.

Courses and Registration: The Study Center courses offer learning to students with a wide range of exposure to the material taught. If you have questions about a course, please call.

Registrations are accepted only by mail or in person. We cannot accept registrations by phone or fax. Early registration is advised since our capacity is limited. Please send the entire course cost as deposit. Upon receipt of your deposit, a confirmation will be mailed to you with information on travel details and what you need to bring. Deposits are fully refundable until 10 days before the start of the course. After that a small processing fee will be charged. If you need to cancel, please do so before the day of the course, otherwise there will be an additional cancellation fee.

DANA (generosity) is intrinsic to the 2,500 year old tradition of Buddha Dharma. Going back to the days of the Buddha, the teachings were considered priceless and thus offered freely. Teacher support comes primarily from the voluntary contributions of students. The registration fee covers the center's cost of housing the retreat, and a small part of our ongoing expenses.

As another expression of dana, the Study Center makes scholarships available to those who might not be able to attend a course due to financial need. Please contact us if you need financial assistance.



THE NOT-SELF STRATEGY

by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

This is a revised version of a talk given during the course on Background to Breath Meditation taught by the author at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies in February, 1993. The original, which deals in detail with a number of points only touched on here, is now available on Access to Insight and DharmaNet computer bulletin boards.

Books on Buddhism often state that one of the Buddha's most basic tenets is that there is no soul or self. Of course, different books qualify this tenet in different ways. Some say that, no, there is no self, but yes there is the moral principle of karma operating beyond death; others say, no, there is no separate self, but yes there is an underlying oneness or identity with the interdependent dance of all things. Whatever the qualifications, though, anyone who reads these books has to assume that somewhere or other, the Buddha must have said that there is no self.

But if you search the discourses in the Pali Canon--the earliest extant record of the Buddha's teachings--you won't find a single passage where the Buddha or any of his disciples make such a statement. In fact, in the one passage (S XLIV 10) where the Buddha is asked point-blank whether or not there is a self, he refuses to answer. In another passage (M 2), he lists the view 'I have no self' together with the view 'I have a self' as a 'fetter of views' that a person aiming at release from suffering would do well to avoid. In addition, he states

that the questions 'Do I exist?' and 'Do I not exist?' are a form of inappropriate contemplation that do not even occur to a person who approaches experience in the proper way.

If you look at the early Jain sutras--our best source for learning how the early Buddhists were viewed by their contemporaries--we find that when the Jains discuss the doctrines of rival systems, they mention the view that there is no self only in connection with the *Lokayata*, or Hedonist school of

or not it exists. (SK I.1.1)

So what does the *anatta* or not-self doctrine mean? Let's take a look at the original sources, for only then can we find what place the Buddha meant for the doctrine to have in the general scheme of his teachings.

The first step in doing this is to make note of a few of the Buddha's own comments on the nature of his teachings.

1. He stated that although he learned many, many things in the course of his Awakening, he taught only what would be useful in helping his listeners attain total freedom from suffering and stress (S LVI 31). Thus we must view all of his teachings--the not-self doctrine included--primarily in light of how they function in liberating the mind, and not just as simple descriptions of reality.

2. The Buddha said further that he always spoke the truth. The idea that a statement could be false and yet conducive to attaining the goal did not even occur to him (M 58). Thus the not-self doctrine cannot rank as a 'convenient fiction,' as some people would have us believe.

3. The Buddha also said that two types of people misrepresent him: (a) those who do not draw inferences from teachings that should have inferences drawn from them; and (b) those who do draw inferences from teachings that shouldn't (A II 25). Since the Buddha himself never drew the implication that 'there is no self' from the not-self doctrine, any-



thought. The Hedonists advanced the view of there being no self as part of their justification for making sensual pleasure the highest aim in life. As for the Buddhists, the Jains complain that it is impossible to get a straight answer from 'these fools' on the question of what the self is and whether

one who does infer such a view is misrepresenting him. This means we have to look at the not-self doctrine as it is stated and in its context--as a means for liberating the mind--without trying to infer things that go beyond that context.

4. Finally, the Buddha said that there are four types of questions: those that deserve a categorical (yes or no) answer, those that deserve a counter question, those that deserve to be put aside and not answered, and those that deserve an analytical or qualified answer (A IV 43). Typical explanations of the not-self doctrine tell us that the Buddha would have given the question, 'Is there a self?' a qualified answer--'No, but...'--yet, as mentioned above, the one time he was asked the question, he remained silent. This shows that the question deserves to be put aside. When Ananda, his attendant, asked him why, the Buddha gave four reasons for his silence:

'Ananda, if I were to answer that there is a self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of eternalism [i.e., the view that there is an eternal soul]. And if I were to answer that there is no self, that would be conforming with those priests and contemplatives who are exponents of annihilationism [i.e., that death is the annihilation of experience]. If I were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of the knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?

'No, Lord.'

'And if I... were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered Vacchagotta (the person who asked the question) would become even more bewildered: "Does the self that I used to have now not exist?"

(S XLIV 10)

Let's take the Buddha's four reasons for not answering the question one by one, although since the third reason is the most complex, we can save it for the last.

1. The Buddha did not want to side with the eternalists because, as he says at many other points in the Canon, belief in a permanent self leads to a sense of attachment that makes it impossible to gain liberation from suffering. Some people have advanced the idea that the Buddha's rejection of the view 'there is a self' applies only to the sense of self separate from the rest of the cosmos, and not to views that identify the self with the changing cosmos as a whole. However, in one passage (D 15) the Buddha discusses four types of self view, only to reject all four: views that the self is (a) finite and possessed of form; (b) finite and formless; (c) infinite and possessed of form; and (d) infinite and formless. Since views that identify the self with an animating force suffusing the cosmos would come under (d), and views that recommend identifying with the cosmos as a whole would come under (c), the Buddha would reject them as well. In another passage (S XXXV 90), he says that the act of identifying with the All is a conceit that would not even occur to an Awakened person. Thus the term 'self' here would cover any sense of identifying or finding oneness with anything at all, because the act of identifying is a form of clinging, and thus a cause of suffering.

2. The Buddha did not want to side with the annihilationists (those who believed that death is

the annihilation of everything except the physical elements) because such a view makes it impossible to devote oneself to the practice leading to the mind's liberation, for it leaves no incentive to do so. Those who maintain that the Buddha taught there is no self try to temper the view--either through elaborate metaphysics or through paradox--in such a way that it would allow one to take up the practice, but we should note here that the Buddha himself is saying that such a thing is impossible: to say that there is no self is, in and of itself, to side with the annihilationists, and that closes off the path.

4. As for the Buddha's fourth reason: those who argue that he took a position one way or another on the question of whether or not there is a self tend to focus on this reason for his silence here, saying that if someone more spiritually advanced than Vacchagotta had asked the question, the Buddha would have revealed his true position. This argument, though, ignores the Buddha's first two reasons for remaining silent, which would hold true no matter who asked the question. We may also note, though, that the Buddha elsewhere (S XII 21) states that the question wouldn't even occur to anyone well-advanced on the path, for such a person would be more involved in observing phenomena as they occur than in engaging in such speculations. So what the Buddha is saying here is that to draw a metaphysical conclusion from the not-self doctrine would simply further confuse people who are still so confused as to view the world in terms of metaphysical questions in the first place.

3. As for the Buddha's third reason: notice carefully how he words it. He says that to say there is a self would not be in keeping *with the arising of the knowledge* that all phenomena are not-self. He is not saying simply that it would contradict the tenet that all phenomena are not-self. The difference, though subtle, is strategically important. He states elsewhere that the arising of this knowledge can have a liberating effect on the mind. He doesn't say, though, that it should be held on to as the final outcome of practice.

This is not to say that the Buddha does not ascribe truth status to this knowledge. In fact, it is a truth innate to the nature of phenomena.

Whether or not there is the arising of Tathagatas (Buddhas), this property stands, this steadfastness of phenomena, this regularity of phenomena: 'All phenomena are not-self.' (A III 134)

However, in the Buddha's teachings, the knowledge of this truth functions as part of the path--as a means for loosening attachments--rather than the goal at the end.

All phenomena are not-self' when one sees with discernment and grows disenchanted with stress, this is the path to purity. (Dh 279)

Once one has reached the end of the path, one must let go even of the truths that have served one well along the path if one is to gain liberation.

This the Tathagata discerns. And he discerns that these standpoints, thus seized, thus held to, lead to such and such a destination, to such and such a state in the world beyond. And he discerns what surpasses this. And yet he does not hold to that act of discerning. And as he is not holding to it, Unbinding is experienced right within...(and) through

lack of clinging--he is released. (D1)

In letting go in this way, one abandons all phenomena and any possible statement that could be made about them. Once the meditator has done this, no words--not even the perceptions of being, not being, self or not-self--can apply.

Upasiva: "One who has reached the end: does he not exist, or is he for eternity free from affliction? Please, sage, declare this to me as this phenomenon has been known by you."

The Buddha: "One who has reached the end has no criterion by which anyone would say that--it does not exist for. When all phenomena are put aside all means of speaking are put aside as well."(SN V 6)

What all this points to, therefore, is that the not-self doctrine is essentially not a metaphysical position but a strategy--a way of looking at an aspect of phenomena as they actually occur--so that one can abandon any sense of identification or attachment to them. Once one goes fully beyond attachment, beyond all phenomena, one goes beyond the realm of what can be described. And as the Buddha says (see A IV 173 & S XXXV 117), it is precisely the realm beyond description that is truly worth knowing.

The Buddha's teachings take as their departure not a philosophical standpoint, but an experience: the Buddha's own realization of liberation and how it comes about. From this point of view, the question of whether or not there is a self is irrelevant. The important question is how we can go about attaining that same liberation. The Buddha says that if you develop discernment through virtue and concentration and then focus it on the 'not-selfness' of things as they occur, you will get this result: unconditioned happiness. Once you attain that happiness, it doesn't matter what you call it. This is not an abstract theory; it's a challenge.

Can you prove him wrong?



References are to the discourses in the Pali Canon:

D=Digha Nikaya, the Long Collection; M=Majjhima Nikaya, the Middle Collection; S=Samyutta Nikaya, the Grouped Collection;

A=Anguttara Nikaya, the Numerical Collection;

Dhp=Dhammapada; SN=Sutta Nipata; SK=Suta Kritanga

SHINING THE LIGHT OF DEATH ON LIFE: MARANASATI MEDITATION (PART II)

by Larry Rosenberg

The first part of this article which appeared in the Spring, 1994 issue of *Insight* ended with this quote from the great Tibetan yogi Milarepa:

"In brief, without being mindful of death, whatever Dharma practices you take up will be merely superficial."

What was Milarepa suggesting? When we forget about our own death, we may also be more likely to forget the dharma? If we don't recall death we will also lose the wish to train our minds in dharma? In forgetting about death do we become thoroughly lost in the busy concerns of life? Will dharma instructions lose their meaning and their value? Even if we don't forget the dharma, we may be more inclined to just think about practice, to put it off. In that mind space, "I won't die today" seems to always ring true. Does it lead to complacency?

The truth is that we are all singing and dancing on the *Titanic* but we behave as if it's a cruise to Bermuda. Perhaps we don't set our well-intentioned yearnings to practice in motion—and another day goes by. This is of course where the nine-part death awareness meditations we are about to embark upon come in handy. Remaining mindful of our own death can leave a deep impression upon the mind, enabling us to engage in dharma practice with greater energy and sincerity.

Put positively, remembering death can have beneficial effects. It can give us a strong and clear sense of purpose, a frame of reference so that we don't waste time, instead using our energy to extract the essence from this precious human life. In my own practice, when sleepiness visits me, I switch from vipassana to death awareness which usually generates some fresh energy. We vipassana practitioners hear so much about "letting go" but none



the less we are overwhelmed by cravings for the perishable things of this world e.g. the powerful influence of the "eight worldly concerns": being happy if we receive gifts, and unhappy if we don't; happy if comfortable, and unhappy if we aren't; happy if famous, unhappy if not; happy if praised, unhappy if criticized. So much of our time and energy is used to construct a sense of "me" and "mine" out of these materials.

See what happens when all of this is seen in the light of death! Our priorities become clearer, attachments seemingly fashioned out of steel soften and sometimes even fall away. You may find yourself naturally become more generous with your wealth and possessions. If you have been meditating for awhile, you have certainly been encouraged to "be in the present moment" often enough. Has the profound simplicity and intelligence of this phrase as a guide for living really gotten through to you? If not, please allow death meditation to work on you and see what happens. Maranasati can be important at the beginning—for some it is an important factor in embarking upon the path of dharma. It can be important in the middle—acting as a condition to

stimulate years of sincere devotion to meditation; it is important at the end—allowing us to be able to die happily, gracefully, with no regrets and the confidence that quite naturally develops from a lifetime of whole-hearted practice, influencing our last moments.

*I fled to the mountains
because I feared death;
I have realized emptiness,
the mind's primordial
mode of existence.*

*Even if I were to die now,
It would be with contentment.*

—Milarepa

Note: The meditations to follow have a precise and specific purpose. They are especially geared for vipassana yogis—people already motivated to walk this path—who are being urged to wake up to the urgency of dharma practice. If you are new to vipassana meditation, such a sense of priority and commitment may be lacking. The exhortations may seem narrow, severe, and inappropriate. If you are in a state of great nervous tension, you may wish to relax and contemplate more pleasant aspects of the dharma instead. Please use your own good sense in deciding whether or not to take up death awareness practice right now.

The Nine-part Meditation Practice on Death

This meditation has been adapted from the teachings of Atisha (980-1055), the great Indian Buddhist sage, and the personal instructions of Tara Tulku Rinpoche and Ajahn Suwat; it has three roots:

- 1) thinking of the inevitability of death;
- 2) thinking about the uncertainty of when you will die;
- 3) thinking about how nothing can help

you die, except the practice of dharma.

Three lines of reasoning are given for each root: there are nine contemplations in all. Let me suggest one way of practicing which I have found to be useful.

Take up the first line of reasoning, "everyone has to die," then briefly move through the remaining eight. In nine sessions (i.e. one each day) you will have had the opportunity to go into each one of them in some depth. If you wish, you may of course begin again.

Begin each session with *samatha* (calm), allowing the mind to come to rest in the breathing. If you are already established in calm (e.g. access concentration or first *jhana*) you may omit this step. Then take the notion e.g. "everyone must die" or an image which evokes this for you, and "turn it over" within a serene and concentrated mind. If the mind is still afflicted by the hindrances, the contemplation is likely to be vague, easily disturbed.

When our capacity to pay attention is limited, the significance of a given contemplation does not sink deeply into the heart. There is no substantial change in the way we relate to life and death. In a serene mind thinking can be quite sharp and pliable. We can direct our attention with precision and focus. Our reflection can be uninterrupted. It has the powerful support of *samatha*, which enables us to remain emotionally engaged, keenly interested.

Our mind in this state is very receptive; it is not necessary to do lots of active thinking about the subject. Richness of meaning reveals itself. Stay attentive to your experience as it tells its own story. Allow the truth of contemplation to affect you. Experience inevitability of death with your entire being!

If you continue to work with this nine-part death meditation, you may find that one of the themes is especially fertile. Feel free to walk through such doors which open up in your practice. The creative process may take you somewhere outside the progressive and systematic arrangement of this scheme. It may be useful to follow this up.

For example, when I was working with the "inevitability" root, one evening af-

ter formal practice, I turned to an old, late-hour movie from the 1930s featur-

ing Clark Gable and Carole Lombard and many other actors familiar to me. Probably because the contemplation was still on my mind, I noticed an obvious and fascinating fact. *Everyone* in the film was now dead! The producer, the director, musicians, actors etc. were all dead. I looked with keen interest at the virile, sensual, highly energetic performers—all DEAD. I then took the impact of this realization inside, lived with it for a while, opened my eyes and examined them living out their lives on film again—and went inside again. I continued this way for a while because this "made in U.S.A." method was fruitful.

Let's move through the practice outline.

DEATH AWARENESS PRACTICE OUTLINE:

THE INEVITABILITY OF DEATH

1) Everyone has to die.

The first of the nine part sequence of thoughts concerning death is to contemplate the obvious fact that no one can stand up to death. Nothing can prevent our death. Death is a logical consequence of birth. Death begins to work on life at the moment of birth. The inevitability of this truth is as obvious as the "emperor's clothes"—the emperor has no clothes—and we are going to die. There are no exemptions. Differences in wealth, education, physical strength, fame, education, moral integrity, spiritual maturity are irrelevant. All distinctions are leveled. Although this event is the only one that is certain, do we plan on it? Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* offers us some help here. Compare yourself with others of great fame, merit, strength, supernatural powers and understanding. Reflect on how death inevitably caught up with each outstanding person, "so how shall it not at length overtake me?" My first teacher, J. Krishnamurti, is someone I contemplate in this way. His inner clarity, strength and immense vitality drew me to him. A very active life of teaching ended only two weeks before his death at age ninety—but it did end.

The Buddha put it this way:

*Young and old,
foolish and wise,
rich and poor, all keep dying.
As a potter's clay vessels,
large and small, fired and unfired,
All end up broken,
so too life heads to death.*

2) Our life span is decreasing continuously.

Our movement towards death is inexorable—it never stops. We walk hand in hand with death. Our life is slipping away. With every tick of the clock we move closer to the termination of life as we know it. The great Indian master Atisha used the sound of water dropping as a support for this contemplation.

Look intently at your breathing; time is elapsing with each breath, even as you read these remarks. From breath moment to breath moment we are being moved closer and closer to the end of our life here on earth, and there is nothing that we can do about it. Can you bring your attention to this sense of the uninterrupted flow of time transporting us to death? It is like falling from a tree. We will definitely hit the ground. What thoughts or feelings does this realization bring up? When the time comes to die what can we do? Just die!

After our birth we have no freedom to remain even for a minute.

We head towards the embrace of the Lord of Death, like an athlete running.

We may think that we are among the living, but our life is the very highway of death.

— The Seventh Dalai Lama

3) Death will come regardless of whether or not we have made the time to practice dharma.

The essence of this contemplation is nicely put by Gungtang Rinpoche:

"I spent twenty years not wanting to practice dharma. I spent the next twenty years thinking that I could practice later on. I spent another twenty years in other activities and regretting the fact that I hadn't engaged in dharma practice. This is the story of my empty human life."

The amount of time spent during our life to develop the mind is very little. Life is so very short—most of us will probably die before we get around to practicing dharma in any substantial way. So much time spent sleeping, so much time spent eating; so much time just spent “puttering around.” Perhaps half our life is spent this way. More? Have you already reached a time in your life where you regret having planned so much and done so little? It is not too late. Wake up! The central thrust of these reflections on the inevitability of death is to strongly encourage us to live and breathe dharma. Time is so easily consumed by other pursuits until, without warning we die. It is too late to negotiate with Death. To plead for more time because we are now finally ready, is useless. Death awareness meditation can help us develop a sincere wish to practice, to alter our daily routine so that it includes more time for practice and finally to make dharma our highest priority. This contemplation can arouse a fear of dying unprepared—an appropriate fear, because many of us truly are not prepared for death.

Twenty years ago, I asked Anagarika Munindra about facing death. He immediately asserted that vipassana yogis are always attempting to remain mindful of the conditions of mind and body. Practice at the time of dying is no different. Of course the challenge is so much greater during our last moments. Is our capacity to pay attention adequate to meet this challenge? He then insisted that the time to get ready is NOW.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE TIME OF DEATH

4) Human life expectancy is uncertain.

The life span for all of us living in this world is not fixed. If we are young we can fool ourselves into believing that we won't die for quite some time; similarly we can be misguided if we are fortunate enough to be in good physical health. Death can come at any time; it doesn't have to give us any warning. It is clearly not reserved for the aged and unwell. Yesterday I was informed that a Korean Zen teacher who

I knew well fell over dead of heart failure in the midst of an interview. He was in his early 50's. People die in car accidents, while eating, sleeping, planning out their summer holidays. Some die in the process of being born. We see dead chipmunks lying on the road beside the Insight Meditation Society all the time. Death can come at any moment. This is a fact, but not one we have real conviction in. Most of us are confident that we will be around for awhile. Thousands die each day. I wonder how many expected to? The challenge of this contemplation is to be able to arouse a strong sense of the uncertainty of our time of death. Do you really know how much time you have left?

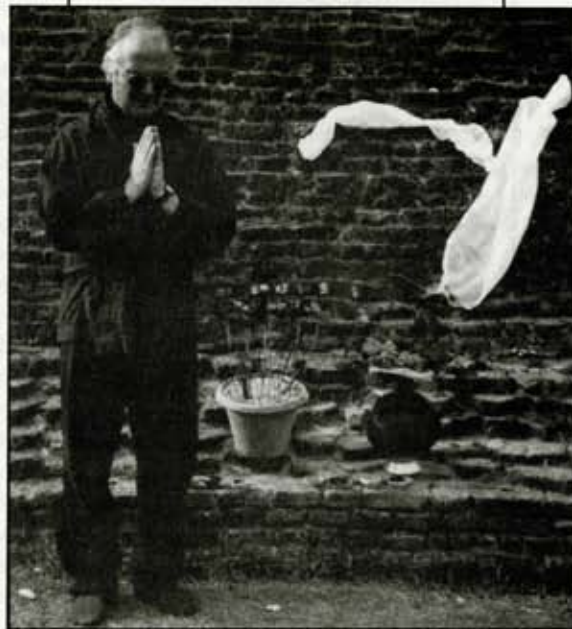
Spirits were high with expectations this morning.

As the men discussed subduing enemies and protecting the land.

Now, with night's coming, birds and dogs chew their corpses.

Who believed that they themselves would die today?

--The Seventh Dalai Lama



5) There are many causes of death.

Once again, from a slightly different angle, we attempt to impress upon ourselves the ever present possibility of death. In seeing that this possibility cancels out all other possibilities, do we

question the meaning and significance of how we are actually living our life right now? Does such questioning propel our dharma practice into the forefront as a consideration for orchestrating our time and energy? In this, the fifth contemplation of the series, we reflect on the fact that there are a seemingly endless list of external and internal conditions that can bring about our demise. To turn on the TV news at any time is to be reminded of death coming from the “outside,” e.g., famine, earthquake, fire, pollution, war, murder, drowning, plane and car crashes.....Do I need to go on? If you feel relatively protected from such causes, please think again! As for problems issuing forth from the “inside” which end our life, we have heart attacks, cancer, AIDS, and the long list of well established and new physical disorders which can result in death. In short, to be alive on this planet is to be subject to probably thousands of causes and conditions that result in our death. Virtually anything is a potential cause of death. Please contemplate this.

We maintain our life in the midst of thousands of conditions that threaten death. Our life force abides like a candle flame in the breeze. The candle flame of our life is easily extinguished by the winds of death that blow from all directions. --Nagarjuna

6) The human body is very fragile.

My uncle, while still in his early twenties and quite robust, cut himself on a rusty razor. He was dead within a few days. Our bodies are delicate and vulnerable, not made of an indestructible or diamond-strong substance. It is so easy for it to be wounded, to break apart, for a change in circumstances to change a healthy and energetic person to one who is helpless, weak, and then dead. A small microbe could do it. A blow to crucial parts of our body could do it. We are all so tender and susceptible to harm. Life provides us with so many concrete examples of how fragile our body is:

From the *Visuddhimagga*:

As to the frailty of life: this life is impotent and frail. For the life of beings is bound up with breathing...Life occurs only when the in-breaths and out-breaths occur evenly. But when the wind in the nostrils that has gone outside does not go in again, or when that which has gone inside does not come out again, then a being is reckoned to be dead."

Drawing upon this simple observation, we have an equally simple method for contemplation number six: stay with the breath, see death in every inhalation and exhalation. Take up the subject of death to teach the mind with every inhalation and exhalation, until a strong conviction arises—our life is literally hanging by a breath. Please return to your cushion!

THE FACT THAT ONLY THE PRACTICE OF DHARMA CAN HELP US AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

7) At the time of death our wealth cannot help us.

Imagine yourself at your own deathbed. You grow weaker by the moment. All of your wealth, hard earned and cherished possessions are available, but useless to you now. It must all be left behind—bank account, book and tape collection, antique objects, clothing, delicious foods. We are separated from our belongings. Are these comforts and pleasures of the past of any importance as our life slips away? In your contemplation attempt to really feel your clinging to any or all of these things during most of your life—and how they are utterly useless now. Can you wholeheartedly feel this?

Letting go helps us die in peace. As soon as we die, our wealth and all these cherished objects will be redistributed to friends, relatives, strangers, thrift shops, the garbage. We have spent so much time and energy building up our collection of wealth and things. No matter how much we enjoyed a particular object, we can't take it with us when Death snatches us away. Isn't it a "sound investment" to give much more of our attention to dharma practice since the fruit of work on purification

of consciousness is the only thing that travels with us?

*Avoid works of little consequence;
And seek the path to spiritual joy.
The things of this life quickly fade;
Cultivate that which benefits eternally.* —Dul zhug Ling-pa

8) Our loved ones cannot help.

It is only natural to turn to those who love us for help at the time of death. Despite our deeply shared bond, there is very little that can be done; we must face death alone. Strong attachments only make matters worse—our departure will be marked by torment. Grasping and peace don't seem to go together. We came alone, and we must leave alone. Our loved ones are powerless when we need them the most. Part of learning to face death realistically is to face this stark truism right now. So, we must see that wealth cannot help us; neither can our friends arrest the process of dying. Only our dharma practice—the beneficial traces of the past, and our capacity to remain wakeful in our last moments—can be of real use.

While I am lying in bed, although surrounded by all my friends and relatives, the feeling of my life being severed will be experienced by me alone. When I am seized by the messengers of the Lord of Death, what benefits will my friends afford? What help can my relatives be? At that time the sole thing that will provide me with a safe direction will be the degree of purity of my mind-stream. But have I ever really committed myself wholeheartedly to such cultivation?

—Shantideva

9) Our own body cannot help.

This body that we have cherished for so long cheats us at the time when we need it most.

—First Panchen Lama

Most of our life is spent working on the body. Getting the body fed, watered, cleaned, and dressed takes up a great deal of time. We need to give it adequate rest and medical treatment when this is required. We exercise it

groom it with attractive clothing and in countless ways attempt to make the body attractive. Countless oils and creams are rubbed into the skin to give it a youthful appearance. Teeth and backs are straightened, eyeglasses and frames are carefully selected. Hair is straightened or curled, allowed to grow long or kept short. The body is scrubbed and cleaned, massaged and stretched. We put clothes on when it is cold; take them off when it is hot. We spend eons in front of the mirror evaluating the results of our dedicated efforts — and then what happens? It goes and dies on us anyway!

We die in this body that we have cherished so dearly. Can such a realization intensify your determination to practice dharma? I hope so, but please be careful. Don't swing to the other extreme of bodily neglect. Advice given to me many years ago by J. Krishnamurti has been of immense help. He said that although we are not the body, we should care for it the way a cavalry soldier cares for his horse. He is not his horse, but proper care of its condition can make the difference between life and death in combat. There is this body, and although it's not "me" or "mine," its reasonable care is a vital aspect of our dharma practice.

This body with which we are so intimate has been our constant companion since birth. We have experienced so much pleasure and pain in it. We treasure it. At death it becomes feeble and of no use to us as we approach separation from this lifetime. Are you able to feel your dependence and attachment to it? Can you see how holding on can only result in torment? Simulate a sense of being at your own deathbed. You lose your job, relationships, home, money, etc. — all at once! Can you visualize the feeling of helplessness and loss, and amidst all this, remain awake? Can you remain as the knowing?

Finally, at the end of each session, save a few moments to make and reflect on the following determination: "Since it is true that I may die at any time, I will practice dharma right now."

By the way — are you aware that you are breathing right now? How wonderful we are all still alive!

Please support the publication of the *Majjhima Nikaya* —a letter from Sharon and Joseph

Dear Sangha Members,

For the past eighteen months, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies has been collaborating with Wisdom Publications, Boston, to bring out a new translation of the *Majjhima Nikaya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. This new translation represents half a century of care and attention in presenting an authentic and accurate translation of the original teachings of the Buddha. It is based on a draft translation left behind by the English scholar monk Ven. Nyanamoli (1905-60), who spent most of his life as a Theravadan monk in Sri Lanka.

This draft translation has been thoroughly revised to ensure optimal accuracy and readability by one of the world's most respected monk-scholars, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American who has lived in Sri Lanka for the last twenty years. John Bullitt, working on behalf of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, undertook the monumental task of entering the entire manuscript with its complex structure and thousands of diacritical marks onto computer and copy-editing and proofing the whole work.

The *Majjhima Nikaya* consists of 152 suttas and forms a major part of the Pali Canon. This new version is the first complete English translation in more than thirty years, and constitutes a companion volume to Wisdom's *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, a new translation of the Digha Nikaya, by Maurice Walshe, published in 1987.

Wisdom, a non-profit Dharma publishing company, has raised most of the money required to publish this important work but needs a little more. To raise it, we seek your support in ordering advance copies of the book. Besides your participation being a service to the Dharma and the Sangha by making the book's publication possible, this very elegant and finely printed volume will become a cherished part of your collection.

We feel that Wisdom's publication of this new translation of the *Majjhima Nikaya* is a major and much-needed step in the preservation and transmission of Buddhadharma in the West. In the West, the Dharma is likely to be preserved through a series of small but crucial steps. Clearly, this is one such step. Thank you for your support.

—Joseph Goldstein & Sharon Salzberg

The *Majjhima Nikaya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* will be published by Wisdom Publications, Boston, in the fall of 1994. Copies will be sent to pre-publication subscribers in December. We at Wisdom are honored to have been chosen to publish this landmark work. We are delighted to invite you to participate in this meritorious project with us.

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TEACHERS AT THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

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

Perrin Cohen is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Northeastern University, and co-director of NUCASE (Northeastern University Center for the Advancement of Scientific Education), which is concerned with ethical responsibility in scientific research. He has practiced vipassana meditation since 1977, and is a Board member of BCBS.

Ron Leifer, M.D., a Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, studied with Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche for fifteen years and is associated with the Namgyal Buddhist Institute in Ithaca, New York, where he also has a private psychotherapy practice.

Susan Murcott has studied Zen since 1972 both in Japan and under Robert Aitken, Roshi, in Hawaii. She is the author of *The First Buddhist Women: Translation and Commentaries on the Therigatha*. She currently works as a research engineer at MIT and is a private consultant on water quality issues.

Daeja Napier is the founding teacher of Newbury Insight Meditation Center and the Phillips Academy Insight Meditation Program. She is also on the teaching staff of Interface Foundation. She has been studying and practicing Buddhist meditation for over 20 years and is the mother of five children.

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

Lama Surya Das is an American meditation teacher, Tibetan Buddhist lama, poet and writer. He has studied with prominent teachers in all the major Tibetan Buddhist schools and spent eight years in secluded retreats. He is the author of *The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane: Buddhist Tales from Tibet*.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraf) has been a Theravada monk since 1976. He is presently the Abbot of Metta Forest Monastery--a combined monastic and lay meditation community--in San Diego County. He is the author of *Mind Like Fire Unbound* and translator of *The Buddhist Monastic Code* as well as a number of Thai meditation guides.

Dr. Thynn Thynn is a medical doctor and Dhamma teacher from Burma. She has studied and practiced Buddhism and meditation for nearly thirty years. She has been teaching the application of Buddhism and meditation in everyday life both in Thailand United States for a number of years. She has written books on Buddhism in both English and Burmese.

The Electronic Dharma

Access to Insight--the computer bulletin board system (BBS) serving the IMS community and beyond--continues to grow, thanks in part to exposure in recent months in two national magazines (Tricycle and Wired). Through the continuing generosity of DharmaNet's volunteer transcribers, the list of Dharma texts now available online is impressive. Among recent online arrivals are: Thanissaro Bhikkhu's landmark 575-page modern commentary on the Theravada monks' code of conduct, *The Buddhist Monastic Code*; a collection of excellent essays by Bhikkhu Bodhi that challenge us to examine closely some of the popular Western interpretations of Buddhist practice; *Living Dhamma* and *Food for the Heart* by Ajahn Chah; *Here and Now* by Ven. Ayya Khema; numerous *Wheels and Bodhi Leaves* from the Buddhist Publication Society in Sri Lanka; the *Inquiring Mind* (our most popular request); and many others.

Meanwhile, on the Internet, discussions on the INSIGHT mailing list continue to be lively, thoughtful and at times downright inspiring. Recent topics have ranged from the Bertolucci film *Little Buddha*, to the eternal question of how to keep the flame of Dharma burning brightly in one's busy daily life, to the question of how to practice harmlessness in a hostile world filled with cockroaches, armed street gangs, nuclear weapons, and tyrants.

To discover what other Dharma treasures await you in the electronic realm, call the BBS with your modem, at (508) 433-5847. If you are already on the Internet, send a message to "info@metta.ci.net".

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Barre Center for Buddhist Studies is co-sponsoring a conference on Meditation and Psychotherapy, March 11, 1995, at Gutman Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Fee \$75.

Both meditation and psychotherapy aim to reduce suffering by helping us to see our lives and mental patterns more clearly. How are they different? How are they similar? How might they interact with each other? This day-long conference, presented by meditation teachers and therapists, and designed for both meditators and psychotherapists will explore these issues through talks, workshops, periods of silent meditation, and panel discussions. A partial list of presenters includes Philip Aranow Ed.D.; George Bowman, Zen Master; Paul Fulton, Ed.D.; Chris Germer, Ph.D.; Trudy Goodman, Ed.M.; Bill Morgan, Psy.D.; Stephanie Morgan, Psy.D.; and Ron Siegel, Psy.D. Other sponsors of this conference are the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, and the Mass. School of Professional Psychology. Partial scholarships based on need will be available for participants not seeking CE credits. For further details, contact MSPP at 617-327-6777 Rivermoor St., Boston, MA 02132



**Theravada-Theravada Conference at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies
June 23-25, 1995, Fee \$75 (non-residential)**

This pioneering conference will explore issues critical to the development of Theravada Buddhism in the West. There are many branches of Theravada Buddhism in the West now, especially in America; but what does it mean to teach Theravada Buddhism when many of its teachers are laypeople? Are monastic teachers critical to the development of Theravada in the West? What is the role and possibilities of monastic form in the West? Is the West ready for Theravada Buddhism? What form will the monastic-lay relationship take in America? A partial list of presenters includes: Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ven. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Ven. Bhante Gunaratana, Ven. Sumedo or Ven. Sucitto from Amravati sangha in England, Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Steven Smith, Michele McDonald, Larry Rosenberg, Christina Feldman. Andy Olendzki will be the moderator for the conference.



**2-Week INTENSIVE PROGRAMS IN BUDDHIST STUDIES
January 8-20 and July 9-21, 1995 at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies**

In its ever-expanding programming vision, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies will offer, in addition to its winter offering, its first summer intensive program in Buddhist Studies. It provides an in-depth academic introduction to the doctrinal and historical background within a contemplative environment. The objective of the program is to explore Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.



**CHRISTIAN-BUDDHIST DIALOGUES AND JEWISH-BUDDHIST DIALOGUES
AT THE BARE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES**

In 1992, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, in keeping with its mission of exploring the relevance of classical Buddhist teachings to contemporary life, organized its first Jewish-Buddhist dialogue/conference. This conference has since become a pioneering model for similar conferences all over the country. It has also become a prominent annual feature of our program schedule. In April 1994, we organized our first Christian-Buddhist dialogue and plan to develop it substantively so that it allows participants to investigate and study their contemplative traditions. The next Christian dialogue will be held on November 26, 1994 here at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. On Saturday, June 3, 1995, another one-day Christian-Buddhist workshop will be held on the teachings of Meister Eckhart and Zen. Please call the Study Center for more details.

THE BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

149 LOCKWOOD ROAD, BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS 01005 PHONE: (508)355-2347

1995 COURSE SCHEDULE



Jan 8-20 1995 INTENSIVE PROGRAM IN BUDDHIST STUDIES

(2 Weeks) (Resident and Visiting Faculty) 95INT \$750

This repeat of the academic program is a new vision of the study of Buddhism in America. It provides an in-depth academic introduction to the doctrinal and historical background within a contemplative environment. The objective of the program is to explore Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.

Jan. 27-29 (Weekend) **THE POTENTIAL OF "INSIGHT": TRANSPERSONAL & VIPASSANA**
Sylvia Boorstein 95SB \$120

A major aspect of traditional psychotherapy is insight into formerly unconscious processes. In vipassana, insight into the nature of reality is often presented as the key to liberation. This course will explore "insights" from both traditions as a way of refining our understanding of how these insights lead to freedom. The didactic material presented will include a psychological formulation of factors such as ego integrity, character formation etc., which either support or limit the potential of "insight" in both psychological and spiritual development.

Feb. 10-12 (Weekend) **TRANSFORMING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**
Ron Leifer 95RL \$120

This workshop synthesizes the insights of Buddhist psychotherapy and skillful meditation practices to transform suffering into clarity and compassion. Focus of the workshop will be on specific meditation practices to transform the energies of negative emotions into wholesome mindfulness.

Feb. 24-26 (Weekend) **METTA (LOVING KINDESS)**
Daeja Napier 95DN1 \$120

Metta is the first of the *Brahma Viharas* (Sublime States of Mind) taught by the Buddha. It is a concentration practice which softens the experience of life, enhancing a loving, compassionate, joyful and balanced relationship with oneself and others. This workshop will explore the teaching and practice of Metta to restore a sense of loving connection with ourselves and the world around us.

March 3-5 (Weekend) **SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY/BUDDHIST INSIGHT**
Perrin Cohen 95PC \$120

Scientific inquiry can be a powerful tool for understanding human nature and for helping people. The use of scientific research and clinical methods, however, is not always grounded in ethics or compassion. This course is designed for science students, researchers, physicians, nurses, engineers and other practitioners of science to explore the practical ways of bringing Buddhist insight and ethical mindfulness into routine laboratory, clinical and field settings.

March 25 (Saturday) **WOMEN IN BUDDHISM: ANCIENT INDIA AND CONTEMPORARY WEST**
Susan Murcott 95MUR \$45

Using *Therigatha: The Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns* as a text, this course will explore the lives of first Buddhist women and whether their life and practice is ours. Were these women dependent or independent, conventional or radical, liberated or bonded? How have we, as the first generation of Buddhist women in the West, followed in or departed from their path? We will also compare these poems with the poems of other ancient religious women poets.

- Mar.31-Apr.2 SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP (kalyana-mitta)**
Ajahn Sucitto and Amravati sangah monks 95AMR \$120
 According to the Buddha, association with spiritually-minded friends (kalyana-mitta) leads one naturally to cultivate the noble eightfold-path. This course will focus on the factors involved in this naturally evolving process, viewed from the perspective of letting go.
- April 13-16 DZOG CHEN: AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN**
(3 days) Lama Surya Das 95SD1 \$180
 Dzog Chen (Tibetan for "The Natural Great Perfection") teaches awareness techniques for awakening to inner freedom, and directly introduces the inherent freedom, purity and perfection of the innate Buddha-Mind, and the interconnectedness of all beings.
- April 21-23 APPLICATION OF MINDFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE**
(Weekend) Thynn Thynn 95TT \$120
 The teaching of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) is the core of Buddha's teaching; it is about living a full human life in the world. Through lectures, discussion, practical training in mindfulness, this course will examine ways of understanding and applying knowledge of the cycle of Dependent Origination in everyday life.
- April 29 VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA**
(Saturday) George Bowman 95GB \$45
 The teachings of Vimalakirti, the householder, are held in great reverence in the Mahayana tradition as a clear guide to living an awakened life as a lay practitioner. Vimalakirti, a contemporary of the Buddha and a married man, was said to be second only to the Buddha in spiritual development. We will take his teachings as our own inspiration for a day of practicing unconditioned openness.
- May 5-7 MONEY AND BUDDHIST SPIRITUALITY**
(Weekend) Jose Reissig 95JR \$120
 This course will explore the split which exists between the world of morality and the world of money. As medium of exchange, money connects us. Yet, at another level, it creates distance and disconnection. Is that split inevitable? What are its consequences? Through dharma talks, sitting meditation, periods of sharing and inquiry, and a money game, we will connect with the teaching of anatta (not-self) and explore how we can bring new insights into this troubled area.
- June 3 EQUANIMITY**
(Saturday) Daeja Napier 95DN2 \$45
 Equanimity, or mental equilibrium, is the king or queen of the four *Brahma-Viharas* (Sublime States of Mind). In this course, we will examine, through traditional Buddhist literature, the means for development and application of this attitude of mind--remaining balanced in the midst of the ever-changing tide of human events--in relationship to ourselves and others.
- June 10 HEART SUTRA: FORM IS EMPTINESS, EMPTINESS IS FORM**
(Saturday) Mu Soeng 95MS1 \$45
 Using this seminal text of Mahayana Buddhism, this course will explore the teaching of Emptiness in the traditions of Zen Buddhism, Madhyamika dialectic, Yogacara idealism, and the findings of quantum physics. Through talks, discussions, meditation and chanting, we will investigate the ever-embracing interplay of form and emptiness.
- June 16-18 BUDDHA, DHAMMA, SANGHA: THE TRIPLE REFUGE**
(Weekend) Thanissaro Bhikkhu 95TJ \$120
 To take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha is to make a firm commitment to a life of awareness. This course will explore--through readings, talks, discussions, and meditation--the what, the why, and the how of this step: What exactly is the Triple Refuge? Why does one need refuge? How does refuge function in one's daily practice?

Insight Meditation Society
1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, Massachusetts 01005

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

THE CALL OF THE PEACOCKS Theragāthā 211-12

nadanti morā susikhā supekhuṇā
sunīlagivā sumukhā sugajjino
susaddalā cāpi mahāmahi ayam
subyapitambu suvalahakam nabha

The peacocks—with lovely feathers, lovely wings,
Lovely blue necks and lovely faces,
Call out—a lovely song with a lovely sound.
This great earth has lovely waters and grasses;
There are lovely clouds in the sky.

sukallarūpo sumanassa jhāyitaṃ
sunikkhamo sādhu subuddhasāsanē
susukkasukkaṃ nipuṇaṃ sududdasaṃ
phuṣāhi taṃ uttamam accutaṃ padan ti

Meditating with a good sound body and a good mind,
It is good to go forth well
In the good teaching of the Buddha.
Experience that highest, unwavering state!
Most pure, subtle, most hard to see.

This highly alliterated poem, attributed to the elder monk Culaka, plays with the prefix su-, which occurs no less than 14 times in these two short stanzas. It has three primary meanings, covered successively through the poem: 1) lovely or well-formed, 2) good, thorough, or well done, and 3) it is often used as a simple intensive prefix, meaning very- or most-.

The plaintive call of the peacock, commonplace during the 3 month rainy season retreats undertaken by the Buddha's monks and nuns, is a favorite theme of their nature poetry preserved in the Theragatha and the Therigatha.

The first stanza reflects the balanced appreciation of the natural world that comes from the focused but equanimous mind in meditation. Pleasurable sensations, such as the ones described here in response to the beauty of nature, can be experienced mindfully by those devoid of craving, without the tendency present in most of us to cling to the pleasure or resist its inevitable passing away. Early Buddhist poetry often points out the beauties of nature, but seldom lingers on them.

The second stanza leads one on to higher aspirations. It inspires the listener (for this was primarily an oral tradition) to give up the mundane pursuits of the worldly life, engage in the purifying and clarifying enterprise of meditation, tread diligently the straight path pointed out by Buddha and, finally, attain in this very lifetime the perfection of the human condition.

Andy Olendzki