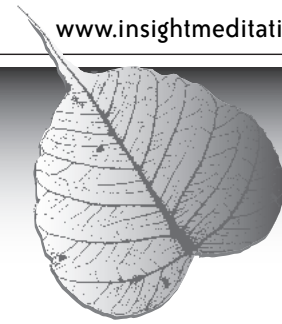


Insight



JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2009

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1

It Is All Empty

Mushin was one of the more radiant monks in the monastery. His peace and joy inspired everyone who met him. Never seeming to want anything, he had a knack for being in the right place at the right time when others needed help. He was always thorough in doing his job as the monastery janitor and no one had ever seen him bothered by anything.

One day I asked him if monastic life had ever been difficult. This is what he said:

“Before coming to the monastery, my life was very hard. I even considered ending my life because my suffering was so great. For me the monastery was the end of the road. I saw it as my last chance. When I first arrived I had a long interview with the abbot. He asked me lots of questions. I told him things about my life that I had never revealed to anyone. At the end of the interview he welcomed me to the monastery. As I took my leave, I asked what sort of spiritual practice I should undertake. The old abbot looked up at me with such compassion and confidence that I thought he was preparing to tell me something very important. But I was confused when all he said was, ‘Always walk completely through the doors.’

“For the rest of that day I wondered if I had heard correctly. How could walking through doors be helpful advice to someone as despondent as me? Perhaps the old man was becoming senile.

“But the next day, to my surprise, the monastery doors started talking to me. Every time I went through a door I heard a faint whisper. At first I thought I was imagining it so I didn’t give it much attention. But when the whispering kept occurring, I strained to hear what was being said. Finally, I was able to make out the words. It seemed each door was whispering the same thing: ‘It is all empty.’

“I asked the other monks if they too heard the voices but none did. I asked them if they knew the meaning of ‘It is all empty.’ They just smiled and shrugged their shoulders, as if they didn’t have a clue.

“Pretty quickly I decided that the voices were a reminder of the life I had left behind. All my possessions, along with the endless pursuits I had run after, the burning drive for recognition, the insatiable womanizing; all of that was indeed empty. The whispering doorways seemed to be reassuring me that I had made the right decision in coming to the monastery. They were reminding me that no longer was there anything outside the monastery walls for me to go after.

“So, at first, the voices made me happy. Convinced that the world I left behind was shallow, I threw myself wholeheartedly into the monastic routine. What a delight it was to have finally found a meaningful life! But as the doorways continued to whisper ‘It is all empty,’ I eventually began to have doubts about my monastic life as well. Was this life also hollow, meaningless? Adding to my concerns, the voices started to grow louder.

“Before long I felt as much despair about monastic life as I had about my previous life. Trying to find something that would give meaning and purpose to my life, I decided to devote more time to meditation and thereby develop my inner life. Certainly the pursuit of real spiritual attainments would be meaningful.

“The meditation practice seemed to lighten my despair, and when my meditations were deep I was filled with confidence. I began to feel quite happy, even happy-go-lucky. I had found the key to happiness and was convinced that I was surpassing all the other monks in holiness. But every time I left the meditation hall the doors whispered again, ‘It is all empty.’

“After a while this began to grate on me. I became increasingly angry because the voices seemed to suggest that my newfound identity as a deeply spiritual person was empty. When the anger became too much to bear, I was forced to admit that I had been caught in pride and that my vanity, too, was empty.

“Once the anger passed, I carried on with my meditation practice. After all, nothing else seemed to make sense. But then the voices started commenting on the meditation itself. I heard again ‘It is all empty.’ Did this mean that meditation itself was meaningless?

“My despair returned with a vengeance. I tried hiding in my room so I wouldn’t have to go through any more doors. I took to climbing through windows whenever possible. If I did have to pass through a door, I ran through trying to distance myself from the voices. But by now the voices had grown very loud. As I ran down the halls the phrase ‘It is all empty’ echoed after me.

“After a while, every thought I had, every wish I hoped for, and every effort I made was assaulted by ‘It is all empty’ resonating throughout the monastery. I couldn’t take it anymore. I ran toward the front gate of the monastery intending to find a tall mountain cliff and throw myself off. It no longer made sense to keep on living if life was going to be so hard. But as I came to the front gate the doors loomed large in front of me. I was too frightened to

Continued inside

SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

NEW LANDSCAPING COMPLETES RENOVATION

In November and December, we finally installed new landscaping to complement and complete the recent building renovation. The design was offered by Sangha member and Landscape Architect Jack Buktenica. A new hedge around most of the property will be kept high on the sides to create private spaces and low in front to be open and welcoming. Other features include pea-gravel walking paths accented by large boulders, three new Japanese Pagoda trees and various bushes around our new extended deck, ramp and front steps. There will be several new benches for socializing and meditating under the redwood tree, on the north side and beside the entry. Thanks again to the generosity of all who have offered time or money for these projects.

KARUNA PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Karuna is the Buddhist word for compassion. IMC's Karuna Program is our vehicle to use our good fortune to support our wider community. In 2008 we organized seven benefits which raised over \$16,000 for:

- Brahmavihara (Cambodia AIDS Project)
- Community Partnership for Mindfulness in Education
- Spirit Rock's Scholarship Program
- Inquiring Mind
- Two benefits for the Foundation for the People of Burma (including a teen program bake sale)
- Tassajara Zen Mountain Center (to help them recover from forest fire)

Many thanks to everyone who made our benefits successful.

SECOND HARVEST FOOD DRIVE

From February 20 to March 1, IMC will have a food drive for Second Harvest, inspired by the first U.N. World Day for Social Justice on February 20th. The Buddha taught that sharing our food brings great benefits. Here on the Peninsula the number of hungry people is increasing. Second Harvest estimates the need is twice what they currently provide. We will provide food collection barrels in our community hall as a way to make it easy for our community to share with those in need. Our aim is to collect at least 300 lb. of food. Second Harvest prefers to receive canned foods including meals in a can (soup, chili, and stew), peanut butter, low sugar cereals, and single serving fruit juices. They ask that we avoid donating bulk packages of rice, flour, alcohol, and sugar, as well as foods packed in glass. For more information, contact Rainbow, rainbowspirit@earthlink.net.

THE DHAMMAPADA: BOOK AND AUDIO-CD SET

Gil Fronsdal's contemporary translation of the most widely read Buddhist classic, *The Dhammapada*, is now available as a Book and Audio-CD set. The audio recording of the text is read by Jack Kornfield. It can be ordered online or through local bookstores.

MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Mindfulness-based Education is an exciting and important development in K-12 education. On Sunday, January 25, 7 to 8:30pm, Megan Cowan, who helped launch the Community Partnership For Mindfulness in Education in 2007, will share her experience teaching mindfulness to more than 4,000 students in fourteen schools in Oakland. The evening presentation offers a great opportunity to learn about the applications of mindfulness in school settings from a pioneer in the field. Following her presentation, people interested in bringing mindfulness to schools on the Peninsula and South Bay will have a chance to discuss the options for this.

Megan Cowan is longtime Buddhist practitioner who spent three years ordained as a Theravada Buddhist nun. She has been teaching children for many years.

DHARMA FIRE: DAYLONG FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Kate Janke and Will Kabat-Zinn invite young adults ages 20-35 to a daylong retreat on Saturday, January 31, 9:30am to 4:30pm.

We live in exciting times. With the changing political and social climate in the world today, there is a heightened awareness among young people around the importance of cultivating community and bringing Dharma practice into society. What better time than now to come together as young Dharma practitioners, to sit with ourselves and each other, and join in the shared cultivation of our hearts and minds? In this daylong retreat we hope to bring together young people from around the Bay Area to sit in the fire of awareness together. It is intended to be a catalyst for building a community of young practitioners to support each other in practice and in manifesting the dharma in our lives. We will take a deep look at how this ancient practice is relevant for our generation. There will be combination of formal sitting and walking practice, Dharma talks, community building, dialog and sharing. People of all experiences levels, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and gender identities are welcome. Let's spread the Dharma fire together in this new year.

—Will and Kate

Kate Janke started her meditation practice in 2004 at IMC, followed by a transformative period of practice in Thailand in 2005. Currently, she co-leads a Kalyana Mitta group for young adults and works as the Coordinator for James Baraz's Awakening Joy Course. Kate will also be teaching with the Mindfulness in Education Project in the Oakland Public Schools.

Will Kabat-Zinn has practiced Vipassana meditation intensively in the U.S. and in Burma. He currently teaches regularly at SF Insight, Spirit Rock and California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS). For the past eight years Will has taught awareness practices to incarcerated youth. He is in teacher training with Jack Kornfield.



REVISED GUIDELINES FOR INSIGHT FORUM AND INSIGHT ANNOUNCE

Several years ago, IMC set up two email lists: Insight-Announce for announcements of interest to the sangha and Insight Forum for skillful, open-ended discussion related to practice. Over the past couple of months, the board revisited these two lists. We wanted to know if they are still serving their original purpose. We also wanted to make sure we're using our volunteer resources wisely. Combining our own observations with the thoughtful opinions and suggestions from members of the sangha, both via an online survey, and independently, we decided to refresh the definitions of the two lists:

Insight-Announce: This list is for announcements within our community about events and speakers at and affiliated with IMC, including ride-sharing for sangha-related events. Short posts about housing (rentals, seeking roommates, etc) are also acceptable.

Insight Forum: This list is for sharing thoughts, reflections, and ideas (personal insights, meditation practice, poetry, quotations, wise humor) that are about, support, or foster our Buddhist practice.

For Both Groups: The following types of submissions will no longer be posted:

- Political/social activism/ecology flyers or articles without specific reference or application to dharma practice
- Personal services or businesses
- For-pay seminars
- Items for sale

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 2009 RETREATS

IMC continues the commitment begun in 2005 to offer all our residential retreats on a Dana (donation) basis. In 2008, we held seven retreats, which translates into an opportunity for over 200 practitioners to develop their inner life by entering into a period of extended silent practice. For 2009 we have six residential retreats planned, again at Jikoji and Hidden Villa. (See the Schedule for details).

Those who have attended retreats deeply appreciate the support of the volunteers who help create the safe and supportive environment. If you have attended a retreat, we ask that you consider providing the same opportunity to others by volunteering to staff future retreats. Volunteer positions available include: registrar, manager and assistant cook. For more information, please contact Jennifer Lemas or Cheryl Hylton at insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com.



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.

It Is All Empty, cont'd. from front page

pass through them. I felt I couldn't survive one more voice telling me that 'It is all empty.'

"I stood there, frozen for a long time, but then remembered the practice the old abbot had given me on my first day in the monastery: 'Always walk completely through the doors.' The instruction seemed so empty and meaningless the first time I heard it. Now it seemed monumental. Still, I could not manage to get myself to pass through the front gate.

"Inside my head, a voice kept repeating 'It is all empty. It is all empty.' My mind couldn't find any object to rest on because when it did I was reminded that it too was empty. My mind became increasingly contracted, turning in on itself. It kept pulling away from everything until all that was left was the frightened mind itself. Then, one last time, a voice boomed out, 'It is all empty,' and with that I let go of my mind. I turned around and re-entered the monastery.

"Since that day the voices stopped and I've never again worried about the meaning of anything. Neither despair nor hope is relevant for me. Happily, emptiness permeates everything."

—Gil Fronsdal

NOTES FROM A VOLUNTEER

My first volunteer activities at IMC included landscape work on Sunday mornings and managing some of the Sangha's Monday evening meetings. Both tasks allowed me to become acquainted with more of our community. Next came four years as IMC's Residential Retreat Coordinator and as a member of IMC's Board of Directors. I had held several administrative and board posts prior to IMC, but these two positions challenged me to focus more on the skillfulness of process (like right speech, right action) than the perfection of results.

In 2006, based on my experience as a long-time Zen Hospice volunteer and completion of the Sati Center's Chaplaincy Program, Gil asked me to serve as chaplain to Hilda and Len Weisberg when Hilda was dying of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). I felt honored, and my practice was inspired by Hilda's equanimity and constant expressions of compassion in the face of her diminishing physical capacity and impending death. Len also inspired me with his loving and unwavering support for Hilda.

During the course of Hilda's dying process she asked if we could start a support group for her and other persons with life-threatening illnesses. We did, and I assumed the role of the group's facilitator. Then someone with lyme disease requested a support group for persons with chronic health challenges, and I have facilitated that group's weekly meetings since January 2008. Serving Hilda and Len and the two support groups has been the most rewarding and practice-enriching of my volunteer activities. The bravery and equanimity with which so many face such difficult life circumstances—including for some the expectation of an early death—has often evoked in me naturally the compassion I must otherwise practice to uncover in myself.

—Mick Bennett

Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

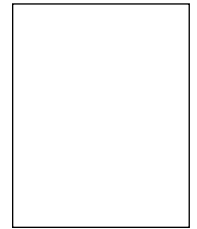
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www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com

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RETREAT CENTER SEARCH UPDATE

Within the last 6 months, several parcels have been identified as possibilities for our residential retreat center. All have been west of Skyline Blvd. and within 40 minutes of IMC. In this area there are still parcels of land that are at least 5 acres in size, relatively affordable and contain sufficient level land for us to develop. However, zoning restrictions have been complex and prohibitive.

We now understand that Resource Management (RM) is the only zoning likely to allow us to use the land for our purpose. We have also talked with POST (Peninsula Open Space Trust) about possibilities of partnership.

If you know of any suitable property within 40 minutes of IMC or if you or anyone you know has connections with a nonprofit that owns property and might like to sell, we would love to hear from you. We would also be interested in churches, schools, or other building sites. If you can help with this search, please call Carol Collins at 408/354-5893 or email at ccollinsc@verizon.net.

2008 TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Monetary donations to IMC are fully tax-deductible. Around the end of January 2009, those who donated more than \$200 total by check and/or credit card will receive a letter acknowledging this total as tax-deductible. Those who contributed using Paypal have already received an acknowledgement by email for each donation larger than \$100. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

BOOK SIGNING WITH RICHARD SHANKMAN

IMC will host a book signing and short presentation by Richard Shankman for his new book *The Experience of Samadhi* on Sunday, February 8, 11:30am to 12:45pm. The book provides an in-depth examination of the range of teachings on *samadhi* (concentration) and then discusses some of the important controversies, disagreements and views on the topic.

The Experience of Samadhi contains interviews with the following well-known monastic and lay teachers: Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, Ajahn Thanissaro, Bhante Gunaratana, Sayadaw Pa Auk, Christina Feldman, Ajahn Brahmavamso and Leigh Brasington. See the related daylong event in the schedule under Sati Center.

Richard Shankman frequently teaches and leads retreats at IMC and throughout the Bay Area. He is a co-founder of the Sati Center for Buddhist Studies.

To sign up for either or both of our Email Lists, go to www.insightmeditationcenter.org and click "Subscribe".

MAILING LIST OPTIONS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To be added or removed from the Mailing List, or to update address, phone, or e-mail—contact Cindy Heyer, cyn@coastside.net 650/712-0231.

NEWSLETTER questions—contact Chris Clifford, imc.newsletter@gmail.com 650/967-8741.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January thru March 2009

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

7:30 to 9pm. A 45-minute sitting and a 45-minute dharma talk.

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

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

- 9:30 am - Sitting • 10:15am - Walking
- 11:00 am - Sitting • 11:45am - Dharmette (Brief Talk)
- Noon to 12:15pm - Temple Cleaning

THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

7:30 to 9pm. Especially suited for new meditators. A 30-minute sitting is followed by a talk and time for questions.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

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

VEGETARIAN POTLUCK BRUNCH

Last Sunday each month at 11am. All welcome. Contact Di or Dave Tatro 650/595-4260.

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- Every Thursday evening 6:15 to 7:15pm, prior to the 7:30pm sitting and talk.
- 1st Monday evening each month, 6:15 to 7:15pm, prior to the 7:30pm sitting and talk.
- 1st Thursday morning each month, 10:30 to 11:30am.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

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

- 6 Wednesday Evenings—January 7 – February 11, 7:30 to 9pm, with Gil Fronsdal
- 5 Tuesday Mornings—January 20 – February 17, 10 am to 11:30 am, with Ines Freedman

ONLINE COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

January 5 – February 21, with Gil Fronsdal and Ines Freedman. To support the listeners of Audiodharma, IMC is offering an online course based on Gil Fronsdal's 6-week Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation class. The course will be supplemented with written material, mindfulness exercises and reflective questions. Ines, as the online teacher, will provide further teachings and email guidance to the participants. Additional teachers will offer weekly support by e-mail, phone or instant messenger. For more info: www.audiodharma.org/onlinecourses.html

NON- RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

9:30am to 12:15pm. Sitting and walking meditation, led by Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers.

HOUSEHOLDER RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

March 8-14. *See Special Events.*

VIPASSANA WITH U TEJANIYA

July 17-24. *See Special Events.*

ONE-DAY MEDITATION RETREATS

- Saturday, January 10, 9:30am to 4:30pm **Greed, Hatred and Delusion** with Ines Freedman, Jim Podolske and Maria Straatmann
- Saturday, January 24, 8:30am to 5pm with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, January 31, 9:30am to 4:30pm **Dharma Fire, a young adults' retreat** with Kate Janke and Will Kabat-Zinn
- Saturday, February 7, 9:30am to 4:30pm with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, February 21, 9:30am to 4:30 pm **Introduction to Mindfulness** with Ines Freedman
- Saturday, March 14, 9am to 4:30pm **Mindfulness in the style of U Tejaniya** with Andrea Fella
- Saturday, March 28, 9am to 5pm **Women's Mindfulness Retreat** with Andrea Fella

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

IMC-SPONSORED RETREATS

There is no cost for IMC retreats. Donations welcome. Contact info@insightmeditationcenter.org, 650/599-3456 or as noted. Registration opens 4 months prior to event.

- May 3-10 with Gil Fronsdal & Andrea Fella. Hidden Villa in Los Altos.
- Memorial Weekend, May 23-25, 2009 with Andrea Fella. Jikoji Retreat Center in Los Gatos.
- August 19-23 with Andrea Fella & Heather Martin. Jikoji Retreat Center in Los Gatos.
- September 13-27 with Gil Fronsdal. Hidden Villa in Los Altos. Contact Laura Crabb, lauracrabb2@gmail.com, 408/380-3002, X80. For senior practitioners.
- September 25 -27 with Andre Fella and Pam Weiss. Jikoji Retreat Center in Los Gatos.
- October 11-18 with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters. Hidden Villa in Los Altos.

SPIRIT ROCK RETREATS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

See www.spiritrock.org for info.

- March 2 - 29 **Insight Meditation One Month Spirit Rock Retreat**, with Jack Kornfield, Gil Fronsdal, John Travis, Trudy Goodman, Marie Mannschatz, Adrienne Ross.

SCHEDULE pg. 2

- August 5 – 9 **Family Retreat** with Ajahn Amaro, Gil Fronsdal, Betsy Rose, Heather Sundberg
- August 14 – 23 **Vajrapani Retreat** with Mary Grace Orr, Gil Fronsdal and John Travis.

YOGA

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

MONDAY EVENING YOGA

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

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION

8 to 10:15am. (No yoga on January 1, 2009).

SATURDAY YOGA AND MEDITATION

January 3, 9am to 12:30pm.

YOUTH AND PARENTS FAMILY PROGRAM

DHARMA ROCKS YOUTH PROGRAM (3RD - 8TH GRADE)

Second Sunday of the Month, 5:15 to 7:15pm. Led by Misha Merrill. In 2009 teachings and activities will focus on the ten perfections, qualities of character which lay at the foundation of Buddhist spiritual life. Includes fun, interactive, community building games and crafts, pizza, and a half-hour of practice and dharma teaching. For info, Hilary Borison 650/366-4120.

Misha Merrill is a Zen teacher, and librarian at the Peninsula School.

TEEN PROGRAM AT IMC/DHARMA TEENS

For high-schoolers. First Sunday of every month, 5 to 7pm.

A safe and fun space to apply mindfulness in support of self-discovery, empowerment, and fulfillment. Teens can discuss among themselves and adult facilitators, important issues in their lives. Includes activities to stimulate curiosity, awareness and discovery, a short sitting, and sharing. Pizza provided* Adult Facilitators: Mary Hofstedt, Youth Development Program Manager and Alicia McLucas, CPCC, Certified Professional Life Coach.

**Please RSVP for food headcount and materials to Alicia McLucas, amclucas@pacbell.net, 650/361-8800.*

SPECIAL EVENTS

NEW YEAR'S EVE MEDITATION AND CELEBRATION

Wednesday December 31, 7:30pm to 12:15am. Bring poetry or reading to share as well as treats. Sitting and walking meditation, time to share, refreshments about 9pm, chanting, bell ringing to bring in the new year. Contact Berget Jelane 408/255-2783, bbjelane@gmail.com.

THE FIVE FACULTIES – THURSDAY SERIES

5 Thursdays, January 8 to February 5. The basic building blocks for meditation practice are the Five Faculties: Confidence, Effort, Mindfulness, Concentration, and Discernment. Learning what they are, what they do, and how to use them in meditation are

important skills for any meditator to have.

- 1/8 Confidence/Faith – Chris Clifford
- 1/15 Effort – Cheryl Hylton
- 1/22 Mindfulness – Jeff Hylton
- 1/29 Concentration – Michael Bennett
- 2/5 Discernment/Wisdom – Jennifer Lemas

PRACTICING WITH THE KILESAS: GREED, HATRED & DELUSION: A DAY OF MEDITATION, TEACHINGS AND DISCUSSION

January 10, 9:30am to 4:30pm (bring lunch) with Maria Straatmann, Ines Freedman and Jim Podolske. The Kilesas (torments of the mind), greed, hatred or ill-will, and delusion are the primary roots of suffering in our lives. Transforming these forces is a major purpose of Buddhist practice. Through meditation, teachings and discussion, we will examine these habits of mind. Join us for a day devoted to understanding how these unconscious roots affect our lives, and how seeing them clearly and developing their opposites can lead to freedom.

Maria Straatmann, has been a student of Vipassana since 1996. A graduate of the Sati Center Buddhist Chaplaincy Program; volunteers with Zen Hospice Project. She also serves on IMC's Chaplaincy Council.

Ines Freedman has been practicing Buddhist meditation since 1985, with Gil Fronsdal since 1995. A graduate of the Spirit Rock Community Dharma Leader Program, she also serves on IMC's Chaplaincy Council.

Jim Podolske has been a Vipassana student of Gil Fronsdal since 1998. He serves IMC both as a volunteer and introductory meditation instructor. He has sat Vipassana, Samadhi, and Brahmavihara retreats.

BUDDHIST ETHICS ON THE PATH OF AWAKENING SERIES

Mondays beginning January 12, with Gil Fronsdal.

SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING SERIES

Sundays beginning January 18, with Gil Fronsdal.

DHARMA PRACTICE DAYS: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

Jan 23, Feb 27, Apr 3, May 1, & Jun 5, 9:30am to 3:30pm, with Gil Fronsdal. Meditation, teachings and discussions. Bring lunch. Rather than allowing hindrances to remain as obstacles it is important to learn how to transform them into stepping stones to greater mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. Each of these Dharma Practice days will focus on one of the hindrances. For those participating in the entire series, Ines Freedman will be available for additional support through practice discussions/interviews. Everyone is welcome.

- January 23 – Aversion
- February 27 – Sloth & Torpor
- April 3 – Restlessness
- May 1 – Doubt
- June 5 – Hindrances In Depth

MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM WITH MEGAN COWAN

Sunday, January 25, 7 to 9pm. Buddhist practitioner and teacher Megan Cowan, Community Partnership for Mindfulness in Education will share her experience and teaching approaches. See *Sangha Programs & News* for details.

SCHEDULE pg. 3

DHARMA FIRE: UNITING IN PRACTICE

January 31, 9:30am to 4:30pm. A daylong retreat for young adults ages 20-35 with Kate Janke and Will Kabat-Zinn. See *Sangha Programs & News* for details.

DEPRESSION AND DHARMA

5 Tuesdays, February 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3, 7:30 to 9pm with Ronna Kabatnick. The Buddha offered many powerful ways to alleviate suffering. This series will concentrate on these teachings, particularly on how to skillfully relate to depression and ways to tenderly disengage from the habitual patterns that intensify it. We will practice mindful ways to open ourselves to the mental and physical aspects of depression, which often lead to deep insights into its true nature. There will be a strong emphasis on applying forgiveness, lovingkindness and gratitude meditation practices to depressive mind states. Reference: *The Mindful Way Through Depression* by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, and a CD by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Ronna Kabatnick is a social psychologist who specializes in helping individuals and groups learn meditative practices to relate to depression. A consultant in the Department of Psychiatry at UCSF on a study investigating the impact of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on treatment resistant depression, she practices in Berkeley, California.

PRESENTATION AND BOOK SIGNING WITH RICHARD SHANKMAN

Samadhi: Exploring the Range of Teachings and Controversies on Concentration & Jhana. Sunday, February 8, 11:30 to 12:45 pm. See the related daylong event in this Schedule under Sati Center.

BEGINNERS PRACTICE GROUP

5 Wednesdays, February 18 to March 18, 7:30 to 9pm, with Susan Ezequelle. For those who have been practicing less than 6 months or have taken a beginning meditation class and would like further support in building their practice. There will be a short sitting, teachings & discussion.

MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY

4 Thursday evenings: March 5, 12, 19, 26. 7:30 to 9pm, with Andrea Fella. Mindfulness of the body helps us to enter into the lived experience of the body, moment by moment. This practice provides the foundation for a deep exploration not only of our bodies, but also of our minds. We will explore practices that support mindfulness of the body, both in formal meditation and in our daily lives, drawing from the Buddha's teachings in the *Satipatthana Sutta* (The Foundations of Mindfulness).

HOUSEHOLDER RETREAT: AN INTEGRATED PRACTICE RETREAT

Sunday to Saturday, March 8 - 14, with Andrea Fella. Integrating practice into our daily lives can be difficult. Many of us need support for this challenging but rewarding aspect of practice. We will integrate formal practice and Dharma discussion with our daily life by surrounding our usual workweek and workdays with practice & discussion. We begin with a half-day retreat with instructions and discussion on Sunday, and end with a daylong

retreat on the following Saturday. During the week we will meet each morning and evening to inspire, encourage and support our daily life practice. You may participate in any part of the program.

- Sunday 3/8: 1:30 to 5pm
- Monday-Friday 3/9 -3/13, mornings: 7:30 to 9am
- Monday-Friday 3/9 -3/13, evenings: 7:30 to 9pm
- Saturday 3/14: 9 am to 4:30 pm, Daylong Retreat

WOMEN'S DAYLONG RETREAT

Saturday March 28, 9am to 5pm, with Andrea Fella. This daylong retreat offers a space for women to gather in silence and in community. We will alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation, including times for instruction, questions, and a Dharma talk. At the end of the day, we will gather in community to share refreshment and mindful speech. Bring your own lunch, which will be in silence, and refreshment to share for the afternoon gathering, if you wish.

ENLIGHTENED IMAGINATION WITH CAROLYN DILLE

Saturday, April 4, 9am to 4:30pm. How do the Buddha's seven factors of enlightenment—mindfulness, investigation, perseverance, joy, calm, concentration, and equanimity—inform creative work we do? Can we cultivate these factors while engaged in creating? During this retreat we'll explore these possibilities through meditation, writing and drawing, and inquiry. Please bring materials for writing and drawing, and a lunch if you like.

Carolyn is a poet and writer who facilitates writing and creativity practices for retreats, workshops, and groups. She has been practicing Buddhist and other meditative forms for over 30 years and teaches dharma in the Vipassana Insight and Soto Zen traditions.

VIPASSANA NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT WITH U TEJANIYA

July 17 to July 24. IMC is privileged to host Sayadaw U Tejaniya, a renown Burmese Meditation master. U Tejaniya started practicing and studying dhamma when he was 13. He teaches Vipassana based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness with an emphasis on the qualities of mind. His teaching style is particularly suited to Westerners. Application required.

SUPPORT GROUPS

(A) THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES

Wednesdays, 1:30 to 3pm

(B) THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

Wednesdays, 3:30 to 5pm

Meetings will include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics, but the primary purpose of each group will be to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. Before attending any group for the first time, please contact Mick Bennett, hmbennett@sbcglobal.net, or 650/368-2518.

SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center: www.sati.org or 650/223-0311 for more information.

SUTTA STUDY PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Monthly from September 12, 2008 to June 12, 2009. A ten month course studying the *Majjhima Nikaya*, or Middle Length Discourses, one of the oldest records of the Buddha's teachings. Taking the entire course is recommended. Fridays, 9:30am to 3:30pm: 9/12, 10/3, 10/31, 11/21, 1/9, 2/6, 2/28, 4/24, 5/22, 6/12. Note: Saturday date – 2/28.

SAMADHI: EXPLORING THE RANGE OF TEACHINGS AND CONTROVERSIES ON CONCENTRATION & JHANA

Taught by Richard Shankman, Saturday, March 7, 9am to 4:30pm. How does concentration fit into insight meditation? What are the samadhi stages known as *jhanas*? Are there two paths of meditation practice, tranquility and insight, or one path that synthesizes the two into one practice? Is *jhana* necessary for liberating insight? There is a wide range of views, opinions, and disagreements among teachers, and students may become confused about cultivation of samadhi or how to incorporate it into their meditation practice. After examination of samadhi and *jhana* in the source texts, we will discuss these different views, and consider how each can inform and enrich meditation practice. The day will include some meditation practice periods.

Richard Shankman has been a meditator since 1970 and teaches at dharma centers and groups throughout the Bay Area. He is a co-founder of the Sati Center for Buddhist Studies and the Community Partnership for Mindfulness in Education, and the author of The Experience of Samadhi: An In-Depth Investigation of Buddhist Meditation.

SATURDAY, MAY 2 - NOT-SELF WITH THANISSARO BHIKKHU

DHARMA FRIENDS

Dharma Friends encourages spiritually-based friendships and a sense of community in our sangha. If you are interested in joining the Dharma Friends Steering Committee, contact Anne Foster, afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285.

- **Full Moon Gathering for Women**—Friday, Feb 6 and March 6, 7:15 to 9:15pm. Meditation and dharma teachings with local teachers, sharing and creativity. RSVP Nicole Cheroke at drncherok@gmail.com.
- **Following your conscience in difficult times**—Saturday, Jan 17, 6 to 10pm, IMC. Dinner, film (*Soldiers of Conscience*, American soldiers turned conscientious objectors), and discussion about making difficult ethical decisions. Contact: Marianna, 650/367-7325 taraihito@yahoo.com.
- **Dharma Friends Steering Committee Planning Meeting**—Sunday, Feb 8, 11:15am to 12:30pm. IMC conference room. Come join us! Anne Foster, 650/591-1285 afoster@rawbw.com.
- **Hike Shoreline to Bixby Park** Feb 22, 12:45pm, carpool from

IMC at 12:15pm Contact: Ginny and Dwight 510/754-7389, zydeholic@yahoo.com.

- **Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement® Workshop** Saturday, March 21, 9:30am to 12:30pm, IMC. Contact Judy, 650/328-4173, judy@judywindt.com.

RECURRING EVENTS

- **Dharma Friends Brunch**—(1st Sundays) Gather at IMC by the kitchen at 11:15 am and choose a local restaurant for brunch. Contact Dwight 510/754-7389, zydeholic@yahoo.com.
- **North Bay Fiction Book Group**—Once/Month, Sundays, 6:30-8:30pm We meet at the home of a member, usually in Menlo Park. Contact Rainbow, rainbowsprite@earthlink.net.
- **Cinema Sanity**—Occasional weekend evenings. Know of a movie with a Dharma message you'd like to see with some dharma friends? Contact Jim Podolske, 650/968-6168, James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov.
- **Speak Spanish**. Every Sunday, 11:15 except the last of the month (potluck). At Starbucks on Whipple and El Camino. Contact Audrey 650/574-4053, guerin.audrey@gmail.com.
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**—5:30 to 7pm. Jan 9, Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 3, May 1 & June 5. *A Year to Live* by Stephen Levine, IMC Social Hall. Contact: Jeff, cjhyllton@earthlink.net.

RELATED SITTING GROUPS

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

Meets Wednesdays in Montara, 7 to 8:30pm. For information and location, www.coastsidevipassana.org.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOUTH BAY WITH SHAILA CATHERINE

2094 Grant Rd, Mountain View. www.imsb.org

Contact: doug.forehand@sun.com.

- Weekly Sitting & Talk—Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9pm.
- Introduction to Meditation class – first Tuesday each month, 6:30 to 7:20 pm

LGBT SITTING AND DISCUSSION GROUP — PALO ALTO

Once a month, Saturdays, 10:30am to 1pm. Meets at members' home. For date & location: Drew Oman drewoman@gmail.com.

OAKLAND MONDAY DROP-IN MEDITATION GROUP

Instruction 5:15pm; meditation/discussion 5:30 to 6:30pm. Unitarian Church, 14th/Castro. Rebecca Dixon 510/482-2032.

SAN JOSE SANGHA

1041 Morse Street, San Jose. www.geocities.com/sjsangha

Contact Berget, 408/255-2783, bbjelane@gmail.com.

- Wednesday Evening Sitting & Teaching, 7:30 to 9pm
- Daylong January 17 9:30am to 4:30pm: Seeking the Seeker
- Half-Day Retreat February 14, 9:30am to 12:15pm
- Introductory Course: 5 Mondays March 2-30 & April 6, 7 to 9pm
- Saturday, April 14, 9am to 2:30pm Daylong Retreat (Part of Intro class)
- Half-Day Retreat March 7, 9:30am to 12:15pm