

Ratnashri Meditation Center inbjuder er till en serie av online tyst Shravasti Meditation retreatar med Vördade Khenmo Drolma

15 – 17 okt., 12 – 14 nov. och 3 – 5 dec., 2021 (fredag kl. 19 till söndag kl. 13:30 CET)



Please read the extensive Shravasti meditation teachings by His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche after this program. All are welcome to join.

Buddha said, “When the mind is realized, that itself is wisdom. Thus, do not search Buddha elsewhere.”

His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche has introduced this meditation as an easy but comprehensive mind training approach following the *Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing* taught by the Buddha in Shravasti while illuminating and supplementing it with teachings and techniques from Vipassana, Zen, and Mahamudra & Dzogchen traditions. This healthy, well-balanced mind training method is suitable for everybody in this modern day life. There is also morning yoga practice from the Tibetan yogic system (The Six Yogas of Naropa), Qigong and Tai chi.

The purpose of these retreats is to deepen our understanding of our own mind in order to expand our innate loving kindness, compassion, and bodhicitta through study, contemplation, and meditation. These silent retreats create conducive conditions for wisdom to arise.

Various Aspects of Meditation:

Be our own master

Buddha was a skilled healer, with teachings appropriate for the varied experiences and stages of understanding we encounter as we traverse our life. By applying various methods given by the Buddha, we become our own master in counteracting our diverse mental states. *The Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing* helps us to find a flexible framework to deepen our meditation and understanding of our mind.

Meditation as a medicine for crisis

Until afflictive emotions are completely uprooted; a change in health or relationships can bring a tsunami of responses for even mature practitioners. This retreat will explore how to calm the mind and practice when strong emotions and thoughts are aroused.

Meditation reveals our buddha nature

Looking within through meditation allows us to look at the roots of our own emotions and mental habits that obscure our innate loving kindness, compassion, wisdom, and bodhicitta. We meditate in order to habituate ourselves to reveal our buddha nature.

Meditation to balance and sharpen our mind

Wisdom is within us. By smoothing the subtle flows of consciousness through meditation, one increases concentration, clarity and equanimity of the mind. This creates conducive conditions for wisdom to arise.

Precepts to be observed

To attain effective meditation, we will follow the footsteps of Buddha by observing no food after midday, adopting a simple vegetarian diet and practicing yoga.

Through observing precepts and noble silence, wearing comfortable clothes, strictly following the schedule with no phone or computer, this closed-door retreat will transform your habitual thinking and attain concentration and joy.

Observe Eight Precepts:

1) Refrain from harming living beings. 2) Refrain from stealing. 3) Refrain from sexual activities. 4) Refrain from telling lies. 5) Refrain from consuming alcohol and other intoxicants. 6) Refrain from using cosmetics and decorative accessories or watching entertainment performances. 7) Refrain from sleeping on high beds. 8) Refrain from eating at inappropriate times.

Observe Noble Silence

Participants should observe noble silence throughout the retreat, except during discussion sessions.

Khenmo Konchog Nyima Drolma, abbess of Vajra Dakini Nunnery, has studied with the foremost spiritual teachers of our time including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche and Ani Pema Chödrön. After her novice ordination by Drikung Kyabgon in 1997, she attended multiple international gatherings as he transmitted the lineage and major Drikung teachings. She received monastic training at Gampo Abbey guided by Ven. Pema Chödrön, and attended their shedra (philosophy college). In 2002 she took full ordination as a Buddhist nun in Taiwan. In 2004 she was installed as a Khenmo (Abbot) in the Drikung lineage, becoming the first woman and first westerner in her lineage to officially hold this responsibility. Most recently, she was one of the teachers His Holiness Drikung Chetsang trained personally to teach the new Shravasti curriculum. Her current responsibilities, in addition to teaching and Vajra Dakini Nunnery, include the Tibetan/Himalayan Nuns Leadership Program and she chairs the international committee for the Shravasti Bhikshuni Varsa Retreat. Khenmo Drolma has been trained and authorized by His Holiness to teach this profound system of meditation and yoga. More information can be found at <https://vajradakininunnery.org>.

Retreat Schedule Oct. 15 – 17, Nov. 12 – 14, and Dec. 3 – 5, 2021		
Sweden CET (Central European Time)		
Friday	kl. 19–21	Dharma Talk
Saturday	kl. 8–10	Session 1
	Break	
	kl. 11–13	Session 2
	Lunch	
	kl. 14:30–17:30	Session 3 (with break)
	Tea break	
	kl. 19–21	Session 4
Sunday	kl. 7–8	Yoga (optional)
	kl. 8–9	Conclusion
	Silent retreat ends	Free time
	kl. 12–13:30	Question & Answer

Shravasti Meditation Retreat Program Fee

Fee for the whole program (all three retreats) is 1 200 SEK (including electronic copies of texts).

No discount when attending part of the program. All proceeds will be donated to Vajra Dakini Nunnery.

A financial statement will be read out at the end of the retreat.

Registration

To confirm your participation, please send an email to info@ratnashri.se and pay the retreat fee to pg. 1287806-2 (Ratnashri Meditation Center) **no later than Oct. 12, 2021**. The three talks that have been given by Khenmo Drolma on “Understanding Practice Through Varied Perspectives on the *Anapanasati Sutra* (*Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing*)” will be available for all participants prior to the retreat. More retreat information and Zoom login information will be given prior to each retreat. Write all your inquiries to info@ratnashri.se.



Teaching on Shravasti Meditation by His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche

The Shravasti Meditation is an integrated approach to cultivate one's mind based on the *Anapanasati Sutra* (*Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing*), which was taught directly by the Buddha. His Holiness developed this modern meditation practice to meet the need of the globalization of Buddhism in the 21st century. This integrated modern approach absorbs the essence of meditational practice of three Buddhist traditions.

1. Vipassana: This is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation. This well-known meditational approach was rediscovered by the Gautama Buddha about 2500 years ago and later integrated into the Theravada tradition.
2. Chan (Zen): Bodhidharma, the 28th patriarch of Buddhism, brought the Chan meditation practice to the Mahayana tradition.
3. Mahamudra and Dzogchen: Mahamudra and Dzogchen are meditation practices of Tibetan Buddhism that originated in Indian Buddhism.

Even in the autobiography of Lord Jigten Sumgön, it says: "I practiced for seven years in retreat. Of them, five years I did not understand the ways of meditation and only in the final two years I was able to dispel mental distractions. Therefore, if you could mindfully meditate for a few years, you will be able to purify your negative mental states. Due to the power of purifying your negative mental states, you will be able to reach the pure land of the Buddha and will be able to deliver all other beings to the pure realm". Thus, in *Abode of Manjushri Sutra*, it says: "Mind is moved by conceptual thoughts. If there are no conceptual thoughts, it is nirvana". Someone who knows this naturally will be known as possessing primordial wisdom. We need to look within to see whether we are able to transform our ordinary life winds into the wisdom winds or not using this meditation method. For instance, when you are engaging a virtuous object, you must check by yourself whether you could concentrate on that chosen virtuous object for 5 minutes or 10 to 15 minutes or not. Otherwise, even though you diligently perform virtuous deeds with body and speech, if your mind is totally distracted then the main purpose of even setting a schedule for the three years, three months, and three days retreat is defeated. Therefore, you are asked not to let your mind be distracted, which is really the most important thing. Drikung Kyabpa Jigten Sumgön says: "Without knowing the ways of placing your mind on mindfulness at all times, engaging in activities merely through body and speech are useless."

[In this matter], we normally choose a pebble, stick, or an image of the Buddha etc., as the object of calm-abiding meditation. You need to concentrate on that chosen object, inanimate form, without being distracted. But due to extreme mental distractions and excitement in this degenerate era, it seems to be difficult to mindfully concentrate on a single object even after applying the antidote of mental distraction. But here, the method of mindfully focusing on "breathing in and out" taught by the Buddha is directly related to one's life-force, the life-winds and wherever you go, the breath follows you until last breath. Hence, doing meditation while living is crucial. And in the teachings of the great Burmese masters, it says, "while inhaling, expand your belly and while exhaling, sink your belly." This approach seems to be immensely useful in order to reduce conceptual thoughts. It is said in our tradition: "the object of meditation should be low." Thus, the importance of such a pith-instruction is also available in this meditation practice of "breathing in and out".

In the *Ganges Mahamudra* pith instructions, Tilopa says: "For a person with lesser intelligence who cannot abide (in reality), seize the vital points of the winds but forsake twisting intrinsic awareness. By the many ways of gazing and focusing the mind, exert yourself until you abide in the state of intrinsic awareness." Having practically engaged in the course of focusing on "breathing in and out," conceptual thought is bound by the rope of wind. Thus, when you settle your mind into the natural state without being distracted, you will be able to abide in the state of intrinsic awareness and realize the ultimate truth. Then undoubtedly you will be widely known as a "yogi".

Many scientists have done a wealth of research on meditation. Not long ago, I have seen many explanations about the benefit of doing meditation such as healing disease, healthy mind and so forth. For instance, based on the information about meditation practice highlighted on BBC News, it says that while doing meditation, an extraordinary matter or substance is produced in the human brain and when the power of the human brain is deteriorated due to old age, the declined power can be restored through this matter or substance. Furthermore, it is said that meditation practice also plays an important role in giving rise to the power of preventing human disease. Therefore, they advised everyone to practice meditation in order to have a healthy body and mind. *Verse of Concluding Prayer* by Kyobpa Jigten Sumgön, says: “The three mental afflictions arising, is like a sword striking water. When the knot of mind is untied, may I rest in the state of luminosity.”

Why do we need Shravasti Meditation?

Among the three wisdom tools (i.e., listening, contemplation, and meditation) that the Buddha recommended, meditation is what we lack most. Many people dedicate their entire life studying Buddhism but fail to practice what the Buddha taught. There are many meditation approaches, for example, the common and uncommon preliminaries. During the traditional three-year retreat, various approaches are also taught. However, most people mainly focus on reaching the required numbers while neglecting the essence of these practices, that is, to transform the mind. Many of you likely have attended teachings on Dzogchen or Mahamudra. However, are you able to meditate with a single-pointed mind for 10 minutes? What about 5 minutes? Meditation is not easy. You should start with calm-abiding to stabilize your mind. So, you come to this retreat not to receive teachings, but to engage in meditation practice and increase your ability to stabilize your mind.

Why is this approach called Shravasti Meditation?

The Anapanasati Sutra was taught in Shravasti, India where Buddha spent twenty-five three-month rainy season retreats continuously there with his disciples. Also, in the Vinaya section of the Kangyur, which contains the Buddha’s earliest teachings, Shravasti Meditation approaches are mentioned.

The Goal of Meditation is to Transform Karmic Wind into Wisdom Wind

Each breath takes about 4 seconds. Every 24 hours, we breathe around 21600 times. In most of these breaths, we breathe in karma wind with thoughts. Every 32 breaths, we breathe in wisdom wind that goes directly into the central channel. The purpose of meditation is to transform karmic wind into wisdom wind and make wisdom wind flow into the central channel. In this way, the mind will stop wandering and suffering. As a result, liberation will be attained.

The Vajrayana tradition has many teachings on the practice of wind, chakras, and channels. When anger arises for example, wind is concentrated in the right channel; when desire arises, wind is concentrated in the left channel; and when ordinary people are in the state of ignorance, wind is concentrated in the central channel.

Phagmodrupa once asked Gampopa, “why are we in samsara?” Gampopa replied, “because our wind is not going to the central channel.” *The Anapanasati Sutra* is like a key in samsara that opens the central channel, which leads to liberation. It is a key approach that is shared by all three traditions (i.e., Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana).

First, Stabilize Your Mind

The Anapanasati Sutra (Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing) has a lot of teachings. We will start with the basics and practice on stabilizing our mind. Without the ability to stabilize your mind, Dzogchen, Mahamudra, or Vipassana special insight is out of reach. Lord Jigten Sumgön said, ‘Meditation is not to do something. It is to get used to and form a habit.’ Someone asked the Buddha ‘What do you do in the three-month rainy season retreat in Shravasti?’ The Buddha replied, ‘Get used to breathing.’ At the beginning stage of your meditation, focus your mind on breathing. This is a relatively rougher way of meditation. Still, you need to practice and experience meditation instead of talking about it in words.

Meditate on Moving Objects

Our modern world is fast-paced. Our mind runs like wild monkeys and horses. Traditionally, the object of meditation is still. However, these still objects are too subtle to tame our monkey mind. We need rougher objects. Meditating on moving objects may be easier. For example, we can practice walking meditation, observe the rising and falling of the belly, or meditate on a running stream.” During the week-long retreat in Taiwan, His Holiness engaged students in walking meditation and standing meditating. During the walking meditation, students are reminded to focus on their feet: Heel, toes, and foot forward and walk steadily as an elephant. During the standing meditation, students are instructed either to focus on the scenery in front of them or sounds they hear.

Don’t Identify

When I meditate on a bell, I do not identify that “Oh, this is a bell.” Nor do I recognize its shape. These are all thoughts arising. The key is to be aware of the object of meditation without identifying it. During the standing meditation, His Holiness would walk behind the students and reminds everyone to “rest on the object, don’t identify it, experience the nature of your mind”.

At All Times Polish it Diligently

Nonduality is an important concept in Zen. Phagmodrupa once said ‘nonduality is mahamudra.’ In China, Shenxiu founded the Northern school of Chan with ‘The body is a Bodhi tree, the mind is a mirror. At all times polish it diligently, and let no dust be attached.’ At his deathbed, Shenxiu bestowed his last teaching ‘bend, zigzag, straight.’ These three words describe the process of meditation. First, we need to bend: To endure hardships so that our negative karma will be cleaned. Milarepa also first went through this bending process. Then, we need to practice constantly. This is zigzag. At last, the wind goes straightly into the central channel.

The Nature of Mind is Stainless

A crystal ball drops into the mud. Your eyes see that the crystal ball is muddy. Then you wash away the mud. The crystal becomes clean and clear again. But this is what we see with our eyes. For the crystal ball itself, it is always clean. We don’t need to wash the crystal ball. It is pure and clear from the very beginning. So does the rigpa, the nature of our mind. But the nature of the mind is too subtle that even the super-resolution microscope cannot see it. It cannot be described by language either.

Car is Empty; Empty is Car

Emptiness is like the space. It can be experienced but not elaborated by words. You go to the space. You don’t know where the center is. You can’t find the North, South, East, or West either. In front of you are all the approximately two thousand pieces that make up your car. You investigate ‘where is my car?’ You cannot find it. These parts of your car can be further broken down into molecules, atoms, and even smaller particles. You cannot find your car, though all the parts of the car are right in front of you. This is why car is empty; empty is car. Then rest the mind in the stainless rigpa.

Not Seeing is the Greatest Seeing

In order to realize the nature of his mind, Naropa endured twelve major hardships and twelve minor hardships. Then, one day, Tilopa hit Naropa on the head with his shoe so strongly that Naropa passed out. When Naropa woke up, his mind and Tilopa’s mind became one. The nature of the mind is beyond words and thoughts. It can only be experienced. Not seeing is the greatest seeing. Now go ahead to look at the nature of your mind and analyze it yourself.

Merits of practicing Shravasti Meditation

In the meditation practice of “breathing in and out” taught by the Buddha in the *Anapanasati Sutra*, there is the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (i.e., body, feeling, mind, and phenomena). Each consists of four exercises corresponding to the four levels of meditation. For example, when you practice and meditate on the body, this body is seen as substantially impure and characterized by impermanence, suffering, and not-self; thus, you are meditating on the meaning of each aspect. The *Anapanasati Sutra* explicitly explains the merits of its proposed approaches, “Bhikkhus, this is how mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit...fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness...that is how the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven enlightenment factors...that is how the seven enlightenment factors, developed and cultivated, fulfill true knowledge and liberation.” Also, the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment also states that these practices are paths to liberation.

The Anapanasati Sutra (Sutra of Mindfulness of Breathing)

This Sutra was taught 2600 years ago in Shravasti by Buddha Shakyamuni. His Holiness has written a unique commentary on this sutra, combining the wisdom of all three Buddhist vehicles - Theravada, Mahayana and Mahamudra. Calm, mindfulness, and the *Anapanasati Sutra* are a complete path to enlightenment. Contemplation on this path leads the practitioner into a state of great spiritual depth like the vast expanse of the heaven, silent like a mountain, and with an ocean-like depth of compassion for oneself and others. The taste of this state is one of joy! This meditation technique is rare and precious, and not only guides us on the path to enlightenment, but also benefits mental well-being and helps us to be in the here and now to be mindful of our own thoughts in spite of the hectic pace and pressure from the outside world, so that we may find greater peace.

Regarding this sutra, it is said in the first volume of the *Basis of Vowed Morality (Vinayavastu)*, “After having practiced austerity for six years, the Buddha realized that asceticism will not bring any result. Therefore, he practiced breathing meditation at ease.” Also, in the second volume of *Vinaya*, the Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, due to my abiding in the mindfulness of breathing during these three months, I have remained in perfect samadhi within.” Similarly, based on the four objects of mindfulness (body, feeling, mind, and phenomena), the Buddha extensively taught Ananda, Kimpa and others the breathing meditation practice and so on. After the Buddha completed the three-month summer retreat in Shravasti, he extended the retreat for another half a month as requested by Shariputra. This was recorded in the *Anapanasati Sutra*, “I stay in Shravasti until the 15th of the tenth month.” As such, three thousand monks and nuns from far away gathered in Shravasti. It was well-known that the white night lilies blossomed on the 15th of the tenth month in this area. Therefore, this day was also known as “the month of the night lilies.” The Vietnamese elder and great scholar, Thich Nhat Hanh, wrote in the biography of the Buddha,

“This is a compilation of all the teachings on the mindfulness of breathing as spoken by the Buddha previously.” Thus, the *Anapanasati Sutra* can be regarded as a complete sutra that explains the breathing meditation practice.