



Mid America Dharma News

Spring Issue

Mid America Dharma Group

March, 1999

Dharma Teacher Training Held in Iowa

In early December Mid America Dharma and Forest Way Insight Meditation Center co-sponsored a five day training course for aspiring Dharma teachers at Prairiewoods Spirituality Center in Hiawatha Iowa. Matthew Flickstein, the resident teacher at Forest Way Meditation Center, facilitated the course.

The curriculum was based on *Swallowing the River Ganges*, a book that Matthew is presently writing. It focuses on the Four Noble Truths, the Satipatthana Sutta, and the Seven Stages of Purification.

Participants received a workbook based on the curriculum and spent time each day studying each of these practice frames of reference as a group. Participants also worked on the skills requisite to good teaching. They did role plays of question and answer sessions, practice interviews and learned how to clearly present practice instructions. Each of them was also required to give a Dharma talk to the entire group. After each talk, participants received feedback both from Matthew and from the group. Everyone commented on the palpable sense of safety and respect that permeated all of the interactive sessions. Everyone felt free to learn and grow in a warm and supportive environment.

Nineteen participants attended. They came from as far away as Florida and Montana, though most were from the Midwest area. Many participants were sangha leaders in their communities and planned to use the training to increase their skill level and depth of understanding when teaching introductory Mindfulness Meditation Classes or in running sitting groups. Several had led retreats--day long or longer--and wanted to deepen their knowledge of the Dharma and to subject their skills to peer review. All the participants agreed that the course far exceeded their expectations and gave them a real sense of the amazing and deep way in which the Dharma all fits together in an atlas of freedom.

The group will get back together in October of this year for a ten day retreat. Matthew Flickstein will conduct the retreat and will take the group, step-by-step, through the practice exercises in the Satipatthana Sutta.

Another Teacher Training Course facilitated by Matthew Flickstein has already been planned for the year 2000. Interested persons please write the course manager, Ginny Morgan, at 717 Hilltop Drive, Columbia, Missouri 65201. Phone: (573)817-9942. E-mail: <ginny@midamericadharm.org> Participants will be asked to go through an application and interview process.

Registrars Wanted

Mid America Dharma needs registrars for our retreats. Training provided and you attend the retreat you register for free. Contact Phil Jones (573)874-0881, <phil@midamericadharm.org>.

1999 Retreat Schedule

April 23-25: Metta Non-Residential with Myoshin Kelley
Columbia, MO

May 21-24: Residential with Eugene Cash & Sally Clough
St. Louis, MO

June 25-28: Residential with Shinzen Young
Conception, MO

Sept. 17-20 or 17-26: Residential with Stephen Armstrong &
Kamala Masters, Conception, MO

Nov. 11-14: Residential with Wes Nisker
Atchison, KS

Ajahn Amaro, Mary Orr Lead November 1998 Retreat

This marked the fourth consecutive year that Mary Orr has returned to Mid America Dharma to help lead a nine-day Fall retreat at Conception Abbey. This year Mary's teacher, Ajahn Amaro, co-led the retreat. His presence and influence was deeply felt by all those participating in the event.

Most of the forty-two retreatants took eight, instead of five, precepts. This meant that a person consumed no solid food after the noon meal. Stomachs were light so that minds and hearts could concentrate. Candles lit the altar day and night. Formal bowing before and after each sitting and chanting in the evening wove a special grace into the flow of the retreat.

Ajahn Amaro, a Theravadan monk, held his begging bowl at noon time and walked the serving line while volunteer retreatants filled his bowl with food. This served as a moving reminder of the impermanence of our lives and our interdependence upon each other. Ajahn Amaro's life is dependent upon the heartfelt generosity of those he meets in the world. Every meal is a reminder of this fact. It serves to remind us that every one of our meals as well as every breath we take, is dependent upon the generosity of the world. On Sunday the retreat closed with a blessing ceremony and a deep sense of gratitude for both teachers and the Dharma filled the hall.

MADG Annual Election

On January 23, 1999 Mid America Dharma Group held its annual election. The following Officers were elected:

President	Ginny Morgan	(573)817-9942
Vice President	Elizabeth Fryer	(314)230-2388
Secretary	John Flaherty	(816)523-5061
Treasurer	Phil Jones	(573)874-0881

Sangha News

Correction: *Lawrence, KS* - Vipassana sitting group. It meets on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at the Friends Meeting House, 1146 Oregon. For more information contact David Arehart at (785) 832-0103 or Bob Mikesic at (785) 749-7249.

Tonganoxie/McLouth Area-We share Vipassana meditation, sacred writings and a vegetarian meal. If interested please call Pauline at (913)796-6666 or e-mail: lscotto@idir.net

Evanston, IL - A sitting group is organizing. Please contact Ralph Marol at (847)675-0282 for information.

If you have news about your local sangha, please let the editor know. Send your news to: Editor, Mid America Dharma News, P.O. Box 414411, Kansas City, MO 64141-4411.

Are You on Our Mailing List?

If you would like to receive future issues of *Mid America Dharma News* and you are not already on our mailing list, please drop a note to Marnie Hammer, c/o Mid America Dharma, P.O. Box 414411, Kansas City, MO 64141-4411.

Land Fund Established

In our last newsletter we announced formally that we planned to begin the process of fund-raising for a Midwest Dharma Center. A number of people sent donations right off the bat ! Because of the overwhelming generosity that people in our area have already shown, we now have a Development Fund !

I would urge people to continue to support the vision of a Dharma Center right here in the area in which we live. We have the ability to do it if we just hold fast to the realization that it is possible. Bit by bit this dream can grow just in the same way an acorn can become an oak—if the idea takes root in enough hearts and minds. We now have enough money for 7 acres of land. If the outpouring of generosity continues, this fund will also continue to grow. And this Center built on our own hopes and generosity will become a reality.

You can make a financial donation* to Mid America Dharma to help support our operations; the Development Fund; our Scholarship Fund or, you could also donate your time and skills. Let us know of your interest, we'll be happy to suggest numerous ways that you can help. Send your contributions and requests for information about service opportunities to: Mid America Dharma, 200 E. Parkway, Columbia, MO 65203.

I would like to contribute:* _____\$10 _____\$25 _____\$50
_____ \$75 _____ Other to Mid America Dharma Group.

_____ I would like to volunteer my services, please let me know how I can help.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____ Home Phone _____

*Mid America Dharma Group is a tax-deductible 501(c)3 organization.

First St. Louis Residential Retreat

In May, Mid America Dharma will be offering its first residential retreat in the St. Louis area. We are excited about hosting a residential retreat in another part of the Midwest. With interest about Insight Meditation growing in St. Louis and the eastern Missouri-western Illinois area, we hope that we can make this an annual offering. With any new venture, there are a few bugs to work out. The challenge this year was finding a site that was suitable for a meditation retreat. We also needed to find a site that had openings which fit our calendar and was reasonably affordable as well. A comparison of costs between our St. Louis and our Conception Abbey retreats clearly shows that the St. Louis retreat is more expensive. We wish this weren't the case but it is simply a function of the way costs vary from one geographic area to another. For those of you who make the trip from Eastern Missouri all the way to Northwest Missouri to attend our retreats, transportation costs will definitely go down.

You will also notice that the deadline for registration is more than 30 days before the retreat. This is different from deadlines required by other retreat sites. This earlier deadline is part of our contractual obligation with the St. Louis retreat site. They want to know much farther in advance how many people to expect so that they can plan accordingly.

If any of you have suggestions for retreat sites in the St. Louis area for our 2000 schedule, please contact *Elizabeth Fryer* at (314) 230-2388. In the meantime, we hope to see you at the retreat in May. Your support means a lot and will definitely keep us hosting retreats in the St. Louis area in years to come.

Corporate Mindfulness

Monsanto Company, a multi-national corporation with headquarters in St. Louis, has contracted the Contemplative Mind In Society to offer a program of Insight Meditation to its employees. Monsanto is a pioneer in bringing mindfulness meditation to a corporate setting. This initiative is partially based on the ideas which Daniel Goleman elucidates in his new book *Working With Emotional Intelligence*. In the book, he identifies self awareness as a primary requirement for success in any organization. The program includes options for employees to attend a 5 week course or quarterly 1 and 3 day retreats, during work hours.

The teachers are from Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA and include Steven Smith, Michele McDonald Smith and Marvin Belzer. Elizabeth Fryer, a local St. Louis practitioner, has joined the group to teach the 5 week courses and one day retreats. The program has been viewed so far as "unusual" but with great appreciation. Support for more programs was voiced throughout the company. Bob Shapiro, Monsanto CEO and a practitioner of Insight Meditation himself, appears to be committed to continuing Mindfulness Meditation at the company.

Mirabai Bush, director of the Contemplative Mind in Society, a foundation of the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, MI plans to compile data generated by the program on the impact of Insight Meditation in the workplace. Monsanto could become a trendsetter for other corporate settings by showing increased employee satisfaction and productivity as a result of practicing mindfulness.

Mid America Dharma Spring 1999 Retreat Schedule

April 24-25: Non-Residential Metta Retreat with Myoshin Kelley, Country Day School, Columbia, Missouri

This retreat will provide basic instruction in metta (lovingkindness) meditation. Metta opens the mind and heart as one wishes happiness to all beings, including oneself. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Registration deadline is April 19.

REGISTRAR: Barbara Clarke, Phone: (573) 443-0362.



Myoshin Kelley has been practicing meditation for over 20 years. During this time she has done intensive practice in Burma and more recently at the Insight Meditation Society, Barre, MA, where she has trained as a teacher.

Free Lecture: There will also be a free lecture open to the general public on Friday evening, April 23 at 7:30 p.m. at Calvary Episcopal Church, Columbia, MO. It is not necessary to be registered for the rest of the retreat to attend this lecture. Persons attending the retreat are strongly encouraged to attend this talk which will be an introduction to metta.

May 21-24: Residential Retreat with Eugene Cash & Sally Clough, Todd Hall, Columbia, Illinois

This retreat will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Registration closes and final payment is due on April 19. *Any registrations postmarked after April 12 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.* Due to space limitations, all rooms at this retreat will be doubles. REGISTRAR: Elizabeth Fryer, Phone: (314) 230-2388



Eugene Cash has practiced meditation since 1981. He teaches vipassana retreats throughout the country and at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, where he is on the Teachers Council. His teaching draws from many streams of the vipassana tradition and has also been influenced by the teachings of the Zen monk/poet Ryokan and A.H. Almaas. As a psychotherapist, he has worked extensively with those who are ill, dying and the bereaved.



Sally Clough: Sally Clough was introduced to vipassana meditation through retreats in India in 1981. She co-founded the Sharpham meditation community in Devon, England in 1983 and was the Executive Director of Spirit Rock Meditation Center in California for five years. She is currently being trained as a vipassana teacher by Jack Kornfield. Sally has led meditation classes and assisted on retreats since 1994.

June 25-28: Residential Retreat with Shinzen Young, Conception Abbey, Conception, Missouri

This retreat will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Registration closes and final payment is due on June 12. *Any registrations postmarked after June 5 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.* Due to space limitations, all rooms at this retreat will be doubles. REGISTRAR: Jeff Nichols, Phone: (785) 246-0907



Shinzen Young is a Westerner who has trained extensively in Asian monasteries. He is also a scholar of languages and science. His deep understanding of Eastern philosophy and Western science gives him the ability to teach meditation using an approach that is accessible to the modern mind. His teachings emphasize achieving and applying the benefits of meditation to one's daily life. He has been conducting retreats since 1980.

REGISTRATION FORM

If you will be registering for more than one retreat, please photocopy this form. Each retreat has a different Registrar. Please do not attempt to register for more than one retreat on each copy of this form. If you do, your registration will be delayed.

April 24-25 Non-residential Retreat with Myoshin Kelley,
Cost: \$45. To register, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 103 Westridge Dr., Columbia, MO 65203.

May 21-24 Residential Retreat with Eugene Cash & Sally Clough, Cost: \$230; Deposit: \$70. Cost after April 12: \$255. To register, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 1509 Fawn Valley, St. Louis, MO 63131.

June 25-28 Retreat with Shinzen Young, Cost: \$175; Deposit: \$70. Cost after June 5: \$200. To register, return this form with check payable to Mid America Dharma Group, 5339 Northwest 70th St., Topeka, KS 66618

Please Print:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Gender: F M Do you snore? Y N

Will you arrive after 8 p.m. on the first day? Y N

Is this your first insight meditation retreat? Y N

If you have special needs, please contact the registrar.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Information on Mid America Dharma Retreats

INSIGHT MEDITATION offers an easily accessible way of freeing the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through concentrated awareness, we can learn to see our experience as a constantly changing process, in which pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life are accepted with increasing balance and equanimity. This insight leads to an understanding of our true nature and the possibility of living each moment fully with compassion and genuine freedom. Insight Meditation requires no belief commitments and is compatible with religious affiliations. Unless specified by the retreat description, no previous meditation experience is required.

RETREAT FORMAT: Periods of sitting meditation will be alternated with walking meditation. *Retreats will be held in silence* with talking only during teaching periods. *Beginners must be present from the start of the retreat* to receive initial instructions.

Please bring a meditation cushion or bench and a soft floor pad for meditation. Standard chairs are available and may also be used.

Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Please do not wear or bring strongly scented lotions, perfumes or incense.

Non-Residential Retreats will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. They are open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Non-residential retreats are an opportunity for beginners to experience more intensive practice. Due to the length and size of the retreats, there will not be scheduled individual interviews.

Residential Retreats begin with check-in at 4 p.m. on the first day and run through lunch on the last day. Participants will be guided through group or private interviews and daily general lectures.

Meals are plain vegetarian. A complimentary tea table will be available. Please be responsible for any special dietary needs. Meals are not provided for non-residential retreats, unless indicated.

REGISTRATION: Information about retreat site, starting times and other details will be sent after you register.

Non-Residential Retreats: Full payment is due at time of registration.

Residential Retreats: A deposit of \$70 must accompany your registration. Full payment is due before the start of the retreat.

Registration Deadline: Registration for the April retreat closes on April 19.

Registration for May retreat closes on April 19. *Any registrations postmarked after April 12 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*

Registration for the June retreat closes and final payment is due on June 12. *Any registrations postmarked after June 5 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*

Retreat Costs: See the registration form on the previous page.

Refunds: No deposits will be refunded after the deadline. Please register as early as possible.

Scholarships: Inability to pay should not prevent you from attending, as there are scholarship funds set aside for this purpose. Deferred payment plans are also available. Contact the Registrar for a copy of the scholarship and deferred payment criteria. Written applications for scholarship must be received by the Registrar no later than three weeks prior to the retreat.

RETREAT REGISTRARS: Call with questions.

April Retreat - Barbara Clarke (573) 443-0362

May Retreat - Elizabeth Fryer (314) 230-2388

June Retreat - Jeff Nichols (785) 246-0907

Dana (or generosity): These retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without any payment. All retreat fees go for retreat expenses. It is central to this tradition that the students support the teacher with a donation. There is no expected amount, but you are encouraged to give to the extent you are able. Dana is totally voluntary.

Mid America Dharma Group
P.O. Box 414411
Kansas City, MO 64141-4411

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