

New Moon Ceremony

Can I trust you? If I told you about something secretive . . . could you respect that and keep my secret? And maybe, if you are bold and curious enough, you might even join us at our next ceremonial meeting? If this sounds like something you can do then stay and listen. If not I politely ask you to move on. Perhaps encounter another story in this place . . .

Before we can begin I need you to repeat a promise with me. It is crucial for our ceremony. If at any point you are unable to continue with the promise or listening to what I'm about to share, that is alright. Please quietly remove yourself and enjoy the rest of your time here.

Please place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your heart. We will breathe in 7 times together. Focus on your breath. In and out. Try to focus on pushing the air down into your stomach. Feel the rhythm in combination with your heartbeat. Focus on how they merge and how they create their own rhythms. Focus on this internal music you create. When you have completed 7 breaths in and out. Or as many as you need to bring you to this present moment. This moment of promise.

Please repeat after me.

I am proud of my nude, sensual body.

I am not an object but a vibrant being.

I am celebrating my body by sharing it with others.

I will not objectify others.

I will not make others objects of desire.

I will recognize, appreciate and love them and their desires.

I will celebrate what others share.

Like I said before, keep your promise and we are good. If at any time you cannot, please quietly remove yourself and have a nice day.

Let me tell you a story . . .

We have a gathering every New Moon. We decided full moons are already so over hyped –

plenty of parties, ceremonies and overall general emphasis. We wanted to position ourselves away from that time of the year. When the moon is completely gone, absent, hidden in the night sky – we come and perform our own sensual-style nude temple ritual. We come as a response to the proclaimed purity of this place – the idea of abstinence and the refusal to recognize a sensual/sexual animalistic reality of our existence. There is a biological, evolutionary reaction, attraction toward sexuality that forms relationships – even with a sense of divine. It is not unaligned with Buddhism, only trying to realign other repressed realities. But in order to not disrespect, disturb or disrupt the monks practice (and for fear of other repercussions) our group keeps the ritual to the darkest day, at the darkest time of night. Not just for the secrecy of darkness but as a way to embrace some darkness or all of it. Reclaiming the night and the dark in a positive feminine 'light'.

This ceremony is mostly inclusive of anyone - practitioners are Buddhist, Animists, Daoist, Spiritual or non-denominational people from all over the world, as well as, local Thai people. We are women, trans and gender non-conforming.

Cis-men, gay or straight, are only allowed to join under specific conditions. As certain restrictions limit female expression during the day, so should these restrictions be placed on men, sadly just during this night, once in a moon cycle. During the ceremony, men who wish to join must observe and practice individually, at a distance of 5 meters, no less. This is to ensure a safe and sacred space around our nude bodies. Men must also be modestly dressed to ensure the conditions for concentration – no masculine distractions. Men must be silent, and meditate peacefully, reflecting on why this separation and exclusion is necessary. Cell phones will be collected. Just cannot trust men. . .

Enough about men.

Our ceremony begins at the temple entrance. We meet, greet and check-in with each other. We start late but we also take our time. We do that so anyone, a little later than us, can still find others at the entrance and not be alone when they begin their participation. We've been doing it so long we forgot if we ever had permission or not . . . but there are some bad-ass ladies standing watch at the entrance to make sure everyone is safe anyway. Everyone has their own unique way to participate and we encourage a diversity of expression when celebrating together. We only maintain that they follow our promise and maintain a shared, safe and sacred space.

The ceremony initiates with our promise to each other, spoken out loud as we begin to enter the temple grounds. This promise echos at the entrance long after the final groups continue the long and multi-paced procession to the temple stairs. At the temple stairs and as we ascend, we begin to shed our clothing, covering the concrete steps in a wide assortment of fashions. We get as nude as we feel we need. So do not worry if for your first time you are still slightly dressed or dressed dressed. . . I'm already assuming you are going to join us. Still a bit early for that! Where was I . . . Yes, you need not feel pressured to get as nude or expressive or as involved as others. Anyway, the idea is that by the time we reach the last few steps, we have opened ourselves up to the elements, nature and each other.

If we are many we will create a large circle of radiant bodies around the Big Buddha statue and if few we will sit in smaller circles spaced around the 4 main points. We will face in toward the statue, and out away from it, in alternating cycles, timed by the chime of small bells. We look in to respect and recognize the Buddha but also look away, not in disrespect to the Buddha's image but in honor of our feminine divinity and looking back to nature and the world with recognition and respect. You may also choose to sit facing any which way you would like for whatever duration. We honor everyones individual practice and encourage you to learn from others as well. On that note actually . . . I think I will leave the rest of what happens during the ceremony up to mystery, so as not to spoil any more for you. And maybe you'll decide to join us on June 18th at midnight. Remember to keep the promise and share this secret only with those who will make the same promise as well. Thank you for being so trustworthy, I have a gift for you.