

Photography & Meditation

About the retreat

On this retreat we will focus on learning skills to improve our photography with a programme of photography workshops and talks.

Complete beginners are very welcome. The teachers on the retreat are eager to make the technical side as accessible as possible and will try their hardest not to bamboozle you with too much jargon and can assist people individually. If you are scared of your camera or the technical aspects of photography, now is the time to face your fear in a supportive and non-competitive environment. We will explore landscape, macro and portrait photography and retreatants are encouraged to photograph what they feel drawn to.

These retreats will combine introductory meditation teaching with photography. We will cover an introduction to two traditional Buddhist meditations; the mindfulness of breathing and the development of loving kindness (Metta Bhavana) as well as a solid introduction to the principals of meditation. We will also be exploring some of the broader aspects of traditional Buddhism to get a flavour of how these might be relevant to our modern lives. Both meditation and photography teaching will be from first principles. The supportive atmosphere of the retreat allows us to develop and deepen both practices, and understand how the two augment each other.

It's great when you see people beginning to understand the mechanics of the photographic process, getting their heads around depth of field etc. Much more satisfying however is when you see the quality of awareness appearing in people's images.

This popular retreat has developed over the past 10 years, moving with the speed of technology from the black and white darkroom, to colour slides and now into a predominantly digital age. People with both film and digital SLR and CSC cameras are very welcome.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

- A tripod
- Warm clothes and waterproofs (for field trips)
- Wellies, preferably ones that don't leak
- Camera manual
- For film users: a 35mm or larger format camera and film of course
- For digital users: a digital slr or csc.

If you have any other photography gear then by all means bring it along.

Camera checklist

Things to check before you come on the retreat:

- Your camera is functioning properly - take a few shots, make sure it works!
- Memory cards - bring a spare if you've got one
- Batteries - again, bring spares or your battery charger

What can you expect from the programme?

Meditation

We do not assume that you will know how to meditate and will teach you two simple meditation practices from the Buddhist tradition, one of which helps us to become calmer and more concentrated and the second of which helps us to develop positive emotions such as confidence, friendliness, and the ability to empathise with others.

Retreat Programme

There will be a programme of meditation consisting of three or four short sessions of meditation each day for 20 - 30 minutes. There will be photography workshops most days. In the evenings there is a programme of talks, slide shows and meditation and chanting. One morning, weather permitting, we will do a field trip to photograph the sunrise, usually around the Glencoe area. We will have periods of silence throughout the retreat to facilitate the process of integrating the meditation into the photography.

We will have periods of silence throughout the retreat to facilitate the process of integrating our meditation practice into the photography session.

About the retreat team

Amoghavira is a landscape photographer who has developed his skills over the past sixteen years at Dhanakosa. He has been a practising Buddhist for over thirty years and brings depth, humour and lightness to his teaching of meditation and Buddhism.