

January 2021

NEWSLETTER

International Meditation Centre

IN THE TRADITION OF SAYAGYI U BA KHIN AND MOTHER SAYAMAGYI

IMC United Kingdom

IMC Yangon (Myanmar)

IMC Australia (NSW)

IMC Australia (WA)

IMC Austria

IMC USA



COURSE SCHEDULE 2021

Before making travel plans to come for a course, please double check the dates with the relevant Centre or group or on the global home page www.ubakhin-vipassana-meditation.org.

IMC United Kingdom

Courses taught by Mr Roger Bischoff:

January	15–25, 2021
February	5–15
March	12–22
April	9–19
May	14–24
June	11–21
July	16–26
August	13–23
September	10–20
October	8–18
November	12–22
December	24–January 3, 2022

IMC Australia (WA)

March	19–29, 2021	Mr Douglas Solomon
July	23–August 2	Mr Gregory Solomon
November	12–22	Mr Douglas Solomon

COURSE SCHEDULE 2021 continued

IMC Australia (NSW)

January	15–25, 2021	Mr Richard Walsh
February	19–March 1*	Mr Richard Walsh
April	9–19	Mr Michael Fraser
June	11–21	Mr Mark Peterson
July	16–26*	Mr Mark Peterson
August	13–23	Mr Richard Walsh
October	1–11	Mr Michael Fraser
November	26–December 6	Mr Mark Peterson

*Courses are for students who have previously completed 10 day courses at IMC NSW. They may be self-catered.

IMC Austria

January	29–February 8, 2021	Mr Franz Zelsacher
March	19–29	Mr Franz Neuner
May	14–24	Mr Franz Zelsacher
July	16–26	Mr Hubert Knaus
August	20–30	Mr Renzo Fedele (<i>in Italian and English</i>)
October	29–November 8	Mr Franz Neuner
December	31–January 10, 2022	Mr Franz Zelsacher

IMC USA

March	12–22, 2021	Mr Michael Kosman
May	14–24	Mr Michael Kosman
June	11–21	Mr Craig Storti
August	13–23	Mr Michael Kosman
October	8–18	Mr Craig Storti
December	24–January 3, 2022	Mr Craig Storti

Germany

Weekend Course:

October	2–4, 2021	Mr Horst Jughard
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Italy (*at IMC Austria, in Italian and English*)

August	20–30, 2021	Mr Renzo Fedele
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COURSE SCHEDULE 2021 continued

Japan

Courses taught by Mr James Emery

April 29–May 9, 2021 (Osaka)

August 13–23 (Aomori)

Weekend Courses (Osaka):

February 12–14

June 11–14

July 16–19

October 8–11

November 12–15

December 10–13

Netherlands

Please check the website.

Russia

Courses taught by Mr Roger Bischoff

April 30–May 10, 2021

July 30–August 9

October 29–November 8

Singapore

December 3–13, 2021 Mr Roger Bischoff

Switzerland

April 1–11, 2021 Mr Eugen Jung

Ukraine

Courses taught by Mr Roger Bischoff

March 26–April 5, 2021

June 25–July 5

September 24–October 4

SPECIAL DAYS 2021

January 19	Sayagyi U Ba Khin's Demise Day
January 28	Mother Sayamagyi's Demise Day
March 27	Full Moon of Tabaung
March 31	Mother Sayamagyi's Birthday
April 7	Sayagyi U Ba Khin's Birthday
April 13-16	Water Festival
April 17	Burmese New Year
May 25	Buddha Day (Full Moon of Kason)
June 24	Mahāsamāya Day (Full Moon of Nayon)
July 23	Dhammacakka Day (Full Moon of Waso)
October 12	Anniversary of the Teachers' arrival in the West
October 20	Abhidhamma Day (Full Moon of Thadingyut)
November 18	Festival of Lights (Full Moon of Tasaung Mon)
December 19	Sayagyi U Thet's Day

MORALITY

We can sum up wholesome actions in the domain of morality with the word generosity. The teachings of the Buddha lead us away from an egocentric outlook. It is not only meditation that lessens self-centredness, but it is also the purpose of *dāna* (generosity) and *sīla* (morality) or right conduct (*carana*). Keeping the five precepts, as Buddhist laypeople do, is a beginning of the process of moving away from a selfish, self-centred approach to life, and instead, considering the interests of fellow beings.

We could say that any action of giving, generosity, is right conduct, as it leads away from egocentricity; whilst any action of taking, strengthens the attachment to self. Keeping the five precepts, one benefits oneself by avoiding actions that will bring suffering later for oneself, and benefits others by keeping them safe from our anger, greed, and delusion. Generosity includes not only giving material objects, but also giving in the sense of benefiting others in any way.

Vipassanā leads to a state of pure and perfect *sīla*: the Sotāpanna, the individual who has tasted Nibbāna, does not break any of the five precepts, as the defilements of greed, anger, and delusion in him are greatly reduced. The first president of Burma, Saw Shwe Taik, said that this new state he had achieved through his meditation was wonderful, and he said that “there was no need any more to strain, in order to restrain himself [from breaking *sīla*]”.

Dāna and *sīla* are also supportive of meditation, in as much as they make us avoid unwholesome actions which create resultants that are harmful to us and our environment. They make us perform skilful actions that will give good results such as long life, health, and material independence, all of which are supportive of meditation.

Even if we are primarily interested in worldly happiness, it is good to make an effort to develop these perfections. When the Buddha gave a discourse, it would be a graduated teaching. He would begin with the first of the *pāramīs* (perfections), generosity. This is because we can sum up wholesome actions in the domain of morality with the word generosity. And it is generosity that leads to rebirth in the higher planes. In this way, the Buddha started by establishing people in generosity. Without this base, it would be impossible to go further.

Next, he would teach his audience concerning morality, for the mind is more pliable when we are generous. We are well disposed to seeing the wisdom in avoiding wrong actions and cultivating right action.

Then the Buddha would establish his listeners in the four Divine Abidings. Finally, if he saw that the potential was there, he would teach calmness of mind

(*samādhi*) and insight (*paññā*). This is why, in Buddhist countries, bhikkhus teach *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (morality), and *bhāvanā* (meditation) to lay disciples. *Sīla* will lead to long life, and *dāna* will lead to material gains. You will notice how *dāna* could play a great role in the rounds of existences as we are only able to meditate if we have sufficient material support for our bodily needs. We cannot meditate if procuring what we need to keep our body going requires all the time and energy we have at our disposal.

The Discourse to the Villagers of Veḷudvāra¹

The discourse given by the Buddha to the villagers of Veḷudvāra illustrates how he suited his teachings to his listeners. This can be called “The Discourse on the Dhamma Way of Comparing Oneself with Another”. The villagers told the Buddha that they wanted to have many children, pleasant things such as perfumes, flowers, gold and silver in this life; and after death they wanted to be reborn in the Deva worlds. How could they accomplish this?

The Buddha did not tell them they should not desire such transient pleasures. He knew that men are motivated by their own self-interest and that it serves no purpose to tell a person to be perfectly disinterested in his actions. It is impossible before one becomes an Arahat.

So he taught them how to compare themselves with others. He told them to reflect in the following manner: “I want to live. I do not want to die. I am fond of pleasure and dislike pain and suffering. Now, if someone were to kill me, it would not be pleasing and delightful to me. If I kill someone else, it will not be pleasing and delightful to him. A condition that is not pleasing to me is not pleasing to others, so how can I impose a condition that is not pleasing and delightful to me on others?”

In the same way, one should reflect on stealing, sexual misconduct, lies that can destroy our good fortune, dissension between friends, harsh words, foolish and useless talk. Seeing that they are all unpleasant, one will abstain from such actions, one will encourage others to abstain from them, and one will speak in praise of abstaining from such immoral actions.

The Buddha ends his discourse to the people of Veḷudvāra by saying that through morality they will be able to attain calmness of mind that will lead to the attainment of the first stage of Awakening. And for one established in the first stage of Awakening, there is no more rebirth in the lower worlds.

¹Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Connected Discourses* (Pali Text Society, 2000), pp. 1796–99.

International Meditation Centre

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Online group sittings: www.internationalmeditationcentre.org/sitting/. User name: daily. Password: sitting.