

ARUNA RATANAGIRI

Harnham Buddhist Monastery

RETREAT INFORMATION

This is an opportunity, for those who have some previous experience of meditation to refresh and deepen formal meditation practice in the company of spiritual friends. **To attend a retreat at Harnham Buddhist Monastery, you must have previously stayed at this monastery (as a guest or on retreat) or at another monastery in the lineage of Ajahn Chah.**

It is advisable to book early. We do, however, request that, **since space is limited you do not book unless you are reasonably certain that you can attend. It is also expected that you stay for the duration of the retreat and attend all sittings as instructed.** With this in mind please make travel arrangements that will enable you to arrive in time, by 5.00pm at the latest on the first day. There will be an introductory talk at 5.30pm.

Longer retreats normally end at the meal time on the last day (around midday). It is helpful if some people can stay for the tidy up session after the end of the retreat. Sometimes the teacher of the retreat may be available for general discussion after the meal on the last day. Weekend retreats may finish later in the day (around 5pm).

A few practical points: Please read carefully before booking a place on the retreat.

Accommodation

Kusala House is not a retreat centre *per se*. The retreats offered at Harnham take place within the context of an active Buddhist training monastery for men. However both women and men are welcome to come on retreat, stay as guests and visit the monastery. Retreatants are asked to be aware that there are limited resources and although we do attempt to meet people's needs we cannot undertake to provide for individual preferences. We cannot, for example, generally offer single room accommodation. Accommodation, in almost all cases, is shared and unfortunately it is unlikely that we will be able to grant a request for a single room.

Food

All food is vegetarian and generally vegan, (rarely a visitor to the monastery may bring a non vegetarian dish, in which case we will do our best to label it). We cannot guarantee to cater for specific dietary needs e.g. wheat or dairy intolerance. However, there is usually plenty of choice and we do offer at least one gluten free dish at the main meal.

Guests to the monastery are required to keep the Eight Precepts throughout their stay, which means not eating after midday (certain drinks and medicines are allowed). An exception can be made if you need to eat in the afternoon for medical reasons (please give details on the application form). PLEASE NOTE, bringing your own food is not permitted.

Booking

Places on the retreat are generally allocated in order of receipt of the booking form. Your place will be confirmed by email *. Please let us know of any cancellations **as soon as possible, so we can offer the place to someone else.** Booking a place on a retreat and then failing to inform us of a cancellation may mean that you will not be accepted for future retreats.

Three weeks before the retreat we will contact you again by email to ask you to reconfirm that you will be coming to the retreat. If you do not reconfirm than the place will be given to someone on the waiting list. (*If you do not have access to email, then we can make alternative arrangements for contacting you by phone.)

Contributions towards costs

No charge is made for the teaching of Dhamma or for staying at the monastery. There are of course significant costs incurred in running a retreat such as food expenses and accommodation costs such as heating, maintenance and insurance. The monastery's trustees hope that so as not to place a burden on monastery funds, retreats should be self financing. There will be an opportunity at the end of the retreat to

make a freewill donation if you are able to do so. Donations can also be made by bank transfer, online via ratanagiri.org.uk or by standing order.

Silence

Please remember that the retreat is **silent**. You are asked not to bring personal stereos or to use a mobile phone. Mobile phones must be turned off (or remove the SIM card if you use it as an alarm). You may bring a silent clock or watch. You may wish to inform relatives that they will be unable to contact you by mobile phone and to ensure that they have the monastery number in case of emergency: 01661881612.

Health and safety

In keeping with insurance policy requirements no heat producing personal electrical appliances may be used in Kusala House. There is a hair dryer available for use during your stay. It is permitted to use phone chargers if you need to do so before or after the retreat.

The Eight Precepts:

As with general stays at Harnham Monastery, those on retreat will be required to observe the following eight precepts during the retreat.

1. **Harmlessness** not intentionally taking the life of any living creature

2. **Trustworthiness** not taking anything that is not given

3. **Chastity** refraining from any sexual activity

4. **Right Speech** avoiding false or malicious speech. Meditation retreats at Harnham are held in silence, which means refraining from any talking unless absolutely necessary. This is to be observed very strictly.

5. **Sobriety** not taking any intoxicating drinks or drugs

6. **Renunciation** not eating after mid-day

7. **Restraint** not wearing make up, jewellery or immodest clothing; not playing radios, music or musical instruments

8. **Alertness** to refrain from over-indulgence in sleep

Suggestions on what to bring:

- Comfortable loose clothes suitable for meditation practice. We ask that you wear clothing that reflects a respect for modesty. Trousers, skirts, and dresses should cover the knees and be loose fitting. Tops should cover shoulders (not vest style). Facilities for washing and drying clothes are limited so bring sufficient clothes with you if possible.
- If possible, i.e. coming via your own transport, a duvet cover, sheet and pillow case or a sleeping bag (this helps cut down on laundry)
- Towel and toiletries

- Torch
- Thick socks (no shoes are worn inside)
- Walking shoes, outdoor clothing
- Umbrella
- Sun screen, insect repellent
- Alarm clock (non-tick) or watch
- Ear plugs!

For further information please contact:

Kath Jones
 Mobile: 07707621717
 e-mail: retreats@ratanagiri.org.uk
 Website: www.ratanagiri.org.uk

Aruna Ratanagiri
 Harnham Buddhist Monastery
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 Harnham
 Belsay
 Northumberland
 NE20 0HF

Directions

For up to date information please visit www.travelinenortheast.info

By Car

From Newcastle the monastery is a thirty minute drive on the A696. Go past the airport, through Ponteland and continue to Belsay. About one mile beyond Belsay, turn right following the sign to Harnham.

Parking: There is a car park adjacent to Kusala House for unloading, but it will be necessary for most cars to be parked in the monastery car park adjacent to Harnham lake for the duration of the retreat,

By Taxi

It is possible to take the Metro (Tyne and Wear Metro: 0191 232 5325) to the airport and from there to take a taxi. Two local taxi companies are:

Darras & Ponteland Taxis: (01661) 871 736
 Airport Taxis: (0191) 214 6969

By Bus.

Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery is situated in the hamlet of Harnham and there are few buses. Services between Newcastle and Harnham are run Peter Hogg Bus Service and Allans taxi (bus) from Monday to Saturday. There is no service on Sunday or Bank Holidays. Please note, it's necessary to request or signal the driver to stop when getting on or off the buses at Harnham. There is then a ten minute walk along the lane to the Monastery.

Allans taxi (minibus)

(Service 808: Newcastle – Otterburn)

Peter Hogg Bus Service

(Service 131: Newcastle - Jedburgh)