

SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 46

Winter 2013

UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2013-2014

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- non-residential retreat: **Sunday September 15th 100-5.30pm** **\$10**
Christchurch, (Mary Potter Centre)

These half day retreats are a chance to take a break in the midst of busyness and to connect with what the practice of meditation can really bring to our lives. This 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 regularly runs beginner courses. Both people new to meditation and experienced practitioners are welcome. For more information and to register call Sarah on 027 6693 825, or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

Pre-Xmas 1 day retreat – “Awakening Joy” Saturday 21st December \$35*
With James & Jane Baraz Christchurch (Mary Potter Centre)

We are very fortunate to welcome James & Jane Baraz (from California) to Christchurch for a one-day pre-Xmas workshop. James Baraz has been teaching mindfulness meditation since 1978 and the *Awakening Joy* course since 2003. He is co-author of *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps to Happiness*, a book based on the course. This is likely to be a popular course and places will be limited. Further information inside newsletter.

To register call Sarah on 027 6693 825, or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

Beginners' Meditation Course Thursdays 7:00-8:30 pm start 8 August for 5 weeks Cost: \$30
With Di Robertson Opawa, Zendo

This 5-week course will provide instruction for insight meditation. Beginning with focusing the attention on the breath, the mindfulness practice calms and concentrates the mind, allowing us to live more fully in the present moment. The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher. Further information inside newsletter. To register contact Di on 338 7070 or email diana.r@xtra.co.nz

Summer Retreat 2014 Friday 24th Jan^{evening} - Friday 31st Jan^{midday} cost \$TBC
With Subhana Barzagli, & Jeremy Logan Staveley Camp

This summer retreat for 2014 will be led by two much loved insight teachers. This will be a weeklong silent insight retreat and we will update you on the title and focus of this retreat later in the year.

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

Costs: Retreat costs are set to be as affordable as possible and longer retreats include a sliding scale: See also “top up” fund information in this newsletter. *This is a small change in price from previous advertisement due to more information about costs

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



I believe every person wants to be happy. At the core, all of our actions are motivated by a longing for genuine well-being. Our own well-being and joy have the capacity to awaken those qualities in others around us, becoming a gift to everyone we meet.
-James Baraz

Future retreat events:

Sharda Rogell – May 2014

We look forward to hosting Sharda again in May 2014 for a 1 day non- residential retreat in Christchurch

Dharma Gathering - January 2015

Plans are underway to run our fourth Dharma Gathering event. This is offered by Southern Insight in conjunction with the Diamond Sangha Zen Tradition. The format of the Dharma Gathering melds meditation with more interactive practices – workshops, bodywork, poetry, art, movement, debate and discussion. The event has been very popular – so look out for it again in early 2015.

Enquiries:

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

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>

Greetings all,

Can we afford Joy in a world of suffering? James Baraz posed this question in an article in the Huffington Post in 2010.

It's a good question and one many of us can relate to. We long for happiness yet we are troubled with questions about whether it is fair, right, or just plain foolish to look for this when all around us we see financial, social and environmental troubles.

In December this year Southern Insight will be hosting James and Jane Baraz as they offer a one day workshop on 'Awakening Joy'. James is an internationally renowned teacher and with his partner Jane runs regular programmes at Spirit Rock Insight Meditation Centre in California. Based on Buddhist wisdom and practice the Awakening Joy course explores not only how to bring joy into our lives but how to accept that joyful living is an essential strategy not only for yourself but for the world you live in.

One of the core aspects of joyful living is connection with others. We like to think Southern Insight helps with this – through our events, internet postings, and newsletters. If you would like us to do more – let us know your ideas – we would welcome them!

This newsletter has more information about James Baraz and this workshop, as well as other items and Southern Insight events. The response to the half day retreats has been great and we are happy to be running another at the lovely Mary Potter Centre on 15 September. We're also delighted to be running a week long retreat with our wonderful teachers Subhana and Jeremy in late January. Registrations are open.

In joy - enjoy

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives.

Howard Zinn



Southern Insight stall at the Dalai-Lama talks

In June New Zealand was treated to a visit by the Dalai Lama. Many Southern Insight friends locally and around the country will have taken the opportunity to attend one of his public talks. Here in Christchurch many of us went for both his morning and his afternoon talks and we were also allowed to have an information table to highlight Southern Insight and the events and activities that we run. It proved to be a good time to meet new people and to catch up with some we haven't seen for a while. It was also interesting to see the extent and variation in the wider Buddhist community in Christchurch. And, true to expectation, the talks that the Dalai Lama gave were well worth hearing. After hearing others describe past talks, I was amazed at how much he spoke directly to us in English using his very present and alert interpreter only occasionally to find the right words. His talk on the four noble truths in the morning session included some interesting Buddhist history while his afternoon talk "Compassion: the pillar of peace" was shorter and more accessible and allowed time for questions that had been sent in earlier

Chrys

My religion is simple

My religion is kindness

.Dalai Lama"



Beginners Meditation Course

Thursday evenings – 7.00 – 8.30pm
 Begins August 8th
 Cost: \$30.
 Venue: Opawa, Zendo

This 5-week course will provide instruction for insight meditation. Beginning with focusing the attention on the breath, the mindfulness practice calms and concentrates the mind, allowing us to live more fully in the present moment.

The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher.

Di Robertson will teach the course. She has been meditating since 1994, has undertaken many meditation retreats and taught beginners' courses since 2001. She is a trustee of Southern Insight Meditation (<http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/>).

For further information and registration Contact Di on 338 7070 or email diana.r@xtra.co.nz

Location: is the Garden City Zen's Group Meditation Room at 4 Kennedy Place, Hillsborough (cnr Opawa Road).

Follow the pathway along the side of the garage. The meditation room is behind the cottage.

Getting There By Bus: Take the #28 Lyttelton Bus from the Bus Exchange and get off at the Grange Street stop. Walk along Opawa Road towards the Port Hills to the next side street which is Kennedy Place.

Getting There By Bike or Car: Travel east on Brougham Street to Garlands Rd. Continue straight through at the lights onto Opawa Rd and past Grange St. Kennedy Pl is the next street on the left and is opposite Hillsborough Park.



Awakening Joy With James & Jane Baraz

Pre-Xmas – 1 day retreat/workshop
Saturday 21st December

Cost: \$35

Venue: Mary Potter Centre, 442 Durham Street,
Christchurch

Registration essential:

E-mail: Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

or Tel: Sarah 027 6693 825

About James & Jane Baraz

[poached from website:

<http://www.jamesbaraz.com/index.html>]

In 2003, I started the Awakening Joy course so that the Buddhist teachings that I've so benefited from could be made accessible to and practiced by anyone whether or not they were interested in Buddhist philosophy. My approach has been to present these principles and practices with a particular emphasis on how they can lead to true happiness. I'm grateful that the course has become more popular than I ever could have imagined, with thousands of people from all over the world practicing the principles it offers.

I would say that a central theme in my life has always been to find and experience true happiness and then share it with others. As an elementary school teacher for twelve years it was rewarding not only to help students learn the curriculum but, even more, to help them see their own goodness.

In 1974, I discovered mindfulness meditation and Buddhist philosophy. This was a turning point in my life. Because I was acutely aware of how my mind

was so filled with confusion, insecurity and self-judgment, I started practicing in earnest as a way to find an inner peace that I longed for. It was clear early on that there was something to this meditation stuff. I was becoming more at ease and actually feeling good about life. I'd found something that was miraculously leading me toward more genuine well-being and happiness.

As I deepened my practice, I had a natural urge to share what I was discovering with others. I didn't know how that would happen, but shortly after I moved to San Francisco in 1977, I was invited to teach a meditation class at Holistic Life University. With the support of my teachers, Joseph Goldstein and Ram Dass, I began leading weekend retreats as well as starting one of the first insight meditation groups in the Bay Area. I also began to organize longer intensive meditation retreats for Joseph and Jack Kornfield, so that others could experience the same benefits I received from intensive meditation practice. With the encouragement of my teachers, I started teaching longer retreats myself in 1982 and have been doing that ever since.

In 1980, I met the love of my life, Jane, who has a similar dedication to conscious living. Our marriage has been based on our commitment to help each other grow and shine. Towards that end, I've been blessed with the perfect partner.

As interest in meditation grew in the 80s, I was part of a group that founded Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California, which has become one of the most respected mindfulness meditation centers, supporting thousands of practitioners since 1986.

At Spirit Rock, besides serving on the Board of Directors and the Governing Teachers Council, I've been involved in a number of programs to support others in their practice. Jane and I started Spirit Rock's thriving Family Program almost twenty years ago. In addition to teaching at Spirit Rock, I've taught mindfulness meditation at Esalen Institute since 1983 and have led retreats and workshops throughout North America and Europe for the last 30+ years.

Besides focusing on being present for all the joys in life, I also feel it's essential to deal skilfully with life's challenges and sorrows. In the fall of 2013, I will be

co-leading a new two-year program exploring how we can become more conscious in working with aging, illness, and dying, known in Buddhism as the Heavenly Messengers. The purpose of the Heavenly Messenger program will be to support personal exploration as well as service to others as they face these unavoidable facts of life.

I have two sons and three grandchildren, and live with Jane in Berkeley, California, where I also lead a meditation community, the Insight Meditation Community of Berkeley (IMCB). All in all, since I was first motivated to find happiness and share it with others, it's been quite a journey. As my mother, Selma Baraz famously says, my life is truly blessed.

-James Baraz

James Baraz co-authored *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps to Happiness* with Shoshana Alexander, a book based on the course.

A review of an Awakening Joy workshop

Last year, on Sharda's recommendation, I enrolled in James Baraz's online "Awakening Joy" course.

His approach was simple, effective, and realistic for the times we live in. Small steps of awareness you can easily incorporate into your daily life. No pressure. One practice I found particularly helpful was taking a moment each evening to answer these 3 questions:

What am I grateful for? What did I enjoy today? and When do I feel satisfied?

If you are wanting applied meditation practices for the real world that are full of heart, presented in a gentle way - this is your man!

Marina



Can We Afford Joy in a World of Suffering?

Let's face it: it's pretty bad out there. Financial worries. Powerful people ruled by greed and self-interest. Distrust and outright hatred because those who are different seem threatening. A planet, since the beginning of time providing us with indescribable richness and beauty, now so out of whack that our main task may be figuring out how to survive.

It's not a picture that fills the heart with hope and inspiration. And yet it's a world still filled with goodness, love, compassion, natural splendor, delight and joy. Dare we let ourselves feel those things that uplift our spirit and make us feel all warm and fuzzy inside? Would we risk going into a dream state of complacency, thinking everything's going to be all right only to wake up and find it's too late and we blew it?

When people hear that I teach an online course called [Awakening Joy](#), they sometimes respond with skepticism. Although they may long for it, the idea of letting themselves actually feel joy in times like these seems a bit frivolous and self-indulgent. As one skeptic commented, it sounds like being in La-La Land singing "Kumbaya" while the world around us is on fire. I've dubbed this the Kumbaya Factor, and it's one of the main justifications people give to keep themselves from opening to genuine well-being.

I use the word joy to describe all the flavors of well-being that uplift us and help us feel whole -- from happiness and delight to contentment and inner peace. These feelings are the healthy states that we naturally experience when our hearts are open. Qualities such as kindness, generosity, gratitude, compassion, and inspiration all touch us in ways that

make us feel connected and alive. They are doorways to true happiness and can be activated by tuning into the goodness of life around us and inside us. But what value, beyond a few moments of escape, can come from allowing our hearts to feel joy by looking for the good?

We're hard-wired to be influenced by others around us. Neuroscience tells us that we all have "mirror neurons" in our brains that light up in resonance, affected by others' experience. If you see someone stub their toe, you will likely wince in response. In fact, the same area of the brain will become activated as if it happened directly to you. When you see another person anxious or afraid, feelings of agitation are likely to arise. Watching actors in a drama or comedy, we can viscerally experience the full range of emotions projected on the screen. Whether hope or despair, we are wired up for empathy.

The problem with despair is that it saps our energy. Have you ever had thoughts like, "What's the point? It's all going down the tubes. People are too short-sighted to trade in immediate comfort for a longer-term greater good." But this line of thinking not only keeps us from acting, the cynicism is contagious. It deflates the potential response of others, too. Rabbi Michael Lerner has pointed out that cynics are really frustrated idealists. They've been disappointed too many times and have traded in their inspiring vision for a more "sophisticated" worldview that protects them from additional hurt.

On the other hand, when we see someone perform heroically or act with wholehearted commitment for a noble cause, we ourselves become inspired. Jonathan Haidt, Harvard professor of psychology, calls this feeling of uplift and inspiration the "Elevation Response." Triggered by acts of virtue, "it causes warm, open feelings ... in the chest; and it motivates people to behave more virtuously themselves." That's why we pay \$10 for a movie ticket to root for the hero or heroine as he or she saves the day. We love to be inspired. And with inspiration comes a magical feeling, a positive energy that wants to make a difference and can actually awaken that feeling in others around us.

Howard Zinn, the great historian whose "A People's History of the United States" did not gloss over the

shadow of our nation's development, wrote about the importance of looking for the goodness and beauty in life. In his essay "The Optimism of Uncertainty," he wrote:

"An optimist isn't necessarily a blithe, slightly sappy whistler in the dark of our time. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places -- and there are so many -- where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction."

I recently read Bill McKibben's brilliant book "Eaarth," and it had a profound effect on me. McKibben describes in a matter-of-fact way how our lives will likely change as our planet adjusts to global warming. I found myself at times overwhelmed as I took in the information and let myself imagine where we're headed. It was very sobering, even for someone who's a relative optimist. I wondered what it will take for people to shake off partisan politics, narrow-minded "us vs. them" worldviews, to wake up and realize that we're all in this together. It seems that often people don't change their habits until they are forced to do so out of fear. Then they do it kicking and screaming.

But McKibben does something extraordinary in the second half of his book. He shows the reader how these inevitable paradigm changes will ultimately necessitate some fundamentally healthy new ways of living our lives based on mutual cooperation and a shared caring for the planet. As I read his vision, I felt my energy slowly return, and with it my determination to want to make a difference.

Looking for goodness in ourselves, in others and in life is so vitally important in these times. Seeing what is good and noble about humanity helps us connect with our joy and aliveness. That natural joy and love of life helps remind others to stay connected with that perspective as well. We remember how good it feels to bring out the best in those around us and make this a better world. And we become positive agents of change, not because

we have our heads in the sand, but because life is too precious and miraculous not to want to do everything we can to let our love and goodness shine through and be a force for healing the world.

So can we afford joy in a world of suffering? I believe, in a world of suffering, we can't afford *not* to find joy.

-James Baraz in *Huffington Post*, November 2010

Remember that happiness is as contagious as gloom. It should be the first duty of those who are happy to let others know of their gladness."

Maurice Maeterlinck,
Belgian Philosopher, 1862-1949

Internet ramblings

Climate change, social inequality, peak oil, human over population, water shortage, environmental limits – How can Buddhist thought assist?

Once again, here are a number of links that have been posted on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernInsight>. Even if you are not a facebook user, I understand you can visit the page and look through the links there.

Quite a number of Buddhists around the world are starting to talk about the idea of engaged Buddhism. I've picked out these articles from the many posted on our facebook page because they offer some thoughts about how to approach these issues in a way that takes heed of the teachings.

The first contrasts fear and love and offers some insight into the difference between working from love rather than from fear.

<http://tinybuddha.com/blog/love-versus-fear/>

The second highlights the value of seeing the world as sacred and not just as a place that owes us a living, and how this viewpoint changes things

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-faith/wp/2013/06/14/earth-isnt-just-home-its-holy/>

The third (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-loy/the-new-bodhisattva-path_b_2166676.html) looks at what Buddhist teaching has to offer with regard to understanding and participating in activism. And as with all the teachings, it focuses on understanding all of us as human and subject to the same human foibles rather than dividing the world into "them and us"

The basic problem in our society is not rich and powerful bad people, but institutionalized structures of collective greed, aggression and delusion. The bodhisattva's pragmatism and non-dogmatism can help to cut through the ideological quarrels that have weakened so many progressive groups. And Buddhism's emphasis on skillful means cultivates the creative imagination, a necessary attribute if we are to construct a healthier way of living together on this earth, and work out a way to get there.

And the last one is an article providing 10 key points for becoming a compassionate activist. It is practical and worth coming back to for a reminder when the going gets tough!

<http://rabble.ca/books/reviews/2013/04/10-key-points-becoming-more-compassionate-activist>

Ohand as a wee aside, our very own Ian Mason has also had some media coverage recently – one of the many different ways that many people in our community are working on this issue:

<http://www.odt.co.nz/campus/university-otago/258462/merits-electric-cars-trains-promoted>

Happy travelling

Chrys



Sayings of the Jewish Buddhist

Drink tea and nourish life; with the first sip, joy; with the second sip, satisfaction; with the third sip, peace; with the fourth, a Danish.

Christchurch 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, staffroom
Opawa Zendo 4 Kennedy Place, (off Opawa Rd)

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:

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

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

North Canterbury Yogi looking to join Sitting Group

Hello, my name is Kate and I live out in Hawarden North Canterbury. I am very keen to become involved in the dharma community. I have been developing a meditation practice over last 4-5 years and now want to go a lot deeper with teachings and support from others. I work in Rangiora on Wednesday & Thursday and while the drive is 1.5 hours I would really like to attend sitting group. I am wondering if there is anyone that I would be able to stay with in Christchurch on Wednesday night. I would only need a bed, as I would be off in the morning to work. If anyone can help I would be truly grateful. My contact is 0274655432 or kateandrob@amuri.net

So Much Happiness

It is difficult to know what to do with so much happiness
 With sadness there is something to rub against,
 a wound to tend with lotion and cloth.
 When the world falls in around you, you have piece to
 pick up,
 Something to hold in your hands, like ticket stubs or
 change.

But happiness floats.
 It doesn’t need you to hold it down.
 It doesn’t need anything.
 Happiness lands on the roof of the next house, singing,
 and disappears when it wants to.
 You are happy either way.
 Even the fact that you once lived in a peaceful tree house
 and now live over a quarry of noise and dust
 cannot make you unhappy.
 Everything has a life of its own,
 it too could wake up filled with possibilities
 of coffee cake and ripe peaches,
 And love even the floor which needs to be swept,
 the soiled linens and scratched records...

Since there is no place large enough
 to contain so much happiness,
 you shrug, you raise your hands, and it flows out of you
 into everything you touch. You are not responsible.
 You take no credit, as the night sky takes no credit
 for the moon, but continues to hold it, and share it,
 and in that way, be known.

Naomi Shihab Nye

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. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should be sent to 6 Trent St, Linwood, Christchurch.

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. Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation**.

Online payment instructions

The account to pay into is Southern Insight Meditation... [.ASB] **12-3148-0078078-00**

When paying online please use the following format:

In the *Particulars* box put the initials of the teacher followed by rt and the year (e.g. YP rt2013 for Yanai Postelnik retreat.– In the *Code* box put how many people are included in the retreat deposit (e.g. 1 person). In the *Reference* box put your name

E.g.

Particulars	Code	Reference
YP RT 2013	2 people	J Smith

Please note on your registration form that you have paid your deposit online and state the amount you have paid.

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

