



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, December 31, 2007**

## **ZEN BRAIN, SELFLESS INSIGHT**

*Santa Fe, New Mexico*—There has been a dramatic increase in research and scholarship concerning Buddhism and neuroscience with the recent publication of several recent books including James Austin’s *Zen Brain Reflections* (2006, MIT Press), B. Alan Wallace’s *Contemplative Science* (2007, Columbia University Press), Daniel Siegel’s *The Mindful Brain* (2007, W.W. Norton), Sharon Begley’s *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain* (2007, Ballantine), and Richard Davidson’s and Anne Harrington’s *Visions of Compassion* (2002, Oxford University Press).

The Upaya Institute and Zen Center will explore this growing field of research, Wednesday, January 16 through Sunday, January 20, 2008, at the “Zen Brain, Selfless Insight” retreat. Scientists and scholars at the retreat hope to facilitate greater understanding of relevant neuroscientific research on the brain.

The format of “Zen Brain, Selfless Insight” will include meditation practice each day, interspersed with intensive discussions led by five scientists and scholars, each of whom have a long-term Zen practice, with Upaya Zen Center residents and 70 Zen practitioners. This retreat is a Upaya Institute/Zen Center and Mind and Life Institute collaboration.

The results of this important program will be made available in spring 2008. In June 2008, the scientists from “Zen Brain, Selfless Insight” will do a major presentation of the findings at Mind and Life’s Summer Research Institute at the Garrison Institute in Garrison, New York.

“Zen Brain, Selfless Insight” will take place at Upaya’s beautiful Santa Fe campus nestled in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.



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## Zen Brain, Selfless Insight Faculty



### **Joan Halifax Roshi, Ph.D.**

Joan Halifax Roshi is a Buddhist teacher, Zen priest, anthropologist, and author. She is Founder, Abbot, and Head Teacher of Upaya Zen Center, a Buddhist monastery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She received her Ph.D in medical anthropology in 1973. She has lectured on the subject of death and dying at many academic institutions, including Harvard Divinity School and Harvard Medical School, Georgetown Medical School, University of Virginia Medical School, Duke University Medical School, University of Connecticut Medical School, among many others. She received a National Science Foundation Fellowship in Visual Anthropology, and was an Honorary Research Fellow in Medical Ethnobotany at Harvard University. A Founding Teacher of the Zen Peacemaker Order, her work and practice for more than three decades has focused on applied Buddhism. Her books include: *The Human Encounter with Death* (with Stanislav Grof); *Shamanic Voices*; *Shaman: The Wounded Healer*; *The Fruitful Darkness*; *Simplicity in the Complex: A Buddhist Life in America*; *Being with Dying*; and *Wisdom Beyond Wisdom* (with Kazuaki Tanashashi).



### **Alfred W. Kaszniak, Ph.D.**

Al Kaszniak, received his Ph.D. in clinical and developmental psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1976, and completed an internship in clinical neuropsychology at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. He is currently Head of the Department of Psychology, Director of Clinical Neuropsychology, Director of the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium Education Core, and a professor in the departments of psychology, neurology, and psychiatry at The University of Arizona. His work has focused on the neuropsychology of Alzheimer's disease and other age-related neurological disorders, memory self-monitoring, the biological bases of emotion, and emotion response and regulation in long-term Zen and Vipassana meditators. His 2006 paper (co-authored with Lis Nielsen) in the journal *Emotion* is entitled, *Awareness of subtle emotional feelings: A comparison of long-term meditators and non-meditators*.



### **James H. Austin, M.D.**

James Austin has spent most of his years as an academic neurologist, first at the University of Oregon Medical School and later at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. He is currently Clinical Professor of Neurology at University of Missouri Health Sciences Center. Dr. Austin's cultural background includes the first sabbatical spent in New Delhi, India; and the second spent in Kyoto, Japan, where he began Zen meditation training with an English-speaking Zen master, Kobori-Roshi, in 1974. He has a keen interest in the experimental designs and findings of investigators who are studying meditation and related states of consciousness. His early research background includes publications in the areas of clinical neurology, neuropathology, neurochemistry and neuropharmacology. Dr. Austin is the author of more than 140 professional publications, including three books: *Zen and the Brain: Toward and Understanding of Meditation an Consciousness - Chase, Chance, and Creativity: The Lucky Art of Novelty*; and most recently *Zen-Brain Reflections* His forthcoming book is entitled, *Zen Brain, Selfless Insight*.

**Neil D. Theise, M.D.**

Neil Theise is a diagnostic liver pathologist and adult stem cell researcher in New York City, where he is Professor of Pathology and of Medicine at the Beth Israel Medical Center of Albert Einstein College of Medicine. His research revised understandings of human liver microanatomy, which, in turn, led directly to identification of possible liver stem cell niches and the marrow-to-liver regeneration pathway. He is considered a pioneer of multi-organ adult stem cell plasticity and has published on that topic in *Science*, *Nature*, and *Cell*. Current laboratory investigations focus on nerve-stem cell interactions in human livers, melatonin-related physiology of human liver stem cell and regenerative processes, and aspects of human liver stem cell activation in acute, fulminant hepatic failure. His 2004 article in *Tricycle* magazine is entitled, *From the Bottom Up: Is science rewriting emptiness with the emerging field of complexity theory? What Buddhists can learn from ants, atoms, and physics*.

**Jason Buhle, B.A.**

Jason Buhle is a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at Columbia University in New York, conducting functional brain imaging research within the Social/Cognitive/Affective Neuroscience Unit of Columbia University. He is the recipient of a 2005 Francisco J. Varela Memorial Grant from the Mind and Life Institute, to study attention and emotion regulation in advanced Zen meditators. His 2006 paper (co-authored with Dr. A. Raz) in the journal *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* is entitled, *Typologies of attentional networks*, and his presentation at the 2007 annual meeting of the *Cognitive Neuroscience Society* was entitled *Expert meditators show enhanced vigilance, alerting and conflict resolution*.

The Upaya Institute and Zen Center is a residential Buddhist practice and social community serving many people through retreats and social action projects. Upaya's vision focuses on the integration of practice and social action, bringing together wisdom and compassion.



**IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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