

The Mountain Hermitage

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The Mountain Hermitage - Sharing the Vision

The first time I was invited to teach in Israel, some students took me to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem after the retreat. I stood there silently as ancient history and current suffering flowed in a single stream through my heart and mind. Then I tore a piece of paper from my note pad and wrote down my intention for a small long-term practice center to come to fruition in the mountains of New Mexico. I folded the paper into a tiny bundle and stuck it into one of the cracks in the wall, along with thousands of tiny bundles of hopes, dreams, remembrances, loves, forgivenesses, etc., that have been tucked into the Wailing Wall's cracks over countless time.

Seven years later, in a world still full of suffering, the vision of that moment is as bright, clear, and powerful as it was then, and I know that with dedication and effort *The Mountain Hermitage* here in the mountains of Taos, New Mexico can become reality. This past Spring I had another personal experience that strengthened my resolve. I joined a group of fellow Dharma teachers for a month of silent retreat practice at The Forest Refuge in Barre, MA, and then stayed on for another month to sit with my Burmese teacher Sayadaw U Pandita. This Fall I returned again to The Forest Refuge, this time to teach.

Practicing and teaching in a place so wisely created to support long term practice for those ready to enrich their meditation practice in this way was a profound gift to me. I personally experienced the vision in action every day, and it moved me deeply. I returned to Taos ready to take up the work of *The Mountain Hermitage* with renewed energy and determination.

It has begun to happen. *The Hermitage* Board of Directors and our extended family of friends and supporters have joined together to take the first strong steps toward making *The Mountain Hermitage* the uniquely beautiful place of shared vision it will one day be. Each person who comes to these pristine northern New Mexico mountains to practice at *The Mountain Hermitage* will be honored and supported in their quest to awaken to the deepest truths and to manifest these truths in their daily lives.

The Mountain Hermitage will nurture peace of mind, lovingkindness, compassion and wisdom in the hearts and minds of those who come to practice here. This world needs more people who have a wise and compassionate spiritual maturity. *The Mountain Hermitage* will provide the space and support for this maturity to grow and blossom.

Thank you all for your interest and support of *The Mountain Hermitage*.

With metta,

Marcia Rose

Resident Guiding Teacher, TMH

May the merit of our actions serve
the welfare and liberation of all beings.

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"Peace in the world begins with peace in our own minds. Wise and compassionate action in the world arises from wisdom and compassion within ourselves. The Mountain Hermitage will help water and nurture the seeds of peace, wisdom and compassion for those who practice there, cultivating the intention to benefit all."

-- Joseph Goldstein



Meet Our Resident Teacher ...



Marcia Rose lives in Taos, NM, and is the resident guiding teacher for The Mountain Hermitage and Taos Mountain Sangha Meditation Center. She has been studying and practicing the Buddha's teachings and meditation with Asian and Western teachers of various traditions since 1970. Her own teaching reflects a strong influence from the Burmese Mahasi Vipassana tradition of Sayadaw U Pandita, and in more recent years also from the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition. Marcia was the resident teacher for staff at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, from 1991 to 1995. She has been one of the teachers for the annual three month retreat at IMS and has been invited to be a visiting teacher at The Forest Refuge in Barre, MA, for a few months during 2003-2004. Marcia also teaches Vipassana and Metta retreats in other U.S. venues and internationally.

* Board development will continue during precampaign period.



What Difference Does It Make?

When asked how the meditation practice of one person can make a difference, many Buddhists recall the story of the third-century BCE King Ashoka, a Mauryan king who conquered what is now India through merciless warfare. After a particularly gory battle, even Ashoka was filled with horror as he walked across the battlefield. He saw one living being, a monk, and struck by his equanimity asked the monk about his spiritual practice. The answer so inspired Ashoka that he established an empire based on nonviolence and spread the teachings of the Buddha throughout Southeast Asia.

The gift of the Dharma – the teachings of the truth excels all gifts.

-- The Buddha/The Dhammapada

In the millennia since, many people's lives have been changed in large and small ways by the Dharma. And each person whose life has been touched has affected the lives of many others. A dramatic example of this ripple effect can be seen in the life of Jean Smith, who first became interested in Buddhism as a teenager but did not become deeply involved in Vipassana practice until her 40s. While a prominent publishing executive, she put her practice into action in diverse ways, from establishing compassionate company policies for people who were HIV-positive to eliminating the use of Styrofoam cups in a Manhattan office building and using recycled paper for textbooks, despite opposition from her management on financial grounds. In her 50s she was afflicted with a chronic health problem that radically limited her cherished physical activities (such as five treks in the Himalayas) and her ability to work in the corporate world. So she decided to devote her life to sharing the Dharma and has now published seven books on Buddhism (most recently *The Beginner's Guide to Walking the Buddha's Eightfold Path*) that have touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Jean Smith is president of *The Mountain Hermitage* Board of Directors.

Our Vision

The Mountain Hermitage will be a small retreat center dedicated to the inner cultivation and outer manifestation of wisdom, lovingkindness, compassion and peace. This home for long-term spiritual practice according to the traditions of Theravada Buddhism will be built in a quiet and beautiful mountain setting in the Taos, New Mexico area. In addition to cottages where any qualified, experienced Dharma students can devote themselves to periods of intensive meditation practice for two weeks or longer, there will be a wheelchair accessible cottage and cottages dedicated for practice by monastics, those engaged in social service work, and lay Dharma teachers. On Sunday mornings a particular area of *The Hermitage* will be open to the larger community for meditation, a Dharma talk and discussion. *The Mountain Hermitage* will be built and operated on the principles of sustainable energy.

"You are cordially invited to help change the world"

Gala Evening Introduces Community to The Mountain Hermitage

On March 1, 2003, a congenial gathering of invitees from Northern New Mexico joined the Board of Directors at the historic Mabel Dodge Luhan House in Taos to learn more about the vision for



The Mountain Hermitage. After mingling in the candlelit room and enjoying wonderful hors d'oeuvres and punch, guests listened to several brief presentations about the search for a physical location, plans for sustainable-energy building, and ways the community might become involved. Guiding teacher Marcia Rose described in moving terms how a spiritual endeavor like *The Mountain Hermitage* can have a ripple effect that touches many people's lives and makes a profound difference in the world. Noted classical guitarist Carl Bernstein celebrated the occasion with familiar and original music compositions.

Attendees responded enthusiastically to the presentation, asking questions, signing up to help with future projects, and generously donating support in the dana baskets provided. The next event to benefit *The Mountain Hermitage* is in the planning stages now.

How will we succeed?

We welcome your participation in creating this sanctuary of wisdom, compassion and peace that will serve the world. Your personal interest and support will make this unique and significant vision manifest.

The Mountain Hermitage vision will benefit a broad and growing range of people over time ... those who come to *The Hermitage* to practice and those who are touched by the many and varied ways that the fruits of Dharma practice work in the world. We invite you to join this vision by offering whatever financial support you can, however large or small. Please consider joining our spiritual community through a great and worthy act, the practice of generosity – the profound and sacred practice of Dana as taught by the Buddha. All donations in any form are welcomed and deeply appreciated.

If beings knew, as I know, the benefits of generosity, they would not let an opportunity go by without giving and sharing.

-- The Buddha

Opportunities for Giving

	Gift Range	Number of Gifts	Total
Bodhisattva Level	\$500,000	1	\$500,000
	250,000	2	500,000
Deva Level	100,000	2	200,000
Benefactor Level	50,000	8	400,000
Patron Level	20,000	10	200,000
Guardian Level	10,000	10	100,000
Supporter Level	<10,000	many	100,000
			\$2,000,000

In general, 80% of a development campaign goal comes from 20% of the prospects. The rule of thumb calls for at least four qualified prospects for each lead gift. Based on the gift table above, TMH will need to cultivate a pool of at least 132 prospects in order to solicit the lead gifts necessary to meet its \$2,000,000 campaign goal.

Where We Stand

Campaign Planning Study Measures Challenge Against Conviction

Believe. Support. Succeed. Those three calls to action are the final words of the 27-page *TMH* Campaign Planning Study commissioned in the fall of 2002, developed by New York City consultant Sarah L. Holland, and presented to the *TMH* Board at its November meeting.

The study addresses the fundamental challenge: How can *The Mountain Hermitage* raise \$2,000,000 in philanthropic funds from its actual and potential constituencies over three years? Conclusions and recommendations were developed from the informed replies of thirteen carefully chosen respondents to questions exploring the eight critical elements of the development campaign.

The study defined three critical phases in the three year plan, beginning with a nine to twelve month pre-campaign period, launched with the November meeting, that will be make or break for *TMH*. As the Board implements and evaluates the results from a cluster of strategies prescribed in the campaign planning study, it will know if it can generate enough support (two or more lead gifts/pledges totaling \$500,000-\$700,000) to move the project into the second phase.

If that formidable challenge is met, *TMH* moves to a one-year nucleus fund phase, aiming to secure 40 to 50 per cent of the total \$2,000,000 campaign goal. Only when these funds are committed would the campaign be "publicly" announced. At this point all other prospects are solicited, and if all goes well, the balance required to achieve the \$2,000,000 goal will be secured, giving *TMH* the green light to begin development of its physical plant.

The study spells out many challenges facing the development team, among them the number of sanghas and retreat centers already in existence in northern New Mexico, creating both a hospitable environment for Buddhist ventures and stiff competition for what is seen as a small pool of philanthropic dollars.

As the Board faces this and other challenges in developing major sources of funding for *TMH*, great dedication, strong belief, and personal sacrifice will be required of many supporters. But overriding the challenges, however great, is the shared and powerful conviction that each passing day in this troubled century brings greater relevance – and urgency – to the vision for *The Mountain Hermitage*. This is truly a project that can change the world.

Yes, I would like to help!

Name: _____
Organization _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Country: _____
Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____
Email: _____

I would like to help financially by

- a one time gift of \$ _____
- a yearly gift of \$ _____
- a quarterly gift of \$ _____
- a monthly gift of \$ _____

I pledge the amount of \$ _____ to be paid by _____ (date).

I would like to help with an in-kind donation of (please list): _____

I would like someone to contact me to discuss the plans for *The Mountain Hermitage* and how I may become part of those plans.

Please return this form to:
The Mountain Hermitage, PO Box 807, Ranchos de Taos, NM 87557

Every gift no matter how great is meaningful to the creation of *The Mountain Hermitage*. Please remember us in your meditations.