

THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE
"... in the footprint of the Buddha..."
Samatha/Concentration Retreat for Experienced Students
Teacher: Marcia Rose
November 8 - 12, 2020
This is an Online/At Home Dana Retreat

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

This Mountain Hermitage online/at home retreat offers a unique and supportive space of solitude and silence for qualified individuals who wish to undertake a period of intensive meditation practice. This five day online/at home *Samatha/Concentration* retreat is for experienced *Dhamma* students (see below). Guidance will be offered for the development and nurturing of deep concentration in the lineage of Burmese meditation master Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE PRACTITIONERS:

Adherence to the ethical guidelines of the Five Precepts (see below).

A commitment to use all activities of the day as opportunities for practice.

Maintenance of silence by refraining from verbal and written communication as much as possible depending on your home living situation.

A commitment to being fully engaged at this Mountain Hermitage online/at home retreat.

Participation in small group and one-on-one practice meetings as set up by the teacher. Marcia will communicate with you via email the day before the retreat begins with the practice meeting schedule.

Practitioners must have sat a minimum of 3 week-long retreats with a recognized Buddhist teacher and/or a longer period of intensive practice with a recognized teacher.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

We ask that you abide by the five traditional Buddhist precepts for lay practitioners while during your participation in this online/at home Mountain Hermitage retreat.

1. I undertake the training to refrain from harming living creatures. I undertake the training to practice compassionate action.
2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking that which is not given. I undertake the training to practice contentment.
3. I undertake the training to refrain from sexual activity. I undertake the training to practice responsibility in all my relationships.
4. I undertake the training to refrain from harmful speech. I undertake the training to practice noble silence.
5. I undertake the training to refrain from the use of intoxicants. I undertake the training to care for my body and my mind.

If you are interested in taking the eight traditional precepts for lay people (the above plus three more) while practicing during this retreat, please let us know before the retreat.

NOBLE SILENCE:

After our Pre-retreat Zoom Technicalities Meeting, you will enter the silent space of the intensive retreat environment. Yogis are asked not to read, write, or keep a journal – short notes for the practice meetings can be helpful. Please refer to the Online Retreat Guidelines for more information on how to navigate an online/at home retreat.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD:

The experience of participating in an online/at home *Mountain Hermitage* retreat is a rare opportunity. In support of this, all personal and business obligations should be taken care of prior to the start of the retreat, so that communication with the outside world can be kept to an absolute minimum. **We ask that retreatants refrain from the use of telephones, cell phones, computers, and from sending or receiving e-mail or text messages EXCEPT for what is necessary to do an Online retreat!** However, given the nature of this *Five-Day Online/At Home Samatha/Concentration Retreat*, exceptional circumstances may arise when non-retreat related communication is necessary. In this case, please contact the Chris Clifford the Retreat Manager. Even in those times, please remember that wise restraint is an integral part of practice. Please refer to the Online Retreat Guidelines for more information on how to navigate an online/at home retreat.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The general retreat schedule will consist of group events such as Dhamma talks, small group practice meetings, question and answer sessions, guided sits plus a suggested schedule of sitting and walking practice. The time frame for this retreat will be U.S. Mountain Standard Time (MST.) Please check the related where you will be living during this online/at home retreat. **All instructions, guided sits, reflections, Dhamma Talks and Q&A sessions will be recorded and available during this 5 day retreat.**

7:00 a.m.	Group sit and <i>Metta</i> chant
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Group sit, Instructions or guided sit or short Dhamma reflection
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Sit & Walk alternate hours - Small group and one-on-one practice meetings as scheduled.
1:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Sit & Walk alternate hours
5:30 p.m.	Light supper or Tea
6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Mindful stretching or Sit & walk
7:00 p.m.	Refuges & Precepts, Dhamma talk, or Q & A as scheduled
8:15 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.	Walk or sit

DANA

Dana, an ancient Pali word meaning *generosity, giving, or gift*, is central to the 2,600-year-old tradition of Buddhism. The teachings of the Buddha have been offered freely since the time of the Buddha. There was and is no way to put a price on the teachings of the truth - they are valuable beyond any fee one could set.

The early teachers received no payment for their instruction. In Buddhist countries, traditionally, it has always been understood that the lay community, through their voluntary generosity (their *Dana*), provide physical support - the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine - for the monks and nuns. In turn they were/are offered guidance and teachings in their own practice by this monastic sangha. This practice of *Dana* has been a very significant pillar in keeping the *Dhamma* (teachings) alive. The generosity of the laity towards the practical support of the monastic community since ancient times is what has kept the *Dhamma* spreading through the world.

Many western teachers have continued this tradition of offering the teachings freely. In our culture, where no real training exists in living generously, it is a new practice for us in both offering and receiving the *Dhamma*.

Dana is not only a practical matter; it also plays a crucial role in the spiritual life of a *Dhamma* practitioner. Generosity is the first of the ten *Paramis*, or qualities of character, to be perfected in spiritual life. The very act of giving is of immeasurable benefit to the giver, for it opens the heart, lessens self-absorption, and serves the well-being of others.

Marcia Rose (teacher) is offering this retreat as a **Dana Retreat**. This means that The Mountain Hermitage is not charging any fees for this retreat. The teacher offers the *Buddha Dhamma* without any set fee, and depends on the generosity of students for the support of her daily life needs. Giving to the teacher, from the heart, whatever feels appropriate, is the practice of *Dana*. It will also be possible to offer *Dana* to The Mountain Hermitage to help cover the administrative and technical costs of offering this online retreat.

HOW TO MAKE AN OFFERING: At the end of the retreat, you can mail us a check with a piece of paper explaining how you would like your *Dana* amount applied. Or you can use our online donation site, Network For Good. *The Mountain Hermitage* is 501(c)(iii) tax-deductible charitable organization. All *Dana* checks made out to *The Mountain Hermitage* are tax deductible. More information on this will be given later.

MEDICAL ISSUES:

All participants must be mentally stable and physically able to care for themselves. Everyone must have health insurance or be able to cover his/her own expenses in case of illness or medical emergencies. Any special needs must be discussed with *The Mountain Hermitage* Office Manager and the Retreat Manager and agreed to in advance. Given the length of this online retreat and the possibility of a participant becoming ill, we recommend that retreatants have appropriate remedies at home to treat a variety of non-urgent common illnesses. Should medical needs or emergencies arise, the Retreat Manager can be consulted for advice re: what to do and must be communicated with if there is a need to leave the retreat for a medical emergency.