SEVEN LANTERNS



Seven Nights in Varanasi

A gentle week-long sleep ritual with Indian raga music

LANTERN OF VARANASI

WELCOME

A quieter week begins tonight

Thank you for listening to Lantern of Varanasi. This little guide is our gift to you: seven evenings, each with a short calming practice, a place to picture as you drift off, and a Indian raga mix to play while you do it.

How to use it

- [ ] Read one night each evening, about 30 minutes before you want to sleep.
- [ ] Start the music first, at a low volume, then do the practice.
- [ ] Read the scene, close your eyes and picture it. Let the music do the rest.
- [ ] In the morning, write a line in the diary at the back.

You do not have to do it perfectly, or seven nights in a row. Skip a night, repeat a favourite, fall asleep halfway through. All of that counts.

This guide is for relaxation and winding down. It is not medical advice and does not replace a doctor. If you have ongoing trouble sleeping, please talk to a health professional. During the breathing exercises, if you feel dizzy or uncomfortable, simply return to normal breathing.

THE PLACE

Varanasi by night

Varanasi lies on the banks of the river Ganges in northern India. It is one of the oldest living cities in the world and the holiest city of Hinduism, also known as Kashi, the City of Light.

Along the river, more than eighty ghats, long flights of stone steps, lead down to the water. At dawn, people come to bathe, pray and greet the sun, while boats drift slowly through the morning mist.

Every evening, as darkness falls, priests on the ghats perform the aarti: they raise great brass lamps of fire to the river, while bells ring and conch shells sound. Visitors set small leaf boats afloat, each carrying flowers and a tiny flame, and hundreds of lights drift away down the dark water.

Varanasi has a long tradition of classical music; the sitar master Ravi Shankar was born here. The music on this channel follows the slow opening of a raga: the bansuri, a simple bamboo flute, and the sitar, over the endless hum of the tanpura and a soft tabla. There is no hurry in it. Each note is allowed to unfold, the way the river moves.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Setting up your evening

A calm night starts a little before bed. You do not need all of these. Pick the ones that are easy for you.

- [ ] **Dim the lights** an hour before sleep. A single lamp or a candle (never left burning) is enough.
- [ ] **Put your phone away** after starting the music. Turn the screen face down, or use a sleep timer.
- [ ] **Keep the volume low**, just loud enough to hear. Softer music is easier to fall asleep to.
- [ ] **Cool, dark and quiet:** a slightly cool room with fresh air helps most people sleep.
- [ ] **A warm drink** without caffeine, such as herbal tea or warm milk.
- [ ] **Same time each night** if you can. Your body likes a rhythm.
- [ ] **Sleep timer:** set one on your phone (or in the YouTube app) so the music fades out on its own and you never need to reach for the screen.

NIGHT 1 OF 7

Arrive

Tonight is only about arriving. Nothing to fix, nothing to achieve: just a slower evening than usual.

The long exhale

1. Sit or lie down comfortably and let your shoulders drop.
2. Breathe in gently through your nose for a count of 4.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of 6, as if cooling a cup of tea.
4. Repeat for about ten breaths. Let the exhale be the longest part.

Tonight's scene

> *You sit on the stone steps above the Ganges as evening falls. Lamps are lit along the river one by one, and their light trembles on the slow, dark water.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM · www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

NIGHT 2 OF 7

Let the day go

Thoughts about tomorrow are loudest when the lights go out. Tonight you give them a place to wait.

The worry page

1. Take a piece of paper and a pen (not your phone).
2. Write down everything still on your mind: tasks, worries, things to remember.
3. Next to each one, write the first small step and when you will take it.
4. Fold the page and put it away. It will still be there in the morning; you do not have to hold it tonight.

Tonight's scene

> *You set a small boat of leaves on the river. It carries a few marigold flowers and a tiny flame. Watch it drift away slowly until it is just one light among many.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM · www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

NIGHT 3 OF 7

Into the body

After a day in your head, tonight you come back into your body, one part at a time.

The slow body scan

1. Lie on your back, arms beside you, and close your eyes.
2. Bring your attention to your feet. Notice warmth, weight, tingling, or nothing at all.
3. Move slowly upward: calves, knees, thighs, belly, chest, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, face.
4. At each place, breathe out and imagine it growing a little heavier. If your mind wanders, simply return to where you were.

Tonight's scene

> *You lie on a rooftop above the old city. The air is warm. Far below, temple bells ring softly, and above you the sky fills with stars.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM · www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

NIGHT 4 OF 7

Steady

A simple rhythm, like the slow pulse in the music, gives a busy mind something calm to follow.

Square breathing

1. Breathe in for a count of 4.
2. Hold gently for 4.
3. Breathe out for 4.
4. Hold empty for 4. Picture tracing the four sides of a square. Repeat for a few minutes.

Tonight's scene

> *A wooden boat carries you slowly across the river. The only sound is the oar dipping into the water, again and again, steady and calm like your breath.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

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NIGHT 5 OF 7

Release

Tension hides in the jaw, the shoulders and the hands. Tonight you find it by tightening first, then letting go.

Tense and release

1. Make two fists and squeeze gently for 5 seconds. Then open your hands and feel the difference for 10 seconds.
2. Do the same with your shoulders: lift them toward your ears, hold, and let them fall.
3. Then your face: scrunch it up, hold, and soften it completely.
4. Finish with your whole body at once, then let everything go loose and heavy.

Tonight's scene

> *In a quiet courtyard, a musician tunes a tanpura. Its deep, endless hum fills the space. Let the sound hold you, the way the earth holds the river.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM · www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

NIGHT 6 OF 7

Gratitude

Ending the day on something good changes the last picture your mind takes into the night.

Three good things

1. Think back over today and find three small good things: a kind word, a warm drink, a moment of quiet.
2. For each one, recall it in detail: where you were, what you saw, how it felt.
3. If you like, write them in the diary at the back of this guide.
4. Let the last one stay with you as the music plays.

Tonight's scene

> *You sit under a great banyan tree. Its roots hang down like curtains. A soft breeze moves through the leaves, and the scent of incense drifts by.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

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NIGHT 7 OF 7

Your own ritual

On the last night you choose. You now know six ways to wind down; keep the ones that worked for you.

Build your evening

1. Look back at your diary. Which nights felt calmest?
2. Choose one breathing exercise and one other practice (the worry page, the body scan, tense and release, or three good things).
3. Put them in an order and do them tonight with the music, start to finish.
4. This is your ritual now. Repeat it whenever you need a quiet evening.

Tonight's scene

> *It is just before dawn. Mist lies on the river, and somewhere a bamboo flute begins to play, slowly and softly, as the first light touches the water.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM · www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

YOUR WEEK

Sleep diary

Each morning, write a few words. Print this page or copy it into a notebook.

	BEDTIME	CALM (1–5)	WHAT HELPED / ONE GOOD THING
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

KEEP LISTENING

The music of Varanasi

Dawn on the Ganges

Indian bansuri flute meditation for yoga and sleep · 60 BPM
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi

New mixes appear every week on www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi. Subscribing is the easiest way to find them.

The other lanterns

Lantern of Shiraz, Persian ambient: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfShiraz
Lantern of Yerevan, Armenian duduk: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfYerevan
Lantern of Seville, flamenco guitar: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfSeville
Lantern of Kyoto, Japanese zen: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto
Lantern of Paris, café jazz: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfParis
Lantern of Galway, Celtic harp: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfGalway



Sleep well.

SEVEN LANTERNS

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