



PIMC NEWS

PORTLAND INSIGHT MEDITATION COMMUNITY

www.portlandinsight.org

JANUARY 2004

It Is Not "My" Mind

By Robert Beatty

You know how it is. You sit down to meditate, adjust your posture to be comfortably upright and take a moment or two to stretch. Perhaps you light a candle, ring a gong, chant, bow and pay homage to the sacred objects on your altar. Then you decide; "Now I am going to practice mindfulness of breathing. I am going to bring my attention to the sensations of breathing in my body, and experience ease and tranquility, perhaps even some bliss. For a breath or two your mind is quite cooperative. "Breathing in, breathing out, in, out..." Then you discover that your mind is planning the dinner for the party next week, or anguishing about your pet's death twenty years ago. "OK, wandering mind. NOW I am going to stay with the breath and experience that lovely concentrated feeling I had the last time I meditated. In, out, in, out"

Again you notice minutes have passed while your mind has been entranced in the past and the future. After a few repetitions the frustration begins to build. "What's wrong with me, I can't do this today. Maybe I am too tired. Perhaps it's what I ate this morning. I never can do anything right. I will just try harder. In, out, in, out... Damn this is frustrating. I must be doing something wrong. Maybe this is the wrong practice for me. Maybe I should practice Lovingkindness for a while. Maybe some mantra practice or yoga, or a cup of tea. I think I will quit and try again tomorrow...or a few weeks from now...or never."

Many people experience meditation as hopeless because they come to it with a profound misunderstanding. They define "success" depending upon whether or not the mind is concentrated, the feelings are pleasant, and the time passes with a minimum of mental or physical discomfort. It is true that sometimes, even at the beginning of one's practice, there may be times of great ease, concentration and delight. However, it is inevitable that coming face to face with your mind will also require acceptance of the fact that the mind is more like a zoo full of crazed animals than a pristine meditation hall.

Just as in the outer world, violence and coercion will work in meditation for only a very short time. You may well be able to force attention to stay with the breath by sheer will power, but before long there will be an uprising and once again the mind will be out of control and rebellious. For meditation to develop, you must go beyond the effort to stop the mind from wandering, and embrace an attitude of acceptance.

At some point it becomes undeniably apparent to you that it is not "your" mind at all. It is, rather, "the mind", a natural phenomenon that is no more predictable or personal than the Oregon weather. The mind is capable of thinking and feeling anything. If it were truly yours and under your control, you would not let the mind torture you with self-criticism, doubts, worry or obsessions.

The realization that the mind is out of control is not a sign of failure. It is one of the fundamental insights that arise through meditation. It signifies the opening of the inner eye and the beginning of meditative insight. The transition from "my" mind to "the"

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mind creates a certain distance between your sense of self and mental experiences. What you previously identified with as “me and mine” becomes an amazing collection of natural phenomena that can be observed and studied.

Once the activities of the mind can be observed directly, the work of mental development and purification begins. Thoughts, emotions, moods, beliefs, memories, perceptions, and every experience that occurs at the six sense doors, are observed to be fleeting.

Now back to sitting. You are making a gentle and persistent effort to maintain awareness of breathing in and breathing out. You study the texture and rhythm of the breath. Awareness arises that the mind is wandering and obsessing. It was unobserved when leaving the breath, but now awareness illuminates the mental activities. There is a choice... to continue thinking or to return to the simplicity and calm of attending to breathing.

Concentration on the breath is not an end in itself. It is more like a compass heading that helps you to find the way through a forest or dense fog. When you consult the compass and discover yourself to be off course, you make a correction and come back to your intended direction. By making a clear intention to remain present with the breathing, the wanderings of the mind are made apparent. Mindfulness of breathing is thus a skillful means to illuminate everything that happens in the mind.

Insight meditation is an artful blending of concentration and mindfulness. The breath is used as the *primary object* for the development of concentration. Simultaneously, non-judgmental mindfulness is cultivated. This allows awareness of everything that happens in the mind, including whether or not concentration is present.

With skillful practice, a dynamic balance develops between concentration and mindful awareness so that meditation becomes relaxing and often effortless. There is room for everything that arises.

*Robert Beatty is the guiding teacher of Portland Insight Meditation Community.
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The Portland Insight Meditation Community

is a nonprofit, urban center for the practice of Insight Meditation. PIMC is a community where people come together to learn, support one another, and deepen their practice of the Eight-Fold Path of the Buddha. From the contemplative life at the heart of the community, wisdom and compassion naturally lead to a lively engagement with life in the world.

Board Notes

By Jim Dalton

The unofficial theme of the most recent Board meeting was change. Even though we all pay lip service to anicca, it is easily forgotten in the monthly busyness known as the Board meeting. This time we paid close attention to the changes taking place within our community.

We reviewed the financial report and recognized that we approached our goal of providing our founding teacher with a housing allowance of \$30,000 for the year. We have never even come close before. We saw the building fund grow to over \$125,000 – a new fund for this year. We reviewed a new, improved draft of the Corporate By-laws – making us closer than ever to approving them and putting that task behind us. We acknowledged the success of the first annual Harvest Dance – the beginning (we hope) of another tradition.

Another first – the first annual Board retreat is planned for January 11, 2004. This will give a chance to ponder all these changes and more, and plan for the future. We need to discuss the future home for PIMC (a church? a smaller professional building? a renovated house?) What sort of ongoing maintenance would be required on our own building? How would we manage that? What sorts of activities would be planned for the community in a new place? What relationships need to be built/maintained with other Buddhist groups in the area? What amount of funding is required for each possibility? How do we go about raising more building funds? Operational funds? What sorts of changes can we see coming our way? How do we prepare for the unseen and the unknown changes? All this will occupy our retreat time and some of it will be clarified.

The next community meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 18th (see Danelle's article). At that time we will share the results of our retreat and poll the community for their concerns, ideas, dreams, visions, questions, acknowledgements, etc. We will break up into smaller working groups to hear from all of our sangha members concerning these changes.

The first meeting of a new Kalyana Mitta (Spiritual Friends) group is scheduled for December 18th. I have solicited the help of experienced coordinators all over the country who are working with practitioners who want to deepen their practice by working in small support groups. Our first group will be reading Jack Kornfield's book, After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. Using that book as a launching pad, we will be discussing the book, our individual practice, and our group process. We look forward to organizing more small support groups to complement our Sunday evening practice and group retreats. Contact Jim Dalton for more information about joining a Kalyana Mitta Group. (503) 641-8336

January is the month where we look back at our past

year's accomplishments and look forward to our next challenges. This does not mean losing ourselves in past regrets or escaping into delusional dreams of the future. This means becoming firmly planted in the here-and-now to apply right understanding to our recent journey and right intention to the next steps of our journey. We hope you will join us on January 18th at our quarterly community meeting and participate in the sangha-building activity.



Jim Dalton has been serving on the PIMC board for three years. He may be reached at (503) 641-8336, jdalton@easystreet.com.

PIMC Board of Directors

At this time the board consists of the following people. Please call, send e-mail or approach in person to share your views and ask questions.

Robert Beatty (rbeatty@easystreet.com)
W (503) 223-2214

Jim Dalton (jdalton@easystreet.com)
H (503) 641-8336
W (503) 466-6507

Doug Pullin (dwpullin@yahoo.com)
H (503) 293-6823
W (503) 293-4177

Ann Faricy (annfaricy@comcast.net)
H (503) 284-5527

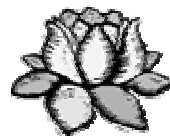
Linda Sawaya (buddhapainter@hevanet.com)
H/W (503) 297-7497

Nancy Turner (nturner@easystreet.com)
W (503) 241-4519

Karen Havran (khavran@hevanet.com)
H (503) 231-2758

Phil Harris (philboy@hevanet.com)
H (503) 234-4810

Danelle Till (mindfulmother@earthlink.net)
H (503) 603-9947.



Community Meeting:

Sunday, January 18th

Contributed by Danelle Till on Behalf of the PIMC Board

So the next Buddha may not take the form of an individual. In the twenty-first century the Sangha may be the body of the Buddha. We have the power to bring the next Buddha into existence in this century. If we sit together and practice looking deeply, we can bring the Sanghakaya (the Sangha Body) and the Buddha into existence. All of us have the duty to bring that Buddha into being, not only for our sake, but for the sake of our children and the planet Earth. This is not wishful thinking, this is a real determination.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Friends on the Path, Living Spiritual Communities*

In the forward to *Friends on the Path* Jack Lawlor talks about our Sanghas “matur(ing) into something alive, flexible, inclusive, tolerant, supportive, and vibrant.” In the fall we had a meeting of our community in which we were invited to speak to our sense of belonging in this community, what we might need, what we have observed and many spoke from their heart. Sunday, January 18th, will our next quarterly community meeting to continue to contribute to the development of our community. Your participation is not only welcome, but necessary as each idea expressed, each perspective shared, each energy held and each listening given, indeed each breath allowed, contributes unique qualities to our “maturing” Sangha.

Our night will begin with a sit. Then the members of our evolving PIMC board will be introduced (always helpful to have faces to go with names) and we will gather in small groups to discuss some of the following questions:

If you were on the board, what would be your long-range plans for this community?

What do you like about what is happening and/or what the board is doing? What would you like to see more of, less of? What should the board be doing that it is not?

What do you need to support your spiritual practice? Are you getting that? What other practice opportunities would you participate in if offered?

What would you like to see more of on Sunday or from Robert? What do you like? What works well for you? Any feedback on other dharma leaders?

What else would you like us to do as a community? What would need to be put in place financially or otherwise to have these ideas happen?

Are you happy with your level of participation in this community? If not, what can you and/or the community do to facilitate your participation?

People tend to participate in something that is theirs, that they have a stake in, that they have ownership of. How do and/or could we share and encourage ownership of this community?

When you have a chance, before January 18th, you may choose to think on these things. Then please join your community as we share and listen and participate in the process of bringing “the next Buddha into existence.”



Danelle Till is a member of the PIMC Board of Directors.

January 2004 PIMC Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	2	3
4 * Children's Sangha 6:30-8:45 pm - PDC * 5:30pm Newcomer Orientation & Instruction - PDC * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	5	6 * 7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	7 <i>Full Moon</i>	8 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	9	10
11 * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	12	13 * 7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	14 * 9am-Noon Meditation - PDC	15 <i>Last Quarter</i> * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	16	17
18 * Children's Sangha 6:30-8:45 pm - PDC * 6:30-7:15 pm Meditation * 7:15-8:45pm Community Meeting	19	20 * 7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	21 <i>New Moon</i>	22 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	23 5 pm Newsletter Deadline	24 (details p. 6) Robert Beatty Day Retreat 9-4 pm Location: Friends of Dhamma
25 * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	26	27 * 7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	28 * 9am-Noon Meditation - PDC	29 <i>First Quarter</i> * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	30	31

* Sunday Evening and Wednesday Morning Events - Portland Dharma Center (PDC), 2514 SE Madison, Portland

* Tuesday Evening - Dalton Home: 11965 SW Foothill Drive, Beaverton. Call Jim at 503-641-8336 if you need directions.

* Thursday Evening - HeartSong Sangha led by Doug Pullin: 2311 E. Burnside on the 3rd floor, Portland. Reach Doug at 503-293-4177.

Half Day Sits Continue:

Wednesday sits will be continuing on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month. Lyn Doiron will be opening the hall and ringing the bell for these Wednesday mornings sits, from 9:00 am - noon at the Portland Dharma Center.

Robert Beatty - Residential Retreats in 2004

March 12 - 14th
Marsh House
Whidbey Island, WA
patriciafulnecky@hotmail.com
(206) 789-1784

July 9 - 15th
Johnson's Landing Retreat Center
Kootenai, BC
info@JohnsonsLandingRetreat.bc.ca
(888) 756-9929

December 3 - 9th
Cloud Mountain Retreat Center
Castle Rock, WA
www.cloudmountain.org
(888) 465-9118

May 28 - June 6th
Cloud Mountain Retreat Center
Castle Rock, WA
www.cloudmountain.org
(888) 465-9118

October 25 - 29th
Hollyhock Holistic Learning Center
Cortes Island, BC
www.hollyhock.bc.ca
(800) 933-6339



Church Search Continues

The PIMC Church-Search Committee continues to look for a building that meets our needs for space, parking, zoning requirements, and affordability.

Scott Jones heard about a centrally located building for sale that had once been a Mason's Lodge, one of the few African American relics still around. He arranged a tour with the owner, a member of the Dharma Rain Zen Community. Unfortunately the building would need an overwhelming amount of restructuring and repair in order to meet our needs. Andrea Wiener recently spotted a church near SE 66th that has peaked out interest. The Search Committee is looking forward to getting more information and arranging a tour when the realtor returns from his vacation in early January.

We are not in a rush. Our goal is to find the right location that we can afford without stress or strain and will allow the sangha of PIMC to feel at home.

There are very few churches on the market in Portland, so we are interested in considering all creative possibilities. Keep your ears to the ground and pass along any leads you may encounter. Meanwhile, our sangha grows clearer about what it is looking for and our church fund continues to receive donations.



Submitted by Nancy Turner, Chairperson of the Search Committee

Sharing Suppers

By Terri Huggett

Thank you to James and Vicki Peck, Karen H, and Phil Harris for opening your homes and hosting food- and community-filled suppers on Saturday, December 13th. And to all their guests for bringing nourishment for the belly and the heart. See the pictures to the right of this article of the gang at Karen's house.

The next sharing suppers are very tentatively planned for Saturday, February 28th.



One Day Meditation Retreats- January 24th and February 28th

On Saturday, January 24th, Robert Beatty will lead a day-long non-residential retreat in Portland. On Saturday, February 28th, Doug Pullin will also offer a day-long non-residential retreat on Compassion.

Bring your lunch to practice mindful eating in the silence of supportive community.

Time/Date/Location:

Saturday, January 24th - With Robert Beatty

Saturday, February 28th - With Doug Pullin

9:00 – 4:00 pm

Friends of the Dhamma Resource Center,
1701 NW Thurman (2nd floor), Portland.

Attendance is limited. Pre-register with Theresa Friedline: (503) 289-7570, tessie769@yahoo.com

All retreats take place through your generosity. Donations accepted at the retreat for PIMC and Friends of Dhamma Resource Center.



Poetry and other amusing readings were the entertainment after a delicious potluck dinner.



PIMC Meets Friends of Trees

By Dan Hannon

The Buddha said that everyone should plant a tree once a year. Well, maybe he said that. He would have said that, had he known of the tremendous benefits of trees. A tree removes over 10,000 pounds of carbon from the air during its lifetime. Trees help control flooding, filter ground water, cool our homes in the summer, and provide beauty all year long. Friends of Trees, a local non-profit organization knows these things, and is dedicated solely to planting and maintaining the "urban forest." They are an organization so positive in outlook and so inclusive that it is hard to resist their call to volunteer.

PIMC is hoping you will volunteer to help plant some trees Saturday morning, February 7, 2004. This is a very direct form of public service. The work you do that morning will benefit the residents of Portland for the next 100 years— maybe even longer, and after a satisfying morning of planting, you get a free lunch. Details will be provided at sangha meetings as the event draws closer. For now, get that 2004 calendar out of its box and mark February 7th for Friends of Trees!



Dan Hannon of the PIMC Service Committee can be reached at hannond@aracnet.com

Winter Retreat

have i told you lately that
i love you?
well, i do!
but no, not me.
it's this,
this presence resting against the heart.
open the back door,
it blows gently in.
open the front door,
open the windows.
a breeze becomes the wind
the structure aches and moans.
and there is no house,
no home
just this
loving
and you.

— James Peck

James Peck a Sangha member. He contributed this poem to the PIMC listserv after sitting with Robert at Cloud Mountain in December.

PIMC Wish List

It is time to begin recording and duplicating Robert's talks on CDs and to have them available as streaming audio from the PIMC website, www.portlandinsight.org.

With this in mind PIMC needs some new equipment.

Digital Recording/Master CD Device	\$800
Mixer	\$250
Wireless microphone (so questions can be heard on the recording)	\$200

Ultimately we want to add a sound amplification system that will be compatible with this equipment.

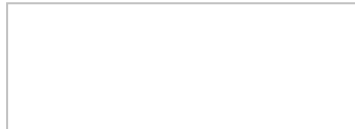
If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution toward the purchase of these items please contact Robert Beatty. rbeatty@easystreet.com (503) 223.2214



Portland Insight Meditation Community
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Community Meeting

Sunday, January 18th

PLEASE COME.

Connecting Online

The PIMC listserv is our community's online means of staying connected.

To join the listserv, send a blank email to **PIMC-forum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**. When you receive a confirmation message, respond to it.

It's just as easy to get off the list. Send a blank email to **PIMC-forum-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com**.

For additional information contact Paul Gerhards, paulg@aracnet.com.

February Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for February newsletter submissions is Friday, January 23rd, 5:00 pm. **Please, no late submissions.**

Art, poetry, humor, articles and other submissions inspired by the dharma are welcome!

Submit to: Karen H