The Vipassana Retreat Experience: A Consideration of the Meditation Retreat as a Religious Paradigm of Travel

Abstract
Despite the scarcity of references to meditation retreats in the large volume of research and literature concerning the relationship between modern leisure tourism and forms of religiously motivated travel, the number of meditation retreat centres has increased worldwide in recent decades. Michael Stausberg notes the growth in the international spiritual retreat business since the 1980s, and lists the visitation of retreats as one of the common purposes of religious tourism, itself one of the various forms of contemporary spiritual life that are a result of the increased leisure time available to us in our modern life.

Meditation retreats, by their style of presentation and advertisement, may resemble other forms of religious travel. Websites of some Buddhist retreat centres have the facility where the enquirer can download the retreat schedule, whilst others have web pages that advertise forthcoming retreats, almost in the manner of a catalogue from which to browse the types of retreat on offer. Some even have testimonials to the efficacy of particular retreats, seen, for instance, in the Finding Freedom in the Body: Mindfulness of the Body as a Gateway to Liberation retreat, held recently between 10 and 15 April 2012, and advertised on the website of the Spirit Rock Meditation Centre.

Full Text:

10 day Vipassana meditation retreat is just the beginning which brings you on the right path, but even these 10 days can be life changing experience. You can read more and also sign up for the course at one of the meditation centers all around the world at the official website of Goenka’s vipassana teaching. We advise to sign up even few months in advance to secure yourself a place at the course. It is not necessary to have an experience with meditation, but if you practiced some meditation before the retreat it will be easier for you to concentrate and also you might get deeper into vipassana technique. Many people imagine meditation retreat as peace and relaxing under the tree while birds are singing around. Vipassana retreat centres specialising in the needs of vipassana practitioners have evolved around the world to cater for these requirements and conditions, usually to the exclusion of any worldly, religious or study activities. The intensive Vipassana retreat centre catering for lay people is a quite recent trend in Buddhism. An intensive Vipassana meditation retreat is a serious undertaking, which requires effort and self-discipline. A retreat is not a chance to escape the pressures of daily life, nor a time out in which to do one’s own thing. The basics of the practice, students are required to report their experience to the teacher in a formal interview. As in the Zen tradition, the daily interview is an essential part of the Theravadin vipassana style of practice.