Dhamma Dharā Newsletter
March 2026

Vipassana Meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

March 2026

Dhamma Dharā, Shelburne Falls, MA

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The Ten Soldiers of *Māra:* Sayagyi U Ba Khin

Sayagyi U Ba Khin was born on March 6, 1899, in Yangon, Myanmar. We are honoring his birth month by publishing an article from one of his discourses, originally published in Burmese and subsequently translated into English. Sayagyi offers a vivid and practical exploration of —"The Ten Soldiers of Māra"—the inner forces that obstruct progress on the path of Vipassana. Drawing from lived experience, gentle humor and deep devotion to the Dhamma, he shows how these subtle enemies arise in the midst of meditation practice: craving, restlessness, doubt, pride, fear and the many disguises of delusion. Rather than treating them as abstract concepts, Sayagyi reveals how they appear in real meditators, in real retreats and in the very texture of our own minds. His guidance is both grounding and encouraging, reminding us that these

challenges are not signs of failure but natural milestones on the journey toward insight. This discourse invites us to meet each obstacle with patience, honesty and renewed determination, so that the liberating wisdom of anicca can deepen and flourish within us.

The Ten Soldiers of *Māra*

One must be very careful. You must stand firm and face many difficulties so that you can know *anicca* through your own direct experience. This is why we remind you again and again: you must work diligently. Difficulties naturally arise at this stage of the course.

During the time of our great benefactor, Sayagyi Thetgyi, students often encountered various obstacles in meditation, such as being unable to feel the object of meditation at all. When asked to focus on the top of their heads, they felt nothing. During *ānāpāna*, they couldn't feel the area around the nostrils. Some couldn't feel their breath. Some even said they couldn't feel their bodies. You may find similar things happening here. At times you won't feel sensations, and you won't be able to maintain your attention.

Some people even think they have attained *nibbāna* when they cannot feel their bodies. If you can't feel your body, just hit your arm or give yourself a little punch and see. There's no need to ask the teacher. You'll know whether your body is still there. These uncertainties can be quite unsettling, can't they?

The nature of *vipallāsa*—mental distortions and corruptions—makes fools of us. These undesirable defilements are hidden inside everyone. When *anicca* is understood, the defilements must leave, but they don't want to. They want the understanding to leave instead. The liberating power of *anicca* is very strong, so *Māra*—the negative forces—fights against it. The *Padhāna Sutta (SnP 3.2*) describes the ten soldiers of *Māra*. We must be careful of these ten soldiers, for they are the destroyers of meditation.

1. Sensual Desire

The first soldier of *Māra* is the desire for sense pleasures. Some people come to meditate not to attain *nibbāna*, but with ulterior motives. They think, "If I become close to Sayagyi, who knows many people in high positions, maybe I'll get a promotion." People who come with greed in their hearts cannot succeed in meditation. There must be no craving.

When you asked for the technique of Vipassana, you said, *"Nibbānassa sacchikaraṇatthāya me bhante"* (—in order to realize *nibbāna*—). I will teach you to understand the Four Noble Truths, but if you are not interested, and intend to take your time about it, what can I do?

2. Aversion to Seclusion

The second soldier of *Māra* is the unwillingness to stay in a quiet, secluded place.

Yesterday someone planned to run away. He packed his belongings. He intended to sit with everyone at 7:30, then slip away while I was checking students at 8:00. He planned to run as fast as he could, catch a bus and go home—collecting his bags later. Fortunately, for some reason, I gave the one-hour *adhiṭṭhāna* sitting earlier than usual, and he had to sit for the full hour. There he was—trapped! After the *adhiṭṭhāna*, *Māra* left him, and he no longer wanted to run away.

When this soldier arises, a person wants to flee. They may inform us they want to leave, or they may slip away quietly. The turmoil inside makes them unable to stay in seclusion.

3. Hunger

The third soldier of *Māra* is hunger—never feeling satisfied with the food.

Are you hungry now? Sao Shwe Theik was one of the very hungry ones. He arrived with boxes full of food. He said he couldn't stay without eating. I told him, "If you must eat, then eat—but try one, two or three days and see for yourself." I had to go easy and coax him gently. Yet during the ten days, he wasn't hungry at all.

Myanma Alin U Tin said that after three days of eating only twice a day, he would become shaky, and that he had never done it for more than three days in his life. He asked for permission to eat more, and I said, "Of course, if needed." But once he began meditating, he wasn't hungry at all.

When meditation is progressing, one doesn't feel hungry. Hunger arises when meditation is not going well. Something inside creates the hunger, and one cannot control it. Once the meditator is established in meditation, hunger fades.

4. Craving for Tastes

The fourth soldier of *Māra* is craving for various tastes and delicious food.

You haven’t eaten chicken for some time—now you want steak? You can’t stay? We don’t serve chicken here, but we provide the best food we can. The kitchen works hard so that everyone eats well.

But what happens when you eat very tasty food? Doesn’t it stimulate more craving? Is it possible to eat without appreciating the taste? Only an *arahant* can do that.

You came here to get rid of *kilesa* and *taṇhā*. If you keep your eyes closed, nothing can be seen and you won’t crave visual objects. No one is playing music, so there’s nothing to crave through sound. No one is wearing perfume, so there’s nothing to crave through smell. There’s nothing here to give pleasant bodily sensations. But the tongue—can it avoid taste? Only if you don’t eat, and then a doctor would have to give you glucose injections for sustenance.

Taste arises whenever food touches the tongue. If the food is less stimulating, craving is reduced.

We want to help you reduce defilement of craving, not increase it. That’s why we don’t provide an evening meal. It’s easier for us, and better for you—you would become drowsy if you ate at night. If you eat well in the morning and at lunchtime the two meals will provide enough for the body's requirements.

5. Drowsiness, Sloth, and Torpor

The fifth soldier of *Māra* is drowsiness—*thīna-middha* (sloth and torpor). Even Mahā Mogallāna (one of Buddha's chief disciples) suffered from it.

Some of you fall asleep while sitting. When I used to go on meditation retreats, an old man accompanied me. We sat in Saya Thetgyi's meditation center in the meditation room and he sat behind me wearing a big shawl. Soon he would start snoring loudly. Normally people don’t snore while sitting, but meditators can do it—sit, snore, wake up! This is called *Thīna-midha*.

Thīna-middha cannot be avoided. When insight sharpens and the purity of *nibbāna* is felt, wholesome and unwholesome forces clash, producing heat. Then drowsiness arises.

If you feel sleepy at times, breathe a bit harder. You’ve lost your *samādhi*. This is a kick from within. Your *samādhi* has gone. If you lose your *samādhi*, focus your attention on the nostrils again, breathe harder and try to calm the mind.

Sometimes when *aniccavijjā* (the wisdom of impermanence) becomes stronger, one experiences the meeting of physical and mental experiences in one's body and one's insight-intuition becomes very sharp and powerful. Then there’s a strong internal “kick,” and you lose your understanding of *anicca*. You become disoriented and ask the teacher what happened.

There are two ways to cope:

- Reestablish *samādhi* as I've explained, or
- Go outside, wake yourself up, and let the reaction pass away.

Do **not** go to sleep when this reaction occurs.

Drowsiness arises when *saṅkhāra* come up. Apply *anicca* firmly—not just by saying the word, but by actually observing the changing nature of the body with the awareness of sensations. If you practice this way, you will overcome it.

6. Fear of Solitude

The sixth soldier of *Māra* is not wishing to be alone and fear of solitude.

Some people cannot sit in one room. They keep changing rooms, seeking company, frightened when alone.

Win Min Tham was one of these. Her house was very large, yet she never stayed in any room alone. She brought a maid with her to the course. She asked permission to keep the lights on while meditating, and I allowed it. Not only that, someone had to sit near her when she meditated. When alone, she felt waves of fear throughout her body.

After one course she improved. After another, she stayed alone in a small dark cell. She came regularly for a 10-day course every month and benefited greatly. She had been first-class in fear, but now her fear is gone. Isn't that wonderful?

7. Doubt

The seventh soldier of *Māra* is doubt—wondering whether one can succeed in meditation.

This is common and true for most meditators. But you ***can*** succeed. The important thing is to wash away the *akusala* (unwholesome conditioning) and *kilesa* (mental defilements) embedded in the mind.

8. Pride and Conceit

The eighth soldier of *Māra* is becoming proud and arrogant when meditation progresses.

When meditation improves, defilements become lighter, and one tends to get conceited and arrogant and may think, “That fellow isn’t doing well. I should help him.” I speak from experience.

Long ago, before we had a Dhamma hall, we used a small ten-foot-square hut where we used to sit and talk. One day U Hla Maung came after the morning sitting and said, “Look.” He lifted his *longyi* and showed little bumps all over his legs—like the skin of a plucked duck. The internal “kick” had been so strong that it showed on the skin.

He said, “See how strong the kick from within was! You too, please try hard, please try hard!” This is why I tell you not to preach to others. If you have something to ask, ask me. If you have something to say, tell me. When he preached, there was ego in it, the "I" was in it—“I am doing well; these people don't seem to be getting anywhere.” He played very good soccer, was very short-tempered, ready to hit, strike and punch. When a very bad-tempered person with a lot of heat has a kick from inside, it shows up on the body surface.

The next day U Hla Maung could not meditate. He could not feel any sensations and had to seek guidance.

I am talking about others because I want to talk about the nature of things. If you progress, stay quiet and continue your practice.

9. Fame, Respect, and Offerings

The ninth soldier of *Māra* concerns the teacher—becoming well known, receiving offerings, gaining respect.

I receive many offerings and much respect. I must guard myself from conceit. Isn’t it easy to become conceited? I must be careful.

We began this center for the people of the accountant general’s office, so they could meditate in their free time. We started not with money, but with Dhamma. Anyone who meditates for ten days becomes a member. The admission fee is ten days of meditation. Isn’t that good? No subscription—just meditate steadily, guard your practice and do not lose it. Money can't do it. It was Dhamma that did it. We believe in this and we do not have any money either.

This center does not belong to me. U Ba Khin must not get conceited thinking, “This is my center.” I do not own it. It belongs to the Vipassana Association of the accountant general’s office. If they remove me, I must leave. I must be re-elected each year. If they choose someone else, I go. I do not own this place.

10. False Dhamma

The tenth soldier of *Māra* is teaching false Dhamma—creating a special new Dhamma to gain offerings, praising oneself, and looking down on others.

This is why I avoid speaking too much about others. Let others say what they like. Some teachers become attached to offerings and teach what students want to hear—teachings that are not the Buddha's—simply because they want the homage and offerings. They stop working with Dhamma. That is the tenth soldier.

The Taste of Dhamma

Dhamma dissolves sorrow and misery and brings happiness. Who gives this happiness? Not the Buddha. It is the *aniccavijjā*—the wisdom of impermanence—within you.

We must practice Vipassana so that *aniccavijjā* neither stops nor disappears. How do we practice? Focus your attention on the four elements, remain calm, cultivate *samādhi* and maintain *sīla*. Of the precepts, lying is the one I fear most, because it weakens the foundation of *sīla*. When *sīla* weakens, *samādhi* weakens and *paññā* weakens.

Speak truthfully, work regularly, build *samādhi* and observe what is happening in your body. Then the nature of *anicca* will arise naturally.

Saya Thetgyi would say: "Very fast, vibrating, incessant, scattered, broken up, burnt down—the destruction of the body—these are the signs of *anicca*, impermanence."

It is the body (*rūpa*) that changes. The mind (*nāma*) that knows the body is changing is also changing. When the *rūpa* changes and has gone, the *nāma,* which knows about the changed-and-gone *rūpa*, is also changed and goes away. Both *rūpa* and *nāma* are *anicca*. Keep this in mind.

Focus your attention on the top of the head and move through the whole body, from the top of the head to the forehead and then the face, from the face to the neck, the neck to the shoulders, from the shoulders along to the hands. Wherever the mind goes, it is like touching with a small torch and feeling heat. Why? Because there is burning and annihilation taking place inside; it is the innate nature of the combustion of atomic units within. This is always present. Learn to be sensitive so you can feel it. Try with the attentive mind and you will know it.

When Vipassana is practiced and awareness is established, the defilements—the *samudaya akusala (*arisen unwholesomeness*)* cannot remain much longer. Gradually they have to leave and when they are all gone, one becomes steady, controlled and able to live well.

How long must one work? Until all the immeasurable, uncountable old *akusala kamma* (unwholesome actions) accumulated along one's journey through *saṃsāra* are eradicated by observing the nature of *anicca*. Then one becomes a *sotāpanna (*the first stage of saintliness, when one has experienced *nibbāna)* and an *ariyapuggala (*noble person*)*. This cannot be achieved easily.

Final *nibbāna*, where all *saṅkhāra* are abolished, is far away. But wouldn't you like to taste a little *nibbāna* now? If it could only be tasted after death, Westerners would never practice this meditation. But they have tasted a little, liked it, and keep returning. They send their friends. Why? Because they have experienced the taste of Dhamma.

A teacher is needed to help students taste Dhamma, but students must work to experience the taste. What is this taste called? It is called the *Dhamma rasa.* "*Sabba rasaṃ dhamma rasaṃ jināti*"—of all tastes, the taste of Dhamma surpasses them all.

You must work hard to taste it. Just as human kings enjoy human pleasures, a *deva (*celestial being*)* monarch enjoys *deva* pleasures, and a *brahmā* (a higher celestial being) enjoys *brahmā* pleasures. The noble *ariya* (saintly person) such as the Buddha and *arahants* can also enjoy the taste of Dhamma that they have obtained. You too must work until you can enjoy this taste. But do not work to extremes. Follow the schedule and work at the right times, with care and effort.

The Ten Pāramīs or Perfections: *Upekkhā*

***Upekkhā* Pāramī**

In this newsletter, we continue our discussion by examining *Upekkhā*, the last of the ten pāramīs.

Pāramīs are virtues—that is, good qualities. By perfecting them, one crosses the ocean of misery and reaches the stage of full liberation, full enlightenment. Everyone who is working to liberate themselves has to develop the ten pāramīs. They are needed to dissolve the ego and to reach the stage of egolessness. A student of Dhamma who aspires to attain the final stage of liberation joins a Vipassana course to develop these pāramīs.

Upekkhā, often translated as equanimity, comes from the Pāli roots *upa* (over, beyond) and *ikkhati* (to see), suggesting the capacity to **"**see impartially**"**—to observe without being swept away by reactivity.

In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10*), the practitioner is described as one who is "equanimous, mindful, and clearly comprehending; without clinging to anything in the field of mind and matter." Such balance emerges naturally when one perceives the universal marks of existence: *dukkha, anicca, anatta*. The Buddha taught that when a meditator truly sees that all conditioned things are "capable of arising and passing away," attachment weakens because nothing can rightly be taken as self. Thus, equanimity is not indifference — it is wisdom expressing itself as emotional composure.

The Buddha reminded his disciples that life is shaped by the eight worldly conditions: gain and loss, praise and blame, fame and disrepute, pleasure and pain. These changing winds touch

everyone, yet the trained mind is not easily shaken. Anchored in equanimity, one learns to meet success without clinging and without aversion.

When defilements such as anger, craving, or passion arise, the practice is neither suppression nor indulgence, but careful observation. Seen with *Upekkhā,* or equanimity, these mental states lose their force and gradually pass away. In this way, *upekkhā* becomes a protective strength — preserving clarity while allowing insight to deepen.

True equanimity is not emotional distance; it is freedom. It is the spaciousness that allows us to stand in the midst of change with a quiet understanding: “This too is impermanent.” From that understanding emerges a life that is balanced, compassionate and inwardly unshaken.

To cultivate the *Upekkhā* pāramī is therefore to develop a mind that remains unshakable amid life’s fluctuations — gentle yet unwavering, fully present yet free from clinging— walking the path with dignity and peace.

With the discussion of Upekkhā pāramī*, we conclude our series on the ten paramis featured in our previous newsletters. Let’s recap the complete list:*

1. *Dāna* - Generosity
2. *Sīla* - Morality
3. *Nekhamma* - Renunciation
4. *Paññā* - Wisdom
5. *Viriya* - Energy
6. *Khanti* - Patience
7. *Sacca* - Truthfulness
8. *Adhiṭṭhāna* - Determination
9. *Mettā* - - Loving kindness
10. *Upekkhā* - Equanimity.

Personal Reflections

Introducing: Personal Reflections

When Ananda asked the Buddha whether having Kalyāna-mitta, noble or spiritual friends, was half of the holy life, the Buddha gently corrected him: "No, Ananda, having good Dhamma friends is the whole of the holy life."

In the spirit of this profound declaration, we are introducing a section in the newsletter: Personal Reflections. This space is for sharing the insights and transformative moments of old students who are walking on the path of Dhamma.

May these stories serve as encouragement and reminders that we are never alone on this noble path.

-VMC Publication Team

My childhood was defined by both cherished blessings and formative mishaps. Life was nuanced—sometimes tender, sometimes turbulent. But one quiet blessing arrived early during my childhood: I was introduced to the Dhamma. A lay teacher at grammar school taught us *anapāna* meditation, and something in me stirred. I felt a yearning for something more that I couldn't name at that time. I joined a few retreats at local Buddhist monasteries, but the teachings felt beyond my grasp. I was too young, too distracted to understand the profound

nature of Dhamma. Still, the seed had been planted. Then came the summer of tenth grade. I sat a 10-day Vipassana course taught by Goenkaji himself. It was a live course—Goenkaji and Mataji entered the Dhamma Hall at dawn to chant, and stayed with us until the final evening discourse. This schedule carried through the course of ten days. At the end of the 10-day course I felt I had never met a teacher who could explain the technique so clearly, so simply. For the first time, I understood what Dhamma meant for me. And more than that, I felt Dhamma at the experiential level. After those ten days, my mind felt astonishingly clean. I realized how much rust and mud had accumulated in my inner world. I was a sad teenager, crying daily for a million reasons. But those ten days lifted half my misery. It was the first time I saw that suffering, *dukkha,* wasn't just my burden. It was a universal truth. And it could be understood. And we could learn a technique that would lead us out of it.

Life moved on. For nearly a decade, I stopped practicing. I was the only meditator at home. Academic commitments consumed most of my time. Life became relatively smooth, and I forgot about the Dhamma and stopped practicing what I had learned in the 10-day course with Goenkaji. That's how it goes sometimes—when the friction of *dukkha* eases, we drift into old habits. By the turn of the millennium, I had moved to New York City. And everything fell apart. It wasn't just the immigrant struggle. It was deeper. One miserable morning, I remembered Goenkaji. I typed his name into Netscape (Google wasn't around yet), and there it was: dhamma.org, VMC, the New York Vipassana Yahoo Club and Chinatown group sittings. I'll never forget those Chinatown sittings, the warmth of the old student community, the post-sitting meals and the feeling of coming home. That snowy February, I sat my first course at Dhamma Dharā. And once again, I found the remedy. Not for the world outside, but for the misery within.

Over time, I've come to see that *dukkha* isn't just circumstantial. It's embedded in the fabric of my existence. Even when life looks fine on the outside, suffering can quietly persist within. But *dukkha*, when met with awareness, becomes the doorway to liberation. Misfortune brought me back to the Dhamma. And for that, I'm deeply grateful. Without it, I might have lost the jewel of Dhamma and kept rolling in misery. I am on a journey, and I know within that this journey will eventually carry me all the way home.

-Reflections from an old student

Center Update

Goenkaji often emphasized that Dhamma service is a vital and selfless practice—one that strengthens Vipassana meditation by softening the ego and cultivating the pāramīs. He reminded us that Dhamma service is not merely work; it is a profound opportunity to learn how to live the Dhamma in real-world situations, much like the training environment of a 10-day or long course. Through service, one practices maintaining equanimity, generating love and compassion and remaining balanced even in the face of challenging people and circumstances. In this way, humility is naturally developed, self-centeredness is diminished and one's personal meditation practice is deepened.

These qualities were clearly evident during the recently completed 30- and 45-day courses at Dhamma Dhara, which concluded on February 22. The meditators and servers formed a richly diverse community, representing many continents, yet all were united by a shared intention: to purify the mind of deeply rooted defilements. We were deeply grateful to host 102 students, many of whom were assistant teachers and committed old students.

On days 18 and 19 of the course, a powerful winter storm swept across the United States, blanketing nearly 220 million people with heavy snow and crippling ice, and causing widespread power outages, leaving much of the country in bone-chilling cold. By great good fortune, the center remained unaffected by power disruptions. Amid these challenging external conditions,

both meditators and servers continued their practice and service with quiet diligence and steadiness—offering a living example of equanimity and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Again and again, both meditators and servers expressed heartfelt gratitude. The course was supported by a harmonious and loving team of 21 servers—an especially encouraging sign of the growing spirit of gratitude and selfless service within our community. One could truly feel the presence of mettā and goodwill in every meal that was prepared and offered.

As one server beautifully shared, “Offering service feels like the most honest expression of my gratitude—for the Dhamma, for my teachers, and for the *kalyāṇa-mittas* who are sitting this course and whose practice I deeply respect. To support their journey is to honor the path we share.”

Another server echoed this sentiment: ”I dedicate this service to my father, who sat this course. Supporting others on this path to genuine peace gives my life purpose and brings immense joy. I remain deeply grateful for the privilege to serve alongside other Dhamma servers toward our shared aspiration of peace, harmony and awakening."

May the sweet nectar of Dhamma continue to reach many; may it bring real happiness and real peace to all.

3-day courses in Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico

Dominican Republic

We would like to share a brief update on the growth of Vipassana in the Dominican Republic (DR) and the upcoming opportunities to connect and support the local community. In recent years, Dominican students have continued traveling abroad to sit 10-day courses, while old students across the country have been meeting regularly for group sittings—listed on the dhamma.org app under "Group Sittings Near Me"—making the practice accessible to many. Although Vipassana courses have not yet been offered in the DR, these steady efforts mark the first careful steps toward establishing the technique on the island through regular sittings, sincere service and regional coordination. Looking ahead, a 3-day course for old students is scheduled for March 16–19, 2026, offering an opportunity for deeper practice together and helping to inform future course planning, alongside a public outreach event in mid-March.

Applications for the 3-day course in the DR can be accessed here[1].

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[1] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/portal/student_apps/new_app?course_id=220062&location_id=1542

Puerto Rico

Over the past year, more than 15 new students from Puerto Rico completed their first 10-day courses, and since then a small but dedicated group of old students has been meeting weekly in private homes in San Juan, bringing together both long-time practitioners and newer old students in steady practice. They remain connected through informal channels, including a local Facebook group[2], while Dhamma Dharā has supported Puerto Rican students wishing to sit 10-day courses. Looking ahead, the community is preparing for a 3-day course for old students from March 23–27, 2026, offering an opportunity for deeper practice on the island and helping to inform future course planning in Puerto Rico.

Applications for the 3-day course in Puerto Rico can be accessed here[3].

Regional Activities

New York City, surroundings and Northern New Jersey

- New York Vipassana Association (NYVA) is holding two 10-day courses and one 3-day course in Fishkill, New York, this May-June 2026. Old students are encouraged to apply to sit or serve the courses (10 Day courses: May 9th - May 20th[4], May 26th - June 6th[5]; 3 Day course: May 21st - May 25th[6].) There are also a number of additional service opportunities, including the camp setup days (May 2nd-3rd), and the camp breakdown day (June 6th). Read more about serving in Fishkill here[7].
- NYVA is in the final stages of a renovation of the NYC Dhamma House[8], which has operated in its current location since 2012, offering New York metropolitan area Vipassana meditators an oasis of calm in busy midtown Manhattan and a dedicated space for group sittings, 1-day courses, and committee meetings. The renovation includes a small expansion with a room for eating lunch and resting during breaks, as well as a sink, pantry, and an additional bathroom.

[2] https://www.facebook.com/groups/899834648906526/
[3] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/portal/student_apps/new_app?course_id=219928&location_id=1542
[4] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/portal/student_apps/new_app?course_id=194546&location_id=1654
[5] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/courses/search?current_state=OldStudents&regions=sublocation_756&attendee_types=Serve
[6] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/courses/search?current_state=OldStudents&regions=sublocation_756&attendee_types=Serve
[7] https://ny.us.dhamma.org/os/dhamma-service/set-up-weekend/
[8] https://ny.us.dhamma.org/os/nyc-dhamma-house/

- AT-led 1 day courses are offered monthly in Northern & Central New Jersey; kindly check the course schedule[9] for upcoming dates and registration.
- Home-based group sittings[10] are offered on the Upper West Side of Manhattan on Tuesday afternoons and in Crown Heights, Brooklyn on Tuesday evenings.
- In the Catskills, old students sit together on Wednesday evenings in Olivebridge, New York.
- In Northern New Jersey, home-based group sittings happen on Saturday mornings in Parsippany and Robbinsville and on Sunday mornings in Livingston.

Please check the NYVA website at ny.us.dhamma.org for more information. You can also sign up for NYVA's weekly announcements email[11].

Boston Area

Regular group sittings have continued in Boston in three locations: Cambridge, Lexington and Sudbury.

Periodic 1-day and half-day courses are also offered in Cambridge and Lexington.

Cambridge sittings

Cambridge holds three regular 1-hour sittings from 8:00 am -8:55 am, 9:05 am-10:10 am and 10:10 am -11:15 am, typically followed by a fourth sitting untill 12:00 or 12:30 pm. Half-day and 1-day courses are also occasionally held. You can participate for one hour or stay for the full two or three hours. Schedules may vary, and sittings may be cancelled during adverse weather. Anyone interested in Cambridge schedules, announcements and cancellations, please be sure to subscribe to the email list by sending an empty email to announce-cambridge-subscribe@dhara.dhamma.org[12] (You will get a reply asking you to reconfirm.)

For address/directions to the Cambridge location please visit the Boston old student web site and login as an old student: https://www.boston.us.dhamma.org/locations/cambridge/

Lexington sittings

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[9] https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/schedules/noncenter/ny.us
[10] https://ny.us.dhamma.org/os/group-sittings/
[11] https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdhamma.us12.list-manage.com%2Fsubscribe%3Fu%3D911ec9e465fe8fcf1924b7c07%26id%3D2009c4c959&data=05|02|kalvin.kochhar%40dhamma.org|01cddaa17e8c4b86f7cc08dddbad2645|a2924ec3e30548bbb3e494bd95f8b833|0|0|638908258925461710|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D|0|||&sdata=YJF6xPbzzHn64xWtFUyrnjW3ly0o8ht7O3DZMd0oGrI%3D&reserved=0
[12] mailto:announce-cambridge-subscribe@dhara.dhamma.org

Two 1-hour sittings are held on most Saturdays from 10:00 am -12:00 noon. The first sitting, from 10:00 am-11:05 am, includes instructions. The second sitting is a silent sitting where students can continue meditating on their own until noon. Sometimes additional sittings are offered, including half-or 1-day courses, and sitting schedules are subject to change during adverse weather. Anyone interested in Lexington schedules, announcements and cancellations, please subscribe to the email list by sending an empty email to announce-lexington-subscribe@dhara.dhamma.org[13] (You will get a reply asking you to reconfirm.)

For address/directions to the Lexington location please visit the Boston old student web site and login as an old student: https://www.boston.us.dhamma.org/locations/lexington/

Sudbury sittings

There are two regular 1-hour sittings in Sudbury: 10:00 am -11:00 am and 11:10 am-12:15 pm. You are welcome to join both or either of the sittings.

For address/directions to the Sudbury location please visit the Boston old student web site and login as an old student: https://www.boston.[14].us.dhamma.org/locations/sudbury/[15]

Vermont

An AT-led, one-day Vipassana course for old students will be held in South Londonderry, Vermont, on April 11, 2026. If you're a Vermonter who has been missing the support of a community and the opportunity to practice together, this is a chance to reconnect and deepen your meditation. The course will be held from 9:00 am-5:00 pm on April 11 at the South Londonderry Depot Visitors Center (34 West River Street, Londonderry, VT 05155). Please bring your own vegetarian lunch and meditation cushions/blankets. To register, please visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1-day-vipassana-meditation-course-for-old-students-tickets-1983624816223?aff=oddtdtcreator[16].

Maine

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[13] mailto:announce-lexington-subscribe@dhara.dhamma.org

[14] https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.boston%2F&data=05|02|kalvin.kochhar%40dhamma.org|8de27b5a26e74d1734da08dd58f28811|a2924ec3e30548bbb3e494bd95f8b833|0|0|638764520870336551|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D|0|||&sdata=xgxln7PVXdp3F5OvxiOO70zrHph0%2BznHkcOGE%2BuNlNo%3D&reserved=0

[15] http://us.dhamma.org/locations/sudbury/

[16] https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.com%2Fe%2F1-day-vipassana-meditation-course-for-old-students-tickets-1983624816223%3Faff%3Doddtdtcreator&data=05|02|kalvin.kochhar%40dhamma.org|9ca26461747c4dfd56bf08de7459a1fe|a2924ec3e30548bbb3e494bd95f8b833|0|0|639076125536210988|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D|0|||&sdata=hMkCqw4XTtLIzitGlFehYY%2BmyoGmsoZlikETN9iYI9w%3D&reserved=0

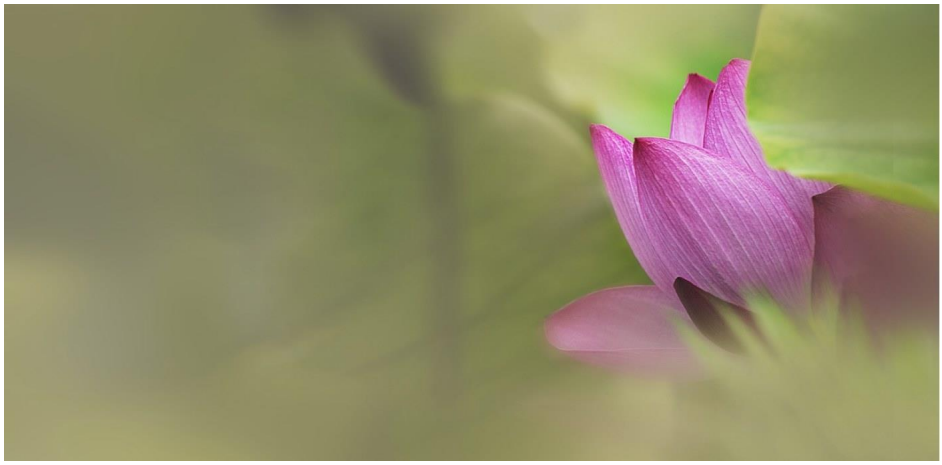
On Saturday, December 20, 2025, two events were held in Hancock, Maine: a half-day Vipassana course for old students and an Introduction to Vipassana program for new students. Twelve old students gathered for the half-day course led by ATs from Dhamma Dhāra, followed by lunch and an opportunity to meet one another. Everyone expressed gratitude for the opportunity to practice together and connect and were interested in having more local group sittings in the future. In the afternoon, about six new students attended the Introduction to Vipassana, where the ATs provided an overview of the practice, answered questions and led some short guided anapāna meditation sessions.

Interested in Hosting a Vipassana Group Sitting?

As Goenkaji mentions in the 10-day course discourses, joining a weekly group sitting with other old students can offer valuable support to help us keep our practice strong. Hosting a weekly Vipassana group sitting at your home, if this is possible, can also be a wonderful way to serve! For more information on hosting group sittings, including guidelines for group sitting hosts and application forms, please email us at info@dhara.dhamma.org[17]

[17] mailto:info@dhara.dhamma.org

Ask an AT



Question:

I want to make sure that when I choose not to generate feelings of anger, I am not actually repressing anger. Sometimes, when something inconvenient happens, I feel that I should be upset, but getting angry feels like a waste of energy and doesn't make me feel better. But, even though I recognize the futility of responding with anger, I'm not sure whether my body suffers as a result. I don't know whether I'm internalizing an unacknowledged anger. How can I know whether I truly accept a negative situation and that I'm not repressing my feelings?

Answer:

Your Vipassana practice helps with these difficulties. Certainly, we strive to control our external actions, so trying to restrain expressing anger in a vocal or physical way is important. But it's the practice of Vipassana that really helps. When anger arises, there is a sensation on the body and/or change in the breath simultaneously. The root of the problem lies with the reaction to the bodily sensation. So you have to feel the sensation, understand its changing nature, and develop equanimity with it. In this way there is no suppression of the anger. It's a long, slow path, but worth it

Question:

I feel embarrassed asking this so many years after my initial 10-day course, but since I continue to worry about it, so here goes:

1. When wanting to observe the natural breath, my breath becomes "unnatural". Does that make sense? Because once I make a conscious effort to observe, breathing becomes methodical/mechanical.
2. I am almost never able to feel sensation on the area underneath the nostrils. I definitely feel sensation of the breath going in and out of the nostrils.

Answer:

There's no need to feel embarrassed and good for you for writing to ask! It is wonderful that you are continuing to practice—keep it up! It is a common question about the breath feeling controlled once someone starts to observe it. If this happens, just accept it and continue to observe. If you continue to give most importance to knowing the breath is coming in or going out, the mind will eventually settle down. You may notice that the breath changes then, but if not, don't worry. Just continue to observe and try to accept whatever is happening with the breath. This is more important than anything else.

Regarding feeling sensation underneath the nostrils—this is unnecessary for an old student. Your job is to be aware of the direction of the breath there—that's all. Sensation is for when you practice Vipassana. Goenkaji introduces the concept of sensation to new students during anapāna but old students focus on the direction of the breath. If you are aware of sensation there, fine—but you still give most importance to the direction of the breath whenever practicing anapāna.

Old students are welcome to ask questions related to the practice of Vipassana meditation and/or how to apply it in daily life by sending an email to at-questions@dhara.dhamma.org[18]. *If needed, a private interview with an AT can also be arranged.*

The Pāramī of Dāna

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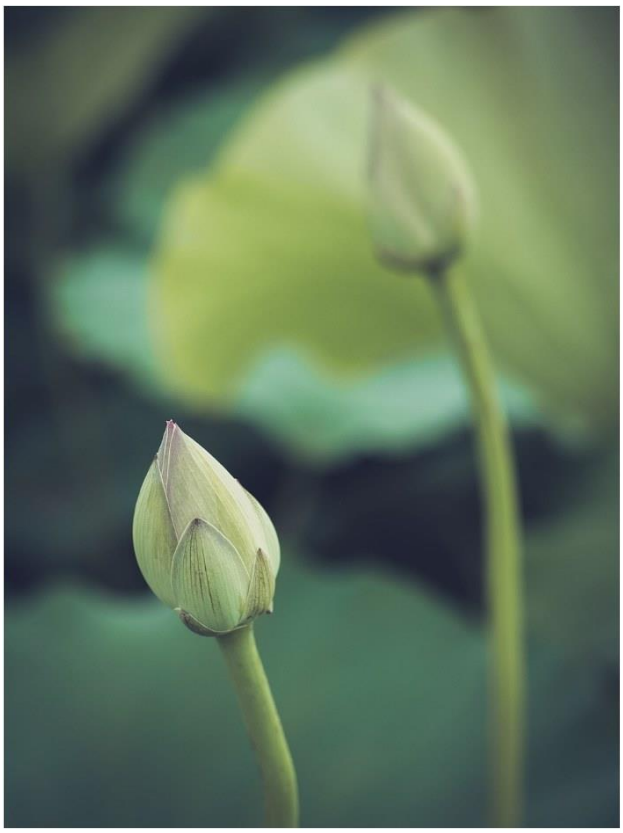
[18] mailto:at-questions@dhara.dhamma.org
[19] https://dhara.dhamma.org/os/home/dana/

Timeless Dhamma



Taṁ kiṁ maññasi, rāhula,kimatthiyo ādāso” ti?

“Paccavekkhaṇattho, bhante” ti.

“Evameva kho, rāhula,

paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā kāyena kammaṁ kattabbaṁ, paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā vācāya kammaṁ kattabbaṁ,

paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā manasā kammaṁ kattabbaṁ."

What do you think, Rāhula? What is the purpose of a mirror?”

“It’s for checking your reflection, sir.”

“In the same way Rāhula,

deeds of body, speech, and mind

should be done only after repeated introspection."

-Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovāda Sutta, MN 61

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