

***THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE***  
**Healing the Self - Healing the Earth**  
**Eco-Dharma Retreat *with David Loy***  
**(A Five Day Retreat)**  
**September 23 – 27, 2016**  
***Columbine Inn, Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico***

**PRACTICE GUIDELINES:**

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.

Some meditation experience is valuable but not required.

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. 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 and study can be uninterrupted.

There will be three nutritious vegetarian meals served each day. (The evening meal will be light). The food served during this retreat will be vegetarian and may include dairy and eggs. It is prepared with an eye toward good nutrition and taste. If you have any serious food allergies, please let us know as soon as possible. If you have special food needs for medical reasons, please bring your own items in your own containers. *Limited kitchen refrigeration is available for special needs, but each room has a small refrigerator.*

**NOBLE SILENCE** - Following registration and settling in on Friday evening the retreat will be held in an overall atmosphere of silence except during prescribed talking times...such as group discussions and Q&A periods. Quieting the body and the voice helps to quiet the mind and create a space in which meditation practice, deep listening and mindful speaking naturally unfolds. **There is no cell service at the Columbine Inn. Any emergencies will be handled by the retreat manager through the retreat manager's room phone at the Columbine Inn. Please refrain from using your cell phone, computer or tablet during this retreat time.** By leaving home and/or at rest the many activities of a worldly life, you will be giving yourself the great gift of stillness and spaciousness.

## **ETHICAL GUIDELINES:**

We ask that you abide by the five traditional Buddhist precepts for lay practitioners while at *The Mountain Hermitage*:

1. I undertake the training to refrain from harming living creatures. I undertake the training to practice compassionate action.
2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking that which is not given. I undertake the training to practice contentment.
3. I undertake the training to refrain from sexual activity. I undertake the training to practice responsibility in all my relationships.
4. I undertake the training to refrain from harmful speech. I undertake the training to practice noble silence.
5. I undertake the training to refrain from the use of intoxicants. I undertake the training to wisely care for my body and my mind.

## **WORK MEDITATION:**

As part of your retreat practice, you will be asked to engage in mindful work practice. The work will consist of one hour a day at tasks such as helping in meal preparation, washing dishes, vacuuming, cleaning bathroom facilities, sweeping outside walkways and porches, etc. This work meditation, a form of service, is also vital: it enables us to maintain relatively low retreat fees, and it allows you the opportunity to practice mindfulness in daily activities.

## **DANA:**

*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.

The early teachers received no payment for their instruction. In Buddhist countries, traditionally, it has always been understood that the lay community, through their voluntary generosity (their *dana*), provide physical support - the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine - for the monks and nuns. In turn they were/are offered guidance and teachings in their own practice by this monastic *sangha*. This practice of *dana* has been a very significant pillar in keeping the *Dhamma* (teachings) alive. The generosity of the laity towards the practical support of the monastic community since ancient times, is what has kept the *Dhamma* spreading through the world.

Western teachers have continued this tradition of offering the teachings freely. In our culture, where no real training exists in living generously, it is a new practice for us in both offering and receiving the *Dhamma*.

*Dana* is not only a practical matter; it also plays a crucial role in the spiritual life of a *Dhamma* practitioner. Generosity is the first of the ten *paramis*, or qualities of character, to be perfected in spiritual life. The very act of giving is of immeasurable benefit to the giver, for it opens the heart, lessens self-absorption, and serves the well-being of others.

*The Mountain Hermitage* fees for this retreat only cover basic expenses and operating costs. The teachers offer the *Buddha Dhamma* without any set fee, and depend on the generosity of students for the support of their daily life needs. Giving to the teachers, from the heart, whatever feels appropriate, is the practice of *dana*. It will also be possible to offer *dana* to the retreat staff – the retreat/housekeeping manager, office manager and the cook.

MEAL DANA: All Mountain Hermitage retreats offer participants an opportunity to offer *dana* to specifically help cover the cost of meals during the retreat – for an entire day or for individual meals. The suggested amount for each of these will be posted at the retreat next to the meal *dana* basket.

HOW TO MAKE AN OFFERING: At the end of the retreat, *dana* envelopes will be provided. Cash or checks on US funds may be used (no credit card support at this time). All *dana* checks should be made out to The Mountain Hermitage. The Mountain Hermitage is 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charitable organization. All *dana* offered to The Mountain Hermitage for use in supporting teachers, scholarships & general expenses are tax deductible. Donations to staff are not.

### **MEDICAL ISSUES:**

All participants must be mentally stable and physically able to care for themselves. Everyone must have health insurance or be able to cover his/her own expenses in case of illness or medical emergencies. Any special needs must be discussed with *The Mountain Hermitage* Office Manager and the Retreat Manager and agreed to in advance. Should medical needs or emergencies arise, the Retreat Manager will offer assistance.