Two-day workshop

WALKING MEDITATION

-A Path to Buddha's Liberation-

September 17-18, 2022

Pheonix Arena, Hitec City, Hyderabad

To conduct this two-day workshop, the Managing Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust specially invited a globetrotter and multilinguistic preacher of Buddhism and a guide in meditation, Venerable Olande Ananda Thera. He was born in The Netherlands in 1948 and ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1975 in Sri Lanka.

On September 17, the first day after noon, a total of 45 participant gathered in the hall at Pheonix Area Hitec City, Hyderabad. The Managing Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust, Lama Doboom Tulku talked briefly on the Trust's work and made a brief introduction on the resource person, Venerable Olande Ananda. He welcomed everyone to this programme especially the resource person and Shri M. G. Gopal who is one of the Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust. He then requested the resource person to conduct the two-day workshop.

With a big smile, Venerable said walking meditation is a wonderful complement to a seated meditation practice. Since we are already in a seated position, we will continue seating and start the session with a seated meditation. He gave a brief introduction on meditation especially walking meditation and asked participants to sit in a comfortable position with back upright.

He went on to saying walking meditation is more than a simple stroll in the park. It is usually done much slower than normal walks, and involves either coordination with the breathing, or specific focusing practices. Unlike seated meditation, when walking, your eyes are open, body is standing and moving, and there is a bit more interaction with the outside world. Because the body is moving, it is easier to be mindful of the body sensations and anchored in the present moment; for this reason, many people find walking meditation easier than seated meditation.

After a short sitting meditation session, he asked all the participant to mindfully stand from the sitting position. Before starting walking meditation session, he said spend a minute or two just standing there, breathing deeply and anchoring your attention in your body. Pace should be steady and even. If your mind is agitated, or your ability to focus is weak, walk very slowly, until you can stay in the present moment with each step. He further said, just as in seated meditation, whenever your mind starts to engage with thoughts, bring your attention back to your walking and breathing.

He then asked all the participants to walk mindfully in a single line after him out of the hall into the garden nearby. After about 20 minutes of walking and contemplation, all followed him back into the hall. When all were quietly seated, he asked if anyone wants to share their experience and invited them for a question-and-answer session.

Before dispersing for the day, every one was invited to a cup of tea and refreshment and announcement was made for the next day's programme to start at 10 am.

Next day, the programme started at 10 am and without much talking the resource person asked everyone to join in the meditation. Lunch was served to all at 1 pm. Post lunch was concluding session where the resource person spoke on the benefits of walking meditation. He said while it is safe to say that walking meditation has all the benefits of sitting meditation, it develops the ability of focusing, helps overcome lethargy and sluggishness that may come with long seated meditation practice and may be more relaxing that sitting meditation. When it is done for an extended time, walking meditation can build strength and stamina and the activity of walking bring several health and well-being benefits. At the end, Shri M.G. Gopal who is one of the Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust was requested to do the honour to thank the resource person with a traditional white scarf.

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