

HUNGRY GHOST RETREAT

PART ONE



‘BEING HUMAN’

5-DAY RECOVERY RETREAT

MONDAY 24 UNTIL FRIDAY 28 MARCH, 2014

New Life Foundation, Chiang Rai, Thailand

A Buddhist Oriented Approach : The Path of Recovery

There are many paths to and of recovery. Some are short term interventions, some are lifetime commitments. Here, is an approach to Buddhist recovery that is based on the following multidimensional practices.

Truth, Truthfulness and Commitment (*Sajja*) : pain is inevitable - suffering is optional. The truth of the way things really are; and our commitment to change.

Generosity (*Dana*) : the antidote to the selfishness of the 'addict self'. A generosity of heart and mind expressed in our thoughts, in our words and in our actions. Generosity gives rise to ethical living, to kindness, to the ability to forgive and to fellowship; and it supports our meditation practice.

Ethics (*Sila*) : the aspiration to live fearlessly, harmlessly and skilfully through the Five Precepts using these gifts to prevent relapse and to reduce the harm in our own life and within our communities.

Loving-kindness (*Metta*) : the regular practice of loving-kindness meditation to lift our self-esteem and promote our well-being, and the well-being of all those around us. We can in time expand our practice to include Compassion, Joy-Gladness and Equanimity.

Forgiveness (*Khama*) : the regular practice of forgiveness meditation to skilfully examine and let go of the past; healing our present and embracing our future - whatever it may hold.

Meditation & Mindfulness (*Sati*) : the practice of meditation of body, feelings and mind; and the cultivation of mindfulness to support & protect our recovery.

Admirable Friends & Fellowship (*Kalyāna-mittatā*) : we may join a support group or start our own. "Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the spiritual life."

It is important to note that we do not have to be 'a Buddhist' to cultivate any of these qualities; or to adapt or adopt any of the principles discussed, and meditation practices explored.

Recovering people of all faiths or none are welcome on this retreat.

What to expect 'on retreat' at New Life Foundation

This mindful recovery retreat is offered as an opportunity to experience a wholly Buddhist approach to recovery from all forms of addiction. This retreat is open to those new to recovery as well as those who have been on the path of recovery for a longer time. All are welcome to sit together to discover and explore alternative and complementary approaches to recovery that support our aspiration of total-abstinence.

For the period of the retreat, retreatants are required to commit to Sila (the Five Precepts – the ethical training guidelines for laypeople)

- To refrain from harming any living being
- To refrain from taking what is not offered
- To refrain from sexual and sensual misconduct
- To refrain from false speech (including idle gossip, harsh and divisive speech)
- To refrain from taking substances which disturb the balance of the mind

Accommodation is based on single occupancy of en-suite bedrooms (unless the retreat is oversubscribed in which case some shared accommodation may be offered).

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food will be provided (please let us know if you have any other special dietary requirements).

Coffee will **not** be served during the retreat. You are asked to respect this requirement.

Participants will be encouraged to minimise their use of telephones and the internet throughout the period of the retreat.

The community will be silent from 21h30 until 09h00 each day including a silent breakfast. There will be one completely silent day during the retreat.

Each day will start at 06:30 with a morning reading and a 30-minute silent meditation. Throughout each day there will be talks and discussions; and most importantly plenty of opportunity to practice sitting, walking and standing meditation. The essential practices of **Loving-kindness** and **Forgiveness** - *for healing our hearts and minds in recovery* - will be central to each day's practice.

There will be an opportunity each evening for a volunteer to lead a Buddhist-oriented 'Sit-and-Share' recovery meeting (see www.5th-precept.org for more details).

Healing the Heart-Mind in Recovery

Our retreat will include a focused, systematic, retrospective and progressive investigation of self-views - *through the traditional practices of Loving-kindness and Forgiveness* – supporting the letting-go of hatred and ill-will for ourselves and others. We will learn to incline our minds towards kindness... there is no finer mindfulness!



Each retreatant is given a personal set of Tibetan Prayer Flags. One side of each flag is decorated with wood block prints of auspicious mantras, syllables and prayers - the other side is blank.

* Throughout the 5-days, as we progress through our retreat, we will write the names - *starting with our own* - of all the many people that we want to send the blessings of loving-kindness and compassion to on our personal prayer-flags. We may also write our own personal prayers and wishes.

* We will also write the names - *starting with our own* - of the people from whom we might want to ask for forgiveness.

* And lastly, we will write the names - *starting with our own name* - of all of the people that we may wish to forgive.

The retreat's teacher will be Vince Cullen; an ex-alcoholic who has been associated with the **Wat Thamkrabok** monastery in Thailand and Buddhist-oriented drug and alcohol recovery since 1998. Vince is a charter member of the **Buddhist Recovery Network** and founded the **Fifth Precept Sangha** meditation-for-recovery group in West Berkshire in 2009. Vince is currently the **Buddhist Prison Chaplain** at Coldingley & Send in Surrey, UK.

Fees: Residents 1000 THB** / Volunteers 2000 THB** / Guests 4000 THB**

** *plus optional Dana*

For more details about the content and costs of this retreat (including booking info) please visit the New Life Foundation website : **www.NewLifeThaiFoundation.com**