

The Here and Now Mountain

With Vajradarshini

About the retreat

Why are we not already enlightened? How did we come to be so painfully separated from reality? Buddhism doesn't offer many answers to this obvious question—but the Buddha's teaching on the fetters is one.

*Even if the veil of self is as thin as an eyelid,
it will blind us to the reality of things as they are."*

- Rumi

Enlightenment is the state of being awake. And the Ten Fetters are ten illusions or beliefs that keep us from waking up. The Buddha showed us how—like him—we can see through these illusions, breaking the fetters one by one.

We begin, as we must, with the first fetter: self-view. Seeing through this illusion is like untying our hands. It's the first step on the path to freedom.

But there's another way of looking at the fetters—one that tells the story of how the illusion of a separate self came into being in the first place. This story begins not with self-view, but with the tenth fetter: ignorance.

On this retreat, we'll explore the fetters in our own experience through reflection and insight inquiry—taking inspiration from the beautiful images of awakening offered by the Persian poet Rumi.

*"The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.
Don't go back to sleep.*

*You must ask for what you really want.
Don't go back to sleep.*

*People are going back and forth across the doorsill
where the two worlds touch.*

*The door is round and open.
Don't go back to sleep."*

- Rumi

Is there anything special I need to bring?

- Loose, comfortable clothes for meditation and gentle movement.
- Warm, waterproof clothes and walking shoes for exploring the landscape around Dhanakosa.

What can you expect from the programme?

The day starts with an 'open shrine room' and space to create your own early morning practice, whether that is sitting practice, walking outside, writing or simply being. Each day there'll be 3 shrine room sessions, morning, afternoon and evening, consisting of Dharma teaching, meditation, movement, reflection and some chance for discussion.

There will be periods of silence from the start of the retreat with 3 or 4 full days of silence in the middle of the retreat. Also an opportunity for short practice reviews during the retreat.

About the retreat team**Vajradarshini**

Vajradarshini is known for her down-to-earth approach to Dharma practice. She has a great love of people and her approach to leading retreats is to set up conditions where people feel at ease and able to truly be themselves, before diving deep into the Dharma. With nearly 40 years of Dharma practice behind her she draws widely on the Buddhist tradition and on contemporary art and culture, weaving them together to create engaging and enjoyable retreats. Find out more on her website [here](#).

Dhammasiri

Dhammasiri has had a deep love for the dharma since her early 20s, intrigued by the way the Buddha's teachings can shed light on this mystery called life. She enjoys study and reflection and in more recent years exploring playful ways of movement and body work as part of practice. Also - carrying out the bins at the end of a retreat! Having spent years as both a doctor and a mother her practice is rooted in the grittiness of everyday life.