

# *Preparing for Online Retreat*

## **Meet and greet:**

We will have a Zoom meeting prior to the retreat to go over practicalities and meet one another.

Say something about yourself, how you have been in lockdown, your practice, retreat experience etc.

Also tell us about your situation for this retreat – is it conducive? Do you see any problems?

## **Online Preliminary Meeting**

**Date and Zoom link given closer to the time.**

## **General:**

**Make sure you designate someone as an emergency call – just in case – and give us the number.**

Here is the link for [Personal Retreat](#) for talks, Puja Book and Encouragements.

## **Minimising disturbance:**

To prevent interruptions during the retreat, tell family, friends, neighbours, WhatsApp groups etc. what you are going to do and about your need for silence. Activate 'out of office' message on email.

The more silent, the better e.g. switch off your mobile phone for the week!

Don't expect the same results level of concentration you might get on a residential, but you may surprise yourself! If there are 'disturbances' think of these as an opportunity to integrate practice into daily life.

## **Sila :**

If full time, follow the 8 precepts, so no solid food after midday meal; this can be modified, but take no more than a light snack. Better for wakefulness if you can do without.

If part-time, you will have to decide for yourself.

Celibacy.

No beverage that disturbs mindfulness (coffee for some excites too much.)

Consider eating vegan or vegetarian food during period to strengthen commitment to the first precept.

## **Zoom for Sitting, Chanting and Group Q&A**

If you're not familiar with Zoom do one of their on-line tutorials before the retreat e.g.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

Be on time for the sitting sessions – other people rely on your support. If, on occasion, something delays you, its Ok to join late.

Make sure you are muted, even during chant.

Use 'Gallery view' rather than 'Speaker view'.

Wave to speak – normally there should be no need to speak except during Q&A sessions.

Sit in a way that is comfortable; its Ok to sit to the side or have the light quite low, but make sure you can be seen even if it only your back! Otherwise we won't build a sense of support for one another.

Please, don't eat or drink in front of Zoom screen and dress modestly – treat this as you would the Satipanya shrine room.

If teacher is present, wait for them to leave or switch off their video before you leave after sitting.

If teacher is not present, bell will ring at the ending time.

If your WiFi connection is poor, consider using an Ethernet cable.

If possible, keep pets away from visible Zoom area.

### **Contacting the teacher:**

Spiritual or psychological difficulty: Feel you can't support the state that has arisen.

Phone anytime – 01588 650752 (landline). It takes a while for it to come through as email and then I will call you back.

Mobile connection very poor!!!

We can then either phone or set up a meeting on Skype ( my name – bhantebodhidhamma ) or WhatsApp (my number – 07 968 291 653)

### **Home preparations:**

Decide on a dedicated place to sit and walk – sometimes moving furniture about supports commitment.

Walking meditation may be more challenging than on retreat because of distractions. Is there anywhere quiet in your house or garden? Could you cover bookcases with a cloth? Would walking barefoot help maintain focus? Will lowering the light level help?

Can you do 10 mins fast walking somewhere in your house / garden to start the walking meditation periods? If not, can you do another form of exercise to lift physical energy e.g. Chi Gong, Yoga, stretches?

Organise food in advance e.g. prepare meals and keep in freezer; do all shopping before retreat or organise for deliveries.

**Link for Retreat – Date and Zoom link given closer to the time.**

*Start as you mean to finish!*

*Moment-to-moment mindfulness is the secret of success!*