Day of Practice Retreat Guide

Written by Kynan Tan, May 2024, updated August 2025
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Hello! Welcome! You're reading this because you've expressed interest in, or are currently attending, the Day of Practice with Kynan. We look forward to practising with you! This document outlines some of the key things to get the most out of this practice on the day.

Benefits of Retreat

The opportunity to go on retreat is special. To have the time and space to focus on practice is an amazing opportunity. Unfortunately, many of us don't get this opportunity very often, so we try to carve out bits of time that allow us to do this in the midst of a busy life. The Day of Practice is an opportunity to practise deeply in the city, without leaving our lives.

You can look at this as a detox from communications and electronics, or a nervous system reset. It can be a deep exhale and shift towards relaxation. It also fosters time to go deeper in practice and explore what is meaningful to you about meditation and the path. The day becomes a container to hold your practice and assist cultivating different states of mind.

While all these good things are possible, it will be much easier to get them if you can bring an attitude of acceptance and curiosity. Try to hold any expectations lightly. Allow the practice to unfold over the day. Practice patiently and diligently, with *wise effort*, like the strings of a guitar, neither too tight nor too loose.

Schedule

The schedule will be posted in the Buddhist Library and can also be viewed here. It will sometimes change on the day. You will be notified of any changes.

The schedule is designed to help support your practice. You can make adjustments to the schedule as long as they don't negatively impact other participants. For example, you may find that sitting for 45 minutes introduces a lot of physical pain – feel free to do shorter sits. You might find you want to do more sitting and less walking. Sometimes it is good to be able to be resilient and sometimes it is good to take breaks and create space. This requires knowing what is helpful for you and your practice. If you aren't sure, please stick to the schedule as written (except for emergencies), and ask the teacher to get an external perspective.

Venue

We are really fortunate to co-present this event with the Buddhist Library as a lovely place to practice in Sydney. There are many books here! Feel free to browse the shelves at the beginning and end of the day (during the event, the books will very likely prove to be a *tantalising distraction*). There's a kitchen with a fridge for storing your food. You can also help yourself to tea or coffee.

When you arrive, please set yourself up with a comfortable meditation posture. Arrange cushions, a chair, and any other props that will help you be both relaxed and alert. You might like to have a couple of different options for seated postures.

Practice

These events are run according to **student-centred** principles, meaning that you will be supported to do your own practice. You are trusted as the person who knows the most about you, so it will be a collaborative endeavour as you are guided through the day. In a practical sense, this means you can continue on with your practice: the technique, methods, and approach you've been working with. Kynan will help guide you to continue to move forward.

If you aren't familiar with a meditation technique or would like a bit more instruction, please let Kynan know and he will give you instruction in the opening talk or in a small group session to begin the day. Some common meditation practice techniques include 1) **stabilising attention on the breath**, 2) **body scanning** and **mindfulness/insight practice**, 3) **mettā** (loving-kindness), or 4) **non-dual awareness practice** (there are many other techniques and you are welcome to practice something outside this list).

This is an opportunity to develop confidence in your ability to practise with *self-guidance*. It's good to stick with a clear intention for the day and to pick one technique as your base practice that you return to in order to allow the practice to deepen.

Individual and Group Interviews

Each participant will be assigned a time slot for a 1:1 or group interview. This is compulsory unless we already know each other well, as it is the only time to check in individually during this period of more intensive practice.

This is a chance to check in with a teacher, to reflect on the practice, ask questions, or receive guidance. Together we will try to find what would be helpful to explore

together. It might help to think of it as finding what is alive, or asking: what is important in your practice? You don't need to prepare ahead of time (although this can be another tantalising distraction!). You'll have a chance to bring up anything that's on your mind. Kynan may ask you some questions, make suggestions, or you may do a short practice together. These interviews are consistently found to be helpful and encouraging in a way that makes practice feel easier.

1:1 interviews will generally be either 10 or 15 minutes long, while group sessions will be longer. This is usually a good amount of time, however sometimes interviews will run a little shorter or longer. Please be patient if the interview starts a little late due to the previous one going slightly over.

Walking Meditation

Often people find walking to be less rich or interesting than stationary/seated practice. Generally though, this is because people haven't given as much time to practising walking meditation. The walking practice is a chance to stretch the legs and bring aliveness and movement into the body, but it's also a chance to cultivate different aspects of conscious awareness. Walking meditation, when engaged with as a practice, can also be highly enjoyable. Try exploring how you can cultivate focus, joy, and peacefulness in the walking practice.

The technique you practise when walking will be related to, or a variation of, the stationary meditation practice. If you are focusing on the breath, then while walking you can either focus on the breath or the sensations in the feet (these sensations also cycle and shift in a rhythmic pattern). You can also do mettā, mindfulness of the body, or non-dual practice while walking. Please ask if you have any questions about the walking practice.

There are two main spaces for walking in the library. The first is the main hall: please make sure your props are not an obstacle for others, and walk side to side (bookshelf to bookshelf), so that we can avoid playing frogger! The second space is the smaller room, in this room please walk clockwise (as viewed from above) around the central table. This room will be for slower walking.

Precepts and Noble Silence

Meditation practice is a way to go into the mind and understand ourselves at a deeper level that allows for powerful transformation. Meditation is also an opportunity for cultivating calm and peacefulness. These aims are greatly aided by finding some degree of seclusion. While we can't all go on retreat all the time, we can find times in life to intentionally stay in silence and remove some of the decision-making, activity, and sensory input so that we can cultivate calm and clarity.

Noble silence is the agreement that we make with the group to support ourselves and each other in our practice. By lending our silence to the group we enable each other to go deeper in practice.

This means not talking unless necessary. It also means technological silence: not using your phone or electronic devices to communicate or receive communications.

It can also mean seclusion from ideas and texts. Please refrain from reading or writing unless it is in direct support of your current practice, such as reading a section of a book that is a manual describing your current practice technique. You can also see the full Code of Conduct (this will also be printed out for reading at the venue).

On the day, you'll be asked if you are willing and able to observe noble silence, where appropriate, for the duration of the retreat. You can always talk to the teacher, or if necessary (e.g. ordering lunch). If the group agrees then this will be one way to support each other to find peace and tranquillity - even in the middle of Sydney!