



## EXPERIENCED YOGI RETREAT



WITH MATTHEW FLICKSTEIN

*See next page for details and registration*

### Cultivating Choiceless Awareness

by Matthew Flickstein

When meditation teachers address the pursuit of enlightenment with their students, they either discuss the gradual or sudden approach. The gradual approach focuses on the value of virtue and on the accumulation of wholesome karma. Meditation techniques which concentrate and calm the mind are taught. The cultivation of mindfulness and clear comprehension is encouraged. The mind thus becomes a precise instrument for perceiving things as they really are. In the gradual approach, wisdom is looked upon as an unfolding process and even enlightenment is seen to progress in stages.

In the sudden approach, however, the teacher's perspective is that we all have Buddha nature and that we cannot "practice" to become what we already are. Concerning oneself with virtue will not lead to the goal since cultivating karma, even wholesome karma, is still involving oneself

with the phenomenal world. Even the quest for enlightenment is seen as keeping oneself trapped within a dualistic conceptual framework. When the student makes statements that belie the fact that he or she is already enlightened, the teacher points out the errors in his or her thinking.

Both approaches are valid and students at different stages of development gravitate to one or the other of these schools of thought. Although it is not immediately clear to the casual observer, what both schools have in common is the quality of mind that enables one to directly perceive or experience the reality to which they both point. This quality of mind is referred to as "non-judgmental" or "choiceless" awareness. Although meditators hear about this state of mind frequently, it is not until they recognize that it is one of the primary causes and conditions for the arising of insight that its true significance is appreciated.

The consequence of making judgments is to perpetuate obsessive patterns of mind. If we judge the contents of mind to be good, positive, or fortunate, we grasp at them. By doing so the presence of these patterns are reinforced. If we judge the contents of mind to be important, we focus on them, watching to see where they will lead. If we judge the contents of mind to be bad, negative, or unfortunate, we tend to resist them. Although the patterns will be suppressed, they will continue to persist on an unconscious basis. Every form of reactivity to our mental patterns actually invests them with additional power to influence us.

It is not easy to cultivate a non-judgmental or choiceless awareness. However, the consequences of remaining present in this way are quite significant. Issues that have been deeply repressed begin to rise to the surface providing us with the opportunity to consciously address them. By recognizing our self-destructive patterns, their power to control our behaviors diminishes. Our attachments typically decrease as we discover more subtle levels of impermanency and realize our inability to stop or control the incessant rise and fall of phenomena. We may perceive the unfulfilling nature of sense experience and abandon the pursuit of meaningless goals. Ultimately, as the mind experiences the selfless nature of all phenomenal existence, it may turn for its security to the freedom of the unconditioned.

Choiceless awareness is a quality of mind that is free from making judgments, decisions or generating commentary as it meets with sense experiences. It is a mind that responds to each new moment without the burden of its past history or of making future projections. When the mind no longer clings anywhere, not even to the idea of not clinging anywhere, we realize, whether suddenly or gradually, that we truly *already are* that for which we have been searching.





## TCVC Experienced Yogi Retreat with Matthew Flickstein

Opens Friday, January 14 at 7:30 P.M. and ends Sunday, January 23 at 1:00 P.M.

Registration is from 6:00 – 7:00 P.M. Please do not arrive before 3:00 P.M.



### Experienced Yogi Meditation Retreat

This is a silent vipassana retreat for experienced yogis. We will be practicing some of the essential exercises from the Satipatthana Sutta which are less addressed during typical retreats. Although we will begin with our breath, we will spend most of our time contemplating feelings, states of mind, and mental objects. The focus of our practice will be to break through our identification with the more subtle aspects of mind. There will be periods of sitting and walking meditation, Dhamma talks and individual interviews.

**It is recommended that participants will have previously attended a five-day residential vipassana retreat and be involved in a committed meditation practice.**

### About the Teacher

Matthew Flickstein, the resident teacher at The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center, has been practicing and teaching vipassana (insight) meditation for over twenty-one years. At one time, he was ordained as a monk in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.

His primary teacher has been Bhante Gunaratana. Matthew co-founded the Bhavana Society Monastic and Meditation Center with Bhante in 1982.

Prior to developing The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center, Matthew was a psychotherapist and facilitated personal development workshops. His first book, *Journey to the Center: A Meditation Workbook*, was recently published by Wisdom Publications.

### Dana

*Dana* is a Pali word which means the spirit of generosity. It is the first of ten noble qualities, or *paramis*, which when perfected lead to enlightenment. According to the Buddha, generosity is a reflection of the desire to benefit others. It is based upon compassion and the wish for the welfare of all living beings.

The relationship between teachers and students is based upon this principle of *dana*. Teachers offer the gift of Dhamma to those who attend their retreats. They endeavor to do so selflessly, without the expectation of any form of reward or gain. Students understand that teachers are supported solely through the generosity extended by the students who attend their retreats. The students' generosity thus enables the teachers to continue to devote their lives exclusively to the sharing of Dhamma with others.

### Scholarships

Scholarships are available for up to 50% of room and board. There is no scholarship for the registration fee or late fee. To apply for a scholarship, attach a letter with your registration giving the background of your need and the amount of your request. Those with financial resources may wish to help others by donating to the scholarship fund.

### Meals and Facilities

The retreat includes meals beginning with Saturday breakfast through lunch on Sunday, January 23 (Sunday, January 16 for weekend retreatants). **The kitchenette is not available for this retreat.** All meals are vegetarian and high in carbohydrates. An effort will be made to work with the cooks at the Tau Center to try to accommodate the diet of those with common food allergies. If you have special dietary needs, you may wish to bring along supplemental food that requires no facilities to store or prepare.

Accommodations at the Tau Center include private rooms with towels and bedding supplied. Showers and bathrooms are shared. Please bring comfortable, loose-fitting clothes and a blanket if you tend to get chilly sitting. Bring a cushion and soft floor pad for meditation, or you may sit on a chair if you prefer.

The Tau Center's phone number is 507-454-2993. **Use for emergencies only. Do not direct questions to Tau Center.**

### Retreat Fees and Registration

All registrants pay room and board fees plus a non-refundable registration fee covering retreat center fees and TCVC expenses associated with the retreat. **This is a residential retreat only; there is no commuter (meals-only) option.**

Applications, accompanied by a check for the full cost of the retreat, must be received by Friday, December 17. **Registration for this retreat is limited. Preference will be given to full-time participants. You will be notified by December 22 if your registration is not accepted because the retreat is full.** If you are successfully registered, you will not receive a confirmation.

**Retreatants are expected to arrive by 7:00 P.M. on Friday night and stay for the duration of the retreat.** Any exceptions must be approved by the retreat manager. Early departures are not eligible for a reduced rate or refund.

Contact the registrar, Steve Burt at 612-721-1021, or the TCVC PO Box, for correspondence concerning this retreat.

**Please bring unscented or lightly scented personal products, such as shampoo, lotions and deodorant. Do not use essential oils, perfumes or hairspray at the retreat. Scented products are distracting and may trigger allergies.**

**DIRECTIONS TO TAU CENTER, 511 HILBERT STREET, WINONA MINNESOTA 55987**

The Tau Center is about 2½ hours by car southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul near Highway 61. In the event of bad weather or other emergency, call the TCVC InfoLine at 651-229-3139 for retreat information and status.



--- Please mail this form with your payment to: TCVC, PO Box 14683, Minneapolis, MN 55414 ---

## REGISTRATION FORM JANUARY 14–16 OR 14–23, 2000

### TCVC EXPERIENCED YOGI RETREAT WITH MATTHEW FLICKSTEIN

Registration must be received and paid in full by December 17, 1999. Registration for this retreat is limited. Preference will be given to full-time participants. You will be notified by December 22 if your registration is not accepted because the retreat is full. If you are successfully registered, you will not receive a confirmation. Retreatants are expected to arrive by 7:00 P.M. on Friday night (but not before 3:00 P.M.) and stay for the duration of the retreat. Any exceptions must be approved by the retreat manager. Early departures are not eligible for a reduced rate or refund.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ M F (Circle One)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**\$90** Registration fee. Not refundable after December 17, 1999.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Non-refundable late fee for registrations received after December 17: **\$25**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Room and Board Weekend: **\$87** Full time: **\$395**

**There is no room-only or commuter (meals-only) option for this retreat.**

**The kitchenette is not available for this retreat.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Optional contribution to TCVC funds (please specify)

Scholarship Fund  Operating Fund

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL (payable to TCVC) Enclosed


**Please check all that apply**

- This is my first TCVC Retreat.
- I need a ride.  I can give a ride.  I am willing to pick up people from the airport.
- I volunteer to host a post-retreat party. (The retreat manager will contact you to confirm.)
- I volunteer to help the retreat manager. Tasks vary but may include arranging for gifts and flowers, helping set up at the retreat center, and registering retreatants. (The retreat manager will contact you.)
- I volunteer to serve as manager or registrar for a future TCVC retreat.
- This is a new address or phone number.

## TCVC RESIDENTIAL RETREAT CALENDAR 2000

The Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative (TCVC) offers retreats to anyone interested in Vipassana and Metta Meditation practice.

Date	Teacher(s)	Location	Contact
Jan. 14-16 or Jan. 14-23	Matthew Flickstein	Tau Center, Winona	Steve Burt 612-721-1021
April 7-9 or April 7-11	Marcia Rose	Tau Center, Winona	TBD
June 9-11 or June 9-18	Kamala Masters & Steve Armstrong	Tau Center, Winona	TBD
Sept. 22-24 or Sept 22-26	Wes Nisker	Tau Center, Winona	TBD

 **TCVC INFOLINE 651-229-3139** for information on business meetings and retreats

 **TCVC WORLDWIDEWEB SITE** <http://www.wordimage.com/tcvc.htm>

Twin Cities Vipassana Cooperative  
P.O. Box 14683  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Please contact us by e-mail ([p.norr@worldnet.att.net](mailto:p.norr@worldnet.att.net)) or PO Box by **January 15** if you wish to remain on the mailing list. If we do not hear from you by this time your name will be removed from the list.