



*Green*

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## Green

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*For among friends.*

Green  
by  
Upaseno Bhikkhu

I dedicate "GREEN" to:  
*Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha*  
All beings who have been my Teachers  
My Family  
*Saddhu!*



Buddhadasa  
Bhikkhu



Phra Khru  
Sukhandasila



Venerable  
Bhadra Pala



# Inside The Green

Dedication .....	5
Inside The GREEN .....	8
Preface from Professor Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn .....	9
Preface from Venerable Bhadra Pala .....	10
Behind The GREEN .....	12
The GREEN of The GREEN by Christian Kusnady .....	14
Preface from Henry Santoso .....	16
Jinapañjara Gatha by <i>Anonymous</i> (Sri Lankan and Thai Tradition) .....	19
I want to Leave This Buddhist Monastery .....	21
Mother's Love by Irene Raharto .....	32
End of Rain Retreat Talk 2005 .....	35
We Are The Children .....	40
I am Alone .....	47
A Letter for Agus .....	51
Why become a Monk? .....	56
What is Dukkha .....	57
Chit Chat .....	62
Looking at The Back .....	67
Acknowledgement .....	69



## Preface

As the Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, I am very pleased to know that Upaseno Bhikkhu is going to publish his own book for Buddhists in Indonesia. It is indeed not an easy task for him as a young monk to finish this project in a short period of time.

The stories in this book titled "GREEN" were based on personal experiences on monastic life. Upaseno has been revealing his feeling toward the Dhamma in daily life honestly. In this way, the readers would feel his spiritual journey in Buddhism and understand the three characteristics in all conditioned phenomena: *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

I would like to express my happiness as this is the first *Dhamma* book published by our student in Indonesia.

May the Triple Gems bless you all!

Regards

Professor Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn  
The Rector  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University  
29 July 2006

## *Preface*

Another book on Buddhism has been published; another wholesome deed has been added in the world. This is a book of interesting stories about the life experiences of Venerable Upaseno. Short, clear and easy to understand.

In his younger age, his journey on searching the *Dharma* is still relative short but Venerable Upaseno has understood the meaning of *Dharma* deeply and fully, with energy. It is appropriate to have a high regard for him as an example both for lay people and young monks alike.

From this book, we can see that indeed the *Dharma* is everywhere, the only thing we need to do is to be more aware, have a broader vision, explore the world, aim to have a broader knowledge and train the mind.

Though the title of this book is "Green," the stories in this book are not as "green" as the title implies. There are so many things that can be learned from this book. Here we can see how someone faces the hindrances in his own mind to reach his goal. In this case Venerable Upaseno is trying to realize the wholesome goal.

Here, we can know how other people respond to the problems in society. This book is suitable to be used as a motivation in learning how to be a better person, like Upaseno.

At last, may all beings be happy. *Svaha*.



Venerable Bhadra Pala

## Behind The "Green"

Hello Friends...!

In the beginning, the writings that have been compiled in this book are just scraps of my hearts that were written in English in my kuti. Then, a friend of mine, a Portugese monk, Venerable Kancano helped me to edit the grammar. Finally, the writings became proper essays and I could send them to a Buddhist youth organization in Sydney, Australia.

Couple months ago, I tried to contact Maṅgala Buddhist Organisation (Beijing, Jakarta, Shanghai and Guangzhou), Buddhist Family of University of Indonesia and some other Buddhist organizations, to find some English translators to translate my essays, since my Indonesian language is very poor. After waiting for some weeks, I got the reply from five friends who were willing to translate my essays. I sent each essay to each translator. I did not give any deadline to them, because I did not know when I could publish the book and I also want them to enjoy the process of translating and editing the book.

After all the essays had been sent to them, I also looked for a typesetter. A friend has been willing to help me. I think typesetting is another important part in this project.

When all the essays were almost finished to be translated, I asked my family about the price of printing in any printing company in Semarang, my hometown. Two days later, my sister sent me a

message that there was a printing company who was willing to offer two thousands copies of my book. I almost could not believe it! I asked them again and my Mum said that that message was true. She further said, "If this is the *kamma*, how can you refuse?" I just kept quiet.

Many things happened without any expectation during the publication of this book. I remembered the Buddha once said, if we work for *Dhamma*, we will get what we need, not what we want. It is indeed True!

When a friend asked me, "Why you titled the book, 'GREEN'?" I answered, "Because I am still green." I feel that I am still too immature in publishing the book. Therefore, this book is intended to be a "bridge" to share my experiences in learning and practicing *Dhamma* with all of you.

This is all the background regarding the book, "GREEN."

Saddhu! *Anumodana!*

With Mudita,

Bhikkhu Upaseno  
(Sutoyo Raharto)  
1 Agustus 2006  
Wat Mahathat, Bangkok.



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## *The Green of The Green*

The first impression I got from the word "green" is "fresh and natural". I am really grateful to my dear friend, Bhante Upaseno for giving me an opportunity to write a foreword for this book. May all wholesome conditions support him in attaining The Noble Path. I also would like to thank my mom for her persistence in struggle for life, by being a single parent in our family. She is a mother with an extraordinary merit; no single word defines, indeed.

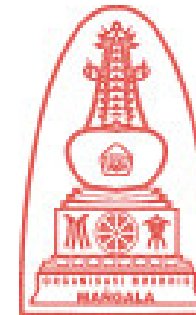
These last 3 years have been such a boundless blessing for me, as it brings great influences in my life. Since the day I decided to join Maṅgala Buddhist Organisation in Beijing, I started to learn *Dhamma/Dharma* deeper. Finally I found what I had been searching for. The *Dhamma/Dharma* answers many life problems logically.

I was born in a strict traditional family. In my childhood, I kept asking my mom about the reason why we should perform such religious ritual and prayed asking for blessing. At that moment, I grumbled to myself, "Ah, life itself is already complicated, so why bother making things just more complicated?" It burdened me so much for having to do such ritual without knowing the real reason behind it. When I was still in high school, I kept trying one religion to another to look for answers that able to satisfy my curiosity. Even, there were times when I did not care about any religions at all. It was totally blank. Yet, I felt that there was something wrong and it made me become skeptical about everything.

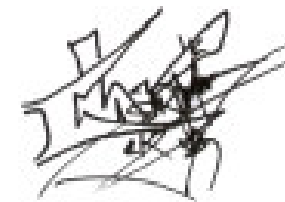
After learning about *Dhamma/Dharma* deeper, I realized that the most important thing in life is that I should be contented. By being skeptical, blank & curious, I kept on searching, and finally contented with The *Dhamma/Dharma*. As a matter of fact, any truth is purely true not because of someone else's opinion but simply because we prove the truth in our lives, in our heart. That is what I call "a teacher" because it controls my own attitude and it helps me to learn appreciating anything in life.

Are you skeptical? Do you doubt this? O good. In fact, it's even better for your mind, so that by having this "green" attitude, you'll keep on searching, won't you? Have a nice journey, may you be enlightened.

Not to forget, I'd like to also thank my dad with boundless *metta*, even though i don't have deep impression about his figure; may he be happy, may all sentient beings be happy



*No worry, be happy,*



Christian Kusnady  
 The Eldest





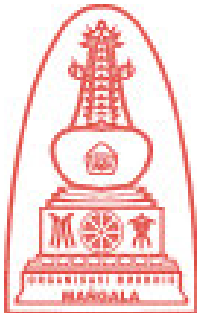
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## Preface

After all the waiting, we finally have *Dhamma* book called "Green". As we all know, it's not easy to publish a *Dhamma* book. *Dhamma* itself is the absolute meaning of happiness and **timeless phenomenon**, thus, I hope this book can help to increase our knowledge in learning and doing *Buddha's Dhamma* either in everyday's life or inside complex society.

I'm sure reading this book will give us a lot of motivation, knowledge about the practice and points of *Buddha's Dhamma*, because inside the book, we will find a lot of clearly written and easily understood story. Like we all feel, "story telling" has a very precious meaning either for us or for other people, and generally story telling will help give us the urge, guidance, or principles in everyday's life

Considering the publishing of this book which isn't easy. I representing MBO would like to give our greatest gratitude to all who have given their help for the publishing of this "Green" book, especially to monk Upaseno as the writer and all the whole editor team and JINAPANJARA FOUNDATION who has published this book.



Mettacitena,

Henry Santoso

President of Maṅgala Buddhist  
Organisation Beijing







“*Verses on The Buddha’s Mansion*”  
(*Tinapañjara Gatha*)

The Heroes, having defeated the evil one,  
together with his army, mounted the seat of Victory.  
These Leaders of men have drunk the nectar of  
The Four Noble Truth.

May all the twenty eight chief *Buddhas*, such as  
*Buddha* Tamhankara and other Noble Sages  
rest on my head.

May the *Buddhas* rest on my head;  
The *Dhamma* on my eyes;  
The *Sangha* the abode of all virtues on my shoulders.

May Anuruddha rest on my heart; Sariputta on my right; Kondañña  
on my back and Maha Moggallana on my left.  
On my right ear are Ananda and Rahula;  
on my left are Kassapa and Mahanama.

On my back at the end of my hair sits  
The Glorious Lord Sobhita, who is radiant like the sun.  
The fluent speaker, the Lord Kumara Kassapa,  
the abode of virtues ever rest in my mouth.

## *I Want to Leave this Buddhist Monastery*

On my forehead like *tilakas* are the five *Theras*:  
Puñña, Angulimala, Upāli, Nanda and Sivali.  
The other Eighty *Theras*,  
The Victorious Disciples of the Conqueror,  
shining in the glory of their virtues rest on the other parts of my  
body.

The Jewel *Sutta* is on my front,  
on my right The *Sutta* on Loving Kindness.  
The Banner *Sutta* is on my back,  
on my left is The Angulimala *Sutta*.

The protective discourse *Khanda*, *Mora* and *Atanatiya Suttas* are  
like the Heavenly vault.  
All the other *Suttas* are like ramparts around me.

May all those Great Personages ever protect me who is dwelling in  
the centre of the *Buddha* Mansion on this earth.  
By the power of their infinite virtues,  
may all internal and external troubles come to naught without  
exception.  
Protecting myself thus in every way.  
Overcoming all troubles by the power of the Conquerors  
(The *Buddha*, The *Dhamma* and The *Sangha*)  
may I defeat the hostile army of passions and live guarded by  
The Sublime *Dhamma*!

Note: This is is my favorite *Gatha*

Rock was the music, sweet Canadian beer was the drink, Friday night was the time, small semi-dark cafe was the place and Eastern Philosophy was the topic of conversation amongst the friends who wanted to kill some time before heading home to watch South Park on TV. Being the only foreign student in town, hanging out with friends in the cafe was much better than having to face boredom at home after being at school the whole week. Every time we discussed Eastern Philosophy, I felt I wanted to gain more knowledge about life. One night, when a friend was driving me home, I asked him, "Rob, what do you think about life?" He answered sarcastically, "Oh my friend, that's a big question!" Sleepily I responded "oh..." Since that night, I had begun to ask myself, "I'm an Easterner, what am I doin' here, eh? I'm learning Eastern Philosophy from Westerners? Shame on me!" Then, I promised myself, after returning to Asia, I would learn and deepen my

knowledge in a branch of Eastern Philosophy. On coming weekends, eagerness to get back to Asia became stronger as I hoped to dedicate my life to either Confucius, Lao-Tze, Muhammad, or even Buddha. Surely, at that time I still did not know what all those thoughts were about, because my next and immediate plan was to go back to Canada for my undergraduate.

It was a cold winter morning when two good friends drove me to Pearson airport in Toronto. My attachment to them was stronger than I realized. Moreover, it was unbelievable that separation was happening once again in my life .. Guns' and Roses' song "Don't Cry" was filling my head as I held back the tears when we said good bye to each other.

Back in my home country, life had changed! The initial eagerness to learn Eastern Philosophy was momentarily forgotten. Probably, it

was because the philosophy itself was already blended in my daily life. For the following weeks, I just enjoyed doing nothing. Some months later, when I was buying some nails and other bits in my parents' friends' hardware store, they showed me a leaflet on a short-term ordination for Buddhist novices. Suddenly, I said to myself, "Yes, that's what I want! I want to be like one of those Shaolin monks. That seemed like a good activity to occupy my free time, better than fooling around all day long. I took the leaflet home and kept reading it over and over again. Seeing the picture of a monk whom I met nine years ago earlier gladdened me, because he would be teaching the novices and quickly wrote my intention to register to the event organizer. If they would accept me, my head would be shaven and I would be wearing monks' robes. I became quite excited with the idea.

Two weeks later, a monk replied to me letter by sending three pages of information: first page was saying that they agreed to let me join the program; second page was some chanting in a language which I did not know its meaning and it was to be memorized for the ordination; third page was some training recommendations

before ordination. One of them was not to eat after noon. I tried to do that from that moment on, but soon hunger came and I just gulped down cups of milk which later on a monk told me was not allowed.

My grandma sent me some bottles of milk every morning, she probably thought I was doing some crazy spiritual practice and needed the nourishment.

Although I had no idea about Buddhism beforehand, a feeling of proudness in becoming a Buddhist novice began to arise in my mind. Probably the monks in that monastery would teach some psychic powers, to see the past and future lives or teach Kung Fu like on the TV series. Out of pride, I also contacted some Canadian friends, informing them that I would be wearing Buddhist monks' robes.

It was seven years ago on the twenty fourth of April when I arrived at the monastery where ordination would take place. I was very relaxed wearing a t-shirt and shorts. While entering the registration hall, I sat in front of the monk who had replied to my letter and later on would become the novice trainer.

The monk asked, "What's your name?"

I told him my name.

He asked, "You bring your registration letter?"

I gave him the letter.

All of a sudden, he admonished me, "You aren't allowed to wear shorts here. You bring pants? Go to the toilet, wear your pants and come back to register!"

"Oh God! How embarrassing being admonished in front of all those people! Damn ...! I only brought a pair of pants. Ah ... it's OK, they'll change our clothes with robes today", I grumbled. I changed my shorts and headed back to the hall.

The monk asked again, "You memorized the chanting?"

"Yes, I answered without any confidence."

"Chant it now", he commanded, while he was collecting my photos and other papers.

I chanted the first line of the chanting, and then I stopped, because I hadn't memorized it all. "Oh goodness, he was testing my truthfulness! Yet I lied to him! I fell into another offence, again!" I thought.

"Oh, are you not ready! Memorize it before ordination. Now, take these dishes and go to the basement. That's where you stay with the others," he instructed me.

I went to the basement which was a large open area totally bare apart from some *Buddha* statues and carpet placed in a corner. Some of the other candidates were already sitting on their selected spot, but nobody greeted me. I found another corner and sat there, feeling lonely and unwelcome. I took my diary to describe the oddness of the situation. Everybody was so cold towards my presence and I had no idea how to start conversation with them. Recently, I have realized that I still keep that memorable entry. It says: "... I want to leave this monastery as soon as possible. The people here look so strange. Many seem weird ... so weird! Their faces look so strange! I want to leave this Buddhist monastery! It seems there is



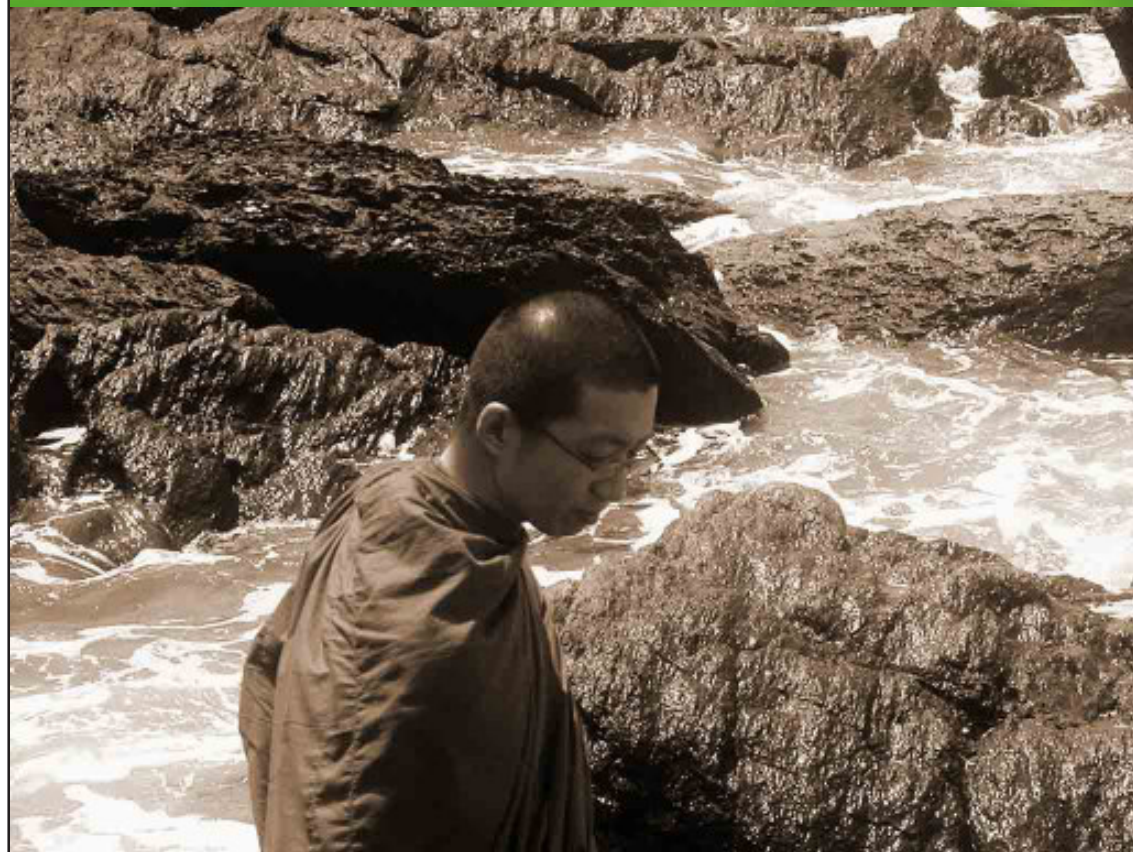
no freedom! In fact, I believe in freedom! Why did I join this program, eh? I am a weird guy and today I am meeting WEIRD PEOPLE! ... Should I believe in these (monastic) rules? Should I? Now, I'm sittin' on my place and listenin' to people who are talking about Buddhism. My only Big Question is: Are they really good people? Their ways of talking seem so Buddhist! Ah ... I don't believe in them fully, because many religious people do bad things. I can't trust them... NO! They are also normal people who can change from being good to being bad at any time. Probably, people who are in religious places always talk about good things. That's the reason why their jokes seem awkward to me ... Eh, some people began to talk to me (in the evening)."

Those were the strong bad impressions on the first day in my life living in a Buddhist monastery. There was no courtesy at all coming from then toward the newcomers who knew nothing about Buddhist culture. It was also an intense cultural shock. Furthermore, the monks gave us rules of etiquette without giving us any logical reasons for keeping them. Those people around me seemed to be pretending to be calm and well behaved whenever in front of others

and honestly I hated that sort of behavior. As time progressed, doubts kept creeping into my mind to the point where any interest of staying in the monastery and wearing the robes were forgotten. The discomforts were influencing me to find ways to leave the monastery. On the other hand, my inner heart kept resisting the desire to leave, by strongly reminding me, "The program hasn't even begun yet. You can't go! There's nothing to do at home, anyway."

Three days before ordination, the trainer monk taught us the ways to chant in Pali language, the ways to sit/bow, the ways to behave during ordination. From four thirty A.M. until nine P.M., the training kept torturing my legs and feet; such a training was not what I wanted. Every so often, I counted how many more days/hours I had to stay there and endure that gruesome pain. Desire to leave was unquestionable!

The third day was a very releasing day for every candidate, especially for myself, because next day would be the ordination day. The Vice Abbot gave us encouragement repeatedly, while many laypeople were preparing and decorating the



monastery. In the evening, the main *stupa*, the shrines and the whole monastery were decorated beautifully with flowers, candles and incense. Every candidate was in a good mood, except one who suddenly cancelled his intention to be a novice as he got homesick. I felt sorry for him; all these days of hardships were gone with the wind, without any good result.

On the fourth day, the excitement towards the ordination moment shattered the bad perception and terrible feelings about the monastery. Joy, happiness and smiles were not replacing the three days' fatigues. The time to wear Buddhist monks' robes was arriving. It was time to pack away the lay clothes. Although the real teaching and learning activities had not yet begun, just being in monks' robes already created a special sense of confidence in myself.

After being ordained by the Abbot, one of our parents offered us bowls and other requisites to support our life as Buddhist novices for the next twenty days. We eventually moved to a dormitory with better conditions, where each person's place was separated by a plank of wood. Yet, certainly we still had no privacy.

Morning/evening chanting, two meals before noon, six hours of Buddhist teaching and new friendships in Buddhism were filling our daily schedule until the last three days. Despite the fact that in this short essay it is not possible to write all the exact details of the Buddhist teachings which I perceived from all the teachers there, it is still possible to write the Dhamma that has been carved in my heart by some teachers there namely:

- 1. The Abbot:** He was calm and serene. He had been teaching both monks and laypeople throughout the country for over twenty years. My father and I met him nine years earlier in an old monastery nearby our hometown, when he was teaching about the way Buddhists should perceive religious symbols. Always in accordance to the way the *Buddha* taught, not according to traditional beliefs. For instance, a *Buddha* statue, Buddhists should perceive it as a symbol of respect, as a reminder of the Teacher in whom we have faith, not as some being with the ability to protect people from calamities or black magic. The most important duty as Buddhists is to respect the *Buddha* by practicing His teachings. As a non-





Buddhist, this short teaching remained clear in my memory for nine years. Meeting him the second time was a blessing for me, because I would get many other good teachings from him.

He indeed gave us good teachings on novice etiquette, *kamma*, rebirth, and many other subjects regarding life and Buddhism. Those allowed me to answer all questions and doubts in my intellectual and spiritual life emotionally. "Wow!" was my response every time he answered my endless questions and lessened my confusions.

Once I asked him, "When a judge sentences an offender to death, would the judge get bad *kamma* by doing so? How does *kamma* work for such a judge?" It was an important question for me since I wanted to go for law school. Yet, his answer seemed foreshadowing my concern. He knew that in time to come, my interest in Buddhism would destroy my intention to go to Law School. So he answered: "Let's talk about it when you become a judge." It was indeed true that later on, Buddhism became more important than anything else in my life.

**2.** The Vice Abbot: He was a fully enlightened scholar and also a lecturer in a university. At first, he seemed quite negative towards my going forth as a novice. I guess he thought I could not change my habits as a layman. The teachings on the impermanent characteristics of all phenomena were the deepest teachings I received from him. Since then, my mind understands, there are no-fixed phenomena in nature. Everything is subject to change.

He also taught the facts on suffering, non-self and the Four Noble Truths, but then true meaning was too difficult to be grasped by me. I thought, in order to understand such teachings I shall learn *Abhidhamma*. So, I kept on learning.

**3.** The Meditation Monk: He was old, but not old in robes, since he had only ordained a few years ago. Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw was his meditation master, while he learned Vipassana meditation. Being mindful on every body movement by doing any activities slowly was the teaching he talked about. It was difficult for newcomers to understand and separate between the mind, mindfulness and body

movement. Those three furthermore were mixed up with thoughts and views. Teaching and learning meditation in just one day was a hard task to accomplish, but it was better than nothing.

A teaching from him that helped me to understand the frustration of bad *kamma* was as follows: "... We should give what people asked from us, rather than holding onto our possessions too tightly, which in any case doesn't last forever. Many people have been killed /hurt throughout history because they hold on and want to protect their belongings at any cost. When we learn to just give up, the chances to be safe from danger are much greater. So, being generous can protect us from danger." This teaching was to become very useful for me. Some months later, a tricycle carrying hundreds of corn cobs hit my left foot into a very bad condition. Right after the accident happened, and almost immediately I remembered his teaching and realized that such accident was a fruition of my bad *kamma*. I forgave the cyclist by saying: "It's alright, next time you should be more careful." Although it was very painful, I let him go away. By being generous in this way, there was no

other *kamma* being created and the debt of my past *kamma* was paid. Consequently, when a teaching can be pragmatically applied in daily life, such a teaching creates many benefits for all beings.

**4.** The Scholar Novice: He had been in robes for nine years and recently finished his Masters degree in Pali and Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He was not only intelligent, but also well mannered. That inspired me.

It was unbelievable to meet a Buddhist monastic who could raise Buddhism up to a high academic level. At that time, Buddhism in my mind was about mysticism, rites, rituals and other kinds of traditional beliefs. Since then, I had been thinking, "He's my ideal of a Buddhist monk! I want to be like him!"

Though these days nobody knows his whereabouts, he is still my inspiration.

**5.** There were some other three or more *Dhamma* teachers who taught other subjects which also aroused my intellectual interest in Buddhism more than in any other subjects in life.

The schedule changed in the

last two days. We all celebrated *Vesakh* day with thousands of lay people both inside and outside of the monastery. The celebrations were mostly rites and rituals, except for later at night when the abbot gave a *Dhamma* talk on the causes and effects of people's behavior. The *Dhamma* talk was later to become famous, after many people noticed that one of his statements seemed to forecast the career of our country's leader. On the following day, he resigned from the presidency. The statement was: "When people build a wall, they obviously know all the materials, the thickness and every single factor which support them to do such a project. On the other hand, when people want to destroy such a wall, without any doubt they know the ways to destroy it, because they themselves were the builders." This simile illustrates how people are themselves the creators of the causes of all the problems in their own lives.

Another wholesome event during the celebrations that made me overjoyed was when all the monks and novices gave a blessing chant to thousands of people in the rainy *Vesakh* day.

The last day, all twenty seven short-term novices had to disrobe. In the morning, we all met together in the main hall to pay our homage to the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha* and to chant the disrobing chanting. Afterwards, being a layman again, I could not believe that I fell in love with Buddhism. Not only with the robes, but also with the teachings ... The Buddha's Teachings. The teachings that had been carved in my heart by the teachers during those twenty days, were resonating deep in my mind, "Do you really want to disrobe? Are you going to let these monks continue to spread the *Dhamma* by themselves?" Tears kept flowing and dropping on the floor.

In a whisper, my heart answered, "I'll be back!"

---EVAM---

Notes:

1. This story happened at a time when Buddhism began to change my life and I too began to change my life for Buddhism.
2. As I did not ask any permission from all the monks here, there were no

monks' names written. Some of them already disrobed.

3. Once, the Abbot gave me a *Dhamma* book that is very clear to understand the basic teachings of the *Buddha*. The book is: Mahathera Piyadassi. The spectrum of Buddhism. Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1991



## *Mother's Love*

My parents had two children, my brother and myself. Four years ago, dad passed away, with heart disease. I am sure my Mom still suffers a lot with his loss; not to mention that she had to endure by herself the task of bringing up two children; quite a heavy burden in this day and age. She has to be a mother and a father; take care of all the family matters as well as earning our upkeep.

My brother was sent to a junior high school in another town by our parents. Then, he continued his high school and university abroad. All his expenses were supported by our Mom; she had hopes that one day he would be successful. It was, quite suddenly that after finishing his undergraduate, he told my Mom: "Mom, after graduation, I'd like to go to Thailand and be ordained as a Buddhist monk." Mom could not turn down his wish, since it was such a wholesome choice of life. And so she respected his decision to choose his own future.

After graduating from high school, Mom sent me to study in Beijing. Actually, I had no plans to study abroad; I just followed her advice and did it. I felt that it was a great opportunity to be able to study in Beijing. Then some day unexpectedly Mom began to call me and to send SMS quite regularly. I felt worry, that Mom, staying at home by herself would be very lonely; at the end of the day, after finishing her work, she would return home and there would be nobody to talk to or to share the burdens of the day just gone. So I tried to

be there for her, to listen and to share some of her burdens.

I still keep studying, but I find that my heart is not peaceful. My mind keeps jumping around, thinking back and forth about my Mom's problems; as well as my studies. I am finding it very difficult to focus on my tasks.

Right before applying for my undergraduate, I called my Mom. I asked her: "Mom, are you really willing to let me study for my undergraduate in Beijing? Will you be ok at home by yourself for another four years?" Taking an undergraduate degree is a long time. Yet, Mom said that it would not be a problem for her. I could not believe her response. I inquired further and eventually, she told me the reason why she sent me to study abroad and wanted me to continue further: - "Mom is afraid that if I don't send you to study abroad, later you'd ask, 'why haven't you send me to study abroad like you did for my brother when he was young?'" I told my Mom, "Mom, I don't have such thoughts. If I can be with you that would make me very happy and satisfied." After this I decided not to apply for my undergraduate in Beijing. I would be happy to just finish my advanced Chinese language courses and after that go back to my home country.

To fulfill my education, Mom was willing to sacrifice her own wellbeing. I feel, there is no other love that can be compared to a mother's love. As long as their children realize their dreams in life and are happy, Moms will always be willing to sacrifice anything in their lives. I would never forget my Mom's selfless love.

***"A mother's love can reach far and deeply"***

\*\*\*Originally the essay was written in Chinese by Dong Xin Niu (Irene) in Peking University, China, 2005. It was translated by her brother who wants to dedicate his wholesome renunciation to his family.

## End of Rain Retreat Talk 2005

(19th October 2005, 03:00 A.M.)

My heart is beating faster than usual now. Probably it is caused by either the late night strong tea or because of the anxiety arising due to having to talk to the Thai people for the first time here in the monastery. My name is Upaseno. I have been living in this forest monastery for over one year.

Actually, my background is no more special than Thai people's in general. It is because I grew up in Indonesia, one of the South East Asian countries. Therefore, we do not have great difficulties to understand each others' personalities and culture. I began to study *Theravada* Buddhism in 1998 when I was ordained as a short term novice for the first time, back in Indonesia. Since then, I have been deepening my knowledge and faith of *Theravada* Buddhism. At that time, it seemed that *Theravada* Buddhism had more structure in

teaching *Dhamma* that any other tradition. Today I feel this is right. As time goes by, sometimes I turn back to my childhood. I realize now that I was raised by parents who understood about *Buddha Dhamma*. Yet, they did not name their knowledge as what we call, "*Buddha Dhamma*." This knowledge was blended with family traditions. So, their teachings and *Buddha Dhamma* were slowly becoming normal matters in my everyday life.

Let me illustrate the above with a few examples. A teaching that I got from my parents was that one should not harm others, because we ourselves do not want to be harmed by anyone. This simple teaching is a part of the law of cause and effect. Yet, my parents did not have a name for it; we call it *Kamma*<sup>1</sup>. They did not even know that it can be explained on a much broader, more complex way. Another example I have been taught, was never to lie to others. Again this

<sup>1</sup>*Kamma*: In Buddhism, it means action of the body, speech or mind which can be good, bad or neutral. Such action brings back a corresponding result.

teaching is one of the Buddhist precepts. In my family, we have been practicing this, in the way that our elders taught to us to, because it was tradition. We did not know about its connection with the Buddhist teachings. Therefore when exposed to the Buddhist teachings, we had difficulties in understanding the differences between the Truth and tradition.

As I see it, most people in my generation have been raised by families with good traditions that are in line with the teachings of the Buddha. Unfortunately, and often we do not appreciate those family traditions, sometimes we even rebel against it. And we go on trying to find something more special in other traditions. There is the old saying, "The grass is always greener on the other side."

Nowadays, the problem amongst the Buddhist youth in Indonesia is similar to the ones that the youngsters face in Thailand. Even though we all have good family backgrounds in Buddha Dhamma, many of us still look for other religions. But in fact, if we look closely into those religions, we will see that they are facing a moral crisis in the West. A

senior monk once said, according to the religious statistical data, in recent years there have been around two Buddhists changing their religion each week. It is sad, isn't it? After realizing the decline of interest in *Buddha Dhamma* amongst the new generations, some teachers have been changing the ways they teach to make it more accessible to the young people. They are encouraging young people to use their musical and composition skills to perform the *Dhamma* chants. By practicing in this way, they are captivating the younger generations.

Another problem with Buddhism in my country is that we used to keep different traditions separated. Often, each tradition held the view that their one was better than the others. We did not even want to get together in the same venues. At that time, I myself was confused, about how I should treat other Buddhists.

This separation grew bigger and eventually started causing a lot of problems. Fortunately nowadays, the Buddhist leaders are trying to get together and build a more harmonious community.

Then I came to Thailand to

ordain as a novice, until that time I was still confused about how I should relate to monks from other traditions. Once, I asked a senior monk here, "Should we bow to monks from other traditions?" He answered, "We don't know whether our precepts our purer than theirs. So what's wrong if we bow to them?" This answer dismantled my confusion about how to relate to those monks.

Whenever I go and live in other countries, people ask me: "Where do you come from?" I tell them proudly, "Indonesia." Straight away, their negative perceptions come up. They judge my country as a third world country that has no political stability or the chance of a good future. But once I mention the religious aspect, they remember that it used to be one of the greatest Buddhist countries in the world. Some of them even know the history of Buddhism in my country better than I do. Years back, a senior monk told me that foreigners come to visit Java because they just want to see Buddhist monuments. So, Buddhism raises good reputation in Indonesia.

There is a legend about a Buddhist King who was assassinated by his own son, who had converted to another religion. This famous tragedy happened five hundred years ago, when Buddhism was beginning to decline in Nusantara<sup>2</sup>. Before the King died he told his son that he would return in five hundred years. The King is now returning. It is true that Buddhism declined and almost disappeared for five hundred years. The King in this legend represents Buddhism.

It is indeed true that the number of monastic has been increasing during the last couple of years. We have now approximately one hundred monastic, forty Theravadins and sixty Mahayanists. Those monks mostly live in city temples. As far as I am concerned, there has not been any forest monastery in Indonesia. Honestly, before ordaining as a novice, I was not sure whether the forest tradition was suitable for me or would strive in Indonesia.

One day, during a *Kathina* ceremony in a monastery in Rayong, I

<sup>2</sup>Nusantara: An old name of a Buddhist country that was as large as the present South East Asia. The center of this country was mostly in present Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup>Krooba Ajahn: A highly venerated monk in Thailand, especially the meditation teacher in the Forest Tradition.

asked the Krooba Ajahn<sup>3</sup> about this matter, whether it is good for me to ordain in the forest tradition. He kept silent for awhile. Then, suddenly he said, "You're the first Indonesian monk in the forest tradition!" Upon hearing this, I decided to ordain as a novice.

At present, I am preparing for my full ordination as a monk; still carrying some doubts about whether the forest tradition will be a suitable choice.

During the *Patipada*<sup>4</sup> event in my *Upajjhaya*'s<sup>5</sup> monastery, I asked him whether the forest tradition would be able to survive and flourish in Indonesia.

He answered, "That's part of the future you can't know. Don't worry about it now."

We all kept silent.

He elaborated further, "If someone is practicing really well then it doesn't matter at all whether the person who reaches *Nibbana*<sup>6</sup> belongs

to this or the other traditions. It's just a matter of how well the person practices."

I asked him again, hopeful, "Would it be possible Luangpor<sup>7</sup>, for you to visit Indonesia?"

He answered, "When the time is ripe, all these things will come together. We have to wait until all things fall into place. Who will object to people who want to hear the *Dhamma*? If you are in a place where you have peace and are free from stains and defilements, then you can easily see people in the mud; who is going to object to help these people? Indonesia is an old ancient Buddhist country, dating back from the time of Srivijaya<sup>8</sup>. It has a lot of Buddhist sites. Probably, there will be a time for reviving it all. But, only when the conditions are right." He paused, and then he continued: "If one could create a *Dhamma* group for monks and laypeople to practice together, this would be the foundation for the spreading of the *Dhamma*. Many people in Indonesia are interested in

<sup>4</sup>*Patipada*: Practice, mode of conduct.

<sup>5</sup>*Upajjhaya*: Ordination Preceptor.

<sup>6</sup>*Nibbana*: The extinction or complete fading away of all defilements, the complete ending of suffering, the ultimate fulfillment of the Buddhist path.

<sup>7</sup>Laung Por: Venerable Father.

<sup>8</sup>Srivijaya: One of the dynasties in Nusantara

the *Buddha Dhamma*."

With those words, the faith in my *Upajjhaya* increased in me. I was glad ....very very glad.

I asked him again, "Why do the number of monks in Indonesia increase so slowly? Is this because of economic factors?"

He commented patiently, "It all depends on the teaching of the monastic discipline and the power of human resources there; it depends on the senior monks whether they are capable or have the potential to lead others. It doesn't depend exclusively on the schools of Buddhism. It depends on how to find the right way to educate people in this modern age. Probably, sooner or later they will direct themselves towards Buddhism, because *Dhamma* answers the question about whether there is anything else outside the material world in which they can rely on for peace. They will come to Buddhism if there are people with the right potential to teach."

With this explanation, my faith towards him grew even stronger. And since then, every time I talk about my

*Upajjhaya* and his wise teachings to others, tears roll down my face. The teachings he gave me were short, but went straight to my heart.

So let me conclude by saying: "Since we are all part of society, we have to uphold their traditions. However, we should not hold on tightly to these since they are subject to change; that is a condition of life itself. If we manage to integrate *Dhamma* in our own lives and wholeheartedly practice it, we will then be prepared to accept and live with whatever changes occur."

---EVAM---

Notes:

- This talk was given to Thai villagers who still held strong Buddhist tradition.
- This talk has been edited and revised from the original talk.

## We are The Children

"I will go with eyes lowered in inhabited areas; a training to be observed," is one of the seventy five training rules on proper behavior which I should practice. The purpose of this rule is to restrain any eye contact with worldly objects that can possibly disturb the mind. While there is nothing wrong to see the surrounding areas, if there is danger or there is something to learn as a *Dhamma* teaching! Most Great Teachers in the forest tradition point out that during alms round, we should only look at our own footsteps, the bowl or laypeople's hands who offer food into our bowls, without attempting to find out who the donors are. In this way, we can contemplate the *Dhamma* within our own bodies.

It seems just like yesterday since I first began to undertake the above training rule as a part of my daily life. A couple of months have passed by and honestly, I still have difficulties in refining this practice. Unfortunately,

"interesting" distractions in the village attract and pull my senses all too often, even before mindfulness does. This is not an easy practice. However, even being aware, intuitively of those bad habits, is better than being inattentive towards them.

Once, when I went on alms round in the nearby village; after walking silently for about half an hour with my eyes lowered to the ground while trying to keep the senses collected... feeling my surroundings, the freshness of the morning dew over the rice fields, the warmth of the ground under my feet... Suddenly a screaming sound, "Arrghhh...eekh...eekh..." It sounded like agonizing crying and choking at the same time. Instinctively, I looked around. "Oh goodness, it sounds like a child; he must've done something wrong, and his parents are punishing him badly! These parents today, are too much...!!!"

In a matter of seconds, my memory flew back to my childhood and the time when I saw my cousin walking toward a well and falling down into it. Amazingly she was unharmed but she was in deep shock, crying and vomiting all through that night.

The painful sounds from my cousin's accident and that screaming sound in the village were very similar; it weakened my body and sucked up its energy.

The screaming sound brought me back to the present. My curiosity was trying to find out what was actually happening, yet I failed in my attempts. The monks in front of me kept walking, seemingly without noticing any of it. My mind kept wandering and coming up with different possible scenarios, along the way back to the monastery.

On the following days, there were not any distractions like the previous day. However, curiosity still aroused and I hoped to find out more about the events of the previous day. Days before I changed my alms round route, the same painful screams could be heard again from the end of the street. "Oh, what's happening?" My curiosity raised larger than before. So,

I decided to lift up my eyes and looked around the houses by the crossroads. "Ah! Nothing? What is it? The screams seemed to come from the blue fenced house. No,...I can't see inside, It's quite dark... Ah...forget it." My curiosity broke the training rule even further. I tried to find out the villager who usually gave food across from that blue fenced house. She was already kneeling down in the front of her old house, holding a small basket of sticky rice above her head, showing a gesture of respect to the monks. When I looked at her, I was shocked, "Oh! She's an old granny without her left eyeball!" Right away, I got a *Dhamma* teaching on the fragility of our human bodies. Until today, my mind's still able to recall her painful appearance.

"It must be a strange neighborhood in that crossroad area," Sometimes the old granny came out from nowhere, all we could see was a vast rice field behind her..."

Two weeks passed by and my alms round route changed to a different route. I forgot all about the screams.

A couple of months later, my alms round route changed back to the

village where the blue fenced house was located. It was a quiet morning, we were walking pass by the blue house, and the thought returned, "Ah, let's see if I can now get a peek into the house..." In the middle of my thinking, suddenly a boy came out from the house, running and yelling towards us, "Arrghhh...eekh...eekh..." I was shocked! "What the hell's he doing?!" I mumbled in my thoughts. The boy's body was shaking convulsively, while he attempted to offer us food, but without having anything in his hands. He was trying to pay his respects to us by joining his palms, but his hands were very shaky. I noticed that he was quite handsome; with sharp eyes and fair skin. On the middle of the road, we stopped walking. Then, a middle aged man also approached us, helping the boy to offer us some cartons of milk. The boy gave us a very sweet smile, after him putting the milk into our bowls.

The following day, the boy did not come out of his blue house, and so it happened for the next few months. Sometimes there was the sound of pop songs coming from inside the house, but not a sign of the boy. I often sneaked a glanced into the house, but only a truck could be seen parked

in front of it.

One morning, before my fellow monks and I entered the main village, a truck full of ready to sell brooms, stopped in front of us. A middle age woman came out from the truck and offered us some cartons of milk. I raised my eyes towards the truck and I happened to see the boy inside; he kept looking at us trying to come out. I was sure that he wanted to help his granny to offer us the cartons of milk. I realized that the boy had some severe disability; he probably was deaf and dumb.

Time passed by, life kept changing and I was sent to a branch monastery for two months of quiet retreat.

As soon as I returned by coincidence, the senior monk assigned me back to the boy's village again. When we were passing his house, I saw hanging on the gate a piece of brown mantra cloth; the cloth was painted with some *Buddha* images and Thai characters. I was not sure what kind of mantra the family believed in, but I think it was used to chase away bad spirits and protect the family, especially the boy. The following days,

I noticed that the boy and his mother offered food to monks more regularly. They seemed glad to see us; and to have a chance to do something wholesome every morning.

Day by day, loving kindness and compassion grew broader in my heart towards the boy and his suffering. I wanted to know more about him, but unfortunately I could not.

One morning, I found myself reflecting on the boy's condition and on a related event that happened in my childhood; they reminded me the reason why I later would consider the Buddhist monastic life as my way of life.

There was a time in my childhood when my parents and I used to visit, quite regularly an orphan Catholic school run by Catholic sisters. It was located in a small town, about three hundreds kilometers from our hometown. We usually brought candies and other requisites for the kids. Every time we visited them, the kids came out to the main hall to greet us in a very warm way, yet, their welcome made me uncomfortable for some reason. I guess these regular visits made me reflect about my own

condition in life, especially my relationship with my parents. I became worried about the uncertainty of life. At any moment either my parents or I would die and become separated from each other. I often found myself holding my parents' hands very hard during these visits, to get rid of my anxiety. Sometimes, I looked at some of the kids who were younger than me, thinking that it would be impossible for me to be able to survive in the world without my parents. At that time I was not yet familiar with the Buddha's teachings, but something very deep inside me was telling me that separation from the ones we love is suffering.

At some point we have stopped visiting the orphanage. But the impressions and valuable teachings I got from them, still remain with me until this day.

Considering myself one of the fortunate children in this world, sometimes I admit that I take for granted the privileges in my life. It is quite easy to lose oneself in a state of gratification and ignore the bitter side of the life. I guess what I'm trying to say is that, the privileges and good fortune one has today could disappear



in a flash, and unfortunately, even if one really tries to make them stay it is to no avail. We have to accept that our existence is subjected to so many different conditions. This world has its own rules that we are powerless to alter, and we're often dependent on them for our own existence. If we contemplate on this, we will realize that every moment of our existence is a very fragile one.

These are just some of my personal reflections that I would like to share with you today, I am hopeful that by reading this, you will notice the *Buddha's* teachings that are already inside of you and begin to notice the important things in this life.

—EVAM—

Note:

*Anumodana* (Thanks) for my editor,  
Venerable Kancano.







## *“I am Alone”*

*Tonight, I am alone. . .*

*Tonight, I miss my friends. . .*

*It's quite a long time,*

*Walking alone. . .*

*Leaving the world behind. . .*

*Leaving my friends. . .*

*Leaving my family. . .*

*Leaving anything that I had disturbed in the past!*

*Walking alone. . .*

*Looking for peace. . .*

*Looking for light. . .*

*Looking for truth. . .*

*Looking for anything that able to make me happy!*

*Walking alone. .I am alone in this cold night. . .*

*Everybody is sleeping. .cares not my feeling. . .*

*Everybody is dreaming. .cares not my sadness. . .*

*Everybody is snoring. .cares not my screaming. . .*

*My dark night in the forest. . .*

*Remembering the hard work today. . .*

*Remembering the discipline today. . .*

*Remembering the hard journey!*

*I want to meet my friends.*

*I want to share my sadness, my happiness.*

*I want to drop my tears with them to share my feeling.*

*Tonight, I am tired. . .*

*I am tired of using my wisdom to break down my boredom.*

*I am tired of using my strength to keep my pride.*

*I am tired of using my foolishness to fool myself!*

*How far do I need to walk on this Way to reach The Goal?*

*Oh. .I am alone here. . .*

*I want to walk hand in hand with my friends. . .*

*I want to let go my boredom. . .*

*I miss my friends. . .*

*All the laughs. . .*

*All the singing that broke down the sky. . .*

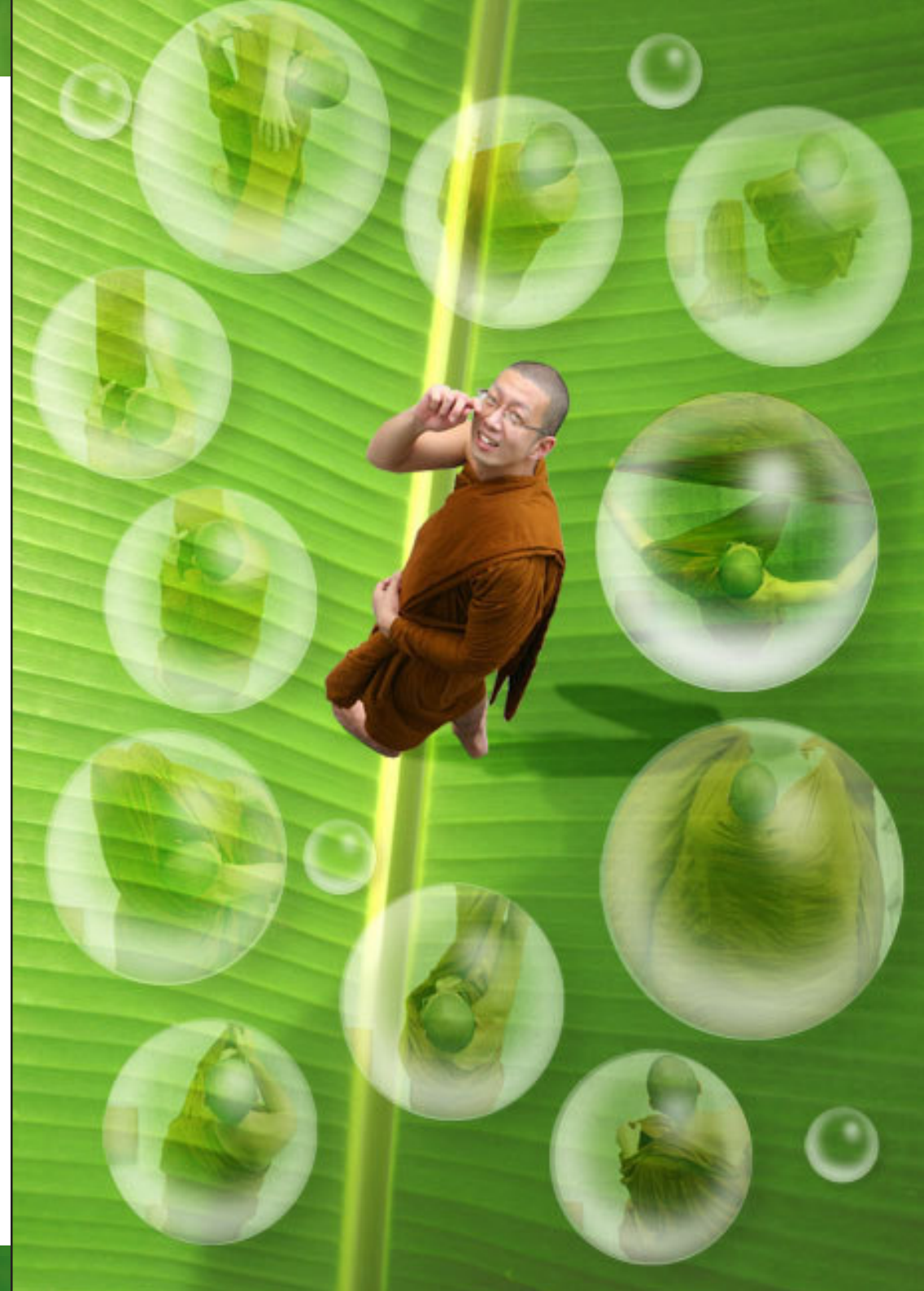
*All the pleasures that able to free The Heart. . .*

*I am tired. .I am alone. .here. .now. .in this cold night. .in this forest!*

*With Love,*

*Upaseno*

*\*\*\* This Poem is dedicated to all friends in Mangala Buddhist Organisation, Beijing, China.*



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## "Letter for Agus"

### *Something Delayed*

*(by: Piyu)*

*I'm here all alone staring at the niches of life  
I feel my life is far from my expectancy  
There is so many of my dark side  
As they know  
As they know*

*I feel forced by reality  
Avenge my self and I can not fight back  
Making me blind  
Of beauty awaken my fear  
Challenging myself*

*Met the love loose the feeling  
Here I'm alone as before, who's afraid  
I feel my self lessening  
No courage for hope  
Drawn as  
I feel it blur  
Reality is bitter, Reality is extremely bitter.*

\* \*

—

*Agus my friend...*

*Has been quite some time since I have approached you*

*That time... Inside my heart my tears dropped...*

*to...*

*chase away the wave*

*destroy the reef*

*Swallow the bitter me*

*Till this morning... my fresh mind*

*Awaken me from laziness*

*To approach you there*

*Your footsteps... sounded harmonized with the bell*

*Your laugh... teased my fingers to write the contents of this heart*

*Agus my friend...*

*When I was going to leave the forest*

*I was forced to take off the robe*

*They're afraid... I'll disturb their arrogance*

*They've threatened me...*

*Urged, flunked, corned, burned... me under the sun!*

*My heart cries...*

*I was alone...*

*Laid as a mouse ready to be eaten by the cat...*

*I gave up...*

*I took off the robe...*

*I left them!*

*Only one thing remains...*

*My Buddha hasn't gone!*

*My Buddha is still in the corner of my heart!*

*No one can destroy my Buddha*

*My Buddha is here...*

*My Buddha hasn't gone*

*I dropped the water of life on His feet*

*I sang the song of life next to Him*

*I kneeled in front of Him*

*I left alone...*

*Met my old friends... we forgot when we parted*

*They took my hand... lifted it to touch the sky!*

*I wore my robe again!*

*I started a new day!*

*I'm ready to hit... all the barriers again!*

*No matter what... I'm ready to destroy anything in between!*

*My Manjusri (sword)... ready to challenge them!*

*Agus my friend...*

*I looked at the sun*

*I flirted with the moon*

*I touched the cloud*

*I stroke the sky...*

*The shadow passing through Rayong... Ubon... Chonburi...*

*Chiangmai... Bangkok!*

*I stopped*

*I smiled*

*I was satisfied!*



*Agus my friend...  
My satisfaction stopped  
After I heard, my friend's boyfriend died on her lap...  
I was sad...  
Tears over this heart again...*

*Yesterday...  
I forgot the past!  
I look at her mourning face...  
I blew the breath of hope for her...  
I hold her helpless hand...to reach the sky's wall!*

*Agus my friend...  
My love hasn't stopped... to reach my friend's shoulder.  
My loyalty hasn't melt... to carry my friends.  
My fondle hasn't gone... to touch my friend's heart.*

*Agus my friend...  
I'm still the same... even my heart has hardened as the reef!  
I'm still the same... even my heart has burned like fire!  
I'm still the same... my heart still touches the Buddha's feet!*

*Agus my friend...  
No matter...what you have become... you are still my friend Agus!*

*With Love,  
Upaseno Bhikkhu  
1 Juli 2006  
Wat Mahathat, Bangkok.*

Note:

Agus is a friend in *Dhamma* whom I met in Maṅgala Buddhist Organisation in Beijing, four years ago. After I left to become a Buddhist monk in Thailand, he also decide to become a Buddhist monk in Fo Guang Shan, Gao Xiong, Taiwan. A few months ago, he ordained as a novice at Dharmasagara Buddhist Temple, Jakarta. Since our departure, we haven't contacted each other because I move a lot from one temple to another. After getting a more permanent residence, on July 1st, 2006, I contacted him again.

I took the poem "Something Delayed" ,by Piyu, from "Iwan Fals in Love." lyric's collection. I include it here because the contents and meaning of it was in harmony with my life 2 months before i wrote "Letter for Agus..."

I also dedicate "Letter for Agus..." to our best friend, whose boyfriend died on her lap.

Some people often ask me,  
"Why do you want to be a monk?"

I answered,  
**"DUKKHA...that's it!"**

## *What is Dukkha*

Dukkha is the lack of perfection in experience, an imbalance, a basic unsatisfactoriness pervading all forms of life due to the fact that all things are changing (Bhikkhu Bodhi).

Sadness  
Jeopardy  
Doubt  
Frustration  
Primal insecurity  
Struggle  
Pessimism  
Resentment  
Unsatisfactoriness  
Insecurity  
Dreariness  
Purposelessness  
Dissonance  
Malaise  
Disquietude  
Rejection  
Hope/hopelessness  
Uneasiness  
Discomfort  
Transience

Displeasure  
 Pain  
 Submission/rebellion  
 Rejection  
 Discontent  
 Trauma  
 Forlornness  
 III  
 Derangement  
 Aggravation  
 Unease  
 Restlessness  
 Displeasure  
 Incompleteness  
 Debility  
 Loneliness  
 Dullness  
 Disorder  
 Vexation  
 Affliction  
 Confusion  
 Loneliness  
 Opacity of life  
 Anxiety  
 Striving/repression  
 Anguish  
 Inadequacy  
 Sickness

Dejection  
 Tension  
 Melancholy  
 Discouragement  
 Restlessness  
 Worry  
 Vulnerability  
 Monotony  
 Yearning  
 Frailty  
 Gloominess  
 Tedium  
 Uncertainty  
 Hopelessness  
 Weakness  
 Instability  
 Meaningless  
 Failure  
 "The dumps"  
 Conditionality  
 Confusion  
 Insecurity  
 Vicissitudes  
 Boredom  
 Conflict  
 Stress  
 Failure  
 Incongruity



Annoyance  
Disorder  
Awry ness  
Tension  
Tribulation  
Decay  
Insubstantiality  
Sorrow  
Despair  
Incoherence  
Angst  
Defectiveness  
Life of quiet desperation  
Loneliness  
Viscosity of life  
Defect  
Drabness  
Ordeal  
Nervousness  
Perplexity  
Disharmony  
Distress  
Suffering  
Perish ability  
Bitterness  
Disorientation  
Deficiency  
Pathos

Basic or original anxiety  
The blues  
Desire/suppression  
Aimlessness  
Ennui  
Heartache  
Dismay  
Wretchedness  
Despondency  
Contingency  
Depression  
Disjointedness  
Perturbation  
Existential plight  
Misery  
Nervousness  
Love/lovelessness  
Irritation  
Torsion of living  
Exasperation  
Primal insecurity  
Anxiety

Source:

Michael Roehm. A newsletter of the International Buddhist Center,  
Korea. Washington D.C., 1994.

## Chit Chat

This "Chit Chat" is compiled from a few chats between friends, that left quite an impression on me. 'F' stands for Friend and 'U' for Upaseno, (myself).

\*\*\*

U: How are you?

K: Fine, just to busy with work, my head feels like it's almost exploding...

U: Wow... don't explode your head... my teacher said, life is already difficult, don't make it even harder. If you need a break then take a break. Which one is more important, life or work?

\*\*\*

F: Until this day, I keep looking for the meaning of my life...

U: Don't look for it. Sometimes, we look for answers that are difficult to be found in life. And most of the time the more we seek, the harder it is to get those answers. But sometimes when we're not looking, the answers come by themselves. So, just let it be...

F: Because once, a psychologist asked me, "In your life, what is the most

important thing? What is the purpose and meaning of your life?" I know what the most important thing is and its purpose... but the meaning, I don't yet know... do you know?

U: The happiness at this moment. What else do you want? I don't want to think anymore... the theory of life or anything else... the purpose is in the dark future, no one knows whether or not we will ever achieve it. What's important is ... this present moment. If we can be happy now, in the future the chances to be happy are greater than to be unhappy.

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F: Until this day, I'm still looking for what I want to prove...

U: There's NOTHING to seek. Living day by day is already good enough. The more you seek the more difficult your life will become.

F: Hmm.... what you said actually has a very deep meaning but... it also leaves me with the pros and cons.

U: It's like... sometimes I want something GREATER than what I have. But if it is not the right time yet, whatever you search, you won't find it. Even if you got it, you probably would end up regretting it... so... wait for the right moment...

\*\*\*

F: Sometimes I feel afraid to do things...

U: If you are scared, hide. And when you are tired of hiding, you might do something amazing that you never thought of before.

\*\*\*

F: May I know what the joys and sorrows of becoming a monk are?

U: The joys... I have more freedom than before. Now I have more time to see deeper into the Buddha's teachings. The negative points of view about other Buddhist traditions are moving towards a more positive side, so now I can really appreciate Buddhism as a religion that is full of variety. If we can enjoy Buddhism in our daily life, Buddhism is beautiful, very beautiful.

The sorrows.... There are a lot, the

heart are being insulted, tortured, betrayed, and hurt... have to be strong... this is where you can learn how to be patient.

F: Please teach me so I can be more patient in life...

U: You want to be more patient? Well... patient people, their feelings are usually what hurt them. My teacher used to say that. Ha-ha... If you want to be more patient then you have to face a lot of obstacles and difficulty in life, only after that can you become strong and patient.

F: That's why I want to learn to be patient, not just being patient blindly or just receiving everything but being patient with wisdom... no matter how much I suffer, I can still survive and live a happy life. Hopefully also bring joy to others.

U: You cannot learn how to be patient. Patient comes from experience. So... the more experience you have, the more patient you become. You cannot force yourself to be patient. We often have to be patient. Not everything should be finished quickly. Rushing into things can be dangerous. We need to see everything carefully... ups... sound like Sun Zhi's The Art of War... ha-ha...

\*\*\*

F: When I am down, I want to be optimistic quickly.

U: Life is not an automatic machine.

F: So it needs processing and a lot of patient, correct?

U: VERY GOOD!

F: Often I don't know when to be patient and when to act speedily.

U: When do we have to eat and when do we have to go to the toilet?

\*\*\*

F: Yesterday, a friend of mine told me to meditate. I can only bear it for 10 minutes. I can't help it, soooo sleepy...

U: You don't have to sit a long time to meditate. Some meditation masters say that even a chicken can sit for hours but they have no concentration. The important thing is to concentrate... when you do something, concentrate. Don't think about anything else. Do one thing at a time. If you want to be more disciplined and to be more aware, stop working and watch your breathing once every hour. If you work for 10 hours then you stop working 10 times for 1 minute, watching the breath. Now... you

already have 10 minutes of mediation.

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F: The other day, I meditated for 10 minutes and I felt nothing... then when I was about to sleep, I felt pain and rage... just because I was sleepy I didn't do anything about it. But it left me angry for weeks. I become angry quite easily... I didn't watch my breath... I forget about it. I have no control ...

U: Well, don't think that meditation is the only way to control your anger. If you want to be angry then be angry. It's better than keeping it inside and be mad about it. Is it wrong to be angry? We are still human beings, aren't we? Instead of forbidding your anger, express it to a wall so there will be no victims. Ha-ha...

\*\*\*

F: How can we live our life fully and happily?

U: By being aware of what we do all the time.

F: How can we be aware?

U: By paying attention or concentrating of what we do all the

time.

F: If we do that, can we live happily?

U: Yes

F: So, what do we live for?

U: To live in this present moment. Enjoying this present moment.

\*\*\*

F: To have a friend depends on our faith, doesn't it?

U: Yes and No. It depends on the process and behavior of each person.

F: The more I grow older the more I understand. Having a friend is important in life ... A friend will be happy when you are happy, but will also be at your side when you are crying.

U: VERY GOOD! It's the most difficult thing to do. I also try to practice it.

\*\*\*

F: Do monks have to resist their passions of the material world?

U: For me, the term is not resisting passions. The common misunderstanding is that a monk already "left" the material world. I don't know who said that the first time. A monk still lives in the world, still depends on the world, and still

faces the world. That's the truth. If there are passions for the material world, it's only natural. The question is, how we can focus on that energy to do something better; it's to have the skill to face the realities of life. So don't resist the energy of passion, because if you resist it, you will be STRESSED, ANGRY and UNHAPPY. In fact, all we want is to overcome Dukkha.

\*\*\*

F: Probably this thought is affected by my religious upbringing... God is LOVE... In my religion anything that happens in life, good or bad, will make better, if we believe in God... and everything depends on God's decision, who wants us to be perfect... but probably it does not make sense for you, does it? Ha-ha...

U: If God is LOVE... Let me add a comment from the Buddhist point of view ... It is said that if you practice Right Speech, Right Action, Right Thought, then you will also have the Right Goal. Therefore, if your Speech, Actions, and Mind are based on Love... your Goal will also be full of Love.

\*\*\*

F: Is the tradition of burning "ghost" money, houses, etc (Chinese Tradition) as dedication to the departed ones, created by man?

F: Bhante, under what organization are you?

U: I am under the sky.

\*\*\*

U: According to one source that I read in Beijing, hundreds of years ago, China was facing a pretty bad monetary crisis. The Emperor of the country didn't know how to solve this problem. Finally he decided to create "ghost" money for his death. Before he "died", he asked his people to respect him by producing "ghost" money and burn it to honor him. Since his people loved and respected him, they followed the Emperor's advice. After some time the demand on paper, ink and other tools increased. Larger quantities had to be produced which in turn helped the country's economy. After the economy recovered, the Emperor "woke up" from his death. Since then, this tradition has become part of the culture.

F: My family has a strong believe in that tradition....

U: If they believe in it, let them do what they believe. Probably by practicing this tradition, they can live more happily.

\*\*\*

## *Looking at the Back...*

Looking at the Back... so that your curiosity about me,  
Is revealed...

Born in Semarang twenty nine years ago.

### *Elementary School*

Bernardus Catholic School, Semarang.

### *High School*

Nusaputera, Semarang.

### *High School*

Satya Wacana Christian High School, Salatiga.

### *Secondary School*

Canadian International School, Singapore.  
Sinclair Secondary School, Canada.

### *Temporary Novice*

Mendut Temple, Mendut.  
Saung Paramita Temple, Ciapus.

### *Chinese Language Course*

Beijing University, China.

*Undergraduate, Philosophy and Religions*  
Beijing University, China.

*Co-founder, The First President, The First Elder*  
Maṅgala Buddhist Organisation, Beijing, China.

*Training*  
Wat Pah Nanachat

*Monk*  
Wat Marp Jun, Rayong;  
Wat Umong, Chiang Mai;

*Graduate, Buddhist Study, Mahahulalongkorn University,*  
Wat Mahathat, Bangkok,  
Thailand.

Now...  
I am here...  
Looking at the Back...  
Back to here...

*Thanks*

to:

**All the Translators and Editors**

Although they live in seven different cities and in four different countries, they all have been very patient and very precise in updating all the work in this book.

Salute to you, Guys!!!

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Although we have not met before,  
but they are willing to print this book (Indonesian version)

**Tandjono Family (Aping, Aming, Budi and Michele)**

Although we have not met before,  
but they pulled me up when I was falling down on a journey, two months ago.

**Mored Family**

Although we have not met before,  
but they pulled me up when I was falling down on a journey, two months ago.

**University of Indonesia Buddhist Family**

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But they were willing to look for some translators for my work.

**Mangala Buddhist Organisation**

[www.mangalautama.org](http://www.mangalautama.org)

(Beijing, Jakarta, Shanghai, and Guangzhou)

Thanks Guys for accompanying me everyday...may you not get bored...hahaha...

**Master Xian Bing (Badra Pala)**

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that has not been together for three years.

**A lay supporter**

who has prepared computer, mobile phone and other facilities for my personal use.

**Dewi R.A., Ferawati S, Muliadi, Jeffery L**

who have been challenging me in understanding the deepness of human nature.

**Queen Aluminium Foil**

+62-818306817 - Surabaya

**All Friends**

whom I do not know, when we met and separated,  
only they know about their goodness.

May all of these wholesome works  
be dedicated  
to the realisation of other  
**WHOLESONE DEEDS.**