

DEEP SPRING CENTER

FOR MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL INQUIRY

Meditation and the Open Heart Retreat

**Albion College
Mitchell Towers
Albion, MI
June 19-22 and June 19-26, 2009**

Thank you for your registration for the upcoming meditation retreat with Barbara Brodsky, John Orr, and Dorothy Ann Coyne. A place has been reserved for you.

The retreat will be held in Mitchell Towers dormitory in the campus of Albion College. Driving instructions to Albion College and some basic information are attached. The emergency contact number during the retreat is Karen Mori – call cell telephone number 734-709-3316 and leave a message. The number will be checked regularly.

Check in for the retreat will begin at 4:00 pm on Friday, June 19, when your room will be assigned and you receive a key card. After check-in you may unpack prior to dinner. Retreat guidelines will be presented and dinner will be served at 5:30 pm. This afternoon and meal will be the only opportunity for social interaction until breaking of the Noble Silence. The retreat program and Noble Silence are scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm on Friday. For weekenders, silence will be broken on Monday morning when the weekend people leave. For full week people, it will be broken at supper on Thursday 25th, then a return to silence until the closing. The retreat will end at noon on Friday, June 26, after lunch.

Karen Mori and Diana Cramer will be the Retreat Managers. If you cannot arrive before the program begins at 7:00 pm on Friday, please keep in mind that the Noble Silence will have begun before you arrive. Please take care to enter quietly and find a Retreat Manager to check-in, getting your room number and key card.

During the retreat, leave a note in the basket for the Retreat Managers if you have questions or problems. Contact them verbally only if there is an urgent situation.

Noble Silence

What is Noble Silence? When you arrive on Friday, there will be time set aside for registration, unpacking, supper, and conversation. With the beginning of the opening talk, the retreat becomes a place of silence. Meditation students are asked not to talk, except with the teachers or with one another in appropriate ways in small group meetings. If there are cases of emergency or questions concerning the retreat schedule or process, you may talk with a retreat manager. In order to keep your concentration on the practice, it is requested that you do not read, write, or find other activities that would keep your mind busy. An exception is limited journal writing. Quieting the body and the voice also helps to quiet the mind and create a space in which you can observe the mind.

Another aspect of silence is watching our movements, endeavoring to use mindfulness as we walk, shower, open and close doors etc. so as to have minimal impact on others and the environment.

Noble Silence also fosters a sense of aloneness, even in a retreat full of people. It is important for you to resist urges to social contact by note, glance, or whisper in order to benefit most fully from this opportunity, as well as to respect the silence of others. We can learn a lot by watching the impulse to talk or make other contact and seeing what motivates that impulse. At first the thought of silence may be a bit frightening, but with more practice it will become a warm haven. The silence is broken at the end of the retreat to allow people to visit and share their experiences.

Retreat Description

During this retreat we will work with deepening vipassana practice, with a special focus on how we may bring an attitude of kindness into each moment and experience. When what arises is unpleasant or painful can we still greet it with spaciousness and an open heart? There will also be extra focus on metta (loving-kindness) and the other brahma vihara practices (compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity). There will be separate instruction periods to meet the needs of students with different levels of meditation experience.

A typical day at retreat will include morning instruction, alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, optional small group meetings or private interviews with a teacher, a rest/personal period, and an evening dharma talk.

Retreat Details

You must bring

- Sheets for an extra-long twin bed (a blanket is provided)
- Pillow case (a pillow is provided, bring another if you want)
- Bath and hand towels
- Cup, mug, water bottle etc. (not for meals)
- Fan (optional, as there is no air conditioning)
- Meditation cushion or bench, shawl for morning sittings
- Comfortable clothes and mat for yoga exercises (optional)
- Personal toiletries
- Rain gear, insect repellent (we must walk between buildings for meals)

Deep Spring will provide cushions, linens and towels for those who are flying in.

Each room has a sink and ceiling light. There is a refrigerator with limited space off the basement meditation room.

Each person will receive a coded card key which gives you entrance to the building, your room and your meals. Don't lose it! If you do lose this, it will cost you an extra \$25 to get it replaced. ***Don't take it home.***

Meals (vegetarian and non-vegetarian) are provided by the college: Friday dinner, three meals each day and two meals on the last Friday. Snacks, coffee, tea and water will be available at all times.

Everyone will have an assigned room. There will be one or two people in each room with a bath shared with an adjacent room. If you have special room requirements, please call or email me and I will do my best to accommodate your request. Everyone will be living in relatively close quarters. Some people are allergic to incense, scented toiletries, aftershave and perfumes. Please refrain from bringing them to the retreat. There is no smoking inside the building.

Meditation Essentials

You should bring your own meditation cushions (if possible) or whatever you use during meditation. A few cushions will be available for you to borrow. Please note that formal meditation cushions are not necessary. A folded blanket for the floor and a firm cushion on which to sit are adequate. Some chairs are available, but you will probably be more comfortable if you bring along what you know works for you. Each day will include periods of sitting and walking meditation. Instructions will be given for those relatively new to meditation. A community altar will be located in the meditation hall. You are welcome to bring anything you would like to have on the altar (for example, pictures or totems). Please take personal items home with you when you depart.

DSC Bookstore

Deep Spring Center has a bookstore which provides a wide variety of meditation and Buddhist books and cushions. Many people find that books are a powerful reinforcement to deepening meditation practice. However, if you choose to purchase books you are strongly encouraged to stay present with meditation practice during the retreat, and to postpone the reading of your new books until you return home.

Dana Offering

The retreat fee covers the cost of the retreat center rental, meals, teacher accommodation and transportation, advertising and some scholarship aid. In the tradition of offering these teachings freely, The teachers receive no payment from the retreat fee. They offer themselves to the retreat on a "dana" basis. Dana is a Pali word which translated means "the spirit of generosity that is rooted in love and compassion for all beings." Dana baskets are available during the retreat for donations for the teachers. They appreciate your support for their teachings. Since the time of Buddha this interdependency has existed between those who offer the teachings and those who receive them and the teachers feel that it is a beautiful tradition and appreciate the spirit of trust and generosity it engenders.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached by phone at (734) 369-2628, by mail at my address below, or by e-mail at mug@hps.com.

I wish you an excellent retreat!

Your Registrar

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Directions

Albion College is 90 miles west of Detroit and 175 miles east of Chicago on Interstate 94. It is easily accessible from Interstate 80/90 via Interstate 69. Nearby airports are located in Detroit, Lansing and Kalamazoo.

From eastbound I-94, take Exit 121 (Eaton Avenue/28 Mile Road) and turn right (south). Follow southbound Business I-94 to Michigan Avenue (M-99 East). Turn left (east) onto M-99. The campus will be on your right, between Huron and Mingo streets.

From westbound I-94, take Exit 124 (M-99) and turn right (south/west). Follow M-99 about three miles into town. The campus will be on your left, between Mingo and Huron Streets.

From northbound M-99, follow the highway into downtown Albion. Turn right (east) onto Erie Street. The main part of campus will be on your left, between Huron and Mingo Streets.

Mitchell Towers is on Mingo Street.

A map of the campus can be seen at http://www.albion.edu/ac_map/acmap_set.asp.