

Insight



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2006

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 4

The Spectrum of Desire

Desire is so inherent to the human condition that life without it is almost inconceivable. It is probably more accurate to call us “human desirelings” than “human beings.” Anyone wishing to live a wise life needs to explore deeply the nature of his or her own desire.

A number of myths about desire circulate among Buddhists. A common one is that desire is bad, and a spiritually mature person has no desires. Another is that the Buddha taught that desire is the cause of suffering and therefore all desire, even the desire to practice for liberation, is a problem. But life without desire is not necessarily a good thing: for example, one symptom of depression is having no desires. The Buddha did not teach that desire was the cause of suffering. In fact, he encouraged his followers to arouse ardent desire for liberation.

A starting point for understanding desire is to differentiate between unhealthy and healthy desire. Unhealthy desire undermines psychological health, producing what Buddhism often calls “suffering” for short. Healthy desire can contribute to psychological well-being, happiness, and peace. If we place healthy and unhealthy desire on a spectrum, at one end we have the motivations that lead to some of the worst and most horrific things people do. But at the other end, desire expresses some of the most beautiful and noble aspects of human life.

One way to distinguish the two ends of this spectrum is to differentiate between craving and aspiration. When the Buddha pointed to the cause of suffering, he used the word *tanha* or thirst. It represents desire which is in some way compulsive, driven, and therefore not easy to let go of. This kind of desire is often accompanied by clinging, contraction, tension, or pressure.

Craving has its costs. People have destroyed their lives by acting on their addictions. When craving has the upper hand, it is all too easy to make poor choices. Freedom, that is, free will and the ability to choose wisely, is easily compromised. Craving takes a toll on our bodies when it expresses itself as physical tension. And it can take an even bigger toll on our minds: constant wanting can exhaust the mind. Left unchecked, craving can lead to an alienation from our self. Unfulfilled, craving can all too easily turn into frustration and anger.

One of the surprising discoveries that we make in mindfulness

meditation is how pervasively and constantly the mind is under the sway of craving. This thirst is the primary reason the mind chases after its own thoughts.

An important function of meditation is to calm down the incessant churning of desire so that we can discover at the other end of the spectrum our deeper wellsprings of motivation. When surface concerns and chatter quiet down, among the beautiful things we can find are our aspirations. The etymology of “aspiration” (like “spiritual”) is rooted in the Latin word for “breath” (*spirare*). This points to the close relationship between breath and aspiration. Craving tends to contract the breathing; aspiration surfaces most easily when our breathing is relaxed and open. In the same way that natural breathing can’t be an act of will, so too the motivations and sense of purpose that come with aspiration can’t be willfully generated. Staying aware of our breathing can keep us close to what inspires us.

The sensitivity and awareness that come from mindfulness practice support the discovery of our healthy desires and aspirations. Mindfulness not only helps us get in touch with our aspirations, but it helps prevent aspiration from becoming craving. Even though what we might want is healthy and appropriate, if we are not careful, this desire can manifest as craving. Noticing the physical and mental tension, pressure, and uneasiness that come with craving makes it easier to distinguish aspiration from craving.

One way aspiration becomes craving is through expectation. At its best, aspiration has an openness to possibility without a need for anything to happen. This doesn’t mean that we don’t act on our aspirations, but that we don’t cling to their success. There is something satisfying and wonderful in a healthy aspiration that is not dependent on outcome.

If we want to base our lives on aspiration rather than craving, we have to give ourselves time to discover our deepest wishes.

Continued inside

The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts.

The taste of Dharma surpasses all tastes.

The delight in Dharma surpasses all delights.

The destruction of craving conquers all suffering.

—Dhammapada, 354

Sangha Programs & News

FINDING NIRVANA IN THE WHIRL OF LIFE: THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF AJAHN BUDDHADASA

Taught by Santikaro. Saturday, October 14, 9 am to 4:30 pm
Ajahn Buddhadasa (1906-1993) was one of the most influential Buddhist teachers in Thai history. He taught simply and profoundly on meditation, on Buddhist paths to living with nature and society, and on the possibilities of liberation in our lives. His teachings have had a lasting impact on many Western and Asian Theravada teachers and students. A renaissance monk, Ajahn Buddhadasa was a poet, photographer, anthropologist, and social commentator who taught both liberals and conservatives, and a leading proponent of inter-religious cooperation.

In this daylong class and commemoration of his 100th birthday, we will review his most significant contributions, the controversies that sometimes surrounded him, and how his Buddhist teachings and social activism are relevant in today's West. Videos, audio recordings, photos and other documentary materials will be used to help give a sense of Ajahn Buddhadasa's presence and teaching style.

Santikaro lived with Ajahn Buddhadasa during the last nine years of his life and became his primary translator. Ordained as a Theravada Bhikkhu in 1985, Santikaro spent most of his monastic life in Thailand. He returned to the USA in 2000, and currently resides at Liberation Park outside Chicago, where he leads a lay life of practice and teaching.

For more information, visit www.sati.org or 415/646-0530.

IMC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We welcome two new members to IMC's Board of Directors: Bruce Freedman and Peck Yee Tan. Bruce has been active in many ways over the years in supporting the operations and maintenance of our center. Peck has been the architect and project leader of our recent renovation projects. She also designed our website and keeps it up to date.

We would also like to thank outgoing board member Ines Freedman for her invaluable service to IMC over the past few years. Although no longer on the board, she will continue in her volunteer position as Managing Director of IMC.

The current Board members are:

Catherine Byers (President), Chris Clifford (Vice President), Claudine Latombe (Treasurer), Elena Silverman (Secretary), Gil Fronsdal, Mick Bennett, Jim Podolske, Jim Bronson
Bruce Freedman, and Peck Yee Tan.

To contact the board: info@insightmeditationcenter.org.

RENOVATION UPDATE

We are happy to announce that the renovation of the conference room and library is complete, and many of us have already had the pleasure of meeting in this peaceful and welcoming conference room. We are very appreciative of all the volunteers who have made this project possible, especially Peck Yee Tan, our architect and project manager.

We will now begin designing and planning for the next phase of renovation, including the meditation hall, the community hall, and the outside grounds. As funds become available, we will continue with the renovation. Prior to finalizing any plans, there will be plenty of opportunity for community input and feedback.

—Catherine Byers, Building Renovation Chair
cbyers@cornerstone.com

LIBRARY REOPENS

With the completion of the renovations to the library/conference room at IMC, the library is once again open for use. We welcome donations of books, but please limit them to recent releases of books on Buddhism and meditation only. We have a sizeable credit balance at Book Buyers and can rely on that for older books that we are missing. Dharma videos or DVDs are also welcome. In addition, we would like to request donation of the following books:

- *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* by Bhikkhu Ñanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. We only have a reference copy and would like to have one for circulation.
- *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*, by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Our library is a wonderful resource and I encourage the community to make use of it.

—Pat White for the Library Committee
pewwhite@stanford.edu

NAME BADGES

In order to weed out the unused name badges, we will soon be temporarily transferring name badges to the library bulletin board to the left of the door. If you are using a badge, please pick it up and bring it back out to the community hall. In this way, those left in the library will be considered not in use anymore and will be recycled. Your name badges are a great help to the rest of us, and we thank you for wearing them, especially during potluck and tea time. Any questions, contact Gabriele at 650/368-2518.

RETREAT CENTER UPDATE

IMC has begun an active search for a suitable local property to house an urban retreat center. This is an exciting development for our center as it will allow us to offer a variety of residential retreats to support the growth of people's practices.

The aspiration of creating a retreat center is supported both by the enthusiasm for this project and the understanding that there is no time pressure to do this. We can wait for the right property. Our search committee, headed by Susan Ezequelle, has explored a variety of local properties, checked out leads, and is actively continuing the search. In addition, we have been developing staffing models and begun to consider the elements necessary for a design. We have many things in place, including volunteers ready for the next step, whenever it comes.

Since the kind of property we will be able to buy is partially dependent on the funds available, we are in the midst of a fundraising effort for the retreat center. At the same time, we are being mindful not to burden IMC's resources and are continuing our IMC renovation as planned.

More information about our plans can be found at www.insightretreatcenter.org. Questions, Ines Freedman inesfreed@gmail.com 408/732-7535.

BUDDHIST SPIRITUAL CARE SYMPOSIUM AT IMC

Saturday, October 7, 2006, 8 am to 4:30 pm (vegetarian lunch included). We welcome Buddhist chaplains, both volunteer and professional, for a day of learning and community building. Morning sessions will be geared to the following areas of chaplaincy: hospital and hospice; prison and criminal justice; community and sangha.

Special Events: Morning dharma talk on "The Conceit of the Chaplain," and afternoon workshop on "Spiritual Care with Angry Persons." For info, schedule, and registration: www.buddhistchaplainsnetwork.org, or contact Bill Hart at 415/567-9823 or Lori Hefner at 925/262-4250.

NEW! INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER IN SANTA CRUZ

We are happy to announce that a sister sangha, Vipassana Santa Cruz, has recently moved into their new home at 1010 Fair Avenue. Mary Orr is the guiding teacher for the group. For info: www.vipassanasc.org.

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BARREL

An opportunity to practice generosity— please bring your donations of canned goods and other non-perishable food items to IMC. Simply remove items from their paper bags and place them inside the Second Harvest food barrel, located in the social hall.

The Spectrum of Desire, *cont'd. from front page*

Aspiration often arises from a non-discursive part of the heart and mind. Craving and clinging are often tied to the discursive world of planning, thinking, and fantasy, while aspiration is associated with inner stillness and relaxation.

Sometimes it is only during long contemplative periods that people discover what they most want to base their life on.

It is also important to respect both ourselves and our aspirations. It is easy to dismiss both our aspirations and the search for them. Believing that we are not good enough, capable, or deserving can leave us feeling unfulfilled and regretful. In the world of aspiration, it is far better to try and fail than to never try.

Buddhism recognizes many beautiful aspirations, including wishes of goodwill and kindness for others, and the desire for happiness and other wholesome qualities of mind for ourselves. Central to Buddhist practice are the aspirations for liberation and for the alleviation of the sufferings of others. However, Buddhism does not require us to desire either of these; when the heart is open and relaxed, these wishes often bubble up. Both aspirations can flow through us without egoism or craving. They can seem so natural that they appear impersonal. Just as water flows downhill, so the unimpeded heart flows to freedom and service. The healthy desire for freedom and compassion can flow like a mighty river that finds its rest in reaching the vast ocean.

—Gil Fronsdal

DHARMA TALKS

Recordings of dharma talks by Gil Fronsdal and many of our guest speakers are available to listen to or download at www.audiodharma.org. You can also borrow audio tapes or CDs from our tape library, located in the Library. Please return within 2 weeks. To request that a tape or CD be made of a particular talk, contact Mike Kupfer at m.kupfer@acm.org (preferred) or 650/591-1285.

VOLUNTEERS

All the work that keeps IMC running smoothly is done by volunteers. Volunteering is an opportunity to participate at IMC and to meet other sangha members. If you would like to support our center by donating your time and skills, please fill out a form on the literature table. Contact Audrey Guerin 650/574-4053, aeguerin@sbcglobal.net.

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.

Insight Meditation Center

1205 Hopkins Ave.

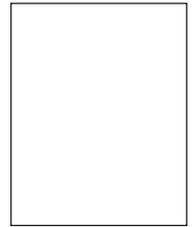
Redwood City, CA 94062

Website: www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: info@insightmeditationcenter.org

650/599-3456

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



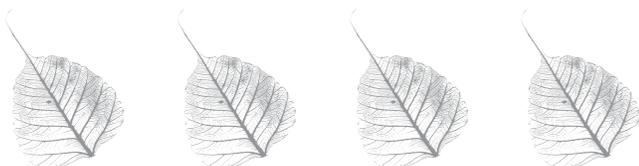
Printed on
Recycled Paper

SANGHA NEIGHBORS

Sangha Neighbors are volunteers who are available to support other members of our sangha when they need help. During times of transition or crisis, support is available for home visits, household chores, shopping, transportation, meals, feeding pets, etc. We encourage members to ask for support when needed. To request support or offer your services, contact Berget bbjelane@gmail.com 408/255-2783, or Rainbow 650/321-3649 rainbowspirit@earthlink.net.

PLEASE ENROLL IN E-SCRIP!

E-scrip is an effortless way of raising funds for our center. If you register your grocery club card and credit/debit cards with E-scrip, the participating merchants will donate a small percentage of your purchases to IMC. You keep all your credit card rewards. Register at www.escrip.com, use forms on the literature table, or contact Ines 408/732-7535, info@insightmeditationcenter.org.



WE HAVE 2 E-MAIL LISTS

Insight-Announce: For sangha-related **announcements**. Requests for ride-sharing and housing are welcome—no discussion, humor, personal services or businesses, for-pay seminars, or items for sale. To join, send a blank e-mail to: insight-announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com When you receive an e-mail back from Yahoo, click Reply, then Send, without adding anything.

Insight Forum: For **discussion** of our Buddhist practice—may include personal insights, social/political activism, ecology, poetry, quotations, wise humor. Send a blank e-mail to: insightforum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com When you receive an e-mail back from Yahoo, click Reply, then Send, without adding anything.

MAILING LIST OPTIONS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

NEWSLETTER questions—contact Ines Freedman, info@insightmeditationcenter.org or 408/732-7535.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

October thru December 2006

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- IMC will be closed Thursday Evening (Thanksgiving) 11/23 & Monday evening 12/25 (Christmas)
- There will be Thursday morning yoga 11/23 at 8 am.
- We will be open as always on Monday evening 1/1/07

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK*

7:30 to 9 pm. A 45-minute sitting is followed by a 45-minute dharma talk. **No Monday evening class on 12/25—however, there will be a class on Monday evening, January 1st.*

NEW! WEEKLY WEDNESDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

Starting 9/27, there will be a weekly half-day retreat from 9:30 am to 12:15 pm, led by Gil Fronsdal or occasional guest teachers. You may attend any part of the morning.

(See below under 'Retreats' for details.)

THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK*

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

**No Thursday Evening class on 11/23 (Thanksgiving)*

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

1st Sitting 8:30 to 9:10 am

Walking Meditation 9:10 to 9:25 am

2nd Sitting 9:25 to 10 am

Talk 10 to 10:45 am

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

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- **1st Monday evening** each month, 6:15 to 7:15 pm prior to the 7:30pm sitting and talk. (No class 1/1/07).
- **Every Thursday evening** 6:15 to 7:15 pm, prior to the 7:30 pm sitting and talk.
- **1st Thursday morning** each month, 10:30 to 11:30 am.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

During this course, the basic instructions in insight meditation will be given sequentially, starting with a focus on mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, emotions, thinking, and the application of mindfulness in daily life. No pre-registration necessary.

- 5 Wednesday evenings – September 27 to October 25, 7:30 to 9 pm, with Gil Fronsdal.
- 5 Wednesday evenings – January 10 to February 7, 7:30 to 9 pm, with Gil Fronsdal.

RETREATS

DHARMA PRACTICE DAYS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Meditation, Teachings and Discussions. Bring lunch.

The following Fridays, from 9:30 to 3:30 pm

- October 6 – Right Intention
- November 3 – Right Speech
- December 1 – Right Action
- January 19 – Right Livelihood

NEW! WEEKLY WEDNESDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

Starting 9/27, there will be a weekly Wednesday half-day retreat, with alternating sitting and walking meditation, from 9:30 am to 12:15 pm, led by Gil Fronsdal or occasional guest teachers.

- **You may attend any part of the morning.**
- Interviews available when led by Gil.
- Bring lunch for informal discussion afterwards.
- Gil Fronsdal will teach all dates except: 10/11, 12/13, and 12/27, which will be led by guest teachers.
 - 9:30 to 10:15 am—Sitting
 - 10:15 to 11 am— Walking
 - 11:00 to 11:45 am—Sitting
 - 11:45 to 12 noon—*Dharmette* (Brief Talk)
 - 12 to 12:15 pm—Temple Cleaning

ONE-DAY MEDITATION RETREATS

Silent retreat. Sitting & walking meditation, dharma talk. Bring lunch.

- Saturday, September 30, 8:30 am to 5 pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal. No instruction, previous experience recommended. Short interviews with Gil available.
- Saturday, October 21, 9 am to 4:30 pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, October 28, 9 am to 5 pm, **LGBTQ Lovingkindness Retreat** with Larry Yang.
- Saturday, November 18, 8:30 am to 5 pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal. For experienced students. Interviews available.
- Saturday, December 9, 9 am to 4:30 pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal.
- Saturday, January 20, 8:30 am to 5 pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal. No instruction, previous experience recommended. Short interviews with Gil available.

SCHEDULE pg. 2

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

IMC-SPONSORED RETREATS

There is no cost for IMC retreats. Donations welcome.

- October 20 - 22 with Andrea Fella and Richard Shankman at **Hidden Villa** in Los Altos Hills. Contact Bess Touma etouma@comcast.net, 650/712-0773.
- May 13 - 20 with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella at **Hidden Villa** in Los Altos (registration in 2007).
- May 25 - 29 (Memorial Weekend) with Gil Fronsdal at **Jikoji Retreat Center** in Los Gatos (registration in 2007).

SPIRIT ROCK-SPONSORED RETREATS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

- December 13 - 17 at **Spirit Rock** with Gil Fronsdal, Mary Orr, Howard Cohn. 415/488-0164 X375
- December 26 - January 2 at **Spirit Rock** with Gil Fronsdal, John Travis, Sharda Rogell, Adrienne Ross, (Janice Clarfield, yoga) . 415/488-0164 X377.

YOGA

Suitable for all levels. Please bring a large towel and sticky mat, if you have one. Taught by Terry Lesser.

MONDAY EVENING YOGA*

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

**No class December 25; however there will be a class January 1, 2007.*

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA & SITTING MEDITATION

8 to 10:15 am

THANKSGIVING MINDFULNESS YOGA & MEDITATION

Thursday, November 23, 8 to 10 am

MORNING OF YOGA & SITTING MEDITATION

Saturday, January 6, 9:30 am to 1 pm. An opportunity to develop a continuity of awareness in movement and in stillness, experiencing how the practices of yoga and meditation deepen and inform one another in our opening to greater wisdom and compassion. The retreat is appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. You don't have to be flexible to do yoga, you only need to be as you are .

FAMILY PROGRAM

MONTHLY FAMILY PROGRAM*

Last Sunday of every month, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm. Join kids ages 4-17 to share the dharma. The entire group begins with songs and introduction of the monthly theme, then kids join with others in their age group for meditation and dharma discussion. Age groups are 4-7, 8-11, and 12-17. Parents are invited to use the time for their own meditation. Contact Amy Saltzman 650/326-0701, thesaltzmans@comcast.net.

- **New Teen Group** – Join others ages 12-17 to talk about how mindfulness and Buddhism influence your life. Led by Amy Saltzman, thesaltzmans@comcast.net.
- **Volunteers wanted** to spearhead two areas of the program in 2007: activities/crafts and music. For info contact jennifer@jenniferkammeyer.com.

**No program 12/31. December program TBA.*

SPECIAL EVENTS

DHARMA STUDY PROGRAM

The Noble Eightfold Path with Gil Fronsdal.

Through June 2007, the monthly Dharma Practice Days will focus on the development of the Noble Eightfold path in the fullness of our lives. It is the Buddha's classic formulation on how to walk the path of liberation – a path that integrates our life in the world and our inner meditation practice. The program will be a combination of meditation, teachings, and discussions. **You may attend any part of the series.**

Dharma Practice Days for this program will be on the following Fridays, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm:

2006: 10/6, 11/3, 12/1 2007: 1/19, 4/20, 5/18, 6/8.

Discussion Group with Tony Bernhard and Ines Freedman, on the following Friday mornings 10 am to 12 noon:

2006: 9/22, 10/13, 11/10, 12/15

2007: 1/5, 2/23, 3/23, 4/27, 5/25, 6/22

Recommended Reading:

- *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness* by Bhante H. Gunaratana
- For questions: contact Ines Freedman, inesfreed@gmail.com 408/732-7535.

EXPLORING THE PATH OF PRACTICE THROUGH THE BUDDHA'S WORDS with Andrea Fella.

3 Thursdays, October 12 - 26, 7:30 to 9 pm. In this series of talks, we will use several Suttas from the Pali Canon as a means for exploring the path of practice.

FINDING NIRVANA IN THE WHIRL OF LIFE: The Life and Teachings of Ajahn Buddhadasa. Taught by Santikaro.

Saturday, October 14, 9 am to 4:30 pm.

Ajahn Buddhadasa was one of the most influential Buddhist teachers in Thai history. As a forest monk he taught Buddhism as a practice of close alignment with the natural world. In this commemoration of his 100th birthday, we will review his most significant contributions, the controversies that sometimes surrounded him, and how his teachings and social activism are relevant in today's West. This class is presented by the Sati Center. For details and to pre-register (preferred), go to www.sati.org or call 415/646-0530.

LGBTQ LOVINGKINDNESS RETREAT

Saturday, October 28, 9 am to 5 pm. With Larry Yang. A day of Lovingkindness practice with periods of silence, movement, contemplation, and sharing.

Larry Yang, a Spirit Rock Community Dharma Leader, leads meditation retreats for People of Color, LGBTQ groups, men's work, and people in recovery from addiction, as well as meditation groups in the Bay Area. He is a psychotherapist and consultant in cultural diversity.

FULL MOON GATHERING FOR WOMEN

Friday, November 3, 7 to 9 pm

A time for women to come together for meditation and Dharma teachings with local woman teachers. We have begun reading and discussing topics from the first chapter of the book: *Pure and Simple, The Extraordinary Teachings of a Thai Buddhist Laywoman* by Upasika Kee Nanayon. We will begin with the first section, 'Looking Inward'. We will also explore mindful movement practices, chanting, moon gazing, and crafting. All skill levels welcome. RSVP to Cheryll Gasner, 650/969-5793 or cheryll.gasner@sbcglobal.net.

TEEN RETREAT: MEDITATION & THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS

Saturday, November 4, 1 to 4 pm with Gil Fronsodal.

Within Buddhism, meditation is one element of an integrated approach to living a wise and stress-free life. This retreat will include instruction and practice of meditation, and an introduction to the Four Noble Truths, which is the heart of Buddhist teachings. The Four Noble Truths points to a happiness and peace which is not tied to our experiences in life. Discovering this happiness brings balance through all the changes life can bring. There will be time for peer discussion and exploration of the topic of the day. All teens welcome.

BEGINNERS PRACTICE GROUP

5 Tuesdays, November 7 - December 5, 7:30 to 9 pm.

For beginners who have taken a basic mindfulness meditation instruction class and would like to take the next step in building and supporting their practice. There will be a 20 minute sitting, a review of the basic teachings, and lots of discussion. Geared to those who have been practicing less than 6 months. With Jim Bronson and Susan Ezequelle.

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST PASTORAL COUNSELING

Saturday, November 11, 9am to 4:30pm. Taught by Steve Stuckey, Jaku Kinst, and Gayle Madison. Presented by the Sati Center, www.sati.org or 415/646-0530.

An introduction to Pastoral Counseling, which brings the knowledge and skills of psychotherapy and counseling to dharma teachers, priests and ministers who act as coun-

selors, ethical guides, and spiritual mentors, within the context of their religious practices and traditions. Buddhist spiritual care helps bring Buddhist practice and perspectives to issues of emotional development, life counseling, and family conflict resolution.

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR (1) THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES AND (2) CAREGIVERS

5 Wednesdays, November 15 - December 13, 1:30 to 3 pm.

Both groups will include brief sittings, discussion of pertinent Buddhist practices and guided meditations, but the primary focus will be to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes and fears, with individuals facing a similar situation.

The group for those with life-threatening illnesses will be led by Mick Bennett, Ph.D., a retired psychotherapist who underwent surgery for prostate cancer earlier this year and has worked with the Zen Hospice Project since 2002. Mick is a graduate of the Sati Center Chaplaincy Program.

The caregivers group will be led by Jim Bronson, who was his wife's primary caregiver for seven years prior to her death from breast cancer. He has taught and facilitated caregiver groups at Stanford Hospital Education Center and KARA, a grief support organization, where he is Director of Community Outreach & Education. Jim is a participant in the Spirit Rock Community Dharma Leader Program.

For questions, contact Mick Bennett, 650/368-2518 or hmbennett@sbcglobal.net.

THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTENCE

3 Thursdays, November 30 - December 14, 7:30 to 9pm.

We will focus on how insight into the 3 characteristics of existence—impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self—serve to liberate the mind through non-identification and non-clinging. Insights into one or more of these characteristics are considered doorways to liberation. We will examine the various ways in which they are revealed through meditation practice.

- 11/30 **Impermanence** (*anicca*) w/Carolyn Dille
- 12/7 **Unsatisfactoriness** (*dukkha*) w/Richard Shankman
- 12/14 **Not-Self** (*anatta*) w/Maria Straatman

NEW YEAR'S EVE MEDITATION AND CELEBRATION

Sunday December 31, 7:30 p.m. to 12:15 a.m. A quiet evening of meditation, walking, chanting, readings, and refreshments. Please bring a reading if you would like. We will do a ritual to see in the New Year. Berget Jelane 408/255-2783, bbjelane@earthlink.net.

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, please contact Anne Foster, annefoster2@earthlink.net, 650/591-1285.

- Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3. **First Sunday Singles' Brunch.** Meet by the IMC kitchen at 11:15am, or at Joy Meadow at 11:30am, 701 El Camino Real (cross street Brewster), RWC. Info: Carol Ann Wegenast, CarolAnn123@sbcglobal.net 650/365-8804.
- Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3. (1st Sundays), 5:30-7:30pm. **Dharma-Inspired Book Group** at IMC. Share potluck and your thoughts and opinions about this month's dharma book. Which book? Ask Cindy at cyn@coastside.net 650/766-6395.
- Oct 6, Friday—**Dance the Dharma.** Join new and experienced dancers for a night of ballroom dancing at the Starlite Dance Club, 1160 N. Fair Oaks Ave, Sunnyvale. Beginning lessons from 7:15-9pm, followed by dancing 'til midnight. 6:45pm carpool from IMC. Debbie Mobley debmob@hotmail.com 650/347-4981, John Spitzer johned0420@comcast.net.
- Oct 14, Saturday—**San Pedro Valley County Park and Rancho Corral de Tierra Hike.** Meet for carpooling 9:30am at IMC. 4.3 mile, minimal elevation gain, near Pacifica, with optional longer hike to the top of a scenic mountain. John Reilly, west_coast_swing@hotmail.com, 650/233-0412.
- Oct 15, Nov 19, Dec 17 (3rd Sundays), 6-8pm **North Bay Fiction/NonFiction Book Group.** We meet at the home of a member, usually in Menlo Park. All book lovers welcome. RSVP to Ursula Berg at bergu@earthlink.net.
- Once a month, Sundays, 5:30-7:30 pm. **South Bay Fiction/Non-Fiction Book Group.** Meets at member's home or local restaurant. Lively book discussions integrating our reading and our own Buddhist views of the world. E-mail Karen Brown for date & location, karenb@sbcglobal.net ("Book Group" in subject).
- Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15 (3rd Fridays)—**Friday Night Outings to the Movies.** Bill Roberts, Billyblacksmith@yahoo.com.
- Oct. 22, Long Ridge Trail Hike from Grizzly Flat Pkg Area on Skyline Blvd. to Jikoji and back on Peter's Creek Trail. 5.5 miles. 500 ft. gain. Tour of Jikoji Retreat Center at half-way point. Carpool after dharma talk at IMC. Jim Bronson JBrons@aol.com.
- Oct 28, Saturday, 7-10pm—**Hungry Ghost Halloween Ceremony for All Boo-dhists,** Mike Kupfer and Anne Foster's home, San Carlos. Volunteers needed for decorations! Anne Foster, annefoster2@earthlink.net 650/591-1285.
- Nov 12, Sunday, 11:15am-12:30pm. **Dharma Friends Steering Committee** planning meeting for January-March, 2007. IMC conference room. Come join us! Anne Foster, annefoster2@earthlink.net, 650/591-1285.

- Nov 18, Saturday, 6:30-10pm—**Vegetarian Harvest Potluck,** IMC. Contact Rainbow, rainbowspirit@earthlink.net to join the team creating this meaningful and festive evening.
- Dec 8, Friday, 7-10pm—**Jataka Tales.** An evening of reading and discussing these stories of ethical behavior and conduct. Facilitated by Rainbow, rainbowspirit@earthlink.net.
- Dec 16, Saturday, 6:30-10pm—**Winter Solstice Celebration,** RSVP for location. Phyllis Klein, pkgold@earthlink.net, 415/273-1036.

RELATED SITTING GROUPS

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

Meets Wednesdays in Montara, 7:30 to 9 pm. For information and location, www.coastsidevipassana.org.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOUTH BAY with Shaila Catherine

2094 Grant Rd., Mountain View. www.imsb.org, email: doug.forehand@sun.com.

- Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9 pm, **Weekly Sitting and Talk**
- **Strengthening Mindfulness - Level 2,** 6 Tuesdays, Nov 7-Dec 12, 7:15 to 9 pm
- **Saturday Retreats**—Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 9; 9:30am to 4pm
- **Sunday Daylongs** in Campbell, 3803 S. Bascom, Ste 200. Nov 5, Dec 3; 9:30 to 4pm.

OAKLAND DROP-IN MEDITATION GROUP

Mondays: instruction 5:15 pm; meditation/discussion 5:30 to 6:30 pm. First Monday each month: presentation at 6 pm, then discussion. Unitarian Church, 14th and Castro, downtown Oakland. Contact Rebecca Dixon 510/482-2032.

PALO ALTO: DROP-IN MINDFULNESS GROUP

Wednesdays 2 to 3 pm with Julie Forbes 650/323-2601 at Avenidas, 450 Bryant St., Palo Alto (Garden Room).

SAN JOSE SANGHA

1041 Morse Street, San Jose. Contact Berget, 408/255-2783 bbjelane@gmail.com. Website: www.geocities.com/sjsangha

- **Wednesday Evening Sitting & Teaching,** 7:30 to 9 pm
- **Beginning Meditation Instruction:** 1st Wednesday of month, 6:15 to 7:15 pm
- **Psychotherapy & Meditation,** 4 Wednesdays, Oct. 4-25, 6:15 to 7:15pm. With Berget. Back room of Meeting House. Please plan to attend all 4 sessions. Suggested reading: *Emotional Alchemy* by Tara Bennett-Goleman.
- **Saturday Practice Day,** Oct 14, 9am to 2:30pm. Part of Intro to Meditation but open to all. At 1041 Morse.