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## Renowned Buddhist monk to lead Rockport retreat

BY GAIL McCARTHY - STAFF WRITER

A teacher in demand around the globe will conduct his second Buddhist retreat in one corner of Cape Ann next month.

The Venerable Brian Smith, a renowned Tibetan Buddhist monk, along with Lindsay Crouse, a Hollywood actress and lifelong Annisquam summer resident, will lead the workshop from Aug. 21 to 27 at the Windhover Performing Arts center in Rockport's Pigeon Cove.

Compassion will be the subject of this second retreat, titled "Meditations On Compassion: Developing The Good Heart." People can attend for the week, the weekend, or by the day. Evening classes will be by donation only.

"Last year, I created the retreat at Windhover because I wanted to bring Lama Brian to Cape Ann, the place I love most in the world," Crouse said. "I was certain that people here would respond to this warm, witty and wonderful teacher. I was also sure that the teachings he was imparting would be vital to everyone."

People did respond, and Crouse and Smith decided to make it a yearly tradition.

Jane Deering, owner of a local art gallery and a Boston gallery, who comes from a Catholic background, attended last year knowing little about Buddhism.

She described her experience as restful, restorative and helpful in striving to live a life that is calmer.

"Both Brian Smith and Lindsay acknowledged that we're all coming from different religions, studies, beliefs and positions on life, and the intent was not to convert anyone," Deering said. "They would say, 'Take what you wish from these days and teachings. Take what is useful to you' – and they were funny."



Brian Smith, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, and Lindsay Crouse, right, a Hollywood actress and Annisquam summer resident, will lead a Buddhist workshop in August at Rockport's Pigeon Cove.

She described the handmade cabin in which she stayed as "blissful" and the grounds as "enchanted."

Crouse said this year's retreat is tackling the concept of compassion because it is key to each individual's happiness.

"Every spiritual discipline says that happiness depends on thinking of others first – the golden rule," she said. "Our problem is that we have a self – centered nature."

"So when the heat comes down, we can't expect compassion to spontaneously arise. We need to train to develop the warm heart. This practice will be the subject of the retreat," she said.

A published Sanskrit scholar, Smith served as professor of comparative religion at Columbia University in New York and professor emeritus of the same subject at the University of California at Riverside.

"But what makes Lama Brian a teacher of such extraordinary skill is not just his weighty credentials, but his warmth, his humor and his tremendous enthusiasm," Crouse said. "He is now much in demand, teaching all over the world and booked years in advance."

***"These practices are beneficial no matter what religion you may follow. Or if you don't have a religion, it raises our level of spirituality." Elizabeth Enfield***

We are lucky to have this week with him. He is fun, exciting and unforgettable."

Elizabeth Enfield, a Gloucester resident who attended last year's retreat, will be back this year.

"Spending a week last August was special in that it focused on giving compassion and extending love," Enfield said. "These teachings are enhanced whether we were doing a yoga workshop in the morning or meditating during the morning, afternoon and evening program."

Last year's retreat was a healing experience for Enfield, who, like many baby boomers, was helping to care for an aging parent.

"When we began a yoga workout, the teacher asked us to envision someone to whom we would visualize giving loving thoughts. Christian teachings ask you to do the same thing," she said. "These practices are beneficial no matter what religion you may follow. Or if you don't have a religion, it raises our level of spirituality."

Participants can attend for an evening, a day, the weekend or the week. Evening classes are free, though donations are welcomed. There is a sliding scale of charges for other sessions.

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More information is available by calling 978-282-4996 or 310-573-6288 or emailing [Windretreat@earthlink.net](mailto:Windretreat@earthlink.net).