

## ***Healing the Self - Healing the Earth Eco-Dharma Retreat with David Loy***

"We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separation."  
-- Thich Nhat Hanh

"I came to realize clearly that mind is nothing other than rivers,  
mountains, and the great wide earth, the sun and the moon and the  
stars."  
-- Dogen

### **INTRODUCTION**

These are challenging times. Problems such as global climate change, the proliferation of dangerous chemicals, and species extinction continue to worsen. In the face of these challenges, many of us are experiencing confusion, weariness and frustration, sometimes with a loss of purpose, apathy or even despair. The truth of *dukkha* (stress, suffering) is hard to miss. But we have our path. By developing wisdom and connecting with each other and the natural world, we can see more deeply, support ourselves more sustainably, and tap into new sources of energy and inspiration.

This unique Eco-Dharma retreat format encourages exploration of the ways that spiritual practice in nature can nourish an ecological and social consciousness based on caring, wisdom and compassion rather than on anxiety and anger. This 5 day retreat is not a forum for policy discussion. It is a deeply personal exploration of what is meaningful and nourishing in your life, which will strengthen how you are connecting, inwardly and outwardly, with spirit and nature. We will dive deep into the issues that we face daily: how Dharma relates to our individual selves, to society, and to the ecological, social, and individual emergencies on our beloved planet. We hope to strengthen our connection with spirit and nature while developing tools to face these issues with compassion and wisdom. There will be periods of meditation and reflection both indoors and outdoors, interspersed with large and small group discussion as well as varied evening programs. The schedule includes daily meditation (with instruction), Dharma talks, experiential exercises, and varied evening programs. There will also be small group meetings with the teacher, as well as time for discussion and sharing one's experiences.

David Loy writes: *"Does Buddhism provide any special insight into the ecological crisis? Do its teachings imply a different way of understanding the biosphere, and our relationship to it, which can really help us at this critical time in history, when we are doing so much to destroy it?"*

*Though Śākyamuni Buddha lived in a very different time and place, Iron Age India, according to the Buddha, there are precise and profound parallels that can be made between our usual individual predicament and our present ecological situation. The basic problem in both cases is an uncomfortable sense of separation, our misunderstanding of that discomfort, and thus our inappropriate responses, which tend to aggravate the initial difficulty.*

*This suggests that the eco-crisis is as much a spiritual challenge as a technological and economic one. Does this also mean that there is also a parallel between the two solutions? Does the Buddhist response to our personal predicament also point the way to resolving our collective one?"*

This retreat is open to anyone interested in exploring these topics. The retreat will be limited to 20 practitioners, so early application is highly recommended. Retreatants are asked to commit themselves fully to their stay. All business and family obligations should be taken care of prior to arrival so that practice and study can be uninterrupted.