



NAVAKOVĀDA

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWLY-ORDAINED BHIKKHUS
AND SĀMAÑERAS

(Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade)

COMPILED BY

SOMDET PHRA MAHĀ SAMAÑA CHAO
KROM PHRAYĀ VAJIRAÑĀÑAVARORASA

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FOREWORD

There is a long standing tradition in Siam for every young man to take temporary ordination as a bhikkhu, usually for the period of one vassa. The purpose of this custom is to study and practise in the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Lord Buddha. Since it would not be possible in the time available to them for these bhikkhus to study and benefit from the voluminous texts and scriptures dealing with the Discipline and Dhamma, Somdet Phra Mahā Samana Chao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāvarorasa compiled this selection of fundamental precepts and classified dhammas and published them under the title "Navakovāda".

The Siamese edition of the Navakovāda has been reprinted 66 times since it was first published over seventy years ago. The book now forms one of the basic texts for both monastic and lay Buddhist education in Siam as well as in her neighbouring countries.

One of the objectives of Mahāmakuta Rājavidyālaya Foundation is to have translated and to publish in the English language those textbooks on Dhamma which form the curriculum for Buddhist education. Only part of the Navakovāda was published in the English language many years ago, so I requested Bhikkhu Paññavaḍḍho to translate it completely. This translation corresponds closely to the Siamese version.

Mahāmakuta Rājavidyālaya would like to express their appreciation to the translator and to all others who worked towards the completion of this book which is being published as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 50th anniversary since the death of the Royal compiler.

Phra Sāsana Sobhana (Suvaḍḍhano) *

Director, Mahāmakuta Rājavidyālaya

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra.

2nd August, B.E. 2514.

* *He is now His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyānasamvara, the 19th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.*

**SOMDET PHRA MAHĀ SAMANA CHAO
KROM PHRAYĀ VAJIRANĀṆAVARORASA**

One of the royal children of His Majesty King Mongkut, His Royal Highness Prince *Vajirañāṇavarorasa*, the tenth Sangharāja of the present *Ratanakosin* period, was born on 12th April B.E. 2403. It was said that at the time of his birth the clear blue sky became suddenly overcast and there burst forth a heavy rain which soon inundated the palace grounds. His royal father, taking this as a prophetic omen of cool and delight associated with his birth, named him *Manussanāga*, referring to an event that took place soon after, the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment. This was when He sat in the rain absorbed in an ecstatic contemplation of the reality of His Enlightenment. A *Nāga* King, impressed by the sight, came to offer protection by spreading his hood over the Buddha's head and coiling himself around the Buddha's body. The term *Nāga*, besides meaning 'Serpent', also refers to an elephant, which is symbolic of strength and endurance and is one of the epithets of the Lord Buddha and the Arahants.

Brought up as a royal prince, he was educated by the best teachers that could be found. Besides studying Thai and Pāli, he was among the first group of royal children who studied English under Mr. Francis Gerge Patterson, a serious teacher who was strict in enforcing discipline as well as earnest in teaching English. But with his patience and intelligence, Prince *Manussanāga*, together with Prince *Diswara* (or Prince Damrong, pioneer in the field of Thai history and archaeology), became the teacher's favourite pupil. This English teacher had also been His Majesty's tutor for some time.

He entered the Sangha at the age of twenty and after this dedicated all his time and energy to studying the Holy Scriptures until he was well versed in the Dhamma and was able to teach all

grades of Pāli classes at that time. But it was long before he was appointed Saṅgharāja with full power and responsibility to manage ecclesiastical affairs. After becoming Saṅgharāja he never wasted his time in seeking personal comfort or relaxation. On the contrary, he worked indefatigably to improve the level of knowledge and the standard of behaviour of bhikkhus at that time. There were not many bhikkhus who had a sound basis of knowledge or a reasonable faith consistent with the spirit of Buddhism. Buddhist education was then rather an individual affair, with each taking the subjects he liked in the way he pleased. Most were satisfied with what had been traditionally handed down and were practically unable to distinguish the special characteristics of Buddhism from other faiths. Thus in many cases they preferred only the superficial aspect of the truth, with a consequent laxity in Vinaya and ignorant distortion of the Dhamma. Even the way bhikkhus preached was haphazard and the language used was generally too old or too high to appeal intelligently to the ordinary mind. The examination procedure in Buddhist education was still conducted orally and individually, there being as yet no written examination. This method, besides being a very tiring job to both the students and the examiners themselves, was very slow and could not cope with the ever-growing number of students each year. Seeing this disadvantage he introduced the method of written examination, which saves time and yields more accurate results.

Apart from laying down several more courses of Buddhist study in the new style both for bhikkhus and laymen, his literary output was also enormous. This includes works of varied nature both in Pāli and Thai, being text-books, sermons, addresses, translations, explanations and discussion or comments. Some of them were composed specially for bhikkhus, dealing with the subtle aspect of the truth, whereas others were prepared for laymen, concerning the lower grade of the truth suitable to their immediate need and condition.

All this, however, shows only his benevolent achievement in the field of Buddhist education. In the realm of administration, the products of his pioneering spirit and democratic character born of his discernment are by no means less significant. But with the space at our disposal it is practically impossible to mention in detail what he had selflessly done for the sake of the development of Buddhism in his country. Suffice it to say that the situation of Buddhism when he took leave of us was far different from when he took over. His heritage, in the form of a much improved method of administration within the Saṅgha and that of hundreds of valuable books still valued today as they were in his time, is and shall be a living witness of his great life and work, with his name and memory forever revered by the coming generations, as well as by the present one.

As a Saṅgharāja he willingly devoted his life to the progress of Buddhism and the welfare and happiness of the bhikkhus all over the land. As a bhikkhu he regarded himself as a member of the Saṅgha who was allowed no special privilege as far as the Vinaya was concerned and who, in spite of his birth and authority, was friendly, accessible and informal to everyone. As a scholar no cost was ever spared by him to raise the standard of study and practice in his land. The compilation of hundreds of literary works, some of which were completed at the expense of his own health, is plain evidence of this noble virtue.

Then came the time when his sojourn in this physical existence was to end. This was on the 2nd August B.E. 2464, when he realized that his death would soon take place. In fact he had known even before that time that his illness was to be his last. So he committed his body to the doctor's care, never once making any complaint. But inside he was dwelling constantly in his mind on the essential Buddhist teaching of Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā. Thus, in spite of his sufferings and exhaustion he managed to keep his mind peaceful and indifferent to the condition of the coarse, physical body until his end, which

he readily welcomed, in the same manner as his august father King Mongkut, with the following last words of his own:-

Saṅkhārā aniccā **Vipariṇāmadhammā**
Santatiṭṭhā
Saṅkhārā dukkhā **Taṃ kutettha labbhā**
Saṅkhārā anattā **Yathāpaccayaṃ pavattanti**

Conditions (of mind and body) are unstable,
things sure to deteriorate,
bound about in continuity.

Conditions (of mind and body) are dukkha
what else could be expected of them?

Conditions (of mind and body) are ownerless
going on according to supporting factors.

Somdet Phra Mahā Samaṇa Chao Krom Phrayā Vajiraṇāvāro-
rasa was administrative head of the Siamese Sangha for 12 years
and Lord Abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihāra for 28 years.

INTRODUCTION

(to the 5th Siamese edition. B.E. 2442)

This book has been arranged in a brief form to meet the needs of new bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras, especially those who are likely to be ordained for only one vassa, a period of four months.

The *Upajjhāya* and *Ācariya*, who is anxious that his attendant monks (*saddhivihārika*) and pupils (*antevāsika*) should gain some knowledge of Dhamma, must find a method of teaching them the greatest amount possible within the limits of their ability. If the method of teaching goes into too much detail, they will not have got very far in their studies before the time comes for them to return to lay life. Brief methods of teaching, therefore, must be used in order that they may learn all those things which they should be taught. This is the basic reason for the arrangement of this book being composed in a concise manner. If, then, the method of teaching is understood, it can give newly ordained bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras a broad understanding of Dhamma and Vinaya. The method of training which I have used will be discussed as follows.

The pupils should define and memorize all the clauses throughout this book, considering only their meaning, there being no need to learn every word by heart. Reading them through just once will not be enough to memorize them, so it will be necessary to repeat them over and over again in the same way as the chants.

The time limit is three months, the first month being taken up with other things which are more fundamental. The second month, then, is for the *Vinaya Paṇṇatti* (the Vinaya Rules); the third month is for the *Dhamma Vibhāga* (Dhamma Classified); and the fourth month, when they have almost reached the time to return to lay life, is for the *Gihī Paṭipatti* (the Lay Person's Practice).

Those who are endowed with *sati* and *paññā*, and who make a great effort, can finish within the time limit while those who are moderately so endowed will finish at the end of the time limit. Those who are dull will not finish.

When they claim to have reached any particular clause of Vinaya or Dhamma during their course of training, they may be tested by the recitation of all the clauses up to that point. Then we can be satisfied that they do know it by heart.

As regards the Vinaya, their interest may be gained by asking them questions and letting them decide the outcome by comparing it with the Vinaya which they have learnt in this book, such as: "A bhikkhu is nursing someone who is sick; he gives him the wrong medicine and the sick person dies. Does he commit a *pārājika*?" Whoever answers must carefully consider and examine the volition of the bhikkhu who gave the medicine and whether or not it is the same as the volition mentioned in the Vinaya (*pārājika*) clause. In this way they can decide.

As far as the *Dhamma Vibhāga* and the *Gihi Paṭipatti* are concerned, they may also be questioned in a similar way, such as: "How is association with such as are good honest people a means for the development of man?" Here, whoever answers must explain, in accordance with his own understanding, whatever is suited to the form of the question.

Once again: "If wealth is spent, how can it be spent so that it will be useful?" Here, one must take the meaning of the question together with the clause which deals with the value that comes from having wealth, and explain it in a manner suited to the form of the question.

When the time for testing is reached, there can be a test of their knowledge in all the sections as a method of increasing their interest.

There still remains to be considered the method of helping those who have been newly ordained to get a wider knowledge than that contained within this book. With regard to the Vinaya,

one may ask questions the answers to which cannot be found from comparing the examples in this book, for example: "If a bhikkhu hits a child, what fault does he commit?" This cannot be decided from the Vinaya given in this book because it only mentions hitting a bhikkhu, which is a *pācittiya*. For this sort of thing it is necessary to search in the large books of the Discipline,¹ and, once having found it, it will be immediately retained in memory.

As for the *Dhamma Vibhāga*, sayings of the Buddha² may be distributed, such as: "People can pass beyond dukkha because of diligent effort," or, "People get fame (good name) because of honesty." One such saying may be brought up each day.

All of the pupils may be given the same saying of the Buddha in order to have them write up their thoughts about it. This should be done with the idea in mind of getting them to read their essays aloud the next time they come together for a lesson. To compose such an essay they must contemplate, using thought and imagination, and they must, to begin with, see for themselves that: e.g., "Diligent effort is the cause, passing beyond dukkha is the result," and again, "Honesty is the cause, fame (good name) is the result." Then they will be able to arrange their thoughts in good order for reading aloud, and when reading them aloud they will hear each other and each will be able to judge the legitimacy of his own view. Also, when hearing someone explaining, they will remember it better.

Giving them essays to write up such as these will cause them to search in the books of Dhamma and in explaining their understanding, they will get a broader knowledge and enable themselves to contemplate what is good and what is bad for themselves.

1. Mahākhandhaka, Pubbasikkhāvannanā, Vinaya Mukha.
2. This way of teaching has since been collected by him into a book of "Buddhist Proverbs." (These two notes are translated from the original text).

This book has been compiled for teaching newly ordained bhikkhus and sāmaneras sufficient for the time suitable for their studies, and therefore we have called it “*Navakovāda*”. This book only gives the concise meanings to clauses of Vinaya and Dhamma.

Krom Meun Vajirañāṇavarorasa

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra.
21st May. R.S. 118. (B.E. 2442).

INTRODUCTION

(to the 9th Siamese edition. B.E. 2447)

This book was arranged to be suitable for present-day initial training and, as such, the number of Pāli words used has been kept to a minimum and have been used only in those places where they would abbreviate the meaning or where they would make learning easier than the use of the equivalent Thai words. However, this book has had a wide circulation among the relatives and family friends of newly ordained bhikkhus and those who have learnt a lot of Dhamma, and though variously satisfied with the idea of this book, feel that the text would be improved greatly if more Pāli words were inserted into it. The reason for this is that those who have reached a high level of learning and who are senior people have always learnt the Pāli words and are perplexed when they do not find them. They must usually think of the equivalent Pāli words before they can understand a Dhamma clause thoroughly, thus they must think that: “Such and such a Dhamma clause is the equivalent of such and such a Pāli clause.” Even in defining and recollecting, they find the Pāli words to be easier and of more convenient use in conversation.

As we wish that this book should also be of use to those who are more learned and senior we have included Pāli in those Dhamma clauses which have Pāli words as single words, but not in those that require a lot of words making up a sentence. For example, in the *Abhiñha paccavekkhaṇa*, the first clause is: “*Jarādhammomhi jaram anātito,*” which means, “It is natural for us to have old age, we cannot bypass and be freed from old age.” In Dhamma clauses such as this, we still use the Thai words as before, but to use a Pāli sentence also would turn this into a book of chants with translation – which is contrary to its original purpose and could lead those who are newly ordained to feel like giving up the study of Dhamma and Vinaya.

With regard to the Pāli words that are included, the order in which they are placed differs according to the respective method. Sometimes they are placed at the beginning of a clause, and sometimes at the end. When they are at the beginning those who are starting their studies and who are not skilled at defining or remembering Pāli words may give up if they have to learn them, so they can define or remember the Thai words only. But if they are also able to get the meaning or learn (the Pāli words), they will gain a broad knowledge from it and will be able to read Dhamma books or listen to Dhamma talks (*Desanā*) and understand more easily. When the Pāli words are placed at the end (of each clause), they are special words which are used just for that item, and they should be known.

Concerning the *Upajjhāya* and *Ācariya* who are going to train the bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras who are ordained in their monasteries, they should know where to ease the training in accordance with the dispositions of all their pupils so as to uphold their knowledge and understanding of Dhamma and Vinaya.

When the time comes for us to correct and improve this book anew, we shall add to the Dhamma clauses whatever is appropriate which has not yet been included herein, rearranging it all in the first group so as to go progressively deeper from the beginning, which will be easy, to the end, which will be difficult, so as to make it easier for those who need to memorize this.

This new edition has been corrected only to the extent mentioned above.

Krom Meun Vajirañāṇavarorasa

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra.
30th June R.S. 123 (B.E. 2447).



SOMDET PHRA MAHĀ SAMANA CHAO'
KROM PHRAYĀ VAJIRAÑĀṆAVARORASA

who worked so hard for the progress of knowledge in Buddhism.

INTRODUCTION

(to the 12th Siamese edition. B.E. 2453)

In this, the 12th edition of the “*Navakovāda*,” we have increased the section on “Dhamma Which Should Be Known” by several clauses, because we feel that, as this book is widely distributed, not only to new bhikkhus, it ought to reveal a very wide field of knowledge.

The Dhamma sections which have been added in this edition include the “*Duka*—Groups of Two”, and those sections which would be needed to complete the *Bodhipakkhiyadhamma*.

With these increases, the clauses for teaching new bhikkhus have been greatly increased. It may be that bhikkhus who have only moderate *sati* and *paññā* or who tend to be a bit dull can leave off without learning all of them. In such cases, the *Upajjhāya* and *Ācariya* who teach may omit some clauses of Dhamma which are not for new bhikkhus, or which are repetitions of Dhamma clauses that are already included elsewhere.

Apart from this, some of the wording have also been corrected in this edition.

Krom Luang Vajirañāṇavarorasa

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra.

9th August. R.S. 129. (B.E. 2453).

INTRODUCTION

(to the 1st English edition. B.E. 2514)

In his preceding introductions, HRH the Venerable Somdet has explained the method of use of this book, and though methods of teaching and learning have changed considerably in the intervening years, this book is still thought to be of interest and use to English-speaking students as an introduction to the serious study of Dhamma. *Navakovāda* is meant to be used as a textbook in the classroom, its information is brief and concise with little or no explanations given to its clauses which normally must be supplied by the teacher.

It should be noted that in Part One of this book, the rendering of the Pāṭimokkha Rules is not a direct translation of the Pāli. Some of the rules have been abbreviated and some expanded in an endeavour to make each one simple and self-explanatory. (Somdet Phra Mahā Samana Chao Krom Phrayā Vajirañānavarora also compiled a detailed exposition on the Vinaya in three volumes, the first volume dealing exclusively with the Pāṭimokkha training rules. This has already been translated into English and published by MahāMakut Buddhist University under the title *The Entrance to the Vinaya*, Vol. I.)

The number of Pāli words found in this English edition rather exceeds the number used in the Siamese editions. The reason for this being that many of the technical terms in the Siamese language are derived from the Pāli and have long been in common usage. A few Pāli words which are now used with a certain amount of familiarity in English (i.e., bhikkhu) have been left in roman type and used with English inflections. All other Pāli words have been placed in italicized type and left in the uninflected stem-form.

Except where otherwise stated, the material supplied by way of parentheses and footnotes is not included in the original Thai.

*Phra Sāsana Sobhāṇa (Suvaḍḍhano) **

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra
August R.S. 190 (B.E. 2514)

*He is now His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyānasamvara,
the 19th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.*

NAMES OF THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION OF "NAVAKOVĀDA"

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