

leap of faith

THE NEW HOPE SANGHA NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 2010

Two days of Spiritual Inquiry and Insight Meditation May 21 – 23. See page 5.

How do we practice?

Vipassana Meditation Instructions

By John Orr

During a meditation retreat, in the morning, I almost always give meditation instructions. The instructions are a reminder of what to focus on in our practice. No matter how many times we review meditation instructions, hearing and practicing them anew, in this very moment, can bring clarity as to how to practice skillfully. At a recent retreat in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I gave a comprehensive overview of instructions for Insight Meditation. This article is adapted from that talk. I hope you will find it helpful.

THE PRIMARY OBJECT

To begin with, we use a primary object to focus our attention on in meditation. The primary object is home base in our practice. It is the object that is primary in our focus and that we can return to over and over again. There are mundane and super mundane primary objects. Examples of mundane primary objects may be our sitting or standing posture, the contact of our buttocks on the cushion we are sitting on, the breath, awareness of sound or anything that we can focus our attention on and return to when necessary. The most common mundane primary object that is used is the breath, but other objects can be used, if they are helpful. Examples of super mundane primary objects are awareness of nada (inner sounds such as those of crickets chirping), chi energy or ground luminosity. Super mundane primary objects are used in the same way as mundane primary objects.

In our meditation we observe the characteristics of the primary object. For example, how does the breath feel at any given moment? Are the inhale and exhale short or long? Is the breath rougher and coarser or is it smoother and subtler? Is it shallow or deep? Where do we experience the breath most clearly? Is it clearest to us in the area of the nose and upper lip or the rising and falling movement of the chest or belly? We notice the texture and the qual-

ity of our breathing. We don't try to change how the breath feels, but merely are aware of it as it is.

If we are focused on the sitting posture and awareness of bodily sensations or contact points of say the buttocks touching the cushion or legs and feet touching the floor as our primary object, then what is the nature of this experience? Do we experience a pressure or heaviness as the buttocks touch the cushion or chair? Do we feel a light sense of touch as the feet rest on the floor, or perhaps we feel a sensation of pins and needles, as though the feet and legs are falling asleep. Are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, meaning they are neither pleasant nor unpleasant?

As we are observing the breath or other bodily sensations as the primary object, we begin to see more clearly the impermanent changing nature of the primary object. One inhale arrives and one exhale leaves. We focus as clearly as possible on each breath and observe its nature. We don't necessarily hold onto the breath or try to control it, but simply observe it as it is. It's a simple practice! As we do this we will notice for example how at the beginning of a sitting our breathing may be shorter in length and coarser and then at another time in the same sitting, the breath becomes longer and subtler. As concentration deepens, we are able to be increasingly aware of the entire length of the inhale and exhale and the spaces

continued on page 6

**January 16
Raleigh, NC**

*Half-Day Retreat
Sponsored by The Raleigh
Meditation Group*

Time: Saturday, 10 am – 1 pm

Instructor: John Orr

Location: The Unity Church of the Triangle at The Long View Center. The center is located at 118 S. Person Street, Raleigh, 27601, and is on the northeast side of Moore Square.

Parking: There is parking on the street and also in lots behind the Longview Center and Exploris.

What to bring: Participants should bring a cushion to sit on. There are also chairs available.

Fee: There is a registration fee of \$15 payable the day of the retreat to cover expenses. Following the Buddhist tradition, John Orr's teachings will be offered on a Dana (Generosity) basis. Participants will have the opportunity to practice generosity to the teacher, so he can continue to offer such retreats.

To Register: Please register for the retreat by Wednesday, January 13, by contacting Tom Barrie (at tom_barrie@ncsu.edu). Registrants will receive information on parking, access to the building and directions to the meditation hall.

**Mondays,
February 1 - March 22
(no class March 8)
Durham, NC**

*Workshop Series
The Chakras: working with
the energy body*

Instructor: John Orr

Time: Mondays from 7:30 – 9 pm

During these seven sessions, through the use of guided meditations, visualization exercises, use of tuning forks and chanting, we will explore seven energy centers and our experience of them. Each of

these chakras are related to certain aspects of our lives, such as survival and instincts, sexuality, power and will, yearning and love and feeling connected to reality or our divinity. We will come to know, through our experience, which of these centers may be blocked at any given time and what it feels like to have all of them open and the energy moving freely through our astral body. My experience of this is the feeling of "Being Home" in its most profound sense. I offered a series of four classes on the chakras this past fall and there was a lot of interest in this work. During this seven week series we will expand on what we started this fall. Therefore this present series will be helpful for those new to chakra work as well as people with more experience.

Location: We will be meeting in the Chapel of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 4907 Garret Rd. in Durham. Please see our web site www.newhopesangha.org for directions. Chairs will be provided. If you wish to sit on the floor, bring a meditation cushion.

Fee: There will be a \$40 fee for the entire seven sessions that will cover the cost of renting the chapel at ERUUF. John will be offering this series of classes on a dana (generosity) basis. At each session, participants will have the opportunity to offer dana.

Registration: Please preregister by sending a \$40 check made out to the Durham Meditation Center and mailed to: John Orr, 1214 Broad Street #2, Durham, NC 27705. It is helpful if participants can attend as many sessions as possible. For any further information contact John Orr at 919-943-0438 or john@newhopesangha.org.

**February 6
Greensboro, NC**

"The Art of Living Mindfully: How to Nurture a Daily Meditation Practice"

Time: Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm

Instructor: John Orr

Location: Unity in Greensboro, 1935 Opal Drive Greensboro, NC 27403.

This is an opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom, and compassion in a supportive environment. There will be instruction in sitting and walking mindfulness meditation and discussion as to how to effectively apply this in our lives and nurture a daily meditation practice. This can be a wonderful way to learn meditation or to deepen one's practice. Beginners, as well as the more experienced, are welcome to join us.

What to Bring: Please bring a cushion or a folded blanket if you wish to sit on the floor, chairs are available. You are welcome to bring a bag lunch. There is a refrigerator to store food, but no microwave.

Fee: The workshop fee is \$60 and we will offer half price scholarships to those who need one. To register please contact Linda Carole at info@unityingreensboro.org or phone 336-273-0944.

**February 12 - 14
Wilmington, NC**

*Mindfulness Meditation &
The Divine Abodes
A weekend with John Orr at
The Open Space*

Location and Sponsor: The Open Space, 411 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, NC

**Friday, February 12
7:30 – 9 pm:**

Public Talk "The Divine Abodes: Loving-kindness, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity"

In this talk John will describe how

these heart centered practices are a wonderful support on our spiritual path. Following the Buddhist tradition, the Friday talk will be offered on a Dana (Generosity) or Love Offering basis.

Saturday, February 13

10 am – 5 pm:

Mindfulness Meditation and the Divine Abodes

This is an opportunity to open our hearts and develop calmness, wisdom, and compassion in a supportive environment. Traditionally the divine abodes are seen as being support to the primary practice, which is mindfulness meditation. However, in the end they become ONE PRACTICE. There will be instruction in mindfulness meditation, as well as, guided divine abode meditations. This can be a wonderful way to learn meditation or to deepen one's practice. Beginners, as well as the more experienced, are welcome to join us. We will break for an hour lunch at 1 pm. The fee for this session is \$60; \$30 for those who cannot afford the full fee. Preregistration is encouraged. To hold a space, please send a non-refundable deposit of \$30, made payable to The Open Space.

**Sunday, February 14
Spiritual Counseling for
Individuals**

Spiritual Counseling addresses both psychological and spiritual issues, honoring the wisdom of many paths. Spiritual direction is a central focus in the counseling. Rates for counseling meetings are on a sliding scale based on your income and ability to pay. For further information and to make an appointment call John Orr at 919-943-0438 or at john@newhopesangha.org

For more information & registration, Contact Elena Pezzuto at (910) 763-8813.

**February 27
Durham, NC**

Mindfulness Meditation, The Art of Mindful Living: How to Nurture a Daily Meditation Practice

Instructor: John Orr

Time: Saturday 10 am – 5 pm

Location: Duke East Campus: Duke West Building Rm. 101

Course Fee: \$85; early enrollment \$75. Register online through Duke University Continuing Studies at www.learnmore.duke.edu/week-end/courses/register or by phone 919-684-6259. Have the following information ready: Class ID 0160 and MC/Visa information. Advance registration is recommended.

Bring: A bag lunch if you wish. A folded blanket and cushion if you want to sit on the floor. Chairs are available. Textbook Recommended: *Mindfulness in Plain English* by Henepola Gunaratana ISBN#0-86171-064-9.

**April 1 - 4
Hot Springs, NC**

Easter Weekend Retreat: Heart of Jesus, Mind of Buddha with John at the Southern Dharma Retreat Center near Asheville, NC

Using the teachings and practices of two of the most enlightened beings to ever walk the earth, we will draw inspiration from the lives of Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha. There will be instruction and practice in Insight (Mindfulness) Meditation and Loving Kindness Meditation as a means of knowing our Divinity and living with an open heart. As part of the evening program we will reflect on true-life stories of how Jesus felt about and treated people that he encountered in various situations. The focus will be on Jesus, the human, who walked amongst us with such love and compassion. During this retreat we will bring together our experience of the clarity of Buddha and the love of Jesus.

For registration and information contact the Southern Dharma Retreat Center, 1661 West Rd., Hot Springs, NC 28743. Call: 828-622-7112 or <http://southernndharma.org/descriptions/Orr.htm>

**April 11
Durham, NC**

Living With Uncertainty

Instructor: John Orr

Time: Sunday 10 am – 5 pm

Location: Duke East Campus: 107 The Bishop's House

Course Fee: \$85; early enrollment \$75. Register online through Duke University Continuing Studies at www.learnmore.duke.edu/week-end/courses/register or by phone 919-684-6259. Have the following information ready: Class ID 0151 and MC/Visa information. Advance registration is recommended.

Bring: A bag lunch if you wish. A folded blanket and cushion if you want to sit on the floor. Chairs are available. Recommended Reading: *When Things Fall Apart* by Pema Chodron.

**April 18
Raleigh, NC**

Mind/Body Approaches to Stress Management

Instructor: John Orr

Time: Sunday 10 am – 5 pm

Location: Meredith College. We will meet in the Chapel Commons Room in the Chapel.

Fee: \$70 for Class ID #1272a, 0.6 CEU

Mail: Make checks payable to Meredith College and mail registration and payment to: Meredith College Community Programs, 3800 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, NC 27607-5298

Online: Register and pay online at: <http://www.meredith.edu/community-programs/health-wellness-fitness.htm>

Phone: Call Community Programs at 919-760-8450 with Class ID 1272a to pay with MasterCard, VISA or American Express.

Bring: A folded blanket and cushion if you wish to sit on the floor.

**May 21 - 23
Mebane, NC**

Residential/nonresidential Retreat

Insight Meditation Retreat with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron and John at Stone House, a beautiful center on 70 acres near Chapel Hill. See page 5 of this newsletter for details.

**June 18 - 25 or 18 - 21
Ann Arbor, MI**

Residential Retreat with Barbara, Aaron, and John Orr

This retreat is open to yogis of all levels. To register or for information, contact Mary Gliedt, 495 Village Oaks Ct. Ann Arbor, MI 48103. or call Mary or Terry Gliedt at 734.369.2628 or retreat@hps.com.

Dana (pronounced “dah-na”) is a Pali word meaning “gift” or “giving.” It is closely related to the virtue of generosity and is expressed in many forms—the offering and sharing of our time, energy, knowledge/expertise, material items and financial resources. Dana is a purely volitional act of giving in which we develop our ability to let go, convey our compassion and caring, demonstrate our commitment, and acknowledge our interdependence and connectedness.

Come visit

John of God

**at his Healing Center
in Abadiânia, Brazil**

with official Casa guides:

January 10 - 24, 2010 - with Barbara Brodsky
August 1 - 15, 2010 - with John Orr
 January, 2011 & summer - dates to be finalized

www.vipassanahealing.com

Contact: John Orr: John@vipassanaHealing.com
Barbara Brodsky: Barbara@vipassanaHealing.com



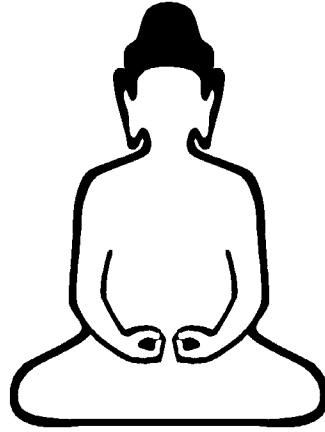
NEW HOPE SANGHA

Twice Monthly Meditations & Dharma Discussion

Our community, the New Hope Sangha, will be holding meditations and dharma discussion the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month, at the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Garrett Rd. in Durham. We will meet from 7:00–9:00 pm in the Chapel, which adjoins the main Sanctuary. This is an ideal location, which is accessible from anywhere in the Triangle. The first hour will be sitting and chanting followed by a walking meditation period. The second hour we will have a dharma talk and/or discussion. Any questions about your meditation practice or spiritual life are welcomed. If you are late arriving and you hear chanting you may enter quietly. If you arrive late and the chapel is quiet we ask you to wait or sit in the sanctuary or other areas. The chapel door will be opened again during the walking period. We will conclude the evening by 9:00.

Please plan on arriving by 6:50 so we can be in our seats by 7:00. This is an open group and all are welcome to attend. If you are new to meditation and need meditation instructions please come to the Chapel by 6:50 pm and one of the group leaders will meet with you separately to give you instructions and guidance in the practice. If you have any other questions concerning the group please call Jim Jarvis at his office 309-2922 or e-mail him at jjjarvis@mindspring.com. There is no fee charged. There will be a dana (gift) basket available to help pay the cost of the room rental and a dana basket for the teacher.

The New Hope Sangha is a resource for anyone who wishes to learn and practice the dharma. This is a nondenominational community that respects the wisdom of various spiritual traditions. Our meditation practices are grounded in three Buddhist practices: Vipassana (Mindfulness) Meditation, Metta (Lovingkindness) Meditation and



Dzogchen (Non Dual Awareness) Meditation. To facilitate this process we have set up a web site (see: www.newhopesangha.org) that will give up-to-date information about the meditation programs we are offering, as well as dharma talks by various teachers and other useful information. Our newsletter, "Leap Of Faith" is available online and in hard copy for those who request it. Send requests to office@newhopesangha.org.

DIRECTIONS TO ERUUF AT 4907 GARRETT RD.

Raleigh/Cary (east), Charlotte/Greensboro (west) via I-40: Exit 270 (15/501). Go north toward Durham. At Garrett Road, turn right continuing 7/10 mile. Turn left into the entrance. Raleigh/Wake Forest via I-85/70 After Rt.70 merges with I-85, Exit from the left lane onto 15/501 toward Chapel Hill. At Garrett Road (BP Station), turn left and go 7/10 mile to entrance on the left. Greensboro/Hillsborough via I-85/70 Exit Rt. 147 and Exit onto 15/501 toward Chapel Hill. At Garrett Road (BP Station), turn left and go 7/10 mile to entrance on the left. As you enter the church grounds, bear to the right, and park in the lot next to the sanctuary. The chapel adjoins the sanctuary. For detailed maps visit www.eruuf.org.

Raleigh Meditation Group

The Raleigh Meditation Group, which is an affiliate of the New Hope Sangha, meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 6:30 – 8 pm at the Unity Church of the Triangle. The church is located at 118 S. Person Street, Raleigh 27601, and is on the northeast side of Moore Square. Please contact Tom Barrie at 919-605-1476 or e-mail dharma55@aol.com for information.

SPIRITUAL COUNSELING & MEDITATION INTERVIEWS

Spiritual Counseling addresses both psychological and spiritual issues, honoring the wisdom of many paths. It is helpful for people who are just beginning to explore their psychological and emotional experience. This counseling can also be relevant for those who have been in psychotherapy and now wish a more transpersonal counseling perspective that helps them know more fully their divinity. Sessions may also include instruction in mindfulness meditation. Rates for counseling meetings are on a sliding scale.

Meditation interviews are also offered and are similar to interviews given at retreats. The content of the session is about your meditation and what you are experiencing in your practice. Meditation interviews are available on a dana (gift) basis. John is welcoming new clients at his Durham office and also does telephone consultations. As an interfaith minister, he also officiates at weddings and funerals. For more information or to make an appointment call 919-943-0438 or e-mail john@newhopesangha.org.

A Weekend of Spiritual Inquiry and Insight Meditation

New Hope Sangha Spring Meditation Retreat



May 21–23, 2010

STONE HOUSE, MEBANE NC



A weekend retreat is an opportunity to develop calmness, wisdom, and compassion in a supportive environment. Beginners as well as experienced meditators are welcome. The weekend will include meditation instruction, silent meditation practice, dharma talks and chanting. Emphasis will be on developing mindfulness in sitting, standing and walking to access our innate understanding, joy and peace.

THE TEACHERS

Barbara Brodsky is a Quaker and trained dharma teacher in the Buddhist tradition. She is the guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center in Ann Arbor Michigan. Barbara has been deaf for 35 years. She is the channel for the discarnate entity, Aaron. **Aaron** is a being of light who has evolved beyond the need to return to the physical plane. We have a special page on Aaron at our web site, newhopesangha.org.

John Orr received Theravada Buddhist ordination and training for eight years while living in Thailand and India. He has been teaching meditation and leading retreats since 1980. John is the guiding teacher of New Hope Sangha and teaches at Duke University.

Barbara and John follow an age-old tradition of freely and open-heartedly offering the dharma. They receive no payment from the registration fees. Your dana (generosity) allows the teachers to continue their work of sharing the dharma. During the retreat there will be baskets available for your offerings.

SCHEDULE AND FEES

The retreat will begin with check in at 5:00 PM Friday. Following dinner at 6:00 PM, the weekend program will begin and continue until closing at 4:00 PM Sunday. The evening programming will end at 9:30 PM on Friday and Saturday. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 AM on Saturday and Sunday.

Fees include lodging, dinner on Friday, three meals on Saturday, and two meals on Sunday. The fees are based on your lodging preference.

RESIDING ON SITE	\$225
TENTING ON SITE (bring your own tent)	\$200
COMMUTING	\$175

For early registrations received before April 23, subtract \$20 from your fee. For registrations received after April 23, include the full amount. There is also an option for a nonrefundable deposit which is due at the time of registration, with the balance due on May 21.

Return the form below and a check made out to Durham Meditation Center, 1214 Broad St. #2, Durham, NC 27705. Confirmation will be e-mailed to you along with detailed directions to Stone House. Space is limited. Please contact Donna Deal if you have any questions: e-mail donnadeal@aol.com or call (919) 667-5906.

New Hope Sangha Spring Retreat, May 21–23, 2010

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____ Preferred roommate if residing on site (optional) _____

If you are residing on site check one: Early registration, received before 4/23 (\$205) Registration after 4/23 (\$225) Deposit (\$125)

If you are tenting check one: Early registration, received before 4/23 (\$180) Registration after 4/23 (\$200) Deposit (\$100)

If you are commuting check one: Early registration, received before 4/23 (\$155) Registration after 4/23 (\$175) Deposit (\$75)

OUR TEACHERS DO NOT RECEIVE ANY FUNDS FROM THESE REGISTRATION FEES. PLEASE BE MINDFUL THAT THEY RELY ON YOUR DANA FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD.

How do we practice? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

or pauses that are experienced after the end of the inhale and exhale. The ability to be increasingly present with our breathing or any primary object will deepen focus and concentration. As our mind becomes more concentrated, not in a narrow sense of holding onto the primary object to the exclusion of other objects, but in a way in which we are able to skillfully work with the primary object, we will experience a calming of the body and mind. Our body becomes relaxed and at ease and our mind is more pointed in its focus and attention.

This degree of concentration and awareness enables us to see more clearly the breath and other objects, such as sensations; sounds and thoughts arise and pass away. The breath, for example, is the way it is at any given moment because of the condition of the body and the mind in that moment. If I am jogging or riding a bicycle then my breathing may be faster and rougher. Similarly, if I am experiencing fear or anger then my breathing may be shallower and not so deep. Contrast this with times when we find ourselves calm and at peace. During these moments the breath may be experienced as long and deep. Thus we see that the primary object is ever changing and subject to various conditions that are beyond our control. The primary object arises and ceases according to these conditions and is not I or mine. In other words, it has a life of its own and our practice is just to be aware of it as it is.

THE PREDOMINANT OBJECT

As we're aware of the primary object, other objects, such as memories, plans and images are going to arise in our experience. As they become predominant, we let go of the primary object and pick up on them and hold them in our awareness. If we're aware of the breath and a thought becomes predominant, then mindfulness holds that thought in attention as the most important object to be present with. The holding of the thought in awareness is called *vitaka*. *Vitaka* is the ability to be present with an object as it appears in our awareness without getting caught up in the content of the thought. We aren't concerned with the details of the memory or plan, but rather with the process of the thought as an object that arises and ceases. Here it can be useful to use the tool of noting the predominant object that has arisen in a general way as "thinking, thinking, thinking," or "hearing, hearing, hearing" if it is a sound that is predominant. The noting of the object is happening lightly in the background; in the foreground of our experience is the direct experience of the thought or sound. In this way we aren't controlling the objects with the use of the noting.

As we are aware of objects that become predominant we also look deeply into them and see their characteristics. An important feature of Insight Meditation is awareness of objects as they arise and the ability to penetrate the object. This seeing more clearly into the object is called *vicara*. Penetrating into it means seeing the characteristics of that object. For example, today at the retreat it's gray, windy and the ground is wet. We are directly experiencing the weather, which is different from thinking about the weather. As I'm looking out the window, I'm not concerned whether that tree is a maple, oak or other hardwood. I'm just aware that I'm "seeing, seeing, seeing." We are in direct contact with the degree of light, the wind, the moisture and the various conditions, which make up today's weather. It is the same with other objects. If we are aware of a sound as predominant, we aren't concerned whether it's a high- or low-pitched sound or whether it's being made by a siren or a car door slamming. In other words, we aren't looking at the specifics of the sound, but rather being aware that there's a sound and noting "hearing, hearing, hearing." In this way, we observe the arising and ceasing of the sound. We see directly the changing nature of the sound, that it comes and goes according to whatever conditions are present that make it come and go. An ambulance driving by and our ability to hear the sound of the siren are the conditions that are present that enable us to hear the sound of the siren. When those conditions are no longer present, then the sound ceases. There is no independent self at work here, just conditions arising and ceasing from moment to moment. In this way we have clearer insight into *anatta* or not self.

Every object that arises will have a feeling quality to it, which is called *vedana*. If it's a gray day we may experience an unpleasant mental feeling. If it's a bright and sunny day we may experience a pleasant or neutral feeling. The ability to be present with gray or sunny is *vitaka*, and to know whether this gives rise to an unpleasant or pleasant feeling

is *vicara*. If there is aversion or dislike because it's gray, then we pick up on the aversion as the predominant object. If we're glad that it's sunny, then the feeling of gladness is what is predominant. It's a very simple practice!

However, sometimes people become confused as to when to stay with a predominant object and when to return to the primary object. At the beginning of practice it may be useful to directly return to the primary object, such as the breath, after experiencing a thought or sound. This lessens the tendency to get caught in the content of the thought or sound. If at any point in our meditation we feel it would be helpful for us to

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come back to a primary object, we can do so. The primary object, especially mundane primary objects such as the breath, is always available to us. If we find ourselves getting caught up in discursive thinking or emotional reactivity, then it can be skillful to note “thinking” or “anger” and then direct mindfulness to our breathing, not as a means of pushing away or escaping the uncomfortable thoughts and emotions, but as a means of creating space around them. For example, if we have the memory of something unpleasant or painful that somebody said or did to us, and this memory gives rise to fear, aversion and anger, and we feel ourselves getting caught in all of this, then it can be helpful to note what we are experiencing and redirect mindfulness to a primary object, like the breath. This is a way of being more spacious with what we are experiencing and refocusing our attention. It’s fine to come back to the primary object, but it’s not necessary every time we have a thought or hear a sound or experience a bodily sensation. Always returning to a primary object whenever we experience a predominant object can create an unnecessary amount of busyness in our practice. Have you ever had the experience of meditating and you’re feeling busier than if you weren’t meditating? I call it mental gymnastics: we’re aware of our breathing, a thought arises, we’re aware of the thought, then come back to the breath, something else arises, we’re aware of that, then return to the breath. It can be tiring and isn’t conducive to the development of insight.

As practice deepens and we utilize the skills of *vitaka* and *vicara*, we will be able to hold and penetrate the predominant objects that arise and see clearly the ceasing of the objects. When the object disappears, we let ourselves rest in the disappearance of the object. After the object ceases there will be a space or pause before another object arises. We let ourselves rest in this space or pause. We don’t feel that we need to come back to the primary object, just rest in the space that is there. In a sense the space will become our primary object. There’s nothing to do, there’s nowhere to go, and we just let ourselves rest in the space. Perhaps at this point thoughts such as, “Should I go back to the primary object of the breath?” or, “This feels weird!” or “Am I doing the practice right?” may arise. These thoughts are seen for what they are, as “thinking, thinking, thinking,” or as “doubt, doubt, doubt,” or as “unpleasant, unpleasant, unpleasant.” As we hold these thoughts lightly in the larger container of our experience they will dissolve and cease. As they cease, we just rest in the space of the cessation of the objects.

SPACIOUSNESS, LIBERATION AND PEACE

These spaces or pauses in our experience are called apertures and can also be experienced during our awareness of our breathing. After the inhalation there is a pause before the

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beginning of the exhalation and after the exhale before we inhale there is another pause. As awareness and concentration improves we are able to discern these apertures between breaths more clearly and to rest in the space. As we rest in those moments of space between the breaths or in the space that exists after a thought or other predominant object ceases, we move increasingly into the experience of spaciousness. While resting in this spaciousness, objects may continue to arise and cease, but we aren’t pulled into the content or pleasant or unpleasant feeling quality of the objects. This is called *access concentration* and is the degree of concentration that is most helpful in Insight Meditation.

Increasingly, we become aware of an inner spaciousness that is always there. If we don’t pay attention to the space, then sometimes we miss it because we’re over focused on objects. For example, there is a lot of space within this meditation hall. There are also cushions, chairs, an altar, people and other objects in the room. If we become overly focused on the material objects in the room, then we may remain unaware of the larger space that exists along with the objects. Actually there is more space in the room than there are objects. It’s not

that the objects are separate from the space; the objects are a part of the space. But if we only focus upon the objects then we may miss the space that is very much a part of the experience of being in the room. What we’re emphasizing in this retreat is the ability to increasingly rest in the innate spaciousness of mind and an awareness of objects that arise and cease within this spaciousness. Practicing in this way brings focus, clarity, insight, freedom from reactivity, equanimity, and peace. ❁



Numerical Dhamma Pocket Guide erratum

We found an error in the pocket guide in the Winter/Spring 2009 newsletter. The last entry in the noble eightfold path should read “Right intention,” not “Right effort.” The Sanskrit phrase, “Samma-sankappa” is correct.

If you would like a new guide, we have a PDF file for printing online at www.newhopesangha.org/numerical_dhammas.pdf

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is usually published twice each year and is offered freely. Your donations allow us to continue to publish the newsletter. If you would like to contribute to the cost of printing and mailing, please mail a check to: Durham Meditation Center, 1214 Broad Street #2, Durham, NC 27705.

Easter Weekend Retreat

APRIL 1-4, SOUTHERN DHARMA RETREAT CENTER NEAR ASHEVILLE, NC

“Heart of Jesus, Mind of Buddha” led by John Orr

We will draw inspiration from the lives of Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha. There will be instruction and practice in Insight (Mindfulness) Meditation and Loving Kindness Meditation as a means of knowing our Divinity and living with an open heart.

More information on page 2; for registration and information contact the Southern Dharma Retreat Center, 1661 West Rd., Hot Springs, NC 28743. Call: 828-622-7112 or <http://southerndharma.org/descriptions/Orr.htm>

Workshop Series: The Chakras

MONDAYS, FEBRUARY 1 TO MARCH 22 7:30-9 PM, DURHAM, NC

Fee \$40. Instructor: John. Held at the Chapel of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4907 Garrett Rd., Durham

**There will be no class on March 8.*

During these seven sessions, through the use of guided meditations, visualization exercises, use of tuning forks and chanting, we will explore seven energy centers and our experience of them. Each of these chakras are related to certain aspects of our lives, such as survival and instincts, sexuality, power and will, yearning and love and feeling connected to reality or our divinity. We will expand on the course we had this fall; therefore this present series will be helpful for those new to chakra work as well as people with more experience. Please pre-register by mailing a \$40 check (to cover renting the space) made out to the Durham Meditation Center to: John Orr, 1214 Broad Street #2, Durham, NC 27705. John will be offering this series of classes on a dana (generosity) basis. At each session, participants will have the opportunity to offer dana. It is helpful if participants can attend as many sessions as possible. See page 2 for more information. For any further information contact John Orr at 919-943-0438 or john@newhopesangha.org.

WINTER/SPRING 2010

leap of faith

Two days of Spiritual
Inquiry and Meditation
May 21 - 23
See page 5.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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