Guidelines for Long-Term Dhamma Servers in Dhamma Mudita

Dear Long Term Server

In the long-term Dhamma Service you have the valuable opportunity to establish yourself in Dhamma, deepen your own meditation practice and at the same time help others to develop in Dhamma. As long-term server you can apply in your daily life what you have learned in the Vipassana courses, and you will learn to give your service with joy and humility.

Long-term service can be given by meditators who exclusively practice Vipassana meditation in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S.N. Goenka, and follow the five basic rules of moral conduct.

The first few weeks on the center land will serve as a guide for you (and us) as to whether a long-term service is the right way for you to grow in Dhamma. You will become a long-term server (LTS) 'officially' once you have given continuous service (with short breaks) in Dhamma Mudita for a total of more than 4 weeks.

As a long-term server you should pay attention to the following points:

1. The five basic rules of ethical behaviour

LTS keep the five precepts both in the center and during the leisure periods outside the center.

2. Daily practice

LTS should meditate three times a day for one hour in the Dhamma Hall on the center land. If a Vipassana teacher is present, they should also participate in the evening Metta meditation. Playing a chanting of Goenkaji in the morning while meditating is highly recommended, but is voluntary. Groupsitting recordings in English and German as well as chantings of Goenkaji are available for playing in the meditation hall. On days off, LTS maintain their daily practice by meditating for at least two hours a day. They are free to choose when and where they meditate.

3. Course participation

It is recommended that LTS sit a course every 3 - 6 months.

4. Meeting with the assistant teachers

Regular contact with an assistant teacher has proven to be very helpful. The responsible ATs can be contacted at any time by mail or telephone. If you feel permanently stressed or if you feel overwhelmed, it is good to seek direct contact with them at an early stage.

5. Accommodation

The accommodation situation on the center land is still difficult at the moment. However, it will change over time. The responsible LTS coordinator will inform you about the accommodation possibilities available at the moment.

6. Regular meetings of the LTS

LTS meet regularly with the LTS coordinator to discuss the distribution of tasks and the daily schedule including necessary breaks.

7. Gender segregation

In order to maintain the pure Dhamma atmosphere, segregation of males and females is to be observed on the center land as much as possible. This applies especially to the meditation hall, accommodation and dining areas. Two singles of different sexes should not be the only LTS on the Dhamma land - the same applies to two homosexual singles of the

same sex who would also require separate accommodation. Married couples or couples who have lived together for many years and are committed to a lifelong relationship can only use shared accommodation outside the center grounds.

Try to treat the people with whom you provide service like your brother or sister. If two Dhamma servers are attracted to each other, if wishes for a relationship or sexual thoughts arise, you should take time off from service. In this case it is important to leave the center immediately and to clarify the situation outside the center. Talking to a teacher can be very helpful.

8. Breaks and personal well-being

All LTS should take 1 - 2 days off per week. This is important to avoid exhaustion and to keep contact with friends and family. After about three months we recommend a break of at least one week. The free times should be arranged with the other LTS so that there are always enough LTS on site.

As LTS you help many people to come out of their suffering. This brings much joy and inspiration. But the time can also be quite demanding. It is therefore very important that you take good care of yourself. This is an important learning process for all LTS.

Since as LTS you always return to the Dhamma land even after a break, your leisure activities should be in harmony with Dhamma. Places where Sila is not observed should therefore be avoided also on days off.

9. Literature, audio and video material, media libraries and Internet

During the time of the LTS, only Dhamma literature should be read and Dhamma films watched on the center land. A small Dhamma library with suitable reading material, as well as audios and videos from our tradition, including the course discourses and public talks by S.N.Goenka, will be gradually built up. In addition, LTS can read daily or weekly newspapers during the breaks and also use the internet for practical matters (travel bookings, news etc.). Outside of the center area, other books and other media can also be used. However, it is important to make sure that they do not contain any violence or sexual content. News, documentaries, education, sports and comics are okay, but LTS should refrain from games.

10. Times of private internet use

On days when you provide service and are accommodated on the center premises, the Internet should not be used between 10:00 pm and 6:30 am. Private Internet use should not exceed 1 hour per day.

On your days off, make sure you take responsibility for yourself. We recommend that you burden your mind as little as possible with useless media consumption - especially not on the center grounds.

11. Telephone and E-mail

To keep in touch with the outside world, LTS can also use telephone and E-mail. On days when you provide service, an hour per day should not be exceeded for private calls or E-mails. On days off there is no restriction.

12. Behaviour of LTS among each other and towards other Dhamma servers

If negative moods arise between the servers, this should be seen as an opportunity to practice a good Dhamma attitude and seek a conversation with the persons involved as soon as possible. Sometimes it can be helpful to take another (neutral) LTS along. If this conversation is not successful, a teacher should be consulted.

If LTS feel uncomfortable or upset at a certain time, it is better not to have contact with others and instead meditate or take a break until the storm has passed. Please also read the "Code of Conduct for Dhamma Workers" (https://mudita.dhamma.org/en/information-for-old-students/dhamma-service/code-of-conduct-for-dhamma-server/).

13. First aid course

For LTSs who provide service for more than three months, participation in a first-aid course is planned. The Vipassana Center will cover the costs for this.

14. Food

In the Dhamma accommodations on the course grounds neither meat nor fish may be eaten, and eggs should also be avoided. Refraining from using any kind of alcoholic drinks or drugs is self-evident, because this would be a breakage of Sila. As long as no regular course program is running, the LTS have to take care of their own meals during their long-term service. If financial support for the food supply is needed, this should be discussed with the LTS coordinator or a teacher.

15. Guests and partners

In the accommodations provided by the Austrian “Verein für Vipassana Meditation” outside the center grounds, such as tents, caravans or similar, the same basic rules apply as in the center. The five Sila rules should be strictly adhered to, as well as the segregation of the sexes. Outside the center land, however, the following exceptions apply: permanent partners can be accommodated together if desired; LTS can also receive guests (e.g. children, parents, friends, meditators and also non-meditators) in their accommodation outside the center. Relatives of LTS can stay with them for some time when visiting, even if they are not meditators, as well as non-meditating friends of the same sex.

During the time as LTS, it is important that personal guests also observe the Sila rules (e.g. to abstain from alcohol) for the time of their stay in Vipassana accommodations.

16. Cleaning and clearing of the accommodation

The LTS regularly clean the accommodation provided to them and take good care of the facilities.

At the end of your stay, please clean and tidy up the accommodation very thoroughly. All personal belongings must be taken along when the long-term service ends.

17. Invitation

All LTS are cordially invited to attend the meetings of the Vipassana organization and to actively participate in the committees (e.g. house and maintenance, garden, forest etc.).

Closing words

The center is a very good place to grow in Dhamma. It is not a place where one comes to escape from worldly obligations. It is a place of austereness and gives invaluable benefit - to those who give the Dhamma service and those who receive it.

May many share in this benefit and be freed from their suffering

May all beings be happy.