

## **Finding Freedom Through Insight Meditation**

### **One-Week Vipassana Retreat**

**With Brian Lesage**

**January 21 - 28, 2025**

**Hyperslow Retreat Center @ San Geronimo Lodge, Taos, New Mexico**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Insight meditation is a simple and direct practice based on moment-to-moment awareness, a technique that opens the heart and clears the mind. This will be an opportunity to practice continuous mindfulness in silence throughout the day—in sitting and walking meditation. In the silence we are freed from much of the daily barrage of stimulus that draws our attention outward, letting us delve deeply inward. Learning to be aware of our experience from a place of stillness and equanimity allows us to see more clearly, and as insight deepens, compassion and wisdom can arise.

The retreat is designed for beginners and experienced practitioners alike and will include meditation instruction, *Dharma* talks, teacher interviews and discussion time.

**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 teachers. 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**

Brian Lesage has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1988 and has taught meditation since 2000. He has studied in the Zen, *Theravada* and Tibetan schools of Buddhism. He was ordained in the *Rinzai* Zen tradition in 1996. His training in *Vipassana* Meditation includes doing extended meditation retreats in Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, and India as well as numerous retreats in the U.S. He leads retreats and teaches meditation courses nationwide. Brian also has a private practice in Somatic Experiencing, which is a naturalistic approach to healing trauma. For more information about Brian, please visit his website for Somatic Experiencing at: [www.liberatingawareness.com](http://www.liberatingawareness.com).

Besides the teacher, the staff of this one-week Vipassana retreat will consist of a resident retreat

manager (the point of contact in case of any difficulties) and a retreat cook. There will be three nutritious vegetarian meals per day.

## **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 one-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.

## **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 \$1520. 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 \$1520 will be gratefully received and treated as a tax-deductible donation.

### **Sliding Scale Fees:**

*\$1320 (low) \$1520 (actual cost) \$1900 (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: increased rental cost 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 6 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 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](mailto:hermitage@mountainhermitage.org)

## DEPOSIT

Please send your deposit with your application. The deposit is: **\$750**. Please note that recently we have had to change our deposit, refund, and cancellation policies. This change is due to a large number of people cancelling after we had paid our non-refundable rent balance for the Spring 2023 retreat. If you cancel on or after November 20, 2024, your deposit will be non-refundable. **Please consider carefully if you are fully committed to sitting this retreat.**

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 on 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. 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 November 19, 2024: If there is a wait-list, your deposit will be returned minus a \$25 cancellation fee.

Cancellations received on or after November 20, 2024, 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 \$750 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, covid waiver liability forms, and deposits** are requested by **January 2, 2025**. 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 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**