

*on-Line at-Home Retreat:*  
**February 16-22, 2025** (Sunday through Saturday)

## **Mindfulness with Breathing:** **contemplating dhammas, contemplating Dhamma** *(natural phenomena, natural truth)*

**Breath is life and mindfulness with breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is the foundation meditation of original Buddhism. Breath connects us with the here-now, webs of life that support us, health & well-being, and deeper realities of mind-body.**

This retreat will emphasize *dhammas* and Dhamma, the realities of mind-body seen in the light of truth. Resting upon previous explorations of body (Feb 2021 & March 2023), *vedanās* (Aug 2021 & July 2023), and *citta* (Jan 2022 & Jan 2024), this retreat will revisit such *dhammas* (natural phenomena) as opportunities to contemplate Dhamma (natural realities) with the aid of Buddha's teaching. All of our experiences connected with breathing are subject to change and uncertainty, are conditioned and dependent, and empty of selfhood. Seeing them clearly, tendencies of possessiveness and identification diminish. Sources of suffering undergo quenching when nobody is fighting them or becoming them. All dhammas, starting with breathing, are opportunities for realization, release, and wholeness.

This retreat builds on the previous *ānāpānasati* retreats but does not strictly require them. However, it will benefit from the foundations of *ānāpānasati* that were explored in the February 2021 & March 2023 online retreats, as well as in-person retreats. If you would like access to those instructions, please [contact Santikaro](#).

\*\*\* [Register for a retreat here](#) \*\*\* [Pay the \\$100 Registration Charge here](#) \*\*\*

\*\*\* [Ask a question here](#) \*\*\*

### **Retreat Overview and Parameters**

In this **online retreat** (at home or in other safe accommodation) teaching will take place **via Zoom**. Please make sure that you have the latest version of the Zoom app installed. The Zoom link will be on the [Retreat Home Page](#) from February 8<sup>th</sup>). The online retreat format will support you in deepening your at-home practice, responding to the contingencies and uncertainties of this winter, and taking a break from the busyness and stress of modern life. You are encouraged to arrange your schedule to fully benefit from deepening your practice of *ānāpānasati*.

**Participants are expected** to follow the entire retreat, participate with all the guided meditations and talks live or by recording, practice with each day's guided meditation and instruction, meditate on one's own, and explore the retreat teachings each day.

**Schedule:** We'll start with a **Guided Meditation at 7:00 am on Saturday February 15<sup>th</sup>** (all times Central USA) and will keep the following schedule of Online Zoom Sessions through **Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup> evening:**

- 7:00 am** Guided Meditation: brief introduction, 40-50 mins practice.
- 10:30 am** 30 mins Silent Meditation followed by Ānāpānasati instruction
- 2:00 pm** 45 mins Silent Meditation followed by Q&R
- 7:00 pm** Dhamma Talk and Q/R

**Note:** These times were chosen to allow all 4 US time zones to participate. The 10:30 am session time was chosen to allow folks to listen to the guided meditation recording if they aren't able to do so live.

**Sit at least one more time daily, more if possible,** at whatever times work best for you, to make the most of the instruction and retreat opportunity. Add walking meditation, yoga, or qigong as able.

You may wish to include light reading concerning ānāpānasati, such as Buddhadasā's Bhikkhu's [\*Mindfulness with Breathing\*](#) or Thich Nhat Hanh's [\*Breathe, You Are Alive\*](#). Limit reading periods to 15 minutes each and leave adequate time for patient reflection and journaling.

If possible, take **Meals** alone and keep them simple.

**Noble Silence:** within the realities of your living situation, limit unnecessary speech as much as possible, especially trivial and frivolous speech, as well as worry-perpetuating, complaining, and blaming speech. If possible, stay off the internet, don't check email, and leave 'social media' alone. Make realistic choices that you can relax with. If you must use devices, create realistic guidelines for yourself to wisely limit net browsing and email activity. This is for the sake of practicing restraint and supporting meditative calm and clarity.

**Personal responsibility:** The retreat is your own responsibility, with the support of the online sessions. Do whatever you need to do each day, according to your circumstances, while keeping a focus on the Dhamma of breathing mindfully and investigating the reality of mind-body-life. You may need to make a few modifications in what I have outlined above, according to your circumstances. Please stay within the spirit of retreat.

An important aspect of **Home Retreat**, such as this one, is developing a practice that fits with your own home and life realities. That requires some flexibility, while personal discipline and structure are important. This retreat offers some structure with which you can learn and experiment, as well as an online sangha of practitioners.

**All the sessions will be recorded:** Links for accessing the recordings (video & audio) will be posted on the [Retreat Home Page](#), usually within an hour. The audio from all sessions will be available after the retreat (on a Google drive) through the [Retreat Home Page](#).

**Dāna:** Santikaro's time and teaching are offered on a donation basis, as are all sharings from Kevala Retreat. Making these retreats possible, maintaining Kevala Retreat for contemplative practice, and our other activities require many resources and hard work. Hence, our dependence on *dāna*, your donations. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Note that the registration fee is required (below) and therefore different from *dāna*. It is a nominal fee to ensure participation. We have found that without a fee, many people who register do not actually attend the retreat (which is disappointingly selfish).

**Registration:** Please [complete this on-line form](#) (specifying “Anapanasati February”) and send [\\$100 registration fee following the information here](#). This fee is to encourage commitment to full participation. Nobody will be refused because of inability to pay this fee. Please email us [if you cannot afford the fee](#) so that we can make other arrangements.

**Preparation:** An email reminder will be sent February 8th, giving access to the [Retreat Home Page](#) (a Google Doc), which will be the on-line hub for information concerning this course, including the Zoom link, schedule, and links to recordings. Further information will be added to the Retreat Home Page as we go.

Best wishes for your practice of the Dhamma journey of life.

Santikaro

[Ask questions here](#)

### **Suggested reading:**

*Mindfulness with Breathing: a manual for serious beginners,*  
Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu (Wisdom Publications)

*Breathe You Are Alive,* Thich Nhat Hanh (Parallax Press).

*Breathing Like A Buddha,* Ajahn Sucitto (Amaravati Publications).

### **An overview of ānāpānasati**

Mindfulness with Breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is one of Buddhism's foundation practices. Many meditators have been exposed to it in some form. This retreat will deepen its roots, especially concerning Dhamma, so that it can truly serve as a foundation in our cultivation of the middle way, strengthening our daily practice of mindfulness, inquiry, serenity, and letting go.



What does a well-rounded meditation practice look like?

- it integrates all four establishments of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhānas*);
- it deepens composure, mental unification (*samādhi*), calm abiding, joy, and freedom;
- it fosters abundant clear seeing and insight (*vipassanā*);
- cultivates the seven factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅgas*) leading to “higher knowledge” and genuine liberation.

Such is mindfulness with breathing according to the original Buddhist teachings. Buddha left behind a framework for systematic meditation practice incorporating all of the above. On its own, *ānāpānasati* is a sophisticated meditation system that thoroughly explores our lived realities of body, feeling tones, mind-heart, and the laws of nature permeating all conscious moments. Exploring these facets of life through and with breathing deepens awareness, serenity, concentration, and insight.

Further, mindfulness with breathing serves as a foundation supporting many forms of meditation, such as the *brahma-vihāras* (divine abodes), providing them with a relaxed, grounded foundation. It also has a central role in somatic health and well-being.

This series of retreats focuses on *ānāpānasati* on its own practical terms, based in the original teachings of Early Buddhism. Each retreat gives 8 days to explore one of the tetrads of this rich, profound process, practicing with and reflecting on how each level unfolds. To begin, mindful breathing in and out opens up the nurturing potential of healthy breathing. Skillful exploration of such breathing releases tension, settles restlessness, and helps us be more comfortable in sitting. This makes pleasure and well-being more available. As this sensitivity increases, the more subtle dynamics of breathing are used for deepening calm and enhancing clarity. This enables us to recognize thoughts and emotions with greater acceptance and less reactivity. As we drop beyond rejection and indulgence, wisdom blossoms. This foundation will support any wise explorations that we choose.

Based on his decades of practice with and teaching of mindfulness with breathing, Santikaro will share skillful means for embodying this practice as a trusted friend. He will emphasize developing *ānāpānasati* as a daily practice.

The retreat’s “Home Page” will have links to PDFs of the *Discourse on Mindfulness with Breathing* (MN 118) and an outline of 16 Entryways into the Domains of Mindfulness with Breathing. If you would like copies now, just [email Santikaro](#).

