

sangha news

AUGUST 2005 VOL 4 NO 3

The Mystery of Relationship

By Eugene Cash and Pamela Weiss

As befits a discussion about relationship, Eugene co-wrote this issue's dharma piece with his wife and colleague, Pamela Weiss.

EUGENE: When I first met our friends and fellow dharma teachers Kittisaro and Thanissara I was intrigued by their relationship. Kittisaro had been a monk for 15 years, Thanissara a nun for 12. They explained that they had fallen in love in the monastery without having ever touched and having barely talked. Kittisaro told me, "We had an arranged marriage, we just don't know who arranged it!" Because relationship is one of the cutting edges of my own practice, I was curious, and asked how they were doing after three years of marriage. Kittisaro responded, "Being married is like having two people under one robe."

I loved how this response described the seamlessness of practice—how, when we fully inhabit the dharma, we naturally extend it outward. For Kittisaro and Thanissara, years of monastic training allowed them to include



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each other as part of their practice with the same mindfulness and compassion they had each cultivated individually.

EUGENE & PAMELA: For us as lay practitioners, the world of relationship exists side by side with formal meditation and retreat practice. We go on intensive retreat as temporary monastics to train the heart and mind and to discover the freedom found in realizing our true nature. Practice allows us to begin to awaken beyond our personal history and our conditioning. As our practice deepens, we find the capacity to apply principles of dharma to wider and wider aspects of our lives.

The term *relationship* conventionally implies our relationship with others, but in our practice we extend it inward, to how we relate to ourselves. Mindfulness retrains us by giving us a new orientation to relating to our bodies, emotions, and thoughts. We then apply this new perspective to how we relate to others. Human interaction provides a powerful mirror to study the self. We often believe it is the other person who is responsible for our reactions. But, as one of our teachers says, “It’s never the other person.” Understanding relationship in this way makes it possible for our involvement with people to become a central component in our practice and a profound discipline to support awakening.

We can call on *sila* to help us cultivate wisdom and kindness in relationship. *Sila* is translated as morality, ethical conduct, or virtue. Virtue (which has the same root as *virility*) expresses the power of the dharma in our action and interaction. The most fundamental teaching of *sila* is the practice of nonharming. Traditionally *sila* is spelled out as the five basic precepts: not killing, not stealing, not misusing sexuality, not lying, and not using intoxicants. Each of these can be applied in our relationships in the spirit of not harming.

Not killing can be taken to mean not attacking or trying to quash the spirit of someone else even when there is disagreement. Not stealing can be understood as taking care to respect the time, values, and boundaries of others. Not misusing sexuality helps us to respect the powerful, mysterious, erotic force that exists between human beings, while also acknowledging the harm that can be done when we misuse this power. Not lying and not misusing intoxicants both point to the importance of maintaining clarity so that our words and the intention behind them further honesty and connection rather than confusion and divisiveness.

Whenever we teach together, people inevitably ask us about our relationship. Perhaps because we are both practitioners living a life dedicated to the dharma, people tend to idealize our relationship and assume we must have “the secret.” But there is no secret. Relationship is wonderful and amazing, but it is also hard work.

So when people ask us about our relationship, one of the first things we say is, “Relationship is *dukkha*.” *Dukkha* often translates as suffering, stress, or unsatisfactoriness, or alternately as that which is unreliable, transitory, or difficult to bear. We say this not because our relationship is bad or particularly difficult but to help students recognize that *dukkha* is not a mistake. It does not arise because we are doing something

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wrong. Rather, it's a characteristic of all human life and relationships.

PAMELA: Soon after we were married, I was surprised to find myself in a state of distress. I discovered I had been harboring a secret fantasy: "When I get married, then I'll finally be happy." Fortunately, I didn't blame my unhappiness on Eugene! Being grounded in Buddhist teaching and practice, I understood the teachings on dukkha, and that the Buddha taught true happiness can never be found in that which is conditioned. Relationships can bring relative happiness, but to expect them to meet all of our needs and desires is delusion. Only freedom and awakening bring true peace.

* * *

EUGENE & PAMELA: In addition to dukkha, one of the other characteristics of reality described by the Buddha is *anicca*, or impermanence. Everything changes. Nowhere is this more evident and important to recognize and understand than within relationship. Our relationships with our loved ones, family, friends, and co-workers are not set in stone. We are all constantly changing. When we embrace the truth of impermanence as a living reality, our practice is grounded in right view and includes flexibility and fluidity. We don't expect people not to change but instead open and welcome the changes, growth, and development that are natural for ourselves, for others, and within each relationship. This way, instead of relating to impermanence as an insult or problem, we find ourselves continuously surprised, which opens a world of wonder and delight.

The teaching of *anatta*, or selflessness, grounds relationships within the depth of the dharma.



Anatta, or "no self," does not mean there is nobody home. Rather, this third characteristic of existence points to the selfless nature of reality, that nothing exists as a separate, solid, permanent entity. Once we recognize the impermanence of every thing, it is a natural progression to begin to question our fixed or reified identity. As we come to understand the relative truth of our existence, we begin to intuit the universal mystery of who and what we are.

EUGENE: When my daughter was growing up, we would do a special meditation practice about once every year. The practice was simple: we would sit together and look at each other. As we looked, the instruction was for her to see that I was not (simply) her father, and for me to see that she was not (simply) my daughter. Doing this, even for a few moments, was a profound and powerful practice. Although it was uncomfortable for my daughter to see me beyond my role as her father, she loved being seen as more than my daughter! This practice allowed us to connect beyond our familiar roles and identities. I encourage you to experiment with this practice in your own relationships.

* * *

The author Wendell Berry describes relationship as a commitment to a way or a path. "In joining ourselves to one another we join ourselves to the unknown," he writes. When we commit in relationship we commit to an unknown, always-changing mystery. This is true in marriage, as well as in being a parent, or a lover, or a colleague, or a friend. It is also true when we commit to the Buddha way. As we cultivate the practice of learning to relate to all aspects of our life as the path of dharma, everything and everyone becomes the ground of awakening.

sister
sangha
UPDATE

With this article, we begin a regular column intended to keep the sangha updated on Woza Moya, the community outreach project founded by Thanissara and Kittisaro, our dharma friends in South Africa. We began a “sister sangha” relationship with Thanissara, Kittisaro, and Woza Moya about five years ago, when, during a visit to our Sunday meeting, these incredible teachers won our profound respect and affection, which they then helped us channel into the program.



The new Woza Moya Community Centre, which IMCSF helped make possible

Other projects. Our first update was written by Thanissara. —Gayle Markow

We launched the Woza Moya HIV/AIDS project in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in April 2001. Thanks to the enormous efforts and skill of the Woza Moya team—Sue Hedden, Jane Nxasana, TC Ngcobo, Benedicta Ndlovu, and their 27 home-based care workers—the project continues to provide an enormous service. The wonderful fundraiser undertaken by IMCSF in April 2004 has enabled the building of Woza Moya’s own community centre. The building is nearly complete and is due to open this September.

Woza Moya’s mission is to provide support to those infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Sisonke region, about 15 kilometers from Ixopo, by supplying home-based

care, orphan intervention, and food security. The population in this area is about 23,000; unemployment stands at 83%. HIV/AIDS has claimed an increasing number of lives, resulting in a growing orphan population. To give you an idea of the severity of the HIV/AIDS infection rate, from April to August 2003, 47% of pregnant women at the antenatal clinic were HIV-positive. Of the general patients referred for voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) during this five-month period, 78% tested positive.

During the last year, Woza Moya made 6,496 home visits, providing counseling, medicine, advice, and general support. It made over 4,000 referrals to the hospital, clinic, and social welfare; assisted 689 orphaned children; and supported 100 children by providing school uniforms, fees, and books. Besides organizing rallies to inform people of legal rights and HIV issues, Woza Moya undertook a large local demonstration to increase awareness and has supported food security by providing 54 families with chickens for egg production and over 190 families with seedlings.

Recently the local hospital in Ixopo has been able to roll out an antiretroviral (ARV) treatment program on a limited scale, which is very good news. The initial availability of ARVs has tentatively moved the community on from stigma and denial, but the slowness of the rollout is stalling this recently won atmosphere of more openness.

Woza Moya has formed many positive partnerships with other aid and development agencies and recently won a three-year contract with the Elton John Foundation. The Woza Moya Community Centre is now reaching completion and looking beautiful (see photo). It consists of one large spacious general office area and two smaller rooms—one for counseling and the other a store/strong room. The office area will accommodate the five Woza Moya staff people and our seamstress, Star Ndlovu.

For more info, visit www.wozamoya.org.za.

Overfloetry This issue's call for contributions brought forth an outpouring of poetry. Here's but a sampling.

*Trees are always meditating
How far can your thoughts wander
When your legs are only moving deeper into the ground?
Your core mostly still
All of your moving in the pull and push of winds
The soak and weight of rain
All sensation given by sunlight
and nightfall
Insect, moss,
woodpecker, crow*

*How far can your thoughts wander
When your legs are only moving deeper into the ground?*

Risa Wallach

Relationship Dukkha

*The other person:
I notice unskillfulness;
I think they should change.*

*They appreciate
My pointing this out to them
Not so very much.*

Jennifer Scaff King

Coming Closer

*I've heard you
in a blackbird's song
in the dark of night
in the whispering wind*

*can you hear me?
are you coming closer?*

*I've seen you
running with the deer
sleeping with a bear
swimming with the salmon
in the rush of the river*

*can you see me?
are you coming closer?*

*I've dreamed you
in the coyote's howl
the eagle's flight
the raven's caw
you're the flow of the slipstream
the song inside all
I search for you everywhere
can you hear my call?*

*do you dream me?
am I coming closer?*

Joe Shakarchi

**Illustrator and former
sangha member Shoshanah
Dubiner lives in Ashland,
Oregon, known for its
many beautiful trees.**

Journey into Sangha

A TRIP TO SOUTHEAST ASIA REVEALS CONNECTION WITHIN COMMUNITY

Story and photos by Kim Hsieh

In March I traveled in Viet Nam with Thich Nhat Hanh and an international delegation of 100 monks and 90 lay practitioners. But my journey actually began last fall, with an email from my brother. He would be deploying to Iraq soon, it said. An indescribable wave of emotion engulfed me; I felt dizzy and closed my eyes. No longer could I cultivate my “equanimity” about the immense tragedy of the wrongful war by limiting my intake of the news. I now had a relationship with the conflict, and it went way beyond my comfort zone.

As I struggled to live with this new reality, I sought my ground in the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh (or “Thây,” as he is known by his students), the gentle Vietnamese Zen master whose poem “Those That Have Not Exploded” had resonated with me long ago. The heart of Thây’s teaching arises from a deep understanding of suffering. During the American war in Viet Nam, he sought to put his understanding of the Buddhist teachings into practice and to serve those whose lives were devastated by the violence. He was feared—and later exiled—by both the North and South Vietnamese governments because he refused to take sides. When I learned that it was possible to accompany Thây on his first return to his homeland since being exiled nearly 40 years ago, I signed up without a second thought.



Devotional offerings at a mountain temple

Traveling for 24 days (in the spirit of a mindfulness retreat) as part of Thây’s “fourfold sangha,” I began to see the depth of Thây’s insight and the ability of his practices to create togetherness and safety in community. “Aware that looking deeply at the nature of suffering can help us develop compassion and find ways out of suffering,” he writes in his *Mindfulness Training on Awareness of Suffering*, “we are determined not to avoid or close our eyes before suffering. We are committed to finding ways, including personal contact, images, and sounds, to be with those who suffer, so we can understand their situation deeply and help them transform their suffering into compassion, peace, and joy.” The energy of the sangha becomes a powerful crucible for this transformation of suffering.

As members of Thây’s “sangha body” we attended a variety of public dharma talks. Each

time, the monks and nuns chanted “Namo Avalokiteshvara,” and Thây would invite the audience to participate in it as a meditation, to hold in their hearts those who were suffering and to bring them into the presence of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion. Each time, tears flowing, I held my brother and all those suffering due to violence. The clarity and power of the music united us in community despite language and cultural differences, and as the last notes faded I felt held by the sangha, grounded and light.

* * *

Walking meditation in Thây’s tradition is a deeply communal practice. One does not walk alone, and while walking single-file we were given a simple instruction: “As you walk, be aware of the energy of the person in front of you; be aware of the energy of the person behind you.” The essence of this instruction was about staying in contact with the sangha body (in addition to one’s own), and the effect of it on me was to radically change the experience of walking meditation.

When walking meditation took us out into the grounds surrounding the temple, people often took the hand of the person next to them. As we started one such period, I felt a small hand slip into mine, that of a young woman (and new friend) from Malaysia. We took a few slow steps—mindful of breathing, of walking, of touch—and then she faltered...hesitated...and stopped. I stole a glance, saw a faint quiver on her lips. The others moved on their way and gradually disappeared from view.



Monks chanting at one of the talks

We stood in the courtyard, hand in hand, unmoving, for almost an hour. As we breathed slowly and deeply together, my senses took in her energy and the energy of the grasses, trees, insects, birds, and warm, humid air around us. It seemed I could hear



The entrance to Tu Hieu temple in Hue, where Thây was a novice monk

at once the now-distant echoes of war in those very woods, the clamor of suffering, and also the clarity of renewal—of survival, healing, and the reclaiming of dignity. I realized my dharma sister’s suffering and my suffering were no different, part of a vast and yet intimate web of timeless human experience. Into that web were woven infinite cycles of death and rebirth—like Viet Nam, like Iraq—and for a moment in the face of it all, incredibly, I was at peace. A short while later my friend turned to me with a faint smile and whispered, “Thank you.” We hugged for a long time, and in the embrace of this small boundless sangha, I breathed in a moment of true equanimity.

Kim’s brother has safely returned from Iraq to his post as an emergency physician on a stateside military base.

Adoring the Dharma

by Sean Feit

Many Buddhist devotional practices, though common throughout Asia, have not been emphasized in the West. The way Jack Kornfield describes it, when he, Joseph Goldstein, and Sharon Salzberg were beginning to teach the practices they had learned in the Asian monasteries, they made a conscious decision to leave out most of the ritual and devotional elements, and to focus on the meditation techniques themselves, which constitute the heart of the transformative power of the practice. Jack says he still feels that was a wise decision, but now that the Western sangha has matured, the time is ripe to reintroduce some of the devotional elements that were left behind.

One of the most powerful of these practices is chanting. With Jack's encouragement, I have been working with the traditional Pali monastic chants, leading them in a call-and-response format, similar to the Hindu practice of *kirtan*. I accompany the chanting on a harmonium, which is a hand-pumped reed organ built in India for chanting practice.

Devotion can become ecstatic as we chant together. In addition, the joining of our voices takes the practice out of our inner landscape and into community. The words we chant, often various names of the Buddha, describe qualities of the awakened heart, such as *samma sambuddhasa* (fully awakened one), *lokavidu* (knower of worlds), and *bhagavato* (blessed one). As the heart deepens in devotion to these enlightened qualities, passion becomes a great support on the path, sustaining us through difficulty and providing bliss along the way.

Join Sean for chanting the first Sunday of the month from 6:15 to 6:45. All chants will be taught.

*Sure, you can just sit there. But IMCSF now offers practices to complement your sitting practice—chanting and *chi gung*—and they're led by our very own sangha members. So if you have a little extra time before the sit on a Sunday, join us. No experience required.*

Extracurricular Activities

Meditation in Motion

by Kitty Costello

In Chinese, *chi* is variously translated as “breath,” “energy,” or “life force,” and *gung* as “practice” or “work.” Chi gung is a movement practice intended to promote health and long life by balancing the life force within us and bringing us into harmony with the life force that surrounds us.

Though the term *chi gung* was coined in the 1950s, the practice encompasses systems that date back 5,000 years or more. Chi gung is rooted in Chinese medicine, Buddhist and Taoist healing practices, and various martial arts forms.

My own current practice synthesizes more than 20 years of studying and teaching Eastern and Western healing practices, including Shao-lin Ssu gung fu, Kuan Ping tai chi, and various chi gung forms.

Our Sunday night sessions focus primarily on mindful standing and on gentle, energizing movements that are intended to cultivate grace, limberness, presence, balance, and peace. It is hoped that this practice will bring us to our meditation session feeling both calm and revitalized and that participants will have new skillful means for blending stillness into motion in their daily lives.

*Join Kitty for *chi gung* the second, third, and fourth (and fifth, if applicable) Sundays of the month from 6:15 to 6:45. The practice can be adapted for people with mobility issues.*

*Jürgen Möllers interviews
sangha member Bhavani Kludt*

TRAVELER

JM: You worked in the corporate world for many years. Now you teach yoga and meditation in jail...

BK: About seven years ago my mother died of cancer. When I wrote her obituary, I reflected on what my own would read if I was to die then. I decided if I didn't want it to read something like, "She was a great employee," I had to start living differently. Six months later I left the corporate world.

JM: Is that when you started yoga and meditation?

BK: No, I had started practicing yoga many years earlier. Since my childhood I had suffered from asthma. Through yoga I learned how to breathe and use techniques to reverse an attack as it started. Yoga also brought me to meditation. Both practices improved my quality of life physically and emotionally.

JM: But why prison work?

BK: My brother was in prison for about 12 years but was

never interested in yoga or meditation. Knowing how these practices had helped me and feeling a connection to incarcerated people, I decided to offer these practices to people in jail. I believe I can relate to these men because every man I work with in custody is

somebody's brother, son, father, family member.

JM: You are part of both IMCSF and the Integral Yoga Institute. How do meditation and yoga relate to each other in your practice?

BK: Meditation and yoga complement each other and deepen my understanding. The yoga philosophy and the Buddhist teachings have amazing similarities and synergy. I feel very blessed to be a part of these incredible spiritual communities and that my life work is now so meaningful.

ON THE PATH



Got a dharma story? Poetry?
Artwork? Announcement?
Contribute to *Sangha News*.
Email rachel@rmink.com.

schedule of

events

at the first unitarian universalist church

Upcoming Daylong Retreat

Saturday, October 15

9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

“Be Here Now”

Teachers: Kris Bailey and Bill Weber

Suitable for beginning and experienced practitioners, this daylong includes meditation instructions; sitting and walking meditation; lovingkindness practice; and a dharma talk.

Teaching by dana. To register, send a \$10 check payable to IMCSF to IMCSF, P.O. Box 475536, San Francisco, CA 94147-5536.

Beginning Mindfulness Meditation Class

September 22 and 29; October 6, 13, and 20

Five Thursday evenings, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Teachers: Kris Bailey and Bill Weber

This class will offer basic meditation instructions as well as Buddhist teachings and practical ways to apply these teachings to our daily lives. Includes October 15 daylong retreat.

Teaching by dana. To register, send a \$35 check payable to UU Church to First Unitarian Universalist Church, Attn: Adult Religious Education, 1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

KRIS BAILEY is a senior Vipassana practitioner and member of the Dedicated Practitioners Program at Spirit Rock. **BILL WEBER** is a senior Vipassana practitioner and graduate of Spirit Rock’s Community Dharma Leader Program.

Change in Dana Policy IMCSF’s rent to the UU Church has quadrupled. We consistently have to dip into IMCSF’s savings (which are minimal) when we don’t gather enough dana on Sunday evenings. For this reason we are no longer using the dana system for Sundays and are now asking for a *suggested donation of \$10*. Donations will be divided between IMCSF and the teacher. If writing a check, make it payable to IMCSF.

Every Sunday Evening

Meditation and Dharma Talk

6:30–7:00 Social time

7:00–7:45 Silent meditation

7:45–7:55 Break

7:55–8:55 Announcements, dharma talk, and discussion

Teacher: Eugene Cash

Eugene’s Absences and Visiting Teachers

Aug. 21: Thanissara (see page 3)

Sept. 11: Thanissara

Sept. 25: Pamela Weiss (see front page)

Oct. 2: Pamela Weiss

Oct. 9: James Baraz

Oct. 16: Bill Weber

Nov. 13: Kris Bailey

Nov. 20: Wes Nisker (tentative)

Beginning Orientation

Second Sunday of the month, 6:00 p.m.

A brief introduction to Vipassana meditation practice, led by a senior student.

Vegetarian Potluck

First Sunday of the month, 5:30 p.m.

Chanting

First Sunday of the month, 6:15 to 6:45 p.m.

Chi Gung

All Sundays except first, 6:15 to 6:45 p.m.

Retreat Schedule for Eugene Cash

All of the following retreats will take place at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. For details, visit www.spiritrock.org.

September 8–11

Dedicated Practitioners Program I Reunion Invitation Only

September 11–18

Dedicated Practitioners Program II Invitation Only

November 5

“Whole Body Breathing”
Eugene Cash

December 6–11

“Body of Awakening:
Mindfulness and Yoga”
Eugene Cash, Anna Douglas,
and Ada Shedlock (yoga)

December 26–January 2, 2006

New Year’s Retreat
Eugene Cash, Gil Fronsdal,
Diana Winston, Trudy Goodman,
and Janice Clarfield (yoga)

January 24–29, 2006

Vipassana Retreat
Eugene Cash, Howard Cohn,
and Diana Winston



KM Daylong at Spirit Rock August 27

Current kalyana mitta (“spiritual friends”) groups and people interested in being in a group locally are invited to attend. For details, visit www.spiritrock.org.

Also on the Menu: Sandwich Retreat

September 3–10

Teachers: Eugene Cash, Pamela Weiss,
and Thanissara

This retreat will consist of two daylongs (the “bread”) surrounding three evening meditation sessions (the “filling”) over the course of one week, and will include meditation instructions, dharma talks, inquiry, and discussion.

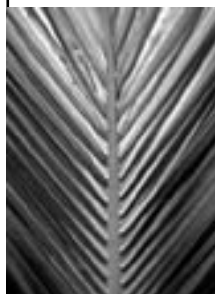
The daylongs on September 3 and 10 will be at the Cultural Integration Fellowship (CIF), 2560 Fulton @ 3rd. The three evening sessions will be at the First Unitarian Universalist Church (UU).

Saturday, Sept. 3, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at CIF
Sunday, Sept. 4, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at UU
Tuesday, Sept. 6, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at UU
Thursday, Sept. 8, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at UU
Saturday, Sept. 10, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at CIF

Teaching by dana. Space is limited; please preregister by sending a \$25 check payable to IMCSF to IMCSF, P.O. Box 475536, San Francisco, CA 94147-5536.



THE PHOTOS ON THE COVER and on pages 4 and 9, as well as the one shown here, were taken by Scott



Spencer, who has been shooting pictures as a hobby for the past 20 years. Says Scott, “I tend to shoot in a somewhat abstract way—which for me really brings up the practice of mindfulness—trying to be present in the moment to see things that might be overlooked in times of hurriedness.”

IMCSF

The Insight Meditation Community of San Francisco is dedicated to offering the teachings of the Buddha as they develop in the West. Our specific orientation is toward intensive householder (lay) practice. We offer a weekly meditation and dharma talk, classes, meditation retreats, and other events as a community of spirit devoted to the embodiment of awakening in our lives.

Meeting at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Francisco,
1187 Franklin at Geary

ABOUT OUR TEACHER

Eugene Cash is the founding teacher of IMCSF. He teaches at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and leads intensive meditation retreats internationally. His teaching is influenced by both Burmese and Thai streams of the Theravada tradition as well as Zen and Tibetan Buddhist practice. He is also a teacher of the Diamond Approach, a school of spiritual investigation and self-realization developed by A. H. Almaas.



DANA PRACTICE

Dana means generosity. The Buddha's teachings are considered priceless but traditionally are given freely in a spirit of generosity. Offering

dana (a donation) gives students an opportunity to express their gratitude for the teachings and to cultivate the joy of giving. All IMCSF retreats and beginning classes are taught by *dana*.

visit us on the web:
www.sfinsight.org

dharma datebook what IMCSF members are up to...off the cushion

SEAN FEIT offers *kirtan* (a full evening of chanting) at his home in Hayes Valley Monday evenings, and teaches a chanting and meditation class in the Mission Friday evenings. Both events by *dana*. For details, email svaha@riseup.net. (Read more about chanting on page 8.)

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ONE OF OUR SANGHA'S KALYANA MITTA ("spiritual friends") groups seeks a few new members. Meetings take place every other Monday evening, and include a meditation, check-in, and discussion of a reading. Six-month commitment. Contact Alison at 282-4731.

* * *

JOE SHAKARCHI will read his poetry with Norman Fischer on Friday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m., at the San Francisco Zen Center, 300 Page St. (One of Joe's poems appears on page 5.)

* * *

LARRY MILLER AND MINDY ZLOTNICK will offer a room of their home for silent self-retreats beginning in September. For details, email chaplainlarrymiller@hotmail.com.

* * *

PATRICIA DIART will teach a meditation/drawing course in the Mission Wednesday evenings beginning September 21. For details, email pdart17@earthlink.net.

* * *

CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE NANCY BARDACKE will teach an eight-week mindfulness-based childbirth and parenting course for expectant parents in the East Bay beginning September 19. For details, call (510) 595-3207.