

**Information for  
Thanksgiving Monastic Retreat**  
Led by Ajahn Pasanno and the Abhayagiri Community

*This is your information packet for the Abhayagiri retreat. If you have any questions please email the retreat manager, Hitesi Cyndia at [Hitesi3@gmail.com](mailto:Hitesi3@gmail.com). **If you are unable to attend the retreat, please let us know immediately so we can properly plan.***

*Thank you!*

Dear Retreatant,

Thank you for registering for Abhayagiri's Thanksgiving Monastic Retreat. We look forward to spending this time together.

A **CONFIRMATION FORM** is part of this packet (separate document). Please complete and return it by November 12th. Receipt of this form confirms and ensures your place in the retreat.

Retreat Dates: Friday, November 19 – Sunday, November 28, 2010

Registration: From 3 - 5 p.m. on Friday

Departure: Approximately 2 p.m. on Sunday (includes time for cleanup)

**COMMUNITY SPIRIT**

During retreat we come together as community to support each other in our practice and daily activities. We will create a monastic environment during our time together, and we offer you this opportunity to explore the Dhamma in a setting that differs somewhat from a typical meditation retreat. We will all live the monastery life, following the Eight Precepts, taking only what is offered, participating in the daily routine mindfully and with awareness, and attempting to reflect on our every activity as part of our practice. This will include noble silence, morning and evening chanting, sitting and walking meditation, and daily Dhamma talks and teachings. Each retreatant will also participate in a one-hour work period each day. The smooth running of the retreat depends on everyone's daily contribution to the retreat community. Retreat jobs should be done in silence as much as possible, maintaining your quiet and attentive state of mind.

The Eight Precepts

- 1) Not intentionally killing or harming any living creatures.
- 2) Not stealing, or concerning oneself with the possessions of others.
- 3) Not engaging in sexual activity of any kind.
- 4) Not lying or using speech harmfully. (Noble silence will be kept during the retreat)
- 5) Not taking intoxicating drink or drugs.
- 6) Not eating after midday.
- 7) Not seeking amusements or wearing special bodily adornment. (On retreat one dresses and acts in a modest and restrained manner.)
- 8) Not using sleep indulgently.

Retreatants should commit to stay for the entire retreat and to fully participate in the retreat schedule including a daily work period. If you have any questions or concerns during the retreat, the retreat manager and other staff will assist you. If you feel you need to leave the retreat grounds in your car during the retreat, or leave the retreat early, please discuss this with the retreat manager. Note writing should be minimized, and notes to the teachers need to go through the retreat manager.

## **ON ARRIVAL**

You are welcome to arrive at the Angela Center (Ursaline) any time after 2:00 p.m. on Friday; registration is from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Early arrivals are encouraged to volunteer for the meal preparation (check in at the kitchen). The help of several people would be greatly appreciated.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Most retreatants will be lodged in single rooms.

Candles and incense will be used at the morning and evening chanting. Candles and incense are not allowed in the sleeping rooms.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

Meditation items: Please bring your own zafu, meditation bench, and/or zabuton (if you are flying, they can be provided. Extra cushions will be made available upon request. Please indicate this need on the Confirmation Form). The shrine room has carpeting, but the room is often cold. You may want to bring a blanket or shawl to leave in the shrine room. Some chairs will be available, but it is preferable to sit on the floor, lower than the meditation teacher.

Bedding: You may bring your own sheets and bath towels, or rent them from Angela Center for a small fee (\$4/sheets, \$1.50 pillowcase and \$1.00 for each towel, washcloth). Pillows and blankets are provided by Angela Center.

Clothing: Please bring appropriate clothing to dress in a modest manner. You will need warm slippers/socks for indoors and sturdy (waterproof) shoes for walking outside. Bring rain gear (umbrella, raincoat, poncho). Also you may want a sun hat, sunscreen, jacket, warm cap, gloves, extra socks, and layered clothing. No washing machine is available, so bring enough clothes for 10 days.

Other recommended items: Flashlight, extra batteries, alarm clock, toiletries, personal hygiene, necessary prescription (only) medications, a water bottle, sleep-mask, earplugs, yoga mat and props. Optional: bring your own tea mug, labeled with your name, A heating pad may be helpful for sore muscles.

**This is a “do-it-ourselves” retreat.** There is no common pool of back-up toiletries or supplies, so please plan and pack accordingly!

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Please take care of all personal and work related business before you arrive at the Center and do not plan to make telephone calls during the retreat unless an emergency necessitates it. (In general, cell phones do not work at Angela Center, and there is no internet access or printer). The telephone at the Angela Center is for emergencies only. If someone needs to reach you in an emergency situation, they can call the Angela Center office at (707) 528-8578 ext. 10. However, this phone is answered only during business hours.

## **DANA**

During the past 2500 years, support for the monastic life has been entirely provided through Dana (donations) by laypeople. In this spirit, financial help is both appreciated and needed. The steward of the monastery, the Sanghapala Foundation, is a nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible. The Thanksgiving Retreat is being offered solely on a Dana basis to make it available to all. In order for us to be able to continue to offer retreats in this manner, your support is greatly appreciated. There will be the opportunity to offer Dana towards the support of the retreat and to Abhayagiri Monastery at the end of the retreat. Donations to the monastery will be used to pay the Angela Center use fees and to cover retreat food expenses. Any shortfall will be made up by Abhayagiri Monastery; once expenses have been covered, any additional funds will go to support the monastic community at Abhayagiri. If you have limited funds, arrangements can be made to make your contribution to Abhayagiri over a period of several months.

In addition, the retreat manager (Hitesi Cyndia), the cook (Paul Eaton), and the movement teacher (Juliann Rhodes) are freely offering their time on this retreat and are not receiving any stipend for their help. At the end of the retreat, you may make a donation to the retreat staff if you feel so inclined. If so, please bring enough checks to write them individually. Many thanks for your continued generous contributions.

## **MEALS**

Breakfast is simple, usually a hot cereal, yogurt, fruit and hot drinks. The main meal will be served by 11:00 a.m. and is finished by noon in order to keep the sixth precept. In the spirit of renunciation and in accordance with

monastic ways, we ask that participants receive what is offered, and follow the eight precepts, including no meals after the mid-day meal. (Please do not bring your own food or plan to use the kitchen, as we cannot accommodate dietary needs beyond what is listed here.) We will offer vegetarian meals, and will also have a gluten-free alternative (rice bread, rice cakes or grain). The meal planning may include dairy-free dishes, but not necessarily every day. We will offer teas/coffee and juice at teatime, and occasionally cheese or chocolate.

### **ETIQUETTE**

In monasteries emphasis is placed on establishing harmony by mindfulness and consideration of others. Before entering a shrine room or living space it is necessary to remove the shoes.

Although retreatants are not obliged to, there is the custom of bowing to the shrine or teacher. The triple bow, to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, is usually done upon entering or leaving the meditation hall. At the end of a formal meditation period, respect is usually paid to the senior monastic with the triple bow.

When in the meditation hall concern needs to be taken in moving with as little noise as possible. When sitting one should avoid lolling and lounging and sitting with one's back against the wall, especially during the Dhamma talk. Care should be taken not to point the feet at the shrine or at the monastics, as this is considered impolite.

When offering something to nun or a monk, or talking with them, one should not stand looming over them but rather approach them respectfully at the same level at which they are sitting. A monk has to be accompanied by another male when talking privately with a woman. A similar rule applies for nuns, who must be accompanied by another woman when talking privately with a man.

### **TERMS OF ADDRESS**

Nuns and monks of ten years standing are usually addressed as "Ajahn" which comes from the Thai and means teacher. Other monks can be addressed as "Venerable" or the Thai equivalent, "Tan". These designations may, or may not be followed by the ordained name of the individual. Alternatively, any monk can be called "Bhante", a more general term. In this tradition it is considered impolite to refer to monks or nuns by their ordained names without the appropriate form of address preceding it. Nuns should be addressed as "Sister", or if they are Elders, as "Ajahn".

### **OFFERING FOOD**

Monks and nuns are allowed to receive and consume their daily meal in the period between dawn and noon. Anything they intend to eat or drink, except water, must be formally offered into the hands or placed on or into something in direct contact with the hands. You will be given the opportunity to offer the daily meal to the monastics.

### **WORK MEDITATION**

Work is an active form of meditation and each retreatant is expected to participate in a one-hour work period each day. The scheduled time for work periods is dependent on the job you sign up for on arrival. There will be easier jobs for those who have limitations, so please sign up for the more physical jobs if you are able. Some jobs begin Friday night and some go until after the Sunday Meal. Extra help at the beginning and end of the retreat is especially appreciated, so please volunteer if you are able. Everyone is expected to help clean the center at the end of the retreat.

### **MOVEMENT**

To support your practice, gentle movement classes will be offered on an optional basis. Proper posture can help with the strain on knees and backs. If you have specific issues, talk with the instructor or come and check out the classes. Details will be announced at the retreat. There will be a space for available for personal stretching, movement or yoga, so feel free to bring your personal yoga mat, etc.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE (tentative)**

#### **Friday, November 19**

Registration and check-in 3 - 5 pm

Light meal (soup, salad) 6 - 7 pm

Orientation 7:30 pm

Evening Chanting and Meditation 8:00 pm

**November 19-27**

Daily Wake up Bell	5:00 am
Morning Chanting and Meditation	5:30 am
Breakfast	7:00 am
Morning Practice	8:30 am
The Daily Meal	11:00 am
Afternoon Practice	1:30 pm
Afternoon Tea	5:30 pm
Evening Session	7:00 pm
Rest /additional practice on your own	~9:30 pm

**Sunday, November 28**

Wake up Bell	5:00 am
Morning Chanting and Meditation	5:30 am
Breakfast	7:00 am
Clean-up personal space	8:00 am
Closing Ceremony	9:00 am
Light Lunch	11:00 am
Clean-up group space and good-byes	Noon - 2 pm
Visit with teachers, peruse books	

**QUESTIONS**

We hope that this information sheet has answered your questions. If you have additional questions, you can email the retreat manager, Hitesi Cyndia at [Hitesi3@gmail.com](mailto:Hitesi3@gmail.com). The Confirmation Form can be emailed or mailed to Hitesi Cyndia, at PO Box 264, San Anselmo, CA 94979 and **must be returned by November 12, 2010 to confirm and ensure your place in this retreat.**

**GETTING TO ANGELA CENTER**

Angela Center – Ursula Hall  
535 Angela Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
[angelacenter.com](http://angelacenter.com)  
707-528-8578

The Angela Center is in North Santa Rosa, California on Old Redwood Highway on the east side of Highway 101. (Note that the retreat is not at Abhayagiri Monastery!)

**Driving:**

**From the south**, take Highway 101 north to Santa Rosa. Exit at Mendocino Avenue/Old Redwood Highway. Get in the left lane as you come down the off-ramp and turn left at the light onto Old Redwood Highway. Go about one mile to Angela Drive, which is on the right side. There is no street sign at Angela Drive, so look for these landmarks: on the left side is an “Angela Center” sign with an arrow pointing toward Angela Drive; on the right side is a low stone wall, a speed limit sign, and a telephone pole with yellow reflective markers. Turn right onto Angela Drive and go less than half a mile to the Angela Center.

If you are coming **from the north**, take Highway 101 south. Just before you get to Santa Rosa, take the River Road/Mark West exit. Turn left (east) and cross back over the freeway. Go a long block and turn right at the light onto Old Redwood Highway. Go about a mile and turn left onto Angela Drive. Then follow directions as in above paragraph.

**Note:** Friday afternoon traffic from the Bay Area and around Santa Rosa can be very heavy and there will likely be delays. Be prepared for rainy conditions. The trip normally takes about an hour from San Rafael, but could take 3-4 hours after 4 p.m. Please plan to leave early and carry a map for alternate frontage roads to use as detours. Stony Point Road to the west and parallel to Hwy. 101 is a good alternate.

Please note on your Confirmation form if you are interested in carpooling or if you can pick someone up from the Oakland or San Francisco airports. Also indicate if you are interested in meeting at the San Francisco or Oakland airport and renting a car together. If there is enough interest, Hitesi will put you in touch with each other. Please arrange your transportation to allow you to stay until the retreat is over. It is best to book departing flights for after 5 p.m. on Sunday, if possible.

**From Bay Area Airports:**

Fly into San Francisco or Oakland Airports. The Sonoma County Airport Express (1-800-327-2024, 1-707-837-8700, [www.airportexpressinc.com](http://www.airportexpressinc.com)) runs shuttle buses to Santa Rosa from both airports. Their buses are white with blue with red lettering. They run every hour in the morning and every 90 minutes in the afternoon from the blue pillars outside the baggage claim area at SFO. At Oakland, they run every two hours on the even hours (6:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., etc.) from the outer drive-through from both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2. The trip takes approximately two hours. You buy the ticket from the driver at the airport. Please see their website for exact schedules and fares.

Take the bus to the Sonoma County Airport stop. You can ask the shuttle driver to call George's Cab (707-546-3322) to take you from to the Angela Center, a 10-minute ride from the shuttle stops. A cab from the shuttle to the Angela Center costs around \$12 to \$15.

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT ANGELA CENTER**

Angela Center is the big building on the right after you come up a little hill. Ursula Hall is the first building on the left. There is a small parking lot by the Angela Center (for brief unloading only). The road then continues down into a larger parking lot on the right. Please park in the lower lot and leave your car there during the retreat.

Please read and sign the following Release of Liability form and bring it with you to the retreat. We will need this form to before giving you your room assignment. Thank you!

**SANGHAPALA FOUNDATION**

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

I acknowledge that I have voluntarily applied to participate in the **Monastic Thanksgiving Retreat, November 19 – 28, 2010 at The Angela Center.**

**ASSUMPTION OF RISK**

1. I am aware that participating in this event may involve strenuous activities such as work meditation, yoga, or movement classes, as well as risks associated with hiking, including contact with poison oak and wildlife. I am also aware that this is a silent, intensive meditation retreat and that participants in such retreats may experience intense and unusual psychological, spiritual, and/or emotional states of mind and body arising from the meditation and associated retreat activities. I am voluntarily participating in these activities with full knowledge of the risks involved, and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of harm that may result from these activities.

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

2. As consideration for being permitted by Sanghapala Foundation to participate in these activities at facilities procured by Sanghapala Foundation, I agree that neither I nor anyone acting on my behalf, or my assignees or heirs, will make a claim against, sue or attach the property of Sanghapala Foundation, its agents or anyone working directly or indirectly for Sanghapala Foundation for injury or damage resulting from acts, howsoever caused, by any agent of Sanghapala Foundation, as a result of my participation in this event, except when such agent exhibits gross negligence or intentionally acts in a manner leading to my being harmed. I hereby release Sanghapala Foundation from all actions, claims or demands that I, or anyone operating on my behalf, or my heirs or assignees now have or may have in the future for injury or damage resulting from my participation in this event, except when an agent of Sanghapala Foundation exhibits gross negligence or intentionally acts in a manner likely to lead to my being harmed.

I am aware of the provisions of Section 1542 of the California Civil Code, and expressly waive my rights under the code, which Section reads as follows:

A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS WHICH THE CREDITOR DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE, WHICH IF KNOWN BY HIM MUST HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR

**KNOWING AND VOLUNTARY EXECUTION**

**I have carefully read this agreement and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this is a release of liability and a contract between myself and Sanghapala Foundation, and sign it of my own free will.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_