Meet the Teachers for the Spring and Summer 2009 Hermitage

ANNIE NUGENT

Annie Nugent returns for her third year as visiting teacher for The Mountain Hermitage spring retreat period. Annie has studied and practiced in the Theravada and Tibetan Buddhist traditions since 1979 under the guidance of a range of teachers including Sayadaw U Pandita, Tullia Ajung Rinpochi and various western teachers. After leaving South Africa, her country of origin, she lived in England for some years, and has recently emigrated to the U.S., making her home now in Barre, Massachusetts. Annie was the resident teacher at the Insight Meditation Society from 1999-2003, and has since taught elsewhere, including the annual IMS three-month retreat and The Forest Refuge. Her teaching style aims to reveal how our lives are opportunities to develop a clear understanding of the Truth.

SEAYAW VIVIKANANDA

Ven. Vivikananda has trained under the Ven. Sayadaw U Pandita of Maha Bodhi Monastery since 1980. He is the resident teacher at Panditarama Lumbini International Meditation Center, Lumbini, Nepal. He has been teaching Vipassana meditation and Bodhisattva Vow meditation in the tradition of the Ven. Mahatma Sayadaw since 1994 in Lumbini, Nepal, the United States, Europe and Israel. Ven. Vivikananda guides meditators in a precise and encouraging manner.

Board Refocuses Hermitage Vision

Preserved by a faltering economy that has seen rapidly escalating costs and a downturn in philanthropic giving, the Board unanimously agreed to discontinue development plans and pour its efforts into offering a broad range of offerings at the several rental facilities now available.

While the decision was a difficult one,” said Board President Jean Smith, “we’re already seeing how much we can do behind our single-minded efforts to dynamically build The Mountain Hermitage by offering a broad and expanding range of retreats.”

In just five short years, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Board, and the continuing generosity of donors, the Hermitage has grown from one retreat offering to four in 2009.

Hermitage Sets New Direction, Expands Retreat Offerings for 2009

Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall. In an expanded schedule central to its new direction, in 2009 The Mountain Hermitage will offer experienced Buddhist practitioners a retreat for every season of the year, including two that bring unique practice perspectives to the Buddhist teachings.

**NEW!** The head-to-tail week retreat, scheduled from February 13 to February 27 at the San Geronimo Lodge in Taos, NM is a Vipassana retreat that includes a dynamic fusion of body movement, writing/drawing and writing practices. Called Self-No Self and the Creative Process, the retreat brings together several eminent, experienced teachers whose talents combine to offer a unique retreat experience. Sliding Scale Fee: $775(low) - $975(standard cost) - $975(benefactor) Limited scholarship funding available: Minimum fee: $375

**From April 1 to April 12, 2009, the Hermitage will offer its fifth annual one-month retreat for experienced yogis at the San Geronimo Lodge. As always, yogis may apply for the four-week session, or for one of the two-week offerings from April 1 to April 15, or April 16 to April 29. Teachers: Marcia Rose and Annie Nugent Sliding Scale Fee: 4 weeks $1840(low) - $1990(standard cost) - $2410(benefactor) Two weeks: $920(low) - $995(standard cost) - $1100(benefactor) Limited scholarship funding available: Minimum fee: 4 weeks $750 2 weeks $375

Information, Practice Guidelines, Application and Scholarship Forms are available at: www.mountainhermitage.org, or Email: hermitage@mountainhermitage.org or call 575-758-0833.
A Message from Our Guiding Teacher

Dear Friends,

On April 30th of this year we concluded our 4th annual Spring Hermitage retreat. It was a month of inspiration, blossoming insight, and fulfillment—a great gift and blessing for everyone involved—yoga, teachers, our retreat manager and cook.

And now, as you read these words, I will have just completed a two-month personal retreat—yet another great gift of the Dhamma as it energizes and shapes our lives.

As 2008 draws to a close, The Mountain Hermitage teachers and staff prepare to move into a richer and fuller schedule of offerings for 2009. Although we won’t be continuing our development efforts for a home of our own, we’ll be engaged in development of another kind with our expanded schedule of retreats for 2009. With two rental facilities we’re now feeling quite secure. And with the abundant energy and inner space now available to focus on retreat planning, and the many gifts of inspiration and insight that have come to us, we are moving boldly into the future.

With four upcoming retreats, we are challenged to offer an expanded scholarship program, a central tenet of our vision. In this light, I invite each of you to consider offering the great gift of supporting the Hermitage in realizing its vision of helping to bring the Dhamma to the world.

With your gift to The Mountain Hermitage Scholarship Fund, you play a vital role by giving the gift of Dhamma practice to those who would otherwise not be able to attend Hermitage retreats, especially in these difficult times of rising costs and limited resources for so many practitioners.

Perhaps one day we’ll be able to offer retreats at no cost to every Dhamma student as we expand our Scholarship program with your help, we move one step closer to realizing this dream.

With much gratitude and metta,

[Signature]

Guiding Teacher

Reflections on Practice

from Annie Noguchi, Co-Teacher, Hermitage Spring Retreat

Loving-Kindness uncovers the buried treasure in the heart.

Human beings are very tender, gentle creatures at heart, and it is because we are so tender and vulnerable that we develop an impenetrable barrier—a wall around ourselves in an attempt to protect ourselves from pain. But the wall only isolates and alienates us from the world of which we are an integral part. In deading ourselves to pain, we cut ourselves off from that unmitigated source of love, kindness, joy and tenderness already within us and that we all desperately wish to experience.

We hurt others because we are hurting and up until now don’t know what to do about it. Our entire lives are geared towards finding happiness, but through the ignorance of separation into “this is me and that is you” we look in the wrong direction—outside of ourselves—for something or someone to give us the love we seek.

When we can develop a kindness, a friendship, and acceptance and understanding towards ourselves by opening to ourselves with loving kindness and by so doing allowing the natural love to flow, then we can be genuinely kind and kind towards others, no matter how they respond to us. And so the shield around the heart slowly melts away.

Additional Scholarship Funding Critical to Expanded Retreats

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of a supporting Foundation, the Hermitage Scholarship Fund is able to support monies among many qualified applicants—but so many in need cannot be subsidized without additional philanthropic dollars from individual friends and supporters.

Will you be one of them? If we are to offer scholarship aid at current levels, the Hermitage will need an additional $6,000 to support retreat costs for scholarship yogis for the February 2009 Self-No Self Creative retreat and the June 2009 Sayadaw Viveknanda retreat.

If you prefer to support the general operating fund to help pay critical retreat expenses, we would also be most grateful for your generosity. Among those expenses are modest facility rental, stipends for Retreat personnel, travel, food, and office expenses. A gift of any amount will be received with utmost gratitude, and will help the Hermitage continue to expand the many ways we are dedicated to bringing the Dhamma to the world.

Self-No Self and the Creative Process:
Hermitage Offers Dynamic Retreat Opportunity

There’s great excitement at The Mountain Hermitage these days as planning continues for our new and unique retreat, scheduled for February 13 to February 27 at the Zen Geronomo Lodge in Dest, NM. The retreat, Self-No Self and the Creative Process, along with sitting and walking practice explores the flow of creative energy in relation to “self-view” via movement/contact improvisation, seeing/drawing, and writing. Retreats need not have had any experience with these creative modalities.

Dance artist Jane Shockley, with more than 20 years experience, will teach the Movement portion of the retreat. Jane is a lecturer in Dance at Carleton College and holds a certification in Global Somatics. Her teaching is informed by her studies in Global Somatics, Body Mind Centering, Feldenkrais and Yoga.

We will begin to discover ways that Self and No-Self show up as we explore letting go into the potential immediacy of moment to moment creative response through the vehicle of the body. The contemplative practice of Authentic Movement will begin our exploration...continuing on into Contact Improvisation, a partnered improvisational movement form which relies on following sensation without a predetermined plan. The dynamic site where two bodies meet is the starting point for this movement exploration. It is an opportunity to release into physical experience and follow the visceral response of the moving body. – Jane Shockley

Following the Movement segment of the retreat, Seeing/Drawing sessions. (See Marcia’s bio on p. 4)

Hermitage Guiding Teacher Marcia Rose will teach the

We do a lot of looking—at our computers, televisions and through lenses; at people and books and ‘nature.’ Our ‘looking’ is practiced every day, but how often do we see? Seeing/drawing is a way to achieve intimate touch with the visible world around us, and through it, with ourselves. Our practice will be to receive what is seen without interpreting the ‘self’ to allow the mind, the eye and the heart to simply reflect like a clear mirror. From this springs the ability to contact things directly and positively, letting the hand (and pencil) follow what the eye sees without the thought of ‘making’ a picture or ‘being’ creative. Our Seeing/Drawing will be the practice of contemplative awareness in relationship to a world that is fully alive. As we begin to draw, suddenly we begin to see. And as we begin to truly see, suddenly we are drawing in a way we may never have experienced before. – Marcia Rose

Sean Murphy, who will guide the Writing segment of the retreat, holds an MFA in Writing from the Naropa Institute, and teaches seminars in writing, meditation and creativity for many organizations, including his own Big Sky Writing Workshops and the University of New Mexico in Taos, NM. He is the author of One Bird, One Stone, a chronicle of Zen practice in America, as well as three novels. His debut, The Hope Valley Hubcap King, won the Henning Award for a First Novel. Sean has been a practitioner of Zen Buddhism for more than 20 years.

No-Self is actually where all creation comes from. Words and thoughts arise as though from nowhere—and we can learn to trust the process, and let it inform our creative work. What happens when we let go of ourselves and let the writing arise from this empty space? That’s No-Self. That’s our starting place. In practice this means we’ll work with guided meditations, sensory/mindfulness exercises, and free-writing to touch that deep place in our creative process from which true inspiration springs. – Sean Murphy

Treasury of Free Dharma Offerings Available on Website

Free downloads of talks and guided sits from the last two years of Mountain Hermitage retreats are available on the Hermitage website at www.mountainhermitage.org. Click on Dharma Talks. CDs may be ordered on a donation basis. Our cost is $4.50 per talk. Dharma Talks are also available through the web on i-Tunes. For Marcia Rose’s international teaching schedule, click on Guiding Teacher.