

Straight from the Heart

New Year's Retreat 2019

Taught by Venerable Ajahn Chandako
December 28, 2018 to January 2, 2019

Vimutti Buddhist Monastery
750 Paparata Road, Bombay, South Auckland

A Meditation Retreat

A meditation retreat is a rare opportunity to develop peace and self-reflection in a secluded and supportive environment. It is also an undertaking that requires some effort and self-discipline. Prior experience in meditation is helpful, although not essential. If you were raised a Buddhist, developing a meditation practice will deepen what it means to be a follower of the Buddha. If you are from a Western background or relatively new to Buddhism, then this is an opportunity to experience how the Dhamma can change your life for the better. This retreat will follow an intensive daily schedule consisting of instruction, sitting and walking meditation, morning and evening chanting and much peace.

Venerable Ajahn Chandako

Ajahn Chandako was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1990 in the Forest Tradition of Thailand. Born in 1962 in Minneapolis, United States, his interest in the teachings of the Buddha grew as he studied towards a BA degree in Religious Studies from Carleton College (1984). Following graduation, he began applying himself to training in meditation and subsequently went to Asia to find a monastery suitable for devoting himself fully to the practice. After training under Buddhists masters in the US and Asia for 20 years, Ajahn Chandako was invited to New Zealand in 2004 to begin Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, where he is currently the abbot.

Registration

To register you can contact Jill Best at jillbest9@gmail.com or call 021 260 3743
Please provide your name, address, email and phone number and emergency contact.

Dana

Dana means generosity, and it is an integral aspect of the path of Awakening. The Sangha of the Forest Tradition offer their teachings freely, and Vimutti Buddhist Monastery operates entirely on donations. This way of supporting the teachings allows you to create good kamma through expressing gratitude while simultaneously ensuring that others in the future will have similar opportunities to practise the Dhamma. A system of dana allows each individual to develop their capacity to be generous according to their own means. The best standard to follow is to note what other similar retreats charge and then give neither too much nor too little.

Sila

Sila, or ethical behavior, is an essential foundation for cultivating inner peace and wisdom. It creates a trusting atmosphere for opening the heart. For this retreat, all participants are expected to follow the eight training precepts:

- To refrain from killing living beings (including insects but not plants)
- To refrain from taking things that belong to someone else
- To refrain from all sexual activity
- To refrain from dishonest speech
- To refrain from consuming alcohol or recreational drugs
- To refrain from eating food after midday
- To refrain from entertaining distractions such as singing, dancing, listening to music and adorning the body. Please do not use make-up, perfumes or wear jewelry.
- To refrain from sleeping on luxurious beds

Silence

This retreat will be held in noble silence. This means we only speak when we are discussing the Dhamma together with the teacher or when we need help from a manager. Keeping silence helps our minds to settle down, assisting serenity, and creating an atmosphere that is supportive for all retreatants. If you share a dwelling, please do not chat with your roommate, and do not make phone calls unless it is an emergency.

Accommodation and Bedding

This is a semi-residential retreat, so some people will commute. If you wish to stay in the monastery, there may be some huts available, and it is also possible to stay in a tent or sleep in a dormitory. There are many beautiful tent sites available, however, people wishing to stay in a tent will need to provide their own. All retreatants will need to bring their own bedding.

Food

There will be two daily meals of breakfast and lunch. Food will be offered as a donation from others who wish to support your Dhamma practice. You are also welcome to bring food to share, but there will be little time for cooking. In the evening, dark chocolate, candied ginger and cheese are allowable, and we ask you to provide this yourself. If you have a medical problem which requires a special diet or any other food supplements, please bring the items you need.

Health

If you have a serious medical condition or any special dietary requirements, please let us know beforehand.

Clothing

It is best to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions, with the emphasis on comfort and appropriateness. In the meditation hall, please wear loose-fitting, quiet fabrics (for example, cotton instead of nylon). Make sure you have enough clothes to stay warm at night, prepared for rain and bring one set of clothes suitable for chores. Bring one set of shoes that you can easily slip on and off, and one set for outdoor walking.

Other Things to Bring and Not to Bring

You will need a torch/flashlight, toiletries, a towel and wash cloth, a sun hat, sunscreen and an alarm clock. You are welcome to bring your own meditation cushion, bench or meditation mat if you wish. We recommend that you bring a plastic cup for brushing your teeth and a plastic bowl to place in the sink for washing your face.

Please do not bring a laptop or use any emailing/texting/tweeting device. Please do not use mobile phones except in cases of emergency. Most importantly, please bring an attitude of being easy to look after, not fussy or complaining, but content and grateful for the opportunity to practice the Dhamma.

Smoking and Fires

Smoking or fires of any kind, including candles, are prohibited due to the risk of fire. The only exceptions to this are the candles that are lit in the mediation hall.

Arrival

You are welcome to arrive anytime Friday, December 28 before 5:00pm. Allow yourself plenty of time to set up your tent or settle in. Upon arrival, please confirm

your registration at the sala with the manager. Please park your car in the carpark, not next to the sala. Orientation will begin in the Yurt Meditation Hall at 7:00 pm.

Ending

The retreat will conclude in the afternoon of Tuesday, January 2. All Participants are expected to stay for the entire period of the retreat except in the case of illness, emergency or with special permission.

Service and Managing

Putting on a retreat creates extra work for the monks living at the monastery. It would be helpful if some people would be able to arrive early to help set up. For retreats to continue, we need people who volunteer to help manage. As service and good kamma are indispensable aspects of the path to Awakening, assisting others to meditate is itself a profound practice. If you are interested to help manage, please mention this when registering.