

Recognizing Natural Awareness One-Week Insight Meditation Retreat

With Greg Scharf

August 15 - 21, 2021

at Blue Sky Retreat Center @ San Geronimo, Taos, NM

INTRODUCTION

Meditation can be seen as the process of learning to recognize and trust a natural quality of awareness that is available to all of us in any moment no matter what is happening in our experience.

This awareness allow us to open to and connect with the truth of each moment. As we gain confidence in the mind's ability to recognize this natural awareness we begin to release the burden of trying to control, manipulate, or fix experience so that it meets our ideas of the way it should be, and relax into the truth of the way it actually is.

Clear seeing and wisdom arise naturally and we see directly for ourselves what leads to well-being and freedom and what leads to suffering, both in our own life and in the world around us. Through this process we begin to live our lives from a place of greater balance, integrity, confidence, and connection.

The retreat is open to beginners and experienced practitioners alike and will include meditation instruction, *Dharma* talks, practice meetings with the teacher, and optional mindful movement. Applications and deposits are requested no later than July 30, 2021. **Printable forms are at the bottom of this page.**

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS RETREAT

We invite anyone with a sincere interest in the *Buddha Dhamma* to join us for this retreat. You will need to complete an application for the retreat, and it will be reviewed by the teacher.

Please be sure to fill out the application sections asking for any meditation and retreat experience, as this information will be helpful to the teacher. Where applicable, include details of the retreats, including teachers' names, dates, location and length of the retreat.

The retreat will be limited to 13 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 and study can be uninterrupted.

TEACHER

Greg Scharf began meditating in 1992 & has been teaching residential meditation retreats since 2007, including the annual 3 month retreat at the Insight Meditation Society where he serves as a guiding teacher. In his teaching Greg emphasizes the understanding that meditation is fundamentally an exploration of nature and natural processes. He also stresses the critical importance of bringing the qualities of kindness, compassion, and a sense of humor to practice.

Greg has a long-standing relationship with the country & people of Burma (Myanmar) where he trained as a Buddhist monk and where he works with a small humanitarian aid project - particularly targeting education, health-care, and support of Buddhist Nuns. Currently living in the high country of northern

Arizona, Greg's love of nature and the outdoors deeply informs both his practice and teaching.

The staff for this retreat includes the teacher, an onsite retreat manager, and a cook. Three delicious and nutritious vegetarian meals will be offered each day.

THE RETREAT FACILITY

[Blue Sky Retreat Center @ San Geronimo Lodge, Taos, NM](#) 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 yurt/hall and indoor and outdoor walking areas. It is situated at 7000 ft elevation.

The Mountain Hermitage will have the use of Blue Sky Retreat Center during the 7 day period of this *Insight Meditation* Retreat. 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 bedrooms, walking spaces, dining room, kitchen are all within one building. There are two wheelchair accessible double bedrooms, to allow for an attendant, if needed. There is a separate meditation yurt that we will be able to use for our meditation space.

Information about transportation and what to bring will be sent to those accepted into the retreat in time for making travel arrangements and packing.

DAILY SCHEDULE

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

5:45 a.m.	Wake up
6:15 a.m.	Group sit with chanting
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
7:45 a.m.	Yogi Work Meditation Period
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Group sit with Instructions/Guided Meditation
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Individual Practice
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Individual Practice
3:00 p.m.	Optional mindful movement with Greg
5:30 p.m.	Tea
6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.	Individual Practice
7:15 p.m.	Dhamma talk/Reflection (refuges/precepts are chanted before talks)
8:15 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Individual Practice

FEES

Fees are on a sliding scale to allow you to pay according to your means. Our actual cost for this week-

long retreat per person is \$1000. A portion of our scholarship fund is being allocated for this retreat to allow us to offer the low range on the sliding scale. Please pay as much as you are able, in order to allow others to attend who need to, pay less. Any amount above \$1000 will be gratefully received and treated as a tax-deductible donation.

Sliding Scale Fees:

\$ 800 (low) \$ 1000 (actual cost) \$ 1289 (benefactor)

If you need more scholarship support, some additional funds are available. Please fill out a scholarship application form and send it with your application form, specifying how much you feel you are able to pay. **There is no fee for monastics.**

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'.

USE OF FEES

Your fees for the retreat will be used to pay for: facility rental; general retreat & administrative expenses; a small stipend for the retreat manager; a small parsonage to the teacher to help cover any ongoing home expenses for the duration of the retreat; cook's wages & food costs; and travel reimbursements.

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 are held to be beyond any price and have been offered freely since the time of the Buddha. This retreat is offered in that same spirit.

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 teacher(s) 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 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.

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. All dana checks should be made out to The Mountain Hermitage. The Mountain Hermitage is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charitable organization. All dana offered to The Mountain Hermitage for use in supporting the teacher, scholarships & general expenses are tax deductible. Donations to staff are not tax-deductible. If you would like to offer dana by credit card, please ask the Retreat Manager for more information during the retreat. OR ask Kathy at hermitage@mountainhermitage.org before the retreat.

DEPOSIT

Please send your deposit with your application. The deposit is: \$275.

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. No monies will be banked until you are accepted on the retreat. The balance of the retreat fee is due at the start of 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. *If you would like to pay by credit card, please contact Kathy at hermitage@mountainhermitage.org*

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 July 30, 2021: your deposit will be returned minus a \$25 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received on or after July 31, 2021, 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 \$275 deposit/cancellation fee.

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 have read this 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 **July 30, 2021**. Late applications will be considered on a space available basis. Applications can be accepted by mail or e-mail. If you would like to pay your deposit/retreat fees/dana by credit card, please contact Kathy at hermitage@mountainhermitage.org

Incomplete applications, including those without sufficient deposit, will be returned for completion.

Each application will be carefully reviewed by the teacher. In some cases, a personal or phone interview will be conducted with the 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 13 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.

Printable Documents and Forms

- **Introduction (print-friendly version of this page)**
- **Practice Guidelines**
- **Application**
- **Waiver of Liability**
- **Scholarship Application & Information Sheet**
- **Special Flyer**