



SKY MIND RETREATS

MEDITATION RETREAT IN THE ROCKIES

Retreat Teachers: Susie Harrington & Caiyloirch Marques

August 25-28th 2011

Capacity: 15

Cost: \$155-\$130

*May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grass,
among all the growing things,
and there may I be alone and enter into prayer,
to talk with the One to whom I belong.*
- Reb Nachman of Bratzlav

To retreat in nature invites us to:

Awaken our sensitivity to the preciousness of the natural world.

Open our appreciation to nature as teacher.

Deepen our understanding of our inter-connectedness with the earth and all life.

Encourage an embracing wakefulness to all moments in our life.

THE RETREAT

Again and again the Buddha recommended practice out of doors. As our society separates us further from our true, wild nature, this recommendation could not be more appropriate. This is an opportunity to "return home," to deepen our practice, and to travel through an extraordinary wilderness.

This will be a four-day meditation retreat in the Buddhist tradition. It will be a special opportunity to practice the art of walking and sitting meditation in the wilderness (weather permitting!), as we will be high in the alpine mountains above lake Irwin in the Gunnison National Forest. Most of our time will be spent in noble silence, allowing the attention to turn inward, though there will also be times for daily check-ins, Dharma discussion, and interviews with the teachers.

MEDITATING IN THE MOUNTAINS: This retreat provides a unique opportunity to explore the power of a silent meditation retreat while immersed in the beauty and wildness of the alpine Rockies in the late Summer. We will participate in an age-old tradition of going into the wilderness as a support for spiritual practice and inquiry. Immersed in nature, and in the quiet of our meditation practice, we will open ourselves to the interconnectedness, preciousness, and beauty of our true nature. Sitting in the beauty of mountains and gives us ready access to rapture, that quality of delighted interest and awe, and one of the seven factors of enlightenment. In many retreats, we're asked not to look around. In this retreat, we'll be encouraged to look around a lot and to delight in what we see.

PRECEPTS

We will undertake to follow the five traditional lay precepts of non-harming during our time together, forming a reliable basis for mutual trust in our little community:

1. To refrain from killing and from other actions that harm oneself or others.
2. To refrain from stealing, from taking anything that is not freely given.
3. To refrain from sexual activity during the retreat.
4. To refrain from unnecessary speech, and practice Noble Silence.
5. To refrain from consuming alcohol, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants.

DANA & RETREAT COST

The Buddha asked that the teaching of the Dharma be offered freely, without charge, since it is of infinite value, beyond any price that could be put on it. Thus, the tradition of DANA, or mutual giving, has supported Buddhist cultures for 2500 years. In Asia the monks and nuns offer the teachings, and the lay people support the monastery and fill the monastics' begging bowls each morning as they walk through the village on alms rounds. It is a beautiful exchange, in which the hearts of both giver and receiver are opened in joy and gratitude, and love flows between them.

In accordance with that tradition, Susie and Caiyloirch are, in the spirit of generosity, offering their teachings, time and service. The fee just covers the retreat costs: food, teachers' travel, and site costs. After the retreat, there is the opportunity for participants to practice generosity in offering financial support to the leaders in appreciation. The dana you contribute provides essential support for the leaders to continue their Dharma service. It will be warmly and gratefully received. There is no "suggested donation," and no donation is required to participate.

RUBY CABIN

We will be guests on private land and in a family's cabin which have been generously offered for the weekend. The cabin is in high alpine basin at 11,000'. The cabin is small and this will primarily be an outdoor retreat with sitting and camping and all aspects of the retreat outside except in the event of bad weather. There is vehicle access but the last ¼ mile is 4 wheel drive. Parking for 2WD vehicles will be available (see below). We will use vehicles to bring everything to the site, but please plan to live out of your tent, rather than out of your car.

BEGINNING AND ENDING TIMES

We ask you to arrive at the shuttle parking area (see "getting there") between 1-2 pm on Thursday. Departure is after lunch on Sunday.

GETTING THERE

From Crested Butte, CO: You will drive on Highway 135 into Crested Butte. Take the left onto Whiterock Avenue. Continue straight onto Co. Rd. 12. At apx 6 miles, turn right onto Co. Rd 826. (If you are coming from Paonia, you may come on 12 and turn left onto Co. Rd 826 – apx 40+ miles.) Continue past Lake Irwin and Lake Irwin Camping. Stay right at a Y. (The left fork goes to the Dyke trail.) You will pass the Old Irwin Lodge Gate on your right. The first possible place to park is just below here on the right. It is ½ mile to the Cabin. There will be signs or markers from here. An additional parking area is ¼ mile further on.

You will need to park 2WD vehicles ¼ to ½ mile from the cabin. We will shuttle gear (and people if a ride is needed) from the parking to the cabin. It will be helpful if your gear is contained (as in duffles or a backpack). If you arrive late and no-one is there to shuttle your gear, continue up to the cabin on foot following the signs and we will return for your gear.

MEALS

We will provide a nutritious vegetarian diet throughout the retreat from Thursday evening to Sunday lunch. Please bring snacks if you have a need for food between meals.

EQUIPMENT

The retreat will be held primarily outside. We will have the main cabin for sitting practice when needed but our accommodations will be camping outside of the cabin. Participants are responsible for bringing an adequate and weather-proof tent as well as a sleeping pad and warm sleeping bag (be prepared to sleep in temperatures as low as 20 degrees. Although very rare at this time of year, we want you to be warm!). Each participant (including couples) should bring their own tent in order to support the retreat experience. We will be shuttling equipment from vehicles so it is possible to bring extra blankets or quilts for sleeping and sitting practice. Average **minimum** temperatures for August are in the high 30's. It would be wise to bring extra layers and hat to keep warm for early morning as well as evening practice. We may also get warm weather (average maximum temperature for August is in the 70s) so be prepared for hot days too and bring a sun hat and sun screen.

WHAT TO BRING:

Camping equipment as described above. Layered clothing including a down jacket (or equivalent) /warm hat and gloves/ waterproof jacket and rainpants / personal toiletries / bowl, cup, plate and utensils / small camping chair, meditation cushion or stool and a tarp and pad to put underneath your sitting area to protect from damp and cold – should be large enough to also lie down on (may be your sleeping pad)/ flashlight / daypack / water bottle / hiking boots or shoes.

Please limit your gear to what you can store in your tent. The cabin is small and will not be available for personal gear.

SAFETY AND INSURANCE

Safety needs to be a primary concern for each of us, since what happens to anyone affects the whole group. We will be in terrain where cliffs and steep slopes abound. This is a wonderful opportunity to be mindful of every step – and this is your best protection from injuries. Nevertheless, accidents do happen. While an injury or ailment is unlikely in the backcountry it is important to be aware of its possibility. As a not-for-profit organization, Sky Mind Retreats does not carry its own insurance to cover a retreatant's medical evacuation.

RETREAT STAFF

Susie Harrington has been practicing meditation since 1989, primarily within the Insight Meditation Buddhist tradition. She has been teaching since 2005 under the direction of her teachers – Guy Armstrong, Jack Kornfield, and Tory Capron. She has also been influenced by her practice with Advaita, Dzochon and Mahamudra teachers. She lives in Moab, Utah, and teaches classes, weekends and longer retreats in the Four Corners area and California. She has been an outdoor professional for over 30 years, including years as a river guide, mountaineering guide, and backcountry ranger for the National Park Service.

Caiyloirch Marques has been practicing Insight meditation since 1997 with an emphasis on intensive retreat practice. His primary teachers include Christina Feldman and Joseph Goldstein. "I am intrigued by the stories we live by. A guiding question for my own life is concerned with what personal and collective stories support us in living in a mutually enhancing manner on this earth." For the past eight years Caiyloirch has worked in the field of experiential environmental education in support of this inquiry.

Jennifer Knochel is our kind and incredibly skilled cook, able to prepare excellent, fresh, vegetartian food in all sorts of conditions. She has cooked on retreats for the past 5 years and offers her cooking, which is a part of her practice, in support of the retreat. She currently lives in Ophir, Colorado.

TO APPLY

REGISTRATION

Please fill out the **Registration Form, Medical Questionnaire, and Release Form**. We require these forms to be sent in with your \$155 - \$130 sliding scale fee. The forms are available on the website, www.desertdharma.org. Make the check payable to **Sky Mind Retreats**. Send all registration materials to: **Sky Mind Retreats, 5 Pamela Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954**.

Reservations are confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. If the retreat is full, you'll be placed on a wait list. If that happens, don't be disheartened, as there will probably be cancellations. Your check will not be deposited if you are on the wait list. **Please see registration form for refund details.**

Scholarships are available. We would like you to apply if you need support. Please write a short letter describing your situation and how much assistance you need. Please include this with your registration forms and a \$50 deposit. If we cannot meet your needs, the deposit is refundable. Scholarship money is for direct retreat costs; if you would like to offer dana to the teacher and staff, please consider it in your budget.

Additional **Information on Dana** is also included on the website. Please be sure to read all materials to familiarize yourself with all aspects of this trip.

OBLIGATIONS OF RETREAT APPLICANTS

This is a private trip which means we will all be responsible for our own safety and the safety of the group and for doing the work that is part of a nature-based retreat. You will need to be able to take care of yourself, as well as be helpful to the group on a day-to-day basis. Because of the remoteness, in consideration of the other retreatants, we ask that you be in good health. The retreat requires a commitment to noble silence and practice.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact Quilley at retreats@desertdharma.org with your questions and concerns.