

BOULDER SANGHA TUESDAY EVENING GROUP



INFORMATION PACKET

www.insightcolorado.org

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The **Boulder Sangha** (*sangha*, a Pali word for “practice community”), together with the **Denver Sangha**, comprise the **Insight Meditation Community (IMC) of Colorado**. The Boulder Sangha began when a group of meditation practitioners came together in 1983. Lu Wright, who had attended a retreat at the **Insight Meditation Society** in Barre, Massachusetts, and others who were interested in meditation began meeting weekly at what was then the Mennonite Church at 15th and Euclid in Boulder. As the group continued to expand, it moved to various locations, including some private homes, a yoga studio, a church, and a rented facility in north Boulder. The Tuesday evening group has been meeting at its current home at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church since October, 2011. Currently, the Tuesday evening group meets **weekly from 7-9 pm on Tuesday evenings throughout the year**.

In the mid-1990’s, the Boulder Sangha began to coordinate some of its activities with the Denver Sangha and together the two groups incorporated as a non-profit organization, the Insight Meditation Community of Colorado. The purpose of IMC is to provide organizational support in the Rocky Mountain region for weekly Insight Meditation groups, as well as residential and non-residential retreats, practice days, and classes.

The IMC Web site, www.insightcolorado.org, was created to make information about events easily accessible. The Website includes links to other organizations sponsoring Insight Meditation classes and retreats in Colorado and elsewhere in the U.S. This internet site also contains resources for meditation practitioners who wish to explore various aspects of the dharma more deeply. The organization also has a **Facebook** page: **Boulder Insight Meditation**.

In 1997, IMC began to offer weekend retreats each Fall and Spring, usually renting retreat facilities from either the **Shambhala Mountain Center**, northwest of Fort Collins, or from the **Sunrise Ranch Conference Center** in Loveland. Currently, IMC continues to offer periodic residential and non-residential daylong and weekend retreats which are taught by senior teachers Lloyd Burton, David Chernikoff, and Terry Ray, as well as other graduates of the Community Dharma Leader program at **Spirit Rock Meditation Center** in Woodacre, California. Lloyd Burton is the senior teacher of the Denver Sangha of IMC. David Chernikoff and Terry Ray are the senior teachers of the Boulder Sangha.

David Chernikoff, M.Div., LCSW, is the guiding teacher of the weekly Tuesday night group. He began the study and practice of meditation in 1971 and started teaching insight meditation in 1988. His major influences have been senior teachers from the Insight Meditation Society and Spirit Rock Meditation Center. David also studied with a prominent Tibetan Buddhist teacher during a 3-year stay in Nepal and has been influenced by contemplative teachers from other traditions, most notably **Ram Dass, Father Thomas Keating, and Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi**. David’s other activities include working in private practice as a spiritual counselor and psychotherapist as well as teaching workshops and retreats on “conscious aging.”

Terry Ray, MA, LPC, is a licensed psychotherapist who also teaches yoga and is a certified leader of Sensory Awareness. She has been practicing vipassana meditation since 1974 and leads retreats, classes, and workshops in the U.S. and Mexico. Terry has been teaching vipassana meditation for more than 20 years. Her method is gentle yet powerful, and focuses on waking up to one’s innate wisdom through simple mindfulness practice. Currently, Terry leads small retreats for women several times a year at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. She also offers periodic practice days for people dealing with chronic pain and illness and daylong retreats dealing with other spiritual themes.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

Insight Meditation (known as *vipassana* in the Buddhist tradition) is a simple technique which has been practiced in Asia for over 2,500 years. Beginning with the focusing of attention on the breath, the practice concentrates and calms the mind. It allows one to see through the mind's conditioning and thereby to live more fully present in the moment. Its presentation through the Boulder Sangha is non-sectarian, although the ethics and traditions of Buddhist philosophy and psychology are included for guidance.

The practice develops clarity of seeing which allows grasping, judgment, and fear to fall away. One discovers and cultivates qualities such as compassion, equanimity, wisdom, joy, and moral integrity.

The ultimate aim of the practice is the ending of suffering in the discovery of an unconditioned and complete freedom. The Tuesday evening gatherings are designed for both beginning and experienced meditators. The combination of this regular schedule, group support, silence, and instruction provides a beneficial environment for developing and deepening meditation practice.

The format of the evening will generally be:

- Opening chants/dedication (brief; 3-5 minutes)
- A 45-minute sitting meditation period
- Announcements and stretch break
- Dharma talk/discussion
- Close/Dedication of merit

David Chernikoff will give the dharma talk 2-3 times per month, with other group members or guest teachers facilitating at other meetings. On occasion, a dharma video of a respected teacher may be shown and/or there may be small group discussions on various topics related to spiritual practice.

MEDITATION ETIQUETTE

- **Please remove street shoes before entering. Please feel free to bring slippers or other foot warmers.**
- **We encourage you to arrive prior to 7 PM to get settled on your cushion, meditation bench, or chair. If you must arrive late, please remove coats or other outerwear in the outer lobby, open and close the doors quietly, and move as quietly as possible to avoid disturbing others.**
- **Please make sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.**
- **If you should need to leave the room during the silent meditation period, please do so quietly.**
- **If you prefer to use a cushion for meditation, please bring your own. Small carpets are available to place cushions on or to place your feet when sitting in a chair.**

Why do we chant before meditation?

Our intention is to honor the Buddhist tradition that is the source of the teachings on Insight Meditation. Through chanting, we are acknowledging the roots of the practice: the awakened heart and mind (Buddha), the teachings that awaken us to reality as it is (Dharma), and the community of practitioners (Sangha). Chanting also aligns us with people who have been sincerely practicing these teachings and others like them for over 2500 years. By chanting together, we are affirming our commitment to living in a conscious and caring manner. The unified sound we create helps to strengthen our concentration and to bring us into the present moment. Please feel free to join us in the chanting or to simply sit quietly and listen.



The Insight Meditation Community of Colorado, Boulder *sangha* (i.e. *practice community*) is an incorporated non-profit organization and is entirely supported by voluntary donations (called *dana* in this tradition; Pali language word for “generosity freely given”). Everyone is welcome to participate and there are no set dues or fees. This tradition of making the teachings which lead to liberation freely available to anyone who is sincerely interested goes all the way back to the Buddha himself.

It’s important to understand, however, that there are ongoing costs involved in what we do, and that our ability to offer practice and study opportunities depends on regular financial contributions from participants.

Here’s a snapshot of our current situation for the Tuesday evening group:

- We pay **\$180** per month rent in advance to St. Paul’s United Methodist Church for each six-month period.
- The service committee has set a budget of **\$955-\$1130** per month, which allows us to support both principal speaker and group coordinator, David Chernikoff, and numerous guest speakers throughout the year.
- In addition to rent and speaker expenses, there are also incidental expenses like photocopying, DVD purchases and rentals, and the Inquiring Mind (a meditation journal that is freely distributed to the community.)

Boulder Sangha – Tuesday Evening Group Monthly Expenses

Expense	Monthly Amount
Rent	\$180
Dharma talks by David Chernikoff and guest speakers: \$150 each; 3-4 times per month	\$450 to \$600
Administrative services—paid to David Chernikoff per month	\$300
Other expenses: (e.g., Inquiring Mind journal, handouts, phone calls, DVD purchases and rentals, etc.)	\$25-\$50
Total	\$955 to \$1130



Although the Tuesday night format varies over the course of the year, we typically have an outside speaker once a month on average and David Chernikoff presenting dharma talks two to three times a month. On other evenings there might be discussions, DVDs, talks given by sangha members, or meetings to conduct business. These events are assumed not to add to our overhead. On this basis the *break-even* monthly financial requirements of the organization are in the range of \$935-\$1150.

To cover its expenses, the group has historically depended on both weekly donations to the dana bowl and more substantial offerings by committed sangha members. Our particular way of incorporating as a non-profit prohibits us from suggesting a specific weekly or monthly donation amount. However, please be aware that in the past donations have sometimes been insufficient to meet our expenses. We encourage you to donate generously, according to your means, if you find the Tuesday night programs of value in your life and practice. All contributions are tax deductible.

To date, the Boulder Sangha's main activities have been the regular Tuesday evening gatherings with dharma talks; women's retreats, weekend morning sessions, and other practice activities with Terry Ray; weekly groups led by Community Dharma Leaders Peter Williams and Johann Robbins, and periodic practice days and retreats led by all of the teachers mentioned above. As the group evolves, there may well be a need for and interest in other programs. These might include such things as structured study for beginners and/or senior students, more seminars and retreats, or social and networking opportunities. Since we're an all-volunteer group with no dues to sustain it, all such ideas depend on participants' initiatives to volunteer time and financial resources. Your participation is welcome and encouraged. Thank you for your support of the Boulder Sangha and the Insight Meditation Community of Colorado!

The "Dana Bowl" is provided weekly to give the sangha members the opportunity to support our teachers and activities, as well as to express appreciation for being part of the community. Some people choose to donate on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. This can be done by **making your check out to "IMC"** and putting it in the dana bowl or sending it directly to David Chernikoff / 255 Pawnee Dr. / Boulder, CO 80303-3730.



These instructions are intended only for those who do not yet have a practice or for those who want to learn a new one. If you already have a silent meditation practice, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, and if you plan to continue it, please feel free to practice it at any meeting or gathering with us.

Our gatherings usually include people from several different traditions and lineages. Although the following instructions come from one of the Vipassana lineages, the practice of mindfulness or awareness is central to all of our traditions, so cultivating awareness should not interfere with either the spirit or the practice of your own tradition whatever it may be.

Posture. Sit or kneel in a position that feels stable, using a cushion, a meditation bench, a chair, or the plain floor. Try to keep your spine straight in order to help keep your mind more alert.

- **Don't force** your body into a posture it isn't used to; rather, let it stretch gradually over time into the new posture.
- **Don't hold** your body in a position where it might be injured.
- In order to calm the mind, it's better to remain unmoving in sitting meditation, but to avoid hurting your body, shift positions if you feel much pain.

Mindfulness of breathing. “Mindfulness,” the Buddha said, “is the pathway to the Deathless.”

- Close your eyes and turn your attention inward.
- Find that place in your body where breathing feels most obvious. For most people that's the abdomen or the nostrils, but it can be anywhere.
- Bring your attention to that place and try to keep it there without a sense of forcing. Simply know the bare sensations of breathing with as much directness and subtlety as possible.
- Let awareness of other things go. Your mind will wander in thought. As soon as you notice that wandering, without judgment let the thoughts go and bring your awareness back to breathing with a kind of gentle, gliding motion in your mind.
- **Don't try to stop thinking**, a common error, because that effort will surely fail.
- **Just let go of thought** once you recognize it and return to mindfulness of the breath. Be patient and gentle with yourself.

Training our minds to be aware is very difficult, but success is certain if we patiently persist.

Extending Mindfulness. Once you find that your attention has begun to wander less and can stay on the sensations of breathing with some stability, then try extending mindfulness to other sensations in your body.

- Use awareness of breathing as your anchor; start there, then extend your awareness to some other sensation, like tightness in the shoulders, and then return “home” to the awareness of breathing.
- Notice clearly which sensations are pleasant, which are unpleasant, and which are neutral. Can you learn to be with them all equally, without reaction?



- After you find that you can track events throughout your body without a lot of wandering off into thought, try extending mindfulness further to include mental events, too and knowing:
 - Thoughts as thoughts,
 - Emotions as emotions,
 - Mental images as mental images, and
 - Consciousness (the function of knowing) as consciousness.

Notice here, too, what events are pleasant, what are unpleasant, and what are neutral. Can you begin to be with all emotions equally?

After you extend awareness further to include seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting, you will have opened your field of mindfulness to encompass all that we can experience.

Walking meditation is identical to sitting meditation, except that you are training your mind to pay attention to a moving body instead of a sitting one.

- Try to maintain awareness of the sensations of walking, bringing attention back when you see that the mind has wandered off into thought.
- In some traditions formal walking meditation is done in a group; in others it's done alone. If you do it alone, it's useful to move more slowly than usual and walk without a destination.
- Walk back and forth on some straight track about fifteen to twenty paces long.

In every moment, during any activity at all, we have a chance to wake up by being present, and being present comes from being aware. Pay attention to sensations in all the body's postures: sitting, walking, standing, lying down. Watch what your mind is doing in all its moods. Ask yourself, "What's happening?" in order to stimulate mindfulness in the moment.

Then ask, "How am I relating to this?" in order to see whether you're caught or free. Is there reaction in your mind? Is there a way to let go? The Buddha said that freedom through mindfulness comes like slowly filling a bucket, drop by patient drop. Each moment of seeing clearly what is here and then letting it be, though it may seem inconsequential, is significant. ***One day the bucket overflows.***

A possible aid in meditation is the practice known as mental noting, i.e., labeling what is happening with a silent thought. Some of our Buddhist traditions practice noting, others avoid it. You might experiment with it to see if it's helpful to you or not. If you decide to try it, just identify whatever is happening in your body or mind by labeling it with one word spoken silently: "in, out" or "rising, falling" for breathing; "thinking," "seeing," "joy," "tingling," "anger," "burning" and so forth. When you are moving slowly in walking meditation, try noting each part of each step: "lifting, moving, and placing." The value of noting is to help direct mindfulness to whatever's happening, and also to antidote thought with thought.



New Member Contact Person:

For general information about the community, sangha activities, or vipassana meditation, please contact **Ani Liggett** at 303-664-0243 (**press “2” to leave a message**).

SANGHA GUIDES are experienced practitioners who volunteer to assist with your meditation practice.

If you would like beginning meditation instruction, support for your ongoing practice, or simply have questions about insight meditation, please feel free to contact David Chernikoff at davidchern@comcast.net or 303-499-7592 for more information. He coordinates the sangha guides and can arrange to have one of them contact you.

Sangha List Serve and Facebook page:

If you would like to be on the Boulder Sangha list serve, please send your name and email address to karen.sheldon@gmail.com and ask to be added to the list. We use the list sparingly and limit its use to meditation related announcements. Our Facebook page is: **Boulder Insight Meditation**.

Retreat Information:

For information about Boulder Sangha retreats, please see the “Retreats and Courses” section on our website (www.insightcolorado.org), check our Facebook page (**Boulder Insight Meditation**), or contact **Tracy Walters** at 720-490-5413 or tra.lewa@hotmail.com.

Volunteers:

The Boulder sangha depends on volunteers for many of the administrative and logistical activities that make our programs possible. The **Sangha Service Committee** is a group of people who offer their time and energy to help with these tasks, which include volunteer coordination, set-up and take-down on Tuesday evenings, working with sound and recording equipment, editing CDs and taking them to be duplicated, managing finances, and helping with snacks and drinks at our occasional social gatherings. Getting involved is a great way to deepen your connection to our practice community.



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- Joseph Goldstein, *The Experience of Insight* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1987)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (Boston: Beacon, 1987)
- Wes Nisker, *Buddha's Nature* (NY: Bantam, 1998).
- Suzuki Roshi, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (NY: Walker/Weatherill, 1970).
- Achaan Chah (Paul Breiter, ed.), *Being Dharma* (Shambhala, 2001).
- BuddhaDhasa, *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (Wisdom, 2004).
- Larry Rosenberg, *Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation*
- Pema Chodron, *When Things Fall Apart* (Shambhala, 1997).
- Joseph Goldstein, *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom* (Shambhala, 1993).
- Joseph Goldstein, *One Dharma: The Emerging Western Buddhism* (Harper Collins, 2002).
- Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield, *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* (Shambhala, 1997).
- Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* (Parallax, 1998).
- Ayya Kema, *Visible Here and Now* (Shambhala 2001).
- Jack Kornfield, *A Path with Heart* (Bantam, 1993).
- Jack Kornfield, ed., *Teachings of the Buddha* (Shambhala, 1996).
- Levine, Stephen, *A Gradual Awakening*, (Doubleday, 1989).
- Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Grove, 1962).
- Sharon Salzberg, *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* (Shambhala, 1995).
- Nyaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (Citadel, 1969).
- Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Wisdom Publications, 2002)
- Don Morreale, *The Complete Guide to Buddhist America* (Shambhala, 1998)



Note: By now there are hundreds of English-language websites related in one way or another to sources of information about Buddhist teachings, practice opportunities, and related issues. It is a rapidly growing and rapidly changing landscape. Rather than seek to summarize them all, this handout instead simply lists two of the most comprehensive sites which are also most relevant to Insight Meditation practice. They both also provide linkage to a vast array of resources that you may find worth investigating.

ACCESS TO INSIGHT www.accesstoinsight.org

Probably the single-most comprehensive and authoritative site for accessing original texts of the Suttas (actual teachings of the Buddha), as well as the Theravada lineage, which has sustained the practice of Insight Meditation since it was first taught. The site includes a key word index linked to texts and commentaries, as well as suggestions on reading them and putting them in historical context. The entire contents of the Web site are also available on CD-ROM on a dana basis.

DHARMANET www.dharmanet.org

The links referenced here are to Buddhist sources that are of an academic nature, as differentiated from resources representing a Buddhist organization or practice group. DharmaNet is probably one of the most comprehensive portals of Net entry into online sources of information concerning Buddha Dharma in the English-speaking West. *Definitely worth a visit.*

DHARMA SEED LIBRARY www.dharmaseed.org

Dharma Seed Tape Library is the current manifestation of a wish to share the Dharma by preserving the oral tradition of the Buddha's teachings and by supporting those in daily practice by distributing contemporary Theravadan Vipassana teachings. Dharma Seed operates financially from the sales of tapes and your generosity through donations. Dharma Seed's hope is that their volunteer service will contribute toward greater understanding, compassion and liberation. Dharma Seed offers talks from original, unedited "live recordings".

DHARMASTREAM www.dharmastream.org

The Dharma Talks presented here were all recorded live during meditation retreats over the past several years by various teachers at Insight Meditation Society, Spirit Rock Meditation Center or other retreat centers. The talks generally range from 30 to 60 minutes in length and all incorporate important aspects of the Buddha's teachings, illuminated by the teacher's understanding and experience.

SELECTED INSIGHT PRACTICE CENTERS and INFORMATIONAL LINKS:

- **BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES www.dharma.org**
Includes a schedule of upcoming retreats and other events.
- **INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY www.dharma.org**
Includes a schedule of upcoming retreats and other events.
- **SPIRIT ROCK MEDITATION CENTER www.spiritrock.org**
Includes a schedule of upcoming retreats and other events.

