

# Recognizing Natural Awareness One-Week Insight Meditation Retreat

With Greg Scharf

July 7 - 14, 2023

at Hyperslow Retreat @ San Geronimo Lodge, 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 **June 7, 2023**.

**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 15 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 of this one-week retreat will consist of the teacher, retreat manager, (the point of contact in case of any difficulties), and a retreat cook. There will be 3 delicious and nutritious vegetarian meals a day. Please let Kathy ([hermitage@mountainhermitage.org](mailto:hermitage@mountainhermitage.org)) know if you have specific dietary restrictions or needs.

### **THE RETREAT FACILITY**

[Hyperslow Retreat @ San Geronimo Lodge \(HSG\)](#), Taos, NM is situated among fruit trees along the banks of the Acequia Madres, and provides the privacy, quiet, and sense of harmony that is most conducive to intensive practice. There are beautiful indoor and outdoor areas suitable for sitting and walking meditation. It is situated at 7000 ft elevation on 2 1/2 acres of private naturally serene and beautiful land.

The Mountain Hermitage will have the exclusive use of HSG during this three-week 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 walking labyrinth is still there!

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

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
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.	Individual Practice
9:00 p.m.	Group Sit with chanting

## **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: rental of the Lodge and attached expenses; other general retreat expenses; a retreat cook; a small stipend for the retreat manager; a small parsonage to the teacher to help cover ongoing home expenses for the duration of the retreat; teacher, cook, and manager transportation. As you well know, transportation and rental costs have increased over the past 2 years. We have done our best to keep the retreat fees as low as possible without jeopardizing our and our teachers' financial health and well-being. Thank you for your understanding!

## **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 off 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 offered 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](mailto:hermitage@mountainhermitage.org)

## **DEPOSIT**

Please send your deposit with your application. The deposit is: \$600. This deposit is non-refundable if you cancel after May 4, 2023. We have had to change our deposit and refund policies due to too many people cancelling after we had paid the non-refundable rent balance. We thank you in advance for your understanding and patience.

The deposit will not be banked until your registration is confirmed. 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. **Please note that the \$600 deposit is non-refundable if you cancel after May 4, 2023, so please consider carefully if you are committed to sitting this retreat.** 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](mailto: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 May 3, 2023: your deposit will be returned minus a \$25 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received on or after May 4, 2023, including non-attendance at the retreat: your deposit cannot be refunded. If you have already paid the entire balance, then that balance will be refunded minus the \$600 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 **June 7, 2023**. 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](mailto: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 two 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.

## **Printable Documents and Forms**

- **Introduction (print-friendly version of this page)**
- **Practice Guidelines**

- **Application**
- **Waiver of Liability**
- **Scholarship Application & Information Sheet**
- **Special Flyer**