

Heart's Release in Song

Singing, ritual and meditation

About the retreat

This retreat takes a deep dive into Buddhist ritual practice, cultivating and expressing devotion through the medium of the voice, through music and song. The Dharma set to music and sung together in harmony can open our hearts and the Buddha's teachings can land more fully into our bodies and minds.

Singing can be a complete practice integrating body, speech and mind through melody and rhythm. Over the course of the week we will learn numerous songs expressive of the Dharma, expressive of gratitude and love for all that the Buddha has given us.

Dhiraka has written a number of songs for choir that are inspired by the poetry of Dudjom Rinpoche, the teachings of Padmasambhava and Dilgo Khyentse. These songs will flow through the heart of the retreat as we work up to a magnificent puja every evening when we will make these songs as offerings.

Each day will include several Sonic Sesshins including singing, drumming, sound baths and meditation. The retreat will be mostly held in silence apart from these sesshins and the evening pujas.

Please do come prepared to give yourself fully to the programme as each sesshin will build on the previous one as the week progresses and our voices grow stronger. The emphasis of the retreat is ritual and devotion, so come willing to step into the magic and mystery of this shared practice together.

No experience of singing is needed. We will start each session with warm up exercises which are great fun and get the body and the voice activated.

What can you expect from the programme?

A typical programme for the day will be as follows:

6:30 Rising Bell

7:00 Meditation – Two sessions (usually 45 mins and 30 mins)

8:45 Breakfast

10:30 Morning Sonic Sesshin

1pm Lunch

4:30 Afternoon Sonic Sesshin - Sound bath, drumming, and meditation

6pm Dinner

7:30 Evening Sonic Sesshin - Puja

What to bring with you

Loose comfortable clothes for meditation. Please do not bring instruments – everything we need will be provided.

About the retreat team

Dhiraka and Sraddhadharani are both experienced meditation and Dharma teachers and have been collaborating for several years as the Lotus Lights, singing Dhiraka's devotional songs to music. You can listen to the Lotus Lights [here](#).

Dhiraka has been practicing Buddhism since his student days and was ordained in 2005. He is fascinated by the 'problem' of teaching meditation - of communicating what is a very private practice and helping others to 'get it' when he can't 'see' directly the fruits of their efforts. It is a subtle art and one that he takes seriously, but does so with a lot of humour as well. He also teaches meditation in secular contexts.

Sraddhadharani first began practicing Buddhism in Manchester in the late '90's. She now lives in the Scottish Borders where her practice is supported by the beauty and peace of the surrounding landscape. She loves using ritual and ceremony as a way of bringing people together around shared values and experiences.