

Dear Napa Valley Meditation Group,

I want to let everyone in the sangha know that we have been invited to join Rik Center in his annual trek to the Abhayagiri Monastery near Ukiah on August 9, 2014. I have attended this day long experience for the past two years and count it among the most educational days of my



life. The monastery is a place where monks live and study the dharma, following more than a hundred precepts. They own nothing but their robes and bowls. They are not allowed to touch money, and can only eat food that is given to them, and are celibate, to name a few of their renunciations. They spend their time in meditation, study of the dharma, and community, the three refuges. In the Thai Forrest tradition, they believe in carrying on without modernization, so many rituals are followed as they

have been over centuries. For lay people, it is a wonderful opportunity to experience the roots of many of the teachings we follow. Ajahn Chah is a founding teacher in this tradition, he was the teacher of Jack Kornfield and many others.

The day will start early. We will carpool from Napa. The drive is about two hours. Everyone should plan to bring a vegetarian dish to offer, and we will collect a group dana. We will convene with Ajahn Pasanno and the monks when we arrive, and prepare the food for everyone to eat. Last year there were about forty people there. We eat and enjoy a nice meal outside. Ajahn Pasanno will speak with us in the temple and offer the taking of the five precepts for lay people. Then there will be an opportunity to walk on the land. They live in the forest on over fifty acres. Then there will be an afternoon tea and opportunity for question and answers. Rik is bringing a group of people from the Mindfulness Care Center (MCC) in San Francisco. If you would like more info, you can go to MCC's website (<http://mindfulnesscare.org>) or you can go the Abhayagiri website (www.abhayagiri.org), or you are welcome to speak with me.



I will be looking forward to attending this trip. One of the most striking impressions I had of observing the monks in their monastery, was of how delightful they are, interested and engaged in the moment and the people around them. If you were able to attend the talk with Ayya Santachitta and Ayya Anandabhodi at our Sangha in the spring, you probably observed some of that quality in them. They are in the same tradition, instituting a path for women monastics.

I hope to see you there.

Best regards,
Sandra Meyer
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