

Intensive vipassana meditation retreat

directed by Henk Barendregt
August 22, 19:00 --- September 5, 14:00, 2014
Monastero Clarisse Eremita
Fara in Sabina, Italy



Vipassana

Vipassana or insight meditation consists of training the mind in concentration and mindfulness. At first this brings a temporary serene mind, which is already quite valuable. Deeper practice of insight meditation can bring lasting peace: with ourselves, others and the universe. While meditation can be seen as a life long path, during an intensive retreat one can make essential steps forward.

The method is simple and effective. One sits in a comfortable position, relaxed and dignified. The basis exercise is to observe the body, notably the rising and falling of the abdomen while breathing. Next one learns to observe and 'know' what the mind is attending to. If it is no longer doing the basis exercise, one knows this and also what is the nature of the 'distractor'. One then gently goes back to the basis exercise. This will give us a more clear picture of the conditionings we are subjected to. The conditioning often is mental and has an interaction within our body and behaviour. Considering distractors as impersonal energies we can learn, step by step, to domesticate these forces, resulting in greater flexibility. An important insight on the way is that we have no absolute control over our body and mind. This disillusion may be confronting at first, but will be liberating later. Developing an equanimous attitude, poised, and without hidden agendas, the meditator approaches clear insight and mentioned threefold peace.

Our hosts

The Monastery is an active nunnery, devoted to loving mild contemplation in the spirit of Clara and Franciscus of Assisi.

Location

Monastero delle Clarisse Eremita, Via del Castello, Fara in Sabina, Rieti, Italy. The monastery is located about 54 km from Roma. There are frequent trains from the Fiumicino and Ciampino airports and from Termini railway station, passing through Roma Tiburtina, to Fara Sabina-Montelibretti (Passo Corese), from where it is 13 km by bus to the monastery. On top of a hill (450m above sea level) it has breathtaking views.

Teacher

Henk Barendregt studied from 1972-1979 Zen meditation under Kobun Chino Roshi (1939-2002) and from 1979-2006 Vipassana meditation under Phra Mettavihari (1942-2007). He has been teaching Vipassana since 2001. Since 2006 he was qualified by Phra Mettavihari to teach Vipassana retreats in the style of Mahasi Sayadaw. Barendregt is emeritus professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Radboud University, Nijmegen, and has been visiting professor at the Psychology Department at Sapienza University, Roma. Since 1998 he directs with colleagues neurophysiology, psychology, and psychiatry an interdisciplinary research group on insight meditation and clinical applications.

Living recommendations

During the retreat one is requested to keep the five rules of behaviour: using respectful language (in our case this means not speaking, except during interviews and for questions), respecting other person's property, respecting life, keeping a friendly asexual attitude (in speech, dressing and behaviour), and refraining from using drugs (including alcohol and tobacco; coffee is allowed and necessary medicines as well).

Program

There are daily morning instructions and evening lectures that support the meditation. After wake-up there will be bowing exercises. The rest of the program consists of sitting or walking meditation. On the last day special attention will be given how to come back to one's daily situation, including how to share your experiences with close one's. The language used is English, with translations in Italian. Questions may be asked also in Dutch, German, and French. Each participant will get personal interviews by the teacher to get feedback on his or her progress. Apart from this the time will be spent in silence. This implies that one does not use a phone or its textmessage system. One does not read or write, but one may keep a diary to write notes (just a few lines a day) for the interview or during the evening lecture. In emergencies family members can call the teacher or the monastery.

For whom

The retreat is for meditators that like to deepen their practise. Some previous experience

with vipassana meditation is recommended. Persons that are under supervision or treatment of a psychiatrist or those taking psychoactive medicine, are advised to discuss with the teacher (via skype or telephone) whether participation at the moment is suitable. Discussing participation with the psychiatrist involved is mandatory.

Arrival, costs, and departure

The retreat lasts 7, 9, or 14 days. Participants have single rooms with a private bathroom. Full pension (vegetarian) is **560E** for 14 days, **420E** for 9 days, and **350E** for five days. The retreat can be started only on August 22 for 7, or 9, or 14 days and on August 29 for 7 days. There are cheap flights from many places in Europe to Roma, to be organised by each participant. Payment details follow.

Dana

The full sojourn for the teacher is covered by participants' payment. The teaching is freely offered out of gratitude. At the end of the retreat participants will be given the traditional opportunity to practice generosity towards the teacher.

Scientific research

To make vipassana and its effects better known, meditators are given the possibility to take part in scientific research. At a later stage details will be given to those interested. On the basis of this information the meditator can decide whether or not to participate.

Detailed information

One is requested to bring his or her own meditation mat, and bench or pillow. Practical information will be sent two weeks before the start of the retreat. Registration at <http://barendregt.wordpress.com/vipassana>, for questions email hbarendregt@gmail.com.



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