

CLEAR MIND



Residential Retreat March 20-26:

Myoshin and Edwin Kelley

Madison Insight Meditation Group welcomes Myoshin and Edwin Kelley to lead a residential retreat, "Uncovering the Wise and Compassionate Heart," at the St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, WI, March 20-26.

The retreat is appropriate for both beginning and experienced meditators. Participants will practice mindfulness techniques while sitting, walking, eating, and moving about throughout the day. Clear and simple instructions will be presented throughout the retreat and a longer discourse will be presented each evening. The retreat will be held in silence except for question and answer periods. Sitting meditation periods



will alternate with periods of walking meditation throughout each day. The cost is \$450, which covers a single room, vegetarian meals, teacher transportation and other retreat expenses. In keeping with Theravada Buddhist tradition, there is no charge for the teachings; however, a donation (*dana*) to the teacher is encouraged. Financial assistance for retreat fees is available. For

more information or to register, see the registration form included with this newsletter. The form is also available at www.vipassana.net/

To learn more about Myoshin and Edwin Kelley, see pages 2 and 3.

Awakening Joy: A Weekend with James Baraz

Spirit Rock teacher James Baraz will return to Madison the weekend of March 6th and 7th for a series of events. James has led several retreats for Madison Vipassana and is the teacher for the on-line course on Awakening Joy. He visits as part of a book tour to celebrate and promote the publication of his first book, *Awakening Joy*.

While in Madison he will lead a one-day workshop on awakening joy from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 6, and give a public lecture on Sunday afternoon, March 7.

James also has generously agreed to attend the Sunday night sitting group March 7 and answer questions about practice during the discussion time. Both the workshop and the public talk will be suitable for meditators and non-meditators alike, so invite your family and friends to share in these events. For more information or to register for Saturday's workshop, see the registration form enclosed or at www.vipassana.net/ Details about Sunday's public talk are at left.



Public Talk by James Baraz

2 - 4 p.m. Sunday, March 7th
First Unitarian Society
900 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI
Cost: \$5.00 at the door

James Baraz will discuss the importance of joy in one's spiritual life and explore themes from his popular 10-month Awakening Joy Course to develop our natural capacity for well-being and happiness. The talk is sponsored by First Unitarian Society of Madison.

The Wise and Compassionate Heart

Myoshin Kelley on compassion as a basis for living

Myoshin Kelley has received dharma instruction from masters in the Theravada, Zen, and Vajrayana traditions. She has practiced extensively with the Burmese meditation masters Chanmyay Sayadaw, Sayadaw U Pandita, and Sayadaw U Tejaniya. Her desire for long-term meditation practice has taken her to Burma on several occasions. In 1994, she accompanied her husband, Edwin Kelley, to the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, where she received training as a meditation instructor from Joseph Goldstein and Sharon Salzberg. From 2003 to 2009 she was teacher in residence at the Forest Refuge of the IMS. Her teaching style has been characterized as emphasizing “a relaxed, caring and attentive attitude combined with joyful interest.”

The world we live in is often a world in pain. If we look around us we see crime, violence, poverty, illness, and a planet in danger. It can be daunting. Looking at our inner world we see that we often struggle with what it is to be human. We see a life that is filled with uncertainty, and we see our mind in constant reaction to this. It's not hard to see why we can be easily overwhelmed and why we're often at a loss as to how to respond. Yet if we don't collapse into resignation we can begin to discover the innate compassion and wisdom in our heart.

The inclination to help is the pull of compassion, that quivering of the heart in response to suffering. It's that movement of mind

and heart that sees pain, whether in others or in ourselves, and wants to alleviate it. Compassion is a willingness to stand in the space of suffering, rather than turning away from it.

However, compassion needs to be supported by wisdom in order to help us see the totality of the situation and not just the symptom. Wisdom helps us to discern what action is most appropriate. Otherwise we may react out of grief and be easily overwhelmed by the suffering. Or we may act out of pity and want to distance ourselves from the suffering, holding the pain at arm's length. We find that when wisdom is strong,



“Compassion is a willingness to stand in the space of suffering, rather than turning away from it.”

compassion naturally flows forth. It is an expression of the wise heart.

We often live from a place of simply reacting to whatever is happening. Meditation practice helps us to find a spaciousness that allows us to respond to life from an inner richness. This transpires through a growing capacity to be with the pleasant, the unpleasant or even the uninteresting

in a way that the mind stays fresh and clear, thus being able to access intuitive wisdom.

For instance, if we're with somebody who's in a lot of pain, we can watch to see if there's a reaction within ourselves – perhaps we experience some constriction or hold ourselves separate. If we aren't aware of what's happening inside us, it creates stress and may shape our response in ways we don't intend. But if there is the capacity to simply recognize what is, there's no added layer of judgment. We can be present with another's suffering and respond from a place of deep caring.

The direction of our lives changes when we discover that our suffering comes more from how we are relating to our experience than from the circumstances themselves. This means that no matter what challenges we face, there is an innate capacity for deep happiness.

This potential is exemplified by beings such as His Holiness The Dalai Lama. He is someone who is truly happy, even though throughout his life he has been exposed to immense suffering. Through the strengthening of wisdom and compassion we find the capacity to live as human beings in the best way that we can, and out of this the joyful heart emerges.

The Source of True Freedom

Edwin Kelley on opening to experience

Edwin Kelley began meditating in 1975 and has practiced in both the Theravada and Tibetan traditions. In 1992 he went to Burma to undertake a six month period of intensive retreat with the renowned meditation master Chanmyay Sayadaw. He was the executive Director of the Insight Meditation Society from 1996-2003. He recently moved to Minneapolis to be co-director and meditation instructor in Tergar International, the organization that oversees the activities of Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. He is currently enrolled in a master's degree program in Buddhist Studies.

We often hear the expression, "Everybody wants to be happy; nobody wants to be unhappy." I have heard His Holiness the Dalai Lama say this many times. I have never encountered anyone for whom this statement is not true; I certainly know it is true for me.

However, when I look at my own experience, there are often times when I am not happy. So if the desire for happiness is so ubiquitous, why is the realization of true happiness so elusive? When we first begin to meditate, we are taught to train our mind to be present with our every experience, whether it is our breath, our physical sensations, sounds, our thoughts and emotions, or just simply resting in awareness itself. In order to do this we must be willing to be open to and accept what-

ever may arise in our hearts and minds. We must develop the capacity to be patient and kind to ourselves. We must learn to cultivate an open heart, one imbued with loving-kindness and compassion. From my own experience, this is not an easy thing to do. My mind seems habitually programmed to chase after happiness in pleasure, avoid unhappiness in displeasure, and to disconnect from that which I find boring. The last thing I want to do is sit there and look at what is really going on.

Nonetheless, I have slowly come to learn that the very things that make me unhappy, the very experience of unhappiness itself, are the raw material, the data, for finding true happiness. So, contrary to my notion that happiness can be achieved by avoiding that which makes me unhappy, in fact I have found that the path to happiness lies *within* that which makes me unhappy. By opening to and being willing to fully experience all of my life's experience, the good, the bad and the ugly, I can be free of the hope and fear that it might be otherwise. This may seem counterintuitive, even

contradictory, but slowly I am learning, or should I say I am learning over and over again, that there is no alternative.

As this understanding slowly sinks in, it is beginning to change

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the way I relate to difficulty in my life. Rather than my first response being, "Oh no! Get me out of here," I find myself saying, "This is interesting. I wonder what is *really* going on?" There are things that, in the past, I would have wanted to get away from or get rid of as soon as I could. With this gradual change, I'm becoming more willing to open to them, even — dare I say? — take joy in examining them more closely.

However, it is not just the change of attitude that brings more joy to my heart. It is the knowledge that as I learn to relate to my life's experiences in this way, nothing can rob me of happiness. Everything I encounter can be the source of my freedom.

To Hear More

Talks by Myoshin Kelley, James Baraz and other teachers are available from Dharma Seed at www.dharmaseed.org. Dharma Seed



preserves and shares talks by teachers in the Theravada tradition of Buddhism. The talks are offered on a dana, or donation, basis.

Regular Activities of MIMG

Sunday Weekly Meditation

6-8 pm, 900 University Bay Drive,
Madison

2nd Sunday each month:

6-8 pm, Introduction to Meditation

1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday each month:

45 minute meditation followed by talk
and discussion.

2nd, 4th Sunday each month:

45 minute sitting meditation
20 minute walking meditation
45 minute sitting meditation

Tuesday Weekly Meditation

6:30-8:15 pm, 9638 Shadow Ridge
Trail, Middleton

45 minute meditation followed by
Dhamma discussion. Led by Janice
Sheppard.

Half-Day Meditation

9 am-noon, Saturday February 13
900 University Bay Drive, Madison.

Alternating periods of sitting and
walking meditation will be followed
by a potluck lunch.

For details on any of these activities,
email uppekha@yahoo.com

Clear Mind

The Newsletter of Madison Vipassana, Inc.
Madison, WI

This newsletter is published
periodically as a service to our
meditation community. It is also
available on our website at:
<http://www.vipassana.net>

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