

SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation,
Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 43

Winter 2012

UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2012 - 2013

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

Half-day Retreat **Sunday 12th August 12.30pm – 5.00pm** **\$15**
Why do we meditate? **Mary Potter Community Centre, 44 Durham St Christchurch**

This half-day event is a chance to slow down, to bring ourselves into the present, and to reflect on what meditation practice can bring to us in the midst of all our cares, duties, and expectations. There will be a mixture of meditation practice, guided exercises, a talk and discussion. All are welcome – see more information inside this newsletter

Spring retreat **Tuesday 11 September^{evening} – Sun 16 September^{midday}** **\$220(*110)**
Meditation & Qi gong **with Jeremy Logan & Mark Bouckoms** **Staveley Camp**

Through meditation our capacity to be compassionately present for our immediate experience grows. It enables us to be open to, and tenderly hold the most difficult parts of ourselves. It deepens and enriches our experience of life and also results in a spaciousness that enables us to respond creatively in situations we would otherwise react automatically from old conditioned patterns. In this retreat meditation will be blended with the gentle grounded physical practice of Qi Gong – as a way to cultivate vital energy through movement, breathing and deep relaxation.

This retreat combines two highly experienced and compassionate teachers – Insight Meditation teacher - Jeremy Logan and Qi gong and yoga teacher Mark Bouckoms.

January retreat **Friday 25th Jan^{evening} - Sat 2nd Feb^{midday}** **\$295(*150)**
With Yanai Postelnik **Staveley Camp**

New Zealand born Yanai Postelnik (living & teaching in the UK) brings a warm hearted insight into meditation and life. This will be an opportunity for both beginners and those with experience to undertake sustained insight meditation, deep inquiry and loving-kindness practice to discover the profound and transforming depths of peace and clarity to which our heart and mind can awaken.

***Sliding scale:** *the actual cost of the retreat is the higher amount, however it is possible to pay a subsidised rate for those on limited income anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure. See also "top up" fund information in this newsletter.*

The Closing Date for registration is one week before the retreat starts. Information about registration is inside the back cover of the newsletter.



There are night birds, in the garden below
us singing.

Oh Listen!

For a moment I thought it was

Our own bodies

Mary Oliver *West Wind*

Why do I meditate?

It gives me an opportunity to stop. To notice.
To appreciate. To find some greater
awareness of what is going on inside.

It seems to help provide a greater chance that
I will also stop and notice during my day.

It makes me feel like I have a spiritual life – I
like that 😊

Rachel

Greetings all,

We have a wonderful line up of events planned
for the next six months.

In **August** we are running a half day retreat
event here in Christchurch. It is often difficult
for people to make the opportunity to come on
long residential retreats. Most people have work
and family commitments that can be hard to put
aside. A half day event can be more manageable
– a chance to pause, and create some stillness
and steadiness amongst the chaos. This event
will focus on the question “why do we
meditate?” Helping us to consider what
meditation practice can bring to our lives.

In **September** we are again running our spring
retreat as a blend of both insight meditation and
the gentle, grounded physical practice of Qi
gong. We have two wonderful teachers to guide
this retreat – Jeremy Logan & Mark Bouckoms.
This promises to be a strong and compassionate
experience for people – a great opportunity to
surrender some of our unhelpful ways of being
and find new spaciousness.

The new year brings another great event – Yanai
Postelnik – a New Zealand teacher now resident
in the UK will be offering a retreat in **January**
2013. Yanai has a wonderful sense of humour
and insight. This retreat will provide a rare
opportunity for beginners and experienced
meditators to undertake deep and profound
practice.

The newsletter has more about all these retreats,
as well as notices, information about the
Christchurch sitting group, poems and articles.

Enjoy

Southern Insight Meditation is a non-profit, non-
sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making
available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana)
Meditation through retreats, courses and talks.

We are also a charitable trust and donations are tax
exempt.

Our website is <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

Face up to it!



Why do we meditate?

Southern Insight Meditation
Half day Retreat

Sunday 12th August 12.30pm – 5.00pm

Mary Potter Community Centre –Christchurch

Southern Insight has a face book page! This is a great way to stay in touch with people. So find us! (*Like us!*) Send in articles, notices, ideas! You can make use of this as a way to connect with like-minded folk.

Sometimes it can be hard to tear yourself away for long retreats in the middle of busy life so Southern Insight are offering a half day retreat in Christchurch on Sunday the 12th of August. This is a chance to slow down, to bring ourselves into the present, and to reflect on what meditation practice can bring to us in the midst of all our cares, duties, and expectations.

Why do I meditate?

I meditate because it helps me keep things in proportion. Particularly when I'm busy or stressed, just sitting and watching for even just a few minutes helps me see how I can become trapped in my own mind. I can see the myriad (usually negative) thoughts constantly passing through telling me to be stressed, or feel bad, or that I'm not efficient enough. And if I stay a bit longer it becomes easier to see the quieter, bigger patterns that lie in front of me that are often a clue to what I need to do – act to make my workload more tolerable, do something else for a bit, or let go of the stress and breathe since continuing to be tense won't make any difference to the result!

Chrys

The half-day will be a mixture of meditation practice, guided exercises, and discussion. A talk will be presented by Di Robertson – a skilled and long time practitioner who many will know also runs beginner courses in Insight Meditation.

Those experienced and new to the practice of meditation are all welcome.

Venue: Mary Potter Community Centre 442 Durham Street, Christchurch
Time: 12.30pm - cup of tea & welcome; Practice 1.00pm– 5.00pm
Cost: \$15 (to cover venue), dana invited for teacher
Bring: Meditation shawl or blanket, clothing appropriate to walking outside – all else provided

Registrations: Please E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com or phone Meg on 3288052.

Spring Retreat

Insight Meditation & Qi Gong
With Jeremy Logan and Mark
Bouckoms



Tuesday 11th – Sunday 16th September
Stavelly Camp
Cost \$220 (sliding scale down to \$110)

Our spring retreat is a wonderful chance to awaken to the new season. This retreat combines the skilled and compassionate teaching of insight meditation teacher – Jeremy Logan with the heart centred practice of Qi gong – led by Mark Bouckoms.

Through meditation our capacity to be compassionately present for our immediate experience grows. It enables us to be open to, and tenderly hold the most difficult parts of ourselves. It deepens and enriches our experience of life and also results in a spaciousness that enables us to respond creatively in situations we would otherwise react automatically from old conditioned patterns.

Alongside meditation practice this retreat will blend Qi Gong – a gentle grounded body practice that cultivates vital energy through movement, breathing and deep relaxation.

Previous experience in Qi Gong or meditation not required

Jeremy Logan has been involved in insight meditation for the last twenty-three years, spending several years in the East and in Europe learning and practicing meditation. He has been teaching retreats since 1991 in New Zealand and has taught in India. He lives in the Wairarapa, working as a counsellor and facilitating Stopping Violence programmes for men

Mark Bouckoms has studied directly with the principal teacher of Sheng Zhen Wuji Yuan Gong, Master Li Jun. He has taught Qi-gong for 14 years and has also practised yoga for 30 years, completing 2 years teacher training with the Himalayan Institute (U.S.A). He has a Diploma in Naturopathy and has practised as a massage therapist for 10 years. He currently directs the Hatha Yoga School of Sumner and teaches internationally

Why do I meditate?

(and 'cos the Buddha liked lists...)

1. the mental chatter becomes clear and there is possibility for stillness (even if it seems remote sometimes)
2. the opportunity for joy is cultivated (especially on long retreats)
3. mind-full-ness is nurtured (along with the capacity to be more than my body, feelings and mind)
4. the sangha becomes my refuge (yum)

Sarah

Southern Insight Steering Group

The steering group has 6 people who volunteer their time to run the organisational end of southern insight. There is also a number of folk out there who help us in many ways – thanks very much to all of you. If you feel you would like to get more involved – there

are lots of little (and medium sized) jobs that we would very much appreciate a hand with. It is a tremendous group of people – very welcoming!

If you have any questions about retreats or other events, or would like to get more involved —here are the contact details of the Steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

Di 338 7070
Meg 328 8052
Dermot 381 4617
Rachel 382 2019
Sarah 027 669 3824
Chrys 338 0313

E-mail: southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com

Why do I meditate?

So I don't miss my life while it is happening

Meg

The Excellence of Bodhichitta

Excerpt from *The Places that Scare You*
 by Pema Chödrön

When I was about six years old I received the essential bodhichitta teaching from an old woman sitting in the sun. I was walking by her house one day feeling lonely, unloved and mad, kicking anything I could find. Laughing, she said to me, “Little girl, don't you go letting life harden your heart.”

Right there, I received this pith instruction: we can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice.

If we were to ask the Buddha, “What is bodhichitta?” he might tell us that this word is easier to understand than to translate. He might encourage us to seek out ways to find its meaning in our own lives. He might tantalize us by adding that it is only bodhichitta that heals, that bodhichitta is capable of transforming the hardest of hearts and the most prejudiced and fearful of minds.

Chitta means “mind” and also “heart” or “attitude”. *Bodhi* means “awake”, “enlightened”, or “Completely open”.

Sometimes the completely open heart and mind of bodhichitta is called the soft spot, a place as vulnerable and tender as an open wound. It is equated in part, with our ability to love....As Trungpa Rinpoche put it “Everybody loves something even if it's only tortillas!”.

Bodhichitta is also equated, in part, with compassion— our ability to feel the pain that we share with others. Without realizing it we continually shield ourselves from this pain because it scares us. We put up protective walls made of opinions, prejudices, and strategies, barriers that are built on a deep fear of being hurt. These walls are further fortified by emotions of all kinds: anger, craving, indifference, jealousy and envy, arrogance and pride. But fortunately for us, the soft spot — our innate ability to love and to care about things—is like a crack in these walls we erect. It's a natural opening in the barriers we create when we're afraid. With practice we can learn to find this opening. We can learn to seize that vulnerable moment—love, gratitude, loneliness, embarrassment, inadequacy—to awaken bodhichitta.

An analogy for bodhichitta is the rawness of a broken heart. Sometimes this broken heart gives birth to anxiety and panic, sometimes to anger, resentment and blame. But under the hardness of that armour there is the tenderness of genuine sadness. This is our link with all those who have ever loved. This genuine heart of

sadness can teach us great compassion. It can humble us when we're arrogant and soften us when we are unkind. It awakens us when we prefer to sleep and pierces through our indifference. This continual ache of the heart is a blessing that when accepted fully can be shared with all.

The Buddha said that we are never separated from enlightenment. Even at the times we feel most stuck, we are never alienated from the awakened state. This is a revolutionary assertion. Even ordinary people like us with hang-ups and confusion have this mind of enlightenment called bodhichitta. The openness and warmth of bodhichitta is in fact our true nature and condition. Even when our neurosis feels far more basic than our wisdom, even when we're feeling most confused and hopeless, bodhichitta—like the open sky—is always here, undiminished by the clouds that temporarily cover it.

This book, (and loads more) is available at Southern Insight's library – just come to a sitting group at Ferndale school on a Wednesday night to access the library.

In deep stillness

there's a cry in my heart.

I wish I could get rid of it.

That would be a great delight,

An enormous pleasure.

But I'm not game enough to let it go

So I keep carrying it as a burden.

I'm afraid that if I release it,

With crying, endless crying,

My stillness will be forever disturbed.

Werner Finck

What place does beauty have in everyday life?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myq8upzJDJc>

In Washington DC, at a Metro Station, on a cold January morning in 2007, a man with a violin played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, approximately 2000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

After about four minutes, a middle-aged man noticed that there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, and then he hurried on to meet his schedule.

About four minutes later, the violinist received his first dollar. A woman threw money in the hat and, without stopping, continued to walk.

At six minutes, a young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again.

At ten minutes, a three-year old boy stopped, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The kid stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. This action was repeated by several other children, but every parent - without exception - forced their children to move on quickly.

At forty-five minutes: The musician played continuously. Only six people stopped and listened for a short while. About twenty gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of \$32.

After one hour: He finished playing and silence took over. No one noticed and no one applauded. There was no recognition at all.

No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world.

He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before, Joshua Bell sold-out a theatre in Boston where the seats averaged \$100 each to sit and listen to him play the same music.

This is a true story. Joshua Bell, playing incognito in the D.C. Metro Station, was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's priorities.

This experiment raised several questions:
In a common-place environment, at an inappropriate hour, do we perceive beauty?
If so, do we stop to appreciate it?
Do we recognize talent in an unexpected context?

One possible conclusion reached from this experiment could be this: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made...

How many other things are we missing as we rush through life?"

The last of one's freedoms is to choose ones attitude in any given circumstance

Victor Frankl



Sitting Group

Wednesdays 7.30pm – 9.15pm

Our “two venue” format for Sitting Group is working well. All are welcome to join us.

First Weds of the month: -Ferndale School
Second Weds of the month Opawa Zendo
Third Weds of the month - Ferndale School
 (facilitated session)
Fourth Weds of month: Opawa Zendo

If there are **five Wednesday's** in a month – the default for the 5th Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

Ferndale School , 104 Merivale Lane in the school staffroom

Opawa Zendo is located at 4 Kennedy Place, on the corner of Opawa Rd opposite the Hillsborough Domain.

Just imagine if we lived with no compassion, thinking only of ourselves. We would suffer greatly.

The more you think of others, the happier you are.

The Dalai Lama, *Imagine All the People*

Resources

INSIGHT AOTEAROA E-newsletter

Insight Aotearoa is an e-newsletter for New Zealand's insight meditation practitioners and communities.

Posted monthly, it includes articles by and interviews with dharma teachers from around the world as well as a comprehensive listing of events in the insight meditation network across New Zealand.

To subscribe (free) visit:
newsletter@insightaotearoa.org
or write to PO Box 6626, Wellington 6041,
Aotearoa New Zealand.

Southern Insight Library



Southern Insight has a large collection of books from Buddhist authors across the world. We also have recordings of talks by all the teachers who have shared their wisdom with us on our retreats.

These books and talks cover everything from dealing with sorrow, to cultivating joy. They have insights into how to deal with the challenges of modern life and how to live in a way that supports awakening. They can be funny, profound, and challenging and are a great resource for supporting your practice and your life.

To access these – just come to one of the Sitting Group sessions at Ferndale school on Wednesday evenings. There is no charge (though we do appreciate them being returned when you have finished with them).

Dharma- talks available online

Video talks by well known teachers are being made freely available online by *Secular Buddhism*.

Recently uploaded :

Being Completely Human - Buddhist Practice in a Post- Christian World

In this talk to around 80 people at St Andrews on The Terrace in Wellington in February 2012, Stephen Batchelor offers some critical reflections on the secular transformation of Buddhism as it comes to terms with the challenges of globalisation and modernity.

It can be viewed at:
<http://secularbuddhism.org.nz/resources/videos>

Secular Buddhism is a nonprofit organization in New Zealand whose aim is to help support Buddhist teachings and practice in New Zealand.

You can visit their website at
<http://secularbuddhism.org.nz/>

Reality is like a face reflected in the
blade of a knife,
its properties depend on the angle from
which we view it

Master Hsing Yun, *Describing the
Indescribable*

Getting our newsletter and hearing about local events

If you did not receive this newsletter by mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please phone Dermot on (03) 381 4617. Any donation towards the cost would be appreciated.

Get it by e-mail!

In addition to the regular mail-out of the newsletter we send out the newsletter as a PDF attached to E-mail. If you think you would like to be on our e-mail newsletter circulation list all you need to do is send an e-mail to

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com with the words “**subscriber**” in the title.

If you would like to replace your hard copy with this E-version – include your name and address in the body of the e-mail and state “**remove from hard copy list**”.

Hear about local events!

If you would also like to go on [the local sangha contact list](#) to receive updates of local events in the Christchurch area – also state “**add to local list**” in the e-mail.

Unsubscribe

If at any time you want to be removed from our e-mail contact list – just send us an e-mail with the words “unsubscribe” in the title.

Retreat Booking Procedures

Please phone **Paul** on **381 0444** for a retreat registration form – or download a form from our website. **The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should** be sent to **6 Trent St, Linwood, Christchurch**. Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation**. Stamped addressed envelopes are appreciated when booking. Further information will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit. Please note that retreats will only run if there are sufficient registrations.

Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$5.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date, and the money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

Top Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

Location

Our retreats are generally held at Staveley campsite at the foot of Mt Hutt. This is approximately 1.5 hours south west of Christchurch. For directions see our website

Contact Details for Southern Insight

E-mail: southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com

Post: 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

WebSite: <http://southern-insight.org.nz>

E-mail is generally checked weekly. For a more immediate response call one of the numbers of the steering group members listed above.

If undelivered, please return to:
13 Dacre Street
Christchurch



If you have a red dot on your newsletter – this means we are no longer sure of this address and will shortly remove it from our data base – Get in touch if you still want our newsletter – see how inside!