

Men's Winter Retreat 2018

"Dark of the Year, Return of the Light"

About the Retreat

Smritiratna writes: "We begin this retreat just after the Winter Solstice, the darkest time of the year, when the short days begin to increase again, the nights drawing back as the daylight returns. Folk have been marking this special time for ages, bringing fire into the darkest time. For us, the light signifies not just faith in life returning, but faith in awareness prevailing over ignorance, humanity prevailing over inhumanity. This retreat is an opportunity to gather and affirm that faith in ritual, in shared communication and especially in silent meditation together."

Is there anything special I need to bring?

On the Saturday evening we'll hold a feast to celebrate the retreat theme. If you have a relevant poem, song or quotation, please bring it along to share. Also bring whatever you need for comfortable meditation - loose clothes for example. And bring a full set of waterproofs (jacket and trousers) and boots so you can roam about in the beautiful surroundings whatever the Scottish weather - often very cold and often wet at this time of year. So plenty of layers and thermal underwear would be a useful extra.

What can you expect from the programme?

The retreat day starts at 6.30am with a rising bell then a meditation at 7.00. There'll be up to six meditation sittings each day lasting about 40 minutes. Each day there'll also be one or two short explanatory talks and each evening will end with Buddhist devotional practice - puja or mantra.

There will be long periods of silence on the retreat so we can attend more fully to immediate experience. Saturday night until Thursday afternoon will be without conversation except for teachings and 1:1 practice reviews. Then we leave on the next day, Friday.

The retreat runs across 25th December but we'll not be celebrating Christmas as such. All through however our aim will be peace on earth and goodwill to all men - and countless other sentient beings!

About the retreat team

Smritiratna has meditated regularly for over thirty years and led nearly 200 retreats. He will be teaching with the help of Vidyaraja and Jinavamsa so that retreatants can receive regular mentoring through 1:1 practice reviews.