

# Mid America Dharma News



Summer/Fall

[www.midamericadharm.org](http://www.midamericadharm.org)

May, 2006

## Working with The Hindrances

By Phil Jones

There are five aspects of our lives that interfere with our ability to rest in awareness, and leave us in suffering. These are: sense-desire, sense-aversion, sleepiness and sluggishness, agitation in the mind and body, and doubt.

These are called the Five Hindrances because when we are caught up in them, they hinder or interfere with the development of concentration and mindfulness. Getting caught in the hindrances involves clinging to or identification with the mind and body states characteristic of the specific hindrance. When we are identified, we have lost our ability to experience a thought or physical experience as an object of awareness. Instead, we are caught in believing that what we are thinking or experiencing is who we are, or who or what the other person or thing is.

Identification with the Hindrances is a common, probably universal, impediment to practice. For one's practice to progress and bear the fruit of freedom from suffering, one must learn to work skillfully with the Hindrances. There are a variety of instructions for dealing with these different hindrances, a variety of skillful means. However, the primary instruction for each hindrance is the same: first to recognize it, then to meet it with acceptance, mindfulness and investigation, the quality of curiosity.

In order to let go of resistance and to bring acceptance, mindfulness and investigation to an experience, first we simply have to recognize it is present. One way to begin is by learning the conceptual description of each hindrance. Then as we bring acceptance, mindfulness and investigation to our experience, we will begin to learn what each hindrance feels like in our own minds and bodies.

Acceptance is a crucial step in working with a hindrance. It is crucial because we cannot understand what lust is, or what fear is, if we constantly push it away or hold it so tightly that we won't let it go away. If we won't let it be what it is, then we will not be able to see, to experientially know, what it is. Also, until we can accept the existence of a hindrance as part of our experience, we will be caught in holding on to it (greed) or pushing it away (aversion). In other words, we will be caught in a hindrance towards the hindrance, such as having aversion for aversion. Non-acceptance piles one hindrance on top of another. So before we do anything else, we need to accept that *this* is what is present in our lives *in this moment*. It is important to understand that acceptance doesn't mean that we act it out. Acting on a hindrance would mean that we are continuing to identify with it, that we are stuck in it. So this form of acceptance includes renunciation or letting go of acting on the experience. Acceptance involves a realization that an experiential understanding of the hindrance as an object of awareness is a necessary step in becoming free from it.

The third quality that we bring to the hindrances is mindfulness, seeing something just as it is. It is the quality of allowing *this* to reveal itself just as it is. It is not a doing but rather receptivity to seeing and experiencing. If acceptance can be viewed as allowing *this* to penetrate into awareness so it can be known, then mindfulness can be regarded as penetrating *this* in order to know it. It is known through bare attention; attention bare of judgment about whether the hindrance is good or bad, useful or useless; attention bare of decision-making about the hindrance; attention bare of commentary or story telling about the hindrance. It is a seeing or a receptive knowing that this is what is present at this moment.

Acceptance and mindfulness, then, allow us to investigate our experience of the hindrance. Investigation is not an analytical process. It is curiosity about what is being experienced at this moment. *What is this?* Investigation allows us to see what the hindrance is and to truly come to understand for ourselves: this is what sense-desire, or any other hindrance, is. This is how I experience it in the body at this moment. This is how it affects the mind. The more we investigate a hindrance and come to understand how we experience it, the more easily we recognize it when it arises into our experience.

Ultimately, it is the practice of mindfulness that frees us from these Hindrances. If we develop enough concentration, we may temporarily suppress them. But it is only by meeting them with mindfulness that we become free of them. When we open to the Hindrances and allow the experience to penetrate into our awareness and allow our awareness to penetrate into the experience, we allow it to pass away through its own nature. When we see and experience this, we have become free of this particular hindrance in this present moment. When we do this again and again, over time these hindrances slowly stop arising. The mind becomes naturally more concentrated and it is easier to find the peacefulness that is always present but often unrecognized.

A more developed version of this article is available at [http://dharma.missouri.org/basics\\_series/hinder.html](http://dharma.missouri.org/basics_series/hinder.html).

# Seeing the Truth of Freedom - Excerpts from an interview with Sharda Rogell

Sharda Rogell will lead a non-residential retreat – “**The Heart of Freedom**” - in St. Louis, November 10-12, 2006. Teaching worldwide since 1985, she brings a strong emphasis to awakening heartfulness. The following is the complete version of the interview excerpted in the printed version of this newsletter.

**Sharda Rogell has been teaching retreats at IMS for more than ten years. After living in England for the last three years, she will soon be moving back to the US.**

*People have come to the practice by many different paths. What brought you to meditation, Sharda?*

When I was about 27 I was going through a very difficult time in my life and was experiencing an extreme amount of *dukkha* [suffering]. I was living in North Carolina at the time and was at a point where I really didn't have any resources. I had not adopted the religion of my upbringing (which was Judaism) and felt I had nowhere to turn. Like so many people who get to that point of feeling extreme helplessness in their lives, I had to go for some kind of refuge.

All that seemed available at the time, at least in my part of the world, was Transcendental Meditation. So I started practicing TM very intently and found that very quickly—within the first two or three weeks of practicing twice a day for twenty minutes—there was a great change in myself. It was quite sudden. As soon as I began practicing meditation I felt more at ease; I felt happier; I felt some relief from the pain that I was in.

From the very beginning I was a diligent practitioner. But after about two and a half years it just started to fade. The feeling of relief didn't fade, but I felt there was not much movement, not much happening in my meditation. I felt a certain amount of relaxation, but not much insight or understanding. So I stopped doing TM and just let it go.

A few months after that I met James Baraz in San Francisco, where I had moved, and he was offering a class in *vipassana*

[insight] meditation. So I joined his class and from then on (that was 1979)

I was hooked. Because I had the foundation of discipline and some stability in doing the concentration practice of mantra, once I started doing the *vipassana* there was a certain clarity of mind and the ability to see aspects of myself that I had never seen before and that was very powerful.

*Have you spent any time in Asia for your meditation training?*

I am one of the newer generation of teachers who have not practiced in Asia. I went to India for the first time in 1987, but I went to teach a *vipassana* retreat in Bodh Gaya.

In 1990, while I was in India, I met Poonja-ji, an Advaita Vedanta teacher, and that had a huge impact on me. Poonja-ji pointed us directly to the freedom that already is here and now, and this pointing came at a time when I was really prepared to hear it and take it in. It also created a problem for me for about three years in my relationship to *vipassana* practice, because in the place of freedom that Poonja-ji was pointing to I couldn't find a role for method and technique. If one could just meet a guru and have a profound realization, what else was needed? It became an important question for me to sort out.

It took me a number of years to integrate an understanding around that issue, and during the years I was struggling with my question I did some Dzogchen practice. I went to meet Tulku Urgyen in Nepal before he died and had instructions from him, and did Dzogchen practice in California with Tsoknyi Rinpoche. It was through Dzogchen practice that I was able to understand and to hold my experience with Poonja-ji within the context of *vipassana* practice. I discovered that although the Dzogchen

## Insight Dialogue: A Residential Four-Day Retreat

with Gregory Kramer

Insight dialogue is a methodical practice based on Buddhist insight meditation and years of careful and respectful development. It is an interpersonal meditation practice that can bring clarity out of confusion and compassion out of self-centeredness. It is an especially profound practice for professionals who work in a healing capacity.

In this four day retreat we will interweave silent practice, listening and speaking meditations and loving-kindness and compassion practices. As we meditate with each other, we bring mindfulness and tranquility to our interpersonal contact. As we become still, insights into the patterns that bind us arise.

This retreat is co-sponsored by Show Me Dharma, the Missouri University Mindfulness Practice Center and Mid America Dharma.

When: June 1-6, 2006

Where: Hughes Hall, Columbia College, Columbia, MO

Teachers: Gregory Kramer, Ph.D. is a meditation teacher, author, and director of the Metta Foundation. He is a co-developer of Insight Dialogue and teaches the practice worldwide. His books include *Meditating Together*, *Speaking from Silence* and *Seeding the Heart: Practicing Loving Kindness with Children*. He is a current faculty member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and lives in Portland, Oregon.

For more information about the retreat, contact Lynn Rossy at [rossyl@health.missouri.edu](mailto:rossyl@health.missouri.edu). For more information about Insight Dialogue and Gregory Kramer, go to [www.metta.org](http://www.metta.org)

tradition had the Buddhist forms and the Buddhist lineage, it was pointing to the nature of mind that I had experienced with Poonja-ji; it has the language to explain and articulate the nature of mind.

The Theravada language is really more about a progress of insight towards a goal, at least in the way I was taught in the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition. The language of Dzogchen points towards immediate freedom. The Dzogchen experiences were—and do continue to be—a very important resource for me.

*When did you start teaching?*

In the early 80's, when I was practicing quite intently, there were really only five main teachers: Christopher, Christina, Joseph, Sharon and Jack. There were lots of people getting involved in vipassana meditation, but there were not that many teachers. So the main teachers started to ask some of the senior students, the students showing the most commitment to practice, to help out.

It was also around this time that Jack Kornfield was starting his first teacher training program. Because I had been around and was, I suppose, showing some potential, I was chosen to participate in the first teacher training program with Jack. That was really the springboard. The first time I actually functioned as an assistant teacher at a retreat was in 1987 when Christopher invited me to join him in India to teach the winter retreat in Bodh Gaya. Soon after that I moved to England and joined Christopher as a co-teacher at Gaia House.

I started to teach fairly early in my practice years—I had been practicing vipassana for about five years before I started the teacher training. Now that I have been involved for about 20 years, I see that this was a little early. I wouldn't advise somebody to start that quickly, but rather to mature in their own meditation practice first.

*Do you still go to India every year to teach?*

Yes, I have gone to India for twelve winters, and have stayed for nearly two or three months each time. It has been a tremendous influence in my life. Few experiences have had such a major impact, but going to India the first time completely transformed my life. (That's when I decided to leave San Francisco.) In India nothing is hidden; everything is out in the open—very raw. It forces the psyche to be exposed to everything that it doesn't want to be exposed to. Life, birth, aging, sickness and death are all there, and there is no real protection. (In our culture we are so protected from these experiences.) It was a real blast to my psyche.

*What aspects of the practice or the tradition do you most emphasize when you teach?*

Because I was teaching primarily with Christopher, whose style is so unique and particularly emphasizes inquiry, I found myself following his example; but I wasn't sure what my own particular approach would be. Eventually I realized that my strong point remains investigation and inquiry through vipassana; but at the same time I have a strong interest in incorporating the beneficial influences of *metta* [loving kindness] as well.

Christopher is not quite as interested in *metta* practice, but I like the heart-based approach—though perhaps not so much in the form as it is taught classically. For me, *metta* is an attitude of mind which brings a compassionate quality to investigation.

I talk a lot about the qualities of heart: gentleness, patience, tolerance, kindness and compassion. I usually take a period of time each day or every other day to bring in the more formal practice of *metta*, because I find that it is very effective.

*And where is your particular passion these days? What is it that you really want to communicate to people?*

My own journey began with such a deep place of suffering, and I have come out of that suffering through the practice. Consequently I have so much faith—really boundless faith—in the methodology, in the teachings, in the power of the dharma, that it empowers all of my teaching. I have so much confidence in the dharma that I want to share that with others.

So my passion comes from the fact that I know the practice works, and I know the mechanics of it. Having suffered very intensely, and no longer feeling that suffering, I know the difference. I believe I bring to my students a sense of urgency, a sense of confidence, and an understanding of how the practice works. And I think I have some ability to articulate that as well. I try to speak simply, so they can understand. I just keep pointing towards the investigative quality: investigate, investigate.

I would even go so far as to say that I try to communicate a faith in the truth of happiness; the truth of freedom; the third noble truth of the Buddha. This faith empowers me and provides the energy for me to teach.

*And how do you understand the third noble truth [the cessation of suffering]?*

I have come to understand the third noble truth as the truth of freedom, through seeing into the nature of my own mind. It is the freedom that comes from seeing that the phenomena of this mind and body are essentially empty; empty of a "me," of a self-being. So there is no longer any belief in this arising condition as anything that is going to bring me to some fulfillment. It is this understanding of the essential emptiness of things that has brought me to some level of fulfillment.

What I have come to see is that I am not moving towards some goal or some end result, but in a moment of clarity, wisdom itself sees the empty nature of retreat and not being on retreat. The body doesn't have to be in any particular posture; the mind doesn't have to be in any particular condition in order to do the practice; the practice is in every moment. So I usually give people a break by saying that if you can't find time for formal practice every day, it's okay; because people are generally under a lot of pressure in their daily lives.

I encourage people just to remember that no matter where you are, whether standing in the shopping line, driving your car, having a conversation with somebody—pay attention! Keep your mind awake. Stay awake. That's where the learning and the inquiry will happen. If you can find time to sit on the pillow, fantastic. It will be incredibly enriching. But let's not set it up

that if you don't you have lost the practice. We have many moments to

practice staying awake.

*I understand you have recently undertaken a thorough study of the Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha? What prompted this interest in the classical Buddhist tradition?*

About fifteen years ago Christopher gave me a copy of the Middle Length Sayings as a gift—it was in three volumes then [as published by PTS]. But I found it dry and difficult to read, so I just put it on the shelf and forgot about it. When Bhikkhu Bodhi came out with his new translation about three years ago, published by Wisdom and BCBS, everything changed for me.

Bhikkhu Bodhi has made these discourses so accessible in the way he edited them, along with the explanatory notes, that I found reading them fascinating and refreshing. I took a six week self retreat and just studied it, read it thoroughly, and took notes. It opened up for me so much the understanding of what the Buddha taught. In fact, I will be publishing my notes soon to make them available to others.

*Did anything you read in the ancient texts surprise you, in light of your modern education as a student and teacher of dharma?*

What stood out for me were the themes and patterns by which the Buddha taught. Before this period of self-study, most of the teachings that I had heard were by western teachers. One of the things I had been taught when I first started practicing and working with my own experience was a particular emphasis on paying very close attention to whether my mind was moving towards fear or whether my mind was moving towards love and harmony. Watch the motivation behind the thought and the way the mind is moving, toward wholesome or the unwholesome. I always liked that and always watched it within myself.

When I read the *Majjhima* I was really amazed to see how strongly this theme was emphasized throughout all the discourses—the importance of wise discrimination between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. On and on, in discourse after discourse and method after method, the Buddha elaborated how to do that. He continually draws attention to the dangers of the uncultivated mind, to the advantages of mental development, to working with the mind, and to how it can so easily move towards the unwholesome action, the unwholesome thoughts, the unwholesome physical movements. He shows how to actually turn that around, to transform the energy of mind and body towards the wholesome and happy mind states.

This is somewhat different from the way I was originally taught about the practice. I was encouraged primarily to practice letting go—just let go, be with what is, notice what is happening and don't get caught in it. But the Buddha, at least in my reading of *Majjhima* texts, seems to place more emphasis not only on seeing what is happening but also on taking appropriate steps to actually change it. He offers a lot of methodology for how to do that.

What these texts seem to be saying is that in each moment there is the fact or choice—between moving toward what is wholesome or unwholesome—and this choice becomes available only through awareness, only when we are mindful and awake. With mindfulness arises discrimination, and a choice becomes apparent. Inherent in awareness is discrimination, and then we can see: Do I want to follow that aversion, that hatred, that ill will, that anger? Or do I want to bring about some condition of mind and heart that will transform that movement of mind towards something that is more wholesome?

And when the mind becomes more refined we can see the consequences that will follow from either choice; we can know that the choice of each moment will lead to these particular consequences. That's the whole sequence: the intention, the action and the result. It's the intention of where the mind is moving, the action that starts to form from that intention, whether it's a thought or the physical body, and then the result, the consequence of that intention.

With mindfulness and wisdom we are able first of all to just notice, and then to have the strength and vitality of mind to choose wisely. We can say: "No, I'm not going to go in that direction; I'm not going to follow that movement of mind. I'm not following the old habitual tendency." We can then apply mindfulness to change that habitual tendency. This entire dynamic, which is so clear in the texts, has really become a foundation for my teaching and my own practice.

*Where do you go from here?*

The most important thing for me right now is to continue to work on becoming even more clear—discerning the places where I am still holding or clinging—so the dharma can flow more freely. The urgency for me to work on myself goes two ways; so that I can experience more and more levels of liberation and with that clarity, allow others to hear and experience the teachings of liberation.



# Sangha News

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To list your group in the next *Mid America Dharma News*, contact Jon Yaffe, [gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net), 314-644-1926. The next edition will be published in November. Deadline for submissions is September 15.

## Arkansas - Little Rock

**The Ecumenical Buddhist Society** - 1015 Second St., Little Rock, AR 72201 - meets Sundays at 7:00 PM for a thirty minute silent sitting followed by a book discussion. Contact Phebe Duff, [phebed@comcast.net](mailto:phebed@comcast.net), 501-975-4060  
Website: [www.ebslr.org](http://www.ebslr.org)

## Illinois - Carbondale

**The Shawnee Dharma Group** - The Interfaith Center, 913 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL 62901 – meets Tuesdays 7:00 PM for a meditation sitting. We are an informal peer-led group meeting regularly since 1999.  
Contact Yolán Presley, [yo@shawnee-dharma.org](mailto:yo@shawnee-dharma.org)  
Website: [www.shawnee-dharma.org](http://www.shawnee-dharma.org)

## Illinois - Chicago Area

**Insight Chicago** - c/o Nancy Randleman, 1300 Belmont, Suite 401, Chicago, IL 60657

- Chicago Sittings - Mondays 7:30 PM in East Rogers Park (near the Morse stop on the CTA red line) at 7:30. See Insight Chicago [www.prairiesangha.org](http://www.prairiesangha.org) for updated schedule.
- North Side Sangha – Evanston - holds weekly Sunday sittings and instruction. Contact Ralph Marol, [rmarol1@comcast.net](mailto:rmarol1@comcast.net), 847-675-0282; [www.northsidesangha.org](http://www.northsidesangha.org)
- Western suburbs group: Weekly sitting in Elgin - Wednesday evenings; includes readings and other teachings. Contact [debwright@earthlink.net](mailto:debwright@earthlink.net).
- Spring retreat with Howard Cohn, May 18-21 at St. Mary of the Lake Retreat Center in Mundelein.
- Autumn Retreat with Andrew Getz, Sept. 14-17 at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago.
- Day of Mindfulness with Ginny Morgan, Nov. 18 at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago.

Contacts: General info and directions: email [nrandleman@hotmail.com](mailto:nrandleman@hotmail.com) or phone (773) 697-6871 Ext. 82. For sangha news & retreats: Ann Leeds, [apleeds@sbcglobal.net](mailto:apleeds@sbcglobal.net), phone (847) 644-8593  
Insight Chicago

## Illinois – Prairie Shagha Network

[www.prairiesangha.org](http://www.prairiesangha.org) is a multi-group website offering further information about several of the sanghas listed here, plus several that are unlisted.

## Illinois - Quincy

**Great River Sangha** - an eclectic group that benefits from a range of experience offered by our members. Beginners are welcome. Activities include: a weekly meeting, Sundays, 9:00 AM for meditation and puja at New Horizons on State Street;

## Illinois – Quincy (cont')

### **Great River Sangha (cont')**

book discussion every other Wednesday; day-long retreats once every two months  
Contact Patrick Hotle, [photle@culver.edu](mailto:photle@culver.edu), 573-288-6394

## Illinois - Rockford

**SatSang Sangha** - meets Saturdays at 7:30 AM in members' homes to practice sitting meditation and to share reading materials, tapes and breakfast. We are an eclectic group drawing direction from the Insight Meditation Society and Goenka, both coming from the Theravada (insight meditation) tradition of Buddhism; and Thich Nhat Hanh's version of Zen Buddhism. We often attend retreats together.  
Contact Wendy Larson Bennett, 815-961-0164

## Illinois - Springfield

**Satipatthana Vipassana Association** - a newly established meditation center focusing on Vipassana Insight Meditation (Mahasi tradition).  
Contact: [ugunasiri@chanmyayusa.org](mailto:ugunasiri@chanmyayusa.org)

## Indiana - Evansville

**The Mindful Heart Buddha Sangha** - 20 Walnut Street, Suite 120, Evansville, Indiana, 47708

The Sanmon Sangha - Branchville Correctional Facility - meets weekly with the support of the Mindful Heart Buddha Sangha. The sangha has written and printed an introductory booklet to give to newcomers and is currently studying *Wings of Awakening* by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.  
Contact (both sanghas): 812-434-6643  
Website: [www.mindfulsangha.com](http://www.mindfulsangha.com)

## Iowa - Des Moines

**The Des Moines Meditation Group** - Friends Meeting House, 4211 Grand Avenue - meets Tuesdays at 7:30 PM. Other activities include non-residential retreats throughout the year.  
Contact Charlie Day, [charlesday1@mchsi.com](mailto:charlesday1@mchsi.com), 515-255-8398

## Kansas - Lawrence

**The Free State Sangha** - Oread Friends Meeting House, 1146 Oregon - meets Wednesdays, 7:30 PM for metta practice, insight meditation and discussion. Activities include occasional pot luck and movie gatherings, day-long and weekend retreats.  
Contact Tamara Dutton, [tlea@ku.edu](mailto:tlea@ku.edu), 785-842-6666

## Kansas – Shawnee

**The Sunday Shawnee Sangha Group** - 302 Lucille Lane, Shawnee, KS - meets Sundays from 5:00 to 6:00 PM  
Contact Jane Vogel, 913-248-4412

## Michigan - Ann Arbor

**Arbor Insight** - sitting group meets bi-monthly on Sunday evenings. They also offer beginning meditation classes and non-residential retreats

Contact Sandra Berman at 734-769-9948

Website: [www.arborinsight.org](http://www.arborinsight.org)

**Deep Spring Center** - 3003 Washtenaw Ave., Ste. 2, Ann Arbor - offers classes for beginning, intermediate, and experienced students; plus short courses on specific topics such as non-duality and metta, weekly drop-in sittings, residential and non-residential weekend retreats 3-5 times/year, week-long summer retreat in June. The guiding teacher is Barbara Brodsky. See the website for a complete schedule, including retreats led by Barbara Brodsky at other locations.

To contact: email [info@deepspring.org](mailto:info@deepspring.org) or phone (734) 477-5848

Website: [www.deepspring.org](http://www.deepspring.org)

## Michigan - Michigan City

**Peacemakers Sangha** - meets at two locations:

- Tuesdays at 7:15 PM at Dancing Feet Yoga Studio in the Old School Community Center of Long Beach in Michigan City
- Sundays at 9:00 AM (except winter months) at the Friendship Gardens of Michigan City off Rt. 12.

We practice sitting and walking meditation with discussion afterwards. Members practice in the Zen tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh and some in the vipassana school. Beginners welcome.

Contact Michael Zieve, [mlzieve@yahoo.com](mailto:mlzieve@yahoo.com), 219-362-1462

## Michigan - Three Oaks

**Belle Via Sangha** - Belle Via Market on Elm Street - meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 7:30 PM to practice Vipassana meditation, listen to Dharma tapes, and engage in discussion. Beginners are welcome.

Contact Mike Zieve, [mlzieve@yahoo.com](mailto:mlzieve@yahoo.com), 219-362-1462

## Minnesota - Minneapolis

**Common Ground Meditation Center** - 3400 East 26th Street - offers weekly sitting groups and classes, daily open sitting times, and both residential and non-residential retreats. We practice vipassana (insight) and metta (loving kindness) meditation as well as other practices that flow out of the Theravada Buddhist Tradition.

Contact Mark Nunberg, [info@commongroundmeditation.org](mailto:info@commongroundmeditation.org), 612-722-8260

Website: [www.commongroundmeditation.org](http://www.commongroundmeditation.org)

**Rivers' Way Meditation Center** - 3357 36th Ave. South - Mindfulness & balance meditation, spiritual support and psychotherapy - Mindfulness/Vipassana meditation & loving-kindness practice - Meditation Practice Groups (by dana/donation only)

Mondays 7-9 PM at Rivers' Way, Sundays 9:15-10:15 AM at MindBodySolutions Yoga Center - Monthly Dharma talks with women teachers (by SWD collective)

Contact Merra Young, [rivwaymed@mn.rr.com](mailto:rivwaymed@mn.rr.com) or phone (612) 253-5133

Website: [www.riverswaymeditation.com](http://www.riverswaymeditation.com)

## Minnesota - Minneapolis (cont')

**Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative (TCVC)** - is a community of people interested in developing and deepening their meditation practice. We provide opportunities to hear and practice the teachings of vipassana (insight) and metta (loving-kindness) meditation, primarily in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.

Upcoming residential retreats will be held at the Christine Center in Willard, Wisconsin:

- June 9-11 or 9-18 with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters; contact Joanne Skarjune, [jskarjune@hotmail.com](mailto:jskarjune@hotmail.com), 612-724-9357
- Nov 3-5 or Nov 3-10 with Marcia Rose, contact Mariann Johnson, [MTJohn2000@aol.com](mailto:MTJohn2000@aol.com), 612-872-7959

Contact: [tcvcoop@hotmail.com](mailto:tcvcoop@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.tcvc.info](http://www.tcvc.info)

## Mississippi - Jackson

**The Conscious Living Project** - Wednesday night Buddhist Study Group at 7:00 PM at the Jackson Zen Dojo and a one hour sit on Sundays at 10:00 AM at Computer Co-op, 2807 Old Canton Road, Jackson.

Contact Luke Lundemo, [luke@computercoop.com](mailto:luke@computercoop.com), 601-981-6925

## Missouri - Columbia

**Show Me Dharma** - 717 Hilltop Dr, Columbia, MO 65201 - offers weekly meditation groups on Monday morning and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, as well as Committed Practice Classes on Thursday and Friday. Sutta study and a Mindful Family Group are each held once monthly along with a Dharma book group. Half-day and daylong retreats are held throughout the year.

2006 retreats include a residential Insight Dialogue Retreat with Gregory Kramer, June 1-4 and a non-residential retreat with Matthew Flickstein, Sept. 22-24.

Contact Ginny Morgan, [virginia028@centurytel.net](mailto:virginia028@centurytel.net) or call (573) 817-9942

Website: [www.dharma.missouri.org](http://www.dharma.missouri.org)

## Missouri - Jefferson City

**Jefferson City Meditation Group** - 203 East Dunklin - meets Thursdays 7:00-9:00 PM, for insight and metta meditation, dharma talk, and discussion

Contact Joe McCormack, [metta41856@yahoo.com](mailto:metta41856@yahoo.com), 573-491-3431 (Home), 573-864-5617 (Cell)

## Missouri - Kansas City Metro Area

**Heart of America Sangha** - Unity on the Plaza - meets Thursdays 7:30 PM to explore how to deepen insight practice in daily life. We are searching for quiet, accessible space in midtown KC.

Contact John or Marnie, 816-523-5061

### Missouri - Kansas City Metro Area (cont')

**Kansas City Bhavana Group** - Pilgrim Chapel, 3801 Gillham Rd. (mid-town area) - meets Sunday evenings at 6:30 PM for Metta practice, 45 minutes of sitting meditation, and a discussion of dhamma/meditation topics. We are a friendly and caring group, and the space has a great "energy."  
Contact Mike McFarland, [karma\\_704@yahoo.com](mailto:karma_704@yahoo.com), 816-914-9732

**The Unity Village/Lee's Summit Sangha** - Unity Village Administration Building Room #229 - meets Mondays 7:00 PM for a 40-minute sit followed by 45 minutes of sharing/discussion. We conduct a three-day, nonresidential retreat twice a year (April and October).  
Contact Robert Brumet, [brumetjr@unityworldhq.org](mailto:brumetjr@unityworldhq.org), 816-941-4603

**The Sunday Shawnee Sangha Group** - 302 Lucille Lane, Shawnee, KS – meets Sunday's, 5:00-6:00 PM  
Contact Jane Vogel, 913-248-4412

### Missouri - Kirksville

**Kirksville Dharma** - 501 South Halliburton, Kirksville, MO 63501 - meets Sundays 8:00 PM for sitting and Dharma talks at the home of Mark Rice  
Contact Marc Rice, 660-216-5303

### Missouri - Rolla

**Inspiration Center Sangha** - 13345 Christopher Drive - meets Saturday's, 10:00–11:30 AM. Other activities include 2 full-day retreats and 1 weekend residential retreat each year.  
Contact Maureen Hall, [mhall@inspirationcenter.net](mailto:mhall@inspirationcenter.net), 573-364-0517

### Missouri - Saint Louis Metro Area

**St. Louis Insight Meditation Group** - Big Bend Yoga Center, 88 N. Gore, Webster Groves - meets Sundays, 7:00-8:30 PM. The group is open to meditators at all levels from beginners to more experienced yogis. Leadership rotates between four leaders, each with a unique style of sharing the dharma. Meetings usually include a 40 minute sitting meditation, a dharma talk and discussion. One Sunday a month is devoted to mindfulness of body through the movement of yoga. Other activities include a book/study group; Introduction to Insight Meditation Classes; and half day, day-long and 2-day non-residential retreats; weekend residential retreats. Those new to insight meditation may arrange for a brief orientation to the practice by contacting Bridget Rolens.  
Contact Bridget Rolens, [bridgetr@brick.net](mailto:bridgetr@brick.net), 314-773-0866  
Website: [www.insightstlouis.org](http://www.insightstlouis.org)

**Meditation Sundays** - Yoga Source, 1500 S. Big Bend - meets Sundays 11:00 AM to Noon. The group is open to both experienced and beginning meditators and includes instruction in mindfulness meditation. All dana (donations) are given to the Mitrata-Nepal Foundation, a nonprofit child sponsorship program in Nepal.  
Contact [info@connectstlouis.com](mailto:info@connectstlouis.com), 314-725-9650

### Missouri - Springfield

**Bow Group** - Body of Work Studio, 205 W. Walnut - meets Saturdays 9:45-11:15 AM - We sit for thirty minutes, walk for fifteen, and conclude with a Dhamma talk and discussion. Ginny Morgan is currently guiding the group in a book study using *The Wings of Awakening* by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.  
Contact Dipa, [sisterdipa@yahoo.com](mailto:sisterdipa@yahoo.com), 417-864-4559  
Website: [www.geocities.com/sisterdipa](http://www.geocities.com/sisterdipa)

### Nebraska - Omaha

**Omaha Insight Meditation Group** - currently has two sitting groups. Both are very informal and welcoming and are open to anyone with a personal sitting practice. One group meets 6:30 PM on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in a private home in the vicinity of 58th and Leavenworth, sitting for 40 minutes. The other group meets Wednesdays at Noon at the First United Methodist Church (Mead Chapel), 7020 Cass Street, sitting for 40 minutes and sometimes going to lunch as a group after the sitting.  
Contact Patti Benker, [pwbenker@gmail.com](mailto:pwbenker@gmail.com), 402-496-3249

### North Dakota - Grand Forks

**Lotus Meditation Center** - 2908 University Avenue, Grand Forks, ND 58203 -  
Sitting group meets Mondays 7:00 PM - Intro classes offered twice per year - Non-Residential Weekend Retreat: Fall 2006 with Ajahn Sudanto (Date TBA)  
Contact Lora Sloan at [lorasloan@gra.midco.net](mailto:lorasloan@gra.midco.net) or phone (701)787-8839

### Ohio - Cincinnati

**Tri-State Dharma** - meets Sundays, 9:30-10:50 AM for sitting and walking meditation followed by tea and Dharma discussion. The group invites nationally known teachers to lead retreats of varying lengths.  
Contact Joan Staubach, 513-793-0652  
Website: [www.tristatedharma.org](http://www.tristatedharma.org)

### Ohio - Columbus

**Mindfulness Meditation of Columbus** – meets weekly  
Contact Jim Dunn, [mmocohio@earthlink.net](mailto:mmocohio@earthlink.net), 614-291-7630

### Oklahoma - Oklahoma City

**The Open Circle** - Windsong Innerspace in Oklahoma City – meets Tuesdays at 7:15 PM. One Day and Half-Day retreats occur once each quarter. The last Tuesday of the month is devoted to study. Contact Arpita Brown, 405-478-8407 or Kay Williams, 405-201-5877

### Oklahoma - Stillwater

**Buddhist Association of OSU** - offers two sitting groups, Wednesdays 7:00 AM and Tuesdays 7:00 PM. The location changes each semester, so contact us for current location information, and also for information about special events.  
Contact Barbara Carlozzi, [carlozz@okstate.edu](mailto:carlozz@okstate.edu), 405-744-9457

### Oklahoma - Tahlequah

**Tahlequah Sangha** – Universalist Unitarian Congregation of Tahlequah, 104 N. College - meets weekly Wednesday 12:15–12:45 PM – we read from the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh and meditate silently together for 20 minutes. When a new person comes, we discuss the Vipassana method of meditation. Other activities include retreats about twice a year lead by Charlie Day from Des Moines, IA.  
Contact Thea Nietfeld, 918-456-7900

### Tennessee - Memphis

**Dharma Memphis** - home for the mindfulness community of the mid-south. Our goal is to offer information and support for the various monasteries, sanghas, and all practitioners of the middle way  
Website: [www.dharmamemphis.com/index2](http://www.dharmamemphis.com/index2)

### Texas - Beaumont

**Insight Meditation Community in Beaumont** - currently is physically dispersed due to the effects of hurricane Rita on the entire community. Contact us for an update on the sangha's status.  
Contact Nancy Thompson, [njuniper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:njuniper@sbcglobal.net)

### Texas - Houston

**Insight Meditation Community Houston and Citta 101** - led by Community Dharma Leader Mary Rees, we host sittings weekly, Mondays 7:00 PM and Wednesdays 11:00 AM.  
Contact Lisa Hoover, [dharmadelrio-design.com](mailto:dharmadelrio-design.com), 979-798-4448 or  
Greg Van Meter, [gregvanm@aol.com](mailto:gregvanm@aol.com), 713-823-5610  
Website: [www.citta101.org](http://www.citta101.org)

### Texas - San Antonio

**San Antonio Insight Meditation Sangha** - First Unitarian Universalist Church 7150 W. I-10 - meets 7:30-9:00 PM Mondays (6:50 PM for new student orientation) in the Jefferson Building.  
Contact Randy Gribbin, [rgribbin@hotmail.com](mailto:rgribbin@hotmail.com), 830-964-3684

### Wisconsin - Winona

**Winona Meditation Group** - meets Sundays 8:30–9:30 AM for silent meditation.  
Contact Lynne, 507-457-0347

To list your group in the next *Mid America Dharma News*, contact Jon Yaffe, [gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net), 314-644-1926.  
The next edition will be published in November.  
Deadline for submissions is September 15.



# Mid America Dharma Summer-Winter Retreat Schedule



June 22-26, 2006

Residential retreat with Matthew Flickstein -- Conception, MO

Matthew Flickstein has been practicing and teaching Vipassana meditation for over twenty-five years. At one time ordained as a monk in the Theravadan Buddhist tradition, his primary teacher has been Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, a Buddhist monk for over fifty-eight years and author of the highly regarded book, *Mindfulness in Plain English*. Matthew co-founded the Bhavana Society Meditation Center in West Virginia with Bhante Gunaratana in 1982. He has published two books, *Journey to the Center: A Meditation Workbook* and *Swallowing the River Ganges: A Comprehensive Practice Guide to the Path of Purification*, through Wisdom Publications.

Registration begins April 22; deadline, June 1; closes June 8.

**Send registration to:** Bob Mikesic, 2620 Kensington Rd., Lawrence, KS 66046, 785-749-7249, E-Mail: [bobmikesic@aol.com](mailto:bobmikesic@aol.com)

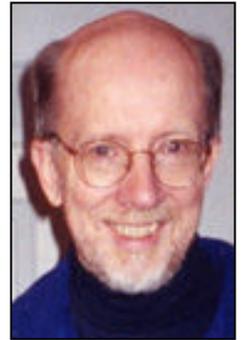
Aug. 11-13, 2006

Residential retreat with Phil Jones -- Conception, MO

Phil Jones has practiced meditation since 1987. After working as a psychotherapist for 25 years, he now works part-time as a medical social worker, devoting the remainder of his time to Dharma service and teaching, and to his family. He is a guiding teacher for Show Me Dharma and currently serves as president of the Board of Directors of Mid America Dharma. Phil completed Spirit Rock Meditation Center's first Community Dharma Leader Program. He has been teaching since 1996 and is currently being mentored by Matthew Flickstein.

Registration begins June 11; deadline, July 21; closes August 28.

**Send registration to:** Hilary Kass, 3020 Nathan Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049, Phone: 785-856-1193, E-Mail: [hilkass@sunflower.com](mailto:hilkass@sunflower.com)



Nov. 10-12, 2006

Non-Residential retreat with Sharda Rogell -- St. Louis, MO

Sharda Rogell is a member of the teacher council at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in California near her home. She has been meditating for over 25 years and teaching insight meditation worldwide for 15 years. She has been influenced by the non-dual teachings of both Dzogchen in the Tibetan tradition and H.W.L. Poonja during her many trips to India. She is currently a student of the Diamond Approach with A. H. Almaas.

Registration begins Sept. 10, closes Nov. 3

**Send registration to:** Ethel Meyers, 10 Vicksburg Circle, St. Louis, MO 63123; Phone: 314-753-0353, E-Mail: [ratly213@hotmail.com](mailto:ratly213@hotmail.com)

Dec. 29, 2006 - Jan. 1, 2007

Residential retreat with Ginny Morgan -- Conception Abbey, MO

Ginny Morgan lives in Columbia, Missouri. She is a guiding teacher for Show Me Dharma Center and the former President of the Board of Mid America Dharma, the emerging retreat center for the Midwest area. After working as a play therapist for acutely and chronically ill children for many years, she has shifted her focus to Dharma teaching, and to working exclusively for Dharma activities. She has studied with Ram Dass, Munindraji, Matthew Flickstein and teachers from Insight Meditation Society and Spirit Rock Meditation Center.

Registration begins Oct. 29, deadline, Dec 8; closes Dec. 15.

**Send registration to:** Karen Hodge, 1199 East Highpoint Lane, Columbia MO 65203, Phone: 573 449-3450, E-Mail: [hodgetribe@socket.net](mailto:hodgetribe@socket.net)



## Coming Soon ... Online Registration!

We are enhancing the Mid America Dharma website to provide online registration. This will let you pay for retreats by credit card or PayPal account. This new service should be available by the time this newsletter is distributed. To check it out, go to: [www.midamericadharm.org/retreats](http://www.midamericadharm.org/retreats). Please note there will be a small add-on charge for online payment, to offset the cost of providing this convenience.

# Information on Mid America Dharma Retreats

**INSIGHT MEDITATION** offers an easily accessible way of freeing the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through concentrated awareness, we can learn to see our experience as a constantly changing process, in which pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life are accepted with increasing balance and equanimity. This insight leads to an understanding of our true nature and the possibility of living each moment fully, with compassion and genuine freedom. Insight Meditation requires no belief commitments and is compatible with religious affiliations. Unless specified by the retreat description, no previous meditation experience is required.

**RETREAT FORMAT:** Periods of sitting meditation are alternated with walking meditation. Retreats are held in silence, with talking only during teaching periods. Beginners must be present from the start of the retreat to receive initial instructions.

Please bring a meditation cushion or bench and a soft floor pad for meditation. Standard chairs are available and may also be used. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Please do not wear or bring strongly scented lotions, perfumes or incense. Non-residential retreats will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. They are open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. Non-residential retreats are an opportunity for beginners to experience more intensive practice. Due to the length and size of retreats, there will not be scheduled individual interviews. Residential retreats begin with check-in at 4 pm on the first day and run through lunch on the last day. Participants are be guided through group or private interviews and daily general lectures. Meals are plain vegetarian. A complimentary tea table will be available.

**REGISTRATION:** Information about retreat site, starting times and other details will be sent after you register.

**RETREAT REGISTRARS:** See information on page 4.

**Non-Residential Retreats:** Please note that full payment is due at time of registration.

**Residential Retreats:** A minimum deposit of \$70 must accompany your registration. Full payment is due before the start of the retreat.

**Registration Begins:** Registrations will not be accepted prior to the beginning date for each specific retreat.

**Registration Deadline:** Registration deadlines are posted for each retreat on the previous page. Any registrations postmarked or received after the deadlines will be subject to a \$25 late charge.

**Retreat Costs:** See registration information below.

**Refunds:** No deposits will be refunded after the deadline.

**Scholarships:** Inability to pay should not prevent you from attending, as scholarship funds are set aside for this purpose. Deferred payment is also available. Contact the Registrar for a copy of the scholarship and deferred payment criteria. Written applications for scholarship must be received by the Registrar no later than three weeks prior to the retreat.

**Dana (or generosity):** Retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without any payment. All retreat fees go for retreat expenses. It is central to this tradition that the students support the teacher with a donation. There is no expected amount, but you are encouraged to give to the extent you are able. Dana is totally voluntary.

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## Registration Form

To register please send this form with a check payable to **Mid America Dharma** to the Registrar of the retreat you plan to attend (see p. 4). If registering for multiple retreats, please send a separate copy of this form with payment to the registrar listed for each retreat. A \$70 deposit is required for all residential retreats. Late registration creates problems for us, so please register early.

\_\_\_\_\_ June 22-26, 2006  
Residential with Matthew Flickstein, Conception, MO  
Cost: \$280 (\$305 if paid after June 8)

\_\_\_\_\_ Aug 11-13, 2006  
Residential with Phil Jones, Conception, MO  
Cost: \$170 (\$195 if paid after July 28)

\_\_\_\_\_ Nov. 10-12, 2006  
Non-Residential with Sharda Rogell, St. Louis, MO  
Cost: \$60

\_\_\_\_\_ Dec. 29, 2006 – Jan. 1, 2007  
Residential with Ginny Morgan, Conception, MO  
Cost: \$220 (\$245 if paid after Dec. 15)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Residential Retreatants only:**

Gender: F M

Will you arrive after 8 pm on the first day? Y N

Is this your first insight meditation retreat? Y N

Do you snore? Y N

If you have special needs, please contact the listed registrar.

Mid America Dharma  
2006 Retreat Schedule - Summer - Winter

June 22-26, 2006 ..... Residential with Matthew Flickstein, Conception, MO

Aug 11-13, 2006 ..... Residential with Phil Jones, Conception, MO

Nov. 10-12, 2006 ..... Non-Residential with Sharda Rogell, St. Louis, MO

Dec. 29, '06 -- Jan. 1, '07 ... Residential with Ginny Morgan, Conception, MO

For the latest information on retreats, please visit our website:

[www.midamericadharm.org](http://www.midamericadharm.org)

**Contemplating Skillful Action? – Sign-Up to Receive the Mid America Dharma Newsletter online!**

We publish an enhanced version of our newsletter on our website. Sign-up for it, and we'll email you as soon as each edition is posted. You'll have access to it sooner, and never have to worry about losing it! You also will be helping us reduce printing and postage costs, so we can keep our retreats as affordable as possible. It will even be kinder to the environment.

Signing up is quick and simple: just send an email with "MAD Newsletter" as the subject, to [johnpflaherty@earthlink.net](mailto:johnpflaherty@earthlink.net). Say "Hi" and tell him your Full Name, Address (City, St, Zip), and email address.

All done! Now back to the cushion!

*Address Service Requested*

455 E 80<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Kansas City, MO 64131-2120

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