



Practice in Action

A year-long spiritual practice program

Practice in Action (PiA) is a new year-long practice program which will be guided by EBMC core teacher, Mushim Ikeda. The PiA program will explore Dharma practice as service both to others and self towards the process of Awakening. This service could be about family, community development and empowerment, social justice, and/or cultural transformation.

This program is designed for those who: 1) have a minimum of 15 days of previous retreat practice or equivalent experience, 2) feel drawn to exploring serious Dharma study, and 3) want to develop an *ongoing, balanced and sustainable practice of community service and social engagement* as one of the primary spiritual focal points of their day-to-day lives.

“How can I help?” is one of the most basic and heartfelt spiritual questions that arise out of practicing the Buddha’s teachings. Once we have gained some measure of personal stability through meditative and other Dharmic practices, we see many opportunities to share our time and talents with others. “Service to our community” can range from volunteering to coach kids in sports, to helping out in a clinic for low-income women with cancer, to painting the bathrooms of your meditation center, or to starting a Facebook or meetup group with a community service theme.

We will explore scriptures and essays from the Mahayana lineage of Buddhist practice, in particular those pertaining to the way of the Bodhisattva, as well as different Dharma topics and our varied life experiences, including our householder and workplace lives, our diverse cultural identities, and our personal histories. This program is intentionally constructed to include multicultural awareness training and practices of deep listening and respectful interaction.

The PiA program will involve face-to-face meetings every month. Each meeting will be 3 hours long. There will be only 21 participants selected for the PiA program. Everyone will be asked to commit to one 30-minute period of Dharma practice, which can consist of sitting meditation, walking/movement meditation, and sound meditation (chanting) alone or in combination, every day. In addition, everyone will be asked to commit to beginning and ending each day with a brief renewal of their intention to benefit others through their practice, and cultivation of gratitude and inspiration. Participants will keep in contact by being assigned to a small group of fellow program practitioners. In addition, participants will have scheduled interviews, either in-person or on the phone (for about 30 min every other month), with the guiding teacher to explore and support each person’s life situation and spiritual practice. The program will close with a one-day retreat and celebration on Dec. 2, 2012.

This is not intended to be a beginner’s program. The prerequisite of the PiA program is that you have experienced at least **15 days** of Dharma retreats previous to the beginning date of the program. These retreat days can be in any configuration, including residential retreats and/or daylong retreats. *Equivalent alternative practice experience* (experience in caring for young children or a chronically ill or dying relative, for instance) will be considered if you can describe in detail why your experience qualifies you for this program, and your knowledge of basic Buddhist teachings. If you are accepted into the program, you will be asked to commit to all of the PiA program components (below) in writing. Preference in program admission will be given to people living in the Bay Area.

(see other side)

Your agreement also will be asked for in 2 important areas:

1. You agree and understand that your participation in the Practice of Dana (or the Practice of Generosity and Giving) is integral to the support and sustenance of the program, the teacher, and East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC).
2. You agree not to share any of the materials distributed within the PiA program to any other individual, and will respect the copyright intentions of this agreement.

For applications when they're available, join our email list at admin@eastbaymeditation.org. Please know that it is expected that the number of applications to PiA will be high. There is no guarantee for acceptance into the program, even if you meet the program criteria.

Practice in Action (PiA) Program Components

1. Face to face meetings with peer-facilitated and organized group
2. Committing to develop a relationship with an assigned dharma partner
3. Meetings with your dharma group (groups of three) at least once every 2 weeks
4. Daily practices of formal meditation practice (sitting, walking/movement, sound) as agreed upon with the guiding teacher as well as cultivation of intention and gratitude
5. Community service as a practice of spiritual Awakening
6. Keep a journal of Practice in Action reflections, questions, insights—at least weekly
7. Interviews with the guiding teacher approximately once every other month
8. Completing all readings, exercises and research
9. Willingness to do and experience all practices which are offered
10. Practice Dana/Generosity to support the program

Program Schedule:

- Oct 1, 2011: Application submission process opens.
Please watch for updates on EBMC website: www.eastbaymeditation.org
- Nov 15, 2011: Application deadline
Review and Interview process
- Early Dec, 2011: Initial acceptances go out
- Jan 22, 2012: Practice in Action (PiA) program begins

Full Group Meetings will take place with the guiding teacher on the following Sundays in 2012, 9 am to noon: Jan 22, Feb 19, March 18, April 22, May 12, June 10, July 15, August 19, Sept 9, Oct 14, Nov 18; and one full day of retreat on Dec 2.

Practice in Action topics:

Mindfulness in action and in stillness; serving joyfully: addressing issues of burnout and overwhelm in witnessing suffering; who is helping who? – the insight of intrinsic interconnection; the Bodhisattva in myth and in contemporary life; practicing meeting difficulties with good humor and patience; what the Eightfold Path and other Buddhist theory looks like when we don't "feel" spiritual; pitching in when needed and bowing out when necessary; Internet technology and media-based tools and resources; and other topics developed from program participants' collective input.

Guiding Teacher

Mushim (Patricia) Ikeda is a longtime practitioner of socially-engaged Dharma and a core teacher at East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) in Oakland, where she has lived for 20 years. She has practiced both monastically and as a layperson in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and S. Korea since 1982, and is a member of the International Advisory Council of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, a socially engaged Buddhist organization. She volunteered as a literacy tutor and teacher for over 10 years in the Oakland public schools. Currently she teaches meditation retreats for people of color, women, and social justice activists nationally. She is also a widely published writer, mother, and diversity facilitator and consultant. See

www.mushim.wordpress.com