

# *Insight*

Spring 2000



**For** Not to be taken  
from the room.  
**reference**

# Insight

A twice-yearly newsletter of the

**Insight Meditation Society**

and the

**Barre Center for  
Buddhist Studies**

with program schedules and  
Dharma articles of lasting interest

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Insight is a newsletter jointly published by the Insight Meditation Society and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which are tax-exempt, nonprofit centers whose purpose is to foster the practice of vipassanā (insight) meditation and to preserve the essential teachings of Theravāda Buddhism. The goal of the practice is the awakening of wisdom and compassion through right action and cultivating mindful awareness in all aspects of life. IMS offers a year-round program of intensive meditation retreats and various opportunities for volunteer service.

BCBS offers a year-round program of workshops and seminars in the study of the Buddhist tradition within a contemplative framework so as to build a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight.



*Winter in Barre gradually gives way to spring.*

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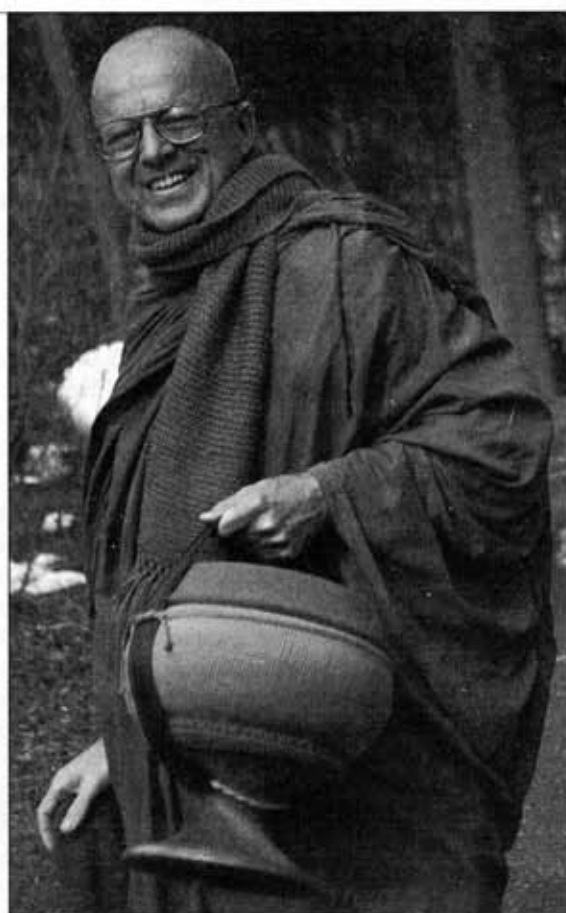
# A Question of Skill

An Interview with

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

*Thanissaro Bhikkhu, also known more informally to many as Ajaan Geoff, is an American-born Theravada monk who has been the abbot of Metta Forest Monastery near San Diego, CA, since 1993.*

*He teaches regularly at BCBS and throughout the US and has contributed significantly to the Dhamma Dana Publications project with his books Wings to Awakening, Mind Like Fire Unbound, and a new free-verse translation of the Dhammapada.*



*I didn't want to lie on my deathbed, looking back at a life frittered away.*

Ajaan Geoff, thirty years ago you were a student at Oberlin College. Now you're the abbot of a Buddhist monastery near San Diego. Could you tell us a little about how you got from there to here?

The route was a lot less roundabout than you might think. Like many college students, I was obsessed with deciding what to do with my life. Business, government, academia: I couldn't see myself finding happiness in any of them. I didn't want to lie on my deathbed, looking back at a life frittered away. Fortunately, in my sophomore year, I was introduced to Buddhist meditation, and I took to it like a duck to water.

After graduation I decided to take a break in my education to go teach in Thailand—to get some perspective on my life, and maybe find a good meditation teacher. While I was there I met Ajaan Fuang, perhaps the first truly happy person I had ever met. He embodied the dharma [the teachings of the Buddha] in a way that I found appealing: wise, down-to-earth, no-nonsense, and with a sly sense of humor. Whatever happiness and wisdom he had, he told me, was due entirely to the training. That was when I realized I had found something to which I could de-

vote my entire life. So I ordained to train with him, and I've never regretted my choice.

Ajaan Fuang trained you as a meditation monk, but for the past several years you've also been translating and explaining the Pāli sūta(s) [the early Buddhist texts]. How do you find that studying the sūtas helps with meditation?

The Buddha in the sūtas asks all the right questions. We all know that what we see is shaped by the views we bring to things, but we're often not aware of the extent to which our views are shaped by the questions we ask ourselves. The Buddha had the good sense to see that some questions are skillful—they really do point you to freedom, to the total cessation of suffering—while others are unskillful: they take you to a dead end, tie you up in knots, and leave you there. The sūtas are helpful in showing how to avoid getting involved in unskillful questioning. If you listen carefully to their advice and take it to heart, you find that it really opens your eyes to how you approach meditation and life in general.

There are currents in modern dharma teaching that de-emphasize the importance of the historical discourses. One might say, for example,

"Don't we often hear that the Buddha said not to believe texts and traditions?"

Well, he didn't say to reject them out of hand, either. Have you ever noticed how American dharma is like the game of Telephone? Things get passed on from person to person, from one generation of teachers to the next, until the message gets garbled beyond recognition.

I once received a postcard on which the sender had rubber-stamped the message, "Don't believe anything outside your own sense of right and wrong."—The Buddha. That was apparently meant to be a quote from the Kālāma Sutta, but when you actually read the sutta, you find that it says something much more sophisticated than that: You don't believe something just because it's handed down in the texts or taught by your teachers, but you don't accept it just because it seems logical or fits in with your preferences, either. You have to put it to the test, check it in terms of actual cause and effect. If you then find that it leads to harm and is criticized by wise people, you stop doing it. If it's beneficial and praised by wise people, you stick with it. Notice, though, that you don't go solely by your own perception of things. You look for wise people and check



your perceptions against theirs. That way you make sure you're not simply siding with your own preconceived notions.

And so the suttas can serve as *kalyāṇa mitta(s)*, or "wise friends?"

There is no real substitute for spending time in close contact with a really wise person, but the suttas can often be the next best thing—especially in a country like ours where wise people, in the Buddhist sense of the term, are so few and far between.

You mentioned that the suttas label certain questions as unskillful. Some of these may be fairly obscure philosophical issues that no longer interest anyone, but can you point to any that are relevant to meditators at present?

The big one is, "Who am I?" There are dharma books telling us that the purpose of meditation is to answer this question, and a lot of people come to meditation assuming that that's what it's all about. But the suttas list it as a fruitless line of inquiry.

Why is that?

Good question (laughs). As far as I can see, the response is this: What sort of experience would give you an answer to that question? Can you imagine any answer to that question that would put an end to suffering? It's easier to be skillful in any given situation when you don't saddle yourself with set ideas about who you are.

Might the *anattā* doctrine be considered the Buddha's answer to the question, "Who am I?"

No. It's his answer to the question, "What is skillful?" Is self-identification skillful? Up to a point, yes. In the areas where you need a healthy, coherent sense of self in order to act responsibly, it's skillful to maintain that sense of coherence. But eventually, as responsible behavior becomes second nature and you develop more sensitivity, you see that self-identification, even of the most refined sort, is a form of clinging. It's a burden. So the only skillful thing is to let it go.

How would you respond to those who say they get a sense of oneness with the universe when they meditate, that they're interconnected to all things, and that it relieves a lot of suffering?

How stable is that feeling of oneness? When you feel like you've come to the stable ground of being from which all things emanate, the suttas ask you to question whether you're simply reading that feeling into your experience. If the ground of being were

really stable, how would it give rise to the unstable world we live in? So whatever it is you're experiencing—it may be one of the formless states—it's not the ultimate answer to suffering.

On an affective level, a sense of connectedness may relieve the pain of isolation, but when you look deeper, you have to agree with the Buddha that interconnectedness and interdependence lie at the essence of suffering. Take the weather, for instance. Last summer we had wonderful, balmy weather in San Diego—none of the oppressive heat that usually hits in August—and yet the same weather pattern brought virtually non-stop rain to southern Alaska, drought to the Northeast, and killer hurricanes with coffins floating out of their graves in North Carolina. Are we supposed to find happiness in identifying with a world like this? The suttas are often characterized as pessimistic in advocating release



*The Metta Forest Monastery lies nestled in fog-shrouded hills, surrounded by avocado orchards.*

from *samsāra*, but that's nothing compared to the pessimism inherent in the idea that staying interconnected is our only hope for happiness.

Yet so many people say the desire for release is selfish.

Which makes me wonder if they understand how we can be most helpful to one another. If the path to release involved being harmful and cold-hearted, you could say it was selfish; but here it involves developing generosity, kindness, morality, all the honorable qualities of the mind. What's selfish about that? Everyone around you benefits when you can abandon your greed, anger, and delusion. Look at the impact that Ajaan Mun's quest for release has had for the last several decades in Thailand, and now it's spreading throughout the world. We'd be much better off if we encouraged one another to

find true release so that those who find it first can show the way to anyone else who's interested.

And the way to that release starts with the question, "What is skillful?"

Right. It's the first question the Buddha recommends that you ask when you visit a teacher. And you can trace this question throughout the suttas, from the most basic levels on up. There is a wonderful passage where the Buddha is teaching Rahula, his seven-year-old son [*Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhulovāda Sutta*, M 61]. He starts out by stressing the importance of being truthful—implying that if you want to find the truth, you first have to be truthful yourself—and then he talks about using your actions as a mirror. Before you do anything, ask yourself: "Is what I intend to do here skillful or unskillful? Will it lead to well-being or harm?" If it looks harmful, you don't

do it. If it looks okay, you go ahead and give it a try. While you're doing it, though, you ask yourself the same questions. If it turns out that it's causing harm, you stop. If not, you continue with it. Then after you've done it, you ask the same questions—"Did it bring about well-being or harm?"—and if you see that what originally looked okay actually ended up being harmful, you talk it over with someone else on the path and resolve never to make that mistake again. If it wasn't harmful, you can take joy in knowing that you're on the right track.

So the Buddha is giving basic lessons in how to learn from your mistakes.

Yes, but if you look carefully, you'll see that these questions contain the seeds for some of his most important teachings: the role of intention in our actions; the way causality works—with actions giv-

ing immediate results along with long-term results; and even the four noble truths: the idea that suffering is caused by past and present actions, and that if we're observant we can find how to act more and more skillfully to a point of total freedom.

#### And how would you apply this to meditation?

It starts with your life. We all know that meditation involves disentangling yourself from the narratives of your life so that you can look directly at what you're doing in the present. Now, some narratives are easier to disentangle than others. If you're acting in unskillful ways in daily life—lying, having illicit sex, taking intoxicants—you'll find that you're creating some pretty sticky narratives, all coated with denial and regret. So you apply the Buddha's line of questioning to your day-to-day life in order to clean up your act and provide yourself with new narratives that are easier to let go.

At the same time, in doing this, you're developing the precise skills you'll need on the meditation cushion. Getting into the present moment is a skill, and it requires the same questioning attitude: observing what the mind is doing, seeing what works, what doesn't work, and making adjustments where needed. Once you get into the present moment, you use the same line of questioning to investigate the present, taking it apart in terms of cause and effect: present action, past action, present results. Once you've taken apart every mental state that clouds the brightness of your awareness, you then turn the same questions on that bright awareness itself, until there's nothing left to question or take apart any further—not even the act of questioning itself. That's where liberation opens up. So these simple questions can take you all the way to the end of the practice.

#### Was this how you were taught meditation in Thailand?

Yes. The one piece of advice Ajaan Fuang stressed more than any other was, "Be observant." In other words, he didn't want me simply to follow a method blindly without monitoring how it was working out. He handed me Ajaan Lee's seven steps on breath meditation and told me to play with them—not in a desultory way, but the way Michael Jordan plays basketball: experimenting, using your ingenuity, so that it becomes a skill. How else can you expect to gain insight into the patterns of cause and effect within the mind unless you play with them?

#### Are there any other questions from the suttas that strike you as particularly relevant to the American dharma scene?

Two jump immediately to mind. One has to do with evaluating teachers. The suttas recommend that a student look carefully at a person's whole life before accepting him or her as a teacher: Does this person embody the precepts? Can you detect any overt passion, aversion, or delusion in what this person says or does? Only if someone can pass these tests should you accept him or her as a teacher.

This calls into question an attitude that's becoming increasingly prevalent here in the US. A teacher once said, not too long ago, "As long as a teacher points at the truth with one hand, it doesn't matter what he or she does with the other hand." Now, is the dharma something you can point to with only one hand? Can the other hand ever really be invisible? There's a real drive at the moment to turn out teachers to fill the demand for retreat leaders, but if they feel they can afford a one-handed attitude, we'll end up with teachers who are little more than mindfulness technicians or yogi-herders: people whose job is to get students safely through the retreat experience, but whose personal life may be teaching an entirely separate lesson. Is that what we want?

If it is, we are setting people up for trouble. So far the mindfulness community has avoided many of the scandals that have ravaged other American Buddhist communities, largely because it hasn't been a community. It's more a far-flung network of retreat clientele. The teachers' personal lives haven't had that much direct bearing on the lives of the students. But now local communities are beginning to develop, where students and teachers have close, long-term contact with one another. Can we imagine that what each teacher does with that other hand is not going to have an impact on the students' lives and their respect for the dharma? If we don't start now to rely more on the suttas' method for evaluating teachers, we'll have to start reinventing the dharma wheel after people get hurt, which would be a great shame.

#### And the other question?

Renunciation. What do we have to give up if we want true happiness? Do we have unlimited time and energy to pursue an unlimited number of goals? Or do we need to sacrifice some of the good things in life in order to gain the most valuable form of happiness? This is a huge blind spot in American Buddhism.

Once, just out of curiosity, I went through a pile of Western dharma books and magazines, looking up the topic of renunciation. Most of them didn't even mention it. From the few that did, I learned that renunciation means, one, giving up unhealthy relationships; two, abandoning your controlling mind-set;

and three, dropping your fear of the unknown. Now, we don't need the Buddha to tell us those things. We can learn the first lesson from our parents, and the other two from a good therapist. But the Buddha recommended giving up a lot of things that most well-meaning parents and therapists would tell their children and patients to hold onto tightly. And yet you don't see any mention of this in American dharma.

#### Is that because Americans tend to live more comfortable lifestyles?

Not necessarily. Modern mass culture, whether Asian or American, is a lot more indulgent than traditional culture, but that may be because it's a lot more frenetic and stressed out as well. The Buddha himself said that, when he was starting out on the path of practice, his heart didn't leap up at the idea of renunciation. Nobody wants to hear that true happiness involves giving up the things we like, but at least in Asia there are dharma masters who, through their words and actions, keep pumping that lesson into the culture. So it's always there for honest, mature, reflective people to hear. But here in the West, the dharma has been so shaped by the marketplace that the lesson is very seldom modeled.

Last year Tricycle printed an article bemoaning how the dharma is being used to sell mass-market commodities, but a deeper problem is that the dharma has become a commodity itself. I was in a bookstore recently with a student, and as we looked at the many shelves filled with books on Buddhism, he asked me, "Do you get the impression that these books were written to make money?" How can you expect to learn the hard lessons of renunciation from a book that had to get past marketing directors and sales reps? And given the financial needs of most teachers, how can you expect even well-meaning teachers not to shape their message to conform with what people want to hear, as opposed to what they should hear?

#### You've written on what you call the "economy of gifts," in which the dharma can be offered freely with no strings attached. How do you think such an economy could be implemented here in America?

It's a long, uphill process, but yes, it can happen. You have to start small—a few good monasteries here and there, a few dana-based organizations such as the Dhamma Dana Publication Fund and now the Dharma Seed Tape Library—and eventually people will catch on to what a good thing it is. Of course, the fact that dharma is free doesn't necessarily guarantee that it's going to be top-quality, but at least it hasn't been filtered through the sort of bottom-line concerns that we needlessly take for granted. It's

only when we appreciate the need to have the bottom line totally out of the picture that American dharma will have a chance to mature. Which makes me wonder if dāna-based dharma will always be something of a fringe phenomenon in our country.

From our discussion so far, you seem to see the Pali suttas as offering not only right questions, but also right answers.

The right answers are the skillful choices you make in your life as you pursue the right questions. I think it was Thomas Pynchon who said, "As long as they can get you to ask the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about the answers." There should be a corollary to that: As long as you honestly stick to the right questions, you're sure to arrive at answers that will make a difference.

Of course, many people in our society are uncomfortable with the notion of right and wrong—especially in the area of religion.

I don't think it's so much that they are uncomfortable with the notion of right and wrong. It's just that they've shifted their reference points. Being judgmental is now wrong; being non-judgmental is right. This, I think, comes from two factors. One is that we're tired of fervid monotheists who demonize anyone who differs from their view of The One True Way. We've seen the harm that comes from sectarian religious strife, and it's obviously pointless. So we want to avoid it at all costs. The other factor is that we ourselves have been subject to evaluation all of our lives, some of it pretty unfair—in school, at work, in our relationships—so when we come to retreats we want respite.

This becomes a problem, though, when people confuse being judgmental with the act of exercising judgment. And again, the difference is a question of skill. Being judgmental—hypercritical, quick to dismiss the opinions of others—is obviously unskillful. But in our rush not to be judgmental, we can't abandon our critical abilities, our powers of judgment. We have to learn how to use them skillfully. It's all very fine not to pass judgment when you're on the sidelines of an issue and don't want to get involved. But here we're all out on the playing field, facing aging, illness, and death. Our skill in exercising judgment is going to make all the difference in whether we win or lose. The team we're facing has never been taught to be uncritical. They play hard, and they play for keeps.

The Buddha himself was quite critical of teachers who wasted their time—and that of their students—by asking the wrong questions. He was especially critical of those who misunderstood the nature of

karma, because how we comprehend the power of our actions is what will make all the difference in how skillfully we choose to think and act. So refraining from judgment is not the answer to the question of how we face the differing teachings we find available. In fact, a knee-jerk non-judgmental stance can often be a very unskillful way of passing judgment.

How so?

It's a refusal to take differences seriously, and that totally short-circuits any attempt to develop skill. You often find this associated with a lowest-common-denominator approach to the truth: the assumption that whatever the major traditions of the world hold in common must be true, while their differences are only cultural trappings. But that's assuming they're all asking the same questions, or that the only important questions are the ones they all ask. Where does that leave people who think outside the box?

I've seen some elaborate attempts to create a perennial philosophy from the common ground of the world's great traditions, but they center on the question, "Who am I?" That, they tell us, is the question at the heart of everyone's spiritual quest. But the training I got from Ajaan Fuang taught me to question the assumption that that's a fruitful line of inquiry. Does the fact that everybody else is asking it mean he was wrong?

Another approach is to assume that all traditions take you to the same place, but that they've found different skillful ways of doing it—the old "many paths lead to the top of the mountain" idea. But the reports we get from people who have been up this mountain say that it has plenty of wrong turns, false summits, and sudden drop-offs. One tradition will say, "When you reach this point, turn left." Another will say, "If you turn left at that point you'll get stuck at a dead-end." If we plan to stay on the valley floor, it's okay for us to stay out of the argument. But can we claim some sort of higher moral ground for not getting involved in the fray? Do we have more

comprehensive maps of the mountain showing that dangers are imaginary, and that left turns and right turns are all okay?

Or suppose that one tradition says, "The summit looks like this." Another says, "No, that's a false summit. The real one looks like this." The first one responds, "No, you're at the false summit." Do we know the limitations of language better than they do, so that we can dismiss their differences as purely linguistic? If we want to go up the mountain, we have to choose one guide or the other—or maybe a third guide, if we decide that the first two were both on the wrong path.

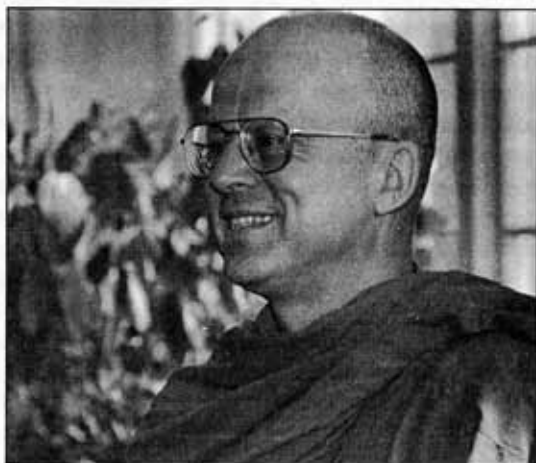
So how would you choose?

One, take a good look at the teachers. If people are skilled mountaineers, they should have no trouble negotiating the valley. Can they get around without injuring themselves or others? Has their experience of the summit been so overwhelming that they're willing to sacrifice personal comfort so that others can get there as well?

Two, look at the tradition. What kinds of questions does it focus on? What kinds does it allow? What kinds does it not allow? Why? Does it encourage the tenacity and maturity needed to stick to a hard line of questioning? Does it foster the kind of ingenious, observant mind that would recognize a false path or figure out a way past an unexpected obstacle?

Finally, take a good look at yourself. Are you up for the adventure? It may sound more than a little intimidating, but the Buddha asked of his students simply that they be honest enough to admit and learn from their mistakes, and sensible enough to give up a lesser happiness when they see that, by doing so, they'll gain a higher one. Are you up to that? If so, you've got what it takes.

*There are dharma books telling us that the purpose of meditation is to answer the question, "Who am I?" But the suttas list this as a fruitless line of inquiry.*







# CURRENT JOB OPENING

## DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Insight Meditation Society  
1230 Pleasant Street  
Barre, MA 01005  
Tel 978-355-4378  
Fax 978-355-6398

The Insight Meditation Society has a challenging and exciting opportunity for an experienced professional as Director of Human Resources.

The Director of Human Resources reports directly to the Executive Director and is responsible for the development and implementation of the human resources management practices affecting volunteer and management staff. This person works in cooperation with the Director of Operations and the Director of Facilities to assist the Executive Director in ensuring that the center is operating within guidelines set by the Board of Directors and the Guiding Teachers. The Director of Human Resources oversees all human resources departmental functions and helps guide organization development and change initiatives.

### The successful candidate will have:

- Demonstrated experience and expertise working within a complex organization
- Skills in leadership, communication and group facilitation
- Experience in multiple facets of human resources management and the ability to discern and balance competing needs within the center
- An understanding of how to manage volunteer staff and foster an effective work environment
- Experience in organization development, particularly managing significant change in workplace practices that impact culture
- An understanding of how to integrate dharma principles into human resources policies and practice

### Qualifications

Deep commitment to the dharma and vipassana practice.

Experience in directing the human resources management functions of a business, non-profit organization or similar enterprise.

Experience in recruitment, retention, training and development of human resources. Training or experience in organization development and conflict resolution is beneficial.

A personal understanding of the integration of dharma practice in everyday life. Open and ready for personal growth that will unfold while working at IMS.

Excellent communications skills, interpersonal skills, good insight into and assessment of human nature.

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

Qualified applicants should send a resume and cover letter to the Executive Director at the above address.

IMS is an equal opportunity employer.



# IMS News Worth Noting

## FOREST REFUGE UPDATE

As you may have read recently in *Insight*, or heard through the grapevine, IMS is in the process of developing a new long-term practice center. This new center, the Forest Refuge, will offer a silent, secluded environment for experienced meditators to undertake extended and uninterrupted practice. It will also be a place where future teachers can be trained, responding to the tremendous growing interest in the Dharma in the West.

Plans for the Forest Refuge are moving right along, although we are not yet sure if we will break ground this year. Our New England climate requires a spring through early autumn start date so the buildings can be closed in by winter. We are not sure we will be ready to launch this year, and so we may start construction in Spring 2001 instead. But whether we start construction this year or next, we should open in 2002.

We also continue to fundraise for the project. Through the extraordinary generosity of many sangha members we have made good progress towards our goal, but still need \$1.4M dollars to bring it to completion.

Sharon and Joseph have two upcoming fundraising events scheduled and others in planning stages. The two Forest Refuge benefits currently scheduled are:

May 20<sup>th</sup> at Spirit Rock Meditation Center  
Woodacre, CA. (415) 488-0164.

July 27<sup>th</sup> by Seattle Insight  
in the Seattle, WA area.

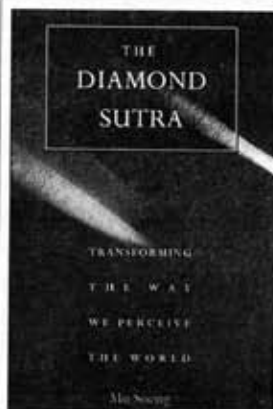
Other events (on the East Coast) are being planned.

More detailed information about these and other events will be forthcoming as plans are finalized. In the meantime, inquiries about or donations to the Forest Refuge may be addressed to:

The Forest Refuge  
1230 Pleasant Street  
Barre, MA 01005  
(978) 724-0113

## NEW DIAMOND SUTRA

The Diamond Sutra is a text highly revered in the East



Asian tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, and has played a pivotal role in the historical unfolding of this great tradition. Within it we find essential teachings on emptiness, as well as teachings on the path of the bodhisattva. As part of the Perfection of Wisdom

(*prajñā-pāramitā*) literature, the Diamond Sutra has emerged from the earliest strata of the Mahayana; yet it is also a text of paramount importance to the latest schools of Zen Buddhism.

In Mu Soeng's exploration of this important sutra, he begins by laying the historical and cultural background for it. This provides a greater context for the understanding of the text itself. In the process of doing so he also sheds some light on the early history

of Buddhism and the birth of different traditions within it. As we live in an age where the walls between the different schools of Buddhism become more permeable, this gives greater clarification to the great history shared by all the traditions.

The second part of the book consists of a translation of the Diamond Sutra itself, along with a commentary that elucidates the essence of the text in light of modern understanding. The sutra is based upon a conversation between The Buddha and one of his disciples, Subhuti, in which they strike to the heart of the Buddha's teachings with the strength of a diamond cutter that "cuts away all unnecessary conceptualization and brings one to the farther shore of awakening." Mu Soeng's commentary draws from a number of existing translations to help illuminate these teachings for the modern day reader, and his use of poetry and stories make this text easily accessible. It leaves us with greater inspiration to come to know for ourselves the truth of these great teachings.

*Reviewed by Myoshin Kelley*

*Mu Soeng is a former Zen monk and is the director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. The Diamond Sutra is published in paperback by Wisdom Publications (Boston).*

## COMING SOON: THE CONNECTED DISCOURSES

Bhikkhu Bodhi, the American-born Theravada monk who has lived in Sri Lanka for most of his life, has completed a new translation of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*--one of the core texts of the Tipiṭaka, or Pali Canon. Anyone who has spent some time with *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* published in 1995 (a translation of the *Majjhima Nikāya* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli that was edited by Bhikkhu Bodhi) will appreciate the significance of this event. Bhikkhu Bodhi's translations are very clear and contemporary, and he provides a wealth of scholarship in his introduction and his appendices that are of great benefit to the general reader.

The existing Pali Text Society translation of this text (*The Book of the Kindred Sayings*) is painfully archaic, having been produced between 1917 and 1930, and this new version will immediately become a treasure trove for all English-speaking students of

dhamma. Published in two volumes by the non-profit dharma publishing house Wisdom Publications (Boston), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* will be released in October, 2000 and will retail for \$120. A special pre-publication offer is available from Wisdom through July 31, offering the texts for \$78 to those who order early.

Joseph Goldstein has said of this work:

"I am eagerly awaiting Bhikkhu Bodhi's new translation of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. His brilliant, scholarly, and eminently readable version of *The Middle Length Discourses* set a benchmark for translations of the Buddha's words into English. This new work will make accessible even more of the original teachings, offering guidance, instruction and inspiration on the path of awakening. It is a priceless gift."

Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm St. Somerville, MA 02144  
www.wisdompubs.org (617) 776-7416



## Lively Purification:

A quarter of a century ago a group of people including Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield decided to create a place for retreat, service, and community life, called the Insight Meditation Society (IMS). What is it that compelled these teachers to live and serve in this dharma community? They saw, like the three hundred or so staff who have followed them over the years, that community life is equally important to sitting on the cushion as a path to awakening. It's a form of "lively purification" where we learn to lose our rough edges.

How is community a path to awakening? First of all, there are the big surprises. Even though each of us comes with a fairly strong sitting practice, we aren't prepared for the hard part...other people. You are breathing, eating, jostling, and living in intimate contact with twenty-five other people you might never have chosen. If you've ever been in a relationship you would know how one person ruffles those sensitive, guarded places where you thought you had it all together. Well...multiply that by 25 and then things really start to get interesting! A potato-cleaning machine is a lot like living in community. A big batch of dirty, muddy potatoes are tossed into a large round metal bin that is



## Staff Dharma at IMS

churned round and round. In the process of the potatoes banging up against each other, they become shiny clean. It is truly lively purification.

In this retreat center one of the dharma challenges is how to live impermanence. One hundred yogis come and go almost every week. Then there is the steady stream of visiting teachers, curious visitors, and staff. In addition to people coming and going, systems come and go: each new face brings a new idea, plan, creation that must be lovingly considered. It soon becomes apparent as part of IMS life, that if you want things to be a certain way...you will suffer. So we learn to relax and live the flow of life.

The second challenge, and probably the most profound from a practice standpoint, is that we are thrown together into a tiny fishbowl where there is nowhere to hide and where every action impacts others. It's such a wonderful lesson for living on this earth which is beginning to feel smaller and more like a fishbowl. In community you quickly see the impact of your anger: everyone hears about it or has feelings about it. It's clear from the start that being impeccable in thoughts, speech and actions is a must.



Over time we begin to see the fruits of our practice in community. There is a deepening tenderness, patience and kindness to oneself and others. We learn to look to the good instead of finding fault. We begin to experience the non-separation of life as opposed to the "you and me" syndrome - how to respond best to a situation so that it benefits all concerned.

In order to support and encourage the unfolding of community life, IMS has wisely provided two resident teachers to guide staff. A typical week of practice here might include twice daily sits, regular individual interviews with a teacher, weekly departmental work-as-practice meetings, and a dharma study program with various teachers. There are also dharma talks most evenings from one of several dozen teachers from all over the world, and near-by is the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, offering classes and scholarly programs all year. There is a wealth of dharma opportunity here.

However, words don't do justice to experiencing community. Our invitation, like the Buddha's so many years ago, is: "Ehi passa! - come and see for yourself!"

*Amy Schmidt (left) and Annie Nugent (right) are the new resident teachers at IMS*





# Dharma Seed

The Archival Center of Western  
Buddhist Vipassana Teachings

*continuing the oral tradition*

## Dharma Seed Tape Library

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"I am very excited to hear the news of Dharma Seed going to full dāna. Horay for you! May your faith and love of dharma bring you all the resources you need and more! Much love and gratitude."

"Thank you for this idea. I love it. Yes, yes, yes. Although I'm not a tape listener, I realize many benefit this way and I'm happy to help."

"It is impossible for me to express fully what a crucial role Dharma Seed has played and is playing still in making my life a quality experience. I cannot conceive of an organization with a more skillful purpose, a more empowering purpose in service to all beings."

"I am very grateful for the many tapes I have purchased from your library. They have really been valuable and meaningful to me. I would be happy to continue sending payment for your tapes in the future."

"Here's my contribution to the 'Millenium of Dāna.' What a wonderful and important thing you all are doing. I wish I could offer more."

"What a great treasure to know that dharma practice has become strong enough for this new step."

"What a great program! I wish I could send more--and would if I had it. Truly the dharma is the greatest gift of all."

"Thanks for all your years of service. Here's a contribution to help move toward a dana model."

"Just wanted to say thanks for being there. Living out in the middle of nowhere, having access to Dharma Seed tapes made a real big difference for me in my practice."

"Thank you for your free offering of the oral dharma teachings. In the spirity of dāna, I want to make my modest contribution."

"Dear friends, Your new concept for the tape library is exceptionally fine...and embracing. It's quite clearly leading with love. Unfortunately I cannot donate as much as I'd truly like to (unemployed senior with eight offspring)."

"I think your idea of distributing dharma tapes freely is wonderful! May your approach to dharma catch on with the entire community. Please accept this donation towards the realization of your heart/mind inspired vision."

"A wonderful vision! Thank you for making the dharma available at no cost."

"Here's a contribution to your wonderfully inspiring effort to provide dharma tapes free of charge."

"I received a letter from you about the idea to give free dharma talks in the new year. At present I am too poor to offer financial aid...But your idea is so intriguing and courageous that I want to keep in touch with what you are doing."

"To all at Dharma Seed: I am so inspired and delighted by your vision and action! Wishing you a fountain of blessings."

"Slowly the world gains liberation. Thanks for your work."

## DĀNA!

The Dharma Seed Tape Library has taken a bold step towards embracing the ancient Buddhist teaching of DĀNA or generosity.

All dharma talks by vipassana teachers at IMS, Spirit Rock and other retreat centers that are recorded in the new millenium (after January 1, 2000) are now offered freely and without charge.

We at Dharma Seed believe that these teachings are precious beyond cost and should be made freely available to anyone who wants to hear them.

We trust the voluntary generosity of the sangha to contribute what is needed to meet the basic operating costs of our non-profit organization, through which these talks are taped, archived, duplicated and distributed.

Here is a sampling from the truly heartening response to this initiative that Dharma Seed has received from the community over the last few months.



## Phil Aranow

1947-2000

*Phil Aranow, one of the founders and president of the Cambridge-based Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy, has been a close associate of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies for several years. In addition to teaching regularly in the Buddhist Psychology program, Phil has been a long-time meditator at the Insight Meditation Society, and has contributed in many intangible ways to the growth of the dharma in New England, and in particular to the creative integration of vipassana meditation practice and the healing arts of psychotherapy and psychological education.*

*On February 18, 2000, after participating in a conference in Florida, Phil was killed when a fifteen-year-old unlicensed driver strayed across the median and struck his car head-on. His wife was badly injured but is recovering, and, thankfully, his two children (aged three and five) who were in the back seat, survived without physical injury. The other driver received minor injuries.*

*Many in the local community of meditators and practicing psychologists are mourning this tragic loss of one of our brightest lights. The remarks below are excerpted from the last teaching offered by Phil at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, on December 9, 1999, as part of the five-day residential program on Buddhist Psychology.*

There is a Leonard Cohen song I remember, with a verse that goes something like this:

*Even though it all goes wrong  
I'll stand before the Lord of Song,  
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah!*

This phrase evokes for me the image of a deep level of confidence in the nature of things, a confidence that I have experienced and have cultivated through my practice of dharma. In the jargon of analytic theory it is called "object constancy." Erickson would call it "basic trust;" Winnicott would call it "the presence of the mother;" and Paul Tillich refers to it as "faith."

It boils down to a basic trust that, even if you might happen to feel miserable at the time, the world is fine; the world, in fact, is great. If ever you can experience this basic confidence or trust, then you know you are not totally cut off from it all—you are still, in some important way, connected.

This actually represents a great deal of progress along the path. We are all saner, nicer and feel better as well when we are in touch with that—the basic confidence that even if we are feeling all mucked-

up and lost, yet somehow underneath these surface perceptions it is all fine and we are still connected.

Most of the time we are screening ourselves from our direct experience of the world. That is what delusion is all about—our various mediation and coping strategies for screening out what we find uncomfortable to deal with. More often than not, it is our thoughts we are eating, not our food.

Then from time to time, during meditation but also outside a meditative context, that active process may stop for a moment. And what is our experience when it stops? There is a sense of contact, a sense of intimacy, a sense of appreciation—in short, there is a response. For example: I am talking here, and you are sitting there—and for just a tiny second, I notice there is a little reflection of the window behind me in my tea cup here.

It is just a little moment, a little "pop." Some people call it a "vipassana moment." It's not like the "BOOM" of a wonderful, revolutionary insight (though it can be at times). And it's not the "BABOOOOOM" of what we think full scale liberation ought to be. There is just this modest moment of "aaah" that takes a second—or even a tenth of a second. But when

you experience this moment you somehow feel better, you understand a little more deeply, you feel somehow more connected to it all.

One might argue that this is a lot of what meditation is all about. It involves a training to notice when this happens spontaneously. You learn to pick up on what is happening a little bit more. And you might even then react to it, because it is nice, and try to extend it. Maybe I'll look at the cup again...

Isn't this the pay-off of meditation practice, if you are not a monk or a nun? Isn't the pay-off that you have more of these little moments—these moments of seeing things differently, of feeling things more intimately, of connecting more directly to the experiences that are not centered around ourselves and our desires and our attachments?

This is actually all you need to start making life better already. Some teachers even say that these tiny, instantaneous moments of awakening are the same as the full-scale, big thing. It is just our deluded, attached mind that makes us want it more, bigger, better.

But you've already got it, actually. (Snaps fingers). It's right here, right now.



## Meditating With Mosquito

Can't get him out of the room.  
 Buzzing and flying he keeps me  
 from my cushion.  
 Finally I surrender. I'm on cushion  
 he's on wall under Gury Rimpoche.  
 He doesn't move. I sit checking  
 occasionally to make sure he's practicing.  
 He hasn't moved. I have. My eyes  
 my mind is he is still there.  
 As long as he's on wall I'm safe.  
 My now was clouded by the  
 future flight of mosquito. That  
 future lasted an hour and a half  
 he was still there.

*Manus Campbell*

## About Silence

How do I write about silence?  
 How do I write a poem  
 when the stillness pervades  
 and no thought catches  
 the mind's eye?  
 How do I write  
 about descending into deep peace?

Do I talk  
 about the endless cobalt  
 of the morning  
 just before the sun  
 rises over the Sangres?  
 Or the way the cat  
 fits herself across my chest  
 paws draped over my shoulders like a shawl?  
 Do I speak of the no-sound  
 when the refrigerator stops humming?

Silence, the science of stillness  
 when I and thou  
 become one  
 and naming  
 becomes irrelevant.

*Lorraine Schechter*

## Meditation

I turn off the senses in search of release  
 attempt to create a lovely cocoon  
 as long as there's breathing there can be no peace

The thoughts slow down but never cease  
 the dramas unfold like a bad cartoon  
 I turn off the sense in search of release

Frustration builds, anxieties increase  
 for as sure as the tide will follow the moon  
 as long as there's breathing there can be no peace

I put in a call to the Buddhist police  
 who say, "You're giving up too soon  
 Turn off the senses in search of release."

But the mind moves like an untamed beast  
 a sparrow, a stallion, a mouse, a baboon  
 as long as there's breathing there can be no peace

Maybe I need a vacation in Nice  
 or a cup of tea and a macaroon  
 I turn off the senses in search of release  
 as long as there's breathing there can be no peace

*Tom Padulla*



## Papañca

Night's heat has met cold dawn  
 A thick fog lays over the land  
 Unseen each particle of liquidity  
 Scatters morning light  
 A myriad ways in space  
 Now seen  
 Now unseen  
 Diffuses.  
 Papañca is the world.

*Irene Pandittesekera*

## Untitled

you will not  
 be able

to stop  
 this world still  
 with a hand

or  
 chase a foe  
 with a tongue

you may not out-run  
 feared pursuers

or expel hatred  
 from the bowel

or keep love  
 true with passion

yet  
 the heart  
 will ease the  
 shaking madness  
 of this place

coax  
 the mind  
 from meanness

dissuade  
 the enemy

the heart will catch and liberate  
 the fear which pursues you

the truth  
 is here

where a love  
 without longing  
 awaits your embrace

*Hilary Nudell*



## Follow Me

Don't follow that thought. You know the one I'm talking about. The one you love to follow. It always comes to you. It loves to take you for a ride. It's subtle and tantalizing. It pretends it doesn't care if you follow it or not.

Won't even look back to see if you are there. It knows. You just perked up. This must have some kind of meaning this thought. What is it trying to tell me. Follow me.

*Manus Campbell*

Friday, 12/2/99 8:15 pm

During the 6:15 sit something happened that I had read about previously but never experienced. My mind has been relatively still during the sittings of the last few days. At one point I began to notice the noise and vibrations of a machine, probably something to do with the heating or plumbing. It droned on and on vibrating noisily. Irritation arose and grew stronger and stronger. I tried to fight off the intrusion of the sound and discipline myself to return to the breath, sinking into the familiar feeling that something was wrong. The noise and vibration just rumbled on and on! There was no escape, although I wanted to flee.

In an earlier interview Taraniya had suggested looking at the source of irritation when it arose. That thought now came into consciousness. I began to look at the anger. I felt really pissed. I sat with that anger and watched it grow. Watched it. Held it. Noted it. Noted the aversion. I worked with the aversion as Taraniya had suggested.

At a certain point I felt a mental "crack," a decisive shift. The enchantment broke. The boiler rumbled on and on, but it no longer irritated me. I noticed the sounds and the vibrations. I still heard them. It just didn't matter.

I sat with focus and concentration, experiencing spaciousness and joy. Five or ten minutes later, the machine jolted to a halt. It didn't matter.

*Arnold Clayton*

softness settles  
where tension raged  
silence sits  
where action blazed  
wonder swells  
where passion swayed  
wisdom dwells  
where fiction played

*Arlene Weiland*

## Morning Meditations

I

The Rising Sun  
Touches  
And

Trees Release  
Their Shadows  
To the Dawn

II

The heart breaks  
And opens;  
Its sparks ascend the ladder

With song.

III

In concert,  
We listen  
To the silence of our Breath--

My fingers reveal their palms.

IV

Pillows bloom like buds  
In the green foyer.

They feed our eyes with spring.

*Rosie Rosenzweig*

The unspoken things

that are essential...



only be passed directly



from one person to another  
as they work together...

Kubota Yasuichi  
*Japanese Papermaker*

## Serve at IMS

### Upcoming Openings in:

- Houskeeping
- Front Office
- Kitchen

### Contact: Recruitment Manager

(978) 355-4378 Ext. 31

(978) 355-6398 Fax

personnel@dharma.org

## Serving the Dharma

### FAMILY RETREAT

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

These people should have experience in meditation and in working with children. Would you consider volunteering to be a group leader? If so, please call IMS at: 978-355-4378.

### YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT

The annual Young Adults Retreat (June 23-27, 2000) is an event requiring considerable supervision.

We are in need of volunteers to lead discussion groups and activity groups.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact IMS at 978-355-4378

**dharma.org**

a combined www page for:

**Insight Meditation**

**Society**

and

**Barre Center**

**for Buddhist Studies**

with links to:

**Dharma Seed Tape Library**

**Vipassana Retreat Centers**

**Teacher Web Pages**

**Access To Insight**

and other sites

of possible interest to

the vipassana meditation community



# INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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

The Insight Meditation Society was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide a place for the intensive practice of insight meditation. IMS operates a retreat center which is set on 160 wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts. It provides a secluded environment for intensive meditation practice. Complete silence is maintained during retreats at all times except during teacher interviews.

Vipassana Retreats are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. Daily instruction in meditation and nightly Dharma talks are given, and individual or group interviews are arranged with the teachers at regular intervals. A typical daily schedule starts at 5 AM and ends at 10 PM. The entire day is spent in silent meditation practice with alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation. This regular

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

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

## IMS offers several forms of individual retreat:

• **Self-Retreat:** If space is available for an entire retreat, otherwise between retreats. A self-retreat may consist of any number of days not to exceed the longest period of teacher-led retreat sat by the student at IMS. During this time, meditators are expected to practice in silence, observe the five precepts and maintain a continuity of practice throughout the day. Self-retreats are charged at \$38 per day and require a separate application form.

• **Work Retreats:** Work retreats provide a unique opportunity to explore the integration of mindfulness

practice with work activity. The daily schedule combines periods of formal meditation practice with five hours of work in silence in one of the IMS departments. Participation is limited to experienced meditators only and requires a high degree of self-reliance. Work retreatants are expected to come at least one day before opening day and stay at least one day after closing day. The work can be physically demanding at times. Work retreats require a separate application form. They are offered without a daily fee and require a \$25 nonrefundable application processing fee. A work retreat is not meant to take the place of a scholarship. Write or call (ask for ext. #19) to request program information and an application.

• **Long-Term Practice:** For those wishing to do long-term meditation practice of 118 days or more, IMS has available a limited number of scholarships in the form of reduced daily rate after the 84th day. Practice guidelines are similar to those for shorter individual retreats with an additional emphasis on self-reliance. Long-term practice requires the prior consent of two teachers. Those interested should contact the office for an application form and limited available dates.

• **Scholarships:** It is our wish that anyone who would like to practice here be able to do so regardless of financial situation. Please refer to the registration page (p. 21) or call IMS for more information about our generous scholarship program.



# IMS RETREAT SCHEDULE 2000

**Insight Meditation Society**  
 1230 Pleasant Street  
 Barre, MA 01005  
 Tel: (978) 355-4378



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

**Feb 4 - 11**  
 (Fri-Fri)

## **METTA RETREAT (7 days)**

**JS1    Deposit \$150    Cost \$270**

Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien  
 Metta is the Pali word for friendship or loving-kindness. Classically, it is taught as a practice along with meditations cultivating compassion, rejoicing in the happiness of others (appreciative joy), and equanimity. They are practiced to develop concentration, fearlessness, happiness, and a loving heart. This course is devoted to cultivating these qualities.

Susan O'Brien has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1980 and has studied with a variety of teachers.  
**Note:** A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 5, 1999 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.

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

## **VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days)**

**JS2    Deposit \$150    Cost \$335**

Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien  
 This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (loving-kindness) meditation. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the quality of precise open awareness as a way of deepening the wisdom and compassion within us.

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

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

## **METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days)**

**JS3    Deposit \$150    Cost \$540**

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

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

**Feb 25-28**  
 (Fri-Mon)

## **INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (3 days)**

**ROD    Deposit \$150    Cost \$150**

Rodney Smith & Narayan Liebenson Grady

The way of meditation is the way of the heart. This retreat will focus on the path of the heart, and how awareness gives access to the joys and sorrows of life with ever-increasing sensitivity, stability and love. Special attention will be given to the role of nature in our spiritual journey.



<b>Mar 4-11</b> (Sat-Sat)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)</b> Larry Rosenberg & Michael Liebenson Grady The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without judgment. Sitting and walking meditation, the first step in formal practice, becomes the foundation and continuous inspiration for meeting all aspects of life with a greater openness and willingness to learn. The ordinary activities of retreat life become a part of the practice because the challenges they offer help us develop the art of mindful living.	<b>LR1</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$270</b>
<b>Mar 17-19</b> (Fri-Sun)	<b>VIPASSANA WEEKEND (2 days)</b> Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady Through direct and simple practice of open-hearted attention, this retreat nurtures our innate capacity for awakening and inner freedom. Emphasis is placed on developing wise and gentle effort in sitting and walking practice, as well as in all activities throughout the day.	<b>NM</b>	<b>Deposit \$120</b>	<b>Cost \$120</b>
<b>Mar 25-Apr 1</b> (Sat-Sat)	<b>WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days)</b> Christina Feldman & Narayan Liebenson Grady In the annual gathering of women at IMS, insight meditation is the vehicle used to develop calmness and clarity, wisdom and compassion, openness and vision. This retreat is an opportunity for women to focus on a spiritual path free of dichotomies as well as spiritual, social and psychological conditioning. There is a full daily schedule of meditation and silence, as well as small group meetings.	<b>WOM</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$270</b>
<b>Apr 7-16</b> (Fri-Sun)	<b>BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days)</b> Ajahn Candasiri & Amaravati Sangha This retreat is an opportunity to explore some of the more traditional aspects of Theravada Buddhism. Along with the cultivation of meditation practices, we examine how qualities such as generosity, renunciation and devotion can enhance and broaden our appreciation of the Buddha's dispensation. May the experience of these qualities have direct relevance to our everyday lives after leaving the retreat. <small>Note: Retreat participants are requested to keep the 8 monastic precepts, which include not eating after noon. Candles and incense will be burned during the early morning and evening pujas.</small>	<b>AV</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$335</b>
<b>Apr 22-30</b> (Sat-Sun)	<b>INSIGHT MEDITATION AND INQUIRY (8 days)</b> Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell & Sally Clough This retreat consists of sustained silent meditation, deep inquiry into our life experiences, and realization into the nature of things. It provides the opportunity to free the mind from the influence of tensions and negative patterns, and for the heart's awakening to immensity. Sally Clough has been practicing vipassana since 1981. Trained by Jack Kornfield, she has led meditation classes and assisted on retreats since 1994.	<b>CT1</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$305</b>
<b>May 6-13</b> (Sat-Sat)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)</b> Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady Through direct and simple practice of open-hearted attention, this retreat nurtures our innate capacity for awakening and inner freedom. Emphasis is placed on developing wise and gentle effort in sitting and walking practice, as well as in all activities throughout the day.	<b>NLG</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$270</b>
<b>May 19-21</b> (Fri-Sun)	<b>WEEKEND RETREAT (2 days)</b> Steven Smith and Rebecca Bradshaw This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the simple and direct awareness practice taught by the Buddha. Each individual is encouraged to find a balance in his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily loving-kindness practice is also included. Rebecca Bradshaw has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1983 and teaching since 1993, including classes and retreats for Spanish speaking individuals, Christians, and youth.	<b>SMW</b>	<b>Deposit \$120</b>	<b>Cost \$120</b>



<b>May 26-Jun 3</b> (Fri-Sat)	<b>METTA RETREAT (8 days)</b> Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw Metta is the practice of friendship or loving-kindness. It is cultivated as a meditation and a way of life along with compassion, joy and equanimity. These practices strengthen self-confidence, self-acceptance, and a steadiness of mind and heart, revealing our fundamental connectedness to all life. Marvin Belzer has practiced vipassana since 1982, studying primarily with Sayadaw U Pandita since 1986. He teaches philosophy at Bowling Green University.	<b>SM1</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$305</b>
<b>Jun 3-13</b> (Sat-Tue)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (10 days)</b> Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the simple and direct awareness practice taught by the Buddha. Each individual is encouraged to find a balance in his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily loving-kindness practice is also included.	<b>SM2</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$360</b>
<b>May 26-Jun 13</b> (Fri-Tue)	<b>METTA &amp; VIPASSANA RETREAT (18 days)</b> Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien, Marvin Belzer & Rebecca Bradshaw	<b>SM3</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$600</b>
<b>Jun 23-27</b> (Fri-Tue)	<b>YOUNG ADULT RETREAT (4 days)</b> Michele McDonald-Smith with Marvin Belzer, Rebecca Bradshaw & Ed Hauben This retreat is specifically for teenagers. It will offer beginning meditation instruction, half-hour sitting and walking periods, discussions, stories, and free time. The aim is to allow young adults to discover, develop and value their natural spirituality with a tremendous amount of support. Extensive supervision will be provided. For ages 14-19 only. Ed Hauben is a long term vipassana meditation practitioner and friend of IMS. Ed has served on the IMS board and has assisted with the Family and Young Adults retreats for the past 20 years.	<b>YA</b>	<b>Deposit \$180</b>	<b>Cost \$180</b>
<b>Jul 1-8</b> (Sat-Sat)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days)</b> Christina Feldman & Rodney Smith An opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom and compassion in a supportive environment. Emphasis is placed upon developing sensitivity attention and awareness in sitting and walking meditation to foster our innate gifts of inner listening, balance and understanding. Silence, meditation, instruction and evening talks are integral parts of this retreat.	<b>CF1</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$270</b>
<b>Jul 15-22</b> (Sat-Sat)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT—For Experienced Students (7 days)</b> Larry Rosenberg & Corrado Pensa The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without judgment. Sitting and walking meditation, the first step in formal practice, becomes the foundation and continuous inspiration for meeting all aspects of life with a greater openness and willingness to learn. The ordinary activities of retreat life become a part of the practice because the challenges they offer help us develop the art of mindful living. <i>Retreatants are required to have sat at least two week-long retreats at IMS. This must be documented on the registration form.</i>	<b>LR2</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$270</b>
<b>Jul 31-Aug 5</b> (Mon-Sat)	<b>FAMILY RETREAT (5 days)</b> Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig & Anna Klegon This course explores integrating meditation and family life. In a less formal atmosphere, a full program of sitting, discussions, family meditations, and talks is offered. Childcare is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers. Anna Klegon has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1976 in the Zen and vipassana traditions. She teaches yoga and lives with her husband and two children in Newton, Massachusetts. <b>Note:</b> Due to the popularity of this course all applications received on or before February 25, 2000 will be processed in the following manner: half of available places will be reserved for families who have attended this course 3 out of the past 5 years and allocated on a "first received" basis. The remaining places will be filled by lottery. Each family unit pays a minimum of an additional \$35 for professional child care coordination. You <b>MUST</b> specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.	<b>FAM</b>	<b>Cost Adult \$210 Deposit \$100 per adult</b>	<b>Child \$60</b>



<b>Aug 11-19</b> (Fri-Sat)	<b>BORN ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1956 OR AFTER RETREAT</b> (8 days) Christopher Titmuss, Sharda Rogell & Mark Coleman	<b>CT2</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$305</b>
	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. Mark Coleman has been engaged in Buddhist practice since 1984 and has taught meditation in UK, USA and India. He teaches meditation to youth at risk and is taking an MA in psychology.			
<b>Aug 25-27</b> (Fri-Sun)	<b>DANA RETREAT</b> (2 days) Bhante Gunaratana		<b>DANA Deposit &amp; Cost:</b>	<b>Donation</b>
	This retreat is offered by IMS to affirm the spirit of giving. There is no fixed course fee; participants are encouraged to offer whatever contribution fits their means. Priority will be given to those who, for financial reasons, are unable to attend courses with fixed course rates.			
<b>Sep 1-4</b> (Fri-Mon)	<b>LABOR DAY WEEKEND</b> (3 days) Ruth Denison	<b>RD1</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$150</b>
<b>Sep 1-10</b> (Fri-Sun)	<b>VIPASSANA RETREAT</b> (9 days) Ruth Denison	<b>RD2</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$335</b>
	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.			
<b>Sep20-Dec13</b> (Wed-Wed)	<b>THREE MONTH RETREAT</b> (84 days)	<b>3MO</b>	<b>Deposit \$750</b>	<b>Cost \$2,700</b>
<b>Sep 20-Nov 1</b> (Wed-Wed)	<b>PARTIAL #1</b> (42 days)	<b>PART1</b>	<b>Deposit \$350</b>	<b>Cost \$1,400</b>
<b>Nov 1-Dec 13</b> (Wed-Wed)	<b>PARTIAL #2</b> (42 days) Joseph Goldstein (all 3 months); Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson & Myoshin Kelley (1st half only); Sharon Salzberg, Steve Armstrong, Kamala Masters & Marcia Rose (2nd half only).	<b>PART2</b>	<b>Deposit \$350</b>	<b>Cost \$1,400</b>
	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. <i>Prerequisite is three retreats of a week or more in duration with an IMS teacher or special permission. This retreat experience, including teachers names, dates and lengths of retreats, must be documented on the registration form.</i> Special cancellation fees and deadlines apply for this retreat. 3MO and PART 1: Up to March 1, \$50; from March 1 to April 15, \$150; after April 15, full deposit. PART 2: Up to April 15, \$50; from April 15 to June 1, \$150; after June 1, full deposit. <i>Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before January 15, 2000 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.</i>			
<b>Dec 28-Jan 6</b> (Thu-Sat)	<b>NEW YEAR'S RETREAT</b> (9 days) Jack Kornfield, Rodney Smith & others	<b>NY</b>	<b>Deposit \$150</b>	<b>Cost \$335</b>
	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. <i>Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before February 15, 2000 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case. Places will be reserved for those who have sat this course three or more times in the last five years. If you meet this criteria, please let us know on your registration form.</i>			



## SENIOR DHARMA TEACHERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Narayan Liebenson Grady is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center where she has taught since 1985. She is the author of *When Singing, Just Sing: Life As Meditation*.

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

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

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



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

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

Sharon Salzberg is a co-founder of IMS and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. She has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970 and has been teaching worldwide since 1974. She is a guiding teacher at IMS and the author of *Lovingkindness* and *A Heart As Wide As The World*. The newly-published *Voices of Insight* is edited by her.

Rodney Smith has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975 including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching since 1984 and worked full time in hospice care for 14 years. Currently he works on end-of-life issues in Seattle and conducts meditation classes and retreats around the country. He is the author of *Lessons From the Dying*.

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

Christopher Titmuss gives teachings worldwide concerned with spiritual realization and insight meditation. He is the author, among other books, of *Light on Enlightenment*, *Freedom of the Spirit*, *The Profound and the Profane*, *Fire Dance and Other Poems*, and *The Green Buddha*. He is a co-founder of Gaia House and lives in Totnes, England.

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

## ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

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

Myoshin Kelley has been practicing meditation for over 20 years. During this time she has done intensive practice in Burma and more recently at IMS where she has trained as a teacher.

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

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

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

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

## RESIDENT TEACHERS

Annie Nugent has been practicing in the Theravada and Tibetan traditions since 1979.

Amy Schmidt has been practicing vipassana for sixteen years and teaching for six years. She has lived in a variety of spiritual communities including a Buddhist monastery. She is also a licensed clinical social worker with a specialty in Alzheimer's Disease.



## Registrations:

- Are accepted only by mail or in person, not by phone, fax or e-mail. Incomplete registrations (including those without sufficient deposit) will be returned for completion.
- Are processed on a "first received" basis or lottery (see course descriptions). Processing order is not affected by scholarships.
- A confirmation letter or wait-list letter will be sent out as soon as your registration is processed; processing may be delayed by volume of registrations at the start of the year.
- All retreatants are expected to participate in the entire course: late arrivals who do not notify the office in advance cannot be guaranteed a spot; exceptions (for emergency or medical reasons) must be approved by IMS.
- Retreats involve a one-hour work period each day.
- For an information sheet about the IMS environment as regards chemical sensitivities, contact the office.
- Participation in retreats is always at the discretion of IMS.

## Wait List

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

## Payments:

- The cost of each retreat and the deposit required are listed by the course on the retreat schedule.
- If you are applying for a scholarship, the minimum deposit for a weekend course is \$25; for up to 26 days, \$50; and for PT1, PT2, and 3MO full deposit.
- Please pay by check or money order in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. or Canadian bank. We cannot accept credit cards or foreign drafts (Canadian drafts must say: US Funds).
- If possible please prepay the entire retreat cost.
- Checks are cashed only when the registration is confirmed or when you include a donation. If you are put on a waiting list, your check will be cashed if you are confirmed. If you don't get into a course, your check will be destroyed.

## Cancellation:

- If you need to cancel your registration, please let us know as early as possible. Cancellation fees are \$25 six or more weeks before a course starts, \$100 four to six weeks before, and full deposit if later than that. Special fees and/or dates apply for FAM, PT1, PT2 and 3MO. (See course schedule for details).

**All cancellation fees are donated  
to the scholarship fund.**

# IMS Registration Form

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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

Course Code \_\_\_\_\_ Course Cost \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of deposit enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Have you been to IMS before? YES / NO

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check here \_\_\_\_\_ if new address. Old Address \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ M/F \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_ Do your snore? \_\_\_\_\_ Dates you will be here: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

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

Can you offer a ride? YES / NO

Retreat Experience (for LR2, PT1, PT2, 3MO). Please list

teacher name, dates and locations. Attach extra paper if necessary: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use Only  
Date Received:

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

# BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

The **Barre Center for Buddhist Studies** is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to bringing together teachers, students, scholars and practitioners who are committed to exploring Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, faithful to its origins and lineage, yet adaptable and alive in the current world. The center's purpose is to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight. It encourages engagement with the tradition in a spirit of genuine inquiry and investigation.



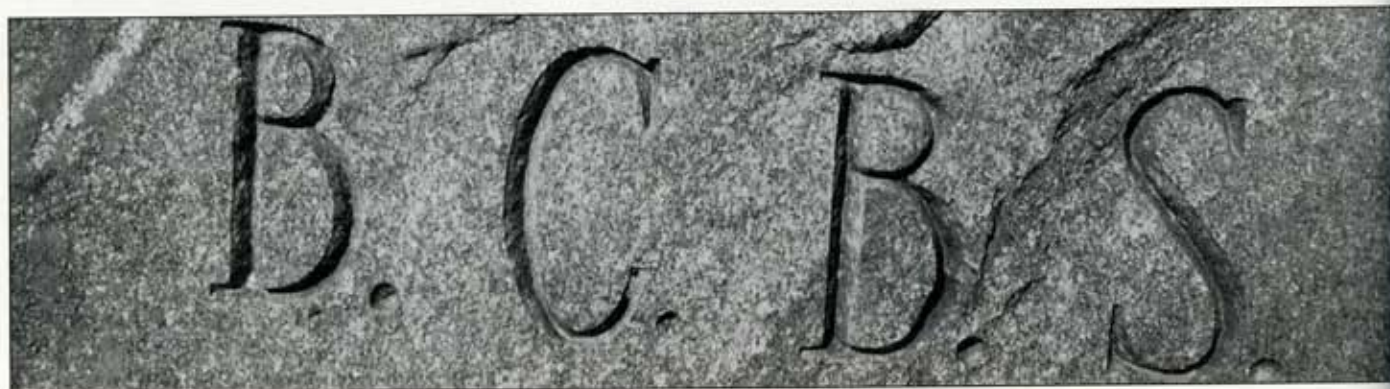
The study center offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats and independent study programs. Emerging from the teaching tradition of IMS, the study center program is rooted in the classical Buddhist tradition of the earliest teachings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



The study center is located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, just a half mile from the Insight Meditation Society (IMS). BCBS provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teachings. A 225-year-old farmhouse holds a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A dormitory and classroom/meditation hall provides space for larger workshops and more course participants, and three cottages provide secluded space for independent study.



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





# BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

The study center in Barre offers a variety of programs from a wide range of visiting faculty, covering a diversity of topics of interest to students of the Buddhist tradition and of meditation practice. Most programs are one-day or weekend offerings, though some are for one week or two weeks. We can host about 20 people for the longer residential courses, 45 people for weekends, and up to about 90 people for popular one-day programs. Although not a degree-granting institution, many people can get academic and professional credits from their home institutions for programs attended in Barre. Course offerings for the year 2000 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 29.

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



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



The **Cambridge Campus** of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, located about mid-way between CIMC and the Harvard Divinity School at 1531 Cambridge Street, consists of a single building that holds a medium-sized meeting room, classroom and meditation hall on one floor, with offices, entry area and informal meeting space on another floor. The Cambridge program focuses on small, advanced-study groups integrating the meditation, university and professional communities.



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



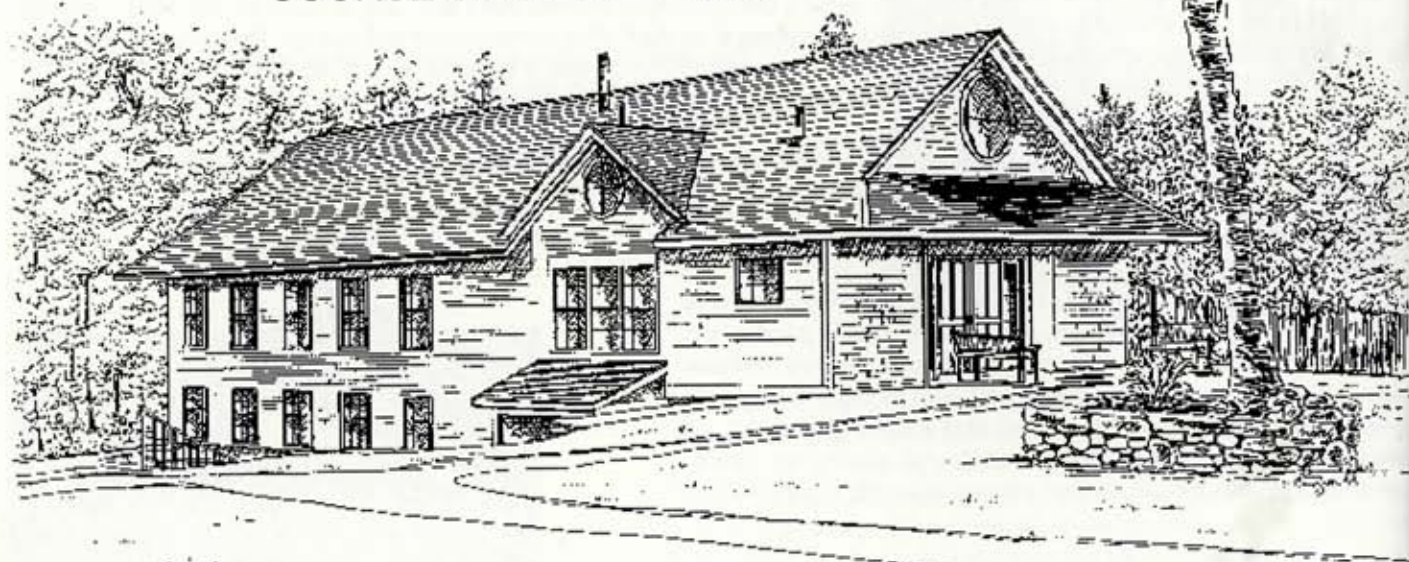
**Dhamma Dāna Publications** is a publishing program coordinated by the study center that prints high-quality Dhamma books for free distribution. So far we have published five books that remain in print and a number of other manuscripts are being prepared. This program also operates entirely by *dāna*.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





# Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

## COURSE SCHEDULE 2000



**May 7-12**  
(5 Days)

### Essentials of Buddhist Psychology

Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty

2000-PS1 \$300

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

**May 13**  
(Saturday)

### Mindfulness and Education: Integration of Learning and Wisdom

Claire Stanley

2000-CS \$45

As our ideas about education and educators come under closer scrutiny, is it possible to bring aspects of wisdom and ethics as taught in vipassana (insight) meditation to our current exploration? The challenge for educators and learners is to have a reflective practice that allows us to see things clearly, to accept them, and to respond to each situation with wisdom and compassion. This workshop consists of didactic presentations, discussions, and experiential practices to develop an awakened approach in the classroom and daily life.

**May 20-28**  
(8 Days)

### Nālanda Program: Vājrayāna Studies

John Makransky and Visiting Faculty

2000-VAJ \$400

The genius of Vājrayāna (Tantric) Buddhism lies in the diversity of its methods for rapid identification with Buddhahood in all dimensions. This course begins with exploration of the development of Vājrayāna Buddhism as a movement of late Indian Mahāyāna profoundly influential upon Tibet. It then explores ancient and contemporary Tibetan writings: a systematic treatise of thought and practice from a Tantric perspective, sacred biographies of Tantric masters, spontaneous Tantric songs, and manuals of visionary experience. Each day, basic meditations of the traditions under study are integrated with classroom studies.

**June 3-10**  
(7 Days)

### Bhāvana Program: Understanding Selflessness (anattā)

Andrew Olendzki and Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia)

2000-BH2 \$350

Using the depth of silence provided by the Bhāvana Program model of study/retreat, we will investigate the central Buddhist teaching of non-self (anattā). Each morning a carefully chosen selection of Buddhist texts with key passages addressing the theme of selflessness is reviewed, to inform and guide the rest of the day's silent meditation practice. Individual interviews by an experienced meditation teacher and an evening dharma talk are also included in the program. This format has shown itself to be a fruitful way for experienced students and meditators to investigate more closely the core teachings of the Buddha in the context of contemplative practice.



**June 18-30**  
(2 Weeks)

**Nālanda Program: Theravāda Studies**

Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty

**2000-THINT \$750**

This program undertakes an in-depth exploration of the inner architecture of the classical Theravāda teachings. Intensive study of the Pali suttas, including some introduction to the Pali language, allows participants to solidify their understanding of the historical Buddha's teachings as rooted in the canonical literature of Theravāda Buddhism. Morning sessions are spent examining historical and cultural issues such as the world into which the Buddha was born and lived, his biography and personality, and a systematic exploration of the major doctrines of early Buddhism. Special attention will be given to Buddhist psychology and the applicability of these teachings to modern life. Afternoons are spent following up these themes with a close and careful reading of primary texts from the Pali Tipiṭaka.

**July 1**  
(Saturday)

**Wisdom of the Dying**

Rodney Smith

**2000-RS \$45**

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

**July 9-21**  
(2 Weeks)

**Nālanda Program: Mahāyāna Studies**

Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty

**2000-MHINT \$750**

The themes of Mahāyāna Buddhism initially introduced in the January Nālanda Program are expanded upon in this exploration of the vast range of Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings as they developed in India and other countries of Asia. Course topics include several Prajñāparamitā texts; the two major schools of Mādhyamika philosophy; and the teachings of the Yogācāra school. We study the rise of major Buddhist schools in China (Pure Land, Ch'an, T'ien-t'ai and the Hua-yen) and Japan (Kegon, Shingon, Tendai and Zen). The course culminates with a look at the arrival and interface of these Mahāyāna lineages in contemporary American culture.

**July 21-23**  
(Weekend)

**Buddhist Thought and Freudian Psychology**

Ven. Punnañi Mahathera

**2000-PM \$120**

Freud, Adler and Fromm outlined some insightful and valuable clues to the nature of mind. In this workshop we explore how the Buddha's teaching sheds new light on these psychological systems, particularly as regards the question of being and becoming. We also look at how the language and outlook of Freud especially can provide a new way of looking at the hinderances (kilesas) and the nature of mental culture. All of our explorations are within the context of our meditation practice.

**July 28-30**  
(Weekend)

**Shin Buddhism: Lay Person's Path to Liberation**

Taitetsu Unno

**2000-TU \$120**

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

**Sept. 2**  
(Saturday)

**Dependent Origination: Mahānidāna Sutta**

Bhante Gunaratana Mahathera

**2000-BG \$45**

Dependent Origination is one of the two cardinal teachings of the Buddha. Our discussion is based mainly on the Mahānidāna Sutta (The Great Discourse on Origination) from the Dīgha Nikāya. This one-day course emphasizes the key points of the sutta and differences between this sutta and the popular standard formula of Dependent Origination. The discussion also includes the main teaching of the Buddha and some commentarial material relevant to our discussion.

**Sept. 9**  
(Saturday)

**Bodhicitta: The Heart-Mind of Awakening**

Joseph Goldstein

**2000-JG \$45**

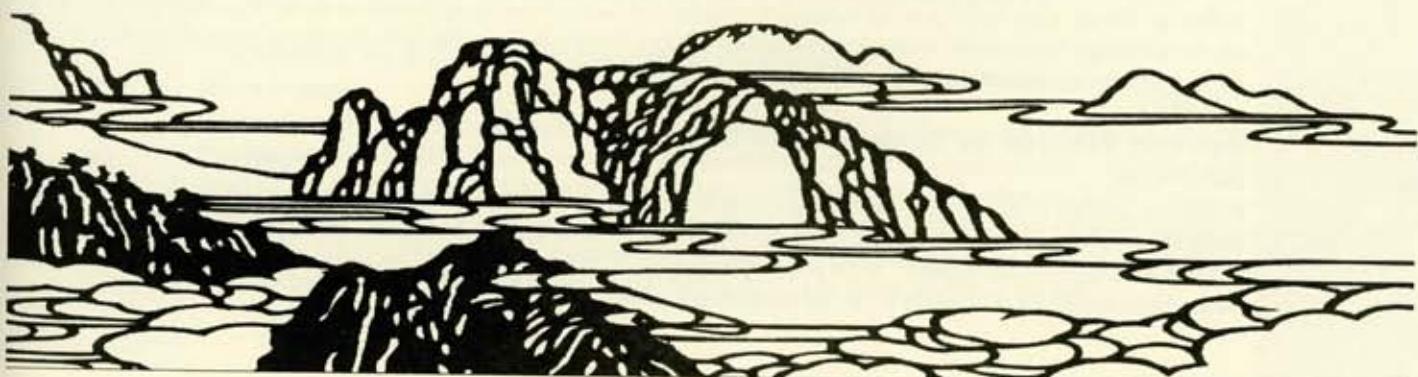
"The relative level of bodhicitta is compassion; the absolute level is emptiness. When these two are present, enlightenment is unavoidable." This workshop explores the relationship of compassion and emptiness and how we can manifest this understanding in our lives. The day consists of talks, discussion and meditation practice.



<b>Sept. 24-29</b> (5 Days)	<b>Abhidhamma: Classical Buddhist Psychology</b> Andrew Olendzki Abhidhamma is the systematized psychological teaching of the <i>Theravāda</i> scholastic tradition. Profound and far-reaching, the Abhidhamma literature is also renowned for its complexity and difficulty. Not for the faint-hearted, this workshop is intended for students with considerable exposure to Buddhist thought and/or experienced vipassana meditators. We work our way through the classical Abhidhamma textbook by Anuruddha, the <i>Abhidhammatthā Sangaha</i> , translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as <i>A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma</i> . An emphasis is placed upon the text's contemporary relevance to practice.	<b>2000-ABHI</b>	<b>\$300</b>
<b>Oct. 6-12</b> (6 Days)	<b>Sublime States of Mind: Cultivating Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha</b> Daeja Napier The Sublime States of Mind ( <i>Brahma Vihāras</i> ) are the cultivations prescribed by the Buddha as antidotes for suffering. Cultivating Metta (loving-kindness) counteracts fear, anger and ill-will; Karuna (Compassion) provides the remedy for cruelty; Mudita (Appreciative Joy) provides the curative for jealousy and envy; Upekkha (Equanimity) dissolves clinging and attachment. These Divine Abidings are considered the great peacemakers and healers of the suffering inherent in our human condition. This forum/retreat will include time spent in Noble Silence, sitting and walking meditation, discussion, meetings with the teacher, and use of classical contemplative practices to cultivate these four wholesome qualities of heart and mind. Note: One day is allotted for each <i>Brahma Vihāra</i> : Metta 10/8; Karuna 10/9; Mudita 10/10; Upekkha 10/11. Although preference will be given to those registering for the full course, one may register as a day student for one or more topics. Details of full course or one-day participation available upon request.	<b>2000-DN2</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Oct. 14-21</b> (7 Days)	<b>The Once and Future Bodhisattva</b> Joanna Macy Stories and teachings about the bodhisattva, embodiment of wisdom and compassion, dramatize the relevance of the Buddha Dharma for the healing of our world. In our week together we study this hero figure in <i>Theravāda</i> and <i>Mahāyāna</i> sources, and through both meditation and interactive practices we enliven its meaning for our lives today. Our experiential work includes a <i>Jātaka</i> -based Council of All Beings, and process work based on the Perfection of Wisdom ( <i>Prajñāparamitā</i> ) and Hua-Yen scriptures.	<b>2000-JM1</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Oct. 22</b> (Sunday)	<b>Entering the Heart of the World</b> Joanna Macy The poet Rilke said we should go out into the world as into our own heart. Is that possible? In a world so full of turmoil, hate, and suffering as ours is today, can we find that kind of homecoming? The Buddha Dharma and its model of the bodhisattva offers answers to these questions -and to our longing for community and courage. In our day together we reflect on the teachings and practice them in quiet meditation and interactive exercises.	<b>2000-JM2</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>Oct. 27-29</b> (Weekend)	<b>Identity and Insight (<i>papañca</i> and <i>vipassanā</i>)</b> Steve Armstrong The habits of our mind serve to construct and reinforce our sense of self. This sense of self acts out by displaying physical and mental behaviors which through repeated use solidify into a personality. The practice of insight serves to undermine and eventually uproot these deeply conditioned habits, thereby freeing the mind from its bondage to identity. During this weekend we investigate the three <i>papañca</i> , or proliferations of mind: conceit, craving and wrong view. We also look at how the practice of vipassana or insight reveals these habits, and with perseverance uproots them from the mind. The weekend consists of homework, discourse, and dialogue.	<b>2000-SA</b>	<b>\$120</b>
<b>Nov. 4</b> (Saturday)	<b>Mindfulness in Relationships</b> Narayan and Micheal Liebenson Grady All forms of relationships can provide an opportunity to develop wisdom and compassion. This day-long workshop explores various aspects of Buddha's teachings as they apply to relationships in everyday life. A central theme of the day is learning to be present to what is. The day includes both meditation and discussion.	<b>2000-LG</b>	<b>\$45</b>



- Nov. 5**  
(Saturday)
- Faith**  
Sharon Salzberg
- 2000-SS \$45
- The Pali word 'saddhā,' usually translated as faith, means "to place the heart upon." This day is an exploration of the role of faith in a wisdom tradition, the meaning of the word in a classical Buddhist context, and the role of faith and trust in contemporary meditation practices.
- Nov. 10-12**  
(Weekend)
- Buddha's Contemplations on Death and the Non-Beautiful**  
Mathieu Boisvert
- 2000-MB \$120
- The *Satipattāna Sutta* is the major text in the Pali Canon outlining the various classical meditation techniques. Among these, we find the awareness of death meditation (*marāṇa-sati*) and the contemplation of the non-beautiful (*asubha-bhāvana*). These contemplative practices are designed to bring the realities of life to the hearer so that one is able to live life fully and wholeheartedly, without illusions. This workshop uses the *Satipattāna Sutta* and the commentaries from the *Visuddhimagga* to clarify the textual prescriptions assigned to these practices and to show their affinity with regular vipassana meditation. We also discuss how they are applied to contemporary monastic and lay environments.
- Nov. 18**  
(Saturday)
- Mindfulness and Devotion: A Buddhist-Christian Exploration**  
Robert Jonas and Olivia Hoblitzelle
- 2000-CB \$45
- Mindfulness, the heart of Buddhist meditation, invites us to bring full awareness to all aspects of our daily lives. With its specific techniques for calming our restless minds, mindfulness is a form of re-education of the mind, leading to greater equanimity, joy and compassion. In Christianity, mindfulness training is rooted in the teachings of the Desert Fathers and is known as the contemplative path. Devotional practices exist in both Buddhism and Christianity. Devotion is often thought to be more relational than mindfulness, focusing on spiritual qualities that arise between the worshipper and the "object" of devotion. During this day we have silent meditation, chanting, presentations, and time for discussion and sharing. Throughout the day, we compare and contrast mindfulness and devotion in both traditions, seeking to answer the question, "Are mindfulness and devotion so different, after all?"
- Nov.26-Dec.3**  
(7 Days)
- Bhāvana Program: Energy (vīriya)--Its Cultivation and Application in Meditation**  
Ajahn Sucitto
- 2000-BH3 \$350
- This program is devoted to exploring the theme of energy (*vīriya*) in the classical Buddhist tradition: what it is, how to access it, apply it and the results. We use three main approaches for our exploration: heart, body, and mind. The exploration of heart-energy is primarily through devotional practices, including learning chanting and accomplishing meaningful ritual. We use shrines and images, and participate in small ceremonies. The exploration of body-energy is through the contemplative use of Qi-gong techniques and exercises in *saṃādhi* (concentration) such as *ānāpāna-sati* (mindfulness of breathing) and body-sweeping. The mind-energy is explored through the process of inquiry--using written and oral material, perhaps even extending into sustained dialogue and debate. We hope that learning how to cultivate one's energy in various modes will lead to a deepening of one's approach to meditation.
- Dec. 10-15**  
(5 Days)
- Essentials of Buddhist Psychology**  
Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty
- 2000-PS2 \$300
- The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what causes contribute to happiness and unhappiness, and how techniques of mental development can purify and transform the mind. This workshop consists of a close reading of specifically selected Pali texts (in translation) which help illuminate the early Buddhist understanding of the mind, the senses, consciousness and the world of human experience. One of the aims of the workshop is to build a bridge between classical and contemporary perspectives on psychology. Includes visiting faculty from the Institute of Meditation & Psychotherapy.





# CAMBRIDGE

## ONE-DAY PROGRAMS: FALL 2000

The programs at the Cambridge campus of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies follow the same paradigm that we have been nurturing for the last ten years in Barre, MA: dedicated to bringing together teachers, students, scholars and practitioners who are committed to exploring Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, faithful to its origins and lineage, yet adaptable and alive in the current world.

The campus is located at 1531 (Rear) Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA, next door to Cambridge Hospital, at the corner of Leonard Street.

The programs start at 9:30AM sharp, and end about 4:30PM. Please bring your own lunch or purchase it locally for the lunch break between 12 and 1PM.

**Please register for Cambridge courses through BCBS (registration form page 31)**

<b>Sept. 16</b> (Saturday)	<b>The Sudden Teaching in the Chinese Zen Tradition</b> Peter Gregory	CC00-PG	\$60
	The Zen tradition claims to represent a "sudden" approach to Buddhist practice. The workshop looks at what this claim means as it is developed in and around the <i>Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch</i> . We explore this claim through a close reading of selected passages of the text, a consideration of the historical background, and guided meditation.		
<b>Sept. 17</b> (Sunday)	<b>Cultivating True Relationship: The Bāhiya Sutta of the Buddha</b> Doug Phillips	CC00-DP	\$60
	Our relationship to all aspects of life manifesting in the moment is both the focus and growing edge of contemplative practice. Responding to the urgency of Bāhiya's plea, the Buddha offers a clear and concise instruction on being with things just as they are as the gateway to liberation. Using this sutta (found in the <i>Udāna</i> 1.10) and the Buddha's practice of breath awareness, we explore the challenge of intimacy with the seen, the heard, the sensed, and the thought through meditation and discussion.		
<b>Sept. 23</b> (Saturday)	<b>Craving, Self, and Liberation</b> Mark Hart	CC00-MH	\$60
	The Buddha's teaching of <i>anattā</i> (not-self) provides a key to understanding how the tendency to crave and to cling can be uprooted from the mind. Our discussion is guided by two discourses, the <i>Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta</i> and the <i>Anattalakkhana Sutta</i> —traditionally held to be the first two delivered by the Buddha after his enlightenment—as well as by direct observation of craving and cessation in mindfulness practice.		
<b>Sept. 30</b> (Saturday)	<b>Buddhist Models of Awakening: The Ox-Herding Pictures</b> Mu Soeng	CC00-MS	\$60
	Created in the 12th century by a Chinese Zen master, the "Ox-Herding Pictures" are a classic of Zen practice, and present a viable model of awakening. The wild ox is a metaphor for our restless and confused mind; taming the wild ox symbolizes our awakening to the nature of things as they are and living in the world with the eyes of wisdom and compassion. This workshop uses the ox-herding pictures to deal with the fundamental issues of delusion and awakening as they are understood in the Buddha's teachings.		
<b>Oct. 1</b> (Sunday)	<b>Zen and Nihilism in Contemporary Culture</b> Issho Fujita	CC00-IF	\$60
	Nihilism is a condition of existence that denies the possibility of knowledge or truth. Its symptoms are confusion, lack of direction in how one should live one's life, and a sense of losing all connection with ourselves and the world. Is it possible for the insights of Zen Buddhism to make a positive contribution to this situation? In this program, we investigate the possibility of going beyond the symptoms of nihilism in our own personal lives through the perspectives of Zen and the practice of zazen.		



# CAMBRIDGE

- |                              |   |                             |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Oct. 7</b><br>(Saturday)  | <b>The Lay Path to Enlightenment</b><br>Taitetsu Unno   | <b>CC00-TU</b> <b>\$60</b>  |
|                              | The Shin Buddhist path consists of three stages: descriptive, evocative, and creative. The teaching of the Buddha is the foundation; it is descriptive of our problems in daily living, driven by the fictive self. A mastery of the basic teaching is evocative in a twofold sense: it brings to awareness the workings of boundless compassion, symbolized by light, and the dark depths of self-delusion. How this realization contributes to solving the problems of living and dying awaits a creative response that will differ with each person.   |                             |
| <b>Oct. 8</b><br>(Sunday)    | <b>Mother of All Buddhas: Manjushri as the Nature and Function of Bodhisattva Ideal</b><br>Robert Gimello   | <b>CC00-RG</b> <b>\$60</b>  |
|                              | As the embodiment of the perfection of insight ( <i>prajñāparamitā</i> ), the bodhisattva Manjushri is closely associated with the Mādhyamika tradition of Indo-Tibetan thought and practice. He is central to the Hua-yen tradition in East Asia, and in his manifestation as a perfect monk he is especially revered in Zen tradition as well. This day-long program uses a broad variety of texts, iconography and art to consider Manjushri as an archetypal bodhisattva, and suggesting new ways of understanding just what a bodhisattva was believed to be in the Mahāyāna tradition.  |                             |
| <b>Oct. 14</b><br>(Saturday) | <b>The Fourth Yāna: Varieties of Engaged Buddhism</b><br>Christopher Queen  | <b>CC00-CQ</b> <b>\$60</b>  |
|                              | Can service and activism complement the paths of mindfulness and morality? In this workshop, held on the 44th anniversary of the conversion of 500,000 Untouchables to Buddhism in India in 1956 under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, we explore through discussion and meditation new forms of spiritual practice in Asia and the West as they are unfolding in our global culture. What do the traditional teachings of generosity, kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity, and interdependence mean in a world of shopping malls, sweatshops, oil spills, and ethnic cleansing? Bring your own concerns and examples of socially engaged Buddhism.   |                             |
| <b>Oct. 15</b><br>(Sunday)   | <b>Awakening to the Ground of Compassion</b><br>John Makransky  | <b>CC00-JM</b> <b>\$60</b>  |
|                              | This workshop focuses on Tibetan practices of Heart-Training and Tantric Imaging. Students are taught the Lojong practice to uncover hidden resources of compassionate power by touching directly in upon the Buddha-nature of all experiences, including suffering. Tantric methods of imaging express and further empower this process of awakening. The experiential part of this workshop is informed by discussion of Tibetan writings selected from Nyingma-Dzogchen, Kargu-Mahamudra and Gelug traditions.   |                             |
| <b>Oct. 21</b><br>(Saturday) | <b>De-Mystifying the Abhidhamma</b><br>Andrew Olendzki  | <b>CC00-AO1</b> <b>\$60</b> |
|                              | The highly sophisticated model of mind and body presented by the mature scholastic tradition of early Buddhism, known generally as the Abhidhamma or "Higher Dharma," offers a precise tool for describing the dynamics of meditation and the nature of all human experience. Its literature can be daunting to students and practitioners because of its complexity of detail, and yet the principles of this system of psychological ethics are fairly simple. This one-day introduction to the subject seeks to provide the general student with an understanding of the basic Abhidhamma system, with an emphasis upon grasping its essential features. We also explore its value for meditation practice and for facing the challenges of daily life. The program should be of special interest to psychologists and meditators.             |                             |
| <b>Oct. 28</b><br>(Saturday) | <b>Nonduality in Action: The Teaching of Vimalakīrti</b><br>Jamie Hubbard   | <b>CC00-JH</b> <b>\$60</b>  |
|                              | The Vimalakīrti-Nirdeśa Sūtra is justly revered as one of the most profound Mahāyāna scriptures and a pinnacle of literary sophistication, presenting the ideas of emptiness, nonduality, and the compassionate engagement of the bodhisattva with unsurpassed subtlety and razor-sharp eloquence. It is also one of the wittiest and most anti-institutional of Mahāyāna scriptures, in which Vimalakīrti—a layman, merchant, and man of the world—teaches the great bodhisattvas and disciples of the Buddha how their confused notions of purity and defilement are transcended in nonduality. This one-day course explores the text and philosophy of the Vimalakīrti-sūtra in the context of core Buddhist ideas about self and the world, its place in the development of East Asian Buddhism, as well as in its relevance to our own time. |                             |



# CAMBRIDGE

<b>Nov. 4</b> (Saturday)	<b>Jātaka Stories As Teaching Tools in the History and Practice of Buddhism</b> <b>Margo McLoughlin</b> The <i>Jātaka</i> , or Birth-stories of the Buddha, offer direct lessons in the core concepts of Buddhism such as the law of karma and the truth of impermanence. The themes of friendship, generosity, truth and morality appear in many of the stories, themes as relevant to our lives today as they were to the early Buddhist communities in India and South-East Asia. This one-day workshop focuses on the background and history of the <i>Jātaka</i> . Since the <i>Jātaka</i> come down to us from an oral tradition, the workshop uses stories both to entertain and to encourage discussion. The format of the workshop also includes opportunities for reflection on the teachings found in the <i>Jātaka</i> and their relevance to daily life.	<b>CC00-MM</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Nov. 11</b> (Saturday)	<b>The Practical Wisdom of Ancient Buddhism</b> <b>Andrew Olendzki</b> In addition to its spiritual teachings of meditation and liberation, the Buddhist tradition contains a wealth of practical instruction, primarily psychological in nature, for living skillfully as a layperson in a challenging world. The Pali Canon offers a remarkable window opening on to the lost world in which the Buddha lived, and also reveals the ways in which many of his contemporaries worked with his teachings in a variety of settings. In this workshop we look at some of this practical advice found in ancient texts and discuss how to make it work in our own lives.	<b>CC00-AO2</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Nov. 18</b> (Saturday)	<b>Buddha's Teachings on the Five Aggregates</b> <b>Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia)</b> The Buddhist teachings are at one and the same time a deeply philosophical and uniquely practical prescription for freeing ourselves from suffering rooted in ignorance, touching both our intellect and our hunger for spiritual awakening and freedom. This is particularly true of the Buddha's teaching on the five aggregates. In this day-long program we explore what Buddha called "the five focuses of the grasping mind." These are body, feeling, perception, formations of the mind, and consciousness. And we learn how to relate to these with detachment and ease. The program involves alternate periods of scholarly examination and discussion with periods of silent contemplation.	<b>CC00-GA</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Dec. 2</b> (Saturday)	<b>Vipassana Meditation: A Unique Contribution to Mental Health</b> <b>Paul Fleischman</b> In lecture and discussion format, we consider the therapeutic processes of Vipassana and of psychotherapy, comparing and contrasting the two. We consider where the two activities may constructively interact, and in what ways overlapping them may be unwise. The discussion brings to bear one-quarter century of the teacher's clinical experience, and will catalyze the insights and personal and clinical experiences of the seminar participants. We give particular consideration to the role of body sensations. We discuss issues of maintaining purity, authenticity, rigor, efficacy and value, for both psychotherapy and Vipassana in their proper spheres. This seminar is based on the essay of the same name in the book <i>Karma and Chaos</i> and on the accompanying essay, <i>The Therapeutic Action of Vipassana Meditation</i> .	<b>CC00-PF1</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Dec. 9</b> (Saturday)	<b>Cultivating Inner Peace</b> <b>Paul Fleischman</b> In any historical era or in any culture where people seek peace, the seekers end up creating strikingly similar pathways. There is an underlying set of psychological principles beneath the quest for inner peace, that is congruent with the essence of human nature. Based upon the book of the same name, this seminar explores in lecture and discussion format the universally recurring themes and practices manifested in the lives of Gandhi, Thoreau, Scott and Helen Nearing, Walt Whitman, and others. Our discussion will sweep up into the midst of poetry, biography, and history. The Buddha's teaching of Dhamma is discussed as the purified, excess-free distillation of the universal quest.	<b>CC00-PF2</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Dec. 16</b> (Saturday)	<b>Karma and Chaos</b> <b>Paul Fleischman</b> The Buddha's teaching of Dhamma contains the concept of rebirth, both as an enforcer of morality and as an explanation of variation and diversity. Can a modern, scientifically-minded person really follow the Buddha's teaching? The first half of this seminar outlines core ideas of modern science and of chaos theory. The second half of the seminar relates scientific ideas to the Dhamma, with special emphasis on how meditation focused on the arising and vanishing of body sensations leads to a complex, rich, and satisfying conjunction with abstract scientific ideas.	<b>CC00-PF3</b>	<b>\$60</b>

*In these three seminars, Vipassana meditation or practice will not be taught. Dr. Fleischman follows the tradition of his Teacher by not accepting payment for his teaching.*

# Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

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



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

## Registration

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

## Deposits

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

## Cancellations

- Deposits are refundable in full (less a \$20 processing fee) if we are notified more than 6 weeks prior to the course opening.
- Later cancellations are subject to cancellation fees as follows:
  - Half the deposit will be retained if canceling more than 2 weeks prior to the course opening.
  - The entire deposit will be retained if canceling within the last 2 weeks.
- Transferring your deposit from one course to another will incur a \$20 processing fee.

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

## BCBS Registration Form

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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

Course Code _____	Course Cost \$ _____	Amount of deposit enclosed \$ _____
Name _____	Have you been to BCBS before? YES / NO	
Address _____	Are you on the <b>Insight</b> mailing list? YES / NO	
Home Phone ( ) _____	Work Phone ( ) _____	Can you offer a ride to someone in your area? YES / NO
I have added \$ _____ to the deposit as a general donation to help support the valuable on-going work of BCBS.		Do you have any special dietary needs? _____
		We cannot guarantee always meeting special needs, but if you telephone the kitchen before registration, (978-355-2347) the cook will be glad to discuss your situation.



# BCBS TEACHERS

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

## CORE FACULTY

**Andrew Olendzki** received a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Lancaster in England, and has studied at Harvard and the University of Sri Lanka. He is the executive director of BCBS.

**Mu Soeng** is the director of BCBS. He trained in the Zen tradition and was a monk for eleven years. He is the author of *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality*; *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen-Tradition and Teachers*; and *The Diamond Sutra: Transforming the Way We Perceive the World*.

## VISITING FACULTY

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

**Olivia Hoblitzelle** has practiced vipassana meditation since the early 1970s and has also trained extensively in the devotional tradition from India. She has taught mindfulness meditation in the field of behavioral medicine as well as a variety of other settings.

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

**Joanna Macy, PhD**, is a Buddhist teacher and conducts workshops and trainings around the world to empower agents of social change. Her books include *Rilke's Book of Hours*, *World as Lover, World as Self* and *The Dharma of Living Systems*.

**John Makransky** teaches Buddhist Studies and Comparative Theology in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He is the author of *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet*. He is also a practice leader in Dzogchen retreats on the east coast.

**Daeja Napier**, a lay Dharma teacher and founder of the Sati Foundation for Mindfulness Training, teaches Insight Meditation and Brahma Vihara retreats throughout the country. She is also the mother of five children.

**Ven. Punnaji Mahathera** is a Sri Lankan monk who has devoted more than fifty years of research to focus on the original teachings of the Buddha. His study of the Pali Nikayas has been informed by many years of meditating in the forest hermitages of Sri Lanka. He has a thorough background in Western philosophy, psychology and religions.

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

**Ajahn Sucitto** has been a monk for 23 years and is a senior disciple of Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. He is currently the abbot of Cittaviveka Chithurst Buddhist Monastery in England.

**Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia)** recently served as the resident teacher at Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts from 1996 to 1999. She has been greatly inspired by the nuns and monks of Amaravati and Cittaviveka Buddhist Monasteries in England. She has taught meditation retreats since 1990.

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



**Paul Fleishman M.D.** is a Yale-trained psychiatrist and a Teacher of Vipassana meditation in the tradition of S.N. Goenka. He is the author, among others, of *The Healing Spirit: Religious Issues in Psychotherapy, Cultivating Inner Peace and Karma and Chaos*.

**Rev. Issho Fujita** is the resident Zen priest at the Valley Zendo in Charlestown, Mass. He has been trained in the Soto Zen tradition and has a degree in psychology from Japan. He also leads Zen meditation groups at Smith College and Mt. Holyoke College in Northampton, MA.

**Robert Gimello** is a specialist in the history of East Asian religions and a scholar of Hua-yen Buddhism. He is currently a visiting professor at Harvard University. He is the co-editor, among other publications, of *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen* and *Paths to Liberation: The Marga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*.

**Peter Gregory** is currently the Jill Ker Conway Professor of Religion & East Asian Studies at Smith College. His scholarship has focused on medieval Chinese Buddhist thought, especially Hua-yen and Ch'an. His numerous publications include the most recent *Buddhism in the Sung* (1999). He has been involved in Zen practice for many years, having studied under the direction of Maezumi Taizan Roshi and Osaka Koryu Roshi.

**Mark Hart** is a psychotherapist, lecturer on religious studies, and a teacher of vipassana meditation in New England area. He recently founded the Buddhadasa Dharma Community in the Amherst, MA, vicinity.

**Jamie Hubbard** is the Yehan Numata Lecturer in Buddhist Studies at Smith College. His publications include *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, *The Yamaguchi Story: Buddhism and the Family in Contemporary Japan*; and *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy*.

**Margo McLoughlin** is a storyteller and writer from British Columbia. Formerly on staff at Insight Meditation Society in Barre, she is currently in her second year of graduate studies in World Religions at the Harvard Divinity School.

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

**Christopher Queen** teaches Buddhism at Harvard University and is the dean of students for continuing education. He has practiced mindfulness meditation since 1978 and has conducted research among India's Untouchables since 1987. He has edited *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*; *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship* and *Engaged Buddhism in the West*.

# A Day of Practice and Discussion with

## Sharon Salzberg

Inspired by the  
Maṅgala Sutta

*These brief comments are extracted from a  
day-long program at the Barre Center for  
Buddhist Studies on November 14, 1999.*



1 The teachings in the sutta are about empowerment, in a way, to craft our lives, to make a life that can be in harmony with other things, a life that can be supportive of our deepest values and the reliance on and respect of simplicity. The blessings in the sutta are, of course, expressions of relationships in the culture of India of Buddha's time and written in that language of relationships. These expressions of relationships are about that sense of being a part of something greater than the limited sense with which we ordinarily walk around, the sense of that moment when something opens up, that sense of having connection to a meaning, so we are not just living randomly in an *ad hoc* way reacting mechanically to different circumstances. It is having a thread, a thread of integration.

2 A blessing, in the context of this teaching, from this point of view, means a gift we give to ourselves. I like to think it is a moment of connecting personally and directly to a deeper truth. And when we do that, there's a feeling that things have opened up or that things are coming together in some way that is not so fractured and fragmented. So it is both something that we do and it is also something that we receive (although not coming from above, necessarily). In these extraordinary moments, when we are reminded of our own potential, something happens: we experience the world coming together in a different way.

3 Many years ago, we brought one of our early teachers over from India and took him around to different centers in the country. He said, "It is wonderful, all that is happening here in the West. But there is something about practitioners in the West that reminds me of people sitting in a boat. They are rowing and they are rowing with great earnestness and sincerity, but they refuse to untie the boat from the docks. People are a little bit like that here. They want these huge transcendent experiences, these magical, mystical events; but they don't really like to pay attention to how they speak to one another, or how they treat other people at work, or all these different circumstances of ordinary life." But what we do all week long affects how we feel when we sit down on Sunday morning to meditate. If our week's existence has been fragmented, it's going to affect what we call our meditation. It's not separate. So we look with a lot of care at all these different elements of life.

4 It matters how we speak. We might think that these are just words coming out of our mouths and when they come out it's over and doesn't matter. But it matters because intention has a power, and it has an effect. All of us have been hurt terribly by someone's words at some point or another in our lives. It is also a question of how we use our energy, how we use discernment, what is our understanding of skillfulness, do we say that which is true and that which is useful? Do we look at all the different aspects of our life? How is our speech? How is our action? How is our livelihood? How is our sense of vision? Do we have a sense of what really matters most in life and can we keep pointing back to that as an inspiration? It doesn't mean we evaluate our every action through a completely punitive mind, but it's to remember, "Oh, yes, this is important to me, and this might be the basis for the next choice that I make."

## The Maṅgala Sutta

Sutta Nipāta 258-269

1  
bahū devā manussā ca  
maṅgalāni acintayum  
ākamkhamānā soṭṭhānam  
—brūhi maṅgalam uttamam

Many gods and men  
Have thought about blessings,  
Wishing for well being.  
—Tell [us] the highest blessing;

2  
asevanā ca bālānam  
paṇḍitānaṃ ca sevanā  
pūjā ca pūjanīyānam  
—etam maṅgalam uttamam

Not consorting with the foolish,  
But with the wise consorting,  
And honoring those who are to be  
honoured.  
—This is the highest blessing.

3  
patirūpadesavāso ca  
pubbe ca katapuññatā  
attasammāpaṇidhi ca  
—etam maṅgalam uttamam

To live in a suitable place,  
And to have done good deeds in the past,  
Having a proper goal for oneself.  
—This is the highest blessing.

4  
bāhusaccaṃ ca sippaṃ ca  
vinayo ca susikkhito  
subhāsitaṃ ca yā vācā  
—etam maṅgalam uttamam

Learning, craftsmanship,  
And being well-trained in discipline,  
What [ever] is said being well spoken.  
—This is the highest blessing.



5

mātāpitu-upatthānam  
puttadārassa sangaho  
anākulā ca kammantā  
—etam mangalam uttamaṃ

Support for mother and father,  
Help for wife and children,  
Spheres of work that bring no conflict.  
—This is the highest blessing.

6

dānaṃ ca dhammacariyā ca  
ñātakānaṃ ca sangaho  
anavajjāni kammāni  
—etam mangalam uttamaṃ

Generosity, morality  
And the helping of relatives,  
Doing actions that are blameless.  
—This is the highest blessing.

7

āraṭi viratī pāpā  
majjapānā ca saññamo  
appamādo ca dhammesu  
—etam mangalam uttamaṃ

Ceasing and refraining from evil,  
Abstinence from intoxicants,  
And diligence among mental states.  
—This is the highest blessing.

8

gāraṇaṃ ca nivāto ca  
santutthī ca kataññutā  
kālena dhammasavanam  
—etam mangalam uttamaṃ

Respect, humility,  
Contentment, gratitude,  
Hearing Dhamma when timely.  
—This is the highest blessing.

5 Support for mother and father. Help for wife and children. Spheres of work that bring no conflict. Whether the languaging feels appropriate to you or not, it goes back to that sense of a wholistic vision of spirituality. It is not some exotic activity that we do in a special way. Spiritual life is really about how we are.

6 Generosity, morality and the helping of relatives. Doing actions that are blameless. The Buddha almost always began his teaching with generosity because that is something everyone can do. The giving is not even necessarily of anything material, but a recognition that any act of sharing makes us happy by helping someone else get happy. It is the act of letting go. You can always smile at somebody. You can give in that way. You don't have to have material abundance to be able to give. And the very nature of giving is an opening that is really what the whole path is about. And then he went on to teach morality, because morality is the basis of tranquility in one's mind. If you have an extremely complicated life and it is very fragmented and it has got devious corners, complicated stuff going on, it's actually very hard to meditate. I mean it's hard enough to meditate, but when you are not only in that less than purifying mode, awakening sensitivity not only about things you did ten years ago but when you are grappling with the complexity of your life right now—it's very hard to be able to concentrate the mind.

7 "Ceasing and refraining from evil." Evil is not usually a word you see translated in Buddhist texts. Generally speaking, they translate it as something like unskillfulness, and it is meant in the sense of remembering that it really matters what we say and how we use our energy and how we care for one another and what we do. It makes a difference. "Abstinence from intoxicants" refers to drugs and alcohol, and is very interesting. The actual precept in the teachings reads "I'll refrain from taking intoxicants which cloud the mind and cause heedlessness." And there have been endless discussions (probably for 2500 years) about what this means. Does one beer at night mean intoxication? Is it moderation? Is it abstinence? Again, we are the ones who decide but it is interesting to look at how we decide what we decide. There are many different kind of scholastic textual interpretations, but it is very interesting to experiment with one's life toward renunciation, toward letting go, toward exploration of how we are affected when we do different things. Because our own seeing is the barometer of what we know.

8 "Respect, humility, contentment, gratitude." These are virtues we don't necessarily think much of. Or hearing the dharma in a timely manner, patience, or the ability to take criticism. The Buddha said that one of the preconditions for loving-kindness to arise more easily in one's heart is the ability to hear criticism. People are often critical, and we can't make that stop. We have to develop a malleability of mind so that rigidity doesn't set in immediately when we hear something critical and there can remain some gentleness or softness in our mind. Why is it a blessing to visit with ascetics—holy models of spiritual power? In our society spiritual people are, generally speaking, not our heroes. They are not the people we respect or revere the most. But their existence is a blessing because certainly here is the great reminder of what is possible for us. When the Dalai Lama spoke for an hour and a half to tens of thousands of people in Central Park in New York this past summer, it was quite extraordinary because his very presence is a kind of blessing. There is something about certain people that helps us remember the best within us, or we remember a sense of possibility that completely eluded us when we were caught by the particular problem or circumstance of the day. Suddenly there is an opening, a sense of greater potential. Something special happens in an ordinary way. That is why I so enjoy watching the Dalai Lama—there is an energy in him that reminds us of what is best about ourselves.

9 Discussion of the dharma in a timely manner—this too is the highest blessing. One of my early teachers, Munindra-ji, once said to me, “The Buddha’s enlightenment solved the Buddha’s problem. Now you solve yours.” It was a fantastically empowering statement, because it felt like maybe for the first time in my life someone was looking at me and saying “You can solve your problem,” and that’s what this passage and the next one mean to me. It’s not just hearing the dharma or hearing teachings. It’s discussing them and then practicing them, which means realizing that they are for you too. It’s not a question of admiring what the Buddha or somebody did 2500 years ago, or thinking, “Isn’t that amazing that someone can get free,” and then turning the page to go onto something else. What is important is the realization that all of these possibilities exist for each one of us. The Buddha was a human being. And the questions he asked about life were the questions any one of us might ask in our own way. What does it mean to be born in a human body which is subject to change, which grows old, which gets sick, which dies—whether we want it to or not?

10 We can’t say, “I’ve suffered enough,” or “I will never feel afraid again.” So where is happiness to be found if the body is changing according to laws of nature and not according to our direct control? It is found by seeing more clearly through the dharma; through awareness; through love. And happiness is for us; it is not just something that happened long ago to someone sitting under a tree. It is not just something that happens in exotic terrain. We have to see that not just Buddhist teachings, but any spiritual teaching exists as an invitation, not to just admire from afar, but to really investigate what it means to us. Can we bring it to life, can we actually participate in a way that is very meaningful? So we hear the dharma; we discuss the dharma; we practice the dharma, that is the highest blessing.

11 The Buddha goes on to describe all of these different blessings, and even though each is said to be the highest, there is nevertheless an ascending order. It culminates with the mind which does not waver, even among worldly things. “Sorrowless, stainless, secure. This is the highest blessing.” Isn’t it interesting that this blessing comes after the direct experience of nibbana/nirvana? So here we have, even after the direct experience of nibbana—that which is beyond birth and death—life in all of its changing forms. And there is no one for whom it is only pleasant all the time. The Buddha probably rarely got horse feed as alms food, but it happened sometimes. The balance in the midst of changing circumstances is different in everyone’s life, but to think of only pleasure with no pain ever—this is just not how life works. It is not how things are laid out. So here the Buddha is saying that the absolute highest blessing is being able to move through life’s changes. It means that sense of integrity, that sense of wholeness, responding with compassion as strongly as we can. Responding with mindfulness as strongly as we can. That’s the stuff, the makings of really having a blessed existence. This is what is truly secure, sorrowless, stainless. Again we are using a certain language to express something. I think that when we think of security, we do think of something static which given the nature of things is not going to be and we also think of something constructed, something we create like a little nest. We don’t have to look at how things are whether it is in terms of change or impermanence or emptiness or whatever. But I think it actually does mean secure in the sense of steadfast, or steady. And that is something one can sense both in oneself at different times and I think in the presence of some of these great beings.

12 One of my favorite expressions was coined by the theologian Howard Thurman, who said, “Look at the world with quiet eyes.” Isn’t that lovely? Just look at the world with quiet eyes. Usually when we are in life’s circumstance—whatever it is—we can be so reactive. It reminds me of those cartoon characters with eyeballs on springs that pop out when they see something surprising. But looking upon the world with quiet eyes, we can feel a sense of just coming back into ourselves and into that more receptive mode. We can be a little less grabbing or reacting. And that modality can extend really to every sense. What would it be like to see and hear and taste and touch and smell with that kind of quiet, just to receive. Let’s try it, shall we? Let’s go outside on this beautiful day and do some walking in just that way. When you are seeing, when you are hearing, when you are feeling—see what happens when you remind yourself of that ability of receiving and watch your eyes. See what happens when they get on that spring and start moving forward, or you are leaning forward into space to grab the next moment. Remember: just continually relax and relax, and come back into yourself.

9

khanṭi ca sovacassatā  
samanānañ ca dassanaṃ  
kālena dhammasākacchā  
—etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ

Patience, obedience,  
The seeing of ascetics  
And discussion of Dhamma when timely  
—This is the highest blessing.

10

tapo ca brahmacariyā ca  
ariyasaccāna dassanaṃ  
nibbānasacchikiriya ca  
—etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ

Ardour, the religious life,  
Seeing the noble truths,  
The direct experience of nibbāna.  
—This is the highest blessing.

11

puṭṭhassa lokadhammeḥi  
cittaṃ yassa na kampaṭi  
asokaṃ viraṇaṃ khemaṃ  
—etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ

A mind which does not waver  
[Even] among worldly things—  
Sorrowless, stainless, secure.  
—This is the highest blessing.

12

etādisāni katvāna  
sabbattha-m-apaṇāṭṭā  
sabbattha sotthiṃ gacchanti  
taṃ tesāṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ

Having acted in this way,  
Everywhere unconquered,  
They go to well-being everywhere.  
—That is their highest blessing.



# Bhāvana Program:

## Insight into the Aggregates

*These remarks are excerpted from talks given on the third day of the program held at the study center in December, 1999.*



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

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

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

## The Interdependent Arising of Feeling

Andrew Olendzki

Today we are turning our attention to the second of the aggregates, the aggregate of feeling. Before we get very far, however, we will need to appreciate the fact that the Buddhists are using this word quite differently than we usually do in English.

Our understanding of the word "feeling" has been molded considerably by the Greek influence upon Western civilization. The Greek philosophers tended to divide the person into three parts. First there are the appetites, the raw drives like hunger, thirst and sex. Then there are emotions, which would include such feelings as love and kindness, hatred and jealousy. The third part of the soul was intellect, a clarified aspect of mind that could aspire to the sacred through the development of reason. So it is to the Greeks we owe the contemporary impulse to distinguish a rational, content-laden discriminating intellect from the emotive, affect-laden sentiments that is summed up by the colloquial division between "heart" and "mind." Nothing in Asian civilization really mirrors this separation, and we have to keep that in mind as we use this word "feeling." It does not refer to the complex emotional life of humans (most of which would be considered part of the aggregate of formations).

In the languages of ancient India, the word for feeling is *vedanā*, which is ultimately a form of the root *vid*, which means "to know." The word "Veda," a name for the ancient revealed wisdom books of the Brahmanical tradition, comes from the same linguistic root, as does one element of the name for the ancient medical tradition *Ayur-veda* (which literally means "knowledge of life"). Another form of the root is reflected in words such as "*vidya*" which means knowledge, perhaps better known to you in its negative Pali equivalent "*avijjā*," or "ignorance."

What all this tells us is that the Buddhists talk about feeling as a quality of knowledge, rather than as a kind of emotion. Moreover, it is a very special or precise kind of knowing, the knowing whether something in our experience is pleasant or unpleasant. It's not knowing in the sense of cognitive content; it's not knowing anything about something; it's just knowing something to be pleasant, not

*continued on page 39*

## The Experience of Feeling

Taraniya

(Gloria Ambrosia)

We study and practice with the Buddha's teaching on the five aggregates in order to take part in the liberating journey towards realizing that body, feeling, perception, intention and consciousness are impermanent, suffering and not self. I have found that the key to this breakthrough liberation has been in observing and discovering for myself how the second aggregate, *vedanā* or feeling, operates.

In the Buddha's teaching on dependent origination, *vedanā* marks what some people call the bifurcation point. It is like a crossroad. At birth, we get issued this body and mind—with their capacity for sensory experience. Through the body and mind we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, think and feel. These experiences take place at what we call the six sense doors: the eye door, the ear door, the nose door, the tongue door, the sensing door, and the mind/heart door. And from the moment of our birth until our death there is constant contact at these physical and mental sense doors occurring at a rapid and frequent rate.

Our discussion of feeling begins here. When there is contact at one of the six sense doors, feeling occurs. We experience the feeling as: pleasant, unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. We say each moment of contact has a feeling tone.

If you are like me you might ask yourself, "How does feeling actually happen?" I spent many years reading books and trying to understand how it happens in a physiological way. In the end, no matter what I studied, no matter what questions I asked, I came to one simple conclusion. "Who knows how it happens?" I don't know how it happens, do you? It may be beyond comprehension in a cognitive way.

The point is not so much how it happens or even that it happens, but what tends to follow on the heels of feeling moments. When feeling moments occur the tendency of the unawakened mind is to proliferate around them. We have highly conditioned tendencies to respond to pleasant sensations, feelings and thoughts

with a certain longing for more. And we respond to unpleasant sensations, feelings and thoughts with a certain repulsion. Seemingly automatically, we long for more good feeling and try to get away from bad feeling. And we tend not to notice, to ignore, or space out around feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

In short, there is a strong tendency for pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feeling to escalate into the more complex, karmically weighty, and suffering states of greed, hatred and delusion. And it is because of this tendency that vedana figures so strongly in the Buddha's teachings about freedom from suffering.

Every thing up to this point—being born, having a body and mind, having sense organs with their sense doors, even the experiences of contact and feeling themselves—are conditions which have been set in place. There is nothing to be done about any of these. They are results, the outcome of past actions. However, the Buddha tells us in no uncertain terms that while there is a strong, conditioned tendency for good feeling to escalate into greed and for bad feeling to escalate into hatred or anger, we have the capacity either to go in the direction of our conditioning or not.

This capacity to choose, if you will, constitutes the crossroads, the bifurcation point. This means that greed, hatred and delusion are not fore-ordained. This is important because it points to a potential for freedom. In and of themselves these three are suffering states. And they cause us to act in ways that bring about even more suffering. If we can become aware of vedana, feeling, and have a direct experience of it—we can short-circuit the tendency to move into these states that lead to suffering, these states that are our suffering.

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*When we put a drop of sugar in the corner of the dish all the little amoeba scrambled towards the sugar. Then we put a drop of vinegar in another petri dish of amoeba and the colony scrambled in the opposite direction. I am made of the same stuff.*

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### **Buddha says, "Don't go there"**

Well, great. That's all well and good. But that is quite a mouthful, isn't it? Look at what we are saying here.

I am reminded of my junior year in high school—biology class. We put these little amoeba in petri dishes and observed their behaviors under our microscopes. When we put a drop of sugar in the corner of the dish all the little amoeba scrambled towards the sugar. Then we put a drop of vinegar in another petri dish of

amoeba and the colony scrambled in the opposite direction. The significance of this laboratory experiment so many years ago escaped me until I began observing the tendencies of my own body and mind. I found that I am highly conditioned to behave in the same way as those cute little amoebae. I am made of the same biological stuff. This tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain is deeply, deeply rooted in me—so highly conditioned, as to be instinctive. Everything in our being at a seemingly cellular level moves us in the direction of more pleasure and less pain. Can you feel that? And the Buddha is inviting us to look at this, to learn from it.

One year I did a solitary retreat in the early spring of the year. The seasons were changing, and as a result the temperature in the room kept changing. I couldn't seem to regulate the thermostat such that it would keep the temperature relatively constant. As a consequence, I found I had to keep putting on blankets and socks and then taking them off again. This happened many times over a period of weeks. At one point when I was several weeks into the retreat I was getting quite childlike in my reactions. The usual defenses and niceties were gone. It was in such a state that I again felt the heat in my body—and quite automatically and violently I yanked off the blanket, tore off my socks and threw them across the room. I threw a tantrum! I was so tired of being uncomfortable, of not being able to control the good and bad feeling associated with the temperature of the room, that I became very angry and actually threw a tantrum!

This reaction really got my attention. I realized that this impulse to seek comfort and avoid pain goes very deep—deeper than a simple wish to feel good. We want to survive and that takes constant effort. I felt fatigued by it. I was sick and tired of being tossed about by it. But with this insight, I was able to surrender to the discomfort of too much or too little heat and learn to be with it.

The Buddha's teaching on liberation is inviting us to tune into our experience right at such points, to examine and see for ourselves how easily we move into the states of greed, hatred and delusion and how opening to the direct experience of vedana, feeling, holds the key to short-circuiting that process.

### **Liberating insights**

Do you see what we are saying here? If we are not following the tendency to go towards pleasant feeling and away from unpleasant feelings we are left with the hard, cold reality that pain and discomfort are our constant companions and that pleasure doesn't last. We don't take kindly to that reality. Of course we want more pleasure. Of course we want less pain. Is Bud-

dha suggesting that we don't seek that? People can get very confused around this.

Buddha is not suggesting that we take the attitude that "life's a pain and pleasure doesn't last so what's the use?" If you follow that dismal line of thinking, you just want to commit suicide.

No, the teachings are far more subtle and significant than that. Buddha is trying to point us in the direction that self observation takes us—that is, to liberating insight. He wants us to see for ourselves the truth of suffering, impermanence and selflessness. There is suffering. And no matter how good we may feel in any moment, that good feeling will end. Everything born of the body and mind follows the laws of nature. It is not self. As meditators, we can see these truths directly by opening to feeling.

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*Buddha is trying to point us in the direction that self observation takes us—that is, to liberating insight.*

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### **Seeing the truth of suffering**

One summer I was house-sitting and animal-sitting for my friend Patty. Actually it was the first time I had done this for her. We were new friends and she asked me to stay at her home and watch her cat Cobbie for the weekend while she was away. Everything went fine the first day. On the second morning I couldn't find Cobbie. I looked around but she was nowhere in sight. I have to say that I didn't really worry, because Patty had told me that sometimes Cobbie stays out all night but finds her way home later in the day.

Well, Patty came home early and approached me with tears in her eyes. As she neared the driveway she saw Cobbie dead in the street. "Oh my God!" I said. And I went over and over my actions asking myself if I had been negligent, if I had been unconcerned, if I had understood Patty's instructions correctly. I asked myself, "What did I do wrong? How could Cobbie have died?" In my mind I kept reviewing the events of the two days trying to figure out what I had done wrong. This is fine to do once, but I was obsessing. Patty was doing the same kind of thing. Had she instructed me correctly? Was it her fault that Cobbie had died?

Suddenly we caught each other's eye and simultaneously realized what we were doing. We both just cried, "Cobbie's dead!" Our hearts knew the simple truth. But our minds resisted the pain of that truth and kept trying to find things to go to—doing everything they could do to avoid feeling the pain of suffering and death. It was as if we thought we could have done something to prevent the truth of death. When we



realized what we were doing, that was it. That was the end of it. Patty and I opened to the pain of losing Cobbie instead of moving away from it.

Until we meditate, until we understand that we can't get away from what is happening in this moment, until we see directly that it is better to be with what is happening than to avoid it, until we train the mind to be with life in this way, we will tend to avoid direct contact with painful moments like this and miss the liberating insights that are our freedom.

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*We become wise when we stop trying to manipulate the world. It is an irritating place sometimes; sometimes it is wonderful. Seeing that is wisdom.*

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### Seeing the truth of impermanence

I spent the better part of two years meditating at IMS, and during that time I became quite attached to a certain cup and bowl. Every time I approached the rack of dishes I looked for my favorite cup and bowl. Whenever they were there, I would get really excited. One day I arrived at the rack of dishes in the dining hall and noticed that my favorite cup and bowl were right on top. And there were nice fresh, clean napkins, too. As I approached the food line thinking things couldn't get any better, I discovered that the cooks had prepared my favorite dish—a potato and basil and Parmesan cheese casserole. And somebody had baked fresh bread, and there was plenty of it!

By now I was giddy with delight. I was thinking how nice it was and how I wish it could be like this all the time. Then I took my place at one of my favorite tables and began to enjoy my treasures—only to discover that the woman I sat next to made disgusting noises when she ate! It made me sick to my stomach. I sat there over my favorite bowl, eating my favorite food, wiping my tears and blowing my nose with my nice clean napkin. Sometimes the lessons of practice hit hard!

We can take comfort in the realization that while there is no guarantee that good feelings will happen or will last, it is also true that they are unavoidable. This, too, is a liberating insight. Pleasure is inherent in life. If we let it happen, it happens more fully. Remember that bumper sticker from a few years back that read, "[Poop] happens?" Well, I always thought we should have a complimentary bumper sticker that reads, "Pleasure happens." That's right, pleasure happens. Not only does it happen, you can't avoid it. I find this thought very comforting, don't you?

Did you see the film *Babette's Feast*? There was a

scene at the end of the movie which really brings home this point. The story involved a small, puritanical religious group which believed that pleasure was bad and should be avoided at all costs. They did everything they could to avoid the experience of pleasure. Well, Babette came along and offered to cook them a fabulous feast. Wanting to accept her generosity, they consented but then realized what they had done. They were frightened by the prospect of enjoying the meal. So they made an agreement among themselves not to comment on the pleasure so as not to indulge in it. They determined to receive Babette's offering graciously, and try to suffer through the pleasure that it would bring.

Those of you who saw the film know what happened. The devoted members of the sect couldn't avoid the fact that this was a most pleasant meal. While they remained true to their pact and did not comment on the food, their delight in it was unavoidable. And because they didn't express it verbally, their pleasure overtook them in unexpected ways. As the meal progressed they found themselves delighting in each other's company in ways that they had never felt before. They admitted transgressions, forgave past wounds, and toasted to each other's good fortune. Pleasure was doing its magic whether they liked it or not.

### See the truth of selflessness

Finally, by observing the workings of vedana, we come to know the truth of selflessness—that pleasure and pain arise out of conditions. This was a revolutionary awakening for me. I always thought I could make pleasure happen. Of course, I can make it happen. I set everything up and it happens, right? Well, we can do things to establish conditions for the arising of pleasure, but it may or may not happen.

I am reminded of a sad story wherein the protagonist wanted to propose to a woman he loved. He arranged for a special evening, brought out his best linens, best champagne and chocolates, had the parlor arranged with flowers, wore his neatly pressed tuxedo—in short, he did everything right to create a happy moment. But the woman refused his proposal of marriage. He established all the right conditions but the pleasure he expected didn't happen.

There is never any guarantee that pleasure will happen. We can't make pleasure happen any more than we can avoid pain. I think this is one of the things that plays into difficulties at the holidays. Families go to great extremes to prepare for the holidays, to make them happy occasions. "Oh everyone is going to be here and we are going to have such a great time!" or, "I bought this gift for that one and that gift for this one and they are going to be so happy." And, yet, for

many people the holidays turn out to be everything but happy. We so want to make everything right! Earlier in the day one of the class members asked about the dukkha of conditionality. This is it. Pleasure and pain arise out of conditions. They are not self. That's just the way it is.

We become wise when we stop trying to manipulate the world so that it is always pleasant or convenient, when we stop expecting to be content and comfortable at all times. This is an amazing reflection. The world is an irritating place sometimes. Sometimes it is wonderful. Seeing that is wisdom. The wise person doesn't create a problem out of either extreme. This is the middle way.

### Change happens in small ways

I was talking recently to one of the former long-term yogis from IMS. She practiced there for about nine months [when I was the resident teacher], and at nearly every interview she expressed concern that nothing was happening in her practice. I'd say, "Let me be the judge of that. More is happening than you think." But she wouldn't believe me. She had a lot of anger and frustration and couldn't imagine that she could ever be free of it.

Now she has stopped intensive practice and returned home. The other day she called me and said she couldn't believe how much things had changed. I asked her to describe the change. And it was precisely this subtle change that comes about by opening to vedana. She said that people still irritate her but she sees the irritation and doesn't get caught in it, so it doesn't mushroom into a coarse state such as hatred or anger. She sees more of the feeling as it happens. Thus, she doesn't get caught in it. And when she does, she quickly finds her way out. That was huge for her. She has had difficulty with certain family members, and the idea that she could begin to embrace them was the furthest thing from her mind prior to meditation.

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*As a result of practice, I am finding it easier to let things be. To me this is liberation.*

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How can we feel compassion for people who are irritating and difficult? How can we learn to be patient with ourselves when we get lost in reactive states of mind? Well, this is how it happens. We open to the unpleasantness of a moment's experience and let it be the way it is. Then it is free to end, free to die.

Recently, when I was buying a computer I found myself getting irritated with the salesman who waited on me. He did and said a couple of things that I found

abrasive and offensive. A few years ago I would have canceled my order and gone to another store. But this time I didn't. I just let the moment be imperfect and let my distaste for it be. I was very happy to see this change in myself. It was an outcome of practice. I could genuinely accept that the salesman was not being considerate. I asked myself, "So what? Can I let the imperfection of the moment be, and not make such a big deal out of it? Sometimes I'm inconsiderate. Can I forgive that?"

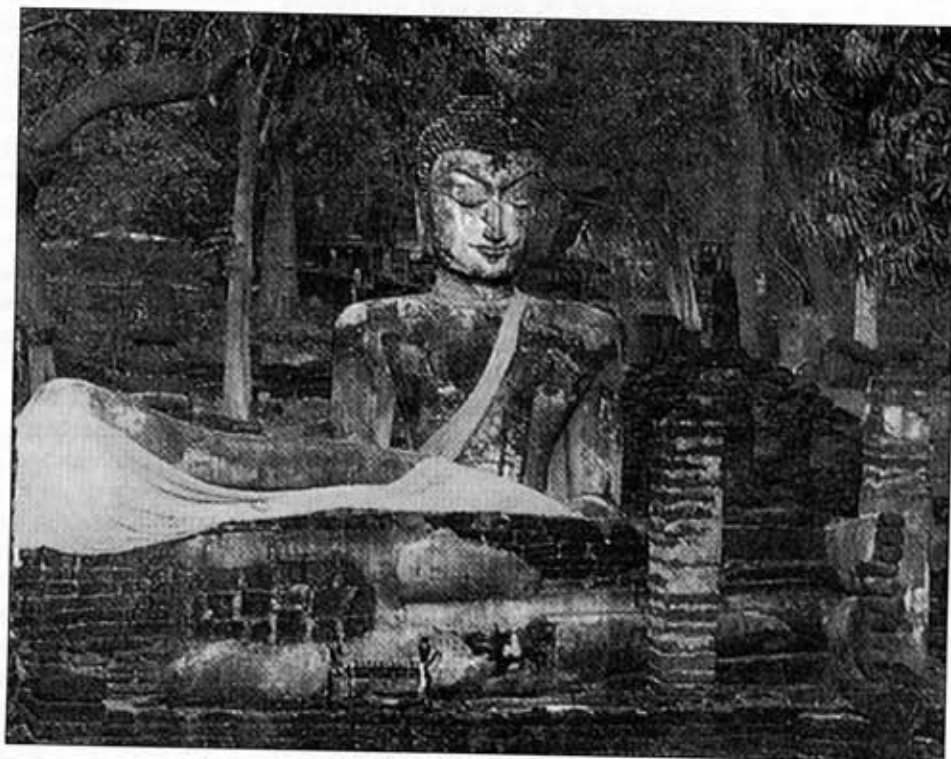
It used to be the case that when people crossed me

or did things I didn't like, I just wrote them off. But as a result of practice, I am finding that it is easier to let things be. To me this is liberation. I don't think much about stages of enlightenment and ultimate liberation. To me this kind of subtle change in my reactive patterns is liberating. This is what I call liberation.

In closing, let me just remind you to be gentle. Out of ignorance we have come to value thinking too much. And we think about, censor or ignore feeling precisely because we think so much. Thus, our hearts have become closed and obstructed. We have given too

much power to the head when it is meant to be a support for the work of the heart. We have to feel our way to freedom. We have to allow feeling all the space it needs and let our hearts do what they are designed to do—take us all the way to freedom.

It might interest you to know: Buddha said human birth is the most fortunate, precisely because of the mix of pleasure and pain. These occur in just the right blend here to facilitate awakening to the truth. We must trust feeling, treasure it, learn from it—open to pleasure and pain and see them as our teachers.



continued from page 36

pleasant, or a third category, neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It is therefore a word that is used to refer to direct experience. I don't want to overemphasize this point, because we're going to put this word "know" to better use when we get to the aggregate of consciousness. But it does point out how, in these early Indian models of psychology, feeling and knowing are so thoroughly intertwined with one another that the distinction between them is very nuanced—and it's a nuance we cannot fully appreciate when we use the English language.

A modern term used by psychologists to indicate the feeling dimension of experience is "affect tone." We are beginning to appreciate much more than formerly the importance of the role affect plays in guiding and molding our behavior and our beliefs. Everything we do or say or think comes packaged with a feeling tone—we either like it (a lot or very subtly), or dislike it (a lot or very subtly); in cases where the experience is not distinct enough or not clearly enough known, we

may be unsure whether we like or dislike it. In this case we still have a feeling, but it is not resolved into the two poles of pleasant or unpleasant. The point of the Buddhist teaching of the aggregates is that this affect or feeling tone is not something we decide upon, based upon some sort of cognitive analysis of sense objects; rather it is built in to every moment of experience—whether we like it or not!

### The Arising of Experience

The first text I would have us look at is one that points to a very important aspect of feeling and of all the aggregates—the fact that they are interdependently arisen. Paragraph 27 of the *Mahā Hatthipadopama Sutta* (MN 28; *Middle Length Sayings* p. 283), *The Greater Simile of the Elephant's Footprint*, describes the way the aggregates emerge from a moment's unique, contextualized experience. Remember the point we emphasized yesterday: The ag-

gregates are not substances that exist; they are terms referring to events that occur. They are conceptual categories we can use to describe episodes of interdependently arisen experience. This text shows us how this works.

No doubt you recall the chart of the sense bases or sense doors: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are six sense organs that have evolved to be sensitive to the six corresponding classes of sense objects we call forms, sounds, odors, flavors, touches and mental phenomena. The passages we are looking at now are emphasizing the fact that experience can only occur when these sense organs and sense objects complete a circuit, as it were, with consciousness, which will also manifest in six different modes to correspond to the six internal and external sense spheres. Another way of saying this is to recognize that subjective human experience only occurs (remember it is an event!) when all three functions of a triangle are joined: the organ, the object and consciousness.



If, friends, internally the eye (ear, nose, etc.) is intact but no external forms (sounds, odors, etc.) come into its range, and there is no corresponding [conscious] engagement, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding class of consciousness.

This section describes a situation where the link between sense organ and sense object is insufficient. If your eye is working properly, but there is some environmental reason for your not being able to see forms (if your eyes are closed, for example, or the room is too dark) then you don't see forms, even though you may be right in front of one. The eye can't see the Eiffel Tower, which is on the other side of the globe, because it's not in proximity. In either case the link between the perceptual organ and the perception object, the eye and the forms is not functioning. Also keep in mind that by eye they do not mean merely the eyeball, of course, but the entire visual system (cornea, retina, optic nerve, visual cortex, etc.); there is also the issue of the eye being sensitive to certain wavelengths of the light spectrum and not others. Other limitations apply to the other senses of hearing, smell, taste, touch and mental phenomena.

*Feeling is built in to every moment of experience—whether we like it or not!*

What would be an example of an insufficient link between the mind and mental phenomena? Perhaps it's like the situation when you are trying to remember a friend's phone number, or the name of an acquaintance, and you just cannot make the connection. You know the information is stored in memory someplace, but try as you might you can't bring that particular mental object to mind in the moment. Here is another reason the system might not work:

*If internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range, but there is no corresponding [conscious] engagement, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding class of consciousness.*

In this case the external factors are okay, but we are in some important way not attending to a particular object. You might be asleep, for example, or you've been knocked unconscious; or you might simply be thinking about something else. If you are so intent on what you're listening to, for example, you may not be paying attention to what is passing before your eyes. In that case, then there is no corresponding conscious engagement, and there is no manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness. The loop between the ear, sounds and auditory consciousness might be operative, but while it is so the loop between the eye, forms and visual consciousness is not complete, because consciousness is engaged at the other

sense door. The system does not allow one to be conscious of two types of object at once.

*If we look closely enough—and mindfulness meditation gives us the means for doing this—we will see reality unfolding, moment by moment.*

This point is itself counter-intuitive, because it certainly seems to us that we can be aware of data coming through several of the sense doors simultaneously. According to this early Buddhist analysis, however, that sense of simultaneity is only the result of the rapidity with which we are able to cycle between the sense doors. Using some modern language from the cognitive sciences, we might say that our basic sensory apparatus is processing a huge amount of data in parallel systems that function independently and therefore simultaneously. While a nerve impulse is passing up my arm from the sensors on my fingers, another impulse can at the same time be racing up my optic nerve from the retina. And a mind-boggling number of other signals may also be surging though my nervous system shuttling their information from arrays of receivers to banks of processors.

But the subjectively-based science of human experience discovered by the ancient Buddhists through meditation is telling us that conscious awareness is something that can only happen by means of serial processing. Our short-term memory and forward and backward masking techniques are adequate to retrieve information from the senses that we had not been attending to, as when a teacher asks a day-dreaming pupil what was just said and the pupil somehow manages to repeat the teacher's words. But this is not the same as conscious engagement with the present object of experience. You all know the difference between feeling really heard and attended to by someone who is focusing on what you say, and being on the periphery of someone's sensory range who may be only politely attentive.

*But when internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range and there is the corresponding [conscious] engagement, then there is the manifestation of the corresponding class of consciousness.*

In the situation being described here the connection is made between these three functions of the system: the visual organ, the visual object and the process of conscious engagement. The Pali word for this connection is *phasso* which literally means "touching" and is usually translated as "contact." I prefer the word "experience," because that is really what emerges from the completion of the sensory systems—a moment's unique experience.

## Insight Into the Moment

There is something truly astonishing about this analysis of human experience, something that I think is unparalleled in world religions. Notice that with this use of language, it is not possible to talk about consciousness as a noun. It is not something that somebody or something either has or does not have; it is not something that somebody is or is not; it can only be understood as an event, an episode, a momentary occurrence. And this event is entirely contextualized—it arises in interdependence with an particular organ and a very specific object; and having arisen, it immediately passes away. Having passed away, it may immediately arise (or better, occur) again, but when it does it will be in interdependence with a different organ and a different object. Even if the eye is seeing the same form for several mind moments in a row, the truth of impermanence is such that the experience will not be exactly the same each time. Perhaps the light has changed subtly, or the angle of presentation is slightly different, or one is in a somewhat altered mood at each ensuing moment of awareness.

Furthermore, according to this model, consciousness alone will never be sufficient to generate experience. Consciousness can only manifest as consciousness of something, and it has to use one of the six sense organs to become conscious of one of the six types of sense object. Now I'm sure many of you have heard such phrases as "pure consciousness" or "consciousness that takes no object," but these expressions come either from other traditions (such as Hinduism) or from strata of Buddhist tradition quite a bit more evolved historically and doctrinally than what is found in the Pali Canon. In the model being presented

*The aggregates are not substances that exist; they are events that occur.*

In this text, it becomes clear that consciousness is just one element of a larger system of cognition, which therefore becomes unintelligible if removed from its role in the system. A carburetor, for example, only does what a carburetor does when it is properly installed in an engine and cooperates with a fuel system and an ignition system in a very particular way. In the same way, human experience only occurs when all five aggregates are co-arising in a moment's constructed cognition. None of the aggregates can be separated from the others and retain its intelligibility as a factor independent of the system of which it is a part.

Why is all this coming up in the context of feeling? Because we cannot really understand what is being referred to as feeling unless we grasp this fundamental aspect of the five aggregate model—feeling arises

only in thorough interdependence with the other aggregates. As our text goes on to say:

*The material form in what has thus come to be is included in the material form aggregate affected by clinging. The feeling... perception... formations... consciousness in what has thus come to be is included in the feeling... perception... formations... consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.*

This is a very important phrase: "what has thus come to be." Each of the aggregates is emerging, moment after moment, as the process of the construction of reality unfolds in a particular psychophysical organism. Our entire experience as human beings is made up of moments of these constructed experiences. If we look closely enough—and mindfulness meditation gives us the tools for accomplishing this—we will see it unfold: a moment of visual experience (seeing the swirl of a pattern on your closed eyelid, for example); followed by a moment of auditory experience (the chirp of a bird outside the meditation hall); followed by a moment of tactile experience (that throb of pain in your knee, perhaps); followed by a moment of mental experience ("I wonder what's for lunch?")...

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*You can begin to discern patterns in how you construct experience... in our colloquial language we call such patterns "self."*

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We string these moments of experience, these moments of sensory connection, together with the construction of subjective time, and a stream of consciousness appears to emerge: moment after moment after moment of knowing. Knowing this (the bird), then knowing that (the knee pain), then knowing the next thing (the thought of lunch). When you put a million or two of these together, you begin to build up a few moments of subjective experience. Then you can begin to discern patterns in the specific ways you go about constructing the experiential stream, certain habits or dispositions that effect the construction process. These patterns are called *sankhāras* or formations. They are referred to in our colloquial language as personality, character, or self.

This is what is happening. This is what our lives, our worlds, our very selves are made up of. How much of it can you see? For most of us, most of the time, we are able to really notice only a fraction of this unfolding universe. Mindfulness practice is training ourselves to see more of it, and you can get a sense of more and more of the universe emerging as you pay closer and closer attention to the process. In the *Anupada Sutta* (M 111) the Buddha's great disciple Sariputta is said to have had "insight into states one by one as they

occurred" for days and even weeks at a time.

The last line we will look at in this particular text sort of sums it all up:

*This, indeed, is how there comes to be the inclusion, gathering, and amassing of things into these five aggregates affected by clinging... And these five aggregates affected by clinging are dependently arisen.*

Returning to the issue of feeling, we see from this model that feeling is something transient, arising and passing away moment after moment, and we see that it is content- and context-specific. A feeling can only be understood in relation to a particular object sensed by a particular organ in a particular moment of conscious experience. The affect tone of "liking this" or "not liking that" is as variable, and comes and goes as regularly, as experience itself.

### The Construction of Reality

It is not the case that we have a "raw" experience, and then we examine the data to see what it is we "perceive," then consult the archives to see how it is we "feel" about this experience. What the aggregate model is suggesting is that perception and feeling are bound up with every moment's experience during the process of constructing that experience. As the experience arises from its specific conditions, as part of the construction process wrought by the mind, the aggregates of perception and feeling are "amassed." The way this is put in the *Madhupindika Sutta* (*The Honey Ball Discourse*, M 18) is:

*Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What one feels, that one perceives.*

This process, as I understand it, does not happen as an unfolding sequence. It is not that we have a moment's experience, and then some how decide what it is and decide how we feel about it. Rather, the experience is presented to our awareness with the perception and feeling already woven in with the sense data and its cognition. We "know" how it feels, just like we "know" what it is (perception), at the very same moment we "know" a visual object is arising via the visual organ into the moment's visual consciousness. This insight, by the way, parallels the modern scientific view that the brain is organized into separate cognitive and affective systems, through which we become aware of "what" we're experiencing through a different channel than we become aware of "how we feel about" it.

So every moment of our experience has to do with the binding together of all kinds of interdependent relationships. Then, as soon as that moment has oc-

curred, it's gone—because it is, after all, only an event. All of "what has thus come to be" can be viewed as the enacting of an event—a flash, a spark—again and again and again. A cognitive, affect-laden system for constructing experience is enacting itself over and over, at sufficient levels of coherence and complexity that we regard it as a "self" and a "world." But the self is not some sort of entity that is kind of underlying or overlying all these moments of experience. The self too is created and re-created every moment, following the patterns of its accumulated conditioning (also known as karma).

All this is understood in the Buddhist models of experience, and it is against this backdrop that feeling needs to be understood. When we hold on to feelings, relating to them as if they were somehow defining our very identity, then the conditions are present for the construction of suffering. But when, through mindfulness, we can simply observe the coming and the going of specific feeling tones—and see how this occurs in dependence on specific conditions—the entire process becomes more de-personalized. Freedom from suffering rests upon this intuition into the selflessness of the process.





# तारका तिमिरं दीपो मायावश्यायबुद्धं स्वप्नं च विद्युदभ्रं च एवं द्रष्टव्यं संस्कृतं

tārakā timiram dipo  
māyāvāśyāyabudbudam  
svapnam ca vidyudabhram ca  
evam draṣṭavyam saṃskṛtam

Like stars, or darkness, or a lamp,  
A trick, a dew drop, a bubble,  
A dream, a lightning flash, a cloud,  
—So should one view the conditioned.

So should you see all of the fleeting world:  
A star at dawn, a bubble in the stream;  
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud;  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.

## Sutta Studies

phenapindūpamam rūpam  
vedanā bubbulupamā  
marīcikūpamā saññā  
saṅkhārā kadalūpamā  
māyūpamañca viññāṇam  
dipitādiccabandhuna

yathā yathā nijjhāyati  
yoniso upaparikkhati  
rittakam tucchakam hoti  
yo nam passati yoniso

...  
etādisayam santāno  
māyāyam bālalāpini  
vadhako eso akkhāto  
sāro ettha na vijjati

This body's like a ball of foam,  
And feeling is like a bubble;  
Perception is like a mirage,  
Formations like a pith-less tree,  
And consciousness is like a trick;  
—So says the kinsman of the sun.

However one reflects on them,  
And carefully investigates:  
They are empty and deserted  
To one who sees them properly.

Their lineage is only this:  
A nonsense-babbling fantasy,  
Revealing itself a killer.  
No essence is discovered here.

Samyutta Nikāya 22:95

### Three Views of Transience

This famous verse serves as a climax to the Diamond Sutra, a foundation text of the Mahayana tradition. Here we see the Sanskrit version in its original script, along with a transliteration and literal translation, as well as a version translated from the Chinese (quoted in Mu Soeng, *The Diamond Sutra*, p. 135). The same sentiment is articulated in the Pali verse on the right, taken from the Samyutta Nikaya. Notice that the Pali verse is referring to each of the five aggregates in turn, while the Diamond Sutra passage lumps them all together as "conditioned phenomena." Notice also how the Sanskrit verse is more of a specific list of metaphors, while the Chinese version tends to be more poetic and somewhat less literal. Of course we recognize the Pali and Sanskrit words for bubble: *bubbula* and *budbuda*.

The sentiment is clearly the same, however, in each of the different renditions. When we place them together like this, we can trace a movement that is common in the development of Buddhism: The Pali texts may contain a detailed psychological teaching; the popular Mahayana texts capture its essence in more generalized terms; and the Chinese versions of these texts point more to concrete natural images compatible with its own rich poetic tradition. —A. Olendzki

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meditation. The tigers were apparently gone, but the rats, insects, snakes, and wild chickens were plenty of company for me.

I had certainly been aware of the possibilities of illness and had brought a water purifier and lots of medicines, but within a few days I was sick in a way that made my Korean experience (2 weeks of severe dysentery) look like a walk in the park. I had a fever and terrible diarrhea and was vomiting. To make matters worse, I had bitten into a hard object in my food and broken a tooth. In Thailand the monks went to the village to beg for food, and we took what we got. I am normally a vegetarian, but I was eating chicken and fish. The food was actually quite good. But something was making me sick.

I was terribly discouraged. Once again I'd been extremely excited about going there to practice and instead I was spending much of my time lying down, when I wasn't running to the bathroom with diarrhea or running outside to vomit. I was also feeling a lot of fear. The conditions we were living in were quite primitive, and I seemed very ill.

Maha Boowa dealt with my anxiety first. He had a relaxed, jovial air and didn't seem at all worried. "Listen," he said.

"You've taken all the medicines you have. You've taken all the medicines we have. It's time to let nature take its course. We don't think you're going to die. If we thought things were that serious, we'd find you the best medical help we could. This just seems to be the problem many Westerners have when they first come to Thailand."

Instead of letting this illness keep me from practicing, he said, I should practice with it. Forget about words like dysentery, fever, even illness. The sensations I was experiencing were as good for practice as any other. What I needed to do was focus on them and stay with them. It is when the mind wanders from its concentration that the difficulties arise. Suddenly it's your illness, these are your feelings, and you're full of self-pity. But when your concentration returns, they're just sensations again. He told me just to work with it, to see the impermanent nature of it all. The unpleasant sensations and the mind-states that accompanied them: All of them were empty. None was solid.

I told him that most of the time I couldn't sit. He said the physical posture was less important than the quality of the attention. I should sit when I could and at other times just practice in bed. "Listen," Ajaan

Maha Boowa said, "you're probably discouraged. Have you thought about going home?" I admitted I had. "You could do that," he said. "You could stay a week, then go back to the United States and talk at parties about your heroic week at the Thai forest monastery. But what would you have accomplished? Either way, the illness will run its course. But if you practice with it, you'll do something for your mind." He meant not my thinking mind but the larger realm of mind that we open up to when we meditate.

I don't think I could have done it without Maha Boowa's help, his calm, light-hearted encouragement to practice with my illness moment by moment. But with him there I was able to, and I can honestly say it was an extraordinary experience. My body was falling apart; I was spending much of my time in bed, but my mind was often positively blissful. Even as I was running to the jungle to throw up there was sometimes joy.

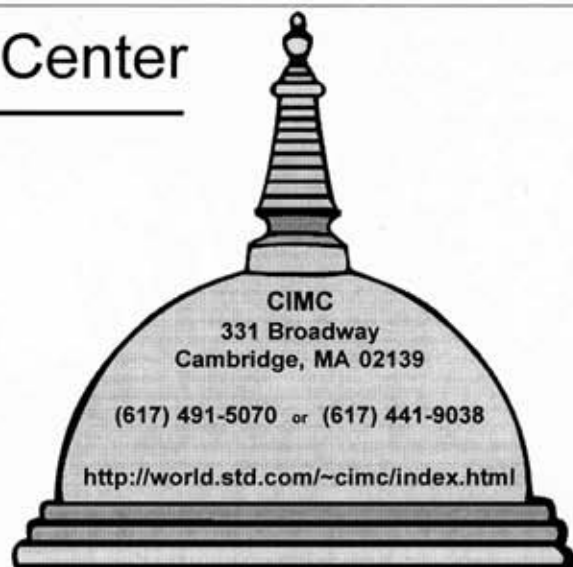
Ajaan Maha Boowa told me it had other implications as well. "We don't know what is going to happen when it is time to die," he said. "But the skills you are learning now will help you then."

From *Living in the Light of Death* by Larry Rosenberg, forthcoming from Shambhala Publications in June, 2000.

# Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

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

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



Illness is unavoidable. Though my body is sick, my mind shall not be sick. Thus, householder, must you train yourself.

The Buddha  
(Nakulapitar Sutta S22:1)

The dharma attitude toward illness, especially in the Theravada tradition, is quite radical and very much in contrast to the attitude of our culture. It isn't that the monks in Asia want to get sick; they appreciate good health and the energy that it gives for practice. But when the body does grow ill, that too is considered a wonderful occasion for practice.

Illness, for one thing, is an immediate reminder of the unpredictability of everything. It is a striking demonstration of impermanence, a reminder that the body is a changing phenomenon and does break down, sometimes quite rapidly. Illness is also a reminder—one that we often ignore—that the body will eventually give out altogether. Since that fact is considered a vital part of practice, we make good use of the reminder, the chance to see deeply into ourselves. We often see what we are by seeing what we are not. And we are not permanent physical entities.

So as dharma practitioners we do whatever we reasonably can to be healed but don't bemoan the fact that we are ill and don't constantly compare our condition to a time when we were healthy. Illness provides a unique opportunity for practice, especially if we are bedridden. Suddenly we can drop all the responsibilities and cares of daily life.

This attitude is much in contrast to that of our culture (and probably to that of most cultures). We are an energetic, productive, can-do society, proud of our robust health, and we see disease as something that shouldn't be happening, when it is really just a natural part of being human, of finding ourselves in a body that is changing and not entirely under our control.

The view of dharma is quite different. It sees the human body as an impermanent phenomenon like any other, one that not only will come to an end but also is constantly changing in unexpected ways. We have control over some conditions that affect the body but not others, and a part of wisdom is to know that. We need to take care of our bodies, but in a profound way we don't really own them, except in a conventional and legal sense.

This is not to say that there is no such thing as illness. Illness and health are useful classifications in our encounters with doctors. The problem is that we attach to these classifications as self; we see them as who we are. They separate us from experience and keep us from being intimate with our lives.

So there is sickness and there is health. But more

Don't wish for perfect health. In perfect health there is greed and wanting. So an ancient said, "Make good medicine from the suffering of sickness."

Korean Son Master  
Kyong Ho (1849-1912)

specifically, there is always just how we are right now. That is what we practice with.

I had a somewhat similar experience when I was traveling to Thailand to practice with the famous teacher Ajaan Maha Boowa, a student of Ajaan Mun, who had largely revived the Thai forest tradition. This was rather different from the collective practice I had done in Zen. We did get together in a hall to eat and do chanting, but we meditated mainly in kutis in the forest, little bamboo huts that were connected together by long paths. Meditators were alone in their kutis. We were near a small village, an overnight train ride from Bangkok, and a good distance from the nearest small city.

It is important to understand that the person undertaking this practice had been brought up in Brooklyn. They call it the Thai forest tradition, but I call it the Thai jungle tradition. A forest is where you go for a picnic, where the worst creatures you run into are ants and the worst catastrophe a rainstorm. This was a lush tropical jungle, with snakes and all kinds of creatures slithering around, including a substantial community of rats who join meditators during the rainy season. There were even stories of monks encountering tigers during their evenings of walking

*continued on page 42*



## The Healing Medicine of Dhamma

Milinda-pañho 335

ye keci osadhā loke  
vijjanti vividhā bahū,  
dhammosadhasamaṃ na-tthi;  
etaṃ pivatha bhikkhavo.

Whatever medicines are found  
In the world—many and varied—  
None are equal to the Dhamma.  
Drink of this, monks!

dhammosadhaṃ pivivāna  
ajarāmarañā siyuma,  
bhāvayitvā ca passivā  
nibbutā upadhikkhaye ti

And having drunk  
The medicine of the Dhamma,  
You'll be untouched by age and death.  
Having meditated and seen—  
(You'll be) healed by ceasing to cling.

These two verses point to the healing symbolism of the the Buddha's teaching. He is often pictured as the great physician who, seeing the suffering of all beings in the world, applies the medical formula of the four noble truths to 1) describe the symptoms of suffering; 2) investigate its specific causes; 3) using this information, reverse the causes to conceive a cure; and finally 4) lay out a flexible program of treatment that will lead a person out of affliction to lasting health of body and mind.

Notice that the medicine will only work if it is drunk. The heart of the Buddhist message is not so much the theoretical analysis of the human condition, subtle and compelling as it is, but rather the practical effect of actually taking the cure. The physician can do no more than offer us the medicine—it is up to each of us to drink of it ourselves. This is where the practice of meditation and the moment-to-moment cultivation of wholesome mind states is so important.

Since all of our afflictions ultimately grow from our attachments (upādāna), and from the clinging constructions we forge (upadhi), the path to freedom or health (nibbutā=the cessation of suffering) will unfold as we learn to abandon these constructions and as they begin to wane (khaya). The mechanism for this cure is wisdom, which emerges as we begin to meditate (bhāvayitvā) and hence see more clearly (passivā) the nature of our constructed experience. Being cured does not mean that the process of aging and dying simply stops (since whatever is constructed must undergo change). But we can, through wisdom, be "untouched" by aging and death. Health consists of a sufficiently deep understanding of the nature of things that we do not cling to anything in the world. Non-attachment is itself the cure.

These verses are published and further explicated in the recent book *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, edited by Christopher Queen (Wisdom Publications, 2000), in a chapter titled, "Meditation, Healing and Stress Reduction."

—Andrew Olendzki