
Clear Mind

Ginny Morgan Weekend Retreat, January 22-25, 2004

Ginny Morgan will lead our next residential retreat. Ginny is returning to Madison because so many people told us how much they had benefited from her teachings. Please see the insert in this newsletter for details on registration. This newsletter contains a dhamma essay by Ginny to give you a feeling for her heartfelt teachings. Get your registration form in early in order to be certain of a spot. If you have questions regarding the retreat you can call Tony at 608-661-9959 or tony.fernandez1@juno.com.

Meditate With Us on New Years Eve, December 31, 2003 4:30-6:30 PM

Ease out of the old year with meditation and spiritual friends. Spend a portion of your New Year's Eve in peace. Join the Madison Buddhist Community for meditation, dhamma and cookies. We have reserved our regular meeting location, 900 University Bay Drive, Lower Meeting House gathering room, for this chance to be with *kalyana mitta*, spiritual friends on the last evening of the year.

We invite you to bring candles, Buddha statues, family photos, or other items of importance to you to share on the shrine we'll set up. If you would like to bring flowers for the shrine, please call Jan at 233-3844 to let her know.

Following the meditation and short talk we'll have a chance for time socially over tea and cookies. If you are able, please bring cookies, juice or other snacks to share. We'll provide plates and cups.

Ginny Morgan at Sunday Night Sitting January 25, 2004

As has become our tradition whenever possible, Ginny Morgan has agreed to give the dhamma talk at our Sunday night sitting following the three day retreat she will be leading from January 22-25. Sitting will begin at our regular time of 6 PM at the Lower Meeting House of the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive. Ginny has visited our sangha and led retreats several times in the past. For those unable to attend her weekend retreat, this is an opportunity to sit with Ginny, whose teachings have touched the heart of many in our community. Hope you can join us and have a chance to benefit from these teachings.

Half Day Meditation February 7 & April 5, 2004

We will continue our practice of offering half day meditations (9 AM - Noon) every other month on the first Saturday of the month. This winter they will occur on Saturday, February 7 and Saturday April 5 in the lower meeting house of the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive. The first sitting begins at 9 AM. If you aren't able to be there in time for the first sitting, you can also arrive on each hour to join in. The last meditation will end at noon and will be followed by a potluck lunch. For more information or possible last minute changes please check the website at www.vipassana.net or call Dave Creswell at 274-8938.

Dhammapada 282

*Wisdom springs from meditation;
Without meditation wisdom wanes.
Having known these two paths of progress and decline,
Let people so conduct themselves that wisdom may
increase.*

Winter Meditation Classes

The winter meditation class schedules are not yet published, but there will be classes this winter. As more details become available we will post them on our website at www.vipassana.net

Edgewood College will again offer a six week Introduction to Meditation, taught by John Meyer and Jan Sheppard. The class will begin in March. For details call Edgewood at (608) 246-6220.

MATC will also offer a six week introductory meditation class taught by Cindy McCallum. For information contact MATC at (608) 246-6220.

Mare Chapman of Lives Unlimited will offer a series of winter classes. For info or to register for Lives Unlimited classes call (608) 233-7431.

Introduction to Meditation on 2nd Sunday of Each Month

Madison Insight Meditation Group has changed the introduction to meditation for newcomers. Previously we offered an introduction from 5:30-6:00 PM on the first Sunday of the month. We found that this allowed only about 20 minutes before the room got busy with others arriving for the regular 6 PM sitting, and that 20 minutes was really insufficient to welcome and help orient newcomers to the practice.

Beginning in November 2003, we now offer an introduction to meditation on the 2nd Sunday of each month from 6 PM to about 7:10 PM. Those who come for the introduction will have time together with a leader, in a room of their own, to introduce themselves and learn some of the fundamentals of sitting and walking meditation before joining the big group for a 45 minute sitting meditation.

We hope this will make the group more welcoming and less intimidating for newcomers and also offer a service for those seeking just a bit of meditation instruction. We are trying to improve this service and looking for feedback from anyone with ideas on how to do so. If you have thoughts on how to continue improving our introduction we invite your comments: please email or call Jan at jrsheppard@sbcglobal.net or 233-3844.

Garage Sale a Success

by Cindy McCallum

The garage sale that was held on August 23, 2003 to raise funds for the Midwest Kuti raised \$400. The Midwest Kuti will be one of 6 kutis on Maui, Hawaii at Vipassana Metta Sanctuary. A kuti is a small meditation hut that is designed for self retreats. Vipassana Metta Sanctuary is 13 acres of land that Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters are developing for day long retreats and self retreats. Although, the land is far away, Steve and Kamala have been long term supporters of the Dharma in the Midwest. Each summer, for many years, they have come to Minnesota or Wisconsin to lead a 10 day retreat. The Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative (TCVC) initiated the fund raising for a Midwest Kuti in 2001. The proceeds from the sale will help go toward the goal of raising \$25,000 for one kuti sponsored by people from the Midwest.

Another Buddhist group (the Drikung Kagyu Dharma Circle) that is raising funds for a retreat center in Maryland, also participated in the sale. Between the two groups we raised \$700 dollars. At times the sale felt like a generosity fest. When people learned that it was a fund raiser they offered a little bit more or put something in the donation baskets. Also, a few people went to their own homes and brought things to add to the sale. Thanks to all of those who helped with the garage sale. Many people donated items for the sale, some shared their time to help sell things or set up and take down, others collected items from friends, family and the curb side. (Yes, we kept some things that were headed to the land fill, out of the land fill.)

If you would like to contribute to the Midwest Kuti, but did not participate in the sale you may still do so by making a donation to:

Vipassana Metta Foundation—Midwest Kuti
P.O. Box 1188
Kula-Maui, HI 96790-1188

If you have questions about the kuti fundraising project you can contact Cindy McCallum

Devotion

by Ginny Morgan

The ego believes that it can do something once and get it over with so it is constantly intimidated and aghast when it discovers that this is not so. What I am discovering is that dying into each moment takes great humility and devotion. This “dying” is the leap of faith directly into the essence of not-knowing. Humility and not-knowing points us toward our true business, the business of devotion to what is absolutely real and true in our lives.

We cover the quiet presence of freedom with holographic manifestations of belief and history. As we devote ourselves to the simple task of waking up to each moment, we rest in the freedom that is already here. We begin to see through veils and shades of history and the floating beliefs of past struggle to the simplicity and freedom that is present each moment. This simplicity of being has been called the “pearl beyond price.”

Devotion to the practice of meditation brings us home to this recognition over and over again. We become devotees of truth, lovers of truth, we surrender into the truth of each moment.

The qualities of devotion:

♥ *Lighting candles, singing chants, bowing to Buddha images are the doorway to true devotion. True devotion means that one devotes one’s heart and mind and life to awakening to the presence of freedom in each moment.*

♥ *Devotion is the patient dedication to the endeavor to recognize the freedom that is inherent in each drop of this human life.*

♥ *Devotion is courageous and wears away contractions of self-cherishing that arise and cloud the Way.*

♥ *Devotion brings us back to each moment with humility. It is from this humility that clarity is born.*

♥ *Devotion requires us to offer up the fruit of our efforts to the great mystery. It requires us to learn the gentle surrender of resting in not-knowing.*

♥ *Devotion means that we allow this sense of not knowing to inform our hearts.*

♥ *Our devotion to truth becomes the compass point by which we triangulate our way home.*

♥ *Devotion is the Way of the heart balanced*

with the clear seeing of wisdom.

♥ *Devotion asks for nothing, it is simply grateful to sit at the feet of its beloved.*

One of the representations of devotion in the Hindu tradition is Hanuman. He devoted himself to Ram or God and was content to sit at God’s feet adoring him and serving him. One day he had a revelation and told it to Ram with great delight and joy. “When I forget who I am I serve you,” he said, “but when I remember who I am, I am you.” This statement implies the deepest recognition of devotion. It points to the awakening that the devotee and the beloved are One and that this has always been so. It is at the point of this remembering that “practice” has come to an end and we live our lives in heartfelt and simple authenticity.

Welcoming the Heavenly Messengers

The Buddha determined to awaken only after opening his eyes to the heavenly messengers (*devaduttas* in Pali) of illness, aging and death that he witnessed after escaping the confines of his royal palace. Though not in a royal palace, each of us are similarly confined by the powerful societal pretense that we can eat, exercise, or use surgery to stave off these heavenly messengers. Our meditation practice helps us to awaken to the reality that being born in a human body means we will also experience illness, aging and death.

Thanks to a suggestion by Mike Winkler, a number of us have been meeting monthly in a group we’ve named “Death Awareness”. So far, the group has been quite informal, consisting of meditation, reading, and listening to dhamma talks or doing exercises to reflect on death and dying.

We invite anyone in the meditation community to join us if you are interested in exploring what the Buddha’s teachings about heavenly messengers offer us. Or, if you are dealing with issues of illness, aging, and death of your own or a loved one and are finding it hard to talk about these topics in most settings, we invite you to attend our group to be with others willing to openly discuss this taboo and complex human experience. The group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7-9 PM at Jan Sheppard’s home. Call Jan at 233-3844 for directions or for more information.

Tuesday Night Sitting

Madison Insight Meditation Group now offers sittings twice a week: on Sunday night at the First Unitarian Society on University Bay Drive, and on Tuesday night at Dale Heights Presbyterian Church. Our regular Sunday night 6-8 PM sitting will continue as it has for the last eight years.

Dale Heights Presbyterian is located on a bus-line at 5501 University Avenue. There is free parking in the Church parking lot. The Tuesday night sitting is smaller, more informal and an ideal way for those newer to meditation to have an opportunity to ask questions of the leaders.

We meet from 6:30-8:00 PM each Tuesday evening. We meditate for 45 minutes and then have a brief dhamma teaching and informal conversation that arises from the teaching or from an issue or question raised by someone attending. The Tuesday sitting will generally be led by Jan Sheppard, though some weeks it will be led by John Meyer, Tony Fernandez or Lori Creswell.

Madison Vipassana, Inc.
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Want Off the Mailing List?

If you no longer want to be on our mailing list all you need to do to remove yourself is send an email to jrsheppard@sbcglobal.net and ask to be removed. It saves us the cost of the stamp and will save you from receiving information that you'd rather not receive. Thanks for helping us reduce our costs.

Clear Mind: the Newsletter of Madison Vipassana, Inc., Madison, Wisconsin

This newsletter is published periodically throughout the year to inform our members of our activities and of events of interest to the Vipassana community. Much of this information is also published on our website at: <http://www.vipassana.net>

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To be added to the mailing list contact Jan at 608-233-3844 or email: jrsheppard@sbcglobal.net