

Travel Information Jhana Retreats



In order to facilitate your travel, the following information should provide you with adequate information with which to make your travel arrangements. If questions arise for you, please don't hesitate to contact our office. We'll make our best efforts to help you make the most convenient and economical arrangements.

Historically, most of the participants fly in from out of the area. This means our usual pool of volunteers from the local area is severely limited. Also, regrettably, the Cloud Mountain staff is unable to directly provide pick-ups for individuals. For these reasons, it has become our standard practice to organize incoming and outgoing group shuttles between Cloud Mountain and Portland International Airport (PDX), which is about 60 miles from the retreat center. In good traffic the drive takes about 1 hour and 15 minutes. The inbound and outbound shuttles are far and away the most economical and convenient options for those of you flying in or even for those of you planning to take trains or buses. There are no shuttle services that run between Seattle airport and Cloud Mountain, nor is there convenient public transportation from SeaTac either.

In order to participate in the group shuttles, it is important to arrange your flight to arrive at PDX between **1:00 and 3:00pm on the first day** of the retreat, and to depart PDX **no earlier than 3:30pm on the last day**. It is also important that you apprise us of your flight information at the earliest opportunity and **no later than 10 days prior to the start of the retreat**. Once we have gathered the flight information for all anticipated shuttle riders, we make the reservation with the shuttle company on your behalf, and send out the timing and logistics of meeting the shuttle on the Monday prior to the start day of the retreat. When you meet the shuttle you will pay the driver directly for your portion of the cost of the trip (which varies a bit depending on the number of riders). Historically, the per person cost averages between about \$20 and \$30 dollars.

The outbound shuttle back to the airport will be scheduled to depart Cloud Mountain at 11:00am, which should result in a 1:15 pm arrival at PDX if traffic flows smoothly. Sometimes people run into difficulties in finding a flight that departs late enough to work well with this schedule, especially those flying from the east coast or internationally. Based on experience, we encourage you to **book a hotel room in Portland, stay overnight and fly out the next day**. Often, hotel rooms can be booked inexpensively when purchased with a plane ticket. If you arrange an earlier flight, and thus must leave the retreat center prior to the scheduled end of the retreat, you will encounter the following challenges. You will likely be forced to book a solo shuttle, which at the current rates will cost you over \$100 for the one-way trip back to Portland. You will also need to take full responsibility for making and confirming your own travel arrangements, because, regrettably, the Cloud Mountain staff will not be able to offer you assistance.

It is probably helpful for us to provide you with some understanding of why we request that everyone stay through until the scheduled end of the retreat. On all of our retreats, we ask every participant to commit to daily and final chores to support the flow of the retreat and help the retreat center offer retreats with only a tiny residential staff. At the end of retreats, we need the help of all participants to clean up the retreat center. This is true on every retreat, but it is especially important at the end of our two annual jhana retreats. These retreats are both long ones, so all of the rooms and buildings have received heavy use and need a good, thorough cleaning by the end of the two weeks or month, respectively. Also, unlike most of our other retreats, we limit the number of participants on these retreats to a mere 24, partly to provide everyone with a single room. So we have relatively few individuals in attendance, but we open up every available space at the retreat center, meaning there is quite a lot to clean up at the end. For these reasons, we encourage you to make every effort to stay through the scheduled end of the retreat, since a departure prior to the scheduled end has a negative impact on the other participants and on the retreat center staff, leaving them all with quite a lot of extra work to do.

Please also bear in mind that you yourself will directly benefit by experiencing the closing of the retreat as part of the group and by ending your retreat and making your re-entry into the world of speech and activity in a calm and relaxed way. You will have just come out of a period of deep concentration, and you will give yourself a priceless gift by assuring yourself the gentlest possible transition.

All of this being said, rest assured we understand that sometimes unusual circumstances exist, and that, despite your best intentions and efforts, you may encounter difficulties in making your travel arrangements in accordance with the guidelines above. We are aware, for example, that international travelers may encounter very limited options in booking plane tickets. We encourage you to call the Cloud Mountain office if this is true for you, and we will be happy to explore various options to work out an arrangement that contains metta and respect for everyone.

Shuttle Service:

The **Blue Star Airporter** provides door-to-door shuttle service between Cloud Mountain and Portland airport. They is the most convenient and reliable service available and we have worked with them for many years. Blue Star can be contacted at **1-800-247-2272** if you have questions for them. Blue Star currently charges about ****\$104.25 for a one-way solo shuttle trip.**

Public Transportation:

Neither **Greyhound** bus (1-800-231-2222) nor **Amtrak** (1-800-872-7245) stop in Castle Rock. The nearest stops for each are about 20 miles from the retreat center, in Kelso, WA. Regretfully, we cannot assist with pick-ups. If you must resort to using public transportation to get to the retreat, you will need to contact Owl Taxi at 360-577-6777 in Kelso or Longview (they are considered “twin” cities) to drive you out to Cloud Mountain. Given the expense, you might wish to take public transportation to Portland, and join the group shuttles from and to the airport. Alternatively, you may wish to look into car rentals before resorting to public transportation.