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Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

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Bhikkhu Moneyya

A GIFT - NOT FOR SALE

A GIFT - NOT FOR SALE

*In Memory of
David Volk*

*Physician, Friend, Teacher, Father
May he come to the end of all suffering
and attain perfect peace.*

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Bibliographical Abbreviations

A	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i> (Numerical Discourses of the Buddha)
AS	<i>Abhidhammattha Sangaha</i> (A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma)
BD	<i>Buddhist Dictionary</i> by Nyanatiloka
D	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i> (Long Discourses of the Buddha) Wisdom Publications; 1987, 1995
Dhp	Dhammapada (The Path of Truth)
K&S	<i>Knowing and Seeing (Revised Edition)</i> by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw
M	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> (Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha) Wisdom Publications; 1995, 2001
Mil	<i>Milindapañha</i> (The Questions of King Milinda)
S	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i> (Connected Discourses of the Buddha) Wisdom Publications; 2000
T	<i>Theragāthā</i> (Verses of the Elders)
U	<i>Udāna</i> (Inspired Utterances of the Buddha)
Vis	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> (The Path of Purification) by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa

Note: Source references to the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Saṃyutta Nikāya* are based on the more modern listing method used by Wisdom Publications to organize the *Nikāyas*.

A Note from the Sayadaw

Teaching & Training was written by one of my disciples here at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. I believe that newcomers will find this book especially helpful.

Pa-Auk Sayadaw¹
(Abbot of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery)

Preface

I started this book in May of 2004, as a six-page letter to my mother, who currently lives in Armidale, Australia. Earlier that same month, she had received a copy of *Knowing and Seeing* from our abbot, and I was concerned that, without a background in Theravāda Buddhism, she would have difficulty understanding the Sayadaw's book.

As it turned out, my fears were unfounded. My mother read the book twice and found it extremely helpful. On the other hand, I was not totally satisfied with my letter. In retrospect, I felt it glossed over too many important topics; in addition, it did not address the very real need for clear and practical introductory information for foreigners. As a Westerner, I had become aware of this need during my first visit to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery some five years ago.

I began to revise the letter heavily, detailing the Four Noble Truths in the Introduction and using the threefold training as an outline. I supplemented the text with more than a hundred footnotes, included several appendices dealing specifically with conditions at this monastery and finally added a sixteen-page index.

¹ **Sayadaw**: a Burmese honorific title meaning “respected teacher”

At this point, I would like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw and other senior bhikkhus at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, for their guidance and instruction in the preparation of this book. The teachings presented here are based primarily on material contained in *Knowing and Seeing*, with numerous references to the Pāḷi Texts and their commentaries. For any possible inaccuracy or misrepresentation of this source material, I beg the reader's forgiveness.

May all who read this book make swift progress on the path to liberation, and may they and my mother experience the peace and bliss of Nibbāna in this lifetime.

Bhikkhu Moneyya

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar
December 2005

Editorial Note to the Current Edition

This current (web) version of *Teaching & Training* contains a number of important updates and revisions that were made after the printing of the second edition. These include: additional instructions on the practice of *ānāpānasati*; more detailed and accurate information on the thirty-one realms; updated listings in the Resource Guide; new information on applying for a visa; additional footnotes; a new daily schedule; an update to the biography of the Sayadaw; and numerous other minor revisions.

Although the length in pages is still the same, it is my hope that these many small improvements will help to make *Teaching & Training* a more useful and informative handbook.

Bhikkhu Moneyya
November 2006

Introduction

Namo Tassa Bhagavato, Arahato, Sammā-Sambuddhassa

Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths are the central teaching of the Buddha, like the hub of a wheel from which the spokes of all his other teachings radiate. The Buddha first expounded these four truths to a group of five ascetics¹ in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares,² shortly after his great enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. With that single teaching, some 2500 years ago, the Perfectly Enlightened One set the unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma³ in motion and established his Dispensation.

The Four Noble Truths are:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

1. **Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus,⁴ is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering; ageing is suffering; sickness

¹ These are the five ascetics who had formerly lived and practised with him during his six years of intense austerities.

² **Benares:** now called Varanasi, approximately 200 kms from the site of the Buddha’s enlightenment in current-day Bodhgaya

³ **Dhamma** (with a capital “D”): the teachings or doctrine of the Buddha; Universal Law; Ultimate Truth; The Four Noble Truths

⁴ **Bhikkhu:** monk, mendicant; specifically, a member of the community of monks that follows the teachings of the Buddha

is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; association with the unpleasant is suffering; separation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in short, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering.”¹

The five aggregates² are the physical aggregate of materiality and the four mental aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations³ and consciousness. These five aggregates comprise all of materiality and mentality throughout the universe. “Clinging” refers to the mental act of grasping – “its function is to not release.”⁴ But why are these five aggregates subject to clinging? Due to ignorance, we wrongly identify materiality and mentality as “I,” “me” and “mine.” It is this subtle sense of self that distorts our perceptions and gives rise to clinging and the countless afflictions that follow in its wake.

There are three kinds of suffering⁵ described in the First Noble Truth:

- i. The suffering of physical and mental pain – this is the most obvious kind of suffering. It is the suffering that arises with birth, ageing, sickness and death, with sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.
- ii. The suffering connected with change – this means that, due to clinging, even pleasant physical and mental feelings can become a cause for suffering when they cease; in other words, “separation from the pleasant is suffering.”

¹ S.56.11 “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*” (“Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse”)

² **The five aggregates** (*khandhas*): For analysis of, please see pp.29-31.

³ **Mental formations** (*saikhāra-kkhandha*): the aggregate of mental factors that functions primarily as volition or will

⁴ Vis.XVII.51

⁵ **Suffering** (*dukkha/dukkhatā*): See S.45.165; defined in BD, pp.54-55.

- iii.* The suffering inherent within the five aggregates themselves – each of the aggregates is in a state of continuous arising and passing away, never the same from one moment to the next. From the smallest particle and most rudimentary form of consciousness to vast universes and entire realms of existence, all physical and mental phenomena are subject to the same inexorable law of impermanence. This type of suffering is going on in and around us all the time and accounts for the fundamental instability and unsatisfactoriness of all conditioned existence.
2. **The Origin of Suffering:**¹ “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering? It is that craving which leads to rebirth, is bound up with delight and lust, and seeks pleasure here and there, namely: [*i*] craving for sensual pleasures, [*ii*] craving for existence and [*iii*] craving for non-existence.”²
- i.* Craving for sensual pleasures, we yearn for pleasant sights, pleasant sounds, pleasant smells, pleasant tastes, pleasant touches and pleasant thoughts.³ Wherever and whenever a pleasant thought or pleasant physical sensation arises, we seek it out and attach ourselves to it: in the food we eat, in sex, comfort, wealth, the company of friends and loved ones, and in various forms of entertainment. When we get what we want, the pleasant physical and mental feelings of the moment

¹ For an in-depth analysis of the Origin of Suffering, please see description of Dependent Origination on pp.32-33.

² S.56.11 “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*” (“Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse”)

³ Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts are the objects of the six sense-bases (the eye faculty, ear faculty, nose faculty, tongue faculty, body faculty and mind faculty). The feeling (sensation) that arises from seeing a sight, hearing a sound, tasting a taste, etc. can be either pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

become a cause for suffering when they cease. When we do not get what we want, that is also suffering. As we suffer, aversion arises; if we blame others, our aversion grows into resentment and hatred. Thus it is that from craving for sensual pleasures, hatred and conflict arise. With the arising of hatred and conflict, our suffering multiplies.¹

- ii.* Craving for existence, we yearn for this life, we yearn for our next life (rebirth in a heavenly realm) and, ultimately, we yearn for immortality.
- iii.* Craving for non-existence, we yearn for self-annihilation and oblivion.

Like moths lured to the flame of a candle, living beings are drawn irresistibly by these three types of craving toward the objects of their desire; this, in turn, gives rise to clinging and the ongoing cycle of rebirth, called “*saṃsāra*.”²

“Inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*. A first point is not known of beings roaming and wandering the round of rebirth, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. Which do you think, bhikkhus, is more: the stream of tears that you have shed as you

¹ In the “*Mahādukkhakkhanda Sutta*” (“The Greater Discourse on the Mass of Suffering”) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha explains: “Again, with sensual pleasures as the cause... kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles... householders with householders; mother quarrels with child, child with mother, father with child, child with father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend... men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge slippery bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows and spears and splashed with boiling liquids and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now this too is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures... the cause being simply sensual pleasures.” (M.13.11-13)

² *Saṃsāra*: literally “running on” or “perpetual wandering”

roamed and wandered on through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable – this or the water in the four great oceans? The stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course... this alone is greater than the water in the four great oceans... For such a long time, bhikkhus, you have experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the cemeteries.”¹

Furthermore:

“There will come a time when the mighty ocean will dry up, vanish and be no more... There will come a time when the mighty earth will be devoured by fire, perish and be no more. But yet there will be no end to the suffering of beings roaming and wandering this round of rebirth, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving.”²

Such is the nature of this saṃsāra, that countless world-cycles³ have already arisen and passed away, with no end to the suffering of living beings. Hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, they roam and wander this ever-unfolding round of rebirth, arising through egg, womb, moisture or spontaneous generation⁴ in as many as thirty-one different realms.⁵ From the lowest of the hells, to the human realm, to the highest of the heavens, these thirty-one realms comprise

¹ S.15.3 “*Assu Sutta*” (“Tears Discourse”)

² S.22.99 “*Gaddulabaddha Sutta*” (“The Leash Discourse”)

³ **World-cycle** (*kappa*): an immeasurably long period of time; aeon. Each world-cycle is subdivided into four world periods: (1) world-dissolution (decay and destruction of the universe); (2) continuation of chaos; (3) world-formation (creation of the universe); (4) continuation of the formed world. (Definition of *kappa* is taken from BD, p.76.) For greater detail, please see S.15.5, A.IV.156 and A.VII.62.

⁴ M.12.32 “*Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*” (“Greater Discourse on the Lion’s Roar”)

⁵ For a listing of the thirty-one realms, see Appendix IV/p.63; for greater detail, see M Intro, pp.46-48 and AS.V.2-7 (including Table 5.1).

the totality of all living beings. If craving is present at the time of death, that person (or other being) will be reborn in one of these thirty-one realms. With every new rebirth, comes a new set of aggregates and another lifetime of suffering.¹ One who truly understands this process wants nothing more than to put an end to it.

3. **The Cessation of Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? It is the complete fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up, abandonment, letting go and rejection of it.”²

This is the noble truth that frees one from the round of rebirth. It is Nibbāna³ – the “sorrowless, undefiled supreme security from bondage.”⁴ In a verse from the Dhammapada, the Buddha states, “Only a few men reach the far shore [Nibbāna]; all the rest merely run about on this shore.”⁵

This shore is none other than the five aggregates we call a self. Buffeted by the winds of craving, beings run hither and thither on this shore. Unable to fathom the origin of their suffering, they stumble from lifetime to lifetime.

In direct contrast, the far shore (Nibbāna) is “unformed” (absent of aggregates), “unborn,” “unageing,” “undying” and “utterly peaceful.”⁶ Therefore, it is called the “unformed

¹ In most cases, another lifetime of suffering in the four woeful realms; for explanation, please see footnote 3/p.45, Appendix IV/p.63 and S.56.102-131.

² S.56.11 “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*” (“Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse”)

³ **Nibbāna:** literally “blowing out” (as of a candle) or “extinction;” according to the commentaries, “freedom from desire.” Descriptions include: “the cessation of craving,” “extinction of greed, hatred and delusion,” “final deliverance” and “the supreme foundation of truth.” For details, please see K&S, pp.37-38, M.140.26 and S.43.14.

⁴ M.26.18 “*Ariyapariyesanā Sutta*” (“The Noble Search Discourse”)

⁵ Dh.p.85

⁶ Words in quotation marks come from U.8.3, M.26.18 and Vis.I.159.

element.”¹ “Here water, earth, fire and air have no footing; here long and short, coarse and fine, fair and foul, mentality and materiality – all are brought to an end.”²

One who has crossed to the far shore is liberated from saṃsāra. Such a person is called an “arahant,”³ a worthy one – one in whom craving and ignorance have been completely destroyed. The Buddha often referred to the attainment of arahantship as the “supreme goal of the holy life.”⁴ He also called it the “highest bliss.”⁵ Even so, as long as the arahant still has a physical body, he or she is not totally free from suffering. Inevitably, the body ages, gets sick and dies – not even an arahant can stop this process. It is only with the attainment of Parinibbāna⁶ at the arahant’s death, that the physical suffering of having a body comes finally to an end.

Until then, out of innate compassion, the arahant may choose to guide and assist others on the path. One can think of no better example than the Buddha and his two chief disciples, the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, who were good friends⁷ to the many and a refuge for those

¹ **The unformed element** (*asaṅkhata dhātu*): Also called the “deathless element,” the unformed element is one of the four ultimate realities. They are: (1) consciousness, (2) mental factors, (3) materiality and (4) the unformed element (Nibbāna). 1, 2 and 3 comprise the formed element (conditioned existence). Please see K&S, p.33 and Vis.XVI.94. More about Nibbāna in K&S, Answer 3.2/p.117.

² D.11.85 “*Kevaṭṭa Sutta*” (“Kevaṭṭa Discourse”)

³ **Arahant** (*arahatta*): literally one who has destroyed the enemy; for details on the arahant/arahantship, please see pp.46-47.

⁴ A common phrase throughout the suttas; the term “holy life” refers to the life of a bhikkhu or bhikkhunī (the female equivalent of a bhikkhu).

⁵ M.75.19 “*Māgandiya Sutta*” (“Māgandiya Discourse”)

⁶ **Parinibbāna**: Also called “final Nibbāna,” this term refers to the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates at the death of an arahant.

⁷ **Good friend** (*kalyāṇa-mitta*): a wise and virtuous person who is concerned for another’s welfare and can guide that person onto the right path (often used as an epithet for one’s meditation teacher); for details, see Vis.III.61-73.

who sought release from this frightful round of rebirth and the bondage of suffering. In the spirit of selflessness and non-attachment, the Venerable Sāriputta once said, “I do not love life, I do not love death; I await the time of my Parinibbāna, like a government servant who waits for payday.”¹

4. **The Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path, namely: [1] Right View, [2] Right Intention, [3] Right Speech, [4] Right Action, [5] Right Livelihood, [6] Right Effort, [7] Right Mindfulness and [8] Right Concentration.”²

Another name for the Noble Eightfold Path is the “Middle Way.” In his first discourse at Isipatana, the Buddha explained to the five ascetics that “the Middle Way discovered by the Tathāgata³ avoids both extremes.”⁴ The two extremes to which he was referring are the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. One extreme is the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is “low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble and unbeneficial.”³ The other extreme is the search for happiness through torturing the body, which is “painful, ignoble and unbeneficial.”³

Time and again, the Buddha taught that the pursuit of sensual pleasures could never lead to the end of suffering; but neither could self-mortification. Either way, the final outcome is only more suffering. By avoiding these two extremes, the Noble Eightfold Path “leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”³

¹ T.XVII.2 “*Sāriputtattheragāthā*” (“Verses of the Elder Sāriputta”)

² S.56.11 “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*” (“Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse”)

³ **Tathāgata**: an appellation for the Buddha, meaning “one who has thus come” or “one who has thus gone”

⁴ S.56.11 “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*” (“Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse”)

Just as a wise physician initially diagnoses a disease, then explains the cause, offers a cure and finally prescribes a course of medicine, in the same way, the Buddha diagnoses our disease (the First Noble Truth), explains the cause (the Second Noble Truth), offers a cure (the Third Noble Truth) and prescribes a course of medicine (the Fourth Noble Truth). Praised by the wise as the best of medicines, “just this Noble Eightfold Path” is the balm that quells the fever of craving and brings release from all suffering.¹ “Having drunk this Dhamma medicine, you will be ageless and beyond death.”²

The Threefold Training

For training purposes, the individual factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are organized into three main areas of practice: (i) *sīla*, consisting of the training and development in morality; (ii) *samādhi*, consisting of the training and development in concentration; and (iii) *paññā*, consisting of the training and development in wisdom (see table below).

I. <u>Sīla</u> Morality	1. Right Speech 2. Right Action 3. Right Livelihood
II. <u>Samādhi</u> Concentration	4. Right Effort 5. Right Mindfulness 6. Right Concentration
III. <u>Paññā</u> Wisdom	7. Right View 8. Right Intention

¹ “Medicine” simile is taken from Vis.XVI.87; “balm” and “fever” similes from “*Mahā Jayamangala Gāthā*” (“Great Verses of Joyous Victory”).

² Mil.II.V “*Anumānapañho*” (“A Question Solved by Inference”)

Prior to undertaking this threefold training, some initial reading and study may be helpful – at least enough to acquire a basic understanding of the Four Noble Truths.¹ This is Right View at its most rudimentary level. Without such an understanding, one might find it difficult to gain confidence in the teaching, and there would be little incentive to undertake and sustain the training. One might also undertake the training for the wrong reason or inadvertently stray from the path.

The training itself is a process of gradual purification, which requires patience, persistence and dedication. As one progresses on the path – from *sīla* through *samādhi* to *paññā* – and begins to see the benefits in his or her daily life, greater confidence in the teaching will naturally arise:

“Such is *sīla* [morality]; such is *samādhi* [concentration]; such is *paññā* [wisdom]. When *sīla* is fully developed, *samādhi* is of great fruit and benefit; when *samādhi* is fully developed, *paññā* is of great fruit and benefit.”²

I. Sīla, the first of the three trainings, encompasses all aspects of moral or virtuous conduct. Its practice facilitates the development of *samādhi* by putting a check on unwholesome behaviour that might disturb the mind or create conflict with others.

II. Samādhi, the second training, is the cultivation of deep, uninterrupted concentration, which arises from fixing the mind on a single object during the practice of *samatha* (serenity) meditation. *Samādhi* suppresses the hindrances,³ which, by their very nature, are opposed to concentration – thus, the

¹ Please see “Recommended Reading List,” p.50.

² D.16.2.4 “*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*” (“Great Parinibbāna Discourse”)

³ **Hindrances** (*nīvaraṇa*): a five-fold classification of mental defilements. They are: (1) sensual desire, (2) ill-will, (3) sloth and torpor, (4) restlessness and remorse, and (5) sceptical doubt. For details, please see K&S, pp.63-65 and BD, p.110.

mind becomes calm, penetrating and powerful, a prerequisite for the development of wisdom.

III. Paññā, the third training, is the cultivation of wisdom through the practice of vipassanā (insight) meditation. Whereas samādhi suppresses the hindrances, paññā destroys them. “Vipassanā” literally means “clearly seeing” or “insight;” it is defined as the experiential knowledge that arises from directly seeing “the three characteristics”¹ in each of the five aggregates. These three characteristics are:

1. Impermanence (*anicca*) – as soon as the five aggregates arise, they pass away.
2. Suffering (*dukkha*) – the five aggregates are always oppressed by arising and passing away.
3. Non-Self (*anattā*) – the five aggregates are without a self; nor is there any enduring substance or essence, either inside or outside the aggregates, that could be called a self.

In his second discourse, the Buddha discussed these three characteristics with the same five bhikkhus as before:

“What do you think, bhikkhus: Is form permanent or impermanent? – *Impermanent, Venerable Sir.* – Are feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness permanent or impermanent? – *Impermanent, Venerable Sir.* – But that which is impermanent, is it suffering or happiness? – *Suffering, Venerable Sir.* – But of that which is impermanent, suffering and subject to change, could it rightly be said, ‘This belongs to me, this I am, this is my self?’ – *No, Venerable Sir...* Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is disenchanted with materiality,

¹ **The three characteristics** (*ti-lakkhana*): For description, please see Vis.XX.45-48.

disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with mental formations, disenchanted with consciousness. Experiencing disenchantment, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion¹ [his mind] is liberated.”²

“Liberation” here refers to the realization of Nibbāna by arahant fruition knowledge.³ With that attainment, one “fully awakens to the Four Noble Truths as they really are:”⁴ to suffering, to the origin of suffering, to the cessation of suffering, and to the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This is the great enlightenment that the Buddha experienced under the Bodhi Tree some 2500 years ago. It is a state of supreme peace and happiness, the highest goal to which mankind can aspire. To achieve this state is to receive one’s inheritance from the Buddha and to become a benefactor and protector of the Dispensation, “so that the pure Teaching may long endure, that it may be for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare and happiness of *devas*⁵ and human beings.”⁶

¹ **Dispassion** (*virāga*): “fading away,” detachment, absence of lust; in this context, freedom from craving. For details, please see BD, p.199.

² S.22.59 “*Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*” (“Non-self Characteristic Discourse”)

³ **Fruition knowledge** (*phala ñāṇa*): the second of the two insight-knowledges that form the core of the enlightenment experience; for more on these two insight-knowledges, please see pp.42-44.

⁴ S.56.5 “*Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇa Sutta*” (“Ascetics and Brahmins Discourse”)

⁵ **Devas**: heavenly beings

⁶ D.16.3.50 “*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*” (“Great Parinibbāna Discourse”)

Teaching & Training at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

The system of meditation taught at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is based on the *Tipiṭaka* (The Three Baskets, or main divisions, of the Pāli Canon) and its commentaries. The *Tipiṭaka* includes the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (the Basket of Discipline), the *Sutta¹ Piṭaka* (the Basket of Discourses) and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (the Basket of Higher Dhamma). The Pāli Canon dates back to the time when Pāli was a spoken language, and is thought to contain the original teachings of the Buddha.

For clarity, the subject matter in this book has been organized into an outline format, using the three trainings of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (wisdom) as its main headings. The three trainings are then further subdivided into the seven stages of purification, originally described in the “*Rathavinīta Sutta*” (“Relay Chariots Discourse”) of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and later expounded in the *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification), a widely respected commentary, compiled by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa around AD 400.

The seven stages of purification provide a step-by-step formula for systematically purifying one’s body (physical actions), speech and mind of defilements in order to realize Nibbāna in this lifetime (see table on following page).

¹ *Sutta*: discourse on the Dhamma, given by the Buddha or one of his close disciples

The Seven Stages of Purification
<u>Sīla</u>
1. Purification of Virtue
<u>Samādhi</u>
2. Purification of Mind
<u>Paññā</u>
3. Purification of View
4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt
5. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path
6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way
7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision

One
Sīla
(Morality)

Sīla consists of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. These three path factors are the basis for all good conduct, as well as the foundation of all Buddhist training. In describing the benefits of sīla to his attendant, the Venerable Ānanda, the Buddha states:

“So you see, Ānanda, good conduct [sīla] has freedom from remorse as object and profit; freedom from remorse has joy; joy has rapture; rapture has calm; calm has happiness; happiness has concentration; concentration has seeing things as they really are; seeing things as they really are has disenchantment and dispassion; disenchantment and dispassion have knowing and seeing as their object and profit. So you see, Ānanda, good conduct leads gradually up to the summit.”¹

¹ A.X.I.1 “*Kimatthiya Sutta*” (“What is the Object Discourse”)

Stage One
Purification of Virtue

Purification through Wholesome Speech and Action

Observance of sīla can be divided into four main areas of practice, referred to in the *Visuddhimagga* as the “fourfold purification.” These four areas of practice are:

1. Restraint with regard to conduct (Right Speech and Right Action) – the two hundred and twenty-seven rules of the Disciplinary Code (*Pāṭimokkha*) for Theravāda monks; the ten precepts and seventy-five *Sekhiya* (training) rules for novices; the eight or ten precepts for Theravāda nuns; and the five or eight precepts for laypersons.
2. Restraint of the sense faculties – of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
3. Purification of livelihood (Right Livelihood) – livelihood that accords with the precepts.
4. Reflection on (and moderation in) the use of the four requisites – food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

At Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, all residents are required to observe the monastery rules, listed in Appendix VI, on page 107. These rules support a lifestyle that encourages the development of concentration through the observance of appropriate sīla for both monastics and laity. As a minimum, all residents must observe the eight precepts for laypersons, listed below:

1. To refrain from the destruction of life (this includes insects).
2. To refrain from taking what is not given.
3. To refrain from unchastity (any kind of sexual activity).
4. To refrain from untrue speech.

STAGE ONE: PURIFICATION OF VIRTUE

5. To refrain from the use of wines, liquors and other intoxicants (including recreational drugs).
6. To refrain from eating after midday.
7. To refrain from dancing, singing, music and shows (all forms of entertainment), and from bodily adornment – the use of jewellery, perfumes and cosmetics.
8. To refrain from the use of high and large (luxurious) beds.

For monks, novices and ten-precept nuns, rule seven becomes two separate rules; rule eight becomes rule nine; and a tenth rule is added, prohibiting the handling, use, or possession of gold and silver (in effect, all forms of money, including cash, credit cards, cheques, jewellery and other forms of exchange).¹

Reflecting on the various benefits of purification through the practice of sīla, the *Visuddhimagga* comments:

“Dare anyone a limit place
On benefits that virtue brings...?
No balm of yellow sandalwood...
Or soft effulgence of moonbeams,
Can here avail to calm and soothe
Men’s fevers in this world; whereas
This noble, this supremely cool,
Well-guarded virtue quells the flame...
Where can such another stair be found
That climbs, as virtue does, to heaven?
Or yet another door that gives
Unto the city of Nibbāna?
Shine as they might, there are no kings
Adorned with jewellery and pearls

¹ For greater detail on rule ten, please see Appendix V (under “Monastics and Money” and “Visa Application/Extension”), plus Appendix VI (under “Theravāda Monks and Novices”).

I. SĪLA (MORALITY)

That shine as does a man restrained,
Adorned with virtue’s ornament...
From this brief sketch it may be known
How virtue brings reward, and how
This root of all good qualities
Robs of its power every fault.”¹

¹ Vis.I.24

Two
Samādhi
(Concentration)

Samādhi consists of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Right Effort is of four kinds:

1. The effort to prevent unwholesome¹ states of mind from arising.
2. The effort to remove unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen.
3. The effort to arouse wholesome² states of mind that have not yet arisen.
4. The effort to increase wholesome states of mind that have already arisen.

Right Mindfulness is also of four kinds:

1. Mindfulness³ of the body – in-and-outbreathing, the four elements, the thirty-two parts of the body,⁴ bodily postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying), etc.

¹ **Unwholesome** (*akusala*): the opposite of wholesome (see below)

² **Wholesome** (*kusala*): healthy, positive, wise, generous, loving, compassionate (in regard to both oneself and others); in accord with the precepts; “profitable, salutary, morally good... blameless, productive of favourable kamma-result, skilful... In psychological terms... all those kammic volitions... which are accompanied by non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion.” (Quoted text is from BD, p.88.)

³ **Mindfulness** (*sati*): awareness applied closely to an object or objects; it is characterised as “not floating away” (see K&S, p.53 and AS.II.5).

⁴ For a description of the thirty-two parts practice, please see p.24.

2. Mindfulness of feelings – pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings.
3. Mindfulness of the mind – any state of consciousness: wholesome, unwholesome or indeterminate.
4. Mindfulness of mind-objects – a range of physical and mental phenomena, including the Four Noble Truths, the five aggregates, the five hindrances, etc.

Right Concentration is defined as the four jhānas¹ (absorption states). The following description of Right Concentration comes from the “*Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*” (“The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness”) of the *Dīgha Nikāya*:

“And what, bhikkhus, is Right Concentration? Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by initial application [of the mind] and sustained application [of the mind], with rapture and happiness born of seclusion. With the subsiding of initial application and sustained application, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which is accompanied by tranquillity and one-pointedness of mind, with rapture and happiness born of concentration. With the fading away of rapture, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, which is accompanied by equanimity, mindfulness and clear awareness; thus he experiences in his person that feeling of happiness of which the noble ones² say, ‘Happy is he who dwells in

¹ **Jhāna/four jhānas** (also known as the four fine-material jhānas): concentration, during which there is a complete, though temporary, suspension of fivefold sense activity (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and of the five hindrances; the state of consciousness, however, is one of full alertness and lucidity. (Definition of jhāna is taken from BD, p.70.)

² **Noble one** (*ariya-puggala*): an individual who has attained any one of the four stages of enlightenment (described on pp.45-46).

II. SAMĀDHI (CONCENTRATION)

equanimity and mindfulness.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of previous joy and sorrow, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and is purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration.”¹

In addition to the four jhānas, the *Visuddhimagga* describes another type of concentration called “access concentration.”² Access concentration is the state of deep concentration that precedes each of the four jhānas. In access concentration, however, the jhāna factors³ are not as distinct as in the actual jhāna, and the mind is still subject to occasional distraction. Both types of concentration are attained by practising one of the forty samatha meditation subjects⁴ taught by the Buddha. Some of these subjects lead only to the lower jhānas; some lead to all four jhānas; and some lead only to access concentration.

¹ D.22.21 “*Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*” (“The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness”); an expanded version of the same passage can be found in the “*Kāyagatāsati Sutta*” (“Mindfulness of the Body Discourse”) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, M.119.18-21.

² For details on access concentration, see Vis.III.5-6,15 and Vis.IV.32-33.

³ **Jhāna factors:** specific mental factors associated with each of the four jhānas. These factors include: initial application (of the mind), sustained application (of the mind), rapture, happiness, one-pointedness (of mind) and equanimity. For a listing of these jhāna factors and their respective jhānas, please see Appendix I: Table 1/p.57; for greater detail, see K&S, pp.55-58.

⁴ For a description of the forty samatha meditation subjects, please see AS.IX.6-12 (including Table 9.1) or Vis.III.104-105; for greater detail, see Vis, Chapters IV-XI.

Stage Two

Purification of Mind

Developing Concentration

Meditators at Pa-Auk are free to begin their meditation practice with the samatha subject of their choice. In most cases, however, they are encouraged to choose between two initial samatha practices: mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) and four-elements meditation.

Mindfulness of breathing is the practice commonly recommended to beginners for attaining and mastering¹ each of the four jhānas. Four-elements meditation is recommended to meditators who wish to take a more direct route to the practice of vipassanā, without first developing a foundation in jhāna. Meditators who begin with four-elements, however, have the option of following up with other samatha practices before proceeding on to vipassanā.

To attain the levels of concentration required for mental absorption, continuous practice is necessary. Meditators at Pa-Auk spend an average of seven and a half hours per day in sitting meditation.² Formal group sittings are held in separate meditation halls in both the men’s and women’s areas of the monastery.

Sitting meditation is properly performed in a comfortable, yet erect, seated posture, with the eyes closed. Between sittings, walking meditation is advised. To promote the development of concentration, meditators are encouraged to keep conversation to a minimum and to maintain silence in and around the meditation hall. Regular interviews with Pa-Auk meditation teachers are also an important aid to the practice.

¹ For a listing of the five kinds of jhāna mastery, please see Appendix I: Table 2/p.57; for a detailed description, see K&S, pp.55-58.

² This schedule includes two fifteen-minute chanting sessions – one at 4:00 am, the other at 6:00 pm. For specific sitting times, please check the daily schedule on the back cover.

Mindfulness of Breathing (*ānāpānasati*)

This samatha subject can be developed up to all four jhānas. Mastery of the four *ānāpāna* jhānas greatly facilitates the development of all other samatha practices, as well as the subsequent analysis of materiality and mentality. To practise mindfulness of breathing, you focus on the breath at the point where it touches either the nostrils or upper lip. Try to maintain this awareness as you breathe in and out naturally. Every time your mind wanders, you must bring it back to the breath.

As concentration begins to develop, your breath will become increasingly calm. At this time, you may also begin to experience some of the benefits of samatha meditation, such as joy, tranquillity, happiness and lightness of body and mind. One of the primary signs of deepening concentration is the appearance of light. When this light merges with the breath in the area of the nostrils, it is called a *nimitta*.¹ In its early stages, the *nimitta* may be grey in colour, unstable and unclear. If you try to shift your attention to it at this time, it will probably disappear. Instead, if you just continue to focus on the breath, the *nimitta* will eventually stabilize.

Once the *nimitta* stabilizes, you can go ahead and shift your attention to it. With continued mindfulness, you will be able to concentrate on the *nimitta* for one, two, three or more hours. If you continue in this manner, the *nimitta* will gradually become bright and clear. This is because a concentrated mind produces light – the Buddha calls this light “the light of wisdom.”²

As you progress from access concentration into absorption – through each of the four jhānas – this light will become brighter and brighter. It is this light that allows you to discern the five aggregates and practice vipassanā in the later stages of meditation.

¹ *Nimitta*: mark, sign, image, object, cause, condition; in this context, a sign of concentration. Due to differences in perception, the *ānāpāna nimitta* appears differently to different people. For details, see K&S, Answer 1.4/p.62 and pp.47-49; also BD, p.107 and Vis.VIII.204-221.

² **Light of wisdom**: Please see K&S, pp.15-16, including footnotes.

Mastering the Other Samatha Practices

Having mastered the four *ānāpāna* jhānas, you may now continue with the remaining samatha subjects. If one subject, such as mindfulness of breathing, is fully mastered, the other subjects can be mastered easily, even as quickly as one subject per day. These subjects include:

- The Thirty-Two Parts of the Body¹ – seeing the organs and other constituents of your body; seeing the thirty-two parts of the body in other beings.
- The Ten *Kasiṇas* – meditation subjects consisting of certain material qualities, such as earth, water, fire, air, light, space and various colours.
- The Four Immaterial Jhānas – boundless space, boundless consciousness, nothingness and neither-perception-nor-non-perception.
- The Four Divine Abodes² – loving-kindness meditation (radiating loving-kindness to all living beings); similar meditations in compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity.
- The Four Protective Meditations – loving-kindness meditation (for overcoming anger), recollection of the Buddha (for developing faith), loathsomeness meditation³ (for overcoming sensual desire) and recollection of death (for developing a sense of urgency).

¹ **The Thirty-two Parts of the Body**: This practice is listed as a single samatha subject. For details, please see K&S, pp.67-69.

² **The Four Divine Abodes** (*brahmavihārās*): Loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*) and appreciative joy (*muditā*) are each developed up to the third jhāna; equanimity (*upekkhā*) can be developed and practiced only in the fourth jhāna.

³ **Loathsomeness meditation** (*asubha bhāvanā*): meditation on the mental image of a bloated or decomposing corpse; for a description of this meditation practice, please see Vis, Chapter VI.

After completing your initial samatha practice, the general progression at Pa-Auk is thirty-two parts of the body, followed by skeleton meditation (one of the thirty-two parts of the body) and white *kasīṇa*. These, in turn, are followed by the remaining samatha subjects listed above.¹

Whether you wish to complete all, some or none of these samatha practices is a matter of personal preference. Mastery of these practices provides a solid base for the cultivation of insight by strengthening your concentration, intensifying your light of wisdom and assisting in the development of other positive qualities, such as faith, energy, tranquillity, compassion, dispassion and equanimity. With a solid base of samatha practices, you will be able to make swift progress in your practice of vipassanā.² When you feel you have mastered a sufficient number of samatha practices and are ready to make the transition to vipassanā, you may begin the practice of four-elements meditation.

Four-Elements Meditation

This samatha subject can be developed only up to access concentration. It has, however, the distinction of being the gateway to vipassanā, since it is the only one of the forty samatha practices that can be used to analyse materiality. In this practice, you focus on the four elements that compose your physical body: earth, water, fire and wind. Each of these four elements has certain physical characteristics, which you must learn to recognise. Altogether, there are twelve characteristics:

1. Earth Element – hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness

¹ For a complete listing of samatha subjects taught at Pa-Auk (including their respective attainments), please see Appendix I: Table 3/p.58.

² According to the Sayadaw, strong concentration is one of the key factors to success, especially in the later stages of meditation.

2. Water Element – flowing, cohesion
3. Fire Element – heat, coldness
4. Wind Element – supporting, pushing

Your practice begins by discerning each of the twelve characteristics individually, starting with pushing, followed by hardness, roughness, heaviness, and so on. Eventually, you will be able to discern all twelve characteristics together. At that point, you will see only elements, not a person or self. As concentration develops, you will begin to see a smoky grey light.¹ If you continue to concentrate on the four elements, that light will become whiter and brighter until your entire body appears as if it were a solid block of transparent ice. Maintaining your concentration on the four elements within that “block of ice,” you will see it begin to sparkle and emit light. When you can concentrate on the four elements in that sparkling form for at least half an hour, you have reached access concentration.

With that light, you will be able to penetrate and break down the solid mass of the body into trillions of infinitesimal particles, called “*rūpa kalāpas*.”² You will see these particles arise and pass away with tremendous speed. This completes the development of four-elements meditation as a samatha practice. You may now proceed to the next stage of meditation, the analysis of materiality, by analysing these *rūpa kalāpas*; or, if you have not already done so and would prefer to develop absorption concentration at this time, you may continue with other samatha practices before returning to four-elements meditation and progressing on to the analysis of materiality and mentality.³

¹ Meditators who have developed strong *jhāna* concentration will pass through this stage very quickly.

² **Rūpa kalāpa**: literally “materiality-cluster”

³ For an overview of these meditation options, please see Appendix II/ p.59.

But when the Law¹ he comes to know
And penetrates the Truths² beside,
Then ignorance is put to flight
At last, and he in peace may go.”³

Three

Paññā

(Wisdom)

Paññā consists of Right View and Right Intention.

- Right View is the correct understanding of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.
- Right Intention is the correct application of the mind to gaining Right View.

To develop paññā (wisdom) means to replace wrong view¹ with Right View, and wrong intention with Right Intention. One with wrong view “is like a blind man who wanders about the earth, encountering now right and now wrong paths, now heights and now hollows, now even and now uneven ground... Hence this is said:

“As one born blind, who gropes along
Without assistance from a guide,
Chooses a road that may be right
At one time, at another wrong,
So while the foolish man pursues
The round of births without a guide,
Now to do merit he may choose
And now demerit in such plight.

¹ For an explanation of wrong view, please see K&S, Answers 7.9-7.10/pp.285-288.

¹ **Law:** Dhamma; teaching of the Buddha; Ultimate Truth

² **Truths:** the Four Noble Truths

³ Vis.XVII.118-119

Stage Three

Purification of View

*The Analysis of Ultimate Materiality
and Ultimate Mentality*

How to Analyse Materiality

Because rūpa kalāpas arise and pass away so quickly, you may find at first that they are difficult to analyse. They appear as extremely small particles, with a definite size and shape, but that is because you have not yet completely penetrated the illusion of compactness.¹ To penetrate that illusion, you should ignore the arising and passing away of kalāpas and focus solely on the four elements in each kalāpa. Once you can discern the four elements, you will be able to analyse additional types of materiality.

Every kalāpa comprises at least eight types of materiality:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Earth Element | 5. Colour |
| 2. Water Element | 6. Odour |
| 3. Fire Element | 7. Flavour |
| 4. Wind Element | 8. Nutritive Essence |

Some kalāpas include a ninth type of materiality: the (9) life-faculty element. And some include a tenth (the previous nine, plus one of the following three): a (10-*i*) transparent-element;² a (10-*ii*) heart-element;³ or a (10-*iii*) male or female

¹ For an explanation of compactness, please see K&S, Answer 1.3/p.60 and p.153.

² Distinctive transparent-elements can be found in each of the five physical sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. For a detailed description of the ten types of materiality, please see K&S, Chapter 4.

³ Kalāpas containing a heart-element are found only in the heart, the sixth sense organ, which is the base for the mind faculty (mentality).

sex-element¹. These eight to ten types of materiality in every kalāpa are the primary constituent qualities of matter and cannot be broken down any further. They are what define ultimate materiality within your body.

After completing the analysis of materiality within your body, you follow the same procedure for external materiality – other living beings and inanimate objects.

How to Analyse Mentality

To discern mentality, you begin by entering the first jhāna, or access concentration if four-elements meditation has been your exclusive samatha practice. Emerging from jhāna (or access concentration), you then analyse the jhāna factors associated with that state of concentration – in this case, the five jhāna factors associated with first-jhāna consciousness. The same procedure is repeated with the second, third and fourth jhānas.²

On investigation, you will see that the mind is nothing more than a succession of consciousnesses that arise and pass away with even greater rapidity than kalāpas. Every consciousness arises with a minimum of seven to a maximum of thirty-four associated mental factors.³ Once you have discerned the various types of consciousness and associated mental factors that comprise each of the four jhānas (or access concentration), you need to discern other kinds of consciousness and their associated mental factors, for example, those consciousnesses that arise upon seeing an object, hearing a sound, etc.

With practice, you will be able to discern and analyse up to eighty-nine different types of consciousness, according to your

¹ Kalāpas containing a sex-element are found throughout the body, in all six sense organs.

² For a listing of the four jhānas and their associated jhāna factors, please see Appendix I: Table 1/p.57

³ The 7-34 associated mental factors always include the three mental aggregates of feeling, perception, and mental formations.

level of development in meditation, and fifty-two associated mental factors. Each type of consciousness falls into one of three broad categories: wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate. All these various types of consciousness, plus the fifty-two associated mental factors, are what define ultimate mentality.

After completing this analysis of mentality in regard to your own mind, you follow the same procedure to analyse the minds of other living beings.¹ You should repeat these two analyses again and again, alternating between internal and external mentality, as you gradually extend your range of perception throughout the infinite universe.

Lastly, you analyse materiality and mentality together, as before, both internally and externally, etc. At this stage, you will not see any beings or persons existing anywhere, only ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality (thus the purification of view). To know and see materiality and mentality in this manner is to know and see the five aggregates of clinging, and to know and see the five aggregates of clinging is to know and see the First Noble Truth – the Noble Truth of Suffering.

¹ This procedure does not enable you to discern the minds of other beings individually, only in a general way. The ability to penetrate and know the minds of others is one of the five mundane higher powers (referred to as “direct knowledges” in the *Visuddhimagga*). For an explanation of the higher powers, see Vis, Chapters XII-XIII.

Stage Four

Purification by Overcoming Doubt

Seeing Dependent Origination

Before you can realize Nibbāna, the Third Noble Truth, you need to know and see not only the First Noble Truth, but also the Second Noble Truth – the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. In the “*Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta*” (“Sectarian Doctrines Discourse”) of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha explains the Second Noble Truth as follows:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering?

- (1) With ignorance as condition,
- (2) Volitional formations¹ [come to be];
- (3) With volitional formations as condition, consciousness;
- (4) With consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality;
- (5) With mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense-bases [eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind];
- (6) With the six sense-bases as condition, contact;
- (7) With contact as condition, feeling;
- (8) With feeling as condition, craving;
- (9) With craving as condition, clinging;
- (10) With clinging as condition, becoming;
- (11) With becoming as condition, birth;
- (12) With birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to be.

¹ **Volitional formations** (*saṅkhārā*): The second link in the chain of dependent origination, “volitional formations” refers to “kamma,” the wholesome and unwholesome volitional actions of body, speech and mind that condition the future states of living beings. For an explanation of kamma, please see BD, p.77, AS.V.18-33 and Vis, Chapter XIX.

Such is the origin of this entire mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.”¹

The twelve underlined links listed above form the cycle of dependent origination, a teaching that explains how materiality and mentality condition one another over the three periods of time: past, present and future. The Buddha considered dependent origination to be one of his pivotal teachings, without which it is impossible to arrive at a correct understanding of the Four Noble Truths: “One who sees dependent origination sees the Dhamma, and one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination.”²

Through a meditation practice that utilises the framework of dependent origination as its guiding principle, you will be able to analyse the workings of cause and effect on a psycho-physical level. This analysis is not the result of psychic power; rather, it is the result of the power of insight-knowledge, which arises from your previous analysis of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality. Coupled with strong concentration, this insight-knowledge is able to know and see each of the individual components of dependent origination, as well as the cause-and-effect relationships between them. This analysis will show you exactly how and why suffering is the inevitable result of ignorance and craving.

To begin the practice of seeing dependent origination, you choose a moment in your recent past that allows you to analyse the previous materiality and mentality of your own body and mind. Starting from that point, you trace the causes and conditions back in time, link after link, to your prenatal stage and then to the first moment of consciousness at your conception. With the strength of concentration that you have developed through the practice of samatha, you will then be

¹ A.III.61 “*Tiṅhāyatana Sutta*” (“Sectarian Doctrines Discourse”)

² M.28.28 “*Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta*” (“The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant’s Footprint”)

able to go back and discern the last moments of consciousness at the time of death in your previous life.

At that point, you will clearly see how your human birth and its circumstances are the direct result of past kamma that matured at the time of death in your previous life. Following this same procedure, you then discern the conditions that led to your previous rebirth, and to the one before that, continuing in the same manner for as many previous lives as you can.

As you continue to practise in this manner, certain dominant patterns will begin to emerge. You will come to see:

- How the actions that you consciously perform (your kamma) are driven by ignorance and craving.
- How you may experience the result of a particular action in one of three time periods: in the same life that the action is performed; in the following life; or in a subsequent future life.
- How wholesome¹ thoughts, speech and physical actions can produce only wholesome (pleasant) results.
- How unwholesome² thoughts, speech and physical actions can produce only unwholesome (painful) results.
- How the kammic force of a particular action can carry over for many lifetimes (even aeons) until it finally produces its wholesome or unwholesome result.

Now you can understand how avoiding unwholesome kamma can prevent future suffering; also, how performing wholesome kamma can lead to a happier life and even rebirth in a higher realm. However, even if you were to observe perfect sīla for a thousand lifetimes, perform numerous good

¹ **Wholesome:** Please see footnote 2/p.19.

² **Unwholesome:** Please see footnote 1/p.19.

works and cultivate the various jhānas,¹ this alone would not be enough to destroy ignorance and craving – the root of suffering. Only paññā has the power to do this – and to develop paññā, you must practise vipassanā. When your practice of vipassanā fully matures and you attain arahantship, all your volitional actions of body, speech and mind will become totally pure and cease to produce any new kamma. This attainment leads to the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates at the time of death, final release from the round of rebirth and the cessation of all suffering:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

- (1) With the cessation of ignorance,
- (2) Volitional formations cease;
- (3) With the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness ceases;
- (4) With the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality ceases;
- (5) With the cessation of mentality-materiality, the six sense-bases cease;
- (6) With the cessation of the six sense-bases, contact ceases;
- (7) With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases;
- (8) With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;

¹ Jhāna states can temporarily suppress all mental defilements, even ignorance and craving, but these defilements remain as latent tendencies and become operative again as soon as one emerges from jhāna. Mastery of the jhānas can lead to rebirth in the higher fine-material or immaterial realms; however, even rebirth in such blissful realms is no guarantee that in some future life one may not fall back into lower realms of intense suffering. Once one falls into one of these “woeful realms,” in most cases it is extremely difficult to escape (see footnote 3/p.45). For a listing of the thirty-one realms, see Appendix IV/p.63; for greater detail, see AS.V.2-7 (including Table 5.1).

- (9) With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;
- (10) With the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases;
- (11) With the cessation of becoming, birth ceases;
- (12) With the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease.

Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.”¹

Until such time as you are able to directly experience this Third Noble Truth, you will continue to roam and wander the round of rebirth, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. Unlike others, however, you now have the means to corroborate these teachings. This is accomplished by discerning your future lives in the same way that you discerned your past lives. You should continue to discern your future lives up to the attainment of arahantship, when ignorance ceases without remainder, and then to the time of your final Nibbāna, when the five aggregates cease without remainder. Depending on various wholesome causes and conditions, it is possible that your future Parinibbāna will occur either in this life, your next life, or in one of your subsequent future lives.²

At this point, you have completed the analysis of both past and future lives. You now understand that materiality and mentality are simply the effect of past causes and will, in turn, become the cause of future effects – that besides these causes and effects, there is neither a person nor a living being. Having purified your mind of doubt about the reality of past and future existences, and the workings of kamma, you may now proceed to the next stage of purification and undertake the practice of vipassanā.

¹ A.III.61 “*Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta*” (“Sectarian Doctrines Discourse”)

² However, if you stop meditating or engage in some unwholesome activity, the conditions will have changed, in which case the future results will also be different.

Stage Five

**Purification by Knowledge and Vision of
What is and What is Not Path**

The Practice of Vipassanā

The formal practice of vipassanā begins by discerning the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self in each of the following forty-nine categories of formations:¹

- Two categories – materiality and mentality
- Five categories – the five aggregates
- Twelve categories – the twelve factors of dependent origination
- Twelve categories – the six sense-bases (eye faculty, ear faculty, nose faculty, etc.) plus the six sense-objects (sights, sounds, smells, etc.)
- Eighteen categories – the six sense-bases, the six sense-objects and their respective six consciousnesses (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, etc.)

In the “*Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta*” (“Lump of Foam Discourse”) of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha explains how to examine the five aggregates:

“So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of materiality there is... whatever kind of feeling... perception... mental formations... [or] consciousness... whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a bhikkhu sees it, contemplates it and carefully investigates it.”²

¹ **Formations:** all things that are formed and conditioned; all aspects of materiality and mentality; the five aggregates

² S.22.95 “*Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta*” (“Lump of Foam Discourse”)

This is the standard you should apply in your practice of vipassanā, as you carefully investigate each category of formations. For example, you should examine the two categories of materiality and mentality, not only in your present life, but also in your past and future lives, extending your range of perception throughout the infinite universe.¹

When you have completed a thorough examination of all forty-nine categories, you will clearly see how impermanence, suffering and non-self pervade all aspects of materiality and mentality, including their causes. Then you will understand what the Buddha meant when he referred to the three characteristics as “a firm condition, an immutable fact and a fixed law.”²

It is at this stage, as you apply these methods and your insight becomes stronger, that the ten imperfections of insight may arise. The ten imperfections are:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Light | 6. Confidence |
| 2. Knowledge | 7. Effort |
| 3. Rapture | 8. Mindfulness |
| 4. Tranquillity | 9. Equanimity |
| 5. Happiness | 10. Attachment |

With the exception of attachment, these states are not imperfections in themselves; when they arise, however, there is a temptation for the meditator to think, “‘Such [powerful] light... knowledge... rapture... tranquillity, etc. never arose in me before. I have surely reached the path, reached fruition [i.e., Nibbāna].’ Thus he takes what is not the path to be the path and what is not fruition to be fruition.”³

If this happens to you, your progress will be interrupted – you will “drop [your] basic meditation subject and sit just

¹ For details on this practice, please see K&S, pp.256-258.

² A.III.134 “*Uppādā Sutta*” (“Arising Discourse”)

³ Vis.XX.107,123; for an explanation of path and fruition, see p.44.

enjoying the [light, knowledge, rapture, tranquillity, etc.].”¹ This is where an experienced teacher can help, by pointing out the imperfection when it arises and encouraging you to overcome this attachment by seeing it as impermanent, suffering and without a self.

When you have purified your mind of these ten imperfections, this is called “Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path.” Therefore, it is said: “The states consisting in light, knowledge, rapture, tranquillity, etc. are not the path; but it is insight-knowledge that is free from imperfections and keeps to its course that is the path.”²

¹ Vis.XX.123

² Vis.XX.128

Stage Six

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way

Developing the Insight-Knowledges

There are sixteen insight-knowledges that you need to develop progressively in order to see Nibbāna. The first three of these knowledges¹ have already been developed through your previous practices of samatha and vipassanā. With your mind already purified by these three knowledges, you are now ready to develop the following eight insight-knowledges:

1. Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away
2. Knowledge of Dissolution
3. Knowledge of Terror
4. Knowledge of Danger
5. Knowledge of Disenchantment
6. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance
7. Knowledge of Reflection
8. Knowledge of Equanimity towards Formations

The first of these eight insight-knowledges, the knowledge of arising and passing-away, actually consists of two insight-knowledges: (i) knowledge of the causal (the causal arising and passing-away of formations) and (ii) knowledge of the momentary (the momentary arising and passing-away of formations). Knowledge of the causal is developed from your previous analysis of dependent origination, and knowledge of

¹The first three of these insight-knowledges are: (1) the knowledge of analysing mentality-materiality; (2) the knowledge of discerning cause and condition (seeing dependent origination); and (3) the knowledge of comprehension (discerning the three characteristics in various categories of formations). For a listing of the sixteen insight-knowledges, please see Appendix III/p.61; for greater detail, see K&S, Chapter 7.

the momentary, from your previous analysis of materiality and mentality. To proceed, you should once again divide formations into categories and then, according to the appropriate method of insight – either causal or momentary – examine each category, as before: in your present, past and future lives, extending your range of perception throughout the infinite universe.¹

Having become fully established in the knowledge of arising and passing-away, your next step is to advance to the knowledge of dissolution. To develop this insight-knowledge, you withdraw your attention from the arising of formations and attend only to the momentary passing away and dissolution of formations. Once you become proficient in this practice, you will no longer see women, men, children, animals, or anything else that can be called a being. You will not even see kalāpas – only the continuous passing away of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality.

As you progress through each of the subsequent insight-knowledges, your understanding of the inherently painful and terrifying nature of all conditioned existence will gradually mature. You will experience a disenchantment and growing desire to escape from saṃsāra and a turning of the mind toward the unformed element – Nibbāna.

¹ For a detailed explanation of how to develop the knowledge of arising and passing-away, please see K&S, pp.264-271.

Stage Seven

Purification by Knowledge and Vision

Realizing Nibbāna

Your task at this point is to develop the final five insight-knowledges, which culminate in the attainment of enlightenment – knowing and seeing Nibbāna. These five insight-knowledges are:

1. Knowledge of Conformity
2. Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage
3. Knowledge of the Path
4. Knowledge of Fruition
5. Knowledge of Reviewing

Even if your initial experience of these five insight-knowledges lasts only for a second, your life will be radically transformed. Doubts and delusions that plagued you for countless lifetimes will disappear in an instant. Shackles that bound you to realms of darkness and suffering will be suddenly removed, and you will experience a freedom and joy beyond anything you had ever known before. But this is not the goal – it is only the first of four stages that every meditator must pass through in order to reach the final goal of arahantship. At each of these four stages, your understanding of the Four Noble Truths will grow clearer and clearer, gradually dispelling the clouds of ignorance that have shrouded your mind in darkness for so many lifetimes.

The Buddha describes this process of gradual purification according to the number of defilements that have been destroyed and the number of lives it will take to reach final liberation. He calls these defilements fetters because they fetter beings to the wheel of existence. There are a total of ten fetters, each of which corresponds to a particular stage of enlightenment.

The ten fetters are:

The Five Lower Fetters¹	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personality View 2. Sceptical Doubt 3. Attachment to Rites and Rituals 4. Sensual Desire 5. Ill-Will
The Five Higher Fetters²	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Craving for Fine-Material Existence² 7. Craving for Immaterial Existence² 8. Conceit 9. Restlessness 10. Ignorance

These ten fetters have been your master since the beginning of saṃsāra. As you progress through each of the four stages of enlightenment, the fetters that correspond to that particular stage will be destroyed, liberating you from the bondage of those defilements. Each stage follows the same basic pattern:

1. Knowledge of conformity prepares the meditator for the transition that will occur in the next two mind-moments, with the arising of change-of-lineage and the path.
2. Knowledge of change-of-lineage ushers in the transition from worldling³ to noble one. This is the first of the insight-knowledges to take Nibbāna as its object.

¹ The five lower fetters tie beings to the sensual realm of existence. The sensual realm includes the four woeful realms, the human realm and the six *deva* realms. For details, please see Appendix IV/p.63.

² The five higher fetters tie beings to the fine-material and immaterial realms of existence, where materiality is either extremely subtle (in the fine-material realms) or completely absent, as pure mentality (in the immaterial realms). For details, please see Appendix IV/p.63.

³ **Worldling** (*puṭhujjana*): literally “one of many folk;” one who is still bound by the ten fetters to the round of rebirth and has yet to attain the state of a noble one. For greater detail, please see BD, p.146.

3. Knowledge of the path¹ arises as the meditator’s consciousness enters absorption in the unformed element. With the force of a “thunderbolt,”² path knowledge “pierces and explodes the mass of greed, hatred and delusion never pierced and exploded before.”² In this moment, the fetters are destroyed.
4. Knowledge of fruition¹ arises as a direct result of the path, with the meditator experiencing the degree of liberation that path knowledge has realized and enjoying the bliss and peace of absorption in the supramundane. Just as a bucket of water cools the embers of a fire, even after that fire has been extinguished, so fruition knowledge completes the task of destroying the fetters, by calming and tranquilising the mind.³
5. Knowledge of reviewing arises at the end of fruition, upon re-entering the life-continuum. The meditator then reviews five things: (1) the path; (2) fruition; (3) Nibbāna; (4) what fetters have been removed; and (5) what fetters have yet to be destroyed.⁴

This is a brief overview of the process.⁵

¹ **Path knowledge and fruition knowledge** (also called “path and fruition”): These are the two insight-knowledges that form the core of the enlightenment experience. Path knowledge (*magga ñāṇa*) arises only once at each stage of enlightenment, taking Nibbāna as its object and giving rise, in turn, to its corresponding fruition. Fruition knowledge (*phala ñāṇa*) also takes Nibbāna as its object. This insight-knowledge denotes those moments of supramundane consciousness that arise immediately after the moment of path consciousness, and which, until the attainment of the next higher path, may reoccur innumerable times during the practice of vipassanā.

² Vis. XXII.2,13

³ Water simile is from a question-and-answer session with the Sayadaw.

⁴ The process of reviewing the fetters must be performed voluntarily (an arahant has no remaining fetters, therefore does not review item 5).

⁵ For a detailed description of the final five insight-knowledges, please see K&S, pp.274-277 and Vis, Chapter XXII.

The four stages of enlightenment are described below:

- i. Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*) path and fruition – At this stage, the three coarsest fetters of (1) personality view, (2) sceptical doubt and (3) attachment to rites and rituals are fully destroyed. With the destruction of personality view, wrong view¹ is eliminated. With the destruction of attachment to rites and rituals, the stream-enterer understands that such practices in themselves do not purify – rather it is the Noble Eightfold Path that purifies. With the destruction of sceptical doubt, he or she gains unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.² Such a person can no longer be reborn in any of the four woeful realms,³ nor can he or she perform the type of unwholesome actions that would lead to such a rebirth; for example, a stream-enterer would never intentionally kill another living being, take what belongs to another or deliberately tell a lie. One who has achieved this level of realisation will attain final liberation in a maximum of seven lives.
- ii. Once-return (*sakadāgāmi*) path and fruition – At this stage, the fourth and fifth fetters of (4) sensual desire and (5) ill-will are greatly weakened, but not fully destroyed. One who has achieved this level of realization will return to the human world no more than once before attaining final liberation.

¹ **Wrong view:** This refers specifically to the twenty types of identity view (see M.109.10; see also K&S, Answers 7.9-7.10/pp.285-288).

² **Saṅgha:** the community of bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs; in this context, those bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs who have become noble ones through attaining any one of the four stages of enlightenment.

³ **The four woeful realms:** The animal kingdom, the realm of *petas* (hungry ghosts), the realm of *asuras* (titans or demons) and the hells – these are the lowest of the thirty-one realms. According to the Buddha, most human beings and *devas* are reborn in the woeful realms (see Appendix IV/p.63 and S.56.102-113).

- iii. Non-return (*anāgāmi*) path and fruition – At this stage, the two fetters of (4) sensual desire and (5) ill-will are fully destroyed. One who has achieved this level of realisation is no longer bound to the sensual realm of existence by the five lower fetters. With the destruction of sensual desire, the non-returner will never again entertain a thought of lust or craving for any object of the five senses.¹ With the destruction of ill-will, he or she will never again become angry or act out of fear. Such a person will be reborn in a Brahma (fine-material) Realm and there attain final Nibbāna, without ever returning to the sensual realm.
- iv. Arahant (*arahatta*) path and fruition – At this stage, the remaining five higher fetters of (6) craving for fine-material existence, (7) craving for immaterial existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness and (10) ignorance are fully destroyed. With the complete destruction of all ten fetters, the arahant attains a state of perfect purity, no longer bound to any of the thirty-one realms and cleansed of even the last vestiges of ignorance and craving. With this attainment, the cycle of dependent origination comes to an end. For such a person, “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”²

If a single achievement could be said to embody the essence of the Four Noble Truths, it is undoubtedly the attainment of arahantship. In fact, everything the Buddha taught during his forty-five years as the Perfectly Enlightened One, beginning with his first discourse at Isipatana, was directed toward that

¹ **The five senses:** the five physical sense-bases, which see, hear, smell, taste and touch their respective sense-objects

² This description of the arahant’s attainment comes at the end of many suttas throughout the *Nikāyas*.

STAGE SEVEN: PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION

single goal: “So this holy life, bhikkhus, does not have gain, honour and renown for its benefit, nor the attainment of virtue for its benefit, nor the attainment of concentration for its benefit, nor knowledge and vision for its benefit. But it is this unshakeable liberation¹ of the mind that is the goal, bhikkhus, of this holy life, its heartwood and its end.”²

Upon his own attainment of arahantship, the Buddha uttered these words of exultation:

“Through many a birth
I wandered in saṃsāra,
Seeking, but not finding
The builder³ of this house.²
Painful it is to be born again and again.

“O house-builder! You are seen.
You shall build no house again.
All your rafters² are broken.
Your ridgepole² is shattered.
My mind has attained the unconditioned.
Achieved is the end of craving.”⁴

¹ **Liberation** (*vimutti*): In this context, liberation refers to the realization of Nibbāna by arahant fruition knowledge

² M.29.7 “*Mahāsāropama Sutta*” (“The Greater Discourse on the Simile of Heartwood”)

³ **Builder**: craving; **House**: body (the five aggregates); **Rafters**: defilements; **Ridgepole**: ignorance

⁴ Dh.153-154 “*Udāna Vatthu*” (“Words of Exultation”) spoken by the Buddha after his Great Enlightenment (and chanted every morning in the meditation halls at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery)

Conclusion

This book began with a general discussion of the Four Noble Truths and the Threefold Training. It then touched on some of the primary teaching methods employed at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery and described in the Sayadaw's book *Knowing and Seeing*. Topics covered include: training in morality; mindfulness of breathing; four-elements meditation; the analysis of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality; dependent origination; the practice of vipassanā; the sixteen insight-knowledges; and the four stages of enlightenment.

Having come to the conclusion of this brief overview, you may be wondering what first steps you can take to get established in a home-based meditation practice. Alternatively, you may have thought about coming to a forest monastery, like this one, where you could pursue the practices of samatha and vipassanā in a more conducive setting, under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

As a householder, a best first step would be to begin with the practice of mindfulness of breathing; start with an hour (or as close to an hour as possible) and try to work up to two or three hours a day. Keep in mind that regular daily meditation is the key to success. To support your practice, you should make a strong effort to observe the five precepts for laypersons. If you are able to attend a Pa-Auk meditation retreat, this would give your practice a tremendous boost. Information on upcoming Pa-Auk retreats can be found at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 117. You may also write directly to the monastery or check with any of the contact persons listed in the Resource Guide.

During the time of the Buddha, many laypeople were able to successfully practise the threefold training at home, attain path and fruition, and become noble ones. The Buddha, however, spoke time and again about the cares of the householder's

life¹. Owing to its many responsibilities and distractions, such a life is inevitably fraught with unforeseen challenges and disappointments. Practising in a traditional forest monastery, on the other hand, has many advantages. It is here that you will find:

- A supportive community of like-minded individuals
- Noble friends and wise teachers
- An environment that encourages the observance of the precepts
- A secluded environment with few distractions
- Few responsibilities
- A culture and laity that support the traditional practice of Theravāda Buddhism and, in particular, the monastic lifestyle

Other than our daily timetable, the monastery does not follow any special retreat schedule. If you plan to come for a retreat, as a general rule, the longer you stay, the greater the benefit. A certain amount of preparatory reading may also be helpful.

Recommended Reading List

- *Knowing and Seeing (Revised Edition)* by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw; 2003
- *Life of the Buddha* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli: Buddhist Publication Society; Kandy, Sri Lanka; 1972, 1992
- *The Word of the Buddha* by Nyanatiloka Mahāthera: B.P.S.; Kandy, Sri Lanka; 1971, 2001
- *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi: Wisdom Publications; Somerville, Massachusetts; USA; 1995, 2001

¹ **Householder's life** (cares of): M.13.7-11, M.26.5-14, M.36.12, M.125.23

CONCLUSION

For those who wish to ordain, *The Buddhist Monastic Code* by Thanissaro Bhikkhu (or another translation of the monastic disciplinary code) is required reading. This book is available on the Internet at www.accesstoinsight.org.

For a more detailed description of the Pa-Auk teaching methods, please refer to *Knowing and Seeing* by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.

Further information on Pa-Auk Forest Monastery and its affiliate centres, including a virtual copy of *Knowing and Seeing* and an international retreat schedule, may be obtained at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 117.

You may also write directly to the monastery or contact any of the contact persons listed in the Resource Guide.

May you be happy.

Biography of the Sayadaw

The Venerable Āciṇṇa, commonly referred to as the “Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw” (and, in less formal circumstances, as “Pa-Auk Sayadaw”), is the current abbot and principal teacher at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. “Sayadaw” is a Burmese honorific title meaning “respected teacher.”

The Sayadaw was born in 1934, in Leigh-Chaung Village, Hinthada Township, in the delta region about one hundred miles northwest of the capital, Yangon. In 1944, at age ten, he ordained as a novice monk (*sāmaṇera*) at a monastery in his village. During the next decade, he pursued the life of a typical scholar-novice, studying the Pāli Texts (including *Vinaya*, *Suttas* and *Abhidhamma*) under various teachers. He passed the three Pāli language examinations while still a novice.

In 1954, at age twenty, the Sayadaw received the higher ordination as a bhikkhu. He continued his studies of the Pāli Texts under the guidance of learned elder monks. In 1956 he passed the prestigious *Dhammācariya* examination. This is equivalent to a BA in Buddhist Pāli Studies and confers the title of “Dhamma Teacher.”

During the next eight years, the Sayadaw continued his investigation into the Dhamma, travelling throughout Myanmar to learn from various well-known teachers. In 1964, during his tenth “rains retreat” (*vassa*), he turned his attention to intensifying his meditation practice and began to practise “forest dwelling.” Although he continued with his study of the Pāli Texts, he now sought out and gained instruction from the revered meditation teachers of those times.

For the next sixteen years, he made forest dwelling his primary practice. He spent these years in the southern part of Myanmar, in Mon State: three years in Mudon Township (just south of Mawlamyine) and thirteen years in Ye Township (approximately one hundred miles down the coast). During this period, he lived a very simple life, devoting his time to meditation and study of the Pāli Texts.

In 1981 the Sayadaw received a message from the abbot of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, the Venerable Aggapañṇā. The abbot was dying and asked the Venerable Āciṇṇa to look after his monastery. Five days later, the Venerable Aggapañṇā passed away. As the new abbot of the monastery, the Venerable Āciṇṇa became known as the “Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.” Although he oversaw the running of the monastery, the Sayadaw would spend most of his time in seclusion, meditating in a bamboo hut in the upper forested area, which covered a deserted range of hills running along the base of the Taung Nyo Mountain Range. This area later came to be known as the Upper Monastery.

Since 1983, both monastics and laity have been coming to study meditation with the Sayadaw. Foreign meditators began to arrive at the monastery in the early 1990’s. As the Sayadaw’s reputation steadily grew, the Upper Monastery gradually expanded from a simple bamboo hut and a handful of disciples to more than two hundred and fifty kuṭis (meditators’ huts) in the forest; a large two-storey meditation hall for the men; a library (with office, computer room and men’s dormitory on the lower levels); a clinic; a hospital; an almsgiving hall; a two-storey refectory; and a reception hall and dwelling for the Sayadaw. In the Lower Monastery, facilities include more than 180 kutis, a new kitchen and, for the women, a large three-storey meditation hall (with sleeping quarters on the ground floor) and a five-storey dormitory (still under construction).

Currently, there are more than one hundred and thirty foreign monks, nuns and lay practitioners residing at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. During our three-month rains retreat, the total monastic population averages between six and seven hundred. Together with laypeople, the monastery population sometimes tops fifteen hundred during festival times.

In 1997 the Sayadaw published his Magnum Opus, an enormous five-volume tome titled *The Practice that Leads to Nibbāna*, explaining the entire course of teaching in detail and

BIOGRAPHY OF THE SAYADAW

supported by copious quotations from the Pāli Texts – it is currently available only in Burmese and Sinhalese. On January 4, 1999, in public recognition of the Sayadaw’s achievements, the government bestowed upon him the title *Agga Mahā Kammaṭṭhānācariya*, which means “Highly Respected Meditation Teacher.”

The Sayadaw speaks fluent English and has lectured and led retreats outside of Myanmar since 1997. In December of 2006, he travelled to Sri Lanka to undertake a long-term personal retreat, staying in seclusion and suspending his teaching schedule throughout 2007. As of this printing, his teaching schedule for 2008 includes a four-month retreat in the United States, July – October, to be held at the Forest Refuge in Barre, Massachusetts.

Updates on the Sayadaw’s teaching schedule may be obtained at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 117.

Appendix I

Tables on the Jhānas**Table 1: The Jhāna Factors¹**

Jhāna	Jhāna Factors
First Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Application (of the Mind) (<i>vitakka</i>) 2. Sustained Application (of the Mind) (<i>vicāra</i>) 3. Rapture (<i>pīti</i>) 4. Happiness (<i>sukha</i>) 5. One-Pointedness (of Mind) (<i>ekaggatā</i>)
Second Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapture 2. Happiness 3. One-Pointedness (of Mind)
Third Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Happiness 2. One-Pointedness (of Mind)
Fourth Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equanimity (<i>upekkhā</i>) 2. One-Pointedness (of Mind)

Table 2: The Five Kinds of Jhāna Mastery

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To enter jhāna whenever desired. 2. To resolve to stay in jhāna for a determined length of time, and to carry out that resolve. 3. To emerge from jhāna at the determined time. 4. To advert (bring your attention) to the jhāna factors (after emerging from jhāna). 5. To review the jhāna factors.
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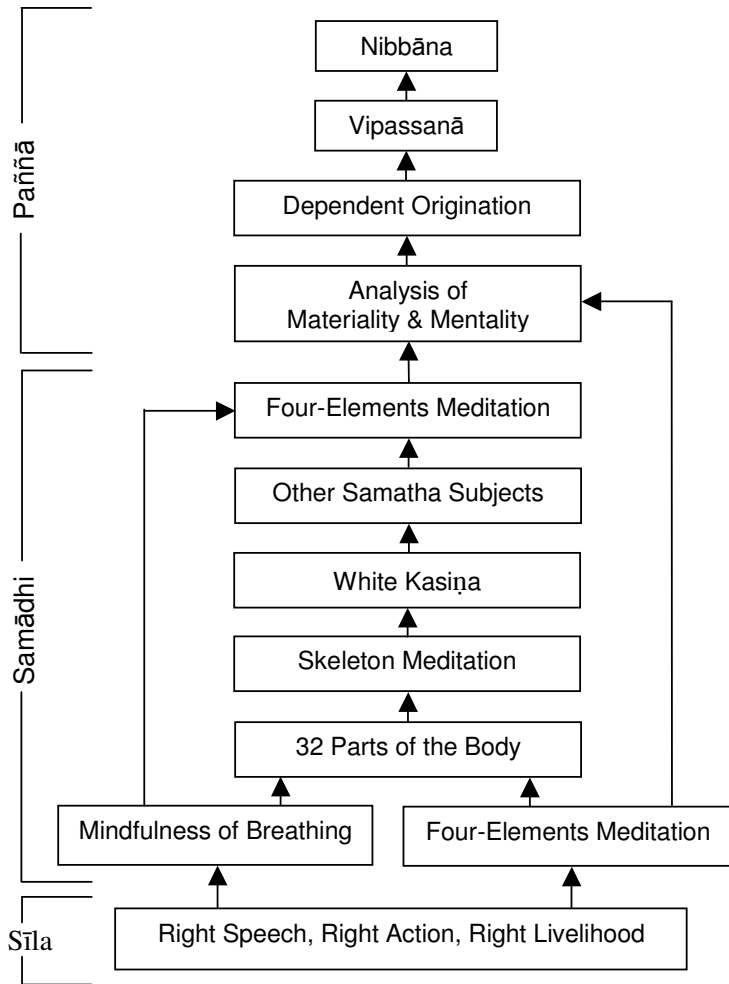
¹ For a detailed description of the jhāna factors, please see Vis.IV.88-101,194-195.

Table 3: Samatha Subjects Taught at Pa-Auk and their Respective Attainments

Subject	Attainment
Mindfulness of Breathing	Up to 4 th Jhāna
Four-Elements Meditation	Up to Access Concentration
Thirty-two Parts of the Body	Up to Access or 1 st Jhāna ¹
Skeleton Meditation	Up to Access or 1 st Jhāna
The Ten Kasiṇas Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Yellow, Blue, Red, White, Space, Light	Up to 4 th Jhāna "
The Four Immaterial Jhānas 1. Boundless Space 2. Boundless Consciousness 3. Nothingness 4. Neither-Perception-Nor- Non-Perception	1 st Immaterial Jhāna 2 nd Immaterial Jhāna 3 rd Immaterial Jhāna 4 th Immaterial Jhāna
The Four Divine Abodes 1. Loving-Kindness 2. Compassion 3. Appreciative Joy 4. Equanimity	Up to 3 rd Jhāna " " 4 th Jhāna only
The Four Protective Meditations 1. Loving-Kindness 2. Recollection of the Buddha 3. Loathsomeness 4. Recollection of Death	Up to 3 rd Jhāna Up to Access Concentration Up to 1 st Jhāna Up to Access Concentration

¹ Although it is possible to attain access concentration or 1st jhāna using thirty-two parts as a meditation subject, neither attainment is required for success in this practice; for a detailed description of the thirty-two parts practice, please see K&S, pp.67-69.

Meditation Chart¹



¹ This chart illustrates the general course of instruction at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. Based on the meditator's personal requirements, instruction may vary from case to case.

Stages of Purification & the Insight-Knowledges

Purification and Description
<p>I. Purification of Virtue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Fourfold Purification
<p>II. Purification of Mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Forty Samatha Subjects Taught by the Buddha
<p>III. Purification of View</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-Materiality
<p>IV. Purification by Overcoming Doubt</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition
<p>V. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Knowledge of Comprehension
<p>VI. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away 5. Knowledge of Dissolution 6. Knowledge of Terror 7. Knowledge of Danger 8. Knowledge of Disenchantment 9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance 10. Knowledge of Reflection 11. Knowledge of Equanimity towards Formations
<p>VII. Purification by Knowledge and Vision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Knowledge of Conformity 13. Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage 14. Knowledge of the Path 15. Knowledge of Fruition 16. Knowledge of Reviewing

The Thirty-One Realms of Existence¹

Main Divisions	Realms	Description
<p>4 Immaterial Realms (<i>arūpa-loka</i>)</p>	Realm of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception	<p>These are realms of pure mentality, attained by entering one of the four immaterial jhānas just before the moment of death. Beings in these realms can live for thousands of aeons and enjoy the highest degree of jhānic bliss. Without path and fruition, however, even the purest concentration is no guarantee that one will not eventually fall back into a lower realm.</p>
	Realm of Nothingness	
	Realm of Infinite Consciousness	
	Realm of Infinite Space	
<p>16 Fine-Material Realms (<i>rūpa-loka</i>)</p>	4 th Jhāna Plane (7 Realms)	<p>These are realms of subtle materiality, attained by entering one of the four jhānas just before the moment of death. Beings in these “Brahma Realms” possess perfect sīla, can live for aeons and enjoy varying degrees of jhānic bliss. When they die, their level of jhāna at that time determines the realm of rebirth. Those who lose their jhāna completely will be reborn as humans and devas. Conversely, humans and devas who are able to enter jhāna at the time of death will be reborn here.</p>
	3 rd Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
	2 nd Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
	1 st Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
<p>11 Sensual Realms (<i>kāma-loka</i>)</p>	Deva Realms (6 Realms)	<p>The Sensuous and Blissful Realms</p> <p>Of all thirty-one realms, the human realm provides the greatest range of pleasure and pain, as well as the greatest opportunity for enlightenment. Life as a deva, on the other hand, is extremely pleasant, filled with sensual pleasures far superior to those in the</p>
	Human Realm	<p>The Four Woeful Realms</p> <p>These four woeful realms are the home for most living beings. Once one falls into one of these woeful realms, in most cases it is extremely difficult to escape.</p>
	Asura Realm	
	Peta Realm	
	Animal Realm	
	Hell Realm	

¹ Concept and table design adopted from AS.V.3-7 (including Table 5.1).

Appendix V

Information for Foreign Meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery (“Pa-Auk Tawya” in Burmese) is a Buddhist monastery in the Theravāda tradition, with emphasis on the teaching and practice of both samatha (tranquillity) and vipassanā (insight) meditation. The number of residents varies seasonally from approximately 700 to 1,500 (during festival times) – this includes more than 130 foreign monks, nuns and lay practitioners, coming from more than twenty different countries. All are here to practise meditation under the guidance of the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, the abbot and principal teacher at this monastery.

This document provides you with an outline of the monastery’s basic requirements and services, plus it tells you how to get here.

Arrival

- Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Monasteries. Upon arrival, foreigners must register at the following locations: male residents – the Registration Office for Foreigners in the Upper Monastery; female residents – the Lower Monastery Office. Please be sure to obtain and read a copy of our “Rules for Foreign Meditators” (Appendix VI of this book), which you can pick up at either office.

In General

- Meditators must strictly observe the fourfold purification during their stay here. This purification consists of:
 - (1) The 227 rules of the *Pāṭimokkha* for Theravāda monks; the 10 precepts and 75 *Sekhiya* (training) rules for novices; and the 5, 8 or 10 precepts for laypersons and nuns.

- (2) Restraint of the six sense faculties – of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
- (3) Purification of livelihood (Right Livelihood) – livelihood that accords with the precepts.
- (4) Reflection on (and moderation in) the use of the four requisites – food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

Meditation

- Everyone must attend the group sittings at their respective meditation hall. Group sittings are held at the following times: 4:00-5:30 am, 7:30-9:00 am, 1:00-2:30 pm, 3:30-5:00 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm.
- Interviews with Pa-Auk meditation teachers are an important aid to one’s practice. New arrivals should come for an interview every day (or make a suitable arrangement that accords with their meditation teacher’s schedule).
- Meditators must practise according to the instructions of their meditation teacher.

Smoking, Drinking and Drugs

- Smoking, drinking, chewing tobacco or betel nut, and the use of recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. If you use any of these items, please dispose of them before entering the monastery.
- There are no exceptions to this rule. If you break this rule, you will be asked to leave.

Diet and Piṇḍapāta

- Meals are offered in the Piṇḍapātasāla (alms hall). Please arrive for piṇḍapāta at the following times:
 - Breakfast – 5:30-6:00 am (depending on the time of dawn)
 - Lunch – 10:00-10:15 am
- The kitchen prepares a vegetarian diet only; no special diets are offered.
- Boiled and filtered drinking water are available at various locations throughout the monastery.

Attire

- Theravāda monks and novices should wear only allowable robes, slippers, etc. Robes must be kept clean. Highly colourful robes (red, bright yellow, etc.) are not acceptable.
- Lay practitioners should dress modestly at all times:
 - Men – no bare shoulders, no bare calves, no bare knees; no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, vests or undershirts; no ripped or otherwise improper attire.
 - Women – no bare shoulders, midriff, calves or knees; no short skirts, no shorts, no sleeveless shirts or blouses; no thin, transparent, tight, revealing, brightly coloured or otherwise improper attire.

Medical Care

- There are quarters for the sick and a clinic, with a resident doctor. A local doctor trained in Western medicine visits once a week; another trained in traditional Burmese medicine visits once a fortnight.

International Mail

- Excessive correspondence can disturb meditation. Please keep your correspondence to a minimum.
- Outgoing mail should be left in the Outgoing Mailbox at the Piṇḍapātasāla; incoming mail can be picked up on the table next to the Outgoing Mailbox. It is best for important incoming and outgoing letters to be registered.
- International parcels must be picked up in Yangon. Please check at the Lower Monastery Office to see if they can suggest someone to do this for you.
- To protect incoming parcels against loss or damage, all international parcels should be insured. Ask the sender to mail you a copy of the insurance form.
- Be aware that parcels are subject to customs formalities, censorship and duties.

International Telephone Calls

- You can use the telephone in the Lower Monastery Office for incoming calls – service is intermittent and low quality. You will need to go outside the monastery to make outgoing calls; international calls are expensive and must be paid in US dollars.

E-mail/Internet

- Permission to send/receive e-mail is granted on a case-by-case basis.

Monastics and Money

- Theravāda monks, novices and 10-precept nuns are not permitted to use, handle or possess money in any form, including: cash, credit cards, cheques, electronic transactions, gold, silver, jewellery, etc. Monastics who carry their own funds must relinquish them PERMANENTLY before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule. (For those monastics with allowable requisite funds, see below.)
- Monastics with allowable requisite funds must arrange for the proper transfer of requisites from their previous location to the Pa-Auk kappiyakāraka (steward; hereafter referred to as “kappiya” for short) or other such person. Transfer of funds MUST follow the prescribed procedure in the *Vinaya* (please refer to the *Pāṭimokkha*, *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* rules 10, 18, 19 & 20).
- If you come to the monastery as a layperson and decide to ordain, you must make proper arrangements for your funds before ordination; this can be done through the monastery kappiya.

Visa Application/Extension, etc.

- If you plan to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for more than one month, you will need to apply for a Myanmar meditation visa, as a 28-day tourist visa and a 28-day entry

visa can no longer be extended. Check with the Myanmar Embassy in your home country to see if they will issue a meditation visa to you (preferably for three-months or longer). If this is not possible, you may wish to check with another Myanmar Embassy – for example, the Embassy in Singapore – to see what type of visa they will issue to you. To apply for a meditation visa, you will need a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter, which can be obtained through a Pa-Auk Contact Person or by writing to the monastery, attention: U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. For the latest news on visa applications and extensions, please contact Daw Amy at attbbpp@myanmar.com.mm. Contact information for the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore and a listing of international contact persons can be found in our Resource Guide on page 117.

- Once you get to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, you can apply for a three-month, six-month or one-year visa extension (stay permit). Payment for your extension can be arranged through the monastery kappiya. He will need 9 passport photos plus sufficient requisite funds in US dollars. Dollar bills must be in good condition: worn, torn, nicked, marked or questionable bills are unacceptable.
- Please be aware that visa extension regulations and costs are subject to change. Current cost of a one-year visa extension is US\$90. The visa extension should be applied for as soon as possible after your arrival in Myanmar. After that, applications for further extensions should be made at least two months before the expiry date of the visa extension.
- If you are a Theravāda monk, novice or 10-precept nun, the monastery will try to cover your expenses, but if the fees are in US dollars, the monastery's Burmese dāyakas (donors) will be unable to pay. So, to be safe, it is best for a dāyaka of your own to make arrangements with a local kappiya to handle the financial side of the extension fees.
- If you stay longer than three months, you must obtain a Foreigner's Registration Certificate (FRC), and when you

leave, a Departure Form. Please apply for the FRC at least one month in advance.

Sponsorship

- A sponsorship letter grants permission for you to reside at this monastery – nothing more. All financial requirements (including medical, dental, transportation, visas, FRC, departure forms and other requisite items) are your personal responsibility. Please arrive with SUFFICIENT FUNDS (IN US DOLLARS) for the duration of your stay.
- If your visa (or visa extension) was obtained with a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter, this means you have agreed to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for the visa's duration. To use an entry/meditation visa for sightseeing and tourism would constitute an abuse of the privilege granted to you by the Sponsorship Letter and could create problems for the monastery.

Suggested Items to Bring

- The following list of suggested items was compiled by foreign meditators here: 10-12 passport photos; vitamin and herbal supplements; herbal teas; light, comfortable, easy-to-wash clothing; dental floss; toiletries; towel; talcum/medicated powder; large umbrella; earplugs; water resistant sandals; torch/flashlight; battery-powered alarm clock; mosquito repellent; yoga mat (if you practice yoga); spare glasses and copy of your prescription; get dental work done before coming. Most everyday-items can be obtained locally, name brands excluded; voltage here is 220V.

Climate

- There are three seasons in Myanmar: a hot season (March-May); a rainy season (June-Oct.); and a cold season (November-February). Temperatures range from 15° to 40° Centigrade (59° to 104° Fahrenheit).

How to Get to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery from Yangon

(Yangon → Mawlamyine → Pa-Auk →Mudon)

- Mawlamyine is 301 kms (187 miles) southeast of Yangon, and the monastery is another 14.5 kms (9 miles) southeast of Mawlamyine. Air-conditioned overnight buses to Mawlamyine/Mudon depart daily from the highway bus station in Yangon. You can buy tickets along the south side of Aung San Stadium, opposite the central train station. Note: If you take the Mudon bus, ask the driver to let you off at “Pa-Auk Tawya” (the bus goes right past the main gate of the monastery on the way to Mudon).
- Travel options include a weekly flight to Mawlamyine and a new train service that goes direct from Yangon to Mawlamyine. If you take the train, be sure to go “upper class.”
- Contact persons in Yangon can help you get to the monastery. For a listing of contact persons, please check our Resource Guide on page 117.

Revised March 11, 2007

Appendix VI

Rules for Foreign Meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

There is one basic rule of conduct at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, which embodies the spirit and essence of all the other rules that follow: to act properly at all times, showing respect and consideration for one another. As the Buddha encouraged his followers, let us live “in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”¹

Arrival/Departure

1. Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Monasteries. Upon arrival and departure, foreigners must register at the following locations: male residents – the Registration Office for Foreigners in the Upper Monastery; female residents – the Lower Monastery Office.
2. If you plan to be away from your kuṭi (meditator’s hut) for more than one week, you must leave it ready for anyone else to come and occupy: male residents – wash and clean what you have used, lock your kuṭi and return all borrowed items, including your kuṭi key, to the Saṅgha Office (in the Library building); female residents – wash and clean what you have used, lock your kuṭi and return your kuṭi key to the Lower Monastery Office. (Both male and female residents: You must return your kuṭi key even if the kuṭi is your own offering to the monastery.)
3. Do not leave the grounds overnight with the key to your kuṭi or take any Saṅgha items with you, such as eating utensils, umbrella, books, or tapes.

¹ M.31.6 “Cūḷagosinga Sutta” (“The Shorter Discourse in Gosinga”)

4. Do not leave your personal belongings behind. Please make prior arrangements with a fellow resident to store those items that you wish to keep and inform the Saṅgha Office of those items that you do not wish to keep.

Meditation

1. Everyone must attend the group sittings at their respective meditation hall (unless the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw has given them permission to meditate in their own kuṭi). Group sittings are held at the following times: 4:00-5:30 am, 7:30-9:00 am, 1:00-2:30 pm, 3:30-5:00 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm. A wooden sounding block is struck at 3:30 am, 7:15 am, 12:45 pm and 5:45 pm to notify meditators of the upcoming sitting.
2. Meditators are encouraged to continue their practice at all times by practising sitting or walking meditation during unstructured hours and personal time. Those who wish to continue sitting in the meditation hall are welcome to do so during this time.
3. New arrivals should come for an interview with their meditation teacher every day (or make a suitable arrangement that accords with their meditation teacher’s schedule).
4. Meditators must practise according to the instructions of their meditation teacher.
5. Out of respect to your teacher, please describe your meditation experiences with absolute honesty. The report should be brief and to the point, and should reflect your personal experience.
6. Do not discuss your meditation practice with others or speak about your attainments. Questions about your meditation practice should be directed to your meditation teacher only.
7. Practise mindfulness. Move slowly and quietly when entering and leaving the meditation hall, while going to your seat, sitting down and in making any other

movements. Please be considerate of others. Do not bring extraneous books, bottles, plastic bags, etc. into the meditation hall. Do not make noise when handling items such as keys or your meditation manual. Although the need for silence applies particularly during scheduled meditation hours, you should make an effort to observe it at all times, as there are meditators who practise beyond the scheduled hours.

8. Do not talk in or around the meditation hall. If you must talk, then do so quietly, away from the meditation hall or out on the veranda where you cannot be heard. Loud talk, noisy whispering and, in particular, laughter can be distracting to other meditators. Remember that even after the formal meditation period has ended, others may still be meditating. Please be respectful of their efforts.
9. Do not use strong smelling balms, beeping clocks or noisy watches in the meditation hall.

Kuṭis

1. Please accept the kuṭi that has been assigned to you. Any problems with your kuṭi should be addressed to the Registration Office for Foreigners or the Lower Monastery Office. Do not change kuṭis without permission.
2. When you leave your kuṭi during the day, always remember to lock the door and windows. Make sure your valuables are stored in a safe place (or leave them at the Lower Monastery Office).
3. If you wish to repair or renovate your kuṭi (at your own expense and supervision), please discuss this with the Sayadaw, U Kuṇḍadhāna, U Candimā or the monastery kappiya (steward) in the Lower Monastery Office.

General Conduct

1. Smoking, drinking, chewing tobacco or betel nut, and the use of recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. If it is

discovered that you have been using any of these items, you will be asked to leave.

2. Please be respectful of the environment: do not litter; do not waste water or electricity.
3. Do not talk while waiting in the piṇḍapāta line for alms.
4. During almsround, do not accept more food than you expect to eat.
5. The following items are allowable after midday: hot and cold water; fresh strained fruit juice diluted with cold water; sugar or jaggery diluted with hot or cold water; herbal teas. To counteract sickness/weakness/tiredness, you may take butter, ghee, oil, honey, sugar and allowable medicine.
6. The following items are not allowable after midday: solid food; boiled or otherwise processed juices made from fruits or vegetables; coffee, tea, Milo, milk, soft drinks, chocolate, cocoa, etc.
7. If you go barefoot, according to the *Vinaya*, you should wash your feet before entering Saṅgha buildings.
8. Between 7:00 and 7:30 am, residents should clean their kuṭis and sweep the surrounding paths and areas. Those who wish may join the local Saṅgha between 5:00 and 6:00 pm in cleaning the meditation hall, sweeping public paths and walkways, cleaning public toilets, etc.
9. Male residents may not receive women in their quarters without direct permission from the Sayadaw, U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. The same rule applies to female residents receiving men. Conversations between men and women must be conducted in public places. A single woman should not approach a monk without another man nearby who understands what is being said. Although two or more women may approach a single monk, they may not do so inside a kuṭi or other enclosed area.
10. Yoga, Chi Gong and other acceptable forms of exercise may be done in private, but not in public. Do not teach

such exercises to others without permission from the Sayadaw.

11. Speak only when necessary. The rest of the time you should keep noble silence and attend solely to your meditation practice.
12. In General: Please be mindful in thought, speech and action; avoid finding fault with others; practise contentment and tolerance. When misunderstandings arise, please discuss them with your meditation teacher.

Seclusion

1. Silence and seclusion are important aids in developing concentration. For your own benefit, it is best not to leave the monastery grounds unless it is really necessary. If you need to leave, check first with the Sayadaw or your meditation teacher. If he approves your request, please inform U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. If you plan to be away overnight or longer, please also inform the appropriate office when, where and how you will be travelling, and when you expect to return.
2. Please avoid mingling with villagers and other local people outside the monastery.

Immigration

1. If your visa (or visa extension) was obtained with a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter, this means you have agreed to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for the visa's duration. To use an entry/meditation visa for sightseeing and tourism would constitute an abuse of the privilege granted to you by the Sponsorship Letter and could create problems for the monastery. (For all other types of travel, please see Rule 1 in the previous section.)

Theravāda Monks, Novices and 10-Precept Nuns

1. Sīla: Monastics must observe their respective *sīla*: for Theravāda monks (bhikkhus) – the 227 rules of the *Pāṭimokkha* and all other *Vinaya* rules; for novices (sāmaṇeras) – the 10 precepts, 75 *Sekhiya* (training) rules and all other *Vinaya* rules that apply; for Theravāda nuns – the 10 precepts.
2. Unallowable Items: Theravāda monks, novices and 10-precept nuns are not permitted to use, handle or possess money in any form, including: cash, credit cards, cheques, electronic transactions, gold, silver, jewellery, etc. Monastics who carry their own funds must relinquish them PERMANENTLY before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule.
3. Food: No food is to be eaten after midday. If you are sick, you are allowed the five tonics: butter, ghee, oil, honey and sugar, as well as the appropriate medicines.

Theravāda Monks

1. Nissaya: If you have less than 5 *vassa*, you must take *nissaya* with a Theravāda monk who has at least 10 *vassa* and is knowledgeable.
2. Food Storage: Bhikkhus may not store food overnight or keep tonics longer than seven days. Before the eighth dawn, all tonics must be relinquished to a layperson, nun or novice, without expecting to have them returned. To avoid waste, the best procedure is to take the exact amount you need for seven days. Be aware that medicines that contain oil or sugar are also subject to the seven-day rule.
3. Incoming Parcels: If a package arrives for you that might contain food, tonics or medicine, DO NOT TOUCH IT until it has been opened and examined by a layman or novice. He will then personally offer you those items that are allowable (at that time) and keep the remainder (to offer at the appropriate time). Be aware that if you touch any of the

above items BEFORE they have been offered to you, you will have to PERMANENTLY RELINQUISH them.

4. Ordination and Food Storage: This rule applies to both laymen and the novices who are planning to take higher ordination. If food, tonics or medicine are in your possession at the time of ordination, DO NOT TOUCH any of these items until after they have been offered to you by either a layman or novice. See Rule 3 (directly above) for details on how these items should be offered.

Theravāda Monks and Novices

1. Unallowable items: Requisite items obtained from unallowable sources (e.g., items that you or another Theravāda monk has bought) must be permanently relinquished before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. Requisites: Do not request requisite items from anyone other than a blood relative or someone who has previously made an invitation to you. An exception to this rule may be made when requesting medicine if you are ill.
3. Pindapāta: Foreign monks must collect piṇḍapāta at the Piṇḍapātasāla. If you want to go for piṇḍapāta in the village, you must first receive permission from the Sayadaw.
4. Pindapāta Etiquette: Foreign monks are privileged guests and are invited to receive alms ahead of even the most senior Myanmar bhikkhus. In order to show respect, please arrive at the Piṇḍapātasāla on time. If you are late, do not rush to the front of the piṇḍapāta line. If the line has already begun to move and you are unable to reach the foreign monk's section, you should enter the Myanmar line according to your *vassa* age. Do not cut in front of senior bhikkhus. If Mahāyāna monks are late, they may not enter the Theravāda line, but should wait until it has passed. ON NO ACCOUNT should anyone enter the line beyond the last turn (at the sign).

5. Ordination: A candidate for ordination as a bhikkhu must study and thoroughly familiarize himself with the 227 rules of the *Pāṭimokkha* before taking ordination. A Mahāyāna monk must relinquish his Mahāyāna ordination completely before taking Theravāda ordination.

Mahāyāna Bhikshunīs, 8/10-Precept Nuns and Laywomen

1. Pindapāta Etiquette: The queuing order for the piṇḍapāta line is according to *vassa* for Mahāyāna bhikshunīs and according to age for 8/10-precept nuns and laywomen. Once the line has begun to move, bhikshunīs and 8/10-precept nuns may not enter the line in front of other bhikshunīs or nuns, but only at the end of the nun's queue.
2. Walking: Women should not walk alone between the Upper and Lower Monasteries. Please make arrangements to always have at least one female companion with you.
3. Interviews: A single woman should never be alone with a male teacher. If you are alone, please excuse yourself and find a companion or come at another time.
4. Decorum: During interviews, please maintain a proper distance from the male interpreter/teacher and observe modesty in all ways.

Laymen and Laywomen

1. Precepts: For the sake of communal harmony, as well as for your own practice, please memorise the eight precepts and observe them strictly. Everyone is encouraged to take the precepts formally upon arrival, and at the appointed time once a week. For Buddhists, the taking of the precepts is compulsory. Exception to the sixth precept is given by the Sayadaw only in cases of severe gastric problems.
2. Attire: Please dress modestly at all times.
 - Men – no bare shoulders, no bare calves, no bare knees; no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, vests or

APPENDIX VI: RULES FOR FOREIGN MEDITATORS

undershirts; no ripped or otherwise improper attire. Shirts must always be worn.

Women – no bare shoulders, midriff, calves or knees; no short skirts, no shorts, no sleeveless shirts or blouses; no thin, transparent, tight, revealing, brightly coloured or otherwise improper attire.

3. Piṇḍapāta Etiquette: Please do not wear unclean or unsuitable attire (shorts, undershirts, etc.) to piṇḍapāta.
4. Requisites: You are responsible for providing yourself with a bowl, mosquito net, blankets and other necessities. You may go to the market twice a month, after receiving permission from your teacher.
5. Dāna: If you wish to offer a meal, you may arrange it through the Lower Monastery Office.

Revised November 20, 2006

Appendix VII

Pa-Auk Resource Guide**Websites**

Malaysia – www.Dhamma-s.org (text is in Chinese)

Singapore – www.paaukforestmonastery.org

USA – www.paauk.org

Myanmar Contact Information**Meditation Centres**

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar
Tel: (95) 57-22853

International Buddhasāsana Meditation Centre
(Pa-Auk Tawya Branch)
Thilawar Road (near Kyaik-Khauk Pagoda)
Payargon Village, Than Lyin Township, Yangon
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