

# Mid América Dharma News



Summer/Fall

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

June, 2007

## Clinging to Rites and Rituals

By Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

Several years ago, during a group practice interview at a ten-day vipassana retreat I was teaching, the topic of discussion turned toward realizing nibbana. As the interview progressed, one fellow in the group became increasingly agitated. Finally, when he was unable to contain himself any longer, he blurted out: "Okay. Let's cut to the chase. Who do I have to know? And where do I have to go?"

*Silabataparamasa*, one of three defilements uprooted at the first stage of enlightenment, is defined as holding firmly to the view that through rules and rituals, rites, ceremonies and practices one may reach purification. Here, we aren't just talking about incantations and rituals in the usual sense. *Silabataparamasa* also includes bhavana, or meditation practice. In essence, we think that our freedom is found in getting good at doing the meditation practice or doing it out of some sense of obligation or righteousness without reflecting accurately on what it is all about. Thus, we fail to experience what is possible through our practice.

### Clinging to a Tradition

*Silabataparamasa* can manifest as an overzealousness about selecting the right teacher, form or tradition in which to practice. It's as if we think, "If I could just find the right teacher, travel to the right corner of the universe, then I'd reach the goal. It's all out there somewhere, and I just have to find it and align myself with it." We can spend many years traveling to different meditation centers, trying out different traditions. We can intellectualize and even argue about the whats and wherefores of each one, but we never get around to applying ourselves in any of them.

In one of the suttas, Magandiya asks the Buddha how one realizes inner peace. The Buddha says that it is only by taking tradition as the means and not grasping it as an end in itself that one realizes inner peace. When practiced correctly, all forms of Buddhist practice lead to freedom. Our task is to find the form that speaks to us and then to apply ourselves to it wholeheartedly.

### Clinging to Methods and Techniques

Have you ever come away from a sitting with the smug feeling that the practice is going well because you were able to sit upright unflinchingly for the hour? *Silabataparamasa* also involves putting undue emphasis on developing the methods or techniques of practice, becoming skilled at using the tools without fully recognizing that tools are tools, not the goal.

On a recent trip to Thailand, I visited a monastery in the central part of the country. High on the walls of the bamboo and grass Dhamma hall the resident monks had hung sepia-stained photographs of famous Thai masters of the last century. Of course, it was inspiring to see so many arahants in one place, but what impressed me most was the fact that none of them had particularly good posture.

Thai meditation master Ajahn Lee said that sometimes people think they are practicing meditation but all they are doing is sitting like a post. We can look the part, can't we? But how we look or how skilled we become at applying the methods of practice doesn't say anything about how well the meditation is going. We may be able to sit perfectly still for an hour, but all the time we may be daydreaming or thinking about things. We may watch each inhalation and exhalation but fail to contemplate the impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless nature of phenomenon. We may be able to keep coming back to the breath but neglect to notice the craving or aversion that took us away. Thus, we never internalize the Dhamma for ourselves. We never actually experience freedom, just skill at handling the tools of practice

The message here is to give some thought to how we understand the tools of practice. For example, why do we go on retreat? Is it to escape from the busyness or harshness of life? If we find ourselves mourning the loss of stillness when the retreat is over, we may be guilty of confusing the raft for the other shore. Do we think there is something magical about sitting or that something is going to happen if we just do it long enough? If so, we've

probably left many a retreat with a feeling of disappointment.

Retreat is a special environment. We enjoy the luxury of having an extended period of time during which we can train ourselves to stand back from experience. When we do this long enough, and well enough, we lose some of our preoccupation with the content of our lives and we gradually untangle the web of confusion about what constitutes happiness and suffering. Retreat is simply a way to apply ourselves to this enterprise in a very deliberate way. But the point is to become able to get up from the cushion and live life with greater skill and understanding, less craving and ignorance, and, therefore, less suffering. The Buddha was quite clear on this. He instructed us to apply ourselves in all four postures and in all our activities throughout the day—not just while we are sitting or on retreat. It's a 24/7 kind of thing. If we don't see this, we run the risk of compartmentalizing the formal practice when we would dearly benefit from seeing that all life is practice.

### **Clinging to Ideas about Practice**

Perhaps the subtlest form of attachment to meditation is clinging to our ideas about it. We hear the meditation instruction and fill our heads with notions about what it is and what we are trying to experience. In the beginning, we really have no idea what mindfulness and concentration are. But that doesn't stop us from thinking we do!

I can recall a time when I was on a long retreat at IMS, being ever so mindful. I was quite confident that anyone who noticed me walking through the dining hall would know I was a very good yogi. One day, as I closed the door to my room behind me, I let out a huge sigh of relief. This really got my attention! Suddenly I could see that for the entire retreat I had been trying to live up to my idea of what it looks like to be mindful.

What if mindfulness and concentration are not what we think they are? What if thinking about them and trying to make ourselves experience them are the chief obstacles to actually abiding in them? There's a big difference between trying to be mindful and concentrated and actually being

so. We need to lose the barrier that the "trying" sets up and settle into now.

Early on, we may not see that our practice is driven by self-view. We want to get somewhere, achieve something, but this orientation puts us outside the very truth we are trying to realize. There's always me and it, me and my practice, me and the states I am trying to become. Anything that we are trying to become is never realized. We only begin to enjoy the fullness of freedom as self-view weakens and we are content to just be and know what is happening.

Perhaps it can't be any other way. We come to practice filled with self-absorption. It takes time for that to wear down. At some point, we begin to lose the sense of self as the one who is doing the practice. We stop trying to "become" concentrated and mindful and instead look for the experience of relaxed awareness in each moment. With this little shift in perspective, relaxed awareness becomes less a skill that we are trying to develop and more an experience into which we settle. From this new vantage point, the Dhamma can't help but reveal itself to us.

The great Thai Forest master Ajahn Mun said that Dhamma will not serve us well if all we do is comply with rules or follow directions. Understanding the Buddha's teaching on clinging to the meditation practice can help us break free of our attachments to forms and traditions, methods and techniques, and ideas and notions about practice so that we can see directly what constitutes our suffering, how we got there, how we let go, and how it feels to be free.

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**Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia** has been a Dhamma teacher since 1990. She is a student of the western forest sangha, the disciples of Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Chah, and is a Lay Buddhist Minister in association with Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery in California.

**Taraniya will be leading a Mid America Dharma residential retreat, October 25-28, 2007 in the St. Louis area. The topic will be the Sattipatana Sutta.** See our Retreats page for details.



# Sangha News

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Note: we've done our best to provide accurate listings, but please use the contact information to verify all specific listings, events and dates of interest. Things change!

## 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** - Contact Ellen McCammon, [ellen\\_mccammon@ameritech.net](mailto:ellen_mccammon@ameritech.net)

- Chicago Sittings - Mondays 7:30 PM in East Rogers Park (near the Morse stop on the CTA red line) at 7:30. See [www.InsightChicago.org](http://www.InsightChicago.org) for updated schedule.
- North Side Sangha - Evanston - holds weekly Sunday sits 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).

October 25-28, 2007, residential retreat at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago - Contact: Ann Leeds, [aleeds@prairiesangha.org](mailto:aleeds@prairiesangha.org), 847-644-8593

Contacts: General info and directions: Ellen McCammon, [ellen\\_mccammon@ameritech.net](mailto:ellen_mccammon@ameritech.net) (312) 493-9015

For sangha news & retreats: Ann Leeds, [aleeds@prairiesangha.org](mailto:aleeds@prairiesangha.org), phone (847) 644-8593

## Illinois - Prairie Sangha 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 benefiting from our members' range of experience. Beginners welcome. Activities include: meetings Sundays, 9:00 AM for meditation and puja at New Horizons on State Street; 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)

## Indiana - Indianapolis

**Friends of Awakening**

4370 Cooper Rd, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46228

Contact: Ingrid Sato, [IngridSato@gmail.com](mailto:IngridSato@gmail.com), 317-291-1776

Website: [www.friendsofawakening.net](http://www.friendsofawakening.net)

## Indiana, Laporte

Vipassana meditation and dharma discussion 7:00pm Tuesday evenings.

Contact: Michael at [mlzieve@yahoo.com](mailto:mlzieve@yahoo.com) 219-871-2094

## Indiana - 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

## 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: Steve Abbott, [swaod@hotmail.com](mailto:swaod@hotmail.com), 785-842-2533

## Kansas - Shawnee

**The Monday Mindfuls** - 5302 Lucille Lane, Shawnee, KS - 66203; Mondays from 5:30 to 7:00 PM  
Contact: Jane Vogel, [wired4gs@yahoo.com](mailto:wired4gs@yahoo.com), 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.  
Contact: email [info@deepspring.org](mailto:info@deepspring.org) or phone (734) 477-5848  
Website: [www.deepspring.org](http://www.deepspring.org)

## 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** - 2637 27th Ave. S. #201  
Vipassana/Mindfulness meditation, loving kindness practice and qigong/mindful movement.  
Monday night sittings 7:30-9:15 PM, Qigong practice group/class. Half-day and daylong retreats, individual practice meetings. Beginners and all levels of experience welcome. (donation/dana)  
Contact: Merra Young, [rivwaymed@aol.com](mailto:rivwaymed@aol.com), 612-253-5133  
Website: [www.riverswaymeditation.com](http://www.riverswaymeditation.com)

## Minnesota - Minneapolis (cont')

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), 612-253-5133  
Website: [www.riverswaymeditation.com](http://www.riverswaymeditation.com)

**Twin Cities Vipassana Collective (TCVC)** - provides opportunities to hear and practice the teachings of vipassana and metta meditation, with an emphasis on residential retreats led by senior teachers in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.  
Upcoming 2007-2008 residential retreats:

- June 15-17 or 15-24, Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters in Willard, WI - Contact Gail Iverson, [giverson@ziegenbein.com](mailto:giverson@ziegenbein.com), 612-721-8626
- Feb. 1-3 or 1-9, 2008, Ajahn Punnadhamo in Willard, WI - Contact Joanne Skarjune, [jskarjune@hotmail.com](mailto:jskarjune@hotmail.com), 612-724-9357
- April 6-11, 2008 Kamala Masters, Myoshin Kelly & Patricia Genoud in Marathon, WI - Contact Naomi Baer, [baern@msn.com](mailto:baern@msn.com), 651-698-1458

Contact: Joanne Skarjune, 612-724-9357

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

## Mississippi - Jackson

**The Conscious Living Project** - offers 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 Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, as well as Committed Practice Classes on Monday, Thursday and Friday. Mindful Family Programming is offered, as well as a Book Study Group. Recent additions include monthly groups practicing Insight Dialogue and Dharma Contemplation.  
We offer non-residential, daylong, and half-day retreats. Recent retreats have included a residential Insight Dialogue Retreat with Gregory Kramer in June, a nonresidential Insight Meditation Retreat with Matthew Flickstein in September, and a daylong Metta Bhavana Retreat with Ginny Morgan in October.  
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

**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, [brumetri@unityworldhq.org](mailto:brumetri@unityworldhq.org),

816-941-4603

### **The Monday Mindfuls (Shawnee Sangha Group)**

5302 Lucille Lane, Shawnee, KS 66203 – Mondays, 5:30-7:00 PM

Contact: Jane Vogel, [wired4gs@yahoo.com](mailto:wired4gs@yahoo.com), 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)

### Missouri - Saint Louis Metro Area (cont')

**Sunday Sangha** - Yoga Source, 1500 S. Big Bend - meets Sundays 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM. 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: Christine Schutz, [drcms@earthlink.net](mailto:drcms@earthlink.net), 314 762-9412

Website: [http://people.tribe.net/sun\\_sangha\\_stl](http://people.tribe.net/sun_sangha_stl)

### Missouri - Springfield

**Buddhist Group** - Body of Work Studio, 205 W. Walnut - meets Saturdays 9:30-11:15 AM - We sit for thirty minutes, walk for fifteen, and conclude with a dhamma talk and discussion.

Contact: Dipa, [dipaeightpreceptor@yahoo.com](mailto:dipaeightpreceptor@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, [insightomaha@gmail.com](mailto:insightomaha@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.

Contact: Lora Sloan at [lorasloan@gra.midco.net](mailto:lorasloan@gra.midco.net), 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 - Wednesdays 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 or update its listing in the next *Mid America Dharma News*, contact Jon Yaffe, [gyaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gyaffe@sbcglobal.net), 314-644-1926. The next edition will be published in May, 2007. Deadline for submissions is April 1.



# Mid America Dharma - 2007-8 Fall/Winter Retreats

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Oct. 25-28, 2007

## Residential retreat with Gloria "Taraniya" Ambrosia - St. Louis, MO

Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia has been a Dhamma teacher since 1990. She is a student of the Western forest sangha, the disciples of Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Chah, and is a Lay Buddhist Minister in association with Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery in Mendocino, California. She served as resident teacher of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts from 1996 through 1999. She teaches at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and at other Dhamma centers in the United States.

The retreat will be held at Rockhaven Ecozoic Center, House Springs, MO (35 miles southwest of St. Louis). Both single and double occupancy rooms are available.

**Cost: Single Occupancy** - \$250 (\$275 if paid after Oct. 4), **Double occupancy** - \$210 (\$235 if paid after Oct. 4)

Registration opens August 1, deadline Oct. 4, closes Oct. 11. To register online go to: [www.retreat0710.homestead.com](http://www.retreat0710.homestead.com)

**Send registration and/or payment to:** Jon Yaffe, 3222 Walter Ave., Maplewood, MO 63143, 314-644-1926, E-Mail: [gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net)



Dec. 29, 2007 - Jan. 1, 2008

## Residential retreat with Ginny Morgan - St. Louis, 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, Munindra-ji, Matthew Flickstein and teachers from Insight Meditation Society and Spirit Rock Meditation Center.

The retreat will be held at the La Salle Retreat and Conference Center, Wildwood, MO (25 miles west of St. Louis). Each retreatant will have a private room.

**Cost:** \$250 (\$275 if paid after Dec. 8)

Registration opens Oct. 1, deadline Dec 8, closes Dec. 15. To register online go to: [www.retreat0712.homestead.com](http://www.retreat0712.homestead.com)

**Send registration to:** Jon Yaffe, 3222 Walter Ave., Maplewood, MO 63143, 314-644-1926, E-Mail: [gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gjyaffe@sbcglobal.net)

### A Note About Online Registration!

For a year or so Mid America Dharma has been letting retreatants register online. This has worked well for all of us. Registrations come to us days earlier than by conventional mail, and we all benefit from names and email addresses coming to us typed rather than hand-written.

Far less successful was our experiment with accepting online payment via credit card. This was popular with many retreatants, but we found credit card payment to be very difficult and time-consuming to administer. We thus have decided to drop this, and return to accepting payment only by check and other conventional means.

Thank you for your understanding, as we try new methods of serving you and sort through the results to find what works best.

# Information on Mid America Dharma Retreats

**INSIGHT MEDITATION** offers an easily accessible way to free the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through concentrated awareness, we 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 in the description, no previous meditation experience is required.

**RETREAT FORMAT:** Periods of sitting meditation and/or dharma teachings alternate with walking meditation. Retreats are held in silence, with talking only during specified teaching periods. Beginners should 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** provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. They are open to both beginning and experienced practitioners, and offer a valuable opportunity for beginners to develop more intensive practice. The shorter duration of non-residential retreats does not allow teachers to schedule individual interviews with retreatants.

**Residential retreats** begin with check-in at 4 pm on the first day and run through lunch on the last day. Participants are guided

through group or private interviews and daily general lectures. Meals are plain vegetarian. A tea table is provided.

**REGISTRATION:** Information about retreat site, starting times, etc., is available online or will be sent after you register.

**RETREAT REGISTRARS:** See information on page 7.

**FEES: Residential:** a minimum deposit of \$75 must accompany registration; full payment is due at the start of the retreat. **Non-residential retreats:** please pay the full fee when you register.

**Registration Opening Dates and Deadlines:** ... are listed on the preceding page. Registrations are not accepted prior to the beginning date for each retreat. Registrations received after the deadline are subject to a \$25 late fee.

**Retreat Costs:** ... are listed on the Registration Form, below.

**Refunds:** We will refund fees if requested before the deadline.

**Scholarships:** We do not want inability to pay to prevent you from attending, and have established a scholarship fund to provide assistance where needed. 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):** Our retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without any payment. All retreat fees go for retreat expenses, such as facility rental and meals. It is central to this tradition that students support teachers through their donations. There is no expected amount, but please 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 \$75 deposit is required for all residential retreats. **We now also offer online registration**, at: [www.midamericadharm.org/retreats](http://www.midamericadharm.org/retreats). Please register as early as you can, as this greatly helps our planning. Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Oct. 25-28, '07  
Residential with Gloria "Taraniya" Ambrosia, St. Louis, MO  
Cost: Single Occupancy - \$250 (\$275 if paid after Oct 4)  
Double Occupancy - \$210 (\$235 if paid after Oct 4)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dec. 29, '07 – Jan. 1, '08  
Residential with Ginny Morgan, St. Louis, MO  
Cost: \$250 (\$275 if paid after Dec. 8)

\_\_\_\_\_ June 20-26, '08  
Residential Self-Retreat with Matthew Flickstein,  
St. Louis, MO  
Cost: To Be Determined

\_\_\_\_\_ Nov. 7-11, '08  
Residential with Shinzen Young, Conception, MO  
Cost: To Be Determined

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### For Residential Retreatants only:

Gender: F M

Will you arrive after 7 pm on the first day? Y N

Is this your first insight meditation retreat? Y N

Do you snore? Y N



Mid America Dharma  
2007-8 Retreat Schedule

Oct. 25-28, '07 ... Gloria "Taraniya" Ambrosia, Vipassana, Residential; St. Louis, MO

Dec. 29, '07 -- Jan. 1, '08 ... Ginny Morgan, Vipassana, Residential; St. Louis, MO

June 20-26, '08 ... Matthew Flickstein, Residential Self-Retreat; St. Louis, MO

Nov. 7-11, '08 ... Shinzen Young, Residential; Conception, MO

Dec. 29, '08 -- Jan. 1, '09 ... Ginny Morgan, Vipassana, Residential; St. Louis, 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 online. Sign-up for it and we'll email you as soon as each edition is posted. You'll receive it sooner, and never have to worry about losing it! This will reduce our printing and postage costs, and help us keep our retreats affordable. 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*

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

Mid America Dharma

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