

Mid America



Dharma News

Winter/Spring Issue

<http://www.midamericadharm.org/>

December 2001

Engaged Buddhism - Working With The Buddhist Peace Fellowship

by Ginny Morgan with Alan Senauke

When we work with compassion in our practices and in our lives we begin to see the courage and heart that it takes to stay present for our human foibles, our fears and patterns of holding. In trying to protect ourselves from further pain, to create a comfortable and pleasant reality in which to abide, we are in fact running away from our basic aliveness into a dissociative and flattened reality. Our attempts to avoid suffering can teach us a basic truth: if we close down to the difficulty and struggles of our internal and external landscape, we close down to joy, peace, and a true and direct receiving of love as it enters our lives in each moment. We also close down to our basic responsibilities as members of communities, of a society, of the world family.

We turn this pattern of mind and heart from one of fear and holding to one of presence, responsibility, authenticity, and openness by bringing the balance of true compassion to bear on our lives and practices. We open to our fear, our normal irritations, and the everyday stuff of our lives just as we find it. Opening with heart to these tender and childlike places in our own lives allows the healing balm of compassion to flow through us and touch others. Paradoxically, opening to our own suffering opens our hearts to the pain and suffering of the whole world. No longer being separate, we both give and receive the gift of compassion, shifting from the passive role of the sufferer to an active and heartfelt response, allowing compassion to flow through us. No longer asleep we empower ourselves to stay present in a very deep way for life.

This open-hearted engagement with the world can deepen through the practice of "engaged Buddhism." Engaged Buddhism attempts to bring conscious and heartfelt action to the suffering of the world. Just as we develop a tender openness to our own internal suffering, we do not close our eyes to the needs of this blue planet and to its billions of inhabitants. We become aware of the need for social transformation of our communities, our country and our world.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship, founded in 1978, is dedicated to just this sort of awareness and action. BPF serves as a catalyst and an agent for socially engaged Buddhism. Its aim is to help beings liberate themselves, to bring peace where there is conflict, to promote communication and cooperation among sanghas, and to alleviate suffering where it is possible. Members and local chapters are involved in a wide variety of efforts, including promoting peaceful solutions to world conflict, environmental work, human rights campaigns, and opposing repression in Tibet, Burma, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and elsewhere.

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The Buddhist Peace Fellowship has more than 50 chapters, contact persons, and affiliates in the United States, Asia, Australia, and Europe. It is also possible to join BPF on an individual basis. Members need only to have a wish to support the work of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and a commitment to bring positive social change to our world in a compassionate and conscious way. Membership is not contingent upon being a Buddhist. BPF extends a welcoming hand to people of all ethnic backgrounds, races, sexual preferences, and physical abilities. Members receive a quarterly journal, *The Turning Wheel*. For more information call (510) 655-1369 or e-mail bpf@bpf.org. To join please visit their website at <http://www.bpf.org> or fill out the form below and mail it with a check to Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship- *Please check which membership rate you desire:*

- Basic membership--\$45 per year
- Two year membership--\$80
- Three year membership--\$100
- Simple living/low income/student--\$20 per year
- Donor--\$75 per year (includes a copy of *The Path of Compassion*)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Check enclosed

VISA/Mastercard: Number _____ Exp. _____

Please make checks payable to Buddhist Peace Fellowship and mail to PO Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704. Telephone (510) 655-1369; e mail bpf@bpf.org

website: <http://www.bpf.org>

Announcements

Meet Our Newest Board Member

Tamara Dutton, our newest board member, joined the Mid America Dharma Board this past summer. Tamara's graduate study was in counseling psychology, and she has been the manager of the bookstore at the University of Kansas School of Law for the past 23 years. Her first contact with meditation was through the Arica trainings in the early '70s. She gradually drifted away from sitting and began regular practice again after hearing Robert Thurman speak in 1999. Tamara lives in Lawrence, KS and is a member of the Free State Sangha.

Annual Public Board Meeting

You are invited to attend the annual public meeting of the Mid America Dharma Board on January 26th, 2002 at 10:00 am. The meeting will be held at Ginny Morgan's home: 717 Hilltop Dr., Columbia, MO 65201. To let us know you are coming and for directions call Ginny at (573) 817-9942.

Training Offered For Those Who Aspire to Share the Dharma

Mid America Dharma and Forest Way Insight Meditation Center are co-sponsoring a nine day intensive training designed to build teaching skills and deepen understanding of the Buddha's central teachings. It will be held April 12th to April 21st at Oakwood Farm Retreat Center in Selma, Indiana. This course is designed to support interested and qualified individuals in learning to formally share the Dharma with others. Applicants will be asked to fill out and submit an application, be interviewed by telephone about issues pertinent to their practice, teaching experience, and knowledge of the Dharma. Space is limited and not everyone who applies will be accepted. For more information or to receive an application please call or e-mail Ginny Morgan at (573) 817-9942, gmorgan@coin.org.

The Present Moment: Living Beyond the Boundaries of Self

by Matthew Flickstein

Spiritual truth cannot be found within time and space. It cannot be seen by the eyes, held by the hand, or grasped by the mind. Searching for it is a futile endeavor. At the same time, those who have realized this truth tell us that it is closer to us than the air that we breathe. This paradox has perplexed humanity from the beginning of time. The ability to resolve this paradox is dependent upon our approach toward spiritual development. Opposed to seeing spiritual truth as a goal to be reached at some future point, we need to focus on discovering what prevents us from experiencing this self-existent reality in the here and now.

The primary obstacle to recognizing spiritual truth is our deeply rooted view of having a "self." We are obsessed with trying to understand and control this self, and with the effort to create a more effective self-image in order to achieve greater success in the world. Wisdom begins to arise as we penetrate the ways in which we have defined ourselves and realize that we are bound, limited, and circumscribed by each self-image with which we identify. As we penetrate the illusion of our self-definitions and deeply held beliefs, we begin to experience the light of truth that has always been shining behind the clouds of delusion.

Engaged Buddhism: A Compassionate Response to the Tragedy of September 11

by Charles W. Day

Fifteen days after the September 11th tragedy, I responded to a request from the Red Cross to volunteer as a mental health worker for two weeks at one of two Respite Care Centers in the disaster area in New York City. Our center provided support services and meals to an estimated 1400 workers and volunteers at "ground zero" every eight-hour shift. As a mental health worker I typically looked for someone eating, sitting, or walking around alone, or two or three persons who were together but not talking, and started a casual conversation. Some spoke of the death of co-workers and friends, of rescuing others or being rescued. Others expressed diminishing hopes of finding anyone alive and the need to turn their energies toward recovering bodies, clothing or belongings that could identify the victims. There was overwhelming concern for the surviving families, especially for the children who would grow up without a father or mother. Many workers suffered sleep difficulties, nightmares, restlessness, emotional spells, anxieties, and other normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

In the midst of the suffering, however, what came through so strongly was an abundance of courage and compassion, friendliness and generosity, humility and gratitude, and the strength and sense of duty that seemed to motivate and sustain those with whom I spoke. As my two weeks there progressed, fewer people were sitting alone and more were conversing and laughing. The human spirit seemed to be normalizing a little. The transition from rescue to recovery and clean up was occurring, and the focus was shifting from the hope of finding survivors to acceptance and grief, from preoccupation with the missing to helping the living.

Weeks after my return home, remembered images of that ghastly and surreal, smoldering rubble pile of twisted steel and concrete slabs bring tears to my eyes. I feel a little afraid, a little sad, a little angry, but mostly just numbed by the magnitude and sheer horror of it all. As expressed so often by so many, what happened remains incomprehensible and unbelievable, but no longer unimaginable. Then my mind fills with the stories of survival, duty and heroism told by fireman, policemen, and the many volunteers who came from around the world to help. The tears are tears of joy, awe and gratitude for the courage, compassion, generosity, and love I witnessed and for the resilience of the human spirit expressed by ordinary folks in the face of tragedy.

Charlie Day is a clinical psychologist in Des Moines, IA, who teaches meditation and Buddhism. He can be reached at (515) 255-8398 or charlesday1@home.com.

Land Search Continues

by Phil Jones

On Sept. 8, Luke Lundemo, a long-time vipassana student and sangha leader, drove from Jackson, MS to Columbia, MO, with his wife Charlotte, to spend five hours discussing the possibility of transferring the Calwood-Fairview Farm, Inc. to Mid America Dharma. During this meeting Luke was able to renew his friendship with another long-time vipassana student, Gregg Galbraith, the Executive Director of the Ozark Regional Land Trust. Gregg had come from southwest MO just for this special Mid America Dharma Board of Directors meeting to share his expertise in establishing land trusts.

Luke explained the history of the land, the corporate structure of the ownership, and the owners' vision for the land. Gregg spoke about options for preserving the integrity of the land. During the meeting Luke made an offer to give Mid America Dharma his share in the property (approximately 50%) as long as the owners' vision was maintained.

After hearing from Luke and Gregg, we all went to see the land. This 310-acre property is located 30 minutes east of Columbia on I-70 (or about 2.5 hours from Kansas City and 1.5 hours from St. Louis). This land is wild, rugged and densely forested with lots of beautiful, large oak and hickory trees as well as smaller species such as dogwoods and sassafras. Undergrowth includes quite a few ferns along with the more typical mix of poison ivy, thorn bushes and small trees and bushes. A number of deep ravines drain into two creeks on the property. Except for the sound of an occasional airplane, all one hears is silence and the sounds of nature.

We walked and drove an old road along a ridgetop through the forest to a meadow deep within the property. Along the way, Luke took us on a tour of the pond and the gazebo that overlooks it. Beyond the meadow, bright with yellow golden rod, we explored a little of the forest and the rugged, beautiful, steep drainage into "Maya" Creek which is on the periphery of the meadow. I think that all were inspired by the quiet magic of the land, by Luke's clear love for it and by his willingness to give his share of it to us.

At this point we have agreed to continue discussions with Luke and the other owners and with Gregg to see if we can find a way to reach an agreement that satisfies our wishes to preserve and protect the land while also making it's beauty and solitude available to support those on a spiritual path.

Mid America Dharma continues to move toward realizing the dream of creating a meditation retreat center. We invite you to be a part of making that dream come true and welcome any contribution you can make of your talent, time or material resources.

Yes, I want to help build a home for the Dharma in the Midwest. Please accept my donation of:

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

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

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

Mid America Dharma is a tax deductible 501(c)3 charitable organization.

Invitation For Sangha News

We welcome news from your sanghas. If you wish to be included in the next edition of *Mid America Dharma News*, please contact Bridget Rolens, 10131 Cabana Club Drive, St. Ann, MO 63074; (314) 426-4238; bridgetr@brick.net. The next edition will come out in August, 2002. The deadline for articles is June 1, 2002.

Ann Arbor, MI

Deep Spring Center hosts several vipassana meditation retreats each year, offers classes in the community and sittings every Sunday morning at the Center. There are 14 teachers with Barbara Brodsky as the guiding teacher. This winter we have 5 vipassana classes with about 120 total students. Our prison and hospice programs are also growing. Two Spring retreats are planned: March 1-3 with Barbara and John Orr for experienced students; March 15-17 with Barbara and 2 of the DSC teachers, for anyone, with a special focus on beginning instruction. Our summer retreat is June 21-29, led by Barbara and John. For information, e-mail the Center, info@deepspring.org, or call (734) 971-3455.

Columbia, MO

Show Me Dharma has two meditation practice groups that meet weekly. Our Beginner Group, 7:30 to 8:30pm on Tuesday evenings, provides basic practice instructions. Our Experienced Meditator Group meets Wednesday evening from 7:45 to 9:15 pm. We also have a class open to 14 participants that meets on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. In January we will begin a class on cultivating the Ten Paramis, the qualities that one develops on the bodhisattva path. To find out more please call Ginny Morgan at 573-817-9942 or send an email to gmorgan@coin.org.

The Buddhist Association MU at the University of Missouri-Columbia is a registered student organization created to introduce the many traditions of Buddhism through study of Buddhist teachings, meditation practice, discussion groups, and community service. During the regular academic year weekly meetings begin with 30 minutes of sitting meditation followed by a presentation by a speaker/teacher from various Buddhist traditions or a discussion among participants based on selected books or Buddhist scriptures. We also sponsor short meditation retreats, visits to nearby temples, and other activities. For more information visit our website <http://students.missouri.edu/~muba/>.

Columbus, OH

Mindfulness Meditation of Columbus meets every Thursday at 7:15 PM at First Community Church, 1320 Cambridge Ave., Columbus, OH 43212 in the annex building. After a 40 minute period of sitting meditation we listen to a tape and discuss our practice.

Beginners are always welcome. For information contact Jim Dunn at (614) 291-7630. Please visit our web site: mmoc.dreamwater.net. There will be a 2½-day meditation retreat with Bhante Rahula from the Bhavana Society the first weekend in May. For more information please contact Jim Dunn by email at jamesmdunn@earthlink.net.

Downers Grove, IL

The Accidental Sangha meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Meetings are usually two 25 minute sitting meditations with a walking meditation in between followed by a dharma discussion. We are a member of the group of sanghas throughout the US in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh but consider ourselves a nondenominational Buddhist sangha with a strong emphasis on insight meditation. For additional information, contact Jack Hatfield at jackhat1@aol.com.

Jackson, MS

The Jackson Insight Meditation Group sponsors a Sunday morning sit, 9:00am to 10:00am. A brief instruction or motivational Dharma discussion often precedes the sit. Other activities include a study group (Thursday evenings 7:00pm to 8:30pm), a long, intensive silent retreat once a year, and other events such as a Dharma film series. Soon after the beginning of the year we will schedule Introduction to Meditation classes. For more information contact Luke or Charlotte Lundemo at 601-981-6925.

Kansas City, MO

Heart of America Sangha meets Thursdays at 7:30 PM. Our location (most nights) is in Classroom C (at the top of the south stairs) at Unity Temple on the Plaza, 707 W. 47th Street, Kansas City, MO. If the room is in use the group meets in the Power Room. Early next year, we will be studying Bhante Gunaratana's newest book, *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness*.

Lawrence, KS

Free State Sangha of Lawrence used the Insight Meditation course by Joseph Goldstein and Sharon Salzberg (a series of 12 tapes by Sounds True) as the focus of study this Fall. Our one-day retreat with Ginny Morgan in October was very well received. Free State Sangha meets at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Oread Friends Meeting House, 1146 Oregon, Lawrence, KS. For more information contact Bob Mikesic by email at bmikesic@webserf.net or by phone at (785) 749-7249.

Lafayette, IN

The Lafayette Sangha usually meets on the 2nd and 4th weekends of the month. The meeting includes listening to a Dharma audio tape by a teacher from Spirit Rock or IMS, meditating together, having a discussion about the tape or about practice in our daily lives, and socializing. For more information please contact Rodney Ball at rodneymarball@juno.com or call (765) 447-4922.

Madison, WI

The Madison Insight Meditation Group will be offering two residential vipassana retreats during 2002 at St. Benedict's Center in Madison, Wisconsin: February 21 through 24 with Ginny Morgan; and April 25 - 28 with Wes Nisker. Both retreats begin at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and run through noon on Sunday. For more information contact Lori Creswell at (608) 274-8938.

Oklahoma City

The Oklahoma Insight Meditation Group meets Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Meetings consist of 40-45 minutes of sitting meditation, a Dharma discussion facilitated by Arpita Brown, and a light refreshment. The focus of the group is Insight Meditation (Vipassana). Arpita also guides one day sitting and walking retreats and teaches classes on basic meditation technique. Arpita is a participant in the CDL2 program at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre California and has been practicing Vipassana Meditation since 1983. For more information contact Arpita Brown, (405)478-8407, arprob@flash.net or visit <http://members.home.net/bbenham/index.htm>.

St. Louis, MO

St. Louis Insight Meditation Group meets on Sundays, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Big Bend Yoga Center, 88 N. Gore in Webster Groves. The weekly meeting consists of an hour

of sitting/walking meditation, a dharma talk with discussion, and tea. Ginny Morgan, of Show Me Dharma of Columbia, MO and Elizabeth Fryer, of St. Louis Insight Meditation Group are co-teaching a class on "Wisdom and Compassion" during 2001 - 2002. Other activities include a 4-week Introduction to Insight Meditation offered twice a year and day-long non-residential retreats. For more information visit our website at <http://www.insightstlouis.org>.

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

The Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative is hosting a number of residential and non-residential retreats. Teachers include Santikaro Bhikkhu, Marcia Rose, Wes Nisker, Franz Moeckl, Kamala Masters and Steve Armstrong. For more information call the TCVC pre-recorded info line (651)-229-3139 or email <tcvcoop@hotmail.com>

Memphis, TN

All of the events in our area are posted on DharmaMemphis, which can be found online at <http://dharmaMemphis.com/>.

Illinois/Indiana

For information about sanghas in the Prairie Network visit our webpage: <http://www.prairiesangha.org>. The site lists meditation groups, classes, retreats and other activities of the sanghas.

Mid America Dharma Winter/Spring 2002 Retreat Schedule

February 22-24: Non-residential with Rodney Smith, Kansas City, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Tamara Dutton, 620 Indiana, Lawrence, KS 66044. (785) 842-6666 (home), (785) 864-3455 (work). tlea@ku.edu. Registration begins December 22 and closes February 15. This retreat will begin with a public dharma talk on Friday evening from 7:30 to 9 PM at Unity Temple on the Plaza, 707 W 47th Street, Kansas City, MO 64112.

Rodney Smith has been practicing vipassana meditation since the mid-70's including several years as a Buddhist monk in Asia. He has been teaching meditation since the early 80's and has worked as a full time hospice worker since 1984. He is currently the program director of Hospice of Seattle.

March 4-9: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana in St. Louis, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Elizabeth Fryer, 1509 Fawn Valley Dr., St. Louis, MO 63131. (636) 230-2388. modharma@aol.com. Registration begins January 4 and closes February 18.

Henepola Gunaratana was born on December 7, 1927 in a small village named Henepola and was 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*, best selling *Mindfulness in Plain English* and the recently published *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness*. 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 conducts retreats worldwide.

May 24 - June 2: Residential with Matthew Flickstein in Conception, MO

The registrar for this retreat is: Ginny Morgan, 717 Hilltop Dr., Columbia, MO 65201. (573) 817-9942. Gmorgan@coin.org. Registration begins March 24 and closes May 10.

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* and *Swallowing the River Ganges: A Practice Guide to the Path of Purification* (Wisdom Publications).

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.

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

RETREAT REGISTRARS: See information on page 6.

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 Begins: Registrations will not be accepted prior to the beginning date for each specific retreat.

Registration Deadline: Registration deadlines are posted for each retreat on the previous page. *Any registrations post-marked or received after the deadlines will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*

Retreat Costs: See registration information below.

Refunds: No deposits will be refunded after the deadline.

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.

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.

REGISTRATION FORM

To register please send a check payable to Mid America Dharma with this form to the specific Registrar for the retreat you plan to attend (see p. 6.) If you are registering for more than one retreat, please photocopy this form and send with payment to the listed registrar for each retreat. A \$70 deposit is required for all residential retreats. Late registration creates problems for us, please register early.

_____ Feb 23-24: Non-residential with Rodney Smith,
Kansas City, MO. Cost: \$50.

_____ Mar 4-9: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana, St.
Louis, MO. Cost \$295, (after Feb. 11, \$320).

_____ May 24-June 2: Residential with Matthew
Flickstein, Conception, MO. Cost \$440 (after May 3, \$465).

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

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

Please Print:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

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

2002 Retreat Schedule

February 22nd - 24th : Non-Residential with Rodney Smith in Kansas City, MO
March 4th - 9th: Residential with Bhante Gunaratana in St. Louis, MO
May 24th - June 2nd: Residential with Matthew Flickstein in Conception, MO
October 2nd - 6th: Residential with Eugene Cash in St. Louis, MO
November 15th - 23rd: Residential with Barbara Brodsky in St. Louis, MO
Dec 30, '02 – Jan 2, '03 Residential with Ginny Morgan in Conception, MO

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Mid America Dharma

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