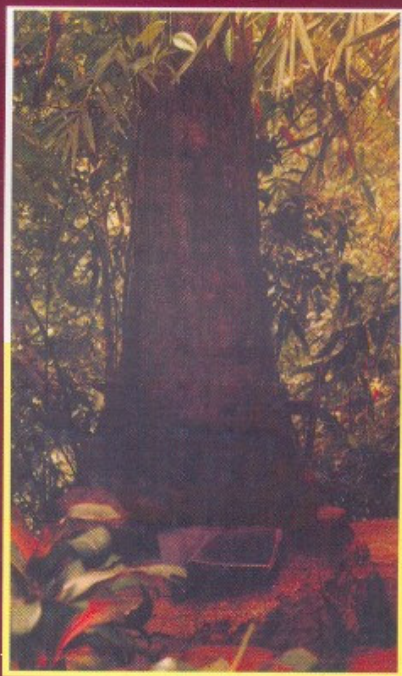


Education for Mindfulness: from the Diary of a Monk

Venerable Mirisse Dhammika

(M.A., Ph.D. Simon Fraser University, Canada)



EDUCATION FOR MINDFULNESS: FROM THE DIARY OF A MONK

**In the Faculty
of
Education**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis turns to Buddhist philosophy as a source of enrichment in educational thought and practice. It argues that a certain secular adaptation of Buddhist meditation in school curriculum would help students identify causes of stress, frustration, helplessness and insecurity, and develop ways to cope with and transform their "afflicted minds". The aim of this work is to help create a consciousness that cultivates compassion in students for a harmonious teaching-learning environment in schools as well as the desire of becoming compassionate social beings.

This study employs a narrative approach to argue that various physical and psychological life challenges bring mental impediments such as anger, jealousy, restlessness and helplessness through a strong "ego-self" in the mind. These challenges often lead to stress, depression and anxiety. By realizing the nature of mind and body relationships and changing internal factors through mental training, individuals can learn to resist anxiety, depression, intolerance and mental insecurity and face psycho-social problems with maturity and mindfulness.

The study explores two forms of meditation techniques, namely "mindfulness" (*sati*), and "Loving-Kindness" (*Metta*), which constitute the foundation of Buddhist mental training. These meditation techniques attempt to train the mind to understand the mental state of happiness, to identify and defuse sources of negative emotions and to cultivate emotional states like compassion (*Karuna*) in order to improve personal and societal well-being in students.

The knowing pursuit of compassion in students is a central feature for realization of the creative potentials of our virtues such as love, sympathy, empathy, tolerance, patience and equanimity. There are many issues in modern schooling, such as diversity in students, multiculturalism, bullying and violence, which require a compassionate approach and understanding. This study examines the potential contribution of Buddhist thought and practices in education for mindfulness.

Dedication

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This dissertation is dedicated

To

My mother,

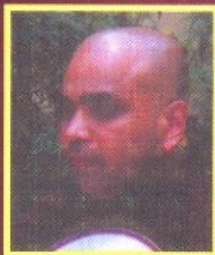
who brought me to this world and

nurtured with love and compassion

and also to

my preceptors

who guided me toward the noble path.



With the newest publication of "Education for mindfulness: from the diary of a monk", venerable Mirisse Dhammika Thero's publishing program takes another stable step forward on the road to social progress & spiritual development.

Venerable Mirisse Dhammika Thero was born in Sri Lanka and ordained a Buddhist monk at the age of nine. After acquiring the traditional Buddhist education, he got his higher ordination in 1982. Then he pursued his higher education at the Colombo University and was graduated in 1986.

He was appointed as a government graduate teacher by the Ministry of Education in 1988. He rendered his service while being attached to the tutorial staff of D. S. Senanayaka College - Colombo 7, until he was awarded an opportunity for a mission of implementing spiritual thoughts of international community. In 1995 he left Sri Lanka accepting the opportunity given by the Buddhist Vihara Society - Canada.

Being an asset to the foreigners too, he started meditation programs on the bedrock upon the mental and spiritual greatness must be built. While engaging in those religious activities, he pursued his higher education, and successfully obtained the Master of Art, in Education in 2000 and further he continued his studies until he achieved his goal by receiving his Ph. D. in the Faculty of Education at the Simon Fraser University, British Columbia in Canada.

He has had wide experience as a High School teacher & a Principal of Sunday Schools not only in Sri Lanka but also in Canada. Apart from that he was instructor for meditation, in the Development of Recreation, Simon Fraser University, in which he obtained his Ph D.

In addition, the Sri Lanka - Canada Scholarship Foundation was established by him in 1998 for the benefit of Sri Lankan needy students, who demonstrated academic excellence at the G. C. E. (O/L) Examination. The perspectives of the foundation is to help students to achieve their academic goals with character development leading to mental wellness. At present, as the Chief Incumbent of Siri sudassanaramaya, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka he conducts Meditation Classes, Dhamma discussions & social welfare services. He is widely known as a scholar monk of high quality in meritorious activities.

K. S. N. Goonetilleke

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