

Five-Day Vipashyana Retreat Schedule and General Information

DAY 0

17.00 – 18.00 Registration

18.00 Dinner

19.30 Dharma talk

21.00 Winding down

DAY 1-DAY 4

05.30 Wake up gong

06.00 – 6.50 Sitting

06.50 – 7.10 Mindful Tea

07.10 – 8.00 Sitting

8.00 – 8.30 Riwo Sangchö (optional)

08.00 – 9.30 Breakfast

09.30 – 10.20 Sitting

10.20 – 10.40 Mindful Tea

10.40 – 12.00 Sitting (3x sit)

12.00 – 12.30 Yoga (optional)

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.00 Individual Dharma study hour

15.00 – 15.50 Sitting

15.50 – 16.20 Mindful Tea

16.20 – 17.10 Sitting

17.10 – 18.00 Free time

18.00 Dinner

19.00 Dharma talk

20.00 Sitting

21.00 Winding down

DAY 5

Schedule as during the earlier days, with conclusion after the session that ends at 10.20.

About the Retreat

The focus of the retreat is continual meditation, within a basic framework of four sessions, interspersed with periods for personal study and interview with the instructor. See attached for an overview of the schedule. As you can see, the schedule and format of the program is quite manageable. During the retreat everyone will be assigned one interview with the instructor, as well as periods where you can have impromptu meetings with him.

Sessions will consist of 20 minutes sitting, 10 minutes walking, and 20 minutes sitting again; then a tea-break in silence and then another 50 minute session as above. The first morning session ends with optional chanting and a short offering ritual. The second morning session ends with time for yoga.

The atmosphere should be one of commitment to mindfulness, with a relaxed appreciation for being fully present. Whatever comes, good or bad, happy or sad, we allow discursive thoughts and moods to pass on by, like imprints of a bird in the sky.

Practitioners of sadhana or ngöndro may designate one session to their practice, which they can do in their room. The overall inspiration of the retreat is the vision of the unified intention of all vehicles; there is no Buddhist vehicle where the practice of mindfulness is not the core, and vipashyana not the objective. Hence there should be no concept of separation in terms of the vision and practice that everyone is sharing.

The format is retreat which means that there are boundaries, and the physical ones are the location where everyone commits to stay for the duration of the retreat, unless there is some unexpected serious reason to leave. Everyone also shares the boundary of speech – silence. The boundary of the mind is the common commitment to the vision of the workability of the mind, and the discipline of continual mindfulness during meditation and post-meditation. It is suggested that couples stay separately during the stay. The idea is to create the necessary simplicity in a situation of silence.

There is no need for apprehension about the retreat. It is for ordinary persons, but of course it requires a commitment to the project of sitting meditation. When it comes to meditation, Vipashyana and Vajrayana, Zen and Dzogchen all do the same thing. The instructor will see to it that everyone is alright with the practice, as well as be available if needed for anything related to practice. He will also give the instructions for the practice in the evenings.

This retreat will provide a clear perspective of the core of Buddhist meditation practice, offering an opportunity to experience the path in the peace of the retreat itself, and also as a preparation for our post-retreat compassionate engagement in the world.