

Thirteenth Annual Meditation Retreat for *People of Color* at Vallecitos Mountain Refuge near Taos, New Mexico

***With Mushim Ikeda-Nash and
Venerable Suhita Dharma***

August 29-September 4, 2009



Vallecitos Mountain Refuge is an inspirational retreat setting

The Retreat

In many traditions, people journey into the wilderness for contemplation and purification. How often do we have the opportunity to connect to our deepest intentions and to experience spiritual renewal? Taking place at 9,000 feet in pristine meadowland in New Mexico, the Vallecitos 2009 People of Color Retreat is designed to offer and support a practical introduction to insight meditation (vipassana). Meditation embodies the essence and wisdom of the teachings of the Buddha and has been the foundation of Buddhist teachings for 2,500 years. It is a simple and direct practice. Meditation is extraordinary in its simplicity, its lack of dogma and, above all, its results. This path to self-awareness can be successfully applied by anyone to their everyday lives. The ancient and profound teachings of interconnectedness and compassion are the foundations of spiritual awareness.

The retreat is based on the intensive training retreats that are traditionally the heart of Buddhist practice. The daily schedule, conducted in silence, is comprised of group sitting periods alternating with walking meditation outdoors. There are group interviews with the teachers and a daily discourse from the teachings of the Buddha. In addition, there will be opportunities for optional group hikes and mindful movement to allow practitioners to fully experience Vallecitos' beautiful natural setting, and to support physical joy and ease. "Gourmet" vegetarian meals add to the special nature of this retreat. To cultivate the meditation process, please note that complete silence is maintained at all times throughout the retreat, except during meditation practice interviews and the talks by the teachers, which may be followed by a communal conversation.

This retreat continues the ground-breaking tradition established at Vallecitos over the past decade. People of color come to the mountains, the forest and the river not to conference, network, analyze or plan, but to practice one of the world's oldest and wisest contemplative traditions. For some, the retreat may be the first extended period of meditation practice and practicing silence. No previous meditation experience is required to participate and the retreat is suitable for individuals at all levels of practice.



Registration & Cost

The retreat is offered on a sliding scale basis of \$250-\$500. Deferred payment plans are available. There are limited full tuition scholarships for New Mexico Women of Color. Visit www.vallecitos.org to register online or contact Leigh Lauck at refuge@vallecitos.org / (575) 751-9613 to reserve your space.

Cancellations. Late cancellations are costly and mean that others cannot attend the retreat. If you cancel 45 or more days prior to the retreat we charge a \$50 processing fee. If you cancel less than 45 days before the retreat, you will be responsible for half of your retreat fees. Cancellations within 72 hours forfeit all fees (except in the case of a bona fide emergency). Fees from cancellations will go into our scholarship fund.

About the Teachers

Mushim Ikeda-Nash is a meditation teacher, community peace activist, writer, diversity facilitator, and mother of a 20-year-old son. She has done both monastic and lay Zen Buddhist practice over the past twenty years, in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and S. Korea. Her poetry, fiction and essays have been published widely in journals and anthologies such as the *Shambhala Sun* and *Innovative Buddhist Women: Swimming Against the Stream*. Mushim was coeditor of *Making the Invisible Visible: Healing Racism in Our Buddhist Communities*. Her work has been featured in two documentary films, *Between the Lines: Asian American Women Poets* and *Acting on Faith: Women and the New Religious Activism in America*, a recent documentary presenting portraits of three women activists of minority faiths in the U.S. A longtime volunteer in the Oakland public schools, Mushim is also a core teacher and center coordinator for the East Bay Meditation Center in downtown Oakland.

Ven. Suhita Dharma, Mahathero (called "Bhante" by his students), is a well-known senior Buddhist bhikkhu ordained in the three Buddhist lineages: Mahayana, Theravada, and Varjayana. He is the first African American to be ordained a Buddhist monk; he was ordained by the late Ven. Thich Thien An, the first Vietnamese Buddhist master to come to Los Angeles. Bhante has been traveling to Mexico recently on a pilgrimage to pay respects to the ancient deities of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, praying to ask permission for the establishment of a Buddhist center in Mexico at the request of the Mayans, Yaquis, Tarahumaras, Pimas, and Aztecs and to meet with the chief shamans in those traditions. A longtime social justice activist and social worker, Bhante began working with Indo-Chinese refugees entering the U.S. in 1975 and has since worked with homeless persons, people with HIV-AIDS, and ex-offenders. Bhante teaches compassion meditation for everyday life and practice for those who are working with people in different communities, emphasizing a one-one-one approach as well as introducing students to the practice of the Kalyanamitta (spiritual friend) and helping those who are within the sea of samsaric suffering.

About Vallecitos

The Vallecitos Mountain Refuge is a magical 135-acre wildlife refuge and mountain sanctuary located eleven miles from paved road, surrounded by thousands of acres of ancient forest, lush alpine meadows, abundant wildlife, mountain lakes and the Vallecitos River running through it. Rustic, comfortable accommodations are in our casitas (solar cabins), yurts and cabin tents. Meals are organic, gourmet vegetarian. Visit Vallecitos online at www.vallecitos.org.

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