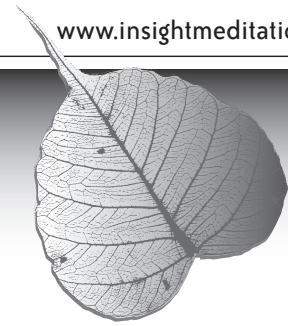


Insight



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2008

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 4

Doubting Doubt: Practicing with the Final Hindrance

Sooner or later all meditators practice with the hindrances. For most, it will be sooner *and* later—as well as in between. These obstructing mind states should not be seen as unfortunate occurrences. Rather, they are opportunities for strengthening practice—for developing mindfulness, concentration, understanding, and non-clinging.

Without a dedication to practicing with the hindrances, any one of them can derail a person from practice. This is especially so for doubt, the fifth and final hindrance. Whereas the other four can arise from concerns about anything, doubt as a hindrance is directly related to the practice itself. When one's uncertainty about the practice or about one's own ability is strong enough, it is possible to give up on the practice.

Doubt as a hindrance is a mental preoccupation involving indecision, uncertainty, and lack of confidence. It causes a person to hesitate, vacillate, and not settle into meditation practice. Its simplest manifestation can be a lack of clarity about the meditation instruction, which may be settled quickly with further instruction. More dramatically, doubt can involve deep, fiery inner conflicts and fears stirred up by the practice. All along the spectrum, doubt can keep the mind agitated, perhaps simmering in discursive thought and feelings of inadequacy. Alternatively it can deflate the mind, robbing it of interest and energy.

"Hindering doubt" is not the same as "questioning doubt." Doubt as a hindrance leads to inaction and giving up. Questioning doubt inspires action and the impulse to understand. It can, in fact, be helpful for mindfulness practice. A questioning attitude encourages deeper investigation. It is a healthy doubt that can overcome complacency and loosen preconceived ideas.

Hindering doubt takes many forms. It can be doubt in the practice, in the teachings, in one's teachers, and, most dangerously, in oneself. Doubt may not appear until one is actually beginning to practice. A person may spend months happily anticipating a meditation retreat only, upon arrival, to doubt whether it is the right place, time, or retreat to be on.

Doubt is often accompanied by discursive thinking. Sometimes thoughts can appear reasonable and convincing enough to mask the underlying doubt prompting them. But regardless of whether it is reasonable or not, the discursive thinking can interfere with the meditation practice and so confirm doubts that the practice is not working. In other words, doubt can be self-fulfilling.

The most insidious doubts are those about oneself, especially when they involve a lack of confidence in one's ability or worthiness. The practice can appear too difficult, or one can't imagine having the inner capacity required. Sometimes such doubt arises when one is intimidated by a distant, grand goal. It is easy to forget that a mountain is climbed one step at a time. Other times the doubt relates to managing the changes that come with practice. One may be buffeted by thoughts such as, "Can I take care of myself if I am more open and relaxed?"; "Perhaps my family and friends won't accept how I might grow"; or "I won't be able to earn a living if I honestly look at how I am driven by fear and ambition."

It is difficult to recognize doubt when caught in it. The challenge is to have enough distance or objectivity to see it for what it is. Doubt may be easier to identify by noticing our indecisiveness or holding back in the practice. Sensing any accompanying physical tension or pressure may help pull us out of the orbit of the doubting thoughts. Clearly noting doubt as "doubt" can be helpful. With enough distance we may be able to stop believing the thoughts: it can be freeing to doubt the doubts!

Once hindering doubt is recognized, there are various ways of working with it. Occasionally a period of careful contemplation may resolve the doubt. When doubt involves uncertainty about the practice or the teachings, it is helpful to study, learn and reflect on the Dharma itself. Asking a teacher or having a talk with a dharma friend may also help in this regard. Having a clear understanding of the Buddha's teachings on what is skillful and what is unskillful can go a long way toward overcoming doubt.

When doubt involves a hesitation to commit to the practice, in some cases it can be useful to apply discipline and resolve to overcome it. This is especially beneficial when the doubts are minor and perhaps don't warrant any attention. This is also a good approach when practice itself is what most effectively disproves a doubt. In the case of major or persistent doubts, however, discipline may not be helpful when it entails unhealthy suppression. Major doubts may need to be dealt with directly—such as by questioning deeply held beliefs, attending to unresolved feelings, or challenging ingrained convictions about self-identity. Some people have a strong tendency to resist change of any type, including new perspectives and understandings. Doubt can become a tool of resistance by inhibiting change.

Continued inside

SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

RENOVATED IMC REOPENS

IMC completed a much-needed renovation of our building in September. This round of work completes important aspects of our original vision for the building. The front door now opens from the center, allowing an accessibility ramp to run from the parking lot to the front door. The front deck and built-in benches have been expanded, and the social hall now opens onto it through two sliding glass doors, providing a larger indoor/outdoor space for potlucks and other social events.

A new set of maple cabinets in the social hall addresses our growing need for storage, permits an improved traffic flow and provides a more coherent sense of “sacred space.” The entrance now frames a view of the Maha Pajapati statue instead of the shoe shelves. We can now enter the door, leave shoes and pick up a zafu on the way to the hall without multiple treks across two rooms!

In the meditation hall, we’ve fixed the squeaky floor and installed a new audio system and carpet. The project also included seismic retrofitting of the foundation, new windows, new interior paint, a new back porch and removal of unused doors.

We’d like to express our deep appreciation for the work of sangha members Peck Yee Tan, Ines Freedman, Chris Clifford and Steve Johnson for their careful work in envisioning this new space and seeing the project through to completion. The project was entirely funded through the generous donations from the sangha.

We are awaiting city approval to begin installing our new landscape, designed by sangha landscape designer Jack Buktenica. This will include new trees, bushes, benches, a hedge and new walking paths.

LEARNING MEDITATION ONLINE

In response to the many requests for practice support from practitioners worldwide, IMC offered its first online *Introduction to Meditation Course*, based on Gil’s audio talks from his six-week series. Ines Freedman was the online teacher for the course, offering daily e-mail teachings, reflections and exercises.

So many people signed up that five other teachers were brought in to help provide the personal weekly practice support, using telephone, Skype, e-mail, instant messenger, and even video chat. 120 people enrolled and over 100 more “audited.”

All the teachers have been deeply moved and inspired by the dedicated practice of so many of these cybersangha members, many living in remote places with no one to discuss their practice with, and yet forming a beautiful connection with the IMC sangha through the talks they listen to online.

Participants included people of all ages, from six continents (except Antarctica!), ranging from newcomers to long-time practitioners—some in the peak of householder joys and challenges, some practicing with pain or illness, the full range of human joys and sorrows.

We received very enthusiastic feedback that included interest both in repeating the course and in taking future courses, which has inspired us to offer a new course on the Five Hindrances next spring.

**The next introductory course will be Jan 5 – Feb 21. See schedule for details.*

ANDREA FELLA AS AN IMC TEACHER

A number of years ago I began training Andrea Fella to be a Vipassana teacher. Now that she has completed the training, I have invited her to become my fellow teacher at IMC. I am delighted at this development, which I see as enriching IMC as a practice center. With IMC’s growth these last years it will be quite helpful to have Andrea’s wonderful teaching ability and practice experience to help guide our community. In March, when I will be teaching the month-long retreat at Spirit Rock, she will be the full-time teacher at IMC. During the month she will give most of the talks and lead most of the practice events. This will be a wonderful opportunity for sangha members to experience the range of her teachings.

Beginning in March, Andrea will also take the main responsibility for our Thursday evening program. This means that when she is in town, she will give most of the Thursday evening talks. She will also be in charge of scheduling Thursday evening guest teachers. In the past, I have valued this program for providing opportunities for senior students to give talks. Since senior students will thus have fewer teaching opportunities on Thursdays I am considering other options for them.

Andrea has also become the program director for our residential retreats. I will continue to offer the annual retreats I have been teaching. As IMC funds allow, we will organize additional retreats. Andrea, together with talented guest teachers, will help us expand our retreat offerings. I feel quite fortunate and grateful that Andrea is willing to serve our community. I look forward to collaborating with her in the years to come.

—Gil Fronsdal

WHAT DO AUDIODHARMA VOLUNTEERS DO?

The recorded talks available on the web at audiodharma.org have allowed people worldwide to benefit from the dharma offered at IMC. Recording and editing the talks are vital functions performed by volunteers, and more people are needed to help. We have recently purchased a new sound system that will spread the sound more evenly in the meditation hall.

Audio Recorders work the sound system for each event. Although familiarity with sound is helpful, it is not required. The recorder operates the mixing board, balancing the sound for the people speaking, the assisted hearing devices, and the recording.

Audio Editors prepare the recordings for posting on the web site. An editor can live almost anywhere, as long as he/she can FTP the recording from our website to his/her computer. We use

a freeware program for both Mac and Windows to play the recording in an editable form. We edit out the announcements and pauses, and leave in the questions and answers (unless someone has requested us to delete a question). If the recording was done smoothly, the editor's job is very easy.

How to learn more about Audiodharma recording & editing:

Sunday, September 21st after the dharma talk – Victor Medina will give a training session for recorders, managers, and interested parties. For information contact Victor, ivgm@mac.com.

A training video is available at <http://homepage.mac.com/ivgm/audiodharma/index.htm>

AFTER THE FIRE: A BENEFIT FOR TASSAJARA ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER

Sunday, November 23, 10 to 11am

In July, a devastating wildfire swept through large areas of the Los Padres National Wilderness. While everyone else evacuated, Zen Center co-abbot Steve Stucky and four monks stayed behind in the middle of the fire zone to protect Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. With water pumps, sprinklers and hard work they kept the fire from destroying most of the monastery. However, the fire has created major challenges for the San Francisco Zen Center. It has lost a significant amount of its summer income, as well as incurring considerable expense to fight the fire, and is now rebuilding what was lost.

The greater danger lies ahead. The steep watershed around Tassajara has lost its protective vegetation, and the winter rains may bring flooding and landslides that prove more dangerous than the fire.

IMC has invited abbot Steve Stucky to teach for our regular Sunday morning program on November 23. Steve will talk about his experience of practicing Zen in the face of a raging forest fire. We will dedicate this morning as a benefit for Tassajara. All the dana will go to support SF Zen Center*. Tassajara has played a major role in the formation of IMC as it was a very important training center for Gil Fronsdal. Significant parts of his teaching and commitment to the IMC community are a result of his training there. It is with pleasure that we offer our efforts in helping with the rebuilding and protection of the monastery.

**Checks may be made payable to SFZC*



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.

Doubting Doubt, cont'd. from front page

Confidence in one's ability to practice is very important. For people plagued by doubt in their own ability, it can be useful to develop self-confidence. Many people overlook what they are capable of and focus instead on what they think they cannot do. Taking time to consider and feel happy about what one can do—even the smallest things—can strengthen confidence. Approaching one's practice in small increments may slowly develop confidence. For instance, resolving to be aware of each breath throughout a meditation session is unlikely to build confidence, whereas resolving to stay with two breaths at a time may be more effective. Once one has confidence in two breaths, one can move on to three breaths. Surprisingly, spending less time thinking about oneself can help with confidence. This is because self-preoccupation tends to undermine healthy self-regard.

Finally, it can be helpful to remember something that inspires you in the practice, such as a teaching, a person, or some experience you have had in the practice. Bringing this to mind may remind you of why you are doing the practice and how much you value it. It may gladden the heart enough to clear away the clouds of doubt. It may even encourage you to rededicate your efforts to transform everything into your path to freedom, including the hindrances.

— Gil Fronsdal

WORDS FROM A VOLUNTEER

My volunteering role began when, knowing the increasing demands on Gil's time at the Friends' Meeting House, I asked how I could help. He suggested that I might begin conducting the kids' program, which he loved, and which included his son Toren, who was then about 4 years old. I accepted, and only later thought about how risky it might be to take over from a beloved teacher whose son was in the class.

My fears were unfounded (aren't they all)! The kids were a great little sangha and very wise. When I got stuck on how to say a teaching, the kids spoke it in their words, which were often much clearer – for example, Moral Living: "Our candle shines on everybody, not just us."

The children's program moved to Sunday mornings in Portola Valley, offering us a lovely natural environment in which to practice being fully present. This led to walking meditations through the nearby orchards and fields, finding treasures along the way and helping each other to stay safe and connected.

I have loved meeting kids from those earlier days at current IMC activities. Seeing both the kids and the programs grow and develop so beautifully has prompted me to notice letting go and trusting the process—good to keep in mind as my volunteering now has me serving on the Board, the Chaplaincy Council, performing weddings, and giving dharma talks. Risky? Not so, with the sweet refuge of the Buddha, the Dharma, and especially this remarkable sangha, for which I am very grateful.

—Jim Bronson

Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

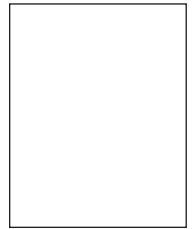
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NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On July 1, the IMC board changed composition. With gratitude, we bow to the departing members whose service provided invaluable support to the IMC community: Elena Silverman (President), Claudine Latombe (Treasurer), and Jim Podolske.

We offer a warm welcome to the new members: Kim Allen, Diana Clark, and Victor Medina.

Current Board Members: Lori Wong (President), Kim Allen (Vice President), Diana Clark (Treasurer), Bill Kostura (Secretary), Jim Bronson, Carol Collins, Steve Gasner, Cindy Heyer, Peck Yee Tan, Victor Medina and Gil Fronsdal.

NOTE FROM THE NEXT EDITOR

Kim Allen is moving on after serving IMC as editor of *Sangha Programs & News* for a year and a half. On behalf of IMC, I offer a deep bow to her clarity and insight into the many facets of our community.

After this issue, Kim will pass this position on to me. Elena Silverman will continue in her long-time role managing the layout and production. Maureen O'Brien will assist both Elena and me as needed. Maria Straatmann will continue in her role as editor of the *Schedule of Events*. We look forward to working with the community to inform and inspire our wide-spread sangha. If you have article ideas or questions, please contact me at imc.newsletter@gmail.com or 650/967-8741.

—Chris Clifford

GREEN POLICY

As we settle into our newly renovated space, take another look at our Green Policy (created in 2005):

We support our own health and the protection of the environment. When available and feasible, we will use cleaning and personal products, office supplies, paper products, and building materials that are:

- non-toxic • chlorine-free • formaldehyde-free
- dye & scent-free • recycled (high post-consumer content)
- recyclable • biodegradable • not tested on animals
- support sustainability and health

We would also like to remind sangha members not to wear scented products at IMC. Not only are these healthier for the environment, but they allow chemically sensitive people to attend our events. Further information about purchasing green and unscented products is available on the literature table.

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

MAILING LIST OPTIONS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

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

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

October thru December 2008

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

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

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

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

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

THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

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

No sittings on November 27 and December 25.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

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

VEGETARIAN POTLUCK BRUNCH

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

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

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

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

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

- 5 Sunday Evenings: September 7 – October 5, 7:30 to 8:45pm, with Ines Freedman
- 6 Wednesday Evenings: October 1 – November 5, 7:30 to 9pm, with Gil Fronsdal
- 6 Wednesday Evenings: January 7 – February 11, 7:30 to 9pm, with Gil Fronsdal

ONLINE COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

January 5 – February 21, with Gil Fronsdal and Ines Freedman. To help support the large community of listeners of our Audiodharma site, IMC is offering an online course based on Gil Fronsdal's six-week Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation class. The course will be supplemented with written material, mindfulness exercises and reflective questions. Ines Freedman,

as the online teacher for the course, will provide further teachings and email guidance to the participants. Additional teachers will offer weekly support by e-mail, phone or instant messenger.

For more info: www.audiodharma.org/onlinecourses.html

NON- RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

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

DHARMA PRACTICE DAYS: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

9:30am to 3:30pm, with Gil Fronsdal, 10/10, 11/7, 12/19, 1/23, 2/27, 4/3, 5/1, 6/5.

PRACTICING WITH THE KILESAS: GREED, HATRED AND DELUSION

January 10, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Maria Straatmann, Ines Freedman and Jim Podolske.

ONE-DAY MEDITATION RETREATS

- Saturday, October 11, 9am to 4:30pm with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, November 15, 8:30am to 5pm with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, January 24, 8:30am to 5pm with Gil Fronsdal

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

IMC-SPONSORED RETREATS

There is no cost for IMC retreats. Donations welcome. Contact info@insightmeditationcenter.org, 650/599-3456 or as noted.

2008

- October 19 – 26 with Gil Fronsdal and Steve Armstrong. Hidden Villa, Los Altos. Contact: Pat White, pewwhite@stanford.edu, 650/462-1834.

2009

- May 3 – 10 with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella. Hidden Villa, Los Altos.
- Memorial Weekend, May 23 – 25 with Andrea Fella. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos. Registration opens 1/23/09.
- August 19 – 23 with Andrea Fella and guest teacher. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos.
- September 13 – 27 with Gil Fronsdal. Hidden Villa, Los Altos. For senior practitioners.
- October 18 – 25 with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters at Hidden Villa in Los Altos. Registration opens 6/18/09.

SPIRIT ROCK RETREATS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

See www.spiritrock.org for info.

- December 10 – 14, Insight Meditation Retreat at Spirit Rock, with Gil Fronsdal, Mary Orr and Howard Cohn
- December 26 – January 3, New Years' Retreat at Spirit Rock with Gil Fronsdal, John Travis, Sharda Rogell, Adrienne Ross and Janice Clarfield (yoga).

SCHEDULE pg. 2

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

YOGA

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

MONDAY EVENING YOGA

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

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION

8 to 10:15am. **Thanksgiving morning 8:30 to 10:15am.** No yoga on Christmas Day or January 1st.

SATURDAY YOGA AND MEDITATION

September 27 and January 3, 9am to 12:30pm.

YOUTH AND PARENTS FAMILY PROGRAM

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

Second Sunday of the Month, 5:15 to 7:15pm. Includes fun, interactive, community building games & crafts, pizza, and a half-hour of practice and dharma. Lorraine Desser Schulze, 650/773-4167.

TEEN PROGRAM AT IMC/DHARMA TEENS

For teens, ages 13 – 17. First Sunday of every month, 5 to 7pm. A safe and fun space to apply mindfulness in support of self-discovery, empowerment, and fulfillment. Teens can discuss among themselves and adult facilitators, important issues in their lives. Includes activities to stimulate curiosity, awareness and discovery, a short sitting, and sharing. Pizza provided* Adult Facilitators: Mary Hofstedt, Youth Development Program Manager and Alicia McLucas, CPCC, Certified Professional Life Coach.

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

SPECIAL EVENTS

FULL MOON GATHERING FOR WOMEN

Friday, September 26 with Rebecca Dixon, October 17 with TBA and December 12 with Shaila Catherine, 7 to 9 pm. Meditation and dharma teachings with local teachers, sharing and creativity. RSVP Nicole Cherok at drncherok@gmail.com.

SATURDAY YOGA AND MEDITATION

September 27 and January 3, 9am to 12:30pm, with Terry Lesser. This is an opportunity to develop a continuity of awareness in movement and stillness, and to explore how the practices of yoga and meditation inform and deepen each other.

SUNDAY MORNING SERIES ON MINDFUL SPEECH

October 12 & 19, November 2 & 9, 9:25 to 10:45am with Gil Fronsdal. Bringing mindfulness to speech is one of the most powerful ways of deepening one's spiritual life and for creating

healthy relationships with others. Gill will offer 4 weeks of dharma talks on the wisdom and practice of mindfulness, listening and ethics in right speech.

MONDAY EVENING SERIES ON HINDRANCES

October 13 to November 17, 7:30 to 9pm with Gil Fronsdal.

The five hindrances are the major obstacles to meditation and liberating insight. They are: sensual desire or greed, aversion or ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt.

DHARMA PRACTICE SERIES: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

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

- October 10 & November 7 — Desire
- December 19 & January 23 — Aversion
- February 27 – Sloth & Torpor
- April 3 – Restlessness
- May 1 – Doubt
- June 5 – Hindrances In Depth

BUDDHIST SPIRITUAL CARE SYMPOSIUM IV

Saturday, October 18, 9am to 6pm. Vegetarian lunch included. Welcoming Buddhist chaplains and those interested in deepening their spiritual care practice for a day of learning and community-building. Topics will include issues of Spiritual Direction, Council, Buddhist Parables, Rituals, Street and Sangha Chaplaincy. Presented by Buddhist Chaplains Group. Pre-registration at www.buddhistchaplainsnetwork.org or call Tina 917/330-8129.

TEEN RETREAT

Saturday, November 8, 1 to 4 pm with Gil Fronsdal. 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, the heart of Buddhist teachings. The Four Noble Truths point to a happiness and peace 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 are welcome.

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

4 Thursdays, October 30 to November 20, 7:30 to 9pm

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness provide a systematic training for the cultivation of awareness, incorporating every aspect of our lives into meditation practice. These include mindfulness of the body, feelings, mental states and mental objects or dhammas.

- 10/30 – Mindfulness of the Body with Daniel Bowling

SCHEDULE pg. 3

- 11/6 – Mindfulness of Feeling with Susan Ezequelle
- 11/13 – Mindfulness of Mind with Tony Bernhard
- 11/20 – Mindfulness of Dhammas with Chris Clifford

BEGINNERS PRACTICE GROUP

5 Wednesdays, November 12 to December 17, 7:30 to 9pm (no meeting November 26), with Susan Ezequelle. For those who have taken a beginning meditation class and would like further support in building their practice. There will be a short sitting, teachings and discussion. For those practicing less than 6 months.

CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND LOVE

Saturday, November 1, 9:30am to 2pm, with Maria Straatmann. Anyone who has lost a family member, friend or other dear person over the last year is welcome to join us to remember and honor those who have died but who enriched our lives. With the Buddhist practices of mindfulness and compassion, we will have a period of silent sitting and rituals of remembrance, bereavement, and farewell. We will share stories over lunch (BYO lunch). Bring pictures or mementos for our altar of persons you wish to honor/remember. If you cannot attend, you are welcome to send the name of the person you would like included. *Maria serves on IMC's chaplaincy council. Contact mstraatmann@gmail.com.*

A BENEFIT FOR INQUIRING MIND: AN EVENING WITH WES NISKER

Crazy for Wisdom: Stories, songs, gossip and revelations from 40 years of walking the path of dharma in the West.

Friday, November 7, 7:30 to 9pm. Celebrate (and support) the 25th anniversary of Inquiring Mind, the most widely distributed, subscription-free independent Buddhist journal in North America.

Wes Scoop Nisker is an author, radio commentator, meditation teacher, and performer. His books include: The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom: The Spiritual Experiments of My Generation; Essential Crazy Wisdom; and Buddha's Nature. He is founder and co-editor of the Buddhist journal Inquiring Mind.

THE SACRED ACT OF DEATH AND DYING

Saturday, November 22, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Berget Jelane and Jim Bronson. A day of silent and verbal exploration of our own dying process, beginning now. In a safe, caring environment we will offer the Buddhist teachings on death as well as our own experiences, fears, hopes, concerns. We will share our process and do an exercise to help us get more in touch with the reality of our dying and begin to demystify the aura around death. Please bring lunch so we can continue to share.

A BENEFIT FOR TASSAJARA ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER

Sunday, November 23, 10 to 11am. Abbot Steve Stucky of Tassajara Zen Mountain Center will speak on practice in the midst of a raging forest fire. All dana for the Sunday morning sitting on this day will be for the benefit of Tassajara for re-building.

THURSDAY EVENING SERIES ON RIGHT SPEECH

December 4 - 18, 7:30 to 9pm, with Mirka Knaster and others.

NEW YEAR'S EVE MEDITATION AND CELEBRATION

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

PRACTICING WITH THE KILESAS: GREED, HATRED AND DELUSION

January 10, 2009, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Maria Straatmann, Ines Freedman and Jim Podolske. The *kilesas* (torments of the mind), greed, aversion or hatred, and delusion are the primary roots of suffering in our lives. Transforming these forces is a major part of Buddhist practice. Through meditation, exercises and discussion, we will examine these habits of mind. Join us for a day devoted to understanding how these unconscious roots affect our lives and how seeing them clearly and developing their opposites can lead to freedom.

VIPASSANA NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT WITH U TEJANIYA

July 17 to July 24, 2009. IMC is privileged to host Sayadaw U Tejaniya, a renown Burmese Meditation master. U Tejaniya started practicing and studying dhamma when he was 13. He teaches Vipassana based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness with an emphasis on the qualities of mind. His teaching style is particularly suited to Westerners.

SATI CENTER

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

RESTING IN EMPTINESS: THE EVOLUTION AND TRANSCENDENCE OF THE SELF

Saturday, October 4, 9am to 5pm, with Rick Hanson, Ph.D. and Rick Mendius, M.D. "Me, myself, and I" – the most personal subject of all, but the most mysterious. This experiential workshop will use the sciences of evolution and the brain to explore the teachings of the Buddha that the apparent self both brings suffering and is "empty" of independent existence. We will cover ways to relax the sense of self, take things less personally, feel more at peace, and rest in spacious awareness in which self activates and then disperses. No background in meditation or brain science is necessary.

SUTTA STUDY PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Monthly from September 12, 2008 to June 12, 2009. A ten month course studying the *Majjhima Nikaya*, or Middle Length Discourses, one of the oldest records of the Buddha's original teachings. Taking the entire course is recommended. Fridays, 9:30am to 3:30pm: 9/12, 10/3, 10/31, 11/21, 1/9, 2/6, 2/28 (Saturday), 4/24, 5/29, 6/12

SUPPORT GROUPS

(A) THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES

Wednesdays, 1:30 to 3pm

(B) THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

Wednesdays, 3:30 to 5pm

(C) CAREGIVERS

Mondays, 6 to 7:15pm (except 1st Monday of month)

Meetings of all three groups will include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics, but the primary purpose of each group will be to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. Before attending any group for the first time, please contact that group's facilitator: (A & B) Mick Bennett at 650/368-2518 or hmbennett@sbcglobal.net (C) Rob Rossel at 650/559-1562 or rosselrob@aol.com.

DHARMA FRIENDS

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

- **Hidden Villa Hike**—Sun, Oct 12 (4 miles - intermediate level). Leave IMC at 11:15 or meet at Hidden Villa back parking lot at 11:45. Dwight zydeholic@yahoo.com 510/754-7389
- **Hungry Ghosts Halloween Ceremony for All Boo-dhists**—Sat, Oct 25, 6 to 9pm. Mike Kupfer and Anne Foster's home, San Carlos. Anne afoster@rawbw.com 650/591-1285
- **Between 2 Cultures?**—Sun, Oct 26, 1 to 4pm in meditation hall. Amanda Kovattana leads discussion on joys & frustrations of juggling cultures. RSVP Amanda akovattana@aol.com
- **Dharma Friends Steering Committee Planning Meeting**—Sun, Nov 2, 11:15 to 12:30. Plan events for Jan–Mar 2009. IMC conference room. Anne afoster@rawbw.com 650/591-1285
- **Windy Hill OSP Hike/Lunch & Garden Stroll**—Sat, Nov 8. For hike (4.6 mi), carpool IMC 9:15am. Meet at Nursery, (yerbabuenanursery.com) at noon for lunch & stroll native plant gardens. Catered lunch \$25 (must RSVP to Marianna taraihito@yahoo.com 650/367-7325), or BYO lunch.
- **Vegetarian Harvest Potluck**—Sat, Nov 15, 6:30 to 9:30pm. Bring songs, poems, or short writings to share gratitude for year as end approaches. IMC. Cindy cyn@coastside.net 650/712-0231
- **Collage As Inquiry**—Sat, Dec 6, 9:30 to Noon. Playfully let collages emerge, discover something new about yourself. No art experience needed. IMC. RSVP Ryl ryl@ArtAsAccess.com 510/384-4795
- **Winter Solstice Celebration**—Sat, Dec 13, 6:30 to 10pm. Celebrate darkness and light, intention and letting go. IMC social hall. Phyllis pkgold@earthlink.net, 415/273-1036

RECURRING EVENTS

- **Edgewood Park Hike**, 2nd Sundays 9/14, 10/12. Meet at 7:55am and hike at 8am sharp before the IMC sitting on the Sylvan Exercise trail. Moderate, 10% grade, 2.5 miles, brisk hike for about 1 hour. Karen karen@brownacupuncture.com.
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**—1st Fridays, 5:30 to 7pm. A Year To Live: How to Live This Year as if it were Your Last by Stephen Levine, IMC Social Hall. Jeff cjhylton@earthlink.net.
- **Dharma Friend's Brunch**—1st Sundays. Meet at IMC by kitchen at 11:15am to choose local restaurant. Dwight 510/754-7389 zydeholic@yahoo.com.
- **Cinema Sanity**—occasional weekend evening. Know of a movie with a Dharma message you'd like to see with some dharma friends? Jim James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov 650/968-6168
- **North Bay Fiction Book Group**—Once/Month, Sundays, 6:30 to 8:30pm. Meet at members' homes. Rainbow, rainbowspirit@earthlink.net.
- **Speak Spanish**—New group for chatting in Spanish, some knowledge required. Time/place TBD. Audrey at guerin.audrey@gmail.com or 650/574-4053.

RELATED SITTING GROUPS

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

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

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOUTH BAY WITH SHAILA CATHERINE

2094 Grant Rd, Mtn View. www.imsb.org, e-mail: doug.forehand@sun.com.

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

LGBT SITTING AND DISCUSSION GROUP — PALO ALTO

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

OAKLAND MONDAY DROP-IN MEDITATION GROUP

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

SAN JOSE SANGHA

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

- Wednesday Evening Sitting & Teaching, 7:30 to 9pm
- Saturday, October 11, 9am to 2:30pm Daylong Retreat **Intro to Meditation & Basic Buddhist Principles**
- November 15, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Cultivating Wise Speech & Communication**. Bring lunch and cup for tea. Meeting House.
- Half-day retreat Dec 20, 9:30am to 12:15pm