

Mindfulness and the Path to Freedom

About the retreat

For this retreat we will be exploring some of the core principles of Buddhism and meditation. In particular, how the Buddha's clarity on the human condition can bring more meaning, richness and purpose to our lives. The teaching will seek to keep things simple and direct, so practical and relevant to the challenges of modern life in the west.

Over the course of the retreat you will learn two main meditation practices – the mindfulness of breathing and the metta bhavana (loving kindness). These practices help us develop calm, positive and alert states of mind. You will also learn some practical tools, to help cope with states of anxiety, fear and stress.

Central to the Buddha's teachings is the importance of developing body awareness. During the retreat, we will be practising ways of becoming more embodied, both on the meditation cushion and in our everyday lives. Each day too we will practice Qi Gong / Tai Chi – a gentle and ancient form of movement. Time on retreat gives an ideal space to experience ourselves differently and bring new fresh perspectives to our lives.

With more awareness of our bodies, we can be more aware of our inner and outer experience. From this basis we will look at one or two famous teachings from the Buddhist tradition – and practice them - feeling what they are pointing towards in our own direct experience.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

Loose clothing suitable for meditation.

What can you expect from the programme?

For the first full day we will follow a lighter programme of activities to help people arrive and settle. From there on we will start the day with meditation, starting at 7.00am. In the mid-morning we will be exploring aspects of the Buddhist tradition, through a mixture of short talks, workshop sessions and meditation. We will also be doing some walking meditation and have at least one session of Qi Gong (very light exercise) per day. In the afternoon, there will be a period of free un-programmed time.

Amongst other things, in the evening we will have short talks. We will be introduced to chanting and have the opportunity to observe or participate in some simple Buddhist rituals. To help deepen meditation, there will be the opportunity to meet one-to-one with a member of the teaching team, to share how you are finding the practices.

There will be periods of silence on the retreat to support reflection. These will normally be overnight, but may also include substantial periods during the day.

About the retreat team

The retreat will be lead by experienced members of the Triratna Buddhist Order.