

Insight

Spring / Summer
2001

For Not to be taken
from the room.
reference



Insight

A twice-yearly newsletter of the

Insight Meditation Society

and the

Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies

with program schedules and
Dharma articles of lasting interest

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Insight is a newsletter jointly published by the Insight Meditation Society and the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which are tax-exempt non-profit centers whose purpose is to foster the practice of *vipassanā* (insight) meditation and to preserve the essential teachings of Theravada Buddhism.

The goal of the practice is the awakening of wisdom and compassion through right action and cultivating mindful awareness in all aspects of life.

IMS offers a year-round program of intensive meditation retreats and various opportunities for volunteer service.

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



A Thai Buddha from Wat Chet Yot, Chiang Mai.

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A Ripple in a Pond

an interview with

Ajahn Sucitto



Bearing the sign of the bhikkhu, you realize that somehow you've stepped into something very, very big.

I know how reticent monks are to talk about themselves, but I cannot help but begin by asking about your own *Jātaka* story. How did you wind up as a Buddhist monk living in England?

Well, where does it all begin? I suppose around the age of six or seven I started to recognize something of what death was about: that we all die. I remember talking to my brother about it and he said, "Oh, don't think about it, it will be all right." Now he is a businessman and I'm a monk. (Laughs.) I remember even then not feeling interested in the general flow of society; feeling, "Well, what are we doing here? Just passing the time." You wonder where it all begins...

After graduating from university (English and American literature at Warwick) I thought I owed it to myself, having done 18 years of schooling, to just move out of the program and see the wider view of things. I spent about four years traveling around. This was the sixties and seventies, so things were pretty wild. After awhile I thought, "Well no, this isn't it. I need to find some proper way of cultivating clarity." So the only intuition I had was—"go to the East."

So you hit the road and went to India?

I went to India when I was twenty-four with the thought, "Well, you'll find it here somewhere." But, I just got very ill; so I escaped India. I had a *Traveler's Guide to the World* which had one paragraph about Thailand in it. Thailand sounded like it was cool and friendly, while India was very chaotic and wild. So, I jumped on a plane to Thailand. After only one day in Bangkok I took a train to Ayutthaya (ancient capital) and found myself wandering among the ruins—colossal Buddhist remains, big pagodas, gigantic Buddha statues. And I thought to myself, "Well, what's this?"

A few days later I was in Chiang Mai. I saw a sign in English saying, "Meditation Classes Being Taught." I thought, "That must be part of what it's about. Learn to focus, get your mind together. I'll do that. I went to one meditation class and there was a monk teaching in this *vihāra* [monastery]. He was an English monk. He was sitting by a window which didn't have any glass in it. He had an oil lamp beside him. I noticed that flying ants were coming in through the window and crawling all over him as he was talking. He

was very carefully picking them off his skin occasionally out of his mouth, without getting upset. To me it looked so irritating but it didn't seem to bother him. We only did about 15 minutes of meditation; and just in that time the obvious realization came, "Hey, there's all this thinking, and there's a silence that's not thinking, a silence that's attending to this. What's that?" I thought, "I must investigate that."

So you got a taste of...what?

Some awareness, some silence, some quality of attention. I mean, whenever you put it into words it doesn't quite work, does it? You find you're in a different key than you were before: before you were very much in the music and now, somehow, the music's happening but you're not moving with it.

So I talked to the monk afterwards and said, "I'd like to do more of this." But I recognized that I was not going to do this while staying in a cheap hotel with five other guys smoking dope and playing guitars. So I asked, "Can I come and stay in your monastery?" A couple of days later I just packed up and hitchhiked a couple hundred miles down the

*I thought, "Three months ought to do it."
That was 22 years ago.*

road to where he was living and wandered in. He gave me a *kuṭi* [meditation hut] and came down the next day to give me some teaching instructions. He was teaching the Burmese *satipaṭṭhāna* [mindfulness] method.

Did you take to meditation from the start?

Yes, I did. I was really interested in the mind and in exploring. It wasn't a decision, really; it was innate. I'd always been interested in it, but I hadn't had a framework. Within about a week I started to piece things together: "Well, you know, this is not bad. You're in this little hut. They're pretty nice. They bring you food. And you get to work on clearing your mind." I felt happy. I recognized that whatever you do in life, basically you want to feel you're doing something with purpose and you want to be happy. I wasn't really missing out on much by being in the monastery. I didn't need much. I'd come from a working class background, which means that you work hard your whole life. Working class people have to activate a lot of effort and energy and attention and aggravation to get the four requisites [food, shelter, clothing, and medicine] together—and there at the monastery that was just laid on. It was simple, but laid on. So I thought, "I'd like to do more of this."

So you stayed on?

I actually had to leave Thailand to get a new visa. I thought I'd have a look around while I was out, so I traveled around Indonesia for a while—but with an increasing sense of *nibbidā*, or world-weariness. I was doing all the things you're supposed to do to make life enjoyable. I was going to some very beautiful countryside, to mountains, beaches, and lakes. But it just was not connecting; it wasn't sinking in. It was like looking at everything through a glass. I was somewhere else. I ended up living in Bali, where everybody was hanging out. But I just couldn't go through that whole scene anymore. There was no energy for it. I found that all I wanted to do was

meditate—sit and walk. I thought, "This is crazy, doing it in this place." So I went back to Thailand. It was a very instructive excursion.

After three days at the monastery I shaved my head and became a *sāmaṇera*, a ten-precept novice monk. It's a much less highly calibrated discipline than full ordination, but the basic stuff is there. Then I got into meditation. After about six months or so there were other Westerners who had turned up, and they were all interested in becoming *bhikkhus* [monks]. I was happy where I was. But the others would say, "You've been here longest. You should become a *bhikkhu* before us." I said, "No, no, I'm fine." I didn't like the idea of being somebody.

However...I was living in a very secluded part of the monastery, and both the teacher and I felt it would be good to go on alms-round because that's part of what being a monk, even a novice, is about. So I began going out every day on *piṇḍapāta*—alms-round. And that was really tremendous. I suddenly got the whole social aspect of it, which is very potent. We'd go out early in the morning. People were just getting up, getting themselves together. They'd come out with bowls of rice to put food in our bowls. The people were eager, concerned to make sure they got their rice in your bowl. I could see that there was a tremendous focus of attention. You create something for people. You set up their day. If a monk didn't go by, they would be very upset. So you're part of some greater meaning than the personal. The fact of being that kind of focus is an incredible spur to practice.

Can you say more about why that's so? Is it a feeling of gratitude for what you've been given, or the service you're providing to the people?

It's partly gratitude, but it's not exactly that. It's more like recognizing you're part of something very big that's gone on for thou-

sands of years and is holding a society together in some form. It's holding people's minds together, giving them a sense of direction. It's certainly not given to one personally: "Hey, I like you. Here's some food." People don't even look at you. They just see the robe, the bowl. You don't say anything. It would be very inappropriate to start conversing. But bearing the sign of the monk you realize that somehow you've stepped into something very, very big. These people are born and will die with that sign in their mind. They grow up as toddlers with that sign in their mind. When they're in trouble, that sign in their mind will come back to them.

In the West, my experience had been of being very much out of context. You're one fragment with a bunch of other fragments around you. The bonding is minimal, perfunctory, and mostly out of functional necessity. Suddenly you are part of something whole. And it is carrying people's values. As a monk your values are simple things: Rather than get angry, I'll calm down. Rather than cheat, I'll be honest. Rather than kill, I'll refrain. Very simple stuff. And yet, you're carrying that for a society in some way. So you think, "My bit in this situation is to be worthy of alms by carrying the sign of goodness."

It's not an obligation. Nobody's asking, nobody's checking up. It's a real level of connectedness in which something...is transformed. You get to points in your meditation where your mind could go flaky—but it doesn't. It comes back into the good because of that connection to goodness. There are times when you could just think, "Oh, forget it." But you say, "No, keep going." It's intuitive. It's something you feel in your heart.

How did you wind up accepting full ordination?

The specific cause was a response to the local community. Twice a year the monastery hosted hundreds of women to come to the monastery and meditate. They would all wear white, take the eight precepts, and sleep where

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you just put the material in and don't
heat it up—you won't get the gold.*

ever a spare patch of floor could be found—there just weren't enough *kutis*. And they would do a ten-day meditation retreat. Now, aspects of the feminine play a big part in monastic culture—either through women themselves or through the receptive and suffusive elements of Dhamma practice. The feminine offers a key to transformation. My own ordination was a good case in point.

The Thai women stepped forward, very eager to offer support—making that offering meant a lot to them. For a Westerner to go forth was regarded as significant and impressive because it's not part of our culture, not something we would do as a matter of course. So the women were very keen to sponsor a Westerner to become a *bhikkhu*. They thought, "You've got so much. You've got education, and money, and so many other things. And you're giving it all up." And I felt, "Well, they've given so much. I'll do it, for them." So the result was that everyone was uplifted. Like the Buddha, a monk "leaves home" to take up the holy life—but sponsorship is a later development. It connects the "Going Forth" to the society—a very "feminine" thing. Anyway, I was a *bhikkhu*. I stayed where I was and continued to practice meditation, but I also joined in more with the community life of the Sangha.

One of the most inspiring things about being a *bhikkhu* was that once a fortnight we would go to the *pātimokkha* recitation. We'd sit in a hall listening to one monk recite the training rules at high speed. (It takes about forty-five minutes nonstop.) We'd just sit there, with our hearts open, listening. And at that time I felt this incredible sense of bonding with all these humans; and also with people like the Buddha, Sāriputta, and all the people who have been doing very much the same thing for 2500 years. They all listened to and lived according to these rules being recited. The recitation is a chance to acknowledge one's own failings or weaknesses, and incline towards clearing the effects and doing better. You feel again that you're part of the human

need, the human urge to do good, which is an urge as basic as our more sensual urges. Because it's low volume, we don't normally hear it. But I think the urge is intrinsic: we want to do good.

So, except for what circumstance would you still be there to this day?

Well, my father died, so I went back to England to see my mother and sort out any family affairs. You know, my own personal stuff. And at that time Ajahn Sumedho was living in London. I had met him briefly in Thailand on one of my visits to another monastery. He struck me as someone with some accomplishment. His presence was peaceful; it was gentle; it was warm and spacious; it was resonant. So when I found out he was in Britain, I thought I would go see him. He was staying in a little place in London near Hampstead Heath, and I went down there and stayed a few days. There were two other monks there as well. I liked what they were doing. They were forest monks—whereas the place I had been trained was more a city monastery. And they brought with them a sense of fuller application to things like making robes, to a whole way of living. I found that interesting. So I thought, "While I'm in Britain, I'll stay a bit longer—three months ought to do it." (Laughs.) That was 22 years ago.

Was it distracting to your life as a monk to have to deal with the social newness of what you were doing in the English culture?

If you go back to the idea of receiving alms-food: I recognized that I was part of something big, a ripple in a pond. My experience in meditation was revealing a lot of the difficulties—hindrances, confusions, wrong views—that needed to get worked out in a wider, social context. So living with a group of monks and engaging was very helpful. It helped to open things up, work things out, take things in; to feel the sense of a larger sphere. English culture wasn't really a prob-

lem because it places a high value on non-intrusion. People don't tend to come in on you unless they're invited. And there's a place for monasteries in the culture.

It still must have been quite a change for you. You mentioned the sense of connecting to a long social tradition in Thailand, and this would have been very different in England.

Ajahn Sumedho is a very gifted teacher, in that he talks about Buddhism from the perspective of what's happening now. Where are we at now? How are we mindful of what's happening now? How do we find harmony? He teaches from the earth up, rather than from the sky down. He set a good example for us. People could relate to the goodness of what we were about. Then the *vinaya* [guidelines for the monastic life] helped to guide the connections between *bhikkhus* and the society, and the sanctuary of the monastery provided the situation for meeting.

After living in London we moved to a derelict house in Chithurst, West Sussex, which we had to work together to rebuild. That was more of a challenge, really, because all I'd ever done before was formal practice. Here we had to do a lot of manual work, we had to talk with people. We didn't have much time for formal practice. And because English people generally didn't know what *bhikkhus* were all about, we'd often have to be more forthcoming to warm them up and make them feel okay and not nervous.

In a lot of what you've been saying you've indicated the importance you give to human relatedness, the value of other human beings. This also seems reflected in how much people seem to want to be around you and in the care you give them. What do you see as the place of relationship in your path?

Well, we're all bobbing around in the pond... Maybe awareness of relationship begins there. I think how we relate to others is a key issue nowadays: the instruction to be our

own refuge, to go into solitude, etc., has to be balanced against the Buddha's frequent use of dialogue to teach, his having disciples live and work with their teachers, and his establishing the Sangha [the monastic community]. Nowadays, a perception of "the other" can bring up anxiety, fear of judgment, competition, etc., and the teacher as "The Other" can be the implacable judge, the parent for whom one was never good enough. All this clogs up Dhamma practice. So I try to enter the practice field with the group and stay connected and responsive—action and speech follow from there. And silence...in a shared silence Dhamma seems to spread by osmosis. I enjoy group practice; maybe that comes across.

What would you say about the relationship between what has come to be called formal practice—intensive meditation in a retreat environment—and what has come to be called everyday life?

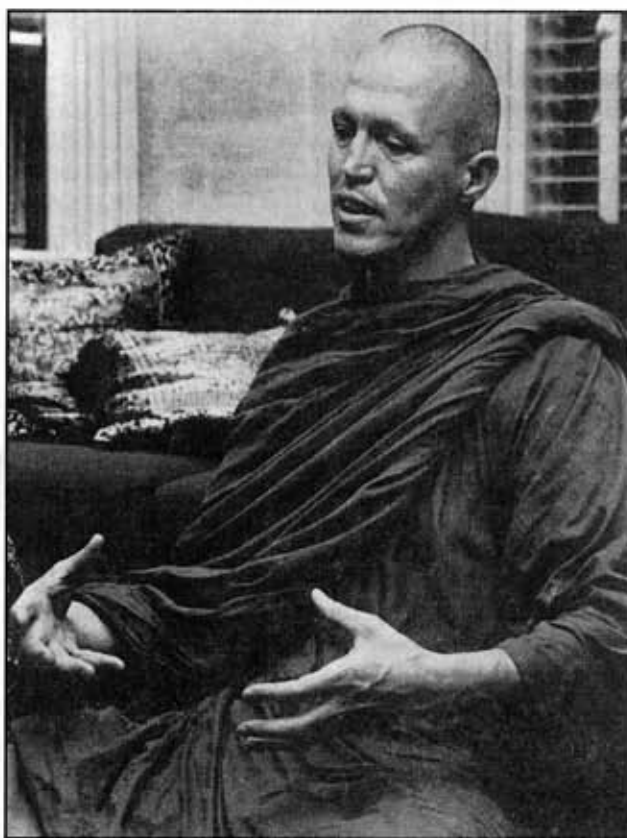
There are different forms for Dhamma practice. Or perhaps you can think of it like Chinese boxes—one is inside another, which is inside another. In my situation, I'm coming out of meditation into a more open form, but another formal training, which is the *vinaya*. The *vinaya* is continually steering and nudging: "Don't go here; things are done in this way; be aware of what you're doing now." I've got that happening all the time—not just at the level of a precept, but in observance and manner. "That's not the way to treat your bowl." Or, "That's not the way to talk in this context: softening the voice would have a better effect. That's not the way to walk in; come in more gently." And as a mendicant, I learn to let go into insecurity. These things offer a great advantage for cultivating the Dhamma.

It is more perilous for a lay meditator who is on a formal retreat and then comes out into a situation which has no training guidelines. They've just got to work it out themselves. They come out of a situation where the skin is being peeled off; they come out all pink and sensitive, and suddenly they're in the circus and they have to perform. Insecurity has to be denied. So in the last decade or so, people are addressing more the issue of daily life context. Having experienced some of the uncovering that occurs on a meditation retreat, the questions become, "How do we practice in

relationship? What is right livelihood?"

Actually this is pretty much the way the process unfolded for the Buddha and his early followers. He taught the meditation and the Dhamma first, and then the *vinaya* evolved from that. You can see the same sort of things happening for the lay community here. After some practice, people begin to see, "We've got to have precepts. We've got to set standards. As teachers we have to be honorable. That has to be very clear." So a kind of *vinaya* culture, more or less, starts to happen. There's a natural interest in it.

So you see some evolution in the Western lay person's encounter with the Dhamma?



Oh yes, there is now a much wider field of corroboration. There is inquiry into things like, "How do we have families? How do we raise children? What constitutes a lay *vinaya*?" It's not just a set of precepts or a code. It's a culture, a Buddhist culture. The culture of awakening. We have a Buddhist school now in Britain. Alms-food gets offered on the streets. There are people who've grown up as Buddhists and are familiar with these things.

Is it the meditation practice that is so transformative, or is it the core values of the entire Buddhist tradition?

In certain respects the culture and the meditation practice are happening on different levels, although they overlap in the personal context. To integrate the two is the major practice. The culture is carried "externally" by the society (though it doesn't always live up to its ideals). When you're in a social context you are often dealing with functional requirements, language, and a conventional reality, which is not set up for Awakening. And we're often relating through the convention of personality. So establishing some sound norms for these connections is basic sanity.

With meditation, you're getting nearer to the core. Meditation practice is intimate. It's really taking you past the ideals and the socialization of values. In the meditation practice you get back to something primary: "I feel this. I know this." So, it's a place of release. It's the place of encountering hindrances intimately, and of firing up the enlightenment factors. Aspects of Buddhist "culture"—patience, generosity, letting go, for example—really support that penetration. Then, as you calm down and get closer to a core experience, the convention of personality starts to unfold into energetic patterns—patterns that are ephemeral but kammically potent when they're held onto. Buddhist values are a crucible; but if you just put the material in it and don't heat it up—you won't get the gold.

With meditation you develop *samādhi* [concentration]. You're getting past thinking, getting underneath sense contact, getting to an experience of your body which is different. You experience yourself more like an energetic sphere of sensitivity than as a six-foot tall vertebrate who's a man or a woman. You're coming to something much more primary. The mind itself becomes different. If you meditate properly, the mind is much more sensitive. It is there, in the pond, part of what's going on. In *samādhi* you don't get the sense of the mind being some separate thing that thinks and decides. You realize that thinking and deciding are part of the ripple. You can undo that and become more intuitive, more attuned to sensitivities.

I see *samādhi* as essentially a deconstruction of the mind. From that, one can come back



IMS News Worth Noting

REGISTRATIONS STILL OPEN

As we go to press, there are still openings in many retreats this year. It's not too late to register for any course. Even if you are put on a waiting list, there is still a good chance that you will get into the retreat of your choice.

FINANCIAL AID

In keeping with the tradition of *dāna* (the Pali word for generosity) that stretches all the way back to the Buddha, it is our intention that anyone who desires to practice at IMS be able to do so, regardless of financial situation. Here is some information about two particular funds that help support our plan to promote diversity of all kinds.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our basic Scholarship Fund assists those who might otherwise not be able to afford the entire cost of a retreat at IMS. To help as many people as possible we usually limit scholarships' value to the cost of one nine-day retreat per person per year. The annual Three-month Retreat is considered separately.

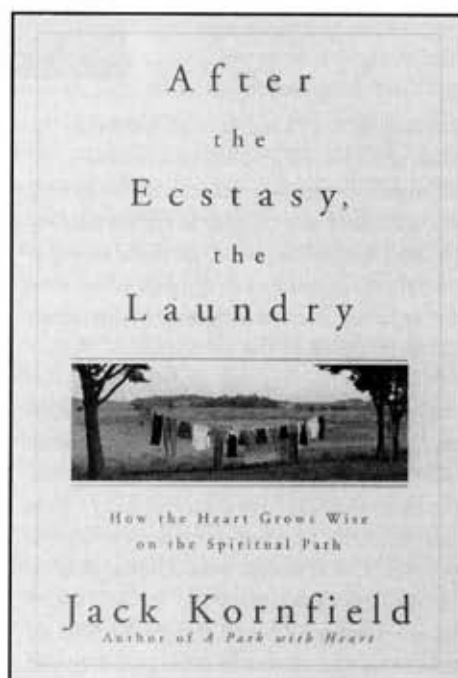
A small deposit is normally required on registering for a retreat--see p. 21 for further information.

SPONSOR-A-YOGI FUND

This fund is designed to assist anyone wishing to practice who has a life threatening, progressive or disabling illness and is in financial need. No deposit is required when registering.

To access either fund, check the appropriate space on the Registration Form (p. 21). Please be assured that we will do our best to help you attend a retreat with us.

BOOK NOTICE



After the Ecstasy, the Laundry
by Jack Kornfield; Bantam Books.

In Jack Kornfield's latest book he takes us on the journey of enlightenment; a journey that begins with the longing of the heart and continues to spiritual awakening - and then into what follows next - the laundry of everyday living. He explores the challenges of integrating realizations of freedom into an ongoing imperfect world.

From this we gain a vaster perspective of the path, the many pitfalls that can be encountered as well as its grace. If we are carrying any illusions about enlightenment and the blissful life of the enlightened one, Jack is sure to shatter them. Instead we are left with a picture of awakening that is an ongoing process of something that is lived rather than attained.

It is a book rich in Jack's masterful storytelling that draws upon wisdom from his own life, the life experience of many living practitioners as well as stories of great sages

from the past. He brings together the wisdom of the sages of many traditions across a broad range of experiences. It is a book that can help us gain maturity in how we hold the path of awakening in our lives as well as remind us of the ongoing need to sustain our practice.

This is recommended reading for those just beginning the path as well as those who find themselves hanging out the laundry.

Myoshin Kelley

www.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**

SILENCE AND SERVICE

as a Working Guest

by John R. DeGrace



"Attention all beings!" Only at IMS would an inter-office announcement be prefaced in quite this way. I smile in recalling this small event because these three words could be taken as their staff motto - perhaps to be engraved over the staff entrance just as the word 'Metta' appears over the front door. The integration of work and spiritual practice is central to all staff activities, and the results are apparent. Working in close quarters and sometimes with conflicting agendas, I found that IMS staff encounter nearly all of the discords that characterize other workplaces, but they manage to face them with a lightness and openness that prevents them from becoming major issues.

I had the good fortune to be invited to spend six weeks, in the fall of 2000, as what is termed a 'Working Guest.' This program is one which depends on the serendipitous

matching of IMS's needs with available expertise, and so is not invoked on a routine basis. The organization was interested in having some assistance in its Registrar's office and my university was willing to let me make an experience there central to a long-planned administrative leave. Almost two years of discussion and planning led to the six weeks.

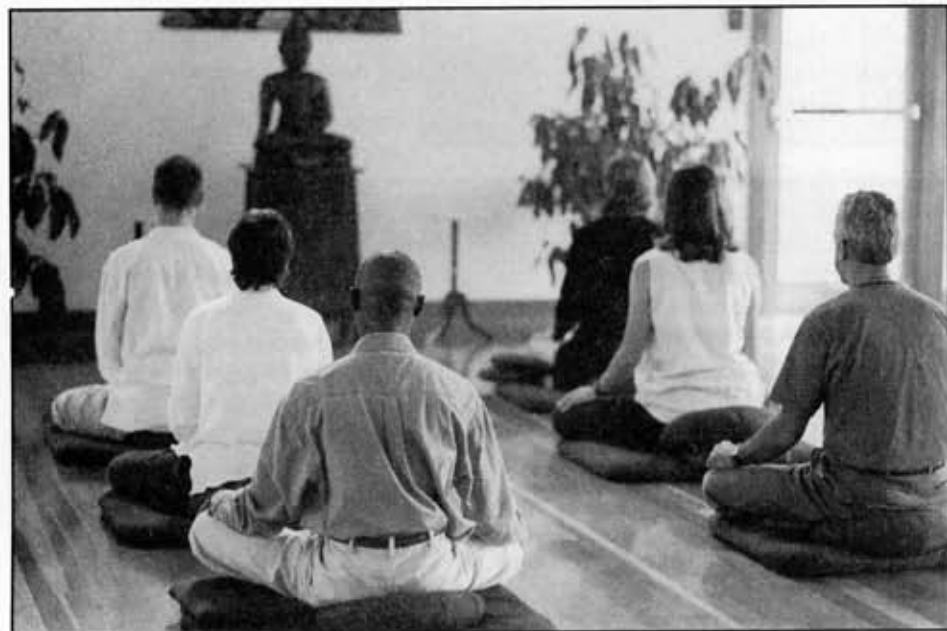
My stay as a Working Guest coincided with Part I of the annual three-month retreat. I had the intention of working as much as required and of sitting when not working - so as to see from the experience, and on a day-to-day basis, how my work would inform my silence, and my silence my work. In fact I found that, on average, I worked perhaps four or five hours a day, sat for four hours a day, and of course was in the hall for the evening dharma talk. As is always the case, however, the actual experience was different than the

expected one.

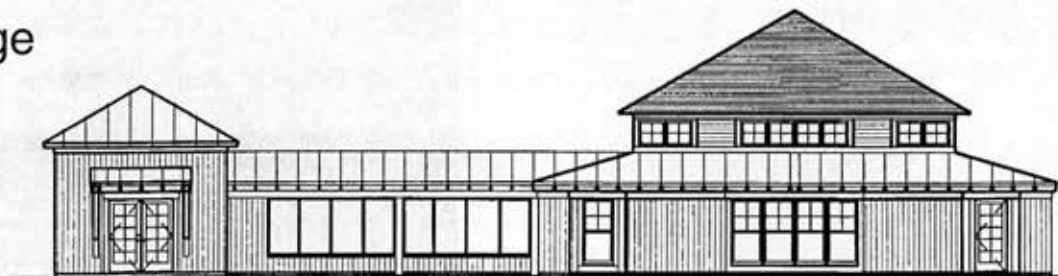
For years I have been in the habit of looking for 'mindfulness bells' as a re-call to attention during the work day. IMS makes it easy during a retreat, as bells ring regularly to announce the start of a meditation in the hall, or a meal or a talk. Staff meetings begin and end with a period of meditation, bracketed with the sound of a bell, and visual reminders abound. A small but not-to-be-missed sign on the door leading from the staff room to the main entrance hall reminds employees of 'the pause that remembers.'

As a Working Guest I was privileged to have a weekly practice interview with, alternately, each of the two Resident Teachers. They strongly encouraged using skillful means to enhance workplace attentiveness and surprising opportunities presented themselves. The computer to which I had been assigned, for example, had a puzzling habit - never resolved during my stay - of entering a state of electronic catatonia several times a day for a minute or so on each occasion. I learned quickly enough that, while this might be taken as a frustration, it was also an opportunity to return the attention to the sensations of the breath - to the present moment - until the screen reactivated. It was a pleasant surprise to find that both the administrative staff and the Resident Teachers also regarded this computer glitch as more an opportunity than a problem.

Since I was not always in silence I enjoyed opportunities for physical exercise that are not generally available to the yogis on retreat. Lifting weights at a local health club I was able to practice staying mindful 'of the body in the



Forest Refuge Update



Plans towards construction of this new long-term practice center have been progressing rapidly over the winter months.

Before the site itself can be developed, water must be available and an access road must be built. The latest estimate for connecting IMS, the Forest Refuge and BCBS to Barre town water is \$820,000; work starts in May and will last a little over two months.

The installation of the water line will be coordinated with the construction of the access road to the Forest Refuge site. Materials dug up in the course of putting in the water pipes will be utilized in building the road. In an endeavor to minimize impact on the land, there will be a single route for both road and water wherever possible; rock, sand and gravel will be recycled and surplus project materials will be used as fill on the site.

Last October the Boston-area firm of O'Neil/Pennoyer was selected as follow-on architect. Design development is almost complete, and site utility work will begin in earnest in July, with construction of buildings commencing in late July/early August. The total projected construction time is 14-16 months. Once the facility is completed, it will be furnished and set-up for occupancy - it is anticipated that an initial opening retreat may be held in early 2003.

A program development group is examining areas such as application criteria, yogi support, teacher schedules and a calendar of events.

Another group is reviewing issues of organizational structure, with the intention of creating effective and harmonious working relationships between IMS (the Mother Ship) and the new facility.

Fundraising efforts remain vitally important. A benefit was held in January in LA, featuring a public talk by Joseph Goldstein. A further \$1.45 million is needed to complete the funding for the entire project, which includes both the facility and the water line. Through a generous pledge, every dollar raised towards this amount will be matched with an equal contribution to the Forest Refuge endowment fund. This endowment will be used to subsidize the operational budget and will help keep rates as low as possible.

Inquiries and contributions for the Forest Refuge can be directed to:

The Forest Refuge
1230 Pleasant Street
Barre, MA 01005
Phone: (978) 724 0113
Email: theforestrefuge@dharma.org

body.' Riding my mountain bike on the superb local trails I was reminded repeatedly that, when you are not fully in the moment during the challenging parts, the bike brings you back right away. In this way my personal 'bell' was rung more than once.

A comment made by Michele McDonald-Smith one evening during her dharma talk was particularly noteworthy. She pointed out that, in mindfulness practice, what is necessary is to "punch in every morning, and punch out at night." In other words, do the work. In sitting practice one should be no more willing to be halfhearted, to be semi-mindful, than to be apathetic in the service of an employer. After all, on the cushion one is fully self-employed.

The direct relevance of this came home to me in dealing with the physical pain of my own sitting practice. Back pain is a common

enough experience among yogis, of course. I have an abnormally-curved spine; and I had found over the span of years of sitting retreats that, after about three days, the pain in my upper back would become so intense that I would feel the need to move to a chair for the balance of my stay. In the case of the three-month retreat, however, no extra chairs were available in the meditation hall.

I discussed the matter with one of the Resident Teachers, and we agreed that what I had been trying to do was to cope with the pain. I acknowledged that, in all likelihood, no permanent physical damage would result from continuing to sit with the back unsupported and that a helpful thing to try was to continue sitting as before and to welcome the pain into my experience - in other words, do the work. The idea was to open to it, investigate it, and see what it was - without the overlay of words, concepts and my habitual mental im-

ages of ripping tendons and tearing muscles.

Within a day or two of practicing in this way, the pain almost entirely disappeared. When it arose again from time to time, my response was the same and the result was the same. In the end, though, it would not have mattered whether the pain had stayed or left. No longer an interloper but now a guest, it was free - and so was I.

It was a great privilege to be able to combine work and formal practice in a setting devoted to bringing mindful attention to all experience. I would like to thank all the staff and teachers at IMS for their friendship and support during my stay.

John DeGrace is Registrar at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama arriving in 1979.



Our 25th Anniversary

IMS celebrated its 25th birthday on Valentine's Day 2001. Many changes and amazing growth have marked this quarter century, not only for the organization, but also for the Dharma in the West. The small group who started IMS were young; most had recently returned from Asia; they had the support of their Asian teachers and most importantly the faith to launch their enterprise. They were somewhat concerned that the place might be too big and that people would not come to do this unusual practice of *Vipassana*. They could not have foreseen that people would come from all over the world to meditate here and that other centers of Buddhist practice and teaching would be fostered by their efforts.

IMS now has teacher-led retreats running over 225 days and serves about 2,000 retreatants each year. We have gone from a small, all-volunteer staff to a larger, more structured organization. We once had a single phone line, with a single telephone that was passed through an opening in the wall between the office and the staff room; now we have a sophisticated phone system, voice mail, a fax machine, and a website.

Physical accommodations have improved significantly too, including renovations to the Annex, the kitchen and much better heating and lighting. Yogis no longer sleep on foam mats placed directly on the floor, nor do



Dipa Ma visits in 1976.



Members of the IMS maintenance crew.



Retreats were smaller in 1977.



Sayadaw U Pandita and associates on the front lawn in 1989.



Back and forth in the Upper Walking Room, 1979.

they wash dishes by hand. Before the Annex was completely renovated in 1995, there were rooms that shared a single window; retreatants had to negotiate in silence when and how much to open it. Some of the Annex rooms were so small that there was no space for a chair or even a sitting mat next to the bed.

The food is now more nutritious and more ample. Some recall yogi tea meals from 1978: tea, apples and, every other day, no more than 2 spoons of peanuts. Not even rice cakes and peanut butter!

The generosity and commitment of many people have made IMS flourish for all these years. Asian teachers encouraged its founding; they and other Asian teachers have visited at various times to inspire us. The founders of IMS have continued their commitment to the Dharma and their support of IMS and other centers. Staff members, both volunteer and paid, have given generously of their time and efforts. Board members have offered their wisdom and vision. Benefactors have given us the financial resources to continue and to improve the facility and operations. Many teachers and practitioners have demonstrated their love of the Dharma through their work at IMS. This anniversary is a time we would like to honor everyone who has been a part of this extraordinary quarter century.

May our practice and work be of benefit to all beings.



Ajahn Chah on alms round at IMS, 1979.



Enjoying the Family Retreat in 1997.



Teaching Authorization Ceremony in 1979 with Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and fellow monks from Burma. Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Jacqueline Mandell-Schwartz.

Winter Retreat

Where can one look?
Where can one go?

—when coats of snow
freeze the growth of oaks;
when young limbs are sheathed
in excruciating ice; when powder
snowfields turn hard as floes;
when rows of distant woodlands
at dusk become funeral curtains
tightly shut; when the darkening,
indifferent sky closes its
bone-chilling dome; when every
star shoots to earth arrowed
icicles; when the moon's
sliver of a blind eye rolls
away from you in the night?

Where do you look?
Where do you go?

Look within.
Go
within.

Jim McCord

I Forget

I forget to let go

Standing by my fridge as I open the door to get food
I see out of the kitchen window wavy silken pink petals
of the Star Magnolia

Bees Wriggling into eye-hurting blue nectar buckets
Laughter bubbles out of me

I forget

Forget to partake of the beauty around me

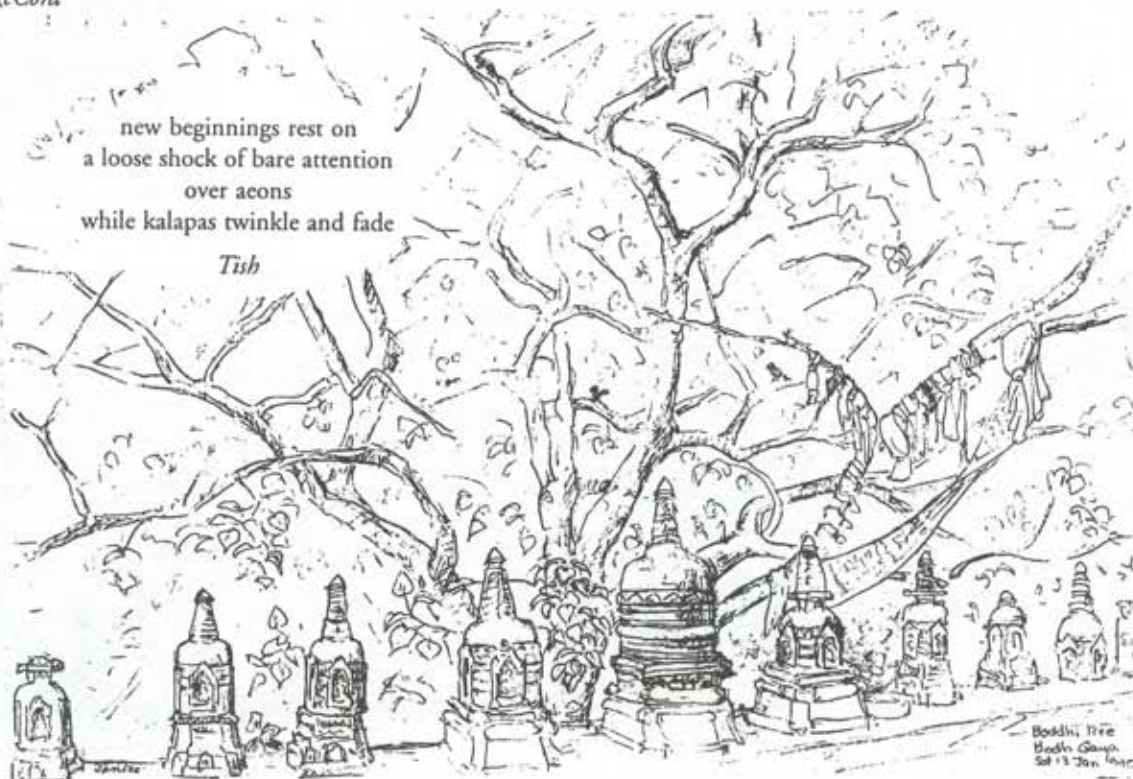
Forget to feast upon the joy inside me

Forget to let go of all the thoughts I forget aren't real

Cherry Tennant

new beginnings rest on
a loose shock of bare attention
over aeons
while kalapas twinkle and fade

Tish



Loud and deaf

Often swept away in a cloud
of talking bodies
like a radio show
like a heart beat interruption
in the end
I am left
spiraled back to myself
alone to my horizontal breath
and the chore
of cleaning up
this neglected silence
once taken
this task
the one I think true work
deaf symphony
of grace
I suck in the trees
like oxygen
and everything
is buzzing
in its own idiom
like early early
morning chirp

Jenny Lambert

watching

just watch

mind
doing its job: always thinking

like watching waves
like watching clouds

just watch

Theikdi

Anicca Our Friend

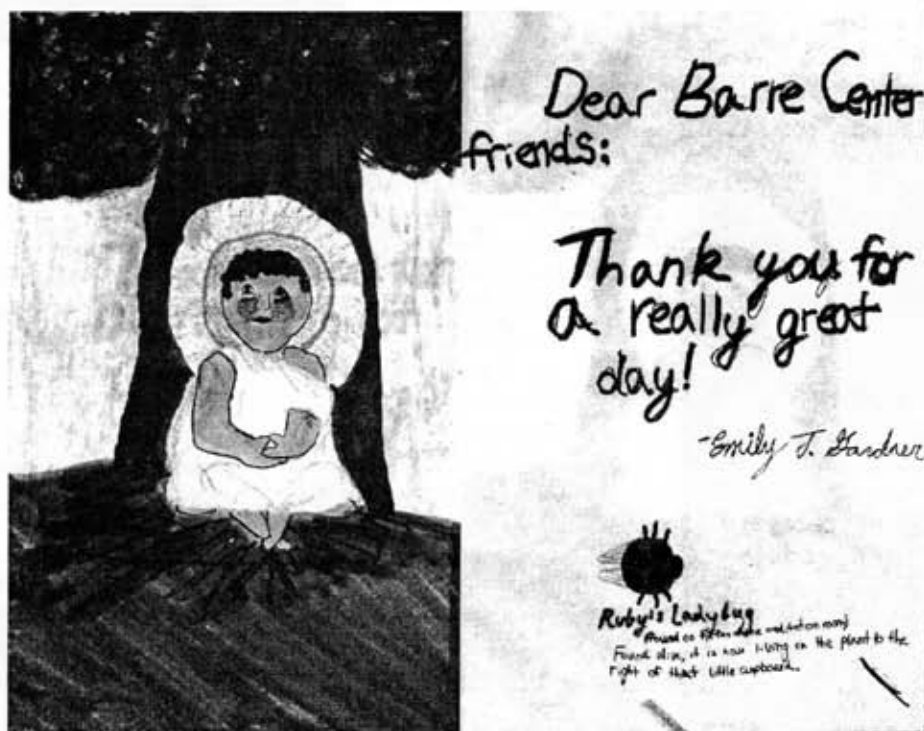
What a crowded planet
this would be
If we all lived to 123

Pain and suffering we
all share
Most often vanishes
to thin air

Our kilesas we change
and transform
Eventually making
freedom the norm

So anicca is a
friend
Its insight a
joy I send

Daniel Cukier



Ruby's Ladybug
(found on the floor
of the meditation
room) Found alive,
it is now living on the
plant to the right of
that little cupboard.

Note received from a young visitor from the Amherst Unitarian Church Sunday School group, after a spirited afternoon's discussion of the ethics of squishing bugs.

Serve the Dharma at IMS

Volunteer Staff Opening in Maintenance Starting in spring/summer 2001

We're looking for:

- General familiarity with building maintenance
- Some mechanical aptitude
- An interest in problem solving
- Ability to perform physically demanding tasks

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



Become a volunteer and

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

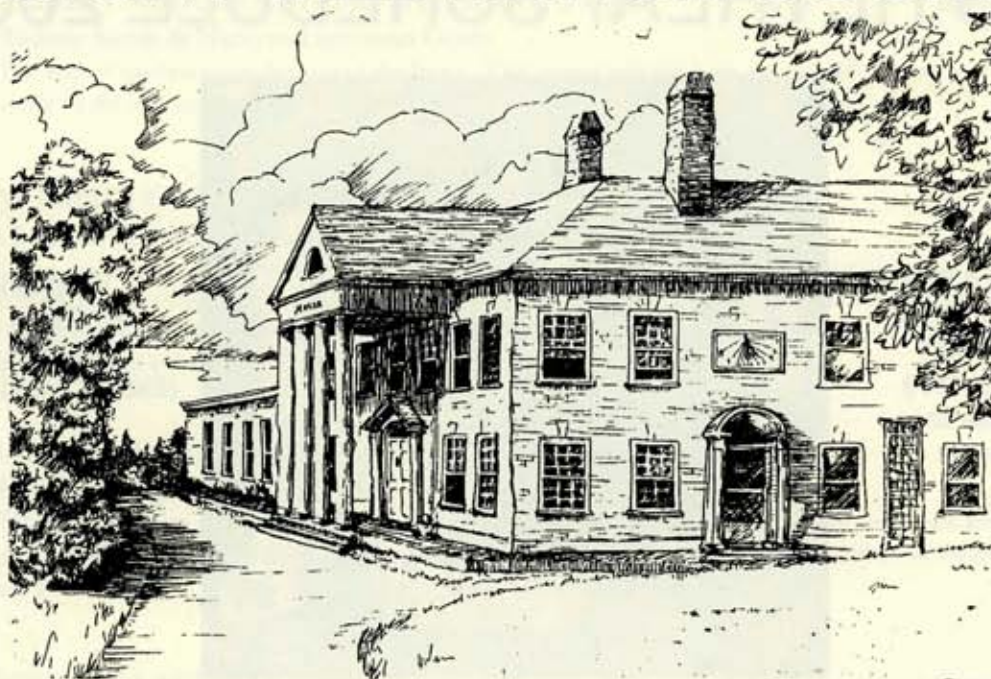
Family Retreat Volunteers

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

We are currently seeking group leaders for the 2001 Family Retreat (July 30-August 4). If you have experience in meditation and in working with children, and would like to consider this, please call us at (978) 355-4378. Volunteers will receive sitting days in exchange for service.



INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY



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

The **Insight Meditation Society** was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide a place for the intensive practice of insight meditation. IMS operates a retreat center which is set on 160 secluded wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts.

Vipassana Retreats are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. Daily instruction in meditation and nightly Dharma talks are given, and individual or group interviews are arranged with the teachers at regular intervals. Complete silence is maintained during retreats at all times, except during teacher interviews. A typical daily schedule starts at 5 AM and ends at 10 PM. The entire day is spent in silent meditation practice with

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

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

IMS offers several forms of individual retreat:

•**Self-Retreat:** Is scheduled between retreats and consists of any number of days not exceeding the longest period of teacher-led retreat sat by the student at IMS. During this time, meditators are expected to practice in silence, observe the five precepts and maintain a continuity of practice. Self-retreats cost between \$32-\$39 per day, depending on length. Please call for an application form.

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

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

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

•**Scholarships:** It is our wish that anyone who would like to practice here be able to do so regardless of financial situation. Please refer to the article on financial aid (p. 7) or call IMS for more information about our generous scholarship program.

IMS RETREAT SCHEDULE 2001

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



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

Feb 2-9 (Fri-Fri)	METTA RETREAT (7 days) Sharon Salzberg, Carol Wilson, Kamala Masters & Myoshin Kelley Metta is the Pali word for friendship or lovingkindness. Classically, it is taught as a practice along with meditations cultivating compassion, rejoicing in the happiness of others (appreciative joy) and equanimity. They are practiced to develop concentration, fearlessness, happiness and a loving heart. This course is devoted to cultivating these qualities. Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 8, 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.	SS1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Feb 9-18 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Sharon Salzberg, Carol Wilson, Kamala Masters & Myoshin Kelley This retreat emphasizes the continuity of mindfulness, along with some daily practice of metta (lovingkindness) meditation. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the quality of precise open awareness as a way of deepening the wisdom and compassion within us. Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 8, 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.	SS2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$345
Feb 2-18 (Fri-Sun)	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days) Sharon Salzberg, Carol Wilson, Kamala Masters & Myoshin Kelley Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before December 8, 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.	SS3	Deposit \$150	Cost \$555
Feb 24-Mar 3 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Christina Feldman, Sharda Rogell & Mark Coleman 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. 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 has an MA in psychology.	CF1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280

Mar 9-16 (Fri-Fri)	INSIGHT MEDITATION AND THE HEART (7 days) 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.	ROD	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Mar 24-31 (Sat-Sat)	WOMEN'S RETREAT (7 days) Christina Feldman & Narayan Liebenson Grady In the annual gathering of women at IMS, insight meditation is the vehicle used to develop calmness and clarity, wisdom and compassion, openness and vision. This retreat is an opportunity for women to focus on a spiritual path free of dichotomies as well as spiritual, social and psychological conditioning. There is a full daily schedule of meditation and silence, as well as small group meetings.	WOM	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Apr 6-8 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA WEEKEND (2 days) Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady Through the direct and simple practice of mindfulness, this retreat supports opening our hearts and minds to the deepest truths within us. Emphasis is placed on developing confidence, lovingkindness and wisdom in meditation practice throughout the day.	NM	Deposit \$125	Cost \$125
Apr 14-21 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Larry Rosenberg & Michael Liebenson Grady The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without judgment. Sitting and walking meditation, the first step in formal practice, becomes the foundation and continuous inspiration for meeting all aspects of life with a greater openness and willingness to learn. The ordinary activities of retreat life become a part of the practice because the challenges they offer help us develop the art of mindful living.	LR1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Apr 28-May 5 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (7 days) Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady Through the direct and simple practice of mindfulness, this retreat supports opening our hearts and minds to the deepest truths within us. Emphasis is placed on developing confidence, lovingkindness and wisdom in meditation practice throughout the day.	NLG	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
May 11-20 (Fri-Sun)	BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATION (9 days) Ajahn Amaro & Amaravati Sangha This retreat will be a time to explore the way of the Buddha as taught in the Theravadan monastic tradition. There will be instructions in a variety of different meditation techniques, together with a focus upon the development of a wholesome attitude towards the use of all techniques. Through daily devotional and reflective chanting (morning and evening pujas), the cultivation of mindfulness, lovingkindness and the many concentrative and reflective practices, the expansiveness and simplicity of the Buddha's Path is revealed. 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.	AV	Deposit \$150	Cost \$345
May 25-28 (Fri-Mon)	WEEKEND RETREAT (3 days) Steven Smith and Michele McDonald-Smith This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the simple and direct awareness practice taught by the Buddha. Each individual is encouraged to find a balance in his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily lovingkindness practice is also included.	MEM	Deposit \$155	Cost \$155

Jun 1-8 (Fri-Fri)	METTA RETREAT (7 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw Metta is the practice of friendship or lovingkindness. It is cultivated as a meditation and a way of life along with compassion, joy and equanimity. These practices strengthen self-confidence, self-acceptance and a steadiness of mind and heart, revealing our fundamental connectedness to all life. Franz Moeckl will lead Qigong practice each afternoon. Susan O'Brien has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1980 and has studied with a variety of teachers. Rebecca Bradshaw has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1983 and teaching since 1993. She also works as a psychotherapist. Franz Moeckl has practiced Qigong for more than 20 years, which he teaches in the US and Europe. He has practiced vipassana meditation since 1985.	SM1	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Jun 8-17 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw This retreat emphasizes the beauty and preciousness of experiencing the truth through the simple and direct awareness practice taught by the Buddha. Each individual is encouraged to find a balance in his or her own meditation practice of the deep relaxation and exploration that leads to living in the present moment with greater wisdom. Daily lovingkindness practice is also included. Franz Moeckl will lead Qigong practice each afternoon.	SM2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$345
Jun 1-17 (Fri-Sun)	METTA & VIPASSANA RETREAT (16 days) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw	SM3	Deposit \$150	Cost \$555
Jun 22-26 (Fri-Tue)	YOUNG ADULT RETREAT (4 days) 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. Marvin Belzer has practiced vipassana since 1982, studying primarily with Sayadaw U Pandita since 1986. He teaches philosophy at Bowling Green University. Ed Hauben is a long term vipassana meditation practitioner and friend of IMS. Ed has served on the IMS board and has assisted with the Family and Young Adults retreats for the past 20 years.	YA	Deposit \$185	Cost \$185
Jun 30-Jul 7 (Sat-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT—For Experienced Students (7 days) Larry Rosenberg & Corrado Pensa The core of vipassana meditation is the practice of mindfulness, that quality of awareness that sees without judgment. Sitting and walking meditation, the first step in formal practice, becomes the foundation and continuous inspiration for meeting all aspects of life with a greater openness and willingness to learn. The ordinary activities of retreat life become a part of the practice because the challenges they offer help us develop the art of mindful living. Retreatants are required to have sat at least two week-long retreats at IMS. This must be documented on the registration form.	LR2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$280
Jul 14-22 (Sat-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (8 days) Christina Feldman, Fred von Allmen & Yanai Postelnik An opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom and compassion in a supportive environment. Emphasis is placed upon developing sensitivity, attention and awareness in sitting and walking meditation to foster our innate gifts of inner listening, balance and understanding. Silence, meditation, instruction and evening talks are integral parts of this retreat.	CF2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$315
Jul 30-Aug 4 (Mon-Sat)	FAMILY RETREAT (5 days) Marcia Rose, Jose Reissig & Trudy Goodman This course explores integrating meditation and family life. In a less formal atmosphere, a full program of sitting, discussions, family meditations and talks is offered. Child care is shared cooperatively through a rotation system with parents and volunteers. Note: Due to the popularity of this course all applications received on or before February 23, 2001 will be processed in the following manner: half of available places will be reserved for families who have attended this course 3 out of the past 5 years and allocated on a "first received" basis. The remaining places will be filled by lottery. Each family unit pays a minimum of an additional \$35 for professional child care coordination. You MUST specify name, full date of birth, and sex of all children on your registration.	FAM	Cost Adult \$215 Deposit \$100 per adult	Child \$60

Aug 10-18 (Fri-Sat)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (8 days) Sharda Rogell, Howard Cohn, Myoshin Kelley & Eugene Cash This retreat offers a rare opportunity for sustained silent meditation and inquiry, based on the teachings of awakening. Through the practice of insight meditation and lovingkindness, we will look deeply into ourselves and the nature of existence and explore the obstacles which interfere with living a graceful life.	SR	Deposit \$150	Cost \$315
Aug 24-26 (Fri-Sun)	DANA RETREAT (2 days) Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien 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.	DANA	Deposit & Cost:	Donation
Aug 31-Sep 3 (Fri-Mon)	LABOR DAY WEEKEND (3 days) Ruth Denison	RD1	Deposit \$155	Cost \$155
Aug 31-Sep 9 (Fri-Sun)	VIPASSANA RETREAT (9 days) Ruth Denison This retreat fosters awareness and correct understanding of life's process in ourselves and others. The focus of the practice is on opening the heart, discovering oneself, and developing insight into the reality of the mind and body. Retreat activities include sound and body movement meditations, and the development of mindfulness in the day-to-day activities of our lives. This retreat is somewhat different from other IMS retreats, and includes sustained and on-going verbal teacher instruction throughout the day.	RD2	Deposit \$150	Cost \$345
Sep 21-Dec 14 (Fri-Fri)	THREE MONTH RETREAT (84 days)	3MO	Deposit \$750	Cost \$2,750
Sep 21-Nov 2 (Fri-Fri)	PARTIAL #1 (42 days)	PART1	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,450
Nov 2-Dec 14 (Fri-Fri)	PARTIAL #2 (42 days) Joseph Goldstein (all 3 months) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Carol Wilson & Guy Armstrong (1st half only) Sharon Salzberg, Steve Armstrong, Kamala Masters & Myoshin Kelley (2nd half only) The three-month course is a special time for practice. Because of its extended length and the continuity of guidance, it is a rare opportunity to deepen the powers of concentration, wisdom and compassion. The teaching is in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw, refining the skillful means of mental noting, slow movement and precise, open awareness. Prerequisite is three retreats of a week or more in duration with a recognized vipassana teacher or special permission. This retreat experience, including teachers' names, dates and lengths of retreats, must be documented on the registration form. Special cancellation fees and deadlines apply for this retreat. 3MO and PART 1: Up to March 1, \$50; from March 1 to April 15, \$150; after April 15, full deposit. PART 2: Up to April 15, \$50; from April 15 to June 1, \$150; after June 1, full deposit. Note: A lottery may be required for this course. All applications received on or before January 12, 2001 will be included. Others may be wait listed. If you have applied for this lottery 2 or more times before and never been confirmed, you now qualify for automatic inclusion. However, you must let us know if this is the case.	PART2	Deposit \$350	Cost \$1,450
Dec 28-Jan 6 (Fri-Sun)	NEW YEAR'S RETREAT (9 days) Rodney Smith, Sharda Rogell, Narayan Liebenson Grady & Michael Liebenson Grady The New Year is traditionally a time for renewal and reflection, a time to pause and ponder our spiritual lives. It is also a time to establish a direction of sensitivity and wakefulness for the rest of the year. This retreat will offer the opportunity to nourish our hearts through mindful awareness and loving contact in each moment.	NY	Deposit \$150	Cost \$345

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 Amaro began his training in Thailand in 1978 with Ajahn Chah and later joined Ajahn Sumedho in England. He was a senior monk at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England for some years and now resides in Mendocino, California in a branch monastery in the forest meditation tradition.

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 BCBS. He is the author of *The Experience of Insight* and *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*, and co-author of *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*.

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*.

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

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

Sharda Rogell has practiced in the Theravadin tradition since 1979. She has taught worldwide since 1985 and brings a strong emphasis to awakening heartfulness. She has also been influenced by the non-dual teachings of Advaita Vedanta and Dzogchen. Sharda recently moved to Seattle to be a teacher with the Seattle Insight Meditation Society.

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



Sharon Salzberg 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* as well as editor of the anthology *Voices of Insight*.

Rodney Smith has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1975 including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching since 1984 and worked in hospice care for 14 years. 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.

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.

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

VISITING TEACHERS

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

Eugene Cash is the Staff teacher at Spirit Rock. He leads the Insight Meditation Community of San Francisco and teaches internationally. His teaching has been influenced by the vipassana, Zen and Tibetan Buddhist traditions; he has a special interest in the development and maturation of householder practice.

Howard Cohn has practiced meditation for over 25 years. He is an original member of the Spirit Rock Teacher Council and has led vipassana retreats worldwide since 1985. He has trained in several traditions, including Theravada, Zen, Dzogchen and Advaita and brings a non-dual perspective to his teaching.

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

Fred von Allmen has studied and practiced under Tibetan and Theravada teachers since 1970 in Asia, Europe and the US. He has been teaching retreats worldwide since 1984. He is the author of several Buddhist books in German and a cofounder of the Meditation Center Beatenberg in the Swiss Alps.

Yanai Postelnik has practiced and studied insight meditation in Asia and the West. He has been teaching retreats at Gaia House in England and internationally since 1992. He was the resident teacher at IMS and is now lives in England where he is closely involved with the on-going work of Gaia House.

ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

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 been practicing vipassana since 1973. He is a guiding teacher 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.

Registrations:

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

Wait List:

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

Payments:

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

Cancellation:

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

All cancellation fees are donated
to the scholarship fund.

IMS Registration Form

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

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

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

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

Office Use Only
Date Received:

I wish to apply for: A scholarship _____ Sponsor-a-yogi fund _____ 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 in good English translations), several thousand volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and a variety of journals and newsletters. We continue to expand our collection and have something to offer both the serious scholar and the casual visitor. Some reference works must remain on site, but most books may be borrowed for up to a month at a time.



BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

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

The study center in Barre offers a variety of programs from a wide range of visiting faculty, covering a diversity of topics of interest to students of the Buddhist tradition and of meditation practice. Most programs are one-day or weekend offerings, though some are for one week or two weeks. We can host about 20 people for the longer residential courses, 45 people for weekends, and up to about 90 people for popular one-day programs. Although it is not yet a degree-granting institution, many people can get academic and professional credits from their home institutions for programs attended at BCBS. Course offerings for the year 2001 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 29.

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



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



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

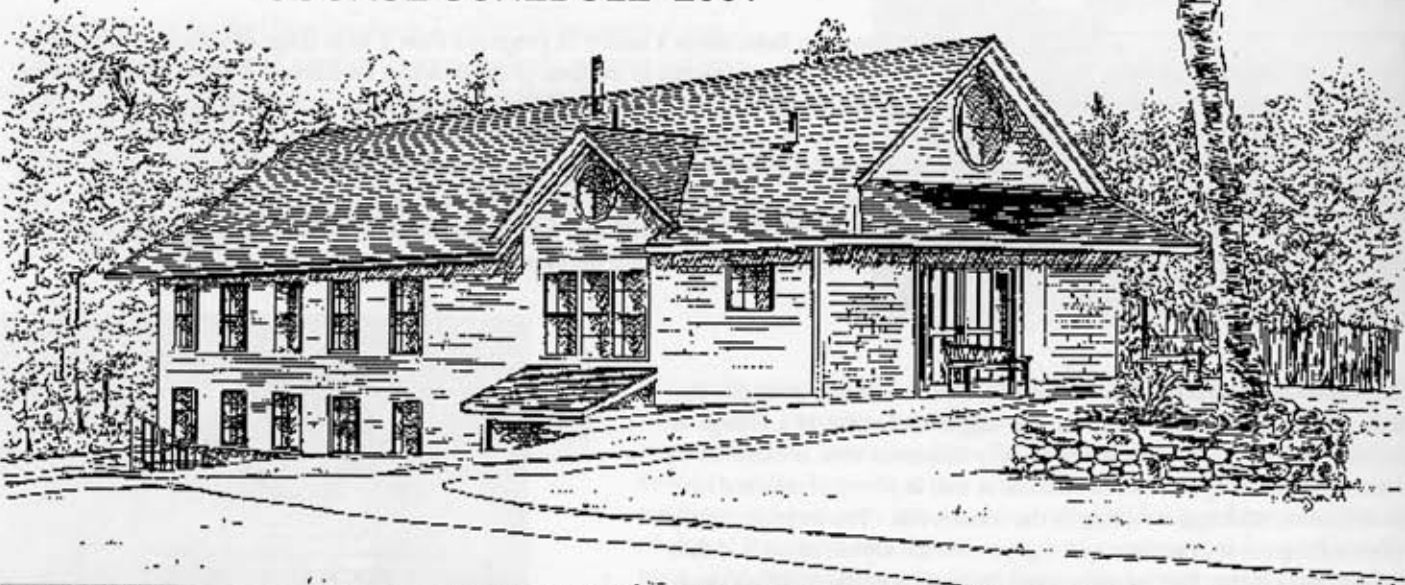


Dhamma Dāna Publications is a publishing program coordinated by the study center that prints high-quality Dhamma books for free distribution. So far we have published five books that remain in print; other manuscripts are being prepared. This program also operates entirely by *dāna*. Requests for books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

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

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

COURSE SCHEDULE 2001



May 19-26 **Nālanda Program: Vāṛayāna Studies**

(7 Days) **John Makransky and Visiting Faculty** 01-VAJ \$400
 The genius of Vāṛayāna (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 Vāṛayāna Buddhism as a movement of late Indian Mahāyāna which was profoundly influential upon Tibet. It then explores ancient and contemporary Tibetan writings: a systematic treatise of thought and practice from a Tantric perspective, sacred biographies of Tantric masters, spontaneous Tantric songs, and manuals of visionary experience. Each day, basic meditations of the traditions under study are integrated with classroom studies.

May 27-Jun 3 **Nālanda Program: Mahāyāna Studies**

(7 Days) **Mu Soeng and Visiting Faculty** 01-MAHA \$400
 In this program we explore the themes of Mahāyāna Buddhism as they developed in India. We explore the range of teachings within the Prajñā-pāramitā tradition, as well as the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools. The idea is to give course participants a thorough grounding in the Mahāyāna teachings in their homeland, and in the developments of Indian Buddhism. We also take a brief look at the arrival of Buddhism in China and the transformation of the Mahāyāna teachings there.

Jun 3-10 **Nālanda Program: Theravāda Studies**

(7 Days) **Andrew Olendzki and Visiting Faculty** 01-THER \$400
 The origins of Buddhism in ancient India are examined in this program. The life and times of the historical Buddha, the intellectual climate which shaped his vision, and the dynamics of his original movement are all explored in some detail. We also undertake a comprehensive review of the basic teachings of early Buddhism, including the psychological doctrines of selfhood and liberation, the various techniques of meditation, and the instructions for the guidance of lay Buddhist life.

STUDENTS MAY ATTEND ALL THREE PROGRAMS OR SOME COMBINATION; THE LAST 2 DAYS OF EACH IS A MEDITATION RETREAT

Jul 1-8 **Bhāvana Program: Karma and Intention**

(7 Days) **Andrew Olendzki and Taraniya (Gloria Ambrosia)** 01-BH3 \$400
 Although we usually think of karma in terms of rebirth and the larger moral implications of our actions, the Buddha in the Pali texts of the early tradition has much to say about how karma operates moment to moment in our experience. This program undertakes a careful inquiry into the experiential dimensions of cause and effect, and of the subtle link between intention, action and dispositions of mind. Built around extended periods of silent meditation, daily study sessions draw our attention to the passages in the literature that will guide a detailed investigation of causality in experience. Some meditation experience is required for this course.

Jul 13-15
(Weekend)

Shin Buddhism: Dharma Experience Through Poetry

Taitetsu Unno

01-TU

\$120

As a path primarily for lay people, Shin Buddhism explores the experiences in everyday living to discover nuggets of wisdom inherent in everyone. Progress on the Buddhist path is based on neither teacher nor doctrine but on human experience at the deepest level of awareness. Such experiences can be drawn out of us as we articulate them in words and imagery. We then become poets according to the definition given us by Meister Eckhart: "A poet is not a special kind of human being, but every human being is a special kind of poet." The sharing of such free-verse poems from the past and the present leads to mutual enrichment and ultimate awakening to Great Compassion. Only then can we taste the spiritual fullness of the Name-that-calls, "Namu-amida-butsu."

July 20-22
(Weekend)

Women in Buddhism

Trudy Goodman

01-TG

\$120

This course explores the lives and awakenings of several Buddhist women from ancient India (e.g. the Buddha's own foster mother) to the contemporary West (e.g., Maurine Stuart Roshi). How did their practice of the Buddha's teachings change the course of their lives and their understanding? And how can our practice of these ancient teachings affect our way of living? The weekend will consist mostly of silent retreat, with an evening to tell our stories and a chance to study and be inspired by the teachings of enlightened women.

Aug 4
(Saturday)

Embracing Death as a Spiritual Path

Rodney Smith

01-RS

\$45

The Buddha said that just as the footprint of the elephant was the greatest of all animals, so too was the meditation on death the greatest of all spiritual practices. What does it mean to use death as our spiritual practice and what changes can we expect when we venture into this subject? The evolution of death awareness includes the stage of self-preservation, the stage of universal death, and the stage of inquiry into who dies. Through hospice stories, guided meditations, exercises, and scriptural references, we will investigate the process of integrating our lives with our inevitable death.

Sep 8
(Saturday)

Karma and Emptiness

Joseph Goldstein

01-JG

\$45

Can we be happy in our lives? This workshop will explore two aspects of the Buddhist teachings that shed most light on this question. Investigating the meaning and application of the law of karma, we begin to understand both the causes of happiness and the causes of suffering. This allows us to make wiser choices in our actions. Understanding the more subtle teachings on "emptiness" also opens up new - and different - possibilities of happiness for us. The day will include talks, discussion and meditation.

Sep 9-14
(5 Days)

Abhidhamma: Classical Buddhist Psychology

Andrew Olendzki

01-ABHI

\$300

Abhidhamma is the systematized psychological teaching of the Theravada 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 *Abhidhammatha Sangaha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. An emphasis is placed upon the text's contemporary relevance to practice.

Sep 16
(Sunday)

The Healing Metaphor in Early Buddhism

Andrew Olendzki

01-AO1

\$45

From the four noble truths to healthy and unhealthy mind states, the teachings of the Buddha are permeated with the image of the teacher as a healer and his Dharma as a prescription for those who suffer. Amid the glory of New England's golden season, we explore the full range of the healing metaphor in the teachings of the historical Buddha: the layman Anathapindika learning insight meditation on his deathbed; the Buddha washing an ailing monk himself when others would not; practical advice on how to be a good caretaker and a good patient; and throughout all a subtle and profound understanding of what it means to be ill and how to go about the deep healing that will ensure our welfare in the midst of any kind of suffering.

Sep 22-29
(7 Days)

Bhāvana Program: Emptiness: The Dance of Life in Buddhist Teachings

Mu Soeng

01-BH4

\$400

The inherent hollowness (*śūnyatā*) of all things is the most revolutionary of Buddha's teachings, and all subsequent schools of Buddhist philosophy and practice have shown a remarkable degree of fidelity to this core teaching. At the same time, this teaching elicits a lot of difficult response from those trained in the Western intellectual tradition. The aim of this week-long course is to take a comprehensive look at various understandings of "emptiness" in different schools of Buddhism, and engage in a systematic meditative exploration of those understandings. The experience of meditators in the Buddhist tradition has shown that emptiness cannot be accessed apart from a contemplative investigation; and this course will engage in classroom discussions as well as intense meditative practice to explore the working of emptiness in our own experience, and thereby gain a greater clarification of what the Buddha was trying to convey.

Oct 5-11
(6 Days)

Sublime States of Mind: Cultivating Mettā, Karuṇā, Muditā, and Upekkhā

Daeja Napier

01-DN2

\$350

The four *brahma vihāras* are practices prescribed by the Buddha as antidotes for suffering. Cultivating *mettā* (loving-kindness) counteracts fear, anger and ill-will; *karuṇā* (compassion) provides the remedy for cruelty; *muditā* (appreciative joy) provides the curative for jealousy and envy; *upekkhā* (equanimity) dissolves clinging and attachment. These "divine abidings," as the *brahma vihāras* are at times translated, 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 of the *brahma vihāras*: *mettā* 10/7; *karuṇā* 10/8; *muditā* 10/9; *upekkhā* 10/10. 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.

Oct 13
(Saturday)

Investigating Fear: A Meditative Approach

Narayan Liebenson Grady and Michael Liebenson Grady

01-LG

\$45

The energy of fear can overwhelm us or provide an opportunity for awakening. We will explore various Buddhist practices that encourage inner balance and wisdom when encountering fear in everyday life. The day will include talks, meditation practice, and discussions.

Oct 19-22
(3 Days)

Yoga and Ānāpāna-sati

Larry Rosenberg and Woods Shoemaker

01-LR

\$180

Ānāpānasati is the vipassana meditation system expressly taught by the Buddha in which conscious breathing is used to develop both serenity and liberating insight. The yoga tradition of TKV Desikachar focuses on a form of mind-body training and is fully compatible with vipassana meditation. It emphasizes the coordination of conscious breathing with all bodily movement, strengthening the spine, and opening the body for sitting practice. Each day of this program will include yoga movements, meditation teachings, and the actual practice of breath awareness meditation.

Oct 26-28
(Weekend)

Buddha's Contemplations on Death and the Non-Beautiful

Mathieu Boisvert

01-MB

\$120

The *Satipatṭhāna 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 *Satipatṭhāna 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 2 - 4
(Weekend)

Selfing: Nine Ways of Concocting the 'I'

Santikaro Bhikkhu and Joan Ryan

01-SB

\$120

The Buddha once summarized his teaching: "Nothing whatsoever is worth clinging to." This is most often explained in terms of taking the five aggregates to be 'me,' 'mine,' or 'my self' through any of the four modes of clinging. Clinging to the five aggregates of life, in turn, is 'the essence of suffering.' Modern psychology has, among other things, contributed

personality typologies to our understanding of what makes us tick. One of these — Enneagram — is particularly useful for meditators and Dharma practitioners. The Enneagram can spark new insights into Buddhist teachings when we look at them in terms of nine basic personality types or structures. This has important implications for our Dharma practice both on the meditation cushion and in daily life.

Nov 10
(Saturday)

Balancing Psychological Work and Spiritual Practice

Jack Engler

01-JE

\$45

There is a lot of debate at the moment about the need for personal work in spiritual practice. Isn't mindfulness enough? If it isn't, doesn't enlightenment at least solve all problems? But is enlightenment even a goal any more? Should it be? Is personal work necessary for spiritual awakening? Or does personal work just strengthen ego? These are some of the questions we will address in this workshop. We will alternate practice directed to self and practice based on no-self with periods of discussion and sharing of what we have learned from our journey to date.

Nov 11
(Sunday)

Equanimity (*upekkhā*)

Sharon Salzberg

01-SS

\$45

This day explores the practice of *upekkhā*, usually translated from the Pali as equanimity. Equanimity is not indifference but a spacious stillness of mind that allows us to accept things as they are. It is the basis for qualities like loving-kindness and compassion to be boundless.

Nov 16-18
(Weekend)

Awakening to the Ground of Compassion (Tibetan Lojong Training)

Lama John Makransky

01-JM

\$120

Dzogchen, the Natural Great Perfection, is an immediate practice vehicle of Tibetan Buddhism that points directly to the nature of mind: pure, naked awareness, the ground of unconditional compassion. Tibetan mind-heart training (Lojong), whose central practice is Tong-Len, is a way to harmonize the whole person with that Buddha nature, releasing its innate compassion and love (*bodhicitta*). From this, the bodhisattva path naturally unfolds, as we learn to take even difficulties and sufferings as fuel for stronger compassion and deeper wisdom. Transmitted from the great 11th century Indian master Atisha through the Tibetan lineages of the Dalai Lamas, Karmapas, and Dzogchen masters, the mind-heart training provides the most powerful support for the Dzogchen path to full awakening.

Nov 25-Dec 2
(7 Days)

Bhāvana Program: Insight Dialogue

Greg Kramer

01-BH5

\$400

The practice of Insight Dialogue is grounded in the suttas (teachings) spoken by the Buddha, especially the *Satipatthana Sutta* (The Foundations of Mindfulness). In Insight Dialogue meditation language--thought, spoken, and heard--is brought into vipassana. In this intensive retreat, silent sitting and walking meditation will be interwoven with discursive interaction in methodical and skillful ways. The clear and refined mental states cultivated in deep meditation transform concepts into study into meditative experience. This will shed light on the subtle meanings of the words of the Buddha. More significantly, the truths the Buddha taught will be explored on a moment-to-moment basis and language-out among participants and teachers.

Dec 9-14
(5 Days)

Buddhist Psychology

Andrew Olendzki

01-PSYCH2

\$400

The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what it contributes 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. Invisiting faculty from the Institute of Meditation & Psychotherapy. 28 CE CREDITS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THIS COURSE.

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 in Montreal, Canada.

Jack Engler teaches and supervises psychotherapy trainees at Harvard Medical School, and has a private psychotherapy practice in Cambridge, MA. He is a board member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and is the co-author, among other books, of *Transformations of Consciousness* with Ken Wilber and Daniel Brown.

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

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

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

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

Joan Rosenburg-Ryan, a Boston native and former lawyer, is the Program Director of Helen Palmer's Trifold School for Enneagram Studies, and teaches world-wide through the International Enneagram Association.

Woods Shoemaker is a long time student of TKV Desikachar and is a teacher of viniyoga. He taught yoga at the Krishnamurti School in England, and has practiced vipassana meditation since 1976.

Ven. Santikaro Bhikkhu ordained as a Theravada Buddhist monk in 1985 and has recently returned to the United States after twenty years in Thailand. He is the primary translator and editor of his teacher, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and has led number of workshops at BCBS in recent years. He recently completed the Enneagram certification program of Helen Palmer, his, and has been teaching Enneagram in Thailand for five years.



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

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.

EAST MEETS EAST:

EXPLORING THE EVOLVING

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOGA

AND BUDDHISM

November 28 - December 2, 2001

Co-Sponsored by the

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies
and

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health

This 5-day retreat is dedicated to exploring some of the similarities and differences between the two ancient traditions from India now changing the lives of millions of people in America. Scholars and teachers from both traditions will explore this interface in panel format, dharma talks, and through experiential practice of postures, pranayama, chanting, and instruction in and practice of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation.

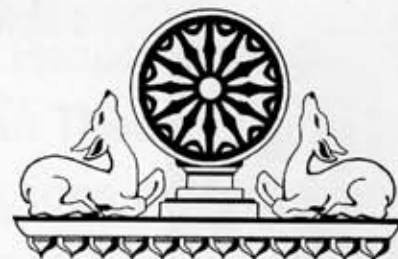
The panelists and Dharma teachers include Ellison Findly, Richard Miller, Lama Caroline Palden, Stuart Sovatsky, Dana Sawyer, Andrew Olendzki, Larry Rosenberg, Narayan Liebensohn Grady, Phillip Moffitt, Stephen Cope, and Mu Soeng.

The conference will be held at the
Kripalu Center in Lenox, MA.
Please call 1-800-741-7353
or visit www.kripalu.org for
registration and more information.

Registering for Courses at the
Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

149 Lockwood Road, Barre, Massachusetts 01005

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



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

Registration

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

Deposits

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

Cancellations

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

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

BCBS Registration Form

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Course Code _____ Course Cost \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

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

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

Amount of deposit enclosed \$ _____

Have you been to BCBS before? YES / NO

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

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

Do you have any special dietary needs? _____

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



Dharma Seed

The Archival Center of Western
Buddhist Vipassana Teachings

continuing the oral tradition

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.

Please contact us and we will be happy to send you a free catalogue of our more than 5,000 recorded dharma talks and meditation instruction tapes. Books are also available.

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What happens?

- when you try to give away taped dharma talks rather than sell them?
- when you try to turn a non-profit retail business into a dana-based public service?
- when you depend upon a community for voluntary donations rather than simply raise prices to cover rising costs?
- when you try to run an organization on the principle of reciprocal generosity rather than reciprocal self-interest?

Everything changes!

The Buddha teaches that there are unwholesome roots and there are wholesome roots of human motivation and behavior. Living the dharma involves abandoning the unwholesome roots and cultivating the wholesome roots, whenever and wherever possible.

Dharma Seed Archive is attempting to put this teaching into practice by providing its service—the taping, storing and distribution of the contemporary oral dharma teaching tradition—as an expression of generosity rather than of self-interest. This is a radical thing to do in this country, which is so thoroughly organized around the premise of mutual personal advantage.

Reciprocal generosity means doing things for the welfare of others, thus inspiring others to also do things for the benefit of others. Since we are all interdependent, the generosity that “goes around” in this fashion will eventually “come around” to benefit oneself as well. The principles of mutual generosity are deeply rooted in the goodness of human nature, and have sustained the Buddhist tradition for 2500 years.

Is it working? Yes!



Dharma Seed Archive has managed to make ends meet in the year 2000. This year, 2001, is pivotal in demonstrating whether this ideal is achievable in our culture or not. There are no financial reserves to fall back upon, so if the taping and distribution of dharma talks cannot be sustained by dana, we will have to go back to a conventional model of selling the tapes.

Here is what you can do to help:

- Take every opportunity to send a modest donation to Dharma Seed, especially when requesting tapes, books and videos.
- Respond to bi-annual appeals from Dharma Seed by sending a larger donation. It's not just another fundraiser, but a chance to participate in something important.
- Practice generosity in other aspects of your life as much as possible, thus contributing to its gradual increase in scope and influence in the world.



Taking Responsibility for Our Thoughts: Reflections on the *Vitakkasaṇḥāna Sutta*

Mark W. Muesse

One of the first insights of vipassana practice is the recognition that the mind has a mind of its own. When we finally begin to attend to the dynamics of our thinking processes, we realize that thoughts often seem to arise of their own accord, with little or no apparent prompting or direction. Where do these thoughts come from after all? It might seem that our thoughts are thoroughly beyond our control, that we have no choice about the kinds of things that drift across our minds. Are we simply at the mercy of a mind out of control? For most of us, most of the time, the answer is yes. But the teachings of the Buddha tell us it need not be this way.

In the *Vitakkasaṇḥāna Sutta* [Majjhima Nikāya #20], the Buddha concisely outlines a discipline for the more conscious management of our thinking. Even experienced practitioners of vipassana who are schooled in the techniques of non-judgmental awareness may be surprised to learn of this teaching of the Buddha. For this discourse encourages the yogi who would attain "the higher mind" not merely to observe thoughts dispassionately but to exercise deliberate thought maintenance. By following the regimen outlined in the *Vitakkasaṇḥāna Sutta*, we are able to influence our thinking patterns and gradually cultivate minds that have a greater tendency to generate thoughts more appropriate to wisdom and liberation. It is not necessary for us to be buffeted about by our own minds.

Like all phenomena, the mind is a conditioned reality. Its existence is interdependent with other factors. Although thoughts may seem to come out of the blue, other mental and physical processes prepare for their arising. Following karmic principle, wholesome

thoughts create the propensity for more wholesome thoughts; unwholesome thoughts set the stage for unwholesome thoughts. In this sense, at least, we are responsible for what we think. While we may not be in conscious control of each and every thought, we can choose which thoughts to entertain and develop and which to disregard and release. Cultivating a discipline for the selection and fostering of thoughts increases our capacities to care for our thoughts with wisdom. The *Vitakkasaṇḥāna Sutta* provides five very practical techniques for such a discipline. In this sutta, the Buddha speaks specifically about one feature of the care for the mind: the relaxation of unwholesome thoughts.

*It requires skill
to recognize
unskillful thoughts.*

Yet before we are able to relax unwholesome thoughts, they must be recognized as such. One characteristic of the unskilled mind, of course, is its inability clearly to distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome thoughts. Just as the unskilled mind has difficulty even knowing when it is absorbed in thought, it finds it hard to know when a thought is edifying or corrosive—or even the importance of this distinction. An apocryphal anecdote from the life of Sigmund Freud puts this difficulty in an amusing light. Freud supposedly asked one of his patients if she were ever troubled by lustful thoughts. "No," she replied, "I rather enjoy them."

In the *Vitakkasaṇḥāna Sutta*, the Buddha identifies the qualities of an unwholesome thought and explains its problematic nature. An unwholesome thought is *akusala*, "unskillful." Put simply, it is a thought that is not conducive to liberation but rather promotes suffering. Unwholesome thoughts may be recognized by certain telltale traits. Specifically, they are connected to desire, hatred, or delusion. Thoughts associated with desire are predicated on pleasant experiences and our voracious appetite for pleasure. Thoughts of hatred arise out of aversion and our desire to avoid unpleasant experiences. Deluded thoughts are thoughts that are at odds with reality and result from our failure to see ourselves and the world as they really are. It requires skill, of course, to recognize unskillful thoughts, and the development of this skill requires practice and vigilance. Given time and diligence, we begin to realize when our thoughts are associated with desire, aversion, and delusion. Once they have been recognized, they can be disempowered.

The Buddha's five techniques for relaxing unwholesome thoughts proceeds in a step-by-step manner. He begins with the simplest and easiest procedure. In the event that technique fails, he advises a second step; if that does not work, he offers a third, then a fourth, and finally the fifth. These methods proceed from those requiring the least amount of psychic energy to that those requiring the most.

Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is pursuing the higher mind, from time to time he should give attention to five signs.

What are the five?

Here, when a bhikkhu is giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign there arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should...give attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome.

...Just as a skilled carpenter or his apprentice might knock out, remove, and extract a coarse peg by means of a fine one, so too... when he gives attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With the abandoning of them his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.



REPLACEMENT

Perhaps the easiest means for ridding ourselves of problematic thoughts, once they have been identified, is replacement. Just as woodworker might knock out a coarse peg with a fine one, says the Buddha, so should we supplant the unwholesome thought with a wholesome one. The most effective approach is to match the unskillful thought with an appropriate skillful one. Thoughts of desire, then, can be substituted by thoughts of the impermanence of the object of desire. Thoughts of hatred are replaced with notions of friendliness and compassion. Deluded thoughts are overcome by an acceptance of reality. Initially, the technique of replacement may seem awkward and artificial. It may appear, as the metaphor suggests, rather wooden. With practice, however, it becomes habitual, thus needing only the slightest expenditure of mental energy.

If, while he is giving attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, there still arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should examine the danger in those thoughts thus: "These thoughts are unwholesome, they are reprehensible, they result in suffering."

...Just as a man or a woman, young, youthful, and fond of ornaments, would be horrified, humiliated, and disgusted if the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human being were hung around his or her neck, so too...when he examines the danger in those thoughts thus: "These thoughts are unwholesome, they are reprehensible, they result in suffering," then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With the abandoning of them his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

REFLECTION ON RESULTS

If replacing unskillful thoughts with skillful thoughts proves unsuccessful, the Buddha recommends that we contemplate the consequences of the unwholesome thought. We might ponder the effects of holding this unwise notion. It helps me to consider the kind of person I become when I entertain and foster a particular unwholesome thought. If, as the first verse of the *Dhammapada* has it, mind shapes reality, that as we think so we become, then our thoughts have ineluctable consequences, not unlike the way high caloric foods have consequences for our physical health. Just as I might reflect on my clogged arteries as I contemplate eating a slice of cheesecake—as pleasurable as it might be—so I follow the trajectory of an unwholesome thought. I envision where a diet of such thoughts might lead. Do I *really* want to become the kind of person whose life has been shaped by thoughts of greed and hatred? In the *Vitakkasāṇhāna Sutta*, the Buddha likens the yogi's unwholesome thought to a snake or animal carcass around the neck of a well-dressed person. Such a thought is unbecoming to a wise and compassionate person.

If, while he is examining the danger in those thoughts, there still arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should try to forget those thoughts and should not give attention to them.

...Just as a man with good eyes who did not want to see forms that had come within range of sight would either shut his eyes or look away, so too...when he tries to forget those thoughts and does not give attention to them, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With the abandoning of them his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

REDIRECTING

If the previous techniques are unable to relax the troubling thought, the Buddha encourages redirecting attention away from the thought to something more wholesome. To clarify this technique, the Buddha uses the metaphor of averting one's gaze to avoid seeing certain objects. This method, of course, is familiar to meditators. When the mind has been distracted by thought, we simply return attention back to the breath. Once again, the practice of meditation strengthens our ability to employ this technique. Redirecting attention relies on the fundamental impermanence of reality to achieve success. If we can simply divert attention to more wholesome objects, the distracting thought, given its impermanent nature, will dissolve of its own accord. All things that arise must fall.

That wonderful but almost extinct Christian community, the Shakers, has an old expression that nicely reflects the wisdom of redirecting attention. "Hands to work," they say, "and hearts to God." This Shaker admonishment recognizes the importance of continually redirecting attention to wholesome activity and thoughts. The undisciplined attention becomes the workshop of the devil. Far better to keep one's self diligently occupied with wholesome activity lest the straying mind comes to dwell in greed, aversion, and delusion.

If, while he is trying to forget those thoughts and is not giving attention to them, there still arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should give attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts.

...Just as a man walking fast might consider: "Why am I walking fast? What if I walk slowly?" and he would walk slowly; then he might consider: "Why am I walking slowly? What if I stand?" and he would stand; then he might consider: "Why am I standing? What if I sit?" and he would sit; then he might consider: "Why am I sitting? What if I lie down?" and he would lie down. By doing so he would substitute for each grosser posture one that was subtler. So too...when he gives attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With the abandoning of them his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

RECONSTRUCTING

We might call the Buddha's fourth technique reconstructing, which is analyzing the formation of the unskillful thought. In the second method, reflecting on results, we pursue the forward trajectory of such a thought. With reconstructing, we move in the other direction, examining the antecedents that have given rise to an unwholesome notion in the first place. Since the mind is a conditioned phenomenon, these distracting thoughts are predicated on other thoughts. It is possible, then, carefully to explore the roots of unskillful thinking. If I am having unkind thoughts toward another, for instance, I am often able to see that those thoughts emerge out of a feeling of envy. Pursuing this insight further, I notice that my envy derives from a sense of personal inadequacy, which in turn rests on the belief that this "I" is a substantial entity, separate from the rest of reality. By systematically reconstructing the formation of an unwholesome thought, one is able to return it to its antecedent causes to see how it is rooted in a false apprehension of reality. Such a process is often effective in rendering the thought totally harmless.

If, while he is giving attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts, there still arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind.

...Just as a strong man might seize a weaker man by the head or shoulders and beat him down, constrain him, and crush him, so too...when, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With the abandoning of them his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

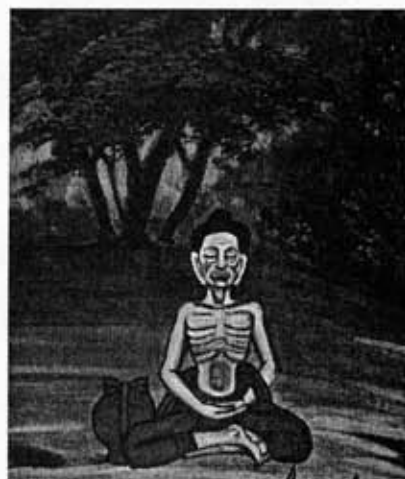
RESISTANCE

The most radical technique for removing distracting thoughts is resisting the "evil mind" by means of the "good mind." As a final resort, the Buddha advises the yogi to clench her teeth and press her tongue against the roof of her mouth as she "beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind." The Buddha compares this method to the way a stronger man might subdue and control a weaker one, literally seizing him by the head and shoulders. This analogy seems uncharacteristically brutal for the Buddha's teaching, and it might appear a rather inappropriate metaphor for "relaxing" thinking patterns. But the intensity of the analogy is instructive if taken in the proper spirit. Its radical nature is consistent with a similar saying of Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus admonishes his students:

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away (Matt. 5:29-30a).

In these teachings, the Buddha and Jesus alike emphasize the seriousness of evil actions, whether those are the actions of the hand or

eye or the actions of the mind. What may now seem small and insignificant over time determines who we become. The tyranny of unwholesome thoughts over our lives needs to be ended, even if we must finally resort to clenching our teeth and crushing the mind with mind. Our liberation depends upon it.



THINKING RESPONSIBLY

We may not be able to control particular thoughts, but we can influence the conditioned mind that gives rise to particular thoughts. We can prepare a fertile mental soil that increases the likelihood of germinating wholesome, skillful ideas and decreases the likelihood of growing distracting ones. But such mind must be tended with a watchful eye. A seasoned gardener once gave me this simple advice: "When you see a weed, pluck it." In other words, it's in the nature of weeds to grow fast and wild; don't wait until the garden is overrun with unwanted foliage before you try to remedy the situation. Unwholesome thoughts are the same. They grow fast and wild and leech vital nutrients from the thoughts that conduce to our liberation. We ignore them at our peril.

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All quotations are from: *Vitakkasāṇhāna Sutta* in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Trans., Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Ed., Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995.



The Wings of the Bodhisattva

Joanna Macy

These words are extracted from a course offered by Joanna at BCBS in October, 2000.

tion with suffering feeds their search for awakening—for freedom from the obscurations and obsessions of the separated self, for liberation from greed, hatred, and delusion. This kind of liberation takes one not out of the world, but right into it! It is a release into action.

So I resonate with Carl Jung when he says that a central shift in our time is from seeing the spirituality as a journey toward perfection, to seeing it as a journey toward wholeness. To my mind, that changes everything. It even feels like a different posture. Instead of holding aloof from travail to clutch and climb up a ladder to the sacred, the movement is to open the arms and embrace it right here.

In Buddhist history, this movement into the heart of the world is associated with the bodhisattva. In early, Theravada, Buddhism the term bodhisattva refers to the earlier lives of Gotama the Buddha. He had lots of them, and in each he practiced and grew in compassion and wisdom. These are the hallmarks of a bodhisattva: compassion and insight into the interconnectedness of all beings. And he developed those capacities not just in human lives, but also in non-human lives. Many of you probably share my delight in the Jataka stories, where these earlier lives, with wondrous displays of courage and compassion, are recounted. In some of them the Buddha was a rabbit, or a monkey, or an elephant, or a snake, as well as a merchant and a prince, and a counselor to kings.

In every tradition, the spiritual journey seems to be presented in two ways. One is like a journey out of this messy, broken, imperfect world of suffering, into a sacred realm of eternal light. At the same time, within the same tradition, the spiritual journey is also experienced and expressed as going right into the heart of the world—into this world of suffering and brokenness and imperfection—to discover the sacred.

The second half of the 20th century has witnessed a move to reclaim the journey into the heart of the world. We are still grateful for the traditional vertical dimension, the upward trajectory into realms of bliss and timelessness, the movement from the dark into the light, from the profane to the sacred, from matter into pure mind. But in our time that

ascending movement is counterbalanced by a more horizontal thrust, or even a descent, to enter fully the world as it is, to know its own beauty and its suffering. As can be seen in a plethora of books and teachings, there's a strong yearning in our time to resacralize ordinary life.

All over the world I see people risking their comforts, risking their jobs and sometimes their lives, to act on behalf of other beings and to protect the living body of Earth. They put themselves in service to the broken and the dispossessed. And among these activists the hunger for a spiritual understanding of what they're doing, and for spiritual practices to strengthen them, seems to be growing by the week, the day, the hour. Their confronta-

As Mahayana Buddhism comes on the scene, the central doctrine of the Buddha, dependent co-arising, is understood with fresh appreciation and vigor. As that happens, a resounding recognition comes: "Oh, given that we course together in radical interconnectedness, we belong to each other. We are all bodhisattvas—that is our true nature." That is a major message of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras which inaugurate the Mahayana.

As the tradition ripened over the centuries, archetypal forms of bodhisattvahood appeared, as celestial bodhisattvas. These you can call on at any time; they are right at hand. You honor your own capacity for wisdom, as you think of the celestial bodhisattva Manjushri, the embodiment of wisdom. Or you experience your own compassion, as you turn to the Compassionate One who listens, Avalokiteshvara. Or you access your own creativity and courage, as you turn to the bodhisattva of action, Samantabhadra. Or you discover your own fearlessness, as you turn to the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, who's not afraid to go down into the deepest level of hell for the sake of those who suffer there.

That's the gift from these celestial bodhisattvas—to symbolize and evoke the capacities of the human heart and mind, to represent what we all want to expect of ourselves. As we learn to see ourselves and others as potential bodhisattvas, we find more equanimity in our relationship to our world—not to be scared of the messiness and the pain; not to hold back and close off from the world. Instead we open up and move into it. So there's both fearlessness, and a kind of celebration.

Bodhisattva behavior is actually present in all schools of Buddhism. It abounds in Theravada, the Way of the Elders. Though the term is not used there, bodhisattva behavior is clearly manifest and called forth. I discovered that when I went to live in Sri Lanka, a Theravadan country, and work with the Sarvodaya movement, a Buddhist-inspired community development movement active in thousands of villages.

In my first year with Sarvodaya, I went through trainings for village workers. The trainings included more than regulations for development loans, or ways to organize village councils, or how deep the latrines should be dug. They included the practices of metta, karuna, mudita, and upekkha, the four abodes or Brahnaviharas. We learned to practice loving-kindness, compassion, joy in the joy of others, and equanimity, and see them as resources for social change. These are clearly bodhisattva tools for being in the heart of the world.



As a matter of fact, that is how these practices arose. A group of Brahmins came to the Buddha and asked him, "How do you, honored teacher, assure that the self, the atman, gets to heaven, the Brahmaloka?" They thought they could nail him on that one, because he was known to be both agnostic and averse to rituals. But the Buddha was a clever one. He didn't say, "Well actually I don't approve of rituals"—which he didn't, because they were quite costly and bloody at the time. And neither did he say, "Well actually I'm not sure there is a god in heaven." He just said, "You want to know, I'll tell you." And he taught the divine abodes, the practices of metta, karuna, mudita, upekkha, which take you to the heart of reality. Then, for all intents and purposes, you are in heaven. You practice that loving kindness; you look at everyone with those eyes of compassion and joy

and equanimity, and there's nowhere else to go. You're home.

So the path into the heart of the world can be found throughout the Buddha Dharma. In the last half century there has been such a stirring for what Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh first called "Engaged Buddhism," that some have wondered whether this might be a new path in the evolution of Buddhism. At any rate that's what Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the great leader of the untouchables in India, said forty-five years ago in India, when he converted to Buddhism along with half a million of his people. He said this

event would launch a new vehicle, the "Nava-yana," wherein we enact the practicality of the Buddha's teachings for our whole lives. The ways we treat each other, the respect and freedom that we accord one another, are central to this Navayana.

What does all this mean for us in our own lives? What are the ways we can live in the world as a bodhisattva, entering freely and fully into the heart of things, staying sturdy and strong in the midst of the turmoil? The gifts of the bodhisattva are many, and a crucial one is simply sharing presence. It is the gift of being fully here, with eyes and ears open, not wishing you were somewhere else or comparing

it to a place you prefer to be. It is being in the world as it is. With each passing year I believe more strongly that this is the greatest offering we can make: our presence. Not our smarts, not some great plan or strategy, not even our generosity and serenity—but our sheer, irreplaceable presence.

There is so much going on in our world today that makes us want to close down and not see and not hear. It's easy to shut down in the face of suffering. But I think that's the greatest danger of our time. The greatest peril is not nuclear war weapons, not climate change or the poisoning of seas and soil and air, nor the impoverishment of more than half the world's population, nor the murderous, genocidal wars flaring up. It is not the disappearance of cultures, or the extinction of species. The greatest danger is the deadening of

our hearts and minds. It arises not from indifference, but from fear. We fear we can't stand it, if we take it all in. We fear we might be shattered by pain, or stuck in despair forever.

It is in this context that I find the practice of vipassana—simple, straight vipassana—to be immeasurably valuable. I first learned it as satipatthana, sheer moment-by-moment mindfulness: using the breath; noticing when you go off, and then coming back; noting the arising of thoughts and mental objects, sensations and feelings. Just being present to them. You discover that you can sit there and be present to it all without having to approve of what comes up. It's an act of courage and freedom to be present with something unconditionally, without referring to whether you like it or not. We need that to be present to our world.

In courses I teach in Berkeley at the Graduate Theological Union, we study the condition of our world, read reports on the global ecological and social crisis; and for that reason I see to it that we also meditate. The students make a commitment to daily vipassana practice to learn how to be handle painful information. If you can be sturdily present to yourself with all the internal garbage that comes up in sitting practice, then you can be present to the facts of deforestation and species extinctions, and all the insanities happening to our world today. That unconditional presence is the first and essential act we must make. Simply to be there with open eyes, open ears, open heart. All else flows from that.

In the earliest Mahayana texts, the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, the bodhisattva is portrayed as flying on two wings. These sutras explain at length that the bodhisattva doesn't have any place to stand, because there is no turf, views or possessions that she can call her own. Nor is there a solid self, or an unchanging identity, or any security, as we understand security. What security can there be for the bodhisattva, if you take seriously the Buddha's teaching of the nature of the self?

Well, the bodhisattva doesn't need a place to stand because she or he flies—flies in the "deep space" of the Perfection of Wisdom. And the two wings on which the bodhisattva flies are compassion and wisdom. Instead of

looking for a safe harbor, for a place where you're all protected and cozy and safe, you just fly high on these two wings and place your trust in them.

Alan Watts talked about the wisdom of insecurity. He says when you try to capture water and hold on to it, it becomes stagnant. And so does life. But when you let the water flow, it remains sparkling and fresh. My own private mudra, to help me through the sorrow of leaving beloved people or places, is this: to open my fingers and imagine water running through them, sparkling and touching the light and staying fresh as it moved. In the Buddha's teachings, that's what we are, a stream of being, bhava-sota. And vinnana-sota, stream of consciousness. We are not a permanent, unchanging self; we flow like water, with no place to abide. So with no safe place to stand, the bodhisattva flies—flies on the wings of compassion and wisdom.

We need both of them: compassion, and insight into the radical interdependence of all phenomena. One isn't enough. We need the compassion because that openness to the pain of the world provides the fuel to move you out where you need to be, to do what you need to do. Yet compassion by itself, without understanding and trusting our interconnectedness, can burn you out. So you need the other wing, the wisdom that knows how interwoven we are in the web of life, inseparable from each other. That wisdom reminds us that we're not involved in a battle between good guys and bad guys, for the line between good and evil runs through the landscape of every human heart. It teaches that we are so interconnected and inter-existing that even the smallest act with clear intention has repercussions throughout the web of life. But wisdom by itself is not enough to move us forward for the sake of all beings; it needs the steady, heart-opening beat of compassion. Then we fly.

Looking at the hand gestures of Tibetan monks as they chant, you see mudras portraying the dance of compassion and wisdom. In motion they interact. We can't have one without the other. When we open to the pain of our world what we discover is our interconnectedness. And as we open to our mutual belonging, we feel the suffering. We don't shut it out. So compassion and wisdom belong together, empowering each other. They are the two wings of the bodhisattva.



The Distortions of the Mind

Aṅguttara Nikāya 4:49

These verses from the Numerical Discourses give the traditional list of the *vipallāsas*. This Pali word is sometimes translated as "perversions" of the mind; but I find this language too strong and prefer the expression "distortions" of the mind.

The term is composed of a prefix (*vi-*) which carries the sense of division, separation or removal; another prefix (*pari-*) meaning around, or complete (as in our related word *peri-meter*); and a verb (*-as*) which can be taken as meaning "to throw." Putting all this together, we have the image of the mind taking something up, turning it around, and throwing it back down—a perversion or distortion of reality by the perceptual and cognitive apparatus of the brain.

The distortions are fundamental to the Buddhist notion of ignorance or delusion. It is not that we are inherently flawed in our nature, it is just that we make some serious errors on many levels as we attempt to make sense of the world around us. As we come to recognize—through meditation practice—some of the ways we misconstrue things about our experience, we become more able to correct for these errors and gain greater clarity.

The distortions of the mind work on three levels of scale. First, distortions of perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*) cause us to misperceive the information coming to us through the sense doors. We might mistake a rope by the path as a snake, for example. Normally such errors of vision are corrected by a more careful scrutiny, but sometimes these sensory mistakes are overlooked and remain.

Distortions of thought (*citta-vipallāsa*) have to do with the next higher level of mental processing, when we find ourselves thinking about or pondering over things in our minds. The mind tends to elaborate upon perception with these thought patterns, and if our thoughts are based upon distortions of perception, then they too will be distorted.

Eventually such thought patterns can become habitual, and evolve into distortions of view (*ditṭhi-vipallāsa*). We might become so convinced that there is a snake by the path that no amount of evidence to the contrary from our own eyes or reason, nor the advice of others, will shake our beliefs and assumptions. We are stuck in a mistaken view.

cattāro 'me bhikkhave
saññā-vipallāsā
citta-vipallāsā
ditṭhi-vipallāsā:...

anicce niccasaññīno
dukkhe ca sukhasaññīno
anattani ca attā ti
asubhe subhasaññīno

micchādītṭhigatā sattā
khittacittā visaññīno

te yogayuttā Mārassa
ayogakkhemino janā
sattā gacchanti saṃsāraṃ
jātimaraṇagāmīno

yadā ca buddhā lokasmiṃ
uppajjanti pabhaṅkarā
te imaṃ dhammaṃ pakāseṇti
dukkhūpasamagāmināṃ

tesaṃ sutvāna sappaññā
sacittaṃ paccalatthu te

aniccaṃ aniccato dakkhū
dukkhaṃ addakkhu dukkhato
anattani anattā ti
asubhaṃ asubha' addasaṃ

sammādītṭhisamādānā
sabbadukkhā upaccagun ti

These four, O Monks, are
distortions of perception,
distortions of thought
distortions of view:...

Sensing no change in the changing,
Sensing pleasure in suffering,
Assuming "self" where there's no self,
Sensing the un-lovely as lovely—

Gone astray with wrong views, beings
Mis-perceive with distorted minds.

Bound in the bondage of Mara,
Those people are far from safety.
They're beings that go on flowing:
Going again from death to birth.

But when in the world of darkness
Buddhas arise to make things bright,
They present this profound teaching
Which brings suffering to an end.

When those with wisdom have heard this,
They recuperate their right mind:

They see change in what is changing,
Suffering where there's suffering,
"Non-self" in what is without self,
They see the un-lovely as such.

By this acceptance of right view,
They overcome all suffering.

Furthermore, these three levels of distortion are cyclical—our perceptions are formed in the context of our views, which are strengthened by our thoughts, and all three work together to build the cognitive systems which make up our unique personality.

You will no doubt recognize that the particular distortions mentioned in this text correspond to the three characteristics. Taking what is impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent, what is inherently unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) as a source of satisfaction, and what is without a self (*anattā*) to constitute a self—these are the primary ways we distort reality to the profound disadvantage of ourselves and others. Seeing the un-lovely (*asubha*) as lovely rounds out the traditional list of four *vipallāsas*.

I like the way these verses say that when under the influence of these distortions we have "lost our senses" (*vi-saññīno*) and our mind is "broken" or "thrown" (*khitta-citta*). When the distortions are corrected by right view, clear thinking and careful perception, then the text says that we have "gotten back" (*pacca-latthu*) our "true mind" (*sa-citta*).

This is the Buddhist view of mental disease and mental health. Delusion is a mental illness that causes all sorts of suffering; mental health can be restored by correcting the flaws in how the mind operates. Fortunately, "Buddhas arise to make things bright" and illustrate in detail how this recovery of our natural health can be accomplished.

—A. Olendzki

*Sir Edwin Arnold first published his magnificent poem **The Light of Asia**, in 1879, and for the first time the story of the Buddha and his teachings were made accessible to popular audiences in Europe and America. It was a huge success, and probably did more to introduce Buddhism to the West than any other single publication before or since. Though the style is somewhat dated and the tone decidedly Biblical, there is still much power and beauty in Arnold's portrayal of the Buddha's quest for awakening. —excerpted from the fifth book; Lupton Publishing Co., New York (1879).*

Round Rajagriha five fair hills arose,
Guarding King Bimbisara's sylvan town:
Baibhara, green with lemon-grass and palms;
Bipulla, at whose foot thin Sarsuti
Steals with warm ripple; shadowy Tapovan,
Whose steaming pools mirror black rocks, which ooze
Sovereign earth-butter from their rugged roofs;
South-east the vulture-peak Sailagiri;
And eastward Ratnagiri, hill of gems.
A winding track, paven with footworn slabs,
Leads thee by safflower fields and bamboo tufts
Under dark mangoes and the jujube-trees,
Past milk-white veins of rock and jasper crags,
Low cliff and flats of jungle-flowers, to where
The shoulder of that mountain, sloping west,
O'erhangs a cave with wild figs canopied.
Lo! thou who comest thither, bare thy feet
And bow they head! for all this spacious earth
Hath not a spot more dear and hallowed. Here,
Lord Buddha sate the scorching summers through,
The driving rains, the chilly dawns and eves;
Wearing for all men's sakes the yellow robe,
Eating in beggar's guise the scanty meal
Chance-gathered from the charitable; at night
Couched on the grass, homeless, alone; while yelped
The sleepless jackals round his cave, or coughs
Of famished tiger from the thicket broke.
By day and night here dwelt the World-honored,
Subduing that fair body born for bliss
With fast and frequent watch and search intense
Of silent meditation, so prolonged
That oft-times while he mused—as motionless
As the fixed rock his seat—the squirrel leaped

Upon his knee, the timid quail led forth
Her brood between his feet, and blue doves pecked
The rice-grains from the bowl beside his hand.

Thus would he muse from noontide—when the land
Shimmered with heat, and walls and temples danced
In the reeking air—till sunset, noting not
The blazing globe roll down, nor evening glide,
Purple and swift, across the softened fields;
Nor the still coming of the stars, nor throb
Of drum-skins in the busy town, nor screech
Of owl and night-jar; wholly wrapt from self
In keen unravelling of the threads of thought
And steadfast pacing of life's labyrinths.
Thus would he sit till midnight hushed the world,
Save where the beasts of darkness in the brake
Crept and cried out, as fear and hatred cry,
As lust and avarice and anger creep
In the black jungles of man's ignorance.
Then slept he for what space the fleet moon asks
To swim a tenth part of her cloudy sea;
But rose ere the False-dawn, and stood again
Wistful on some dark platform of his hill,
Watching the sleeping earth with ardent eyes
And thoughts embracing all its living things,
While o'er the waving fields that murmur moved
Which is the kiss of Morn waking the lands,
And in the east that miracle of Day
Gathered and grew. At first a dusk so dim
Night seems still unaware of whispered dawn,
But soon—before the jungle-cock crows twice—
A white verge clear, a widening, brightening white,
High as the herald-star, which fades in floods

The Light of Asia

Sir Edwin Arnold

Of silver, warming into pale gold, caught
By topmost clouds, and flaming on their rims
To fervent golden glow, flushed from the brink
With saffron, scarlet crimson, amethyst;
Whereat the sky burns splendid to the blue,
And, robed in raiment of glad light, the King
Of Life and Glory cometh! Then our Lord,
After the manner of a Rishi, hailed
The rising orb, and went—ablutions made—
Down by the winding path unto the town;
And in the fashion of a Rishi passed
From street to street, with begging-bowl in hand,
Gathering the little pittance of his needs.
Soon was it filled, for all the townsmen cried,
"Take of our store, great sir!" and "Take of ours!"
Marking his godlike face and eyes enwrapt;
And mothers, when they saw our Lord go by,
Would bid their children fall to kiss his feet,
And lift his robe's hem to their brows, or run
To fill his jar, and fetch him milk and cakes.
And oftimes as he paced, gentle and slow,
Radiant with heavenly pity, lost in care
For those he knew not, save as fellow-lives,
The dark surprised eyes of some Indian maid
Would dwell in sudden love and worship deep
On that majestic form, as if she saw
Her dreams of tenderest thought made true, and grace
Fairer than mortal fire her breast. But he
Passed onward with the bowl and yellow robe,
By mild speech paying all those gifts of heart,
Wending his way back to the solitudes
To sit upon his hill with holy men,
And hear and ask of wisdom and its roads.



Snowstorm in a Cabin in the Woods

Paul Fleischman, M.D.

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

Swirling with impersonal ferocity
White flakes like stars in proliferating galaxies
Rotate and eddy into multiplying milky ways.

How did we emerge here
On this one planet among all the pinholes of light
In their infinite expanse and variety?
What brought these three stilled and receptive minds
To stare through eyes with quiet joy
At the gusting veils of brownian celebration
Of manifestation, amplification, and dissolution—
This snowstorm seen from an isolated cabin in the woods?

A sere old pine is all we can see
That's dark and green, the only other sign
Of life—all else is shades of chalky invisibility.
Sky, air, and earth merge indistinguishably.

Outside we march among the great blankets and eves.
Nothing moves, nothing lives, but wind and flakes.
The tracery of deer trails leading to and from
Old apple trees and streams are smoothed and smothered
Into oblivion, and we move,
Oafish brown and jerking things with poles,
Lone triad of lost giants among
Exquisite and phantasmagoric comforters.

Everything seems simultaneously flailing and at rest.
A heaven of wild and meditating stars billow around us.

We wander through unspeakable beauty within the storm,
A pure new creation uninhabited yet and cold,
The mystery of emergence,
Something present in the emptiness of winter woods in snow.

Hemlock trees form inviting peaked huts
Sealed shut with thickly layered cream of flakes,
Under which snow cannot reach, where our eyes
And necks receive a brief respite
From the freezing wet buffeting.
Curved cones and ghosts appear from detritus of the air.
The blowdowns of old maple and beech lie long
Contorted and asleep,
Like ruins of ancient and arboreal civilizations
In which the plants were once strong, wise and tall,
Before they were battered by storms, broke and fell.

We lurch up hills, crawl under white weighted evergreen limbs
That when we brush them
Scatter icy solar systems down our necks.
We traverse a deep unfolding nativity of secrecy and splendor.
White, white, white, all the world is softly held
In this maternal lining
Of pensive and pregnant endometrial fertility.

We wander through unspeakable beauty within the storm,
A pure new creation uninhabited yet and cold,
The mystery of emergence,
Something present in the emptiness of winter woods in snow.



But we cannot stay outdoors. There is no home
 For us within the wind and cold,
 So we return through stubborn and circumlocutory
 Foot-puffing pathways, to our cabin in the woods.

We pack the wood stove with logs of apple, birch, and ash,
 The bones of our solar-sipping ancestry,
 Knocked dead from storms of other years,
 Who left their skeletal remains among the woods
 Where we collected them, without which
 The cabin walls would only entomb
 The thermometer's impoverishment.
 Only the birth and death of trees consigned to fire
 Enable our remote and rapturous reveries.

This is the greatest peace we know:
 To sit in warm harmony at one, and yet removed,
 From the power and potency of the storm.
 We are its witness, its inner eye.
 Buried under its accumulating residue
 We think its unanswerable questions,
 Laugh its casual laughs, relax in the warm
 Familiarity that can only be found inside
 The cold and killing chaos of the storm.

When the morning comes we are pensioners
 On the hillside of wide white resolution.
 Meditating the three of us in our hushed cabin
 With our eyes closed like buddhas and like elves,
 Observing the crystalline cascade of life we call ourselves
 Scintillant and descending among the indispensable mélange
 Of wakefulness and ending that is the destiny of living things.

Now I wonder:
 These overarching heavens, these stars above,
 These ungraspable expanses of the perpetual snowstorm sky,
 Do they harbor within them some cabin in deific woods?
 Does the perfection of peace and joy reside
 In those who meditate within the storm
 That roams some far off cosmogonical center
 Of the cosmic whirl?

The best in our life is a transient reflection, a reception,
 Of what in fact abides. We ensconce ourselves
 In storms, in cabins, in bodies to reconfigure it, although
 It does not exist inside of bodies, wind, or snow.

We face the storm to find it.

We cannot name it
 But we know.

to dealing with things in terms of conventional entities, duties, responsibilities, time, place, and so forth. When you're in a more constructed state, you use mindfulness and the clarity that has arisen, and then some stored guidelines which act as your conventional guides. But in the context of a lot of kammic activity the mind is much more likely to be in a stressed or tense state, and on the level of social construction you often have to deal with all sorts of emotional strangulation.

The course you're teaching here at BCBS, on energy or *viriyā*, addresses this issue. How are you approaching the subject?

From my own experience over the years, as well as working with others, I have come to realize just how damaged we all tend to be, both physically and emotionally. As such, many people haven't got the resources to apply themselves to Dhamma. It's rather like lifting weights. You come in and you haven't warmed up. You try and lift a weight, and you just rip a muscle. It's not that you don't want to lift the weight. It's not that you aren't trying. The body just isn't primed for it.

People's bodies are pretty damaged energetically. They've sat in chairs all their lives; they've been wired to unnatural energy for decades. People often find it difficult to even know where their bodies are. Their mind has abstracted itself from the body. So when you meditate, you're in this kind of disembodied experience—a frantic mind is pumping out thoughts, but you're not getting any energy from the body. You meditate and meditate, but you're basically cut off, disembodied. So it's not just a matter of effort. It's a matter of accessing the resource of balanced energy in the body.

The other issue is emotional. We do sharing and devotional practices because often people's emotional energies are out of whack. They feel isolated, fragmented, alone, competitive. Everybody's looking at each other, perhaps feeling annoyed because somebody is sniffing or rustling. You know, you're in your own little box. It's like going out on the freeway, and everybody's in their little box driving along. In that sort of situation people's emotional experience is not extensive, it's not unfolding, it's very much folded up with personal interest and personal protection. Often people find devotional practices help to restore a quality of natural connectedness and emotional resonance.

When these two bases of body and heart are restricted, I don't know where you get the energy to practice. Perhaps it's just idealism, or will power; but people run out of that. Because of its restraint and discipline, Theravada Buddhism can seem heartless, cerebral, world denying, and body denying—a very cramped thing. But when you read the texts, you find the Buddha talking a lot about joy, bliss, rapture, tranquility, vitality. So people

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have to tap into this field, this pool of uplifting energy, and they can only do this by healing some of the damage done by our modern world. So I teach body and heart practices to open them into this field of energy.

You have often mentioned returning to the *suttas* [texts]. Is this important only for teachers, or for all practitioners?

My own personal interest has been in trying to look into the *suttas* and to get past the cultural accretions. I think an interest in what

the Buddha said naturally develops from living and practicing in this tradition.

It might start with a simple curiosity, "What did the Buddha say on mindfulness? Well, let's have a look—Oh, the *Satipatthāna Sutta*." And that leads you on to, "What does he mean by feeling? What does he mean by *citta* [mind]?" You start to check the Pali against the English. So often you think you understand, but you're not getting the entirety of it. You find that *citta* and "mind" don't exactly relate. So you have to investigate that.

For me it's been very much a process of, "What do I need to know?" And then I can check a scripture and see what the Buddha said, which isn't always the most populist "Buddhist" message.

I still think meditation is the leading edge. But you need right view to know where to apply that. And certainly right view is enhanced by some accurate study. So you owe it to yourself to go back to the Buddha. You'd be foolish not to try to get as close as you can to the Master.

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Many *suttas* taught by Buddha include reflections on aging, sickness, and death. The point of these teachings is to reflect on the fact that this body must age; that we are not going to be youthful forever; the body must grow ill; no one remains healthy forever; and the body also must die. We are all destined to die; none of us are exempt from this lawfulness. Such observations can be useful reminders that help balance our attitudes if there is vanity and pride in youth. Many foolish things are done out of such pride and attachment; unskillful actions can easily grow out of an ignorant relationship to our body.

Sometimes we do things in our youth and we pay for it for the rest of our lives. We wind up in prison, or make harmful decisions that are irreversible. The same with illness. There can also be a vanity and attachment to vitality and health. Good luck! No matter how many organic foods and supplements we funnel into our body, there will still be sickness from time to time. These reflections help put the body in perspective. They are not designed to get us depressed, but rather to wake us up!

Can we simply see that there is this body; not that it's "my body" or that "I am this body." The Buddha offers many teachings and practices which help us weaken and uproot these identifications, which cause so much unnecessary suffering. If you take up hatha yoga or other forms of body training, keep these teachings in mind to protect you from getting lost in the allure of a healthy, energetic, attractive body.

My first teacher, J. Krishnamurti, took vigorous walks, did yoga everyday, had a very careful diet, and obviously was also devoted to a life of awareness. He had a wonderful image to help us maintaining balance. He

would say, "In a profound way, you are not your body. But having a body is like being a cavalry officer. If you go into battle on a horse, you had better have a strong healthy horse. You are not the horse, but the horse is very, very important. Your life depends on it."

Our challenge is to appreciate, respect, care for the body, enjoy the well-being of it, but not to make a self out of its condition. Can we avoid turning our yoga practice into a sporting event, or a beauty contest? There is a way of doing yoga where we appreciate the body's intrinsic dignity. Almost any posture, when executed with care and respect, is dignified. In vipassana practice, on the other hand, I have observed that it's possible to really enter into the body and develop strong and deep insights, to clearly see the impermanent and empty nature of the body, to experience all the great liberating energy and vitality that comes from that seeing, but at the same time know very little about how to take care of the very same body. Perhaps some of the loss of health, energy, and vitality that comes with aging can be minimized if we can use mindfulness to learn about our bodies' need for food, water, rest, movement.

I found that in my vipassana training, my own background in yoga practice was invaluable. The same mindfulness that can help you see impermanence and insubstantiality can also help you see that you're eating harmful foods. Shivananda Saraswati used to put a lot of emphasis on food. Remember, if you're a meditator, you're in the mind business. There are many things that support a bright, alert mind. One of them is diet. Certain foods incline the mind to be more agitated, more jumpy; other foods make you heavy and sleepy. Food can also help the mind be light, calm, energetic—qualities so helpful for

vipassana yogis. A bit of attention can help you learn which foods, and how much of it, are beneficial for meditation practice.

You see where I'm going with all this. We have a mind and a body and we need to take care of the body in such a way that it becomes an asset to dharma practice. Can we do hatha yoga (or any other form of bodily training) with the same wisdom that guides vipassana practice? Can bodily care become an element in our dharma practice? If so, such yoga could help us have more health and vitality, and enable us to do extended periods of sitting meditation with more comfort and ease.

A specific example from my own practice and teaching: I do viniyoga, which emphasizes constant awareness of the conditioned movement of the body and breathing in all postures. This helps bring about a more vivid quality to the breath sensations, making breath awareness meditation more accessible. This is an asset for yogis engaged in *ānāpāna-sati* [mindfulness of breathing], especially for those with faulty breathing habits, which can incline the mind to distraction. If the postures were practiced with the same deliberate mindfulness used, for example, in walking meditation, such conscious breathing and movement would not only facilitate meditation practice—it would be meditation itself. Someone once asked Kapleau Roshi, the well-known American teacher of Zen who used to do yoga as well, "Isn't there a conflict between your Zen practice and your yoga practice?" And Kapleau Roshi said, "No, I just do yoga in the spirit of Zen."

That's just it. It's not about *chakras* or *kundalini* rising, as valuable as this approach may be. It's just that when I do yoga, I do vipassana.

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.



Body People, Mind People

Larry Rosenberg

One of my early teachers was Shivananda Saraswati, who was about 85 years old when I first met him. He was traveling on the Greyhound bus, and I was so impressed that I became his traveling companion. He was a Vedantin monk, and told me that Vedantins were often great scholars who practiced a kind of awareness called 'witnessing,' but who could also be condescending about bodily care, seeing it as a burden and obstacle to liberation. However, Shivananda observed that his fellow monks were frequently ill, and lacking in energy. So he trained himself in yogic postures, breathing, diet, cleansing practices; but intensive meditation practice remained primary.

What I learnt from him was to care for my body as an integral part of dharma practice. During our travels together, I slept in the same room with him. No matter what time he went to sleep, he'd pop up at two or three in the morning, and just go right into meditation. He wouldn't even shower—he'd just sit for 3 or 4 hours or more, and then wash up and tend to what had to be done during the day. He told me that if I paid attention, I could learn to understand the needs of the body, and possibly have a relatively painless old age. There are no guarantees in life, he said, but it was possible.

He went even further, saying that his deepest spiritual breakthroughs came after the age of seventy. And that's because, he said, he still had a good deal of energy because of his yogic living; and a lot of small-mindedness that sometimes accompanied his younger days had fallen away. So when he saw that I was interested in meditation, he encouraged me to do yoga practice as well, since for him there was no split between the two. When Shivananda returned to India I took training in different hatha yoga schools, but found serious meditation practice to be lacking.

My love for meditation was finally fulfilled first in Zen and then in vipassana. I noticed a tendency for the hatha yogis to be primarily "body people" and the vipassana yogis to be "mind people." I saw the limitations when such fragmentation is carried to an extreme. You can get cut off from wisdom where there is an infatuation with the qualities that care of the body can produce: youthfulness, energy, health, attractiveness, and lots of compliments. Perhaps this is where Western hatha yoga has sometimes gone astray, a kind of "spandex yoga," quite alien to classical yoga's comprehensive and deeply meditative approach to liberation.

When we turn to vipassana practice, there is tremendous emphasis on mindfulness of the body, much of it designed to weaken and eliminate any tendency we might have to get lost in our identifications with the body. There are contemplations on the thirty-two parts of the body, which is like an ancient manual of anatomy. Sometimes it's called "contemplations on the unloveliness of the body". This practice is not training in aversion, but rather is an antidote designed to counteract or balance off strong infatuation and identification with the body. Most of the time this practice is used by celibate monks, but it can also be helpful for laypeople.

Other contemplations that are similar have to do with seeing the body as just composed of the elements—earth, air, fire, and water—and the teaching of *marana-sati*, the contemplation of death and the decomposition of the body. The yogi uses visualizations, or if possible, actually practices in front of a real corpse. One of my teachers and I spent a whole evening with a decomposing corpse. Sitting there, mindfully aware of what it aroused in me and reporting these reactions back to my teacher, was very helpful. It was frightening at first, but not so much after a while. It became very clear that I was of course looking at the fate of my own body as well.

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Stealing the Scent

Samyutta Nikāya 9:14

yam etaṃ vārijaṃ pupphaṃ
adinnaṃ upasiṅghasi
ekaṅgaṃ etaṃ theyyānaṃ
gandhattheno si mārisā ti

Devatā:

This lotus blossom which you sniff,
Though it's not been offered to you,
Is thus something that's been stolen.
You, sir, are a stealer of scents!

na harāmi na bhañjāmi
ārā siṅghāmi vārijaṃ
atha kena nu vaṇṇena
gandhattheno ti vuccati

Bhikkhu:

But I don't take, nor do I break;
I sniff the lotus from afar.
So really what reason have you
To call me a stealer of scents?

yvāyaṃ bhisāni khaṇati
puṇḍarikāni bhuñjati
evam ākiṇṇakammanto
kasma eso na vuccati

He who uproots them by the stalk,
And consumes the pale lotuses;
The one engaged in such cruel work,
Why do you not say this of him?

ākiṇṇaluddo puriso
dhātī celam va makkhito
tasmim me vacanaṃ natthi
tañ cārahāmi vattave

Devatā:

A person who's ruthless and cruel,
Defiled like a workman's garment,
To him my words would mean nothing.
But it's fitting I speak to you.

anaṅgaṇassa posassa
niccam sucigavesino
vālaggamattam pāpassa
abbhāmattam va khāyati

For an unblemished person, who's
Always pursuing purity,
Even a hair-tip of evil
Seems to him as large as a cloud.

addhā maṃ yakkha jānāsi
attho maṃ anukampasi
puna pi yakkha vajjesi
yadā passasi edisaṃ

Bhikkhu:

Truly, O yakkha, you know me,
And have concern for my welfare.
Do please, O yakkha, speak again,
Whenever you see such a thing.

neva taṃ upājivāmi
na pi te katakammase
tvam eva bhikkhu jāneyya
yena gaccheyya suggatin ti

Devatā:

I don't live to serve upon you;
Nor will I do your work for you.
You should know for yourself, O monk,
How to go along the good path.

This lively exchange between a forest-dwelling monk and a benevolent deity is filled with poetic movement and gives us a glimpse of the care with which some people practiced in the time of the Buddha. Since the working definition of stealing was "taking what has not been given," the Devata is correct—in a very strict sense. Notice that the monk at first reacts defensively, denying that he is doing anything wrong, and then tries to shift the blame to others who do even worse. After recognizing a veiled compliment, he finally realizes that the Devata is trying to help him, at which point he encourages further help. The Devata ends the exchange sharply, revealing an intriguing and capricious character who is willing to help, but only on his own terms. This is a role often played by nature spirits and other minor deities in the Pali texts.

—Andrew Olendzki