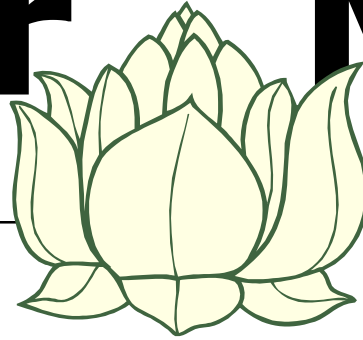


Clear Mind

Volume 14, no. 1

January 2007



Residential Retreat HOWARD COHN

May 3-6, 2007

Pine Lake Center,
Westfield, WI

We happily welcome back Howard Cohn, who has been to Madison many times and was the teacher for our first retreat in the early 1990's. The clarity and gentle nature of Howie's teachings easily open the heart and relax the mind. We are very pleased he will be joining us again. The registration form for this retreat is included in this newsletter.



This retreat is suitable for beginning or experienced meditators. The cost of the retreat, vegetarian meals, and a double room is \$250.00. In keeping with the Buddhist tradition there is no charge for the teachings, however, a donation to the teacher is encouraged.

Details and a registration form are included in this mailing as well as at: www.vipassana.net Questions about registration can be directed to the registrar, Julie Meyer at (608) 231-1558. To discuss special needs for accommodations or food, email Julie at: juliemeyer@ameritech.net Please remember that we do have a scholarship fund that may be able to cover part of the retreat costs for those otherwise unable to attend the retreat. Contact John Cotter at 221-1632 for details about the scholarship fund and to discuss your situation.

Please register for this retreat by March 9th. Late registrants should check with the registrar regarding availability. As always, we will maintain a waiting list so it is worthwhile to get on the list as there are often last minute cancellations. Thanks very much for your cooperation!

Howard Cohn at Sunday Night Sitting

We are hopeful that Howard Cohn will be able to stay on after the retreat to lead our regular Sunday night sitting on May 6th from 6-8pm. If you are unable to attend the retreat, this is a wonderful opportunity to benefit from Howie's visit to Madison.

Save the Date!

SHARON SALZBERG Retreat

We are pleased to announce that Madison Vipassana, Inc. will welcome Sharon Salzberg, author of *Lovingkindness*, *A Heart As Wide As the World*, and *Faith*, to teach a nonresidential retreat on August 4-5th, 2007, at the Lussier Heritage Center in Madison. She will also be giving a public address on the evening of Thursday, August 2nd, also in Madison. Details regarding these events will be included in a newsletter, posted on our website at www.vipassana.net, and sent to our email list closer to the time of the retreat.

Anumodana

In Theravada Buddhist tradition "*anumodana*" is the Pali word traditionally used to express appreciation for the skilful actions of others. For example, at the end of an inspiring Dhamma talk, one may say, "*Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu, Anumodana*" to mean, "well said (3 times)! and I appreciate and rejoice in what you've done here". When one makes a donation to a Theravada Buddhist organization, it is likely that the acknowledgement will include *Anumodana*, to acknowledge and appreciate the generosity of the donor.

Anumodana does not have an English equivalent. It is a complex concept; its closest meaning may be rejoicing together, in that it expresses appreciation for both the giver and the receiver in an interchange. While in western traditions, the norm is to consider the giver and receiver in a somewhat hierarchical way, with the giver at the 'advantage' both materially and spiritually, in Buddhist tradition, the giver and receiver are paired, equal, and necessary to one another. *Anumodana* expresses this equivalency and acknowledges that the actions of both the giver and of the recipient generate beauty and goodness. In giving *anumodana*, and expressing

sincere appreciation of another's good deeds, one generates goodness for oneself as well. It is the ultimate in 'win-win'.

As a community, we have much for which to express *anumodana*! In this newsletter we send *anumodana* to all who participate in the activities, read the newsletter, visit the website, and support the goals of Madison Vipassana, Inc. and Madison Insight Meditation Group! *Anumodana* also to those individuals listed below who work behind the scenes to keep this community strong.

Madison Vipassana, Inc. Board Members:

Cindy McCallum, President
Lori Creswell, Vice President
Tony Fernandez, Treasurer
Laura Berger, Secretary
John Cotter
Cathy Loeb
Julie Meyer
Jan Sheppard

Assorted tasks undertaken for Madison Vipassana, Inc. and/or Madison Insight Meditation Group:

Mike McInnis, book librarian
Julie Meyer, tape librarian
Tony Fernandez, zafu transport
Cindy McCallum, Jan Sheppard, Community Dhamma Leaders
Lori Creswell, Cindy McCallum, Jan Sheppard, monthly introduction
Thia Triggs, ride share coordinator
Cindy McCallum, Jan Sheppard, and volunteers, Sunday night facilitation
Jan Sheppard, Tuesday night facilitation
Dave Creswell, half day sittings
Dave Creswell, highway cleanup
Jim & Piew Kern, monthly temple visits
Jan Sheppard, monthly chanting
Cindy McCallum, kalyana mitta coordinator
John Cotter, Jan Sheppard, email list managers
Jan Sheppard, newsletter editor
Cathy Loeb, newsletter duplication & mailing
Peter Kaufman, mailing list maintenance & labels
Jan Sheppard, webmaster
Lori Creswell, retreat teacher coordinator
Cindy McCallum, retreat facility coordinator
Tony Fernandez, Julie Meyer, retreat registrars
Laura Berger, John Cotter, scholarship coordinators
Tony Fernandez, Buddhist Peace Fellowship liaison
Lori Creswell, First Unitarian Society liaison



Upcoming Madison Vipassana, Inc. Retreats

Sharon Salzberg, August 4-5, 2007, non-residential, Lussier Heritage Center, Madison, WI

Community Building Retreat, October 13-14, 2007, residential, Pine Lake Retreat Center, Westfield, WI.

Ajahn Amaro, November 5-11, 2007, residential, Christine Center, Willard, WI.

Myoshin Kelley, Kamala Masters, Patricia Genoud, April 6-11, 2008, residential, co-sponsored with Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative, St. Anthony's Center, Marathon, WI.

Other Retreats

"The Path of the Body: Yoga, Meditation and Poetry"

Saturday, February 3, Washburn Heritage Room, Edgewood College, 8:45-3:30 pm

Facilitators: Penny Ballantyne, a certified Kripalu Yoga teacher and Paula Hirschboeck, a Zen Buddhist Chaplain and meditation instructor.

Register by February 1 with Health Services at Edgewood - cost is \$35 (or \$40 for walk-ins the morning of the workshop).

No yoga or meditation experience needed! for further details call Paula (278-0271) or email (hirsch@edgewood.edu).

Kamala Masters & Steve Armstrong, June 15-17 or June 15-25, 2007, Christine Center, Willard, WI, sponsored by Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative, for details write tcvcoop@hotmail.com

Monthly Trips to Waukesha Temple

Theravada Buddhism is a tradition based on monasticism. Monks and nuns have maintained and transmitted the tradition for our benefit for 2550 years, since the time of the Buddha. There are Theravada Buddhist monasteries and temples not too far from Madison. One of them is Buddhahaska Temple in Waukesha. A group will be carpooling to the Temple each 3rd Saturday of the month to hear the teachings and to offer support to the monks. They will meet at the Dutch Mill Park n Ride promptly at 9am and plan to return by 2pm. At the Temple there will be food offerings to the monks and a community meal, followed by meditation and a Dhamma Talk by Abbot Ajahn Phanh or another monk. Please let Jim Kern, 608-334-1920, know if you plan to meet and carpool with the group. Directions to the temple are on our website at www.vipassana.net/weekly

Little Things

July, 2003, by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

abridged, for full essay go to: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/meditations3.html#little>

Patience is an important quality in the practice. The Pali word for patience, *khanti*, also means endurance, the willingness to stick with things over the long haul. And although the practice *is* a long haul, this willingness to stick with things over the long haul translates into the present moment as meticulousness. You're very careful in the steps you're following right now, step by step by step, not jumping over any steps, not trying to leap from the first floor to the fifth. You're willing to go up the stairway, one step at a time, paying careful attention to what you're doing. You're willing to put your trust in the little things you can do in the present moment, confident that they'll build into the bigger results you want.

We all want the big results. We want major happiness, major peace, major clarity in our minds. When we look at the step-by-step-by-step increments we have to follow, we sometimes get impatient and don't trust them. How could little things like this build up to such big things as release, liberation, nibbana? That's what we think. And yet it's precisely the little unskillful things that get in the way of the big results we want, so we have to pay careful attention to them each time the mind pulls away from the desire for peace or the desire for true happiness. It's a little pull, but over time it adds up to a major habit. The best way to fight this habit is with a path that's made out of little steps that add up over time as well. At the same time, the willingness to look at the details means that your powers of perception, your powers of insight, get very sharp.

There are times when your practice seems to hit a plateau and it's not going anywhere. At times like that, if you turn around to look at what you've been doing, you'll realize that you haven't been looking very carefully. In other words, your meditation has been put on automatic pilot and you're not paying much attention. You're just going through the motions, so the results just go through the motions as well. The cure for this lies in being very sensitive and precise about what you're doing.

For example, focusing on the breath: Be really precise about any tiny little bit of tension or discomfort or dis-ease in the breath. Don't slough over it, because paying attention to the little details is what brings you more and more into the present moment. If you're sloughing over the details, you're sloughing from the past into the future and skipping over the present. So pay close attention to each breath, to how the process of each breath feels in different parts of the body. As you develop your sensitivity, working through whatever

tension you detect, you move from where it's really tense to where it's less and less tense, until things are so calm that you can detect even the slightest bit of tension. Work through it, work through it, even though it may seem like a little thing. If you leave it, it may turn out to be a seed. It may grow into something larger.

There's a story in the Canon of a creeper seed that lands next to a sala tree. The devas in the other trees come around to comfort the deva in the sala tree, saying, "Have no fear. Have no fear. Don't worry about that seed. Maybe a fire will burn it or a woodsman will chop it or step on it or a peacock will eat it or maybe it's not even a seed." Well, it turns out to be a seed. It sprouts and grows into a creeper, and the creeper grows up around the tree. At first the deva in the sala tree doesn't understand why her friends were so concerned. After all, the creeper's tendrils seem soft, downy, and tender. But then as the creeper grows bigger and bigger, it finally forms a canopy over the whole tree, pulls down the major limbs, and destroys the tree. That's when the deva realized why her friends were so concerned.

This is one of the reasons why you have to be careful about little things, because sometimes they're seeds that can grow. At the same time, when you're attentive to little things, you're beginning to plant your own seeds in the mind as well, different kinds of seeds: seeds of stronger mindfulness, stronger alertness, stronger willpower, determination. All the perfections needed for Awakening start with the little things, and they keep growing in little steps, little steps, through your being very, very attentive, very, very precise in what you're doing. At the same time, though, you can't be tense in what you're doing. You just watch things very carefully. ...

...small skillful things can do you a lot of good if you look after them. So don't despise the little victories you achieve in your meditation, don't be careless about the little defeats, because it's step by step by step that you get more and more precisely into the present moment, which is where things are going to open up. If you're not paying careful attention here, you're not going to see the opening. So focusing on the little things is not a distraction from the larger issues of the practice. It's actually in the little things that the larger ones appear.

So always keep this point in mind, especially when your meditation has hit a plateau or seems to be sliding downhill. Often it's a problem of not paying careful attention, of simply going through the motions. Ajaan Suwat would often describe this as not having enough respect for the little things that you're doing each moment. So try to meditate with an attitude of lightness, but at the same time a sense of respect, of real dedication. That's how the principles of endurance and patience, which sound like long-term principles, translate into the present moment: being meticulous in what you're doing right here, right now.

Madison Vipassana, Inc.
9638 Shadow Ridge Trail
Middleton, WI 53562

Activities of Madison Insight Meditation Group

For more details on any of the following events visit our website at www.vipassana.net or email uppekha@yahoo.com

Sunday weekly sitting, 6-8 pm, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison

1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday: 45 minute meditation following by talk and discussion.

2nd, 4th Sunday: 45 minute sitting meditation, 20 minute walking meditation, 45 minute sitting meditation

Note: 2nd Sunday includes separate introduction to meditation from 6-7:15 pm.

Tuesday weekly sitting, 6:30-8 pm, 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Middleton, check www.vipassana.net for directions and details.

Chanting and meditation: first Monday of the month, 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Middleton.

Bi-monthly half day sittings & potluck, usually the first Saturday every other month, 9 am-1 pm, dates listed at www.vipassana.net

Highway cleanup, periodically throughout the year, call Dave at 238-1234 for details.

Buddhahaksa Temple visits, 3rd Saturday of each month, details at www.vipassana.net or call Jim Kern 608-334-1920 for details.

Email list: to subscribe send an empty message to mimg-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Want to Receive this Newsletter Electronically?

If you are willing to receive this newsletter as an electronic file rather than a hardcopy through the mail you will help us to save paper as well as expense. You can find the newsletter on our website or, sign up for our email list and it will be sent to your email address. To subscribe to our email list, send a message with no subject or content to mimg-subscribe@yahoogroups.com There are usually fewer than 4 messages per week. If you are already receiving the newsletter via US Mail and are willing to only receive it electronically, please send an email to Peter at kaufman@doit.wisc.edu and ask to be removed from our hard copy mailing list. Please include your full name and address so he is sure to remove the correct person.

Clear Mind

the Newsletter of
Madison Vipassana, Inc.,
Madison, Wisconsin



This newsletter is published periodically 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>

Jan Sheppard: Editing, Layout & Design.
Cathy Loeb, Duplicating and Distribution.

To be added to the mailing list contact kaufman@doit.wisc.edu