

## Introduction to Survey

The Inter-Sangha Coordinating Committee (ISCC) has prepared the accompanying on-line survey as a follow-up to our report “A Good Place to Build,” released in January 2011. The report, commissioned by the boards of the Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group, Sacramento Insight Meditation, and Valley Streams Zen Sangha, assesses the feasibility of developing a shared permanent location for these three meditation groups. The report is available to view or download at the websites of each group:

<http://www.valleystreamszen.org/>    <http://www.sactoinsight.org/>    <http://www.sbm.org/>

The three sanghas formed the ISCC out of a mutual interest in creating a dedicated space for the Dharma to thrive in our Sacramento community. A meta-assumption for the shared meditation center is that none of our three groups acting separately has adequate resources to justify leasing a permanent space, but that collectively we might garner those resources. The attached survey is meant to test this crucial assumption. The responses received will provide a basis for determining whether or not to proceed with the action steps outlined in the ISCC report.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the Committee met with the Board members of the three Sanghas to discuss the report. Among the questions was “why is the proposed shared location preferable to our existing separate locations.” The Committee notes the following common problems encountered in our existing separate locations or off-site retreat venues:

- Each of the three groups has experienced one or more instances of permanent displacement due to unexpected rent increases, lack of maintenance of the space, or the decision of the primary occupant of the space.
- Use of our spaces can be temporarily pre-empted by the primary congregation or master lessor.
- Our current spaces are not usually available for retreats and classes.
- Weekend retreat spaces are difficult to schedule.
- Weekend retreats require significant planning for access to our equipment (cushions, sitting mats, altar supplies), transportation to the retreat site, and return of equipment to the primary space.
- Weekend retreats are subject to unexpected interruptions from incompatible activities occurring on the site during the retreat.
- Weekend retreat spaces are not configured to accommodate our use – too few bathrooms, etc.

In addition to overcoming these negative conditions, a permanent space might enable the following positive developments.

- A more readily identifiable and visible presence for Buddhist meditation practice in Sacramento.
- The possibility of offering multi-day retreats.
- The possibility of a full-time calendar delivering new programs and opportunities to practice.
- The possibility of reaching out to a diversity of communities not currently being served by the three sanghas.
- A library of dharma books, tapes, cd’s and videos.
- Shared publicity for each group’s retreats and classes.

The collective response of sangha members to the ISCC survey will be a major influence on the “go” or “no go” decision to be made in June 2011 by the Boards of the three sanghas. We therefore urge everyone to give careful consideration to the survey questions. If you want more information, please refer to the report and Question and Answer report addendum, located on the websites referenced above.

In the spirit of practice,

Inter-Sangha Coordinating Committee