

Kevala Retreat Newsletter May 8, 2020



Dear Friends,

We're thinking of you as our global journey into the unknown continues, and as we learn with ever greater acuity how to bring our hearts and minds to rest in uncertainty. We miss seeing you here at Kevala, and hope a time comes soon when we will welcome you back. Meanwhile, the herd is reveling in the freedom to explore all of the valley, and the birdsong is in full, raucous swing. Santikaro and Jo Marie continue their daily work and practice, as the only human inhabitants of the valley. Jo has returned to a part time nursing job to round out the finances. Santi has more time to edit and translate, and is replacing much of his travel with on-line teaching. Scroll down for the details of an upcoming on-line retreat. We've also had some down time to get the new website off the ground. It can be [found here](#).

a note from Santi...

Living with COVID-19 means there's no going back to "normal," which is a lot like "self" -- a seeming reality that we can never actually recapture. Buddhism has always taught us to live with the inherent risks and dangers of sentient existence, classically expressed in terms of aging, illness, loss, and death. Nobody can escape these natural manifestations of change. Yet, how many of us keep trying? Living with C19 is a challenge to be awake (Buddha) within this reality, to understand the natural truths (Dhamma) of this moment in our history, and to share in the commonality of all fragile, sensitive beings (Sangha). These are our refuges, in life and in death, in sickness and in health. By taking harbor in them we tame the forces of greed, anger, fear, and confusion.

from Dhamma teacher and wise friend, Amita Schmidt:

New Leadership

You might wonder after a pandemic, "Who is going to lead?" A president? The millennials? Wise elders? Philanthropists? Corporations? Criminals?

Instead of "who," wonder "what?" What in me is going to lead? Fear? Worry? Selfing? Pushing? Controlling? Thoughts? Emotions?

This is a time for new leadership. Lead with your inner stability. Lead with your quiet, empty, aware nature. Lead with stillness, wisdom, and connectivity. Lead with the absence of "you."

The Buddha insisted, "I have stopped, why don't you?"
And Psalm 46:10 invites, "Be still and know that I am God."

Stop. Listen. Experiment with social distancing from the streaming device between your ears. Wash your hands of the insatiable push to do more.

Simply stop, be still, and effortlessly rest in the core of your inner being. Each day, surrender to your inner being, and listen. It will tell you everything you need to know.

Follow the quiet, away from fear. Follow the simplicity, away from complexity. Your mind will lead you into a maze of illusion. Remember your unborn nature. When you come out of quarantine, leave the matrix of "I" behind. Then, only awareness remains. Awareness is always leading, not you.

Expect no one to lead. Let your steadfast inner stillness lead.
-- Amita Schmidt www.amitaschmidt.com

On Line Retreats, May 16-22 & June 4-7

Some of Santikaro's teaching is being offered on-line. In place of the May Cloud Mountain retreat, and the June Insight Chicago retreats, at-home versions will be offered. [Details may be found here](#) if you would like to participate from where you are.

Matching Fund Opportunity

A good friend of Kevala Retreat, who has asked to remain anonymous, is offering a \$1500 matching fund opportunity for Kevala Retreat. With retreatants staying at home, and Santikaro's travel and teaching schedule on hold, finances are somewhat less certain for Kevala. We know the needs are great and varied at this time, and urge you to contribute wherever it is most needed. If you have the means and inclination, please also keep Kevala and your other Dhamma centers in mind. To participate in the matching fundraiser for Kevala, [please follow this link](#). Please note "Matching Funds" on your check or Paypal comment section. All funds up to \$1500 will be matched.

We send you Much Metta in this time of Great Hearted Practice.
Jo Marie & Santikaro