

THE NATURE OF DOUBT
A 3-Part Series at the Insight Meditation Community of Denver
Evenings of 1/27/19, 2/3/19, and 2/10/19

This series is titled the 'Nature of Doubt' because it is a naturally arising phenomenon in the study and practice of Buddha Dharma. Together we will examine the different kinds of doubt as taught by the Buddha and in the commentaries (noble doubt, skeptical doubt, and despair) as distinguished from doubt's companion—faith.

We will also contemplate the three classic objects of doubt: doubt in the Dharma, doubt in the teacher, and doubt in oneself. Using case studies and the sharing of personal experience, we will work with some of the following questions:

Doubt in the Dharma:

1. What do I do when I come across some teaching in the discourses or commentaries that seems so disturbing, misogynistic, or otherwise off-putting that it causes me to question whether this path is right for me?
2. How do I relate to the atrocious behavior of governments in countries that gave birth to and maintain the Theravada tradition, such as the genocidal practices of the Burmese military?

Doubt in the Teacher:

1. What do I do when I learn that a respected—perhaps revered—Dharma teacher in my tradition or another has been shown to have engaged in unethical conduct, particularly sexual misconduct?
2. How can I protect myself and how as sanghas can we protect each other from such misconduct, as well as making sure it is called out and assessed?

Doubt in Oneself:

1. What are some of the ways I tend to judge myself as to whether I am doing the practice well and living up to my self-imposed spiritual expectations?
2. How do I work with the suffering this self-judgment can arouse?

On each Sunday evening of this series, Dharma Teacher Lloyd Burton will give a talk on these subjects, followed by sangha discussion of some of the questions raised above (and others), with an opportunity for the sharing of personal experience. If you wish to explore this subject prior to or during the series, Joseph Goldstein (one of Lloyd's root teachers) has a very useful talk on the subject at Dharma Seed:

<https://dharmaeed.org/teacher/96/talk/40112/>