

## Buddhism in Nature Gil Fronsdal

When the Buddha, at age 29, left his palace life to seek liberation, he spent most of his remaining fifty-one years living in the forests, woodlands, and parks of Northern India. These natural settings were the incubator for both his awakening and his teaching. The important connection he saw between nature and the practices he taught is encapsulated in his emphatic instruction to meditate in the forest at the foot of a tree. He claimed that as long as his followers practice in the forest the path of liberation would not decline.

The Buddha's great Awakening, or *bodhi*, at the age of 35 occurred as he sat meditating outdoors under a tree, protected by its canopy. One legend explains that after his Awakening he spent seven days gazing in gratitude at the tree that sheltered him in his final quest for liberation. The tree— known scientifically as *ficus religiosa*—is held up as the living symbol of the Buddha's Awakening and represents the important connection between Buddhism and the natural world.

The Buddha chose to die in a quiet forested area. His lying down to die peacefully and mindfully between two trees is a powerful image of living (and dying) in harmony with the natural world. In Buddhism nature is not seen as an adversary; it is our partner for living at peace.

In between his Awakening and his death, the natural world was ubiquitous in the Buddha's life and teachings. Forests and woodland parks were the most common setting in which people met the Buddha and heard his teachings. As such, nature provided the backdrop and unspoken context for his teachings and how people heard them.

For example, when he recognized his son Rahula was ripe for liberation, the Buddha led him to a grove deep in the woods. Sitting on the ground, surrounded by large, majestic tropical trees, the Buddha offered teachings that guided his son to awakening. The natural setting must have contributed to Rahula's ability to receive the teachings as deeply as he did. The tranquility of the grove and the grandeur of the great trees sharpened his attention, calm, and receptivity. The diminishing of self-preoccupation that comes from sitting in an inspiring natural setting probably made it easier to be impacted by the Buddha's teachings on not clinging to self. The sense of being protected and supported by nature must have made it easier to trust letting go fully.

There is a long tradition of Buddhist monastics living simple lifestyles in the forests. In fact, a category of monastics are called

"forest monastics." One monk, a disciple of the Buddha named Maha Kassapa, expressed his joy in meditating in the mountains with the following verses:

*With beautiful darkening clouds,  
Streams of pure water,  
And ground covered with ladybugs,  
These rocky heights delight me.*

*Covered in blue flowers  
As the sky is covered in clouds,  
And filled with flocks of birds,  
These rocky heights delight me.*

*Without crowds of people,  
But visited by herds of deer,  
And filled with flocks of birds,  
These rocky heights delight me.*

—Theragatha 1062-5

Because such delight is an aid to meditation, for centuries many Buddhists have found it helpful to practice outdoors, in natural settings. The great 20th Century Thai forest monk, Ajahn Buddhadasa not only practiced for decades in the forests, he also gave most of his teachings outdoors. Those who listened to his teachings did so sitting on the ground among the trees.

The Buddha often used examples and metaphors from nature to illustrate his teachings:

Growing in spiritual practice is like the rising sun dispelling the darkness of night. Progress along the path of practice is like mountain streams flowing downhill. Deep concentration is like a peaceful pond; having insight is likened to looking into a clear, still mountain lake; spiritual maturity is "entering the stream" leading to awakening. Awakening is like the heartwood at the core of a tree. Someone who is fully liberated is like a lotus rising out of muddy water while being unstained by the mud below.

In the modern world it is easy to discuss Buddhism without reference to the natural world. Many books about Buddhism emphasize the psychological, therapeutic, and philosophical aspects of the religion without any mention of the role nature can have in the lives of Buddhist practitioners. These books commonly leave out the backdrop in which the teachings were originally given. The natural world outside of urban settings points to a freedom from the complexity of social life. A peaceful

*Continued inside*



# SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

## INCLUSIVITY AT THE IMC FAMILY RETREAT

Over Memorial Day weekend in 2016, IMC held its first bilingual, Spanish/English, family retreat at Jikoji. Families from a variety of backgrounds participated. A Chinese family shared that they had decided to come because their son, who was learning Spanish in school, was looking forward to hearing and speaking Spanish during the retreat. For three days we formed a village in which every adult looked out for every child. As we practiced together there was a palpable feeling of community, care, and trust. Bruni Dávila, one of our teachers, expressed, "I felt a sense of ease, of openness, acceptance, and love. It was possible to be 'me in us'. We were all invited to let go of opinions and to cultivate curiosity about differences, while not burdened by the expectation of having to know everything about the others' culture."

We started our light and playful investigation on diversity by reading the bilingual story, *Perro Grande, Perro Pequeño* (Big Dog, Little Dog). A girl and a boy, ages between eight and ten, sat at the front of the meditation hall and read the Spanish version of the story, while Liz Powell read the English version. After the story, like the floating blobs in an ever-changing lava lamp, we grouped ourselves, according to age, size, country of origin, culture, language, preferences, etc. We discovered with amazement that between all of us we spoke fourteen different languages! We felt open to share about ourselves and to ask about the others. Over breakfast I experienced a satisfying conversation with two Asian couples who shared their experience of growing up with Buddhism in China and contrasted it to what they were experiencing in the West.

We all laughed a lot. There were some wonderful language moments, as people tried to use their Spanish. My favorite was the following English, French, Spanish utterance, "Can we go into the kitchen *avec zapatos*?" The Spanish-speaking children laughed with relish at the English-speaking adults' valiant attempts at speaking Spanish.

I see this retreat as a beginning. We planted healthy seeds of inclusivity in our children, inspiring them to appreciate differences in each other. We also planted seeds for future retreats; we hope to include more blended, intercultural, Hispanic/Latino, bilingual, and only-Spanish-speaking families.

Many thanks to all who made the retreat possible!

—Andrea Castillo

*The 2016 IMC Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat was generously supported by \$3600 in donations from families and IMC to cover expenses. Plans for the 2017 Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat are underway. This year's retreat will focus on kindness, compassion and generosity in sharing our diverse family cultures in sangha.*

## STATES OF GRACE: A JOURNEY OF LOSS, RESILIENCE, AND RENEWAL

Please join us and guest Dr. Grace Dammann on Friday, March 3, 7:30 to 9pm for a special screening of the documentary *States of Grace*, which explores Grace's Dharma practice in the face of her life-threatening crises. Grace Dammann is both a physician honored by the Dalai Lama for her extraordinary work with AIDS patients and a long-time Dharma practitioner at San Francisco Zen Center.

A head-on collision on the Golden Gate Bridge left her in a 48 day coma. This was followed by long hard, painful work of rehabilitation and renewal. Today, Grace runs the Pain Clinic at Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center from a wheelchair.

The film, *States of Grace*, provides an intimate and sensitive portrayal of Grace's life and her challenging transition from being a caregiver to becoming a care-recipient. Her partner, Fu Schroeder, and their adopted daughter, Sabrina, demonstrate an unconditional commitment to Grace as she navigates the path to restoration, which transforms the film into an unflinching study of the bonds and frustrations of human relationships under exceptional stress.

The evening is a fundraiser for the Sati Center's scholarship fund for the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program. All donations are appreciated.

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## IMC'S WINTER CLOTHING & CAMPING EQUIPMENT DRIVE

FEBRUARY 1 – 28

Clear some space and share your generosity by donating your unneeded clothing and camping gear to those who most need it. Your new and wearable used clothing for men, women and kids will be donated to PARCA and Samaritan House of San Mateo.

Recycling camping gear for neighbors in need is a nice way to repurpose old and used camping gear. Equipment does not have to be perfect but at least functional. Adult and children's items desired are: sleeping bags, sleeping pads, air mattresses, tents, tarps, backpacks, footwear and blankets. Donated items will go to Gear for Good, [fb.me/CAgearforgood](https://fb.me/CAgearforgood).

Bring your donations to IMC and place them in the bin in the community hall.

For more information, contact [joe@insightretreatcenter.org](mailto:joe@insightretreatcenter.org).



## CELEBRATION FOR JACQUES VERDUIN & GRIP

On Friday night, November 4th, about 75 people gathered at IMC to honor and celebrate Jacques Verduin and the GRIP (Guiding Rage into Power) Program that he started at San Quentin State Prison. Jacques and five paroled inmates received the IMC's 2016 Karuna (Compassion) Award for their pioneering year-long program that has brought profound personal transformation to over 300 inmates.

The Guiding Rage into Power (GRIP) Program is now offered by the Jacques Verduin's Insight-Out organization at four state prisons. It grew out of Jacques' 20 years of teaching mindfulness and meditation classes, anger and victim-offender programs, and spiritual care to thousands of inmates. GRIP provides inmates tools to "turn the stigma of being a violent offender into a badge of being a non-violent Peacekeeper." It guides people on a healing journey deep inside themselves from where they come back transformed and ready to serve others.

Jacques has also trained some of the GRIP graduates to be "change agents" within the prison. These men, once violent, now help teach the GRIP program. Some of these have been paroled and are now hired by Insight-Out to work within the state prisons to try to meet the great interest in GRIP. The San Quentin GRIP program has a 500-inmate waiting list and other state prisons are asking for the program.

Many from the IMC community who came to the event have a direct interest in breaking down the barriers between people on the inside and outside of prison walls. Ellen Kirschman began the evening by inviting people in the room to stand if they served or worked in jails/prisons, if they had even been incarcerated themselves, or if they had been inside San Quentin to visit GRIP, or in some other way connected with Jacques and GRIP graduates. A great majority of the audience stood up.

As a way of supporting the efforts to spread the work of Jacques and Insight-Out, the evening was a fundraiser for Insight-Out. We raised just over \$10,000! IMC has had a long-term connection with Jacques and his work. We look forward to continuing to support his work and the work of his "change agents" as they spread the GRIP program to more state prisons. Information about Jacques work is found at [Insight-Out.org](http://Insight-Out.org). A recording of the moving award ceremony, including presentation by parolees who have graduated from GRIP can be found on Audiodharma. Audiodharma also has a number of talks by Jacques where he describes his great work in San Quentin.

—Kim Grose Moore and Sally Confer

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## PRACTICE GENEROSITY WHEN PARKING AT IMC

For those who can, when driving to IMC, please park at least half a block from the center. This will provide more parking spaces closer to IMC for people with difficulty walking, for new people to IMC, and for our neighbors. Also, if you arrive early enough, by parking further away, it will be easier for those who are running late to find a place near the center. Making it easier for others to park is an act of generosity. *Thank you.*

## Buddhism in Nature, cont'd. from front page

and beautiful natural setting can loosen self-identification and self-preoccupation as these become irrelevant. It also can provide a sense of serenity that supports inner calm; many people breathe easier when relaxing in nature. Nature can also be an effective teacher. In particular it can provide lessons in the impermanence of life; just as change is inherent in nature, so we can expect we will change. Being in nature can also teach us the importance of living in harmony with nature. In addition, spending time in the wilderness can help us confront our fears and build skills of attention and self-reliance.

A long tradition in Buddhism sees an intimate and mutual interaction between nature and people's inner life; the health of the natural environment is closely tied to the people's physical and spiritual health. Caring for the environment is a way to care for our selves. And if we really care for our own well-being, we would care for the environment. When we live disconnected from nature, it is hard to remember the intimate connection between our life and the health of the natural world. When we spend time in nature it is easier to understand how these work together. If we take up the Buddha's instruction to meditate at the foot of a tree, perhaps our appreciation of the natural world will grow. And perhaps sitting in nature will show us the natural world that is within each of us. Even if we cannot be outside in the natural world, with a calm, clear mind we can find the natural world within us. In important ways the nature within and the nature outside of us are the same—they live in mutual relationship. If we then want to care for our environment, we will become "nature taking care of nature."



## "THE BUDDHA BEFORE BUDDHISM" ~ GIL'S NEW BOOK

Gil's newest book, *The Buddha Before Buddhism: Wisdom from the Early Teachings* was released in November. This is Gil's translation of an anthology of Buddhist poems that are remarkably simple and free of religious trappings. Often thought to be the earliest surviving teachings of the Buddha, the text contains radical teachings of liberation that differ from the systematized versions of Buddhism we now associate with the Buddha. The translation is accompanied with Gil's commentary on the text.

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## HELP IRC WHILE BUYING OR SELLING A HOME

IMC sangha member Carol Collins is a retired longtime local real estate broker with Realtor connections throughout the state. If you are thinking of buying or selling a home she can refer you to a conscientious, highly qualified Realtor who will, in turn, make a donation in your name to IRC. Carol can serve as your consultant at no charge throughout the buying or selling process. She has performed this service for sangha members in the Bay Area and Santa Cruz. Contact Carol at [carolcollins888@gmail.com](mailto:carolcollins888@gmail.com), or 408/348-1385.

# Insight Meditation Center

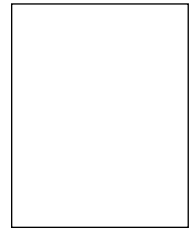
108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

[www.insightmeditationcenter.org](http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org)

Email: [insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com](mailto:insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com)

650/599-3456



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## WAYS TO DONATE

All teachings at IMC and IRC are offered freely according to the Buddhist tradition of *dana*. Our center and its teachers are supported entirely by your generosity.

**CHECK:** via mail, or in person at the donation box at IMC.

**ONLINE:** Visit the **DONATE** page on IMC's website.

**AMAZON SMILE:** A simple automatic way to support IMC/IRC when you shop through Amazon, at no cost to you. Go to [insightretreatcenter.org/smile](http://insightretreatcenter.org/smile) or enter through IMC's

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS** page.

**DONATE YOUR CAR:** Make a tax-deductible donation of any vehicle, working or not. *Center for Car Donations* handles pick-up and all paperwork; IMC/IRC receives 75% of sale price. Tell them you want to donate to Insight Retreat Center. Call 877/411-3662 to be guided through the process.

**EBAY GIVING WORKS:** Recycle your unwanted possessions and support IRC at the same time - it's tax-deductible. Go to: [insightretreatcenter.org/e-giving](http://insightretreatcenter.org/e-giving)

**E-SCRIP:** Register your grocery club card and credit/debit cards with E-scrip and the participating merchants will donate a small percentage of your purchases to IMC/IRC. You keep all your credit card rewards. Register at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com); Group ID is 238528.

**DANA**—All teachings at IMC are offered freely according to the Buddhist tradition of *dana*. Our center and its teachers are supported entirely by your generosity. Thank you.

## PLANNED GIVING

A charitable bequest is a simple and flexible way that you can leave a gift to support the future of IMC and IRC for generations to come. It's easy to make a bequest by including *Insight Meditation Center of the Midpeninsula* as a beneficiary:

- in your will or living trust
- in your retirement plan or bank account
- in your life insurance policy

The Legacy Circle was created to recognize those who include IMC/IRC in their estate and financial plans by making a bequest. Members of the Legacy Circle are invited to an annual luncheon with the IMC/IRC Teachers.

For more information, visit the **DONATE** page on either the IMC or IRC website. For questions, or to arrange a consultation with a volunteer attorney, email [legacy@insightmeditationcenter.org](mailto:legacy@insightmeditationcenter.org).

### • GENERAL INFORMATION:

[insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com](mailto:insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com) or 650/599-3456.

• **NEWSLETTER QUESTIONS:** Contact the editor at [imc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:imc.newsletter@gmail.com).

• **CONNECT:** To sign up for our UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS emails, go to the IMC website and click on the CONNECT link.



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January ~ March 2017

## WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

### MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 7:30 to 9pm. A 45-minute sitting and a 45-minute Dharma talk.

### TUESDAY MORNING SITTING AND TALK

With Andrea Fella or guest teachers, 9:30 to 11am. A sitting followed by a talk and time for questions.

### TUESDAY EVENING DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL

Con Andrea Castillo, 7:30 a 9pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español.

### WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

Sitting and walking meditation with Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 9:30am to 12:15pm. Bring lunch. Informal discussion afterwards. You may attend any part of the morning.

- 9:30am – Sitting • 10:15am – Walking Meditation
- 11am – Sitting • 11:45am – Dharmette (brief talk)
- 12pm – Temple cleaning

### THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Andrea Fella or guest teachers, 7:30 to 9pm. A sitting, a talk and time for questions.

### SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

With Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 8:30 to 10:45am.

- 8:30am – 1st Sitting • 9:10am – Walking Meditation
- 9:25am – 2nd Sitting • 10 to 10:45am – Talk

**Sunday Community Tea**—2nd Sunday of month at 11am.

**Vegetarian Potluck Brunch**—Last Sunday of month at 11am.

## MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

### BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- First Monday evening of month, 6:15 to 7:15pm.
- First Thursday morning of month, 10:45 to 11:45am.
- Every Thursday evening, 6:15 to 7:15pm.

### INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

- 5 Tuesday afternoons, January 10 – February 7, 1:30 to 3pm, with Tom Fenner
- 5 Wednesday Evenings, January 18 – February 15, 7:30 to 9pm, with Diana Clark and David Lorey

The basic instructions in Insight meditation taught sequentially, starting with mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, emotions, and thinking, then application of mindfulness in daily life. No pre-registration necessary.



## ONE DAY RETREATS

On Saturdays, unless otherwise noted:

- January 7, 9am to Noon, **Yoga & Meditation Half-day** with Terry Lesser
- January 21, 10:30am to 4:30pm, **Teen Retreat: Cultivating Goodness in Ourselves and the World** with Nirali Shah & Bruni Davila
- January 28, 9am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness Meditation** with Matthew Brensilver
- February 11, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness, Dharma, Mental Health & Science** (Sati Center) with Matthew Brensilver
- February 18, 9am to 3pm, **Mindfulness of the Body: Meditation, Posture and Yoga** with Max Erdstein and Lolly Font
- February 25, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Dia de Retiro en Espanol en IMC** (Spanish Speaking Meditation Retreat) Maestras: Andrea Castillo y Francisco Mora
- March 4, 9am to 4:30pm, **Metta Daylong** with Andrea Fella
- March 25, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation** with Ines Freedman
- April 1, 8:30am to 5:00pm, **Mindfulness Meditation** with Gil Fronsdal
- April 8, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Time and Our Human Condition** with U Jagara and Nikki Mirgafori
- April 15, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of the Mind** with Andrea Fella

## RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

### AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

For more information go to [www.insightretreatcenter.org/retreats](http://www.insightretreatcenter.org/retreats).

- February 23–26, **Insight Retreat** with Ines Freedman and Matthew Brensilver
- March 17–26, **Awareness and Wisdom Retreat** with Andrea Fella and Alexis Santos
- April 16–23, **Mindfulness in Early Buddhist Meditation**—A Study and Practice Course with Ven. Analayo and assisted by Max Erdstein
- April 30–May 14, **Two-Week Experienced Students Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella
- May 26–29, **Insight Retreat** with Max Erdstein and Kate Munding
- June 4–June 11, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Nikki Mirghafori

Most teachings given at IMC are recorded and posted online at [Audiodharma.org](http://Audiodharma.org)

### SERIES PROGRAMS

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#### **DHARMA PRACTICE DAY SERIES: THE TEN PERFECTIONS WITH GIL FRONSDAL. FRIDAYS 9:30AM TO 3:30PM, JAN 13, FEB 10 (ENDING 2:30PM), MAR 10, APR 21, MAY 26.**

A program of study, exploration and practice of the ten perfections (paramis)—the ten qualities of character which, when developed, support both Buddhist practice and compassionate involvement with others. These 'perfections' are core Buddhist values. The Dharma Practice Day series is one of the core programs at IMC. People are welcome to attend any or all of the Friday programs. Bring lunch.

#### **EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM**

TAUGHT BY CHRIS CLIFFORD AND OTHERS

• **SUNDAYS 1 TO 3:30PM. JAN 8, FEB 5, MARCH 5, APRIL 2, & MAY 7**

For questions, contact [eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org](mailto:eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org).

### SPECIAL EVENTS

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#### **THE HEAVENLY MESSENGERS WITH AYYA SANTUSSIKA**

**BHIKKHUNI AND DR. WILLIAM BUCHHOLZ**

These series will focus on both practical and spiritual aspects of aging, sickness and death. Sessions will include Dhamma teachings, small group inquiry and discussion, practices, homework and application of practical tools such as Advance Directives, working with doctors, and practicing self-compassion. Two sessions of this course are offered in two locations. Please choose one to attend:

- **TUESDAY EVENINGS, 7 TO 9PM, JANUARY 10 – FEBRUARY 7.** Health & Wellness Center, 749 Brewster Avenue Redwood City
- **WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS, 1:30 TO 3:30PM, JANUARY 11 – FEBRUARY 8** Insight Meditation Center

Commitment to attend all five sessions is essential. No registration necessary.

#### **TEEN RETREAT: CULTIVATING GOODNESS IN OURSELVES**

**AND THE WORLD WITH NIRALI SHAH & BRUNI DAVILA**

**Saturday, January 21, 10:30am to 4:30pm.** Relax deeply, speak your truth and develop the mind— all while hanging out with other people your age. Through the practices of mindfulness and meditation, we reconnect with ourselves, get real, and support each other. We can experience happiness, peace, wisdom and harmony in community. The day includes Buddhist teachings that will help us explore how we can engage in the world in these uncertain times while taking compassionate action; and how relating with the Earth is connected to our meditation practice. Bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch at 1pm. All teens are welcome. For info go to [www.mindfulteens.net](http://www.mindfulteens.net) or email Nirali or Bruni at [Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com](mailto:Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com).

#### **MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG**

**WITH MATTHEW BRENSILVER. SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 9AM TO**

**4:30PM.** Practicing mindfulness meditation on retreat is one of the foundations for maturing insight meditation. With alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, instruction in mindful-

ness practice, and a Dharma talk. Recommended for both beginners and experienced practitioners. Bring lunch.

#### **MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY: MEDITATION, POSTURE AND YOGA CENTERED ON THE BODY FOR MEDITATORS WITH MAX ERDSTEIN & LOLLY FONT**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 9 TO 3PM.** Honoring the body as our vehicle for practice and awakening, this daylong workshop will focus on helping meditators discover physical balance, alignment and ease. Guided meditation, yoga, posture exercises and adjustments will be offered. Please bring a sticky mat if you have one and a beach towel. Bring lunch.

#### **DÍA DE RETIRO EN ESPAÑOL EN IMC**

**(SPANISH SPEAKING DAYLONG MEDITATION RETREAT)**

**MAESTRAS: ANDREA CASTILLO Y FRANCISCO MORA**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM.** En este día nos reuniremos a dialogar lo que significa para nuestra comunidad Hispana vivir con serenidad, amor bondadoso y compasión en estos tiempos de incertidumbre y cambios.

#### **METTA DAYLONG WITH ANDREA FELLA**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 9AM TO 4:30PM.** In addition to insight meditation, *metta* (lovingkindness) meditation is a foundation of our Buddhist practice. It is the opening to a compassionate heart, the heartfelt wish for the well-being of oneself and others. This day is dedicated to cultivating friendliness and goodwill. With alternating periods of sitting and walking, instructions and discussion. The day will be primarily in silence. Recommended for both beginners and experienced practitioners. Bring lunch.

#### **INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION**

**WITH INES FREEDMAN. SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM.**

The day will alternate with sitting and walking meditation and instructions in mindfulness of the breath, body, emotions, thoughts. Suitable for both beginners and those wanting to review the basics of practice. Bring lunch.

#### **YOGA WITH TERRY LESSER**

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Suitable for all levels, including absolute beginners. Bring a large towel and sticky mat, if you have one. Mats are also available.

#### **YOGA & MEDITATION HALF-DAY RETREAT**

**SATURDAY JANUARY 7, 9AM TO NOON.** This mini-retreat offers a quiet and grounding place where we can slow down after the holidays, deepen our meditation, connect with our bodies, and focus our intentions for the coming year.

#### **MONDAY EVENING YOGA**

- 6:30 to 7:15pm. Join us for yoga before evening meditation.

#### **THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION**

- 8:30 to 10:30am.

### SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center and held at IMC. Visit [sati.org](http://sati.org) or contact 650/223-0311, for more information.

#### **THE RADIANCE OF EMPTINESS IN EARLY BUDDHISM WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND DIANA CLARK**

**EIGHT-WEEK ONLINE COURSE: JANUARY 30 – MARCH 26**

The realization of Emptiness is integral to the worldview, practice, and path to liberation taught in early Indian Buddhism. This class will explore the different aspects of the teachings on Emptiness in relationship to some of the core concepts of early Indian Buddhism: impermanence, not-self, dependent origination, and enlightenment. We will also explore the application of these concepts and teachings to one's own Buddhist practice.

This online course will consist of essays by Gil Fronsdal, *sutta* readings, videos, and questions for personal reflections on class topics. Students will have the option to explore the different aspects of Emptiness in relation both to their own personal spiritual practice and to the earliest Buddhist texts. These two explorations will be done in small group forums (discussing spiritual practice), and larger group forums (discussing Buddhist texts). Registration at [Sati.org](http://Sati.org)

#### **MINDFULNESS, DHARMA, MENTAL HEALTH & SCIENCE WITH MATTHEW BRENSILVER**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM.** Increasingly, dharma and its distillations are being incorporated in diverse spheres of secular life: psychology, medicine and education. Meditative practices and Buddhist psychology are being subjected to scientific interrogation. What are the implications of this encounter? In what ways will mindfulness and science converge or collide? Will scientific research inform how we practice?

During this day, we'll examine the ways that mindfulness is influencing psychotherapy. We will examine scientific research regarding the efficacy of mindfulness and the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms through which mindfulness confers its benefits. Lastly, we'll consider how this work may inform conceptualizations of dharma in the future.

#### **STATES OF GRACE: A JOURNEY OF LOSS, RESILIENCE, AND RENEWAL WITH DR. GRACE DAMMANN**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 7:30 TO 9PM.** Please join us and guest Dr. Grace Dammann for a special screening of the documentary *States of Grace*, which explores Grace's Dharma practice in the face of her life-threatening crises.

The evening is a fundraiser for the Sati Center's scholarship fund for the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program. All donations are appreciated. For more info, see Sangha Programs & News.

### YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

**DHARMA SPROUTS (K-2ND GRADE)** Led by Liz Powell and Carla Rayacich. **First Sunday of each month, 11:15am to noon.** Meditations and mindfulness practice through stories, songs, art, movement, and games. Parents/caregivers participate with their children. Contact Liz at [eapowell@aol.com](mailto:eapowell@aol.com) if you plan to attend, giving first names of each participant.

**DHARMA ROCKS (3RD-5TH GRADE)** Led by Carla Brooke. **Third Sunday of each month at IMC, 11:15am to 12:45pm.** Interactive mindfulness meditations, games, art/ crafts, and movement. RSVP to Liz at [eapowell@aol.com](mailto:eapowell@aol.com) if you plan to attend, including the first name and age of each participant.

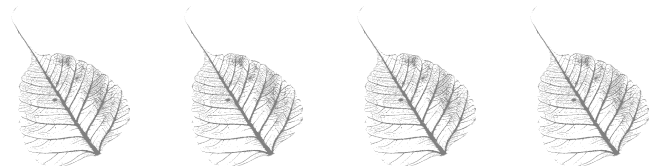
**DHARMA BODHIS (MIDDLE SCHOOL 6TH-8TH GRADE)** (6th-graders can attend Dharma Rocks and/or Dharma Bodhis). Led by Hilary Borison. **Fourth Sunday of each month, 5:15 to 7:15pm.** A time to explore how the Dharma can support challenges and opportunities pertinent to middle schoolers through group discussions, mindfulness practice, creative activities, interactive games, pizza dinner, and more. RSVP for dinner plans. Contact Hilary, [hborison@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hborison@sbcglobal.net), or 650/575-2052.

**MINDFUL TEENS (AGES 13 TO 19)** Led by Nirali Shah and Bruni Davila. **First and third Sunday of each month, 5pm to 7pm.** We aspire to create a safe and joyful space where teens learn mindfulness to nurture inner-discovery, clarity and a deeper connection with others. After a guided meditation, we discuss issues around relationships with friends/family, stress, intentions, identity, etc, and in general have some fun with life! For info go to [www.mindfulteens.net](http://www.mindfulteens.net). Please RSVP Nirali or Bruni at [Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com](mailto:Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com).

**MINDFUL PARENTS. Second Friday of each month, 7:30 to 9pm.** An opportunity for parents to practice in community and to hear from parents who are senior students or dharma teachers. Facilitated by Liz Powell. No pre-registration required. Guest Speakers: Jan 13, Jennifer Kammeyer, Feb 10 & Mar 10, Hilary Borison.

#### **MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FAMILY RETREAT**

**Saturday, May 27 – Monday, May 29,** at Jikoji Retreat Center. Enjoy a weekend of family and parent mindfulness practice, hiking, crafts and community. During this relaxed weekend we will gather for teacher-led family practice periods and parent practice periods as well as hiking, crafts, and outdoor activities for all. Forms for registration by lottery will be available starting Jan. 29th on [www.insightmeditationcenter.org](http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org) under the "What's New" heading.



## SCHEDULE PG. 4

### SUPPORT GROUPS

#### FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES THURSDAYS 1:30 TO 3PM.

#### FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

#### THURSDAYS 3:30 TO 5:30PM.

At least 4 days before attending either group for the first time, please contact Mick Bennett, [hmichael.bennett1@gmail.com](mailto:hmichael.bennett1@gmail.com) or 650/368-2518.

#### BUDDHISM AND 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP

**SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:30 TO 9PM.** Group discussion and study exploring the 12-Step program and the teachings of the Buddha. Includes a 30-minute meditation, short talk and open discussion on the Buddha's teachings selected for the evening. Everyone welcome. Facilitated by Jennifer Lemas, [jennlemas@comcast.net](mailto:jennlemas@comcast.net).

#### DHARMA FRIENDS

Dharma Friends encourages spiritually based friendships and a sense of community in our sangha. To receive email updates on upcoming Dharma Friends events, go to the IMC website, click on **DHARMA FRIENDS** and follow instructions to subscribe.

- **NEW! "For the Love of the World" Book Study, Meditation, and Discussion**—Fridays, Jan 6 & 27, Feb 3 & 24, 7:30 to 9pm. Facilitated by Liz Powell. We will study Ajahn Amaro's book "For the Love of the World," (free download at <http://tinyurl.com/haq3hak>) Each evening will include a guided meditation, a discussion of each section of the book: and a presentation by a member of the Sangha on their committed environmental work in each element: Earth, Water, Fire and Air.
- **Mindfulness Hike at Eaton Park** (San Carlos)—Saturday, January 7, 9am. Meet at IMC. Dress in layers, bring plenty of water. Rain cancels. Brenda Naste, [brendanaste@att.net](mailto:brendanaste@att.net).
- **Sunday Morning Brunch**—Sunday, January 22, 11am, location TBD by group. Meet outside the kitchen, by the tea and hot water dispenser. Lysanna Anderson, [lysanna@xinyu.us](mailto:lysanna@xinyu.us), Christine Junge, [cejunge@gmail.com](mailto:cejunge@gmail.com).
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**—3rd Fridays, Jan 20, Feb 17, March 17. 7 to 8:30pm. IMC Meditation Hall. We are reading *The Buddha's Brain* by Rick Hanson. Anne Foster, [afoster@rawbw.com](mailto:afoster@rawbw.com), 650/591-1285.
- **San Francisco Zoo**—February 11, 9am. Meet at IMC. Shelly Gordon, [sgordon@g2comm.com](mailto:sgordon@g2comm.com), Brenda Naste, [brendamaste@att.net](mailto:brendamaste@att.net)
- **Dharma Friends Event Planning Meeting**—Sun, Feb 19, 11am to 12pm. Plan events for April, May, June. IMC conference room, following the Sunday morning meditation and Dharma talk.
- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Practice Sessions**—Sundays (check with Paul for dates), 1 to 2:30pm. Please join us as we strum our way to samadhi...with ukuleles! We are a group of sangha members who are getting together to sing and play ukulele. For more information contact Paul at [sonasstrummers@gmail.com](mailto:sonasstrummers@gmail.com).

- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Playing at Hopkins Manor**—Sundays, Jan 22, Feb 26 & Mar 26, 1:30 to 2:30pm. We are making music with the residents of Hopkins Manor, a residential care facility for the elderly next to IMC. No prior musical experience necessary. Basic ukulele instruction provided. For info: Paul at [sonasstrummers@gmail.com](mailto:sonasstrummers@gmail.com).
- **Women's Circle of Mindfulness**—2nd Thursday of each month, 10:45am to 12:30pm. A gathering for women who wish to deepen practice by exploring together how to bring principles of mindfulness into our daily lives. You're welcome to bring lunch or have tea until 1pm. Facilitated by Alicia McLucas, [mclucasalicia@gmail.com](mailto:mclucasalicia@gmail.com) and Hilary Borison, [hborison@sbcglobal.net](http://hborison@sbcglobal.net).
- **Cinema Sanity**—At least 1 film during the quarter. Know of a movie with a Dharma message you'd like to see with some Dharma friends? Contact Jim Podolske, [James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov](mailto:James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov), 650/968-6168.

### AFFINITY GROUPS

#### LGBTQUEER SANGHA

**2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:30PM TO 9PM (IMC).** A peer-led sitting group open to all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and queer individuals. Co-facilitated by Sue Bachman and Joe Hayes, with Guiding Teacher John Martin. [imcqueersangha@gmail.com](mailto:imcqueersangha@gmail.com).

#### YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

**AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S. WITH MAX ERDSTEIN. FIRST & THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 7:30 TO 9PM.** An open, monthly group addressing Dharma themes relevant for twenty- and thirty-somethings. Through meditation, Dharma talks, and discussion we will explore how Dharma practice can be a refuge and inspiration as we make our way through the many worlds we inhabit.

### OTHER LOCAL SITTING GROUPS

#### LOS GATOS SITTING GROUP WITH KIM ALLEN

Sunday, 11am to 12:15pm, meditation and dharma talk. Meet at Yoga Source, 16185 Los Gatos Blvd. Drop-in; no membership needed. Contact Kim Allen, [kimall@mindspring.com](mailto:kimall@mindspring.com).

#### SAN JOSE SANGHA

1041 Morse St. Contact Berget Jelane, 408/255-2783, [bbjelane@gmail.com](mailto:bbjelane@gmail.com), website [sanjoseinsight.org](http://sanjoseinsight.org).

- Wednesday evening sitting, 7:30 to 9pm.
- Wednesdays, 6 to 7:15pm, Vipassana meditation with Berget Jelane
- Half-day Retreat, 9:30 to 12:15pm—Jan 14, Feb 11, and Mar 11

For more **LOCAL SITTING GROUPS**, go to our website and click on "Links" on the left navigation bar, and scroll down the page.