Bowing to Gaia
Dancing with the Aliveness of All Beings
February 3 - 10, 2027

Cost:
Double occupancy:
(Sliding scale costs are for 1 person in a shared 2-person room.)
$1575 - $1750 Yurt
$2040 - $2200 Suite
$2130 - $2300 Bungalow

Single Occupancy:
$2500 Yurt
$3300 Suite
$3600 Bungalow

Teachers: Susie Harrington and Erin Selover

Welcome to the Sacred Land of the North Kohala Coast!

We will be holding this retreat at Hawaii Island Retreat in Kapa'au on the Big Island of Hawaii. This privately owned eco-boutique hotel and wellness spa encompasses 50 acres of sacred land, home to thriving gardens, peaceful goat sanctuaries, and a secluded private cove. Your retreat practice will be nourished by the sacred land of Ahu Pohaku Ho'omaluhia, the land of peace-giving stones, an ancient place that carries stories—and a quiet sense of magic—woven through legend, stone, and mist-filled mornings. Hiking trails span the 50 acres of private coastal lands with towering evergreens, wild groves of fruit trees, and ancient valley trails. A private cove is located a short 15 minute walk from the retreat center. Retreatants will have access to the solar-heated, salt-purified infinity pool and hot tub and a private yoga studio.

Here, you are invited to reconnect with the living world and experience life as our ancestors once did—in a deep relationship with the land and all the beings who share it. In this ancient valley, you will deepen your kinship with and devotion to Gaia, spanning the plant, mineral, animal world, all beings, and every form of life. You will listen deeply—beyond the mind of separation, extraction, and concepts—to Life as it unfolds moment by moment. This unique retreat will be held in noble silence. In addition to meditation and dharma talks, it will also include music, guided somatic practice and movement, inquiry in small groups, and ritual. Recognizing our interdependence and embedded belonging, we will explore our deep reverence and responsibility in caring for the earth and her myriad beings.

Housing Options

The eco-boutique retreat center offers a choice of elegant and sustainably built bungalows, suites, and nature yurts.

Ocean-View Bungalows: Spacious, private units face the private cove with oceanfront views, and feature a large bathroom and an oversized shower.

Suites: With views of the valley or the private cove, these suites have turn-of-the-century Hawaiian furniture, an oversized soaking tub and a separate shower.

Glamping yurts: Designed for nature lovers, glamping yurts are privately tucked away next to the sacred valley and infinity pool. Each includes a toilet and sink. There is a separate shower house that is shared with other guests, a short walk down the path.

All costs are discounted for the retreat relative to the normal cost for a stay at Hawaii Island Retreat.

Food

Hawaii Island Retreat's organic gardens and orchards yield a rich variety of exotic fruits and vegetables. Much of what they grow—from tender salad greens to lychee and sunrise papaya—finds its way directly into their hotel kitchen. For lunch and dinner, the private chef will craft thoughtful farm-to-table menus inspired by the day's harvest and the island's seasonal offerings. The Hawaiian cuisine menu is rich with local accents, whole-grain breads, Pacific Rim dishes, and international menus.

Food will be primarily vegetarian, organic where possible, with two abundant meals a day for lunch and dinner. A light, cold breakfast food will be available, followed by an early lunch. There will be non-dairy and gluten-free options available for those who are lactose or gluten intolerant. Tea, coffee, and other snacks will be provided as well.

Weather

February on the North Kohala Coast usually has highs in the mid to upper 70s and nights in the mid to high 60s. As the driest region on the Big Island it sees minimal rain, but February can be dynamic and there could be a full range of warm and dry and sunny to rainy. Please bring diverse clothing for sitting and walking meditation, suitable for inside and outside. We will send out an email closer to the time of the retreat with more specific details about what to expect.

Please note that swimming is not recommended in Hawaii Island Retreat's private cove due to rocks and rough waves, though the cove is excellent for whale watching. There are beautiful white and black sand beaches within a 15 to 30 minute drive from Hawaii

Island Retreat. Please plan to visit swimming beaches before or after the retreat in order to preserve the retreat container.

COVID-19

We request that all retreat participants wear a mask while traveling through airports to help protect the health of the group. Depending on current conditions, you may be requested to take a Covid test upon arrival and 3 days thereafter.

Retreat Cost

The Buddha asked that the teaching of the Dharma be offered freely, without charge, since it is of infinite value, and beyond any price that could be put on it. The tradition of 'Dana,' or mutual giving, has supported Buddhist cultures for 2500 years. In Asia, the monks and nuns offer the teaching and the lay people support the monastery and fill the monks' 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.

Trying to walk the balance of the Buddha's instructions and the costs of residential retreats, the retreat fee just covers the retreat costs: food, retreat center fee, administration costs, and other incidental expenses. Support for the teacher is not included.

Teacher support

In accordance with that tradition, and in the spirit of generosity, Susie and Erin offer their teachings, time, and service freely. After the retreat, there is the opportunity for participants to offer financial support to Susie and Erin. By offering your financial support, you will support Susie and Erin to continue living and teaching the Dharma. It will be warmly and gratefully received. If you would like to offer a donation by check, please bring your check book.

RETREAT TEACHERS:
Susie Harrington teaches internationally, is the guiding teacher for Desert Dharma, and serves communities in the Southwest near her home in Moab, Utah. She has trained in the Insight tradition since 1989 and in 2005 was invited into teaching by Jack Kornfield and Guy Armstrong. She has also been influenced by her practice with Advaita, Dzogchen, and Mahamudra teachers. Her teaching is deeply grounded in the body and often emphasizes the expression of mindfulness interpersonally and in daily life. Susie brings the skills of inquiry, relational dharma, and the psychological/spiritual interface from her training in Hakomi Therapy and the Diamond Approach. Believing nature to be a profound teacher, and a gateway to our true self, she often offers retreats outdoors. Susie has also been an outdoor professional for over 30 years, including years as a

river guide, mountaineering guide, and backcountry ranger for the National Park Service.

Erin Selover is a Dharma teacher with over 20 years of Buddhist practice and teaching. She co-stewards a meditation community integrating the Celtic Wheel of the year and Buddhism within needs-based gift economics and distributive governance systems. She has complemented her Buddhist practice and studies with studying and experimenting, at times intensively, with Miki Kashtan and the Nonviolent Global Liberation community. She is a residential retreat teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Northern California.

Creating the Retreat Container

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. These precepts are to remind us of our natural behavior when we are resting in our true nature.

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 lying and from harsh, abusive or damaging speech, or from unnecessarily breaking silence.
5. To refrain from consuming alcohol, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants that will unnecessarily cloud our awareness during the retreat (prescription medication that you need to regularly take is an exception; retreat is not a good time to alter these medications).

Noble Silence

Meditation retreats are traditionally silent. The teachers will emphasize silence, both to deepen our practice and as a refuge. All yogis will have the opportunity for interviews individually or as a group with Susie and Erin. There will also be a message board if you need to communicate with them at any time. To help maintain silence and to support your own and others' practice, please leave all buzzers, cell-phones, alarms, ipods, etc. at home or in silent, airplane mode. If there are issues concerning a yogi job or personal needs, these questions should be directed to the teacher or to the cook.

DEVICES - You will be asked to either lock your phone and other devices in your car or turn them in for safe keeping at the beginning of the retreat. We suggest you bring a watch for time keeping during breaks and walks. Staying off the phone is an important aspect of retreat. By signing up for the retreat, you are agreeing to this commitment.

Work Meditation

This is our opportunity to both integrate our practice and to serve the community – our Sangha. Each person will be asked to participate in a daily ritual of either meal prep, clean-up, bathroom cleaning, bell ringing, or other shared needs. Participants will sign up for these work meditations (aka yogi jobs) when we arrive at the retreat location. Noble silence will be expected during work meditations as well, except for absolutely necessary instructions.

Practical Information

Directions to the site

Hawaii Island Retreat is located at 54-250 Lokahi Rd, Kapaau, HI. Please visit their website for more information (https://hawaiiislandretreat.com/).

Flight Information

Hawaii Island Retreat is located 49 miles from the Kona International Airport (KOA) and 82 miles from the Hilo International Airport.

Arrival – Meet Wednesday, February 3rd, at 2:00 pm.

- 2:00 pm Check - in
- 4:00 pm Group Orientation (Please plan arrival to attend this group)

Dinner on February 3rd is the first meal that will be served.

Departure – Wednesday, February 10th.

We will end our retreat by 11am.

What to Bring

- Sun hat
- Rain gear
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Swimsuit for pool or hot tub
- Walking shoes for the trails
- Flashlight for walking at night
- Personal toiletries
- Watch—not your cell phone, which is best left in the car—for use on longer free periods
- Clothing (layers) for walking and practicing outside (including lightweight pants, shirt for sun protection)

- A jacket and/or warm sweatshirt for cool weather
- Whatever you will need to sit and meditate comfortably - a cushion of some type, a zafu, blow up cushion, chair, etc.

Trip Insurance

Our cancellation policy for this retreat is based on the cancellation requirements of the center we are using. Therefore, we will not be able to make exceptions for any circumstances. We highly recommend that you purchase trip insurance, available online, and at any travel agency. It will protect your investment in non-refundable costs if you have to cancel or if the retreat is canceled due to circumstances beyond our control. Cancellations for Covid-19 related issues are generally only covered in the 'cancelation for any reason' clause, so if you desire that coverage be sure it is included. We also recommend that your policy covers medical evacuation costs in case of sickness or injury.

Emergency Contact

Since we will be in silence, you will not be in phone contact with the outside world during the retreat. There is an emergency phone at the site, which will be used only for true emergencies. In special situations (ill family members in particular), there will be a number at which to leave messages and they will be checked periodically during the retreat. This number will be sent in the final email.

Registration and Payment Information

Please register online at www.desertdharma.org. Be sure to complete the Registration Form. This form includes medical and practice questions, and a release form. A deposit of $200 is required to reserve your place, which can be paid online or by check. If you are paying by check, please make checks payable to **Sky Mind Retreats**. Address the envelope to Sky Mind Retreats, PO Box 1171, Moab, UT 84532. If you have questions, please reach out to the registrar, Amanda (amanda.desertdharma@gmail.com).

If you are paying online, please add 3% for the processing fee.
Using the online system to pay more than the $200 deposit is an option, but we ask that you add 3% to cover the fees as we do not account for credit card fees in figuring your expenses.

Retreat registrations are confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. Please fill out a separate series of forms for each person. 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.

The deposit ($200) is non-refundable and non-transferable. The full payment is due by September 25, 2026 (or at the time of registration if registering after September 25,

2026). Those who have not paid in full will be canceled from the retreat, and will need to reapply space permitting. Please read the Refund and Cancellation Policy detailed below.

Please wait for the confirmation of your accommodation choice before paying the balance due so you can make an accurate payment. Housing will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. We will confirm your housing option on September 10, 2026.

If you have questions about registration or payment, please check the website and this document for your answer first. If your question persists, contact Amanda, amanda.desertdharma@gmail.com, for all retreat and registration questions.

Partial scholarships for Hawaii residents are available. We would like you to apply if you need support. Please write a short email describing your situation and how much assistance you need. Please address your letter to the Sky Mind Retreats registrar (Amanda amanda.desertdharma@gmail.com). 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 teachers and cook, please consider it in your budget.

Refund and Cancellation Policy

If SMR finds it necessary to cancel a trip due to under-enrollment or other unexpected conditions, your deposit and any payments on the balance of the fee will be returned.

Our cancellation policy for this retreat is based on the cancellation requirements of the center we are using. Therefore, we will not be able to make exceptions for any circumstances. We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance to cover unforeseen circumstances. In order to respect those on the waitlist and to encourage timely cancellations, we have the following cancellation policy:

1. Payment is due in full by September 25, 2026 or at time of registration if after that date. Those who have not paid in full will be canceled from the retreat, and will need to reapply space permitting. The $200 deposit is non-refundable and only transferable if you are re-accepted into the retreat.
2. For cancellations after September 30, 2026 you will lose 75% of your fee unless we are able to fill your space. If we can fill your space you will receive a 75% refund. We will do the best we can to fill your space, but make no guarantees.
3. Cancellations after January 1, 2027 will receive no refund.
4. A full refund of your deposit will be made if you cancel from the waitlist (minus credit card fees).

Questions

All the information you will need is contained in this retreat information page. If after reading it you have questions, you can email the registrar, Amanda: amanda.desertdharma@gmail.com