

“ ... a footprint of the Buddha... ”
SAMATHA/CONCENTRATION RETREAT
with Teachers Marcia Rose & Nikki Mirghafori
at San Geronimo Lodge in Taos, New Mexico
November 1-18, 2014

This two and a half week *Samatha*/Concentration retreat is for experienced *Dhamma* students (see prerequisites below). Guidance will be offered for the development and nurturing of deep concentration leading towards *Jhana* in the lineage of Burmese meditation master Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw.

The retreat will be held in Noble Silence, and will consist of alternate periods of sitting and walking, instructions, *Dhamma* talks and individual practice interviews. The small group size at *Hermitage* retreats (a maximum of 15 students for this one) helps to create a more intimate experience and easier access to teachers.

A scholarship fund has been established to offer financial aid to those who would otherwise not be able to attend and to promote diversity.

Applications and deposits are requested by September 15, 2014. Late applications will be considered on a space available basis.

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS RETREAT

Practitioners must have sat a minimum of three week-long or ten-day retreats with a recognized Buddhist teacher and/or a longer period of intensive practice with a recognized teacher.

Details of the qualifying retreats, including teachers' names, dates, location and length of the retreat, must be documented on the application form.

ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE

Yogis are expected to maintain sustained and continuous practice during their time at *The Mountain Hermitage*. Teaching support for this retreat will consist of 3-5 practice interviews per week, 2-3 *Dhamma* talks each week, 1-2 guided sits per week, and one question & answer evening per week. At the first sit after breakfast each day, there will be a renewed yogi group commitment to the refuges and precepts. Yogis will undertake one hour of work meditation daily.

The Mountain Hermitage offers a unique practice opportunity. In order to benefit from this environment, applicants need to be largely 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.

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 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 Mahasi *Vipassana* and Pa-Auk Forest Monastery lineages with authorization from Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw to teach *Samatha* and *Jhanas* in his lineage. She has also studied and practiced in the *Dzogchen* Tibetan Buddhist tradition with Tulku Urgyen 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 has been one of the teachers for the annual three-month retreat at IMS, and currently is an occasional visiting teacher at IMS and a regular visiting at The Forest Refuge in Barre, MA. Marcia teaches *Vipassana*, *Concentration*, *Brahma Vihara*, and *Creative Process* retreats in various 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.

Nikki Mirghafori was introduced to contemplative practices and yoga in the early 1980's. Since 2003, she has studied and practiced mainly in the *Theravada* tradition with renowned Western and Asian teachers. Her primary teacher, Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw, authorized her to teach *jhanas* and *vipassana* in his lineage in 2008. She was also invited to join Jack Kornfield's teacher training program at Spirit Rock/Insight Meditation center. She has taught mindfulness courses, and is a certified mindfulness facilitator through UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center, and is currently completing The Stanford University Center for Compassion & Altruism Research & Education compassion cultivation teacher training program. Additionally, Nikki has a Ph.D. in computer science from UC Berkeley and has had an active career as a research scientist in academia and industry, leading research teams, teaching, mentoring graduate students & postdocs, and advising high tech companies.

The staff of this two-week retreat will consist of a resident retreat manager (the point of contact in case of any difficulties) and a retreat cook. Meals will be vegetarian and very nutritious.

THE RETREAT FACILITY

San Geronimo Lodge is situated among fruit trees along the banks of the *Acequia Madre*, and provides the privacy, quiet, and sense of harmony that is most conducive to intensive practice. There is a beautiful meditation hall and indoor and outdoor walking areas.

The Mountain Hermitage will have exclusive use of San Geronimo Lodge during the two-week period of the *Samatha/Concentration* Retreat. All yogis will have their own single room and bathroom. Each room is spacious enough to allow for both sitting and walking meditation for those who wish to practice in a more secluded setting.

The meditation hall, walking spaces, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms are all within one building. There is one wheelchair accessible double bedroom, to allow for an attendant, if needed.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The general retreat schedule will consist of group events such as meals, *Dhamma* talks, and guided sits plus a suggested schedule of sitting and walking practice.

5:30 a.m. – Group sit and *Metta* chant

6:30 a.m. – Breakfast

7:15 a.m. – Work period
8:15 a.m. -Refuges & Precepts – Group sit – Instructions or *Dhamma* reflection
9:15 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Walk & sit alternate hours- Practice interviews as scheduled
12:00 Noon – Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Walk & sit alternate hours
5:30 p.m. – Tea
6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. Sit & walk
7:15 p.m. – *Dhamma* talk, guided meditation, or Q & A as scheduled
8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Walk or sit

FEES

Fees are on a sliding scale to allow you to pay according to your means. Our actual cost for the two and a half weeks per retreatant is \$1,775. A portion of our scholarship funds is being allocated for this retreat to allow us to continue to offer the low range 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 \$1,1775 will be gratefully received and treated as a tax-deductible donation.

Sliding scale fee:

\$1,625 (low) \$1,775 (actual cost) \$1,925 (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 teacher(s). 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 for the whole retreat group.

USE OF FEES

Your fees for this two and a half week retreat will be used to pay for: rental of the San Geronimo 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 cover ongoing home expenses for the duration of the retreat; teacher transportation.

DEPOSIT

Please send your deposit with your application. The deposit is \$350 minimum.

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 into 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. *Sorry, but we are unable to accept payment by credit card.*

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 September 15, 2014: your deposit will be returned minus a \$50 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received between September 15 and October 3, 2014: your deposit will be returned minus a \$150 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received between October 3 and October 22, 2014: your deposit will be returned minus a \$275 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received on or after October 22, 2014, 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 *Samatha*/Concentration Retreat should read this document and the separate Practice Guidelines. 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 September 15, 2014. 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 15 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.