



Right Effort, Vitality, and Refuge

Gil Fronsdal

The application of effort is central to Buddhist teachings and practice. Without right effort, there is no Buddhism. We find Buddhism through practice. It is by right effort that the teachings come alive in our lives and our world. So important is this topic that it warrants ongoing care to keep our effort guided by the inner freedom that Buddhism emphasizes. We can do this by understanding the quality and vitality of our effort, the purpose for which it is applied, and the source that motivates it.

A key characteristic of right effort is effort free of strain. Its central purpose is liberation from attachments and self-centeredness, including becoming non-attached in how we make effort. Its motivating source is the same deep well-spring from which flow love, compassion, and wisdom, far below our self-preoccupations. With such a source, effort is not self-centered; it is self-freeing. We recognize effort is right when both exercising it and its results are nourishing.

Right effort includes a readiness to meet whatever happens with mindfulness, and if we can't, to investigate why. It is the effort to never lose heart with non-hostility and, if we do, to reestablish the intention of non-hatred. Right effort is the dedication to finding freedom from suffering and not being complacent or acquiescent with distress.

Discovering right effort in Buddhist practice requires careful awareness of our inner life. Mindfulness of our thinking and beliefs can protect us from the influence of energy-draining thoughts. Awareness of moods and emotions supports calm, steady, balanced exertion independent of our ups and downs. Clarity about our sense of purpose can keep us on track, undistracted by other purposes.

Persistence is the partner to right effort when it is a healthy alternative to effort driven by a force of will, for example, to overcome the drag of resistance. Excessive effort agitates the mind, contributing to turmoil rather than progress. Holding back or giving up can keep us stuck. Gentle, non-assertive persistence is the practice of the turtle, not of the hare. Right effort leads to being as quietly content as the turtle.

When the concept of effort is associated with the drudgery of work, it can be helpful to explore how the expression of our vitality is affected. Peaceful vitality is an inner treasure that enlivens attention and presence. It is a simple vibrancy from within, an embodied aliveness devoid of stress. Stress often arises from ego-driven endeavors entwined with desires, aversions, and fear—forces that deplete our vitality. Peaceful vitality feels satisfying.

Right effort always involves a journey to discover what constitutes right effort in whatever circumstance we are in. While there is no one universal way to make right effort, when we find it, we also find the Dharma, that is, the experience of non-clinging. This journey of discovery shows how vitality is a transformative element of Buddhist practice. This is when the sense of easeful, peaceful aliveness invites a shift away from self-promotion and ego-driven pursuits. As Joseph Campbell aptly

noted, what people truly seek is not mere meaning but a profound sense of aliveness, which in Buddhist terms is a vitality that contains freedom from clinging and inner conflict.

Observing the quality of our vitality throughout the day is useful for living by the classic Buddhist definition of right effort. Simply stated, it is the mindful effort to avoid doing what is unwholesome and unhealthy physically, verbally, or mentally and, instead, to do what is wholesome and healthy.

Doing what is unwholesome has a very different effect on us than doing what is wholesome. Both require the application of energy. However, unwholesome effort to do what is unwholesome is agitating and self-alienating. Similarly, a wholesome effort to do what is unwholesome is unsatisfying and self-defeating. Most beneficial is the wholesome effort to do what is wholesome; this brings peace in ourselves and in the world.

Buddhist practice involves a mindful interplay between effort and vitality. It is taking the time to recognize the vitality inherent in being alive, even when sick, and then expressing it through the quality of effort made. A sense of peaceful, relaxed aliveness can guide our efforts so they are peaceful and relaxed enough to persist through the challenges of life. When the challenge is illness or intense emotions, then persistent, wholesome effort may be to relax and rest into the simplest, quietest sense of aliveness available.

In this way, vitality is a profound guide, urging us to move beyond "what" we do to delve into "how" we are. This nuanced exploration unfolds a deeper understanding of our relationship with effort, vitality, and the innate wisdom that arises from observing the interplay between the two.

When effort becomes satisfying enough, we become inspired to be wholehearted in what we do. Inspired effort, in turn, gives birth to peaceful vitality and joy. This joy can be most pronounced in meditation, where joy, even bliss, can become the manifestation of the efforts we make.

Peaceful effort, wholesome effort, persistent effort, steady effort, nourishing effort, joyful effort, and liberating effort are all possible when we set out to discover what the Buddha meant by "right effort." And when we discover right effort, our efforts become our refuge. We are protected by the wholesomeness with which we engage the next moment.

Furthermore, with right effort we become a refuge for others. In a world where so much harm is done by wrong effort, a devotion to right effort is a gift we can give.



LOVE AND WISDOM

ANDREA FELLA

(Editor: This slightly updated version was published previously in the IRC newsletter, Winter, 2016)

Our mindfulness practice asks us to open to all aspects of our experience, both our joys and our struggles. It can be challenging to open to suffering: to the frustration of wanting things we cannot have; to the fear that the things we have will go away; to anxiety about the health and happiness of ourselves and our loved ones; to anxiety and fear about the state of the world; to confusion. Yet every time we experience a flavor of suffering, it is an opportunity to grow in both wisdom and love—when we meet it with mindfulness.

Much of our suffering happens when we struggle against the very nature of life: its changing uncertain nature, so often out of our control. At the same time, our struggles also seem to be connected to a deep inner wish to be happy, to be healthy, to be safe. We wish that for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the world—and at times these wishes seem out of reach. The wishes of love, of kindness, of caring are very human wishes. What happens when these deep wishes meet the vicissitudes of life? The wish for well-being and happiness can collide with the impermanent, uncertain nature of life; when that happens, reactivity, greed, aversion, and confusion can result. We have a deep wish for safety for ourselves, our loved ones, and the world. As we also recognize vulnerability, uncertainty, and impermanence, fear is born, anxiety is born.

As we learn to bring mindfulness to anxiety or fear, we may try to orient to wisdom, perhaps telling ourselves, “Vulnerability—that is just the way it is.” And this can be helpful. Yet sometimes as we orient towards wisdom in this way, we can subtly deny the deep wish for safety.

We might have a subtle belief that when things are impermanent and out of control, the wish for safety, happiness and ease is invalid, that it’s not the right wish. In a subtle way our minds can take the truths of impermanence and unreliability to deny these deep wishes, which are actually an expression of metta, of love, of compassion. They are wholesome wishes. Yet our relationship to these wholesome wishes often includes craving or a belief that if I were doing things “right,” these wishes would be fulfilled.

This craving around our wholesome wishes creates a collision when our experience is impermanent and uncertain. The hidden demand that these wishes be so creates anxiety, fear or reactivity. The expectation, the craving for a particular outcome around these wishes—that is what wisdom asks us to let go of. Wisdom doesn’t ask us to let go of the wishes themselves. In fact, I think that wisdom asks us to embrace those wishes. Wisdom understands that these deep wishes are wholesome, natural, human wishes. It asks us to simultaneously open to the nature of things as they are and to open to love, without clinging.

Whenever we experience struggle or suffering, not only is there a doorway to aligning to the nature of life, there is also a doorway asking us to open to love without clinging to love—to truly have an open heart. Our path of practice asks the heart to stretch and hold both love and wisdom, without resistance, without fear, without expectation.

IMC’S NATURE RETREATS AND SATI CENTER’S ECO-CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

Dharma practice has a profound connection to the natural world and to the natural world within us. In recent years, Gil Fronsdaal has been involved with other teachers to bring these two worlds together to expand the range of practice and service opportunities that IMC can offer.

In April, 2023, Susie Harrington, Mark Coleman, and Gil started a two-year Nature Dharma Training for Insight teachers and wilderness guides to offer meditation retreats in nature. These retreats range from one-day to week-long periods of mindfulness practice in natural settings. Some are primarily silent backpacking retreats with meditation, mindfulness practice, and Dharma teachings, all in the wilderness. Others are stationary retreats in peaceful settings where participants sleep in tents they bring or are provided.

Five IMC teachers are participating in this training and are beginning to organize nature retreats for 2024 (see Schedule of Events). Just as living outdoors in close contact with nature is very different from living indoors surrounded by four walls, practicing meditation outdoors is different from practicing indoors. It is often easier to find a healthy relationship with oneself, others, and life when the natural world helps us to see beyond the common tendency to be absorbed in our preoccupations. Nature can teach freedom from self and simplicity of being, bringing much peace.

These nature retreats have a long history that goes back to the Buddha, who meditated outdoors. Since then, many meditators have found the natural world to be a great Dharma teacher.

In the Summer of 2019, IMC’s sibling organization, the Sati Center for Buddhist Studies, offered the first 13-month Buddhist Eco-Chaplaincy Training. Having grown to be 18 months long, in August, 2024, Sati Center will present the fourth of these trainings to be taught by Susie Harrington, Kirsten Rudestam, Ram Appalaraju, Kaira Jewel Lingo, and Gil Fronsdaal (see Sati Center’s listing in the Schedule).

The Eco-Chaplaincy program builds on Sati Center’s Introduction to Buddhist Chaplaincy Program, which trains people in the skills of spiritual care needed to support people undergoing major life transitions. Chaplains often work in hospitals, hospices, jails, and prisons, where people face some of the most significant human challenges. The Eco-Chaplaincy Program offers training in providing spiritual care in connection to people’s relationship with the beauty and harmony of the natural world and the modern challenges of climate change and environmental destruction. The Eco-Chaplaincy Training includes two week-long outdoor training periods where participants’ relationship to the natural world becomes central to learning Eco-Chaplaincy.

With these two programs, IMC and IRC will start offering nature retreats and explorations of the spiritual/deep relationship possible with our more-than-human world.



AROUND IMC: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JAN MESSER

Sangha is more than a community. It's a deep spiritual practice...for the transformation and healing of self and society.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

During a Dharma talk in early 2023, Gil spoke of his hope to focus more intentionally on community at IMC. With that prompt, I organized a Community Development Committee with six other sangha members. We first met in May, 2023, to brainstorm ideas that could potentially further develop and strengthen the experience of community at IMC.

Since then, the Committee has helped initiate and/or organize some well-received events. These include two half-day in-person retreats at IMC, facilitated by me and my husband Barry Rothman. Both retreats included silent sitting and walking meditations, group discussions about the practice of Sangha, and a potluck lunch. One of the retreats also hosted a beautiful Japanese Tea led by Nancy Hamilton and her Tea colleagues.

Another recent event initiated by the committee, led by Gil, was the New Year Refuge and Precept Ceremony. “Going for Refuge” and “Committing to the Precepts” are the two primary Buddhist rituals that mark the start of residential Insight retreats, and almost every other Buddhist ceremony. Participants tied cords around each other’s wrists, as a symbol of going to refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and committing to the Precepts for oneself and for the sangha. It was an inspiring way for attending members of the community to start the New Year!

In addition, the Committee is currently organizing in-person community meetings, to be led by Gil or other teachers. These meetings are an opportunity for sangha members to ask questions, make suggestions and express concerns about IMC.

We are incubating more IMC community-development projects, including a day to explore issues of diversity; a weekend residential sangha retreat; a day to explore wise-speech; a Dharma-themed movie night; a dance with Dharma-themed music; and an IMC publication of sangha members’ writings—somewhat like a past IMC publication, *Passing It On*. Keep an eye on IMC’s calendar to learn about these community events. If you would like to suggest some ideas please contact me at jmessermft@gmail.com.

MAJOR GRANT FROM HEMERA FOUNDATION SUPPORTS IMC DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL

DAVID LOREY

Recognizing the great strides IMC has made in reaching and growing the number of Spanish-speaking practitioners over the last 15 years, in 2022 the Hemera Foundation awarded IMC a grant to support the further development of its Spanish-language programs. Over the last two years, the grant made possible significant advances in translating Dharma teachings into Spanish, further training Spanish-speaking and Latin American teachers, mentors, and leaders; and developing Spanish-language content for IMC’s web presence in Spanish. The grant also made it possible for a larger number of Spanish-speaking practitioners to participate in retreats at IRC and in Mexico and Colombia.

Large Spanish-speaking communities surround the Insight Meditation Center (IMC), and IMC’s connections to Latin America and Spain are

growing. Over the last ten years, IMC has worked both to meet needs of the local Spanish-speaking practitioners and to provide Dharma practice opportunities and teachings for practice communities in Latin America. IMC’s Dharma programs in Spanish have been organized and implemented under the “Dharma en Español” (DEE) umbrella. Along with the growth in programs, the number of IMC-trained Spanish-speaking Dharma teachers IMC has also increased.

A highlight of the grant was support for dedicated Latin American practitioners to attend IMC’s annual Spanish-language retreat at IRC. This retreat is a major event for IMC’s Spanish-language sangha, with many retreatants returning in 2023 for their sixth retreat experience. Teachings, interviews, and all retreat signage and instructions were provided in Spanish. Many first-timers also participated in the retreat: last year a full third of participants were new to IRC, and many to retreat practice. The teachers were Andrea Castillo and David Lorey, with important assistance in teaching and retreat management from Carrie Tamburo. Comments from retreat participants included the following:

“The retreat allowed me to connect with my own culture and language; somehow this way the Buddha’s teachings go straight to heart instead of having to pass through a rational process.”

—Gustavo

“Having the retreat in Spanish makes it possible for me to communicate with my parents and grandparents about what I find so meaningful in this practice!” —Gabriela

“It’s great to meet other practitioners from Latin American countries. Sharing with friends both new and old the experience of retreat is so important for nurturing the practice.” —Adriana

The grant also funded a retreat led by Andrea Castillo in Mexico during the Summer of 2023, with retreatants attending from Mexico, the United States, Colombia, Uruguay, and Argentina. This was a unique opportunity to experiment with a dana-based format in Mexico, working with local Buddhist organizations to provide support. The Hemera grant supported travel and partial retreat fees for 11 of the retreatants.

The focus of translation work under the grant was the translation of Gil’s book on the Five Hindrances. The work on this volume, the second book of Gil’s to be made available in Spanish, was carried out by an entirely Spanish-speaking Latin American team, including translators, a designer, the editor, and two visual artists. Approximately 400 copies of the book were printed. This book was selected for this portion of the grant work because it is especially well suited to the needs of the more seasoned members of the DEE practice community, for whom very few resources are available in Spanish.

Building on the success of this grant, Hemera has recently announced a follow-up grant to IMC Dharma En Español, for activities through Spring, 2025. With this grant, IMC plans to further support the growth of Spanish-language Dharma, continuing and enhancing activities that have successfully built and sustained this diverse and inclusive community of practice. Under this second grant there are four interrelated objectives: supporting Spanish-speaking IMC teachers to lead retreats in Latin America; bringing dedicated Latin American practitioners to IRC and to IMC retreats in Latin America; translating IMC Dharma teachings into Spanish; and supporting IMC-trained local Dharma leaders to bring mindfulness approaches to disadvantaged families and children in Medellín, Colombia.

AI COMES TO AUDIODHARMA

EDMUND MILLS

Let these AudioDharma statistics settle in your mind:

- As of the end of 2023 AudioDharma contained **17,956** talks.
- In 2023 AudioDharma had **171,069** distinct worldwide users.

These are extraordinary statistics for a center that operates solely on volunteers and dana (donations)!

The ever-growing library of talks offers an abundance of thought and reflection about many topics in multiple talks. But how to find those talks? How to explore what's available in these archives? How to find the relevant talks for specific intentions? Applying recent advances in natural language processing it's now possible to help AudioDharma users with these questions.

Users will now, for the first time, be able to easily search for related talks. For example, clicking on Related Talks, will lead a user to talks whose content is similar to the current talk being shown. This means, for example, talks with topics related to the one in the current talk, or guided meditations related to a talk (or vice versa), or talks with similar content by other teachers:

Guided Meditation: Simplicity of Now



By: Gil Fronsdal

Recorded: Thursday, February 22, 2024 at Insight Meditation Center
Duration: 30:30

▶ Listen ⬇ Download 📺 Watch Video ➦ Related Talks

New

Similarly, users will now be able to easily search talks by their content and meaning, rather than exact words. This feature helps to find talks when the search topic doesn't show in the title. This search mode is available in the 'Filter talks by' dropdown menu, by selecting Similar in the Search Mode dropdown menu:

The screenshot shows the AudioDharma search interface. At the top is a search bar labeled 'Search talks and speakers' with a magnifying glass icon and a dropdown labeled 'Filter talks by'. Below this are several filter categories: 'Speaker' (set to 'All'), 'Language' (set to 'All'), 'Date Range' (with 'start date' and 'end date' fields), 'Duration' (set to 'Any length'), and 'Venue' (set to 'All'). A large green arrow points to the 'Search Mode' dropdown, which is currently set to 'Exact'. The dropdown menu is open, showing 'Exact' and 'Similar' options. A green arrow points to the 'Similar' option. At the bottom of the filter panel are buttons for 'Close', 'Clear', and 'Search'.

Advances for AudioDharma result from the generous dedication of many volunteers—including all the people who started, maintained,

and grew AudioDharma over the years, including presenters.

Development of the enhancements described here (Related-talks and Similar-search) was led by Edmund Mills, with support from Jon Kaplan, and Christopher Minson, among others.

These new features are now live on AudioDharma— try them out!

INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER KEEPS GROWING

Over the last four years, IMC's Insight Retreat Center (IRC) has grown in ways unimaginable when we opened the center in 2012.

Online and Hybrid Retreats

At the start of the pandemic, we learned how effective it is to offer retreats online through Zoom, and how valuable this option was for retreatants. For this purpose, we created a very supportive "Insight Retreat Online" website to host online retreats.

Near the end of the pandemic, we started offering hybrid retreats with both online and in-person options. IRC retreats are limited to about 40 in-person retreatants; online, we can have up to 100 people. For the online version of the retreat, the online participants hear the teachings given by the in-person teachers. In addition, an online Dharma teacher is available to the online participants for practice discussions and group meetings.

With online and hybrid retreats, hundreds more people participate in our retreats!

Volunteer: to volunteer for our online or hybrid retreats, please fill out a volunteer application on the IRC website:

insightretreatcenter.org/volunteer/

Offsite Retreats

This year, IRC is taking another giant leap by beginning to offer residential "offsite retreats." These are IRC retreats hosted elsewhere. As done at IRC, these will be freely offered in the tradition of dana (generosity).

Some of these new retreats will be Nature Dharma retreats, where the daily practice and teachings will be done outdoors in a natural setting. Some will be indoor retreats at other retreat centers we rent.

Our longer-term plan is to develop a community of volunteers around these retreats. We would love to use the IRC model of volunteers to cook for and manage these retreats.

We may be offering ten or so of these offsite retreats in 2024, locally in the Bay Area, near Sierra City in Northern California, and in Southern California (listed on the IRC website in the "residential retreat schedule"). IMC teachers will teach these. To have this new offsite initiative work well and be sustainable in the future, we hope that a handful of people will offer to volunteer to support them by being registrars, managers, and cooks.

Volunteer: to volunteer for offsite retreats, please contact Doug Wiebe, our volunteer offsite retreat coordinator:

doug@insightretreatcenter.org.

Non-IMC dana retreats by IMC teachers

In addition, IMC is now supporting some of our teachers to offer non-IMC or non-IRC dana retreats. Currently these are scheduled in Arizona, Washington, and Virginia (listed on IMC's website under "programs").

For more information, please go to insightretreatcenter.org, or send an email to info@insightretreatcenter.org.

RIVAL PRISON GANGS AT A MEDITATION RETREAT

DIANE WILDE

(Editor: this article was first published in the Spring, 2015, newsletter. Its message is timeless, and especially relevant given the levels of polarization and violence around the world today. Diane Wilde is the Founder of Boundless Freedom Project (formerly Buddhist Pathways Prison Project), and a Sati Center Board Member.)

A prison daylong meditation retreat was not where I expected the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to bring together members of the Northerner (Norteños) and Southerner (Sureños) prison gangs. Gang policies obligate them to fight if they meet, sometimes to the death. Prison policy was to keep these two groups segregated.

In the twelve years I had been teaching meditation in the New Folsom maximum-security prison in Sacramento, I had never known a time Northerners and Southerners came together. But when Northerners wanted to join our January, 2015, meditation retreat, prison officials, surprisingly, told us to include the Northerners or the retreat would be canceled. Adding to the challenge, the retreat would be in the gym, not in the chapel. Armed security would be present at all times. In the past, prison guards had made no effort to support the retreat environment—they were known to hold boisterous conversations, call out derogatory statements to the incarcerated individuals, and repeatedly slam the large iron doors.

Before the planned retreat, I discussed the situation with our established incarcerated sangha, a diverse group of African Americans, Whites, Asians, “Others” and Southerners. I explained we had two options: we could cancel the retreat, or we could go ahead and hope for the best. The men all said that they did not want the daylong cancelled—they had been anticipating it for months. They preferred to welcome the Northerners, and hope for the best. We went ahead with a great deal of apprehension.

I arranged for the Northerners to meet the entire sangha, including Southerners, the week before the retreat. I wanted the men to introduce themselves to each other, and I wanted to teach some basic Buddhist concepts to the Northerners as well as conduct a practice meditation session together. I requested that security guards limit loud conversations, and respect the atmosphere we hoped to create.

We had the meeting in the chapel, unexpectedly without prison security present. Just me and one other woman and 30 men, many we assumed were sworn enemies. We were nervous. At first the room was tense as the incarcerated individuals sized each other up.

I called for quiet and everyone settled down. I explained the meaning behind the Three Refuges and stressed the importance of Sangha as a sacred community. They committed to confidentiality and to the safety and sanctity of Sangha. We recited the Three Refuges together and sat in meditation for 30 minutes. It was surprisingly peaceful. Afterwards everyone introduced themselves and described their current mental state. Comments ranged from, “I was nervous about us all being together, but now I feel okay.” “This is the first time I have felt safe in this prison” to “Silence gives me a chance to breathe.” We were looking forward to our daylong retreat together!

On the day of the retreat volunteers met in the gym, a huge, frigid, dirty, disheartening room. Just imagine a giant gray box with peeling grayish-green paint, a dusty cement floor etched with scratch marks from

years serving as the overflow barracks for hundreds of incarcerated individuals. Armed security were milling around, just watching, but also keeping silent. One of our incarcerated sangha members came in early and wet mopped the entire gym floor. Incense, flowers, three donated Buddhas, a candle and our homemade altar cloth transformed that corner of the gym into a beautiful focal point for meditation. Vipassana meditation teacher Tony Bernhard taught for the day, and prison volunteer and senior Vajrayana practitioner Brandyn Davis offered yoga.

Thirty incarcerated individuals and ten volunteers from Boundless Freedom Project took part. At the 8:30 a.m. start I explained Noble Silence and offered anyone who wished the opportunity to leave if they felt being silent for the day would be too difficult. No one did. We then took the Refuges. Brandyn began the day with gentle yoga. Tony gave a practical Dharma talk on the Four Noble Truths and the basics of practice. We practiced sitting and walking meditation until 11:30 when volunteers laid out lunch. After instructions on mindful eating, everyone was encouraged to take at least thirty minutes to eat their meal. (In prison, eating is normally done very quickly.) We began the afternoon with a short session of qigong and then went back to sitting and walking meditation.

At the end of the day, we formed a circle and everyone held hands. One participant commented, “I like being quiet. In prison you don’t ever get to be quiet. This felt normal and good and peaceful.” I had been worried about safety given the Northerners and Southerners being together. But the incarcerated sangha members said the most difficult part of the day was leaving the retreat. They commented that for seven hours they were safe, authentic, and at peace. Gang affiliation, race – none of it mattered. They saw possibilities for themselves. Even in that grimy gray gym, with armed guards, they were free.

(Editor: to find out more, please visit www.boundlessfreedom.org or, for volunteer opportunities, please email info@boundlessfreedom.org.)



Thousands

*Better than a thousand meaningless statements
Is one meaningful word
Which, having been heard,
Brings peace.*

*Better than a thousand meaningless verses
Is one meaningful line of verse
Which, having been heard,
Brings peace.*

*Better than reciting a hundred meaningless verses
Is one line of Dharma
Which, having been heard,
Brings peace.*

–Dhammapada (100 – 102)

IMC BOARD TRANSITIONS

IMC is pleased to announce that Sandra Sanabria has succeeded David Lorey as IMC Board President. David served on the Board beginning in 2018, and then served as President for four years beginning in January, 2020, just as the Covid pandemic began. Sandra, who has long been involved with both IMC and IRC and has served on the Board since last year, was elected President in December, 2023. IMC is grateful to both David and Sandra for their sustained care and leadership.

The IMC Board Members are Andrea Fella (Co-guiding Teacher); Gil Fronsdal (Founding Teacher); Kodo Conlin; Matthew Brensilver; Nancy Yamahiro; Paul Wallace (Treasurer); Ram Appalaraju; Sandra Sanabria (President); and Wendy Lo.

MEMBERSHIP

People sometimes ask about membership in our IMC community. To keep our administration simple and to be as open a community as possible, we have no formal membership. However, we are happy for anyone who would like to be a member to consider themselves a member.

Everyone is welcome to participate in any of our programs and events. If you would like to be more involved with our community, a number of options exist. You can sign up for our print newsletter and/or email updates. You can volunteer. You can participate in our community tea, potlucks, and other social events. You can also become a supporter of our community and teachers—everything that IMC offers is supported solely through your donations.

You are also invited to introduce yourself to our teachers. You can approach them after one of their talks.

Connecting through our website (insightmeditationcenter.org)

- Subscribe to the IMC News & Upcoming Events Email and receive weekly emails about events and other announcements.
- Sign up on the mailing list to receive our quarterly Newsletter (also available online and through our email list above).
- Investigate groups that might be of interest, including several affinity groups – see the Community page of the website.

Volunteer. All the work that keeps IMC running smoothly is done by volunteers. Volunteering is an opportunity to participate, to meet other sangha members and fosters a sense of community. You can learn more on the volunteer page of our website.

Dharma Friends encourages spiritually-based friendships and a sense of community in our sangha. All sangha members are welcome to our events and may bring friends. We organize various activities such as hikes, music-jams, poetry readings, backpacking trips, and movie nights.

Sunday Morning Gatherings. Everyone is welcome to these informal get-togethers of sangha friends:

- Community Tea on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 11am
- Vegetarian Potluck on the last Sunday of each month at 11am.

Both follow the regular Sunday morning program.

HEALING THE SELF, FORGETTING THE SELF

A RETREAT WITH MATTHEW BRENSILVER, JULY 9 – 13

IRC's dana retreats are spreading! In coordination with Big Bear Retreat Center, Insight Retreat Center is co-sponsoring this insight retreat in the San Bernardino Mountains in Southern California. More information at bigbearretreatcenter.org

RELATED NEARBY VIPASSANA SITTING GROUPS

The groups listed below are related to IMC in either being led by or visited by teachers closely connected to IMC. Other centers may be found on the IMC website, by clicking on Resources and then Other Groups.

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

Wednesdays 7 to 8:30pm Pacific

On Zoom only (group located in Half Moon Bay)

Info: coastsidevipassana.org

INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTRAL VALLEY

In English: Sundays 8:45 to 10:15am Pacific

On Zoom & in-person at Sarana Kuti, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, CA

En Español: Jueves 7:30 a 9pm

En Zoom y en persona, en Sarana Kuti, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, CA.

Info: imcv.org

INSIGHT SANTA CRUZ

Teacher: Dawn Neal

All Community Sit Tuesdays 12:00 to 1:00 pm Pacific, plus others throughout the week (see calendar)

On Zoom and in-person at 740 Front Street, Suite 240, Santa Cruz, CA

Info: insightsantacruz.org

METTA DHARMA FOUNDATION

Teacher: Richard Shankman

Wednesdays 7:00 to 8:30 pm Pacific

On Zoom & in-person at St. Clement's Episcopal Church, Berkeley, CA

Info: mettadharmafoundation.org

OPEN DOOR SANGHA

Various sitting times throughout the week (see calendar)

On Zoom and in-person at various facilities in Santa Barbara

Info: opendoorsangha.org

SAN JOSE INSIGHT MEDITATION SANGHA

Wednesdays 7:30 to 9:00 pm Pacific

On Zoom and in-person at the Friends Meeting House, 1041 Morse Street, San Jose, CA

Info: sanjoseinsight.org

SUMMER PICNIC!

Join your fellow sangha members—adults, teens, children, and babies, and Gil—in sharing friendship and favorite summer foods at IMC's summer vegetarian potluck picnic.

This is a great chance to connect with friends you know and those you haven't met yet! Everyone is welcome. If you are able, please bring a vegetarian dish for 4 to 6 people to share. If not, no worries, bring yourself—or your not-self!

The picnic will be held at Red Morton Community Park, on Valota Road off of Jefferson Avenue, Redwood City, on Sunday, May 26, from 11 am to 2 pm. If you are able, come a little earlier to help with setup, and/or stay a little later to help with cleanup.



AROUND IMC: NEIGHBORHOOD DHARMA GROUPS

As we did for many years before the pandemic, we would like to cultivate and strengthen our community ties by offering sangha members the opportunity to participate in Neighborhood Dharma Discussion Groups. These are peer-led groups, for local Bay Area participants only, which meet monthly to support one another in exploring how the teachings of the Buddha can help us in our daily life, off the cushion.

The groups meet once a month for six months in someone's home at the best time for the majority, based on indicated availability. Meetings can be in-person, on Zoom, or hybrid, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the members. If you choose to participate, please commit to attending all six meetings. Each meeting consists of a short sit, a check-in and a discussion of the topic of the month. Many Dharma topics and resources are available in AudioDharma. A volunteer facilitates each meeting, rotating among the group members.

In the past meeting participants have been geographically close. While this is not critical, being near each other supports the growth of Dharma friendships, and enables people to be of service to one another as needs arise. For example, a trip to the store or a cooked meal for someone who is ill, or carpooling to IMC, etc.

If you're interested please come to the Community Tea on Sunday, April 14, when people will be available to answer any questions, and to help with signing up. If you would like to register now, please do so at bit.ly/NeighborhoodDharmaGroups—and we encourage you to come to the Community Tea. Note that forming the groups may take some time as we await applications, and that some areas may need to be combined with others to have enough participants. If you have questions, please contact us at neighborhood.dharma@insightmeditationcenter.org.

AROUND IMC: PEER-LED SUNDAY ONLINE SANGHA MEETINGS

JAN MESSER

Practicing Sangha...deepens us and causes us to train our speech, understand our own emotions and perspectives, and develop a great heart. –Ajahn Sucitto

In the Fall of 2021, with the world slowly starting to come out of the pandemic, IMC began to offer more in-person events. It occurred to me at that time that IMC could offer a weekly online sangha gathering to people who had been attending IMC programs online but who, for various reasons, couldn't attend IMC in-person and/or didn't have a local sangha.

With Gil's support, the IMC Online Sunday Sangha came to fruition in October of 2021. Since then, I have been facilitating the group with my husband, Barry; our co-hosts, Peter and Helen Brown, have been facilitating when Barry and I are away. We meet weekly for 45 minutes after the IMC Sunday Dharma talk for practice discussions and community connection, both in breakout groups and in the group-at-large. Gil recently led our online sangha in a beautiful Refuge and Precepts ceremony. Sangha members used red Refuge cords that we had mailed to them ahead of time.

The online sangha is composed of dedicated practitioners from many states in the U.S., and from many other countries, including Canada, Scotland, Iran, Portugal, Puerto Rico and France. We now have an email list of over 100 members. We also have a *kalyana mitta* (Dharma friends)

list for those who wish to connect one-to-one or in small groups for Dharma support at other times. Some local members have gathered in person, while members in other locations have traveled to meet each other.

The depth of the group discussions, the willingness to cultivate trust, be vulnerable, share wisdom and offer compassion to each other have created a heartwarming community connection that is a joy. If you would like to find out more, please contact me at jmessermt@gmail.com.

CELEBRATION OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY!

On Sunday, May 5, IMC will celebrate Vesak, a commemoration of the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. Also known as Buddha's Birthday, Vesak is one of the most important and sacred days in the Buddhist calendar. Celebrated by millions of Buddhists around the world, Vesak is a time to reflect on the Buddha's life, his teachings (Dharma), and the community (Sangha) he established. It is also a day for followers to recommit to fundamental Buddhist practices of compassion, kindness, and non-violence, and a reminder of the potential for enlightenment that lies within us all. The United Nations recognizes Vesak as an International Day of Observance, underscoring its global significance and the universal appeal of its message.

Families with children are encouraged to attend and participate. Families should arrive by 9:15am at which time they can decorate the flower pagoda. Please bring some flowers. Gil will tell the children about the Buddha's birth and teach a simple chant to sing as we carry the pagoda and baby Buddha into the meditation hall. The children will then participate in a brief ceremony with the adult sangha, prior to the Dharma talk.

RETREAT FOR THOSE NEW TO RETREAT PRACTICE

DIANA CLARK AND TANYA WISER

We're offering an in-person non-residential retreat for those with meditation experience, but who have yet to go on a retreat. Scheduled from 3 pm Friday, May 31, to noon on Sunday, June 2, in Belmont, CA, this non-residential retreat will introduce participants to the routines, practices, and schedules found on residential retreats. It will include guided meditations, silent meditations, walking meditations, practice discussions, and information about practice at a residential retreat. With this experience, we hope to support, inspire, and deepen your confidence for going on retreat and engaging in deeper practice. This retreat is offered freely, as a gift to those who attend—there is no cost.

For details please see the *Schedule of Events* in this newsletter.

GIL'S NEW BOOK: "EVERYTHING IS PRACTICE"

Gil's new book, *Everything is Practice: A Guide for Insight Meditation Retreats*, is now available on Amazon. Gil describes how to practice with the many facets of retreats including preparing for and leaving a retreat, Dharma talks, practice discussions, sleep, pain, meals, silence, and mindful attitudes. This book is a detailed and practical guide to understanding what to expect while on retreat, from a perspective of mindfulness.

See 'Recommended Books > Books by Gil Fronsda' on the IMC website.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April ~ June 2024

WEEKLY MEDITATION & TALKS

IN-PERSON AT IMC:

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Diana Clark or guest teachers, 7:15 to 8:30pm. A 30-min sitting, a 30-min Dharma talk, and 15 min Q&A.

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

Sitting and walking meditation with Gil Fronsdaal or guest teachers. 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

At 12:15 we have an informal lunch and discussion outdoors in the parking lot. Everyone welcome (bring bag lunch).

DHARMA PRACTICE THURSDAYS: BRINGING THE DHARMA TO LIFE WITH TANYA WISER OR GUEST TEACHERS, 6:30 TO 8PM

Join us in exploring various Dharma topics. Includes sharing reflections on our practice; guided meditation, dharma talk, and group discussions. For beginners and experienced beginners.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

With Gil Fronsdaal 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

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

IN-PERSON AT IMC:

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

- 5 Tuesday afternoons, April 23 – May 2, 11 to 2:30pm, with Tom Fenner
- 4 Monday evenings, June 24 – July 15, 7:15 to 8:30pm, with Diana Clark

Basic instructions in mindfulness meditation 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 is necessary.

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- 3rd Monday evening each month 6:15 to 7pm
- 4th Wednesday morning each month 8:30 to 9:15am

DAYLONG RETREATS

ON SATURDAYS, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- April 13, 9am to 4:30pm, **Insight Retreat** with Ying Chen
- April 20, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Mindfulness of the Body Meditation** with Diana Clark
- April 27, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Spaciousness and the Objects of Mind** with Ines Freedman
- May 4, 9am to 4pm, **Cultivating a Boundless Heart** with Ying Chen

ON SATURDAYS, ONLINE THRU IRC:

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- April 6, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Mindfulness of the Body** with Diana Clark
- June 1, 9am to 4:30pm, **Modes of Investigation** with Kim Allen
- July 13, 9am to 4:30pm, **Practicing RAFTT** with Tanya Wiser

SATURDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- June 8, 9:30am to 12:15pm, **Mindfulness Meditation and Practice** with Tanya Wiser
- July 6, 9:30am to 12:15pm, **Mindfulness Meditation and Practice** with Tanya Wiser

WEEKLY ONLINE PROGRAMS

SEE WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR LINKS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

- **MONDAY THRU FRIDAY MORNING SITTING AND TALK** with Gil Fronsdaal or guest teachers, 7 to 7:45am. On YouTube.
- **MONDAY THRU FRIDAY EVENING HAPPY HOUR: LOVING KINDNESS PRACTICE** with Nikki Mirghafori, Liz Powell and others, 6 to 7pm. Guided Meditation teaching, and discussion on loving-kindness. On YouTube and/or Zoom.
- **TUESDAY MORNING SITTING, REFLECTION, & DISCUSSION** with Dawn Neal and others, 9:30 to 10:45am. 35-minute sitting, followed by a reflection and discussion. On Zoom
- **MARTES DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL** con Andrea Castillo o Sandra Sanabria, 6 a 7:30pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español. En Zoom.
- **WEDNESDAY SITTING AND DHARMETTE** with Matthew Brensilver, 7:30 to 8:15pm. On YouTube starting April 3
- **THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND Q&A**, with Ari Crellin-Quick, Liz Powell, and others, 7:30 to 8:30pm. A sitting followed by a short reflection and discussion. On Zoom.

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- June 16–23, 1-Week **Insight Retreat** with Diana Clark, Kim Allen, and David Lorey
- June 30–July 7, 1-Week **Insight Retreat in Spanish (Español)** with Andrea Castillo and David Lorey
- August 11–18, 1-Week **Metta Retreat** with Nikki Mirghafori and Diana Clark

IRC OFFSITE RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

Insight Retreat Center retreats in other locations. For information go to insightretreatcenter.org/offsite-retreats/

- May 23–27, **Dharma of Nature** with Dawn Neal and Marjolein Janssen; in collaboration with Off-Grid Retreats. Camping retreat at Shelterwood Collective in Cazadero, CA
- Aug 6–10; **BIPOC Nature Dharma and Insight Retreat** with Bruni Dávila, Kuan Luo, Ram Appalaraju, Big Springs Retreat, Sierra City, CA.

ONLINE RETREAT

AWARENESS AND WISDOM INTEGRATED HOME RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA Sunday May 5 thru Saturday, May 11 with two online sessions daily 7:30am to 9:30am and 3:30pm to 4:30pm. Inspired by the teachings of Sayadaw U Tejaniya. We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience, as well as integrating awareness into our whole day and all activities. Registration required: see the link on the IMC website calendar. Questions? Yosh at yosh@insightretreatcenter.org.

NON-IMC RETREATS WITH IMC TEACHERS

- June 16–21, **Nature Dharma Retreat** with Kirsten Rudestam and Tanya Wiser at Rain on Snow Retreat Center in Carson, WA. Info by emailing elementsnaturedharma@gmail.com
- September 4–8, **Insight Retreat** with Marjolein Jannsen at Blue Mountain Retreat Center, Knoxville Maryland. Info at imcrva.org

SPECIAL EVENTS (In Person at IMC)

INSIGHT MEDITATION DAYLONG RETREAT

WITH YING CHEN Saturday, April 13, 9am to 4:30pm

We will support the cultivation of mindfulness through instruction and continuity. Includes periods of sitting and walking meditation, and guidance on mindfulness of breathing, body, emotions, thoughts, and choiceless attention. For those who have attended an introductory mindfulness meditation course (or similar), as well as those with more experience. Bring lunch.

MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY MEDITATION DAYLONG

WITH DIANA CLARK Saturday, April 20, 9:30am to 3:30pm

We will explore mindfulness of the body as an integral part of mindfulness practice. Includes guided and silent meditations, periods of sitting and walking, and short Dharma talks. For those who have attended an introductory mindfulness meditation course (or similar), as well as those with more experience. Bring lunch.

SPACIOUSNESS AND THE OBJECTS OF MIND DAYLONG

WITH INES FREEDMAN Saturday, April 27, 9:30am to 4:30pm

We will explore how seeing the objects of mind more clearly can help develop a sense of spaciousness in our practice. The day will include guided and silent meditations, alternating periods of sitting and walking, and short Dharma talks. Bring lunch.

CULTIVATING A BOUNDLESS HEART DAYLONG WITH YING CHEN

Saturday, May 4, 9am to 4pm. We'll begin with mindfulness practices and expand to include the cultivation of heart qualities. Provides an opportunity to strengthen mindfulness, develop concentration, open our hearts, practice with the IMC community, and ask a teacher questions. Includes guided meditations, dharma talks, practice discussions, and periods of sitting and walking. Appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

VESAK: CELEBRATION OF BUDDHA'S BIRTH, ENLIGHTENMENT AND PASSING WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Sunday, May 5, 10 to 10:45am. We will celebrate Vesak after our morning sitting. Children welcome. Families should arrive by 9:15am at which time they can decorate the flower pagoda. Please bring flowers. For details see SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS.

SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

Sunday May 26, 11 am to 2 pm at Red Morton Park in Redwood City. See SANGHA PROGRAM & NEWS for details.

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND PRACTICE HALF-DAY WITH TANYA WISER.

Saturday, June 8 and July 6, 9:30am to 12:15pm. Includes guided meditations, a dharma talk, group discussion, and mindful activity. An opportunity to deepen your meditation and daily life practice, ask a teacher questions and practice with others. For beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

SPECIAL EVENTS (On Zoom)

FULL SIMPLICITY WITH KIM ALLEN

- **Main Program on Zoom: Four Tuesdays 6pm to 8pm: June 25, July 9, July 23, and Aug 6**
- **Optional Supplemental Sessions In-Person at IMC: Two Sundays 1 to 2:30pm: June 30 and July 28**

Kim Allen is offering a six-week online program based on her book *"Full Simplicity: The Art of Renunciation and Letting Go"*. We'll explore how deepening simplicity in our lay life creates space for wisdom, care, harmony, and enhanced fullness. Full description on the IMC website and calendar. Registration required (opens April 1).

20's AND 30's PROGRAM

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S WITH MAX ERDSTEIN AND

GUEST TEACHERS. SUNDAYS, 7:30 TO 9PM (EXCEPT THE 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH). Our meetings alternate between Zoom and in-person at IMC; please check IMC's website Calendar for details. Our group addresses themes relevant to people in their 20's and 30's and includes guided meditations, short dharma talks, and group discussions. We have a friendly and vibrant ongoing community, and all are welcome to drop in at any time.

RETREAT FOR THOSE NEW TO RETREAT PRACTICE WITH DIANA CLARK AND TANYA WISER

3 Days: Friday, May 31, 3pm to 8pm; Saturday, June 1, 9am to 8pm; Sunday, June 2, 9am to 12pm. This non-residential retreat will introduce participants to the routines, practices, and schedules found on residential retreats. Please see SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS for more information. Registration details will be posted on the IMC website.

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

IMC has a variety of programs for youths and family from preschool through high school. For more information contact Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com. In-person at IMC.

MINDFUL PARENTS Led by Lauren Silver and Melody Baumgartner. **THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 11:15AM TO 12:45PM.** This year's theme is Mindful Parenting in the context of the Eightfold Path. Each month we will explore a different path factor. Parents are invited to practice together in a warm and caring community, supporting each other as we raise thriving children of all ages—infancy through adulthood. Includes meditation, mindful speech and listening, with time for sharing. No registration necessary. Contact Melody Baumgartner at melodybaumgartner@gmail.com.

DHARMA SPROUTS (K–2ND GRADERS & THEIR PARENTS) Led by Hilary Borison and Carla Rayacich. **FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11:15AM TO 12:15PM.** Meditation and mindfulness practice through stories, songs, art, movement, and games. Parents/caregivers participate with their children. Contact Hilary Borison at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com or 650-575-2052 for more information or to RSVP. Please provide first names of each adult and child who will attend.

DHARMA ROCKS (3RD–5TH GRADERS) Led by Camille Whitney and Tim Sandoe. **THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5 TO 6:15PM.** Meditation and mindfulness practice through games, stories, and art. Vegetarian pizza will be provided. Parents/guardians can either drop off and pick up their kids or wait at IMC. We ask participants to sign up at least two days before the event. For more information, please email CRWmindfulness@gmail.com.

JOINT MEETING: DHARMA BODHIS (6TH–8TH GRADERS) & MINDFUL TEENS (HIGH SCHOOL). Led by Hilary Borison and Conrad Sherby. **SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5:30 TO 7PM.** A time to explore how the dharma can support challenges and opportunities through group discussions, mindfulness practice, creative activities, and more. Vegetarian pizza will be provided. RSVP if you plan to attend. For info or to RSVP, contact Hilary Borison: 650-575-2052 or IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CHALLENGES

ON ZOOM: 1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH, 12:30 TO 2PM. The primary purpose of this group is to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. Meetings include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics. At least four days before attending the group for the first time, please contact Ying Chen at imcsg22@gmail.com.

BUDDHISM AND 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP

ON ZOOM, 2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH 7 TO 8:15PM. Group discussion and study exploring Recovery principles and the teachings of the Buddha. Includes 15-minutes of sitting meditation, a reading on Dharma and Recovery and open discussion. Everyone is welcome. Facilitated by Jennifer Lemas. For more information contact: jennlemas@comcast.net. See IMC website calendar for Zoom link.

OTHER GROUPS

DHARMA CIRCLE FOR PEOPLE OF ASIAN BACKGROUND WITH LILU CHEN AND YING CHEN. **ON ZOOM: 2ND AND 4TH SUNDAYS OF EACH MONTH, 1 TO 2:30PM.** Includes sitting meditation, a short dharma talk, discussion and community activities. We intend to provide a safe, friendly, and nourishing environment. Open to all self-identified people of Asian or South Asian, Southeast Asian, East Asian and Pacific Islander background. No registration required. For info contact asianimc2020@gmail.com.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS WITH HILARY BORISON. THURSDAYS, 11AM TO 12PM on Zoom.

A gathering for self-identified women who wish to deepen practice in a loving community, as we learn to weave mindfulness throughout our daily lives. For info and to receive the Zoom link, contact Hilary at hborison@sbcglobal.net.

DHARMA-INSPIRED BOOK GROUP

ON ZOOM: FRIDAYS, 5 TO 6:30PM. We read books on Buddhism and meditation at a pace that allows lots of discussion. You may drop in even if you don't have the book. This group is self-led. For our current book, Anne Foster is acting as facilitator, contact: afoster@rawbw.com. For info, Zoom link, and to sign up to receive email updates: insightmeditationcenter.org/dharma-friends/

EARTH CARE GROUP

ON ZOOM: LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, 8:30 TO 10AM. We focus on a set of diverse topics relating to the right actions we can take to mitigate climate change. Meetings will usually have an invited speaker and include a brief meditation, presentation, and group discussion. See IMC website calendar for Zoom link. For info email EarthCare.Dharma@gmail.com.

SENIOR SANGHA GROUP: ENJOYING OUR AGING WITH DAVID COHN, FIONA BARNER & ROBERT CUSICK

ON ZOOM: USUALLY ON THE THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, CHECK THE IMC WEBSITE CALENDAR TO CONFIRM, 11AM TO 1 PM. (See the calendar entry and fill out the short form to be added to the email list for class materials, announcements and Zoom link). Join our dharma-based community of IMC seniors of all ages. We will cultivate enjoying our journey through the vicissitudes and blessings of aging with kindness and wisdom practices. Includes guided meditations, talks, and discussions on topics that support aging with ease and contentment.

SCHEDULE PG. 4

SONA'S DHARMA STRUMMERS

Join us as we make music for the elderly. No prior musical experience necessary. Once a month, we visit two residential care facilities in Redwood City and sing old favorites accompanied by our ukulele playing. If you don't play the ukulele, you can come and sing along. We practice once a month in a nearby home. Basic ukulele instruction provided. Masks required indoors at one facility. For info contact Martha at marthachickerting@gmail.com.

IMC LGBTQIA+ SANGHA

ON ZOOM: 1ST AND 3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 5 TO 6PM

Suitable for both beginners and experienced practitioners within our LGBTQIA+ community. Open to people who self-identify as trans, nonbinary, queer, genderqueer, questioning, bisexual, asexual, intersex or two-spirit, gay, lesbian.

To join us online and be added to our e-mail list, please contact imcqueersangha@gmail.com. The Zoom link will be sent separately. We are peer facilitated with guiding teacher Bruni Dávila.

YOGA

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION WITH TERRY LESSER 9 TO 10:45AM IN-PERSON AT IMC

In each session we use a variety of asanas (poses) to focus and calm the mind, enhance breath and overall awareness, and develop flexibility, balance, and strength. Beginners are welcome. The class is a mixed level—all are encouraged to work in accordance with their needs and abilities. Bring a large towel and sticky mat if you have one.



SATI CENTER

Register for these events at Sati.org for more info and Zoom links.

ON ZOOM:

EXPLORING CHRONIC PAIN THROUGH THE FEELING TONES (VEDANAS) WITH CHRISTIANE WOLF, MD

6 WEDNESDAYS: APRIL 10 TO MAY 22, 10:30AM TO 12PM

We will take a look at how we can use the Buddhist teachings to help us to not only suffer less, but to enjoy life while living in a body that is subjected to pain and illness, especially as we age.

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY WITH JENNIFER BLOCK AND VANESSA ABLE SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 9AM TO 1PM. An overview of a chaplain's work of providing spiritual care and support for people in hospitals, hospices, prisons, and a wide variety of other settings. Information about the Sati Center's Buddhist Chaplaincy Training (in-person and online) provided.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY: PRACTICING WHAT WE PREACH WITH GRACE SCHIRESON

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 9AM TO 10AM. This talk will address how to truly understand how to help people, and will build on "SPOT: A Training Program for Buddhists in America" in the book *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.

TO BE MORE FREE, REFLECT ON YOUR FINITUDE (MARANASATI) WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 9AM TO 12PM. We'll contemplate death to cultivate gratitude, generosity, and goodwill. Includes dharma talks, guided meditations, discussions, Q&A and interactive small groups.

"SO THEY SAID TO THE BUDDHA ..." WITH AJAHN SUJATO

FOUR TUESDAYS, MAY 7 TO 28, 7:30PM TO 9PM. The Buddha's teachings come alive in conversation. For this course we will focus on *how* he taught in conversation.

BREAKING BAD: UNLOCK THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HABIT CHANGE WITH JUD BREWER. SATURDAY, MAY 11, 9AM TO 12PM Buddhist wisdom meets neuroscience.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SPEAKER SERIES

- Alice Cabotaje, Zen teacher, Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Care at Stanford Health Care. **SATURDAY, MAY 18, 9AM TO 10AM**
- Staff Well-being with David Morris, **SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 9AM TO 10AM**

IN PERSON AT IMC AND ON ZOOM:

AN EVENING WITH BHIKKHU SAMBODHI

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 7PM TO 8:30PM. Bhikkhu Sambodhi will speak on the vital importance of one's mind's training being GRADUAL: a Buddha's teaching that is not being talked about often enough!

JOY AS PATH: PAMOJJA AND TRANSCENDENT DEPENDENT ORIGINATION WITH AJAHN KOVILLO. SATURDAY JUNE 1, 9AM TO 11:30AM. Rediscover happiness by exploring different routes to well-being especially meditation on breath, loving-kindness, letting go, and objects of faith.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

BUDDHIST ECO-CHAPLAINCY TRAINING PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL, KAIRA JEWEL LINGO, KIRSTEN RUDESTAM, RAM APPALARAJU, AND SUSIE HARRINGTON

AUG 2024 – DEC 2025. One year introduction to the wisdom and skill needed to be a Buddhist Eco-Chaplain.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING PROGRAMS

- **IN PERSON WITH JENNIFER BLOCK, GIL FRONSDAL, AND PAUL HALLER**
- **ON ZOOM WITH VANESSA ABLE, DAWN NEAL, AND TRENT THORNY**

Sept 2024–July 2025, 11-month trainings introducing, from a Buddhist perspective, spiritual care skills needed for being a chaplain, Buddhist teacher, or offering spiritual support to people in times of major life transitions and challenges.

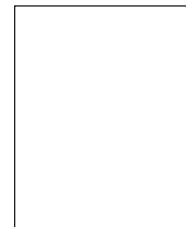
Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



DANA SUPPORTS IMC

IMC continues a 2,600-year-old Buddhist tradition of providing the teachings freely to all who are interested. IMC has no paid staff and is run entirely by volunteers. All financial support comes from the generosity of people who value what we do. Tax-deductible donations support all expenses, including programs, publications, website, the Insight Retreat Center, and AudioDharma. Teachers receive no salary and are supported by teacher dana (donation), which isn't tax-deductible.

We at IMC are very grateful for all the support we receive, and are inspired by how beautifully Dharma practice develops when it does so in a field of generosity and gratitude!

To donate, please go to www.insightmeditationcenter.org/donate/. If you have any questions, please email fundraising@insightmeditationcenter.org, or call (650) 260-8674.

AWARENESS OF SCENT AND ITS IMPACT

Some practitioners at IMC are sensitive to scents and chemicals and may become physically ill from exposure to ingredients in common personal care products.

As part of keeping our community accessible to all, we request that those who attend IMC refrain from the use of perfume, cologne, after-shave, and minimize or avoid personal care and hair styling products containing scents or the ingredient "fragrance". By this compassionate act of restraint, you can help to ensure the health of all who wish to practice here.



PARKING AT IMC

To be good neighbors, we ask that those attending IMC events do not park on the 100 block of Birch Street where IMC is located, unless you are not able to walk more than a short distance. Also, please do not park in The Abigail parking lot across the street from IMC; your car may be towed.

Abundant street parking is found close to IMC: on El Camino, Brewster, Broadway, and Hopkins & Fulton. Parking further from IMC will not only help our neighbors, it will provide more parking for people for whom walking is a challenge. Thank you!

GENERAL INFORMATION:

contact@insightmeditationcenter.org or 650/599-3456.

NEWSLETTER: If you have any suggestions for articles please email your thoughts to: newsletter@insightmeditationcenter.org.

ON THE IMC WEBSITE:

- To sign up to receive emails: click on the **EMAIL SIGN-UP** button (upper right).
- To receive this newsletter by postal mail: Resources>Newsletter, click on "PAPER newsletter: [sign up for our postal mail list](#)"