

THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE
ONLINE Month-long Vipassana Retreat for Experienced Students
with Sayadaw U Vivekananda & Sayalay Daw Vimalanani
April 3 - May 1, 2022

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The Mountain Hermitage offers a uniquely supportive space of solitude and silence for qualified individuals who wish to undertake longer periods of intensive meditation practice. This online month-long Vipassana retreat will be for experienced students. Please see the listed prerequisites below. This online retreat taught by Sayālay Daw Vimalanani and Sayādaw U Vivekananda will be conducted through Zoom.

The daily schedule will include approximately 5h 45m sitting meditation, 4h 30m walking meditation, an evening Dhamma talk, and individual interviews. TMH will provide the necessary set-up for streaming Dhamma talks and individual interviews. This retreat is capped at 16 yogis in total. This retreat will be taught according to the meditation instructions given by the late Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw and it is a necessity that retreatants practice according to these instructions.

EXPECTATIONS FOR *THE MOUNTAIN HERMITAGE* PRACTITIONERS:

- Observe the eight precepts or at least the five precepts (see below);
- Practice according to the schedule;
- Practice according to the meditation instructions as given by the late Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw;
- Practice with care and respect;
- Exercise restraint of the senses;
- Slowing down all activities;
- Continuity of mindfulness;
- Keeping the mind in the present moment;
- Keeping communications with the outside world to a minimum;
- All practitioners must have sat three or more 7-10 day retreats or a retreat of a month or longer.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

We ask that you abide by the eight traditional Buddhist precepts for lay practitioners while at this retreat. If you have special circumstances, please abide by the five Buddhist precepts.

1. I undertake the training to refrain from harming living creatures. I undertake the training to practice compassionate action.
2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking that which is not given. I undertake the training to practice contentment.
3. I undertake the training to refrain from sexual activity. I undertake the training to practice responsibility in all my relationships.
4. I undertake the training to refrain from harmful speech. I undertake the training to practice noble silence.
5. I undertake the training to refrain from the use of intoxicants. I undertake the training to care for my body and my mind
6. I undertake the training to refrain from eating at the wrong times. I undertake the training to practice eating simply for nourishment and to sustain the energy to practice the Dhamma.
7. I undertake the training to refrain from entertainments, beautifications and adornments. I undertake the training to keep the mind and heart undistracted and clearly focused on practicing the Dhamma.
8. I undertake the training to refrain from sitting or lying on a high or luxurious seat or bed. I undertake the training to use only what is truly needed to rest the body and stay alert for the practice of the Dhamma.

NOBLE SILENCE:

After our Pre-retreat Zoom Technicalities Meeting on Saturday, April 2, 2022 from 11am-noon (US-MST), you will enter the silent space of the intensive retreat environment. Yogis are also asked not to read, write, or keep a journal – short notes for the interviews are okay.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD:

The experience of being at *The Mountain Hermitage* is a rare opportunity for silence and solitude. In support of this, all personal and business obligations should be taken care of prior to arrival, so that communication with the outside world can be kept to an absolute minimum. We ask that retreatants refrain from the use of telephones, cell phones, computers, and from sending or receiving e-mail or text messages EXCEPT for what is necessary to do an Online retreat! However, given the long-term nature of the *Month-long ONLINE Samatha-Vipassana Retreat* exceptional circumstances may arise when non-retreat related communication is necessary. In this case, contact the Retreat Manager(s). Even in those times, please remember that wise restraint is an integral part of practice.

DANA

DANA, an ancient Pali word meaning *generosity, giving, or gift*, is central to the 2,600-year-old tradition of Buddhism. The teachings of the Buddha have been offered freely since the time of the Buddha. There was and is no way to put a price on the teachings of the truth - they are

valuable beyond any fee one could set.

The early teachers received no payment for their instruction. In Buddhist countries, traditionally, it has always been understood that the lay community, through their voluntary generosity (their *dana*), provide physical support - the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine - for the monks and nuns. In turn they were/are offered guidance and teachings in their own practice by this monastic sangha. This practice of *dana* has been a very significant pillar in keeping the *Dhamma* (teachings) alive. The generosity of the laity towards the practical support of the monastic community since ancient times, is what has kept the *Dhamma* spreading through the world. Western teachers have continued this tradition of offering the teachings freely. In our culture, where no real training exists in living generously, it is a new practice for us in both offering and receiving the *Dhamma*.

Dana is not only a practical matter; it also plays a crucial role in the spiritual life of a *Dhamma* practitioner. Generosity is the first of the ten *paramis*, or qualities of character, to be perfected in spiritual life. The very act of giving is of immeasurable benefit to the giver, for it opens the heart, lessens self-absorption, and serves the well-being of others.

The Mountain Hermitage fees for this retreat only cover basic expenses and operating costs. The teacher(s) offer the Buddha *Dhamma* without any set fee, and totally depend of the generosity of students for the support of their daily life needs. Giving to the teacher, from the heart, whatever feels appropriate, is the practice of *Dana*. You may also wish to offer *dana* to the staff, or to the *Hermitage* itself to support operating expenses or future scholarships.

HOW TO MAKE AN OFFERING: At the end of the retreat, the retreat manager(s) will let you know the best way to offer *dana*. You will be able to make a *dana* offering by mailing TMH checks on US funds or by offering *dana* using your credit card on our online donation platform Network for Good. All *dana* checks should be made out to The Mountain Hermitage. The Mountain Hermitage is 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charitable organization. All *dana* offered to The Mountain Hermitage for use in supporting the teacher, scholarships & general expenses are tax deductible. Donations to staff are not.

MEDICAL ISSUES:

All participants must be mentally stable and physically able to care for themselves. Everyone must have health insurance or be able to cover his/her own expenses in case of illness or medical emergencies. Any special needs must be discussed with *The Mountain Hermitage* Office Manager and the Retreat Manager(s) and agreed to in advance. Given the length of the retreat and the possibility of a participant becoming ill, we recommend that retreatants are prepared to treat a variety of non-urgent common illnesses at home. Should medical needs or emergencies arise, the Retreat Manager(s) can offer assistance online.