

**Vajraloka**

**Buddhist Meditation Centre**

**2010 Retreat Programme**



**VAJRALOKA**  
MEDITATION CENTRE

# Welcome to Vajraloka



All Vajraloka retreats are tailored to help you deepen your meditation and Dharma practice. They aim to support you in seeing through confusions and to taste, even dwell, in more liberated states of mind. Whilst there is much diversity to our events for the year, all are unified in drawing from the practices and principles outlined in the FWBO System of Meditation.

Our retreats continue to evolve, in response to our deepening practice and feedback from retreatants.

Due to their popularity, 2010 will see us run more Practice Retreats. These offer a basic programme for each day, but no teaching input. So you have the space akin to a solitary retreat, with all the benefits of practising with others. As part of our Rainy Season, we are running our first month long practice retreat across the new year (weekly options are available). Rain is guaranteed!

On both 'Everything and Nothing' and 'From Integration to Spiritual Rebirth' retreats, we will systematically journey



## ABOUT VAJRALOKA

through the FWBO approach to meditation and practice; exploring how a foundation in mental stillness and positivity provides a basis for insight reflections and practices to bear fruit.

People come on retreat with very different levels of experience, and with diverse issues, tendencies and interests. Finding the most helpful ways of working in meditation is a personal journey – one informed by certain key principles. All our retreats offer regular one to one meditation reviews, to help you tease out what is most effective and to foster a sense of confidence and direction.

Above all, maybe the real magic of Vajraloka is simply the place itself. Its indescribable atmosphere – of which the looming forest above, the river, the wildlife and the long heritage of practice here all form part. A special cocktail of conditions which in a very tangible way works on you. An enchanting realm, where your inner world can unfold, supported by, and in connection with, others.

Dive in!

Balajit

# Men's Retreats

## Everything and Nothing

Led by Saraha and Shuddhakirti

On this retreat we will be exploring the profound simplicity and enormous depth and vision of Sangharakshita's teachings on meditation. The System of Meditation is a framework for the Spiritual life, giving us step by step guidance towards developing or recognising a taste of Enlightenment and plenty of space in which to allow it to emerge. These insights are all glimpses of a single Great Bliss, a single perfection of vision.

Guest leader, Saraha, will be sharing his deepening love and gratitude for this constellation of meditations, this guidebook to the spiritual life.

**Feb 26 – Mar 5**

**£ 252 / 224**

## The Brahmaviharas

Led by Rijumitra

The metta bhavana is one of four meditation practices known as the brahmaviharas or "sublime abodes". The other three practices enable us to cultivate and recognise compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These four qualities are the basis of emotional maturity and the foundation of transcendental compassion.

The retreat will build on a strong foundation of metta to explore the nature of empathy through compassion and sympathetic joy and move into equanimity to look at its quality as an active force for good. These practices are a potent way of transforming emotional energy.

**Apr 2 - 11**

**£ 324 / 288**

## Weekend Taster Retreat

led by the Vajraloka team

If you are relatively new to meditation or retreats, this long weekend is an excellent way of getting a taste of Vajraloka and its supportive conditions. Through teaching and workshops you will explore how to enjoy and deepen the main FWBO practices – mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana.

There will plenty of opportunity for discussion and chats with members of the team, as well as periods of silent practice – a valuable feature of all our retreats at Vajraloka.

**Apr 30 – May 3**

**£ 108 / 96**

## Back to Beginners' Mind

led by Tejananda, with Vajraloka team members


Rediscover the main ground of the FWBO's System of Meditation and thoroughly refresh your practice!

Everyone who meditates recognises that there are times when their practice lacks inspiration. This retreat can help get you out of the doldrums, and if you're not in the doldrums, it will brighten your practice even further! The Vajraloka team's enthusiasm for meditation can give you new ways to approach old issues.

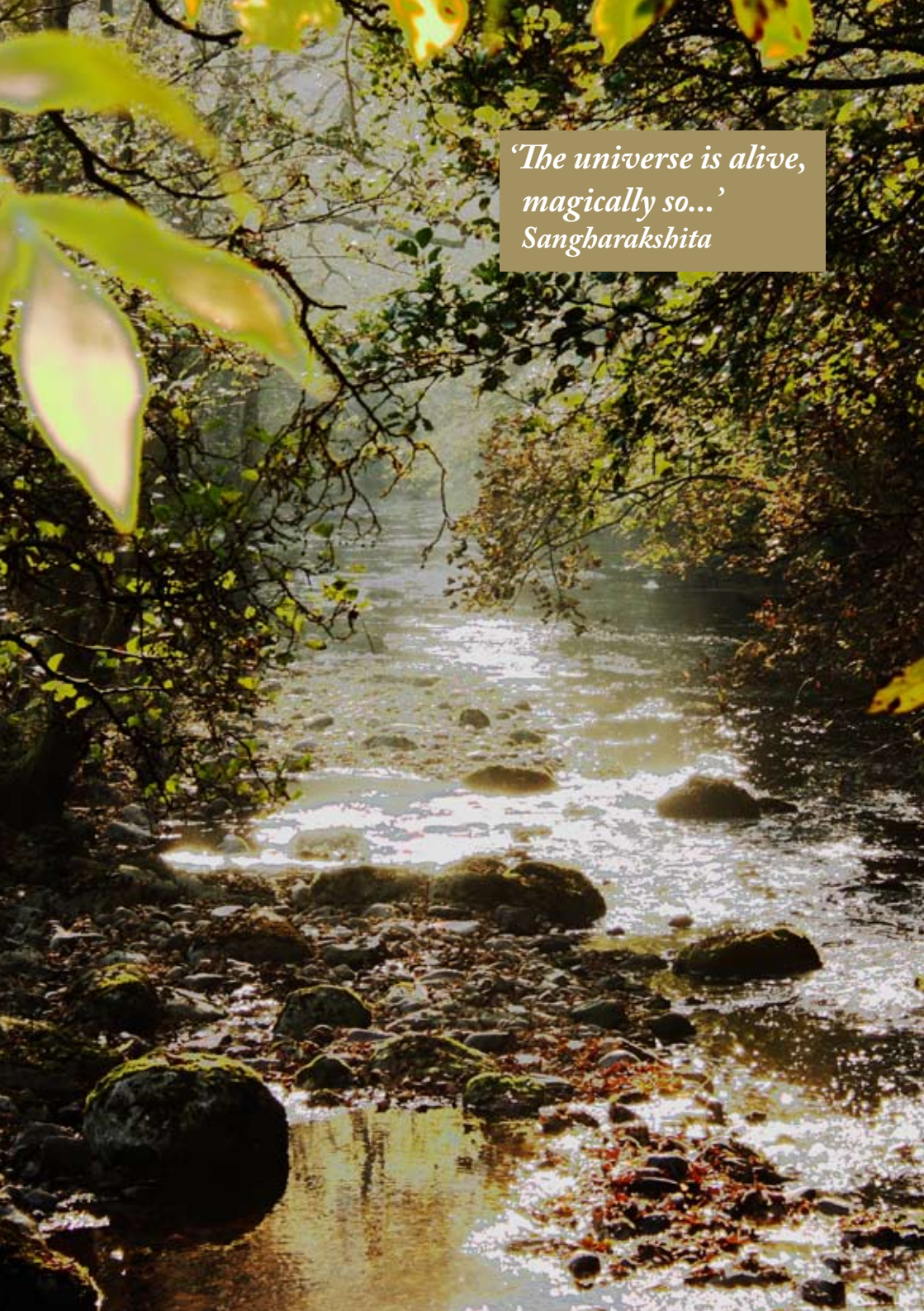
The content of the retreat will be customised to help you revitalise your practice. We will go into all the main FWBO practices: the mindfulness of breathing, metta bhavana, just sitting and reflection.

**May 7 – 16**

**£ 324 / 288**

A person is shown in a meditative posture, sitting cross-legged. They are wearing a dark, heavy robe and a striped blanket. The room is dimly lit, with a single candle providing a warm, soft glow. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with wooden walls.

*'The object of  
meditation is to  
transform oneself,  
not to have good  
meditations'.  
Sangharakshita*



*'The universe is alive,  
magically so...'  
Sangharakshita*

## Going Deeper

led by the Vajraloka team

This retreat is about working effectively in meditation. It explores the vast potential of the meditations taught in the FWBO – the mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana, as well as just sitting, and reflection on the Dharma. We will explore what makes practice more effective and enjoyable – from posture and setting up - to all the aspects of working in meditation. An excellent introduction to what Vajraloka has to offer and a great way to benefit from Vajraloka's 30 year tradition of meditation and teaching.

**Jul 23 – 30**

**£ 252 / 224**

## From Integration to Spiritual Rebirth

led by Tejananda and Dharmadipa

This is an ideal retreat for men who have asked for ordination, or are thinking of doing so. Sangharakshita's System of Meditation – integration, positive emotion, spiritual death, spiritual rebirth and just sitting – is soundly based in traditional Buddhist teaching, yet freshly and appropriately re-expressed. It is a complete path for the cultivation of tranquillity and insight. On this retreat we will be exploring it in depth, from the fundamentals (mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana) to reflection, insight practice and formless meditation. The retreat will be co-led by Dharmadipa, from the Padmaloka ordination team, and Tejananda.

**Dec 10 - 19**

**£ 324 / 288**



## Practice Retreats

Practice retreats do not have any formal teaching. Apart from pujas and morning and evening meditation, much of the day will be free for individual practice. These retreats combine the chance to follow the themes and rhythms emerging from your own meditation practice with the momentum and depth of a more intensive meditation retreat. Daily meditation interviews are available on request.

### Rainy Season Practice Retreat:

2 – 9 Jan (for men)

### Rainy Season Practice Retreat:

9 – 16 Jan (for men)

### Rainy Season Practice Retreat:

16 – 23 Jan (for men)

### Practice Retreat:

17 – 24 Apr (for men)

### Summer Practice Retreat:

20 Aug – 3 Sep (mixed)  
see 'Mixed Retreats' section

### Practice Retreat:

23 – 31 Oct (for men)

### Practice Retreat:

26 Nov – 3 Dec (for men)

### Winter Practice Retreat:

23 – 31 Dec (for men)

**These retreats are run on a dana (generosity) basis. Our suggested donation is £ 36 / 32 (conc) per night.**

## LONG TERM GUESTS

A longstanding tradition at Vajraloka is hosting long term guests. Men who stay for an extended period of practice and partake in the life here, both during and between our public retreats. Many have reported how fruitful such periods have been – whether for three months, a year or longer. If you are interested in coming to stay here for a period, do get in touch. Whilst we have guideline figures, weekly rates can be negotiated.







A photograph of a forest path in autumn. The path is covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. To the right, there is a low wall made of large, moss-covered rocks. The trees in the background have vibrant yellow and orange foliage, while some are bare. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# Mixed Retreats

*'Faith is innate,  
doubt acquired'*  
Sangharakshita

## Satipatthana

### - Mindfulness and Wisdom

led by Smrtiratna and Tejananda

The Satipatthana Sutta (Discourse on Establishing Mindfulness) is one of the Buddha's central teachings on the path to bodhi – wisdom, awakening. Mindfulness is the transformative application of awareness to our existential situation. The Buddha outlined four main areas of mindfulness practice, each of which can act as a gateway to fully waking up to what and who we truly are. On this retreat Tejananda and Smrtiratna will introduce mindfulness practices in this light, practices which bring awareness into every aspect of our lives and, ultimately, into the heart of the Dharma itself.

**Mar 12- 24**

**£ 432 / 384**

## Opening to the Body: a Gateway to Freedom

led by Balajit

The body is a key foundation of mindfulness. But modern attitudes towards it, and the pace of life, mean it can so easily be left behind in our Dharma practice. On this retreat we will explore and practice different ways of anchoring our meditation, and our lives, more fully in the body.

Opening to the body can both calm and still the mind, as well as bring ever deeper layers of healing and insight.

We will be doing plenty of sitting and walking meditation, and some simple exercises to help us explore our experience. In particular we will see how opening to body sensations, can lead to a more intimate and spacious relationship with the broader 'body' of our experience – our thoughts, feelings and emotions.

**May 21 – 28**

**£ 252 / 224**

## Emptiness and the Heart Sutra

led by Tejananda

### Form is emptiness; emptiness itself is form

Samatha (clarity and stability of mind) and Vipassana (insight meditation) are two interconnected aspects of Buddhist meditation aimed at full awakening to the real nature of things. Yet, the Heart Sutra teaches that there is no awakening and no 'things' to have a real nature. Such paradox suggests that words and concepts have their limitations as well as their uses. These are all issues that we will explore on this retreat - not through study but by cultivating samatha and reflecting on the paradoxes and mysteries of the Heart Sutra's teaching on the complete emptiness of all phenomena.

Tejananda will give succinct practical introductions to the various sections of the Heart Sutra, and to reflective meditations on the meaning of the sutra, within the context of the FWBO System of Meditation. We will also be chanting the sutra, and there will be a supportive context of devotional practice.

**Jun 11 – 21**

**£ 360 / 320**

## Heroic Spirits

### – Samatha and Vipassana

led by Appicha

The Ratnagunasamcayagatha, declares, "Call forth as much as you can of love, of respect and of faith! Remove the obstructing defilements and clear away all your taints! Listen to the Perfect Wisdom of the gentle Buddhas, taught for the weal of the world, for heroic spirits intended!"

Through led and personal reflection we will seek to develop the confidence to see beyond our concepts into the liberating truth at the heart of the Perfection of Wisdom.



*'One of the most  
important of all  
Buddhist practices  
is awareness  
of the body.'  
Sangharakshita*

On this retreat we, the heroic spirits, will discover a refreshing approach to the mindfulness of breathing, the metta bhavana, and formless meditation. Through these practices we connect to the confident open dimension at the heart of our being.

**Aug 6 – 16**  
**£ 360 / 320**

### **Summer Practice Retreat: with optional yoga classes**

This is a Practice Retreat (see separate section) - with the option of daily yoga classes. The yoga will be led by Kieran, who was part of our community here for a number of years. He will be taking a break from teaching yoga in Africa, to join us on retreat.

This retreat is available as a one or two week option.

**Aug 20 - 27**  
**Aug 27 – Sep 3**  
**£ 252 / 224 per week**

### **The Awakening Heart and the Divine Abodes**

led by Tejananda and Rijumitra

This retreat will focus on the four brahmaviharas or 'divine abodes' – love, compassion, joy and equanimity – in the context of the cultivation of the Bodhicitta (the awakening heart), and the tonglen or 'giving and receiving' practice. Bodhicitta could be described as both the heart-response of wisdom to the suffering of living beings everywhere and the urge to realise Buddhahood for the benefit of all.

The practices that we'll explore on this retreat are all ways of opening our hearts and responding to the joys and sufferings of living beings – opening to the wisdom and compassion of Bodhicitta itself.

**Oct 8 – 17**  
**£ 324 / 288**

### **Formless Meditation – Opening to Awareness**

led by Tejananda

The mysterious sky-like quality of awareness is at the heart of the Dharma – always present, yet impossible to grasp with thoughts. Formless meditation combines just sitting with simple, subtle and insightful ways of exploring our direct experience, including the surprising depths of body-awareness. By gently questioning some of our usual assumptions about space, time, thought and 'self', our hearts and minds may well open to the unsuspected potential of awareness itself. The retreat will include a clear practical introduction, outlining the place of formless practice within the FWBO System of Meditation. Most of the retreat will be silent practice, within a context of shradha - devotion, faith and aspiration.

**Feb 12 – 21: £ 324 /288**  
**Nov 12 – 22: £ 360 / 320**

### **Focusing and Meditation: The Body's Wisdom**

led by Manjudeva and Appicha

Our body is not simply a vehicle for awakening but a source of wisdom and insight in its own right. Both meditation and focusing, especially when combined, can be very effective tools in helping us access such riches. Through the practice of 'Focusing' we will explore the wisdom held deeply within us. Each day will provide periods when we will 'Focus' with a partner, in a private space. Through meditation, we will begin to relax our hold on a limited sense of identity, moving us towards the liberating truth of non-duality.

Manjudeva, currently based in North London, is fully qualified with the British Focusing Teachers Association (BFTA) and the Focusing Institute in New York.

**Sep 24 – Oct 1**  
**£ 252 / 224**

Please note: this retreat is only suitable for those with some previous experience of focusing.



### **Our Set Up**

Vajraloka is a cluster of traditional Welsh stone farm buildings set in attractive gardens, perched on a hill in the quiet and lovely valley of the River Alwen. Craggy hillsides overlook streams, woods and meadows. In the distance lie the dramatic mountains of Snowdonia. The facilities were set up with meditation in mind. Many comment on the shrine room's atmosphere, redolent of the thousands of hours of meditation practice that have taken place there. Our accommodation is simple, warm and comfortable. In the dining room, our cook serves up vegetarian food which is creative, wholesome and tasty.

### **New to Buddhism and Meditation?**

A number of our retreats are suitable for those with little or no experience of Buddhism and meditation. We have given these retreats an 'A' grading on the retreat calendar (see facing page).

On such retreats, alongside the main teaching sessions, we will provide special introductory tuition and support on the basic meditation practices of the FWBO – namely the mindfulness of breathing and the metta bhavana.

Although Vajraloka is a Buddhist retreat centre, you don't have to consider yourself a Buddhist to come on any of our retreats.

### **Hiring Out Vajraloka**

At certain times of the year, Vajraloka can be hired for group events – such as centre sangha retreats, team building breaks and training courses. In recent years, there has been growing interest in this. In addition to the beautiful surroundings, Vajraloka provides a peaceful venue, with 21 beds in comfortable accommodation and good communal space.

Depending on availability we may be able to provide a cook.

Vajraloka also provides retreats for individual buddhist centres and their sanghas, which are led by members of our resident community.

The length of stay and pricing are both negotiable.



# Vajraloka Retreats 2010

Jan 2 - 9	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Jan 9 - 16	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Jan 16 - 23	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Feb 12 – 21	Formless Meditation – Opening to Awareness	Mixed	B
Feb 26 – 5 Mar	Everything and Nothing	Mens	A
Mar 12- 24	Satipatthana – Mindfulness and Wisdom	Mixed	B
Apr 2 – 11	Brahmaviharas	Mens	A
Apr 17 - 24	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Apr 30 – 3 May	Weekend Taster Retreat	Mens	A
May 7 – 16	Back to Beginners' Mind	Mens	A
May 21 – 28	Opening to the Body – a Gateway to Freedom	Mixed	B
Jun 11 – 21	Emptiness and the Heart Sutra	Mixed	B
July 23 – 30	Going Deeper	Mens	B
Aug 6 – 16	Heroic Spirits – Samatha and Vipassana	Mixed	B
Aug 20 – 3 Sep *	Summer Practice Retreat: with optional yoga classes	Mixed	B
Sep 24 – Oct 1	Focusing and Meditation - The Body's Wisdom	Mixed	B
Oct 8 – 17	The Awakening Heart and the Divine Abodes	Mixed	B
Oct 23 – 31	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Nov 12 – 22	Formless Meditation – Opening to Awareness	Mixed	B
Nov 26 – Dec 3	Practice Retreat	Mens	B
Dec 10 – 19	From Integration to Spiritual Rebirth	Mens	B
Dec 23 - 31	Winter Practice Retreat	Mens	B

\* = Single week options available on this retreat.

A = Suitable for beginners and those quite new to Buddhism and meditation.

B = For those who have been meditating for at least a year.

The prices for our retreats are based on a full nightly rate (please pay this rate if you can to help support Vajraloka) and a concessionary rate – for students, unwaged, OAP's and FWBO Centre/businesses workers (on 'support' rates). Further concessions may be available, please contact us for details.

To book on a retreat, please send a non-refundable, non-transferable £50 deposit.

This deposit will hold your place until six weeks before the retreat starts at which point you must send the full balance (failure to do so may result in losing your place on the retreat). If booking within the six-week period, you will need to send the full amount. Cheques are payable (in pounds sterling) to: FWBO (Corwen)

Special arrangements can be made for those living abroad – please contact the office.

tel: 01490 460406

BOOKING A RETREAT

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**VAJRALOKA**  
**TYN-Y-DDOL**

Charity registration number 514363  
Photos by Balajit and Vajraloka guests. Design by Allan Kirkman.