

PLANNING A RETREAT OR DAY OF MINDFULNESS

Practicing together as a Sangha for one, three, five or more days can be inspiring and refreshing. Practicing together for a day or more will deepen our practice in powerful ways. Ever since our local Sangha (the Laughing Rivers Sangha of Pittsburgh) began organizing Days of Mindfulness (DOM) and retreats, our Sangha has grown in numbers and in individual commitment to our Sangha and our practice. Our Sangha has learned that repeated retreats bring us ever closer. The more often that our teacher, Chan Huy, leads our retreat, the deeper he understands our Sangha and the more powerfully his teachings touch us.

Organizing a retreat or DOM can itself be a fruitful practice. In addition to the practical benefit to our Sangha, there is an opportunity to organize in a way that brings us and those around us peace and joy. In order to do that, we must begin with ‘Organizing Meditation.’

Organizing Meditation

We often think of organizing a DOM or retreat as a constraining and tedious process that involves countless details, potentially annoying interactions with caterers and fussy participants, and lots of things that go wrong. In fact, lots of things do go ‘wrong’, caterers can be temperamental, participants can be fussy, and details can be intimidating. By practicing Organizing Meditation, we create a process that nurtures us rather than exhausts us and that creates an atmosphere of peace and joy for those who participate in our DOM.

We begin practicing Organizing Meditation by sitting and looking deeply at why we are organizing. We need to examine the many motives and ideas that we associate with such an activity. Do we expect praise and attention for our efforts? Are we afraid that our DOM or retreat will spin out of control without our involvement? Are we open to the views of others? Can we listen deeply to others’ points of view or do we construct arguments against their points of view even as they are talking? Are we determined to be diligent and responsible or will we find reasons why we cannot complete tasks? By looking deeply at our own views, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, we can learn to let go of our expectations and to unattach ourselves from outcomes and possible futures. We can learn that by being present in every moment of our organizing whether it is while attending meetings with our co-organizers or talking menu with a caterer, we can experience the joy and peace of our practice. At the same time, if we learn how to organize skillfully, we shall help create an environment that presents countless opportunities for our Sangha members to practice happily.

Details are important. Just as Thay teaches us to chew and to fully taste each bite of our food, we can focus on and enjoy every detail of organizing, knowing that it nurtures us as well as all who participate in the DOM or retreat. Each detail is an opportunity to nourish others and ourselves. For example, dealing with a caterer and choosing our menu is important. Serving food that is too spicy for the tastes of some participants is guaranteed to distract them mentally and physically long after the meal. Some may use that as an opportunity to unattach from their dietary preferences and to deeply contemplate their physical reactions to such food. But others will be so distracted that they lose opportunities to strengthen their practice. While this example

may seem trivial it is a reminder that attention to details and our simple decisions help make or break the experience of people who attend our DOM or retreat.

These guidelines are written with the hope that they may identify some details that are worth considering when we plan, particularly for those organizing their first DOM or retreat. These guidelines are not a substitute for experience. They should not be slavishly followed. Just as we learn that some sitting postures are valuable aids to practice so too can some approaches to organizing. The key to postures and organizing is to understand how effective they are in assisting us in the moment. We know that there is no virtue in sitting in a particular position and so there is also no virtue in how we organize. As we sit we find the posture that works for us and as we organize we find the method that works for our Sangha. That is the correct posture and the correct planning. Talking with our Sangha members, hearing their reactions to our planning, observing their reactions during the DOM or retreat and having participants fill out evaluation forms are of great importance. These inputs will let us know if our planning has been successful and point out ways that we can adjust our plans to enhance the practice for everyone. Remember that the Buddha attended retreats with large numbers of nuns and monks. At those retreats, the Buddha gave teachings that remain with us today. He also taught others who have transmitted his teaching to us. Some nameless people correctly organized those retreats. Their gift to our Sangha is without limit.

The Committee

A committee of three to six people is sufficient. People interested in joining committees should screen themselves to be sure that they will be able to contribute successfully. Each member should commit to attend every committee meeting. Planning moves very quickly and anyone who misses even one meeting will miss important information and also create extra work for those who do attend. Since planning occurs over a number of months, it is important that each member look ahead at his or her calendar to be sure that he or she will be able to fully participate in the planning over the entire planning process. Individuals who cannot do so can participate in many other ways such as helping with periodic tasks such as mailings or doing important tasks during the DOM or retreat itself. Potential committee members should also consider whether their work or home obligations allow them to put extra hours into the planning process at peak times such as during the registration period and the week prior to the DOM or retreat. Finally, each committee member needs to assess whether she or he is willing to let go of preferences or views and to fully support the decisions of the group.

Timing

Planning needs to begin, at least, one year before the event. The early planning is dedicated to finding a teacher, agreeing on some potential dates, and reserving a facility where the DOM or retreat will take place. The committee should plan its schedule of meetings at its very first meeting. Therefore, attendance by each committee member at each meeting is essential. In our experience, committees that meet for 1-2 hours need 6 meetings while those that have 4-5 hour meetings generally need 2 meetings. Email and phone contact between meetings is obviously necessary. More meetings will be needed by Sangha organizing their first or second DOM or retreat.

We do not have any advice for finding a teacher. In our case, a senior member of our Sangha suggested that we invite Chan Huy to lead our retreat. We did so and have not looked further. Virtually all of the evaluations from all of our retreats speak warmly and positively about his teaching. Talking with Sangha members in other cities might provide you with leads for a teacher. Finding a teacher will probably take less time than finding a suitable location.

Location, Location, Location

Our Sangha polled our members and found that people were happy to travel up to 50 miles to get to the DOM or retreat but were less willing to travel 75 or more miles. Finding out the travel distance acceptable to your Sangha brothers and sisters should be done at the very beginning of the process. Another initial piece of information needed before a search for a facility can occur is the number of participants that are anticipated. Choosing a number may be affected by the ability of your chosen facility to accommodate a certain number of people, or by your Sangha's ability to provide a dharma sharing AKA dharma discussion leader for every 10 or 12 participants or other factors. Deciding on a number is critical since it will exclude potential facilities that are too small.

Finding a location can be daunting. Sangha members can begin by asking friends particularly clergy and academics about possible sites. If your city or town has an association of churches, it may very well have a list of retreat houses that can accommodate you. The committee or some sub-committee of the Sangha should draw up a list of requirements and preferences for the location. Once some sites are identified, committee members or other volunteers will need to travel to the site and determine their adequacy. The following are the major requirements identified by our Sangha members:

- a. A quiet, large, and comfortable meditation hall preferably carpeted with adequate lighting and temperature control will be needed. Since some practices include prostrations or lying flat, the hall should be big enough to accommodate the projected numbers of participants in lying as well as sitting positions.
- b. A facility should be chosen that could accommodate all people including those with physical disabilities.
- c. A lovely outdoor area that can be used for group or private walking meditation is important.
- d. All people including those with no cars or with limited access to private transportation such as taxicabs should be able to attend. Financial considerations for travel should not be a barrier for those with financial limitations. The Sangha may want to set up car-pooling in addition to identifying easy methods of travel using public transportation. Scholarship money should be made available to provide transportation when necessary. It is important to remember that those with physical or financial limitations are not likely to contact the Sangha to discuss registration if the advertising does not indicate that the Sangha is willing to accommodate everyone despite physical or financial limitations.
- e. A comfortable room for sharing meals as well as an area for self-serving snacks and beverages throughout the day is suggested. It is important to remember that

- participants have different eating habits and needs. Snacks like fresh fruit, cookies, and pretzels as well as coffee, tea and juices are appreciated throughout the day.
- f. Quite breakout space is needed for each of the dharma sharing groups that will be formed. In addition, a smaller private space is necessary if your teacher is able to do private consultations.
 - g. Quiet is important for the success of the DOM or retreat. Inquiries should be made about noise levels at various times of the day. Some locations may get noisy at rush hour or after school. Some locations may be noisy because of the noises related to food preparation or table setting.
 - h. The facility should provide an emergency contact. In our experience, alarms have gone off and bathrooms have flooded during our retreats. Knowing who to call for emergencies helped us get through those crises.
 - i. If you invite people to commute to your overnight retreat, consider asking a few Sangha members to allow commuters to store things in their rooms at the facility and to use the rooms to rest. Many people are extremely tired by the end of the day and should rest before driving home.
 - j. The two areas most often commented on in our written post-retreat evaluations are the temperature of the facility and the quality of the food. Since a suitable temperature is difficult to ensure, participants should be reminded to bring layers of clothing that can accommodate varying temperatures. The issue of food needs its own section.

Food

Many facilities provide meals. Most of them have had little experience providing vegetarian meals. Cooks at the facilities often assume that providing vegetarian meals is simple- just provide the same menus provided to everyone else but eliminate the meat. Our long-suffering Sangha has had some interesting eating experiences that we still enjoy talking about. Do not underestimate the importance of food service.

- a. Try to visit the site when it is serving food at other functions or talk to others who have used the site before. Talk to the cook and discuss menus if possible. Be cautious and kind. Cooks can be touchy when you raise questions about their cooking.
- b. If the food provided on site is not adequate, consider having meals catered. In our experience we have had lunches and dinners successfully catered for \$4-\$7 per person. However, and this is a major caution, be sure that the food served will accommodate a wide range of tastes and diets. Food that is too 'exotic' or 'spicy' will not sit well for some people. Our committees have asked our Sangha members about the food that they prefer so we can better plan.
- c. A caterer may have difficulty finding a facility especially if the facility is on a campus and not at a street number. Be sure that your caterer has directions as well as your cell phone number. Also, be prepared to pay her or him in cash, check, or credit card when the food is delivered. Caterers generally expect payment at or before the event.
- d. Some people have many dietary restrictions. It is not always possible to accommodate them. Registration fees should be reduced for such participants and

- they should be encouraged to provide their own food. Access to a refrigerator and some food-heating device may be necessary. Ingredients should be clearly labeled and gluten-free and vegan options provided.
- e. Some Sangha members may offer to cook or provide food for the DOM or retreat. It is important to remember that food safety for a large number of people is different than food safety for a family or small group. The possibility of food-related illness is too great to be risked. Food should be provided by professionals.
 - f. People love leftovers. It is likely that you will have food left over after the DOM OR RETREAT. Plan for this by bringing containers and bags so that the food can be divided and distributed to participants to take home. Students are especially appreciative of food baskets to go.

Decorating and Setting Up

A silent retreat often allows us the opportunity to take more notice of our environment. Without the distractions of radio or TV or talking neighbors, we are more likely to look around and observe and appreciate our surroundings. This presents a wonderful opportunity for the organizers to contribute to the experience of each participant. Some of our decorating tips are described here:

- a. The altar in the mediation hall is the centerpiece for the DOM or retreat. An altar can be simple or elaborate. It could be a draped altar with a statue of Buddha, some flowers, and a calligraphy or picture in the background or it could be a simple table with a few flowers or branches. It is most important that the altar be set up mindfully and skillfully so that everyone seeing it will be moved. A candle and/or incense might be used. But be sure to ask participants at the “Welcome” if any of them have an allergy to smoke or a breathing problem that would be affected by the smoke.
- b. Flowers or branches can be placed throughout the facility to offer us beauty and joy.
- c. Pictures of Thay or of our Sangha or of beautiful scenes should be obtained and hung throughout the facility. One of our creative members found such pictures in old calendars from Plum Village.
- d. Gathas are wonderful means for bringing us back to the moment. Before our DOM or retreat, we travel the facility and put them up in bathrooms, on walls, on mirrors and many other sites. We always have to have two or three people scour the facility after the DOM or retreat in order to find them all.
- e. Since people often need to move to smaller rooms for different practices, we generally give the room’s lovely names and put signs on room doors so people will find them easily.
- f. A teacher needs to be comfortable as she or he leads us. We provide a 3-foot by 3-foot platform on which we put some carpeting and a cushion. Be sure that you find out if your teacher is bringing a cushion; you may need to provide one. Next to the platform we place a small table with water or tea, a bell, and room for notes. We always ask one of your younger Sangha members to act as an assistant for our teacher throughout the retreat. He or she can escort people to their private consultations, be sure that our teacher has everything he or she needs, and to convey messages between the organizers and the teacher.

- g. Many teachers will need a sound system especially in large rooms. Equipment may be purchased, borrowed from arts groups or rented. The equipment should be checked out carefully beforehand with the teacher. Someone should be assigned to adjust the sound during the Dharma Talk and other times.

Advertising

Getting word out about the retreat or DOM can be tricky especially if your Sangha has not had them before. Over time, more and more people know about the retreat and filling the facility happens quickly. Our Sangha uses a few methods of communicating and advertising.

- a. We have developed an email list over time and use that list to announce our DOM, and other major events. It is important to be sure that everyone knows and agrees to be on the list and that the list isn't over-used. Remember that some people do not have email and they need to be reached via regular mail. It is important not to exclude them from communication.
- b. We have also developed a regular mailing list and have the capacity to print mailing labels. Our regular mailing list includes our Sangha members, those who have attended past events and signed a sheet asking to be on our list, and others who have asked to be on our list.
- c. We also have a list of places that will accept our flyers and post them. These include other Sanghas, yoga studios, churches, and businesses. It is important to remember that if we wish to invite a diverse audience of people that we need to advertise in places and neighborhoods where people who are different than us shop, play, and live.
- d. Registration forms should be sent out to the regular mailing list and/or our web page 6 to 8 weeks before the event and there should be a bolded and underlined deadline for registration. That deadline should be about 10 days before the event. (See Appendix A.)
- e. Our registration form asks the participants to give their contact information, enclose their check, and check off boxes to let us know if they wish to take the 5 Mindfulness Trainings, have special needs, wish to contribute to our scholarship fund, and will be attending our orientation to the retreat. (We strongly advise those new to the practice to attend a 45-60 minute orientation to the retreat. At orientation, people are told about our practices such as walking meditation, our inviting of bells, silence and other things that will happen at the retreat. This orientation leads to less confusion for the participant.)
- f. Flyers (but not registration forms) should be sent out to our business/organization mailing list at the same time. (See Appendix B.) The flyers should describe the event and give phone numbers and emails of a few members of the committee. This is important. While those on our mailing list know about our retreat, passers-by in health food stores may not. By calling or emailing us, they give us an opportunity to let them know what the retreat or DOM entails. Even those who have been on retreat elsewhere may not know what our tradition means by silence or walking meditation. It is helpful to have copies of some material about Thay and our practices to send out to interested individuals. (See Appendix C.)

- g. Our flyers and registration forms describe our teacher, name the theme of the retreat, the cost, and give contacting information.
- h. It is important to carefully proof the flyers and registration forms before they are sent out. Two or three people should review them word by word to be sure that they are accurate. Most importantly, all references to cost and scholarships and the way that checks should be made out and mailed should be double-checked.
- i. Be sure to list your DOM or retreat on the Community of Mindfulness webpage. (<http://www.iamhome.org/>)
- j. We also post a flyer on our webpage.

Processing Registrations

Every Sangha has a different way of dealing with income and expenditures. In the past, our Sangha had asked individuals to process Sangha finances through their individual accounts. That becomes cumbersome for numerous transactions over an extended time. Currently, two of our Sangha members maintain a joint account. Duties are divided so that one member makes deposits and another makes payments. Detailed records are kept by both and a financial statement is made to our business meeting after the DOM or retreat.

The committee creates the budget for the DOM or retreat. Expenses include facility rental, food, mailings, sound equipment, copying, flowers, transportation for our teacher, and a stipend for our teacher, scholarships, and office supplies such as tape and scissors. Income includes registration fees, donations for scholarships, a dana collection for our teacher made at the event, and donations of materials and other in-kind donations. The following are some special considerations:

- a. The person receiving the registration forms should keep a hard copy of each form and mark the date it was received as well as a note describing the amount of the check that accompanied the form. It is also a good idea to keep a copy of the check before it is deposited.
- b. Someone needs to be put in charge of scholarships. Members of our Sangha or others seeking partial or full scholarships should be able to make those requests privately. There should be no record indicating who received a scholarship just the amount of money used. Scholarships should not create a difference among participants. Those receiving scholarships should not be expected to do extra work during the retreat. Indeed, they are offering a wonderful opportunity for member of our Sangha to practice generosity. They should be warmly thanked for giving us such an opportunity.
- c. Our teachers give us an incredible gift when they lead our retreat. They give us the fruit of their years of practice. They give us valuable time that they could spend with their families and loved ones enjoying the pleasures of their everyday lives. They risk poor food, long hours, sore jaws from smiling, and emotional demands by participants in need. We include in our budget at least \$500 for a one day retreat and at least \$800 for a Friday - Sunday retreat for our teacher. We also include air travel. During the retreat itself we put out a basket and allow participants to make a donation

- to our teacher. These payments are no larger than the low to moderate payments given to consultants by non-profit organizations. Sanghas who can donate more should do so.
- d. We mail each registrant a confirmation letter that includes directions to the retreat and an information sheet (that we copied in most part from the information sent out by our national retreat organizers). We also send a contact phone number that family members can use to contact a participant during the retreat, a pre-retreat contemplations (to ascertain what people expect or need from the event) (See Appendix D for the pre-retreat contemplations authored by Chan Huy and sent to us by the Plum Blossom Sangha in Austin, Texas and the post-evaluation), and any special instructions about what to bring along to the retreat. It is important to remember that people will need to know if they are expected to bring bed linens or alarm clocks, soap, shampoo, etc.
 - e. Twice we distributed directions provided by the facility that turned out to be inaccurate. Another time, the directions were accurate but did not include information about a recent important detour. It is best to practice drive the route to the facility if possible before directions are distributed. If that is not possible, the facility should be consulted to confirm the directions.

The Theme

The theme of the DOM or retreat can be an important way of organizing the experience. Members of the committee should discuss the various issues that have come up in the recent discussions at the regular sittings of the Sangha. War, tensions at work, relationship problems, or death and dying may significant issues for Sangha members at one time or another. When a particular issue is identified by the committee, the more poetic members can translate that issue into a suitable title for the retreat. A committee can also simply adopt the theme of Thay's retreat that year.

- a. The theme should be discussed with the teacher so that she or he will be comfortable organizing a Dharma Talk around it.
- b. The theme should be visited by each Dharma Sharing leader as they kick off their discussions.
- c. The theme can be used in choosing a guided meditation, songs, or sutras.
- d. One year when peace in our everyday lives was our theme, our committee organized a well-received panel of Sangha members who gave 5 minute talks on how they practiced peace in their everyday lives and jobs. We also distributed a peace packet with poems, articles and a CD of Thay.

The Schedule

Scheduling the day is perhaps the single most important task of the organizing committee. Members of our Sanghas have a wide range of preferences when it comes to our practice. Some people love to sit in quiet, others enjoy singing. Some of our members enjoy practicing Touching the Earth while others find the bowing foreign and difficult. Creating a successful schedule requires that committee members identify their own preferences so that their personal likes and dislikes do not determine the entire schedule. Second, the schedule should be examined in detail to see if options can be offered. For example, while it is useful and helpful to offer free time after meals, participants can also be invited to practice sitting or walking meditation on their own at those times. The following are things to keep in mind:

- a. The organizing committee must be careful not to get caught up in trying to squeeze too much into the day. We delight in the practices that Thay teaches us but these practices should be savored and not crowded together. It is especially difficult during a one day DOM since time is so limited. We can be tempted to jam the day with practices. Having four practices that are peaceful and joyful are more useful than seven practices that are hurried.
- b. Our committee does not distribute a schedule. Rather we write it up on a board in the meditation hall a few hours at a time. This allows us to change times or add or drop activities to accommodate the flow of the day. It is important that one person be charged with maintaining the schedule and committee members and our teacher can confer with that one person as needed. Trying to get consensus from the entire committee for every schedule change is too cumbersome.
- c. Since some people arriving at the facility may not have had an opportunity to eat before coming, it is generally good to have some food available such as soup and bread during registration.
- d. Two Sangha members should be assigned to registration. They should be equipped with a list of registrants and any notes about payments to be made at registration. They should be ready to tell each person where and when the “Welcome” is, where their room is located and any other information that is needed. They should also be ready to assist people with disabilities get to their rooms or carry their luggage. Participants should be given name tags to wear.
- e. It is important to equip participants with song sheets. While old timers have no trouble remembering lyrics, newcomers will have a difficult time unless they can read them. Singing can be done at the beginning and at the end of many practices like the Dharma Talk, tea ceremonies, sutra readings, and panels.
- f. We only schedule the transmission of the 5 Mindfulness Trainings at multi-day retreats because of the amount of time that they require. We generally do them on Sunday mornings. It is important that people wishing to take them be given copies of them ahead of time and be provided time to discuss them with a teacher and/or experienced Sangha members or at a Q&A session. Some group of Sangha members will need to meet separately from the retreat on Saturday night to review each application, assign dharma names, and allocate roles for the ceremony.

The Welcome

The “Welcome” at the beginning of the DOM or retreat is important. It sets the tone of the retreat as well as provides important information to participants. There are a number of announcements that we make that we believe are important. They are:

- a. We emphasize that sitting and other practices are not supposed to hurt and that there is no virtue in pain. We advise people to use chairs or move mindfully if necessary during sittings.
- b. We carefully emphasize the importance of silence during the welcome, making the point that silence is not simply the absence of talking. We remind participants that our practice is about being mindful and that we need to be mindful of the way we walk, move furniture, and close doors. We point out that quiet not only helps each participant remain mindful but also is a gift to those around us.
- c. At the welcome, we ask three of our members to stand and we advise participants to seek out one of these three members if they have questions during the retreat.
- d. We review how we invite the bell and how it brings joy.
- e. Often we will ask each participant to say his or her name and hometown. We especially welcome first-time participants and make it clear that they should talk to one of our three welcomers if they have any needs whatsoever.

Some Practices

- a. **Mindful Socializing:** A number of participants have noted on our post-DOM evaluations that they had hoped to have an opportunity to meet other practitioners. The people making these observations were generally people new to the practice or who lived in areas where they have no Sangha. Our Sangha felt an obligation to serve these participants. So we invented ‘Mindful Socializing.’ We sometimes set aside 30-45 minutes generally before or after dinner where we ask people who wish to socialize mindfully to meet at a specific place that is sufficiently distant from the DOM as not to disturb participants who do not attend the socializing. Mindful Socializing is an experience in deep listening and compassionate speaking. In society we spend many hours socializing at work or leisure. Generally, we are not fully aware of what people are saying or what their needs are. We often compete with others for attention or use socializing as a way to build or support our ego. Mindful Socializing gives us an opportunity to become aware of our reactions to other people and to observe our own conversing. It also provides a way for new people to feel welcomed, learn about our Sangha, and have their questions about our practice answered.
- b. **Dharma Sharing (Dharma Discussion):** Dharma Sharing is a difficult practice for people not familiar with it. Current attempts are being made to change the name from “Discussion” to “Sharing” and that may help a great deal. At our “Welcome” and again at the beginning of the Sharing, we remind people that Sharing is not the time to ask practical questions, or to discuss intellectual issues. It is not group therapy or a time to discuss our views and opinions. Dharma Sharing is a time to speak personally

- about the joys and difficulties in our practice. These are often related to the Dharma talk but that is not necessary. We remind people that we join hands and bow before and after we speak. We ask people to listen deeply and that includes maintaining silence for at least 3 breaths after each person speaks. Each Dharma Sharing leader can decide to pass a leaf or other item so that only the person receiving the item can speak. Other leaders might ask people not to speak a second time until everyone has had the opportunity to speak once. We discourage cross talking, i.e., two members engaging in conversations. We also let new people know that speakers do not necessarily respond to the person who spoke before them and that the Sharing is not about fixing things or solving problems.
- c. The Closing Circle: At the very end of the day or the retreat during the last 30-45 minutes of the event we invite everyone to sit in a circle and invite people to say their name and make any comments that they wish to. If time is short and the crowd is large, we might invite people to call out a word or words that express their feelings. This process allows ample time for everyone to have a say and the warm words bring joy. We then end with some songs and a few minutes of silent sitting. We remind participants to fill out their post-DOM/retreat evaluation forms. These forms are very important and each committee member should review them to identify suggested changes for future retreats. However, it is important to keep in mind, that one complaint or suggestion might not represent the majority view. We should bring complaints or suggestions back to the committee or our business meeting for discussion before we make changes.

Handouts

It is difficult to balance the need to assist participants by providing them various materials and not to distract them from the practices of the retreat. We set out extra copies of our retreat handouts that give basic information about our practice and Thay. We also have sample copies and subscription forms for *The Mindfulness Bell* and let people know how valuable it is as a resource (See IAMHOME.org for information that can be distributed at your event). Our Sangha has found a bookstore that provides books so that we can set a table of Thay's books and sell them during free time after lunch and other free times.

Last Minute Preps

It is necessary to ask Sangha members to assist in the DOM and retreat. Our members lead sitting and walking meditation, invite bells throughout the day, read the 5 contemplations at meal time, participate in panels, help at registration and clean up, and sundry other tasks. We try to spread the assignments widely for two reasons. We don't want a few members to be so occupied that they miss participating fully in the retreat. Second and, perhaps, more important is that by assisting, Sangha members deepen their commitment to the Sangha and to the practice. Although it is prudent to give tasks that require more experience to the longer-term members there are many tasks that can be carried out by newer members. They should be given the opportunity to offer their energy and talents to the participants. Keep in mind:

- a. Some people are uncomfortable speaking in public or having a central role during a ritual. Give people the opportunity to decline requests or to choose the tasks that they are more comfortable doing.
- b. People should be asked to help before the actual start of the DOM or retreat. Asking at the event can cause confusion and unnecessary conversations.
- c. Give people the support they need including written instructions or lessons in inviting the bell.
- d. Celebrate our tradition's openness to all styles and differences. Let's not create a hierarchy among practitioners.

We have developed (and continue to develop) our checklist. (See Appendix F) The checklist gives us a way to quickly review what we need to do. It is most reassuring and calming to see that we have completed all the tasks.

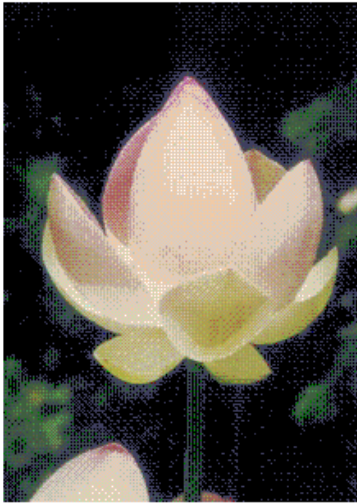
Last Note

You are invited to roll these pages into a ball or retreat or make paper airplanes with them. In the end, trust in your Sangha. At every DOM or retreat, the organizers make a list of everything that goes wrong. Interestingly, participants don't notice any of them (except food problems). 'Mistakes' are fine; they provide opportunities to practice with impermanence, non-attainment, and unattachment.

With a bow and smile from the
Laughing Rivers Sangha of Pittsburgh

Written from the experience of the Laughing Rivers Sangha of Pittsburgh
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Appendix A



Please join us for

The Heart of Happiness: Practicing Peace

A Day of Mindfulness
in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh

With Dharma Teacher Chan Huy

*Sponsored by Laughing Rivers Sangha
(The Pittsburgh Community of Mindful Living)*

Saturday, April 26

9 am- 8:30 pm

(Registration 8-8:45 a.m.)

Location

Nuin Center
5655 Bryant Street
Pittsburgh, PA (Highland Park area)

Registration Information

- Cost for the day is \$50 (vegetarian continental breakfast, lunch and dinner included)
- Cancellations after April 22 will receive a partial refund
- Some full and partial scholarships available

About Brother Chan Huy:

Chan Huy, "True Radiance," comes from a family with four generations of Thich Nhat Hanh's students, from his grandmother to his two children. He was ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh as a Dharma Teacher in 1994. He teaches mindfulness meditation and leads retreats throughout North America.

If you have wanted to hear Thich Nhat Hanh in person but have not been able to do so, Chan Huy can give you a taste of that experience. He is among the most accomplished and articulate of Thich Nhat Hanh's lay Dharma Teachers. You will know from his presence that he embodies the practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness means dwelling fully in the present moment, to be aware of what is going on within and around us so we can be more alive in our daily existence. Our retreat will include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, mindful listening, small group discussion, and eating mindful meals together.

For more information, please contact:

Matt: 412-624-5508 - or - Tony: 412-624-5080
Matt@stophay.pitt.edu tonys@pitt.edu

Please register by April 15, 2003

Send this form with a check payable to:
Matt Moyer, Box 7319
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

NAME _____

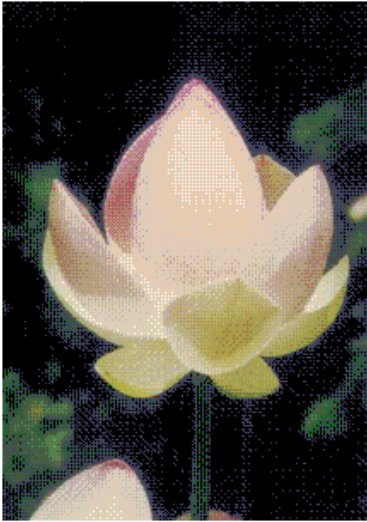
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- I am new to the practice and would like an orientation
- There may be an opportunity to receive the Five Mindfulness Trainings; please check here if you are interested in receiving them.
- I would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund in the amount of \$ _____
- Please specify dietary or other special needs:

Appendix B



Please join us for

The Heart of Happiness: Practicing Peace

A Day of Mindfulness
in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh

With Dharma Teacher Chan Huy

*Sponsored by Laughing Rivers Sangha
(The Pittsburgh Community of Mindful Living)*

Saturday, April 26

9 am- 8:30 p.m.

(Registration 8-8:45 a.m.)

Location

Nuin Center
5655 Bryant Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA (Highland Park area)

Registration Information

- Cost for the day is \$50 (vegetarian continental breakfast, lunch and dinner included)
- Some full and partial scholarships available

About Brother Chan Huy

Chan Huy, "True Radiance," comes from a family with four generations of Thich Nhat Hanh's students, from his grandmother to his two children.

He was ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh as a Dharma Teacher in 1994. He teaches mindfulness meditation and leads retreats throughout North America.

If you have wanted to hear Thich Nhat Hanh in person but have not been able to do so, Chan Huy can give you a taste of that experience. He is among the most accomplished and articulate of Thich Nhat Hanh's lay Dharma Teachers. You will know from his presence that he embodies the practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness means dwelling fully in the present moment, to be aware of what is going on within and around us so we can be more alive in our daily existence. Our retreat will include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, mindful listening, small group discussion, and eating mindful meals together.

For more information, please contact:

Matt: 412-624-5508

- or -

Tony: 412-624-5080

Matt@stophiv.pitt.edu

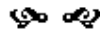
tonys@pitt.edu

Appendix C

WALKING MEDITATION

"Walking meditation can be very enjoyable. We walk slowly, alone or with friends, if possible in some beautiful place. Walking meditation is really to enjoy the walking -- walking not in order to arrive, but just to walk. The purpose is to be in the present moment and aware of our breathing and our walking to enjoy each step."

- Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*



Mindfulness means dwelling fully in the present moment, to be aware of what is going on within and around us so we can be more alive in our daily existence. Mindfulness practice is about bringing one hundred percent of our self to whatever we are doing, not just when we are sitting on our meditation cushion, but in our daily activities as well.

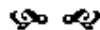
In walking meditation, we coordinate our walking and breathing, paying close attention to each breath and each step. We follow our natural breathing and take one step for each in-breath, and another step for each out-breath. We bring all of our awareness to the soles of our feet, the floor (or ground), and the contact between them. Place each foot gently but firmly on the walking surface, as if you were reaching out to touch a loved one. Walk as if you were walking on the Earth for the first time.

Your hands may be left at your sides, or you may hold one hand in the other. You may like to walk with your hands folded or palm to palm in front of your heart -- whatever is comfortable for you.

Walking meditation can also be enjoyed at a more natural pace. For example, you may like to take two or three steps with each in-breath and each out-breath. Practice conscious breathing by counting your steps. Notice each breath and the number of steps you take as you breathe in and as you breathe out. If you take three steps during an in-breath, you may say to yourself silently, "One, two, three," or "In, in, in," one word with each step. As you breathe out, if you take three steps, say, "Out, out, out," with each step. This helps us to maintain awareness of our breathing as we walk.

You can practice mindful walking in everyday settings with ease. For instance, you may try walking mindfully from the parking lot to work each morning, or from your car to your front door at the end of the day.

Please enjoy mindful walking in the beauty of the outdoors. Remember to stay with your breathing. If you notice something beautiful along the way -- a tree, a leaf, a bird -- just stop, but while you do, continue breathing mindfully so as not to get caught up in your thoughts. Always stay with your breathing. When you want to resume walking, just start again.



"I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child -- our own two eyes. All is a miracle."

- Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*

MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

From the Plum Village Chanting and Recitation Book

There are many different ways to cultivate mindfulness in our lives. In our community at Plum Village, we use several particular practices, such as sitting meditation, walking meditation, inviting the bell, reciting gathas, touching the Earth (or bowing), and hugging meditation. Following are brief descriptions of each of these. To learn more, you can refer to various books by Thich Nhat Hanh, or you can ask friends and teachers in your own community.

Sitting Meditation

Sitting meditation is like returning home to give full attention to and care for our self. Like the peaceful image of the Buddha on the altar, we too can radiate peace and stability. The purpose of sitting meditation is to enjoy. Don't try to attain anything! (See *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, Thich Nhat Hanh, 1975.)

At Plum Village, we practice mindfulness of breathing. Whether you sit on a cushion, a blanket, a chair, or directly on the floor, sit in a way that feels comfortable. If possible, inhale through your nostrils, and notice your abdomen expand. Then, as you exhale, notice your abdomen return to normal size. One way to help maintain awareness of breathing is to recite a gatha. When you breathe in, say silently, "In." As you breathe out, say silently, "Out." After doing this for a while, you might like to try a guided meditation. (See *The Blooming of the Lotus*, Thich Nhat Hanh, 1993.)

Sitting meditation periods can be ten, twenty, or thirty minutes -- or however long you like. Sitting is for your pleasure, so relax. If your posture is causing you too much pain, feel free to adjust your position, moving slowly and attentively, following your breathing and every movement of your body so you will not lose your concentration. You can even stand up slowly and mindfully if necessary, and when you feel ready, sit down again. At the end of the period, allow a few minutes to massage your legs and feet before standing up again.

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation indoors or outdoors is a very precious practice. Walking meditation means that we know we are walking. We walk just for walking, no longer in a hurry. There are families and communities who walk together every day, and it brings them a lot of peace and joy.

To practice, walk slowly, in a relaxed way, with your head upright and a light smile on your lips. Simply keep in touch with both your breathing and your steps. When you practice indoors, take one step as you breathe in and another as you breathe out. Outdoors, you can walk more quickly, allowing your lungs as much time and air as they need, and simply noticing how many steps you take as your lungs fill up and how many as they empty. The link is the counting, using a word, a phrase, or a gatha. If you see something along the way that you want to touch with your mindfulness -- the blue sky, the hills, a tree, or a bird -- just stop, but while doing so, continue to breathe mindfully. (See *The Long Road Turns to Joy*, Thich Nhat Hanh, 1996.)

Inviting the Bell

It can be very helpful to have a beautiful bell to support us in the practice. With the sound of the bell, we can relax and return to the present moment.

For our daily practice and during ceremonies, a bell master (yourself, if you are alone) is often called upon to invite the bell to sound. Before doing so, he or she may wish to recite this gatha, either silently or aloud, according to the circumstances:

*Body, speech and mind in perfect oneness,
I send my heart along with the sound of the bell.
May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness,
and transcend all anxiety and sorrow.*

To invite the bell, the bell master first wakes it up by lightly but firmly placing the wooden stick on the rim of the bell and holding it there so that everyone hears a short sound. This prepares the bell and everyone present for the full sound of the bell that will follow. The bell can then be sounded.

As soon as you hear the bell, follow your breathing. If you like, repeat this verse silently:

*Listen, listen.
This wonderful sound
brings me back
to my true home.*

Before inviting the bell again, allow enough time for three in- and out-breaths. At the end of a period of sitting meditation, the bell master wakes up the bell lightly, then wakes it up again a little more loudly, then invites one full sound of the bell.

Reciting Gathas

Gathas are sort poems or verses we can recite to help us dwell in mindfulness during whatever activity we are undertaking. While reciting gathas, we become deeply aware of the action we are engaged in, and this helps us to perform that action with understanding and love. The gathas are easy to remember and to practice during our daily activities. (See *Present Moment, Wonderful Moment*, Thich Nhat Hanh, 1990.)

Touching the Earth

The practice of "touching the Earth," or bowing, helps us return to the Earth and to our roots, and to recognize that we are not alone but connected to a whole stream of spiritual and blood ancestors. We touch the Earth to let go of the idea that we are separate and to remind us that we are the Earth and part of Life.

To begin this practice, join your palms in front of your chest in the shape of a lotus bud. Then gently lower yourself to the ground so that all four limbs and your forehead are resting comfortably on the floor. While touching the Earth, turn your palms face up, showing your openness to the Three Jewels -- the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Breathe in all the strength and stability of the Earth, and breathe out your suffering. This is a wonderful practice.

Hugging Meditation

When we hug, our hearts connect and we know that we are not separate beings. Hugging with mindfulness and concentration can bring reconciliation, healing, understanding, and much happiness.

You can practice hugging meditation with a friend, a child, your parents, your partner, or even a tree. To practice, first bow to each other and recognize each other's presence. Then, enjoy three deep, conscious breaths to bring yourself fully into the present moment. Next open your arms and begin hugging, holding each other for three in- and out-breaths. With the first breath, become aware that you are present in this very moment and feel happy. With the second breath, become aware that the other person is present in this moment and feel happy as well. With the third breath, become aware that you are here together, right now on this Earth. We can feel deep gratitude and happiness for our togetherness. Finally, release the other person and bow to each other to show your thanks.

Thich Nhat Hanh

*"The real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thins air,
but to walk on earth." - Thich Nhat Hanh*

Born in central Vietnam in 1926, Thich Nhat Hanh was ordained a Zen Buddhist monk in 1942 at the age of 16.

In the 1950s and 1960s, he helped found the movement known as engaged Buddhism. In 1961, Nhat Hanh went to the United States to teach comparative religion at Columbia and Princeton Universities. In 1963, his monk-colleagues in Vietnam urged him to return to join them in their work to stop the war following the fall of the oppressive Diem regime. He immediately returned and helped lead one of the great nonviolent resistance movements of the century, based entirely on Gandhian principles. Nhat Hanh and many of his fellow monks left their monastic isolation and became actively engaged in helping victims of the war and in publicly communicating their desire for peace.



In 1964, along with a group of university professors and students, Thich Nhat Hanh founded the School of Youth for Social Service in which teams of young people went into the countryside to establish schools and health clinics, and later to rebuild villages that had been bombed. By the time of the fall of Saigon, there were more than 10,000 monks, nuns and young social workers involved in the work. In the same year, he helped to set up what was to become one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Vietnam, La Boi Press. In his books and as editor-in-chief of the official publication of the Unified Buddhist Church, he called for reconciliation between the warring parties in Vietnam, and because of that his writings were censored by both opposing governments.

In 1966 he was invited by the Fellowship of Reconciliation to tour the United States to describe "the aspirations and the agony of the voiceless masses of the Vietnamese people." He met with hundreds of groups and individuals, including Secretary of Defense McNamara, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and, in Europe, Pope Paul VI. He spoke convincingly in favor of a cease-fire and negotiated settlement. Thomas Merton described him as "more my brother than many who are near to me in race and nationality, because he and I see things in exactly the same way. Just the way he opens the door and enters a room demonstrates his understanding." As a result of his outspoken frankness and fierce neutrality, he was unable to return to Vietnam.

Zen master, scholar, poet and peace advocate, his life-long efforts to generate peace and reconciliation moved Martin Luther King, Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967, saying, "I do not personally know of anyone more worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize than this gentle Buddhist monk from Vietnam. He is a holy man, for he is humble and devout. He is a scholar of immense intellectual capacity. His ideas for peace, if applied, would build a monument to ecumenism, to world brotherhood, to humanity."

Guided Meditation

In the practice of guided meditation, we have the opportunity to look deeply into the mind, to sow wholesome seeds there, to strengthen and cultivate those seeds so that they may become the means for transforming the suffering in us. Guided meditation can help to make our sitting meditation more concrete.

To practice guided meditation, we recite the two guiding sentences, one with our in-breath and the other with our out-breath. Then we use the key words (the condensed version of the guiding sentences) to focus our attention as we continue to breathe in and out. When we feel that our concentration is solid, we move to the next set of guiding sentences.

Exercise #1

Guiding Sentences	Key Words
Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.	In Out
Breathing in, my breath grows deep. Breathing out, my breath goes slowly.	Deep Slow
Breathing in, I feel calm. Breathing out, I feel ease.	Calm Ease
Breathing in, I smile. Breathing out, I release.	Smile Release
Dwelling in the present moment, I know this is a wonderful moment.	Present moment Wonderful moment

This exercise can be practiced anywhere, in the meditation hall, in the living room, in the kitchen, or while on a train.

The first stage is designed to bring body and mind back into oneness and at the same time to help bring us back to the present moment, to connect us with the miracle of life now occurring. If we can breathe in this spirit for two or three minutes, our breathing will quite naturally become light, leisurely, gentler, slower, and deeper, and naturally we shall feel much more at ease in body as well as in mind. This is the second state, "deep, slow." We can stay with this stage for just as long as we like. Next we come to "calm, ease." Here we can achieve deeper tranquility (Sanskrit *prashrabhis*), a great calm of body and mind, and the joy of meditation will continue to nourish us.

The next stage brings relaxation to all the facial muscles. The meditator sends the half smile to the whole body, as if it were a fresh, cool stream of water. To ease the body is to feel light. The breathing helps to remove all the tensions which still remain in the body.

The last stage brings the meditator back to the present moment with the in-breath. The Buddha taught that the past has already gone and the future has not yet come; that we find life in what is happening *now*. To dwell in the present moment is truly to return to life. Only in the present moment is the meditator really in touch with the wonders of life. Peace, joy, liberation, the buddha nature, and nirvana cannot be found anywhere else. Happiness lies in the present moment. The in-breath helps the meditator be in touch with his happiness. The out-breath also brings much happiness to the meditator, and that is why she says, "wonderful moment."

The Five Mindfulness Trainings

Reverence for Life

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life. Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.

True Happiness

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to practicing generosity in my thinking, speaking, and acting. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others; and I will share my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. I will practice looking deeply to see that the happiness and suffering of others are not separate from my own happiness and suffering; that true happiness is not possible without understanding and compassion; and that running after wealth, fame, power and sensual pleasures can bring much suffering and despair. I am aware that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough conditions to be happy. I am committed to practicing Right Livelihood so that I can help reduce the suffering of living beings on Earth and reverse the process of global warming.

True Love

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. Knowing that sexual desire is not love, and that sexual activity motivated by craving always harms me as well as others, I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without true love and a deep, long-term commitment made known to my family and friends. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct. Seeing that body and mind are one, I am committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of my sexual energy and cultivating loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness – which are the four basic elements of true love – for my greater happiness and the greater happiness of others. Practicing true love, we know that we will continue beautifully into the future.

Loving Speech and Deep Listening

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and compassionate listening in order to relieve suffering and to promote reconciliation and peace in myself and among other people, ethnic and religious groups, and nations. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to speaking truthfully using words that inspire confidence, joy, and hope. When anger is manifesting in me, I am determined not to speak. I will practice mindful breathing and walking in order to recognize and to look deeply into my anger. I know that the roots of anger can be found in my wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in me and in the other person. I will speak and listen in a way that can help me and the other person to transform suffering and see the way out of difficult situations. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to utter words that can cause division or discord. I will practice Right Diligence to nourish my capacity for understanding, love, joy, and inclusiveness, and gradually transform anger, violence, and fear that lie deep in my consciousness.

Nourishment and Healing

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will practice looking deeply into how I consume the Four Kinds of Nutriment, namely edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness. I am determined not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs, or any other products which contain toxins, such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books, and conversations. I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear, or craving pull me out of the present moment. I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption. I will contemplate interbeing and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy, and well-being in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society and the Earth.

Appendix D

PRE-RETREAT CONTEMPLATIONS

**To be Mindful in each moment means that we be Mindful of who we are,
what we are doing, and why we are doing it.**

In preparation for the upcoming retreat, Br. Chan Huy, our dharma teacher, invites each person to spend some quiet time contemplating the questions below.

Your answers will be held in strictest confidence.

Returning the completed questionnaire helps Br. Chan Huy to address the real needs and concerns of each participant during the retreat.

Namaste.
Plum Blossom Sangha

-
- 1) Who am I ?
 - 2) What is my experience with my general and my Thich Nhat Hanh meditation practices?
 - 3) How am I, physically and mentally ?
 - 4) How are my loved ones ?
 - 5) How is my environment?
 - 6) What are my current needs and desires?
 - 7) What are my current sufferings ?
 - 8) What do I wish to transform ?
 - 9) Why do I want to attend this retreat ?

Send your reflections and observation DIRECTLY to Br. Chan Huy at chanhuy@villagedespruniers.org.

- (1) Please mention *PLUM BLOSSOM SANGHA, Feb 2003* on your completed form and
 - (2) Bring a copy of your reflections to the Orientation on the first evening of the retreat.
-

POST-RETREAT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

1. Please describe any expectations for today that were met.

2. Please describe any expectations that were not met.

3. Please describe what you enjoyed about the day.

4. Please describe anything you did not enjoy.

5. Please let us know how we could improve upon today.

(There's more on the back)

Appendix E



A Journal of the Art of Mindful Living
 Published by Community of Mindful Living at Deer Park Monastery
 2496 Melru Lane Escondido, CA 92026
 Phone: (760) 291-1234 Fax: (760) 291-1010
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 Had current issue/Received current issue through special events? Yes [] No []
 Renewal/subscription through special events? Yes [] No []

Appendix F

DAY OF MINDFULNESS/RETREAT

TO DO LIST

A year or so before the DOM or retreat

- ❖ Set up a committee
- ❖ Find a teacher
- ❖ Find a suitable facility
- ❖ Find a caterer if necessary
- ❖ Develop an email and a mailing list of interested people and venues for hanging flyers

Six months or so before the DOM or retreat

- ❖ Create a budget including a cost for participants
- ❖ Set up a bookkeeping system
- ❖ Choose a theme and share it with your teacher
- ❖ Create a scholarship policy and procedure
- ❖ Visit the facility and figure out the set up
- ❖ Create the template that you will use for your registration and flyers especially if you are going to use pictures or fancy graphics
- ❖ Prepare and check-out a clear and correct set of directions to send out to registrants
- ❖ Locate a suitable sound system
- ❖ Buy or erect a platform for your teacher to sit on

Eight to ten weeks before the retreat

- ❖ Mail out registration forms and flyers
- ❖ Create confirmation packets and send out to those who register including the pre-retreat contemplation forms
- ❖ Choose and copy the handouts that will be distributed at the retreat such as song sheets
- ❖ Print out gathas to hand around the facility and meal gathas for the dining areas
- ❖ Buy supplies such as nametags, pens, and tape
- ❖ Plan the agenda for the DOM or retreat

The last week

- ❖ Assign Sangha members to particular tasks and notify them
- ❖ Assign a member to be the teacher's attendant

- ❖ Assign someone to be the Orientation Leader
- ❖ Assign meditation leaders, bell masters, leaders for singing, and leaders and readers for other practices
- ❖ Assign a set up crew and a clean up crew
- ❖ Confirm the caterer and facility
- ❖ Assign sleeping rooms

The day before or of the DOM or retreat

- ❖ Buy flowers
- ❖ Set up the altar
- ❖ Set up the teacher's platform and table
- ❖ Decorate the facility
- ❖ Pick up your teacher
- ❖ Sit