

**THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE**  
**Recognizing Natural Awareness Online Retreat**  
***with Greg Scharf - August 13-18, 2021***

The conditions of our home life vary individually and we understand that this will affect the way that we enter into a period of retreat. How much available time we have, whether we are living alone or with others, the degree to which we are able to immerse in silence, as well as responsibilities we may have for others, will all affect the form our retreat takes.

We would like this retreat to support as wide a range of conditions as possible. In this regard, it is possible to take part in the retreat while living in seclusion and solitude, and equally possible to do it while living with one's family and taking care of daily responsibilities. Please do your best to enter as fully into the retreat as your home life will allow.

We will offer a suggested daily schedule, so that those who are able can engage in continuity of practice for the whole day. And, those whose lives at home involve duties & responsibilities that must be attended to can attend while participating in just the teacher-led sessions.

**PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

The Mountain Hermitage offers a uniquely supportive space of solitude and silence for qualified individuals who wish to undertake longer periods of intensive meditation practice. Meditation instruction for this five day retreat will focus on Vipassana practice. The retreat is open to beginners and experienced practitioners alike and will include meditation instruction, Dharma talks, practice meetings with the teacher, and optional mindful movement.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR 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 to the extent possible
- Sustained and continuous practice to the extent that this is possible
- Participation in scheduled practice discussions with the teacher

We invite anyone with a sincere interest in the Buddha Dhamma to join us for this retreat. You will need to complete an application for the retreat, and it will be reviewed by the teacher. Please be sure to fill out the application sections asking for any meditation and retreat experience, as this information will be helpful to the teacher. These retreats must have been led by a recognized teacher. Where applicable, include details of the retreats, including teachers' names, dates, location and length of the retreat.

**ETHICAL GUIDELINES:**

We ask that you abide by the five traditional Buddhist precepts for lay practitioners while at The Mountain Hermitage:

- 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 misconduct. 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.

### **NOBLE SILENCE:**

After our Pre-retreat Zoom Technicalities Meeting, you will enter the silent space of the intensive retreat environment. Yogis are strongly encouraged 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:**

A retreat offers a rare opportunity for silence and solitude. In support of this, we encourage you to take care of personal and business obligations prior to the start of the retreat. In this regard please limit communication with the outside world to a minimum. If possible, please refrain from the use of telephones, cell phones, computers, and from sending or receiving e-mail or text messages. Please remember that wise restraint is an integral part of practice.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The retreat schedule will consist of group events such as group sittings, Dhamma talks and individual practice periods in the four postures: sitting; standing; walking; and reclining. Retreatants are welcome to discuss their schedule with the teacher.

\*Teacher-led sessions are in **bold**. \*all times are MDT - mountain daylight time

6:45 a.m. Wake up

**7:15 a.m. Sitting meditation**

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

**9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Sitting Meditation with Instructions**

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Individual practice Small group practice meetings as scheduled

12:30 p.m. Mindful meal & daily activities

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Individual practice

**\*3:00 p.m. optional mindful movement with the teacher**

5:30 p.m. Mindful meal & daily activities

**7:15 p.m. Dhamma talk/Reflection (refuges/precepts are chanted before talks)**

8:15 - 10:00 p.m. Individual Practice

### **DANA**

Dana, an ancient Pali word meaning generosity, giving, or gift, is central to the 2,600-year-old tradition of Buddhism.

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The teachings of the Buddha are held to be beyond any price and have been offered freely since the time of the Buddha. This retreat is offered in that same spirit.

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. 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.

The Mountain Hermitage fees for this retreat only cover basic expenses and operating costs. The teacher(s) offer the Buddha Dhamma without any set fee, and depend on the generosity of students for the support of their daily life needs. Giving to the teacher, from the heart, whatever feels appropriate, is the practice of *Dana*. You may also wish to offer *Dana* to the staff, or to the Hermitage itself to support operating expenses or future scholarships.

**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.