



# Mid America Dharma News

Winter Issue

Mid America Dharma Group

December, 1998

## Mid America Dharma, Who We Are and Where We Are Going

As President of the Board, I have often made the joke that Mid America Dharma is like the Wizard of Oz, when you pull back the curtain there are not as many people there as you might think. At present for example, Mid America Dharma is being run by a handful of people – seven Board Members and a volunteer registrar to be exact. All of us have jobs, families, and other responsibilities. Our registrar is retired, but she is quite an active Grandma with two grandchildren.

What brings us all together in a common bond and keeps us working toward this common goal that we call "Mid America Dharma" comes from direct experience. We know that the practice of Insight Meditation touches lives in a very deep way. We have seen for ourselves positive effects in our own lives and hearts. Because of this we are willing to offer the practice to others. We are dedicated to the undertaking of bringing the same practice opportunities to the Midwest that are available to people on the East and West coasts.

People often ask me where we are heading, what is the vision for the future? I have made a deep personal commitment, as have other Mid America Dharma Board members, to work toward a Midwest Dharma Center like Spirit Rock Center in California and Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts. This is a practical goal. It is a goal that with dedication and energy will come into being. All it takes is effort, strong intention, and that powerful and yet gentle ability to not give up when things get difficult. A goal of this nature calls for courage. It calls for that delightful foolishness that refuses to be stopped. It calls for a sense of generosity that wants to share the practice of freedom with as many people as want to partake.

Both Spirit Rock Center and Insight Meditation Society report that retreats are going into wait list status. Often, to insure fairness, lottery systems have been imposed on more popular retreats at these centers. This year Mid America Dharma ran more retreats than ever before and filled every single one of them. Some of our retreats also went into wait list status. This tells us clearly that interest is growing. But in order for us to move to the next stage, we need your help. We need volunteers to help with many facets of retreat organization, coordination, and management. We need qualified people willing to serve on our Board. We need donations to help us build our Development Fund. We need your generosity and support. This little group of seven Board Members and a Grandma cannot accomplish this alone.

Please send your comments, reactions and/or offers of help to Ginny Morgan, 717 Hilltop Drive, Columbia, MO 65201, <ginny@midamericadharm.org> or call me at (573) 817-9942.

## 1999 Retreat Schedule

- Jan. 29-31: Non-Residential with Rodney Smith  
Kansas City, MO*
- Feb. 12-14: Anapanasati Non-Residential with Santikaro  
Bhikkhu, St. Louis, MO*
- Mar. 5-8 or 5-14: Residential with Matthew Flickstein  
Conception, MO*
- 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. 5-8: Residential with Wes Nisker  
Conception, MO*

## Registration Procedures Being Toughened

Though we would like to accommodate everyone's needs for late arrivals and early departures, these sorts of scheduling allowances aren't going to be possible any longer. Because Mid America Dharma is growing and because our all-volunteer staff has been shrinking, we can no longer keep track of any but the most straightforward details about your retreat registration.

We have tried to accommodate scheduling needs by setting up two registration plans on our longer retreats – either a weekend option or the full retreat option. This was done to give flexibility to people who absolutely cannot take off work but still wish to attend retreats. These options will still be available for our longer retreats. For shorter retreats (five days or fewer) however, registrants must sign up for and attend the full retreat.

Keeping things simple saves our registrar from having to continue to deal with registration issues during retreats. It also keeps our relationship with Conception Abbey on a more business-like footing.

## Mid America Dharma Annual Board Meeting

Mid America Dharma will be holding its annual, open-to-the-public Board meeting in January. If you are interested in attending, please contact John Flaherty at (816) 523-5061.

## Don't Be Late, For a Very Important Date!

As part of the toughening of registration procedures, Mid America Dharma has begun adding a \$25 late charge to residential retreat fees which are postmarked seven days prior to the deadline for registrations. Many people have gotten into the habit of waiting as long as they can to make their registrations. While we realize that no one wishes to pay any sooner than they need to, waiting until the last week makes it very hard for the Abbey to order food. It also makes it very difficult on our volunteer staff to get arrangements made. Please help us out. Pay early and avoid the late charge!

## Retirements from the Board

Mid America Dharma acknowledges the service and dedication of two individuals who have recently retired from the Board of Directors: Robert Brumet and John van Keppel. Thank you to both of you for your many years of service to Insight Meditation in the Midwest. We wish you well.

## Dana for Our Sangha

*Being able to let go, to give up, to renounce, to give generously – these capacities spring from the same source within us. When we practice generosity, we open to all of these liberating qualities simultaneously. They carry us to a profound knowing of freedom, and they also are the loving expression of that same state of freedom.*

– Sharon Salzberg, *Lovingkindness*

You can practice generosity towards your sangha in a number of ways and help to build our practice community here in the Midwest.

- Make a financial donation\* to Mid America Dharma to help support our operations, our Development Fund and/or the Scholarship Fund.
- Donate your time and skills to Mid America Dharma or to your local sangha. Let us know of your interest, we'll be happy to suggest ways that you can help.

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

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to Mid America Dharma Group.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please let me know how I can help.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

## www.midamericadharma.org & Bookstore

Mid America Dharma's web site has a new easier to remember address: <http://www.midamericadharma.org>. We've also opened an on-line bookstore as an associate of amazon.com. Our hope is that the bookstore will help pay for the improvements to the web site. If you ever want to buy a book on-line, please log into our bookstore first: <http://www.midamericadharma.org/books.html>. Then follow one of the links to amazon.com. Mid America Dharma will earn a referral fee for any books you buy after following this procedure!

## Sangha News

*Cape Girardeau, MO* - A new sitting group is forming. For more information, contact Cheryl Brown at (573) 332-0261.

*Kansas City, MO* - The Heart of America Sangha, which meets at Unity on the Plaza, would like to announce that the parking problems will soon cease. Construction on the adjacent parking garage will probably be finished by its target date, November 25th.

*Lawrence, KS* - A vipassana sitting group has formed. It meets on Thursdays 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.

*Memphis, TN* - A beginners insight meditation group is being formed. For more information contact Mike Potter at (901) 274-3488

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?

Do you usually receive this newsletter? Does the mailing label on your copy have letters and numbers, such as "P" or "197", on the right hand side? If your answer to either of these questions is no, then you are not on our mailing list.

If you would like to receive future issues of *Mid America Dharma News* please drop a note to Marnie Hammer, c/o Mid America Dharma, P.O. Box 414411, Kansas City, MO 64141-4411.

## Mid America Dharma Board of Directors

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Elizabeth Fryer, St. Louis, MO. Phone: (314) 230-2388

Marnie Hammer, Kansas City, MO. Phone: (816) 523-5061

# Mid America Dharma Group Winter 1999 Retreat Schedule

## January 30-31: *Non-Residential Retreat with Rodney Smith, Martha Truman Rd. & Charlotte, Kansas City, MO*

This retreat will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Registration deadline is January 25.



**Rodney Smith** has been practicing vipasana meditation since 1975, including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He is currently a senior teacher for Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA. Rodney has been teaching meditation and working as a full-time hospice worker since 1984. He is the author of *Lessons from the Dying* (Wisdom Publication, 1998.)

**Free Lecture:** There will also be a free lecture open to the general public on Friday evening, January 29 at 7 p.m. at Unity on the Plaza. This lecture will be jointly sponsored by Mid America Dharma and the American Buddhist Center. It is not necessary to be registered for the rest of the retreat to attend this lecture.

## February 13-14: *Non-Residential Retreat with Santikaro Bhikkhu, Maria Center, St. Louis, MO*

This retreat will provide basic instruction in the anapanasati (mindfulness with breathing) methods of vipassana (insight) meditation. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners.

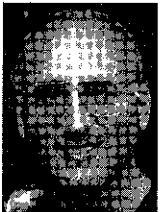


**Santikaro Bhikkhu** is an American, born and raised in the Chicago area, who went to Thailand with the Peace Corps and subsequently ordained as a monk in 1985. He is the senior monk at Suan Atammayatma. For many years he has served as the English translator for Ajahn Buddhadasa. He is also the translator of Buddhadasa's *Mindfulness with Breathing* (Wisdom Publications, 1997) and the editor of Buddhadasa's *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (Wisdom Publications, 1994.) For more information on anapanasati or Ajahn Buddhadasa see <<http://www.suanmokkh.org>>.

**Free Lecture:** There will also be a free lecture open to the general public on Friday evening, Feb. 12, at 7 p.m. at St. Louis Co. Public Library Headquarters, 1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd. It is not necessary to be registered for the rest of the retreat to attend this lecture.

## March 5-8 or March 5-14: *Residential Retreat with Matthew Flickstein, Conception Abbey, Conception, MO*

This vipassana (insight meditation) retreat will focus on cultivating all Four Foundations of Mindfulness and on making one's life one's practice. The retreat is suitable for serious beginners as well as for experienced practitioners. There will be detailed practice instructions, Dharma talks, question and answer periods and opportunities for both group and private interviews. Retreatants have the option of registering for the first weekend (March 5-8) or the full nine days of this retreat. *Couples will not be allowed to share rooms at this retreat.* A limited number of single rooms will be available for the first people registering for the full retreat. Only doubles will be available for the weekend retreat. Registration closes and final payment is due on Feb. 20. *Any registrations postmarked after Feb. 13 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*



**Matthew Flickstein**, the resident teacher at the Forest Way Insight Meditation Center, has been practicing and teaching Vipassana meditation for over twenty-one years. Prior to developing The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center Matthew was a psychotherapist and facilitated personal development workshops. He is the author of *Journey to the Center: A Meditation Workbook* (Wisdom Publications, September, 1998.)

### REGISTRATION FORM

*If you will be registering at different times for retreats or for St. Louis and other retreats, please photocopy this form.*

For St. Louis Retreat, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 300A Enchanted Parkway, Manchester, MO 63021

For all other retreats, return this form with check payable to Mid America Dharma Group, 1000 NW Arlington Pl., Apt. 220, Blue Springs, MO 64015

Please Print:

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

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

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

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

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

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 listed on the next page.

\_\_\_\_ January 30-31 Non-residential Retreat with Rodney Smith, Cost: \$45

\_\_\_\_ February 13-14 Non-residential Retreat with Santikaro Bhikkhu, Cost: \$45.

\_\_\_\_ March 5-8 Retreat with Matthew Flickstein, Cost: \$165; Deposit: \$70. Cost after Feb. 13: \$190.

\_\_\_\_ March 5-14 Retreat with Matthew Flickstein, Cost: Single: \$375; Double: \$350; Deposit: \$70. Cost after Feb. 13: \$375 for a Double.

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Information on Mid America Dharma Group 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 January retreat closes on January 25.

Registration for February retreat closes on February 8 .

Registration for the March retreat closes and final payment is due on Feb. 20. *Any registrations postmarked after Feb. 13 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.

January & March Retreats - Joyce Wyler (816) 220-1434

February Retreat - Bridget Rolens (314) 227-9823

**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.

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

*address service requested*

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