



# Mid America Dharma News

Summer Issue

Mid America Dharma  
<http://www.midamericadharm.org/>

June 2000

## 2000-01 Retreat Schedule

2000

- Aug 11-13: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana  
Conception, MO
- Sept 13-17: Residential with Wes Nisker & Ginny Morgan  
St. Louis, MO.
- Nov 9-13: Residential with Mary Orr  
Conception, MO

2001

- Dec 28 00 – Jan 2: Residential with Santikaro Bhikku  
Conception, MO
- Feb 16-19: Residential with Rodney Smith  
Conception, MO
- March 3-5: Non-residential Metta Retreat with  
Myoshin Kelly, Location TBA.
- June 12-19: Residential with Guy Armstrong, Franz Mockl  
and Carol Wilson. Location to be arranged.
- Aug 30-Sept 3: Residential with Eugene Cash.  
Conception, Missouri

### Contact Information:

For registration information on the upcoming 2000 retreats,  
see registration info on page 3 and 4.

Where there would be quiet, solitude, clean buildings, small private rooms for each meditator, good simple and healthy food to eat, a supportive staff. All of these things done simply and without excess so that the per diem charge for room and board would stay affordable for people in our area. But this will not happen by our hands alone. Mid America Dharma has only seven volunteer staff members. We are all members of the Board of Directors. Kind and helpful people volunteer to manage or register our retreats for which they receive a free retreat. But they only work on a retreat-by-retreat basis and do not stay on staff. We need your generosity! We need people to join with us in the beginning stages of visioning a Midwest Dharma Center. Send us your ideas, your heart's notions about what this would look like, where it would be. We also need donations of money. If every person on our mailing list sent \$20.00 we would have \$40,000 with which to purchase land. This power of many people working together is no small matter. If some of us gave more than \$20.00 we could perhaps buy the land outright. A purchase of land and that wonderful catalyzing force of "real" estate could mobilize us all to give this gift of a Dharma Center to the people of our area. Our many hands and hearts could join together in great power and lovingkindness to give this practice of freedom to as many people as want to share in it. -----Ginny Morgan, MAD Board President.

## Public Meeting: Envisioning Our Retreat Center

Mid America Dharma would like to invite everyone interested in a Midwestern Retreat Center to our upcoming public Vision Committee Meeting on October 14, 2000 in Columbia, MO. Our role is to serve the needs of this community and therefore, in turn, we need everyone's help in envisioning and actualizing our very own Retreat Center. Please let us know if you will attend by contacting any Board member or calling MAD (573)817-9942. E-mail to: <ginny@midamericadharm.org>.

## Many Hands Make Light Work

Recently the Board of Mid America Dharma has been expanding our duties to include discussions about our vision of a Midwest Insight Meditation Retreat Center. We are beginning the process of discussing where we would put such a Center in this large Heartland of ours? What would it look like? How much land would it need to insure that a reasonable buffer be in place to protect the sense of being away from it all and nestled in an environment of "ideal solitude"? As we begin to explore these very meaningful issues with each other it is important that we also begin to explore them with all of "us."

I want to invite you to become part of this vision committee. Our vision committee can be as large as the area that we serve. It can be comprised of people who care enough to write us and let us know what is in your hearts and minds about such a project.

My mother would say, "many hands make light work." The sense of truth and warmth that I felt as I listened to that statement was the precursor to my understanding of interconnectedness and interdependence. It was that moment in my life when my understanding opened up to include a larger universe. This statement also rings true in the task that we have set before ourselves of giving the Midwest the gift of a place to practice in an environment conducive to that undertaking.

Yes, I want to help build a dream. Please accept my donation of:

\$1000  \$500  \$100  \$50  \$25

\$15  OTHER

I can't give financially right now but want to help.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send To: Mid America Dharma  
200 E. Parkway  
Columbia, MO 65203

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

## Community Dharma Teacher Training Held

For the second time in our history, Mid America Dharma co-sponsored, with The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center, an intensive workshop for community dharma teachers from all over the United States. Taught by Matthew Flickstein, the workshop focused on both deepening the participants understanding of the Dharma and on helping them develop skills requisite to sharing this understanding with their sanghas. Many of the 19 participants either run sitting groups or lead classes and daylong retreats at the community level.

The workshop, which is based on Matthew's forthcoming book *Swallowing the River Ganges* (Wisdom Publications, due out in January 2001), followed a retreat format. Participants practiced silent meditation for several periods each day and also had didactic and experiential components. Each participant wrote and gave a Dharma talk to the entire group and then received feedback. It was quite interesting and exciting to experience the many styles and voices of the participant's talks.

The didactic part of the workshop was quite powerful and helpful in terms of bringing the teachings of the Buddha into a more precise focus. The workshop used a format derived from *The Path of Purification* that is, the seven stages of purification that a meditator goes through on his/her journey to Freedom. Participants developed a deeper understanding of these stages and learned to recognize the different levels of development of their students as well as their own. Within this framework, students could then understand how to present practice instructions that fit each stage of development. These began with the development of concentration and went sequentially through the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Each Foundation is associated with a different stage of purification. Lastly, the instructions for choiceless awareness were presented.

After the training many people commented that they were humbled by the experience. They felt inspired to share Dharma as deeply as they are able, but humbled by the depth and breadth of the Buddha's understanding. This humility, participants agreed, will keep them inspired for deep practice and to teach only that which they are ready to teach. So in learning to be good teachers they are also learning how to be good students.

Another teacher training is in the works for 2001. If you are interested, please call or e-mail Ginny Morgan at (573) 817-9942 or <ginny@midamericadharm.org>. Matthew Flickstein can be reached at <forestway@cstone.net>.

## Prison Meditation Ministry

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to join a prison meditation team. I became a volunteer at Lansing Correctional Facility in Lansing, Kansas. Since that time, the prisoners have become a part of my spiritual sangha.

A Buddhist maximum-security callout (gathering) is an unusual spiritual support group. We meet on Saturday nights at Lansing Correctional Facility inside the walls of the prison. The group consists of volunteers and inmates. We study together and we meditate together. We discuss the challenges and frustrations of our lives.

We teach and learn from one another. Prison is a unique environment in which to practice mindfulness. Prisons are noisy and finding a quiet place to meditate can be impossible. There is limited access to teachers and few members of the prison system are supportive of the Buddhist path. I have learned many truths from the men and their situations. These experiences have enriched my life and have helped me to become more aware of the miracle of freedom. Since I started doing volunteer work at the prison, it is clear to me how much need there is in this arena and how little awareness there is of the need. There are many prisons that are actively requesting volunteer participation in their religious programs. Rehabilitation of criminals by traditional means has not been successful. Investing resources in the spiritual transformation of people "inside" could prove that the slowest way is the fastest. -----Linda Faris

## Sangha News

**Hutchinson Correctional Facility** is trying to start a Buddhist study group. Lansing Correctional Facility already has two Buddhist groups. Dana (in its many forms) is needed to assist the prison meditation team in providing spiritual help and guidance to the prisoners. We are asking for time, supplies and/or money to help to establish and maintain the prison Buddhist study groups. We need volunteers to help provide spiritual support and teaching at the callouts. We also need meditation cushions, benches, bells, books or other study materials as well as incense to use during the meetings. If you would like to make a donation of money or supplies, contact Ben Worth at the American Buddhist Center at Unity Temple on the Plaza in Kansas City. His phone number is (816) 561-4466. If you are interested in joining our team, please contact Linda Faris at westondvm@cs.com or by phone at (816) 640-5729 day or (816) 640-2306 eve.

**The Free State Sangha** is the new name for the sangha in Lawrence, Kansas, which meets on Wednesday evening at 7:30 at the Friends Meeting House, 1146 Oregon in Lawrence. Another new development is Tamara Dutton and her son Aber are putting together a tape library of recordings about Insight Meditation and other Dharma teachings. All interested people are welcome. Contact info for the Free State Sangha: call Bob at (785) 749-7249 or email him: bmikesic@webserf.net

**Deep Spring Center, Ann Arbor Michigan.** Over 150 people were in the introductory classes this academic year and continuing classes are also full. Our morning sittings (6:30 AM) are lightly attended. The winter 3-day retreat brought out about 50 people. Our next residential retreat is the annual weeklong retreat June 23 through July 1, led by our guiding teacher, Barbara Brodsky, and John Orr, who was a monk in Thailand for 10 years in the 1970s. Our most exciting news is the decision arrived at through many Board and Sangha meetings to find a larger space and bring all our programs under one roof again. Our newsletter is available on request, distributed on a dana basis. Donations support all our center work. The newsletter is 24 pages, published 3 times a year, and contains a mixture of teacher talks, sangha news and calendar information. To request it, or for program/retreat information, e-mail the Center at info@deepspring.org or write to 3455 Charing Cross Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48108.



# Mid America Dharma Summer/Fall 2000 Retreat Schedule

## Aug 11-13: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana, Conception, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Joyce Wyler, 2510 W. 78th St., Prairie Village, KS 66208 (913) 649-0271. Registration closes and final payment is due on July 28th. Any registrations postmarked after July 21st will be subject to a \$25 late charge. This retreat is open to both beginning and experienced meditators. The retreat will provide instruction in Vipassana (Insight) meditation. All rooms for this retreat will be singles.

**Henepola Gunaratana** was born on the 7th of December 1927 in a small village named Henepola and ordained at the age of 12 as a Buddhist monk. He is the author of *Come and See*, *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, *The Jhanas* and the best selling *Mindfulness In Plain English*. His articles have been published in the U.S.A., Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, England and France. He is now president and abbot of the Bhavana Society, a monastery in West Virginia about 100 miles west of Washington, D.C. He continues to teach meditation and conduct retreats worldwide.



## September 13 -17th Residential with Wes Nisker and Ginny Morgan, St. Louis, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Elizabeth Fryer, 1509 Fawn Valley, St. Louis, MO 63131 (636) 230-2388, <modharma@aol.com> Registration closes and final payment is due on August 30th. Any registration postmarked after August 23rd will be subject to a \$25 late charge. This retreat is open to both beginning and experienced meditators. The retreat will provide instruction in Vipassana (Insight) meditation. All rooms for this retreat will be singles.

**Wes Nisker** has practiced vipassana meditation for 30 years. He is founder and co-editor of *Inquiring Mind*, a well-known Bay Area journalist and author of the best-selling *Crazy Wisdom* and *Buddha's Nature*. Wes has taught courses on Buddhist meditation at Esalan Institute, University of California, Spirit Rock Meditation Center and leads a weekly sitting group in Berkeley, CA as well as teaching retreats across the country.



**Ginny Morgan** has been practicing meditation since 1977. She has worked as a Play Therapist with chronically and acutely ill children for many years and her teaching is strongly influenced by her work. She currently serves as Board President for Mid America Dharma and leads retreats across the Midwest region.

## November 9-13th Residential with Mary Orr, Conception, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Toni Parra, 340 N. 21st St., Kansas City, KS 66102 (913) 281-0807. Registration closes and final payment is due on October 26th. Any registrations postmarked after October 19th will be subject to a \$25 late charge. This retreat is open to both beginning and experienced meditators. The retreat will provide instruction in Vipassana (Insight) Meditation. All rooms for this retreat will be singles.



**Mary Orr** has practiced vipassana since 1983; prior to that she followed western contemplative practices. She worked as a therapist from 1977 to 1995. She was trained in teaching by Jack Kornfield, and now teaches classes and retreats in Santa Cruz and throughout the United States

### REGISTRATION FORM

*If you are registering for more than one retreat please photocopy this form and send with payment to the listed registrar for each retreat.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Aug 11-13: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana, Conception, MO, Cost: Only available as Single \$135.00 Minimum deposit of \$70. Cost after July 21st: \$160.00. To register return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma, c/o Joyce Wyler, 2510 W. 78th St., Prairie Village, KS 66208

\_\_\_\_\_ Sept 13-17: Residential with Wes Nisker and Ginny Morgan, St. Louis, MO. Only available as Single \$235.00 Minimum deposit of \$70. Cost after August 23rd: \$260.00. To register please return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma, c/o Elizabeth Fryer, 1509 Fawn Valley, St. Louis, MO 63131

\_\_\_\_\_ Nov 9-13: Residential with Mary Orr, Conception, MO. Only available as Single \$235.00 Minimum deposit of \$70. Cost after October 19th: \$260.00. To register please return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma, c/o Toni Parra, 340 N. 21st St., Kansas City, KS 66102

Please Print:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you have special needs, please contact the listed registrar.*

For Residential Retreatants only:

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

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 mat 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:** Please note that full payment is due at time of registration.

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

**Registration Deadline:** Registration deadlines are posted for each retreat on page 3. *Any registrations postmarked or received after the deadlines 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.

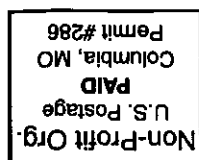
**RETREAT REGISTRARS:** Call with questions.

Aug 11-13 - Joyce Wyler, 2510 W. 78th St., Prairie Village, KS  
66208 (913) 649-0271.

Sept 13-17 - Elizabeth Fryer, 1509 Fawn Valley, St. Louis,  
MO 63131 (636) 230-2388,  
<modharma@aol.com>.

Nov 9-13 - Toni Parra, 340 N. 21st St., Kansas City, KS  
66102 (913) 281-0807.

**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  
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Kansas City, MO 64141-4411  
address service requested