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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

“Monks, I will teach you the Noble Eightfold Path, and I will analyze it for you. Listen and attend closely; I will speak.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” the monks relied.

The Blessed One said this:

“And what, monks, is the Noble Eightfold Path? Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

“And what, monks, is right view? Knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the origin of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: this is called right view.

“And what, monks, is right intention? Intention of renunciation, intention of non-ill will, intention of harmlessness: this is called right intention.

“And what, monks, is right speech? Abstinance from false speech, abstinance from malicious speech, abstinance from harsh speech, abstinance from idle chatter: this is called right speech.

“And what, monks, is right action? Abstinance from the destruction of life, abstinance from taking what is not given, abstinance from sexual misconduct: this is called right action.

“And what, monks, is right livelihood? Here a noble disciple, having abandoned a wrong mode of livelihood, earns his living by a right livelihood: this is called right livelihood.

“And what, monks, is right effort? Here, monks, a monk generates desire for the nonarising of unarisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states...He generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states...He generates desire for the continuation of arisen wholesome

states, for their nondecline, increase, expansion, and fulfillment by development; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. This is called right effort.

“And what, monks, is right mindfulness? Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed longing and dejection in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed longing and dejection in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating mind in mind, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed longing and dejection in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating phenomena in phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed longing and dejection in regard to the world. This is called right mindfulness.

“And what, monks, is right concentration? Here, monks, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and dwells in the first jhana, which is accompanied by thought and examination, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion. With the subsiding of thought and examination, he enters and dwells in the second jhana, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without thought and examination, and has rapture and happiness born of concentration. With the fading away as well of rapture, he dwells equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences happiness with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhana of which the noble ones declare: ‘He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and dejection, he enters and dwells in the fourth jhana, which is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called right concentration.”

(S. V.8-10 quoted in Bhikkhu Bodhi 2005: 239-240)

APPENDIX B

INFORMANT BIOGRAPHIES

Thep, 24, was born in a family that was quite active in Buddhist practice. His parents were major patrons of a temple and he would go there regularly with them to make merit. They also were serious about keeping the Five Precepts and impressed on him the importance of doing so. In addition, his mother introduced him to meditation when he was just a little boy. Instead of telling him bedtime stories, she would lead him into a short ten-minute meditation before bed.

When he was ten, he went to boarding school in England. In the first years he felt homesick and had difficulty adjusting. He says at that point he “felt a need” to turn to religion. He began to read books on Buddhism and meditation and started meditating seriously at the age of twelve. Since then, he has never let a week go by without meditating. In high school, he also adopted an “iron-clad rule” not to touch “a single drop of alcohol”, even though drinking was common among his peers. Ever since, he has managed to maintain this rule, save for one short period of “rebellion” during university.

Although he had attended a Christian school and even joined a choir singing Christian choral music (just because he liked the music), he says he had always been firm in his conviction that Buddhism was the way for him and never had any interest in conversion. He says even though he was far away from Thailand, he believes it was his karma to feel this drive to study and practice Buddhism. “You can be anywhere in the world and feel it.”

Similarly, he believes he was “meant to” choose religious studies for his undergraduate major, as he has always naturally been interested in abstract existential questions. When deciding what area to specialize in, he considered Christianity, because he found it intellectually fascinating. In the end, though, he chose Buddhism because he believed in it, which he said made it more interesting to study. He pursued his interest further by taking a Master’s in Philosophy degree in Buddhist Studies. He

believes his study of many different Buddhist traditions has given him a broader view and more “open-minded” approach to Buddhist practice. He has been greatly influenced by the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva and has incorporated Mahayana elements into his practice such as chanting Mahayana sutras or reflecting on the concept of emptiness (*sunyata*).

He said his parents were liberal-minded and let him pursue religious studies as opposed to a more conventional field of study, but his father “made a deal” with him that he would later have to study law, which would be more practical and provide a surer means of making a living. He returned to Thailand two years ago to finish researching and writing his master’s thesis and got a job working at a university, where part of his duties involved coordinating classes about Buddhism. At the same time, he started pursuing a bachelor’s degree in law through night school. Although he still has in the back of his mind an interest in pursuing a doctoral degree in Buddhist studies, he considers it his “filial duty” to concentrate first on his law studies and perhaps only pursue it part-time after he has started working at a law firm, as his father wishes.

At twelve, he had been ordained as a novice, upon his own initiative. The experience helped strengthen his commitment to Buddhist practice, but he currently does not have any ambitions to ordain. He says that he is happy with the development he has thus far achieved as a layperson and would be satisfied if he continued progressing in this way.

* * *

Pok, 27, says that he has been interested in religion ever since he was nine years old. He remembered asking his mother questions like “Why are we born?” but she thought his questions were strange and said he was thinking too much (*kit mak*). His mother was actually quite devout in practicing what Pok called “plain (i.e.ordinary) Buddhism,” which mainly involved going to the temple to make merit, and he would often accompany her. (His dad, however, had “no interest at all” and even negative attitudes towards religion.) On his own, however, he explored other religions. At one point, Christian missionaries were handing out Bibles in front of his

elementary school. After reading it, he did feel God was great but he felt he wanted a religious practice that involved more self-training than “just accepting God.”

Many years of spiritual exploration followed, where he read a wide variety of thinkers ranging from Khalil Gibran to Sartre and Camus to Chinese and Zen philosophers, none of which he felt could fully answer his questions. At one stage he even considered himself to have no religion. The summer after his second year at university, he went on a seven-day meditation retreat at a forest temple. During it, he developed deep concentration and heightened awareness, an experience that so amazed him he decided to finally choose Buddhism as his spiritual path. Only a few months later, he went to another retreat, this time at a lay meditation center. Its rigorous schedule of ten hours of meditation suited his yen for intense training. He has since practiced exclusively in that tradition.

After graduating from university he ordained at a forest temple for a month. He liked the peaceful environment and the disciplined monastic way of life, which gave him the idea he would like to ordain in the future. Yet he admits that towards the end of his temporary ordination, he was counting down the days until he could leave and return to lay life. Indeed, he seems constantly torn between his aspiration to *patibat tham* seriously and his desire to enjoy worldly life. Although he recognizes the importance of maintaining the five precepts, he says he still has the urge to go out drinking a few times a month. He also still wants to date girls, and has even maintained two girlfriends at the same time. He says he cycles between being drawn into worldly pursuits and growing tired of them. Yet through the ups and downs, he still seeks to maintain at least some connection to the “dhamma world” by going on retreats almost every year and serving on retreat programs.

Currently, he works as a counselor in a government drug rehabilitation program. At university, he considered majoring in philosophy, but decided it was not practical enough and instead settled on psychology, which still explored questions of the mind but offered more employment opportunities. He pursued a master’s degree in counseling because he wanted to do work helping people. In the program, he encountered professors who combined Buddhist approaches and western psychology. Studying counseling also provided added impetus to *patibat tham* as his professors taught that a good counselor needs to train in *sila-samadhi-panna* in order to better

understand and serve their patients. Without exactly planning it, his line of work thus became closely associated with *patibat tham*.

He has set a goal to become more committed in his practice over the next few years, in preparation for ordaining as a monk, which he wants to do no later than the age of thirty-five “because if you stay in the world too long, you will have more concerns and attachments and can’t go anymore.” However, he does worry about his parents as his only brother lived outside Bangkok, and doubts his own ability to cut off his attachment to his family. Then again, he argues that the highest way he can repay his parents is to “give them the eyes to see dhamma.” Still – flip-flopping back again – he says as he gets older, his certainty about ordaining fades.

* * *

Waew, 29, was raised in a well-to-do business family that was active in supporting temples. Her parents taught her the importance of making merit, and since she was a child she would follow her parents to temples to offer donations and pay respect to monks. In addition, her mother had practiced meditation for over 20 years. She says she probably had absorbed these influences without knowing it. Still, she was not particularly serious about Buddhist practice when she was young. When she was in grade seven, her mother encouraged her to go to a seven-day meditation retreat and she complied simply because her family had always taught her that Buddhism was something important. But even though she went again the following three years, she says she did not really understand it or “get into it” because she had not yet faced any real suffering. She says her life was generally happy and she got most everything she wanted. Back then, she recalls, she was quite frivolous and loved shopping for expensive brand-name clothes.

When she entered university to study architecture, she worked very hard as she wanted to graduate with honors. She characterizes herself as a “good girl” type, who has never been interested in going out at night or partying. As she devoted most of her time to studying, though, she had little time for retreats.

After graduating, she started working at her family’s real estate development and retailing company. At twenty-five she branched out to start, and be the managing

director, of her own specialized retailing firm that has developed a boutique shopping center. While she found work enriching in many ways, she also had to deal with problems that were stressful. By twenty-seven, she had seen her life cycle over the past five years between suffering and happiness (or as she put it, “less suffering”), and felt she was seeking some answers. This time, she felt the urge to go to a retreat on her own rather than at her mother’s bidding.

Actually, even when she was still a “frivolous” teenager, she had in the back of her mind questions about the purpose of life. But every time she tried to bring it up, her high school and later university friends asked her if she was normal and told her she was “thinking too much” (*kit mak*). But she found her answer during this retreat. In the course of it, she was struck by a profound understanding “in her heart” that the true purpose of life is to *patibat tham* to liberate oneself from suffering.

After this experience, she felt like she had been “born again” and that her life had completely changed. She wanted to devote herself to this highest purpose in life. She started setting aside time to go to four retreats a year and gave her employees paid leave to do so as well. She also began writing dhamma magazine columns and books, including a bestseller. She even started to seriously contemplate retiring from work entirely to become a lay renunciant at a temple, where she would be able to engage in solitary intensive meditation for an extended period. Her parents are supportive of the idea, having always valued spiritual matters more than making money and other worldly concerns.

At first, she set a target of retiring at the age of thirty, but she says she now does not want to fix a strict deadline. While she has been trying to scale back her work projects and prepare to hand over her duties to someone else, she says that currently the situation at work is still very unsettled and not ready for her to leave yet. She also admits that she herself is not ready to let go of it because she is still “having a lot of fun” working. She often reiterates that “the worldly forces (*krasae lok*) are very strong and keep pulling you back away from *patibat tham*,” and says she feels a lot of internal conflicts. She believes the biggest obstacle to deepening her *patibat tham* is not really work, but her own mind and its defilements. Wanting to be realistic, she is allowing for the possibility that she may actually end up tied back

down to the “worldly world.” Nonetheless, she still considers it her intention to eventually devote herself full-time to *patibat tham*.

* * *

Daeng, 33, considered herself only a nominal Buddhist growing up. Her mother would bring her to the temple to offer donations to monks on her birthday and she would say sometimes say prayers at night, but that was the extent of her Buddhist practice. At school there was a required Buddhism class, but it mainly involved rote memorization of Pali terms without really understanding the philosophy behind it.

In her late teens, when she entered university, Daeng started to go out partying a lot. On average, she went drinking with friends three nights a week. Still, she did well enough at school and went on to pursue a master’s degree in the U.S. She chose to study organizational management, a field related to psychology, because she found the human mind and layers of personality fascinating.

While in the U.S., she visited an aunt living there who gave her a dhamma book, a biography of a monk. “She probably thought my life was really frivolous,” she laughed, recalling her carefree student days where she passed her ample free time going shopping, traveling, and having fun with friends. Feeling bored one day – with all that free time – she picked up the dhamma book and was so taken by it she read it cover to cover. It inspired her to seek out the monk’s temple when she went back to Thailand, and she started going regularly for short meditation retreats organized there every Friday to Sunday.

At the same time, when she started working, she saw how everyone seemed to be doing the same thing – working hard to get a promotion and then, once they got it, setting their sights on another and another in an endless cycle. She also saw how friends who got married would then become divorced not long after. Was there more to life than just going to school, working, marrying, and starting a family? While at first she started going to the temple on weekends with the aim to become a better person and improve her life, now she was searching for the true purpose of life. She decided she was ready to go to a longer seven-day meditation retreat, and was galvanized to keep going back, up to four times a year. She came to the

understanding that the true purpose of life, and indeed the duty of every person, is to develop themselves spiritually.

As she became more serious in her practice, she “completely changed her lifestyle,” including quitting smoking and drinking. She also felt increasingly troubled by the questionable ethics involved in working for her family’s publishing company. It was virtually impossible to survive in the industry without resorting to the widespread practice of bribing government officials in order to win textbook contracts. No longer able to tolerate the moral conflict, two years ago she left the family business and set up her own publishing firm, which publishes educational books (but not textbooks) as well as dhamma books.

At the moment, she considers herself dedicated to *patibat tham* but still “wants to live a normal life.” She got married last year and presently has no desire to ordain. While she acknowledged that her attitude could change in the future, she said she would just let it happen in its own time. As both she and her husband are serious about *patibat tham*, they had actually discussed the issue before getting married. Both sides had agreed that they would not mind if the other decided to ordain in the future. For now, they are happy to have each other as *kalyanamitta* in walking the path together. She does not want children, however, as she sees them as an unnecessary burden that can be an obstacle to serious *patibat tham*.

* * *

Ko, 34, grew up in a family that was not particularly serious about Buddhist practice. She did have one aunt who was actively involved with Wat Dhammakaya, and for a little while during her early teens she tried meditating according to that method. However, she says she “wasn’t good at doing meditation,” meaning she could not visualize the meditation object (a crystal ball) and concentrate her mind to reach a calm state. Frustrated, she did not continue. In addition, she says she was turned off by the temple’s aggressive marketing, which she felt deviated from Buddhist principles.

She did not give much thought to Buddhism until she went to do her master’s degree in London. She had chosen to study anthropology because she wanted to learn

more about how different cultures approached the same human issues. Her exposure to these diverse worldviews made her seek out “universal truths” and what insights her native Buddhist tradition could offer. At the same time, paradoxically, she admits she latched on to Buddhism as a way for her to assert a unique identity and cultural viewpoint that distinguished herself from Western classmates and professors. On a more basic level, she had visited Thai temples in England because their familiarity helped alleviate homesickness. With her newfound interest, she planned to study Buddhism in greater depth when she went back to Thailand.

Upon her return, she resumed her prior job as a newspaper features writer. She was soon assigned to do an article about a meditation retreat for kids. Although at first she was not particularly interested, at the last minute she decided to attend it as part of her research for the article. It was a real eye-opening experience – “It was the first time I had ever heard of the word ‘*sati*!’” – and she was inspired to do a full-length seven-day retreat. On the first day, she felt “I had finally found what I’d been looking for. This is the way for me.” She then did three more intensive retreats in quick succession.

With her increasing dedication to *patibat tham*, she at first questioned whether journalism was ethically questionable because articles may not really capture “truth.” One way she reconciled herself with her job was to focus on writing articles about spirituality, wellness, and social issues, which she felt were most useful to readers and herself. However, after a while she felt she wanted to devote herself more fully to spirituality-related social action work and last year quit her newspaper job in order to do so. Now, she works on a freelance basis and is involved in two main programs – one to promote a more constructive and spiritually-conscious journalistic approach among media professionals, and another to educate people on how to deal with death peacefully. In addition, she still writes articles on spiritual topics occasionally and helps run an art school she and her friends started.

She aims to continue simplifying her life and incorporate spirituality more seamlessly into it. She currently has no desire to ordain because she does not consider it necessary for committed spiritual practice. Yet, she also admits she does not want to ordain because she wants to keep on exploring a variety of different spiritual approaches. Already, through her journalistic and personal experiences, she has

learned about a diverse range of spiritual and self-development approaches beyond Theravada Buddhism, such as Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, Deep Ecology, Enneagram, and the philosophy of Krishnamurti. She says such exposure has given her a broader, more holistic approach to spirituality and she incorporates elements from various traditions into her own personal mixture. It is only when she is ready to commit deeply to one particular spiritual tradition that she would consider ordaining.

* * *

Mi, 36, had parents with different religious roots. Her father's side were established patrons of Buddhist organizations in Phuket. Her mother had chosen to become Buddhist, but actually came from a family that practiced Christianity. When she was a child, Gae would stay with her grandmother on weekends and accompany her to church. She enjoyed it and for a time was interested in Christianity. She remembered that even as a ten-year old she had questions about life and as a teen read books on Taoism and Zen. Around that age her parents also started practicing transcendental meditation "because it was trendy" and she also took it up, enjoying the tranquility and happiness it brought. She says it was only in university that she really experienced Buddhism for the first time, when she joined the university-organized *Thamacharini* summer program where female students spent three weeks at a temple living like an ordained person and learning meditation. Although she found the experience meaningful, she soon slipped back into her pre-existing way of life.

She says she had grown up bearing high expectations from her parents, which she internalized. She was expected to excel at school, get into a good university, land a good job and later come back to help expand the family real estate business and join Phuket's elite society. At first she kept following the set path, doing a master's degree in accountancy at a top university and securing a position at a prestigious accounting firm in Bangkok. Working there was highly competitive, demanded long hours, and left her stressed and fatigued. She hit a low point where she started to feel that this type of life was meaningless. After three years, at the age of 26, she quit. She decided she had to do something to turn her life around. She went to the US to take an MBA, where she took advantage of the peaceful small town setting to devote

time to reading about Buddhism, and practicing meditation regularly. When she returned to Bangkok she deliberately took an undemanding job at a non-profit organization and devoted her weekends and spare time to *patibat tham*.

Two years later, her family called her back to Phuket to join her older sister in helping at their family-owned hotel. The heavy responsibility and constant headaches of running a private business were extremely stressful, and again she turned back to Buddhism and redoubled her efforts in *patibat tham*. As her commitment to Buddhism strengthened, and she even started to consider ordaining, she decided to pursue a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist university. Most of her classmates were monks and she said her peers were surprised when she, a laywoman, topped the entrance exams. She now divided her time between studying and working in the family business. Yet, the more she worked in it, the more she felt conflicted about the ethical compromises, such as bending the truth and evading certain laws, required to survive in business. Still, she felt duty-bound not to abandon her family responsibilities.

At first, her parents found it difficult to understand their “strange” daughter and wanted her to fit into social norms. When she told them she may want to ordain they simply couldn’t accept it. Over the four years since she has been back in Phuket, however, they came to realize that they probably can’t change her and grew to accept her aspirations. Now, she says they no longer expect her to work in the family business. After she finishes her Ph.D., she wishes to devote herself to working to spread dhamma.

She currently still harbors ambitions to possibly ordain in the future, and insists that it be as a full-fledged *bhikkuni* (female monk). However, she is not yet clear on when or where exactly she would do it. She says it is only when clearer options for women emerge and her readiness becomes truly firm – “200 percent” – that she will actually go through with ordination.

* * *

Fai, 46, grew up in Ratburi, where her entire village had been converted to Catholicism in the reign of King Rama IV. All her relatives on her mother’s side

were staunch Catholics. Her father had also converted. In grade six, she moved to Bangkok to study at a convent school, where she attended mass every morning. On weekends, she would visit her grandmother on the weekends and accompany her to church. Yet at the age of eight she started to question her religion, after her father, a soldier who had been sent to Vietnam, did not come back. In addition, her childhood friend died. She asked why she still suffered so much if she was “God’s child.” She did not entirely lose faith in God, but the questions lingered deep down.

As she got older, she passed through the typical steps of life – going to university, getting married, and having children. Her goals were to be a successful businesswoman and become wealthy. By her mid-thirties she had achieved these goals, building up a thriving import business. In 1998, crisis struck, however. Unrelated to the 1997 financial crisis, her business went bankrupt after a so-called friend swindled her of 20 million baht in a scam. Her lifestyle totally changed: her business shut down, she lost her Mercedes Benz and house, and her children had to be pulled out of school. It made her realize how uncertain life is.

At the depths of her despair, a former client suggested she go to a seven-day meditation retreat. She was not interested at first, thinking she was not Buddhist, but ended up going out of a sense of obligation. The retreat proved to be a real turning point. During meditation, she had a moment of epiphany when she realized she suffered because of thinking. She also reached a profound understanding that the purpose of life is to free oneself from suffering, and felt the Buddhist path was the way for her. She did not feel that she now believed in “Buddhism” per se, but in universal truths about suffering and the way to end it.

The experience was so powerful she decided to put off returning to work and devote herself to *patibat tham* intensively. She went to three more seven-day group retreats in quick succession and then intensive solo retreats every one-and-a-half to two months for the next two years. She now says perhaps she had been too extreme, but she still believed such intensity had helped her to retrain or “flip” her mind in a short span of time.

In considering what to do next, she decided she no longer had any desire at all to return to business and no longer felt motivated by the materialistic goals ruling mainstream society. Instead, she chose to become a dhamma and meditation teacher,

for which she received no payment (her husband earning enough at his job to support their family). She now also writes books and newspaper columns about dhamma on a freelance basis.

She says her commitment to *patibat tham* has grown even stronger in the past two years, as she becomes more firmly established in her practice of *sati*. However, one major factor holding her back from devoting more time to *patibat tham* is her duty as a mother, with her two children presently aged fourteen and fifteen. While she stresses that she by no means regrets having them, she admits that she has made a wish (*aditthana*) not to be married in her next life. She believes romantic love and children are like “sticky glue” binding people to the cycle of rebirth. As of now, she has not yet thought seriously about ordaining, but is leaving the door open to possibly doing so in the future. She says vaguely that she may if she “reaches a certain point” in her practice and the “conditions are right,” which includes her children being grown up and no longer dependent on her. One thing she is very clear on, however, is that she would only ordain as a *bhikkhuni* and not as a *maechi*.

* * *

Noi, 47, was raised in a family that was very serious about maintaining the five precepts. In addition, her parents were active supporters of a local temple, regularly donating funds to build prayer halls, Buddha statues, and monks’ dwellings. Since she was a child, she would accompany her family on their visits to various temples and would take part in Buddhist festivals. In addition, her father’s grandmother, and later her father’s aunt and her own grandmother, were all ordained as *maechi*. Thus, she was able to observe the way of life of two generations of ordained women in her family.

At the same time, she attended international schools and Christian schools, which exposed her to Western civilization. As a child, she went through a phase when she was interested in Christianity, and was particularly impressed by how Catholic nuns and priests were active in social works. Later, when she read works by thinkers like Marx, she started to question religion altogether. During her university years, many students were involved in political activism and she became more

interested in social issues, believing that she could make herself most useful through social work. At this point, she had no interest in religion at all.

It was only when she went to Europe to pursue her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees that she started to turn towards religion. Not used to her new environment and feeling isolated, she experienced a lot of emotional turmoil. She was also anxious about her studies, worrying whether she would graduate with honors. Before she was to defend her Ph.D. dissertation, a friend invited her to a retreat at a Thai temple in England. It was the first time she had ever learned about Buddhist teachings in depth and how to meditate. The experience of observing her mind was revelatory, and she vowed to learn more about Buddhism when she went back to Thailand.

After she returned, at the age of thirty-two, she became a university professor teaching European language and culture. At the same time, she started to study Buddhism in earnest. Very helpfully, there was a strong dhamma community centered around her university's dhamma center (*thamasathan*). She went to dhamma classes held there in the evenings, visited temples on weekends, and went to various retreats. Over the years, she has explored a wide range of Buddhist schools of practice both in and outside the Theravada tradition, including Thai, Burmese, Mahayana, Zen, and Tibetan. However, a few years ago she decided to choose the Theravada Buddhist path, and further, a particular meditation method within Theravada which she now practices exclusively. She believes a person has to commit to one method in order to reach deeper levels of practice.

Around two years after she began to *patibat tham*, she became very interested in joining the *Dhammamata* program at Suan Mokkh, a five-year training course in dhamma theory and practice for women. It was akin to ordination as participants lived like ordained persons at the temple. She said she had wanted to experience what it would be like to *patibat tham* full-time. In order to do it, she would have had to retire and leave home. However, her siblings objected, saying that she was needed to help take care of their mother. She bowed to her family's wishes, but for the next ten years, she still harbored a desire to ordain and "suffered over it." However, she eventually realized that if the timing was not yet right, ordination was not the right thing for her to do and she ought to learn how to live as a layperson without suffering.

Particularly when she started practicing in a tradition taught by a lay teacher, she came to see that it was also possible to practice seriously as a layperson.

Now, she continues to work as a university professor and occasionally as an interpreter, including for well-known Buddhist teachers. However, she devotes her semester breaks and other time off work largely to retreats and other dhamma-related activities. She is also very active in the Foundation for the Promotion of Vipassana Meditation. While she has no clear plans for the future, she says after she retires she may dedicate herself to serving the Foundation's programs or find other ways of pursuing *patibat tham* full-time.

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION GUIDE

HISTORY OF BUDDHIST PRACTICE

What were your parents' religious backgrounds?

What was your religious upbringing like growing up? If Buddhist, what forms of practice did your family do?

Were you exposed to other religions aside from Buddhism?

When did you first become interested in Buddhism? Why?

How have you learned about Buddhism? (At School? Books? CDs? Monk's sermons? Classes? Internet?)

Have you been on a meditation retreat? How many times?

Which schools of practice/teachers/meditation methods have you explored? Which have been/are currently the most influential?

Who are the authors/what are the titles of dhamma books that you have read? Which have been/are currently the most influential?

"PATIBAT THAM"

What do "*patibat tham*" and "*phu patibat tham*" mean to you?

When do you consider yourself to have started to "*patibat tham*"? Is there a clear demarcation point?

What are the main components of your *patibat tham*? Which are most important and why? (*Dana*? Holy day observance? Rituals? Prayer? Five or Eight Precepts? Formal Meditation? Continuous *Sati*?)

What is your current daily/monthly/yearly "*patibat tham* routine" like? Do you have any "minimum requirements"? How have these changed over the years?

What are your spiritual goals? (In this life? In meditation? Ultimately?)

Do you aim for *nibbana*? How do you understand “*nibbana*”?

What do you think are common conceptions/stereotypes many people have of *patibat tham* or *phu patibat tham*? What is your view of them?

What are some ideas about *patibat tham* you wish to convey to others, if any?

INTEGRATION OF *PATIBAT THAM* INTO DAILY LIFE

What are the main ways you have integrated *patibat tham* into your daily life? What are the areas of your life that have been most significantly affected?

What, if any, difficulties/conflicts have you encountered in attempting to do so?

What do you consider your duties/goals in life? How do these relate to your spiritual goals?

JOB/RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

After you started to *patibat tham*, did it affect the way you viewed your job or jobs in general? What teachings/teachers have influenced your views?

What do you consider unacceptable jobs? What are the criteria to evaluate them by?

Are there considerations beyond avoiding precept-breaking?

What kinds of jobs are you interested in? What are the criteria to evaluate them by?

What are your professional goals?

What is your current job? How long have you been doing it? Why did you choose it?

What have your previous jobs been? Why did you choose them?

Did you change your job after starting to *patibat tham*?

Do you want to change your job now? What is keeping you from doing so?

How do you integrate *patibat tham* into your work?

How easy is it for you to take time off work to go to retreats?

SOCIAL RELATIONS/GOOD FRIENDSHIP

After you started to *patibat tham*, did it affect the way you viewed your friends or friendship in general? What teachings/teachers have influenced your views?

What do you consider are the qualities of friends to avoid? Friends to associate with?

When you started to *patibat tham*, how did it affect your existing friendships? Have any ended or faded away?

Have you developed any new friendships with others interested in *patibat tham*/spirituality? Have you become part of any “dhamma communities?”

If yes, why do you consider it important do so?

How did you meet these friends? Did you meet any on-line?

What activities do you do with them?

How would you characterize the nature of these friendships?

FAMILY

Do others (parents, siblings, spouses, children) in your family *patibat tham*? In what ways is your Buddhist practice similar/different from theirs?

What have been the attitudes of your family members towards your *patibat tham*?

What do they like/dislike about it?

What do they consider your family duties to entail? What expectations do they have of you?

ORDINATION

How do you compare *patibat tham* as an ordained person with that of a layperson?

What are the main differences? What are the advantages/disadvantages of each?

How important do you think it is to ordain in order to *patibat tham* seriously?

For men: Have you ever been ordained temporarily?

For women: Have you ever experienced anything akin to being ordained

How has the experience affected your views on ordination?

Have you ever considered/are you presently considering ordination? With what degree of urgency? Why?

If not, do you think it is possible you may want to in the future?

What are the main factors that have so far kept you from ordaining?

What are you family members' attitudes towards you ordaining?

What conditions would have to be in place for you to ordain?

For women: Do you think it is necessary to ordain as a female monk (*bhikkuni*)? If not, what other forms of full-time *patibat tham* would you consider?

OTHER TOPICS

How has *patibat tham* affected your:

- Choice of field of study?
- Views on romance/marriage/children?
- Use of leisure time?
- Consumption? (Vegetarianism? Shopping?)
- Style of dress?

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE RETREAT SCHEDULES

To provide an idea of what the experience of a meditation retreat course is like, included below are the daily schedules from two popular retreats run by lay foundations, the Young Buddhist Association of Thailand (YBAT) and the Foundation for the Promotion of Vipassana as Taught By S.N. Goenka.

Note: The schedule is different on the first and last day of the retreat, and may also vary slightly from day to day during the retreat.

Schedule for the Seven-Day Course Offered By YBAT

“Developing the Mind for Wisdom and Happiness by Khun Mae Siri Krinchai”

(“*Patthana Chit Hai Ked Panya Lae Santisuk Doi Khun Mae Siri Krinchai*”)

- 04.00 Wake up. Walking and Sitting Meditation.*
- 05.30 Morning Chanting and Dhamma Discourse.
- 07.00 Breakfast.
- 08.00 Walking and Sitting Meditation. Dhamma Discourse.
- 12.00 Lunch.
- 13.00 Walking and Sitting Meditation. Short break.
- 15.00 Walking and Sitting Meditation.
- 17.30 Light Dinner.
- 18.00 Evening Chanting and Dhamma Discourse.
- 19.15 Walking and Sitting Meditation.
- 21.00 Rest.

* All meditation is done in the group hall.

(From <http://www.ybat.org/meditation/siri.html>)

**Schedule for the Ten-Day Course Offered By
The Foundation for the Promotion of Vipassana as Taught By S.N. Goenka.**

- 04.00 Wake up.
- 04.30 Meditation in the hall or in your room.
- 06.30 Breakfast.
- 08.00 Group meditation in the hall.
- 09.00 Meditate in the hall or in your room according to the teacher's instruction.
- 11.00 Lunch.
- 12.00 Rest and interviews with the teacher.
- 13.00 Meditate in the hall or in your room.
- 14.30 Group meditation in the hall.
- 15.30 Meditate in the hall or in your room according to the teacher's instruction.
- 17.00 Tea break.
- 18.00 Group meditation in the hall.
- 19.00 Dhamma Discourse.
- 20.15 Group meditation in the hall.
- 21.00 Question time in the hall.
- 21.30 Lights out.

(From <http://www.dhamma.org/en/code.shtml>)

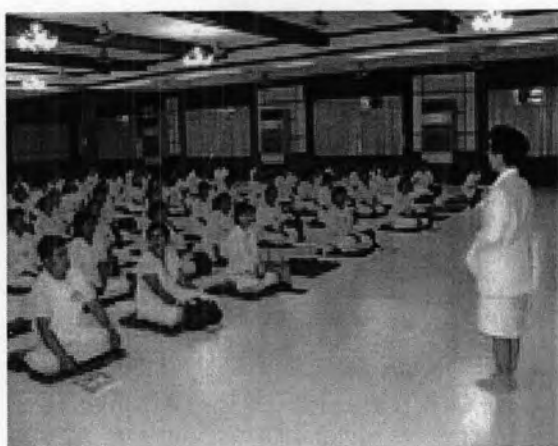
APPENDIX E

PHOTOS FROM A SAMPLE RETREAT (YBAT)

Included below are photos of some of the main activities at a meditation retreat. Although the photos used here are from retreats held by the Young Buddhists Association of Thailand (YBAT), the activities depicted are common to other retreats as well.

Note: Other venues may not allow photo-taking or have photo archives available to the public.

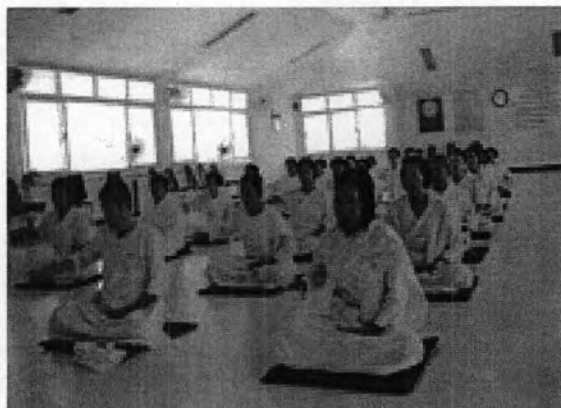
All photos below courtesy of the Young Buddhists Association of Thailand, from <http://www.ybat.org>



Orientation on first day of retreat. Rules and regulations, schedules, and teachers are introduced.



Retreatants are taught step-by-step how to assume the proper sitting meditation posture.



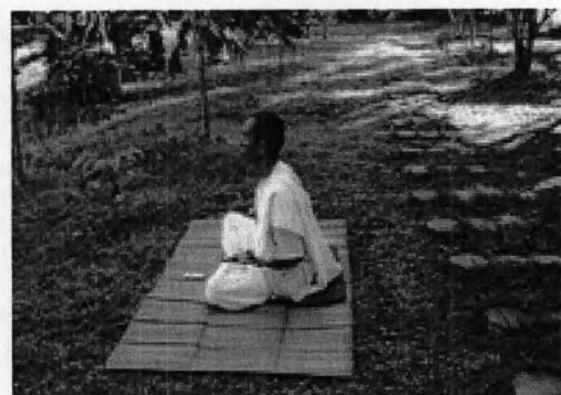
Group sitting meditation session.



Group walking meditation session.
Retreatants are guided to walk in unison.



Dhamma discourse given by a lay
teacher using audio-visual aids.



Solitary meditation in a natural setting.
(Intensive course for more advanced
meditators.)

BIOGRAPHY



Nissara Horayangura was born to Thai parents in Manila in 1978, and was raised in the Philippines and Bangladesh. She received a B.A. in History, specializing in International Relations History, from Harvard University. She has worked at the Committee of 100, a non-profit organization promoting U.S.-China relations in New York. In 2003 she moved to Thailand and now works as a journalist based in Bangkok. In 2004 she entered the M.A. Program in Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University on a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation.