

# **TOUCHING PEACE RETREAT**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2008

East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham University. UK

## **JOINING INSTRUCTIONS**

**Please Note: These are the instructions for those who have already booked onto the retreat. Please do not attend if you have not booked.**

I have arrived  
I am home  
In the here  
And in the now  
I am solid  
I am free  
In the ultimate  
I dwell.

### **Arrival and departure**

We are very happy to welcome you to the UK retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh at Nottingham University.

Please practise mindfulness as you arrive and throughout the retreat. Registration will be open between 2 and 5pm (Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August).

If you have to arrive outside these hours please contact [retreat@interbeing.org.uk](mailto:retreat@interbeing.org.uk) at least one week in advance. It will not be possible to register, or to have access to your accommodation, before 2pm. Early arrivals will have free access to the University fitness centre (open all afternoon). A £1 coin is required to use a locker. You may also like to stroll in the pleasant, leafy campus grounds, relax in your room, or enjoy a gentle yoga class.

Lunch will not be provided on arrival day. A light meal will be served at 6pm. At approximately 8pm there will be orientation, followed by meditation and bed.

The retreat concludes after lunch on Friday August 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **The practice of living together on retreat**

### **Mindful Living**

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment, to life. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present, and at one with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our mind, breath and body back together in harmony whilst we walk to our room, drink our cup of tea, or listen to someone speaking.

Whilst on retreat we do very much the same things one would do at home or at work – walking, sitting, listening and eating – except now we learn to do them with mindfulness and concentration. We practise mindfulness in each moment of the day, whether we are in the Dharma Hall, the toilet, in our rooms, or on the path leading from one place to another. We practise to arrive in the present moment and not to be carried away by the past, the future, or by strong emotions.

Our practice of mindfulness becomes more joyful, relaxed and steady if we practise together as a sangha. We are bells of mindfulness for each other, supporting and reminding each other along the path. With the support of the community, we can practise to cultivate peace and joy, within and around us, as a gift for all those whom we love and care for. We can cultivate our solidity and freedom – solid in our deepest aspiration and free from our fears, misunderstandings and afflictions.

### **The Sound of the Bell**

From time to time throughout the retreat you will hear the sound of the bell. This brings our awareness back to the present moment from wherever our thoughts or actions were at the time. We invite you to stop what you are doing at the sound of the bell, and breathe in and out consciously three times, before continuing.

### **Meals**

The first part of lunch and supper, and all of breakfast, will be taken in silence. Please do not worry if children are not quiet at these times. When we stand in line preparing to collect food, we can stand in mindfulness and relaxation. Parents with children and organisers have been invited to go to the front of the queue when they need to.

We invite you to collect your food, sit at a table and wait until the table is complete. When everyone is together on our table someone may read the Five Contemplations, then we can enjoy our food in mindfulness. After fifteen minutes or so the bell may sound and we may wish to engage in mindful conversation or get up from the table.

The main meal will be taken in the middle of the day, with a light meal in the evening. For these five days we will be eating the diet that Thich Nhat Hanh enjoys at home in Plum Village, free from meat, fish, eggs, and dairy produce. This reflects the Buddha's teachings on protecting life and protecting the earth. Special dishes will be prepared for young children, which may include dairy produce and eggs. If we are not accustomed to this diet, please reflect on Thich Nhat Hanh's encouragement to us: "It is not so difficult to stop eating products of the meat industry, when we know that we are saving the planet by doing so. Lay communities should be courageous and give rise to this commitment, at least 15 days each month. If we can do that, we will feel a sense of well being. We will have peace, joy and happiness right from the moment we make this commitment."

### **Noble silence**

The practice of noble silence will be from evening meditation until after breakfast the following morning. This is especially important in our accommodation area. If we need to speak, we do so mindfully well away from others, so as to allow them silence. By practising silence we come into contact with people and things on a deeper level.

### **Sitting meditation**

It is important to enjoy sitting meditation. Simply follow your breathing and dwell in the present moment. Sitting meditation is like returning home to give full attention to what is in and around us. We let our mind become spacious and our heart soft and kind. Following our breath helps unite body and mind, bringing us back to the present moment.

### **Walking meditation**

Whenever we walk we can practise mindfulness. We harmonise our steps and our breathing and become aware of the people around us. As we walk we try to be in contact with the ground, our feet massaging the earth with peace in every step.

## **Dharma Discussion**

These small group discussions are for people to help each other to understand and put into practice the teachings. Questions and insights may arise from the Dharma talks or from our personal practice.

## **What to bring with you**

You will have a single student room equipped with a bed, bedding, chair, wardrobe and desk. There will be a kettle in your room or nearby.

You may like to bring the following:

Comfortable, loose clothing

A warm blanket or shawl to wrap yourself in during morning meditation

Meditation cushion or stool. There are plenty of chairs available

The meditation room is carpeted

Notebook and pen

Torch

A personal item of beauty to adorn your room

Toiletries and regular medication

A hand towel and bath towel are provided. These, and your bed linen, will be changed once during your stay

Warm and waterproof clothing including a waterproof jacket/umbrella

Outdoor walking shoes/boots and indoor slippers/warm socks

Hot water bottle

Favourite teabags and a mug for your room

Musical instruments, songs, poems, and stories to share

Extra accommodation, before or after the retreat, can be booked at local hotels through the University Accommodation Service on 0115 951 3640, or in student accommodation via [Maria.Rogers@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Maria.Rogers@nottingham.ac.uk)

## **Bookshop**

The retreat bookshop will be open for a period after lunch Monday to Thursday. It will stock a wide selection of Thay's books, along with bells, bell bags, magazine subscriptions, stationary, book covers, etc. The bookshop will accept cheques and cash, and may accept credit/debit cards

## **Programme**

The schedule may vary slightly from day to day. Details will be posted during the retreat

## **Want to help? Need some help?**

If you have difficulty with sight, hearing, mobility, etc and would like someone to assist you on the retreat please contact Margaret on 01473 652386 [margaret@wellend.f9.co.uk](mailto:margaret@wellend.f9.co.uk)

If you would like to offer assistance to someone on the retreat with a specific difficulty please contact Margaret as above

## **Pets**

Unfortunately pets are not allowed at this retreat venue (other than assistance dogs)

## **Travel information**

The retreat venue is the East Midlands Conference Centre, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RJ

[www.emcc.co.uk](http://www.emcc.co.uk)

Maps at :

[http://www.nottinghamconferences.co.uk/pdfs/Emcc/university\\_park.pdf](http://www.nottinghamconferences.co.uk/pdfs/Emcc/university_park.pdf)

## **By coach**

National Express coaches arrive in Nottingham at the Broadmarsh Bus Station, Collin Street NG1 7LS

The following Trent Barton buses run from the bus station to the University Park campus:

University Boulevard: Rainbow 5

East, South and West Entrances: 18, 32 (West is closest to EMCC)

More information on [www.trentbuses.co.uk](http://www.trentbuses.co.uk) or 01773 712265

[www.nctx.co.uk](http://www.nctx.co.uk) or 0115 950 6070

## **By air**

East Midlands airport is approximately 30 minutes taxi ride (17miles) from the University Park

The Skylink bus service runs every 30 minutes from the airport to the city centre (railway station) and costs £5 single/£9 return

More information on [www.eastmidlandsairport.com](http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com)

## **By train**

Nottingham train station is the nearest major station and is about 2 miles from the University Park Campus

Information and timetables for national and regional train companies  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or 0845 748 4950

The train station is 250m from the bus station. See 'by coach' for information on local buses to the University Park.

The Trainline, [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com), on-line booking service for all national and regional train companies.

A taxi from the train station to the EMCC costs about £8

### **By road**

From M1

Leave the M1 at junction 25 (signed Nottingham, Derby and A52).

Join the A52 towards Nottingham.

Remain on the A52 for 4.4 miles until the roundabout junction with A6464.

Turn right (third exit) at the roundabout onto (Woodside Road) A6464.

At the next roundabout turn left (first exit) into the University Park Campus West Entrance (Beeston Lane). Follow the road around to the left for about half a mile.

The entrance to the EMCC car park is on the right hand side.

From the A1

At Grantham take the A52 to Nottingham and travel for about 30 miles, passing Bingham, Radcliffe on Trent and West Bridgford. Approaching Nottingham pass the Showcase Cinema Complex on your left and take the left hand slip lane down an island. Turn left at the island onto Beeston Road. Follow the road onto the dual carriageway, University Boulevard. At the island turn right. At the next island turn right again into the West Entrance. Follow the road round to the left for about half a mile. The entrance to the EMCC car park is on the right.

### **Useful information**

Cripps Medical Centre, pharmacy and out-of-hours doctor service 0115 846 888

Nottingham Tourist Centre 0115 962 8300

Local taxis: Arrow      0115 966 6111  
                  City Cabs    0115 970 1701  
                  Royal         0115 960 8608

Streamline 0115 924 2499

There are two 24 hour access cash machines on the outside of the Portland Building (on campus), operated by NatWest and HSBC. They accept all major bank cards.

*May you be well*

*May you be happy*

*May you be at ease*