



# AUKANA

*residential courses*

HOUSE OF INNER  
TRANQUILITY



## BOOKING COURSES

The practice of meditation is fundamental to the Buddha's path. As such, it is central to the system of training at the House of Inner Tranquillity.

All meditators are encouraged to attend a six-day or weekend meditation retreat as soon as they have completed their introductory period.

We run residential courses throughout the year, except for the months of January and July which are set aside for monastic retreats and any necessary building projects.

We take in names for retreats twice a year (in November and May), scheduling six months at a time. Demand for places is high, although it is occasionally possible to book courses at short notice.

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

To ensure you get the most out of your retreat, we recommend that you increase the amount of meditation you do during the week before the course. In particular, if you normally meditate for only half an hour, it is a good idea to extend this to an hour as on residential courses most periods of seated meditation last for one hour.

More information about the best way to approach a course can be found in the chapter entitled 'Retreats' in *Buddhism: The Plain Facts*.

## PRACTICAL MATTERS

To minimise concern about appearance, please do not bring in too many clothes, and make sure that what you do wear will be comfortable and warm. We also ask that you do not bring in after-shave, cosmetics (apart from deodorant), or jewellery (wedding rings may be brought in but not worn during the course).

If you bring slippers, please do not wear them in the Shrine Room or in meditation interviews. You will also need shoes for walking meditation in the garden and the usual washing-kit and towel. Women are asked to bring in sanitary protection if there is the least chance it will be needed.

Other necessary items include an alarm clock and wrist watch, and paper and pen for making notes on your meditations.

Keeping a brief record of each session not only helps meditators improve their discrimination of what is going on in the practice, but also provides a useful basis for discussing the progress of the meditation with the instructor. Please take your notes along to your interview.

Please do not bring in any food, dietary supplements, drinks, radios or any form of entertainment. Mobile phones must be switched off for the duration of the course.

Books and pamphlets are available on the retreat. You may bring in Walkman style stereos on Integrated Retreats to listen to Aukana tapes.

If you are taking any form of medication, prescribed or otherwise, please let us know in advance.

On a six-day course you will be able to shower mid-week so it is a good idea to bath and wash your hair before you arrive.

#### ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE TIMES

Arrival times are as follows:

Six-day retreats: Monday morning, between 9 and 9.45am.

Weekend retreats: Friday evening, between 7.45 and 8.30pm. If it is your first retreat please arrive at 7.15 so that there is time for us to show you round the Centre before the start of the course. If you are travelling by train and have to arrive earlier than the scheduled times, please let us know in advance.

On arrival you will be given a time-table with details of the times of meditation periods, interviews, meals etc. Dinner is not provided on the Friday evening of weekend retreats.

Six-day retreats end after dinner on Saturday, weekends after dinner on Sunday (i.e. around 6.30pm).

#### DONATIONS

Donations for the course are best made at the beginning of the retreat. They can be handed to the resident lay-student who will be in the library. Please make cheques payable to the Aukana Trust.

As a guideline, at present it costs the Trust £25 per meditator per day to provide the necessary facilities. This covers everything from heating, food and laundry to the maintenance of the buildings.

#### ON THE COURSE

On Six-Day Silent Retreats, each meditator has a room of his or her own. In the mornings those on retreat meditate in the Shrine Room with the monks; in the afternoons they meditate in their own rooms. Meditators on Integrated Retreats help out with duties in the afternoon.

On weekend courses each meditator has a room of his or her own and the same format of meditations as on Six-Day Silent Retreats.

Interviews with a meditation instructor are an integral part of all residential courses held at the House of Inner Tranquillity. The first interview of a retreat is a good time to give a gift to your teacher.

*continued overleaf*

## DIET

All meals and drinks are provided. Some days the meals are vegetarian, some days they include meat or fish. Learning to accept whatever conditions life presents us with is an important part of the meditative training. To this end, meditators are expected to eat the food provided.

We have invariably found that those who can put aside any views they might have concerning diet make great strides forwards in the practice of meditation. Vegetarianism itself is not an issue but the training can only succeed when attachment to view (of whatever kind) is overcome.

## RULES

A rule of silence operates for much of the time on all residential courses. This enables meditators to withdraw more easily from worldly concerns and to focus their attention on the meditation.

Further, for the duration of the retreat, meditators are expected not only to keep the five precepts but also to refrain from all forms of sexual activity, from all forms of entertainment and from personal adornment.

Smoking is not permitted inside the meditation centre but meditators may smoke in the garden.

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*The Aukana Trust is a registered charity (no 326938).  
It supports two Monasteries and a Meditation Centre,  
the House of Inner Tranquillity, which together provide instruction  
at all levels in the Buddha's path to enlightenment, from  
introductory evening classes to full-time monastic training.*

9 Masons Lane  
Bradford on Avon  
Wiltshire BA15 1QN  
England

Tel: +44-(0)1225 866821

e-mail: [info@aukana.org.uk](mailto:info@aukana.org.uk)

<http://www.aukana.org.uk>