

# **SKY MIND RETREATS**

## **BACKPACKING MEDITATION RETREAT IN THE BEAUTIFUL EMIGRANT WILDERNESS SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS (FOR MEN AND WOMEN)**

**Retreat Teacher: Susie Harrington  
Trail Guide: Alison Reitz  
AUGUST 2-9, 2009**

**\$520**

### **THE RETREAT**

This will be an eight-day backpacking meditation retreat in the Buddhist tradition. 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 individual meetings with the teacher. Our days will include formal walking and sitting meditation as well as day hikes to explore this unique area.

**MEDITATING IN THE MOUNTAINS:** This trip provides a unique opportunity to explore the power of a silent meditation retreat while immersed in the beauty and wildness of the Sierra Nevada. 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.

**DEEPENING OUR PRACTICE:** This trip will be held in Noble Silence and will require a commitment by participants to this practice. While holding this silence we will have many opportunities for different forms of meditation, whether walking with the group, in more formal sitting practice, or in personal solitude. During the retreat there will be a one-day, two-night solo, during which we may use our own practice and form a closer bond with nature.

### **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 lying and from harsh, abusive or damaging speech.
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 accordance with that spirit of generosity, Susie and Alison are offering their teachings, time and service. The fee for the retreat covers only the retreat costs: food, group gear, insurance, and administrative 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.

### **THE HIKE**

We will be hiking in the high Sierra of California starting at about 6300' and climbing to around 8000'. We will take two days to arrive at our main camp, where we will stay for four nights. We will be camping near tree line, taking our water from clear mountain streams. At the end of the retreat we will retrace our steps to the trailhead.

### **THE WEATHER**

While weather cannot be predicted with certainty, we can probably count on warm to cool days, with cool to chilly nights. A thunderstorm or two are certainly possible. Please go over the equipment list carefully to be sure you are prepared for changing conditions.

### **BEGINNING AND ENDING**

We will meet on August 2 at the Kennedy Meadows trailhead campground. Please plan to arrive by four p.m. at the latest. Kennedy Meadows is off California Highway 108 (Sonora Pass), seven or so miles west of the summit. Our first meal will be dinner that night.

We will end back at the Kennedy Meadows trailhead mid-day on Sunday, August 9.

**Please note that the retreat officially begins and ends at the trailhead. You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the trailhead.**

### **MEALS**

Our menu is vegetarian, lightweight and simple. Please tell us in advance of any dietary restrictions. **To accommodate your personal preference, we ask that you bring your own hot and cold drink mixes (coffee, tea, Gatorade, etc.) and trail snacks.** Stoves and cooking equipment are provided; all you need to bring are **your own cup, bowl, spoon, and water purification equipment** (see equipment list). Cooking and cleanup duties will be shared. The first meal is dinner on Sunday, August 2.

### **SAFETY AND INSURANCE**

In addition to your health insurance, you may wish to purchase evacuation insurance to cover expenses associated with a medical emergency evacuation. This can be a good deal since a backcountry medevac almost always involves the use of an expensive helicopter, which you would otherwise be responsible for. There are several respected providers to choose from, such as Diver's Alert, the American Alpine Club, World Nomads, or Global Rescue, Inc.

You may also wish to purchase trip insurance, available at any travel agency. It will protect your investment in non-refundable airline tickets if you have to cancel or if the retreat is canceled due to circumstances beyond our control.

### **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 Vedanta and Dzochon teachers. She lives in Moab, Utah, and teaches classes, weekends and longer retreats in the Four Corners area and California. She has completed Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Dedicated Practitioners Program and Community Dharma Leader program. 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.

**Alison Reitz** has been guiding wilderness trips for eighteen years and practicing Vipassana meditation for ten years. She has completed Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Dedicated Practitioners Program, and teaches meditation and dharma classes in Santa Barbara, CA, where she lives.

## TO APPLY

### REGISTRATION

A \$100 deposit is required to reserve a place. The rest of the fee is due 30 days before the retreat. In addition please fill out the **Registration Form, Medical Questionnaire, and Release Form**. We require these forms to be sent in with your deposit. The forms are available on the websites [www.skymindretreats.org](http://www.skymindretreats.org) and [www.cloudcanyon.com](http://www.cloudcanyon.com). Make checks payable to **Sky Mind Retreats**. Send all registration materials to: **Sky Mind Retreats, 4858 Ogram Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105**.

Please remember, when you send in your deposit be sure to send in the three forms. We can only register you when we have this info.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact Alison at [alison@cloudcanyon.com](mailto:alison@cloudcanyon.com) or 805-692-9615 with your questions and concerns.

*Today I will walk out, today everything evil will leave me,  
I will be as I was before, I will have a cool breeze over my body.  
I will have a light body, I will be happy forever,  
nothing will hinder me.  
I walk with beauty before me. I walk with beauty behind me.  
I walk with beauty below me. I walk with beauty above me.  
I walk with beauty around me. My words will be beautiful.  
In beauty all day long may I walk.  
Through the returning seasons, may I walk.  
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.  
With dew about my feet, may I walk.*

- Excerpt from a Navajo Prayer