

THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE
Day-Long Black & Indigenous People Of Color ONLINE Retreat
December 2, 2023

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.

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
- Sustained and continuous practice
- A commitment to being fully *in retreat*, with no outside activities

ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

We ask that you abide by the five traditional Buddhist precepts for lay practitioners while in 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.

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. 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 fee for this retreat only cover basic expenses and operating costs. The teachers offer the Buddha *Dhamma* without any set fee, and totally depend of 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: There are a couple of ways to offer Dana. Checks/money orders with US funds may be used. All Dana checks should be made out to The Mountain Hermitage. The Mountain Hermitage is 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charitable organization. All Dana offered to The Mountain Hermitage for use in supporting the teachers, scholarships & general expenses are tax deductible. Dana offered to staff is not. If you would like to use your credit card to offer Dana, please contact Kathy at hermitage@mountainhermitage.org