



The Buddha and His Noble Path





VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37235

November 10, 1986

Dear Venerable Nanissara,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the very kind help you have provided for my classes this semester. Your presence in Nashville for these three months has been of great benefit to all who knew you and heard your teachings. We have been fortunate to have had you in our midst. This has been doubly true of me since I teach several courses that relate to Buddhism. It is one thing to know a religion only by reading books, but how much better it is to know someone who believes in and practices that religion! But you are not just an ordinary believer, you are a monk who is recognized in your own country of Burma (Myanmar) as an outstanding teacher, scholar and activist for humanitarian causes.

It was a pleasure having you attend my classes in Survey of Eastern Religions, Comparative Studies in Religion, and Zen Buddhism. It meant a great deal to the students to have you in the class everyday and to have a chance to talk with you informally outside the class. Several students told me about their conversations with you, and on several occasions I saw you talking with students on the campus. One never knows how significant such contacts can be on the lives of young students. I am sure their impression of Buddhism has changed for the better simply by knowing you.

It was especially helpful to have you lecture in my classes. In the Survey of Eastern Religions you not only lectured in class on the basic teachings of Buddhism, but you also kindly invited about thirty members of the class to visit the temple for a lecture on meditation and a chance to actually practice meditation under your guidance. You also answered their questions about the life of a monk and some of the

rules that you follow. The students wrote a paper about the temple visit and each of them expressed their appreciation for the chance to experience living Buddhism here in Nashville, Tennessee.

You also lectured on Theravada meditation in my class on Zen Buddhism to give them a background in Buddhist meditation that would help them to understand the development of the Zen practice of zazen. Finally, in the Comparative Studies in Religion class you not only participated in the class discussion, but you lectured to the class on the view of Buddhism towards other religions. The students noted that they learned about Buddhist attitudes towards other religions not only from your lecture but from the spirit and attitude that you displayed in the class .

I have often thought of team-teaching a course on Buddhism with a Buddhist monk-scholar like yourself. Although you were not here long enough to do that, it was possible to utilize your expertise in my

classes, and I am even further convinced of pedagogical value of this kind of experience for the students.

Let me conclude with a personal word of the admiration and respect I have for you. You are an easy person to talk with and your friendly smile immediately communicates your warm personality. I wish you success in your work, and I hope you will be able to return to Nashville at some time in the future.

Charles H. Hambrick
Associate Professor

On the Art of Translating

The Reverend Nanissara and I have been studying the "art of translation" during this fall semester at Vanderbilt University. It is a translation on many levels--on the most literal one, I have been helping him to phrase in grammatical and idiomatic English the intricate concepts of Buddhist thought, to translate them, that is, from his language and culture to the language and culture of the West.

But on other levels, we have been studying in ourselves the translation (etymologically the "crossing over") and the transforming of two representatives of different cultures who suddenly discover between them a common language. I come away from this experience transformed in two ways. First, in reading about the teachings of the Buddha. I am able to see how the ways of Buddhism and of western Christianity intersect. Second, as I have met each week with the Reverend Nanissara, a man who defines himself as a seeker and

who has been almost exhaustively called upon to be a teacher and lecturer on Buddhism during his visit to the United States, I have seen in the life of this Buddhist monk the translation of the Buddha's teachings into lived practice. That is, the Reverend Nanissara has made his very life an illustration of the Buddha's teachings. In this "translation," the ancient texts are spoken and lived in his actions, in his manner, as well as in the words he chooses with such care when he is lecturing to students.

I have seen negotiated on yet another level the very fine line that separates the seeker from the knower, the student from the teacher. Because I know English grammar better than he, the Reverend Nanissara is my student. But as he struggles to explain in my language the ideas of the Buddha expressed in the language of Pali, I see that the Reverend Nanissara is clearly also my teacher. We cross this line of

teacher and student, of knower and seeker, constantly in our conversations. In the very act of finding the English words to express the Dhamma, for example, we are in fact seeking, on another level perhaps, the Majjhima Patipada, the Middle Path, where the thought of two culture and the roles of student and of teacher may be shared.

It is one thing to make the psychological and geographical "translation" that the Reverend Nanissara has accomplished in the months that he has visited the United States. Undoubtedly he has found the ways of western culture, and the life of Vanderbilt University, with its schedules, its students and teachers and their confusing mannerisms and idioms, a challenge to the serenity that he tries to shelter within him and to bring to those whom he meets. As he journeys each day in the hour busride from the Buddhist temple in Nashville to the bustling University campus, he makes of himself a bridge between two very different worlds. The crossing over or translation that we talk of when we discuss English

composition, thus, becomes a metaphor for this much larger imaginative and generous act of translation in which this Buddhist monks is engaged. It is, quite simply, a gift that he carries from his culture to ours, and the gift has been himself.

Ellen M. Caldwell
Assistant Professor of English
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee
November 5, 1986

Planting the Seed of Dhamma

Traveling around the world spreading the Buddha's Dhamma one has to be very careful while teaching to people of a Christian ideal dominated society and their Western way of living. The following essay, written by Venerable Ashin Nyanissara, was delicately prepared to suit his audience. It is from a series of unconnected individual lectures on Buddhism that he has given in the West since 1982.

As a Dhamma preacher, Ashin Nyanissara parallels a wise farmer who tills the soil before sowing the seed. He finds fertile soil, a person willing to listen, learn and practice before carefully planting the seed of Dhamma. Over time he then nurtures this seed with his knowledge and loving-kindness so that it will be able to grow and maintain itself; establishing morality, concentration, and wisdom.

It was my interest in learning meditation which led me to the Buddhist Temple in Nashville Tennessee U.S.A., where I

met Sayadaw on May 26, 1992. Every Tuesday night American meditators would gather for Sayadaw's one hour Dhamma lecture, one hour of instructions and meditation, and question and conversation period.

Approaching Sayadaw personally a week and a half later, he invited me to listen to U Tezaw Bhatha, U Sacca Vamsa and his chanting. Afterwards we sat for an one-on-one conversation. Everything that I was seeking after in my life could be found in or answered by this venerable teacher sitting in front of me. He answered all my questions and counter-questioned me on why I wasn't a Christian and my beliefs. I wanted to know everything about Buddhism so he began by teaching the Mangala Sutta. The seed was being planted.

Over the next seven months I would daily visit the temple for teachings and provide Dhamma service to the monks. My entire life was being changed as Sayadaw carefully nurtured my learning process. That October, I formally declared under Sayadaw

that I was Buddhist and he gave me the Myanmar name Janapabha.

Also at this same time Śayadaw announced that in December he would be departing for Asia. When a farmer doesn't water and tend to his crops they wither and die. Not wanting me to stray off my new Dhamma path, he invited me to follow. Thus I was offered the opportunity of a lifetime, to study and live Buddhism in Myanmar where it has been maintained for nearly 2500 years in its pristine purity.

Ashin Nyanissara is a "man of gifted" His goal in life is to first perfect himself. Second to perfect those around him. Third to perfect the world. He hadn't only been teaching me to be a proper Buddhist but also a good Myanmar Buddhist. It was all too obvious upon my arrival in Myanmar why Sayadaw takes such care in his teachings. Physically, Myanmar is very poor, however, it flows abundantly with mental richness. Myanmar qualities, such as generosity (especially in the form of donations), loving-

kindness and hospitality, which we lack in the West, I could easily understand.

The seed of Dhamma which Sayadaw planted was growing and blossoming, leading to the ultimate experience of a Buddhist and between teacher and student-my ordination as a nun. We had waited ten months for my becoming a "daughter of the Buddha".

As you read the following essay you will notice how Sayadaw plants the seeds of Dhamma into his listeners as he planted it inside me. For those with little knowledge of the Buddha's teaching he begins with the life of the Buddha and history of Buddhism. The intellectual will be stimulated by Sayadaw's refreshing version of the foundation of Buddhism which is the Middle Path.

Whatever it takes Ashin Nyanissara strives ardently and diligently to spread the Buddha's teaching to the world. With the help of the Myanmar community in Myanmar and abroad Sayadaw has been able to spread the true teaching of the Buddha.

Sayadaw, I can never thank you

enough for giving me the greatest gift of all-
DHAMMA!

Jennifer S. Conn - Janapabha
Sitagu Vihara
April 15, 1994

Biography of Ashin Nyanissara

Youth and Education:

Ashin Nyanissara was born in Thegon Township, Pago Division, Myanmar, on February 23, 1937. He was ordained as a Buddhist novice at the age of fifteen and received his higher ordination as a Buddhist monk in the same township when he was twenty. He passed his primary, middle and higher examinations in Pali Buddhist scripture in the years 1956, 1957, 1958 respectively. He also earned a Master degree in Buddhist Doctrine at Khin-ma-gan Pali University in Mandalay and he completed a diploma course in Foreign Language (English) at Sangha University in Yangon for the propagation of Buddhism.

Teaching and Ministry:

In 1965, he founded BBM College in the town of Lay-Myet-hna in the delta region of Lower Myanmar, and worked as

Headmaster and Chief Administrator of that institution until 1968. In 1968 he shifted his residence to the Sagaing Hills in Upper Myanmar and there began to teach Buddhist scripture to monks, novices and nuns. He also continued his study of English, as well as trained in Buddhist homiletics for the purpose of preaching to lay Burmese Buddhists. He remained in the Sagaing Hills until 1975. Between the years 1975-1978 he lived in seclusion and practiced meditation at the forest monastery of Thabaik Aing Taw-ya in Mon State Lower Myanmar. In 1979 he established his own monastery, Sitagu Vihara, and resumed the teaching of Buddhist doctrine and scripture to the monks, novices and nuns of the surrounding region.

Charitable Projects:

In 1981, he began collecting donations for the construction of a water supply system that would eventually provide clean drinking water to the over six hundred monasteries and seven thousand residents of

the Sagaing Hills. This project took four years to complete at a cost of over 8,000,000 Myanmar Kyats.

In 1987, he began the construction of an one hundred bed hospital for the monks, nuns, novices and poor people of Sagaing. This project took four years to complete at a cost of 35,000,000 Myanmar Kyats. The hospital is equipped with surgical and X-ray units, an inpatient ward and outpatient clinic, and has a permanent staff of twelve doctors, twenty-four nurses, and thirty non-professional workers. Another 20,000,000 Myanmar Kyats has been reserved for equipment and operating costs.

Foreign Missionary Travel:

In 1981, he took his first foreign missionary journey to six countries in South and Southeast Asia. The following year, he visited twelve countries including the United States. In 1987, he made his third missionary tour, in the course of which he again visited the United States and nineteen other countries. During his stay in the United

States he resided in the Myanmar Buddhist Temple in Nashville. He stayed there for four months, during which time he taught Buddhism to American students, and on one occasion gave a lecture at Vanderbilt University. In 1990, he took his fourth missionary tour, and in March 1991 began his fifth missionary tour. On the journey he visited the following countries: Thailand, India, SriLanka, Nepal, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Japan, Australia, Switzerland, Russia, England, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Canada and the United States.

Publications:

Besides being a teacher of Buddhism and organizing and administering various charitable projects in Myanmar over the years, he has published thirty-eight books and articles in Burmese since 1979 on the subject of Buddhism. He is currently working on several manuscripts for English publication.

With Metta

Lee Olsen

Secretary

Cambodian International Buddhist Temple
Nashville, TN, U.S.A

Acknowledgments

This booklet would not have been possible without the help of many people.

First, I wish to thank the teachers of the Sangha University, Yangon, Myanmar, 1962,1963,1964.

Second, I want to thank Ashin Pandita (Aggamahapandita) who taught me the Path of Purification, the Question of King Milinda and the Preaching Method.

Third, I express my gratitude to Ashin Thittila, Dr. H. Saddhatissa, Dr. Wapola Rahula and Bhikkhu Narada. I have higher knowledge on the subject of comparative study of religions by reading their books. The Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures, Buddhist Ethics, What the Buddha Taught, and The Buddha and His Teachings; these Books are my benefactors.

I am extremely glad to express my gratefulness to Dr. Ellen Caldwell, who helped me in English, and to Dr. Charles Hambrick, who arranged my Dhamma lectures, when I attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. My gratitude also goes out to Dr. Win Myint who founded the Buddhist Temple in Nashville.

Lastly, I would like to thank Jennifer Conn for typing and editing my papers.

All proceeds from this booklet will be donated to the International Buddhist Academy of Sagaing Hills, Myanmar. Its goal is to teach and train missionary-student-monks in the hopes of further spreading the teachings of the Buddha.

May all beings realize the Dhamma.

May the Dhamma prevail in the
world in its pristine purity.

THE BUDDHA AND HIS NOBLE PATH

This lecture was delivered to the Survey of Eastern Religions Class of the Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A, on October 27, 1986, at the request of Dr. Charles Hambrick, Associate Professor of Religion and Director of East Asian Studies at Vanderbilt University, and also a member of the Board of Directors of the Buddhist Temple.

Buddha

Six hundred twenty three years before Jesus Christ, on the full moon day of May, in the Rupandehi district of the Kingdom of Nepal, at Lumbini a lovely garden full of green shady Melly Sala groves, Sakya Prince Siddhatha Gotama, the Buddha, who would become the greatest religious teacher in the world, was born.

His father, Suddhodana, was the ruler of the Kingdom of the Sakkyas; his mother was Queen Maha Maya. Moriyen Emperor Ashoka visited this sacred birthplace of the Buddha in 239 B.C. In commemoration of

his visit, he erected a stone pillar. The inscription on the pillar testifies not only to the location of the Lumbini gardens but also to the birthplace of the Buddha.

The inscription reads as follows: "When King Devanam Priyadarsina Raja had been anointed twenty years, he himself came and paid respect to this spot because the Buddha Sakyamuni was born here."

In 588 B.C., on the full moon day of May, under a Bodhi tree growing on the bank of the Narajara River near Gaya (now in modern Bihar, India), at the age of 35, Siddatha Gotama attained Enlightenment. During the first watch of that wonderful night (Vesakha Punnama), the Blessed One acquired knowledge of his previous existences; in the second watch, penetrated the law of Dependent Origination; and finally, at sunrise, attained Omniscience. After this, he was Known as the Buddha, "The Perfect Enlightened One". He was not born as a Buddha, but was a human being who became a Buddha by his own striving.

In 543 B.C., on the full moon day of

May (Vesaka Punnama), in the Sala grove southwest of Kusinagar capital of the Mallas (in modern Uttar Pradesh, India), the Buddha, founder of the greatest religion, and the greatest teacher of all men and gods, passed into parinibbana, or complete extinction, at the age of eighty. When the Blessed one was entering into parinibbana, he addressed the assembly of bhikkhus saying: "Behold, now behold, I exhort you, decay or disintegration is inherent in all compounded and conditioned things, but the Truth will remain forever! Work out your salvation and liberation with earnestness and diligence." These were the last words of the Buddha.

When the Buddha thus entered Nibbana, there arose, at the moment of his passing out of existence a mighty earthquake, terrible and awe - inspiring; the thunder of heaven burst forth, and those of the bhikkus who were not yet free from passions stretched out their arms and wept. Some fell headlong on the ground in anguish, anguish at the thought, "Too soon

has the Buddha passed away! Too soon has the Tathagata passed away from existence! Too soon has the Light of the World gone out! Too soon has the Eye of the world disappeared!"

The brilliant lamp was extinguished! But the lamp of the Dhamma, that is, the Buddha's teaching exists forever and will light the way of countless numbers of beings in our world across the stream of life and death to Nibbana.

It has been twenty-five centuries since Siddhattha Gotama, the Sakkyia Prince who became the Buddha, passed away. But his words, his teachings, his path, his philosophy, his discipline and his truths have not passed away. These Dhamma remain even now as the guide to life for countless numbers of mankind.

Among the founders of religions, the Buddha is the only teacher who did not claim to be anything other than a human being, pure and simple. Other teachers claimed to be either God or his incarnation in different forms, inspired by God. The

Buddha was a human being; he claimed no inspiration from any God, other external power. He attributed all his realizations, attainments and achievements to human endeavor and human intelligence. A man, and only a man can become a Buddha, if he so wills it and endeavors after it. We call the Buddha a man "par-excellence". He was so perfect in his "human-ness" that he came to be regarded later in popular religion as "super-human"

His Noble Path

The moral, philosophical, practical and ethical systems expounded by the Buddha are called the Dhamma, and are more popularly known as Buddhism. Strictly speaking, Buddhism is not a religion, in that it is not a system of faith and worship owing any allegiance to a supernatural Supreme Being. Buddhism is a course or way that guides a disciple through pure living and pure thinking, to gain Supreme wisdom and deliverance from all evil and defilement. In Buddhism, there is no God or creator to be

feared or obeyed. Instead of placing an unseen almighty God over man, the Buddha raised the worth of mankind. Buddha taught that man can gain salvation by self-exertion without depending on God or other authorities. If by religion we mean a system of deliverance from the ills of life, then Buddhism is the religion above all religions.

The foundation of Buddhism is the Middle Path. This avoids two extremes; one is the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is "low, common, unprofitable and the way of ordinary people"; the other is the search for peace through self-mortification- usually in various forms of asceticism, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable. The Buddha, having found both to be useless, avoided them, discovering the new way through his own experience. This is the Middle Path, which gives clear vision and knowledge that leads to calm, peace, happiness, insight, purification of mind and enlightenment, cessation of defilement, extinction of suffering, and Nibbana. The

Middle Path is generally called the Noble Eight-fold Path, because it is composed of eight categories, namely:

1. Right Understanding
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

(1) **RIGHT UNDERSTANDING** is the key-note of Buddhism. It is the knowledge of the four Noble Truths. To understand rightly means Right Understanding; to see things as they really and truly are. This understanding is the highest wisdom which sees the ultimate reality and absolute truth. These realities and truths are within us, not outside ourselves. The path to freedom and purity has been well-mapped by the Buddha and countless others who have walked upon it. This is the guide pointing the way to enlightenment.

In the practice of the Noble Eight-fold Path, Right Understanding stands at the beginning as well as at its end. A minimum degree of Right Understanding is necessary at the very beginning because it gives the right motivations to the other seven factors of the Path and gives correct direction to them. In the beginning, Right Understanding deals with certain natural laws which govern our everyday lives. One of the most important of these is the Law of Kamma, the law of cause and effect. Every action brings a certain result. Whenever our acts are motivated by greed, hatred and delusion, then pain and suffering come back to us. When our actions are motivated by generosity, love or wisdom, the results are happiness and peace. If we integrate this understanding of the Law of Kamma into our lives, we can begin more consciously to cultivate and develop wholesome states of mind. The Buddha often stressed the importance of generosity. Giving is the expression in action of non-greed in the mind. The whole spiritual path involves

letting go, not grasping, not clinging and generosity is the manifestation of non-attachment.

Right Understanding also involves a profound and subtle knowledge of our true nature. In the course of meditation practice, it becomes increasingly clear that everything is impermanent. All the elements of mind and body exist in a moment and pass away, arising and vanishing continuously. The breath comes in and goes out, thoughts arise and pass away, sensations come into being and vanish. All phenomena are in constant flux. There is no lasting security to be had in the flow of impermanence. Deep insight into the selfless motive of all elements begins to offer us a radically different perspective on our lives and the world. The mind stops grasping and clinging when the microscopic transience of everything is realized, and when we experience the process of mind and body without the burden of self. This is the kind of right understanding that is developed in meditation through careful and penetrating observation.

(2) Clear vision leads to clear thinking. Therefore, the second factor is **RIGHT THOUGHT**. This serves the double purpose of eliminating evil thoughts and developing pure thoughts.

Right Thought is free of sense desire, free of ill-will, free of cruelty.

The endless cycle of desire for sense pleasures keeps the mind in turbulence and confusion. Right thought means becoming aware of sense desires and letting them go. Then the mind becomes lighter. There is no disturbance, no tension, and we begin to free ourselves from selfishness, and possessiveness.

Freedom from ill-will means freedom from anger. Anger is a burning fire in the mind and causes great suffering to others as well. It is helpful to be able to recognize anger and to let it go. Then the mind becomes light and easy, expressing its natural loving kindness. Thoughts free of cruelty and harmfulness are thoughts of compassion, feeling for the suffering of others and wanting to alleviate it. we should

develop thoughts which are completely free of cruelty towards any living being.

(3) Right thought leads to **RIGHT SPEECH**. Today how we relate in the world, how we relate to our environment and to other people depends upon our speech. The Buddha's teaching is a prescription for putting us into harmony with our surroundings, for establishing a proper ecology of mind so that we are in accord with others or with nature around us. The first aspect of relating to the world in this way is right speech. Right speech means not speaking what is untrue, or using slanderous, abusive or harsh language, rather speaking words which are honest and helpful, creating a vibration of peace and harmony.

(4) Right speech must be followed by **RIGHT ACTION**. This means not killing, minimizing the amount of pain we inflict on other beings; not stealing, that is, not taking what is not given; and not committing sexual misconduct, which in the context of our daily life can be most basically understood as not causing suffering to others

out of greed or desire for pleasant sensations.

Although we are not always able to see the far-reaching consequences of each of our acts, we should take care not to create disturbances in the environment but to emanate peace and gentleness, love and compassion.

(5) Purifying ones thoughts, words, and deeds at the outset, the spiritual pilgrim tries to purify his livelihood. **RIGHT LIVELIHOOD** involves our relationships in the world. This means doing that kind of work for support and maintenance which is not harmful to others; not engaging in work which involves killing, stealing or dishonesty. There is a traditional list of occupations which are considered unwholesome. It includes the work associated with harmful weapons, intoxicants and poisons, and the work which causes suffering of human beings and animals. The Dhamma is very active. Most human beings are dull in understanding, but wisdom and understanding have to be integrated into our lives.

Right Livelihood is an important part of the integration: to make an art of life, to do what we have to do in a sacred manner with awareness.

(6) The next three steps on the path have to do primarily with the practice of meditation. The first of these is in many respects the most important - **RIGHT EFFORT**. Right Effort is the energetic will to keep evil from arising, to get rid of such evils that has already arisen, to produce the good not yet arisen, and to develop the good that already has arisen. Unless we make the effort, nothing happens. It is said in the Abhidhamma (the Buddhist Philosophy) that effort is the root of all achievement, the foundation of all attainment. If we want to get to the top of the mountain and just sit at the bottom thinking about it, nothing is going to happen. It is through the effort the actual climbing of the mountain, the taking of one step after another, that the summit is reached.

But effort has to be balanced. Being very tense and anxious is a great hindrance.

Energy has to be balanced with tranquility. In our practice, we have to be persistent and persevering, but with a relaxed and balanced mind, making the effort without forcing. There is so much to discover in ourselves, so many levels of mind to understand. By our making effort, the path will unfold. We each have to walk the path with energetic will to solve the problems of our life.

(7) **RIGHT MINDFULNESS** means being aware of what is happening in the present moment. It is being diligently aware of the activities of the body. It is to be diligently mindful with regard to the activities of sensation or feeling, perception, ideas, thoughts and mind. Mindfulness notices and attends to the flow of things; when walking, to the movement of the body. It observes the breath in - the breath out. Whatever the object is, Mindfulness seeks to notice it, to be aware of it, without grasping, which is greed; without condemning, which is hatred; without forgetting, which is delusion; just observing the flow, observing the process. Mindfulness brings

the qualities of poise, equilibrium and balance to the mind.

(8) Right Effort and Right Mindfulness lead to **RIGHT CONCENTRATION**. The mindfulness of breathing is a very popular method for establishing concentration in the meditator's world. Concentration on breathing leads to one-pointedness of the mind and ultimately to insight which enables one to attain enlightenment. The Buddha also practised concentration on breathing before he attained enlightenment. The harmless and fruitful concentration may be practised by any person, irrespective of religious beliefs.

The most important discourse ever given By the Buddha on mental development or mental culture (meditation), is called the setting up of mindfulness (Satipatthana-Sutta). The ways of insight meditation are given in this discourse. The discourse is divided into four main sections. The first section deals with our body (kaya), the second with our feeling or sensations (vedana), the third with the mind (citta), and fourth with various moral and intellectual

subjects (dhamma). It should be clearly borne in mind that whatever the form of "meditation" may be, the essential thing is mindfulness, meaning awareness, attention and observation.

One of the most well-known, popular and practical examples of meditation connected with the body is called the mindfulness or awareness of in and out breathing. For this meditation only, a particular and definite posture is prescribed in the text. For other forms of meditation given in this course you may sit, stand, walk or lie down as you like. But for cultivating mindfulness of in and out breathing, one should sit according to the text, "crosslegged position, keeping the body erect and mind alert". Place the right hand over the left hand. Eyes must be closed. Easterners generally sit cross-legged with the body erect. They sit by placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. This is the full lotus position. Sometimes they sit in the half position, that is by simply placing the right foot on the left thigh or left foot

on the right thigh. When the triangle position is assumed, the whole body is well-balanced. But sitting cross-legged is not practical and easy for westerners. Those who find the cross-legged posture too difficult may sit comfortably in a chair or any other support sufficiently high enough to rest the legs on the floor or ground. Assume any posture that is comfortable to you, keeping the back reasonably straight so that the nose may be in a perpendicular line with the navel. Your hand should be placed comfortable on your lap and the right hand must be on the left. You must close your eyes. Keep the body still and steady, relaxed and easy, without being stiff, strained, cramped, shackled or bent over.

Thus seated in a convenient posture, at a quiet place, you should establish mindfulness. You should pay attention to the meditation object being mindful and alert, fixing on the tip of your nose. Breathe in and out as usual without any effort or strain. Do not control or force the breath in any way, merely stay attentively to the coming

of breath-in and breath-out; let your mind be aware and vigilant of your breathing in and out. When you breathe you sometimes take deep breaths, sometimes not. This does not matter at all. Breathe normally and naturally. The only thing is that when you take deep breaths you should be aware whether they are long or short, in or out. In other words, your mind should be so fully concentrated on your breathing that you are aware of its natural movements and changes. The important thing is not to move very often. Forget other things; your surroundings, your environment. Do not open your eyes and look at anything. It is very important to be patient. Patience means staying in a state of balance, regardless of what is happening in the body. Staying easy, relaxed and alert. If we have a patient mind, all things will unfold in a natural and organic way. Being patient through all these experiences will help us to keep the mind in balance.

Another thing for deepening meditation is silence. Much of the energy that is conserved by not talking can be used for the

development of awareness and mindfulness. As with the meditation practice itself, silence, too, should be easy and relaxed. By keeping silence, the whole range of mental and physical activity will become extremely clear. Verbal silence makes possible a deeper silence of mind. Try to cultivate a sense of aloneness. To do this it is helpful to suspend preconceptions about yourselves, about relationships, about other people. At the time of meditation take time to experience yourself deeply. When we understand ourselves, then relationships become easy and meaningful. Concentrated effort during the meditation on the development of moment-to-moment mindfulness will be directed towards one goal; the mind will become powerful and penetrating. During the meditation you will become very mindful and notice carefully all your movements. The meditation deepens through the continuity of awareness.

When you are seated in a suitable place and in a suitable posture, you should establish mindfulness. You must pay atten-

tion to the meditation object, being mindful and alert, fixing the mind on breathing in and out. the in-breath and out-breath are a body. In this case, a body means a group or a heap or a collection of physical phenomena.

When you contemplate or observe or investigate in the body with mindfulness and knowledge, you can experience four material qualities. They are the element of extension (earth); cohesion (water); heat (fire); and motion (air). When you stand up your feet are touching the ground or floor. When you sit, the lower parts of your body are touching the carpet or floor. When you sleep, some parts of your body are touching the bed. There are many touchable parts on your body with anything, you can experience the four material qualities of elements. Sometimes the touch will be soft or hard, this is the element of extension. Sometimes you will touch fluid with your body, this is the element of cohesion. Sometimes you will touch something hot or cold with your body, this is the element of heat. Sometimes

you touch air, wind or inflation of matter with your body, this is the element of motion (air). The material elements of our bodies are called "great", because of their destructive power and constructive power. Our bodies are constituted in these four great primary elements. Then the earth, sun, moon, planets and stars are the same. It is these very elements, experienced in our body. The power of these elements is enormous. For a short period of time the elements are in some kind of balance. Not realizing the tremendous destructive power inherent in them, their own nature, when they begin to get out of balance, they cause decay, the dissolution of the body, great pain and death.

There is also pain of the mind; depression, despair, anxiety, worry, anger, hatred, fear, lust, greed, desire, grief, sorrow, dissatisfaction, jealousy, separation from beloved one, association with hatred persons, etc., which cause suffering in the mind-body or mental-body.

How long will we remain ensnared in

this cycle of rebirths and death, the suffering of this endlessness hurrying on, driven by ignorance and craving? Every morning we have to wake-up and go day and night, looking for sense-objects. We are subject to colors, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, thoughts and sensations in endless repetition. You go throughout the day, you sleep at night and you wake-up to be exposed to the same sense-objects, sensations and thoughts, over and over again.

Therefore, we have to give full attention, full-mindedness to the mental-body. We must observe the flow of sensation, feelings, thinking, knowing, etc. Whatever appears and disappears from moment to moment in the mental-body or material-body, you must examine the real thing carefully; observe with mindfulness; investigate with knowledge. When you do so constantly, the three characteristics of material-body and mental-body will become evident in your knowledge; that is to say you will see or know the three signs of mind and matter. They are always changing, not

everlasting, and they are impermanent, suffering and egoless (soulless). After distinguishing these as materiality and mentality, you should contemplate these three characteristics to develop successive knowledge of insight until enlightenment is attained and absolute-truth, the Nibbana is realized.

This is insight-meditation which leads to insight-wisdom, purification, higher supramundane wisdom, final liberation, real happiness, ultimate peace, cessation of suffering, absolute-truth, the Nibbana.

So concentration meditation is the mental state of one-pointedness. It leads to mystic power and supernatural power.

Insight-meditation is the knowledge of wisdom which penetrates the true characteristic of mind and matter. It leads to the highest wisdom, enlightenment, noble truth, absolute-truth, the Nibbana.

The great benefit of mindfulness on breathing in and out should be understood as the basic condition for the perfection of clear vision, final liberation and purification of the mind. For this had been said by the

Buddha, "Bhikkhus, mindfulness of breathing when developed and much practised, perfects the four foundations of mindfulness. The four foundations of mindfulness when developed and much practised, perfect the seven enlightenment factors and the seven enlightenment factors, when developed and much practiced, leads to clear vision and liberation."

In conclusion, I will give you an example to make clear my subject. Please imagine someone pouring water from above into a jar. If there are many holes around the bottom and sides of the jar, the water will run out, but if the holes are all filled in, the water will rise.

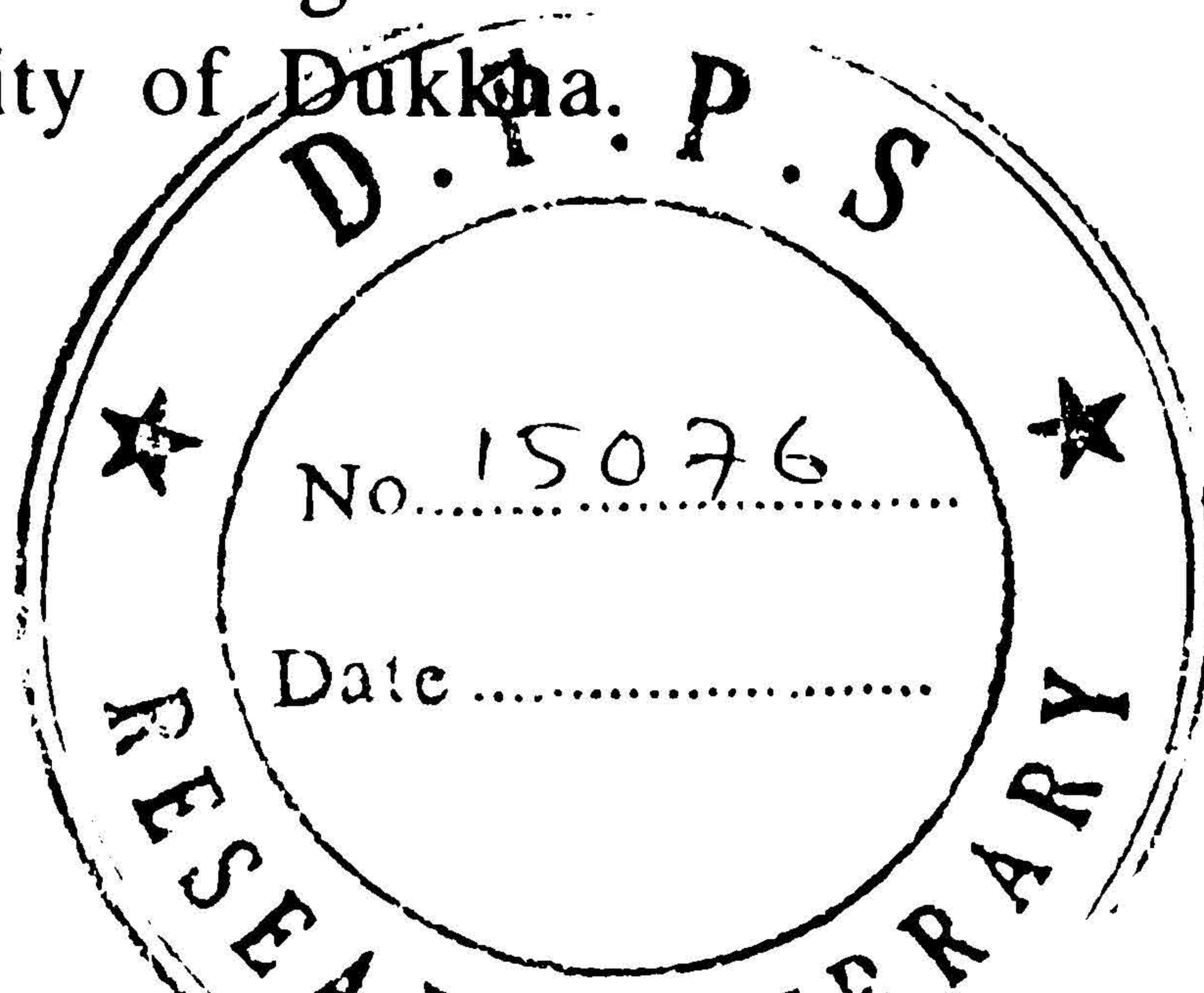
Most of us are like the jar full of holes, ready to leak. We cannot concentrate our mind. Mindfulness is like the water. Effort is like the pouring of water, and concentration is like the filling of the holes. Concentration makes our mind steady without leakage and Mindfulness fills it with clear vision and wisdom. Therefore, by meditation, we can enlarge our knowledge and

wisdom. Then, we will see things as they truly are, and wisdom will shine forth.

So, I wish fervently as follows: may all you brothers and sisters, who are willing to enjoy cessation of suffering, pain, sorrow, lamentation-try and practise the foundation of mindfulness which gives you real happiness, peace and cessation of all forms of suffering.

Thank you very much my dear brothers and sisters.

May all beings be liberated from cycle of continuity of Dukkha.



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