

Self-No Self & the Creative Process
Guiding Teacher: Marcia Rose
with Writing Teacher Sean Murphy
July 9-22, 2012 at
AustingHaus Lodge in Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

This very special retreat offers a unique opportunity for *Dhamma* students to engage in two weeks of practice grounded in the Vipassana teachings and practices with an orientation towards investigating Self–No Self in relation to the creative process. Along with sitting, walking, *Dhamma* talks, individual practice interviews and some group discussion, we will explore the flow of creative energy in relationship to “self-view” via movement, seeing/drawing, and writing. One need not have any experience with any of these creative modalities to participate in this retreat.

Marcia Rose is the Guiding Teacher for *The Mountain Hermitage*’s two-week Self No–Self and the Creative Process Retreat. She will be assisted by writing teacher Sean Murphy. The retreat will provide an opportunity to train with the guiding teacher and the assisting teacher in various creative modalities along with the development of a sustained mindfulness and concentration practice. This will contribute to a comprehensive deepening of practice and understanding.

MOVEMENT: 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. It is an opportunity to release into physical experience and follow the visceral response of the moving body.

SEEING/DRAWING: 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 interposing 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.

WRITING: 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.

Marcia Rose will lead the movement and the seeing/drawing portions of the program, and Sean Murphy will teach the writing segment. Yogis are expected to maintain sustained and continuous practice during their time at *The Mountain Hermitage*. Teaching support will consist of six to eight evening *Dhamma* talks and four to six individual practice interviews during the two weeks. Before each *Dhamma* talk there will be a renewed yogi group commitment to the refuges and precepts. Yogis will undertake one hour of work meditation daily.

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS RETREAT

For this retreat, we are easing our usual practice requirements to invite anyone with a sincere interest in the Buddha *Dhamma*. You will still need to complete an application for this retreat, and it will be reviewed by the guiding teacher. Please be sure to fill out the application sections on your meditation and retreat experience, as

this information will be helpful to the teachers. Where applicable, include details of the retreats, including teachers' names, dates, location and length of the retreat.

ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE

The Mountain Hermitage offers a uniquely supportive space of solitude and silence for individuals who wish to participate in this unique retreat. Our foundation practice will be *Vipassana*, which may at times be supplemented by concentration or other awareness practices.

In order to benefit from this environment, applicants need to be at least somewhat self-sustaining in their practice and be comfortable in unbroken silence and solitude. All participants must be mentally stable and physically able to care for themselves. Everyone must have health insurance or be able to cover their expenses in case of illness or medical emergencies. Any special needs must be discussed and agreed to in advance, as the staff is very small and cannot accommodate high levels of support for any individual.

The retreat will be limited to 16 practitioners, so early application is suggested. It is asked that retreatants commit themselves fully to their stay. All business and family obligations should be taken care of prior to arrival so that practice can be uninterrupted.

TEACHERS

Marcia Rose lives in Taos, NM. She is the founding and guiding teacher of *The Mountain Hermitage* and founding teacher of Taos Mountain Sangha. She has been studying and practicing Buddhist teachings and meditation with Asian and Western teachers since 1970, primarily in the Theravada-Vipassana (Path of the Elders) tradition. Her own teaching reflects a clear influence from the Burmese Pa-Auk Forest Monastery and Mahasi Vipassana lineages. She has also studied and practiced in the Dzogchen Tibetan Buddhist tradition with Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, and Tsoknyi Rinpoche. Marcia was resident teacher for staff at the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, MA from 1991-1995. She continues teaching at IMS as an occasional visiting teacher and is also a regular visiting teacher at The Forest Refuge in Barre, MA. Marcia also teaches Concentration, Vipassana and Metta retreats in other U.S. and international venues, and is dedicated to offering these ancient and timeless teachings in ways that make them accessible and authentic for contemporary culture.

Sean Murphy 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. 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 Hemingway Award for a First Novel. Sean has been a practitioner of Zen Buddhism for more than 20 years.

Besides the guiding teacher and the assisting teachers, the staff of this two-week *Hermitage* retreat will consist of a resident retreat manager (the point of contact in case of any difficulties) and a retreat cook. There will be three nutritious vegetarian meals per day.

THE RETREAT FACILITY

Austinghaus Lodge is situated among tall pines in a mountain setting at beautiful Taos Ski Valley and provides the privacy, quiet, and sense of harmony that is most conducive to intensive practice. There is a spacious room for the movement, drawing, and writing practices, a separate meditation hall, and indoor and outdoor walking areas.

The Mountain Hermitage will have exclusive use of AustingHaus Lodge during the two-week period of the Self – No Self retreat. Retreatants paying at full cost or above will have their own single room and bathroom, while

those receiving scholarships or paying at the low end of the scale may possibly be assigned to share a spacious double room with attached bath.

Each room, whether used as a single or double, is spacious enough to allow for both sitting and walking meditation for those who wish to practice in a more secluded setting. The creative practice room, meditation hall, indoor walking spaces, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms are all within one building.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The retreat schedule will consist of group events such as meals and *Dhamma* talks, along with periods of movement practice, seeing/drawing practice, and writing practice. The schedule will also include periods of sitting and walking. We will begin with two days of intensive sitting and walking practice. Between each three-day period of the creative modalities, there will be a full day of sitting and walking practice.

5:45 am Group sit with chanting
6:30 am Breakfast
7:30 am Work period
8:30 am Reflection – Sit
9:15 am Movement of Seeing-Drawing or Writing Session
10:45 am Sit
11:30 am Walk or individual practice interviews
12:15 pm Lunch
2:15 pm Sit
2:45 pm Movement or Seeing/Drawing or Writing Session
4:00 pm Sit
4:45 pm Walk or individual practice interviews
5:15 pm Tea/Light Supper
7:15 pm Dhamma talk or more movement, or drawing, or writing practice
9:00 pm Sit or walk
9:30 pm Rest/Sleep or continuing practice

FEES

Fees are on a sliding scale to allow you to pay according to your means. Our actual cost for the two weeks per retreatant is \$1,450. A portion of our scholarship funds is being allocated for this retreat to allow us to continue to offer the mid and low ranges on the sliding scale. Please pay as much as you are able to allow others to attend who need to pay less. Any amount above \$1,450 will be gratefully received and treated as a tax-deductible donation.

\$1,300 (low) \$1,450 (actual cost) \$1,600 (benefactor)

Additional scholarship funds are available. Please fill out the special scholarship application form and include this with your regular application form. *The Mountain Hermitage* will gratefully receive donations to our scholarship fund to enable those in financial need to attend this retreat. Donations are tax-deductible and should be marked 'Scholarship Fund'.

DANA

The retreat fees only cover basic expenses and operating costs. The teacher(s) offer the Buddha *Dhamma* without any set fee, and totally depend on *DANA* – on the generosity of their students and benefactors – for the support of their daily life needs.

DANA, an ancient *Pali* word meaning generosity, giving, or gift, is central to the 2,600-year-old tradition of Buddhism. The teachings of the Buddha have been offered freely since the time of the Buddha. There was and is no way to put a price on the teachings of the truth – they are valuable beyond any fee one could set. At the end of the retreat, envelopes will be provided for you to offer *Dana* to the teachers. Giving to the teacher from the heart, whatever feels appropriate, is the practice of *Dana*. You may also wish to offer *Dana* to the staff or to the *Hermitage* itself to support operating expenses or future scholarships.

Another way to support the *Hermitage* is to donate all or part of the cost of a meal during the retreat.

USE OF FEES

Your fees for the Self – No Self & the Creative Process Retreat will be used to pay for: rental of AustingHaus Lodge and attached expenses; other general retreat expenses; a retreat cook; a small stipend for the retreat manager; a small parsonage to the teachers to help cover ongoing home expenses for the duration of the retreat; teacher transportation.

DEPOSIT

Please send your deposit with your application. The deposit is: \$350. The deposit will not be banked until your registration is confirmed and will be applied to the total fee for those accepted to attend. The deposit will be returned in full to those not accepted, or to those who are on a waiting list at the time that the retreat begins.

PAYMENTS

The full deposit must accompany your application, even if you are requesting scholarship funds. No monies will be banked until you are accepted on the retreat.

The balance of the retreat fee is due when you arrive for the retreat, or you can mail the balance to us in advance. If possible, we appreciate you paying the full fee (deposit plus balance) at the time of application or on acceptance, as this improves our efficiency. However this is not necessary. Please pay by check or money order in US funds, drawn on a US bank. We cannot accept foreign cash or bank drafts, but we can accept international money orders in US dollars.

Checks/money orders should be made payable to *THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE*.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation fees apply to all confirmed registrations.

Cancellations received on or before April 31, 2012: your deposit will be returned minus a \$75 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received between April 31 and May 22, 2012: your deposit will be returned minus a \$150 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received between May 22 and June 22, 2012: your deposit will be returned minus a \$250 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received on or after June 22, 2012, including non-attendance at the retreat: your deposit cannot be refunded. If you have already paid the balance, then that balance will be refunded minus the \$350 cancellation fee/deposit.

CANCELLATION FEES WILL BE APPLIED TO *THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE* SCHOLARSHIP FUND (after the cost of the retreat is covered). In the event of specific, unusual emergency circumstances, the cancellation policy can be discussed with *The Mountain Hermitage* Office Manager after the retreat is concluded.

If you attend the retreat but for some reason decide on your own to leave early, the deposit and balance you have paid cannot be refunded to you.

APPLICATION

Anyone interested in attending the retreat must read this document and the separate Practice Guidelines document. Then, complete the Application form and Waiver of Liability, attach your deposit, and mail to: *The Mountain Hermitage*, PO Box 807, Ranchos de Taos, NM 87557.

Applications and deposits are requested by April 31, 2012. Late applications will be considered on a space available basis. Applications will be accepted only by mail, not by phone, fax, or e-mail, because they must be accompanied by the appropriate deposit. Incomplete registrations, including those without sufficient deposit, will be returned for completion.

Each application will be carefully reviewed. In some cases, a personal or phone interview will be conducted with the guiding teacher prior to determination of suitability for this type of practice. All applications are processed by date received. We will respond within four weeks from receipt of your application.

If your application is not accepted for this retreat, your deposit will be returned.

WAIT LIST

Places are limited to 16 practitioners, so early application is advised. Once the retreat is full, you will be notified and placed on a wait list, and we will contact you if a place opens up. If it does not, then your deposit will be returned.

If you are placed on the wait list and you then cancel your registration before a space has become available, your deposit will be returned. If you are placed on a wait list and are unable to attend the retreat, please let us know immediately. As long as your name remains on a list, we assume you wish to attend. If a space becomes available, we will automatically confirm your registration. Once you are confirmed for a retreat, you are liable for applicable cancellation fees if you subsequently cancel.